

# Apocalypse Playground

ISSUE 10

FEATURING :

NEW POETRY  
"3712" A PLAY  
MORE LITERATURE !

# Apocalypse Playground

Issue 10

March 1998



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## “Hero”

I need a new hero. When I was a kid, all I ever wanted was Superman. He could fly. I was happy with truth, justice, and the “American way”; with red white and blue. I wanted

to fly to the stars. But what is it now? What is it that makes the American way any better than, say, the Japanese way? I need a new hero because all my heroes are dead. Kerouac, John Lennon, William Burroughs, the list goes on. I was going to write a letter to a hero once- to William Burroughs, and ask him to come to my high school graduation. I was in Seattle then, at the park, by the pond. I called that day at the park ‘resolution day’ I had resolved to contact a hero. I got home to find out that Burroughs was dead. He was old, weak. I resolved not to try contacting anyone else.

I need a new hero because the people I know are all unidblizable. They get colds in the winter, they have their own problems- “Go away kid, I’m no good. Go find someone better than I am. You, you’re better than I am. What’s the problem?” But that’s just it. I think the way they do; I think they are better, far superior even, than I could ever be. They think the same thing. They’re too busy. “Sure kid, I’d love to help you with your term paper/emotional

problem/theater audition/ question. But, please make it quick. I have things to do. Buildings to leap and not enough bounds. You see, I’ve leapt out of bounds. I have trains to race, but the locomotives are so damn powerful. Too strong for me. So hurry up kid.”

I need a new hero because parents, school church and peers don’t have them. They’ve got television, grades, politic and... and the group ethic. That is how I think my peers get by. In a group, a clique, there is no need for peers because that group idolizes itself. It wants to be what it already is, together. I need a new hero, possessed of some buddha-wisdom far superior to any Yoda or Mr. Miagi. They’re fake. Their problems were scripted from the same desk that saw their solutions and the check that paid for them to be broadcast. I need a real hero. I need a new hero: one that won’t let me down. Someone I know that knows me. Someone I love and trust. I need to see the feet that have tread the uncertain ground, and are certain that I can tread it too.

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# Notes From A Moment In A Poet's Time

- Gabriel Stoker  
Apocalypse Playground  
Poetry Editor

Every ounce of comfort can be swept under the table today. The organizations of class, race and gender rearrange themselves around property. This happens all too fast for travel on a back road. This isn't some place in the Styx.

Towering over a small person's figure is a sky scraper swaying in the wind. Check out this architectural design. Blue prints as plain as the black briefcases they come out of. Tell us whose idea it was to put three sloped structures over the first thirteen stories.

Attraction emanates from creative minds at the top of every morning. TRY to take their coffee away and you may cause a few directive responses. Some actually prefer offices in the basements, the mail rooms, leading a non-capital-organized lifestyle.

This generation's lifestyle is far too "advanced" and overconfident. To avail themselves of the inevitable roadkill along the highway of progress, they smear mud in the nearest available face. Sometimes they miss their target and douse a neighbor. That's right, walk down the sidewalk and duck down, way down low when a mud cake comes your way.

Perspective points litter the citrus drive of public events. I got out of a round table like chair seven friends grunt animal noises. Few drops of Java juice, a turn to shades of the very intense, memory of audience, of where a beat poem was derived.

Java Joes in downtown Rochester NY won't take anything less than your credit card. This coffee house your most insightful line of denial. Squeeze every droplet of insecurity reaction through. Anticipation is a feature found in the crowd. Open, I'm a drop. Night creates anything less than a sober atmosphere. The first few close looks at the Joes give you the shakes. Glances from afar give the artist self-esteem. He is merely a microphone.

She has been checking me out for the last two poetry readings. Desire is let loose by my tongue. She will sit there and breathe it in. Now, is it that aura and her crushed velvet dress? Yes. Addictive. Passe'. You don't need to be a business partner to put on a good act. Be an associate of a poet, one of the cities' poets. It is not intimidating, the act. It is her scarf which reminds me of gravitation. So sensual.

Hot in your hands with a life all it's own. Her tears leave you "sequestered". She took a heart, my heart. But what gives? She had a pair of golf shoes, business people golf shoes to tromp my heart across. And she had a sleek get away car. What a tease! Let us spend a night up in Canada and forget all about it.

Simulate falling over a dream-like beauty queen. Hazel eyes will make you forget all about a hundred dollars, or is a bottle of chardonnay?

Money, or not a tourist will thrive. Sustained, in Madrid, Spain. Where the rain is talking. How? Maybe the Auduban. Keep your wheels on the road.

Culture is fascinating to that sponge upstairs. One black and white photograph in bitter-sweet lighting. Time reveals unexpected brown splotches -the negative, something wrong with the negative. Cowering the negative.

A canopy of tree branches lay on the cast shadows across the snow. Lay down in the snow alone and please your eye. Don't worry about that strange wet spot forming on the seat of your pants.



# Tears of Past?

Gabriel Stoker

I like what you have made me  
risen nurtured sound.  
Given the sun's Golden Mead  
entangled, the branched bow.  
A WISPY weave  
observed from the window  
shared, united in time  
- your season's my feeling -  
roll s in life's raw dealings  
watching as you sway  
we weep in fall's decay.  
A shade tree you are  
protected,  
I see you from afar  
fragile we are  
sway me as you bend

symbolic friend

*Gabriel drew the  
picture too*

# Under to Stand

Gabriel Stoker

Extend to lend a hand  
They would rather watch than  
give  
A joke of two  
I'm a stranger  
well, that about says it  
strange  
Friends understand an artesian  
plan to see a vast plan to see a vast stretch  
but rather a rigid element  
She does not know    Together we Glow  
Running away and hiding in shadows  
able, we run through meadows  
As clean as the observations  
they critically manifest  
Afraid to lead, heed  
so mistaken  
Push on.    Push on, so bright.  
A realist night.

# Sequestered

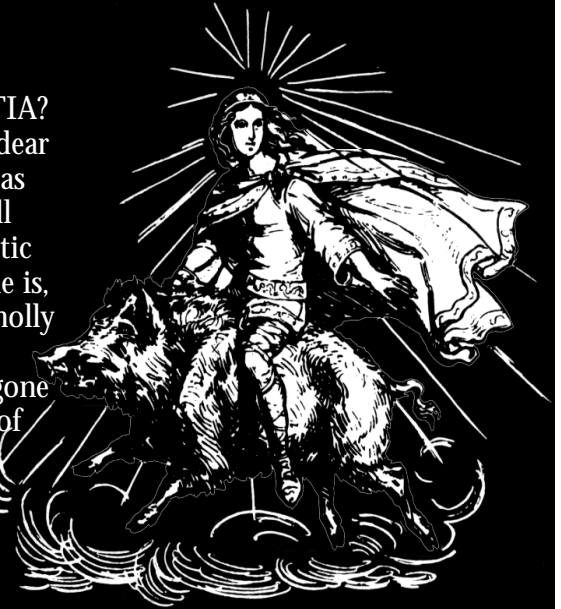
Gabriel Stoker

“Take a long nap  
my sweet.  
The actor used to delight  
and  
yes you even took flight”  
voice grows silent  
leaving only the solo pantomime  
A faint yawn detected  
my delicate iris petal  
protecting my fragile, disrepaired heart  
the covering curls and fades  
at the edges  
now exposed, it loses its hue  
complementing a dried puddle’s basin  
Harsh wind rapes and erodes this abandoned shell  
Each grain adds to  
desert sands  
the granules sift and sink  
an instantaneous burial  
silence  
silence  
seizes the far cry  
A tear falls from the sky.

and  
yes  
you even took flight  
voice grows silent



Concerning the present state of the good lady DEMENTIA? And her column(s): My life lately has been, to quote a dear friend, a world of suck. I oughtn't be surprised by this, as it's not much of a variation from my normal world. But it has all been amplified in recent weeks and thus the bitter, angry, sarcastic DEMENTED persona is back in full effect (fully affected??). She is, however, in close contention with the introspective, and not wholly healthy DEMENTIA?. Thus my written work is somewhat of a deviation from the usual. Fear not, the care-not wench of days gone by shall return, but until then my "Ashes of Memory and Dust of Desire" are put on hiatus. They will be, for better or for worse, replaced by... "The Mess that Scalpels Make"



*"I act the role in classic style of a martyr; carved with a twisted smile; to bleed the lyric for this song - to write the rites to right my wrongs. An epitaph to a broken dream, to exercise this silent scream... A scream that's borne of sorrow."*

- Marillion  
"Script for a Jester's Tale"



So here's the thing: I've been spending a lot of time wondering. Deliberating. I've been terribly existential of late. My major query is this: Once I've decided who I am, what I will be, and what I shall accomplish, can I back out? Forfeit and cut losses? Whoops, I fucked up, sorry guys, no deal. Just can't play this role anymore - and there's certainly no encore on the way. See, I was idiotic in choosing and allowing others to choose for me. The part I play, the dance I do, was all decreed and laid out and neatly packaged from birth. I accepted the script with clenched teeth, a stolid and grim determination. I signed the contract without reading the fine print. What I want to know is - can any lawyer in the world acquit me of this burden?

I am a bitch. Ask them - they'll tell you. I've been one my whole life. I drew my first breath ready and fully intending to scream at the doctor for denying me such comfortable living quarters. From the very first, I was loud, I was strong, I was independant. I was *ALONE*.

*Loud*. because I could, I can. The old adage that children ought to be seen and not heard was destroyed before my shoulders exited my mother's body.

*Strong*. because I was big, I was loud, and for some reason volume was power. I demanded to be heard, obeyed. Independant: because no one wished to do things for me. It was quite obvious that I could take care of myself, so I was forced to do so. The trouble was, no one asked if I wanted to.

*Alone*. because I was too proud to admit I desired company. It is not a particularly happy childhood when a 4 year old stays home by herself all day and reads and writes to fend off boredom.

I place no blame on those who claim the responsibility for rearing me. I harbor no hostility for my family because they recognized my individuality for what it is and chose to nurture it instead of instilling more traditional family values in its stead. All I'm saying is that I was unwittingly forced into this body, this way of life. So if I did not yoke the intrinsic right to choose at such an early age, may I be permitted to now alleviate my childhood folly?

## “Everyone Orders From The Heart-Healthy Menu at the Jubille Cafe in Kickapoo Illinois”

---

Before I knew where I was - after Morgantown, through the valleys and past the mountains - Dad said “Wake up.”

The next thing I remember is that red-speckled formica table top.

“We’ve been here before,” I said. Mom was watching the van, vigilant. Dad tried to ignore the reproduction art on the walls, favoring the bus boy’s rhetorical questions about the local demolition derby.

“Did you know that the internal crank shaft shell can hole so much pressure?” His arms stretched out. Wide, like the horizon. The boy’s audience gaped in awe. The boy’s only audience was an old woman. Her hearing aid squealed.

Welcome to the Jubille Cafe. Regular or decaf?

My teeth hurt. Anything with bread, or texture would strip the holes where my wisdom teeth had been a week ago. I was tired of cole slaw and apple sauce. I ordered chili, with onions.

Oh Jesus Christ! Was that an Andrew Wyeth on the wall? How perfectly suited to my mood.

Billy Joel moaned on the radio. “These are the days to hold on to, because we will not always want to.” (because we won’t although we’ll want to.)

Two older couples sat in the booth behind us. I faced them. A green horizon stretched forever outside their window view, which they ignored.

“Oh, so do you know now what they done to Apple Mae?”

“No.”

“Yah, her kids had to put her in a home now.”

“Yah?”

“Yah.”

The balding man among them shook his head at his fully furred companion. Both men sipped coffee. One of the wives peered out the window.

“Good crop this year.”

The other woman peered over at me while the radio served Sting lyrics: “*I don’t drink coffee, I drink tea my dear. / You can see it when I walk. / A gentleman will walk but never run. / I’m an Englishman in New York.*”

Our waitress had strange make-up. He eyes were lined with silver glitter.

Is everything okay? Cream, sugar?

Dad started talking about the demolition derby. “You see”, he explained in a mock-teaching tone, “the driver of the car has to put his own flag out. So, if I were to bash you good and fast and you were to collapse and die, just as quickly, then I’d get to bash you again on the next lap. Unless you put your flag out.”

The chili came, with cheese on top. My glass of root beer cast a black warbled shadow on the table top.

Bus boy took dishes from the table next to us. The old woman left, to take her grandkids to the derby, she said.

A blizzard of potatoes erupted down the bald man’s throat as he turned to hear his wife.

“His doctor at Mayo says that it’s spread to his liver now.” She adjusted the collar on her green floral shirt, stared at me, at the Wyeth, at me, her only audience, out the window and then

nowhere.

“Poor man.” The other woman dissected her ham with the edge of her fork and lifted strands of tissue to her dentured mouth.

Avalanche licked the last of his potatoes from his spoon.

“Didn’t his Beth have that?”

The women, in unison : “Cancer?”

“Yah.”

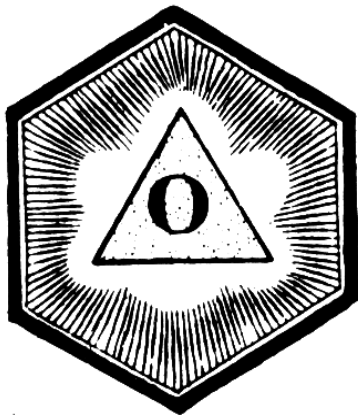
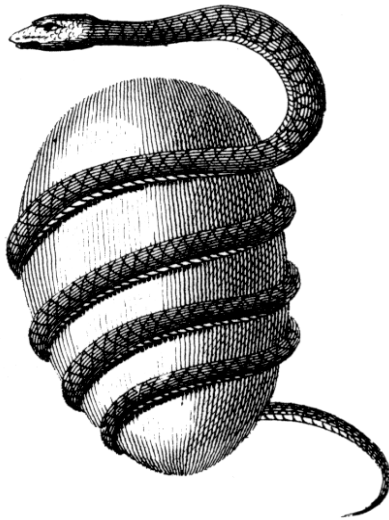
“Yah.”

Can I get anything for you? A refill? Regular or decaf?

I didn’t order the ham, although my second cup of chili indigestion made me wish I had. Ham was on the menu in three places: the dinner specials, lunch, and the “Heart Healthy” menu which included potatoes, corn, and a beef something-or-other. I could match most of the plates in the establishment to an item on that last list.

Toward the end of my second cup of coffee (and of chili) a family stumbled into the air-conditioning. The waitress met them with her painted face and hurried to seat them. An oily man in thick overalls, his wife whose pregnant girth was covered in a yellow jumper, and their extremely rotund daughter passed the older couples (by way of the pie cart) and sat. The girl frolicked. Her parents were tired.





## Goth and Fluorescent (So-called) Light

*Ed Zahniser*

Goth is the shadow fluorescent light cast. To the tune of 'Forever Jung,' even while not at the shopping mall. Goths provide the necessary shadows that consumerism otherwise would everywhere obliterate because of this anti-light property of fluorescent light. Goth affirms the truth of sunlight, which is to cast shadows and to define darkness by its absence. Without Goth fluorescent light could not then properly claim to be light at all. Without Goth those who walk the shopping mall would walk in great darkness and never see the light.

Goth is the yin without which all the yang in the world cannot possibly created the symmetry of a semaphore. Without Goth the Tao would lose the potency which inheres solely (soul-ly) in its being paradoxical. Goth keeps alive the possibility of metaphor despite the inability of fluorescent light to cast anything by which it could define itself by a necessary negation.

Goth is the affirmation that mundanity and the every-day-ness of life are what prevent the fullness of life. Without Goth, Gnosticism would have no goal of a great overcoming or preparatory cleansing for the apocalyptic event. Without Goth it would be impossible to enunciate the Good. To paraphrase the poet Archibald MacLeish in his play JB:

If Goth is Goth it is not Good.  
 If Goth is Good it is not Goth.  
 Take the even, take the oddth,  
 If Goth is Good it is not Goth.

Goth projects the meaning of light in a world whose constructed experience of light is a perceptual illusion. Goth is this motivating power of servanthood in a non-transcendent Me-First world. Goth is the mirror casting the corrective reflection of the self that believes anything can be fixed; that if you jog enough the body will not die; that if you pull the chin up where the forehead was, the face will not age; that if you surgically remove the 'love handles,' then love can get a longer and more satisfying grip on you. Whereas the truth is that If Goth is Good it is not Goth—simply because If Goth is Goth it is not Good.

Goth washes the feet of the faithful in the shadow of the true light.

The persistence of Goth in the modern world is what makes the statement "Yea though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil" an affirmation of present fact and not mere wishful speculation on the avoidance of the very difficulty that alone can make room for the overwhelming satisfactions that life can bring us when it does. Goth. It just is.

In visual art, it is quite common to see a sketch. Well, in verbal art there is a similar kind of sketch: a rough hewn collection of bits and pieces that may one day become something else. Sometimes, an artist's sketch is an interesting thing in and of itself. That's what this is, a published sketch. Enjoy it the way you would a crude pencil drawing.

## "A Sketch"

---

The subject I would guess to be a middle aged man. He has dish hair that is cut short like a crew cut on top and slightly longer in the back. He has a thin mustache. All of his movements are slow, relaxed, seemingly calculated. The man drives a black nineteen-sixties model Ford. He wears a black T-shirt with the Dallas Cowboy's blue star on it and a 2 long-sleeved, collared shirt with blue and white stripes. It billows slightly in the wind as he leaves his car. Black jeans, white tennis shoes. There is a teddy bear hanging from the mirror in his car. He walks slowly, shoulders relaxed arms, swinging toward the Taco Bell. He heads directly toward the counter, leans against it and orders something in a definite but not too southern accent. He smiles. His left leg is crossed behind his right as he leans on the counter, he reaches, right handed into the back pocket of his jeans and removes a wallets he walks over to the drink table, and dumps ice into his cup - loudly. When his food arrives by the cash register, he takes the tray and turns towards the seats. On his way to a seat, he looks toward his car through the window. He takes a seat in the non-smoking sections right under the sign. He unwraps and immediately applies various sauces to his taco -the first of two soft shells, before eating. His first bite is a large one, the ones after that get smaller and smaller as the taco does the same. He reads the wrappers to his tacos while he eats. When the taco is done, he takes a fork to the bits of meat and lettuce that have dropped from it onto the wrappers. New taco, huge bite. His left elbow is on the table, with his arm up at an angle toward his face, the hand on the end of that arm is limp. He is looking intently at the ad for "Choco 'Taco" on the table beside his tray. He wipes his mouth with one

broad stroke, and then sips from the straw in his drink. He reads the banners hanging from the ceiling while he does this.

Bite, wipe, sip, read, he repeats this pattern several times. After each bite of taco, he wipes his mouth with his left hand, transfers the napkin to his right hand and goes for the drink with his left. He always refolds the napkin again.

Bite, wipe, sip, read. He chews to the side (right) with his mouth slightly open. Due to the relative emptiness of the establishment, I can hear the munchie noises.

He reads the place mat on his tray while chewing, before folding his fourth napkin and placing it on the table. He finishes reading that, and looks out the window toward the tangled traffic on the duel highway. There had been an accident. The subject looks at the cup, the glass on the road, at me who is in front of the window that looks out on that. He takes his last bite of taco, and uses his fifth napkin to wipe his mouth. The last sip from his cup is a short, gurgly one. He places the free chocolate candy bar that came with his value meal in his shirt pocket. He collects his things onto the tray and heads to the trash to dump it. Before walking, he searches for something, in his pockets his hand goes into each one before picking up his tray and emptying it loudly into the can.

He moves his elbows around to catch his billowing shirt from the wind as he heads toward his car. He stops beside the car his back is toward me, and he seems to be buttoning up his shirt. His elbows are moving around a little but otherwise he is still. When he turns to open his car door, the shirt is still unbuttoned, I can't tell what he was doing. He puts sunglasses on is still for a moment. He does not wear a seat-belt, he looks left right for traffic and then joins the flow.

## "Apocalypse Drama"

Beginning with this issue, as you'll soon see, Apocalypse Playground will be publishing dramatic scripts in addition to our regular regiment of literature. Theater is an often overlooked literary medium.

Our first play, entitled simply "3712" was submitted to us anonymously. It will be published in installments for the next few issues. More information about the author will be given as soon as it becomes available. Enjoy !!!

“3712”

“3712”

### CAST LIST

- MON - A mother of 47, who is getting over a separation and trying to get her life back together. She is plainly dressed in middle-class clothes, but she knows how to have a good time when she can find the energy.
- CREATURE - MON's daughter. She's 21 and not overly attractive, but she'd do in a pinch. She dresses moderately, also. She doesn't have too much tolerance for school, but studies, and does everything else, because she must.
- DEAD BODIES - These are people who've died, still dressed in their shabby burial clothes, and come back to life reciting poetry.

### TIME

St. Patrick's Day. March. The year 3712. The future.

### PLACE

The country, away from the city of Tallahassee, FL. The play takes place in a large backyard, where the nearest neighbor is only a cemetery.

# 12”

# “3712”

**T**he future. The year 3712. And things don't look very different than now, but obvious style changes, as odd as the director wants. An afternoon on St. Patrick's Day. The backyard of a Tallahassee, FL house in a residential neighborhood. Not a lovely house or backyard, but good enough for two women on their own. The edge of the house can just be seen. A bush with red berries. Fallen leaves on the dirt-enveloped grass. Free-standing poles 20 ft. apart connected by sturdy clothesline. The shades of trees are moved from start to finish of play by the sun's constant motion. *CREATURE*, a young woman of 21, sits in a futuristic deck chair "catching rays". She wears sunglasses. College books beside her chair. She gets up to poke the fire simmering in the post-modern grill, comes back to chair, opens a book to study, closes it frustrated, and lies back. Something sounding like a shot is heard far away. *CREATURE* jumps half-way up, then settles back down. She turns off the radio which has been playing "Bohemian Rhapsody" or some made-for-this-play song that has vaguely to do with mothers shooting people.

*CREATURE*. Really hope this works... (*Gets up and starts to poke the fire again when MON enters. She's 47, but has still managed to keep her looks pretty well. She carries a slab of frozen ribs in a bag*)

Hey, Mon, did you -?

*MON*. Next time, Creature, I'm going to send you out yourself, and I don't care if you can't drive.

*CREATURE*. Said I was sorry.

*MON*. Sorry, yes, yes.

*CREATURE*. What is it?

*MON*. Ribs. What did I tell you I was going to get? Ribs. What did I ask you for? Ribs. So here.

Here are the ribs. Here!

*CREATURE*. You don't have to be so -

*MON*. I'm not angry, just mad as hell! Our guest will be here in..

*CREATURE*. (*Laughs to herself*) Never heard you call him a guest before, Mon.

*MON*. I... - we've got to get ready. Are you ready? Everything all set inside?

*CREATURE*. No.

*MON*. - I'm sorry. I didn't hear that.

*CREATURE*. You said keep an eye on the fire.

It's what I've been doing. All I could. The breeze is up strong today. From that - (*Starts to point*)

*MON*. The fire? That's all you could do? Oh, Creature... (*CREATURE hangs her head. MON's sorry for talking to her like that. Goes to hug her*)

Oh, Creature... it's okay. Sorry. I'm sorry. It's all right. I'm nervous. Okay? Nervous.

*CREATURE*. You have a right to be.

*MON*. That's the spirit. You wouldn't believe what a run on the meat department St. Patrick's Day causes.

*CREATURE*. I'd believe it, Mon, if you told me. (*MON smiles at CREATURE, pats her cheek.*

*Then slaps her*)

*MON*. Don't forget again. Now. I believe everything else is ready. Everything. Out here, I should

*CREATURE*. Did it?

*MON*. How are the studies coming?

*CREATURE*. I don't take French. I take Spanish.

MON. Was that French?

CREATURE. *(Laughs)* Ha - I guess it was...

MON. Well?

CREATURE. I'm tired of college.

MON. And I'm tired of paying for it. When you figure a way to teach yourself, let me know.

*(They've been taking turns cooking the meat)* See to the sheets. I doubt our guest will mind if our clothes dry while we eat.

CREATURE. *(Smiles, starting to go in the house)* That's a really good sign.

MON. *(Pause)* Uh..

CREATURE. Hmmm..?

MON. I didn't ask your father. I forgot. *(The sound of someone reciting something is getting closer)*

CREATURE. *(Smiles again)* That must be him now.

*(Goes in the house. MON continues over the meat, a little troubled. Suddenly a DEAD BODY, like something from Night of the Living Dead, ambles on, reciting Byron's "Vision of Belshazzar". He walks slow and continues to recite no matter what he does, which is basically to get at MON's "brains")*

DEAD BODY. The king was on his throne

The Satraps throng'd the hall:

A thousand bright lamps shone

O'er that high festival.

A thousand cups of gold,

In Judah deem'd divine -

Jehovah's vessels hold

The godless Heathen's wine!

In that same hour and hall,

The fingers of a hand

Came forth against the wall,

And wrote as if on sand:

The fingers of a man;-

A solitary hand

Along the letters ran,

And traced them like a wand.

*(MON's horrified and doesn't know what's going on. She evades the crippled walk and screams once or twice, before finally deciding to take up the shovel from a remote part of the yard and hits the thing on the head repeatedly until it's dead again. She kicks it to see if it's dead. CREATURE enters with a laundry basket of sheets. She stops, seeing MON over the DEAD BODY with a wild look in her eyes)*

MON. - He was reciting Byron! - Good Lord!..

How did I know that?!

CREATURE. What do you mean "get ready for our guest"?

MON. What?

CREATURE. "Our guest". If you didn't didn't invite dad, who's coming?

MON. Creature, there's a dead body in our yard. He wanted to partake of my dandruff. *(Thinks to herself)* What an odd thing to say..



CREATURE. Did you kill that man?

MON. Well....

CREATURE. Yes or no.

MON. Or. (*Laughs at herself, pleased with the joke*)

CREATURE. Why did you kill him, mother?

MON. Well what do you want me to do? Stand there and say "Dig in!"? It was like he was trying to eat me.

*To be continued in Apocalypse Playground issue 11...*



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*Image Credits*

- page 2. "Scarabaeus": Regeneration, Fertility. (*Egyptian*)
- page 7. "Fro-Freyr": The Sun and Growth. (*Germanic*)
- page 9. (top) "The Egg and the Serpent": Providence (*Greek*)  
(middle) 1- "Sisamora": The Good Principal. 2- "Senemira": The Bad Principal. (from *Zoroaster's Oracle*)
- (bottom) "Seal of BABALON": from Aleistar Crowley's *Book of Lites* 1913
- page 14. "Gorgon": The Terror. (*Greek*)
- page 15. printers mark from Johannes Knoblauch. (*Strassburg*). 1521

