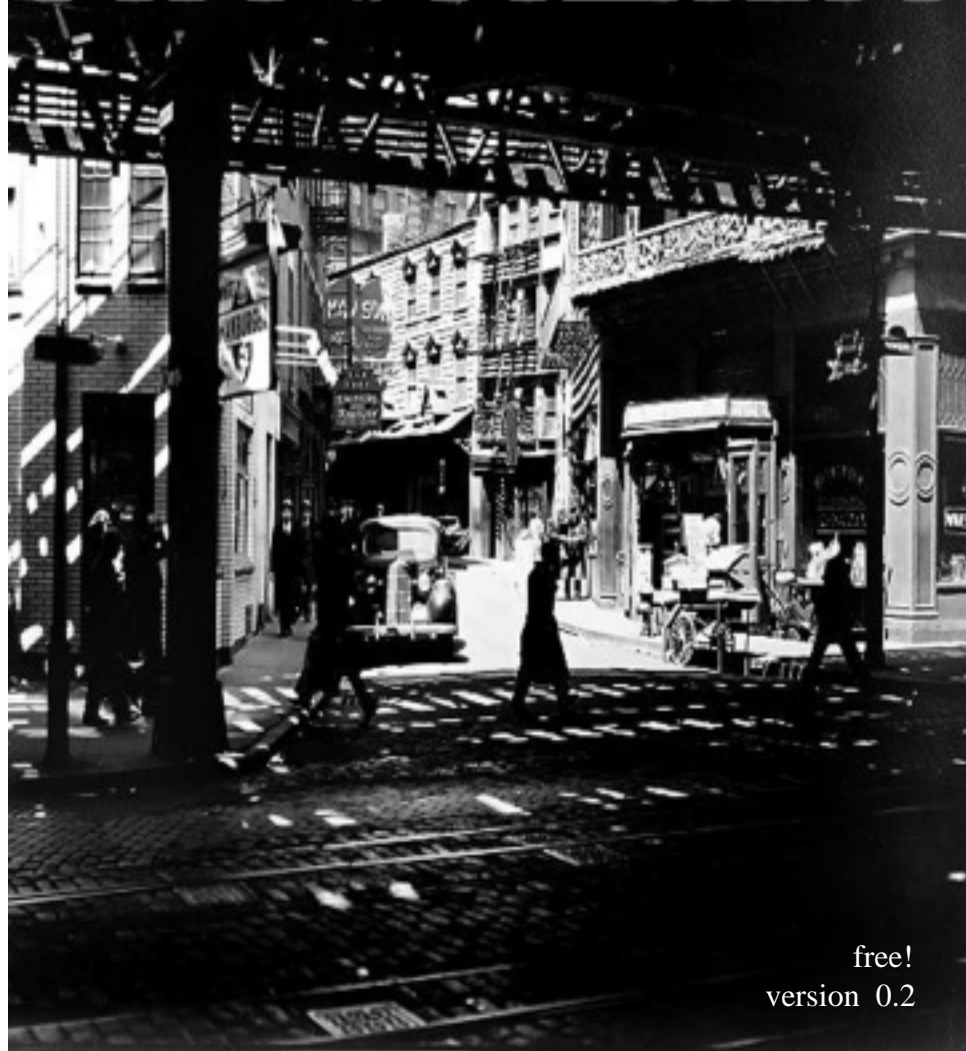


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What is *Anothros ex Machina*?

1) Man of the machine.

Man from the machine.

Man out of the machine.

anticipation and summer's end

first yellow
leaves bend in warm wind—
closed windows.

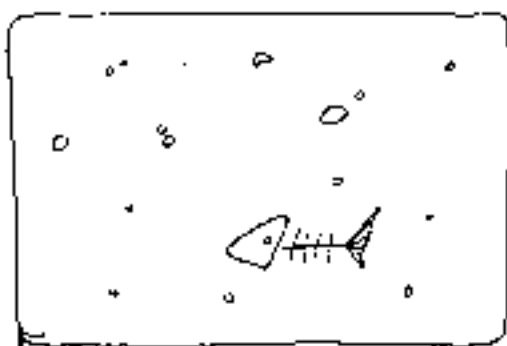
THE ADVENTURES OF MAX

PLEISTOCENE FISH

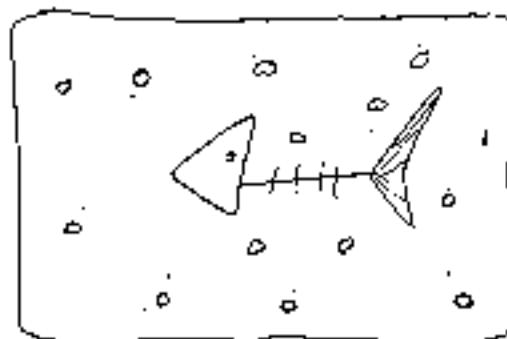
I woke up
today,
buried by a
thousand tons
of earth.



Smell of worms,
cracking rocks,
molded leaves.



I must have
layed still too
long.



two people, empty street

dull brown grass—
bent faces aside,
steps beat past.

Locomotive Sunflower
*(somebody's ID erupted
all over the table)*

If all the lies of the world
were land mines, where on
earth could you safely step?
 end the desire— end the grief.
The Bullshit Artist
uses language to deflect any
deeper introspection, and to
deflect any outer reality.
we made ourselves—buncha a sick puppies.
Nature is corrective.
 Best revenge against America
 is to live a long productive life.
Art is mediation
between
realism and mysticism.
disseminate information semantics
 moon madness—sun reason
how can there be a democracy
when the leaders lie to the people?
how can the people go on voting
when they know it's all lies?
how can there be democracy
when it's all lies?
“Yah, but—“
“—Shut-up with yer ‘yah, buts!’
Just go about yer work.”
 mental hemorrhoids
 A prophetic
 moment of
 Direct
 Vision
 sombodys ID erupted
 all over the table
“Van Gogh cut off his ear because
he was a frog.”
 all things are empty, but aware.
 Existence is tragic.
 Save the fucking children!
There's only one solution:
“KILL THEM, KILL THEM ALL!”
 Jack's dad drank himself to death,
 so Jack drank himself to death, too.

All that is regarded as sacred is a con.

absent fathers

A good story is like

a good session of

oral sex.

—Watch in Technicolor

naked children running

hair and wrists on fire,

sheets of flame

incinerating behind,

while kids in Kansas

milk-fed-boy-America

eat their TV dinners

with

Howdy Doody.

the hero needs the poet

to write about his epic—

the poet needs the hero

to have an epic to

write about.

kinda blue

wishy-washy, bullshit,

bleeding-heart,

liberal thinking.

Free market—

everything else is Communist.

Material facts are the

terminus or

circumference of the

invisible world.

What is the

temperature of the

American

soul

these days?

“You pretentious egghead—

all we want is toothpaste

and convertibles.”

Eternity= your journey

to the Understanding.

“I realized we were both crazy

and had lost contact with

irresponsibility.”

—creates a whole lotta

straight.

Eternity is in love

with the productions

of Time.

sticker shock

"They imitate conversation
by lying."
—talking to government,
"You made that up!"
Government replies back,
"...No we didn't."

external culture is so
internalized, any attempt
at revolution could be
suicide.

"I want my paintings to walk off
the canvas, to become a wild and
dangerous creature."

Big investment in hang-ups.

"It is not the poet, but, rather,
what he observes
that is obscene."

Don't interfere with the
Sacred Free Market!

America's screaming
and Memory Babe
with his heavy
and heavier head
had to drink himself
to sleep at night
to quiet the world
while in bed.
A person complains about mistreatment,
and God replies back, "You've been so
mistreated, huh? Want it to stop?
Then stop bugging me."

You see a lady
and start describing
her from close focus
and continue
explaining everything
around her as you
pan out your
vision
describing and
describing
until you finally hit
the cosmos.

"Don't give me,
just show me
the money."

rip out wiring= self-destruction
Time= invention of man

society, boundaries,
 hang-ups, anxiety,
 death, speed
 chaos, America
 Phallic Prods of Joy
 “Describe what you see at the end
 of your nose, boy!”
 —change language to
 change description to
 change reality.
 cartooney, angry, phallic images
 constructive-destruction
 —destroy to rebuild
 “It doesn’t kill people—
 it neutralizes enemy personnel.”
 It’s all Voodoo
 How do you get people to
 believe you in a culture
 dominated by
 radical skepticism,
 when people won’t even
 believe their own mothers
 yelling “fire!” when
 dandelions are much
 prettier to
 look at?
 Educationally Rationalized Space
 “Say IT!
 No ideas but
 in things.”
 face your monster and
 kiss it on the lips!
 art is a dream for the
 waking mind
 Thelonious Monk
 “lives in the cracks
 between the notes.”
 Get explicit—
 people don’t get
 symbolism anymore
 “It’s all dick.”
 what is IT?
 “I’m a child of
 Television.”
 Count your railroad ties
 all the way to Heaven
 escape velocity
 + money

“Holy flowers floating in the air,
were all these tired faces
in the dawn of
Jazz America.”

Chauvanistic Patriotism

(“sell-out” in 50s meant to
sell out of America—
in 90s it means to buy into
America)

still waiting
for revolution.

very effective troublemaker
where is home?

Locomotive Sunflower

Nothing’s gonna stop the flow
nik the power
creating “mass weapons
of cultural conditioning”
making it

“It’s all Witch Doctors!”
put a spin on it
demonic soul (freedom)

Katong!

parts is parts
me first!

words beget virus
kissings, bubblings
“Walking silly contradictions.”
self-selected

baby sucklings
certifiable paranoia
Poet is martyr
exquisite corpses

war is language
“It’s all dick.”

Katonk!

What is IT?

tunnel vision
and children killers.

Tired Feet

(Part One in a Serial)

Thus Sophia, with heaving bosom tightly laced, and protruding pink. . . wait, that's a different story. This is the story about the gentleman who was almost swallowed by the chair.

You see, it's true; the gentleman was attending an informational meeting at the Lone Wolf Exploration Society's headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. He was mixing and milling with the other prospectives in the posh parlor, examining the many antiquated volumes on the shelves and gazing longingly on the great freestanding globe in the center of the Oriental carpet, when his feet got tired and he decided to sit down. So, without really looking, the scholarly gentleman plopped his posterior on the nearest station, which happened to be a lonely ancient, oaken chaise completely

covered with yellow caution tape.

Immediately the chair began to tilt and vibrate; his legs and thighs were encased by bony shards of wood; his torso and arms were, shell-like, crushed and subsumed by a writhing mass of velvet. Eventually the dust settled and the gentleman, too stunned to speak found he could barely breathe. The director of the organization, a trim and tanned thirty-something, hurried over to the rubble, and with several aides, effected the extraction of the gentleman and the subsequent retransformation of the chaise.

After profuse apologies, the director explained that the chair was temperamental because it was built by Limpy, Merlin's rebellious flunky apprentice who opted for a life of cabinetmaking and woodwork in lieu of sorcery. The gentleman, still in

physical and emotional shock, mumbled that he was in fine, but hoped there would be no other disconcerting phenomena in his future with Lone Wolf. The director looked sad for a moment and regretfully explained that the Society could not allow the gentleman membership as of yet. The Group, said the director, was famous for its long and dangerous jaunts to places like El Quabat d'Amit and Chiang Xi Pao. The chair, by trying to eat him,

unfortunately, had deemed the gentleman unworthy of such activities. Thus, the Society must concur with its providentially inspired judgment. The director then offered the gentleman membership in the Society's novice branch, the Tenuous Baby Stepper's Guild, advised him to watch where he sat, and left him picking splinters out of his butt.

...to be continued



What is *Anthros ex Machina*?

2) In ancient Greek plays there was a mechanical device called the *dues ex machina*. It was a crane that would lower an actor posing as Zeus or some other godly figure onto the stage. Then the god dispenses their godliness as appropriate, sometimes with wisdom or justice, more often zapping those with too much hubris. Then the crane wenchers the actor/gods back into the sky and off set leaving the characters to deal with a new mess.

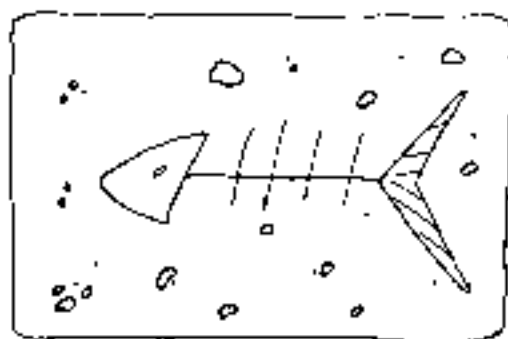
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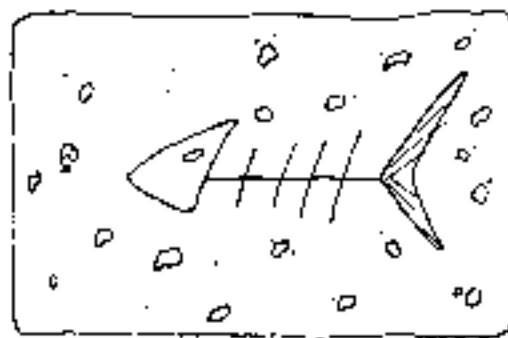
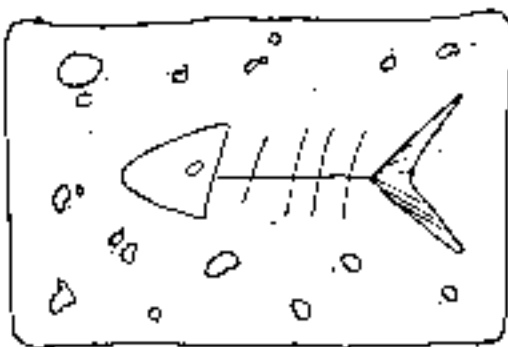
"SEPERATION"

He is inside her
tonght.

Tomorrow her
cells will be
dividing.



Tonight I stared
at the wall until
yellow seperated
from white.



The Giant of Ticonderoga Park

I.

The bar is sixty-three centimeters long; the blade which revolves around the bar is made up of two centimeter links. Each link has a tooth. When properly cared for the tip of the tooth holds true to two angles, sixty degrees into the saw, and thirty degrees away from the wood. The saw is powered by an eight-point-six horsepower engine. It can be run hard for an hour before needing to be refueled, longer with less intensive cutting.

None of this means much, but in three minutes a steady hand can cut down a tree that took two hundred years grow. In an hour, half an acre of lodgepole pine can be cleared. Five men collecting the slash can't keep up with a single cutter.

The sap will well up in the bowl of the stump as the roots struggle to bridge a gap they cannot begin to fathom. Stacked at the mill, a tree can bleed for weeks after being cut.

It takes a practiced eye to find the art in a chainsaw.

Ticonderoga Park is a glacial valley twenty-six miles into the Rocky Mountains. On a map the topo lines spread for a moment like a pair of lips before pinching back together in a sullen pout that translates to a thousand foot vertical drop. Like the specs of a chainsaw, this doesn't capture the soul of the place: the gaping absence of a peak, scooped from the head of the Rocky Mountains by a million tons of glacial ice and then polished by the weight of centuries. In the same act of creation, the glacier crushed entire boulders to a grit finer than sand and deposited it along the valley floor, creating a park two miles wide and seven

long. On a map the valley is inked the color of lime, the Forest Service's way of luring the gullible to believe that, yes, the valley is filled with trees.

In Europe all commercial timber is raised on farms. It has been that way for the last forty years; there is little call for a woodsman. In America and Canada though, there is still work for men willing spend months away from civilization. Margaret's family had friends in Colorado Rockies who offered to let us stay on their ranch, so I signed onto the nearest outfit, and in January I left Germany with a satchel of tools and my father's chainsaw.

Margaret stayed in Thann with her parents, waiting for the baby to arrive. The night before I left she had still not begun to show, but when I held her there was a third between us. Looking out over the rooftops, we both knew we would never again be alone; the distance between Margaret and I had been forever bridged. We had become a family.

I had to hitch three different rides to get up the the road to Ticonderoga. Each time I heard the same story. The fire came to Ticonderoga a month before I did. The child of lightning and the driest spring in a decade, it flew over ridges on golden wings, sent burning cones hundred of feet into the sky and routed the living with screams of water evaporating explosively inside the pines. A silver-haired fox of a woman was my last ride and she told me that when the firefighters evacuated Ticonderoga Park, elk and deer flooded the road by the river, dying before the crush of the fleeing automobiles and blocking road for miles, until they were hauled, ton after half-cooked ton, to the side of the road. That same forest was

silent when we arrive.

I stepped out of the Ford and look up into the moon-lit valley. I had seen forest fires before but never one that stretched across entire mountains. The silhouettes of dead trees ringed the valley's edge like the clawing fingers of buried giants. The flesh had been stripped from the body of the woods. There was a river that ran through the center of the valley, and I didn't have to see it to know that it ran black. My chainsaw and tools waited in the back of the pickup.

"Ten thousand acres," the woman said.

"Ten thousand acres." I wanted to explain to her the thin tendril of those acres that reached to Europe, and how a single burning cone flew the ocean and set fire to a promise. "Ten thousand acres."

The woman gave me a ride to the Burdick Ranch, the Protestant summer camp that belonged to the friends of the family. Mr. Burdick was a sympathetic man, and he offered me a job at half wages cutting dead wood. We shook hands and he showed me the way to the camp pay phone.

I pulled out a zip lock bag from my satchel. It was stuffed with fistfulls of American coins.

Margaret answered. I told her about the fire. She told me about the car trip she took with her parents. We both said I love you just as the recorded voice of the operator cut us off. I slung my gear over my shoulder and made my way to the bunk house.

II.

It is easy to find the art in a draw knife. Sixty centimeters - roughly two feet - of hardened steel, centered between two wooden handles. The blade is drawn down the length of the trunk peeling the bark from a tree, exposing the clean wood beneath. The blade should be held short of perpendicular to the tree, your hands staggered, otherwise the knife will catch at every knot.

The blade should slice through the skin of the tree, not drag.

My father always insisted on running a wire brush along the tree to clean the bark. His rigor was justified by the hours we spent sharpening every edge in his collection. Under his care a blade touched nothing but wood.

The danger of tools is their ability to skip the soul of a project, to shortcut around the work that makes you appreciate what you are doing. A chainsaw is such a tool; a draw knife is not. Cleaning a tree forces you to become intimate with every knot and divot. You come to know its personality. The trees with spiral will twist as they dry, the rare ones without spiral won't. Trees that grew in dense stands will have less taper and fewer branches. Trees grown in the open taper quickly and take twice as long to clean. Sometimes my mother and I would peel trees while my father was away, and when we were done we could tell you its life: the good seasons, the drought, how many years it had lived.

Three men worked the Burdick crew; I made us four. The Burdick Ranch suffered the worst of the fire; it was surrounded on all sides by the dead forest. One day a week we rode out on an ancient Dodge pickup and cut until sunset. The remainder of the week we bucked the trees into manageable poles to be stacked into bonfires. We planned to set fire to the piles when winter came. The hillsides would blaze a second time.

In the first week I learned that not every tree burns the same. Some had only the bark scorched, and as the ashes fell away they revealed the white bones of the tree beneath. Others burned until they were towers of charcoal, defying physics like old men with too much pride. Our crew took them all. Burdick was worried that the camp's children could get hurt when the trees began to fall, and he was right. The soil was completely stripped of life leaving nothing to hold the roots in place. On windy nights you could hear them fall, one by one.

There was little to occupy me, and I fell into a life of habits. Every night I

lugged my chainsaw to my bunk and sharpened each of its forty-five blades, sixty degrees and thirty. The bar had to be oiled, the air filter cleaned. Once a week I exchanged a ten dollar bill at the camp store for a fistful of quarters. Margaret was always waiting on the other side. She tried to capture as much as she could in the spare minutes, telling me about the child growing in her belly, about her family, her old school friends. I told her that I loved her. We always hung up just as the operator cuts us off.

The other men had their own habits. Some played horseshoes, all drank. For the first month they invited me every night into town, but slowly the offers trickled and died. I kept my money in a lock box beneath pictures of Margaret and her family, tallied on a slip of paper in my wallet. Each week I added a new figure and crossed out the last. The tally grew steadily until the accident.

The four of us were cutting on the south ridge. Alan was working with his kid brother Randy, and I was paired with a behemoth of a man we called Timber Dog. The Dog and I had just finished cutting for the afternoon and were headed back to the truck to change out of our chaps and helmets. Alan was cutting a sixty foot pine, a beautiful tree that shot up as straight as the sun. He cut the face notch, careful to aim it downhill but away from the truck. Randy waved excitedly from the top of the ridge; the tree was gigantic and when it hit it would be a show.

Alan stepped around behind the tree and cut towards the breaking wood, the narrow hinge of fiber left between the face notch and the back cut. But instead of stopping inches short he continued cutting until the tree settled back on the blade. Confused Alan cut off the saw and kicked at the stump.

There was nothing supporting Alan's tree, he had cut clean through the stump. The tree was free to fall in any direction. Randy began waving again and Alan began to run, but no one can outrun a sixty foot pine on its way down.

The tree hit along the ridge line, blasting Alan with dirt and shards of branches. He covered his face from the cloud just as the trunk of the tree jumped and kicked, smashing him against a granite boulder.

Dog and I were up the slope before the dust had settled. Dog vaulted over the trunk and dropped to Alan who was batting halfheartedly at the spear in his chest, as if it were a fly or gnat. The trunk had grazed his face as it fell, leaving fatty yellow a gash down Alan's face where his right cheek and eye should have been.

Dog turned to me and I started my saw, but all the weight of the tree was focused down the slope, down into Alan's crushed chest. It took me two tries to saw through the trunk, two tries before the tree slid free and rolled down the slope. We carried his body to the truck and laid it in the back of the bed. Randy insisted we drive down the canyon to town.

That night, waiting at the hospital, I counted my tally. It had been four months and odd days since I last saw Margaret. Knowing I was only halfway through my tenure was too much, and I drove back up the canyon alone, leaving the crew behind.

Sometimes Burdick and I spent our evenings together in the bunkhouse. We would talk about our families and play poker. One night over a mug of coffee, he bet five acres. We played out the hand and in the lamplight my three of jacks beat his pair of fours.

A boy will greedily take whatever he can grab, a man will turn down any charity. As father I would be neither of these. Margaret was coming soon, and I needed to have something for her. I considered the hard-shaven man over the stool and the cards. Seventy years old, and his hands were still held their callouses.

I accepted and we never played cards again.

Five acres wasn't much compared to the Burdick Ranch. His land ran

for miles. But like topo maps or machine specs, none of this meant anything to an expecting father. Five acres was enough land to build a cabin on.

I called Margaret to tell her that I loved her.

III.

The chainsaw forces itself on the tree, and the tree on the draw knife. It wasn't until my father taught me how to use an axe that I realized wood could be made fluid.

The blade of my axe is thirty centimeters long, the shaft of the axe, three times that. Of all the tools, the axe must be kept the sharpest. Used with skill it can hew out a notch with force, or, held by the head, shave the angle of a saddle. The tree will still have its say: if it grew slowly, with tight annular bands, the wood will be a pleasure to work. But if the tree grew quickly, the bands will be wide, and the wood will be fibrous and loose, like reeds.

I began cutting trees at dawn the next Saturday. The week before I had cruised the stands of burnt timber, marking the least burnt trees with blue chalk. For my first tree I settled on a lean forty footer with a ten inch base. Ten inches, I've learned, is a lot of years to a lodgepole pine. I'd only be using the bottom twenty-five feet; after that the tree became too narrow.

I pulled the chainsaw to life. The blades spun and for that perfect moment everything felt right: my sun-wet arms, the roar of the saw in my ears, and the wilderness surrounding me. First the face cut, slicing a notch out of the trunk on its downhill side. I stepped around the back of the tree and cut the rest of the breaking wood, until a sliver of trunk less than two inches thick held the tree vertical. Slowly, gravity had her way, and the tree pitched down the fall line, gaining speed and momentum, until all forty feet hit the ground at once, throwing dust and branches into the morning air. I made my way down the slope and began

cutting off the slash.

Dead trees are light and I was able to move these with just a winch. In the first weekend I brought down all sixty trees. Loading them onto a trailer took the rest of the month.

With the chainsaw I clipped off the branches even at the trunk. Then I came back a second time with the draw knife, skinning what little bark was left from the fire. A month later all the trees were ready, the foundation was laid and I could begin to build.

The lure of a log cabin is in its simplicity. Trim the end of each log into an saddle. Place the next log atop it and drive a twelve inch spike through them both. Repeat. Sixty logs later you will have a four interlocking ten-foot walls that will remain standing long after you are dead. It was late August when Burdick drove up from the ranch. Margaret's family had called. My daughter and wife were both healthy and resting in a Munich hospital. Did I want to call them? I shook my head no.

After he left I laid back atop the frame of the cabin as the cold Colorado stars began peaking out from the velvet sky. A continent away my child was being born. She was seeing her mother for the first time, her first touch of skin, her first taste of milk.

I hiked down to the ranch and told Burdick I would be sick for the next week. Then I came back, lit my single lantern and continued to build.

A cabin is made up of a thousand simple steps. After the frame is finished, fill all the cracks with chinking, frame and insulate the interior. Frame the ceiling and roof with plywood and more insulation, cut a door and a few south facing windows, run pipes and lines for plumbing and electricity, and you have yourself a cabin. But sweeping out the last of the sawdust you will realize that a home is something different altogether. When I called Margaret that night no one answered.

It was late September when she

finally arrived. Mrs. Burdick picked her up from the airport and brought her straight to the ranch. They drove up as I was putting the last bit of trim on the first of the five windows.

My wife was different, older. I had left her a girl; she had come back as a woman. The change was in the angle of her hips, how she held her head. I too had changed; her clean shaven Munich boy was now a thick bearded mountain man, his clothes speared with sawdust, his soft hands hard.

She shifted the baby to her other hip to wipe her cheeks.

It's a fine house.

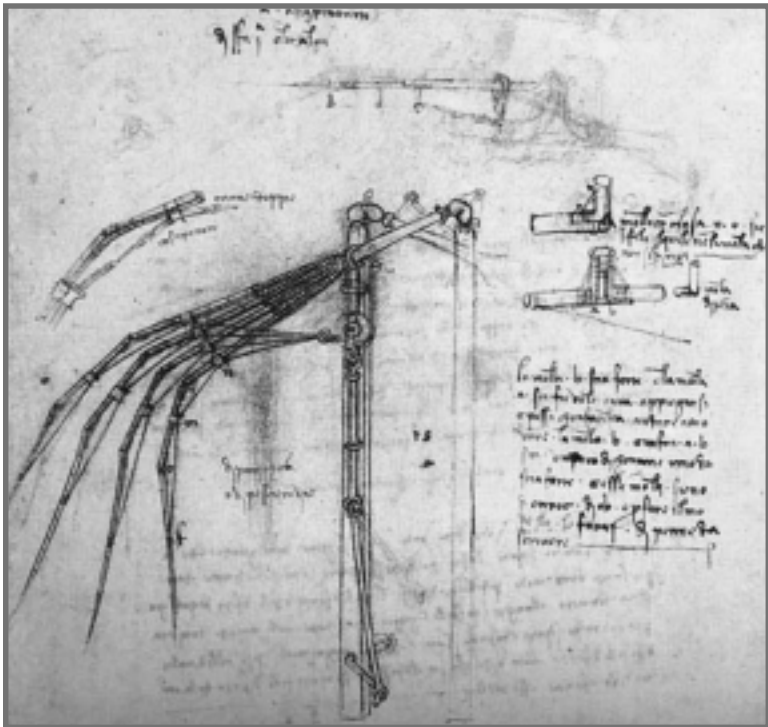
I built it for you. I wanted you to be proud.

I know.

I love you-

Please, she cut me off, giving me the same look my mother would give my father.

I took my daughter from her hip and kissed my wife for the first time in nine months. Together we started up the hill towards the cabin. I stopped halfway, startled. Before us, on the the ground, was a saw, pitted and rusty, covered in a fine layer of sawdust and dirt.



What is *Anthros ex Machina*?

3) Once I had a discussion with my friends while walking around a forest in Wyoming. It was a conversation about what makes us unhappy. After much relating and pondering we came to a conclusion: the essential element that caused unhappiness was inertia, the tendency for all of us, for all of everyone, to keep doing the same thing over and over. Like a machine. Like the machine that we live day to day. Like the machine that is so many interchangeable parts that make up our world. And of course we are one of those parts. Unfortunately none of us were happy with that, we were (are) plagued by dreams, sleeplessness, leftover angst, overwhelming comfort, and so much anger at all the complacency around us.

So that night we coined a new word: ert. It is the opposite of inertia and perhaps a little of balance, but at least it is going somewhere.

she sits there—I

water glares,
drops roll down fogged glass—
thoughts broken.

she sits there—II

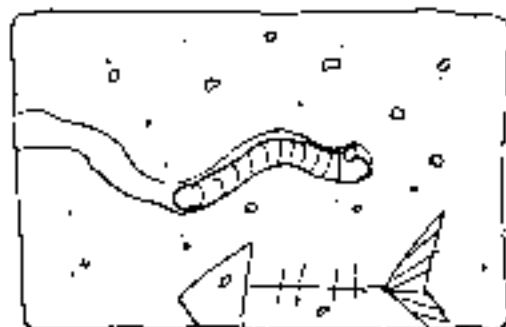
ice clinks ice—
arm falls across cloth,
flush of red.

The Adventures of Max

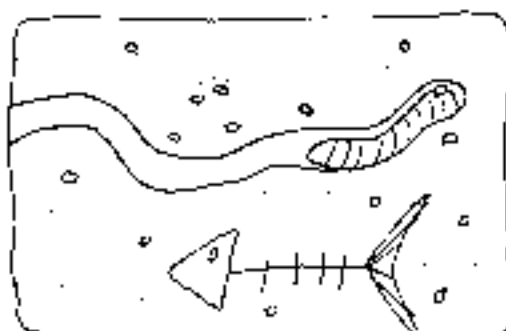
PLEISTOCENE FISH

"SIDEWALK"

A worm crawled
by today. Smiled
with bright eyes.



I looked away.
Kept walking.



She was
beautiful.
in her way.



Word of the month: Soma

What the hell is soma?

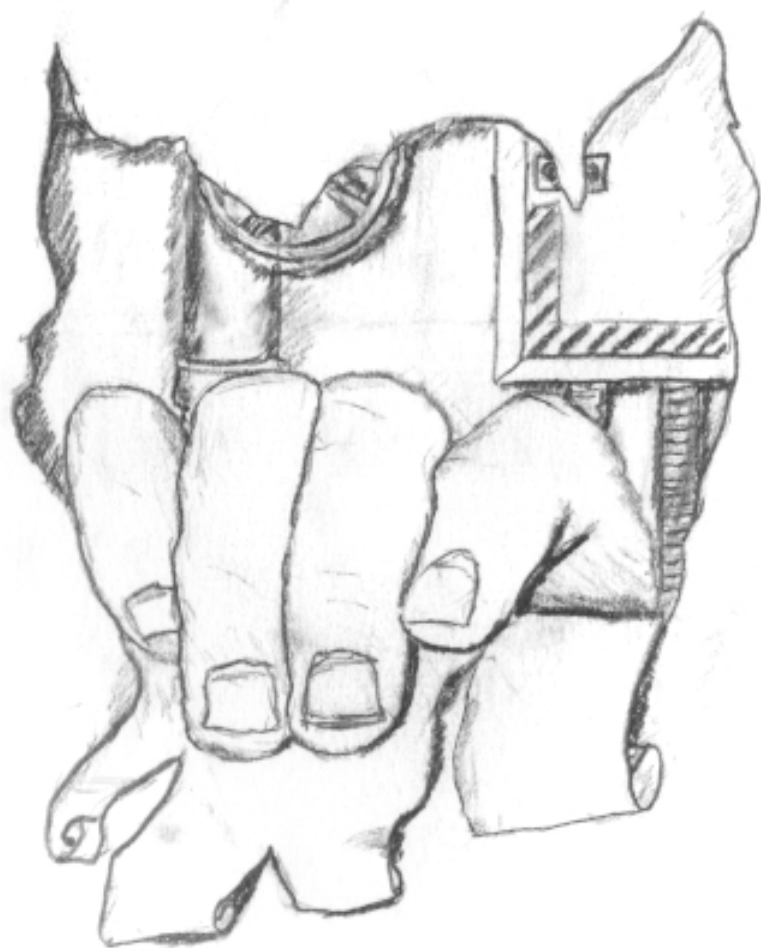
Soma is all the stuff you do to escape life. It can range from watching TV to reading an intellectually stimulating novel to wasting time hanging out with your friends to drinking beer. Soma is the part of your life where you don't produce anything.

Soma isn't necessarily bad. You have to escape life sometimes to maintain your sanity—just like you need sleep to function in your waking hours. Soma is a relaxing comfort in a shitty world.

In excess soma is a really bad thing. It leaves no time for creative outlet. Too much soma turns you into an automaton. If you get too wrapped up in comfort maintenance then how can you possibly be creative or accomplish anything.

Soma is the curse of the smart, because you realize that you're just wasting time. And that just makes you feel guilty, doesn't it? Shouldn't you be out changing the world or something? Maybe be a little less concerned with your comfort, or little more concerned with art.

another moon
small in the clear sky . . .
full stomach.



Guidelines for Submissions:

- 1) Any printable medium accepted.
- 2) Work must communicate with intent and communicate effectively.
- 3) Works addressing the author/artist's growing understanding of themselves or their environment and culture more favored in the selection process.
- 4) Send work or comments to melchior@www.central-dogma.net or mail to:
A.E.M.
804 1/2 West Myrtle St.
Ft. Collins, CO 80521

Credits:

Johnny	"The Giant of Ticonderoga Park" The Adventure of Max: Pleistocene Fish
Phlegm	Locomotive Sunflower
007	"Tired Feet"
Vagina Girl	Photo page 13
Spackle	Cover and layout.
Melchior	Haiku, various art, and editor

some stoopid dogs press: 10.00