

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Scene 37

[Setting:] The same. A backroom in hell.

‘Perhaps you should go into **exile**,’ she says, picking at a fingernail.

(Am I not already in exile?) ‘Why?’ he says, focusing for the first time in minutes. (*Sees her*)

‘So you don’t stalk people.’

(*Bemused*) ‘What?’

‘And make them uncomfortable.’

‘What about the gift I have for them?’ (John Ashbery, ‘At North Farm,’ 1984).

‘Sooner the better, I suggest.’

‘How will I recognise them when I see them—?’

‘Who cares?’

‘And recognise the gift they have for *me*?’

‘Don’t be silly,’ she says, chewing again on her nail.

The thrum of the music continues. Silhouettes glide by, vanish, appear, stop, stare, then move on. Above, legs open and stretch and crouch and squat. Eyes blink and drool in the swarthy currents below.

‘I’m scared of the dark, you know?’ he says, glancing around.

‘So you’ve said.’

‘And the light.’

‘You’ve said.’

‘Almost everything!’

She spits the nail away. ‘Yes, you’ve said.’

‘*Somewhere someone is travelling furiously toward you,*’ he says.

(*Shrugs*) ‘So?’

‘*At incredible speed.*’

‘Perhaps.’

Exile:
Exile always involves a shattering of the former body.

(Julia Kristeva,
Strangers to Ourselves,
1991, p. 30)

Stalking:

Stalking is the obsessive following, observing, or contacting of another person, or the obsessive attempt to engage in any of these activities. This includes following the person to certain places, to see where they live or what the person does on a daily basis. It also includes seeking and obtaining the person's personal information in order to contact him or her (e.g. looking for his or her details on computers, electoral rolls, personal files and other material containing the person's private information without his or her consent).

Stalking exists in many forms. Victims may or may not be aware that it is happening, and the perpetrators may or may not have malicious intent. Stalkers may even have a sincere but misguided belief that their victims love them, or have a desire to help the victims. Stalking consists of a series of actions which in themselves can be legal, such as calling on the phone, sending gifts, or sending emails.

Stalkers will often denigrate and objectify

'Travelling day and night.'

'Sounds incredible.'

'Through ocean currents and mountain passes.' (*Reaching for her*)

She throws a glass. (*Misses*) *'Stay back you brute!'*

'Like I have you,' he suggests. *'I need to belong—'*

The second glass hits him plumb on the head.

'—somewhere,' he says, falling.

She returns to her cage as the madman swims in delirium. Her body rises up and down, her legs lift and stretch and her toes point, her chest heaves and her stomach flattens, and furtive, seductive glimpses are revealed of her genitals. The madman thinks of Keats.

Her eyes shimmer far above.

'I've been in exile forever,' he whispers, *'for-ever and ever.'*

'Why're you here?' she says, slumping again beside him. *'You shouldn't be here. This place is for sickos. And weirdos.'* She ties her gown. *'And perverts. You know?'*

Jack lifts his head from his forearm and surveys the blue smoke. *'I came beckoning for the foster child of silence and slow time'* (*Ode on a Grecian Urn*). And there she is, beside him, her inscrutable green eyes shimmering in the bars of blue light. An apparition, an ethereal cross between his greatest desires and most terrifying fears. A projection. A myth. A universe.

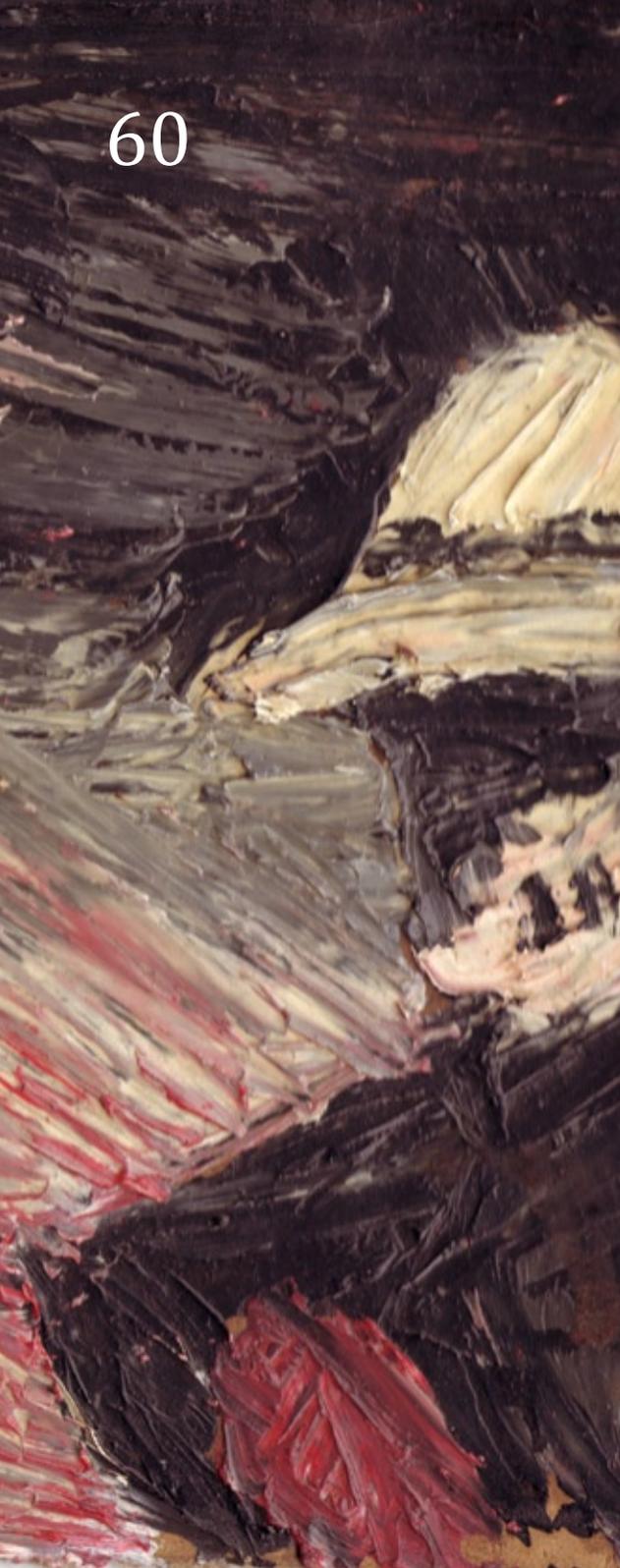
*'Are you **stalking** me?'* she says.

'No. I was celebrating.' (*Rolls his eyes*) *'Humanity. Trying to meet people. To find something.'* (*Sighs*)

'Yes, I remember.' She smiles. *'Substance and meaning. Love and hope. Piss and shit.'*

Of truths unknown and life-long obsessions, he recalls. *Love, stability, and cohesion.* Guardian of the Wasteland. Guardian of Hell.

'This is my night job,' she says. *'Pays more than my day job.'* (*Scowls*) *'My fucking nail keeps splitting.'*



their victims. This can help stalkers to abuse their victims without experiencing empathy, and may reflect or fuel a belief that they are entitled to behave as they please toward the victims. Viewing victims as 'lesser,' 'weak,' or otherwise seriously flawed can support delusions that the victims need to be rescued or punished by the stalkers. Stalkers may slander or defame the character of their victims which may isolate the victims and give the stalkers more control or a feeling of power.

Wikipedia
(accessed 31 July 2008)

Jack lifts his glass of wine to his mouth and sips. 'Really?' he says.

'May I?' she says, taking the bottle from the table and gulping on it. 'Terrible,' she says. 'I should've grabbed a better one.'

'I saw a parakeet back there,' Jack says.

'Oh, Binky,' she laughs, chewing again on her nail.

'On a man's shoulder—'

'It's a parrot. Hasn't been eating olives, I hope?'

'As a matter of fact—'

'Oh, dear. Naughty little bird. Picks them out of martinis, you know?' (*Laughs*)

'Hung itself, actually,' he says. 'Like a hare on a hook. Dangling there. Like Ned Kelly. On a chain. On a man's neck. Hanging there. Singing "*Fuck the World*."

'Now—now,' she says, 'stop fibbing.' (*Patting him on the back*)

'You're not still upset by those rocks I threw, are you?'

'Yes,' he says. 'And the glasses.'

'Don't be.'

'How could I not be?'

'Sit up. I can't be seen hugging the clients.' She pushes him away.

'I've already been molested once tonight,' she says, 'by a dwarf.'

'You shouldn't be cruel to dwarfs,' he says.

'Why? It molested me. Bit my tit.'

'Keats was a dwarf,' he says, ignoring her last remark.

'Who's Keats?'

'Of sorts. He was very small.' (*Frowns*) 'He was a Romantic Poet, actually. And a doctor. And a pugilist.'

'I thought you didn't believe in romantic love?' she says.

'I believe in it,' he says, 'I just haven't seen any examples of it. Not yet at least. I'm looking. It's like the [Holy Grail](#).'

'Me too,' she says. 'My tit—'

'I'm glad,' he says. (*Aside*: 'I'll tell God that.')

(*Rubbing her breast, grimacing*) 'Except maybe once,' she adds,

Holy Grail: An artefact in Christian mythology, being the dish used by Christ at the Last Supper and in which some of his blood was caught during the Crucifixion.

Wiktionary
(accessed 31 July 2008)

Economic Ecosystems:

The processes of social change, which are collectively known as globalisation, are associated with late capitalism. Economies and therefore societies are being transformed as they become more internationally based. The transformation is from a blue-collar economy—that is, where a substantial proportion of the population earn their livelihood from working in manufacturing—to an economy in which many of these jobs are disappearing and other economic activity such as service industries come to dominate. For individuals, many of the old certainties about life are swept away in the course of economic reform.

(Evan Willis,
The Sociological Quest,
1999, p. 86)

‘when I was little. I had ponytails back then. People used to think I was cute. And petite. And that I was going to be famous. This was before my Dad went bust. Before we were deported. Anyway, I fell in love, or lust, it’s hard to tell the difference. Those three little words are almost meaningless now, in the consumer age.’

‘*Is it?*’ Jack says, ignoring her last remark.

‘Extremely,’ she says. ‘Yes.’

(*Aside:* ‘Won’t tell God that.’) ‘You know, you adopt a different persona every time I see you. In a post-industrial—post-structural, post-modern, post-human—sort of way. You’re never the same person twice.’

‘Don’t we all?’ She smiles condescendingly and pinches his arm. ‘You have thin little arms. They’re like fingers.’

‘Are they?’ he says.

‘Like I was saying: my father, Bruce – most called him Garbo or Garbs or Brutus or Theotormon – used to take me places. On his rounds. You know? He picked up garbage from people’s houses. You know? And lugged it to the dump. But the dump cost money so we’d just dump it in the river. Sit up. You’re falling. Most of it sank. Don’t look so ridiculous. The bits that floated, floated. It was great fun and made good business sense—’

‘Sounds horrendous,’ he says.

‘Why?’

‘What about school?’

‘Why?’

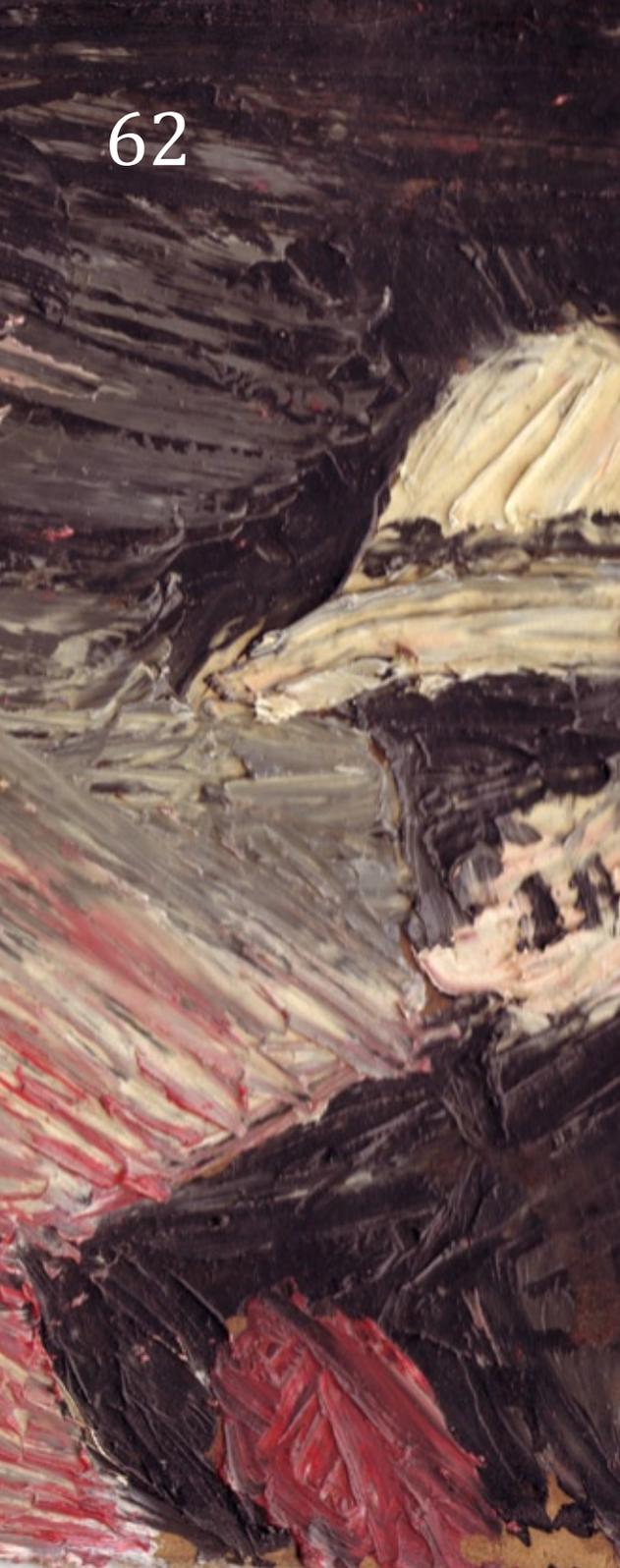
‘And the river? All that junk ends up at the sea, strangling fish. It’s a delicate ecosystem.’

‘So’s my home. My Mum’s always crying about the [money](#). And Dad, who seems to’ve taken to men again.’

‘How’d you mean?’

‘He’s gay when Mum becomes all feminine, but he won’t admit it.’

‘How’d you mean?’



'He fucks blokes – when she menstruates. And when he fucks blokes he won't fuck Mum. Hates blood, I think. Don't look so silly. She gets sad about all that. She's very fertile. Sit up. Like me.'

(Is any of this real? he wonders.) 'Can't she share?'

'No.' (*Smiles*) 'Don't be silly. Anyway, he'd take me to people's places and we'd pick up their junk and whack it in the ute.'

'Sounds fun, I guess.'

'Don't be silly. That glass cut your head, you know?'

'But it does, sort of.'

'Wipe your face. That's when I met Bill or Bromion – can't remember his name.'

'Sort of thing,' he says.

'He's an artist who makes films. "*Sort of thing?*" What is that? You're weird.'

It is at this moment that a man behind the bar begins yelling at Circe and shaking his fists.

'Bill used to bonk me in his shed,' she continues.

'What?'

'On his bench.'

'What?'

'On all the nuts and bolts and nails and tools and stuff.'

'Good God!'

'It kinda hurt. Like my tit now.'

'What?'

'That's what I liked. And the camera, the voyeur, being exposed, hurt, trampled... An *odalisque*.'

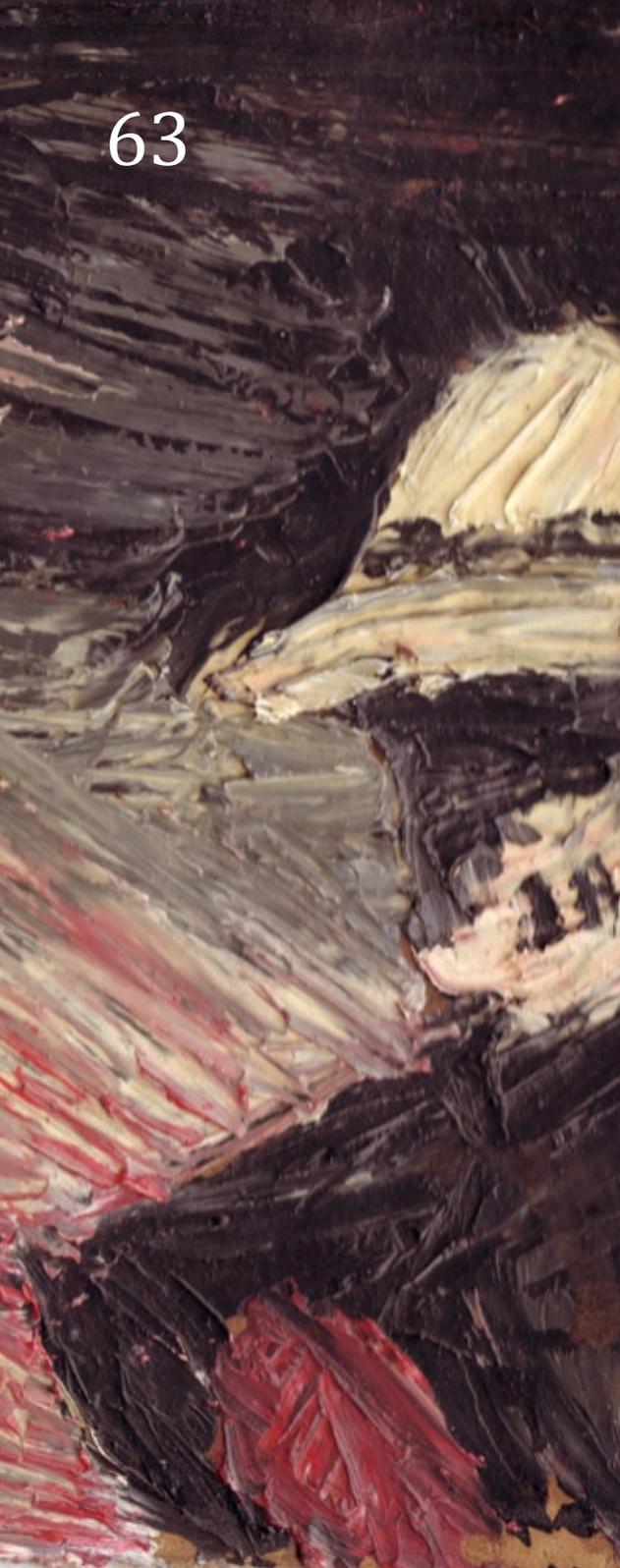
'What?'

For Bromion rent her with his thunders and tore her virgin mantle in twain.

'But Bromion was terribly ugly, so he wore a mask. A pig mask. He'd pay me so it didn't—'

(*Confounded*) 'What?'

'—matter.'



Speechless, Jack blinks and a string of saliva swings from his mouth.

‘Anyway, I thought I was in love. Yuck, you’re gross.’

‘What?’

‘Because every man before Bill wouldn’t come in me—’

‘What?’

‘Not like Bromion did. He’d—’

The madman is grabbed by the scruff of the neck. ‘You gonna pay for that, fuckface?’ And punched. And kicked.

‘Wha—?’

‘That bottle.’

‘Wh—at?’

‘That’s a flaming [Grange Hermitage](#).’

‘—aaat?’

‘You will pay for it.’

‘Sort of—’

[Voice over:] *That did it.*

The bouncer pummels the madman’s jaw, sending his head spinning heavenward while his body plummets hellward. Several minutes elapse before the madman rouses. A pool of blood surrounds his head.

‘Anyway,’ she says, ‘he used to come in my face and smear it into my eyes. *Like this.*’ (*Spits in his face*)

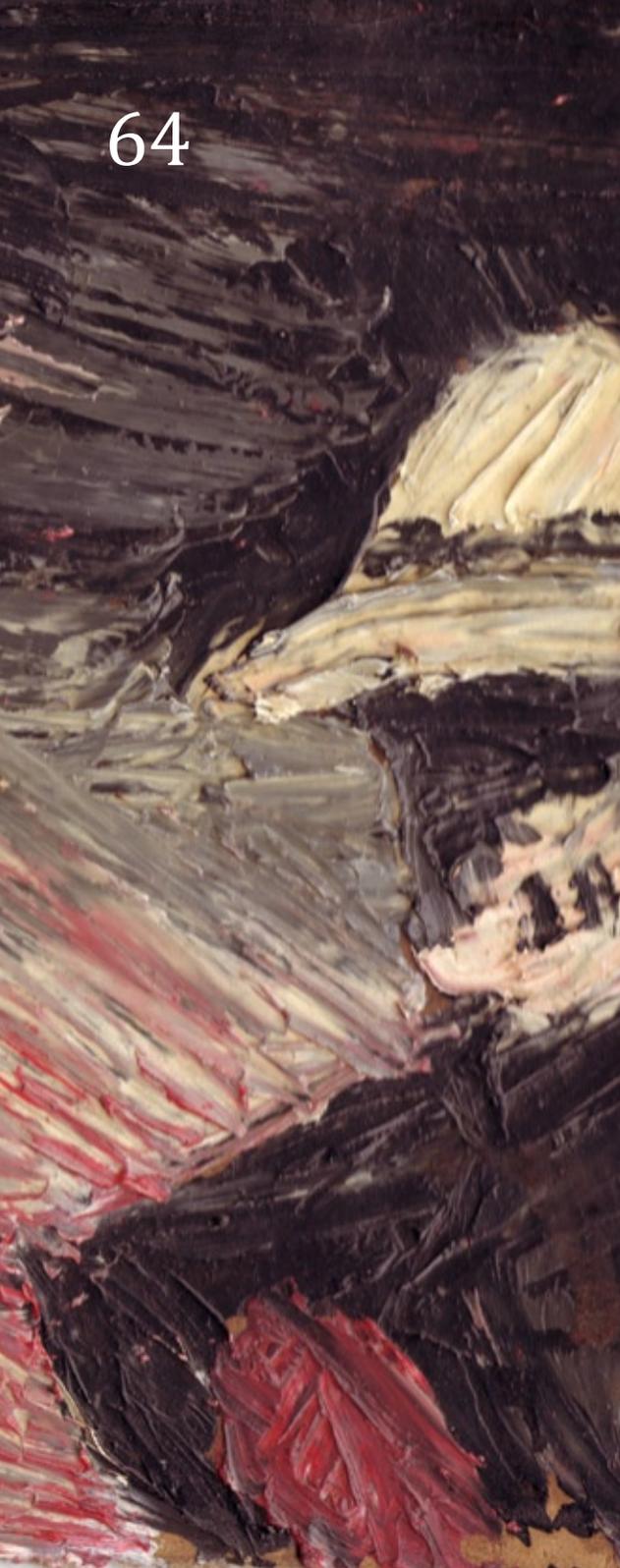
The madman attempts to focus. ‘*What?* Stop it. Stop it. Stop it! This is psychological vandalism.’

‘Maybe now you’ll stop stalking me,’ she says, ‘else I’ll hurt you more.’

Again Jack faints with humanity indelibly impressed upon his face: eyes swollen and bloodshot, tongue spilling from the corner of his mouth, fresh barbs of a beard sprouting from his chin. And so his

Grange Hermitage:
Penfolds Grange (until the 1989 vintage labelled Penfolds Grange Hermitage) is an Australian wine, made predominantly from the Shiraz grape and usually a small percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon. It is widely considered Australia's 'first growth' and its most collectable wine. The term 'Hermitage,' the name of a French wine appellation, was commonly used in Australia as another synonym for Shiraz. In 1953 two versions of Grange were made, one 87% Shiraz and 13% Cabernet Sauvignon, the other 100% Cabernet Sauvignon.

*Wikipedia
(accessed 31 July 2008)*



Language Games:

Wittgenstein, taking up the study of language again from scratch, focuses his attention on the effects of different modes of discourse; he calls the various types of utterances he identifies along the way ... language games. What he means by this term is that each of the various categories of utterance can be defined in terms of rules specifying their properties and the uses to which they can be put – in exactly the same way as the game of chess is defined by a set of rules determining the properties of each of the pieces, in other words, the proper way to move them.

(Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 1984, p. 10).

whole body continues to work despite the debilitation of the head, which swims through the horror of her **words**, returning alas to the lair of his being, a warehouse of fanciful dreams and incredible delusions: of Circe as his bride.

He laughs wildly. ‘*Somewhere someone is travelling furiously toward you—*’

His shoulders slump into his chest. He cries, ‘An **odalisque!**’
And faints.

Scene 45

[Setting:] A sewer.

The madman throws plastic bags into the river. Circe watches.

‘What you doing?’ she says.

‘So the fish can kill themselves,’ he says.

‘*What?*’ she says.

‘The fish, poor souls.’

‘You’re weird.’

‘Can you smother me in my sleep?’

‘What?’

‘With a pillow? Your breasts will probably do.’

‘What?’

‘Like Henry the Seventh did the princes in the Tower’ (Josephine Tey, *The Daughter of Time*, 1951).

‘What you talking about?’

‘The princes were smothered.’

‘What?’

‘With hatred. **Richard** was kind.’

‘Who’s Richard?’

‘A great king.’ (*Sighs*) ‘My friend. A Plantagenet.’

She looks bemused.

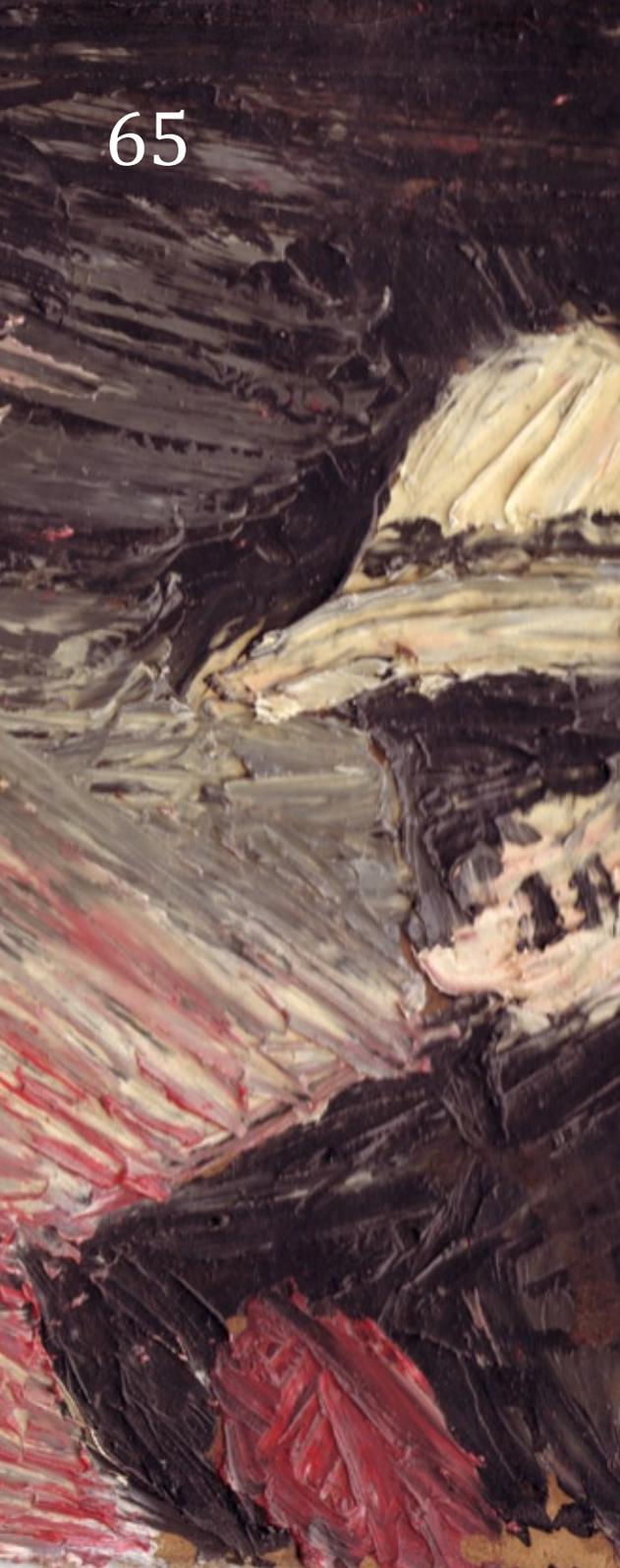
‘It was Richmond who did it, killed them. He married their sister, you know? Claimed Richard’s throne after killing him. On Bosworth Field.’

Odalisque: or *odalisk*, a female slave or concubine (Collins English Dictionary).

Richard III:

(2 October 1452 – 22 August 1485) was King of England from 1483 until his death. He was the last king from the House of York, and his defeat at the Battle of Bosworth marked the culmination of the Wars of the Roses and the end of the Plantagenet dynasty. ...

Much that was previously considered ‘fact’ about Richard III has been rejected by modern historians. For example, Richard was represented by Tudor writers as being physically deformed, which was regarded as evidence of an evil character. However, the withered arm, limp and crooked back of legend are nowadays believed to be fabrications, possibly originating from the questionable history attributed to Thomas More, which made a deep impression upon William Shakespeare, and was long taken as the authoritative history of events. The accusations against his moral character



**Otherness/Alterity
/Difference:**

Alterity is a philosophical term meaning 'otherness', strictly being in the sense of the other of two (Latin *alter*). It is generally now taken as the philosophical principle of exchanging one's own perspective for that of the 'other.' The concept was established by Emmanuel Lévinas in a series of essays, collected under the title *Alterity and Transcendence*.

The term is also deployed outside of philosophy, notably in anthropology ... to refer to the construction of cultural others...

Wikipedia
(accessed 23 July 2008)

'If you know something about a murder perhaps you should forget it.'

'Many have, it's no use. History lies,' he says. 'Those fish have a sanctuary now, poor souls.' He adds a eulogy for good measure: 'Fuck the world, and amen, creatures of the depths.' (*Crosses himself*)

'You're mad.'

'Really?' he says, throwing himself into the river.

Her scream isn't lost on the three shadows lurking in the gloom.

Watching her. Hunting her.

[Voice over:] *Such were Jack's heartening dreamscapes on the fifth day. Watery hells of abandonment and destitution, riptides and sluices that dragged him ever deeper into the abyss.*

Places so familiar they were home-like: cold, lonely, and turbulent. How, after all, was Jack to know anything different from difference? The very meaning of the word home was beyond him. Difference was that thing he felt, that feeling of remoteness that separated him from them, that distance. To feel something contrary to that—that was his quest. To try and fit in—that was his betrayal. That's what swept him down stream.

Arms flailing helplessly against the currents.

Screaming.

'Circe—'

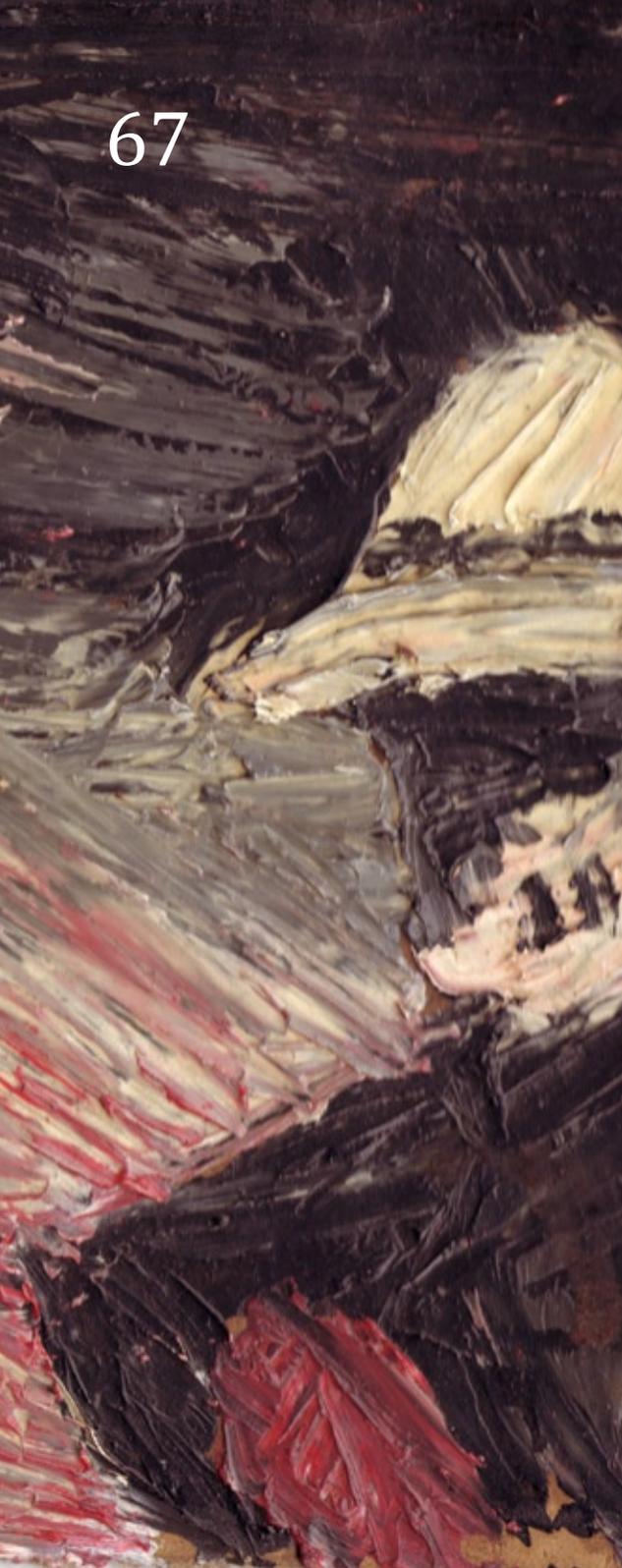
The sewers hear his cries and echo back his sighs.

'My ... kingdom for ... a horse,' he calls, taking in mouthfuls of sewage as he flounders downstream. 'My horror ... *for* a kingdom,' he adds, flapping and kicking. 'My ... horror ... for ... a ... kingdom!'

have proven more resistant to refutation than the slanders against his physical looks. ...

Richard III was found not guilty in a mock trial presided over by three Justices of the United States Supreme Court in 1997. Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Associate Justices Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Stephen G. Breyer, in a 3-0 decision, ruled that the prosecution had not met the burden of proof that 'it was more likely than not' that the Princes in the Tower had been murdered; that the bones found in 1674 in the Tower were those of the Princes; and that Richard III had ordered or was complicitous in their deaths.

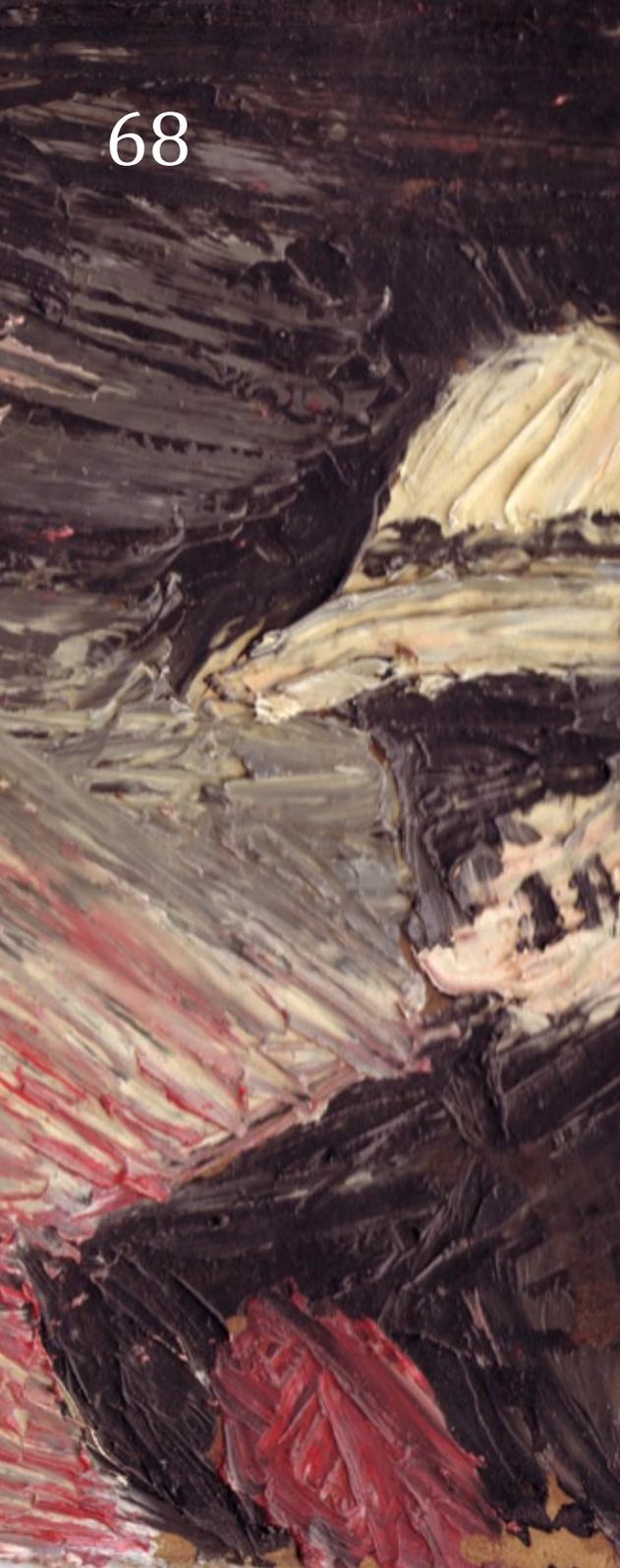
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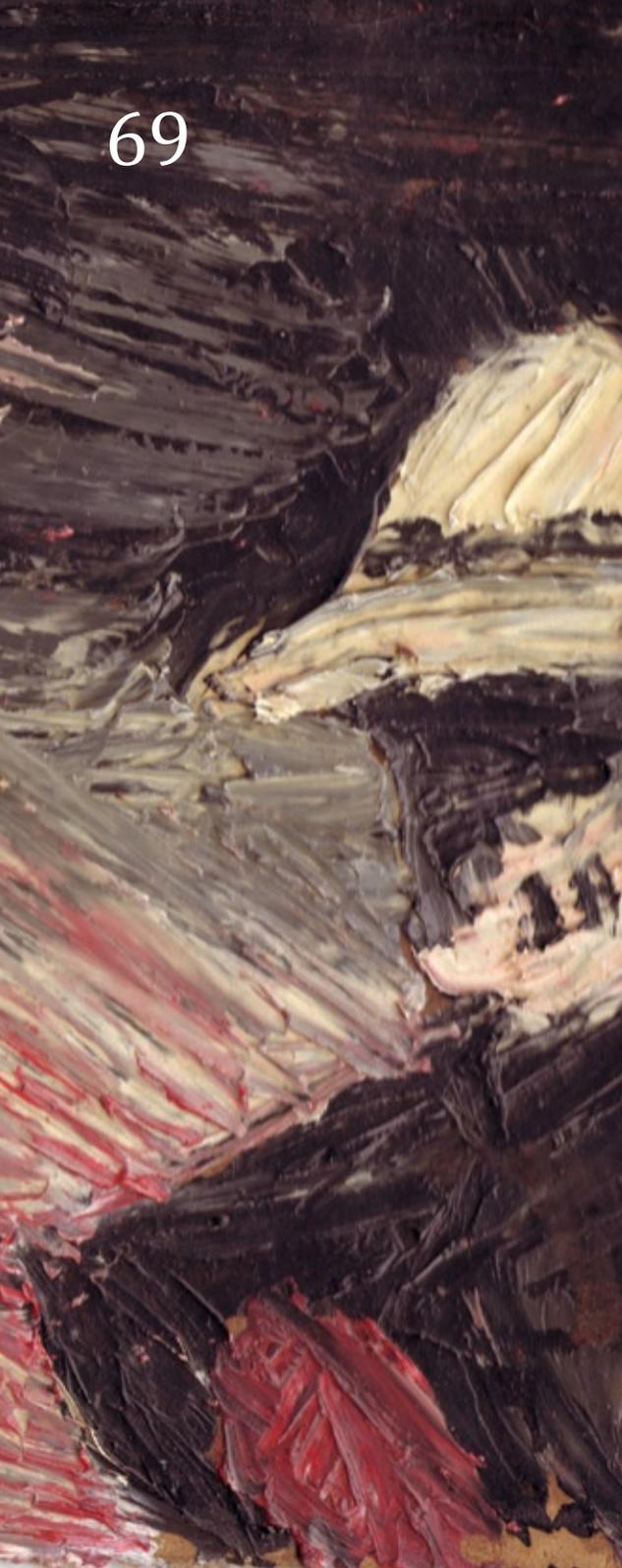
Seek not to make the Son of God adjust to his insanity. There is a stranger in him, who wandered carelessly into the home of truth and who will wander off. He came without a purpose, but he will not remain before the shining light the Holy Spirit offered, and you accepted. For there the stranger is made homeless and *you* are welcome. Ask not this transient stranger, 'What am I?' He is the only thing in all the universe that does not know.

A Course in Miracles, 2004, p. 430

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A Vagabond in Hell