



LOVE is Lighter than AIR

By Annie Levin

Good morning! This is AGPR, Alpha Galaxy Public Radio, coming to you live from the green green planet Earth. And it's a beautiful Easter Sunday morning. I am here broadcasting from the holy city of Helsinki inside the gold domed Temple of All Prophets. In seconds High Priest Iesop Randwingin will be reading the morning's fragments from the Book of Oracles. According to long-held tradition he begins the services with a reading from the apocrypha of the Book of Heroes. It's eight a.m. on April ninth in the year 2906.

I

FRAGMENT 1007.66

BOOK OF LIONEL McMATHEWS

SOURCE: THE LOST GOSPEL OF THE NEW YORK GLOBE

In the early morning hours of the Ides of March, notorious serial murderer Caligula Cocopuff escaped the law again. Adjusting his turbo scooter to 'Fly,' he sailed above the heads of the police cars careening after him down Coney Island Avenue. Dozens of shots were fired, but Mr. Cocopuff appeared to hear them before he could see them (one can almost imagine the long, yellow hairs that jut out of those elephantine ears standing at attention as the bullets whizzed by). Two-dozen feet above the ground he swerved and turned, backtracked and plunged, stray 0.35s pinging off the magnum steel lining of his cape. Law enforcement managed to follow after him along the Shore Parkway several miles. They continued to fire at Mr. Cocopuff, taunted all the while by the thousands upon thousands of goldfish crackers, each with the lines of the 'Jesus Fish' *Ichthys* and C.C.'s

insignia '*ab irato*' ('from an angry man') printed upon it, flooding out of the scooter's exhaust pipe. The barrage stopped above Manhattan Beach where the pursuant gained height and curved over the rooftops of Sheepshead Bay. Surely he had heard the whirring of helicopter blades and the cocking of sniper rifles close behind. Turning the nose of his scooter to the sky and picking up height one last time, he turned his monstrous head around to glance at his pursuers. The cherubic, curly blond wig glued to his scalp blustered around his face. Mr. Cocopuff's cape with its peacock feather pattern had taken to the air and furled around him like two massive wings. For a moment he seemed to pose up there in the sky. As I looked up from far below at the colorful figure in the hurling wind, Mr. Cocopuff – formerly Cardinal Clement Flynn of St. Patrick's Cathedral – appeared almost like the medieval Angel of the Annunciation he had costumed himself as when he took to the air to begin his murderous scourge six weeks ago. The gold of the twilight sky lit up his tiny blue eyes for a split second and then he was gone, veering off over the bay, gliding like a seagull over the horizon and finally disappearing into the clouds somewhere over Far Rockaway. This journalist has never seen such a caper in his 25 years of service to The New York Globe. Helicopters attempted to follow, but the clouds had entirely obscured him. His turbo scooter didn't even show up on police radar. Mr. Cocopuff has once again eluded authorities. One cannot help but wonder - with every spare hand in the police force looking for him day and night, and South Brooklyn flooded with Federal Agents - why his whereabouts have yet to be found?

II

FRAGMENT 876.09

BOOK OF DETECTIVE JARREL ROBERTS

SOURCE: POLICE INTERROGATION RECORDING 59B,

JULY 16, 2009

"Our master is returned to us. Safe. Sound."
"We hear it often anon morning night. The barks of Our Savior carrying north filth of our filth, gleaming black sacks, stench of sin. Plodding forth, forth to End Time. Carried forth, forth to the scales, weight of sins of sins in gold, filth of our filth. Returned, returned unto us our master..."

"High Virgin painted white enthroned in mortar. Delivered us of His child. Soiled. Soiled and so baked deep, deep in the earth. So pleasant pig wiggy for hungry Children of God."

“Enlighten, Oh! Enlighten us Oh Gabriel! Lead us not unto the fumes. Love us. Leave us not to the cold. Feed, feed us His body. Body, body celestial, body miracle body vision. Vision of Empires. His vision. His prophesy. Ours. His world sin no more in ours...”

“Virgin cried, cried in the sunless place. Place of His crown of sorrows no more. Virgin cries no more...”

“His body. Wafer of exploding mushroom tasty purple eggs in walls of brick hospital brick underground bright lights like sunbeam paws on soft soft eyelids make soft make soft walls of brick gold teeth sin sin sing glory visions wings light love Gabriel Oh! soft...”

III

FRAGMENT 1001.00

BOOK OF BLOG

SOURCE: THE IMMORTAL WRITINGS OF PRIVATE IRWIN
SIMEONS PETERSON III

They came in like the flying monkeys in the *Wizard of Oz*.

We didn't know anyone had any idea about us. Stockpiling for the government. What for? Fuck, we didn't know. Some final blowout with all the rogue nations on Long Island or some bullshit: as I said, no fucking clue. I'd been up from Basic Training in Georgia like two minutes and they put me in this basement in New York with a gun. Then they left me there with twelve guys and some bottled water and beans for six months. All those rounds of steel in the basement of the abandoned armory out on the island; we thought we'd be down there alone forever. Who fucking knew?

It was real late at night. The warehouse doors were open to let in the night air. I was off taking a shit when I heard the gunfire. I ran back into the guard room. The guys were shooting up in the air. Those white blond monkeys on their silvery pogo sticks were zigging and zagging all over the damn place. Then they broke out these big fucking clubs and zoomed down on the guys like little pretty Herculeases. Clomp clomp, clomp, until there wasn't a man standing. It was amazing. Kind of beautiful, actually. Like some Ang Lee crouching tiger shit.

I knew the defense was up after like no time or nothing, so I dived behind the army surplus boxes and just sat there with my useless fucking machine gun, watching those bastards scoop up all the artillery

in the place in huge sacks. Like elves or some shit.

I crawled out of there like 2 o'clock in the morning. All our guys were dead.

IV

FRAGMENT 1308.77

BOOK OF OPRAH

SOURCE: THE GOSPEL OF JEANINE FRIEDMAN,
MOTHER OF MEMOIR.

This morning the sun hit the light snow powder in the back garden and Monica's room, all white and baby pink, shimmered for a brief moment like an ice castle. Alan and I had done up her room last summer, a surprise for her birthday, a present for being such a good girl on the move, compensation for having to live on top of the F train line, a guilt-gift from her hysterical cheating parents a few months before the separation. Whatever. And she held court to all her strange messy-haired friends there. The tiny girls with the brusque, sly, yoga-thin mothers, came and played dolls in this papier-mâché and chintz wonderland.

I made the bed that Friday morning, after she went off to school, Alan swinging by in his cherry-red minivan to take her. The Barbie dolls tangled together into one sprawling blond tribble I pulled apart and set neatly in the white toy chest. I fluffed the lacy pillows, swept up the hundred-odd little plastic toys imbedded in the carpet and wiped the lipstick drawings off the mirror on her vanity.

That cell phone call from Bernadette on the train overpass. No Monica. No calls from the teachers, no “your child went missing at lunchtime,” no message from the principal's office. Just, no Monica. She wasn't at the gate to get picked up by her babysitter. I stumbled off the train and ran the three and a half agonizing blocks to our building, craving nicotine for the first time in a decade, hoping she would be home, hoping one of the mothers from her school had left a message on our machine. “Monica's at Becky's, she left her Aladdin DVD here and just had to have it and then Bobby wet his pants all over the sofa and I got so distracted we just forgot to call.” Something vague and irritating. Something irresponsible from a ‘cool’ young Brooklyn Mom. But nothing. There was nothing.

Nothing but a white package, almost camouflaged on the whitewashed mantelpiece but for the three long peacock feathers wrapped around it with gold twine. A note. The handwriting beautiful, the kind of handwriting no one has anymore, the kind my

grandmother had, all legible curlicues and perfectly straight lines.

"We welcome your contribution to the Children's Crusade. The gates are open. Welcome Monica. Welcome mothers. You shall be reunited in Heaven."

That's it. Not a word else. No signature. Of the hundred children taken she's been the youngest of three girls. This is what worries me most.

V

FRAGMENT: 1087.82

BOOK OF NETWORK

SOURCE: THE LOST GOSPEL OF ROSE

"Good evening and welcome to Charlie Rose. I'm Charlie Rose and with me in the studio tonight is Dr. Erich Jungenfisch, Professor of Political Philosophy at The New School for Social Research, here to discuss the Caligula Cocopuff phenomenon. Good Evening Erich."

"Gutt eve-en-ing, Sharlie."

"Thank you for coming. Now, you're here to discuss your recent article, first published early this month in Spar Online Magazine, republished this week in The New Yorker, titled "Cosmonopolis; Gone up in Coco Puffs.""

"Yah, zat iz correct."

"Now in your article you argue that Caligula Cocopuff, serial murderer and kidnapper at large, is not among the Jeffrey Dammers and Charles Mansons of the world, but resides instead, as you write, 'In the arena of common faith and constitutive knowledge, the subjective manifestation of the Angel of History.'"

"Zat iz correct."

"Would you mind explaining your theory for the viewers at home."

"Of gorse... You zee ze vorld of prow-gress shoots ahead into ze sky like ze rocket ships unt satellite dishes. But zis man, he rides above ze clouds like Santa Claus, ze Banshee or Baba Yaga, taking, destroying vatever he please, unt gripping modernity around ze throat. Cocopuff iz ze collective manifestation of pre-capitalist, unt zer-fore ze harbinger of ze post-capitalist mythos. Soon he vill bring about ze crashing down of ze capitalist state. He cannot be caught because he does not exist but in ze imagination of ze masses. But he begins ze revolution. His followers, zey vill rise, a mass army of terrorists to plunder ze earth of its misbegotten riches."

"But what about the murders and kidnappings? They're real. We have bodies, fingerprints, murder weapons."

"Zere may be an organization responsible for zese murders, but zat is a small matter. Ze Angel Gabriel on ze flying scooter, vit his clown makeup unt blond hair, iz no more a man zan ze gargoyle carved into ze churches in ze middle ages. Cocopuff is ze light zide of ze fear in all our hearts zat dere is nothing on ze other zide of death. He iz ze smile zat resides in ze abyss."

"But we know who Cocopuff is. There are dozens of eyewitnesses who saw and recognized former Cardinal Clement Flynn flying through the rose window of St. Patrick's Cathedral on his scooter at 6:23 p.m. on February 17th."

"Zis iz nonsense. Ze manifestation of ze post-capitalist mythos iz not zis real man of ze religion zat coddles unt calms ze boiling blood of ze masses. Zis man vas a decoy."

"But Erich, what can we do? The body count is up to two-hundred. And that doesn't even figure in the hundred-odd children he's kidnapped from around the city. Where have they all gone?"

"You ask me vat to do vit ze curdling flame of injustice? Ask ze vind vy it makes hurricaines, ask ze owl vy it must gnash ze bones of lytle mouses. Zis iz progress, ze end of ze world is in ze making unt I say ve vants no more vorld!!"

VI

FRAGMENT 155.40

BOOK OF HAL CURBBINGTON

SOURCE: THE GLORY JOURNALS OF PRINCE CURBBINGTON

I can smell them closing in on the sanctuary. Nowhere in sight yet, but they're coming. The Cardinal paces the grounds, followed by the limping forms of his followers, the tiny children. He has taken off his costume and paces the path that runs around our home, our ruin, our holy center, just as he paced the snaking lanes of his private garden almost two months ago: head bent, eyes on the sandy gravel, unaware of the blue sky overhead or the rose bushes at his feet. I do not know what goes on inside the sanctuary. I was the first, oldest to be rescued. Eldest choirboy. Red robes and candle of peace exchanged for the workingman's jumpsuit I found stuffed in a corner of the abandoned factory across the road. And I man the gate we built of twine and sticks. Man it with a club and a lantern. Waiting.

Waiting. I hear the others, the unseen followers inside and below. The ones who would not consent to eat of His Body. They scream. Loud at night, softer as day breaks. I sleep three hours in the morning, my breath in rhythm with their faint shrieks. We have only true vision here. Given my portion I see only light, hear only music. And then the darkness. The rest is silence.

VII

FRAGMENT 1007.06

BOOK OF LIONEL McMATHEWS

SOURCE: THE LOST GOSPEL OF THE NEW YORK GLOBE

Late last night an army platoon landed on the far southwest tip of Far Rockaway and made war upon the land, probably for the first time since it was inhabited by the Canarsie Indians. At 12:07 a.m. three combat support boats anchored off the nose of the spit, and the 139th Civil Platoon scampered across the peaceful, wintry beach. In seconds, as soon as the platoon seemed to cross a halfway mark on the sand, it began. The scene that followed was like a cross between The Battle of Normandy and the struggle between the Pirates and the Lost Boys of Neverneverland. A hodgepodge of sick, thin young boys wearing what looked to be fur, feathers and leaves scrambled out of the underbrush. They bellowed out at the top of their little lungs "*Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*" ("To the Greater Glory of God"). With a beautiful cacophony of children's voices raised in prayer taking to the sky, the children flung themselves tooth and nail at the armed soldiers.

Their skirmish was to no avail. Most of the boys were weaponless and those bearing sticks or crude wooden spears were easily unmanned. The soldiers seemed to be herding the defenseless children onto the boats with ease. But then a rustling was heard in the tall pines lining the beach. This noise was followed by the rich, crackling laughter of Cocopuff, now feared among the city's inhabitants as Kahn and Napoleon were feared among the families of their conquered foes. Soon the glint of the white scooter appeared from behind the pines. The old, gaunt face that has become commensurate with evil and fear over the past six months, turned its hideous crooked grin on the 'battle' scene below. A loud grumble erupted from C.C.'s throat. The actions below appeared to stop for a split second as soldiers and children turned their eyes to the heavens. It was then that everything started going wrong.

First another scooter burst from out of the trees, carrying an adolescent boy, aged about fifteen. He was as gaunt and ill-looking as the other children, only with a strange, cruel smile upon his face. He wore an altar boy's robe covered in old, rusty bloodstains. And then a third scooter erupted. This one mounted by a little girl dressed in white with a veil over her hair. She's since been recognized as Monica Friedman, the missing girl from elementary school P.S. 109. She was the one powering the air to land missile-launchers, one attached to each side of the scooter. She took the soldiers on the beach while Cocopuff and the boy glided over the ships and dropped tiny, dispersive depth charge bombs on the soldiers and boy-warriors alike. Then there was nothing but noise and smoke for twenty minutes. When the smoke cleared only corpses were left on the shore. The remaining soldiers and a gaggle of struggling naked children were crammed onto a single boat, heading for Coney Island Beach and civilization.

High Priest Iesop Randwingin closes the Book of Oracles. The light of the stained glass window behind him catches the jeweled pattern of peacock feathers on the dazzling white book, creating a kaleidoscopic effect along the dais. The children's chorus has started the chant, now taken up by the congregation, welcoming C.C. and Monica Friedman into the arms of the Prophet Muhammad. We have to stop now for a commercial from Venusian Hydrogen Incorporated. Be sure to tune back in for Donald Rumsfeld's Sermon on the Hill. This is AGPR coming to you live from the holy city of Helsinki on the green green planet Earth.

Annie Levin is an editor of Canon Magazine and a second year MA candidate in Liberal Studies. She will be attending one of a variety of competing MFA programs in creative writing in the fall. Her fiction can be found in Eclectica Online Magazine. She hopes one day to hunt the wild unicorn of the Siberian Steppe.