

Garry Morse / from FamTasMaGoria

Nail

biting times tying rubber band around plastic bag a cannibal he was taking the rise & I don't think a penny a bag of sweepings a halfpenny half a pound of candy & that bird used to steal my lunch & the boys said I had a classy chassis or it's turned out nice again but I used to fancy those baby hearts & he was dashing in those days leading up to war work at the Eveready factory the head chap took a shine to me & I tested batteries from eight at night till morning you used to get shocks not like for Mr. Schmidt he used to take long naps clean the sugar bowls not like that filthy shiksah who used to bring blokes in & sweep everything under the rug or those relatives the Litvaks who ate off the tablecloth without knife or fork well fingers was made first & all night upstairs he was radioing the Germans & in the end they took him away & at that time you couldn't get an orange or take a bath & he proposed in Hyde Park just before the air raid & ran for shelter unanswered & I still wanted to walk didn't I & that was goodbye to all that after armistice the best looking warbride on the boat the other wives didn't like that my picture on the front of *The Sun* with the ol' boy carrying me over the threshold of the rail station & soon after they put us up in the old Hotel Vancouver & I did my washing on the roof & then we went down to the White Lunch but later on I loved all those tuck-ins at The Only & Foo's & People's & The Dragon Inn & mmm ... those ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT SMORGASBOARDS with the little boy come to think he was good to me but I tell a lie not when he bought that Christmas tree & broke a window to bring it inside & my brother said you could have married a copper back home & dad why you've come out to the Wild West but after the boy was grown my auto dealer in the Interior & Mario Lanza & the love of my life strange how the ol' boy I'm so sorry for him now saw him about our car years earlier & said he was a crook or to read his obituary or that Science of Mind chap who borrowed a van to take me to see Uri Geller bend spoons with his mind & said his wife didn't mind all these moments so queer & out of time almost like the time those blokes next door invented radar it's a nervous habit I think like smoking

Chiefly

the feast & feat of getting up before five taking the plunge into ice water with splash around nape of neck even in winter then instinctive to hunt & gather even without his ox Babe the image of his obsidian eyes & heavily painted moustache with a touch of Deliverance hardly sweating with a fresh kill a two-hundred pound deer & after a late lunch picking his teeth with a passing black bear his mother an Eagle & his father a Wolf & stressing clannish matrilineage it's definitely an excellent match with Miss Moon along with this element of fasting without breakfast this savage progression toward evening feast to the Gods the scent as palpable as what Prometheus swipes for the mouths of men or what Raven obtains from a locked kerfed box this gift of fire & the naming of things like him *Yakinakwas* to give the guest a blanket & *Mamasakami* & *Tlagoglas* & *Pasala* all of them a give-away for a potlatch of over three-thousand people for three weeks more than a century ago before the offering of cedar rope from Wai-kai the old fakir trick in a time of flood our canoes securely fastened to sky & later an even older trick fastening chains around his Indian house & hitching it to donkey engine & tugging it out to sea with no sky this time to bind it to along with a scow-load of regalia & masks Ottawa-bound rather than suffer the opportunity costs of additional incarceration after innumerable arrests for having a party for theatrical tricks Shakes-The-Spear might have liked painted nightmares falling through the roof & the biting of flesh & the burning alive of urchins in boxes weeks of preparation for trapdoors under history & tunnels through daily papers & always a bit of visionary once past the initial resistance his concession to record some songs for a woman from Vienna & in the freewheeling scheme of things his voice subsists across the global in mid-hamat'sa & more over in Kwak'wala love song this decision & precision about what to document like an animal scratch in the caves of Lascaux or in the Interior something stronger once all that fishing & hunting is done this urge to survive is something other than being with full belly after the feast in the aftermath of West Coast luxury something other than hunger chiefly desire

Temper

temper at times born more fair-haired than the other kids the teachers being pretty anti-semit & all his teeth like lumps of skuttle & really sickly as a boy but the last kick at the can & much beloved for it turning to the air force as a young lad A-1 in health & perfectly biting he lied about his age to enlist & ended up serving in the end turning over extra weapons to Israel with that touch of gangster Jew the foundations of city or state save for entertaining & he used to box & box & smash in teeth & faces the funny story he'd ruin his hands for designing eyecatching dresses the old boy used to laugh at him cutting patterns as a lad but never did anything to make himself rich he tried his hand at Sweet Sixteen in Montréal but I'm a designer not a cutter he exclaimed in fury & frustration with the snow-blindness of it & it didn't take that long to become a millionaire in those days he had a startup accountant partner who wanted to shirk his duty & buy his girl a pony so they divided up the week between them with a manageress & he went swimming instead moving bolts of fabric with flair & the tenacity of a mountain goat but none of this stopped him from losing his temper & boxing Marty Feldman's father down the stairs for stealing his patterns & rag trade & selling out to ragheads & that's what killed him but in lighter times he married that lovely dolly bird from the Leverhoff legacy to do with Sunlight soap & liquidity O it was a lovely meal that night when his son that little sod got hold of his keys & started the car & started rolling it into the restaurant that was the night he asked the Greek how much to clear off & she said I'm going to start my own business & make you all look like flies & she failed within a few months though it was a fancy place I must say & she almost outlived us all but he never got to Buffalo to set up shop there with an eerily portentous look in his eye he once leapt off a moving train that derailed before the next stop & later thought before the airshow began the guy in back of him a dilettante without the proper training up to the point when flying in looping formation he nose-dived into the tail of his plane & at the age of thirty-eight leaving two boys & wife it was curtains but the other bloke lived

Eyebrows

raised almost lupine with eyes quite close together in untrustworthy merriment during an agitated assignation with Miss Sexy Legs the pinup contest winner warts & all & then a case of more than cliché stereotype an Irish cop & Hebrew bride almost sitcom-like with the on-duty officers peeping through keyhole some hot-blooded broad turning tricks with missing thumb & shrapnel in his side during training maneuvers handed a live grenade he threw & lost to the wind & someone lost a son that training day & his visit was the equivalent of a telegram how to tell someone's family that with your lycanthropic look a family curse & another twist of bad luck the first house he bought struck by lightning what are the odds of such an Act of God but he managed to trade in boots for brogues & slippers & pipe on the porch & after the divorce that agreement to disagree in dissolution he was going to marry well to do & so he did & kept a pair of samoyeds & eventually a hyperactive white terrier & after the injury he bathed his son & watched him for hours but in later years chucked him off the couch why don't you do something with your life go to an open house & much later when he won those tickets to Painter's Lodge with his son standing on the pier he motored away looking back at him with a lift of eyebrows like at a stranger & only once he bought Roscoe the action figure policeman with patrol car to match his orange General Lee & sent it to his grandson otherwise the same level of estrangement & then the madness began the drunken boating in front of his island home where his father drowned with policeman's special & second wife scratching out poison pen letters for all the neighbours in order to isolate them so it would just be the two of them alone forever maybe ordering three lawn mowers & an entire home shopping network on credit with all their respective investments doing well & getting slower & going off together surrounded by open tins of decaying food until she had a heart attack he a stroke leaving him unaware a banana rotting on the bug-ridden bed & in the end still sharp a kind of King Lear with homegrown crown a man without memoir recalling only the scent of a cigar locked in the cabinet of his third island home

Bears

on one side of the family pawing at broken limbs with ferocity the way they bite at dangling fruit & scoop fish out of stream & dump the bones at the bottom of another fruit-bearer to enrich the roots & the entire cycle continues she occasionally threw large parties with money like running water to her yet never quite hers like for her lover's trucking business O that side of the line they are all like that they just take & take her father had fire-red hair & used to yell at you with rolling Rs & whap at you with his big stick before he went senile why they wouldn't give you dime one except to size you up for more gains & with that ursine frame she really looked made to squat & paw fish into tins in the cannery & you don't wanna know what they put in those cans or that time we were berry picking & she leaned over & fell upside down into the patch & my sister told me not to laugh or we'd get a real licking but it was so funny we both laughed before lifting her back up with a great heave & boy did we get it & in the summer we were nigger rich & didn't save nothing for winter & so we had to go round like the grasshopper bumming off other ants we would have been well off if not for her & if she didn't get her way she would tear at her food with such a sound & stab each piece into her mouth with her fork & make another noise against her teeth each time & I said it's a wonder you don't hurt yourself & whenever she wanted a single tear would form in one of her eyes & roll down her fat cheek & I told her Mum Liz Taylor has nothing on you & she forgot all about her big plastic tear & the fact she was still *acting* & started to chase me around the table & to this day she still dials me up & starts blubbering saying she hasn't a crust in the house & one time we took her to Safeway with our money & he believed her plastic tear routine & she started picking out cracked crab & ready-made salads I said Mum you can make salad you've got nothing but time after her swinging an axe at me as a kid we go to bingo & she could fall down a hole & land on a diamond she clears so many grand & by the time we get off the cheap slots in a lost weekend she's blown it all & calls us up crying I haven't a crust in the house & finally wise he crashes down the phone no bones about it

Touch

of hypochondria what every body always remembers is the tall ominous tray of medicinals & snake oil cure-alls the way he needed to be wheeled in with the air of an insurance claim wheeling grand entrance into courtroom with an adjustable cast of characters to swear he was fit as a fiddle & while the women continue to make do & toddle off to work he continues to butter the *baidels* his entire life & all the while he was hitting up each relation with fresh stories & buttering their bagels in the kitchen with his heavy clay-like hands full of our gelt & otherwise he never closed those thick flat lumps of dough only sat like an aristocratic esthete humming *I'm just wild about Harry* & *Harry's wild about me* while the toast burned & his son became a pharmacist in the second generation confirming that Proustian notion the best writers are neurotics like the best doctors are obsessed with curing themselves first & that explains his niece with all her herbal remedies & strange diets & holy grail of a natural hair dye out of walnuts but for the lack of a fixative & he is easy to blame for any moment of neurosis or crisis or even a sudden whelm of perceived effeminacy if there is such a thing because during the war he disappeared into myth about as mysterious as what happened to Glenn Miller after swing dancing the urban legend of a bombed city he would only come out at night in a frock in the guise of a heavy-handed woman although he was mortally unfit for conscription they would have sent him packing hardly in the mood for such antics & if you asked him about it or started an argument he would just back away & continue buttering the *baidels* & pouring cups of tea till you thought you'd go mad & then he'd run to the loo since tea's one of the leading diuretics or sit back in his big soft chair with the women fluttering around & when he finally died in his sleep of long-livedness his giant miserly accumulation of wealth came to no one just some Jewish organization down the road & my mum was so mad after everything they did for him & it just goes to show you never know when your numbers up the fruits & raw vegetables don't exactly agree with me & there was that bloke fit as a fiddle gone jogging who was hit by a truck with ginko or ginseng on the side

Shit

disturbing Mother Earth of many devices rising at five with identifying scar of a stab wound & bad bones breaking a limp the brown girl learning to lift & fry up on her father's boat nothing to do but play cards & pool they would giggle at the boys & shoot a few games until the money got *serious* but later more like Piper Laurie limping around train station after another hustler the stakes getting shittier first her father & then her sister & then her husband dead reckoning at sea the odds of pagan gods against all of them like ducks lined up so she just lost it & let blood & lineage drink her up for a long while addictive like gran's bingo beliefs & with a crutch I loved your father & those Hebes & didn't touch a drop when you were on the way the doctors thought me barren & then your father named you after him but she never became an almond tree at *Ennea Odoi* she wanted to stay modern to get out of the bush with unpawned typewriter hidden under her bed after mum swung that axe at her she fucked off to Vancouver & clacked away at the courthouse in lieu of all the cutesy dames the lawyers hired for one thing she loved most to cook in hotels & restaurants & the White Lunch & later among dirty pool & goonish union finaglers a filmic villain threatened her & she called the cops & around the corner they waited & caught him again for tanked up operation of a vehicle & when they tried to force her out pensionless the books & everything were photocopied in a safety deposit box for her closest heir & if anything happens to me & once again it did her legs gave out & they made her cybernetic & in recovery she wheeled about & waved talking stick & because white seniors looked horrified by her brown skin she decided to fix them & got better & threw dinners & bingos & got the grant to pull it off & the Native mayor came to visit all before the nagging *anagnorisis* of a reunion & then the additional *parapeleia* of estrangement her epilogue sailing off into the picture on her wall the last boat blown into bottle & tossed toward deadly ebb tide all this first syllable shit about mothers & the sea of memory *mêm mare mater maaaa* that pounding music of the maternal turned into a passing stream of disturbing *materia* no nut tree or softwood to talk of

Walk

& wander lust in Levite blood of tribe with lithe movements he buggered off to Australia for about twenty years of sunshine to fire his arrows at but in the beginning she liked the way he looked in his clothes the way he sat down in his Saville Row suit with such care with the knowhow of generations of cloth merchants & cutters & floggers & more than this to fold not to ruin the knees & in the b/w pictures the cool rounded rims of a suave villain no father of three & scarcely that no no question this one was a real toff or that he got off on the chase a few pursuits around the world & that time he was moving in on someone's misunderstanding if I was only twenty years younger I'd snap her up & he drove me mad about getting her this particular perfume & the way he went on such expletives about the passing waft of the women in Montréal but I mean they never got on she always wanted a row & he kept to himself & she used to fight all the neighbourhood battles although you couldn't say she wore the pants another case of progenital vacancy amongst the missing like in Genesis a stranger in a strange land until his son dug him up again in that run-down district & brought him back into the fold & he never got on with his oldest boy *babick* he bbburled out at him because he sttuttered & he sure wasn't fussy on the Greek lot he fell in with they'll bleed 'im dry & like half a stubborn horse he had some sense they led him out of the factory & he partly snorted at the situation & it was time for another leisurely contented puff perhaps upon another continent & why quit now he started when he was ten & lived till ninety with that trim figure & a slim fag in his mouth the way he still hopped on the double decker maybe after the passing waft of a foreign lady or another last seduction by some ductile Salomé reducible to odour from a stashed flask or the steam of teapot & this collection of cards from Oy! colonizers mostly hoaxes from something in the depths of Loch Ness to giant South American balls & his odd collection of white elephants whose tusks face the front door for luck like his eyes & astrological *sagitta* of desire with all that wild white hair fading into cancerous hospital pillow the last card in the deck a fakir up the rope up in smoke