

The Fragments of Mister/Miss X's femur

It was summer. I was on the mountains with my old group of friends. We had decided to visit a small deconsecrated cemetery over there. It didn't look like a regular cemetery. It stood next to a small ruined building, which was probably a chapel, surrounded by a low battered wall of tufa stone. The surface of the former cemetery wasn't more than 50 square meters wide, a real spit, fully covered with weeds, branches and fragments of tombstones scattered everywhere. We admired the sinister landscape and then started "digging" with our bare hands in the grass, looking for something interesting. After almost an hour, we hadn't found anything yet, until my fiancée (actually, she became my fiancée two years later) called us. She was holding a femur, or rather, a femur divided in two. We looked at it for a long time, then, with some disappointment from the others, she and I decided to take the femur home with us, a piece for each of us. Then we put them in our backpacks and headed for our shelter. In the evening, some legal concerns came to our minds; of course, I was tempted by the idea of having a femur in my house, but I was less tempted by the idea of spending three years in prison plus a 10,000€ fine. So, that same night we went back to the cemetery. It was pitch dark. The cemetery was ghostly illuminated by a multitude of dancing fireflies. We managed to put the bones back where we had found them, using the light of our cell phones, and then we ran for the hills, afraid that someone might have seen us. It was a surreal day. Later, we found out that the cemetery was used also as a stable by shepherds. So, there is a possibility that the femur was not even human. Someday I will - legally - collect human anatomical parts (but now it would be far out of my budget). Although, I have heard of an old unattended ossuary - two hours by car from my house - which is full of skulls and countless bones piled up. I don't deny that right after I heard about it, I immediately considered going there.

Democracy

What is democracy if not just one of the many miscarriages of humanity? There are those who lull it, just like a mother would do, trying to breast feed it, while dreaming of raising it. Yet, silkworms have already started eating it a long time ago. I would love to have the strength and the insanity of that mother, who, despite a visible gangrene, does not give up, keeping hope alive, still being socially committed. Maybe I would found a political party or a movement of "unpopular ideas", which would fight against the imminent anocracies, claim the right to individuality, and embrace issues regarding environment, culture, sciences and blah blah blah. In no time, as mother, I would end up being the umpteenth crawling silkworm, craving for a small piece of democracy to gobble up in a spasmodic search for electoral consensus. We will never get over it. We will never accept its death. And I doubt that someday we will have the have the courage to conceive a new "life" to guide and to grow for everyone's sake. So, death comes for us as it comes for society's superstructures that impose ourselves. It is nature.

1 Lunatic 1 Ice Pick

I need to make a confession. For a long time, almost every evening after drawing for hours and hours, I've been wearing the clothes of the internaut of disgust. I visit many shock sites, looking for material of anthropological and social relevance regarding sex and violence. I've seen many videos, including one in which a narco, after torturing a man - as if that wasn't enough - starts digging with his bare hands in the victim's chest extracting his pulsing heart. I have seen a shady individual who, for unknown reasons, tore his testicles (I mean literally) by pulling them with a rope. But never,

never have I seen something abominable like 1 Lunatic 1 Ice Pick. It's a 2012 video uploaded on Bestgore.com. In the background, you can hear the song True Faith by New Order, while the assassin (Luka Rocco Magnotta) towers over a tied boy. He stabs the boy several times, with what looks like a screwdriver, then he beheads the victim, and cuts his limbs. Then, a scene of necrophilia, in which the murderer violates the defenceless blood dripping torso, and feeds the boy's meat to a dog. The video ends here. Usually, I remain completely impassive. I am aware that violence is part of the human nature, yet here I felt something. I don't know why, but the video made me feel strange, as if those extreme acts somehow overcame the matter, mutating into metaphysical, frightening, unconscious ultraviolence... yet that disgusting actions had been committed by a boy like any other, a boy disturbed by a spasmodic desire for success. There would be many other anecdotes related to this video and its "director", and I suggest you watch to the Netflix docuseries Don't F*** With Cats, which tells the whole story.

The Filipino Girl

I was browsing a web forum dedicated to photos of corpses (autopsies in particular). I was with my girlfriend, and we were combing through various threads, looking for something interesting. We stumbled upon the "naked women" section. There were several women of a certain age, laying on cold stretchers at the morgue, some car crash, some suicides. Nothing new. My girlfriend got up from the chair headed to the balcony for a smoke, while I was still browsing through the photos, and I suddenly found a set of photos that vaguely shocked me. It was a young Filipino woman. She was probably in her twenties. The woman was lying on a clean autopsy table, before anything happened to her corpse. Her skin colour was greenish, with yellow and purplish bruises all over her body. There were silkworms wandering on the woman's body, which was sinuous and relaxed, but not in the way you would expect from a corpse. The face was roundish, her eyes were closed, her mouth had thin lips and was slightly ajar; a relaxed and peaceful face. I heard the door slamming, and my girlfriend came back in the room. So I told her, «Hey, check this out, she looks like you!» «Fuck! It's true», she told me. We contemplated the woman a little more, then we moved to another thread, which, if I remember correctly, was "autoerotic asphyxiation". I was never able to find those pictures again. I tried and tried, and maybe it's better this way.

GG Allin

I could overlook how much I love, and most of all envy, the amazing ability of that man to be honestly human; throwing shit to his audience, performing blowjobs to his fans and acts of unrestrained self-loathing. It is clear that his funeral was one of the greatest ever seen. In '93, the good old GG died of a heroin overdose. His brother Merle (a member of the band Murder Junkies) requested that GG's body not be prepared and clean, and the funeral was turned into a party. At the funeral, there was people pouring whisky or drugs into the cadaveric GG's mouth, people taking pictures with him, as well as people yanking him. And it was all filmed (some parts are easy to find on YouTube). Some people could consider it disrespectful, or even abuse of a corpse, but I think it is a wonderful thing, somehow even sweet. They saluted him like he wanted, making him immortal.

Carmelo Bene

I am well aware that it could be highly offensive to include him in this list of corpses, considering his immateriality. However, his non-existence has deconstructed my perception of being. I discovered him in my late teenage years, watching all his appearances on tv at the Maurizio Costanzo Show. «Who the fuck is this raving lunatic?» I thought at first, bewitched by his bold and inflammatory silver tongue. So, I started digging his grave, pillaging his pharaonic sarcophagus of all his shows and movies. I still wear the signs of my major teenage crush on him. We keep in touch every once in a while, very rarely. He is in the limbo of the classics, and I don't dare disturbing him. Yet I would love to take the phone and give him a call, just to hear his thundering voice: «please, C.B., say it again.»

And him, pissed off: «...from what Goliath was I conceived so big, and so useless?»

Then I give up, feeling hopeless.

I wish I was there, in an empty theatre, to catch those unrepeatable moments, never the same. But he is dead when I was only seven years old. So, I had to make things up by watching him on loop on YouTube, while he recites “To His Beloved Self” by Mayakovsky, yet being conscious that he would have ontologically disapproved. So, I haven't been looking for him for a while. Every now and then I watch him at the Maurizio Costanzo Show fucking around with everyone, just for a goliardic sense of nostalgia. I'm waiting for the day when he will appear before my eyes as he did to Mother Mary, hopefully revealing to me the arcane secret behind non-being.

The Trio Of My Childhood

Ever since I can remember, there was in my life never a moment without drawing. While in kindergarten, when all the other kids were drawing flowers and birds, I was writing my name designing some sort of blood dripping logo (and during adolescence I found out it actually looked like the logo of the band Cannibal Corpse), drawing skeletal hands, graves, monsters, etc... Obviously, the teacher and my parents were quite worried, and I was sent to a therapist, who reassured them telling them that mine was only a way to exorcise my fears (while actually I simply enjoyed grim things). The truth is that behind those innocent and “gruesome” drawings, apart from my fascination for Halloween and the (black) Magic cards illustrations, there was my father's huge collection of books of illustrations. When I wasn't drawing I was contemplating images on those books. Crucified Christs, battle scenes, skinned and beheaded saints, Venus dressed as satyrs, naked sirens, and everything that classic and Christian iconography had to offer. However, the artists who plagiarized my brain and my hand are basically three: Hieronymus Bosch, Maurits Cornelis Escher, and Aubrey Beardsley. I had a huge book about the first, with big detailed images. I used to get lost observing the minutiae of his Hell or his Eden, dwelling on those jumping and festive little monsters. They amused me so much. I guess that the influence from this corpse is clear on my work, so let's move straight to the next one. I had a small Taschen book by Escher, I was enraptured by the order and the geometries, how all the things fit perfectly, transforming chaos into something harmonious. Obviously, at the time I wasn't devoted to all this mental masturbation, but I tried countless times to emulate him, always with poor results. And then, the last one, and probably the one out of the three who plagiarized my little infant brain the most. My father had a Beardsley's beautiful monograph, with no descriptions, only a large selection of works (and now I regret that I partially ruined it with markers). There was Salome with the head of the Baptist dripping blood,

satyrs with abominably huge penises, fetuses born from calves, and many other absurd images that a child's mind was not able to fully elaborate. I lost that book, and I hate myself for it, but perhaps that was the reason why those crazy images continued to ferment in my mind. Recently, a couple of years ago to be exact, the book magically resurfaced to my great amazement, and it is precisely by flipping through it again that those memories came back making me aware of how much those images unconsciously manipulated me towards what I now I make as an artist, having over time made those elements "mine". All this made me think. What if instead of those books my father only had books about Giotto, Cimabue and Piero della Francesca, or worse if he had no books at all? What would I be doing now?

Sir Daniel Fortesque

When I was five, I was obsessed with *Medievil 2*, and with its main character. I wasn't able to play the PS1, so I always used to have my parents play long and exhausting sessions, during which I rejoiced at the sight of zombies and blood. Obviously at that time I used to draw the good Sir Daniel quite often, armed with a sword surrounded by tombstones poorly coloured using markers. In all likelihood it was, together with my father's artists monographs, my first vehicle to the world of macabre. Just recently, while cleaning the garage, I found a folder containing a ton of my drawings made during the years of nursery school, still jealously preserved. At least a dozen of these drawings represent the scenario "Greenwich Observatory", of which memories surfaced only after looking at a full *Medievil* gameplay. I must admit that it was pleasant to relive those childhood feelings that I had long packed in my memory drawers.

Andrea Pazienza

Pompeo is one of the first comics I've ever hold in my hands. A good way to discover the world of comics for a fifteen years old boy. I already knew Paz for a long time. Or maybe I've always knew him, as my father went to the same high school as him in the 60s (yet in different classes), so since my childhood I've always heard about his legendary figure. – Off topic – in Zanardi, to be specific in the story *Verde matematico* ("Mathematic Green"), the characters mention some shady guy named Genchi (who acts as an intermediary to buy morphine). I asked my father if he knew anything about that, but he's always been all cagey. When I became a teenager, I bought *Pompeo* (honestly it was the only Pazienza book I was able to find in the comic book shop). I came back home and devoured it. From that moment, I was possessed. I don't know why Paz has this effect, but from that moment I started to unconsciously emulate him. Actually, I wasn't drawing anything cuter before that, since my dream was to become a *Magic The Gathering* or *D&D* artist. Anyway, I started using Pantones, I started writing my first scripts, drawing them and tearing them up. I was, and still am, highly self-critical, and over time (within a few years to tell the truth) I realized how much I had Pazienz-ized. So, I started "hating" him for this. It was hard to detach that visceral love for him from my hand; big noses and everything I had awkwardly plagiarized. I needed rehab. If I hadn't stopped I would probably be one of those many poor wretches who unwittingly mimic their idols. However, I get melancholy thinking about it. It was good to feel "free" out of the glass cage I surrounded myself with, a self-imposed style to make yourself visible and competitive in this mess of cartoonists and illustrators, all caged in their styles in a vain attempt to emerge.

Myself, as a comic artist

Since 2017 my work is published by Hollow Press. My birth as a comics artist was a painful one. But at the end of the day, I was born and I took my first steps. My publisher saved me from putting my fingers into electrical sockets, and held my hand on the pedestrian crossings of the publishing world. Now I've grown up as a cartoonist. I'm a teenager in full hormonal crisis, oscillating on the razor's edge between a death wish and the feeling of having the whole world in my hands. Artistic suicide would have its reasons. Being a comic artist is a sacrifice, everyone knows it. And not everyone is able to keep up with this kind of life, especially while asking yourself, «What do I want to be when I grow up?» «Will I be able to go on like this?» «Will I be good enough to keep going on?» At the point where I am, I am not able to give myself an answer. But I am sure that, despite all my emotional breakdowns, I want to keep going on. I love creating stories, although I keep rejecting my children, like I was living a constant artistic postpartum crisis, that pushes me to choke every line I put on paper. Maybe that's the thing that keeps me going on, pushing my feet down on the accelerator. Running like hell, away from who knows what, moving between sharp bends, drifting on a battered street on the mountains of the Italian publishing world, in the dead of night, until a fucking deer appears on the street. I suddenly turn the wheel to dodge it, crash! I hit a guard rail, my comics are torn apart, panels and balloons everywhere, in pieces. My body is unrecognizable, innards are spread all over crumpled pages. I'm in a coma, or even worse. An editorial corpse, like many others before me, because of a fucking deer in the wrong place at the wrong time. Maybe, ten years after the accident, someone in a Kindle VR book store will ask a friend, «Hey, do you remember Genchi?» «The one who used to draw only dicks?». «No, the morphine guy in Mathematical Green». And then I will be like the hundreds of artists who end up in oblivion, forgotten. You know what? I don't care, I make comics so that others can read them, but mostly for myself. So even if I die prematurely I will have no regrets, I will die doing what I love.