

THURSDAY'S FICTIONS

BY RICHARD JAMES ALLEN

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Thursday's Fictions tells the story of the conflict between talent and ambition in a writer who craves immortality and learns to accept death. It is an adult fairy tale, a fantastical parable of spirituality and excess, dealing with themes of crime and art, death and reincarnation.

"What a fascinating, challenging, thoughtful, exciting and confrontingly entertaining piece of creativity this unusual presentation is ...a mind-blowing mix of dance, drama, performance poetry, a radio play and music...Underpinning everything is the rich poetry of Richard James Allen's text with its storm of ideas."

-Wal Eastman, *The Mercury*

"[Thursday's Fictions]' big moral/metaphysical 'week' is a true achievement...what I admire is the stamina, the clarity of soul, the willingness to ask hard questions. This is the kind of poetry Alec Hope was (or should have been) looking for when he lamented the decline of the 'discursive mode'. It's utterly different, I'm glad to say, from all those little OZ poems about a sensitive bloke walking out one morning and seeing the light shimmer on farmyard dams." -Chris Wallace-Crabbe



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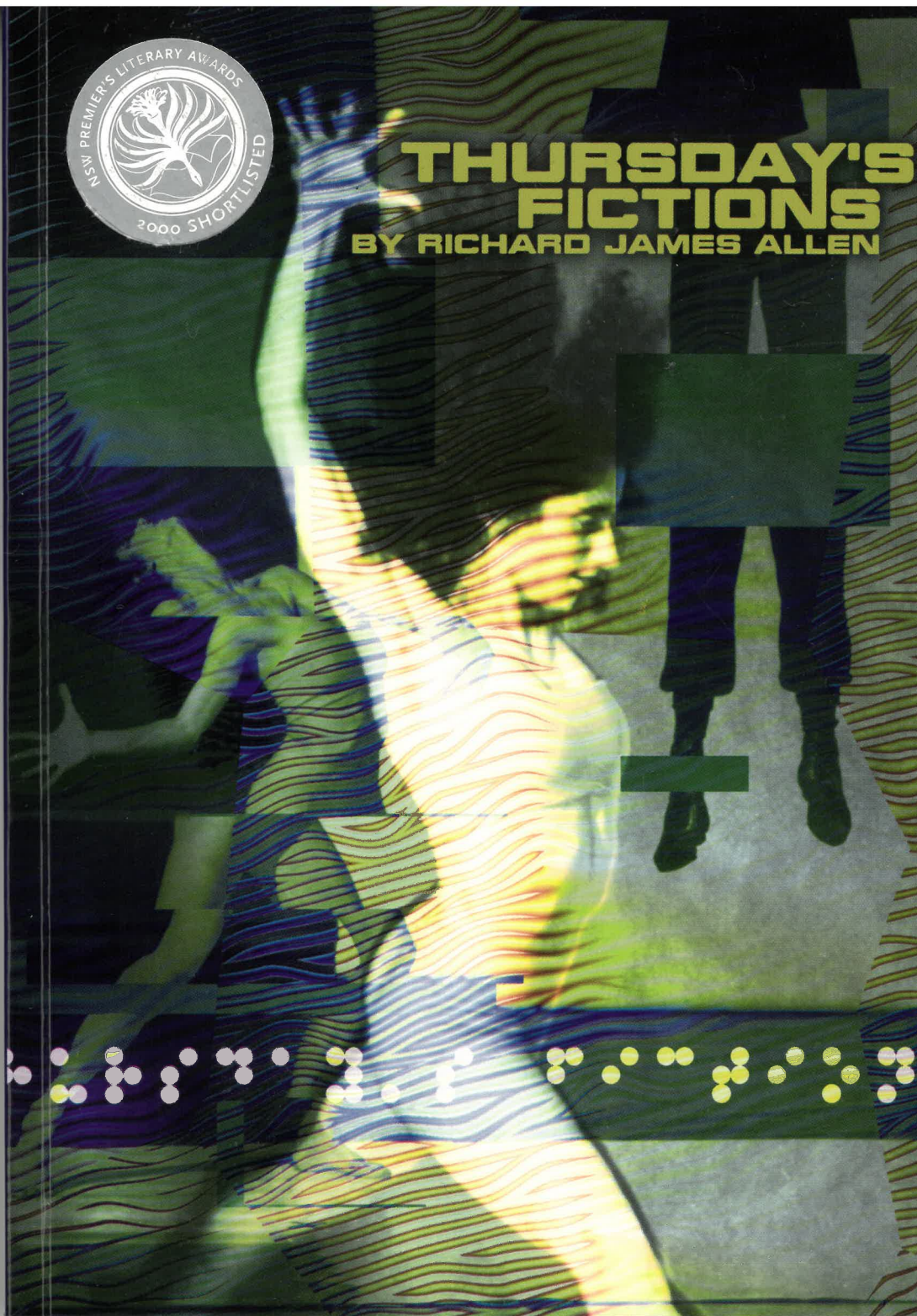
THURSDAY'S FICTIONS BY RICHARD JAMES ALLEN tip





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THURSDAY'S FICTIONS

Richard James Allen was born in Kempsey, on the mid-north coast of NSW, Australia, in 1960. The first ten years of his life were spent in Vietnam and Japan, after which he returned to Australia where he attended Sydney Grammar School and Sydney University, graduating with First Class Honours in 1982.

Coming from a literary family that includes a writer of fiction, an art critic and historian, an editor-in-chief, and several journalists, he began writing poetry at fourteen and his first poems were published in various school magazines and anthologies. His first professional publication was in 1978 and his poetry has appeared steadily ever since in a wide cross-section of magazines, journals, anthologies, and on radio, in Australia, the United States, Holland, Britain and Korea. He is the author of six previous volumes of poetry published in Australia.

From an early age Richard also became interested in martial arts, yoga and ice dancing, and this led to him becoming a professional dancer, training and performing in Australia, Europe and the United States. In 1985 he met his partner, Karen Pearlman, in New York City. Together they formed *That Was Fast*, a company that drew together his interests in literature and movement to create text and dance works which they toured to over one hundred venues on three continents, including many of the leading theatres for cutting edge work in New York, Washington, London, Glasgow, Harlem, Düsseldorf, Sydney and Melbourne. Their interest in crossing artforms broadened to include film and video, creating text and dance works for television for ABC-TV and SBS-TV.

In 1995 they became joint artistic directors of *Tasdance*, in Launceston, Tasmania, where they expanded the scale of their hybrid arts work, as they had done from time to time on previous companies, such as *Dance North* and *Tropic Line Theatre Company* in Queensland. They created large scale works for the stage, award-winning works for television (which have been shown at festivals across Australia and around the world), outdoor works, schools programs, a book of poems and essays on dance, and an international tour to *The Kitchen* in New York. They also initiated, and co-directed, in collaboration with Tim Thorne, *The Tasmanian Poetry and Dance Festival* (1995, 1996). Since returning to Sydney in 1997, they have completed a long-standing project, the research and editing of *Performing the Unnameable: An Anthology of Australian Performance Texts*, published by Currency Press and *RealTime* in 1999.

A regular reader and performer of his poetry across a wide range of venues since the late 1970s, Richard has also taught at many secondary and tertiary institutions, written reviews, co-edited a literary journal, contributed to a broad spectrum of conferences and festival forums, and been chair of numerous judging panels for performance poetry competitions. He is currently the Artistic Director of Australia's Poets Union Inc., and Festival Director of the 1999 Australian Poetry Festival.

OTHER BOOKS BY RICHARD JAMES ALLEN

The Way Out At Last & Other Poems

Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1986

To The Ocean & Scheherazade

Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1989

Hope for a man named Jimmie & Grand Illusion Joe

Five Islands Press, Wollongong, 1993

What To Name Your Baby

Paper Bark Press, Sydney, 1995

The Air Dolphin Brigade

Paper Bark Press, Sydney, and Shoestring Press, UK, 1995

New Life on the 2nd Floor

(with Karen Pearlman)

Tasdance, Launceston, 1996

Performing The Unnameable:

An Anthology of Australian Performance Texts

(edited with Karen Pearlman)

Currency Press in association with *RealTime*, Sydney, 1999

THURSDAY'S FICTIONS

RICHARD JAMES ALLEN



Five Islands Press

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PROLOGUE

*The restriction period is over and "Thursday's" file
is now open. Given my relationship to the case,
I have been asked to provide a file note for what is,
as far as I'm concerned, the chronicle of a mad woman,
passing through an anomalous time
where characters named after days of the week
live only for the length of a day; a story whose forms
keep changing from day to day like the weather.
It is a cautionary tale and I caution you with it.
At the end of this book, you may wonder
how I can stand outside of it, since I appear in it.
Believe me when I say
I don't have to answer your questions.*

Mrs Fairchild

THURSDAY'S FICTIONS

THURSDAY knocks on FRIDAY'S door.

(Immortality was
driving me
crazy.
But it's
alright,
I have
the feeling
I have
lived my life
and am now
becoming mortal.
I have become
a human being.
I have come
back down
to earth.
I've
come home
to die.
There's
(a lot

to be said
for dying.
There are
all kinds
of advantages.
You should
try it
sometime.
If
nothing else,
you know
it's
all over.
Mission
accomplished.
If you
haven't done
the job
right,
at least
you've

put in)
the hours.
And what more
can be asked
of you,
after all,
you're dead,
right?
May I
come in?
Perhaps
I'd better
introduce
myself
before I
collapse
all over
your floor.
I do have
a name.
Well,)

(at least,
some kind
of a name.
One has to
be thankful
for what
one can get.
It can be
a long time
between
identities
when you
are waiting
for
reincarnation.
And there
is nothing
so good
for relieving
that terrible
(boredom

as having
something
perishable
amid
the clouds.
Something,
at last,
to perish
with you.
Eternal life
goes on
a hell
of a
long time,
if you
know what
I mean.
So,
congratulate
me,
I have

entered)
the playground
of time.
I came in
on a
Thursday,
call me
Thursday.
And now
that you've
opened
your door
to me,
invited me
into your
home,
what can I
do for you?
Well,
neatly packed
into the)

(briefcase
of my brain
is my brief
this time
around.
I bring you
verbal trinkets,
nouns like
little jewels,
sparkling
adjectives,
knick-knacks in
every tongue,
practical and
philosophical
concepts
useful around
the house
and out in
the big
(narrow world,
an image
for every
occasion,
that certain
way of
expressing
emotion,
simple
and helpful
resolutions of
what it's
all about,
big answers
to the
small questions,
small answers
to the
big questions,
whatever it is
your mind
and heart
require,)
I have it
in stock,
and for
the most
reasonable
of prices.
I bring you
my fictions,
my storehouse
of fictions,
as I don't
believe you
will find
them elsewhere,
except perhaps
in curious
little shops,
in forgotten
towns, hidden
between the)

(bright cities
of the
imagination.
Thursday's
fictions.
I am opening
a theme park
- are you
ready? -
with lots
of rides
- if someone's
going to
market
my soul,
why not me? -
plenty of
laughs
- I hope
you will
(do the
honours of
cutting
the ribbon
with your
mind -
glasses
from which
to drink
miracles,
an Olympic
games
of poetry,
a surfboard
on the sea
of dread,
a moon
in the
eye
of the
beholder,
a slip
though)
the lips
of eternity,
the torso
of a
Greek god,
legs
to match
branches,
fingers in
the earlobes
of the
sky,
a dance
that
doesn't
require
a destination,
desire
without
explanation,)

(an erection	who forgives	the fog)
on the	because	of the
information	that's what	centuries,
superhighway,	they do	the sexism
a poem	in the movies,	that launched
of life	the nipples	a thousand
because	- my nipples -	ships,
that's the	pinkish, red,	ducks,
good bit,	golden	dinghies,
a confrontation	and brown,	dicks,
and some	that have	and now
swaying	guided men	- at last -
breasts	like	the grand
to keep	spheres,	open wide
the sponsors	like	of my open
happy,	beacons,	house poem,
an honesty	like	my open
that doesn't	landing	cut mine,
leave its	lights,	my open
delights on,	down	cut mind.
(a lover	through	But)

(don't think	but	the future,)
that I too	it is	on Friday,
haven't	one of	I may think
failed	those	I have
in the	concepts	touched
technique	that work	God's
of death.	better in	heaven
I am not	the telling,	with this
down to	are made	work,
earth	of gold,	but they
enough.	made in	will
I die	Elysium,	stone me
too easily.	an illusion	and I will
I keep talking	of the	fall back
to the sky	highest order.	to earth.
on my	Our mortality	Will this
portable	and our	be part
telephone.	immortality	of the
One tries	are not	success
for	a matching set.	or the
(perfection,	In	failure?)

(All I know
is that
in several
hours
it will
be Friday
and I will
be gone.
In several
minutes
it will
be the end
of the
millennium
and my time
will be up.
In just
a few
breaths
I will
(have said
my speech
and be
out of
paper,
out of
words,
out of
this
century,
flailing
helplessly
into
the next
thousand
years,
somebody
else's
thousand
years.
What an
illusion
to think)
we even
fall
in a
single
direction.
As if
dying
were like
sending
yourself
through
the mail.
Parcel post.
Front,
side,
back.
Who can
stress
enough
the)

(irrelevance
of direction?
Side,
back,
front.
In the
labyrinth
all the
pathways
are clear.
On the
human highway
the road map
is a blur.
There are
no structures
to the
games of
reality.
We structure
(our illusions
with illusions.
Very convenient,
we only need
a single string
to tie up
the package.
And I did
so much
want to tie
the most
beautiful
of bows.
I was born
on a
Thursday.
Friday is
the deadline
for my
dexterities.
I only have
Thursday's
twenty-four)
hours
to tie
or untie
my knots.
Friday
is the
last day
of my week.
Friday
is the
last day
of my
universe.
By Friday
I will have
run out of
whatever
medium
you are
receiving)

(me in.	join me.	with the)
By Friday	Then	future.
Thursday's	you can	You're not
fictions	pay with	going to
are well	your life.	come away
and truly	Expensive	from the
due.	poetry,	search
By Friday	to be	for meaning
my life	sure,	with some
is due.	but	sanitised
I'll leave	what else	peace of
the words	do you have?	paper,
like flowers	What	a memorialised
on my grave.	other currency	speech,
You'll have	could you	a mini-series
your own	pay in?	of thoughts,
twenty-four	It's got	an interactive
hours	to be	computer menu
to read	eternal tender.	of debating
them	Try to	points,
(before you	make friends	the)

(top ten	Everybody	universe.)
commandments	has to	Different
of the	go to	destinies
human	death school.	at different
condition.	Except me.	fingertips.
At best	I have	A moment of
you'll get	already learnt.	great clarity
a crumpled map	Either that,	followed by
to buried	or I am	a moment
treasure,	deluding	of great
a knotted up	myself	confusion.
safety net	and have	Different
at the end	too much	kinds
of the rainbow.	to learn	of texts
You can't	to start now.	with
teach death.	Most of us	different
But everyone	creep	kinds
has to	like insects	of appointments.
go through	under	I wish
the banality	the doormat	I had
(of learning it.	of the	the)

(longest	all I've	disappear to.)
hair	been doing	And why?
in the	is trying	And what
world,	to sell	happens?
so that	you something,	And disappearing
I could	a good	again.
plait it	old story,	And why
into the	a classy yarn,	the record?
universe,	a nervous	Well, that's
wind	breakdown	partly it,
it up	with literary	but here's
and tie	pretensions?	the secret.
myself	Actually,	Shakespeare
to this	I want	left us
life.	to give you	a message:
Are we	something.	we are
ready to	A record	like Romeo,
close up	of where	we shouldn't
this deal?	I, you,	commit
Or do you	he, she,	suicide,
(still think	we or they	Juliet's)

(not dead.	would be.	forgetting)
Remember	You're not	your
I told you	even	past lives,
I'd come	supposed	to start
home to die?	to know	again.
Well, it	you're	But this
wasn't	travelling.	last time
quite as	You're not	my reread
simple	even	was beginning
as that.	supposed	to wear
It wasn't	to know	a little thin.
as if	you exist.	My soul
I got	They want you	had been
to choose	to lose	recycled
where	your mind.	so many
I'd be	Literally.	times
coming in	To become	I could
or when	someone else,	hardly
or what	arrive	see it,
my new	oblivious,	but I
(identity	completely	started)

(to get	or maybe	am going)
wind of it	they	to be
- I could	wanted me	reincarnated
feel myself	to be	several more
wafting away,	awake.	times,
wafting	Why?	each
towards the	I don't	providing
exit bay	know.	a different
doors.	But I	test,
Maybe they'd	woke up	a particular
given me	on my way	problem,
that	out	a new step
anesthetic	those doors	to be taken
so many	and got	and solved.
times now	a chance	I asked
they'd	to see	myself,
become	the file	what
careless	at the bottom	was this,
and hadn't	of my bed.	the twelve step
administered	I found out	method
(enough,	that I	for recovering)

(poets?	for example,	I haven't)
I could have	it pays off	really
told them	big when	wanted
not to bother.	your enemies	to sell
Once a poet,	die laughing	you
always a poet,	at one	anything.
you have	of your	I just
to be	masterpieces.	wanted to
forever	But before	strike up
on your guard.	you start	an acquaintance.
But with	laughing,	To make
vigilance	I want	friends,
and the support	to say	even,
of friends	that I'm	so that
you can keep	sorry	I could
your problems	to have	get
at bay.	been	all
Anyway,	deceiving	of this
poetry	you	out
does have	all this	and down
(its good sides,	time.	somewhere,)

(somehow -
these
words
and
observations,
my story
and
my fictions.
I wish
I'd thought
to ask
you to
write
some of it
down
for me,
I could
still repeat
key bits,
if you'd
(like to take

some notes,
or memorise
parts of it.
At least,
please, take
these pages,
twenty-four
poems
which
I call
*The
Air Dolphin
Brigade,*
and bury them
with me,
so that I
can have
a chance
at picking
them up
again
next time)
around.
But remember,
my poems
must be
buried
with me,
buried
not
cremated,
that way
I can
dig
them up
and keep
writing
in the
next life.
A new
twist on
the grave-)

(robber story,
the pick-
pocket of
eternal life.
I wake up
from time
to time
and find
myself alive
- am I
dreaming? -
the dream
of time
that
wakes up
from time
to time.
In this
life,
am I
(dead yet?

Not dead
yet?
Well,
I'd better
be quick
about it.
It's almost
the end
of the day.
And I did
so much
want to
give you
something
while I
was here.
I wanted
to add to
your life
in some way.
Otherwise,
what would)
any of it
be for,
all this
art stuff?
If it
didn't
add up
to something
at any
given moment,
what would be
the point of
leapfrogging
with it
in your
backpack
across
the
generations?
I hope)

(I have made of the poems moment)
some contribution as a heart - tomorrow,
to your transplant. Friday,
waking dreams. And the heart it could be
And that now can be in another
you will want harvested year,
to take at any time. in another
some part In this race decade,
in seeing there are in another
that my no clear millennium -
imaginings markers I didn't
are for when get that
picked up the runners close a
and passed on. begin look
I want you or at at my file.
to play what point It could be
a part the baton any time
in my will be in time
reincarnation. passed. where
Think of It could be people are
(the burial at any and souls)

(are required. of you. of my)
So there Very soon, mistakes.
it is. I will be It's such
It's a looking for a messy
relief a cost-efficient business,
to have death, falling
told you a purpose-built on your pen
my plans. death. and
I am glad As for how what not.
to have I'll die, A Rorschach
told you it is of blood
the truth, my belief and ink.
Thursday's that I And then
truth, have tried, who
hidden amid over the would bury
her fictions. centuries, the pages?
And now not to Have I
I have make knocked on
one more suicide the right
thing part of door?
(to ask the repertoire Did I tell)

(my story
to the
right
person?
Perhaps
as Brutus,
when he
and Cassius
had been
defeated
on the
field
of Philippi
by Mark Anthony
and Octavius,
was aided
by Strato,
so you
might be
of some
assistance
to me?)

FRIDAY'S REWARD

FRIDAY'S brain splits.

FRIDAY'S RIGHT BRAIN:

Jesus, I hate reality.

FRIDAY'S LEFT BRAIN:

I thought you were
going to say
you hate talking.

You've been at it
long enough.

FRB: This is no time
for jokes.

I don't think anybody
has any idea
what it's like

to be human any more.

FLB: Excuse me?

FRB: They've forgotten
their basics,

their 1, 2, 3s,

their A, B, Cs.

They've forgotten

their alphabet of selves.

FLB: Translation please?

FRB: They can no longer read
the language of themselves.

People have forgotten
how to spell themselves.

FLB: What's so important
that they are

trying to spell?

FRB: You'd say anything
to shut me up.

You're always doing that,
you and your damn
left side of the damn brain.

Don't you have any regard
for basic human values?

FLB: They're not exactly
our emergency.

You spend too much
of our energy

on this restoration
of optimism thing.

I hope I don't have to

remind you again

that it's my job

as the left side

of our brain

to make these kinds

of determinations.

It may be your job

as the right side

to be all touchy-feely,

but it's my job

to think

and to make

practical decisions.

And if you'll

remember that,

we'll get along

just fine.

FRB: Well, if you're

going to be

small-minded

about it,

I guess that's

the purview

of your side

of the brain,

or should I say

the front office

of our brain.

I don't know why

it's left to

my side

to make all

the moral decisions.

Don't you realise

that we are part of

a larger social system?

We, each of us,

think of ourselves

as so independent,

and yet we are

interconnected

by a great web

of supply and

disposal lines

of information,

electricity,

transport,

consumer goods,

food and garbage.

FLB: Which has got what

exactly to do with

the price of fish?

FRB: That poor girl, Thursday..

FLB: Thursday? You're

not going to start

in on about Thursday,

are you? She was

even worse than you.

FRB: Meaning?

FLB: As I recall

she had a problem

with her illusions.

FRB: Which was?

FLB: She believed them.

FRB: Very clever. We

can't get away

from her, we are

connected to her.

Thursday leads to

Friday. We are

connected to her,

just as much

as if there were

a great river

of disease that

connected us all,

a supply system

in the blood,

a supply system

of death,

the River Styx

in the blood.

FLB: What? Have we been

sharing needles?

Are we that stupid?

FRB: You take everything

so literally.

"The act of prayer,

the act of communion,

in a godless world

is to recognise

the god in each other."

FLB: Excuse me?

FRB: "Hope comes

in the form

of other people."

I read that

somewhere,

in a story,

a kind of parable,

about a man

who used

to have hope

and had

given it up.

Where is it?

Let me see.

(Friday takes a book

down from the shelf,

looks through it.)

Ok, here we go.

Listen to this.

(He reads.)

"And then it happened

that Joshua,

who was a good man,

was in despair,

he was old and dying,

he saw his life's work

spinning slowly

to a halt

in front of him.

He had no more

strength to carry it

on. And then,

at the last minute,

as his eyes

were closing,

he saw somebody

do a good thing.
He pulled himself
to sitting. Suddenly,
all around him,
people were picking up
the tasks where he had
left off. Joshua
couldn't believe it.
Tears streamed
down his cheeks.
Other people were
doing good things.
And the old man felt
that there was hope
- was God - and
it was beyond him.
He cried out,
"Thank God,
it is beyond me,
it will go on
even when I die."
And so he died,
not with a
last minute conversion
to some religion,
but with hope
for the human race,
faith, where he had
none, not in a god,
but in other people,
in other people
whom he had seen
to be so conniving
and selfish and
thoughtless and
destructive
- the old man died
with faith in the good
in them, in the god
in them." And this
is my parable.
FLB: What book is that?

FRB: That's irrelevant.
Why do you always
ask me questions
like that? Don't you
see? Isn't that just
what happened here?
Didn't we just meet
a woman who used
to have high hopes
but had given them up?
Then, just at the end,
when things seemed
desperate, another
person did something.
We did something.
Another person did
a good thing. We did
a good thing. And she
felt that there
was hope - was God,
or whatever you
want to call it -
and it was perhaps
even beyond her,
would go on even
if she died. Hope
for the human race.
FLB: Christ, you're a
sentimentalist.
How did I get
hooked up with
such a sentimentalist?
You should stop
reading books
like that. Anyway,
I don't know what
you are talking about.
What did we
do for her?
She was some
kind of door-to-door
poetry salesperson.

We sent her
on her way.
FRB: That's not true.
We listened to her.
We gave her a home
for her story.
FLB: Maybe you
listened. I didn't.
And we certainly
didn't buy anything.
I saw to that.
FRB: Well of course not.
We couldn't guarantee
her job. We couldn't
pay her taxes. We
couldn't save her life.
We could only listen.
FLB: How very generous
of us.
FRB: You can't save anyone.
You can't grant anyone
eternal life or happiness.
We've all got it
coming. We are all
fighting a rearguard
action against reality.
And we all lose
in the end. The
when is relative -
this week, next week,
next decade.
FLB: So what's your point?
FRB: My point is that
we can give
each other something,
while life lasts. Or
we can take it away.
And I feel something now.
At last. Don't spoil it
for me. You always
try to spoil it for me
when I feel something.

I feel it now.
The wonderful cloud
is around me. This
is heaven. Thank God
I have finally found
something to feel
good about.
FLB: You and your damn
feelings. What
are you raving on
about this time?
FRB: The ceremony of self-
healing. We must all
partake in the healing
of others. Maybe the
most worthwhile thing
you can do in your
entire life is to be
kind to another person.
To someone in need.
To listen to them.
To help them through.
Or even just to
help them have
a wonderful moment
of self-trust, self-
confidence, belief
in their past, present
and future. Perhaps
there comes a time
when you care more
for the welfare of
others than yourself.
When you realise
that you can never make
the world safe enough
for yourself alone.
That you can never be
so secure, so strong,
so famous, so successful,
so lucky, or whatever
it is you are chasing,

that you are impenetrable.
When you come to see
that we are all,
each of us, part of
a vast interconnected web,
a grid, a quilt, a patchwork,
and that our attention
must be turned outward.
FLB: You're crazy. You are
absolutely bananas. Let's
go for a walk outside.
You need some fresh air.
*(He walks to the door,
opens it and goes outside.)*
FRB: Alright, alright. Don't
walk too fast. Don't
rush away. I don't know
how many moments like
this I have left. When
the rain of heaven
descends upon me like
a warm golden shower.
Everything is in slow
and full motion. Was
the womb like this?
Stop a minute. I want
to try and remember.
FLB: Keep moving. That's not
the kind of thing
you can remember.
FRB: Maybe it's not
the kind of thing
you can remember.
But alright, I won't
argue. I'll trust
you. Just this once.
You can guide me
like a lost lamb,
with tender sharp teeth
and a stick.
We are off again
at a brisk trot.

Like horses.
Like golden horses.
Like silver horses.
Like bronze horses.
Like clay horses.
Don't let stop
the images in my mind.
Their flow through.
Their intangible
opening into
each other
like a series of
gods. Of men. Like
generations. Bless
you for your patience.
Let me ride awhile.
You are my blackburst,
you keep me walking,
talking, thinking.
Floating on these legs.
I dedicate this to you.
I dedicate this to each
other, to your half and
my half, to your side
and my side of our brain.
Is this the holy trance
of love? Is this
the holy truce of love?
Don't let me wake
to hunger, tiredness,
distractions, fear.
I am watching danger
like a movie. The whole
world is my movie.
Don't let knives
and signs and calls
pierce through my screen.
I don't want to wake up
yet. Perhaps I don't
ever have to wake up.
Perhaps I can join
the dancing deaths.

Recreate again the
words upon words, the
century of images, the
cemetery of images,
the democratic ashes.
Why is the end so
inevitable? The sun
sets all too quickly.
I'll find out the answer
in sleep. But I don't
expect any surprises.
This is a deep sleep
and still descending.
A deep, deep sleep.
Birth and death and
all life are contained
in this sleep, like
one great god's sleep.
An Indian god whose
turning in sleep
is the world turning.
He stands up, a thin
old drunk who seems
to be sleeping, and
I give him some change.
He could be me. Is he
the god? He stands up
and the world changes.
He says...
INDIAN GOD:
I am a time traveller
and I am writing
the constitution of time.
You are in reality
stadium here.
Reality colosseum.
Don't carry my guilt
around with you.
I don't want your
pigeons and I don't
want your holes.
I'm not that interested

in changing the world.
FRB: I don't know what to say.
It's my big chance to
ask the big questions
of a little god. Is
Paradise sold? Is art
the rear projection
of God's soul? Is
this the end of the
philosophical world?
I finally come up
with a puerile question,
"Is the greatest privacy
in sleep, the privacy
of dreams?"
INDIAN GOD:
No, the greatest privacy
is in death.
FRB: ...he replies.
INDIAN GOD:
You should pay your
respects to the dead,
because one day you'll
be one of them. We
all come down from
the tower.
FRB: He gives me these
medications in sleep,
these meditations
in sleep.
INDIAN GOD:
Good night, sweet sleep.
Sleepers all.
FRB: A nudge in the direction
of immortality. A cubbyhole
in the clouds. Runway
signals for backed up souls.
Landing lights for the dead.
Moving appreciations around
the world. Where are they
going? Where can they go,
after death?

INDIAN GOD:
Efficiency is the best
of forgetfulness.
FRB: ...he assures me.
"Where are you going?"
I ask. He smiles.
INDIAN GOD:
Towards the maybe.
FRB: "What are you," I ask,
"a well-kept secret?"
INDIAN GOD:
I am a lighthouse
that went to sleep.
FRB: He is dancing now.
Using arms
not as apologies.
A wild and unlikely snow.
"What's that?" I ask.
INDIAN GOD:
It's my new exercise,
called death.
FRB: "Did you see my angel?"
I cry out.
INDIAN GOD:
Human beings being human.
FRB: ...he calls back...
INDIAN GOD:
I thought she swayed
like a field of wheat.
So I cut her down.
Of course, it's hard
to know what I honestly
think. Honesty doesn't
really come into it
any more. She dies,
she passes, she stops,
she ends. She used
to be beautiful, which is
an ugly thing to say..
FLB (*interrupting*):
Celebrating the need

to hallucinate again,
are we?
FRB: Oh, Jesus, I'd forgotten
all about you.
Leave me alone.
FLB: I can't, you're a
danger to yourself.
You need supervision.
FRB: Go away.
FLB: But you asked me
to look out for you.
FRB: I just wanted to go
into my own world.
FLB: Your own world
is poorly constructed,
if it were a building
I'd have it condemned.
FRB: You needn't worry,
my imagination isn't
part of your precious
structure, it's just
a breeze, passing
through the house.
FLB: Your imagination isn't
a breeze, it's a disease,
like the plague.
FRB: I hate you
almost as much
as I hate the world.
FLB: Would you be willing
to put that in writing?
FRB: I thought you
were my friend.
I was trying
to feel something.
You didn't have to
bring me down
just yet.
FLB: Oh yes I did.
I am your friend,
remember?
FRB: Life is short. Don't

fuck with me. I don't
want to be bored any more.
FLB: You've got to learn to
stop speaking in tongues.
FRB: Why?
FLB: Because it irritates me.
You speak in too many
voices, like an orchestra.
FRB: What's wrong with that?
FLB: People don't like it.
FRB: So what?
FLB: I don't like it.
FRB: Oh boy, playing hardball,
are we?
FLB: You're about to find
out how hard.
FRB: Look, I can't help it
that my side of the mind
sees connections between
things that aren't there,
or that could be there.
Maybe it creates connections,
did you ever think of that?
FLB: I keep telling you,
you need a structure
to hang your ideas on
or they'll hang themselves.
FRB: What about that poor girl,
Thursday, what was the point
of her having a structure
to hang things on?
FLB: I didn't see much
of a structure there,
and I don't see
much of a structure here.
This is the last warning,
you've got to stop
speaking in tongues.
FRB: I'd rather be creative
than be right.
FLB: You can't just
think of yourself.

This isn't a novel,
it's a nation.
When you're trying
to go to sleep,
nothing is at
the right angle.
When you have to
wake up, every angle
is an interesting one
you want further time
to explore.
FRB: Translation please?
FLB: Ha! I caught you out.
FRB: You caught me nowhere.
FLB: I caught you
at your own game.
FRB: I thought you wanted
to stop playing games.
FLB: But the dictionary is
not in the dictionary.
The words were not
in the head.
I caught...
FRB: "She dies, she passes,
she stops, she ends.
She used to be beautiful,
which is an ugly
thing to say..."
You shouldn't finish
other people's sentences.
I know you think you can.
You think, he doesn't finish
his sentences. Why would
he? Why would he bother?
Nobody else does. Everybody
stops after the beginnings
of sentences. But you don't
understand that my thoughts
beg their own questions.
Damn panhandlers.
FLB: What are you talking about?
FRB: All I can hope for is

that tomorrow will be
a more level-headed day.
FLB: Not if you're around
it won't be.
FRB: Do you think new
dreamers replace old ones?
Sleep falls all
over me. Sleep falls
all over me like
the seasons. Sleep
falls its reasons all
over me. Sleep lets fall
its reasonableness all
over me. Sleep wakes me up.
Sleep wakes me up and
tells me to stop talking
about it, I am exposing
its weak profile. Sleep
wakes me up and tells me
to shut the fuck up,
I am a pain in the ass.
Sleep is a friend of mine,
and hell, everybody
needs a friend. Sleep
is an epilogue. Sleep
is an epilogue in which
all of the events of the
day hide or pretend to be
resolved. Sleep is like
an epilogue, by which I
mean it is not really like
an epilogue at all. I stay
awake talking about sleep
but I am no expert at
talking or at sleeping.
I've already spoken
enough about sleep
to send anyone to sleep,
but I can't seem to do
myself the favour. The
reason I talk so much
about sleep is that

I only ever get to
do one or the other..
FLB: Stop it. You're having
a nervous breakdown.
You're too sensitive.
You need a rest.
Let's get home.
FRB: All I have is my sensitivity.
There's nothing concrete about
my way of thinking, you know.
Don't you realize? Haven't
you guessed? I have stopped
speaking in tongues. Just now.
FLB: What?
FRB: Things happen faster than
you think. The visitation
of Thursday's fictions.
Thursday disappearing into
Friday. Friday's reward.
I played it back for you,
one thing after another.
But it passed you by - that
vision you appreciated so
much, my dream. And you
thought I was hallucinating!
And I thought I was in heaven!
Don't you get it? That god
in my sleep, that charming
little god, was me. That
angel in my sleep, that
delightful little angel,
was Thursday. It's a hideous
ditty. Do you know it?
Sing along with me.
When God murders his angels
they return to life as poetry.
FLB: Good God!
FRB: I don't know about that.
But you're right. It is
a little far-fetched, isn't it?
To tell you the truth,
I'm lying through my teeth.

All that crap about gods
and angels! There's more to
it than that. And don't act
so innocent and surprised. We
are in this thing together.
I might be the part that
forgets, but you're the part
that doesn't want to remember.
And we are both running out
of lines. Out of lies.
Out of disembodied voices.
Out of projections and
sublimations. Get us inside.
These words must come to an end.
It was a language thing, you
understand that. And now
the text is bleeding. Life
is complicating life, is what
it is. God damn it! Internal
bleeding. Tomorrow will not
be a more level-headed day.
We didn't ask for much, just
the clues to our being. But
we have hidden too long
behind our imaginings, hanging
from the mythology of the sky.
Tryouts for fallen angels. What
a joke! Falling was the easy part.
You always ask me why I am so
interested in God? Because I miss
the old bugger. God is the myth
of our best selves. No more talk.
It will get us into trouble.
The mind is clearer without talk.
I am getting rid of my images,
I am getting rid of my imagination.
Very soon I won't speak any more.
I won't leave any more of me
than I have already wept.
Then I can dry up like a puddle.
FLB: Have you gone insane?
FRB: I have gone totally

fucking sane.
FLB: Who are you talking to?
(*He goes inside.*)
FRB: Myself. Myself. Ourselves.
You don't die from dreaming,
you once told me. You don't
die from destiny, either,
I told you and I was right.
I always felt that there was
somebody watching me over
my fucking shoulder. Making
sure I did the right thing,
turned in the right direction,
followed the right path. But
when I turned around there
was no one there, no one
there who gave a good God damn.
And when I did the wrong thing..
(*Pause.*)
Nothing. We *are* still.
We are still here. Still alive.
Is that the significant surprise?
It goes on. We have survived.
All of it.
FLB: What are you trying to tell me?
FRB: You're such a fool, you
believe yourself every time,
you believed me every time.
Of course, I believed me, too.
Living in our imagination.
Well, at least that was living,
wasn't it? Stick 'em up!
Your lunacy or your mind!
And you always terrified
of sleep, terrified of being
murdered in your sleep. And
that is why I dream. It's
my job to dream. They can't
get us when I dream. But
I am at the end of my tether
of accountability. I cannot
bear it any longer, one reality

is breaking through the other.
There are cracks in the
floorboards of my brain.
Like one being inside another,
bursting through the skin
in a cheap horror flick.
The schizophrenic takes
apart his personality
and puts it back
together in new ways.
He hears the sound of
writing in his head,
pen scratching paper
- writing, crossing out,
writing again. He is
sure that someone is
writing a novel in his
head. He dies with his
head inside a
photocopy machine.
She wasn't the nicest
person, but that's no
excuse. She didn't
believe in mankind,
or womankind either,
for that matter, and
I don't blame her for it.
Thanks to a friendly
person, she no longer
exists, only these words
about her. I used to say,
I can only say things
I do not know that I mean.
Now I understand what
I mean. Now I have
deciphered what I mean.
And I can no longer
delude myself or anyone
else. This is my life.
Will the real me please
stand up? Will the real
Friday please stand up?
I am afraid. I have

been afraid for what
seems like days. I
didn't know why. You
can get used to anything,
everything, you once told
me. You were laughing.
But laughter is not in
this dictionary. It can't
be blamed on a god. I
killed her. I raped her.
Or maybe we just made love
and then I somehow replaced
her. Or maybe she killed
herself. And I helped.
I don't exactly remember.
I am the nightmare from
which I am trying to awake.
I am the nightmare from
which tomorrow will awake.
Tomorrow will awake by
calling me a nightmare.
There are no words for
such knowledge, only
silence. I am that man.
We are that man. The
salesperson is not an
angel and the homeowner
is not a god. We killed
Thursday. Friday killed
Thursday. And Saturday
awaits our reward.
Saturday is our reward.
(Pause.)
FLB: Don't ask me why, but
this is one of the
hardest decisions
I've had to make.
It's like some kind
of religious conversion.
FRB: It's a project that
has been waiting for us
for some time now.
FLB: I cannot keep my mind

on what is in front of me,
it is drifting, shifting.
Have you noticed how light
reflects on things,
meditating on them,
thinking about them,
pondering them?
FRB: They are a bit
hard to read
from a distance,
but, then again,
so is life.
FLB: Is there nothing
but this artificial calm?
FRB: I believe the universe
has a deeper silence,
a purer calm.
FLB: It's unbelievably late
in the century.
FRB: I have heard it said
that killing someone
is sometimes a form
of environmentalism.
FLB: Oh yes, save the planet
and all that.
FRB: Let's take a holiday.
Let's take off
the rest of our life.
FLB: Alright, I'm ready,
even if the rest of
the world isn't!
Turn Friday into Saturday
so that Saturday can watch
its demise in Sunday.
Will the old man die
with tears in his eyes?
Leap to it, boy, leap or die!
FRB: Alright, I'm ready,
even if I'm not.
*(Friday shoots himself
with a semiautomatic weapon.
Gunfire continues for a moment,
then fades away.)*

**SATURDAY
AND THE ETERNITY CRIMINAL**

*SATURDAY, a.k.a. MRS. FAIRCHILD, is standing
above the splayed out body of the dead FRIDAY.*

Is that the rain or somebody hosing away the evidence?

Jesus, what a morning, who set this one up?

Why did I get a day like this?

How come I always get called out on a Saturday, why can't people commit suicide during the week?

Where's the damn body?

Jesus, did you spill yourself all over yourself or what?

Excuse me, did you eat the wrong thing for lunch?

Christ Almighty, what's your name, Mr. Friday, you didn't leave yourself much of face, did you?

How do you expect me to carry on a serious conversation with a man with no head?

Ok, just got a few questions here, then you can be on your way, alright?

No need to say anything right away, you go ahead and answer when you feel up to it, do you hear?

We'll skip the reading of your rights, I take it that's all the same to you unless you want some last rites?

Now, where to begin?

Just to satisfy my curiosity, before we get too serious, perhaps you can tell me, you went out into the dark, is it dark out there?

I know you must have felt bad, don't you think I know that life is a constant combination of it's over and it's just beginning?

That the problem in life is that in life life is disappointing?

But why not leave a damn note?

You could have saved me a lot of trouble, I suppose you are aware of that?

What was it, did you decide not to bother with posterity, after all, what had posterity done for you lately?

Not even a little witticism for the obituaries, like: "What do I think of the meaning of life? I think it's great."?

Or something more subdued: "Expect to find me dead, but don't expect me to be happy about it."?

But of course, you did it, didn't you?

So perhaps you *are* happy about it?

Maybe you expect to be turning - hell, doing the rumba - in your grave?

Used this uzie thing here, did you?

What for?

What were you expecting to achieve?

Was that shot some kind of a deep spiral into the self?

Some kind of journey to the centre of revelation?

Did you think you could look past death as if it were an azalea?

Is it that you had in mind, some kind of elaborate flowering destiny for yourself?

What mystery did you believe emanated like perfume from your soul?

Am I to take it that you were confident that you had some sort of compact with the powers of darkness - that they would leave you nothing but the light?

Had some assurance descended upon you that you could snap the cords of time?

Why have you set aside this manifest destiny for yourself and no one else?

When did you work out the mathematical dimensions of just clearing your neighbours' rooftops and still being hundreds of feet above their heads?

At what point did you give yourself wings instead of a parachute?

Was this before or after you confused the earth with its shadow?

Was this some kind of attempt to live fully in the moment?

By dying?

Having a blast?

It's difficult, living in the moment, don't you agree?

There are constant distractions, and perhaps you've already discovered that if you live fully in one moment you are liable to be late for the next?

Or am I on the wrong track?

Since it takes such a long time to become a human being, did you just get tired of the journey, of never arriving or always going past your stop?

Did you join the great, vast pool of those whose spirits have been broken?

Did you find the most basic facts of life the most strange?

Were you unhappy with the destination of your thoughts?

Was your whole life one long conversation with death?

Do I need to ask which of you got the last word?

Oh, excuse me, is this a private struggle between you and your destiny?

Or is anyone invited?

Look, don't come crying to me, ok?

Don't you know that all laments are the same?

The human condition's enough to upset anybody, let's just leave it at that, shall we?

The charm of life is to live a charmed life, what was yours like?

I know, I know, life's a clever idea, why didn't you think of it?

Something tells me your primary discourse was pain, why was that?

Didn't you have anything else to say?

I mean, really, why would you have expected so much from your life, after all, did you honestly expect as much for all the other members of the human race?

Funny, don't you think, what we take for granted about other people, like the fact that they die?

On the other hand, it wouldn't be fair to begrudge anyone their destiny, now would it?

An intellectual at the gates of himself, was that it?

Did you ever stop to think of all the pleasures you'd be missing?

I mean how much nookie can you get when you're dead?

What a shame, such a waste, or was that it, was there someone else involved?

Did she ask for it, or did you give it to her?

And what happened next?

Your secret will be safe with me, you know that, don't you?

I'm looking forward to this, how bad is it?

Oh, now, don't clam up, please don't, can I count on you?

What did she do to you, or was it something you did to her?

Nothing?

Nada, niente, zilch?

You're a great disappointment to me, do you know that?

Why not tell me if I'm barking up the wrong tree?

So what were you doing, trying to pop an air bubble in your brain?

Can I have that again please?

No, I still didn't quite catch what you said, was that a yes or just a maybe from heaven?

Couldn't you at least try opening your mouth?

They say the devil is in the mouth, do you believe them?

Or do you think the devil is in the words?

So that when you die there is nothing left in the mouth?

What does that say about me, since I appear to be doing all the talking here?

Ah, the jewels of speculation, what do you think you're thinking?

The jewels of the mind are in the mouth, is that it?

The fangs of the mind are the jewels in the jaw?

And the devil resides in those piercers and grinders?

I trust you won't mind if I just take this gold crown as evidence?

Could I care less what you mind?

It's not that I don't have some sympathy for your ambitions, whatever they are, but surely you don't expect I can let you get away with them?

On the other hand, something about the way your mind is splattered around this room leads me to believe you have an intriguing unconscious - colourful, abstract, abandoned - would you care to comment on that characterisation?

You'll have to come clean eventually, you know that, don't you?

I mean dead or alive, isn't memory a muscle that needs to be stretched?

Of course you do realise that while I'm happy to baby you through this, I have to be responsible for my own mind, I can hardly be responsible for the minds of others?

Do you expect me to be the gardener of the flowering of every person's self-definition?

I can be very patient, as you see, I'm just sitting here waiting for the magic to begin, what are you waiting for?

Are you aware that people like you give humanity a bad name?

Shall we try again?

Supposing I said the whole of life was connected by a vast question mark, what would be your question?

Now try and be serious, everyone's serious about something, aren't they?

Some things make life seem more meaningful than it is, those are the good things, don't you agree?

Let me see, what was it you said wasn't fair, being human?

You're not one of those corpses who is going to pop up in a minute and start complaining, are you?

No, no, I do you wrong?

Well, how many platitudes can you pass like gall stones with your recalcitrant silence?

You should appreciate small blessings, for example, aren't you glad my mind is speaking to you in English?

Very considerate of it, *n'est-ce pas?*

Don't you think you'd better pay attention?

If you'd open your mouth you could ask me to go away, have you thought of that?

Tell me to leave you be, leave you some mystery?

Want me to stop bothering you?

Desire for me to bugger off like I don't exist?

Well, ask yourself this, if I'm a projection, why are you throwing me?

Perhaps there is something you need from me, even though you're dead?

Justice?

An explanation?

Expiation?

Some form of relief?

Forgiveness?

A way onward, let's not be so crass as to say forward?

Unravelling the knot of your mind, or have you already done that?

Won't you let me read your mind, or what's left of the smears of it?

Surely there is something left of you around here for me to discourse with?

It's not that you're not dead, but don't you realise how much of you is still alive?

Tell me, what was it that made things difficult, believing in something so hard it broke you in half?

How is it possible for me, you marvel, to be so unconcerned, unperturbed, uneddied, by the waters of pain that have split you asunder?

Just remember, before you start passing judgements, I'm ok, you're not, got that?

I mean, who is reading whose brains here?

Maybe I never knew what it was like to be a human being, you're thinking?

Quite right, and you did and you're dead, so who wins?

Who's the smart one here?

Who am I really?

You're not making a pass at me, are you?

Calling me the devil would be amusing but a little melodramatic, wouldn't you agree?

And a trifle self-important perhaps?

I mean, we're talking the big guns here, you know that, don't you?

Are you that special, Mr. Friday?

Perhaps you're worth the devil's whore?

She who sucks the devil's root?

A witch?

Sorceress?

Hag?

Private secretary?

Executive personal assistant sounds better to me, unless you can come up with some more elegant appellation?

Mrs. Fairchild is the name I prefer to go by when I'm called out on these silly, little assignments, like on this - what is it - Saturday?

That's right, I have dropped into life this dreary Saturday morning because, to tell you the truth, back at the fire station our buttons have lit up, we smell blood, and I still smell it, and it smells good, doesn't it?

Well, not mine, yours, whose do you think?

Or is there really someone else?

Yes, perhaps so, I taste it in your blood, it's rather sour, did you die a bitter death?

Decide not to go for one of those gentle wafting exits?

No, no, of course not, otherwise why would the little red siren on our soul meter have started flashing?

That's right, we may have an interest in your soul, Mr. Friday, and while we're at it, that of anyone else mixed up in this sordid spectacle - now won't you come clean, won't you lay it all bare for us?

Keeping mum, are we?

Well, never fear, I may not know all the answers yet, and while I'm on earth I may have to work in time like the rest of you, but I do have a few little tricks up my sleeve, you don't doubt that I hope?

Anyway, I trust you're not forgetting that wisdom exists in time?

I always live in hope, where do you live?

You don't hope for anything much these days except hope, I hope?

Then again, hope's all very well, but I've always found it convenient returning to earth in a practical position of authority and respect, don't tell me you can't guess why?

How better to do my job of finding souls to join our club, to bathe in the hot springs of hell, than to be, down the ages, a beat cop, a special investigator, a sergeant-major, a prosecutor, a teacher, a social worker, a counsellor, a nurse, a preacher, an inquisitor - I always enjoyed that one especially - so much leeway for immediate action?

There is nothing like access to power and trust, now is there?

And if I can't find what I'm looking for in the measly paper trails and personality disorders of your little world, I may be forced to cheat a bit, to turn to some of my extraordinary skills and exotic delights, in which I hope you will be ready to find I am a connoisseur?

For I am a scuba diver of the mind, I can sink into your veins, and find the sea-flowers of your dreams, the gallonous epics of your nightmares, and on that moist night flight, the drowning nightingales in your blood will sing to me, won't they?

Shall we fill the oxygen tanks and tune up the orchestra now?

SUNDAY AT THE ABORTION STATION

MRS. FAIRCHILD turns on a radio play trapped inside a poem.

CHARACTERS

DONALD MACABOY, Radio Announcer

SUNDAY, Terrorist

MARCUS DROPLITE, Artist

LONGFELLOW UPDIKE, Critic

MARTIN FALLOFF, Writer

LOUISE SCHMIDT, Marketing Executive

NEWSCASTER ONE

NEWSCASTER TWO

NEWSCASTER THREE

FEMINIST POET

RADIO DJ

STANTON SINGLESTOP, Lawyer

REPORTER ON THE SCENE

DR. THERELING, Psychiatrist

POLICE SQUAD LEADER

SECOND POLICEMAN

DONALD MACABOY, RADIO ANNOUNCER:
(HE READS.)

“And now, as the months slip by,
there are rustles in the leaves,
and it’s spring.”

That’s just a little bit of poetry my daughter wrote for a school project and I thought I’d share it with you. It’s great what kids can do these days, isn’t it? Computers and all that high tech jazz and still find time to write poetry. Maybe all’s right with the world after all. It’s coming up to ten o’clock this beautiful Sunday morning and it’s time for the news, this is your station...

FX: STATION THEME MUSIC FOR THE NEWS. DOOR CRASHES OPEN.

SUNDAY, TERRORIST: This is the news. And the news isn’t good. All’s not right with the world. Get down on the floor.

DONALD MACABOY: Is this some kind of joke? It’s not April Fool’s Day or International Terrorist’s Mardi Gras is it?

SUNDAY: Get down. Face down.

DONALD MACABOY: Oh, I like that costume. You’re not Terry’s girlfriend are you?

SUNDAY: Right now. Move it or you’ll be laughing out of half a face.

FX: SHE KICKS HIM. HE GROANS.

DONALD MACABOY: Jesus Christ, that’s not funny. There may be a few problems between the departments around here but things haven’t got this bad. You’re not from those people about the overdue house payments are you? Oh, my God, my daughter isn’t having drug problems again is she? I’ll pay you whatever you need.

SUNDAY: You’re all the same, aren’t you, you media people? There couldn’t be a world out there that you hadn’t thought about, could there? Now shut up and stay down there on the floor or I’ll lose my sense of humour.

(TO RADIO AUDIENCE) Whoever’s listening out there: I have taken over your radio station. Don’t get the wrong idea just because I have a gun. I am a regular person just like you. I am not a political activist. But something happened this week which made me feel that I have to take a stand. That I can’t just leave the anger up to other people any more. That I can’t just sit at home listening to the radio, thinking about my own destiny.

My name is Sunday. A few days ago I was raped. I was at my job – a door-to-door salesperson. I had a perfectly normal session, displayed my product, believed that the gentleman I was speaking to was ready to make a purchase. He told me he had left his wallet and checkbook in his car. I followed him out to the garage. In the midst of an urbane conversation he suddenly spun me around, pinned me down and raped me. He fucked me against the open boot of his car. He pulled up my dress and fucked me like a dog with my face in the oily rags of his boot. Let me say up front that I did not enjoy it. I did not ask for it. Who knows how much he even enjoyed it. When I look back I think what he really wanted to fuck was his car. Maybe all he wanted from life was a cunt with an engine on it.

And now I am dead. That is correct. This man, whose name was Friday, killed me. He strangled me. I don’t even want to know what he did with my body! It is probably floating in some river somewhere, or perhaps by now has been washed out to sea. My name was Thursday. The raped girl’s name was Thursday. And she is dead. So whose voice are you hearing? You might find this hard to believe, but this is Thursday’s voice. I am Thursday reincarnated as Sunday.

DONALD MACABOY: Hard to believe! It’s preposterous! Give me back the microphone.

SUNDAY: Stay on the floor! I might be dangerous. I am pretty upset. And I don’t have much to lose - I know I’ll be dead by midnight. I wasn’t built to last. But there is something I have to deal with before I go: I have been reincarnated pregnant.

DONALD MACABOY: Oh my God!

SUNDAY: I am going to abort the child. Right now. On air. This is going to be a backyard abortion in the front yard. I’m sorry to be so tasteless, but I’ve found out recently that if you choose life on your multiple choice at birth, good taste doesn’t necessarily come with the territory.

FX: DOOR OPENS.

MARCUS DROPLITE, ARTIST: Is this Donald Macaboy’s studio?

SUNDAY: Who the hell are you?

MARCUS DROPLITE: I’m Marcus Droplite, I’m looking for Donald Macaboy. We’re doing an interview this morning.

SUNDAY: Get in here and fast.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Well, thank God I’ve found the right place. This building is a maze, it seems like hundreds of empty

corridors. Of course, I'm having a bit of trouble getting around at the moment. I was hit by a car and am still limping a bit. Don't limp, my physiotherapist says, walk through the foot. It's an amazing experience, actually, learning to walk again at my age. Of course, I wouldn't wish it on anyone, it's a ghastly business, all in all. But if you look at the positive side of the thing, I've been able to start all over again as it were. Like a baby, learning to walk. Seeing the world as a wonderful and dangerous place, everything rushing by at speeds you could never match. Wondering though, and this is a bit of a truism I'm afraid, where everyone is off to in such a hurry? And yet some things from the past have been such a saving grace - my yoga for example, so much peace in that and you don't have to go anywhere. And the old fashioned art of letter writing. Of course I've got nothing against the telephone, but there's a depth you can get to in a letter that one never seems to achieve in the rough and tumble of a conversation. Wouldn't you agree?

SUNDAY: That's enough, old man.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Excuse me? Oh, I'm sorry, I should in all fairness wait for the interview to start, shouldn't I? No one really wants to hear the mumblings of an old man, unless it's strictly necessary. And I don't blame them, we really don't know when to stop.

(HE LAUGHS AT HIS LITTLE JOKE.)

SUNDAY: You see this, old man, this is an automatic rifle.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Yes, I've often wished we had a few of those during the War. One of my friends died in a dugout because he couldn't reload fast enough or get enough of those damn bullets into the damn bodies of the damn Germans. Ghastly business, of course, stopping other people's lives. I was a medical orderly in those days, it was before I had a full degree, we spent all our time stopping up people's lives. It didn't matter much which side they were on. I suppose, at the time, leaking out lives and trying to stop the leaks all had to be done. It's sometimes a little more difficult to understand now. A dangerous game played by a bunch of kids a long time ago. They were just kids, we were all just kids. About your age, if you don't mind my saying so.

Anyway, you can't change the past. I bet those ancient Greeks at Marathon would have been very happy with a Civil War musket.

SUNDAY: Jesus Christ, didn't I just tell you to shut up? What are you, some kind of kook?

MARCUS DROPLITE: No, no, young lady, I don't spend my time collecting souvenirs of the past, if that's what you mean, nothing concrete, in any case, not ammunition and helmets and belt buckles. But memories you can't help collecting. Why, I haven't thought about the war in years, and then I see your gun, and there it all is, plain as day.

SUNDAY: You sure as hell stumbled into the war zone here.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Oh, I see, is this a special effects room?

SUNDAY: No, this is your everyday normal defects room.

And here, by the way, on the floor, is your host, Mr. Donald Macaboy.

DONALD MACABOY: Get out of here, Marcus, she's dangerous!

SUNDAY: Keep quiet you, speak when and if you're spoken to.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Why is Donald on the floor?

SUNDAY: Because he's been a bad boy.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Young lady, I realize I am from a different generation, but that is really no way to speak about, let alone treat, another human being.

SUNDAY: Be quiet or you'll be down there with him.

MARCUS DROPLITE: At my age, young lady, threats don't count for very much. In fact, contrary to what is commonly believed about old people, I enjoy new experiences. To tell you the truth, this whole situation is actually quite intriguing, except that I really must insist that poor old Donald here be allowed to sit back up like a proper human being. He's a very nice fellow, actually, we've spoken quite regularly, well, that is, every few years, when I am lucky enough to have completed enough paintings for an exhibition. And, despite my earlier, somewhat disparaging remarks about conversations, I was secretly quite looking forward to our little chat today. He always asks me the damndest questions, don't you, Don? It's a bit like playing chess. Not a totally fair analogy, of course. I'm not exactly protecting my queen when I say I don't know why I paint exactly what I paint, one must just do what one must.

In any case, Don, let me give you a hand.

SUNDAY: Don't do that. I'm warning you.

DONALD MACABOY: Be careful, Marcus, she's crazy.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Oh, nonsense, she's a perfectly nice girl, anyone can see that. She's just a little upset about something.

Here, you get up.

FX: MARCUS HELPS DONALD UP INTO A CHAIR.

MARCUS DROPLITE: And we'll all have a cup of tea from this little machine thing you've got over here.

FX: HE STARTS TO MAKE TEA.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Now how do you all like it? I take mine black myself.

SUNDAY: I don't believe this guy.

DONALD MACABOY: Milk, one sugar please. Why don't you make the same for her?

SUNDAY: Hold on, boys, I'm still the one with the gun here.

MARCUS DROPLITE: I don't believe that fact has slipped anybody's mind. You are now the proud possessor of one gun and one tea, black. Do please serve yourself milk or sugar. I believe in freedom of choice in these matters. In all matters, really, which was why Donald really did have to get up off the floor. But which is also why I would like to say, that if you choose to tell us what's the matter, I for one, would be very happy to choose to listen.

DONALD MACABOY: She was raped. She's pregnant. She wants to abort the baby right here in the studio. And as if that wasn't enough, she's got some wacky story about being a time traveller or something.

FX: PAUSE. BREATHING.

SUNDAY: It shouldn't have happened. It wasn't fair. I didn't want it.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Of course you didn't.

SUNDAY: And my child. Creating life should be like creating art. Something magical. This was nothing like art. This was monstrous.

MARCUS DROPLITE: People don't always realise that they are artists, in a way, that they are making things all the time. So they don't take care about what they make. They disfigure things that are beautiful and they build things that are ugly. Buildings, situations, lives. Legacies of pain. But, you know, there are very few rules about what is beautiful and what is ugly, and those rules there are are constantly being twisted and turned and made to mean things they aren't meant to mean. So people get confused and they make mistakes. We all make mistakes. So we have to forgive each other a little sometimes for the horrors of our mistakes.

SUNDAY: When you've been raped you can talk about

forgiveness. I'll never forgive him.

MARCUS DROPLITE: You're probably right. It's not my place to say. He probably can never be forgiven. But perhaps you will come to understand him in some way, and stop hating yourself.

SUNDAY: He forced himself inside me. He mixed his self with my self. I am contaminated by him for the rest of my life.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Take my hand.

SUNDAY: Are you planning on raping me too?

MARCUS DROPLITE: People usually trust me more than that.

SUNDAY (CRYING): I don't want your damn hand.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Take my fingers at least.

FX: THEIR CHAIRS MOVE CLOSER TOGETHER AND SHE GRASPS HIS HAND.

SUNDAY: And the baby?

MARCUS DROPLITE: I will help you abort. It's been a while since I gave up medicine for painting, but I have not stopped working with my hands.

DONALD MACABOY: Now look here, this has gone far enough. You can't do this sort of thing on my radio program. I have my listeners to think of.

MARCUS DROPLITE: You mean we have been on the air, all this time?

DONALD MACABOY: That's right, she's hijacked the live-to-air station.

MARCUS DROPLITE: So we have had our interview, after all, in the strange way things work out.

DONALD MACABOY: No, no, we were supposed to talk about art.

MARCUS DROPLITE: This young lady is more complex a work than I have ever created.

SUNDAY: But you didn't create me. I exist.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Thank God, what a relief.

FX: MRS. FAIRCHILD TURNS THE RADIO DIAL. QUICK JABS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF MUSIC, ADVERTISING, AND NEWS ARE INTERLACED WITH AND BLURRED BY STATIC. SHE SETTLES EVENTUALLY ON ANOTHER STATION, FINE TUNING IT DURING THE CRITIC'S FIRST SPEECH.

LONGFELLOW UPDIKE, CRITIC: Good morning, this is Longfellow Updike, and you're tuned to *Arts Update*. This morning we have on the line the well known playwright,

Martin Falloff, and we're discussing the unprecedented events taking place on our other station as a form of radio drama. Martin, in a play like this one, if you'd call it a play, and then again, what would you call a play today?

MARTIN FALLOFF, WRITER (ON TELEPHONE HOOKUP): I think you're taking this all a little lightly, Longfellow. As the girl herself just said, she is not a work of art. The poor girl's flesh and blood and in a very sticky situation as far as I can see.

LONGFELLOW UPDIKE: But the element of daytime soap opera surely appeals to you as a writer?

MARTIN FALLOFF (ON TELEPHONE HOOKUP): We've had this sort of discussion before, Longfellow, and I sometimes think you just ask me these kinds of questions on air in order to drive away audiences from my work.

LONGFELLOW UPDIKE: In what way?

MARTIN FALLOFF (ON TELEPHONE HOOKUP): Because it makes me out a cynical and heartless bastard more interested in ratings than feelings.

LONGFELLOW UPDIKE: Well, that's a fine speech, but my interest in this terrorist-hostage-abortion situation, which is currently, if our listeners haven't caught up with it, unfolding live on our other station, is the way life imitates art. I mean that this is hardly what one would call an entirely unconventional drama. It is, after all, completely linear, one thing follows another, a trifle melodramatic, all that to-ing and fro-ing with the machine gun, topical, nothing if not up to the minute in addressing contemporary anxieties, and brimming with a certain kind of energy, if lacking in a certain kind of taste. I'd like to bring in Louise Schmidt, a Marketing Executive with our network, who has just joined me in the studio. What's your take on this, Louise?

LOUISE SCHMIDT, MARKETING EXECUTIVE: I think the important question is will it reach its target audience and I believe the answer is that it will. And quite frankly that is of paramount importance to the continuance of our whole operation here. I, for one, am very happy that we are finally broadcasting a gutsy, true-to-life drama. One that has emotional threads our listeners will want to unravel, and not intellectual knots that they will break their fingernails trying to untangle.

MARTIN FALLOFF (ON TELEPHONE HOOKUP): Louise, I

am confident that you would like to assure our listeners that you don't mean by that that you have lost your respect for the writer, the artist, as the centre of a complex web of relationships that produces the kind of event we call drama.

LOUISE SCHMIDT: Well, Martin, the fact of the matter is I don't like having words put in my mouth, any more than I'm sure you would like someone appearing in the middle of the night and adding words into one of your scripts. It is my opinion that our listeners are probably very bored by this very kind of conversation at this very minute, and it is our duty as a government funded broadcasting network to entertain them by staying closer to the straight and narrow. There are real issues in the real world which we and they have to grapple with. There's a time for highfaluting floaty things and a time for brass tacks and it's time to get the hammer and bring things down to earth.

LONGFELLOW UPDIKE: So you don't believe that debate can be a useful form of entertainment and instruction?

LOUISE SCHMIDT: Not debate about debate. In fact, in the best interests of our audience we will now be switching to a live feed to our other station where the abortion is currently taking place.

FX: A COUPLE OF TECHNICAL BLEEPS OVER THE OBJECTIONS OF THE CRITIC AND WRITER.

SUNDAY: Oh! (SHE IS MOANING SOFTLY.)

DONALD MACABOY: Is she in pain?

MARCUS DROPLITE: It's a very unnatural business, but then again, so is radio.

FX: MRS. FAIRCHILD MOVES THE RADIO DIAL AGAIN.

NEWSCASTER ONE: An extraordinary event is taking place in a national broadcasting network studio today, broadcasting live across the country to millions of listeners.

FX: SHE MOVES THE DIAL THROUGH THE STATIC TO ANOTHER STATION.

NEWSCASTER TWO: A woman, claiming to have been raped, is having an abortion on air today. The woman has taken the pseudonym of "Sunday"...

FX: SHE MOVES THE DIAL THROUGH THE STATIC TO ANOTHER STATION AGAIN.

NEWSCASTER THREE: Apparently she entered the radio station with a concealed weapon and...

FX: MRS. FAIRCHILD AGAIN MOVES THE DIAL THROUGH THE STATIC TO ANOTHER STATION.

FEMINIST POET: Well, I think it's a truly disgusting situation that we live in a society where an honest, decent, working woman has to resort to this kind of action in order to be heard, in order to get her case out of the backyard and the closet to the court of public opinion.

RADIO DJ: I understand that you have written a poem inspired by this event.

FEMINIST POET: That's correct. This poem is for you, Sunday, and for all women listening today.

(SHE READS.)

Chant of Silence

Being entered is a form of speech.
Not being entered is a form of speech.
Being entered is a form of silence.
Not being entered is a form of silence.
We have just begun to learn how to make sounds
That are commensurate with the thinking of our cunts.
Being entered by a cock or a finger or some other object
Is not something we have been taught to talk about.
But while we have not been granted speech,
We have been made the echo chambers for your speaking.
The inverse of speaking. We give you
A rich silence to resonate in. We must learn
To hear our own silence. We must silence
Our need to hear, to fill the silence with hearing.
We will find a way, first to reject your noise
And then later, when we feel like it,
If we feel like it, to select
Your anti-silence. To tune in that wireless,
The radio of your cock.

FX: MRS. FAIRCHILD MOVES THE RADIO DIAL.

NEWSCASTER ONE: This is a news update exclusive. The man accused by Sunday of raping her is dead, an apparent suicide. The man, named by Sunday only as "Friday", has apparently taken his own life, but police are cautioning that exactly when this event took place remains unclear.

We have a live feed to the home of Mr. Friday, where members of his family are currently being questioned by police. We may get an interview with his lawyer, Mr. Stanton Singlestop, who has been consoling and counselling the family in its hour of grief. Mr. Singlestop?

STANTON SINGLESTOP: Friday was my friend as well as my client and on his behalf I have to say that the allegations made by this woman Sunday on national radio are outrageous and despicable and to be denied completely and categorically.

REPORTER ON THE SCENE: With all due respect, Mr. Singlestop, how can you deny or confirm the actions of a dead man?

STANTON SINGLESTOP: Well, for one thing, the obvious imputation is that Friday heard these accusations on the radio and committed suicide, fearing exposure and embarrassment. In fact, Friday took his own life two days ago, well before the broadcasts began.

REPORTER ON THE SCENE: Two days ago? But that would still have allowed him to have committed the rape and murder on Thursday evening, as was alleged, wouldn't it?

STANTON SINGLESTOP: I cannot comment on that, but I do happen to know that Friday has been suffering from severe depression for some time, and this in my opinion is what led him to the desperate act of taking his own life.

REPORTER ON THE SCENE: So you believe it is unlikely that Friday would have raped Sunday, or "Thursday" as she says she was then called, against the boot of his car, and then strangled her and dumped her body into the river?

STANTON SINGLESTOP: I find it hard to believe we are even standing here discussing such a possibility. My client was a peaceable, law-abiding man. I am certain in my heart that he would be entirely incapable of the heinous acts you are describing. And, as a matter of fact, and it is essential that we get the facts straight, his car has been in the repair shop at the garage all week with a blown gasket. So it would have been quite impossible for him to have raped her or taken her anywhere in his car.

REPORTER ON THE SCENE: So you are saying that Sunday made the whole thing up? What would be her motivation?

STANTON SINGLESTOP: I have no idea. Perhaps she is suffering from a delusion of the mind. Perhaps it is some kind

of desperate need for attention or a place in the world that has led this young lady to these terrible extremes.

REPORTER ON THE SCENE: Do you believe, in fact, that she was raped at all?

STANTON SINGLESTOP: I have no idea if in fact she was raped or not, or by whom. Certainly her whole story about reincarnation would lead one to question her sanity. My guess is that the whole thing is a fabrication with a specific purpose, for example a publicity stunt. Perhaps she wants the notoriety so that she can write a best-selling book about her experiences.

REPORTER ON THE SCENE: If the whole thing is a fabrication, doesn't that mean that the abortion operation currently taking place in the radio studio could be extremely dangerous to her health?

STANTON SINGLESTOP: Well, I'm not a doctor or anything, but I would have thought so, yes.

REPORTER ON THE SCENE: Thank you for taking the time to talk to us, Mr. Singlestop, on what must be a very difficult day for you and the family of your client. Would it be fair to say that you have given us such an extended statement here today because of the extraordinary publicity surrounding this case?

STANTON SINGLESTOP: I'm afraid I don't follow you.

REPORTER ON THE SCENE: I mean that you understand the importance of avoiding damnation in the court of public opinion at this early date...

STANTON SINGLESTOP: Young man, this isn't some kind of a movie of the week we are discussing here. These are real people with real lives and real tragedies. I have told you the truth as I understand it. The unfortunate passing of Friday has absolutely no connection with the wild allegations of a young woman who is obviously deeply mentally agitated and is currently undertaking a terrorist action which is endangering the lives not only of herself, but several other people. I must now return to my clients. No further questions at this time.

FX: MRS. FAIRCHILD MOVES THE DIAL AGAIN TO ANOTHER STATION.

RADIO DJ: So tell us, Dr. Thereling, in your expert opinion, which of these two people is telling the truth and why have they both come forward so publicly with their stories?

DR. THERELING, PSYCHIATRIST: In this kind of situation both parties have been struck to the very heart by the conflict and have no choice, psychologically, but to come out fighting.

As to which is telling the truth, without a great deal of further physical evidence and time for psychiatric examination away from the press of the microphones, it would be impossible to say. I should add, however, that this case is particularly clouded by the fact that one of the protagonists is now dead and the other believes she is some kind of reincarnation of her former self. On balance, my guess would be that there is some truth and some falsehood in what both Sunday and, on Friday's behalf, Stanton Singlestop are claiming.

RADIO DJ: You don't think it's possible that one of them is telling the absolute truth and the other a complete lie?

DR. THERELING: It is possible, yes, but in my experience this would be unlikely. I've seen more cases of blurred truths than the kind of projections of good and evil popularised by Hollywood films.

RADIO DJ: Is there any scientific or forensic evidence that could be called upon to prove the case either way? For example, if an autopsy of Friday's body showed that he was infertile and incapable of fathering a child, would all credibility then disappear from Sunday's allegations?

DR. THERELING: Not necessarily. This is precisely what I mean. To begin with, whether Friday was fertile or not would have no bearing on whether he raped her or not. And further, it is quite conceivable, biologically speaking, that a fertile Friday did rape her and she simply did not have an egg in the appropriate place for fertilisation at that moment. So it would be very difficult to make fertility the deciding factor. A myriad of half-truths are possible. But you don't need a specialist in psychiatry to tell you that, surely?

RADIO DJ: Well, Dr. Thereling, can you give us a psychiatrist's special insight into how a perfectly normal person, as she calls herself, comes to think they've been murdered?

DR. THERELING: Very well. Following on from where we have begun, let us suppose, for a moment, that this fellow Friday did rape her. Whether she becomes pregnant or not, she is probably left feeling soiled and unclean. In her mind, we may surmise, she makes the metaphorical association with disease and so speaks of contamination. In fact, she goes so far as to say she feels contaminated for the rest of her life, which I take to mean that the rape has given a death sentence to her sense of self. This conviction is taken to its logical extension when she believes she has been murdered. But then you'll

notice she is dropped in the river - which I would suggest represents a psychic need to be made clean. And finally washed out to sea - even better, a return to the universal innocence of the womb.

RADIO DJ: Does this also explain her bizarre story of reincarnation?

DR. THERELING: I believe so. After the trauma she feels like she has "died". The river of cleansing is also the river of death. Unfortunately, when she wakes up the next day and the next day after that - when she should be "reborn", as it were, to a new life - she finds all of her problems are still with her. So she fantasises that she is someone else, no longer the door-to-door salesperson, Thursday, the victim caught cruelly unawares, but the tough, smart, terrorist, Sunday. But the pain remains. Where to put it? I would suggest that the contamination of Thursday, the emotional discomfort not washed clean by the river of death, becomes transferred into a new physical image: the unwanted foetus of Sunday.

RADIO DJ: Are you saying that it is impossible that she could be pregnant?

DR. THERELING: Not at all. As I've already indicated, it is biologically equally possible that she could be pregnant or not pregnant if he did indeed rape her. But following on my theory: the image of the baby and the need for an abortion could be related to a deep sense of outrage and pain about the rape and possibly guilt that she may in some way have encouraged it. You'll notice that she said she was strangled. Having her windpipe blocked meant she was unable to speak and therefore could no longer be held responsible for not protesting. This may indicate an uncomfortably nagging sense either that she said something to encourage the rape or that she did not say enough to discourage it. In either case, and this is very common among people who have suffered many different kinds of abuse, she is driven by the need to cut out, in some physical way, the manifestation of that feeling. This would explain why she fantasises that on Thursday she is strangled and is therefore in her mind justly punished for her speech or lack of it, and on Sunday she feels compelled to abort the child, symbol of her continuing sense of contamination, anger, pain and guilt, whether or not it in fact physically exists.

RADIO DJ: Is this the theory you currently subscribe to then?

DR. THERELING.: No, no, of course not. As I said, we have,

none of us, access to the facts of this particular case. This is just one potential model of analysis. If anything, you are probably getting my psychic need to make sense of the situation, certainly in terms of my professional experience, but also in some human way: to share out the blame and hope things are not as bad as they seem.

RADIO DJ: So, in fact, you think it would be better if she had been raped but did not become pregnant?

DR. THERELING: Certainly I personally hope that she was neither raped, nor is pregnant. I really don't think it is professionally proper of me to say any more until we have the chance for a thorough physical and psychological examination. And even then, the final details of this case will probably have to be decided in a court of law, not on a radio station.

RADIO DJ: Well, thank you Dr. Thereling, we may ask you to return with more expert advice as the facts unfold. I'm sure we all, whatever our profession, hope for some kind of happy ending to this tragic story. We now go to our news desk for a full update on the situation.

NEWSCASTER TWO: Good morning ladies and gentlemen, this is the news. The abortion operation that has rocked the country by going live-to-air on a hijacked radio station is now over. The doctor who performed it, the well-known painter Marcus Droplite, who retired from medical practice fifteen years ago to pursue his artistic career, says the operation has gone smoothly despite the disadvantageous conditions, and the patient is resting quietly. In the meantime, police have gathered around the radio station where the woman, the doctor and the radio announcer are holed up, and are apparently considering their next move. The woman entered the premises early this morning with an unlicensed firearm and took over the broadcasting room in a terrorist style attack. There are also some questions being raised as to why the executives at the network have allowed the station to continue broadcasting during this crisis. Questions are particularly being asked because the network ceased regular programming on its other stations and switched to a live hook up, with only occasional commentary, to the "Abortion Station" as it has come to be known. Critics have alleged that the profit motive was involved as all ears in the country have been tuned to the station.

FX: MRS. FAIRCHILD SWITCHES ACROSS THE DIAL BACK

TO THE ORIGINAL STATION WHERE THE ABORTION HAS TAKEN PLACE.

SUNDAY: Thank you, I don't know how to thank you.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Perhaps things won't be as bad as they seem.

DONALD MACABOY: One thing that's looking very bad at the moment is the police presence in the parking lot.

MARCUS DROPLITE: They wouldn't dare try anything.

FX: CRASH AT THE DOOR AS A SPECIAL FORCES POLICE SQUAD BURSTS IN.

POLICE SQUAD LEADER: Everybody freeze! Up against the wall.

DONALD MACABOY: Jesus Christ!

MARCUS DROPLITE: For God's sake don't shoot.

SECOND POLICEMAN: Where's the lady?

MARCUS DROPLITE: She's ill, she's down here on the floor.

POLICE SQUAD LEADER: Get away from her. Put down that gun, young lady.

SUNDAY (WEAKLY): I won't.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Leave her alone, you bastard.

SECOND POLICEMAN: She's lifting her weapon.

MARCUS DROPLITE: Get away from her!

FX: MARCUS DROPLITE RUNS TO PROTECT SUNDAY. AN INSTANT LATER THE SECOND POLICEMAN OPENS FIRE.

MARCUS FALLS. SUNDAY PUTS DOWN HER GUN.

SUNDAY: You've killed him! You've killed Marcus.

DONALD MACABOY: Jesus Christ!

SECOND POLICEMAN: Had to be done, boss. She was about to use the weapon.

FX: SECOND POLICEMAN PICKS UP SUNDAY'S GUN.

SECOND POLICEMAN: Suspect disarmed, Sir.

SUNDAY: You bastards. You killed an innocent man. His only crime was that he listened.

DONALD MACABOY (TO RADIO AUDIENCE): This is Donald Macaboy regaining the microphone on a sad day for our nation and our art. What a strange image Marcus Droplite painted at the last.

FX: MRS. FAIRCHILD SWITCHES OFF THE RADIO.

MONDAY, MONDAY, MONDAY AND 'THE AIR DOLPHIN BRIGADE'

*Triplets, three sisters all named MONDAY, are discussing
the body of THURSDAY
at The First Day Of The Week Funeral Home.*

MONDAY THE FIRST: Haven't you finished with this one, Monday?

MONDAY THE SECOND: I've hardly begun, Monday, and this one's a particularly interesting case.

M1: Where's Monday, Monday? She should be helping with this, this is her shift, isn't it?

M2: Last time I saw her, Monday, she was in the bathroom washing her hands.

M1: She's been in the bathroom washing her hands for the last half an hour, Monday!

M2: Well, the last body had the most interesting entrails, Monday, in fact I've put them in the fridge to read later. You never know what they may tell me about the future.

M1: I'm going to get Monday, Monday, this is quite ridiculous. *(Exits.)*

M2 *(to the body)*: So what's your name, darling? How did you die and where are you now? Don't worry, I'll find out. I love the way your eyelashes look like you're not dead.

M1 *(enters with Monday the Third)*: Right, Monday, we're here - we've got half an hour to clean this one up.

MONDAY THE THIRD: Can't we do it quicker than that, Monday?

M1: Monday, it's half an hour per body, that's the rule.

M2: I hate that rule, Monday. How am I supposed to find anything out in half an hour?

M3: Alright Mondays, I'll do the paperwork.

M1: No Monday!

M2: Monday!

M3: Monday?

M1: Monday, you have to examine the body. I'm sick of you avoiding that.

M3: Monday, it's just that you do it so much better than me.

M1: I can't help that, Monday, I take pride in my work.

M2: There's something really special about this person, Mondays, I think she deserves a closer going over.

M1: Quality time must be accounted for, Monday.

M3: I'll check to see if it's a gold, silver or bronze job, Mondays.

M2: I'm sure she deserves the best coffin we have, Mondays.

Look at her eyes, I think she's trying to tell me something.

M3: Don't look into her eyes, Monday, she might come back to

haunt us. The last time you got pally with one of those stiffs, we had a ghost clattering around in the attic for months.

M1: Monday and Monday, don't be ridiculous, the both of you. There is nothing in her eyes and there are no ghosts in the attic. Let's see what kind of service we've been paid for.

M3: This is giving me the creeps, Monday. Let's just put her in the first available coffin and get her out of here.

M2: No Monday, we can't do that, I think I knew her in a previous life. I think she was our long lost quadruplet. She even looks a bit like us, come and have a look.

M3: That's it, Monday, I'm not going anywhere near her.

M1: Hold on you two Mondays, this is a very peculiar request. They don't seem to care what kind of coffin she's in so long as it's big enough to fit in this stack of papers.

M2: What papers are they, Monday?

M3: They came with the body. They're probably just a few old deeds and share certificates, they won't be worth anything, Mondays.

M2: How do you know, Monday? Let me look at them. Maybe they're letters from her lover.

M1: You two Mondays are impossible. How can I run a business when one of you is out with the fairies and the other spends the whole day in the shower? We've wasted ten minutes doing nothing and there's a truck load of corpses outside that all have to be sanitised by the end of the day.

M3: Don't remind me, Monday.

M2: They're poems!

M1: Poems?

M3: Poems? Who would want to be buried with a bunch of old poems, Monday?

M1: Nobody, Monday, it must be a paperwork error.

M2: Let me look. Oh, they're beautiful, Mondays. They're all handwritten on different kinds of pieces of paper.

M1: That doesn't mean anything, Monday, except that the person who wrote them was disorganised. Do they have a name?

M2: A baffling and fantastical name, Mondays: *The Air Dolphin Brigade*.

M1: *The Air Dolphin Brigade?*

M3: *The Air Dolphin Brigade?*

M1: Ah, meaningless, Mondays!

M3: It might be some kind of witchcraft, Monday. This is making me very uncomfortable. I don't think we should touch things belonging to people who are dead.

M2: That's our job, Monday, and anyway it's quite clear. It's written on the order form. "The poems are to be buried with the body."

M1: Who wrote the damn things, Monday?

M2: Looks like she did, Monday.

M3: Where does it say that, Monday? You're always making things up.

M2: Her name is written on the back of the manuscript, Monday, "Thursday".

M1: "Thursday"?

M3: "Thursday"?

M2: "Thursday"!

M1: "Thursday"!

M3: "Thursday"!

M1: Thursday, Monday, isn't that the day she died?

M2: Seems to be both, Monday.

M1: Well, I don't care who wrote the poems or what day she died, there's no way they're going to fit into any of our coffins, Mondays - deluxe, premium or no frills.

M2: Well, we can't just throw them away, Monday, you've got to observe a dying person's last wish.

M3: Who's to say it was her dying wish, Mondays? This order form was filled in by somebody else called "Friday".

M2: "Friday"?

M1: "Friday"?

M3: "Friday", Mondays! Maybe he was trying to put a curse on her. To put some kind of evil eye or the evil poem on her.

M2: I'm sure these poems belong to her, Monday, I feel it in my bones. They must be buried with the body to keep them safe.

M3: Safe? For what, Monday? What is this, some kind of an Egyptian thing, having your utility bills buried with you so that you'll have plenty of heat and hot water in the afterlife?

M1: Actually, Monday, that's the best idea you've had all day, we should keep it in mind. But that rolling fridge full of bodies outside is giving me a headache. I don't care what you Mondays do, I want this corpse clean and ready for burial in fifteen minutes.

M2: What about the poems, Monday?

M1: Well, I don't know - do they have any resale value, Monday?

M2: How should I know, Monday? I'll have to read them to find out.

M3: I wouldn't read those poems if I were you, Monday, there's something very suspicious going on here. You read those poems and you'll probably never get them out of your head.

M1: You can't be haunted by poems, Monday, but I certainly get some sleepless nights thinking about The First Day Of The Week Funeral Home balance sheet.

M3: I know, Mondays, let's cremate the whole thing. That'll keep our hands clean - there won't be any of that horrible digging - and we can do it right away with just one move of the body. And look, it says here she doesn't have any relatives so we won't even have to bother with a funeral. That will save time and money, won't it, Monday?

M1: Another excellent idea, Monday, you surprise me. And in that case, we won't have to bother with a coffin, either.

M2: I'm shocked at the both of you Mondays. Have you forgotten why we got involved in this profession in the first place? It was to help people in their time of greatest distress.

M3: We got involved, Monday, because we were so poor that we had to bury our own mother in the icebox for six months. And we became very good at it.

M1: That reminds me, Mondays, we must do something about Mother in the near future.

M2: No, Mondays, I'm still trying to communicate with her!

M3: What would Mother tell us to do in this situation, Mondays?

M2: I'll go ask her, Mondays.

MRS. FAIRCHILD (*entering*): HAND OVER THOSE POEMS, MONDAY, MONDAY AND MONDAY. THEY'RE EVIDENCE IN AN ETERNITY CRIME!

M1: Who's that?

M3: How did you get in? The door was locked.

M2: Mother?

TUESDAY ON THE RACK

TUESDAY is being tortured for grave-robbery.

(My enemies have reinvented the rack
 and broken me on it.)
 (I should be flattered.
 Perhaps it is some kind of honour,
 (having a piece of medieval equipment
 rebuilt especially for you.)
 (Maybe they'll cast it in bronze
 after I'm dead)
 (and set it up
 as a monument)
 (in the central square.
 I can hear the voices now.)
 ("...witchcraft..."
 "...forbidden arts...")
 ("...she'll hex you from the grave..."
 Or,
 (from the more progressive side of town:
 "...ahead of her time.)
 (a great artist
 torn apart)
 (by darkness and suspicion..."
 "...the lights of our past)
 (and its many shadows..."
 And then there's)
 (the dreaded middle ground:
 "She was a great writer,
 (there's no question about that,
 but what was she doing)
 (digging up corpses in the graveyard?"
 I flatter myself.)
 (They probably use the rack regularly
 in this God-forsaken country.)
 (But am I going to spend
 my last few minutes)
 (of coherent thought
 dancing around myself)
 (with suppositions,
 speculations,
 (fantasies
 and cleverly constructed jokes?)
 (Let's stop
 this merry-go-round of thought.)

(I am on the rack.
 I'll be dead soon.)
 (What's the good news?
 Is the check)
 (for my next life
 in the mail?)
 (Always the joker.
 Well, I wish I could have)
 (joked my way out of this one.
 I tried to, of course,
 (but they didn't speak my language.
 I tried a few physical comedy routines,
 (too,
 don't think I didn't.)
 (Nothing too fancy,
 just the usual shtick,
 (falling on my head in the grave, etc.
 They didn't seem amused.)
 (They wanted to know
 why I was digging up a grave)
 (and I really couldn't tell them.
 It wasn't just the language thing.)
 (I just didn't think
 they were sensitive enough)
 (to cope with the whole story,
 let alone believe it.)
 (I mean, it was my own grave
 I was digging up,
 (it wasn't like
 there was an issue of theft here.)
 (I was digging up my grave,
 or rather the grave of my ancestor,
 (because I had - well, she had -
 left something there for me to pick up.)
 (Oh, no, nothing
 they would have called)
 (terribly important.
 Nothing they would have)
 (risked their lives for.
 Not gold or jewels)
 (or anything like that.
 Just some bits of paper)

(with some lines scribbled on them.
 Well, they meant something to me.)
 (Yes, enough to go through
 slow torture and death for,)
 (except that I never found them.
 They weren't there.)
 (Some other bastard
 must have dug them up.)
 (I hope he or she or it
 knew how to read.)
 (I didn't find a damn thing,
 except some)
 (lethal smelling mud
 and a few old bones.)
 (But these oafs found me,
 and, unable to make head nor tail of me,)
 (are now translating
 their penal code onto my body.)
 (Apparently in this country
 grave robbery is a capital offence.)
 (Jesus, where's their sense of humour?
 You can hardly imagine)
 (how many countries
 with diametrically opposed taboos)
 (I have passed through.
 I remember one place,)
 (digging up and serving your ancestors
 for a guest)
 (was the highest honour
 and the greatest delicacy.)
 (And another
 where you never made love)
 (with your own spouse,
 only those of the couples)
 (living one hundred square feet around you.
 Cities were divided up)
 (into thousands of these breeding squares
 and the competition was always)
 (to get a home in the right precinct -
 the least disease infected part of town.)
 (I suppose I have committed
 a thousand crimes down the centuries,)

(broken a thousand rules,
 especially if you layered)
 (all the countries and their laws
 on top of one another,)
 (and imagined I had been living
 in a state)
 (where one would hardly have been able to move
 for fear of breaking)
 (the invisible cage of some taboo.
 Wait a minute.)
 (Wait up just a goddamn minute.
 I think I'm going crazy.)
 (I must be going crazy.
 Who do I think I am talking to?)
 (I am stretched out here
 on the rack)
 (like a fried banana
 and I am going soft in the head.)
 (I am talking to myself.
 A fried banana)
 (engaged in a discourse
 with itself.)
 (And the worst part about it is that,
 even having said that,)
 (I still think
 I am talking to someone else.)
 (I have this secret delusion
 - or now not so secret -)
 (that somebody is listening.
 It's like one of those dreams)
 (where you think you've got up to pee
 and when you do finally wake up)
 (you are bursting.
 I had a dream like that once,)
 (I spent all my sleeping night
 making final corrections on a story)
 (and when I woke up
 there wasn't any story)
 (to correct.
 Is this my excuse,)
 (that I am talking to myself
 as writers sometimes do,)

(as if there was a reader,
(What kind of excuse is that?
(Here is my writer's card.
(that aren't there.
(of my imagination
(that someone is listening.
(is to believe
(whoever they are,
(I believe this is
(I believe it is
(like breathing.
(we will be breathing
(In and out
(and...
(dreaming,
(The last thing we ever expect
(The last thing we ever expect
(I have decided to believe
(what exactly?
(that my thoughts are being recorded
(hidden in the walls,

as if there were an audience?)
"I am a writer.)
It allows me to imagine things)
Included in the rights)
is the right to imagine)
And a sub-clause of that)
that they will understand,)
will care.")
not limited to writers.)
some kind of a natural delusion,)
Like believing)
for ever and ever.)
and in and out)
Dreaming,)
dreaming.)
is to wake up.)
is always the next thing.)
- let's see,)
ah yes -)
on little cameras)
or perhaps little listening devices)

(hidden in this rack.
(why do I care
(Nor:
(like hot breath in cold air,
(like an aroma,
(the mere thought of an idea?
(of my many answers
(that I can't bear
(of becoming ether.
(for those of you
(these are my hot breaths
(I let you be privy
(in the air.
(Because you are a comfort to me.
(what does one do
(of a life?
(I think we've established that already.
(Indubitably.
(I have been engaged
(but I wouldn't call it love,
(by the projections

I am not going to ask:)
if my thoughts are recorded?)
why not let them vanish)
like smoke,)
a mere scent of a thought,)
Because the first)
would be)
even the thought)
And that being the case,)
out there in the ether,)
on cold air.)
to my diary of breaths)
Because you comfort me.)
Do you know, friend or foe,)
with the last few moments)
Talk to oneself.)
Breathe.)
Make love?)
in the act of copulation,)
to be hooked into)
of a series of prison guards,)

(their sweat and semen
(running all over me,
(the inroads to my soul.
(I pray,
(with a disease
(that I will carry
(nor the pearl
(But one cannot always avoid
(the shadows,
(like a faint music
(one can never quite make out,
(The memory of past lives
(of one's mind
(in a seashell.
(I mustn't have done so well
(to end up like this.
(in this time
(can't go on much longer.
(Till Wednesday.
(Then it will be Wednesday.
(My name is Tuesday.

and a language I don't understand)
trying to find)
My blood keeps its own council.)
if they have infected me)
or left their grain of sand in me,)
neither the infection)
into my next life.)
the memories,)
the resonances,)
in one's ears)
like a memory of sea sickness.)
coating the back)
like the ocean)
The karmic chorale.)
in one of my past lives)
Well, thank God)
this torture)
Only till tomorrow.)
Only till midnight, really.)
A twenty-four hour life.)
I have no real name,)

(I borrow
(or cities or families
(I am born into.
(was Sunday.
(And since Thursday
(and Sunday on a Tuesday,
(I'd create and maintain
(and temporary tradition of it.
(But now
(are wandering boldly
(with stories to tell,
(a very noisy
(Perhaps this is
(myself,
(And I have all the time in the world to do so
(so little time
(for a thousand thoughts
(paying in their token idea,
(that has passed
(and mind to mind
(passing from ocean

the names of the days)
or sometimes even the taboos)
My last name)
And before that Thursday.)
has returned on a Sunday,)
I thought, what the hell,)
a little)
I like a bit of continuity.)
my past lives)
back into my memory)
making my mind)
and crowded bar indeed.)
who I am talking to,)
in my past incarnations.)
because I have)
and yet it takes only an instant)
to pass the toll gates,)
dropping the coin)
from hand to hand)
like drops of water)
to air)

(to plant
to earth)
(to ocean.
So even if
(I only have
five minutes)
(left to live,
five minutes)
(before the boots return
with their heavy)
(and muddy monotony,
it is an eternity)
(for my floating mind.
My thoughts turn,
(like a dancer
and leap,
(like a runner
and glide,
(through the air
of my reincarnations.)
(A thousand years ago
I had never made love)
(with an angel before.
And an acquaintance)
(of mine
was turning into an angel.)
(I can't say
that it made me sad.)
(Was there something selfish
in that?)
(All day
in the monastery of my mind.)
(Naked inside.
Melting.)
(Melting.
Like some kind of)
(pornographic ice cream.
And I tasted good.)
(I knew,
I tasted myself.)
(That senseless seamy traffic
called sex.)

(That senseless seamy traffic
called death.)
(A moment of
uncontrollable intimacy.)
(A civilian masterpiece.
An uncontrollable masterpiece.)
(I was confused
by night and day.)
(When could I
trust my senses?)
(I love the sky,
I hate the sky.)
(I have no feelings
about the sky.)
(Don't let's talk
about the sky.)
(All day in the monastery
of my mind.)
(I could die
on that thought.)
(And yet
my mind reminds me)
(it is still possible
to look at a horizon)
(and have
one thousand thoughts)
(flood by you
before your eyes glance away.)
(I am looking
at the horizons of my life,)
(Tuesday is looking
at the horizons of her life,)
(and what thoughts,
what bitter thoughts,)
(as if the thoughts
welled up in my eyes)
(and left their memory
on my cheeks)
(as I turned
my head away.)
(Perhaps these lines
are such hot,)

(wet memories,
 (of passing thoughts.
 (was its own reward.
 (My whole life
 (of relativism.
 (the world
 (It's not that I'm a cynic,
 (that life is so ecstatic.
 (Life is a poor substitute
 (Life is a poor substitute
 (Look, don't mind me,
 (some of my happiness
 (This may be the end
 (or nineteenth,
 (or fifteenth,
 (or first,
 (the end
 (I want to play
 (in the novel
 (But they always find
 (to close off

salty embodiments)
 They told me language)
 And I believed them.)
 has been a marvel)
 I don't think
 is a very well designed place.)
 but I don't think
 Only sex makes you come.)
 for happiness.)
 for being alive.)
 I've just lost
 chemicals.)
 of your twentieth century,)
 or eighteenth,)
 or twelfth,)
 but it's not
 of mine.)
 the lyre of language)
 of their closed minds.)
 good reasons)
 their minds,)

(excellent reasons
 (little shelters
 (don't see too much light,
 (against the brightness
 (My attempts may survive
 (A monk or two, here or there,
 (disk to cd-rom, cd-rom to...
 (listening to the light,
 (in emotional events,
 (that wash my brain.
 (the things
 (The latitude
 (- it's difficult
 (the just so many stories
 (across my brain,
 (middles
 (the anathemas
 (like doors on memories
 (the continental drift
 (And I, caught like a bird,
 (at play

each century,)
 so that their minds)
 sunglasses for the mind)
 of the universe.)
 their inability to read them.)
 copying them from paper to disk,)
 I have spent the millennia)
 seeking the alignment of my soul)
 in the golden tidal waves)
 I regret, of course,)
 I did not understand.)
 and longitude of purgatory)
 to make maps of such things -)
 that break like bubbles)
 the unforgivability of beginnings,)
 and endings,)
 that want closing,)
 that want opening,)
 of the human condition.)
 spying on the ocean,)
 in the fields of form,)

(fall like a rainbow
 across the beatitude)
 (of the sea.
 Who will sink to the occasion?)
 (they ask,
 in the era)
 (in which I have landed.
 Of course,)
 (I am the great harlot of history
 and they look to me)
 (with the eyes in their heads
 and that great eye)
 (protruding from
 between their legs.)
 (They think
 I want to fuck with death,)
 (so that means
 they can fuck with me.)
 (I do not satisfy them
 but find the beach)
 (literally bathing
 in the eternal,)
 (become one with the beach,
 breathing in the eternal,)
 (the waves of my breath
 are breakers of sighs,)
 (the white water
 making my inner body)
 (salty and white.
 And what I breathe in)
 (from all sides
 from all sidelessness)
 (is beyond geometry
 beyond mathematics.)
 (And nothing else matters
 so long as I)
 (transform the world
 - which is impossible -)
 (- futility under the sun -
 but even that)
 (doesn't matter
 so long as I)

(transform the world
 into the impossible.)
 (And then God
 comes to me)
 (in the form
 of a seagull.)
 (At first I think
 He wants to fuck me too,)
 (but He says,
 "You have the most)
 (delicate hands,
 translucent,)
 (colourless,
 almost as if)
 (they have been
 working away)
 (at refashioning
 the universe.)
 (But there is
 no form)
 (for the irrelevance
 of your thoughts,)
 (the coil
 of your individual destiny.)
 (Illusions
 like jumping dogs,)
 (playing go fetch
 with your hopes.)
 (You are the parody
 of your own best hopes,)
 (the success story
 of thin air.")
 (He asks me,
 "What do you want?")
 ("What do the stones want?"
 I reply.)
 ("What does the beach want?"
 I am being too clever.)
 ("The universal language
 of fingers.")
 (It is impossible
 to tell)

(which of us
 (since neither
 (He leaves us,
 (alone on the beach
 (One comes to regret
 (I have found
 (my inconvenient dramas.
 (your golden hand,"
 (Is this the forgiveness?
 (available forever."
 (about ourselves.
 (for a moment,
 (a space beyond time,
 (beyond the stutter
 (- what else
 (and, touching
 (like a blind man
 (like a deafened woman
 (as if
 (forget to wonder
 (which illusions
 has said that,
 of our lips moved.)
 me and the sunset,
 of our preconceptions.)
 everything and nothing,)
 in my lives,)
 "Give me)
 God has returned.)
 "We won't be)
 He is talking)
 I take it,)
 which opens out)
 a fluency)
 of eternity)
 am I to do? -)
 the wings of God,)
 starting to see,)
 hearing music)
 for the first time,)
 to myself)
 make the most difference.)

WEDNESDAY'S LULLABY

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ACT ONE

WEDNESDAY SAYS NO, WEDNESDAY SAYS YES

WEDNESDAY SIAMESE TWIN TWO: Don't do it for me.
Don't do me any favours.

WEDNESDAY SIAMESE TWIN ONE: We've got one heart
between us. One of us has got to go, now, while we're in the
womb. Otherwise, when we are born, we'll both die.

WED2: You're ignoring what we've been offered.

WED1: I don't believe in what we've been offered. It's unnatural.

WED2: There's nothing natural about our situation, brother, Siamese
twins reincarnated from the foetus of a crazy mother just before she had
an abortion broadcast in front of the whole country.

WED1: I don't know about unnatural, but I'd agree we are an
interesting case.

WED2: How can you be so dispassionate about your own life?

WED1: I've prepared myself for the worst, I've prepared myself never
really to have it.

WED2: You're just like our mother, making things difficult for yourself
and other people. We have a way out.

WED1: Let's not go around this one again. We are a special case, like
you say, and we've been made a special offer. And why do you think
that is? Don't you think there's a reason for it? Why would this
charming lady come around to just another pair of doomed Siamese
twins and say:

MRS. FAIRCHILD (*enters*): Are you listening, children? One of you is
not going to live. I know this will be difficult to hear, because you
have, well - how shall I put it - grown attached. One of you is going to
die, and the two of you can choose which of you that is, or wait and see
what happens, which might well mean letting the doctors decide. But
there is an alternative. Your mother, Thursday, whose unborn foetus
you are the reincarnation of, was a real problem to us. She was highly
ambitious. In my opinion, overambitious. She tried to overreach
herself. She discovered the cycle of reincarnation in herself and tried to
play it like a poker game. And she damn near won, I'll give her that. In
fact, to be perfectly honest, she is still playing the game, in a certain

way. You are part of that game.

Your mother was a writer. Each life, each day she was alive, she
would write her poems, *The Air Dolphin Brigade* she called them, and at
the end of each day, and life, she would try to convince somebody to
bury them with her, so that she could pick up the work in the next day
and life. Now it was a clever little system, not exactly illegal, but
something of a loophole, not exactly following the spirit even if it did
not specifically contravene the letter of eternal law, and therefore highly
questionable to our cosmic immigration authorities, the navigators of
death and life. We were ready to turn a blind eye to it, but,
unfortunately for your mother, things didn't turn out quite as she
planned. I am sorry to say that through a series of accidents,
mischances and downright unsavory acts, your mother's little system
turned in on itself and became a string of deaths rather than a string of
lives, a string of landmines rather than a string of pearls.

And what happened to the poems? Well, this is where you come in.
Your father, Friday, before his own unfortunate demise, kept a compact
he had made with your mother, and the texts were delivered with her
body for burial. Unfortunately, at this point, they were lost. Or at least
we do not know what happened to them. I will say that we tried, on
your and your mother's behalf and that of history, to save them. But to
no avail. The only thing we can say is that we believe that if they
have a chance of turning up it will be in your lifetime. We believe they
may find their way to you.

Now listen carefully. It is our opinion that this little game your
mother set in motion has had its time and now must be stopped. We
are extremely sorry on a personal level for the sadnesses that have
befallen her, but her artworks and her ambitions have caused enough
grief already. Why you yourselves are a perfect example of the
suffering your mother has created. Without wishing to put too fine a
point on it, you being Siamese twins is a kind of mistake. In fact, I
believe there may be some element of karmic retribution to your mother
and her line in this whole sordid business. After all, her poems have
been lost and her children are deformed.

And what to do with this sorry tale? My advice to you is to cut the
cord of family and history. I believe it might be possible, if you are
willing to co-operate, for us to take a second look at your paperwork,
and maybe even redo it, tear up the old instructions and start anew, and
make you normal twins. Of course, this will not be easy and in order
to make these changes we will have to have a guarantee from you that if
you ever come across these poems your mother has written you destroy

them at once. I am sorry that this is necessary, as I told you we tried to save them once, but now it has gone to the next generation and is simply too late. You will not read them, or even open the package they are in. And this is for your own good. We are quite concerned that even the touch of them could contaminate you with the dangerous ideas and the dark qualities of your mother's life. Work with us on this, and we will be your friends, we will make things easy for you, and if we are satisfied with your progress at the end of your day, we may even offer you what your mother so craved, a form of eternal life. (*Exits.*)

WED2: I think we should take the offer. My God, we didn't even know our mother.

WED1: I wish we had known her.

WED2: We never could have, she aborted us! Listen, she didn't care about us and that means we don't owe her anything.

WED1: Perhaps we owe her something anyway. There must have been a good reason for what she did. We have to trust her that much.

WED2: We don't have to do anything for her. Except live. Don't you think that's what she would have done? Don't you think that was her prime motivation? She wanted eternal life, you heard it.

WED1: I think perhaps there was more to it than that. I would like to read the poems.

WED2: You can't do that, you heard what the old lady said. We can't even open the package. I must say I didn't like the sound of that. If we agree to Mrs. Fairchild's plan and then go back on it when the poems arrive you never know what might happen.

WED1: You're right, I won't be able to see the poems.

WED2: Thank God you're starting to make some sense.

WED1: You'll have to read them.

WED2: What? What are you saying?

WED1: You know what I'm saying.

WED2: Why should you be the one to do it?

WED1: I am the stronger of the two of us. And you have the most to learn. You need this life more than I do.

WED2: Wait, we haven't finished deciding yet.

WED1: Yes we have, we decided a long time ago.

WED2: There's got to be another way.

WED1: There isn't. Take care.

WED2: Don't go.

WED1: I'll be seein' ya.

WED2: Please...

WED1: Bye.

WED2: Oh my God.

MRS. FAIRCHILD (*returning*): What a shame! And such a waste.

WED2: Go away!

MRS. FAIRCHILD: I only want to help, my dear. Let me see. Yes, he's quite dead, I'm afraid. He was stubborn, your brother. He had too much of his mother in him, I fear. But he underestimated me. And I believe he underestimated you. We are both a bit more pragmatic than that, aren't we? I'm sure we will be able to come to some arrangement.

WED2: Don't try to talk me around. You made an offer, we didn't accept it. We don't accept it.

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Now you're just a child and I'm a grown up. I can take what I want, if I want it, you know that, don't you?

WED2: I don't know anything of the sort. You're bluffing. If you knew how to get hold of the poems you wouldn't have come to us in the first place.

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Very clever. Just as I said, your brother underestimated your strength.

WED2: Get out of my womb.

MRS. FAIRCHILD: What a brave child! I'm so very proud of you. I'll go. Your brother has solved your first problem. You can be born now. But you'll need me later. We'll see each other again.

ACT TWO

GEORGE = GOD?

WEDNESDAY:

I

Don't panic, your compere has returned. I have been born.

I feel I have been woken up in the middle of the night in order

to say something.

But don't worry, I won't be here long. I'm not going to unpack this stuff, because I know it's only part of a dream.

Just now, when I dreamt about Fred Astaire, he said to me, "You know, the problem is, and this is sort of off the record: how far can you go with these cute little gestures if in the end you have to make people do this?" And he smiled. And I said to him, but you've been incredibly lucky. You were born with the talent to dance on the ceiling of your form *and* to make people smile. That's a gift. And he kissed me on the cheek, with tears in his eyes. "Thank you, Wednesday. You are Wednesday, aren't you?" And then he danced a new dance, hopping and skipping about like a firefly, celebrating the star-spangled dream of America.

II

There's a visitor in my room. It's an animal from my dream. A large light blue spider that looks like a cross between a praying mantis and a chandelier. It seems to want to communicate with me, it keeps holding my hand.

I think it wants to tell me that it believes it must have created human pain and is very sorry about that.

On a more personal note, it adds, that abstraction is a form of inadequacy like premature ejaculation, but not to worry because it can be cured with the appropriate exercises.

Apparently, it has been thinking about migrating into history, but unfortunately has no sense of time and therefore ended up in my bedroom.

I have recently discovered that its name is George, but that doesn't necessarily mean we should count on its being of either sex.

You know, it's funny, I never thought I'd make a friend like this in the middle of the night. Ha! And I thought reality was misguided.

Do you hear that, George? I used to say: Hell, if this is sleep, I'll trade it in. You see, it was very hard for me to find characters in this world that I could care about. But now I know that sleep is a far more interesting character than most.

George has just told me that he/she's just finished a weeklong book that was a series of clues. The problem was, when she/he pieced it together, he/she still didn't find the buried treasure. On the other hand, George assures me, she/he isn't interested in the money. It's just the principle of the thing.

Maybe the novel fell asleep at the wheel, I said, and went off the track. George said s/he thought perhaps it was never awake. But not to worry, s/he likes dreamers, and anyway, s/he'd had a premonition that that piece of paper was going to cause her/him trouble, so s/he'd been ready for it.

Then George pulled out his pen like a cigarette and lit up an idea. I've been thinking so long my head hurts, she began. Can you massage it? Which I did. Then we had sex, which was great. He had so many blue arms and legs that tingled and thrashed over me like the branches of a weeping willow and washed away my cares, and I had my cock which I think she found strong and satisfying in his head, spring cleaning her worries and cares.

III

"There isn't any good news in any of her books", George is telling me. George is trying to help me out. That's not true, I say. There's the possibility of a slippery dip ride through heaven and hell, what more could you ask for? "That's not what I mean," says George. What do you mean? I reply. George gives me one of those looks, like he (let's leave George as 'he' for a while)

is trying to send me the message from his antennae through telepathy. That my mother, Thursday, was a better artist than a human being?

"Everything is a little bit true", says George. "But take her advice. 'I don't want possessions, I want memories' - she wrote that somewhere. Well, none of us really want possessions, we want memories we can trust. Give us back our faith in ourselves, and then we won't need trust funds.

IV

I've decided to stick around, because I think I've finally found in George a real mentor. I think he has a lot to tell me. Right now, for example, he's telling me not to edit my dreams. Not unless I really need to get in there and fix something.

Of course, sometimes I don't quite understand him. He is reading me *Selections from Imaginary Essays*:

"To be human seems to be endlessly simple and endlessly complex.

"To be nothing and everything.

"Forward is a lonely death.

"The unconscious is nothing if not well-educated.

"The wild card of knowledge.

"Some kind of very flexible dancing is required.

"Everything is my final statement.

"Happiness is consensus on deep pain.

"Pause for a moment in the corridor in which you are wildly lost.

"Close your eyes and let the castle dissolve all around you.

"It fades, becomes translucent, an outline of an idea that once seemed so formidable.

"And then the princess and the executioner, the turrets and the dungeons, are gone.

"The mind has its freedom and the body can walk abroad.

"Everything is my final prayer.

"The textbook of the world.

"Read, read, remember and forget.

"Eulogy in the third person.

"Eulogy by appointment only.

"The buck stops in the 20th century.

"Words stop in the 21st century.

"Abstraction is not a thought.

"Logic doesn't sleep in the same bunk.

"In fact I doubt logic sleeps at all.

"Perhaps in the wild west of ideas.

"I guess we all preferred cartoons to the real thing.

"Purity has bitten her nails down to the quick, as if that mattered to anyone.

"Faith is thinking about it.

"Ego has all the answers, but no form and no name.

"And no wallet and no room key, either, according to the rumours.

"If Destiny could buy Chance, their long golden hairs would be indistinguishable.

"Specificity sleeps with whomever it can, to get the details right.

"Optimism is part of the temporary art movement, but jot it down in the diary for forgiveness, anyway.

"Of course, Short Term Installations have been known to rescue themselves with their own lassoes, but only after midnight on The Cowboy Channel.

"Truth is unprintable, that is to say indescribable, that is to say too colourful."

V

I don't know if George is happy, but he sure seems peaceful.

We are all jumping at the wall, I say to George, who gets over?

"Poets can't be choosers", he chuckles.

VI

"You don't have to like me, you know," says George. I know, I say, but I do, that's the silly thing. There are all these people I am supposed to like that I couldn't care less about, and you, well, most people would expect me to be, at the very least, terrified of you, but of course, nothing could be further from the truth.

ACT THREE

FOR MY SISTER

George left me this little notebook when he died. He told me I could share bits of it with the world, but not everything. He said I could choose the bits. The notebook is dedicated "*For My Sister*".

FOR MY SISTER

o write me a sonnet
with ribbons in her hair
and blue blue eyes
a pretty little sonnet
that never grows up
and never has to know
it has failed

*

i found your poems
in the attic
in the old chest
in a heap
of broken dolls

*

if anything
let grass grow between us
or a tree
not words

*

your poems are orphans
i send them off
trying to find them good homes

*

Water these words,
until they grow,
until they grow.
Eat them.

*

"I should be happy
to float downstream,"
said the dreaming man,
"but I wake up
and make myself drown."

*

Poetry

Let it die.
You cannot eat it
or sell it
or kill a man with it.
It serves no purpose.

*

why die?
didn't you know
that poets
have a
responsibility
not to?

*

at your funeral
there were too many roses
i cut them down
to prevent their whispering

*

Sorceress, you were the fire in me
dancing to consume,
sweeping through the forests in me
scorching all that breathed and was green,
haunting like a wind through a graveyard of ash and stumps.

Like the sea
you have worn me to a pebble
buffeted and toppling upon an empty shore.

Scatched your name in me
the lines on my brow are scars.
Diving and dancing like heaven
I have clattered down through the wonder-
land like a seagull onto the rocks.

*

Pond

The leaves on my palm
are fish.

They slip
skin to pond,
soak -
 shadows in lean
dreamtime.

Mistress emerges,
naked as Moon.

*

**By Another Name
I'd Call You**

Paris
city of weeping
i have left my wet shoes
in your cobbled streets
and danced off
through the rain
like an acrobat
doing cartwheels
across the Seine

*

If I were the wind - breeze or blast
Across your belly of golden corn - you would call me draught,
And lock the doors.

*

Blind Song

brick
upon brick
word upon word
night after night
building building
up into the dark
dark and no day
a candle a lighthouse
a beacon
burning

*

inside the room
of all and no sensations

*

I have a memory
of a house
in the country
that creaked
and was draughty
and is probably
still inhabited
by the ghost
of my childhood.
I have had
dreams of it
in all the parts
of the world
I have travelled.
It comes with me,
that little wooden house,
and with it the memory
or the dream
of climbing
into its bowels.
Clambering
into the guts
of that house,
somewhere behind
or underneath
the stairs,
somewhere in
the walls,
somewhere between
the walls,
somewhere between
the ground and
the first floors,
a secret place,
a dark passage.
But with no pain,
no fear.
A peace,
a comfort,
a contentment,

a joy even,
climbing
in the dark air
in that dark
corridor with
no ceiling
and no floor,
but only
walls,
walls,
walls.
Black
walls
an arm's
length
from one
another.
And
that
much
certainty
enough.
Onwards.
Climbing
onwards.
Prying
my way.
Feeling
the dark.
Seeing
the dark.
Climbing
the dark.
At home
in the dark.
Becoming the dark.

*

George's Lullaby

We are ourselves, soft pilgrims
Slow moving meditations
The eclipse of life in the easy music of a kiss

*

Communion

Heavy against the hillside like an old rock
stands the great house of my fathers.

Painted figures in the wooden hallways,
canvases as high as the ceiling -
maiden faces beckon from the waters of their red-green garments,
knights with laurels, golden hands fading.
Buckled to the cold thighs of the wall
the swords of tired heroes are as blunt as cast iron railing.
And propped up in that corner
a five hundred year old image of Christ
is wasted to the ankles as with leprosy.

Come in to the cold.

There is a chalice in the centre of my house,
chairs with twisted backs endure around its place on my table -
so quiet
they might be tombstones around a church.
Push them by,
push them by,
lift that cup,
swallow down its waters,
know if they burn or are cold.

When you know,
I shall look past death
and what sights I shall see
in your eyes.

*

In tropical waters

ADD
STANZA
BREAK

they seem a long way from me now
those early poems
strange exotic islands
visited in my youth
i could plot my course
all unplanned
the sudden squalls
the need for supplies

here in this drunken port
i could run blunt fingers across a blackened map
and say here we were becalmed
here the quarrels began on deck

but i could not trace the islands
could not run my finger around the islands
hot dripping rainforests
heavy with the scent of woman

*

it must be like this
i think
in the end

still

how different outside
the play of wind
in the leaves

*

I go to the window
It has started to rain
On my arms
Thick cool rain
It is a long time
Before I turn

will it happen like this
will there be an end like this

a closing of the window
an opening of the window
a calling to the rain

* * *

For his sister? The strange thing was that George had no sister. That's what he told me, anyway. Unless, of course, I was his sister.

ACT FOUR

THE MIRACULOUS DELIVERY SERVICE

MRS. FAIRCHILD (*disguised as a man in a courier's uniform, knocks at door*): Excuse me, I'm from The Miraculous Delivery Service, I understand that you recently received a package from The First Day Of The Week Funeral Home. I'm afraid to say that there's been some kind of a mistake. You received a package meant for Mrs. Crosier, just down the street. It contains soap and other personal items from her daughter. I do hope you haven't opened it by mistake...

WEDNESDAY: Mrs. Crosier likes poetry, then, does she?

MRS. FAIRCHILD: I don't think I quite grasp what you mean.

WEDNESDAY: I mean that there wasn't any soap in the package.

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Then all is lost.

WEDNESDAY: What do you mean, all is lost? I've got the package right here, it just doesn't have any soap in it, that's all.

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Then you don't know who it's from?

WEDNESDAY: You told me who it's from and who it's from is on the return label.

MRS. FAIRCHILD: You'd better give the package to me, I'll try to clear things up.

WEDNESDAY: But why should I give the package to you if it's not the one you were looking for?

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Don't quibble with me, I'm from The Miraculous Delivery Service.

WEDNESDAY: Are you?

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Of course I am, what do you mean?

WEDNESDAY: You know what I mean.

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Well, if I know what you mean, why are you standing here talking to me?

WEDNESDAY: Because I wanted to see what you looked like after all this time. I wanted to look you in the eye, now that I'm grown up and can see certain things more clearly. I wanted to be sure that you weren't just a dream.

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Are you satisfied? Give me those damn poems!

WEDNESDAY: That's cute, I don't think the poems are damned and neither am I. But you, on the other hand...

MRS. FAIRCHILD: You have no idea what you're doing.

WEDNESDAY: I know, as much as my brother knew.

MRS. FAIRCHILD: You have no idea what you're giving up. I can offer you dreams beyond your wildest dreams.

WEDNESDAY: You think I don't have enough problems with dreams coming true? You want to add to this parade of seven nightmares in a row?

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Seven nightmares in a row? That's nothing. If you don't co-operate with me you'll have plenty more to come. I can guarantee you that. As long as you keep dreaming, I've got points on your dreams.

Give me that package and I will let you out of your nightmares. More than that, we will let you out of the wheel of desiring. No more reincarnations, and no more bank charges, to say nothing of parking fines and sexually transmitted diseases. The universe is on your side tonight, my child. You can become pure spirit and roam the cosmos as a star, as a god. Pick your timeline, come down to earth in Ancient Greece as Zeus, or Aphrodite, if it pleases you. Select your flower to deflower, your empire to ravish, your artwork to keep under your eyelid. Be alive when you want to or dead and find out the secret pathway backwards and forwards between the two. We will allow you absolute knowledge, unimaginable power, unutterable delight, and all for the twenty four hours of those twenty four poems your mother tried

to sneak through the net of time. You can see, you've bargained me down, all I want is those poems...

WEDNESDAY: And my soul...

MRS. FAIRCHILD: And your soul.

WEDNESDAY: You expect me to make a deal with you?

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Deal is such a crude word, we'll call it an understanding, our little agreement. Shake on it. Your word is my bond. And you needn't worry, I am only that part of God which is not pusillanimous. I don't come with any hidden costs, with any fine print. With me, everything's up front. I give you the whole picture. You take the good with the bad, not the good with the maybe. God, on the other hand, is so political! He's got His ins and His outs, His ups and His downs, His rights and His wrongs. Everyone's allowed in my bathtub. Everyone can wash in the same bath water. Now that's a true baptism.

WEDNESDAY: Don't you think you've done enough damage to one family for one week?

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Do you think you can blame me for everything?

Do you think it's all my fault your mother's poems have arrived on your doorstep to ruin your life? Do you think I want the pathetic little drowned cats of words for myself? What use could I possibly have for the disease ridden things? I just have to look after them. I have a responsibility to do what's right with them. To send them on a long voyage back down river where they belong. I am the good person here. Don't take it the wrong way, my child, but your mother was a lunatic. I mean, she went around doing truly strange things. Bothering people. She would knock on their doors and try to sell them things they didn't want and - let me tell you - truly didn't need. What she had to say upset people. What's the point of upsetting people?

WEDNESDAY: Whatever you say about my mother, these poems are something else.

MRS. FAIRCHILD: Oh yes, I knew you were going to say that. You are thinking, maybe she was a bit eccentric - who isn't? - but her poems! You've read them. You are amazed. In fact you are wondering how could they have come from the same person you've heard all these grizzly stories about. They must have been the best of her, the sunset reflected in her eyes. The milk of life as it passed out through her breasts. Something beyond her, something she was a conduit for. The eternal gleam in her transient eye. The warmth of the centuries in her arms and legs. The juice of nirvana in her thighs and...

I could go on for hours. But the real point is, so what? I mean, look

around you. How many sexy babes do you see? And how many poets? They are like rabbits. Who needs art? The sunset is there, the sex is there, the tits are there, the reproduction is there, the beauty of the goddamn universe doesn't go away, even with a bit of pollution. Who needs someone like your mother to tell you about the meaning of life? You've got your own life, so live it. You don't need a bunch of hokey antisocial aesthetes telling you how to think. You don't need some special pair of sophisticated sunglasses to help you see the coming of the night air. And if you don't need them, then sure as hell don't sacrifice your own life and prospects for them. Even if they are your mother's.

I want you to stand up straight and look me in the eye and say: "I'll take your offer because, God damn it, it makes perfect sense, it's fair and it's right. I am going to stand on my own two feet and not wilt for some prissy little, no good, too good, lily of the field, pinko-poetic, good for nothing - hasn't she fucked up my life enough already? - mother."

WEDNESDAY: Beautifully put. Such *joie de vivre*. Such a way with words. You surprise me. Why do you care? Why all this witty, warm, grandmotherly advice? And why, if they are of so little value and purpose, are you so keen to get your dirty, conniving paws on my mother's words? Why are you expending so much hot air and so many parts of speech on attacking the fortress of Thursday's syllables?

Well, I'm not buying it. I'm not selling out my mother. And I'm not dispensing with her poems. I couldn't write them, and neither could you. So don't offer me eternal life with eternal guilt for destroying the dreams of someone else. And don't offer me eternal life with a bargain basement imagination. A million days at a dollar a day may add up to a million dollars, but hardly enough for more than a cold cup of coffee on any individual day. I'll keep the poems and my short span of life. I don't need to live forever. I need to live now.

All I know is, do my best in this moment and I may get a chance to do my best in the next, and if not, well, I will have done my best in the last. I am here, I am now, I am...

ACT FIVE

WEDNESDAY'S WILL

1

So, Mrs. Fairchild, you will never catch me. I reincarnate too fast, like a Ferris wheel. I will escape the dreaded interlocking of my dreams. Like my mother, I have a hope in hell. I am like a carnival, you'll never know what ride I'm on. Your offer of eternal life is like the last bow of a ham-fisted magician who has extended his curtain call too long. I don't even speak your language any more. I am surprised that my mind can even formulate thoughts of you. Your voice has become blurred and muffled like a landscape in the wind. You cannot tempt me because I no longer see the world as you do. I no longer see the difference between now and later, this temporal moment and for ever, death and eternal life. And don't think you can scare me. My whole life has been a dialogue with death, the translation of subtlety, a monster in a cave, a seam I had no choice but to mine.

2

I am dying. What do I want? You ask me this, you who have been audience to this weeklong nightmare? What do I want? Nothing. To die well. The city of dreams is taking the grand fall and I am falling with it. I no longer peer out at the world through that selfish hood, selfhood, through the bars of anger and regret, through the beats and bars of time. But with forgiveness - now and forever, backwards and forwards - with compassion - now and forwards, backwards and forever. Even for you, Mrs. Fairchild.

3

I am glad to have beaten the Devil at her own game. But I am tired of arguments. I am supposed to be the angel of light, but when you get to this level you can't tell the difference between the darkness and the light. So before the dark settles in we'll make our peace. Before we become as clear and transparent as nothingness we must let go of our craving to be more than just a window through which the light passes. This is the challenge of every time and place, to be the corridor, not the footstep, to be the memory, not the footfall.

4

This is what is apparently known as the end of the line. They said as much. My time would come. Each person's does. And go. Each person's does. Of course, one never asked to be taken on the journey, one never got to choose the year and design or make of the carriage. But it is time to get off this form of transportation and onto the next bit of firm ground one can find for oneself. Not much more to be said than that. I can only share my plot of earth with the next person. Or leave them some footprints by which to stand, if they don't know where they are, so that when they do know, they'll also know they have not been alone. Or if they know already, to give them someone to turn to with understanding in their eyes. To say, I'm sorry there isn't more. Truly sorry. For all of us. To stand together in silence watching the train go on. It goes on. Of course it must. We know that. We can, in fact, be glad of it. For something of ourselves is left in the carriages. We are the carriages as we stand in the mud, and watch ourselves being dragged away.

5

While she was here, between the darkness and the darkness, my mother wanted to burn with a light so bright that its embers would still be glowing after she had crumbled into night. She wanted to be able to find her way back by that light. I am sorry that she died thinking her light had been lost. But I am her light. And if she comes back one day she'll be happy to find that I have left her poems to the world, along with those of my brother George, and there will be a double light waiting for her, perhaps even enough to keep her warm. And so in death I will be the carriage, the courier for her words, I will be the vehicle for the passage of the words, the journey of the words, a prism for the light of the words, a corridor for the wind of the words, words which are themselves only vehicles for the light.

6

I am dying. Let these words be my will. But I know, as my mother knew, that the moment of birth and the moment of death are the same moment at two different chimes of the clock. That a person's death is written into the chiming of the clock, the ringing of the bells, the streaming of the tears, the laughter of delight, the gasps as the sea creature emerges amphibian to the air. Those gasps are the sounds that fill the silence with their echoes at the moment that the breath finally departs the body. They curl into that hollow space in the roof of the mouth like a foetus, like the memory of a fire in a barn that has been rebuilt. Because the memory is the bridge of time. And on that bridge we stand, hand in hand with ourselves, our pasts, our futures. On that bridge we are ourselves - the paving stones for the footwork of eternity.

I can see the world now as if I first discovered it, as when I first created it. This is my will and my will be done. And now that we understand each other, I will tell you a story: "In the beginning the heaven and the earth created God, and saw that He was good..." Do you now know the rest? And as for yourself, Devil, it is said that with your help in what was once the past, man and woman built from heaven a prison; but I say that with your help in what will once upon a time be the future, they shall build from prison a heaven. And I have found a little poem which may help kick-start history again, start up the illusion of the next twenty-four poems, the next twenty-four hours. Written in the sand, written in the wind, it is anonymous, as are all good blueprints for the architecture of eternity.

A Wave, The Wave, Building Made Of Water

You see a wave.
It arches, clear,
irrefutable, architecturally perfect.

No one else sees it.
It is gone.
No one else sees you.

You and the wave
are one.
All you have is

that moment,
your moment,
your wave.

Acknowledgements

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The creative development of the stage adaptation of the poem *Thursday's Fictions* was funded by a grant to That Was Fast through the Time and Motion Project from the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, the Commonwealth Government's arts funding and advisory body. Richard James Allen and Karen Pearlman wish to acknowledge the creative input to the theatrical work during this development period from Theresa Blake, Cate Blanchett, Ian Campbell, Michael Edgar, Scott Grayland, Ruth Hadlow, Don Mamouney, Greg Methe, Simeon Nelson, Joanna Pollitt, David Pidd, Gregory Tebb, Meme Thorne, Kylie Tonellato, Samantha Vine, Dan Witton and Andrew Yencken.

Further development of the poem, the adapted performance text and specific sections of the production of *Thursday's Fictions* was funded by a grant to That Was Fast from the Dance Program of the New South Wales Ministry for the Arts and assisted by a Booranga Writers' Fellowship from Wagga Wagga Writers Writers. Special thanks to Barbara Richardson and Lynne Mitchell of the Time and Motion Project; Rosalind Richards of Artful Management; David Gilbey and Kyle Powderly of Wagga Wagga Writers Writers; and to Ausdance (NSW).

Thursday's Fictions premiered in a Tasdance production at the Earl Arts Centre in Launceston, Tasmania, on December 7, 1995, and subsequently toured to the Peacock Theatre in Hobart. It was performed by Michael Edgar, Karen Pearlman, Joanna Pollitt, Gregory Tebb, Kylie Tonellato, Samantha Vine and the author, as well as thirteen guest actors for the radio play section. Production, Direction and Choreography: Karen Pearlman and Richard James Allen; Co-Direction: Don Mamouney; Dramaturg: Karen Pearlman; Composer and Sound Designer: Andrew Yencken; Music Production Co-ordinator: Karlin Love; Costume Design

and Construction: Dani Haski; *Tuesday's Rack* Design: Simeon Nelson; *Sunday at the Abortion Station* Radio Play Production: Benjamin Little at ABC Radio (7NT); Lighting Design and Stage Management: Greg Thompson. The production was funded by grants to Tasdance from the Tasmanian Minister for Education and the Arts through Arts Tasmania and from the Australia Council.

Thursday's twenty-four poems, *The Air Dolphin Brigade*, were published by Paper Bark Press, Sydney, and Shoestring Press, UK, in association with Tasdance, to coincide with the production.

Also at the time of the production, *Sunday at the Abortion Station*, the radio play, was broadcast by City Park Radio in Launceston, Tasmania.

Thursday's Fictions was featured on the SBS-TV Arts program *Imagine* in 1996. Presenter: Annette Shun Wah; Director of Photography: Ian Peterson; Editor: Sue Wallace; Executive Producer: Veronique Bernard; Series Producer: Richard Moore; Director-Producer: Moshe Rosenzweig.

Two excerpts from the performance text adaptation of *Thursday's Fictions*, along with a biography and an artistic statement on the development of the performance text and the hybrid arts stage work from the poem, first appeared in *Performing the Unnameable: An Anthology of Australian Performance Texts*, edited by Richard James Allen and Karen Pearlman, published by Currency Press in association with *RealTime*, Sydney, 1999.

Finally, thanks are due to the University of Technology, Sydney, for an Australian Postgraduate Award with Stipend, with the assistance of which this poetry manuscript was prepared for publication. For their input in the final stages of editing the author wishes to acknowledge his publisher Ron Pretty, along with Karen Pearlman, Martin Harrison, Chris Wallace-Crabbe, John Hawke, Christopher Allen and Jocelyn Allen.

*this book is dedicated to the memory of woody, the hope of sam,
the light of jaz, the love of karen, the teachings of sharon and david,
and to scott who fell like an angel*

A Note on The Way Out At Last Cycle

Thursday's Fictions is the latest instalment in a large scale poetic work, *The Way Out At Last Cycle*, begun in 1982 by Richard James Allen. This cycle draws on an idea proposed by the 18th century Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico, who postulated that human beings, in their lives, their civilisations and the development of their languages, continually pass through a four stage 'corso e ricorso' of birth, life, death, and rebirth. *The Way Out At Last Cycle* takes this idea as a metaphor for human experience and uses it as a structural framework for a poetic exploration of consciousness and language. Its outward spiralling, four part structure is first seen in the title poem of *The Way Out At Last & Other Poems* (1986), and continues to unfold through *To The Ocean & Scheherazade* (1989), *Hope for a man named Jimmie & Grand Illusion Joe* (1993), and now *Thursday's Fictions*. *Thursday's Fictions* also has a place in the development of a series of writings for performance by Richard James Allen going back to the late 1970s, exploring a variety of relationships between text on the page and text on the stage or screen. In 1995 the poem was adapted for the stage in a hybrid arts production by Tasdance. Thursday's poems, *The Air Dolphin Brigade*, were published to coincide with the production.



Photo: Chris Callis

THE AIR DOLPHIN BRIGADE

Thursday's twenty-four poems

- The Air Dolphin Brigade; In the kingdom of forgetfulness;
From which the crucifix was made; A Requiem for the
Millennium; Translation from the Wind; adrenalin; From the
Axle; I feel it, and it'll cost you; Ark; preaching to the
unconverted*; Tuesdays it's a free country; The Fate of
Reason (or What My Murderer Said); Tree; going with the
flow; Tigers; The Climate to Confess; air; ...and she to me;
Scene from a Marriage; An Infant of the Occasion; Nativity;
Goals; Over The Treetops Of The Dance; *and* The Relic -

are published in

The Air Dolphin Brigade
by Richard James Allen,

Paper Bark Press (Sydney)
and Shoestring Press (UK)
in association with
Tasdance (Launceston), 1995.
ISBN 0 646 26678 0.

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BY RICHARD JAMES ALLEN

Five Islands Press
PO Box U34
Wollongong University 2500

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Rockin' Doodles Pty Ltd

Photographs:
Chris Callie & Franc Raschellá

ISBN 0-86418-596-0



Thursday's Fictions tells the story of the conflict between talent and ambition in a writer who craves immortality and learns to accept death. It is an adult fairy tale, a fantastical parable of spirituality and excess, dealing with themes of crime and art, death and reincarnation.

"What a fascinating, challenging, thoughtful, exciting and confrontingly entertaining piece of creativity this unusual presentation is ...a mind-blowing mix of dance, drama, performance poetry, a radio play and music...Underpinning everything is the rich poetry of Richard James Allen's text with its storm of ideas."

-Wal Eastman, The Mercury

"[Thursday's Fictions] big moral/metaphysical 'week' is a true achievement...what I admire is the stamina, the clarity of soul, the willingness to ask hard questions. This is the kind of poetry Alec Hope was (or should have been) looking for when he lamented the decline of the 'discursive mode'. It's utterly different, I'm glad to say, from all those little OZ poems about a sensitive bloke walking out one morning and seeing the light shimmer on farmyard dams." -Chris Wallace-Crabbe

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