

MANGUS THE MOTHERFUCKER

***A Play
By***

Murray Mednick

The Stage: A misty area, upstage darkened — where the actors enter and exit. A large screen for projections.

CHARACTERS:

MANGUS: The Motherfucker.

LARK: His wife.

DAVID: A lost soul.

MR. MORRIS: A local resident.

MR. and Mrs. REED. Locals.

ROY ZINC: Another local.

A POICEMAN.

A JAGUAR PRIEST.

VOICE OFF: In Italics.

The Universe is a scenario of non-simultaneous and only partially overlapping transforming events.

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MANGUS: Here we are on the Event Horizon, where all falls down and nothing is ever seen again.

LARK: Where does it go?

MANGUS: No one knows.

LARK: What's taking so long?

MANGUS: It takes Time. Passing through worlds. Another world, another cosmos. Look. *(Projection)* Tidy streets and happy homes. The ideal America. 1947. I was eight years old.

LARK: Never true, never the case. We were poor outcasts then and before then and before that and now, holding fast to our position. Keeping balance, some sort of equilibrium in the face of disaster.

MANGUS: Bodies collapse into spiraling fragments, into nothing.

LARK: We don't know, do we?

MANGUS: We do not. And yet I strive. Holding fast. An ideal. A way of life. A marriage.

LARK: Electrons become spirals, which disappear. Nobody knows where it goes.

MANGUS: System 's down. We need a map, a document, an image, a sound.

LARK: A closeup, a message, a portal, a pattern.

MANGUS: A Temple, a scroll. *(Ancient Music.)*

LARK: What's taking so long.?

MANGUS: Progreso, Yucatan.

LARK: Is what? A destination? A world?

MANGUS: A memory. Little Mayans coming to town with their bundles and wares. A walled compound. We were subsidized by the State. No, it was the Guggenheim

Foundation. A livelihood guaranteed, upright, intact, except when I went on a spree, if I remember right, stealing vouchers in Campeche.

LARK: Thought that was you.

MANGUS: Yes.

LARK: *(Out)* Well, it's somewhat of a mystery. Off he went to the North, on a sailboat, I think it was.

MANGUS: Yes, it was. On a boat. A ferry.

LARK: Was that you, Mangus?

MANGUS: It was.

LARK: Say more.

MANGUS: Well, it was an affirmation in a way. Travelers checks. American Express. Driving along the coast in my pick-up truck with my dog, Spot, smoking weed and drinking the Irish Whiskey that I got from Moyo. The whiskey and Lucky Strikes. Moyo ran that aspect of the town, sitting in the corner of the café rendering goods and services to the wandering gringos and their addictions.

LARK: What was the affirmation?

MANGUS: I was affirming myself. That I could do something. Pull it off, you know. We had a group once. You were there. On the Lower East Side. We were Anarchists, we meant business. The Motherfuckers.

LARK: I remember. The park and the river.

MANGUS: Some gave their lives. Drugs and the cops. All dead now, though a few have disappeared, vanished into the mist.

LARK: And the Yucatan?

MANGUS: We had an outpost there. Not really. We meant no harm. Remember Moyo? He was Arab. Lebanese. Kindly, but bigoted. Definitely a hard-ass. Sitting in the corner of the cafe like a dumpy god. *(Photo)*

LARK: Did he admire the angry gringos?

MANGUS: He acted as though he did.

Anything you want. All you have to do is ask; a week, ten days, it's yours.

Thanks a lot.

MANGUS: And he'd come through, you know, with a carton of Luckies, a bottle of Irish, cubes of hash. Good memories in the Yucatan.

LARK: I got lost in the jungle around *Chitzen-Itza*. *(Photo)* Jaguars were there in those days.

MANGUS: Still are.

LARK: Bad memories. Fuck that shit.

MANGUS: No angry talk now. Not now, Lark. We need to deal with the gravity of the situation. Not the time just now. Can't fuck with the Gravity.

LARK: Don't lecture me.

MANGUS: It's like pedaling a bicycle on ice. Need to keep straight up and balanced and don't tip right or left. Can't slide or break your ride.

LARK: Where are we now?

MANGUS: Hovering on the edge of black gravity itself. *(Sound)* Perhaps another dimension, in another body.

LARK: Repent, Motherfucker.

MANGUS: I'm sorry for everything I ever said or thought. Everything that I saw or heard or acted upon. All the lies and pretensions and faces and lies, the noise of falling or rising, grinding, pounding, stars colliding. Monsters in the mist, shining like spirits. The fog of war. Murder in the villages and towns. Murder in the household. Murder in the faces of love.

LARK: Murder in speech.

MANGUS: Fuck, man.

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LARK: Right. The love obsessions, the lust obsessions, the gullibility. Married women.

MANGUS: Yes. I regret that so much. Best friends' wives and all that. We couldn't see the consequences. Haunts me to this day. I'm so sorry.

LARK: Never mind.

MANGUS: Keep on keeping on and don't be afraid. And don't let up if you slip and fall, you get up again and trudge on, stay on course, or you're gone, lost in the event horizon.

LARK: Another world.

MANGUS: Like was said, I don't think so.

LARK: What, then? (*SOUND*)

MANGUS: Nothing then. Excuse me.

LARK: Yes?

MANGUS: Did you take care of the car?

LARK: I took care of the car.

MANGUS: Did you feed the kids?

LARK: I fed the kids.

MANGUS: What did you feed them?

LARK: Birds in their nests.

MANGUS: Very good.

LARK: Melons and mice.

MANGUS: And the fighting?

LARK: I stopped the fighting.

MANGUS: How so?

LARK: I threw them into the fire. Into the no-time zone. They sang their death songs and vanished.

MANGUS:: They will return.

LARK: When?

MANGUS: I don't know when. Through a portal. They'll come back in through one of those.

LARK: Ah, as the story goes: we tried and tried and eventually we lost, crapped out, bowed down, paid our dues and skipped town. *(Pause)* I have to ask – whose voice is this, singing of homicide that can't be undone? Of children thrown away like trash?

MANGUS: It's yours.

LARK: And you?

MANGUS: Ah. Well. He crawls back into his thoughts and wonders: a sperm and an egg, a spark of electricity, forming a mechanism that thinks, that remembers itself and knows what to do next. Memories: The Yucatan, the walled compound, the little Mayans arriving with their goods, their gifts, their solemnity. Progreso. Port silted up, a blue haze over the ocean. Ancient sacrifice in the forest. Skulls fractured on the stones, blood on the stones. Frozen in time like endless wounds, ripe and red.

LARK: If there's another world there, what would it be like?

MANGUS: Jusr like this one. *(Bangs his stick.)*

LARK: We could see the kids then, cavorting in the living room.

MANGUS: Did they go to school today on their bikes?

LARK: An interesting image, children on bikes, racing to school, laughing and shouting, and there on the hill waits the school, stony and sunny. Maple trees, perfect sidewalks, brand new cars, American cars, can't be beat.

MANGUS: Bums on the street, shit all over the place, lost hope, the Evil eye. Brother gimme a dollar. Give me a dollar or I'll cut your throat. He's brandishing a shiny machete. Where'd you get that fuckin' thing?

None of your fuckin' business whiteboy.

MANGUS: Lark?

LARK: What?

MANGUS: They have lunch at school?

LARK: You bet they do.

MANGUS: That's good. Dangerous out there. Kids kidnapped for sex and money.

LARK: Sex, money and tortuous revenge. Where are we now?

MANGUS: Six miles to the west. Five fathoms down. High above the horizon, miles away from where we started. When we had an identity and a reason for living. No. We're in a foggy place in a different zone, where anything can happen.

LARK: Everything has happened already.

MANGUS: Why do you say that?

LARK: I don't know why. I feel the time passing. I feel like we're running out of time. I feel like everything is taking too long.

MANGUS: We could go any which way now but its violence holds us back for the moment.

LARK: Violence?

MANGUS: Yes, and we had best be alert.

LARK: I am.

MANGUS: Did you walk the donkey today?

LARK: I walked the donkey.

MANGUS: Did you perform fellatio today?

LARK: Not today. I'll suck your dick anytime you want. Just ask.

MANGUS: But you never do.

LARK: You don't ask right.

MANGUS: It was all a ploy.

LARK: I'm not a prostitute, I'm not a whore.

MANGUS: Nobody said so.

LARK: Yeah, yeah.

MANGUS: And nobody thinks so.

LARK: I feel faint at the moment, like the gravity has changed.

MANGUS: Hang on.

LARK: I am hanging on.

MANGUS: What's my name?

LARK: Mangus, the Motherfucker.

MANGUS: What's my cause?

LARK: King of the universe. And I?

MANGUS: You sing. You have a sweet voice and a wet cunt and I could swallow you alive. Like a Jaguar.

LARK: Hold right there and don't fall down.

MANGUS: Yes. And to remember. Like a walled compound in the Yucatan, Jaguars and birds of prey appear, birds with three wings and long beaks, beaks a foot long. *(Jungle sounds.)* Everything is electricity and nobody knows where it goes, spiraling into the void, or another cosmos, nobody knows.

LARK: I was there. And in New York City. We had a canary that sang.

MANGUS: The cat ate the canary. *(SOUNDS of N.Y. City)* The bank was around the corner. On the other corner was an elementary school. The park was up the street. My nephew was dying. Ned destroyed the apartment. It was alcohol that did it. We pulled the plug on the kid and then Ned the sonofabitch destroyed the apartment. *(SOUNDS of windows smashing.)*

LARK: Ned?

MANGUS: His fuckin' name was Ned. Broke all the fuckin' windows.

LARK: Who knows what to say about all this?

MANGUS: I don't.

LARK: Struggling in the past, suffering in the past, living on the edge?

MANGUS: We'd find a bar finally and sit down and get a drink finally and you'd say *Ah, at last*, so we could forget the whole thing for a minute. The horror we couldn't quite digest, so it's a film now, a picture-show in the mind.

LARK:(*Out*) Mangus the motherfucker, he ended up dead you know in a doorway. Nobody gave him a dime. He had no shirt on, his pants were oily, and his mouth hung open, showing his rotten teeth. I saw him in a play one time, on the Bowery, and he had this monologue, which happened in the Yucatan:

MANGUS: Wait, bitch.

LARK: Don't hate me now. What's the fucking point? You were fucking someone else the whole time. It wasn't me at all, and yet you complained, like all assholes, you complained with your eyes, with your mouth, the way you stood in the hallway, that insolent posture.

MANGUS: Complained about what?

LARK: About not getting laid.

MANGUS: You sucked my dick to entrap me and then you went off god knows where -- nothing in your eyes. No love there.

LARK: Silver and gold in those eyes, There's a thin line of silver there and gold shines like a dot where your pupils should be. You're not here. You never are.

MANGUS: That's true. Preoccupied. With memory and thoughts, and images appearing.

LARK: In my own life, too.

MANGUS: How does love end?

LARK: Does it ever end? I don't think so. Even a shadow, even a hint.

MANGUS: Maybe not.

LARK: No.

MANGUS: Maybe it exists in time. Just a matter of time.

LARK: It's taking too long.

MANGUS: Be patient.

LARK: I am.

MANGUS: Sing a song.

LARK: No. I 'll tell you my dream. If you'll pay attention, motherfucker.

MANGUS: Okay, go.

LARK: And in walks a killer – he's got a Jaguar mask and body armor and a machine gun -- he barricades himself into a classroom, holy shit he says, I can do what I want, while the dumb police wait outside.

MANGUS: Texas. The cornball state, where everybody is Americanized. Guns in the street, moronic fantasies.

LARK: So the cops stand outside while our boy opens fire and kills nineteen ten-year-olds and two teachers. All immigrants from Mexico with Mexican names. Why were you guys standing around outside?

Well, we didn't know.

We thought it was over.

We thought it was on the other side, in another building.

LARK: You stupid fuck, you're dumb and terrified. You're looking right at it.

We didn't know.

LARK: You're dumb and Americanized, lost in Cowboy films, where the bystanders don't intervene while the shootout happens in the street and the Mexicans and Indians fall wildly off their horses.

MANGUS: Right!

LARK: You dumb fucks. I hope you die a thousand deaths. *(Pause)* The police were hanging around wondering what to do. I hope they go on trial and hang. I hope they die.

MANGUS: You hope everybody dies, Lark.

LARK: Everybody *does* die.

MANGUS: Okay, go on, Lark.

LARK: I'm done, now. I'm done. We're somewhere else now, in another world. It's called:

DREAMS OF AN ANCIENT RACE

LARK: You go first.

MANGUS: It's nightmares, mainly, Lark.

LARK: Is what?

MANGUS: Waking up sullen. Vague, disappointing imagery, slightly wet in your pants. And still the day is ahead of you.

LARK: Not much of a day. A long night, maybe. Got to cleanup. Tend to the children. I want to weep, for the the way it is, the way things are, and I will, like the murderess goddess of the night in Teotihuacan – shed her tears of blood. Your turn, Motherfucker.

MANGUS: Okay. *(Out)* The boy feels hurt, abused. He goes into the dense forest feeling sorry for himself, angry. This powerful inner turmoil becomes his friend. He doesn't let go of it for a long time. Later, when they turn on him, he goes into himself for his friend. Their habitation is a grinding death machine from which there is no escape, a forestry of implacable temptation. But thoughts of copulation are now tinged with repugnance. A sense of swinish helplessness – he has become the victim of unspeakable husbandry, a farm animal.

LARK: *(Out)* All faces are now false faces, masking a secret suffering, a blind, useless sorrow, a violent disgust. The faces talk. They can't stop talking.

I didn't do it.

I didn't mean to do it.

I'll never do it again.

MANGUS: There's no time to breathe. The ashtrays fill with blackening blood. He hangs his head in shame.

LARK: Suddenly she catches herself in a lie. It's a machination from childhood, a familiar pose. There's arrogance in it, and ferocity. She hears it in her voice. It's all out there on the table, like a writhing lizard with bright red eyes and a forked tongue. It will follow her through the long night ahead.

LARK: Hi! The frightened boy says.

MANGUS: Hello!

Name 's Ned.

LARK: No! Ned fell into the Gowanus canal — bad fentanil in a hot shot did him in. Shit came all the way from Mexico.

Name 's Moyo!

MANGUS: I don't think so. Banged though the head by a Persian spy. God knows why.

Oh!

MANGUS: My name is Mangus. I'll start. Pay attention.

Okay!

MANGUS: It's a dream. We were driving. We drove on a highway to the top of the world, up into the sky. How could such a road have ever been built? On we climbed. The ascent became vertical, straight up. I gasped for breath. I thought, "This car doesn't have the power for this, this car will fall off the road." We hung in the balance, on the edge of falling. "Why have they put this highway here, this must be some kind of test." "No, this is a tourist road, this is for sightseers." Was it a mountain, or a city made of rock? We were heading for the highest point of all the cities of all the worlds.

Thank you.

LARK: I'll do one now. It's called *The American Town*. You want to imagine – the yellow lighting, weeds along the railroad tracks, red brick walls, the store windows, the drunk on Main Street, parking meters. A waning afternoon on the edge of town. A shiny car goes by. We know the nickname of the driver. He cruises in his Oldsmobile slowly through his town and down the road. It's as though his eyes are in his chest or on the fenders of his car. The radius of his vision includes the road, the telephone poles, the last houses right and left. Boundries from his boyhood. He is keeping something hidden which is known by everyone in town. He takes it with him down the road and into the woods.

Applause.

MANGUS: He is a Seeker the likes of whom has never been seen in all the worlds, the stars above and the stars below. He cannot be seen with ordinary eyes. Woman next door. She's attractive. Husband 's a fathead. Likes cherry bombs and talks loud on the phone.

LARK: Keep your pants on.

MANGUS: It's electricity, it's all in the electromagnetism of everything. Desire.

LARK: Yeah, yeah.

MANGUS: Otherwise it's — you can't explain it. Lovely woman. Two kids.

LARK: Leave it alone.

MANGUS: Where are the children now?

LARK: Swimming.

MANGUS: There's water in the pool?

LARK: Of course there's water in the pool. Uh, oh.

Hey, you know anything about Bellevue?

LARK: No.

You know if they tell you about O.D.'s?

LARK: No.

They gave me some pills and they told me to take one a day, two at the most. I took thirteen of 'em.

LARK: When?

Yesterday. I don't know what happened. And that doesn't happen to me, where I don't know what happened.

Someone saved my life and I'd like to thank the guy.

LARK: What's your name?

David.

LARK: Hi.

Hi.

LARK: Where do you live? *(Enter DAVID)*

DAVID: Down aways a few miles down the foggy coast you gots to watch out or you'll drown yourself in the dark-dark sea.

LARK: Oh.

MANGUS: How do you live?

DAVID: We farm the sea. We use artificial light on the seabed. We grow a variety of kelp and a certain vine. Not radioactive.

LARK: I shouldn't think so.

DAVID: We feed the dead sun with garbage. And they fire asteroids and little frozen hydrogen bullets into it.

LARK: Why?

DAVID: I don't know why. Maybe to wake it up. And you?

LARK: What?

DAVID: Shoot bullets?

LARK: Yes, all over the place. It's like the Wild West. Everybody is armed.

DAVID: Wow.

LARK: *(Projection)* This is a view of our galaxy, the Milky Way. Far away. Very far away. And this is a shot of an ancient Aztec calendar. A sun-face in the center. The Aztecs could measure enormous lengths of time. *(Image of an Aztec priest in his black regalia, hair matted with blood, plunging a stone knife into a sacrificial victim, then pulls out the pulsing heart.)* They did this to keep the Sun moving across the sky.

DAVID: Across the sky!

LARK: Yes.

MANGUS: It is said that the gods gathered in the twilight of Teotihuacan. And one of them, a leprous god covered in boils, threw himself into a huge brazier as a sacrifice. He rose from the blazing coals changed into a Sun. But he was motionless. He needed blood in order to move. So the gods immolated themselves and the Sun, drawing life from their deaths, began its course across the sky. This was the beginning of a cosmic drama in which humanity took on the role of the gods, to keep the Sun moving in its course so that darkness should not rule the world forever, it was necessary to feed it every day with its food, the "precious water" – human blood.

DAVID: Human blood!

LARK: Yes. I don't know why I showed that material, Mangus.

MANGUS: What came up on the screen, what it was.

DAVID: What it was.

MANGUS: Yes.

DAVID: I think I have to go home now.

MANGUS: Thanks for coming by.

DAVID: Thanks for coming by.

MANGUS: You're welcome.

DAVID: I'll come again if I can, if you don't mind, if it's alright, thank you very much.

LARK: You're welcome anytime.

DAVID: You're welcome. Anytime. Thank you.

MANGUS: Okay, bye bye.

DAVID: Bye.

MANGUS: Bye, now. *(DAVID exits.)* Weird.

LARK: He repeats himself.

MANGUS: He repeats us. The last thing said.

LARK: How odd.

MANGUS: He reminds me of something. A guy. A war veteran. American. Marine. Like Ned. He comes home and throws his wife down the stairs and beats her to death. But it wasn't him that did it. It was another him that did it, and they're not in touch. Same person. One guy likes men and the other one's a family man. And one of 'em is the killer. Guess which one did it.

LARK: I can't tell.

MANGUS: Right. And neither can he. So he's so good at being the good guy, he gets away with it for the most part, because all he has to do is act the good guy who is right and true and no one 's the wiser.

LARK: How do you know?

MANGUS: Nice American town. Nice looking kids. Green rolling hills of the Appalachians.

LARK: Look out, Mangus. Take a look. I can't get over how it looks outside. You can't see so well in the fog, but you get down by the ocean and you see the rocks they have here shining up at you from the beach. They glisten like stars. Standing there at the point, you have the impression that the sky is all around you, above and below.

MANGUS: Could be the amount of carbon in the water, as in coal. I mean, is why the ocean is so black.

LARK: Yes. I think that 's right. Oh. Nice stick you have there.

MANGUS: Yeah.

LARK: Is that a Jaguar on there?

MANGUS: That''s a jaguar.

LARK: Oh. How'd you get it?

MANGUS: I've always had this stick.

LARK: Oh. Never noticed the Jaguar.

MANGUS: Had it in the old days, mark of the Motherfuckers, gang of outcasts, we had tattoos and amulets and a scarf and a belt, and so on. Insignia. Sign of the Jaguar.

LARK: Okay, don't point it at me.

MANGUS: Why so moody?

LARK: I don't understand what's taking so long.

MANGUS: Conditions have to be just right. All the gravitational and tidal effects have to be blocked . We can go out there and never come back. The tide is faster than the fastest tide on Earth. The fog is the worst I've ever seen.

LARK: What's that coming at us? (*Enter Mr. and Mrs. Reed.*)

MR. REED: Don't be afraid, Ma'am. It's only us.

MRS. REED: We won't hurt you.

MR. REED: Difficult typography, right here.

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MRS. REED: We've adapted well, I think.

MR. REED: We're the Reeds. The Reeds have maintained the lighthouse for generations.

MRS. REED: Did our son come by here? He gets lost at times. Fog too much for him.

MR. REED: Life 's too much for him.

MRS. REED: Never mind.

MANGUS: Yes, he was by here. Then he left.

MR. REED: Long night.

LARK: Yes, it is.

MR. REED: Suggestibility is what it is.

LARH: And he repeats.

MR. REED: Tell him to come on home.

MANGUS: We will, Sir. Ma'am.

MRS. REED: Thank you.

MR. REED: Name 's David.

MANGUS: Right.

MR. REED: Bye, bye.

LARK: Bye. *(Foghorn. Enter DAVID)*

MANGUS: Holy shit, here he is now, appearing out of the fog.

DAVID: Good evening.

MANGUS: Go on home kid, your parents are looking for you.

DAVID: Looking for me.

MANGUS: Yes.

DAVID: Fog is dense this evening.

MANGUS: Yes, it is.

DAVID: Yes, it is. The black sun is like a seed.

MANGUS: No, it isn't.

DAVID: The whole universe collapses into it.

LARK: He has a point there.

DAVID: Souls out there getting ready in the dark.

MANGUS: For what?

DAVID: For what?

MANGUS: That's what I asked you.

DAVID: It is said that they are the souls of the dead who are not at peace with themselves and so they come out to argue. They come out searching for people to talk to so they can explain how their lives went wrong and argue as to how it should have gone differently with them.

LARK: Do they know who you are?

DAVID: Who?

LARK: Them.

DAVID: I don't know.

LARK: That would be important, wouldn't it?

DAVID: Important. I don't know.

LARK: You don't know squat.

DAVID: A ghost is someone who doesn't want to die. His head is still going. Yadayadayada. Like a slot machine. He doesn't know what's happening so he hangs around.

LARK: What's taking so long?

DAVID: What's –

LARK: Don't repeat me.

MANGUS: You are here because you are lost and you want to take a short cut home.

LARK: Something like that.

DAVID: And you?

LARK: What?

DAVID: You're afraid of getting old and dying in space.

LARK: So true.

DAVID: So true.

MANGUS: Best to get back to your Mom and Dad.

DAVID: I should learn to play an instrument. Pass the time. I like your walking stick.

MANGUS: Thank you.

DAVID: Hand-carved Jaguar. I was wondering, do you have a text?

MANGUS: A text?

DAVID: No, perhaps a map, a celestial map. A map of the skies.

MANGUS: I might have one.

LARK: Lots of maps.

DAVID: I'll come back.

LARK: No!

DAVID: Well, I seem to have over-stayed my presence.

LARK: So long.

DAVID: Oh. One more thing. *(Enter MR. MORRIS)* This is Mr. Morris. He wanted to meet you.

LARK: How do you do?

MR. MORRIS: Very well, thank you.

LARK: Bye-bye for now, David.

MANGUS: Good night, David. *(Exit DAVID)*

MR. MORRIS: I think if people would leave each other alone, life would be a lot easier. When I was young I wanted to know things. Now I just leave it alone.

LARK: Good idea.

MR. MORRIS: I thought I was going places. Making progress. Scratching around. I'm settled down now, I leave it alone. I go out on the beaches once in awhile, collect my rocks, do my job.

LARK: What is your job?

MR. MORRIS: I run the lighthouse. I keep an eye on things. I don't bother anybody.

LARK: Good for you.

MR. MORRIS: Yes, it is. You said that. Very good. Generations of being here. Quiet. Fastest tide in the world. And they say it's getting warmer, a degree or two per generation. Probably why you're keen to investigate.

MANGUS: Yes, it is.

MR. MORRIS: Well, you take the tides now -- they're tricky, the tides are. A man could be down to Refugee Cove, down there off the point, and get caught by the tide. He wouldn't be able to get back. It's a problem we have here with the moon. A man got lost on the moor, year or two ago, found him on the rocks. He'd fallen down the sheer side of a cliff there in a storm and broke his neck.

MANGUS: The moon?

MR. MORRIS: Unpredictable. Of course, wasn't always as peaceful. Couple hundred years ago they chased the Russians out, cornered 'em down in the cove, that's how they call it Refugee Cove. Most of 'em died. You can still see the graves, anchored to cables a mile or so out to sea.

LARK: Mangus?

MANGUS: What?

LARK: Say good-bye to Mr. Morris.

MR. MORRIS: I'm a rock-picker. I pick rocks. Small rocks. Any kind of small rock. They shine like little stars. I use them for my fireplaces. I glue them on for ornament. It's very nice. They're only about twelve inches high and ten across. Pieces of red glass inside. I put some carbon product on the red glass and put some carbon product on it and plug a light into it and she glows. I sold five of them last week. Woman up to the station at Apple River. She gave one each to some sisters of hers, I believe. A couple more she used for wedding presents. They make a nice gift.

MANGUS: I'll bet they do.

LARK: Very nice.

MR. MORRIS: I'm here for three weeks now. Been here two weeks already. Then I go up to Cape Enrage until the 36th... That'll be two weeks off around Christmas. You can have this rock here. It's a power rock.

MANGUS: A power rock?

LARK: Where did it come from?

MR. MORRIS: Fell out of the sky, as you'd expect. Power came with it. See, I'm taking the assistants place five weeks altogether. Makes four weeks vacation plus another week owed to him. That's down to the lighthouse here. You been down there to see the beacon? Inter-galactic beacon, you know. Ain't too many of those. Aimed at Andromeda, that way. *(Points)* Won't get there for a million years. Government wants to let them know we're out here. Mainly it's to orientate the ships coming in. Come down with me some night and I'll show you the beacon.

MANGUS: You bet. Cosmic power falling.

LARK: Word dust falling.

MR. MORRIS: They put a freeze on 'em last year. A freeze came up out of the Government put a stop to vacations. Don't know why that happened. This year has been a good year though. See, the boss has got to take his vacation soon as Roy comes back. That's Roy Zinc, lives over at Station Three, West Monitor, one that watches where the Sun used to be.

MANGUS: Well -

MR. MORRIS: He's gone up to Squally Point for a week and then he's not sure but he's got another two weeks. Sick leave is not the same as vacation, you see.

LARK: 'Course not –

MR. MORRIS: Someone gets sick or something happens, they call on me. Before I took Roy's place, I was over to Chinecto Station taking my cousin's place, that's Phiiip Morris, my name 's Chester.

MANGUS: Interesting.

MR. MORRIS: I was filling in for him three weeks. They've got a light down there, but no horn. Ought to have a horn. I don't care how narrow the gap is, the fog is tricky. You might know it.

MANGUS: Sure do.

MR. MORRIS: But I'm not the man quarrells with the authorities. If there's two ways to do a thing, the boss's way and the right way, it's the boss 's way I'll want to do it. Now, the boss here – he 's Mr. Murphy, his people are down in Parsbury – anyway, he won't take a drink himself, so he forbids it. But me and Reg Fleming – he's the third man on here – me and him will drink a quart of an evening and no one is the wiser. What he don't know won't bother him is what we say. So long as it's not interfering with our duties. I'm a man that 's reliable. I'm on time and I'm steady. My brother is an alcoholic. *(To MANGUS)* You're not one, are you?

MANGUS: No. I don't think so.

MR. MORRIS: I've got a fireplace down to the lighthouse that I'll show you. Another coat of varnish and it's done. I'll do that tonight. Sold to a woman at East Prosecute Station. She has one already. I sell 'em for twelve dollars. *(Pause)* Costs two to make one. I've got another one just ready for the rocks. Have it done by tomorrow.

LARK: No, thanks.

MANGUS: We have other business.

MR. MORRIS: Like what?

LARK: Find our way home.

MANGUS: Work to do, things to see and organize.

MR. MORRIS: I work steady. Right on through. Then I put a coat of varnish on 'em and drill a hole for the electric wire. Due the 23rd. Lady up at Advocate Station, lives with her two sisters on Main Street. You ever hunt moose?

MANGUS: What?

MR. MORRIS: I'll tell ya a moose yarn. My friend Rudy Dewis and me – oh, I known Rudy almost my whole life—Rudy 's a cripple, ya know, he was born with his feet turned around the wrong way. They tried to break his feet to make them right. Didn't work. Made 'em worse. But he LOVES to hunt moose. He 's very interested in hunting and fishing. Things like that, even with his twisted feet. And we was walking along one morning and I had my old twelve with me and Rudy had his brand new thirty-odd-six. And he was fired up he'd see a moose. He 'd just got his moose licence and he was hopeful of getting a shot at one. He was holding onto my arm, naturally, because of his crippled feet. Whadyaknow but up comes this moose a hundred yards away from us. Well, Rudy couldn't get his rifle aimed in time, so I raised up and shot him with my old twelve-gauge, using my free arm of course, and I got him. I gave him to Rudy though. Didn't mean much to me and I knew it meant a lot to him. We went down to his hunting shack and had a feast. You ever ate any moose?

MANGUS: No.

LARK: I don't think so.

MR. MORRIS: Tastes better than a cow, if you ask me. My cousin, Philip Morris, he's got one arm. He got sick. Weighs two hundred pounds, but he got sick. His house is smaller than mine and he has FOUR children. (*Ominous silence*) I've lived alone, myself, these long, long nights. You'll want to keep an eye out for that Reed boy.

LARK: David?

MR. MORRIS: Could be anywhere now. Killed his parents, ya know. Cut their hearts out of 'em. Did it to 'em live. Hearts are gone. Took 'em with him, I reckon. Don't know why he did that. Found the weapon. Stone knife, made out of these same rocks, found it shining in shallow water off the point. Oh, you'll want to keep to the vicinity and hold your ship aground for awhile.

LARK: Are there other boys?

MR. MORRIS: Of course. Yes. They have little black spots all over them. Running around. Having a good time.

LARK: Black spots? (*Projection*)

MR. MORRIS: Yes, like a Jaguar. Or a monkey. You take pills?

MANGUS: Yes.

MR. MORRIS: Why?

MANGUS: *(Trance)* To avoid pain. To avoid fear. To avoid oppression. To avoid consequences. To avoid injustice. To avoid emotion. To avoid defeat. To have something to look forward to. To have an excuse. To avoid the stench. To avoid lying. To avoid boredom.

LARK: Enough, already.!

MR. MORRIS: Well, good luck with that. You have kids?

LARK: Two boys.

MR. MORRIS: Lock 'em up. Lock 'em cup and throw away the key.

LARK: Why do such a thing?

MR. MORRIS: Machine-gunner walks in and kills 'em all. Bang-bang! *(SOUNDS of gunfire.)* All gone! A bloody mess! Here's a communique. The body of Mrs. Roy Zinc of West Monitor Station has been discovered off Squally Point at 0800. Her heart was torn from her chest with a blunt instrument. They suspect that the killer, David Reed, is still at large. So I'd keep an eye out if I were you. Thanks. *(Exits)*

MANGUS: Take a hike, motherfucker.

LARK: Bye, bye.

MANGUS: Get lost. Where are the kids, Lark?

LARK: I let them out to play.

MANGUS: You let them out to play?

LARK: I let them out to play. *(Pause)*

MANGUS: Where are they now?

LARK: How the fuck should I know?

MANGUS: You don't know?

LARK: No. They must be at school, playing ball in the schoolyard.

MANGUS: Where were you?

LARK: I was asleep, I think. Taking a nap. *(SOUNDS)* I could hear the ball outside, skipping around, and children playing. *(Sounds of a marital argument)* Uh, oh.

MANGUS: What is it?

HELP!

Take your hands off me!

She's trying to kill me!

I'm taking the kids!

Like hell you are!

Call the police!

LARK: They're fighting next door. He 's such a jerk, playing the victim. So typical.

MANGUS: She 's very cool.

LARK: I know she is. Keep your head straight. *(Pause)* I had a dream. You listening, Motherfucker?

MANGUS: Yes, I'm listening.

LARK: I was looking for my shoes. I came to a house where some friends were having a party. They offered me a drink and I sat down. I waited for awhile, but noone returned. They had all gone away. I left the house and walked through a courtyard. I was looking for my shoes. The sky was splendid with wonderful colors, but something warned me not to look up.

Don't look up.

LARK: That if I were to look into the sky I would lose all chance of ever finding my shoes. In the courtyard, I met a man with oily black hair. He was holding a pair of shoes. He gave them to me but when I tried to put them on, they didn't fit. They weren't mine. I became frightened and ran away from the man. Then there was another man, a funny little guy holding another pair of shoes. He was smiling. He seemed to know me. I tried on the shoes and they didn't fit. The little man suffered.

The Little Man.

LARK: He said I should go on to the next house.

Go on to the next house.

LARK: There were some people there who would help me. I said I must really find my shoes. He said that he understood, that everything would be alright.

Everything will be alright.

LARK: He was sad. (*Music. Video.*) I began to feel drawn to the music coming from the other house. I went up the stairs into that house. People greeted me without paying any attention to me, but they were not unfriendly. A woman came close. I told her that I was looking for my shoes and that my friends in the other house had offered me a drink and then gone away, which made me feel bad. She was middle-aged and had brown curly hair and she was in pain. She said that although she had just arrived, she was sure that I would be able to find my shoes. She herself had lost her heart and would never find it again. I tried to say something kind. She waved me away, saying: "We would be glad to offer you a drink, but there's nothing to mix it with." I started to answer that I'd be happy to take it straight but she was no longer listening. I realized there was a party going on. The music was coming from upstairs. The party was on the roof! As I climbed toward the roof I saw the comet! It filled half the sky and was made of all the colors of the rainbow streaming across the black sky! LOOK! LOOK UP!

Look up! (Projection - Comet)

LARK: LOOK AT THE COMET! LOOK! LOOK! I wanted to leap into the sky and become a part of that beautiful comet forever, but my body –

MANGUS: It's gone now.

LARK: It's gone. I think she was a very nice lady.

MANGUS: Yeah.

LARK: In my dream.

MANGUS: Right.

LARK: And you?

MANGUS: Did you appease the Mullah today?

LARK: What kind of question is that? You're out of your fuckin' mind!

MANGUS: Sorry.

LARK: Where were you, Motherfucker?

MANGUS: I had been walking for a long time, in Mexico, the Yucatan, angry that there had been nowhere to go, no one to visit, when I came to a café – a pale, blue light in a darkened street. I was thirsty and went directly to the counter, where there was a lady wearing a red dress and red shoes. Bright red. And she wore red-jeweled earrings. And her lips were painted red and there was red shadow around her narrow blue eyes. She looked at me with disdain, shaking her head, her shiny black hair almost striking me. I made the gesture of one drinking from a bottle. She nodded, handed me a cold, black beer, and smiled. I felt embarrassed by my anger and smiled profusely. She mumbled something, shrugged, and walked away. She knew how my eyes were on her hips as she walked, a gaze like hardened electric light. A wire.

LARK: And then?

MANGUS: Look. *(Video)* I sat down at a table near the door. Everything was blue – table, chairs, floors, walls, ceiling—all blue. The café faced onto a square. Directly across the way was a great old stone church framed in orange electric light. A windowless red bus was parked on the corner. Shrouded forms were climbing on and off the bus in a desperate hurry. As I watched the bus, trying to understand what was going on, I became aware of the drone of conversation in the café. They were speaking an ancient musical language I had never heard before. Then I became frightened. The language these people were speaking was an extinct Mayan tongue, *Lacondon*. I don't know how I knew this with such certainty.

Pause.

MANGUS: I looked up and caught the woman in the red dress watching me as though she knew my thoughts. For a moment, I was overwhelmed by a tremendous sexual longing for her. She was aware of this and smiled sardonically as she moved from table to table, her wide hips swaying in the tight red dress.

Pause.

MANGUS: At the table nearest me, three young men were whispering intensely. I was sure that they were discussing my presence there and that if they knew my thoughts and desires, they would attack me. I indignantly stared at the red floor, trying to concentrate. Suddenly two beggars appeared, a woman and a child, their outstretched hands covered with sores. I started to give them money, but the woman refused and spat on the money. Then I noticed two groups of people passing back and forth in front of the café. Two young girls flanked a crippled old lady. The old lady had to swing one leg in a 180 degree arc in order to walk. Somehow, I understood that the girls were talking about the consciousness of spiders and worms, while the old woman giggled continually. The other group was composed of three young Indian men. The one in the middle would turn towards me and make a

face. He would show his teeth in a wide mask-like grin, flaring his nostrils and rolling his eyes. His teeth were jagged, filed down to a point in the ancient way. Each time they passed I became more deeply enraged by that face. Again and again they passed, and that grotesque Indian showed that horrible mask. Finally, I hurled myself out into the street and went for him. I wanted to cut into that face with my broken beer bottle—we rolled together on the pavement. I was stabbing at his face – it was the face of a Jaguar –

A red light flashes on and off.

LARK: Looks like another communique.

Killer on the loose. Wants the Sun to rise and thrive. His latest victims were Mr. and Mrs. Avril Hope, sea-bed farmers from East Prosecute Station. Time of the murders is believed to be 0955. The Governor General has called for a state of emergency –

LARK: What do we do?

MANGUS: I don't know. Call the cops?

LAEK: And then what? Everything is taking so long. I don't understand it. *(Light cue.)*

MANGUS: It's twilight.

LARK: Interesting: Radioactive light.

MANGUS: My fondest time of day or night.

LARK: Mine as well. I love the light. Listen. Listen up. I dreamt that I had become you, Mangus, that I was inside of you. I was inside you, but I was also myself. I could feel what you were thinking and feeling, but I was outside also, like a spirit. I remember thinking: "I don't want to be here, this isn't where I was meant to be. I hope this will be over soon."

MANGUS: I love you, Lark. I don't understand why. It's an unmistakable, overwhelming feeling, that look we exchanged, the gaze, only a moment, complete, unalterable, final, flashing like a goddess or a lightning bolt.

LARK: Not the lightning bolt.

MANGUS: Sorry.

LARK: And then comes the daily grind, the kids, the job, the shit and piss and worry of it all.

MANGUS: Yes.

LARK: Let me finish.

MANGUS: Please. Sit here.

LARK: It was a world in another solar system, and you were a soldier. We were marching, marching. The terrain was a wasteland, with ditches and trenches and weird canyons everywhere. We were marching along, knowing we were all going to be destroyed. The people around us, the other soldiers, an officer, I couldn't trust them. They might do anything, stupidly, insanely, and get us killed. I kept trying to talk to you, to ask you to take me away from that place. And I knew you heard me because I was speaking with your mind. But we couldn't MOVE. We could DECIDE, but we could not MOVE. And then we came to an area that had just been bombed. There were stacks of bodies in neat rows. I mean, piles of mangled flesh. And through each pile there were stuck FOUR bombs. I don't know why FOUR, but four bombs like huge fat arrows. And the stacks of bodies went on and on into the distance. On and on. The most terrible thing was the stench. It was so absolutely vivid. A voice, it was an officer, was saying, "Well, this is what happens when you get bombed. These are the bombs. They come from the enemy." A soldier reached into a pile and pulled off an arm, and then – a heart! I was shouting MANGUS! MANGUS! With your own voice. I was so desperate I began to come back, to wake up. I was coming away from the smell of death, and I was only free of it when I could no longer, no longer actually smell the piles of dead meat with those four bombs sticking through them like arrows.

MANGUS: Well. The only thing really, the only thing given us, is a taste of Paradise. Making more bodies. I'd like to track the woman next door, press her against the wall and kiss her hard, and then lift up her dress —

A knock at the door.

DAVID (Off): Let me in! Let me in!

MANGUS: It's David. (*DAVID appears, covered in blood+Projection: a double image.*)

MANGUS: What do you want?

DAVID: A map! Document!

LSRK: Go away.!

MANGUS: We have nothing! We've lost our way! We're waiting!

DAVID: For what?

MANGUS: For the skies to clear!

DAVID: You must be fucking kidding! You must be fucking kidding! I'll be back!
(Exits)

LARK: I hope he dies out there. He 's leaving little pieces of death all over us, like lice.

MANGUS: Get away! Get them off! Get them away from me! *(Drumbeat as he writhes.)*

LARK: Calm down. He's gone.

A silence. MR. ZINC appears. He is a Peter Lorre type plastic-skinned native. He carries a large axe over his shoulder.

LARK: Who 's that? Who 's there?

ZINC: Zinc 's the name. Roy Zinc.

LARK: What do you want?

ZINC: Having a bit of trouble?

MANGUS:: What do you mean?

ZINC: Saw you flopping on the ground. Thought it might be the murdering Reed kid. Killed his parents, ya know.

LARK: We do know.

ZINC: Shot 'em in the face. Tore their hearts out. This fella here has a bad voice.

MANGUS: Sore throat.

ZINC: That a fact?

MANGUS: That's a fact.

ZINC: No need to be ill-tempered.

LARK: There you go.

MANGUS: Shut up, Lark.

ZINC: I catch him I'm gonna kill him outright. But first I'll torture him, I'll suck up his power. I'll take the last quantum of juice from his soul. Then I'll hang him. He'll float on the dark sea for eternity., locked to a steel cable. Twenty-two fathoms down off Cape Enrage. During the long nights I'll row out to his grave and spit into his memory.

MANGUS: Right up your alley, Lark.

LARK: Thanks a lot and fuck you.

ZINC: Ought to leave him to us. Keep to your own business. She liked shoes. Mrs. Zinc. It was shoes she liked best. She liked to work with them, give them care. A woman 's different, she's got special needs. Takes years, learn a woman's heart. Deep and dusky. Liked shes. You make a pattern, fills the long nights.

MANGUS: What's your name again, sir?

ZINC: Zinc. Roy Zinc. Listen close to my meaning: the killer is one of us. You don't belong out here. We don't want you. Stumbling around, giving warning. We'll hunt him down. He'll be coming back here, back to his starting point.

LARK: Here?

ZINC: *(Whirling his axe, making a rainbow of light.)* Walking about in the fog, might get one of these, slash your skull, mash your brains. Be misfortunate. *(Pause)* She liked shoes. Shoes and the music of the organ. *(Exits. Music.)*

LARK: Nasty old gink.

MANGUS: Where are the boys?

LARK: They went out to play, like I told you.

MANGUS: Did you pay the Nanny?

LARK: I paid the Nanny,

MANGUS: Did you pay the Dealer?

LARK: I paid the Dealer.

MANGUS: Look.

LARK: I'm looking.

MANGUS: My father used to sit like this, just this way. I catch myself doing something and it isn't me at all, it's him. Poor old fuck fell off a building and cracked his skull. Never recovered. Thought the truth of a thing lay in the force of its presentation. He acted as though his life were on the line all the time, as if his life was his own creation.

LARK: Maybe he was right. I taught school for many years, as you know. It develops, I don't know what to call it, a kind of heavy empathy. A sense of Fate, maybe, of consequence.

MANGUS: The last time I saw him on Planet Earth he was living in Mexico, where he could maintain his habits on his Army pension. We hadn't been in contact for years. I didn't want to start anything up with him, just wanted to take a look. He was easy to find, the only gringo gimp in town, living in the one hotel on the square. I sat on a bench and waited while a little humped-back kid shined my shoes. This kid had the harsh, sour voice of an old man. He made me think of Caliban and old trolls. Finally, my father showed up, hobbling on the arm of a kindly-looking, bent-over Indian woman. He stared at the pavement, noticing nothing. He seemed almost blind. His face was grey and decrepit. I knew that he was going to die soon, and he knew it as well, that in fact he was nearly dead. The only thing alive about him were the movements of his fingers as he clutched the woman's shoulder. I think he loved her. *(Pause)*

LARK: Did you stay?

MANGUS: No. He didn't recognize me. I went back, I missed the street, the greasy, hazy, crackling, hard-concrete, give-no-quarter New York streets. *(N.Y. SOUNDS. Projection.)* You could get lost, you know, downtown, empty streets, you don't know what the fuck happened or how you got there. *(Sound)* Uh, oh. It's the cops.

LARK: What the fuck. *(Enter POLICEMAN)*

POLICEMAN: Well, well, a monkey-man.

MANGUS: Fuck off.

POLICEMAN: God forbid someone should say something bad about you.

LARK: Are you blind, are you deaf and blind? Like the fearful cops of yore?

MANGUS: Are you calling me a monkey?

POLICEMAN: May I sit?

MANGUS: Sit.

POLICEMAN: Wrong side of the Universe. Bouncing about, adventuring, falling here and there.

LARK: So what?

POLICEMAN: This is an electrical system in which everything is connected though an electromagnetic forcefield by a superluminal process that makes the knowledge of all events simultaneous and instantaneous.

MANGUS: What does that fucking mean?

POLICEMAN: Quarantine on the planet. Nothing comes in, nothing goes out. Messy business set in motion here. Psychopathological.

MANGUS: Meaning?

POLICEMAN: Meaning, we know where the kid is.

LARK: Where 's that.?

POLICEMAN: Close by.

LARK: You're just a bunch of chickenshit cowboys in funny hats all gunned up and quivering in your boots.

MANGUS: Ease up, Lark.

LARK: No.

POLICEMAN: You are the crime. It's you.

MANGUS: How so?

POLICEMAN: By showing that kid Mexican sacrificial murder, cutting out folks hearts so the Sun – It's some kind of electronic wind –

MANGUS: That what?

POLICEMAN: Causes dreams and memories to erupt. And warps Time and Space.

LARK: Oh. Where are my boys?

POLICEMAN: What kind of mother are you?

LAEK: The best kind. You fuck and get the result. Plugged in. Out comes the boys. And you feed 'em and watch 'em 'cause they give back Love, a connection to Reality,

and somehow they got a role to play In the Future, in Time, but its pain and suffering all the way home. Excuse me. You got that?

POLICEMAN: Here they are.

(Amplified) Hi, Mom!

LARK: Thank you.

MANGUS: A colossal misunderstanding.

POLICEMAN: I'll be going now. I'll be on my way.

LARK: Bye, bye.

POLICEMAN: Don't be such a bitch. Won't get you squat. But who gives a shit? No avoiding you get what you deserve. It's a Law. Right up your dreamy ass. I'm a butt man myself, never got over it. I look and look and keep on looking. 'Course, they don't look back, don't even see me at all, seems like. *Adios, y buen futura. (Exits)*

LARK: What was that all about?

MANGUS: The Law.

(SOUND of FOGHORN)

MANGUS: Listen. It was a dark, overcast night, no stars, no moon. The electric lights, weak because of insufficient power, gave everything a gaudy, yellowish tint. I felt restless and went out for a walk by the sea. *(Tide)* There was a cool breeze and the sea was loud with incoming tide. At dinner, I had arrogantly affronted a group of friends, and now I felt a lingering pain over the incident. I began washing the pain through my body, as if I were trying to cleanse myself with it. I did this until I became aware that I was being observed by a naval military policeman. My behaviour must have been startling. I had been cursing and stamping my feet and spitting on the ground. I dropped it and began walking again. I saw a young couple kissing in the shadow of a palm tree. Some distance away, a man was lying against the sea wall masturbating as he watched them. He took no notice of me and I hurried away. I discovered that I was talking to myself in a loud voice. I stopped that and was composing myself when I was accosted by a leering, half-naked individual about sixty years old. He grasped my arm in a drunken stupor, his faded blue eyes hinting at some secret depravity. He told me, in broken Spanish, that he had just given his wife a good beating and proudly showed me her blood on his shirt.

Ah, don't hit me, don't hit me. Por favor!

MANGUS: I shoved him away, but he came back and clung onto me. His foul odor was overpowering. He kept insisting that he wanted to play with me. I pushed him from me, and, sick to my stomach, vomited onto the sand. Still, he would not let go. I lunged for a piece of driftwood and began swinging it at him. Drunkenly, he tried to elude the blows, not understanding the fury of my attack. At last, I clubbed him to the ground with a thumping blow to the head. He lay quietly on the sand. One of his eyes was hanging from his face on a thin strand of flesh.

Ayudame por favor!

MANGUS: I stood above him, my stick poised to hit him again should he move. I thought, "What a helplessly evil, stinking two-legged animal this is!" Down the beach were some young people sitting peacefully around a fire. I rushed at them with my stick. I wanted to destroy as many of these abominable creatures as I could...

A RED LIGHT FLASHES. SOUND OF FOGHORN.

LARK: Mangus?

MANGUS: I see myself, finally, in the mirror. Not at all what I thought. Nightmares. Always the same. Can't get there, can't find anything, can't get up, get down, go forward, laugh or cry. And the next day is lost.

LARK: Do you hear something?

MANGUS: Yes, it's the tower on the bay.

LARK: No, there's someone at the door. *(Banging)*

DAVID: Let me in! It's me, David!

LARK: David!

DAVID: Yes! Let me in!

MANGUS: Shoot the motherfucker!

LARK: No! Not that!

MANGUS: Fuck off!

LARK: Go away!

SOUND OF A JAGUAR ROAR. SILENCE.

LARK: He 's gone

MANGUS: How do you know?

LARK: I don't. He 's right here. *(Double image.)*

DAVID: For years I tried to unlock the secrets of this dead system. To bring it to life and light again. I studied the sacred numbers but it was no use. Their meaning had been long forgotten. I was obedient to my parents, painfully shy, self-conscious from years of isolation. They could not tell me why the Sun was trembling across the sky becoming a black wormhole. I wanted to know. Perhaps with knowledge would come help. They said we had to go on, that it was not for us to know these things. Here and there I found crumbs of an Ancient Science based on studies of the Living Solar God. Time was passing and I couldn't fit the pieces together. All our light was the empty reflection of an electronic moon. I tried to concentrate, I wanted to feel the warmth of the Sun, even for a moment break the cycle of black gravity and night.

LARK: What the fuck! Hit him with your club! *(MANGUS does so. DAVID has a strange fit, writhing and flailing about. Standing downstage LEFT is the JAGUAR PRIEST. He is relaxed and confident. handsome, dressed well in modern clothes):*

PRIEST: Drunken seizure are you. Lust of creation are you. Cock-mcaw seizure are you. Deer seizure are you. Who is your tree? Who is your bush? What was your arbour? It is the place of Lady Needle of Blood, the Lady Remover of clotted blood. Removed is creation, removed is darkness, at the place where you vomited water and clotted blood. Cakaw seizure! The snake monkey seizure! Erotic Monkey Seizure! Madness seizure! Cast them away, ye four gods, ye four bacabs, to fall in the place of the yellow Sun Eye! *(He grabs DAVID by the neck and throws him to the ground. The club is luminescent with the colors of a Jaguar. The Priest spins it and a whirling lamp of color appears above it.)* Cast them away, ye four gods, to the place of the Lady Mad Seizure Star. Four days he lay prostrate at the Lady Mad Seizure Star. There he bit the arm of the madness of creation, the madness of darkness. Then he licked the blood of the Maxcal plant. Then he licked the blood of the Acanthum, the stone set up on a foundation. Then cast ye still the lust of creation, the lust of darkness, ye four gods, ye four bacabs. He would fall into the heart of the Metnal, the Underworld, at the place of the Father of Vigorous Enemy of fire, and of Lady Detrimental One who keeps closed the opening in the Earth. *(DAVID vanishes. The JAGUAR PRIEST picks up David's gleaming "power rock" from the floor and hands it to MANGUS.)* Here is what you're looking for. You can go home now.

MANGUS: Where 'd he go?

PRIEST: You can row out, if you want, if you feel like it, row out to his grave, tied to a cable in the far away sea — you can look down the cable into his memory. *(Exits)*

LARK: What the fuck was that?

MANGUS: He gave us a scroll. Ancient Mexico.

LARK: We can go?

MANGUS: Where are the boys?

LARK: In bed, where we left them.

MANGUS: Did you bow to the Beekeeper?

LARK: Oh, fuck off with that shit, Mangus.

MANGUS: Okay. Let's go home.

A nap. A close-up. A message. A descent. An image. A road. A book. A rhythm. A pattern. A temple or a scroll.

MANGUS: A tattoo.

LARK: Is what?

MANGUS: Insignia?

LARK: You're out of your mind, Motherfucker. *(A series of sounds and comments as they travel back through time:)*

MANGUS: Listen.

Break this cycle of black gravity and night...was hanging from his face on a thin strand of flesh. I stood above him...this is what happens when you get bombed. These are the bombs...the proportions are three, four, and five...and she wore re-jeweled earrings, and her lips were painted red, and there was red shadow around her narrow blue eyes...I would be unable to find my shoes. She herself had lost her heart, she said, and would never find it again...Would you ask David to come home?...to feed it every day with its food, the precious water, that is -- human blood...far away, very far away...you think they'll answer me at Bellevue if I call them up on the phone?

MANGUS: Lark?

LARK: Yes?

MANGUS: I've found the text we were looking for, I think I've finally found it. I think David was referring to an old, twelve-sided canonical figure called The New Jerusalem. It's based on the dimensions of the Solar System. *(Reads: Projection.)*

The city had a wall great and high and twelve gates. And the foundations of the walls of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was one pearl. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river was there the Tree of Life, which bore all manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the Nations.”

SIRENS

LARK: Here we are.

MANGUS: Thoughts and Prayers?

LARK: Fuck off. Sun ’s out. Wake up the kids. We have a lot to tell them.

MANGUS: How ‘bout the neighbors?

LARK: Leave the neighbors alone, Motherfucker. If it wasn’t for them, you wouldn’t be here at all.

MANGUS: Thank you, very much.

LARK: All of us. Not just you, Mangus.

(The ACTORS all step forward and applaud the audience.)

END

**Murray Mednick
Draft, June, 2022**

