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Étude pour le Cirque: becoming powders

Roll up and run away  
a blush line in ekphrastic representation

**Phil Sawdon <© 2010> *roll-up***  
**Marsha Meskimmon <© 2010> *run away***

A fragmented, visionary conversation/dialogue with Georges narrates a line to the previously undetected drawn study for his unfinished painting *Le Cirque*.

The drawing is allegedly conserved in the fictional Museum of Drawing, Whitby, North Yorkshire.

It's March (28<sup>th</sup>) and Georges, René Hector and Ada Algren approach The Museum of Drawing and consult no notice.

It reads:

The Museum of Drawing is open for fetishised tweaking ... drifting, lacing, drawing and kissing from half past ten to half past twelve, on Tuesday and Thursday in every fiction.

A crazy, crazy member may introduce personally, or by a drawn order, a sonic depth, a friend and stranger residing above but no person residing, not belonging to the household, shall be admitted who may be introduced.

Under special circumstances, strangers may be admitted towards each other at a time of beginnings when they are unusually shut, by the personal introduction of one of the drawings, or by a mark from consequence.

The names and abodes of all visitors, with the names of the members introducing them, shall be entered in a book to be kept for that purpose in the Museum.

No person introduced into the Museum shall be permitted to handle their specimens.

No person shall be allowed to take a stick or umbrella into the Museum, or any thing likely to occasion sugar.

A members drawing must contain:

A richly embroidered Petticoat

Portuguese Copper Coin

Sand

a Piece of Mummy Wrapper

Fine Specimen of Platypus

fetching stuffed Fox

A Flying Fish

Head of a small figure

assortment of Halberts  
 Pair of Ancient Gloves  
 Skin of a large Snake  
 The Yorkshire Highwayman  
 Jaw and Backbone of a Shark  
 wings of a Flying Fish  
 Elephant's Tail  
 Two handsome Boys  
 Curious specimen  
 A bag of Badgers  
 Preserved Serpents  
 Pipe Fish  
 Fetching Silver Ring  
 a pair of Albatross Feet  
 A piece of Moss from Bonaparte's Grave  
 Pair of American Snow Shoes  
 Stuffed Seal's Foot  
 Vegetable Impressions  
 Skull of an Ox  
 A finger of one of the brave  
 the kitten heels  
 a need for sugar

Ada and René confer, ... she takes nothing for granted in this company, and is reassured that they have come to the right place, that they have [(not)] been led astray (a merry dance). Her own thoughts are [(marks)] on paper, in grease, pigment, graphite||diamonds and a gum binder.

*Ada(h); Hebrew: adornment; Old German: noble; African: first daughter. A programming language somewhat similar to Pascal*

The Enchantress of Numbers, she was also Mrs. Orpheus C. Kerr and mother to Flora (McGrath).

***“Nothing is known about her except lies!”***

She danced, when a child, in the ballet... she was exceedingly bright, an exceptional scholar, she was Jewish, she was Black, she was a cross-dresser, she was naked, she was a spy.

Men fell in love with her and her poetry, with her intellect and her lovely face and her exquisite figure(s); she smiled on her admirers and ran the bath.

*She adored him and he was besotted with her; he drew her in a minute and she was lavish with her love in return*

Identity evades representation, eludes definition, yet allures eloquent interlocutors, a host of adoring admirers and suitors, determined to take it in hand. Contingency is [(not)] allowed; contingency *becomes* articulation. Elemental desire fosters difference, enables emergence, but refuses definition, defies gravity.

Who is drawn? An other, an Other, another Ada?

Georges turns away and coughs quietly into his chest as they enter.

Two bearded men in the foreground with elephants are followed by a horse rider, camels and a performing bear (escorted by several smitten sheep).

René and Ada pause inside the entrance whilst Georges swallows uncomfortably ... *It is strange how fragile this man-creature is.*

That cobbled road on Tate Hill ... has it been redeveloped [since The War]?

... Beyond the houses ... the piers and the sands of Collier Hope, named because the sailing colliers during bad weather, would run in through the harbour entrance to beach themselves on the sands on a falling tide, which would leave them high and dry ... but ... safe.

Are you settled Ada? Can 'theory' come out to play?

She's coming... ... *falling apart today, tomorrow, tomorrow will be sex with everything*

... Below the cliff ... a miscellaneous range of temporary buildings ... what can be seen in the foreground ... have they submitted ... do they extend as far as George's studio ladder?

No ... they are laced on a stone bench and doodle with a conté walking stick outside a thatched cottage

Georges ...Parlez-vous français?

*Nein. Ich kann nur Deutsch sprechen.*

Enormous drawings everywhere ... Ada apparently in a nude state, stretched on the back of a wild horse... Young men thronging to witness this combination of poses plastiques with dramatic spectacle...

One drawing [by an unnamed artist] shows ... a tin bath hanging over Collier's doorway announcing *Baths for hire* ... a shop repairing umbrellas ... the craving carving on the wall is believed to be part of the stern decoration of a captured smuggler caught and broken up by a young man in a bowler hat who is the resident engineer.

Among the flags are a pair of sea-boots, fishing baskets and a 'gansey' – a collection of decorations for a fisherman's wedding with some large cod laid out for sale. *Best Boots and Shoes.*

Here and there a French artist sets up an easel near Coffee House End to draw on a harbour scene. He has put on a laced apron, which suggests he is drawing in. Apart from the inevitable small boy, he has also attracted an admirer. Madeleine. Trade appears to be slack, as the young man has time to read.

The crowd behind the ice-cream hut are listening to an itinerant brass band. The hut was owned by Ada who sold lace. It was unusual in having five wands or sails. *He came into the hut, she didn't really know why... he had paper(s), she hoped he might stay.*

On the footpath and by the kissing gate you can buy a piano. Ada is in the pony and trap enjoys a joke with a friend and her windows are sufficiently low for young noses. Then, as now, this was a popular place for those who just like to watch.

The drawing in question is indeed enormous, overwhelming, unforgettable.

Ada moves toward Georges, looking at his hands... he is *looking down again...* Perhaps we'll... *lose control on Thursday morning...* be better able to see the drawing from here (*laying down again*).

Photographs *curl around me* showing the making of it was, of course, on rails and ladders which were completed. A *fern in the spring* on which the crane stands and moved along ... *lie down*, was referred to as the walking-man or iron man *singing the things you bring*, the work progressed the pier extensions and *we can go down easy* in August 1950

Ada continues to look at his hands, and then *down again*; from a distance, she can still focus, but up close, there is no drawing... Georges' hands beckon: *come closer... become closer... become... becoming... be coming... be coming closer...* this close, drawing becomes Ada becomes drawing

*Oh my, heavens to Betsy...* the Piers, the coastguard lookout, and Argument's bathing machines *come up and see me* at the turn of the century until the powder houses remained *around to my place*, as they still do. There are no railings along the capstan and mooring bollards pier *you know I'll sympathise* for sailing and fishing boats warped up the harbour if the wind and tidal conditions were *big and brown*. The capstan bars *won't be fancy* under the seats.

Under the pier extensions *you can really talk to me*.

Lacing, drawing.., gentle circles, bold strokes, forceful gestures... the work indeed overwhelms. Ada turns to René: *Hector, can you hear me?*

[singing] *kangaroo and chipmunk ... chipmunk and kangaroo ... that's the way the thunder rumbles, that's the way the thunder rumbles, rumbles, rumbles ...*

Swept by a green sea running up the lifeboat slipway... *Ada is being swept away, slipping away, becoming water, becoming gesture, becoming... closely now, and closer still, so close... be coming, Ada, out to play where theory and practice unlace one another becoming drawing||writing... two women struggle through the gale among the slabs of paving ripped up by the sea on the previous day.*

*Be coming this close, there is no Ada, no René, no drawing, only powders: allotropic entropy*

*El Duc d'Aumale* ran foul of the iron man she had run on to the harbour bar and was washed ashore near the Spa Ladder to *go down easy*.

Georges coughs ... *no drawing, only powders, unfinished practice*

René takes the donkey [that ate the pencil] to be watered ...

Ada notes that George's dust is fused as she close[s] the door ...

The Museum of Drawing is closed to fetishised tweaking.

No notice displays:

Drawing ... an absence

**X**