



*Selections from the Writings
of*

Bouvard Pécuchet

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Eighty Words for Wind was first published in David Bromige's *Indictable Suborners*, dPress, Sebastopol, 2003.

Miró Walgreen, Author of Pierre Menard's *Quixote*, posted online at [Plagiarism, June, 2003](#).

The Plagiarist Years: 1982–1986, Bouvard Pécuchet, Chaos House Press, San Francisco, 1988.

A Brief History of the Plagiarist Movement, Whitler Pratphall, Paper Waster Press, San Francisco, 2003.

CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[Jack Spicer's *Poetry As Magic Questionnaire*](#)

[Review of Roberta Soltea's
Novel, *The Flesh of Fire*](#)

[Eighty Words for Wind](#)

[Miró Walgreen, Author of Pierre Menard's *Quixote*](#)

Introduction

With rare exception, every major study of the Plagarist Movement includes passing reference to the writings of Bouvard Pécuchet. In *A Brief History of the Plagarist Movement*, Whitler Pratphall, a leading authority on this movement to end movements, writes, "The work of Bouvard Pécuchet animates the abstract; he speaks to the cosmic in us."

Bouvard first came to the public's attention with the publication of *The Plagarist Years: 1982-1986*, which included poems such as:

AT DAWN

I take endless journeys in russet
light,
moving through a landscape of
love again
without ever finding the wind
source.

I am surrounded by a miracle of
clouds.
My memory is as heavy as a
clear winter,
and my heart is an azure tumult.

His talent won him a prominent place among the Plagarist writers of the San Francisco scene. He became friends with A.P. Orria, Roberta Soltea, and Isabel Reznimchemko, and he contributed to

Big Mag.

There is a baroque humor in his works. Whether he writes about another author or forges an original creation, Pécuchet's style is characteristically a self-characterization of itself, yet his irony instructs and his humor lightens the burden of our existence.

JACK SPICER'S *POETRY AS MAGIC QUESTIONNAIRE*

I'm sitting with Jack Spicer at a table in Vesuvio's, and we're discussing the difference in taste between "Green Death" and other ales when, changing the subject, Jack asks me

What does the fall of Rome have to do with modern poetry?

Rome gets into everything. Rome fell, and it's still falling, still felt. I just got a letter from my daughter. There's an enclosed poem and a couple of pictures of her drinking wine in the hills above Florence. Student life, hard, learning is drudgery, really. Maybe good for you, but—I want to warn her of my own love of wine and where that led, but—there she is on a hill above Florence. I sent an email: "so glad to hear from you, i was touched by your lewis carrol poem and the pictures, ah, my child drinking away her 'pensive mood upon some silent hill'"

Ancient Greek culture filtered through Roman eyes and hands. Translations of Catullus especially popular, on Valentine's day, and generally all year—Janus, Februarius, Marcus, Juno, Julius, Augustus and so on, not to mention Cicero. O, Sweetpea. Achtung!

I turn, at random, to Patrick McGuinness in PNR Nov-Dec, 2002, "The Belgiad," stanza 1,
Caesarean state:
every roadsign a mirror
every town a suburb

Read between the lines. There's always a war going on; the Gates of

Janus remain open

Who are the Lovestoneites?

Followers of the *Grateful Dead*?

What animal do you most resemble?

A cheetah, at least this is what the brand of my swim trunks says

What insect do you most resemble?

A grasshopper, *Æsop*, that dang Roman, again

What star?

Anteres, Mars's rival

What card of the ordinary playing-card deck (or Tarot deck) represents the absolute of your desires?

Three of cups, friendship, the Muses

What card represents the absolute of your fears?

The Magus

What's your favorite joke?

In the 15th century, there was a ghetto of Jews outside the Vatican. The bishops were upset about this and petitioned the Pope to have them removed. The Pope felt he should be fair, and as he was fond of riddles, he suggested that if the wisest among the Jews accepted the challenge of a riddle festa with him, and if this man could answer the riddle, the Jews could stay, and, if not, they would have to leave.

A proclamation to such affect was sent out, and in the ghetto everyone scurried around asking themselves and each other, "Who

is our wisest man?" It was finally decided it was Itzy, the tailor.

On the appointed day, Itzy showed up. He was ushered into room of rich tapestries and columns of marble with gold worked into the grain. Itzy sat at the end of a long table and twiddled his thumbs. At last, the Pope came in and sat at the other end of the table.

The Pope sat for awhile, looking at Itzy, and he raised one hand and pointed a finger in the air. Itzy returned this sign by pointing a finger at the ground. The Pope responded to this by pointing a finger at Itzy, and Itzy responded by pointing two spread fingers at the Pope. The Pope was startled. Then, he took an orange from his robes and held it up. Itzy opened a satchel he carried and produced a piece of matzo, and he toasted the Pope with his piece of matzo.

When Itzy was gone, the bishops crowded the Pope, anxious to know the outcome of the contest. The Pope stared in amazement. "That was certainly a very wise man," he said, finally. "He answered my hardest riddle—I told him that God is in heaven, and he said that God has come to earth. I said that there is but one God, but he said, that He has two other manifestations. I said that the earth is round. And he said that some believe it to be flat."

Back in the ghetto, Itzy was surrounded by a chorus, "Itzy, Itzy, can we stay or do we have to go?" Itzy replied, "That Pope, what a smuck! He told me we would have to leave, and I told him we were going to stay right here. He said he was going to poke out one of my eyes, and I told him, if he did, I would poke out both of his. He took out an orange. So, I took out a piece of matzo, and we had lunch.

What is your favorite political song?

"The Times They Are A-Changin'"

If you had a chance to eliminate three political figures in the world, which would you choose?

This is truly a dangerous question in this political climate, I'll pass

What political group, slogan, or idea in the world today has the most to do with Magic?

"Trickle Down Economics," says Belle.

What political group, slogan, or idea in the world today has the most to do with Poetry?

Earth In Upheaval

Who were the Lovestoneites?

A far-out religious sect, maybe from Estonia

Which one of these figures had or represented religious views nearest to your own religious views? Which furthest? Jesus, Emperor Julian, Diogenes, Buddha, Confucius, Marcus Aurelius, Lao Tse, Socrates, Dionysus, Apollo, Hermes Trismegitus, Li Po, Heraclitus, Epicurus, Apollonius of Tyana, Simon Magus, Zoroaster, Mohammed, the White Goddess, Cicero?

Nearest, Buddha, furthest, Emperor Julian, although I have a bone to pick with Apollo

Classify this set of figures in the same way. Calvin, Kierkegaard, Suzuki, Schweitzer, Marx, Russell, St. Thomas Aquinas, Luther, St. Augustine, Santayana, the Mad Bomber, Marquis de Sade, Yeats, Gandhi, William James, Hitler, C.S. Lewis, Proust.

Nearest, Kierkegaard, farthest, Proust

What is your favorite book of the Bible?

Numbers

As far as you know, how did the universe come into existence?

Not really sure this has even happened yet

Give what you believe to be the most significant relation of man to three of the following: sun, tree, radio, cat, 3, angel, time, air, truth

time/dreams, 3/body-voice-mind, sun/son

What reference is there in your poetry to date to specific conditions of your physique?

"I drink from the Cancer Cup."

How would you say your physique is related to the form of your poetry at the present point?

Narrow poems, I'm thin

Name ten masterworks (of the order, that is, of *The Bible*, *Das Kapital*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Bleak House*, *Phaedrus*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, or *Harvey's Motion of the Heart and Blood*) which you have never read or which having read you remember nothing of, including on your list as many works as you can that you believe you will never read in your life and starring these. (Do not include more than one work of any particular author.)

**War and Peace, *Principia Mathematica, *Confessions of St. Augustine, The Faerie Queen, The Rape of the Lock, *Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire, *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood, Aeneid, *Being and Nothingness, *Remembrance of Things Past*

**"Thou art my master and my author," Dante says to Virgil.
What poet could you name as Dante names Virgil?**

Why, Jack, you, of course, and Borges

Choosing one of the two figures that I draw with the spilt beer on the table, conceive of yourself as poet (that is, the spirit of

your work) in the position marked with an x; then list as many poets of the tree or constellation of your genius as you can numbering them according to their position in the design.

(Fig. A looks somewhat like a Tarot spread; Fig. B looks like a family tree. I choose the Tarot spread.)

Luis Garcia on my left, Belle Randall above Lu, Robert Creeley between them and to their left; Rimbaud above Creeley, Charles Olson below him, Allen Ginsberg above me, Karen Rice below me, William Carlos Williams to our right, Gertrude Stein above him, and Ezra Pound below him, then, on the far left (#13) is Dante Alighieri, and on the far right, Chaucer, high in empyrean is Sappho, and deep in the fiery abyss, Billy Blake.

Invent a dream in which you appear as a poet.

I'm holding my pen between my fingers and twirling it around like it was a baton, and it gets longer and turns into a pool cue. I'm in a poolroom in a small Texas town with my eyes rolling around in their sockets, I try to write, but it seems my pen is too long, and I'm trying to hit the cue ball with the butt of my pen/pool stick. The bartender, who looks like Ed Dorn says, "Ass has been cold since they shot Michael Jackson." (*They* seems to refer to the government, or Whites.) Marianne Moore, in a blue suit and wearing a triangular hat, rises from her seat and heads for the door saying, "They see rings in war," and another shade says, "They hear rings in their ear." I realize I'm in Poet's Hell and there's no place to go to pee.

Think of a page on which you are writing a poem as being also a map. Do you write the poem with or against the sun?

The sun never sets on my domain, however I try to keep a bit of shadow on page while I write, so, *against* the sun, especially in the sense that everything is just fine, there's no need to protest

What geographical observations can you make about this imagined page of writing?

It is flat, like the Earth

Name three great conquerors in the history of man and compare their movements with the movements of writing on this page.

Alexander the Great, a sentence written from left to right, west to east, from Macedonia toward the Indian Ocean; Julius Caesar, lines from top to bottom, north to south, empire from Gaul to Rome; George Bush, impishly captivating the American people like Scheherazade hypnotized the King in the *Arabian Nights*

Give the approximate date of the following people or events: Plato 400BCE, Buddha 500BCE, The Battle of Waterloo 1812, Dante 1250CE, The Invention of Printing 1500BCE, Nero 50CE, Chaucer 1350CE, Joan of Arc 1400, The Unification of Italy 80BCE

which leads us back to the original question and why the fall of Rome has something to do with modern poetry...but, Jack has one last card up his sleeve

In any of the four following poems fill in each of the blanks with any number of words you wish (including none) attempting to make a complete and satisfactory poem. Do not alter any of the existing words or punctuation or increase the number of lines.

I.

And now the conflabberation
Of the radiator on the top floor
is giving me the hebejeebies, the even row of it
fit to raise
God only knows how many children.

You will count to twenty
You will stay in the midst of them,
You will know Meannie, Mienie and Moe you will hear them
in the narrow hallway, quibbling over a molecule of mayonnaise.

II.

In the objective endlessness
Snow, ambulances, and salt
He lost his imagination.

The color white. He squats
Over a soundless stool made
Of pigeon feathers.

Without nose or toes
He suffers a dream not moving
But the bones go on humming to bubble gum music.

*In the white endlessness
How pure and big a wound
His imagination left.*

_____, seaweed, _____ Now
In the white endlessness.

III.

Blue-rooted heron, a stranger on the lake
and in song, like me no traveler

Taking a constructive rest, loose-winged water bird
And dumb with music and bubble gum

I stand upon the waterfront, like him no traveler
_____, dangling on unmanageable wings.
Aching for flight, for farther shores than
I can hope to hop to, even Proxima Centauri, where I stand and take
my rest.

They will not hunt us in the fog of our understanding
The flesh of the lake bird is fishy and is dumb.
The sound of an arrow, the sight of a hunter
might bring surcease to this life without wings.

So let us die for death alone is motion
And death alone will make these herons fly.
Fly wingless and witless, herons, across the ocean
and die.

IV.

With the gums gone the
words within words, no kidding,
the
birds chatting with other birds,
are barely heard.

And the nose is
green and blue,
it's much too hot to twitch.
Nothing

Stirs except a blue-bottle fly.
The eye IN my head
sees me coming toward the river,
and a sound says,

"I will die outside your window."

Two rivers—the River Styx and the other one, I can't remember, the Russian River, maybe. You get embalmed, and there's no place to go to piss or to scream. If you follow me into the Underworld, be sure to bring three coins and some extra honey cakes.

REVIEW OF ROBERTA SOLTEA'S NOVEL, *THE FLESH OF FIRE*

In 1824, Shelly hazarded the opinion that all poems were parts of one immense poem written by all the poets, past, present and future. One hundred twenty years later, Jorge Luis Borges extended this idea, feeling that the almost infinite world of literature was in one

person—he was Walt Whitman, he was Thomas De Quincey, David Bromige, Roberta Soltea. In her plagiarist novel, *The Flesh of Fire*, Soltea's heroine, Annabelle Rose, travels through time to have conversations with famous authors, giving them plots and dropping metaphors. Annabelle has dinner with Emily Dickinson, and they discuss how "nerves sit ceremonius like tombs." She visits Shih Huang Ti, the first Emperor of China, and encourages him to burn all the books that had been written so far. Although the works of Confucius and Lao Tzu have since resurfaced, those of Kuc Xing and Laun Dri are lost to the world. She visits Adam and interviews him as the greatest author of his day, seeing monotheism as a stimulus to art and proclaiming *Genesis* morphological to all future literature. It is her idea that, in the beginning, the earth was without form and void.

Midway through the novel, Annabelle Rose transports Thuragania, a pre-Socratic philosopher, into the near past and introduces her incognito to Jack Kerouac. Their conversation is witty and intimate, full of wisdom and insight, and the gullible Jack, in a fit of infatuation, decides to follow her across America. Suddenly out on Irving near 19th Avenue bound for the coast Jack saw a yoga studio where there was a class in chi kung going on, and our lady doing the exercise *bird that flies with conscious intent*, said "hey, dude, you understand poetry is all one poem," and Jack made a tremendous soaring wobbling pass at the chick, and she caught the ball, saying "further, further," and out they went into the star-speeding night laughing and teetering in joy of their artistic power.

Near the end of *The Flesh of Fire*, Whitman's dog gives a yawp when he hears Jack proclaim that the grass that liberates itself is the same grass which grows wherever the land is and the water is. This Whitman also lived in previous poets. His secret autobiography reveals that he was a cavalry officer in the nearly mythical wars of Charles XII— wars that turned Voltaire, a mechanical engineer, into an epic poet, completely against common sense. But, then, it was Voltaire who said that we consider common sense so common that no one needs more of it.

All poems are one poem. All poets, one poet. And history, as revealed in *The Flesh of Fire*, is a preamble in the third person telling the story of a heroine who is writing a faux autobiography.

Nothing really exists, yet we derive pleasure from the play of lights and winds.

EIGHTY WORDS FOR WIND

a foreward to David Bromige's *Indictable Suborners*

David Bromige's writing is *rainfall in the silence*. It is easy to mistake the dream for the real, the unsubstantial for the concrete, and the narrator in "Indictable Suborners" reminds me of Lycius in Keats's "Lamia":

*His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,
In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.*

Reading this poem is like joining Apollo and Dionysius on the soccer field. The poem, the story, enchants me on one level and alienates me on another. I am challenged to go beyond the actual, *to lose all my plastic, to shed identity*, and to get lost in a transcendent bog, where all is new, exquisite and bright. In a careful read I undergo a transformation, guided not only by the artist's passion but by the cold philosophy of his sciential brain.

The poem's narrative movement is geographical and autobiographical, but (Wittgenstein, be my Virgil) there is an inner architecture

background tower or arch or strut(.)

With mythic memory, the narrator moves from city to city, muttering in Nottingham, pissing in a doorway in Voorst, swatting mosquitoes in Rapperswill, trudging up Cricklewood Broadway, subliminally

assembling a domain. He creates a world warmed by an inner sun. The material of the poem is an affirmation of love.

I took the poem with me on vacation. I was on Kauai, water breezes, land breezes, fragrant fern wind bringing a whiff of coconut oil from the sunbathers, daydreaming about the 15th century and the *cult of lyric poetry, whose pretense is to escape social penetration.*

Joan of Arc is cast out for, among other abominations, wearing men's clothing, her judges are determined to get her to change, and she's condemned in much the same way the Elder Bush condemned John Walker Lindh for wearing his hair long, saying, "I can think of no worse punishment than to bring him home and make him keep his hair like that."—Overheard, waiting in a checkout line, "They don't believe in God; they believe in Allah."—Attorney General John Ascroft holds onto his face, doesn't let his face slip—God has many faces, can his be one?

Oke ola no'ia o kia' a loko

Look for the life within

Kiei ka'ula nano i ka makau

Peer towards Ka'ala, look at the wind

Ho'olono i ka halulu oka Maluakele (pa)

Heard is the roaring wind Maluakele

I watch an old man sweeping the sand with a metal

detector, and I'm wondering if he's found anything good, when he stops and stoops to sift for a dime. A boy in red trunks faces him, fascinated by the mystery of trickle-down economics.

And what does this have to do with Minoan civilization and the price of gasoline? I took "Indictable Suborners" to read on the beach. The poem begins: "And hands comb some one annual rainfall in the silence after laughter in Brandenburg."

The narrator admits he communicates his needs without the independence, the clarity, the definiteness of logic, moving his emotional flotsam to Cedar Rapids, even though there are very few cedar to see. He follows the one, two, three of reality into an elysium of prelexical attention, hissing and blanching, as he sails and spells from Kakamari to Mogadouro. I found myself nodding in the half-flight, and I realized, here is more than a tint of manic expressionism, and I wondered if I could make it fully across his riverrun.

I reread the first line, "And hands comb some one annual rainfall in the silence after laughter in Brandenburg." I placed my identical foot in the Heraclitian river and felt a tickle:

Sable arrested a fine comb.

Jack Spicer's message finally penetrated—*the letters growing like palm-trees in a cold wind.*

Ua Hana'ia ai pono a pololei
That which is done is true and correct
Ua haina'ia a kuno 'ia 'oe
That which is spoke stands before you

I laid "Indictable Suborners" aside and decided, I'll
make a cup of tea, put on sun screen and walk on
broken legs

across a great civilization in decline, singing the
songs of Spring.

March 21, 2003
Poipu Beach

MIRÓ WALGREEN, AUTHOR OF
PIERRE MENARD'S *QUIXOTE*
for Roberta Soltea

Pierre Menard, author of erudite and entertaining
articles on varied subjects, is best known for being
the author of the *Quixote*. Pierre Menard did not
merely copy the work of the illustrious Miguel de
Cervantes. Menard re-created the *Quixote* from
scratch, word for word, line for line, chapter and
verse. To accomplish his singular and, as he called it,
astonishing purpose, Menard converted to
Catholicism, fought the Moor, emptied his mind of

over three hundred years of history, and taught himself Castilian. Miró Walgreen, respected for his critical scholarship and translations, has recently undertaken the difficult task of translating the *Quixote* of Pierre Menard first into Urnish and then, through Urnish, back into Spanish.

The land of Urn is a semi-mythic kingdom reported by Adam of Bremen, an eleventh century traveler, to "border the wide desert which lies on the far shore of the Gulf, beyond the lands where the wild horse mates." The language of Urn consists of a single word, and this word is kept secret and sung only by the illiterate bards of that distant country. Adam of Bremen received the word from one Bjarni Thorkelsson, and it was passed down by him through the lineage of *skalds* to Miró Walgreen.

Miró Walgreen, picking up where Menard had left off, first prepared himself by fasting and praying for nine days. He realized that he did not have the fortitude of Pierre Menard, who had smoothed the way by becoming Miguel de Cervantes before him, but he did have the stubborn determination to accomplish his own task.

To further prepare himself, Miró Walgreen, attempted to author the story "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*" by Jorge Luis Borges. The initial line, clumsily translated

The complete works bequeathed by the author can be listed in short order, regardless of the inept and scurrilous catalog that some snot rag of

a newspaper published for the entertainment of a lot of fascist fart snuffers (2)

and all that follows was condensed into the cryptic and obtuse Urnish language. However, Walgreen, following the method of Pierre Menard, suppressed this intermediate stage of his final work. It is rumored that the exact word presented immense linguistic difficulties, and that it emerged in French. It was Miró Walgreen's consummate desire for his opus to be rendered into the language best used when speaking to God.

The world is not perfect, and the word that is the entire language of Urn is not a perfect word, but the word does convey the romance and sad humor of the original story. Upon completing his reverie, the forces of fulfillment entered Miró Walgreen and, through the initiation of inspiration and imagination, he wrote...

La Mancha.

Notes:

- 1) *Analecta Germanica*, Lappenberg , Leipzig, 1894.
- 2) *The Book of Sand*, Jorge Luis Borges, Buenos Aires, 1975.

