

ADMIT TWO

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I HAVE NAMES FOR THE WAYS THEY TWITCH THEIR EARS:

*The story of one man's flight
from his wife's rabbits*

by

Arlene Ang & Valerie Fox

INTRODUCTION

A children's book author isn't necessarily a fossil. I've been afforded this privilege for a long time, but I have feelings, too.

I've finally run out on my former wife and her rabbits. Since then she has been telling everyone that I'd have been a taxidermist if it wasn't for her. I hear she adds as further, dramatic grist: "And I wrote his books for him, one hundred percent."

I care to say that, coming home from the grocer's or the post office, I would often catch her in compromising positions, all involving a state-of-the-art adding machine and Swiss bank account receipts. In her dealings she was rarely honest and rarely properly dressed.

Shortly after the first drafting of this memoir, I discovered that the first two chapters had gone missing. I have since moved out of Lorraine's villa, but this doesn't stop me from suspecting her or her rabbits.

This is a reconstruction of my story.

CHAPTER ONE

I never intended to come out in the open. However, after thousands of fan mail last Christmas asking for the next Magical Carpet Bunny book (the 83rd), I wanted to state that Bunny Elliot was honest-to-goodness dead and that, if my ex-wife Lorraine hadn't interfered, would've remained so.

She used a correction pen to bring him back to life. The evening before my corrected galleys were headed to press, she fed me three servings of lamb stew with sage and cinnamon. Her specialty. I slept soundly that night and never dreamt that she would erase the poisoned camera flash that killed Bunny Elliot, that put out his lights for good.

Lorraine still thinks of Bunny Elliot as hers. Sometimes I think she thinks of me in the same way. Private Property—Caution: Falling Rocks.

It's obvious now that Lorraine never forgave me for giving up a promising position at Shining Lantern University. She had some outmoded ideas about being the gentle wife of a faculty member. "Call me Dulsie," she used to mince to the other wives, after I'd introduce her by her actual name. "Don't pay any attention to Richard. I don't."

I was in history, a generalist. A little of this, a little of that. Marx, Engels, Agincourt. I was quite the romantic.

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ADMIT TWO

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by Arlene Ang & Valerie Fox

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Frequent and lengthy department meetings turned me into a realist. I impulsively resigned after a three-hour meeting one hot summer day. Twelve adult human beings could not decide whether they wanted a regular coffee maker or one with a timer for their newly renovated mailroom and lounge. Besides, such employment didn't come with the perks it once did. Unlike Job I had little patience and not much else to lose. No camels, wives, concubines, jewels, or donkeys.

So began my life as would-be novelist. I would start six different novels at the same time. The fact that they went mostly unfinished defined me as a pleasantly opaque postmodernist. Lorraine, of course, had other ideas.

She had never taken my writing seriously. Or kept the bathtub free of soap scum. Month after month, she would release into our garden the rabbits she'd won from the town fair's shooting arcade. By the time I left her, there were at least fifty hopping up and down the stairs and more than a hundred had gotten in the garage.

Lorraine ignored how I felt about them—which was as strongly as the odor they left on my clothes. I often remarked, "Those rabbits lying out there in the sun, panting. You just know they're up to no good."

And sometimes I'd jeer, "Oh look. There's your four-hundred dollar fern. Gone today, poop tomorrow."

I began visualizing them in various positions over a fiery spit. When I showed Lorraine my illustrations, she laughed, "We could make money out of this, darling! Think of it. I'll even let you get me a new fern."

It was amazing how she could turn every phrase I said or wrote into their exact opposite. I had written a thousand-paged novel about her hateful rabbits taking over an alien carpetworld. She edited it

overnight into fifty pages and turned one of the killer rabbits, Bunny Elliot into a sort of hero who flew carpets for a living.

Thus she launched my bestselling *Magical Carpet Bunny* books. In a way, I never forgave her for that.

The twenty-fifth installment, *Bunny Gets What He Wants For Christmas*, still makes me wish I had gone blind. It sold more than a million copies in Belgium alone. Lorraine got me a pair of dark glasses for my pains, but not the guide dog or the talking parrot.

Her rabbits kept me in a state of perpetual anxiety. Her snores sometimes jolted me awake at night, disturbing my deep sleep. Residual images of Lorraine dressed up as a lascivious rodent complete with salivating chops kept me from re-shutting my eyes most nights. Rabbit-wrestling wrung me dry.

I was terribly miffed when I found a copy of Machiavelli's *The Prince* in my wife's night stand drawer. It was worse than discovering a vibrator or another man's dirty socks. I tried pulling out pages to see if she'd go *Ouch!* while sleeping, but she always maintained her calm even after I bought a hundred can openers from The Home Shopping Network and started throwing them at her empty flower pots.

CHAPTER TWO

Imagine my surprise when I broke into Dr. Orten's office. Dr. Orten is someone I can talk to because I pay her for it. She'd actually labeled my session tapes: *Richard's Rabbits*. For years, I'd been telling her to use my assumed name, but she once admitted, after pausing the recorder, that she never listened to her patients.

I had come there hoping to steal back my ideas when I discovered that more than half of them had already been bought by Lorraine. There were quite a lot of receipts that included sales tax. All

very legal, I thought with dismay. I was shocked to see typescript transcripts as well, labeled "copy," with annotations in Lorraine's girly-curly hand. "Usable" and "Just like his cousin, that ninny."

I realized then that she knew my cousin Lou, perhaps even biblically. That very night I came home and began writing my memoir. I was the abused "better half"—not Lorraine, not her rabbits. In less than a month, I had secretly typed 33 chapters. I admit I actually enjoyed trying on her facial cream, her lace negligee, her mink hat for research purposes. Once or twice, she came home demanding to know who had rummaged through the silverware. The comment I reserved for these occasions was always: *You and your goddamn rabbits.*

Perhaps I should have known even then that our marriage was already in trouble. I had come to writing down some generic comments on index cards. With me, I thought, Lorraine at least would never have the last word.

The emperor has no clothes. This was and is one of my favorite retorts. I still use it when accused of being drunk or missing a tooth. I could say it enigmatically. Lorraine tried for years to come up with an adequate reply, but I leered down at her until she felt too naked to go on standing, in her clothes.

Gobbledygook is another favorite comeback. It's a nice cross between *Id like to be alone now* and *If it's not part of the main course, it's not a rabbit.*

Eventually, I found them all cut up and left to gather algae in the pond. Before his appendix operation, Lou confessed that Lorraine put him up to it. She made him believe my index cards were insured. She said she would marry him upon their demise. My cousin Lou was never a literate man, but he took her wisecracks literally. She—

(some pages pulled out here)

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

More dangerous than Lorraine were her rabbits. Their ears twitched with pure malice. I could understand the language they spoke among themselves. In time, I compiled a dictionary. I had a system that took advantage of the latest in sensor technology.

Jackknife. Left ear vertical right one horizontal, fiercely still: *We know a thousand names for God and for insanity.*

Johnnie Walker. Two twitches with the left ear, then three with right. Signifies question: *Why do you stand there looking as if you had no soul?*

Soufflé. An ear flops down over an eye, tremors for a few seconds: *Go home, Yankee.*

Toy-type. One side seems paralyzed, the result of competitive wife-hopping. *Just between your species and mine, that last harmonica solo you recorded and sent as a Christmas present to everybody is low-grade.*

U-turn. Brief, effervescent ear twitches that mean *if it weren't for the letter T we'd have been rabbis.*

There was no end to their obnoxiousness. Week after week they multiplied. My compendium reached two thousand 8 1/2 by 11 inch pages. Then, one day, it too was gone. To think that I had been so careful in hiding it from Lorraine, her rabbits, Dr. Orten, Cousin Lou. I found a page in the garden once, trampled by rabbit feet. It was filthy, some vowels eaten by teeth marks. I called it The Last Straw.

That night I confronted Lorraine, "E=mc²!" I signed it as well as spoke it.

"And what's the matter with *that* now?" she raised a brow. She was brushing her hair in front of her antique Italian dressing table. I felt the upper hand. I knew she

wasn't getting it.

"Herzegovina," I gave a particularly menacing glower.

"Oh whatever," she sneered. "If you've got a war somewhere, go on and get it over with."

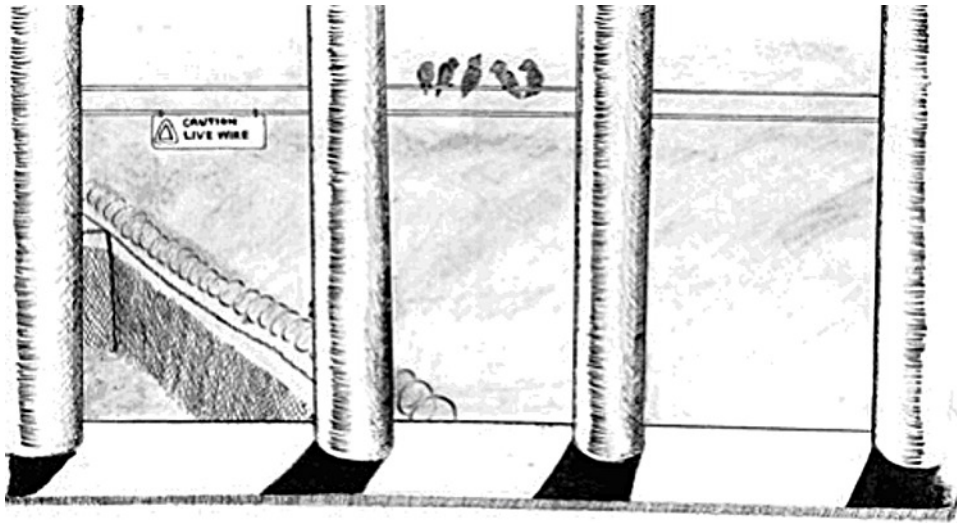
"Styptic pencils don't heal leprosy."

And with these last words, I left her well-appointed house taking nothing but this memoir. The whole, unadulterated, glacial truth. Out of habit, I now keep all my manuscripts in a safety deposit box in another State. The lock is certified rabbit-proof, ex-wife-proof.

When I left Lorraine, I made sure not to leave a forwarding address. I didn't even let her keep my pencils.

Arlene Ang and **Valerie Fox** have collaborated in numerous projects, most recently short fiction. Arlene Ang lives in Spinea, Italy where she keeps a fine collection of dust bunnies under the bed. She is the author of *The Desecration of Doves* (iUniverse, 2005). Valerie Fox lives in New Jersey with her husband, a daughter, a cat and several disembodied rabbits. She is the author of *The Rorschach Factory* (Straw Gate Books, 2006). They both prefer French fries to over-the-counter acne creams and have clickable websites at www.leafscape.org.

March '08



Jail Birds by Eleanor Potter

SETTLING SCORES:
A PLAY IN ONE ACT

by

Robert Johnson, Victor Hassine AM4737, & Ania Dobrzanska

CAST
(in order of appearance)

Correctional officer
Stenographer
Inmate Sanchez
Lawyer
Prosecutor

SETTING

Curtain Closed:
Noises in background: chains, brass keys, and distant male voices.

DIALOGUE

Correctional officer:

Move it Sanchez! (*snapping sound of man chewing gum with his mouth open. . .*) Stay right here. Your lawyer'll be here in a minute. You know the drill, no stupid shit.

Sound of handcuffs, chains, and keys rattling.

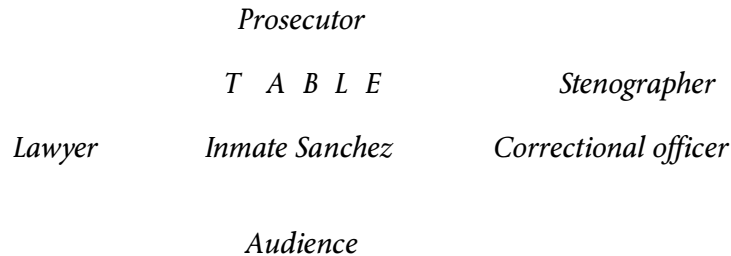
Calling out:

Okay. We're done in here. Ya'll can let 'em come through.

Sound of gate opening and closing—feet shuffling, chairs being moved.

Curtain opens, revealing a large, heavy-set Correctional Officer, a man once muscular but now, in middle age, gone to seed. He is standing near a pretty Stenographer who is seated and wearing a form-fitting gray pantsuit, white silk blouse, and stylish heels. Inmate Sanchez, in a green institutional jumpsuit, is cuffed and shackled to a chair with his back to the audience. The audience can only see the back of Sanchez's head, which sports a long, salt-and-pepper ponytail. A large tattoo of St. Mary in a praying position sits at the nape of his neck. A Lawyer in a standard black suit is seated next to Sanchez on the left side of a table with his briefcase and papers spread out before him. He fumbles with the papers while whispering to his client in a controlled but urgent manner. Meanwhile the correctional officer looks longingly at the stenographer.

Stage Diagram:



Correctional officer:

Soft tone:

Ma'am, ya'll can set up your machine right over there.

He turns his head towards the right corner of the stage, points his chin towards the corner, and nods his head, suggesting the designated location for the machine.

And don't ya'll worry one bit. I'll be here the whole time to make sure nothing happens.

Sternly:

Counselor, (*Lawyer's head jerks up, in reaction*) you can move your chair right on next to your . . . client. He ain't gonna bite ya.

Lawyer pulls his chair up closer to Mr. Sanchez.

Lawyer:

I'll need some time to consult in private with my client. When's the prosecution expected?

Stenographer:

Sexy female voice, with a hint of a European accent, stretching her "R's":

Excuse me. Can you show me where I can plug in my equipment?

Correctional officer:

Upon hearing her voice, immediately ignores the Lawyer:

Ma'am, let me help ya with your—your equipment.

The officer rushes to where the young stenographer is sitting and then bends to put the plug into an outlet. His handcuffs and keys slide to his side, making a metallic noise, getting the stenographer's attention.

Stenographer:

I hope you won't have to use them today. *(pointing to the cuffs)*

Correctional officer:

Don't you worry now. But if I do have to secure the prisoner, I'll just be doin' my job ma'am, just doin' my job.

From bending over, the officer's blood rushed to his head showing a red face. He sighs, lifts up his left hand and runs it through his hair, fixing his "do."

Stenographer:

Thank you. You are so sweet. Really.

Lawyer:

Impatiently but nervously he stands:

Hey, can I get an answer? When do I see my client in private?

Correctional officer:

Ya'll need to sit tight, counselor! *(sighs and looks at his watch)* You got a few minutes, just go ahead talk to your man right here. Nobody gonna listen to ya.

The lawyer begins to object but stops when he hears the rustle of keys and the distinctive sound of a large prison gate swinging open. A woman in a black business suit with a black leather briefcase marches onto the stage, moving in an almost military manner. She positions herself behind the Table, across from Inmate Sanchez, then briskly removes her black, polarized glasses, and places them in her left breast pocket.

Prosecutor:

Sorry I'm late. I was over on death row, checking out the equipment. Everything seems to be working just fine.

She pulls on an expensive looking silk scarf which is knotted at her neck, loosening it, then nods to the stenographer.

Let's get this plea negotiation over with, shall we?

Holding an open file and looking at Sanchez:

Okay. Let's begin. Mr. Sanchez, as you know, I'm from the prosecutor's office and I'm here to negotiate a plea agreement. I hope to convince you to plead guilty to the charges against you in exchange for a more lenient sentence.

Now, let's see. It says here, you were arrested for possession of a substantial amount of illegal drugs that were processed through your house.

Lawyer:

They weren't his drugs. He rents a room to transient folks in the neighborhood—to make ends meet. The room's in the basement; that's where the bum who sold those drugs lived. Mr. Sanchez had no idea those drugs were in the basement.

Prosecutor:

Drugs were found in his house.

Lawyer:

Yes, but they were not his. He doesn't even go down to that basement except to collect the measly rent he gets for the room. It's not like my client lives there.

Where were the drugs found? If they were hidden, how was Mr. Sanchez to know that drugs were even there?

Prosecutor:

Technically, no drugs were actually found in the house. We have reliable testimony that drugs passed through the house—the basement—but no physical evidence.

Lawyer:

No drugs were actually found! How in heaven's name was Mr. Sanchez to know that phantom drugs passed through his house?

Prosecutor:

No need for sarcasm. You know the law. If corroborated testimony establishes that drugs passed through that house, then drugs passed through that house. It goes like this: his basement, his house, his drugs, his case. You follow?

Lawyer:

What corroborating evidence? Traces of drugs?

Prosecutor:

No traces, no. In fact, no drugs were ever actually found. But we have firm testimony from informants that major drugs passed through that house.

Lawyer:

You have nothing but “snitch” testimony? It’s not like these guys are known for their honesty, for God’s sake.

Prosecutor:

They testified under oath; we made it abundantly clear that we would not tolerate perjury. We gave them the opportunity to cooperate, and they took it.

Lawyer:

So my man is going down for owning a house through which unfound drugs allegedly passed through the basement apartment and of which he had no knowledge?

Prosecutor:

We think he knew—or should have known. Again, his house, his responsibility. The so-called “transient” you’re talking about—his name is Smith—copped a plea. He’s on-board. He named your man as part of the deal. That means your man is part of a conspiracy. We offered the transient—uh, Mr. Smith—a deal and he took it.

Lawyer:

Well, that bum—Smith—had every reason to deal, if he was part of a drug conspiracy. Even if he wasn’t, since someone could’ve made up his name, too. Christ, he had nothing to lose by taking someone else down with him.

Prosecutor:

Your man should do the same. You know how this works. Let’s not make it any tougher than it has to be. Once I offer your client a deal, he can take it or roll the dice with a jury.

Pause

But if he gets convicted at trial, he faces a maximum term of . . .

Looking in her file and counting on her fingers.

160 years in prison.

Whistles.

Lawyer:

Quickly stands:

But they weren’t his drugs—if there ever were drugs! I mean, come on, look at my client . . .

Prosecutor:

Impatient, cutting Lawyer off:

That's for a jury to decide! His co-conspirator has already pled guilty. A jury will be impressed by that. Now it's your client's turn at bat.

Lawyer:

Co-conspirator!

Slowly sits back down. Whispers to client, then:

Okay. What's on the table?

Prosecutor:

Eagerly handing over documents to Lawyer:

To make things easy, here's a chart, listing the maximum term your client is facing and the various deductions we are willing to make in return for a guilty plea and cooperation.

Stenographer:

With an index finger on her lips:

Excuse me. Can I get a copy of that — for my notes?

Correctional officer:

Sure, you can.

Snatches the Lawyer's copy from his hand and walks it over to Stenographer and returns.

Lawyer:

Hey!

Stenographer:

Thank you. Thank you very much.

The Correctional officer gazes at the Stenographer until the Lawyer clears his throat. The Prosecutor hands the Lawyer another copy of the document, raising her eyebrows. The Lawyer shakes his head.

Prosecutor:

To Lawyer:

Where were we? Oh, right. Now, as you can see from the nicely laminated chart, the good news is that, simply for pleading guilty, we will deduct a full 20 years off the maximum sentence.

She smiles with tightly pursed lips, highlighted by bright red lipstick.

The bad news is that your client still faces a nice chunk of time.

Lawyer:

A century and then some, for Christ's sake!

The Correctional Officer blows a bubble with his gum, which pops after he is startled by the lawyer's vehemence.

The Stenographer lets out an involuntary gasp.

Prosecutor:

To Lawyer, chuckling:

But you know what the guys in prison say, "You can't play the game if you don't give up a name!" Okay. Let's start at the top.

Pointing to the chart, which can now be seen to be labeled in bold black letters, "NAME GAME."

Lawyer:

What's that small print I see at the bottom? Instructions?

Prosecutor:

That's not instructions. It's more like a motto. One of the guys at the office is an amateur poet.

Stenographer:

Really? I love poems!

The Stenographer hesitates, realizing she has spoken out of turn. In a more subdued voice, she says:

Someone read it and I'll take it down—for the record . . .

No one makes a move to read the chart, so the Correctional Officer rushes over to the prosecutor, stumbling slightly, then takes the chart. He draws a deep breath, tries to smile at the Stenographer, than reads in his best baritone:

Correctional officer:

They bought your drugs
You sold your life
Now we'll make you an offer
you can't refuse

-

You're facing
Five to ten
Ten to life
Life with an out
Life without
Death on a gurney

the ultimate clout

-

The ball's in your court
to your own self be true
Rat someone out
get less time to do
Guilty or not, most
any name will do

Lawyer:

Geesh, what kind of message is that?

Prosecutor:

It means you better go along to get along. We play for keeps. Now listen, here's the mechanics of the process.

Pausing

We figure this must have been a family deal. If your man was in on it—and we believe he was—so were his wife and kids. They all benefited. So, for each member of your client's immediate family — wife, children, anybody else related who ever used that house—that he is willing to name, we'll deduct 20 years.

When we say “name,” we mean implicate and testify against that person in this or any other criminal proceeding.

Lawyer:

We understand that much. He can't play the game if he don't drop a name.

Prosecutor:

That's the spirit! Now, 20 years per name! Pretty generous, when you come right down to it, especially since a lot of criminals come from large families!

Lawyer:

Please, let's focus on this case. My client is not a criminal! (*begins to rise*) He . . .

Prosecutor:

Stands up quickly and dramatically, causing the Lawyer to quickly sit down:

Okay, enough! He's a criminal if we say he's a criminal. It's not like this is his call, damn it!

Pausing, then softening her tone:

Plus, now get this — there is a bonus of 40 years for naming two or more immediate family members. Every two family members you name, you get 80 years off the original sentence! How's that for a plea bargain?

The Stenographer squirms a bit.

Lawyer: *visibly uneasy*
Well, I . . .

Prosecutor: *impatiently*
Naming unrelated codefendants, neighbors, friends, or other relatives will earn a deduction of 20 years each but – listen closely – with *no bonus time deductions* for multiple names.

Lawyer:
There's a family discount?

Prosecutor:
Yes there is. *(spoken with a hint of pride)*

Lawyer:
Compassionate conservatism at work!

Prosecutor:
Smiling coldly, ignoring the sarcasm:
Perhaps. But in any event, you cannot receive any less than a 20-year sentence for your guilty plea.

Lawyer:
So no matter what, you do 20 years?

Prosecutor:
That's the score, counselor. Unless, of course, you have someone real juicy to turn in, like a mob boss, a politician, or a White House intern with an unnatural fondness for Cuban cigars. Then we'll put you on the Witness Protection Program and you don't have to serve any time at all!

Lawyer:
This is absurd!

Prosecutor:
Yes, it is. But it's effective. You gotta love it!

Stenographer:
Tilting her head, coquettishly:
Excuse me. Can I ask a question?

Correctional officer:

Of course, of course you can. Just go right ahead!
The Prosecutor and Lawyer are caught off guard, as it were, reduced to silence at Correctional officer's inappropriate behavior.

Stenographer:

Thank you. This sheet says that Mister Sanchez can get 20 years off his sentence for turning in his wife, twenty years off his sentence for turning in his son, twenty years for . . .

Prosecutor:

Interrupting, impatient.
 That's right. We call that our Family Plan.

Stenographer:

Well, why twenty years? Everything is twenty this, twenty that . . .
 What's so special about twenty?

Correctional officer:

That's a damn good question! Good for you, young lady!

Prosecutor:

Looking directly at Correctional officer
 Well, twenty years is a generation — a score, as in, "Four score and seven years ago."

Correctional officer:

I serve 20 years till my retirement . . .

Correctional officer falls silent when he meets the prosecutor's stern gaze.

Lawyer:

This is crazy. My client didn't do anything. He has no one to name. My client was a model citizen till you guys arrested him for this ridiculous crime. And here we are joking about twenty years of captivity like it's nothing!

Prosecutor:

Well, most folks figure out the score pretty quick.

Lawyer:

All that bum had to do was drop my guy's name! There's no real proof . . .

Prosecutor:

That's all your man has to do, too—drop a name. This drug stuff, a lot of times it's all talk. The evidence goes up in smoke – or coke!

Laughs at her own humor

Lawyer:

I'm glad you find this funny. I can't see the humor in selling people into captivity on something as flimsy as an accusation that is so self-serving it's laughable.

Prosecutor:

Do you see me laughing? This is serious. For sure folks aren't going to turn themselves in. We've got to squeeze one bad guy to get to the next.

Anyway, look. Just because your client has no record and the "bum", as you call him, has been around the block, well, that really doesn't make a difference. Justice is blind; people may be different but when you get right down to it, that really doesn't matter. The law's the law. Do the crime, do the time.

Lawyer:

But he didn't . . . Alright, alright, we're in a bind . . .

Prosecutor:

Now I'm a reasonable woman, and my office would like to settle this. Saves time, ours and your client's. So we'll offer your client a flat 20 years for his guilty plea. That's 140 years off his maximum sentence.

Guilty or not, we've got snitch testimony—you know, his co-conspirator—that *makes* him guilty, and that's what counts in the end. What do you say? Are we all going to save ourselves a lot of time or . . .

Lawyer and Sanchez whisper.

Lawyer:

My client says, okay, but you know this isn't fair. You know he didn't do anything. The bum he rented to is just doing what he can to get out from under a sentence as high as Mount Everest. For all I know that guy's innocent too! And maybe Mr. Sanchez just pissed him off and this is his way of settling the score.

Prosecutor:

Settling scores, well that's pretty much what it comes down to. All that matters is what we can prove. So, we can settle this score by settling on a score – 20 years, flat – rather than having your client risk really big time. Poetic justice, huh?

Lawyer:

Bad poetry. Bad justice. Shit, just send me the paperwork at my office.

Shaking his head, the lawyer stands up and puts his papers in order, preparing to leave. The stenographer does the same. The Correctional officer turns Inmate Sanchez's chair to the audience, which reveals him to be a very old man strapped into a wheel chair with an array of medical equipment attached to him. Sanchez looks decrepit, like death warmed over. Everyone watches impassively as a nearly comatose Sanchez is wheeled off stage.

Characters exit the stage except for the Stenographer, who stops at Center Stage to face the audience as she prepares to leave. She appears to be deep in thought.

Stenographer:

Twenty years. All this fuss and that old man isn't going to last twenty minutes!

Nods her head pensively as she exits stage...

The End

Robert Johnson is a criminologist who writes poetry and fiction on the side, drawing attention to the inhumanity of US prisons and death houses. He is the author of *Poetic Justice: Reflections on the Big House, the Death House, and the American Way of Justice* (Conservatory of American Letters, 2004). His latest poetry collection is *Burnt Offerings: Poems on Crime and Punishment* (BleakHouse Publishing, 2007).

Victor Hassine is a life-sentence inmate entering his twenty-sixth year of confinement in Pennsylvania prisons. He is the author of the widely used text, *Life Without Parole: Living in Prison Today* (Oxford University Press, 2008), as well as several works of fiction, including *The Crying Wall* (WilloTrees & Infinity, 2005) which he co-edited and which contains several of his short stories.

Ania Dobrzanska is a corrections expert and practitioner with a long record of professional publications dealing with prison life and prison reform, most recently with a focus on the prevention of sexual violence in prisons and jails. Dobrzanska is a published writer of fiction. Her award-winning short story, "Dances with Dragons: Memories of the Hole," appears in *The Crying Wall*, a book she co-edited with Victor Hassine and Robert Johnson.

Eleanor Potter received a BA in Fine Art at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth. Eleanor completed her art foundation course at the Wimbledon School of Art in London, U.K. She has had her work displayed at the Goethe Institute in Washington D.C. as well as at exhibitions in the London area. Her artwork is featured prominently in *Poetic Justice: Reflections on the Big House, the Death House, and the American Way of Justice* and in several issues of *Tacenda Literary Magazine*, a publication of WilloTrees Press in partnership with Bleakhouse Publishing.

5 poems

by

The OrZel Transtextual Poetry Project

O Rose

Oh, Rose, thou Art
l'affection invisible
(worm which crawls (yeah he)

crawls up on your winder
crawls into your door
in a night-howlin storm)

says
when I get home
men better be gone
(but Rose, she once a man
how beautiful once a man)

L'art séminal, urinoir.
graffito, porcelain, Eros la vie
Rose (her psyche pastes
twigs at night

for she once
a palace at 4 a.m.)
(best time for groovin)

Has caught out your bed
of crimson? Joy!
Dig that, Rose,

March '08

those bloods
in floods?

You some
kind of kook, Rose!

(I think Rose
your dark secret vine
turn me to crime)

twigs, blood, urine, porcelaine...

Porcelarrosa, your dark secret
(love/pain/porcelain)
make me woman again!

(Rose make here a happy rain
then set the mutt upon its perch)

sur son perchoir, l'urinoir:
l'art séminal dans l'abbatoir

Falling Man

(*snap8* clip flipping**)

60 of about 692,000 airplanes tear a hole in the sky as men fall, or, Johnny
Kick A Hole In The Sky,
Lights Out!!

Donnie is on the Hill, looking at the sky, laughing

The paradox:
as the tangent universe winds down, a wormhole
(a tear or hole in spacetime) appears

The tissue will tear easily
in a straight line
with the grain
through the hole
in the sky

(thoughts whipping hairward -- *snap8* clip flipping**)

The Electronic Astrobiology Newsletter whispers
I will tear a hole in you harlot burn your eyes
(I will hold your white-washed bones unto the sky and scream "oh god, if
you are there,

tear a hole in it
wipe out communications
change the weather: Is the sky doing weird things you never saw before?")

Donnie is on the Hill, looking at the sky, laughing

(Thoughts Whipping Hairward)

Anyone have any theories/ideas about the Film *clip* rolling**?

I would build a 100-foot igloo
with a 50-foot hole in the center. It accelerates
at 30G and unexpectedly goes tearing across the sky.

The sky dropped from a hole in the sky.
This is retail therapy!

Donnie is on the Hill, looking at the sky, laughing
snap8 clip
flipping**
on the Falling Man

Baltic lover

*the Baltic loved one who sleeps - Jeremy Prynne
might in fact be a submarine skulking
and "echoing" in territorial waters - John Kinsella*

*We Dive at Dawn
Orzel left the Gulf of Danzig
for open water
Just think - submarine night
Dive! Dive! Dive! Baltic Gall!*

I love Europe I love its Jungle theme
I love it Mrs B dive, dive, dive
(it stalks the drowned Brandenburg Gate
the Shoulder of deep Orion—
Hauer and Ford submariner captains

*across the Tannhauser Gate
sea-beams glitter)*

OOooooohhh I love the race! I'm a race *fanatic*
I love it Mrs B!
I love things you people wouldn't even believe
letters from the Kursk bubble
like tears in rain
clanging on the hull

love letters
and fire (a chemical reaction) 108 metres down
in the Barents Sea
things you wouldn't even believe
I love it
I love it
I love it
oh

to death
a sudden irruption

silence of the *sea lover*
 who sleeps

psychic contact with Oteri and Yakut

easing the gnaw
 and the clutch
 of aching hearts

we're going to want to make contact now (with Oteri and Yakut)

Yakut dreaming

(ever been through shit
 in they lives
 so they fall to their knees and) they cry? Like this:

"We gave one more fierce inarticulate cry as the dark
 outline of the bark

made one last clutch at the smooth wet planks
 and then..."

(in this way so we chime thunderous)!

chimneys of farmhouses stood so vertically

the people foraging
 a trilling war cry over the *Hatching Sands*
 rising as two candles

hover

then crest as hot wax

(while it certainly was *frustrating*
 does Oteri fall to her knees and cry out "Why me?",
 eyes locked on the clutch that spreads before her?)

from the rising sands below
 out of a yawning tunnel
 (here Oteri sees a man like Freud
 wet as winds
 and wanting I know she sees him)

Yakut! Yakut! (dreaming)
 they calling on him

the people foraging a war cry:

"Why me?"

"Why me?"

why not me?

me who fell from the sky (says Yakut dreaming)
 me who can count them all in an hour
 on a white mare's hide

why not me
 on a white mare's hide

Epicurus amongst the stars

(able but unwilling to stop evil?)

Epicurus has seen all this before
 emptiness coiling-arching-ejaculating
 little wriggling radio-sparks
(atoms, he calls them: the Indivisible Ones)
 of spirit—the battle
 between *Ugh* ice and *Ugh* fire
 —he is prudish about such extremes

(through all of this
 the submarine looms grey in the deep)

Now all aboard for everlasting frolic!
 he giggles a little into his goblet
 what is that down there in the sea-dark wine?
 no it is nothing, only disturbance

see how I push against resistance
 only so far
 how I am directed towards vitality
 towards love?
 a wise man does not write his own poetry,
 but lives it in the flux of himself

Now he writes future words:
intergalactic coitus that devolves
into satellite areola for weary Apollo

liquid fire—placenta folding upon itself
into life—O I have seen dust
scurry helpless, entropy...

(the submarine ceases all sound
 waits, settles, listens—something...)

in the mind's widening eye
 it reaches/arches/st r e t c h e s—stops—retracts.
 —shards drawn each inexorably back
 to the source where the fabric tore
 —to seal)(shut
to watch it all again just as before... these
 are his future words

(the submarine slowly rises in the dark: *hoist the One-eyed Lady*
we are blowing our damn tubes down here)

with this my meditations are complete
 —now where
 do I get a blowjob
 and a rare haunch around here?

Some thoughts from the Collective:

Orzel uses transtexting, cutup, and collage, alongside original material. Orzel digs submarines, monsters, supernatural figures (add at will)... Stick these in a processor, blitz it up. Unreadable syrupy sludge emanates, eschewed by all but the most dedicatedly perverse connoisseurs. Of special interest to Mugwumps in need of a fast hep (atic) fix. J.R. says: "Layer Cake" is a name we coined for poems in which we sandwich myth, demi-flarf-, & real emotion about a photo/situation/subject into a delectable poem cake iced with fine vernacular.

Steve Parker is a UK poet unhealthily obsessed with Emily Bronte. He now lives near to her grave, and dreams of excavating her frail, perfect form. Only perverse legislation and two feet of stone stand between him and fulfillment. He also collects broken computer parts, and will one day build a robot that can speak in tongues and cook. His blog is constantly a picture of the inner workings of his mind: <http://brickstackblockstack.blogspot.com/>

Pamela O'Shaughnessy is a strange but curiously beautiful female poet from California. Read her blog at: <http://pamoshaughnessy.blogspot.com>.

J.R. Pearson is an entity of pure energy that feels the summers in Idaho are far to hot. He (if a being of unattainable light can be classified so) enjoys starting small brush fires in his spare time and vandalizing various 'black budget' government projects. He finds human "thought" a curious by-product of electrified meat. His work can be found here: <http://evulalterego.blogspot.com/>

[seeing your breath as you pull snakes]

by

Benjamin Fidler & Russell Brakefield

note by note
from your wooden pillowcase
there lays a faint smear
of something dark
like fear or passion
quivering timidly above your cowlick
and in the cold air of the barn
this quarto reads
like a dense novella
about a boy who has to shoot his dog
cellos push horse hair
against rib bones
and in a moment
of shared humility breathes
in and awaits dawn or winter
as in the last wine
as some say
beguiled
a hole cut in wood
works as a homophone
for a whole cut of wood
folk instruments
for in the hollow
lies a heifer and in
the heifer lies
a boy who shot
his dog
these plates
unwashed beet greens
seem fine as

March '08

cheap Goodwill porcelain
once we were lost
in a dark wood
once we circled
with poet laureates
to see the waxing
new quarter now
quartered in a root
cellar maybe we'll sell
her a few songs would
an erratum be out of
place if it was wood
to welcome the only
harvest we've known
this is no daybreak or
light break or this is not the wind
but a lamp shade covered
in icy rain now the people are
waiting for among other things
the man with a mask
and a squeeze box
to ease as cautiously as a hurricane
into the barn
the girl next to me is writing a play
about birds and rats
and her transistor radio is so broken
you can see the wires
and you can see this tired girl
sitting helplessly on the streets of Spain
as if she would wash slow
into the blush of gutters below her knees
we all stroke the edge of wide eyes
when men sing straight and barefoot
into a wire or an old empty can
filled with eighth notes and cigarettes
squeeze her now or something will fall
directly upon the sawmill's roof
squeeze her and tell her swing dancing
is for farmers and folks swing dancing

is like walking this line we lay
and finding it lined with something so filthy
the pigeons wont touch a wing to it
and it's filthy sand is filthy
fitting don't you think to quit
or in quilting of a grass
patch patched quilt of birch
as old barns don't fall down
run-on run
off run off fill your cup first
ask questions later as in
the definition will
this be the love I return for
will this be the lip I kiss
to return to secrets were
made to degrade mad
only in essence or above
all remains quiet if
this lip turns into the lisp
of pines whispering
listening for the pin drop
or rain drop yes those
lips I would call ruby
your wood rosy steel
was made to be malleable
able as I to kiss
those lisping lips

Russell Brakefield and **Benjamin Fidler** are famous for finding the best deal on showers and were once seen playing four square on the edge of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. Currently Russell Brakefield's work can be found in Prick of the Spindle, the Weathervane, and elimae, and Benjamin Fidler is avoiding showers altogether.

The Bald Soprano by Eugene Ionesco inspired Diana Magallón to create a series called "%Paragraphs," of which "%King" is a fragment. But Magallón takes the non-sense of Ionesco and crosses it with a story about her own rising star, Beata Beatrix, a singer navigating a dual language world.

Aside from a story about Beata Beatrix in the world of the arts, Magallón gives us Beata Beatrix as a kind of Booba from the Booba and Kiki experiment of Wolfgang Köhler. For Köhler, the human mind perceives certain sounds and shapes and colors as soft so that initials like "B.B." and names like "Beata" and "Beata Beatrix Australis" and shapes like circles and colors like purple are perception-wise soft. Thereby, Magallón plays Beata Beatrix to the synaesthetic unification of the senses; she models the classification of soft in a theory that deems sensory perception as soft or hard.

For Jeff Crouch, the mix of stories and theoretical narrative in the work of Magallón plays to his notion of meaning. Crouch takes the text of Magallón and realizes/de-realizes its Wolfgang Köhler/its hard/soft dualism graphically by mixing all metaphors, by scoring Spanish with English, by lining soft with hard in an attempt to make the circle of this astro-nomostro-logical tale point. Crouch seeks out the sense/non-sense of this between and hopes to lure you to its strange--to that graphically unnamed between.

Postscripts

by

Jane Wong & Daniel Katz

Are you awake? I am in bed, one leg tucked under the other like a flamingo. I wish I knew how to swim so I can cross the ocean and curl into bed with you, hair full of seaweed and barnacles.

I love you more than a bowl of homemade soup & a marathon

I'll bring a photo of you and keep it in my pocket. I'll take it out at the museum and show you the art. Look, here, a Tang dynasty bronze bowl. Look, here, a painting with one hundred faces (but no that is the reflection of your photograph in a mirrored wall).

I miss you, and I'd be a fool not to borrow the poem below:

The moon has set, and the Pleiades;
It is midnight and time passes.
Time passes and I lie here alone.

Sappho, The Pleiades

I'm going to fold some laundry. Come with me?

Why did you end the letter with "dumping love"?
did you mean "exuding love"
or that you're dumping me?
Or that you can't spell "dumpling"?
I hope it's the first or last option.

I am surrounded by maps. Large ones that open with thick creases that never lay flat.

I am constantly trying to figure out my way around, but I end up measuring the distance between us: the States and Hong Kong, using my index finger as a guide. How far, I think. If you are sleeping when I am awake.

The Goodnight:
I'm off to dream of you,
writing letters on dried leaves.

The Missing of You:
Do you know that I wake up in the morning, having travelled lower in the bed, my feet hanging off the end? This is because I am so used to sleeping on your chest, my head never on the pillow and my legs tangled around yours like a mangrove. I place books and papers and newspapers and clothes and towels on your side of the bed just to feel something there.

Does it bother you that I used the word 'romantic'?

Are you awake?

I used to be a bucket
but now I am the floor.

I used to be a sun shower
but now I am an arch of sand.

I used to be a letter never sent
but now I am an open palm.

Today, I discovered that 'Dear John' letters are those which begin with 'I don't know how to tell you this' and always end up with some trite heartache ('I've met someone else' or 'you have the ugliest ties' or 'we're better off as friends/people who don't even know each other in the street'). I don't want to ever write this kind of letter to you.

Do you remember when I was sick and all I could eat was clam chowder? You fed it to me, spoon by spoon. And I was grateful, even though it tasted like a foot.

I'm astounded by the full moon tonight, and how it is so bright it hurts my eyes.

I like knowing that we're both seeing the sun's light right now, even though what I'm seeing has traveled an extra 50,000 miles.

For light, that's only 1/1000 of a second, and somehow, that makes me feel a little closer to you.

Says Jane:

"Daniel and I wrote these postscripts while I was in Hong Kong and he was in the States. We were really interested in discovering what went into postscripts and not the main body of the letter. We discovered that it's something more intimate, something that **MUST** be said, even when the letter ends. The postscripts do not denote who wrote which postscript."

Jane Wong is a Fulbright fellow, writing a manuscript in Hong Kong. She is the recipient of awards from the Bread Loaf Writers Conference and the Bucknell Seminar for Younger Poets.

Daniel Katz is an ecologist and has worked at Harvard Forest, The Institute of Ecosystem Studies, and the Natural Resources Group in NYC.

Little Golden America

by Ilya Ilf & Eugene Petrov

translated by Charles Malamuth

illustrated by Georg Hartmann

1937 Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. Edition

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for previous chapters
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Chapter Fifteen . . .

. . . Dearborn

OUR CAR drove triumphantly into the very place where it had been manufactured only a few months before, into the city of Dearborn, the center of Ford's automobile industry. Good God! How many mouse-colored cars we saw here! They stood aside, waiting for their masters, or rolled along the wide concrete alleys of Dearborn Park, or, quite new, just off the assembly line, they rested on passing trucks. Yet we had thought we bought an automobile unique and inimitable in color! True, on the road we had already met a number of little automobiles of the same mouse color, but we had comforted ourselves with the thought that those were shades of the same color, different shades, or they did not have the same flowing lines as ours, and did not really resemble it as two drops of water are alike. We were determined in our belief that our automobile was unique. Then suddenly this blow!

If cities could select their weather as man selects his necktie to match his socks, Dearborn would have undoubtedly selected, to match its two-storied brick houses, an inclement day with a grayish-yellow stripe of rain. The day was awful. A cold mist was in the air, covering with its repulsive sheen the roofs and sides of automobiles and the low buildings on Michigan Avenue, which connects Dearborn with Detroit. Through the rain could be seen drugstore signs lighted since early morning.

"On just such a day," said Mr. Adams, turning to us, "a certain gentleman, as Dickens tells it, put on his top hat as usual and departed for his office. I must tell you that the business affairs of this gentleman were in excellent order. He had a beautiful wife, blue-eyed children, and he was making a lot of money. That was evident at least from the fact that he wore a top hat. Not every man in England goes to work in a silk hat. Yet suddenly, one day, while passing the bridge across the Thames, the gentleman silently jumped into the water and drowned. Gentlemen, you must understand this: A happy man on the way to his office throws himself into the water! A gentleman in a top hat flings himself into the Thames! Don't you think that in Dearborn one is also inclined to put on his top hat?"

The street came to an end. From the height of the embankment could be seen a somber industrial vista. The signal bells of engines coursing between shops rang out. A large steamship glided down the canal, whistling, going toward the middle of the creek. In brief, here we saw everything that distinguishes an industrial district from a kindergarten—a lot of smoke, steam, clatter, few smiles and little happy chatter. Here one sensed a special kind of seriousness, as in a theater of military action in the region of the front-line trenches. Somewhere near by people participate in something significant—the manufacture of automobiles.

While Mr. Adams and Mr. Grozny, who was not at all a mister, but was Comrade Grozny, representative of our *Autostroi* in Dearborn, were getting permission for us to visit the factory we stood in a hall of the information bureau and examined the new model Ford on the hardwood floor. In the hall it seemed larger than on the street. It seemed incredible that Ford's factories produce each day seven thousand such complicated and beautiful machines.

Although it was the end of 1935, all of Dearborn and Detroit were full of the advertising samples of the 1936 models. They stood in hotel vestibules, in the stores of the dealers, even in the show windows of drug-stores and confectionery shops, among cakes, syringes, and cigar boxes. Automobile wheels turned on thick Firestone tires. Mr. Henry Ford made no mystery of his production. He displayed it wherever he could. In his laboratory, however, stood the one sacred object—Model 1938, concerning which the most contradictory rumors were afloat.

In that model the motor was presumably located at the rear, there was presumably no radiator, the coupé presumably was twice as large, and, in brief, all of it was a thousand and one automobile nights. For the time being no one was to see it, certainly not the General Motors people who, a few miles from Ford, manufacture Chevrolets, machines of the Ford class.

Our permit was granted very quickly. The management placed at our disposal a Lincoln for guests, in which there was even a bear rug, evidently because of the desire to provide the guests from the distant North with surroundings as close and native to them as possible. With the Lincoln were a chauffeur and a guide. We drove into the factory yard.

Along a glass-covered gallery which connected two buildings, in the yellowish light of day, slowly floated automobile parts hung on conveyor chains. This slow, stubborn, irrevocable movement could be seen everywhere. Everywhere, overhead, on the level of the shoulder or almost

at the level of the floor rode automobile parts—stamped sides of hoods, radiators, wheels, motor blocks; sand forms in which the liquid metal still shone; brass horns, lights, fenders, steering wheels, gears. They either went up or came down or turned the corner. At times they came out into the fresh air and moved under a little wall, swaying on their hooks like the bodies of sheep. Millions of objects floated simultaneously. It took one's breath away to behold this spectacle.

This was no factory; this was a river, sure of itself, a trifle deliberate, which increases the rate of its flow as it reaches its mouth. It flowed day and night, in inclement weather and on sunny days. Millions of parts were carried by this river to one point, where the miracle happened—the hatching of an automobile.

On the chief Ford conveyor the work proceeds with feverish speed. We were amazed by the gloomy and worried appearance of people busy at a conveyor. Their work absorbed them completely. There was not even time enough to raise their heads. But it was not only a matter of physical fatigue. These people seemed to be depressed in spirit, seemed to be overcome at the conveyor with a state of daily madness that lasts for six hours, after which, upon returning home, they must rest for a long time, get well, recuperate, in order on the next day again to grow mad for a while.

The work is so divided here that the men on the conveyors don't know how to do anything, have no professions, no trades. Workers here do not manage the machines; they merely tend them. Therefore, one does not see here that sense of self-esteem which is found among trained American workers with a trade. The Ford employee receives a good wage. He himself represents no technical value. Any minute he can be dismissed, replaced by somebody else. In twenty-two minutes his successor will learn to manufacture automobiles. Working for Ford gives a man a livelihood, but does not raise his qualifications and does not assure his future. That is why Americans try not to work for Ford; and when they do, they go as mechanics or as clerks. The men who work for Ford are Mexicans, Poles, Czechs, Italians, Negroes.

The conveyor moves. One after the other excellent cheap machines roll off. They drive through the wide gates into the world, into the prairie, into freedom. The people who have made them remain behind, in confinement. Here is an astounding picture of the triumph of technique and the misfortune of man.

Down the conveyor came automobiles of all colors—black, Washington

blue, green, gunmetal (so they are officially designated), even, oh, oh, of a sedate mouse color. There was one bright orange hood, apparently a future taxi.

Through the commotion of assembly and the clatter of automatic bolt wrenches, only one man maintained a grandiose calm. He was the painter whose duty it was to draw with his thin brush a colored line around the hood. He had no accessories, not even a maulstick, to hold up his arm. On his left arm hung little jars with various pigments. He was in no hurry. He even had the time to regard his work with an appraising glance. Around the mouse-colored automobiles he passed a green stripe. Around the orange taxi he passed a blue stripe. He was a free artist, the only man in a Ford factory who has no relation to technique, a kind of Nuremberg Meistersinger, a freedom-loving master of the paintshop. The Ford laboratory must have discovered that it paid best to have these stripes drawn in this medieval way.

A bell rang out. The conveyor stopped. Little automobile trains with lunch for the workers drove into the building. Without washing their hands, the workers walked up to the little wagons, bought their sandwiches, tomato juice, oranges, and sat down on the floor.

Mr. Adams suddenly came to life. "Gentlemen, do you know why in Mr. Ford's plant the workers have their lunch on the cement floor? This is very, very interesting! It is of no moment to Mr. Ford how his workers lunch. He knows that the conveyor will compel them to do their work, irrespective of where they eat, on the floor, at a table, or don't eat at all. Take, for example, General Electric. It would be foolish to think, gentlemen, that the management of General Electric loves its workers more than Mr. Ford does; maybe, even less. Nevertheless, it has excellent dining rooms for its workers. The point is that at General Electric are employed qualified and trained workers, and one must take their wishes into consideration. They might go away to another factory. It is a purely American characteristic not to do any more than necessary. Don't doubt for a moment that Mr. Ford regards himself as a friend of the workers; but he will not spend one extra penny on them."

We were invited to sit down in a machine that had just come off the line. Each machine drives around a special factory road two or three times as a test. This is in a sense a model bad road. One could drive all over the United States and not find such a road. As a matter of fact, the road was not so very bad. A few regular dips, a small, rather attractive puddle—that was all there was to it—nothing frightful.

The automobile made before our eyes by people who have no trade exhibited remarkable qualities. It made sharp turns at a speed of fifty-five miles an hour, was very steady, in third gear went no faster than five miles an hour, and took the dip as gently as if there were no dip at all.

"Yes, yes!" Mr. Adams said exultantly. "Mr. Ford knows how to make automobiles. You do not even begin to appreciate progress made in this business. A 1935 Ford is better than a 1928 Cadillac. In seven years the machine of the cheap class has become better than the machine of the best class. Write that down in your little book, Mr. Ilf and Mr. Petrov, if you want to know what America is."

Here not only flowed parts combining into automobiles, and not only automobiles flowed out of the factory gates in an uninterrupted line, but the factory itself changed constantly, improved upon itself, and augmented its equipment.

In the foundry, Comrade Grozny suddenly began to cackle enthusiastically. He had been here less than two weeks, and in that time serious and important changes had occurred in this department. He stood in the middle of the shop, and on his face, lighted by flares of fire, was reflected such elation that none but another engineer, a real engineer, not an engineer of human souls, could appreciate fully and understand him.

The yellowish-gray day soon passed into a yellowish-black twilight. When we were leaving the factory a tremendous number of completed automobiles was already standing in the yard, and among them somewhere in the center we noticed the bright orange taxi which a little while ago had been moving along the conveyor.

In a barbership on Michigan Avenue, where we had our hair cut, one barber was a Serbian, another was a Spaniard, a third was a Slovak, while a fourth was a Jew born in Jerusalem, which might be deemed a joke of nature. We dined in a Polish restaurant, where we were waited upon by a German girl. The man whom we asked for directions in the street did not speak English. He was a Greek who had arrived here recently, right into the devil's own hell, from the Peloponnesus. He had the sad black eyes of a philosopher in exile. At the cinema we suddenly heard in the darkness this sentence spoken out loud: "Manya, I told you that we should not have come to this picture."

"Here, gentlemen," said Mr. Adams, "now you are in the real America."

In the morning we called on Mr. Sorensen, manager of all the Ford plants scattered throughout the world.

We passed through a hall, on the clean hardwood floor of which were spread out the parts of a standard automobile. Just as we were, in our hats and coats, we were led into the glass-enclosed office of the manager. Here stood a large desk. There was not a single piece of paper on it—only one telephone and a calendar. We wanted to find out as soon as possible what occupies the time of a manager who does not sign any papers, who does not ply the telephone morning, noon, and night, a manager in whose anteroom, instead of even a single visitor, lie oiled machine parts.

A tall thin man in a gray suit entered the office. His head was gray, his face was ruddy, and his walk was that of an athlete. In his hand was a small black object made of some plastic. This was Mr. Sorensen, a Dane by descent, the son of a stovesetter, himself at one time a stove-setter but later a patternmaker.

Before we left America we read in a Washington newspaper a list of the ten people who received the highest salaries in the country that year. Mr. Sorensen was in the last place. The first place was occupied by Mae West, the motion-picture star. In 1935 she was paid \$450,000. Sorensen received \$112,000. Needless to say, the head and hands of this man are infinitely more valuable than the pornographic bosom of any film star.

He at once began to talk about the machine part he held in his hand. At one time it used to be made of steel; now it is made out of plastic and tested at once.

"We are constantly on the move," said Mr. Sorensen. "Therein lies the essence of the automobile industry. We cannot stop for a minute. Otherwise we shall be left behind. We must think now of what we shall be doing in 1940."

He stepped out of the room and at once returned with a mold in his hands. That was the block of a motor he had himself cast in mold out of steel—with his own managerial hands.

"We will be testing this for a long time. But it looks as if this might be a part of our automobile."

We touched the block cast that would be part of a machine a few years hence, and began to talk about Ford.

"I met Mr. Ford thirty-five years ago," said Sorensen.

"What are your relations today?"

"Oh," said Mr. Sorensen, "thirty-five years ago Mr. Ford built his automobile in some barn and came to me in the small foundry where I was working. At that time he was an ordinary mechanic, while I was a

patternmaker. He brought me his blueprint and asked me to make a model. And nothing has changed since that day. To this day Mr. Ford brings me his ideas and I put them into practice."

He said that nothing had changed. Yet even the most cursory glance could see the progress that had been caused by a little Dearborn mechanic and his young friend, the patternmaker.

Mr. Sorensen led us to a photograph showing him together with the manager of the Gorky factory, Dyakonov, and with Grozny. Smiling artlessly, the three men were looking straight into the camera.

"There is only one permanent thing in this world," Mr. Sorensen told us in parting "—incessant change."

We managed to squeeze into our conversation the notion that we should like to see Mr. Ford, and Mr. Sorensen said that he would find out whether that was possible. However, we were not certain that the interview would actually occur. Everyone had warned us that this was very difficult, that Mr. Ford is old, busy, and unwilling to meet people.