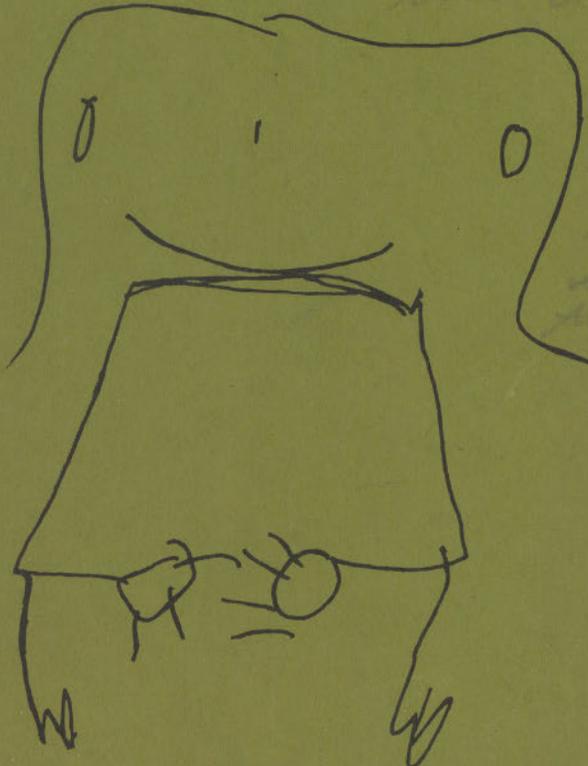
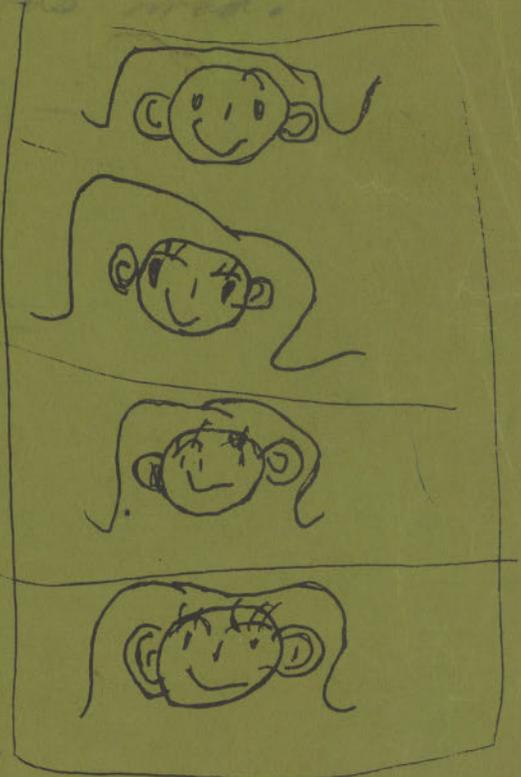


*My god! you'd almost think the man was mad.*

# PILK'S MADHOUSE

*Divine 'put-on', but unfortunately Mr. Pilk has put himself on more than the rest of us.*



"Who is real in this hall of mirrors?"

An Evening Devoted to the works of

Henry Pilk

"Who is real in this hall of mirrors?" - Henry Pilk

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1st Edition January 1973

Ken Campbell writes about Henry Pilk.

**"Who is real in this hall of mirrors?" - Henry Pilk**

A drinker of Brendan Behan proportions. A passionate Irish patriot (despite his Canadian birth). Is convinced that Dublin is being run by gangsters. He has the contacts to have you hooded and taken to the gallows... turns... late night

**PILK'S MADHOUSE** was first produced by Theatre Passe Muraille, Toronto, November 1972, with the following cast:

**BOB DERMER**

**ANDY JONES**

**PHILLIP SCHREIBMAN**

**JENNIFER WATTS**

Music composed and performed by Phillip Schreiberman.

Set and Lighting by Paul Williams.

Photographs by Elizabeth Wolynski.

Set Construction by Ed Fisher and Lucien Parmentier.

Compiled, edited and directed by Ken Campbell.

"Do you want to join the Road Show?" I said.

His great boozey clown face pantomimed considering the offer.

The playlets known collectively as **PILK'S MADHOUSE** may be presented in any order, or none at all.

"Did I ever tell you about how I shat in the soup?"

"No", we said. "What soup?"

"It was in Dublin. Works outing. The governor took us to this restaurant in Dublin where they serve old style food, and it's done out like a monastery, they serve mead, and the waiters dress up as sort of monks. There was a little speech. The governor's wife said grace and I stood on the table and shat in the soup. Dropped me pants and crapped in the soup. I was carted straight off to Grange Gorman Madhouse, and over a period of three weeks I made 18 baskets and 3 leather wallets, was declared sane and went and got a job at the Abbey Theatre".

Marcel Sciner, another Road Show man said: "Yeah, me and my mate used to go about doing mad things, we never quite got it together that much, but we used to do some things."

Ken Campbell writes about Henry Pilk.

The first thing to be said about Pilk is that he is a madman. A drinker of Brendan Behan proportions. A passionate Irish patriot (despite his Canadian birth). Is convinced that Dublin is being run by gangsters. He has the contacts to have you hooded and shot. Is in and out of asylums. Gentle and violent by turns... I first met him in Groome's in Dublin, which is an illegal late night drinking place for actors and politicians. We were immediately in passionate and violent argument. Not that we actually disagreed with each other. It was just that we saw in each other what fun we'd have if we argued. And so we progressed, shouting and screaming the odds at each other, arguing complete nonsenses as long as they were opposed to what the other had just said. Mrs. Groome slung us out round about 3 in the morning and so I invited Henry back to where myself and the rest of the Road Show were staying. The rest were in bed, but I doubt if they got much kip in once we arrived. It was a wonderful night. Undoubtedly the best arguemnts are when you're talking complete balls, but with genuine passion and violence - it's a tonic - a complete liberation of the mind and soul, etc. Anyway, round about 4:30 we moved on from mere argument and shouting abuse to physical threats. Pilk grabbed the poker and waved and brandished it about like a deranged samurai. I countered with the bread knife. I slashed up the arm of the landlady's sofa in an attempt to demonstrate that I meant business as opposed to him who was merely being silly with a pcker. Not to be outdone he smashed a vase and thrust his poker through the Monopoly set. Next moment we were rolling around the floor. He's physically much bigger than me, not in height but in weight, and I was eventually pinioned to the floor, his great loony drunk face thrust into mine .

"Do you want to join the Road Show?" I said.

His great boozey clown face pantomimed considering the offer.  
"Yeah, all right", he said.

One night, after we'd finished a show in Amsterdam, Pilk said,  
"Did I ever tell you about how I shat in the soup?"  
"No!", we said. "What soup?"

"It was in Dublin. Works outing. The governor took us to this restaurant in Dublin where they serve old style food, and it's done out like a monastery, they serve mead, and the waiters dress up as sort of monks. There was a little speech. The governor's wife said grace and I stood on the table and shat in the soup. Dropped me pants and crapped in the soup. I was carted straight off to Grange Gorman Madhouse, and over a period of three weeks I made 18 baskets and 3 leather wallets, was declared sane and went and got a job at the Abbey Theatre".

Marcel Steiner, another Road Show man said: "Yeah, me and my mate used to go about doing mad things, we never quite got it together that much, but we used to do some things."

But Pilk said: "I don't think you can do a totally mad act WITH someone else. A totally mad act has to be done solo."

Pilk writes like he drinks - continually from midday till he passes out. He writes on backs of cigarette packets, napkins, walls, anything. Since he joined my company I've been trying to collect it and put it all together as I find it quite the most mind-blowing stuff I've ever come across. In my office in London I've got two trunk loads of his writings. Apart from odd little items of his I've stuck into my Road Show from time to time, this is the first presentation of any of Pilk's works. I think it will be a very funny, very alarming night.

... Dat dey should tour de world via a Theatrical presentation - a Surgical Circus - and at every performance parts off Heims und Bohms should be surgically removed - so dat the peoples there present know dat dey could this night be in the prescense of a death and this would undoubtedly be the greatest service to Peace in our Time. To dis end dey devised a sequence off operations de nature off vich dey placed in a series of numbered envelopes - all sealed so dat de surgeon mine self shall not know vich parts he any night remove must. I shall now ask de nurse to please hand me the sealed envelope containing the informations as to vich parts go tonight. Here it is. Operation 69. Vor iss in it? You might be interested to know vor vos der first parts I have removed. Can any off you guess what it vas?

BOHME

The hollocks! Yeh! Yeh!

SURGEON

Nein it vas nicht der nacherst. Dis first parts I have removed in dis inaugural performance, in der prescense of der heads of state of many nations, via dis special scalpel present ed by Deutsche Steel Ltd. - in conjunction with - Harvey Weilhanger - vos der frontal lobes of the brain! Und dis vas an intelligent choice - for dis means dat at every subsequent operation dey feel no pain - or if dey feel any pain it has made them into such loveable laughing zobbies dat dey laugh laugh all de time laugh what ever de hell of deirs I cut off! I shall now move into der audience und

THE DIMINISHING MEN

1.

(Two men laughing and snickering under blanket.  
Nurse in attendance)

SURGEON

Ladies and gentlemen you are now about to witness a truly unique act. These are the amazing Diminishing Men. Fully to appreciate our astounding presentation it will be necessary to say something of the history of our act. It was the inspiration of Wolfgang Heinz and Georg Bohne vich is der real names off der diminishing men. Bohne und Heinz vos for many years psychiatrists und psychoanalysts second to none in deir chosen spezialization - der study of mass response und crowd reaction und so weiter. It vos der diskovery of Heinz und Bohne dat ven a krowd off more than thirty persons are gathered together dat it is deir supkconscious vish to vitness a death and that it vhy krowds are so riotous and unruly in diss our day und age, they gather together - ten fifteen thirty thousand peoples - und vhere is die execution? - deir is just foot-ball or hockey or some bloody ting. So Heinz und Bohne decided to devote their lives to the Cause of Peace und Goodwill. Vot dey would most have liked to have done, especially Bohne, vos to have gathered all the persons off the world together und be executed in front of dem. But dis alas vos an imprktikal dream. Den Heinz suggested dis remarkable kompromise.

... Dat dey should tour de world vis a Theatrical presentation - a Surgical Circus - und at every performance parts off Heinz und Bohne should be surgically removed - so dat the peoples there present know dat dey could this night be in the prescence of a death and this would undoubtedly be the greatest service to Peace in our Time. To dis end dey devised a sequence off operations de nature off vich dey placed in a series of numbered envelopes - all sealed so dat de surgeon mine self shall not know vich parts he any night remove must. I shall now ask de nurse to please hand me the sealed envelope containing the informations as to vich parts go tonight. Here it is. Operakzion 69. Vot iss in it? You might be interested to know vot vos der first parts I have removed. Can any off you guess vhot it vos?

BOHNE

The bollocks! Yak! Yak!

SURGEON

Nein it vos nicht der nackers! Die first parts I have removed in die inaugral performance, in der prescence of der heads of state of mahy nations, vis dis special scalpel present ed by Deutsche Steel Ltd. - in conjunction with - Harvey Wallbanger - vos der frontal lobes of the brain! Und dis vos an intelligent choice - for dis means dat at every subsequent operation dey feel no pain - or if dey feel any pain it has made them into such loveable laughing zombies dat dey laugh laugh all de time laugh vhot ever de hell of deirs I cut off! I shall now move into der audience und

THE DIMINISHING MEN

2.

SURGEON (Cont'd)

ask der younk lady here to please be so kind as to open der sealed envelope. The lady is trying to get it out for you now Bohne... Und would you please now read out in a loud voice vhot is on the card... etc.

ON THE CARD

We would like our thingies removed tonight please. SIGNED...  
Wolfgang Heinz Georg Bohne.

SURGEON

Very well, ve shall now proceed with tonight's operation - die surgical removal of deir thingies. If you will pardon me I shall now make my preliminary examinations. Torch please Nurse. Vis your permission I shall now go under.

(Goes under. Is amazed. Asks nurse to come and have a look)

It's all right I give you another coupla minutes Nurse. Ladies und Gentlemen it is obviously for you dat Heinz und Bohne haf saved deir ultimate refelation... die amazing diminishing men are in fact amazing diminishing women...ve haf such fun now girls... ORGY. Life is good - no?

INTRODUCTION

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to Pilk's Madhouse. Who is real in this hall of mirrors?; asks Pilk and maybe this evening devoted entirely to the strange playlets of Henry Pilk will supply some sort of answer. -Henry Pilk, poet, madman, drunk - born Cabbagetown 1944, lived in Dublin from 1950 until he joined Ken Campbell's travelling stunt and freak show in the late '60's. Our next item, FALSE JOURNEY, is in its way a little masterpiece. It is restrained, hypnotic and finally haunting. It was written in September of this year at 4 o'clock in the morning in the Cafe Prinz on the Prinzengracht in Amsterdam on the backs of two cigarette packets.

I shall kneel in the church next to Phyllis in my long white wedding dress.

And a moment will arrive

And I will say "I do"

A simple ring made of gold will be pushed up my finger

And I will be Mrs. Scane.

(Pause)

Who's there?

(Enter HENRY. In his hand a half-finished bottle of whiskey)

What do you want?

HENRY

I've come to wish you good luck.

WOMAN

What do you want?

HENRY

I've come to wish you good luck.

(Pause)

I've brought some scotch.

WOMAN

So I see.

(Pause)

Well?

HENRY

Well good luck. (Drinks)

(Pause)

FALSE JOURNEY

1.

(To be performed on a booth stage. Preferably with a strong light source from below the acting level. The style of performing is what I call "Past Tense". That is it is truthful but more carefully considered than "naturalistic". It should have a perfection about it more usually found in dance and ballet. The murder should be beautiful and hopeful rather than brutal)

WOMAN

So tomorrow I shall be married.

Mrs. Stone.

I shall kneel in the church next to Phillip in my long white wedding dress. And a moment will arrive

And I will say "I do"

A simple ring made of gold will be pushed up my finger

And I will be Mrs. Stone.

(Pause)

Who's there?

(Enter HENRY. In his hand a half-finished bottle of whiskey)

What do you want?

I've come to wish you good luck.

What do you want?

I've come to wish you good luck.

(Pause)

I've brought some scotch.

So I see.

(Pause)

Well?

Well good luck. (Drinks)

(Pause)

Thank you.  
HENRY  
The weather forecast says it's going to be thundery tomorrow.

WOMAN  
Why have you come?

HENRY  
To tell you to call off your marriage.

WOMAN  
Why?

(Pause)  
HENRY  
It's not a good idea.

WOMAN  
Why is it not a good idea?

(HENRY drinks)

HENRY  
May I have a look at your photograph album?

(He picks it up)

This is you aged six with your mother.

This is you aged nine with your pet pekingese.

This is you aged thirteen on your horse.

This is you at your twenty-first birthday party. And there's me.

There's you on holiday last year aged... thirty.

WOMAN  
Thirty-one.

HENRY  
And these empty pages here await your wedding snaps.

What a well-ordered life.

(Holds the book admiring its form)

WOMAN  
Will you give me back the album please.

I am asking you to give it back.

(HENRY opens the book and tears out the last pages  
which were being reserved for the wedding photographs)

WOMAN

That was an awful thing to do.

HENRY

It's just paper. I just tore up some paper. You can't compare tearing up paper to tearing up lives.

WOMAN

Whose lives am I tearing up?

Are you saying that I should marry you?

(Pause)

Are you?

HENRY

I don't know.

WOMAN

Well I'm not going to.

I'd like you to go as soon as you feel able to.

And if you want to make me happy you'll keep away from my life forever. I value my peace above all things and you are most certainly not a bringer of peace.

Are you?

Everything is clear and set.

Will you please now go.

(Pause)

(HENRY cries out, his cry summoning strange forces.  
He murders her perfectly.  
He is now relaxed, and at peace)

HENRY

This is how it has to be.

For the rest of my time I can devote myself to your memory.

There's no hope - but there's no humiliation.

There's no possibility -

But lack of possibility is peace.

(A knock at the door.  
HENRY hides the body.  
Another knock)

HENRY (Cont'd)

Yes?

(MAN appears)

MAN

Imperial Tobacco are proud to announce a new cigarette. Knightsbridge. A cool gentle smoke. You are lucky to have been chosen at random from the telephone directory to receive a complimentary pack of fifty Knightsbridge cigarettes plus fifty Knightsbridge coupons. In this brochure you will see some of the many varied and wonderful goods which can be obtained with Knightsbridge coupons. This is the General section and this the Woman's section and this is the Man's section. Thank you for giving me your time.

(MAN goes.

HENRY muses on the cigarettes and the brochure.  
A sudden but slight pain suddenly alights on his face)

HENRY

(To WOMAN)

The Universe can't be stopped.

Already it's beginning to slip away from you.

(Referring to cigarettes)

This is the first of a never ending sequence.

We're all flying away from you in our aeroplane.

This was a false journey.

The road was long.

But it was a cul-de-sac.

And tomorrow the forecast is thundery.

1.  
I mean like it's useful to spot the garbage cans, but more than that I come up here for philosophical reasons.

2.  
I think I shall probably die in a minute.

1.  
See when you look down, all the cars they ain't really cars, they're just like little dinky cars, and all the people they aren't really people, they're just like little ants dodging about and dashing off nowhere, and I'm up here, the Governor - you know what I mean? It gives you a true perspective on things.

(Enter GENT)

Hang on - company.

THE MAN WHO TOSSED HIMSELF OFF

1.

Introduction: Who is real in this hall of mirrors?

The macabre comic logic of Pilk's THE MAN WHO TOSSED HIMSELF OFF recalls Luis Bunuel's middle period.

(Two TRAMPS on top of monument)

1.

All right up here on top of the (insert local monument) isn't it?

2.

It's a bit chilly.

1.

Chilly! Bracing! That's what it is friend, bracing! Fill your lungs with the health-giving ozone.

(Clouts him on back)

2.

I've only got one lung.

1.

You've only got one lung? Well fill that one up!

(Clouts him again)

The thing is friend, from up here you can see every garbage can for miles around. You can plan your route - you know what I mean?

2.

Load of bloody use to me. I can only see as far as that.

(Indicates about two feet)

After that it's just fog.

1.

I often come up here you know...

2.

I think those steps have done my ticker in.

1.

I mean like it's useful to spot the garbage cans, but more than that I come up here for philosophical reasons.

2.

I think I shall probably die in a minute.

1.

See when you look down, all the cars they ain't really cars, they're just like little dinky cars, and all the people they aren't really people, they're just like little ants dodging about and dashing off nowhere, and I'm up here, the Governor - you know what I mean? It gives you a true perspective on things.

(Enter GENT)

Hang on - company.

THE MAN WHO TOSSED HIMSELF OFF

2.

Morning. GENT

Morning. 1.

(GENT climbs up on wall)  
Where are you going?

Don't try and stop me. GENT

1.  
What, going to toss yourself off, are you?

GENT  
Yes, as a matter of fact I am.

1.  
Well I'm not going to stop you. And ray of sunshine here, he's got one lung, a dodgy ticker and wooden feet --so even if he does object you should be able to cope.

All right. Good-bye. GENT

1.  
Good-bye. Say good-bye.

2.  
Good-bye.

1.  
Just a minute.  
(Pulls GENT off wall)

GENT  
I thought you said you weren't going to stop me.

1.  
No, it's all right, I'm not going to stop you, it's just a thought crossed my mind... you can't take nothing with you, you know that don't you?

GENT  
What do you mean?

1.  
What I mean is this jacket you're sporting. Now it's up to you but I could make use of this jacket. But once you've splatted yourself all over the pavement, it's not going to be worth a cup of beaver shit to nobody is it?

GENT  
All right. You can have the jacket.  
(Takes off jacket. Removes wallet. Gives jacket to 1.)

1.

Well I mean - don't be mean - with contents obviously.

GENT

No.

1.

Yes. I mean better us make use of your money than leave it for the ambulance men to scrap over. Suicide is a mortal sin, you know that, don't you? This could square it with Him for you.

GENT

All right. You can have the money.

1.

Well give us the wallet as well. We could get half a buck on that.

GENT

No. It's got a note in it which says why I'm doing it..

(1. takes wallet. Removes note. Puts note in GENT'S back pocket. Keeps wallet)

1.

All right?

GENT

Yes. Can I go now?

(1. removes GENT'S tie and shirt)

1.

On your way.

(GENT climbs up on wall)

2.

I could do with his trousis.

1.

He says he could make use of your trousis.

GENT

Well he can forget it. Now leave me alone.

1.

So you're set on it, are you? To make your last action on this earth an uncharitable one. Him up there he's sent you one last chance. You're about to go and a blind one-lunged beggar, with wooden feet, and brass pins through his poor undernourished knees asks you for your pants and what do you say? No, you say. Well it's your decision.

GENT

O all right.

(Takes off shoes. Removes trousers. Gives them to bums. Puts his shoes back on again)

THE MAN WHO TOSSED HIMSELF OFF

4.

2.  
And the shoes.  
1.  
He says he'll take the shoes.

GENT  
They won't fit him. They're not big enough!

1.  
Well he can carve his feet down till they fit!

2.  
Yeah, I can whittle 'em down.  
(GENT gives them shoes. Gets back on wall)

1.  
Hang on pal - your note.

(Takes suicide note out of pocket of trousers. Reads it)

"I am doing this because since Brenda left me I feel as if I haven't got a thing".

(1. sticks note down GENT'S underpants)  
(Pause)

Go on then.

GENT  
I seem to have lost the urgency. I can't do it.

1.  
Don't be a cunt.

(Pushes him off)

(Little voice) Who is it?

Where are you?

Who is it?

What are you doing here?

I live here.

No you don't I do.

No I do.

Where are you?

THE TWO HUSBANDS

1.

Introduction: The notion of invisibility crops up with great frequency in Pilk's writing. In THE TWO HUSBANDS Pilk plays with the notion of two men who are invisible to each other.

(MAN is at home. He is reading a book. He puts the book down, takes out a packet of cigarettes and lights one. He puts the packet of cigarettes on the floor. He gets some notepaper and starts to write a letter. SECOND MAN comes in. Both men are invisible to each other, but they can hear each other and feel each other. The FIRST MAN assumes that a gust of wind must have caused the door to blow open and then shut. He goes to inspect it. The SECOND MAN is surprised to see the book, notepaper and cigarettes. He examines them. The FIRST MAN turns round and is astounded to see what he takes to be a packet of cigarettes floating in the air, a cigarette come out and light itself. He creeps as if in a dream over to the SECOND MAN and after some hesitation takes the cigarette. He examines it and waves his arm in the air to test for wires, ghosts, etc. SECOND watches the movement of the cigarette. FIRST tosses it to see if he can get it to float. No success. SECOND picks up cigarette and examines it. Puffs it exploratively. FIRST sits down. To do so he automatically moves the book and notepaper. He is still transfixed by cigarette. SECOND sees the book, etc. moves. He investigates them. Further business at artists' discretion)

FIRST

(Little voice)

Is anyone there?

(SECOND is slightly unhinged by disembodied voice)

(FIRST moves chair and sits in it)

SECOND

(Little voice) Who is it?

FIRST

Where are you?

SECOND

Who is it?

FIRST

What are you doing here?

SECOND

I live here.

FIRST

No you don't I do.

SECOND

No I do.

FIRST

Where are you?

SECOND

Where are you?

(Both make their way very delicately towards where they suppose the other to be. They overshoot each other. Then not finding each other they go backwards a bit so that they are only an inch from each other. They relax a bit but that small movement involved is enough to make them touch. They spring apart. Then find each other and feel each other)

FIRST

You're invisible. You're an invisible man.

SECOND

So are you.

FIRST

I can see me.

SECOND

I can see me.

FIRST

Who are you?

SECOND

I am Mr. Hoskins and this is my house.

FIRST

I am Mr. Hoskins and this is my house.

SECOND

I think we may have wandered into a time warp. Or rather you have. I've seen a film about it.

FIRST

Well what ought we to do about it?

SECOND

Well you'll have to go.

FIRST

Why me? I'm the one who's really here.

SECOND

No I think you're in error there.

FIRST

Well I'm definitely not going.

SECOND

Nor am I

(Both sit defiantly. Enter WIFE. Both men in exact unison)

FIRST & SECOND

Hello darling.

WIFE

Hello dear.

BOTH

Can you see me all right?

Look stop talking while I'm talking.

You stop talking while I'm talking.

No you!

No you!

You'll drive me mad!

WIFE

O darling whatever's the matter?

BOTH

I think we'll just have to learn to live with each other till this thing sorts itself out. Yeah.

WIFE

Till what thing sorts itself out darling? You are behaving strangely.

BOTH

Look the important thing is that we've got you, or rather I've got you, and you're real and lovely and I love you.

WIFE

And I love you.

(Both men are kneeling in front of her and she holds them fondly. The men look at where they suppose each other to be - actually they're just a bit out - and wonder for a moment and then relax into the comfort of the WIFE)

WIFE

(Gently) Shall we go to bed?

BOTH

Yes.

(She passes her hand through her hair and goes. They make a quick look to where each other isn't quite and follow out)

or

THE MAN WHO LIVES IN THE UNKNOWN OF THE MIDDLE GREYNESS

Introduction: Who is real in this hall of mirrors? And now  
for two of Pilk's unique psychodramas,  
THE MAN WHO CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE and  
THE HOMICIDAL NYMPHOMANIAC.

(One of Pilk's putrid plays)

(Doctor's surgery. A lady DOCTOR. MAN comes in with hold-all)

DR.  
Next. What seems to be the matter?

MAN  
I can't tell the difference, Doctor.

DR.  
The difference between what?

MAN  
The difference between anything. If I jump am I a frog? If I don't  
jump am I a frog who doesn't happen to be jumping at the moment?  
These are the worries that panic my mind Doctor. Is there anything  
you can do?

DR.  
I don't think I really know what you're getting at.

MAN  
I've slipped down the crack between things, Doctor. Every single  
thing drives me to panic if I look at it for any length of time -  
the only way out is to sing drivel and caper about - then and only the  
then does my mind cease its panicking.

DR.  
Give me an example of how things panic you.

MAN  
(Takes wrapped sandwich out of hold-all, unwraps it.  
Takes cheese out of it and slaps it on the table)

What's that?

A bit of cheese.

MAN  
There are microbes and bacteria in that cheese... am I correct?

DR.  
Yes.

MAN

Are the microbes and bacteria part of the concept of cheese or are they separate?

DR.

They are part of the cheese. The bacteria is what matures the cheese which gives it its distinctive property.

MAN

What if there was a piece of cheese the size of this room, Doctor. With mice and budgerigars in it - pecking at it - nibbling at it - going to the bathroom in it - dying in it - decomposing in it - part one might say of the maturing process of this monster cheese - giving it its distinctive property wouldn't you say - would they be part of concept of monster cheese or separate.

DR.

Part of it.

MAN

A piece of cheese the size of Africa, Doctor. Lions in it - giraffes, natives, pygmies, missionaries - nothing in their own right! Just part of the maturing process of cheese! We're all just cheese Doctor! You're cheese! I'm cheese!

(He sings drivel and capers about)

DR.

Calm down. Calm down.

MAN

Tell me I'm not cheese!

DR.

you're not cheese.

MAN

I don't believe you.

DR.

You're all right. You're all right.

MAN

Yes Mum. Oooo no. OOOOooo no!!

DR.

What's the matter?

MAN

I can't tell the difference between your table and a hippopotamus.

DR.

A hippopotamus has a head to start with.

MAN  
Not a headless hippopotamus  
(Sings drivel. Starts to caper)

DR.  
It's a table which is a table which is a table. Be comforted.  
(She holds the table and shows him how to hold an object  
and comfort yourself with its definedness)  
A table. There you are.

MAN  
Neither do I. And if you had an answer would a widget necessarily  
Only just... only just.

DR.  
What do you mean 'only just'?

MAN  
Cut an inch off that table leg - is it still a table?

DR..  
Yes it's a rickety table.

MAN  
Cut six inches off all the table legs - is it still a table?

DR.  
Yes. It would be a sort of coffee table.

MAN  
Cut down all the legs so that there's just an eight of an inch  
stump of a table leg all the way round. Eight of an inch legs...?  
Is it still a table?

DR.  
No the legs would be ineffectual. It would be a tray.

MAN  
No longer a table! So there's a minimum length table legs have to  
be to keep a table a table...?

DR.  
Yes.

MAN  
What is the minimum length?

DR.  
About a foot.

MAN  
About! About! Be exact Doctor! I need help from precise people!  
I'm a man drowning in approximations!  
(Capering)

THE MAN WHO CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE

4.

DR.

Twelve inches! Twelve inches!

MAN

Right, let's imagine it cut down to minimum Doctor. 12 inch legs. The minimum length! I cut another inch off all the legs! Is it just possible it is still a table?

DR.

I don't know.

MAN

Neither do I. And if we found an answer would a midget necessarily agree?

MIDGED

(Popping up from hold-all)

Exactly.

MAN

And that's what I mean - everything you look at is just one step from the unknown. I breed rabbits in my car so is it a mobile hutch? What are these?

(Produces Y-front underpants from out of hold-all)

DR.

Y-front underpants.

MAN

But I've sewn the legs up! I've ripped the elastic so it's a strap! It's a handbag! So I'm a woman!

DR.

No you're not. You've got a dick.

MAN

I'm a woman with a dick!

(Is this man the centre of the universe?  
The middle?)

PHILLIMON

What can I do for you Dr. Bowmer?

BOWMER

Dr. Jackson has finished his book. I thought you'd want to be the first to know. He's now decided to call it "Orgasmic Reflex in Poultry". I thought that you'd be interested to hear that everyone who has read it thinks it is brilliant. Coming for lunch?

PHILLIMON

Someone waiting.

BOWMER

Race her through. I'll be inside. Got it.

PHILLIMON

Send the last one in Miss Fitz. Next. Good morning Miss...

LINDA

I'm not giving my real name Dr. till I check out for definite that what I'm going to say goes no further.

PHILLIMON

Nothing passes these four walls. I give you my word.

LINDA

All right the label I go under - which is the one I was borrr with - is Linda Flame.

PHILLIMON

And what is the problem Linda ?

LINDA

The problem is sexual.

PHILLIMON

Orgasm trouble?

LINDA

Yes you could say that.

PHILLIMON

EVER HAD ONE?

LINDA

Never get near it.

PHILLIMON

Look, it's almost my lunch break, Miss Flame. Orgasm difficulties are not usually something that can be cleared up in a couple of minutes. If you like, I'll give you a quick physical checkover and then maybe after lunch I'll delve into your past, (Pause) unless you've got any objection...

LINDA

All right. (Lies over his table)  
But keep your checkover strictly medical Dr. - I'm warning you for your own good -

PHILLIMON

Miss Flame you can see my Medical Association Oath displayed in all its glory on the wall.

LINDA

Yeah, well then get on then. Sigh like this. Ahhhhhhh.

PHILLIMON

(Takes out rubber gloves, decides not to put them on, begins physical checkover of Linda. He begins by pressing her stomach, then he makes sure her legs are mobile by cycling them)

Let out a sigh like this Ahhhhhhhh.

LINDA

Ahhhhhhhhhh (In with her legs, etc. business-like with the breasts, etc. ...about to get her pants finds himself flying through the air)

PHILLIMON

Ahhhhhhhhhh

LINDA

Ahhhhhhhhhh, (etc)

PHILLIMON

Keep relaxed Miss Flame. (Pushes both her legs in)

Ahhhhhhhhhh! Ha Ha, she's a homicidal nymphomaniac!

LINDA

Ahhhhhhhhhh. (PHILLIMON feels her breasts in a business-like fashion and is about to put his hands down her pants when she grabs him and throws him in some wild ju-jitsu fashion)  
See this is my problem Dr. I can let a man go just so far and then I don't know what happens - I just panic I guess and then wallop! I guess I've killed around a dozen fellows - certainly whacked a lot of skulls - but I don't hang around to inspect the damage, just get the hell out - what's wrong with me Dr.? There's nothing wrong with my passion I can tell you that - I sure want it - and how! It's just that when I get near it, well, I'm just not answerable.

PHILLIMON

I see. I'd just like Dr. Bowmer to take a look at you. Dr. Bowmer

BOWMER

What is it? I want you to imagine you're inside of an egg. You're a little chickadee being born. Get the picture? Right -- now peck your way out! Peck your way out. Peck your way out.

(DR. JACKSON puts PHILLIMON her pants. She kills him)  
I wonder if you'd do me a favour. Miss Flame here has a chronic orgasm difficulty.

BOWMER

You've given her a physical checkover? Get the hell out!

PHILLIMON

Yes. But I think you maybe... it's quite all right - it's one of the hazards of the job! Poor old Jackson. Hal Hal

BOWMER

Oh out of the way Phillimon.  
(Presses her stomach, cycles her) Pecked problems. Tee Hee.  
Sigh like this. Ahhhhhhhhh. Hal Hal My tricks with chicks. Hal Hal

(They dance) LINDA

Ahhhhhhhhhh.

BOWMER

Ahhhhhhh.

LINDA

Ahhhhhhhhhh.

BOWMER

Keep relaxed. That's it. That's good.  
(In with her legs, etc. business-like with the breasts, etc. ...about to put hand down her pants finds himself flying through the air)

PHILLIMON

Ha! rrr! uuuhhh!

BOWMER

Explain this circus, Phillimon.

PHILLIMON

Ha Ha, she's a homicidal nymphomaniac!

BOWMER

Wow Geeee Ha! Ha!

LINDA

Is there anything you can do?

BOWMER

(Evilly) I think Jackson should take a look at her. Dr. Jackson.

DR. JACKSON

What is it? I'm busy.

BOWMER

Miss Flame here has orgasm difficulties.

JACKSON

O one of the many. Lie back Miss Flame. Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh. Sigh... Ahhhhhhh. I want you to imagine you're inside of an egg. You're a little chickadee being born. Get the picture? Right -- now peck your way out! Peck your way out. Peck your way out.

(DR. JACKSON puts hands down her pants. She kills him)

LINDA

Shit, I've killed him. Pardon me boys. Get the hell out!

BOWLER & PHILLIMON

Don't worry. You're nuts. So it's quite all right - it's one of the hazards of the job! Poor old Jackson. Ha! Ha!

(They find the manuscript)

Here it is - Orgasmic Reflex in Poultry. Pecker problems. Tee Hee. Get your cock and pullet. Ha! Ha! My tricks with chicks. Ha! Ha!

(They dance)

ARTHUR

Hallo darling!... (To himself) ... I did it then... I was listening to my own voice rather than trying to communicate... (Tries to merely communicate) Hallo darling!

(SANDRA comes on and kisses him. Takes his hat and hangs it up)

SANDRA

Had a good day, dear?

ARTHUR

Yes.

SANDRA

Dinner's nearly ready.

ARTHUR

Good! (Tries to communicate) Good! I'm glad! I'm looking forward to dinner very much!

SANDRA

Are you feeling all right, Arthur?

ARTHUR

Feel absolutely marvellous, love.

SANDRA

Won't be a minute.

ARTHUR

(Trying to communicate)

I feel quite all right. (To himself) Actually I don't... O God... O God.

SANDRA

Arthur, what is the matter with you?

ARTHUR

Nothing at all.

SANDRA

Well you're behaving really strangely.

Introduction: Who is real in this hall of mirrors?

"If you kill a British soldier clap your hand".

So sing the Catholic children of Northern Ireland.

Pilk's attitude to the English is not far removed from these sentiments. During a recent stay with relatives here he took a train out to Stratford, Ontario where he was appalled to find decent Canadians training themselves to be English. A fist fight broke out in the Avon bar between Pilk and several members of the Festival company and it was while waiting to be charged that Pilk penned this minor masterpiece - THE MAN WHO DISAPPEARED UP HIS OWN ASSHOLE.

ARTHUR

Hello darling!.. (To himself) ... I did it then... I was listening to my own voice rather than trying to communicate.... (Tries to merely communicate) Hello darling!

(SANDRA comes on and kisses him. Takes his hat and hangs it up)

SANDRA

Had a good day, dear?

ARTHUR

Yes.

SANDRA

Dinner's nearly ready.

ARTHUR

Good! (Tries to communicate) Good! I'm glad! I'm looking forward to dinner very much!

SANDRA

Are you feeling all right, Arthur?

ARTHUR

Feel absolutely marvellous, love.

SANDRA

Won't be a minute.

ARTHUR

(Trying to communicate)

I feel quite all right. (To himself) Actually I don't...  
O God... O God.

SANDRA

Arthur, what is the matter with you?

ARTHUR

Nothing at all.

SANDRA

Well you're behaving really strangely.

ARTHUR

It's nothing at all really... It's just that I bumped into a chap I knew in Newfoundland today - a fellow I went to school with - we went down to the Avon - we bent the old elbow for a while - (To himself)... O shut up... (tries to communicate) Well, he said he hardly recognized me because my whole way of speaking and all my mannerisms are so completely different.

SANDRA

Well he's quite right, Arthur, they are! And I'm very proud of you. I mean without all that hard work you put in at the voice and movement classes you'd never have got Lennox.

ARTHUR

No, quite... but Henry, this old friend, pointed out that I don't really speak in order to communicate any more, I speak in order to listen to my own voice... and d'you know, it's true, I do... I'm doing it now... I'm listening to myself the whole time... Maybe if I spoke in my old voice (Speaks commoner) Like this, if I spoke like this... No, that's no good... that's not me, I don't speak like that any more... I mean who am I? Who have they made me into? You see, voice classes are the study of speaking like you don't and movement and gesture classes are the study of behaving like you don't. Even now, now while I'm telling you this I'm listening to myself: listening for a vowel out of place...

(Tries to clear his mind and brain by extreme vocal action)  
Oooooooooaghhhhhhzxsheeeeeeburoooooooooothpp. Help me, Sandra!

SANDRA

Arthur, now sit down here  
(Sits him down)  
and relax.

ARTHUR

Yes.

SANDRA

Don't think about anything.

ARTHUR

No. (SANDRA massages his neck)

SANDRA

Is that nice?

ARTHUR

Mmmmmmm.. (Becomes worried) Darling, I'm thinking about thinking... I can't think about anything else except the process of thinking... I'm only talking to you now to stop myself thinking about the process of thinking... but it's no good, because I know that's what I'm doing... Sandra, how can I stop myself thinking about thinking?

Oh, Arthur, I've got a lovely stew in the oven...

SANDRA

Just think about blackness.

ARTHUR

Yes.

(Tries it. Seems to work, but suddenly)  
No, no! My brain can't be fooled! It knows I'm thinking about blackness in order not to think about thinking.

SANDRA

Darling, don't think about anything. Just fill your mind with emptiness and space.

ARTHUR

Yes. (Tries it, then) My brain's feeling itself! It's feeling itself!

SANDRA

Like a headache is it?

ARTHUR

No, there's no pain. Pain... (Stands) maybe that's the answer. If I hurt myself that'll take my mind off my mind.

(Hits himself in stomach)

It's no good. My brain knows what I'm doing. It won't let me hit myself hard enough to take it off itself. Sandra, kick me! (She won't) Kick me woman! (She does) No, that's not hard enough. Kick me in the rear end!

( Gives him a hefty kick)

Harder, harder, that's not hard enough.

(SANDRA kicks and kicks him until she hurts her foot and starts crying)

Pain!

(ARTHUR looks about for more pain. Takes scissors from work box on table and tries to cut his thumb off. It doesn't work. Tries to stab himself with scissors but his mind won't let him. Asks SANDRA to stab him. She won't. He sees a long length of thick elastic in box and looks round for something solid to fix it to. Nothing. Gives one end of it to SANDRA)

(ARTHUR holding other end)

Now, walk over there.

SANDRA

Why?

ARTHUR

Go over there, woman!

(She obeys him and walks to audience to limit of unstretched elastic)

SANDRA

Oh, Arthur, I've got a lovely stew in the oven...

ARTHUR

(Tests elastic)  
You can go a bit further.

SANDRA

Arthur, what are you going to make me do?

ARTHUR

Further.

SANDRA

No, I won't.

(ARTHUR, still holding elastic, walks over to SANDRA and picks her up and carries her about six feet away and walks back to where he was before. Elastic pulled very taut now. He puts his end in mouth)

ARTHUR

Now pang it at me!

SANDRA

No. (Etc. She eventually pangs it at him)

ARTHUR

No, that's no good!

(SANDRA rushes off)

Whatever I do my brain sees through it... (Charges about)... If only I could wreck my brain, I'd be all right... but it won't let me wreck it... I'm not in charge of myself...

(Races about, hating brain and trying to wreck it)

It's in my stomach as well now... my whole nervous system is feeling itself.

SANDRA

I've rung the doctor, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Sandra!

SANDRA

What?

ARTHUR

I'm disappearing up my own asshole. Help! Pull me out! Quick, quick, help me, before my head goes up. Good-bye, darling. Good glub!

(He tries to speak but it is as if his mouth is gagged with balloon skin)

THE WHISPERING DOWNSTAIRS

1.

An ad-lib interview with man in audience claiming to be a university lecturer from \_\_\_\_\_, who met Pilk in Dublin and to whom Pilk sends his prose works. Lecturer announces his intention of performing Pilk's "LITTLE SISTER" after the SHOW PROPER.

Introduction: Who is real in this hall of mirrors?

Our next item is entitled: THE WHISPERING DOWNSTAIRS

(WOMAN sitting with her back to us. She wears elegant gloves. We see long beautiful hair but it's a wig)  
(Silence. Enter MAN)

MAN

Henrietta...?

WOMAN

Robert. Sit down.

MAN

But...

WOMAN

Sit down. Don't be angry with me Robert, but I don't want to turn round. Many things have changed since we last met.

MAN

I couldn't understand why you were so reluctant to see me. If there was one thing I was sure that time could never alter it was our love.

WOMAN

Yes I was sure of that too.

MAN

What's happened then? Look at me. This is so extraordinary.

(She turns round. She is wearing a beautiful mask)

What is this? O take that silly thing off.

(He rises to go and remove it. She gets up)

WOMAN

(Imperiously) Sit down! Or I'll have you thrown out!

(MAN sits)

Robert, I'm sorry. My love, forgive me.

MAN

It's all right. I just don't know what's happening.

(He takes her hand. It feels very strange. He lets go.

She leaves him and sits down)

WOMAN

You see many things have changed, Robert.

THE WHISPERING DOWNSTAIRS

3.

THE WHISPERING DOWNSTAIRS

2.

MAN

What's happened to your hand? It felt... wwhat's happened?

WOMAN

I'll tell you. It's a strange and awful story so I shall make it as brief as possible.

MAN

Go on.

WOMAN

You remember me often speak about my mother's old house? Well last Christmas I went home. And it was beautiful. There was my little room upstairs waiting for me. Mother had put my little dolls in the bed. My teddy bear, my pinnochio, and little Raggy Ann. My two brothers were there, they're almost grown-up now. And we had a wonderful Christmas. It was like going back in time. Round about one or two in the morning we went to bed, and I was lying in my bed, in my own little room, and wishing that time could stop right there. And then I became aware of the whispering...

MAN

Whispering?

WOMAN

I couldn't tell where it was coming from at first. I thought praps it was my brothers, but then it became clear that there were ten or twelve people, whispering downstairs.

MAN

What were they saying?

WOMAN

It was just whispering. I lay there a long time. It was getting scary. It sounded like there were about twenty down there... whispering... and then I thought maybe I'm imagining things - we'd drunk quite a lot that night... but eventually I thought I'd go down and see what was going on.

MAN

What was going on?

WOMAN

Well at the bottom of the stairs there's a door which shuts off all the ground floor, and from the other side of it I could hear all this whispering and little furry animals squeaking and running around and the crack of wood being broken but above all (Pause) the whispering. It was like a strange dream.

MAN

Yes.

WOMAN

So I pulled the door open. (Pause) And there was a rush like the flood gates opening, and a roaring wall of fire engulfed me, and I woke up in medical tinfoil, a screen round the hospital bed and no mirrors, so no one, not even me need see the obscenity

WOMAN (Cont'd)

of my burns. My hands like burnt sticks. No face. And so the whispering was the voices of the fire. (Pause) Would you like me to remove the mask?

MAN

If you'd like to.

(Pause. WOMAN takes out pistol and cocks it)

What's that for?

WOMAN

I neither want nor expect you to love me still, Robert, but I believe that our love was a real thing...

MAN

Yes...

WOMAN

You can remember me as I was...

MAN

Yes. Always...

WOMAN

Then... this is what I ask... summon up all your recollections and remembrances of me... as I was when you loved me most... fill your mind with my face as you remember it and make love to me... (Deep voice. Excited)... be unrestrained... let there be no barrier... let us transcend and explode time... and when I scream out, shoot me... shoot me through the head and through the heart... be my everything for all time... will you do that for me?... be my last and everything...?

(Pause. MAN reflects. WOMAN puts gun in his hand)

Please.

MAN

Yes.

WOMAN

Put the light out, Robert.

(She lies back sexily. MAN puts light out. Sex noises)

(??? Light goes on, revealing LITTLE BROTHER with mask and gloves. MAN gets up with pants down holding pistol. They straighten up)

LITTLE BROTHER

O gee sorry Henrietta. I didn't know you were busy.

WOMAN

This is my young brother David. This is Robert.

BROTHER

Heard a lot about you. Anyway, I'll leave you two to get on with it.

MAN

Great. (BROTHER goes) All right if I have a scotch before we get back to it?

Introduction: Who is real in this hall of mirrors?  
In the terminology of the Un-Mad it would be true to say that Pilk has wrecked and heaped havoc on many peoples' lives. But to Pilk a man's home, his wife, his possessions, his job, his social standing, are merely elements of the blind and pathetic suburban farce. They are just so many targets on a rifle range. Pilk often refers to himself as "The Suburban Bandit" and this following little playlet is based on an actual event:

"I'M THE SAME ME BUT EVERY SO OFTEN IT'S A DIFFERENT HIM",  
featuring: The Suburban Bandit...

(HUSBAND and WIFE)

W.  
Busy day at the office, darling?

H.  
Mmmmmmmmm.

W.  
I met Louisa out shopping today. She looked just the same.

H.  
O yes. (Little laugh) Mmmmm. I think I might have my eyes tested.

W.  
Good idea. Are your eyes bad?

H.  
Not really. But I think I should get them tested.

W.  
I've seen the blender I want...

H.  
All right. We'll go take a look at it Saturday.

W.  
O wonderful.

H.  
I ought to mow the lawn. What's on television?  
(Knock at the door. WIFE opens it. THE SUBURBAN BANDIT comes in)

B.  
Great to be home.

H.  
Who is it?

W.  
I don't know.

B.

Where've you hidden the scotch. It's all right. Don't disturb yourself. I'll find it.

H.

Look here, who are you?

B.

I could ask you the same question, pal. Ah here we are.  
(Finds scotch)

W.

Shall I get him a glass?

H.

No!

B.

Don't worry about a glass. Now let's get introduced - you're Mr.....?

H.

Brickwell.

B.

And this is Mrs. Brickwell?

W.

Yes?

B.

Well it's mighty fine of you folks to have kept the place in such good order for me.

H.

Look here, what do you mean? This is my house, in fact, get out!

B.

Don't get so jumpy, shorty. Just take it easy.

W.

What do you want?

B.

What do I want, lady? I just want a bit of peace. I just want to put my feet under the table for a little while.

H.

Well you can't do it here.

B.

Why not?

H.

Because this is our house and we say you can't.

B.

On the contrary mister, it's my house and I say I can.

H.

You can look at the deeds if you like.

(Goes and gets them)

B.

(Laughs) Paper!?

H.

Here you are. Properly sealed and in my name.

(B. looks at them then takes a bite out of them and swallows it and swills it down with scotch. He snatches back rest of deeds)

B.

Listen shorty, just give me two minutes and I'll put you and blondie here, fairly and squarely in the picture. Do you know a little town in the Argentine by the name of Tacuarembo?

H.

No?

B.

Well that's where I've just come from. I'd persuaded the Government to sponsor my idea for an experimental Polar Bear ranch. Set up two mile wide refrigerators.

W.

What an amazing idea!

B.

Amazing lady! - It was absurd. It was insane. Totally mad. A notion born and raised on the funny farm. And as anyone could foresee it was a complete fiasco. There was an electric strike so the refrigerators packed up, so we had to let the bears out, then the heat drove them frantic. The whole town of Tacuarembo came riding out with shotgun and bolass, to wipe out me, and the bears and all my boys. But as it was government sponsored all I had to do was get on the phone to them and they flew the military in - and I'm telling you there was mayhem! Panic, chaos and massacre! Well, just before the hell and fury broke loose - I was holed up in the washhouse - with around thirty heat-crazed, berserk Polar Bears howling and roaring just outside - and what should I find was the toilet paper of the day, but the A-Z Street Map of your little town here. So sitting there on the john of that washhouse I picked me out a new life, right here, and here I am. But there's no need to lose your cool shorty, because so long as you and me and little wifey here get along okay, there's no reason why you shouldn't stay. Me, I like company. What do you say we have a party? I mean this is a time for celebrating.

H.

(Calmly) Darling, I'm going to phone the police. If our friend here misbehaves in any way just scream out. I won't be a moment.  
(He goes out to phone)

B.

Want a drink?

W.

All right.

B.

I think we're all going to get along swell.

W.

My husband's just phoning the police.

(BANDIT laughs and shrugs. Pause. WIFE rubs her stockinged legs together)

Is that true about the Polar Bears?

B.

Lady, living here day after day in your little box, with your television and your hi-fi gramophone and your lawn and your blender.

W.

I'm not getting the blender till Saturday.

B.

All these things, they're not real, they're blinkers. They're just nonsense. They just keep you in sweet ignorance of what the world is about. Why do old men keep on about war, not their sweethearts, not their homes, but the war? I'll tell you why, because that's when they nearly found out something, but then they allowed the blinkers to be put on, let themselves be pushed into the stable, to stay there and be fed hay until some guy who knows the real routes of the world fancies riding them for a bit. I'm sorry if this is all a bit deep for you...

W.

No, not at all, It's very interesting.  
(Rubs her stockinged legs together)  
(Re-enter H.)

B.

Did you get through?

H.

(Ignoring B.)

I phoned the police, they said they couldn't do anything. They said the man was obviously a nut so he wasn't guilty of anything. He's insane so it's not their department.

B.

What did I say? Take it easy shorty. Invite the neighbours in. Let's have a hooley.

H.

(still ignoring him)

But they've given me the telephone number of the nearest mental institution, so if you're all right, I'll get straight onto them .

W.  
I'm all right.

B.  
Why make yourself busy?  
(H. exits)

W.  
Go on with what you were saying.

B  
See most people take me to be an adventurer. In a sense I suppose I am. But I like to think of myself as a student of the absurd. Absurdity is my light and my God. What could be more absurd than the Great Tacuarembó Polar Bear Massacre - well sitting on that washhouse can - on the point of abducting my podex with a section of your street map - I fancied, that whatever wondrous mayhem was about to develop - I was onto something which in its way could even top it.

W.  
I think you might be right. Well?  
(Re-enter H.)

H.  
The asylum superintendant said that there was no justification to take him until he commits a crime..

B.  
See what I mean? It's just a box of tricks. You don't OWN it. How can you own anything? You just happen to be in it. For the moment. Courtesy of me. Got any dope?

H.  
No.

B.  
Go and rustle some up.

H.  
No!

B.  
Anyway, I was in the middle of putting blondie more in the picture. You know how at times of your life you stand outside yourself - and it's like you're watching yourself and it's the one that's doing the watching which is the real you.

W.  
Yes I do know what you mean. As a matter of fact I'm sort of outside myself now. It's all sort of unreal. I'm just watching myself.

H.  
Forgive me if I read the paper.

B.  
Well I'll tell you a secret. It's the secret key to the knowledge of the Universe. The You you're watching is infinitely changeable. You can re-tune it to other stations like a television.

B. (Cont'd)

It's not a stable thing! The stability of the personality is a load of hogwash! It's propaganda put out by the big men who are in on the full show to keep things sufficiently stable for them to ride about having their Big Fun.

H. MANAGER

I'm afraid I've had enough. Are you going to get out?

No.

H.

Then there's only one thing to do.

(Goes to drawer. Fumbles out pistol. Fiddles around loading it)

B.

So it's gotta be a showdown.

(He turns sofa over, takes out pistol and gets behind it. Cocks pistol)

Winner takes all is the rule of the game.

(They are about to fire at each other)

W.

Just hold it right there fellers, cos I wanna say something.

B.

The stage is yours, lady.

W.

(Reffering to BANDIT)

I like the way you talk. You're getting through to me. I like your style. But if you want me, and I'm yours for the asking, I'm not staying in this box - what to you say we hit the road together?

B

(Considers)

All right.

(Puts his gun away)

So long Shorty, and no hard feelings, eh?

(They go)

(H. doesn't know quite what to make of it all. He goes to straighten the furniture and then doesn't. He suddenly goes into a rage. He stamps his feet a few times. Silent thought. Without the anger he stamps his feet in precisely the same way as he did before. He thinks. He converts the stamps into a little tap routine)

H.

Hey I've got talent!

(Races off for phone. Brings it on)

(Into phone)

H.(Cont'd)

Mr. Mervish? Listen, just call me Little Big Man. Five foot two and bursting with talent. Be there tomorrow at ten.

(Tap routine with music in spotlight. At finish  
MANAGER runs on)

MANAGER

Just come through on the wire, Clem. We hit Vegas Monday.

(MANAGER has brought his overcoat. He puts it on.

MANAGER lights up cigars for them both. W. walks by in dreadful old clothes)

H.

(Tossing her coin)

Here! (About to walk on)

Hey!

W.

No!

H.

What happened? He ditch you?

W.

He decided to run Cyprus, and things got a little hot for me so I had to get out. How long is it? Three years?

(Little laugh to herself)

I decided to be an alky's trollop for a bit. See how it goes. And you're the big star now?

H.

Yep.

W.

It's a great world, Clem. When we left you, we went straight to the United Nations Building and got sponsored for an all-out contraceptive drive in Calcutta - Mr. Condom and Mrs. Loop. I didn't know you could laugh so much.

H.

Say, so you're in Show Business too.

W.

In a manner of speaking I suppose.

H.

Listen I'm booked for Vegas Monday. Sands Hotel. Why don't you join the act? You always had a neat pair of feet.

W.

Okay. (Dance routine with the two of them in spotlight. They sing "Tacuarembó Polar Bear":

Broke refrigerator

In the land of alligator

It's the Tacuarembó Polar Bear

Waiting for the ice man

"Tacuarembó Polar Bear" song (cont'd)

Instead we got the dice man  
It's the Tacuarembó Polar Bear  
So if you feel suburban  
You just grab yourself a turban  
And some itchy red underwear

Cos if you can't stand it  
Yeah - hand it to the Bandit  
And the Tacuarembó Polar Bear.\*

(MANAGER runs in at end)

MANAGER

You're booked for the Royal Command Performance, England. In the presence of Her Majesty the Queen.

W.

(Standing with H. and MANAGER glowing)

And you know who we owe it all to Clem? - The Suburban Bandit.

(BANDIT comes on to join tableau. Spins his gun, fires two shots and tosses bomb into bin which explodes with a deafening roar blasting all the cast to the floor. Shaken but smiling they get to their feet and bow)

\*Words and music by Phillip Schreiberman.

Introduction: Who is real in this hall of mirrors?

Duchamp, Picabia, Man Ray, Max Ernst. These are the people who made "found art" or "objets trouves" a recognized form of self-expression. Almost 40 years have passed since the birth of Found Art and still the Theatre almost totally neglects the genre. How refreshing, therefore, to be able to examine Henry Pilk's Found Morality Drama, BASEBALL NYMPH.

SHARON

I'm going to call myself Sharon. It's not my real name but I don't want any crackpots looking me up. A girl has to watch herself. I live in a town that has a major league ball team, and the manager of the team is a guy I'll call Ernie. We have an understanding. I'm pretty much his girlfriend but he lets me do just about what I want, which is the way I like it. Ernie sometimes comes on like a crude slob, but he's a shrewd one, a regular thinker.

ERNIE

I better call the wife. (Phones) It's me darling. One of my infielders is on the verge of a nervous breakdown. I've got to hold his hand. I won't be home till late.

(Puts phone down)

SHARON

Have we finished messing round in the sack or is there more to come?

ERNIE

Listen, I'm growing an ulcer - I'm running to the john three, four times a day.

SHARON

Lou?

ERNIE

Yeah. The kid's tearing up the league. He's hitting something like four-fifty against us. We tried throwing at the kid's head, behind him, at his leg so's he had to do a tightrope avoiding the pitch, but the kid keeps hitting my pitchers as if he owned them. Sharon I'm going to get you to do something for me. Not just for me - for the team. Sit behind his team's dugout for the upcoming series. Distract the kid's attention, dilute his concentration.

SHARON

You know, for what you got in mind I'll have to sleep with the kid. That is if I can get to first base with him to begin with.

ERNIE

(Playing it cagey)

Yeah, I guess so. Well, listen, if you can get the kid to sleep with you and if he doesn't hit, I'll let you buy that new outfit you wanted, Sharon. Fair enough?

(ERNIE takes out his wallet and hands her a fistful of fifties)

Does that cover it? (Frowns)

SHARON

(Doesn't count money. Puts it straight down her bra)

What's this rookie's name again, Sugar? Ernie told me the kid's name. I'll call him Lou. Ernie knew where Lou's team would be stopping the next time they came to town, and he arranged for me to get a room in the same hotel. Lou showed up at the hotel next afternoon. I saw him get out of one of the elevators in the hotel lobby.

(SHARON crashes into LOU and spills the contents of her bag)

LOU

Gee, I'm sorry. I really am sorry. I didn't see you. I'm so sorry. I really can't tell you how sorry I am.

(Helps her pick up things)

You sure you're okay lady? I didn't hurt you did I?

(SHARON sits on chair as if dizzy)

SHARON

(Southern accent)

My poor head feels like it was clobbered with a hammer.

(Holds head dramatically. Rolls eyes. Sighs)

I was about to go out, but I guess I'd better go back up to my room. Would you mind terribly seeing me to my room? I'm afraid I'll faint.

LOU

Sure, lady, sure.

SHARON

Outside my room. I still feel woozy. Would you mind coming in with me? I now had him where I wanted him. With me, alone, in my room. I'm from Mobile. I'm visiting my brother. He's just had a gall bladder operation.

LOU

I'm from the south too.

SHARON

Fancy that. I've got some tickets to some ball games. I'm a great fan. I hope I won't have to miss any of the games because of a headache.

LOU

What a coincidence. I'm a ball player. I'm Lou Hartfield.

SHARON

You're not putting me on are you? Men are sly creatures. You're sure you didn't stage that little 'accident' so that you could get me alone in my room?

LOU

Lady I didn't stage anything.

SHARON

I'll know tomorrow. I've seats behind the visitor's dugout. Maybe after the game we could have some dinner, and then you could tell me about some of baseball's finer points. That is, if you're really who you say you are and would like to have dinner with me.

LOU

Like it. (Big smile) I'd love it.

SHARON

And why wouldn't that hunk of a man love it? I'm a good-looking broad, nice legs, good breasts, and I know how to wear clothes.

(On the field)

SHARON

Hit a home run for me sugar.

LOUI

I'm going to sure try.

SHARON

He was getting horny. All to the good, I thought. Make him concentrate on impressing me rather than winning the old ball game. To make a long story short, our hero went nothing for five that afternoon and Ernie's team won a tough one-run game. I'm sorry your team lost today.

(LOU shrugs disconsolately)

Look maybe you feel so bad, you want to call our date off. I'd understand.

(Strokes his hand)

LOU

Where I come from the way you're acting means one thing.

SHARON

Where I come from too.

(He rips her dress off)

Easy sugar. At the rate you're going you'll be finished before you've had a chance to enjoy yourself.

(LOU comes over to SHARON. She dangles the phone. She Jesus but you've a great body, Sharon. He slams down the phone)

SHARON

I really was good to him that night. Taught him a few tricks boys that age don't usually know. All told, we made love three times that night, and by the third he had real good control. I was kind of proud of him.

(Kiss. Embrace)

LOU

We're returning to play Ernie's boys again in 2 months. Get this same room then. I'll pay all your expenses.

SHARON

I promise sugar. Wild horses wouldn't keep me away from you.

LOU

How's your brother doing?

SHARON

My brother? O my brother, he's feeling much better.

(On the phone)

Did I do okay?

ERNIE

Sharon you do as well the next series we play when that kid hits town, I'll give you a bonus.

SHARON

The couple of months went by. Ernie sent me cash and three baseball tickets. And he rang me up:

ERNIE

You did it before, you can do it again.

SHARON

But that game was a very different story.

LOU

Those three homers were for you Sharon. I wouldn't have wanted to see you if I didn't do so well out there today. I'd have felt as if I didn't deserve you.

SHARON

Thanks.

(Phone rings)

ERNIE

What the hell happened?

SHARON

Lou told me that from here on in I'm going to bring out the best in him. Sugar, you outsmarted yourself this time. Water just reached its proper level.

(LOU comes over to SHARON. She dangles the phone. She unzips LOU'S fly. ERNIE fumes. He slams down the phone)

SHARON

That poor little bastard Ernie. If there was anything he hated it was outsmarting himself.

(LOU has cigarette in his mouth. SHARON removes it. Kiss. Embrace)

Afterword: Pilk has often stated that it is only in trash and pulp magazines, only in the lowergrade forces' porny and sado porny stories, that the morality themes of the ancients still occur. BASEBALL NYMPH, a Pilk "found" morality drama would seem to be a justification for his claim.

Very displeased indeed.

What did I just find in your room?

What did I find that you'd done in the corner of the room?

Just thrown there.

Dirty underpants.

Is this your way of thanking us?

With my back?

Making me bend down with my back and pick up your dirty underwear?

Do you think it's fair?

(Snatches his comic, rolls it up and hits him on the head and face with it)

Do you love me Robert?

(Pulls his hair)

I am asking you Robert if you love your mother.

Well you have a very funny way of showing it if you do.

I am referring to dribblings.

Toothpaste dribblings.

If I've told you once I've told you a thousand times - clean your teeth over the basin and then we won't get toothpaste dribblings on the tiles will we?

No.

(Clout)

Introduction: Who is real in this hall of mirrors?  
To Pilk a Madhouse is simply what it says: "A place they let you go to to be mad in". In "Conversations with Henry Pilk" he boasts of asylums he's known like an old campaigner showing his medals. Madness is excellent, it shouldn't be repressed. Repressing it leads to mental illness. Apparently all asylums have their favourite stories which are passed from inmate to inmate and chuckled over and embellished. Here is one of Pilk's favourites from Grange Gorman Asylum, Dublin. It's called CHICKEN.

MOTHER

(To son reading comic)

I am very displeased with you Robert.

Very displeased indeed.

What did I just find in your room?

What did I find that you'd done in the corner of the room?

Just thrown there.

Dirty underpants.

Is this your way of thanking me?

With my back?

Making me bend down with my back and pick up your dirty underwear?

Do you think it's fair?

(Snatches his comic. Rolls it up and hits him on the head and face with it)

Do you love me Robert?

(Pulls his hair)

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Well you have a very funny way of showing it if you do.

I am referring to dribblings.

Toothpaste dribblings.

If I've told you once I've told you a thousand times - clean your teeth over the basin and then we won't get toothpaste dribblings on the tiles will we?

No.

(Clout)

ROBERT

Cluck.

MOTHER

Is this a silliness, Robert?

(ROBERT turns into a chicken. He clucks at his mother. He flaps round the room. He perches on the table. He clucks in a straining manner. He lays an egg)

MOTHER

Did you just lay that egg, Robert?

(She goes to the telephone and dials emergency)

(Into phone)

I want an ambulance please.

Mrs. Mott. 15 Aniline Street.

It's my son. He's gone mad. He thinks he's a chicken.

Thank you.

(She replaces receiver)

(The two eye each other across the room)

Would you like something to eat Robert?

A nice piece of cakey...?

(She makes her way to him offering a bit of cake. He pecks her. She squawks out. She hurls cake at his head)

O this is a fine way, isn't it, to show me that you love me, going mad like this. All you can do, isn't it?

(Clouting him)

Cluck, cluck, cluck!

Cluck, cluck, cluck!

DOCTOR

(Entering)

Mrs. Mott?

MOTHER

Cluck, cluck, cluck. Yes.

This is Robert.

DOCTOR

This is the young gentleman who thinks he's a chicken is it?

MOTHER

That's right. Come on now Robert... cluck, cluck. I've tried him with cake Doctor. I expect he wants his oats.

DOCTOR

Excuse me sir, I must ask you this, are you a chicken?

ROBERT

No.

MOTHER

Robert!! You are. There is that egg you laid.

DOCTOR

All right, Mrs. Mott.

(Injects her arm with hypodermic)

Come on Duchess. We're off to the Happyland where everyone's a chicken.

MOTHER

Ooooo!

Shout out to the world

I am she

And come to me across waters

Lands

Go on shout out now

Now

Now is the moment

Go on.

(ACTOR Ceases reading and says)

And here I am instructed to pause for a moment... and if there is no genuine seeming response to continue... (Reads) So you're not there.

So good-bye to you.

Why do I say good-bye to you when you're out there?

Because my mad hope in Great chance

Conjured you sufficiently in my mind to speak to.

Good-bye.

(The lecturer interrupts from audience and announces that he knows who the dark lady is. In conversation with Henry it came out that shortly before he left Canada, at the age of five he was looking through the 1949 Eatons mail order catalogue and a model in the lingerie section gave him his first sexual arousal. It's not so much he's looking for her - but rather the ideal which she represented)

ACTOR

(Reads poem)

"I fall in love. I hit the ceiling.  
But with you I went through the ceiling  
Through the roof  
And hurtling towards the ever further sky.

Do you exist, O lady in black?  
Who is real in this hall of mirrors?"

The identity of the Dark Lady of Pilk's sonnets is as far as we know unknown. But when he heard that a production of a few of his pieces was being mooted, he wrote and asked if the following could be read out...

Everything I write I write for you  
My silly journey  
My whole farce is for you.  
Do you know who **you** are?  
I think you do, but will never say  
All is chance, random and chaos.  
You may be here tonight:  
If you are, speak up now  
Now is the moment

Shout out to the world  
I am she  
And come to me across waters  
Lands  
Go on shout out now  
Now  
Now is the moment  
Go on.

(ACTOR Ceases reading and says)

And here I am instructed to pause for a moment... and if there is no genuine seeming response to continue... (Reads) So you're not there.

So good-bye to you.  
Why do I say good-bye to you when you're out there?  
Because my mad hope in Great chance  
Conjured you sufficiently in my mind to speak to.  
Good-bye.

(The lecturer interrupts from audience and announces that he knows who the dark lady is. In conversation with Henry it came out that shortly before he left Canada, at the age of five he was looking through the 1949 Eatons mail order catalogue and a model in the lingerie section gave him his first sexual arousal. It's not so much he's looking for her - but rather the ideal which she represented)

Introduction: Who is real in this hall of mirrors?  
Certainly not for the squeamish is Pilk's visionary  
TOTAL TANGO TIME.

WOMAN

Wonderful of you to invite us out like this Mr. Ferret.

FERRET

I like to get to know my employees. On the personal level.

DERMER

Firm seems to be doing very well.

FERRET

Thanks only to a first-rate manager/worker relationship. I think the bad old days when a boss ruled with a whip and paid his workers a pittance have gone for ever. At least if I'm going to have anything to do with it they have. Anyway, eat up - don't let the soup get cold.

(JOCKLER shits in his soup)

FERRET

Jockler have you taken leave of your senses?

JOCKLER

A lot of people think God is dead. I don't think he is. My impression of a boil.

(Fills mouth with custard. Presses mouth and it all spurts out)

He's not dead! It's just he can leave us to get on with it now! In the early days, when he'd only just come up with Man, obviously he was forever fiddling with it, fussing over it - but now it's all heading the way it's meant to! We're now okay! We're now on our way to the climax of the Divine plan. And the Divine Plan is Boom and Bang and the Ultimate Explosion - the whole show blasted into smithereens, which hurtle out into space; and maybe there's a bit of muck and slime on one or two of them and then life'll develop and he'll be back again with his angels all making themselves busy, tinkering and fiddling till they get something which he knows will lead it on to yet another Boom and Bang and the whole lot'll blast out again. And we're here! We're the ones! We're here on the brink of time - seconds before the lot goes up - can't you feel the strain in the world? It's straining, it can't hold itself together, and there's men sitting there with buttons, fingers out and poised, and a trillion times a trillion times a trillion tons of TNT up there ready till they sense the ultimate tension - and then snap!

JOCKLER (Cont'd)

Whooooee! Bang! And death and rebirth of a new universe. So let us dance the Death Dance. Take your partners for the madness boogie. Dunk your tits in the custard Mother it's Disintegration Day! Let us race and shriek like faggot loons, and paint our nackers green  
 And desperately attempt to be everything there's ever been.  
 Did you hear that? My mind was wide open and poetry flew in!  
 I'm switched on! I'm tuned in! With the ecstasy of the Ancients  
 I cheerfully murder Mother.

(Strangles FERRET who dies with goony look)

So now there's just the three of us! And here we go! The Final fling! What do you say? Will you dance or no?

(Fires guns)

It's the Death Ball! It's Total Tango Time! Come on!

(They dance grotesquely)

(Bomb goes off)

And there you are! That's it! Disintegration! New Worlds!  
 Hooooorayyyyyy!

(BLACKOUT)

(2001 type music.

Solo light up on dangling soup plate in the air)

VOICE

And lol! it came to pass that it was from a bit of shit still adhering to the prophet Jockler's soup plate that life in the New Universe was to evolve.

The little girl, she'd be not quite two years old. She was just beginning to speak. She hadn't been seeing much of her mother for the past few weeks, and one day her father explained to her that her mother would have to go away for a little while, but she would return, he promised her she would return. The little girl nodded. She had her Nanny and so she accepted the fact of her mother's imminent departure without demurr. She had many toys including a big collection of dolls. Now I'm talking about forty years ago, when dolls had different faces to today's models. They were more alive, and could look at you out of real eyes and had haunting intelligent faces, instead of that cretinous cuddle-me look - a symbol of present society's sickness - don't you agree - but I digress. Let me see where were we? O yes. Well, three weeks after her mother had departed the little girl was on the second floor. Her Nanny she knew would be angry with her if she found her up there. Some of the bannisters were a bit weak up there I believe, and the construction of the house was such that if she had fallen through them she would have fallen down some forty feet to the front hallway. She wandered along the landing peering into rooms she'd never been into before. In one was a mountain of excitement and awe that brought tears to her eyes - in fact it was just junk - but for her it was that first and most important introduction to Awe, Awe - Gateway to the boundless universe -

## LITTLE SISTER

### ACTOR

I met a man who told me a strange story which has since haunted me. At least ten or twelve times a day the look on the mother's face as he described it when she realized... but I jump ahead in my narrative. The man who told me the story was in his late fifties, he was conservatively dressed but there was something in his eyes which I've only met with in Asylums. It's the look of a man on a journey. A journey into lands as equally real to him as Paris or London or Quebec is to the dim perceptions of the un-mad. Our eyes met and we both knew why we were in that bar in \_\_\_\_\_. We were there to meet each other, and to mutually progress each other on our chosen journeys. Perhaps the word chosen is poor usage here, since I don't wish to imply that the choice of going on our journeys was necessarily our own. Anyway, suffice it for the moment to say that our meeting was exciting and helpful and we were able to answer certain of each other's questions relating to magical cause and effect, the nature of All-Matter,

(Pilk makes that one word, hyphenated, with a capital A and M... "All-Matter")

and a new line of investigation he put me onto - the question of the personality of water. But at some point in our earnest converse he said "I just must have a pee - and then I'll tell you a little tale". He returned to the table. He ordered more drinks and began...

In a large rambling house in the little village of \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_, there was a little girl, she'd be not quite two years old. She was just beginning to speak, She hadn't been seeing much of her mother for the past few weeks, and one day her father explained to her that her mother would have to go away for a little while, but she would return, he promised her she would return. The little girl nodded. She had her Nanny and so she accepted the fact of her mother's imminent departure without demurr. She had many toys including a big collection of dolls. Now I'm talking about forty years ago, when dolls had different faces to today's models. They were more alive, and could look at you out of real eyes and had haunting intelligent, faces, instead of that cretinous cuddle-me look - a symbol of present society's sickness don't you agree - but I digress. Let me see where were we? O yes. Well, three weeks after her mother had departed the little girl was on the second floor. Her Nanny she knew would be angry with her if she found her up there. Some of the bannisters were a bit weak up there I believe, and the construction of the house was such that if she had fallen through them she would have fallen down some forty feet to the front hallway. She wandered along the landing peering into rooms she'd never been into before. In one was a mountain of excitement and awe that brought tears to her eyes - in fact it was just junk - but for her it was that first and most important introduction to Awe, Awe - Gateway to the boundless universe -

## ACTOR (Cont'd)

again I digress, - your forgiveness. She spent perhaps an hour in there in adult time, but in her time it was years, but then it began to get shadowy, and very soon it was almost dark. And the most beautiful mountain of the daytime can change to the most looming of monsters at night. Not that she stayed long enough to become frightened but in fact had the good sense to know that it was time to leave. She emerged from the room to see a gentle light glowing past the half open door at the end of the landing. She began to make her way along the thinly carpeted boards of that second floor landing towards the light. As she did she heard adult chatter coming from far below. It sounded as if it was coming from the front living room. And amongst the voices and the chatter she suddenly heard her mother's laugh, and then she heard her mother say something and laugh again. But the little girl, having stopped momentarily in her journey towards the inviting light of the end room, again proceeded. She found herself in a bedroom. It had a full length mirror in it which first attracted her as she could see herself in it and as most of the mirrors in that house were high up on the walls this was something she had hitherto only experienced when lifted up by her father, or more usually, her Nanny. She examined her image minutely. She noticed the stains on her little green frock one of which looked like a frog, and she looked for a long time in wonder at her own face. And then her focus must have changed suddenly and her eyes lit upon something in the mirror image which filled her with a similar wonder to the magical Room of Junk. There in the corner was a tiny four-poster bed. It was bigger than any of her doll's beds but it would be too small for her. And the lace curtainings were of such intensity that they spoke to her. She turned from the mirror image to see if the real thing did indeed lay behind her. It did. She walked in a dream to the bed. And in it was the most beautiful doll she had ever seen. Was it there for her? It was so beautiful that she couldn't be sure it was. It occurred to her to ask her mother if it was for her. The doll was well tucked up in the bed, and there was a boarding surrounding the edge of the bed, but her thrilled, excited, trembling hands eventually uncovered it and she pulled it by its right leg over the boarding and onto the floor. There was a bit of a bang when it fell to the floor but it didn't break, and still holding it by the leg she dragged it to the door, and along the landing, and bumpety bumpety bump down the first flight of stairs, along the next landing, down bump bump the second flight of stairs and so on till she was in the front hallway. As she descended the noise of grown up chatter became louder and louder, and she heard her mother's voice many times, as well as her Nanny's and her father's. There was the chink of glassware also which she was aware of. The door of the front room was slightly ajar. Still clutching the treasured discovery by the leg she dragged the doll into the room.

## ACTOR (Cont'd)

There were many grown-ups in the room, some of whom she vaguely recognized and they were standing about, talking and drinking and laughing. She saw her mother's back and her Nanny far away in the corner. For a time no-one spotted her but then suddenly all was changed and the moment was frozen, all time skipped a beat, the tube of time's continuum sprang a leak and Pan's All-Knowledge, rushed in. But in an instant the tube healed it's leak, the world returned to itself and all was huge open staring eyes from white ghost faces. Her Mother's eyes wider than the widest things and suddenly her mother's mouth opened wide and she emitted a scream which was volcanoes, hurricanes, and maelstroms. It was a scream which knew the dinosaur and further back and went forward to the last living thing. And it was a scream which found the note of the house, and consequently all the windows and the wooden walls, and the timber floors reverberated to the cry of agony and knowledge. And her mother's eyes became tunnels and the little girl saw that their directional point was not herself but her doll.

The man paused in his narration. Sweat was running down his brow. Since he began he'd had none of his beer. He swallowed it all now in two long gulps, and then continued...

I expect you are by now well ahead of me in the denouement of my narrative. It was not a doll at all but her week old baby sister.

The man paused. I heard his breath tremble. Sometimes in even the most crowded of bars in the earlier part of an evening a sudden hush can come upon the evening, a short silence that has a windless feel to it, and the reason for these silences has often been a subject of my conjecture. But tonight I knew the reason. The man had invoked the presence of the mother, or more perhaps the mother's eyes, or maybe there was a tiny pinhole leak for an instant in the Tube of Time's Continuum. And then my mind suddenly jumped to an insignificant seeming incident earlier in our meeting. Before he went into the toilet he had hesitated before the two doors, only for the merest split of a second, but he had hesitated, as if there were some act of choice required in the matter, and then he entered the convenience set aside for the nobler sex.

I pointed at him in a compulsive gesture!

"And you know all this because...!"

"Exactly", he said.

And then I knew the reason for my friend's strange journey, and could only wonder which of the next choice of bizarre routes he would take, and hope he knew that whatever route he took into life's chaotic extremes, that he had touched me.

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