

THE BLACK HORSE WATCH

By Nini Tantrini & her Horses c. 1999, 2004 all rights reserved

Soon to be a Major Television Miniseries, broadcast accompanied by trade paperback novel.

words justified to the right are the thoughts of horses

words in italics are Johannes' thoughts

use of rhyme attributed to horses

Simona of Livorno has had a bellyful of this Risorgimento, this revolutionary "Brotherhood of Mankind." She spits into the night at the thought of this Brotherhood of Men. Simona's raven black hair flies wild against the moon, and her skin and cheeks hold bloom of early pregnancy: confessional and augury of sorrow, "Forgive me Father for I have sinned, a child within and unmarried," running, now, skidding across pea gravel and sick marvel at cannon boom.

The scent of antique roses uncultivated and overgrown the seawall, prick thorn and flesh pink in moonlight, filtered through bottlegreen and cordite, wafting custom scent across dust road as she hurries in the dark to Giovanni.

A letter in a formal white envelope with a wax seal is hidden against her plush bosom. Rushing predilection and presage, caught, in too late an age for international sympathy and materiel' from hell to help explode a little heaven here on earth.

"Gio, Giovanni!" Simona stage-whispers against the serious backs of men at the barricades. Their shoulders hold rigid and sad against cannon bloom. Above their heads, Simona sees the terrible beauty of the Austrian flares, red and green fire in slow motion arcs against the low ceiling of the sky. The heavy moon quiets starlight, all reflected and fragmented in the black pool of the deep bay.

"Gio, Giovanni!" This time in sight and chorus with the Corsairs' lapping waters, cannon splash, then painful silence. The men nearest hear her and turn, scowling at her intrusion on the seriousness of their scene. Simona distinguishes Giovanni Fattori's dark head, and her stomach drops and her sex wets at the sight of him. If anything happens to Giovanni! The pain of life without Giovanni! A constant threat; Giovanni, unattached, admonishing; curly black hair and astonishing wide eyes which calmly record the scene around him. Concord and upright: beautiful, young, passionate lover in the night; considerate and commiserate audience to all her dreams on waking. But cannot afford to marry without the accord of family. His giant hands belied their delicacy of talent. He drew like an angel! And his paintings! Brief moments of a day, captured in planes of light. If only Giovanni were not so infatuated with the unification- Risorgimento! Simona's greatest rival in love, those passionate words of brotherhood which kept men away from home and bed at night.

"Go home Simona," says Giovanni in a resigned voice. Taking the letter from its post between her breasts. The nearest men smirk, then turn back to watch the lightshow over the bay.

Cloying scent of roses, seaweed and salt sea, rancid garbage scumming under docks, nitrites, pomade and perspiration mixed, odoriferous and sour stomach acid charged atmosphere wired and tired waiting here.

She was so ripe! Simona, Simona! Reaching his long hand into the bodice of her peasant blouse, muslin gauze against full breast.

The regal crest of the Duke of Firenze was pressed into yellow-orange wax on the thick white envelope flap. Solomon's seal on an epicurean deal? What providence can a Duke steal? There's thunder held a bey, man-o-wars floating cocked on the Bay, here's tedious greetings, full of the demand that we obey.

Paper, pale as moon, full of platitudes and pleadings: “Greetings, Livornese,” excess verbiage of genuflecting praise, “...magnificent loyal sons of the City State of Tuscany.” Giovanni slowly intoned like a preceptor on the lower pulpit as sweating men clustered ‘round in the humid night, tall and inflated proud by words of domain ingrained.

A herald, post and published by silver tipped pen with a flourish nourished on these men: “Your Duke, who rules you by the Decree of Ages and Progenitor, by the Blessings of the Pope and Rule of the Treaty of Vienna, recognizes and respects the Hapsburg presence in our Tuscan Land. We request you welcome the Austrian ambassadors of the Hapsburgs as our guests in Italy. Your Duke and Ruler, Keeper of the Faith and Foreman of your Prosperity appreciates and Rewards your acquiescence to this Decree with Courtesy in the Year 1849, on this day, the 10th of May. Signed Duke of Firenze.”

Bla-blaa bla-blaa scourge and subterfuge, felucca floating and Lorca, Lucca and Fattori stand,
censored vacuity, the fatuity of family sword at hand.

No materiel, no help from the scrooge except blasphemous benediction of hell for miscreants, demented,
standing here in humid thunder

“The royal “we” floats welcome on the boats at sea, the Duke, a flunky and a fluke! Forsooth a footfall on landfall before the curtain of the dawn ebb tide causes Austrian rides to puke roses lanky as asters and cuirass disasters bobbing on the bay morass, a different funk, neigh, hypocrisy and trespass, wishing for a demitasse of Naples’ best and rocking here,” sighed Ecol.

“Public domain against punitive gain versus commonwealth pure pure Odysseus landing on another island, greeted by plush Pulvinar and lush grasses! Morbidity unlooses madness; mantic thunder, spit sorcerer of cannon looms deadly promise of live ammunition. Cross country day! (Dirge promise, purge piss, hit-and-miss, corsair a prison ship for cavalry) A pulpiteer’s pulp plaster and soap fiction, are all those words found in a diction-ary?” Asked Clary of Ecol.

“Pulvinar, har har nothing similar to jar memoir of meaning,” laughed M. Kundalini from afar, Perzeus delayed in Punic Wars. “A Pulvinar is (in ancient Rome) a. a cushioned couch kept in readiness for any visitation of a God. b. a cushioned seat at a circus. c. cushion-shaped back section of the brain’s thalamus that controls spacial concepts in vision, music and language.”

“Do you have a rhyme in mind, or does it just come?” Continued Clair. “As sailing horses do we get a ration of rum? Coastline, shoreline, a view from floating corsair, a wing and a prayer strums harmony cryptic and delphic, morphotonemics and morons spawned by hunger, hunger is a great motivation for revolution, but here we are just obeying orders, a dense and captive audience in this sense-arama drama. Will they put us in the thick of fight ‘err night gives succor to dawnlight? Do we get to jump the barricades? Are we just jesters? Suckers well behaved?” soon late of life

Noble, wanting oats, rocking on this tin-lined boat

“Ah my son and holy, we are sacrifice to strife.”

“Fucking son of a dog!” Muttered one of the Tuscan men, rang chime in three four time to “Bastardo! Codardo, coward, ladro, thief, ardent chief disregarded safe at home hiding behind his Renaissance throne gnawing on a mallard bone stolen from my barnyard, a blackguard who administrates and adjudicates head bobbing in a accommodating drone, let me elucidate the Duke’s violations, abominations, capitulations to the Austrian throne, they all sit high together on our sweat and labor, our friends and neighbors, we are exploited while they are

expiated and anointed, we are anomic and they, our enemy, our rulers! They are castrado! Easier to hate than venerate! Copulation! Recognize our Italian nation! Capitulation! I'd sooner see their seacraft crashed on rock and our drydock burnt to sea. Capitulation! Only to emancipation, Duke! I ejaculate on your shoe I'll see your syncopatic Austrian nation decapitated first, and you, in black satin hearse, memoria ostinato, testardo (headstrong) we throng your throne and take back our risorgimento home."

"Castrate!" Said Clair. "Are such things fair in war?"

"What shall we do?" Asked the young Giovanni, looking much less his twenty three years as he stared at Salvatore', unspoken leader of the men. Salvatore' was owner of the mill on the hill outside town. He clenched and unclenched his fist, ground his jaw and thought. Salvatore longed for the rhythmic swoop and clonk, swoop and clonk of an orchestra of shuttle cocks pulling threads through the looms.

In peaceful times, Salvatore's tightwoven cloth of gold graced the richer dinner tables throughout Livorno. Each extended family of Tuscan men sat tipped back in their chairs, stomachs pressed against the sheer gold table cloths. Settling stomachs between courses, top pants' buttons unfastened to allow room for:

the bread sticks and antipasto: chilled tuna, pimento, and anchovies;

then pasta, rigatoni in a white clam sauce;

a fish course, maybe two, in honor of the proximity to the sea: oysters, briny and still breathing, with a dipping sauce of garlic butter and cayenne; a tender flounder, coated in bread crumbs and fried in olive oil;

then sliced eggplant cooked in the flounder pan, topped with melted bubbling baby mozzarella cheese;

the main course of Spring leg of lamb roasted rare with rose-wine jelly, whole heads of garlic, and new potatoes roasted in a pan under the lamb, crusty with the meat's juices;

a dish of cold broccoli rape doused in olive oil;

fresh shelled peas served in a gold-plated cauldron;

a salad of baby lettuces dressed in wine vinegar and more olive oil;

breath, rest, another button undone:

then fresh pressed espresso;

cannoli with chocolate cream piped in a shell pattern;

ripe golden pears and a

triple cream cheese with a dense rind, spread with a heavy gold-plated knife onto the thick crusted, yeasty bread replenished with each course;

also replenished, ever-flowing, were the accompanying carafes of deep red wine, full bodied and dry;

and the slightly sweeter golden white wine, resinous from raisins in the must,

and finally, small thimbles of the fiery grappa, gasping alcohol served with

marzipan and almond paste dried and pressed into the shapes of fruits.

The men groaned in unison, sipping small thimbles full of the blistering grappa to aid their digestion.

The women ate in the kitchen, standing around the counter with Momma positioned by the door. She shoveled in pasta and fingered her rosary beads. Her body was immense inside a tight rusty black bombast dress. She waited for the signal from Poppa that the men were ready for the Zabaglione, and more Grappa. As the light caught the golden brown liquor in Poppa's snifter, Salvatore told a slightly ribald and hilarious joke at the expense of women. Through his own laughter, he frowned at the sounds of pots and pans being scraped and washed in the kitchen.

(The poor the peasants ate pasta and trash fish in good times; sometimes they dined on stolen grapes, tending vines, too-oft they dined on grass soup.)

Salvadore was brought back to the present by the splash of cannon fire. The duties of the Risorgimento and Brotherhood of Men were discomfoting, taking too much time from life and work.

“Grass soup!” Excitedly recited Clair. “What’s poor in mankind’s minds is often divine to horses. Will we soon disembark and arc those barrel coups? Yonder field of wheat is calling me. Gangplank, disembark, form rank, bide time, bugle time, cavalry charge, weapon’s discharge, thunder, fleet to air, plunder, then eat.”

The impending cavalry charge and probable capture of Livorno was just a job to the cavalrymen from Prussia. The well-trained and impeccably turned-out troops were fired by discipline and the sharp precision of their well-honed fighting skills. They anticipated little resistance to their forward sweep. Reconnaissance had accurately reported a raggie-taggle collection of the “enemy,” who would be quickly overcome by the superior firepower, horse, and fighting prowess of the Prussian Cavalry. The three regiments aboard the corsairs were part of the greatest fighting machine ever assembled and trained for war. The only detriment to the likely rout of impending battle was the lack of emotional impetus behind the Prussian Cavalry’s position. Personally they had no quarrel with, and little interest in the citizens of Livorno.

“Foals wondrous from ancestors, the Assyrians with their squeal of chariot wheels behind us and the tandem defense, two rides aside, shield from arrows, never yielding in the field of furrowed roads for battle! The Egyptians who justly mummified us as Gods; against all odds the Greeks, whom we taught to think as us; then the Romans, who brought the battlefield to the playfield, choice pastoral or seared in pain, all the same, never deviated from winning troop morale, the sweeping rationale of battle, and that banal, chance fatale weeping final grandeur of the grave. Azure the sea abjured and deep the sleep, we come again, forelimb first, for war we never rehearsed the end, sing hymn immune and not immured belowsides, reborn and sworn in fealty and service, for wealthy is the human who sits astride a warhorse who loves him,” said Clair with the historical help of M. Kundalini.

“Azimuth and truth, for better trust he’d never put us where we’re down and drown’d into dust,” rejoined Ecol.

Behind the barricades, sporadically lit by flare and cannon fire, then plunged back into sticky darkness, Giovanni Frattori smiled to be in the company of men. Quick as Frattori’s eyes were, it was his large ears which drowned in the noises of this night. Every sound reverberated against the chamber of his brain in symphonies of melody and counterpoint. Echoing staccato kettledrums, the Austrian horses were brought up on deck to unload beneath the cover of night. Great Trakehner ironclad hooves stamping and pawing nervously, flaring nostrils inhaling sulfite and cordite and the scent of land, looking out on fallow darkness, exhaling stale belowside and deck traipse and fear’s landscapes. The corsairs rolled with the shifting weight of horses.

Giovanni heard the melodic lines of a ghost symphony’s reeds and woodwinds in the terrifying scrape of ships being tied against the dock. Undercover voices of men, a shadowed chorus of cautionary warnings, carried on the humid air while misleading flares broke dark sky in the opposite direction. The sound of violins were ethereal emissaries from the stars which hung at arms’ length in the May sky. Mixolydian crossed with unwanted sharps, the bass and room of cannons, crossed with the desultory high fire of antique Tuscan rifles desperate to conserve hand-poured lead bullets. A soprano wind sang dawn through cypress trees and ancient roses, resinous with quiet tide and tarred with the pitch of fear and dank perspiration on the men behind the barricades.

“Would that the Duke had sent arms,” said Salvadore.

“A troop of his lancers in gold livery would make fine targets,” muttered a man as he spilled powder into the family rifle.

“Hold fire, men, save your ammunition!” Ordered Salvadore to the raggedy line of men leaning against the barricade. Sporadic gunfire continued.

“Lie low and wait these Austrian bastards out!” Shouted Salvadore.

The officers on the nearest ship smiled coldly at his words.

Men stretched cramped muscles, milled around shaking awake stiff limbs in the damp early morning air. The only cool moment in a sweltering day.

On ship, Johannes blew into the nose of Ecol to calm her. The large and rangy red roan softly snorted back, apparently calmed, then threw her great white head into the air and screamed.

Hugging the last of darkness, the cavalry began disembarking the ship. Great hooves rang against the gangplank, which bobbed and swayed, but held fastened to the dock. The ship upped the ante of cannon balls, which zoomed closer to their mark, exploding lethal fragments as effective detriment to Italian aim.

Behind the barricades, nervous sweat made slippery cramped fingers locked on old muzzle loaders and family dueling pistols. The luckier men had rifled barrels, grooves cut on the interior of the rifle to improve the aim. Polished stocks with family crest and floral-engraved silver or brass plate reflected rose-orange dawn, growing East light over water. Numb against the barrels it was still dark and dumb with excitement and terror. The overgrown scent of roses blended incongruously with gunpowder.

“Hold your fire!” Again commanded Salvadore. “Wait until you have clear target. Don’t waste ammunition!” The men tried to relax their trigger fingers, stretching and flexing their hands. This Risorgimento was a kitchen revolution, born around the table and fought with weapons of the hearth. The old blunderbusses were muzzle loaders which needed a handmade bullet and gunpowder tamped down the barrel with a thin metal rod. The first aim was crucial, as the superior horse and firepower of the Austrians would overwhelm the barricades before the rifles were reloaded. The hand pistols, dueling arms with decorated stocks, each held one shot in the chamber. Usually the pistols came in pairs nestled in a velvet lined box, offering the duelers’ choices of comparable weapons. A ancient crossbow or two, loaded with deer arrows, scythes, broadswords and narrow dueling swords, and kitchen knives rounded out the arsenal of the Risorgimento. Salvadore had two loaded pistols and a Renaissance dagger stuck in his leather belt, and a rifle of the modern type leaning against the barrel barricade in front of him.

A single gun or antique rifle was the best most of the men could muster. Giovanni held an old pistol with a dark wood handle, a much polished, carved horsehead, which spewed out a large caliber bullet of lead. Yesterday, was it only yesterday! Eons ago, he and Simona heated lead in a crucible over the open hearth, carefully pouring the molten lead to mold bullets.

Few of these “Brotherhood of Men” are skilled fighters. Cringing, clinging to the dark shadows of remnant night, more then a few wishing themselves safe in bed. Kneeling here, a genuflection’s habit of protection, knee bones against the cobblestones of impending battle. Defending ideals against Duke’s cutting deals and a tradition of stealing meals, commonwealth held steady and powder ready.

“Nervous punctuation of cannon doom, doom, digging potential tombs for both sides with short fuses which explode lead sporadically, showering percussion plumes, watery flumes, lead fragment and fume across the growing gloom of dawn. Gangway!” Whinnied Clair, making room with his great shoulder, racing Ecol off the ship.

Drinking great draughts of the perfume of land.

Hooves ring against stone as the Austrians, barely out of rifle range, line up for a classic cavalry charge. Well-trained horses stand still and poised on the edge of battle. Rolling whites of eyes, ecstasy disguising terror in champed foam bits and still fit for all the rolling ship, whip ready and sharp steel against commonweal's kneeling zeal. Three ships' full of cavalry now disembarked and semi-circled waiting for the charge.

The Italians once again flexed forefingers against antique triggers, waiting, waiting, quaking at the premonition of their own wakes.

Beads of perspiration now dripping from Giovanni's forehead, filming his eyes red. His shoulders are cramped and stiff as he holds his loaded gun, cocked and aimed in the direction of the cavalry.

A whippoorwill's song; arcing its battle-eager line along the edge of bay, Prussian blue silhouettes of horse and soldier are backlit by burnt orange dawn. Gleaming backlight off metal vests with leather sleeves and boots above the knee. A cooling breeze winds in from offshore, riffling plumed helmets, "Swimming madness, eradicating battle taint of sadness from the turgid air," said Clair.

In the hush before the fight, time stood still, captured on stale sweat inside steel, a liquid envelope encasing the bodies of the men as they sat their horses, trying to free their minds from sentimental thought. Each cavalryman strove to banish wife, sons and lovers, unfulfilled desires, ambitions and plans for future life. The more professional the soldier, the more he sought to free his mind into the unknown Zen koan of emptiness, inviting only the warrior and the killer inside to fight. The fit Austrians were masters of this technique. Immediately sensing their stilled vibrations, the war horses quieted, stood foursquare softly on the bit, confident and steady.

The Brotherhood of the Risorgimento, on the other hand, carried everyone they'd ever loved to the dock basin of impending battle. Sentimental attachments were both obstruction and motivation to survival. The appetites of love and family brought reason to fight, and to retreat, alive, uninjured. Some blinked wet eyes at surprise that rhetorical passion of political cause had fomented this most insane of obsessions strong enough to bring men to this brink of death. Songs of freedom and unification rang tinily in their minds as the impending magnitude of approaching battle overwhelmed family men crouching behind barricades. Nervously, they prayed for both success, and a way out of battle. Films of blood red tension colored their sight as their eyes blinked sore from the intensity of orange light haloing the cavalry.

The Angel of Death hovered nearby, winging a southern breeze downward from the wispy sky. The thin sickle of a new moon faded into pale blue as Mars disappeared into the now blood red horizon.

Film Frames: rouge and rue noir dye over scratched negatives of extremely high resolution until there's another solution for over-population. (The magnitude the splendor the awful fear and progenitor of atomic annihilation). Reading orange light think desert testing in Nevada, the Seychelles, the Marshall Islands then blue white dynamite then diamonds dancing off the retreating waters of the sons and daughters of other times and other waters on the planet enchanted by your thought streams proem poem and astroinertial guidance: It's all your dream.

THE BELLY OF THE HORSE

Johannes sat his red roan Ecol on the front right center of the battle-line, a leading position for the bold mare and rider, who never refused a jump. Her forward stride and bravery pulled more hesitant horses in her wake. Of course, Ecol's white face presented a steadily advancing target for an enemy, but so far, she had never been injured seriously.

A basin of brick cobblestone stretched and dipped for three hundred yards in front of the barricade. Metal-banded wooded barrels and casks were stacked in varying heights from three to six feet high, two to six feet deep. Still full of their original olive oil and wine, or stuffed with beach sand and “grand without a ground line to help the horses’ calibrate the arc of their jump. Pumping legs, the engine of the hindend engaged and waged in deadly service,” added Clair, addled by the sight.

Jigging in nervous passage, then jerked still. The cavalry line faced the barrels, topped with eyes of filigreed rifles which winked ill-promise in the growing light.

“Let the morning sun ruin their sight,” said the Captain. “Then we’ll fight.”

Johannes planned to gallop Ecol within pistol range, then shoot. He understood that he held the advantage in this battle. As a moving target, he would be hard to hit. Johannes was an accurate shot from horseback, pushing Ecol on with his legs, freeing his shooting arm, which he braced with the other arm to steady his aim. Like the Mongols of centuries past, Johannes rode with short stirrups so that he could float high in the saddle, obtaining deadlier account. Johannes preferred the one-on-one battle to the more distant gunpowder warfare. Hand to hand, face to face, saber to saber, clashing, slashing, whaling, lashing, impaling, that was warfare!

“Cropped ears and docked tails in arrears of the sword flashing rash act, quite the fashion, farcical tears, we died laughing, a faraday dark space, tragic around flies,” cried Clair.

In addition to his saber and his medium barreled pistol, Johannes carried a curved scepter in his leather belt, a gift from an Arab. While it was against normal uniform regulations, here in the Provinces dress codes were more lax.

The many armies of Franz Joseph each wore different uniforms to distinguish the numerous companies. The Austrians’ at Livorno wore dark red wool uniforms with crossed white bandoleers, augmented by various body armor. A chest plate, and arm guards over leather gauntlets were practically standard issue.

“Drape and rape,” jiggled Clair, desperate to break the cavalry line and be off. “The cut of cloth, the uniform formed the different troops in individual splendor, swagger, dominance, Rubicund corps and corpses, colored uniform red and bled dry on dust, blown corpulent from heat, the final feat, swollen and uniform stolen.”

Johannes’ well-oiled saddle had a top layer of wax which helped the grip of his leather breeches. Tight black leather boots, above the knee, with 1 inch spurs with rowels hugged the horse and encouraged her forward.

“Encouraged!” Haughtily laughed Ecol. “Silver spurred urge as an impetus to courage. Standing here foursquare and staring at staved barricade, full ‘a whole barrel of rowdy monkeys’ spunk and bored stories of whipped monk’s tonsure of ears to sword, and funk, inactive after ship’s ride on rolling tide and tiresome, damp grain, Mediterranean rain, everyday the same sick swells, a vacation in hell. Now yonder sweet wheat fields to be ascertained and calibrated as war gain. Rowel me not for I shall fly! All baited, waiting gore and gold. Bold and fated not to grow old, no need for silver pain, no barbs and let loose rein for I shall attain and soar the barrels ‘err crossbow arrows fall to brick.”

“What are they waiting for?” Muttered Salvadore. The Livorno men are stiff from standing and hollow from fatigue. They dare not eat, they dare not rest, or even take their sight off the Austrian troops. Terrified, ears riding the imported Comanche Indian cries and whoops of the cavalry, knocking sallow weakly knees from nerves and pleas: please save me. The audio turned up, all sensory apparatus tuned to war.

Vacuity and void, facility and agility gone on nocturne tide

Bright orange thunders heat waves into day, white waves glisten like steel all pearly and reflecting white, whiter, brighter backstream of white green waves, like a dream, floating on the throat of the bay, all fleshy lightstreams like sex involved and glass gleamy notions offshore roaring the machine hum of tidal waters, bridal daughters, fraught with fright on wedding night, anguish and ecstasy of waiting fight, light, lighter, brighter atmosphere and sorrow silver remainders of evolution, reminders of revolution, do the best survive revolving on the ride of earth or die wanting an audience of publicity, appropriation and appreciation, a new nation, under a new time, heralded by rhyme less reason, a reevaluation of the seasons, hot, hotter, blinding light, precipitation on a underwater nation, distort the news about the war, any war and noontide fighting, buying time and materiel, potentials flew from heaven falling into hell on oily sky floating bilge heatwaves, vibrating horizons of fixed stars, the planet Mars, Pluto in fire, billowing heatwaves disguised as resolution, might and mightier, blindsight and hindsight of civilizations wrought by war, in the balance of the chalice and the Christos, Gnosis, and chromatic aberrations brought by thermonuclear vaporization distorting sight across the day, bought by taxed appropriations and donations to the disease of materiel to pay for the material consumption blight white and growing in scintillating waves of repeating crests of days and waves and slaves winking, blinding white light in the eyes of the boys and men behind the barricades of the dock basin of the Bay of Livorno, a City-State in the larger principality of the Tuscan Peninsula on this day the eleventh of May, 1849.

“Define feeling fine?” Said Clair, waiting jiggling jabbed and eliminating.

“I’m just a warbride and ward of redress,” confessed Ecol, “No warranty, know revulsion for this means of repressing revolution, an ocean of lifetimes in a eye, can’t we discuss the alluvial detritus of fluvial motion across basins of emotions before I fly those barrels? For I confess fear I’ll die before I eat sweet golden wheat. On a wing and strum prayers, hum a syllabus of reasons for all wars, redistribution and population reduction, all dressed up to sup on souls harrowing into night, killed in battle’s flight and born back to continue their attack, addled, chattered, saddled up and reined by conditioning of pain and reward, the neuron channels of the brain’s repeated refrains, ah me! Ah life! For the sacredness of life, only, holy, noontide bringing madness, flashing light of passing sadness...fading like the Polestar, the pollster, tamping audiovisual vesicles of fear of audits, standing here, rearing on the wheels of time revolving like the earthside turning, burning molecules and wonder, must we deify, must we decry, afraid of loosing wealth, loosing health and hearth and home, is security then the real enemy, or trace wiring of humanity’s brains which are so filled and confused by patriotic refrains and punishment and pain and sports’ games that we allow oil deviates to hold the reins and reive and reign ‘til melting orbits rain? Sinecure and pox, pox vo biscum...

“Ah, I confess, I love life as it could be, no need to eat and sweet unity of sun and moon.” So reechoed Ecol, waiting to lead flight and die.

The sun is now visible, casting long orange rays across the tepid waves, reflecting fluid, rippling patterns on the shore and cobblestoned area between the two armies. An aura of liquid light, flickering, like firelight, or water mixed with wine, or a basin of wash water tinted by blood, a copper bowl of blood.

The Captain lifts his arm in the salute to a proper enemy. Behind the barricades, the men are flustered and afraid, blinded by the sun. Spurs meet horses’ sides,

no need to coax,

the cautious trot out feeling footing, cantering, the bold jump as one into a gallop, fleet as racers, bits clenched to teeth, necks stressing forward, feet flying fast across brick. The cavalry’s Comanche yells ricochet terrorizing sounds around the copper basin. Horses scream as in a dream, a crescendo, the crest wave of centaurs slipping into darkness.

“I’m galloping on the edge of the world!” Yelled one.

“Never so slow as love, a shower, meteors and sport brush thy curb, slow thy tongue, rushed by liquor to brush awesome obstacle; drum hoofbeats in this safe trot,” said another.

Spurred and thundered, pushed to canter by the hot the dumb.

“I’m almost there, fair wind and God speed,” yelled a third, galloping as a herd. “Uncustomary cross, cobblestones and confusion, jaws of darkness call me lark and art, slipping under madness,” screaming, the horse fell, neck and soul in sadness, broken, tumbling rider in the path of chargers. Another horse galloped relentlessly onward, riderless.

At the barricade, scared men pulled triggers, adding the boom of muzzle-loaders to the screaming melee. Dreaming, dreaming dust and thunder under haze, promise of prosperity dote heat and congealed like blown blood under form and oath, dignity and prayers a shield against waves of cavalry, bearing down the curve of basin, galloping up the otherside, charging foursquare and swearing a quantity of truth at root of hoofbeats counterfeiting death as weeping, weeping on root vision, prosperity, consecration of cries confusion contagious blind discharge

“Hold your fire!” Ranted Salvadore. “Wait until they’re within range. Hold your fire,” he sprouted like a mad man, spitting in the wake of words unheard by the men as the herd surged closer.

Other voices joined the tumult.

Throwing rifles down, peeing in their pants, the defecation of defamation and pain, fear of pain insane, prayers to save me, sweet Jesus save me

The men who had fired too early turned backs to the charge, crouched against the barrels, feeding powder and lead to guns, clumsy in their haste.

The horses gallop onward, first mad rush now collected. Rocking weight back onto hindlegs, settling into deep smooth rides. Horses fly cannon holes and rubble. Another horse falls victim to an immense crater; screams of pain. Now they are within pistol range. Handguns spit fire a phosphorescent trail and rally of lead, ricocheting volleys against the basin valley. Red rouge pox marks rude as men fall vomiting in slick pools of shit and blood. Screams, sirens, calling from the safety of the wheaten shore, the waiting hearse and worse, quiet moans of agony. A craze of cordite smoke like fog across the battleground, cut by the onslaught of horses. The leaders are at the barrels, now.

Ecol first in a burst of kindness pumping blood through veins and mane streaming in the wind of motion, horse ocean rising in unison like the crest of a great wave, flying barrels, flying men, crouched behind them, landing strong and almost immediately, turning to join back into battle. One horse tumbles, two refuse, three blown to night, the rest, enthused by jump now lumped in hand to hand battle.

Giovanni, frozen in awe, the artist’s sight, finger on pistol trigger waiting for clear shot. Time to whisper “What am I doing here? Run, a great cast, glare and faint, I am an artist! Contract of enclosure, not a soldier, much art, yet, to create!” Author, kneeling, gun pointed up to air. Author, jumping in perfect form, form and reform, dissolution, a gun blast, a bee sting, the licensed ring of madness, tenants of the hand of man, foaming like sea tides at the mouth of the month and moths of light fluttering, gun sighting air and flaring a elegiac ship of lead through hip of horse and coursing through Johannes; allusion, the performance of a play at court, tort and report of pistol, chancery suit and tithe and sandpit of ages, spilling out with blood wine and oil from the barrels of the cages of humankind, blind to light, firing wild entry, royal, masterpieces to be painted, innocents abroad a loyal horse now aching quaking tremors cross and hand, “I don’t want to kill!” (Or be killed), mouths Giovanni, firing the pistol up to sky crying measured precepts noblest grace a companion trace both diligent and lazy sprays down visitation and gown sponged in fresh fresh blood and pulp flesh a jewel dower of war war scenario and shower uniform dark red

Johannes, a madman hashishi assassin on a white-faced roan, galloping straight at Giovanni. Sitting back, spit and polish black booting mareside, poised for plunder, sordid air gushing by on lead fire hesting red red sex only sex is better vesture and moon cry lunacy, transparent clarity, the verity of soldier voluntarily chauvinistic voluptuary of the sleek hair of horses sensualistic skin of peaches plush blush (babies christened at the marble font) come over here my dear let me cover you with my thighs your sighs subcontinent and awe, level, lethal, sublime, in perfect line for jump red against white and sitting tight, clenching a scimitar, plural blue and brine the wind on sky steel arm aligned to swing its razor blade, oh you gorgeous Ecol launches us into a magnificent jump, suspirated and suspended the law's delay Ariel defers discussion of gravity invincible domain extended over barrel barricade, over crying Giovanni with his pistol aimed at sky, Johannes in the air on the back of his great flying mare, swinging blade kill to wit whippoorwill slash fast purchase and through, decapitating the man beside Giovanni. Long live sick at heart, the artist. Ecol and Johannes land, leisurely and grand, seeping leave and weaving, lectern on their stage of land.

The decapitated head flew off, dripping blood and brains over leavened sand and landed in rose bushes. Found, home foam loam limerick and mad dog degeneracy machismo and masochism the love of punishment sweet whips three corsair ships floating after the sound of waves retreat, head nestled in a halo of sweet-smelling roses. Pullulated fennel, the birth channel, Queen Anne's lace and trace particles of a surprised look frozen on the face by rigor mortis, as yellowjackets plucked at the eyes and flies feasted on reasons for treason.

Leavened heaven leathered hand i died to dream again

“Is war, then, treason to the humanrace?” Asked Clair, who lived to fare wars fairly, a dichotomy, gentlemen blowing brains out. “For trade, ages of civilization, great nations, all are born and warmed in copper bowls of blood. Does it take the ache of annihilation to teach us all to love?”

Two rude simultaneous surroundsound and still still suspirating expiating genuine jump depiction sought in poetry and fiction. It's a wonder Nini'll ever get on a horse again, so much as jump, all of this lumped in her throat and voting for print versitude. “Remember your bodhisattva vow,” whispered down the Lama. Been there, seen that hang your head on words. “You'll fly on me,” whispered M. Kundalini. “Fluid wonder flow magic incantation predestination transfiguration and lucid lullaby of splendiferous levitation. Words cannot compare the absolute, we're rooted here in madness only to know the equal opposite, clarity, lux fixed flux luminance and luxurious illusion. Think what it will be NOW.”

Recapitulation of fragmentation struggling to be unification: even as the Austrian cavalryman, Johannes swung his scimitar, horse Ecoled geometry jumping over Giovanni, Giovanni's pistol went off, sending its whole chunk of lead into the underside of the jumping horse. Later, it would be discovered that the bullet, shot into its target at point blank range, traveled through the belly of the horse and out her left hip. The bullet then entered the tail end of Johannes, where it severed his spine. Noble Ecol felt a searing pain in her hip, even as she completed her jump in perfect form. Johannes, unbalanced on her back, first the scimitar attack, then the mutual causality of bullet track, slumped to Ecol's left side. She swerved to compensate, trying to right him in the saddle. The man with decapitated head was quite dead. Giovanni Fattori went on to create art that predated and inspired Impressionism, the planar angles of Cezanne, and the block painting and perspective of abstract Modern Art. Never heard of him, sing hymn to unity of nations and a paid press which addresses issues of Aesthetics. Holography? Searching for holographic art?

Heart exploding with love, bow the head and nod, Scheherazade, a Horse! Weaving roan throne and memory,
purpose, blood toll nobly got, sunspots, cavalry's ghat, sport nature's laws are the jaws of our successive
thought

“Bullet crushing through my spine, trembler, the follow-through of scimitar twists me left left listing unbalanced,”

chalice broken through the foot of the Gods, down and in saddle battle all around.

Good Ecol swerves to compensate,

the shivering shocks, my lover, sweet mare mother saves me, a measure of gait, then wait, as I slowly lie down upon the ground, numb sift sand and fallow, the gift of a shallow fall what hallowing their wills their law for my dear sake you take it all and bawl, gentle tumble, brawl, red, then white, then black spirit, nature, mured milder, multure for horse a horse of culture cake and barn overblown burdened words glace' and harm, gladiator gone to arms, flown to bones, roan throne and opponent known glissando and merciless sleep sleep sleep...

“Heart exploding with love, standing here, weaving, leaving trails of blood on brick and sand, spilled wine, vinegar in the sun and flies, my master’s hand leveled heaven, leathered hand, lying by my side groaning in cacophony with the dyings’ cries, where’s the syllabus of reason in this and thus, Phowa, my Lama, my hip shattered shock and no blame, no pain, a lucky aim, aimless weaving, heaviness shake it off and yield, field of wheat here tearing whelp and yelping slaves potent spirit wafting delicate life and plot, hot, grains of wheat ah so, so sweet, still, still so still, the chill, I cannot eat...”

Ecol stood, trembling, covered in white foamy sweat, left hind held off the ground like a stringhalt horse.

Slow motion film footage, reincarnating and recreating lifetimes of impressions compressed into the space between time. Giovanni deaf with the horrific music of war, the waves upon the shore, gunshot and shout and so the lion vanished, a crescent moon, a movie company on vacation from Rome, polyphonic ages and total terror slimy and insensate, a headless body a perfectly natural carcass decorated with a necklace of yellowjackets, drinking from the wound, a band of yellow against red, brick and sand buzzing, crooning flies mating, copulating, encompassing all of Giovanni’s vision, obscenely demanding & demeaning, the female fly laying eggs in severed flesh just meat, murder cries on buzzing wings, crows cawing shotgun’s report, the male fly fighting another fly, Kawa Paltseg at Buddhist-Bonpo debates, cutting off his head and putting it back on again, Giovanni shaking his head and slapping his own face trying to erase his stupor.

“Heighten your sensation,” wired Zola to the Associated Press, “Phasic play begs stages of ages. Orderly war rules insupportable, mourn, fecund mea culpa have mercy on me,” moaned Giovanni.

Blindfold ransom, cargo, great oath of guilt and drum enemy the devil disguised as man. Dispersion desertion floodgate and fate hold wait cold weight, a solitary debate on decomposing chimera, sand, spilt olive oil and red wine on killed man, i killed him

Giovanni moaned, lost in a buzzing envelop of his own time while the battle raged around him. Directly behind the headless carcass, a lame horse stood nuzzling her downed rider.

Standing in the field of rippling wheat, all gloss and gold, waving, weaving, the great horse, at a loss, not eating

“We have stopped believing in God, but not in our own immortality,” wired Zola to Turner News Service.

“Sweat Mother of God,” prayed Giovanni, usually an agnostic in a Catholic country. “Hail Mary, holy Mother, hail Murderer, (sieg heil),” he said over and over in a litany of great waves of catholic guilt. He’d murdered a man! Nameless misery, murderer, muses gone on leave, semibreve, muttering and more prayer, but the corpse still lay

dead, puddled at the feet of a charger. Here's muddled Giovanni, phlegm dripping from nostrils, tears coursing his filthy cheeks, praying half-notes on the mystical mystery of murderer, taken a life, stolen it from wife, family, or lover, brother, his own heart skipping beats in semi-shock, red! Life, life, dead, life, life, fear, life, life, dear, the ecstasy of sorrow, 'til, dismayed, sorely, standing there and dazed, he'd had enough of battle, of killing. Better to end his days as servant of Dukedoms then continue killing in the name of freedom. Even as he was praying, the dead man, nuzzled in the face by his bleeding horse, groaned and flung his arm over his eyes.

"I've had enough, to," said Ecol. "Screw you, prayers, platitudes and rude petitioning of sorrow. Apropos your dual deathblow, my man might see tomorrow."

"He's alive, oh, thank you, thank you thank you," breathed Giovanni, who hurried to the fallen man. He would save him! He had a mission, a more important job than battle.

The fallen cavalryman struggled to awake again. " 'care of horse," he rasped, then he was swimming against a pale green pool, thick with algae that sucked him down into its depths. Waves, tsunami waves, an empty copper basin, a bowl of blood and screaming green sucked out from shore, then roared over all the earth and verdant, turning.

Giovanni was in a strange mood, full of light and grace, oblivious and invincible to the battle which still raged all around him. Exalted, from a murderer to a God in moments. Giovanni's childhood was rich with horses. Caparisons trapped in beauty and grace, "to bid the wind" (Shakespeare) a race or play, or simply grazing, lazing in pastures on serious business. Bud shadow and lament, thorns ruin, battle's reign, golden words on pistol still stuck to hand, the hand of man, plunged black with powder, spilling powder into metal horn and hole.

The noble Ecol still stood, weaving gratitude and compassion on her intelligent white face. White face to death gladly, Giovanni, no guilt nor gilt with burdens of this place, simple stars, meadow grass and sward for sword and green, free of dust! Powder, cry freedom.

Giovanni, cramping gun and noting the large hole in Ecol's belly, emoting long mass of her intestines, severed and bleeding, Ecol, you are leaving inside out and it is clear and full of doubt. Denouncement of your wound: my bullet has expelled at hewn top of your left hip, stealing smashed bone and shredded cartilage in its trajectory to sullen air and sponged red. Adrenaline kicked Giovanni, adrenaline and fear and guilt and sorrow pressed against his chest breathless, hyperconscious, planting oblivion, courage stung by tremble, semblance, deride scour aconite and trust, no time, fumble, trance, elevation, where words earlier rode revolution, now sucking air, unsaddling mare, whispering nonsensical, scared musical phrases to the horse as he bumbled buckles, apologizing, weeping, an artist with a gun in his hand.

Sandy here, thought Ecol, thoughtforms waving out on rays of light, lightest, splendor and compassion, no comparison, kind acceptance, no blame, a bit of beach, a breeze, a hill of roses for a shade, dream of green and all gloss blue

fluid, light, already seeping for I was sleeping and now I wake

Giovanni, aching, flustered and frantic, baking sweat and weaving with the gun a paintbrush, a rush of reasons, sea rushes waving in salt pools i am a fool drowning in your deep eyes, karuna, karuna, compassion come over here and still my cries, men's lies, lie by my side cover me with your mouth, Simona! A gun's tongue, frosted white and empty glaze now drowning in drums beating repetitive illusions, dissolution, release, Yamantaka take nourishment come karma, come come carnage, every death an Armageddon

FORGIVEN! said Ecol now all hymns and streaming white

Out the corner of his own eye, Giovanni saw Salvadore waving a fine white damask tablecloth on a broom handle.

Bid them leave quaking in trembling ecstasy,
A sheeny star,
a myrtle grave,
to horn and hound,
muses mourning shorn of sage.

(“On a revolving stage,” said Ecol.
“For I’ll be born back,
I’ll be born back,
faithful hack
and poesy herald
of a New Age.”)

INTERLUDE, A Separate Chapter (A Return to LUST FOR LIGHT)

Film Frames: Intime intoned in time, flickering across the face of the human race

“Beauty, truth and rarity...leaving no posterity” wired Shakespeare to Warner Communications.

“Gone was the need for mythical, historical, religious, patriotic, or epoch-making subject matter. The optical impressions of an artist-self at a given moment were quite enough,” wrote Daniel Boorstein of the Impressionists in “The Creators.”

“Okay,” said Clair. “You’ve made your point, nationality is treason to the human race and horses, racing through war courses, are sacrifice to manmade strife. Beauty is often unrecognized in its own time of creation. Hecatomb for Hecumen...”

Vincent Van Gogh stirred in his absinthe reverie, yawning dream chasms, the hand of man

“Vincent saw painting as a spiritual means of expression, a literature of sorts, written in colors and lines,” wrote Emile Bernard for the *Mercure De France*.

(pg. 92, Van Gogh, a Retrospective.)

The restaurant bar, La Tambourin went to ruin, the place sold off, Vincent’s flower paintings in a pile, sold as scrap for a laughable sum.

“Surroundings, family love home money country patriotism are all treason to a painter. Nationality is treason, universality is one mind mother, brother, lover, all others all entwined in the enlightened aspects of the mind,” said Nini Tantrini. Muses, take a bow: Mnemosyne, Pegasus on Parnassus, ridden by Apollo, Saraswati and Yeshe Tsogyel, the Gangi Devi, Paul Twitchell, Mahantas and Mahatmas, Malfeasance and Morpheus, Calloso a Cavallo (horny on horseback).

(Apologue apocryphal apocalypse)

Broken glass, unable to reflect even the most limited light

“A Hecatomb,” boomed M. Kundalini, sick of being locked up in his backyard stall, “is, 1. (in ancient Greek and Rome) a public sacrifice to the Gods. 2. any great slaughter. A Hegumen is the head of a monastery. More about him, later? Now let me out the sun shines gilt on sweet rye and fleet...”

“The heir to the town’s economy, the poet of the loom, the shy thin man of music the second string horse, the foresoul of a painter, all, all are sacrificed as the forerunners of the Italian Risorgimento, the unification of a country. The avant-garde is always sacrificed and ruined, forgotten on the passage of time. The avant-garde is smashed for daring to offer the working glimpse of the future which, in time becomes the standard of the middle, massive consciousness of the greater body of men,” said Clair, who always has to have the last word.