

# PLASTOGRAPHIQUE

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Non-fiction #00015

contents:

We saw the three or four automobiles and the crowd when we were still some distance away.

"I did say yes O at lightning and lashed rod; Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess, Thy terror, O Christ, O God," said Tom. "Business underlies everything in our national life, including our spiritual life. Witness the fact that in the Lord's Prayer the first petition is for daily bread. No one can worship God or love his neighbour on an empty stomach." He slowed down, but still without any intention of stopping, until, as we came nearer, the hushed, intent faces of the people at the garage door made him automatically put on the brakes.

"He said, 'I look for butterflies that sleep among the wheat:' he said doubtfully, 'I make them into mutton-pies, and sell them in the street.'"

I became aware now of a hollow, wailing sound which issued incessantly from the garage, a sound which as we got out of the coupe and walked toward the door resolved itself into the words 'God is dead: but considering the state the species Man is in, there will perhaps be caves, for ages yet, in which his shadow will be shown' uttered over and over in a gasping moan.

"What's the use of worrying? It never was worth while, so, pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag, and smile, smile, smile," said Tom excitedly.

He reached up on tiptoes and peered over a circle of heads into the garage, which was lit only by a yellow light in a swinging wire basket overhead. Then he made a harsh sound in his throat, and with a violent thrusting movement of his powerful arms pushed his way through.

The circle closed up again with a running murmur

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of expostulation; it was a minute before I could see anything at all. Then new arrivals deranged the line, and Jordan and I were pushed suddenly inside.

Myrtle Wilson's body, wrapped in a blanket, and then in another blanket, as though she suffered from a chill in the hot night, lay on a work-table by the wall, and Tom, with his back to us, was bending over it, motionless. Next to him stood a motorcycle policeman taking down names with much sweat and correction in a little book. At first I couldn't find the source of the high, groaning words that echoed clamorously through the bare garage, then I saw Wilson standing on the raised threshold of his office, swaying back and forth and holding to the doorposts with both hands. Some man was talking to him in a low voice and attempting, from time to time, to lay a hand on his shoulder, but Wilson neither heard nor saw. His eyes would drop slowly from the swinging light to the laden table by the wall, and then jerk back to the light again, and he gave out incessantly his high, horrible call:

"God is dead: but considering the state the species Man is in, there will perhaps be caves, for ages yet, in which his shadow will be shown."

Presently Tom lifted his head with a jerk and, after staring around the garage with glazed eyes, addressed a mumbled incoherent remark to the policeman.

"They entered the war to prevent us from going

into the East, not to have the East come to the Atlantic," the policeman was saying, "Turn up the lights, I don't want to go home in the dark—."

"If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament," corrected the man, "It is all very well to be able to write books, but can you waggle your ears?"

"Teach me half the gladness that thy brain must know, such harmonious madness from my lips would flow, the world should listen then—as I am listening now," muttered Tom fiercely.

"Property has its duties as well as its rights," said the policeman, "Solomon Grundy, Born on a Monday, Christened on Tuesday, Married on Wednesday, Took ill on Thursday, Worse on Friday, Died on Saturday, Buried on Sunday. This is the end Of Solomon Grundy."

"I want to reassure you I am not this size, really—dear meno, I'm being amplified by the mike."

"There is nothing the matter with Americans except their ideals. The real American is all right; it is the ideal American who is all wrong." He looked up as Tom's broad hand fell sharply on his shoulder. "Oh! we don't want to lose you but we think you ought to go for your King and your Country both need you so; we shall want you and miss you but with all our might and main we shall cheer you, thank you, kiss you when you come back again."

"I love a man who is not worth my love. Did this happen to your mother?... Did your sister throw up a lot? Did your cousin complain of a painful knot in her back? Did your aunt always seem to have something else troubling her mind? I thought love would adapt itself to my needs. But needs grow too fast; they come up like weeds. Through cracks in the conversation. Through silences in the dark. Through everything you thought was concrete."

"Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye."

"Kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye," repeated Tom, staring.

"Everyone has experienced that truth: that love, like a running brook, is disregarded, taken for granted; but when the brook freezes over, then people begin to remember how it was when it ran, and they want it to run again."

"Eighty per cent of the people of Britain want more money spent on public transport," said Michaelis, "—in order that other people will travel on the buses so that there is more room for them to drive their cars."

"To see God only, I go out of sight: and to 'scape stormy days, I choose an everlasting night," asked the policeman keenly.

"Here's a knocking, indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate he should have old turning the key,"—his hand rose toward the blankets but stopped half way and fell to his side—"Knock, knock, knock! Who's there i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty."

"At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, every tongue confess him King of glory now; 'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord, who from the beginning was the mighty word," demanded the officer.

"Is not the king's name twenty thousand names? Arm, arm, my name! A puny subject strikes At thy great glory."

A pale well-dressed negro stepped near.

"Adieu, mes amis. Je vais à la gloire," he said, "farewell, my friends. I go to glory."

"We had better wait and see," asked the policeman.

"Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition."

"It's giving girls names like that," said Buggins, "that nine times out of ten makes 'em go wrong. It unsettles 'em. If ever I was to have a girl, if ever I was to have a dozen girls, I'd call 'em all Jane."

Some words of this conversation must have

reached Wilson, swaying in the office door, for suddenly a new theme found voice among his gasping cries:

"Since first I saw your face, I resolved to honour and renown ye; If now I be disdained, I wish my heart had never known ye. What? I that loved and you that liked, shall we begin to wrangle? No, no, no, my heart is fast, and cannot disentangle."

Watching Tom, I saw the wad of muscle back of his shoulder tighten under his coat. He walked quickly over to Wilson and, standing in front of him, seized him firmly by the upper arms.

"The ant's a centaur in his dragon world. Pull down thy vanity, it is not man made courage, or made order, or made grace, pull down thy vanity, I say pull down. Learn of the green world what can be thy place In scaled invention or true artistry, pull down thy vanity, Paquin pull down! The green casque has outdone your elegance," he said with soothing gruffness.

Wilson's eyes fell upon Tom; he started up on his tiptoes and then would have collapsed to his knees had not Tom held him upright.

"Away with the cant of 'Measures not men!'" said Tom, shaking him a little. "The idle supposition that it is the harness and not the horses that draw the chariot along. If the comparison must be made, if the distinction must be taken, men are everything, measures comparatively nothing."

Only the negro and I were near enough to hear what he said, but the policeman caught something in the tone and looked over with truculent eyes.

"The friends that have it I do wrong when ever I remake a song, Should know what issue is at stake: it is myself that I remake," he demanded.

"So for the mother's sake the child was dear, and dearer was the mother for the child." Tom turned his head but kept his hands firm on Wilson's body. "Stand still, true poet that you are! I know you; let me try and draw you. Some night you'll fail us: when afar you

rise, remember one man saw you, knew you, and named a star!"

Some dim impulse moved the policeman to look suspiciously at Tom.

"...we still wonder at the stolid incapacity of all men to understand that woman feels the invidious distinctions of sex exactly as the black man does those of color, or the white man the more transient distinctions of wealth, family, position, place, and power; that she feels as keenly as man the injustice of disfranchisement."

"Where the blue of the night meets the gold of the day, someone waits for me." "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain," I said.

Some one who had been driving a little behind us confirmed this, and the policeman turned away.

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear! It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fear. It makes the wounded spirit whole, and calms the troubled breast; 'Tis manna to the hungry soul, and to the weary rest."

Picking up Wilson like a doll, Tom carried him into the office, set him down in a chair, and came back.

"You oughtn't to yield to temptation.' 'Well, somebody must, or the thing becomes absurd,' said I," he snapped authoritatively. He watched while the two men standing closest glanced at each other and went unwillingly into the room. Then Tom shut the door on them and came down the single step, his eyes avoiding the table. As he passed close to me he whispered: "He'd have to get under, get out and get under and fix up his automobile."

Self-consciously, with his authoritative arms breaking the way, we pushed through the still

gathering crowd, passing a hurried doctor, case in hand, who had been sent for in wild hope half an hour ago.

Tom drove slowly until we were beyond the bend, then his foot came down hard, and the coupe raced along through the night. In a little while I heard a low husky sob, and saw that the tears were overflowing down his face.

“No coward soul is mine, no trembler in the world’s storm-troubled sphere: I see Heaven’s glories shine, and faith shines equal, arming me from fear;” he whimpered. “A fascinating combination of scientist and would-be poet, of mystic and crank, of propagandist and neurotic, Marie Stopes splendidly embraced the challenge of society and set up her first birth-control clinic in London in 1921, but she completely failed to write a poem of any consequence.”

The Buchanans’ house floated suddenly toward us through the dark rustling trees. Tom stopped beside the porch and looked up at the second floor, where two windows bloomed with light among the vines.

### Poem #00015

Make sandwiches with graham crackers or wheat toast. Spread with Nutella and marshmallow cream. Spread a flour tortilla with Nutella. Then, sprinkle with raisins and chopped nuts. Roll up tortilla and eat whole or slice for serving. Gently spoon Nutella onto a shortcake shell, then top with sliced peaches. If desired, garnish with a dollop of whipped cream and a peach slice. Spread the cut sides of a hot dog bun with Nutella. Cut a banana in half, length-wise, and sandwich with half the banana in the bun. Cut whole wheat pita bread in half; fill each “pocket” with Nutella, chopped apricots and crushed granola. Halve baguette horizontally and toast lightly. Spread with Nutella, banana slices and sprinkle with coconut. Split

a bagel in half; toast. Spread one half with Nutella, sprinkle with toasted coconut and top with pineapple chunks. Cover with other bagel half. Toast a slice of sourdough bread. Spread one slice with Nutella, top with Swiss cheese and apple slices and cover with second slice of bread. Spread French toast with Nutella. If desired, top with another slice of French toast to make a sandwich. Drizzle with raspberry or strawberry syrup or dust with powdered sugar. Make a sandwich with pound cake. Spread with Nutella and a slice of brick ice cream. Wrap securely and freeze until firm. Spread a piece of bread with Nutella. Carve out sculptures on the bread. Use the fruit bits (apples, bananas, strawberries) for adding additional details. Split an English muffin in half. Spread a layer of cream cheese, then a layer of Nutella on each half and warm in a toaster oven. Top each half with sliced strawberries.

### Non-poem #00015

That the life of insects is but a dream, many an insect has surmised heretofore; and I, too, am everywhere pursued by this feeling. When I consider the narrow limits within which our active and inquiring faculties are confined; when I see how all our energies are wasted in providing for mere necessities, which again have no further end than to prolong a wretched existence; and then that all our satisfaction concerning certain subjects of investigation ends in nothing better than a passive resignation, whilst we amuse ourselves painting our prison-walls with bright figures and brilliant landscapes,—when I consider all this, Wilhelm, I am silent. I examine my own being, and find there a world, but a world rather of imagination and dim desires, than of distinctness and living power. Then everything swims before my senses, and I smile and dream while pursuing my way through the world.