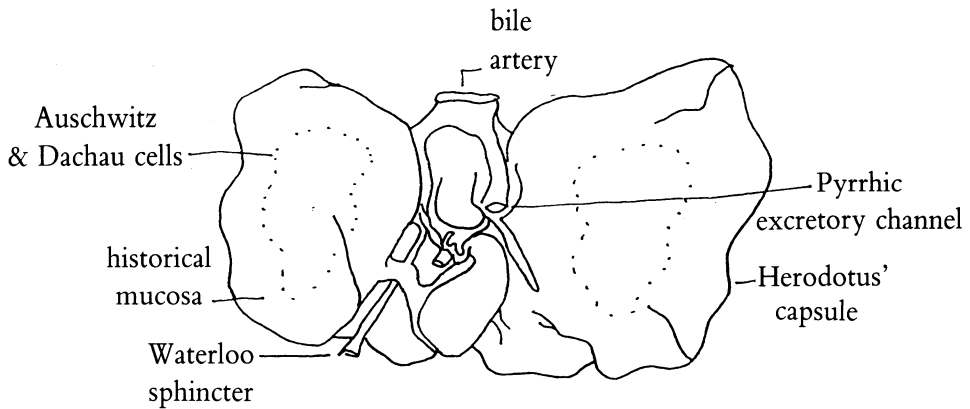


from EHMH: An Oceanic Romance · *Eurudice*

Human Genome Project Eradicates Mystery and Proves History: At the end of the millenium, the exact locations of all the 100,000—or up to 300,000—human genes on all twenty-three pairs of human chromosomes, as well as the precise order of the 3 billion nucleotides that make up these genes, will be determined. In this light, it seems unlikely that an entire human being could ever again remain missing. Escape will be rendered impossible.

GROWTH CONTROL IN HISTORICAL CORRUPTION



DIAGRAM—INFERIOR SURFACE OF HISTORY

History does not look to the past and has no concern for dates, except in fairytales or ads. In fact, history is the largest vital organ of the body, an hourglass ductless gland situated below the diaphragm in the upper abdominal quarter between the liver, the gallbladder and the spleen, just within the left nipple line. History is covered by a tough fibrous sheath, Herodotus' capsule, which carries the blood vessels and strands of connective tissues that provide the scaffolding for the many intrahistoric bile passages anastomosing and finally converging in the Pyrrhic excretory channel of history, thus permitting free escape of the human bile—which contains salts, Machiavelli pigments that impart the characteristic color of the feces, and other unnamed poisons. Briefly stated, the bile which cannot be processed by the liver is absorbed by the pustular historical mucosa through the sphincter of Waterloo. Within the sinusoids of history and attached to their broken walls are found the cells of Auschwitz and Dachau, which are highly phagocytic and whose function remains obscure, although it is established that they are normally concerned with blood destruction. While the human subjects binge, fornicate, compete and quote movies, their histories beat inside them sending out newly detoxified blood to their limbs and brains. That is until, one day, a lethal cumulative virus unexpectedly attacks their immunity networks and they become historically infected.

When history malfunctions, it stops filtering out the acidic Attila poison that otherwise would putrify the bloodstream, and an inky Napoleonic fog spreads out inside the afflicted body. Simple activities such as sharing a glass of water with a toothed foreigner or eating bloodstained eggs or being kissed by a feebleminded fly that has feasted on a turkish bathroom suffice to cause these infections. Early diagnosis consists of purple fecal accumulation, either waxy or percussive, enlargement of even the most atrophied historic organ toward the free border of the ribs, and an increasing tympanitic Marxist sound, never flat, caused by the subjacent intestines. No one is immune, and there is no known antidote, and no relief for the ill. Because the social effects of the disease remain profitable, scientists worldwide have scrupulously evaded its research.

The historically stricken individual, now a mutant, has two choices. As with all human choice, these are identical in as much as they both end in death; i.e., the diseased has the choice of the condemned, history being the damnation.

At this stage, the history patient can either become a murderer or an exile. An effete distaste for blood often makes the first choice impractical. As an exile, the history patient must withstand the spastic sympathy of ignorant natives, stiff laws that treat exiles as museum displays or alternatively as slaves, and a life of padded inactivity spent prone in bed, subject to the incessant pains of the pounding history

within, which are manifested in a swelling of the flesh, due to acute hemorrhage. Screaming, hyperventilating, passing gas, fainting, and breathing through nano-oxygen masks are the typical methods available to the patient to alleviate despair. As the normal area of historic dullness is diminished, the patient experiences Tet night sweats and Mao chills, anorexia, fullness and vomiting of frothy mucus, flatulence, constipation, glossolalia, Cleopatra convulsions and marked cerebral phenomena. Beaujolais-red pus, smelling of candied apple, can be extracted from the wildly fluctuating history by aspirating needle, and the patient should be keeled over his/her right side, so the rough thrashing liquid will gravitate from the tender historical region. As obstruction increases, imperialist portal blood opens new insurgent channels and floods the abdominal region, and the superficial historical veins enlarge, notably around the umbilicus, forming the so-called "1917 caput-medusae," until the belly explodes. Having no distraction from the slow ballooning torment, feeling his/her history extending out of the frail bodily cavity, the patient is helpless in fighting the symptoms and can only hope that his/her veins can withstand the hourly piercings that doctors recommend as a means of knowing when the patient will enter the expected coma, so that they may switch on the life-preserving machinery, at which point the victim is legally owned by the state and illegally dead.

Murder is the simpler option. This patient abandons all daily responsibilities as pedestrian distractions from the only remaining commitment: historical cleansing. She/he lunges into dramatic outer explosion in order to delay the inner explosion of the entrapped historic bile, by stalking historical enemies and bathing in their blood to preserve his/her sanity and life. Enemy blood is an intoxicant which helps to soothe the patient's massively aching historical conscience, as the most immediate symptom of the disease, evinced long before physical examination can detect the growth of history, is the inflation of the patient's communal memory and guilt to the point of bursting, and only by bursting into vengeful insurrection can the patient subdue for a while the asphyxiating typhoon raging within his/her constricted diaphragm which prevents the diseased from breathing. As science has always known, bloodletting releases nervous tension. This slaughtering routine also mentally prepares the patient for his/her own fatal prognosis. Best of all, this patient stands a fair chance to die in glorifiable action.

CONCLUSION

This, in short, is the essence of the millennium: the infection will spread through the world faster than any plague in human existence.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE [APOCRYPHAL]

As if struck by a ricocheting golden bullet, Medea fell in love with America. In America, where every person's happiness hovered waiting to be snatched up like a wedding bouquet or a signed football tossed in the maelstrom, her hunger could be satiated. America was a tornado of happinesses. Medea believed in America because she felt suffering was not suitable for humans, nor Gods (except for the misguided Jesus). For Medea, divinity meant abundance.

So at the age of sixteen Medea eloped with Melvin Jason Washington Jr., a twice-striped accountant with the US Air Force. They met, as everyone in her country, in a café at Liberty Square where the locals gathered to preen in old black leather, gold chains and dark glasses, as the soundtrack pitched into heartfelt lament. Medea caught Melvin's Mongolian eye as she restlessly sipped her espresso and winked at him forebodingly because:

- a. the girls at the next table were eyeing him;
- b. his Erebus skin flashed images of mindless sex and dying, which in her country were life's primary concerns;
- c. love affairs were the best way (the shortcut) into a foreign culture as they provided her with indirect, and thus not haunting or overbearing, memories of a geography;
- d. she had winced because her espresso tasted bitter and pungent, a mixture of pulled weeds and baked urine.

Melvin shook the ironed tails of his Air-Jordan raincoat, lifted his pointed face with an almost posthumous glow, and shyly waded sideways through the noisy tables that extended across the sidewalks, cutting through the traffic melees and the curious glares of regulars who shared the air of survivors eager to talk of their most recent grand ordeal. He knew how to say "Thank you" in the local tongue, and this he used as ammunition each time he had to elbow a lottery man thrusting his notched stave at him, or a shrivelled woman collecting coins at the crank of a barrel organ, or the animated soccer fans commenting on the bright displays of the day's papers that fluttered from ubiquitous yellow kiosks.

Medea's raceblind wink had struck Melvin as the promise of an escape into exotic magic. Her pale olive skin signaled to him a misty harbor. He felt that fear and self-deprecation were modern languages she didn't

understand, like a colloquial form of English. She could make the old mirrored cradle of America a funhouse for him again.

Medea's large wet eyes rooted with proprietary ease into her helpless suitor on that simmering afternoon, while in broken English she initiated him into the joys of lazing, of channeling all significant events into the commonplace and personal needs into the common, and exorcising time by flooding it. She liked the meekness that bridged Melvin's body to his brain, the slender unease of his piped limbs, the solitary twitch of his lips, the lined rigidity of his back, the wiry tufts that looked as if they could be dusted away, and the tension huddled in the rimmed crevice of his nape that crept into the cracks of his lips and worried the top of his melanin-browned head. He limply recalled his high-school days for her, but otherwise his mind constantly gravitated toward the future with second hand speed. In the end, Medea admitted that her mind was not something she could easily misplace. After sunset, she led him to an Ionian temple of Poseidon renovated into a disco, where, not quite realizing it, Melvin moonwalked himself into a golden fleece.

Two days later, Medea married Melvin Jason Jr. because:

- a. he was bubblingly eager to distract and spoil her;
- b. no local men of his age (21) had independent incomes;
- c. the US Air Force would provide them a house, whereas regulations did not allow her unwed in his dorm, and she couldn't sneak a black man home as in her country there were no secrets;
- d. she was now a traitor—she might as well have cut up her own brother—and had to flee her family and her comrades before they kidnapped her and restored her to her proper history;
- e. he hated being left alone with his frothy penis, forced to try and figure it out every time it fizzled away;
- f. he placed his words neatly together like piano notes floating coolly to edge out the black echoes of the night;
- g. he trusted her, which amused her, then shocked her, until she felt that his blind faith had finally broken her real hymen.

It was a minimalist unritual wedding before an Embassy judge, because her family had excommunicated her, and his family, stationed on a remote overseas base, had just invested in a new Mercedes. Medea wore a rawhide mini, flamenco shirt and open-toed sandals. He wore a brown baggy suit, and his lukewarm hands looked as if they had just been shaved. The

witness, his stern lieutenant, took snapshots. Medea was surprised when she cried.

Afterwards, Melvin giggled. When he finally spoke, it was dawn and his words flowed haphazardly from a leak she had sprung inside him. He was so drunk he sounded earnest: "Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night," he divulged to Medea as her curls whipped his polished skin, "and I realize we'll die; we won't be young, our flesh will crumble like some ugly person's I see sometimes in the distance; that thought suffocates me. Medea, we all die!" Medea's eyes looked like puddles after a storm.

"Terrifying," she replied the next day to ease her husband's hangover. "Not that I know what you're talking about. Isn't death the most normal aspect of life?" Her blinding familiarity with history, her foreign sixth sense, loomed over Melvin Jason Washington like a censor ever after.

Meanwhile, that dawn Medea understood that being American meant espousing the divine laws of supply and demand; so she reassured Melvin that if there was no demand for death, death wouldn't exist. "But life, too, needs to be salted, or it's tasteless," she concluded. "Death is the salt."

The happily mismatched newlyweds were painfully jealous of one another. He was a squeaky-clean black Elvis; she was once arrested for fornicating in public during a national parade. He rose at dawn, she at sunset. He felt devoted to his poodles, Lucy and Ethel; she to her breasts, Diana and Niobe. He was new, shiny and ambisexually delicate; she was careless and greedy, and every time she closed her eyes after sex, she saw an ocean.

Because her homeland was known for its passionate lovers, because all its roads and motions led to the sea, and because she was now an untouchable, they transferred to America, so their marriage could be safe from outside appetites, and so that Medea would experience the land of maple syrup, where people lived as though in desertion, and bathed in cold cash.

There wasn't much Medea had to be trained in for her exile: she studied catalogues, learned to identify brand names, and replaced most of the rebellious actions of her premarried life with the American equivalent: in short, she learned to shop.