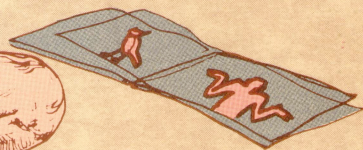


# William S. Burroughs The Book of Breeething



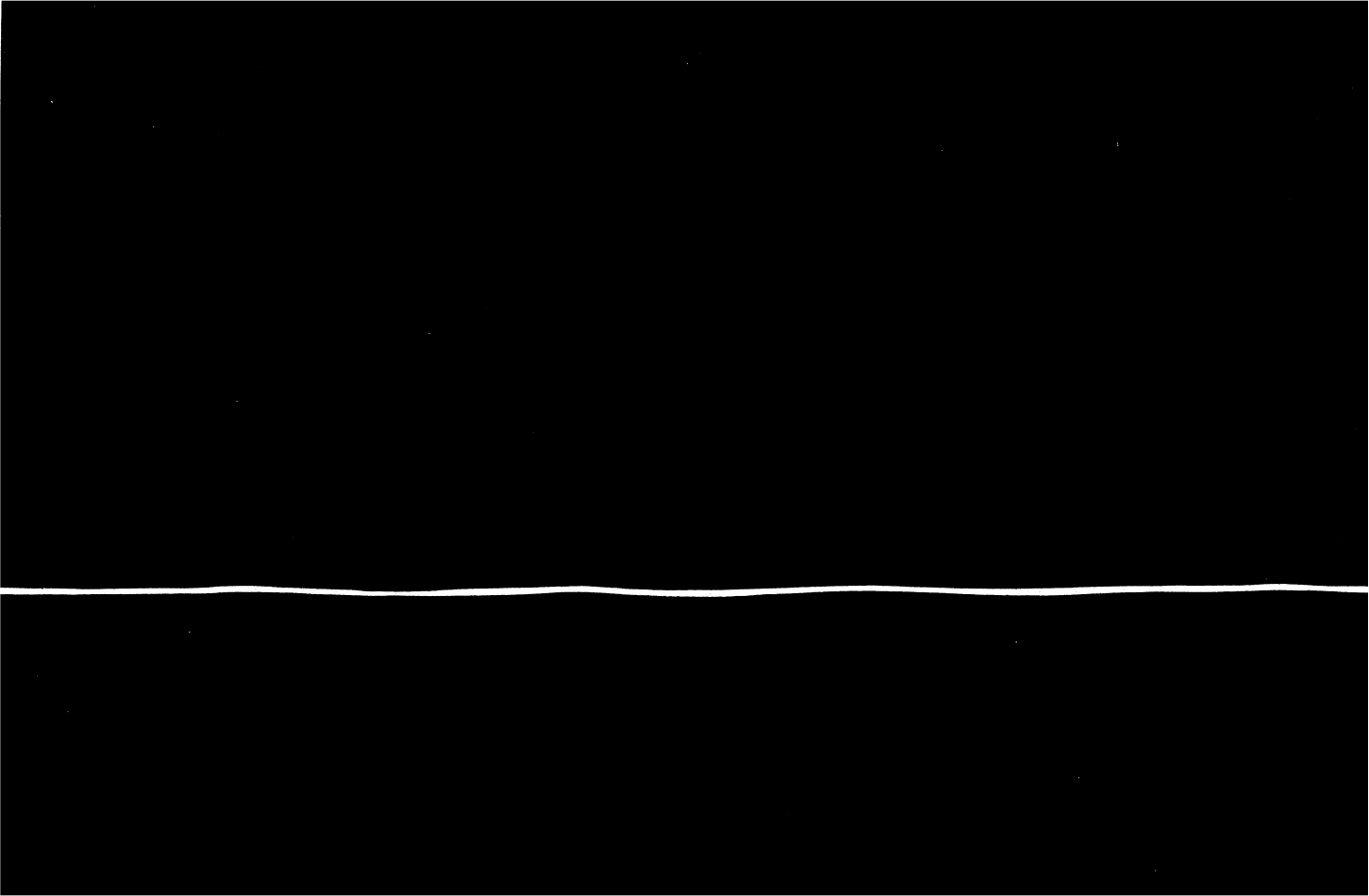
*with Illustrations by Robert F. Gale*





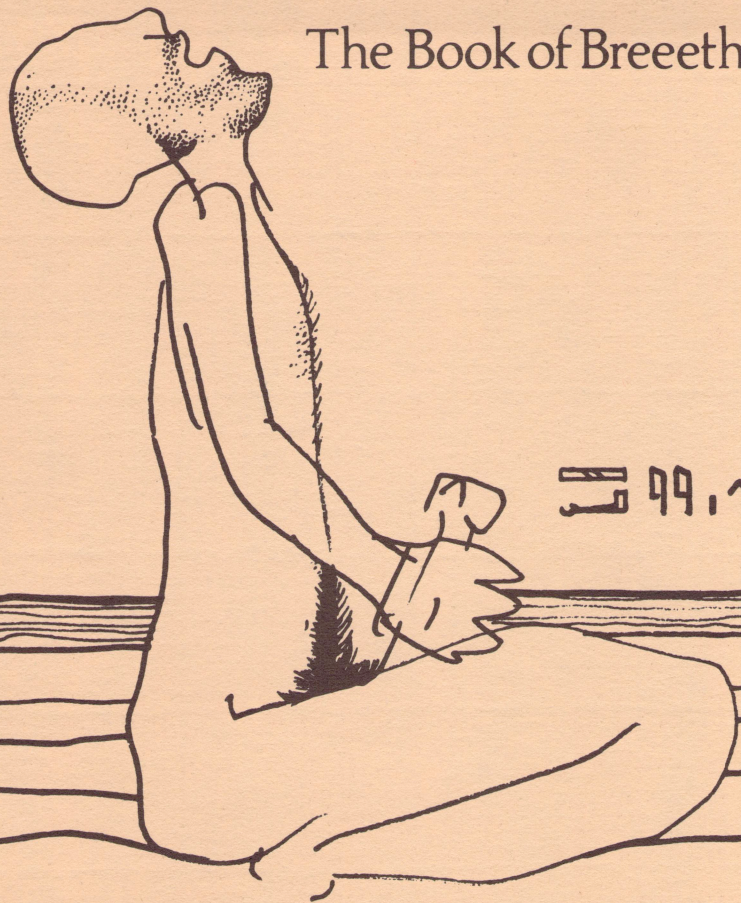






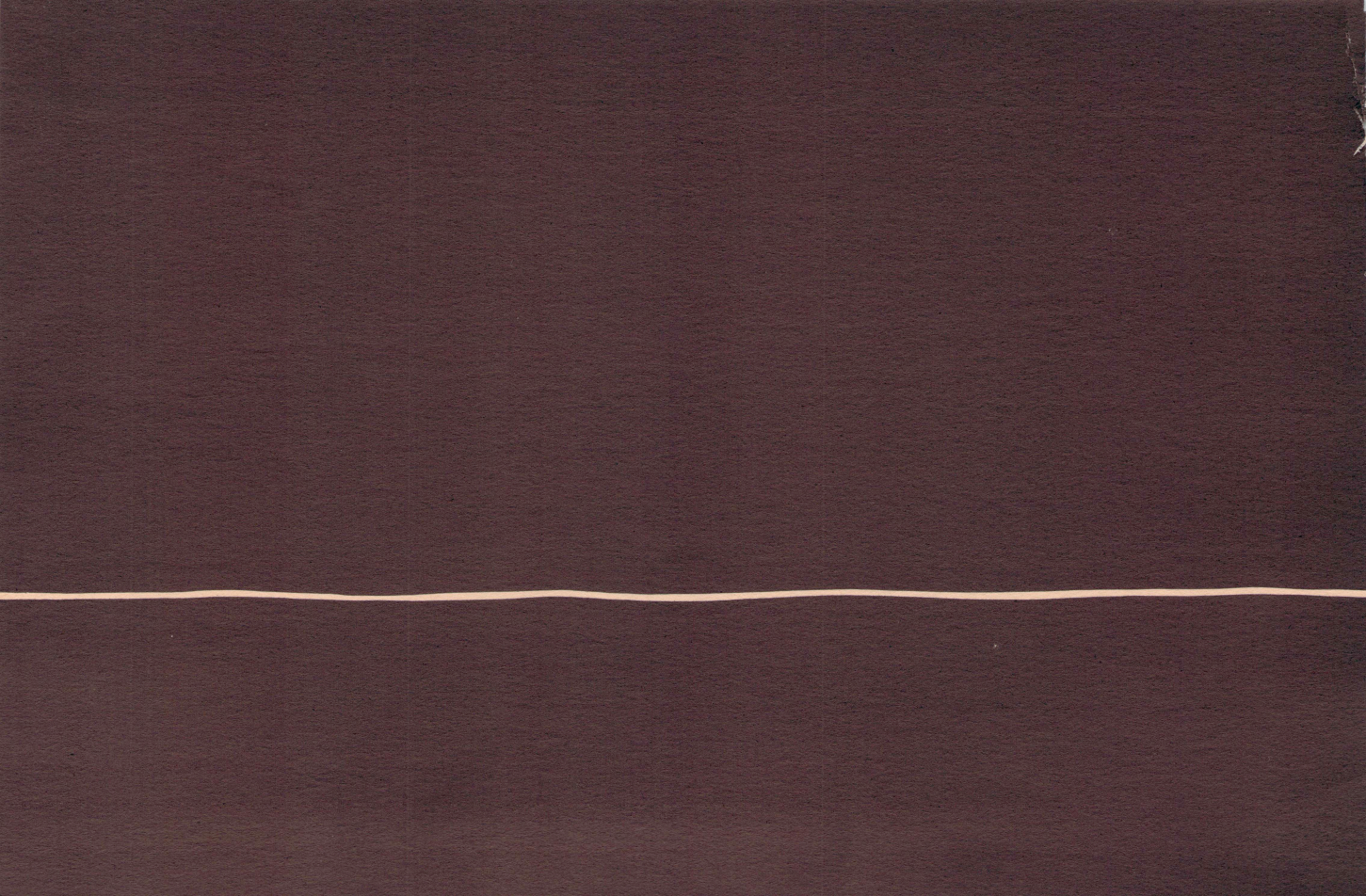


# The Book of Breething



99, ~ ~ ~ ~ ~







# The Book of Breething

TEXT AND CONCEPTION BY

William S. Burroughs

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Robert F. Gale



AN OVERDRIVE BOOK

BLUE WIND PRESS : BERKELEY : 1975



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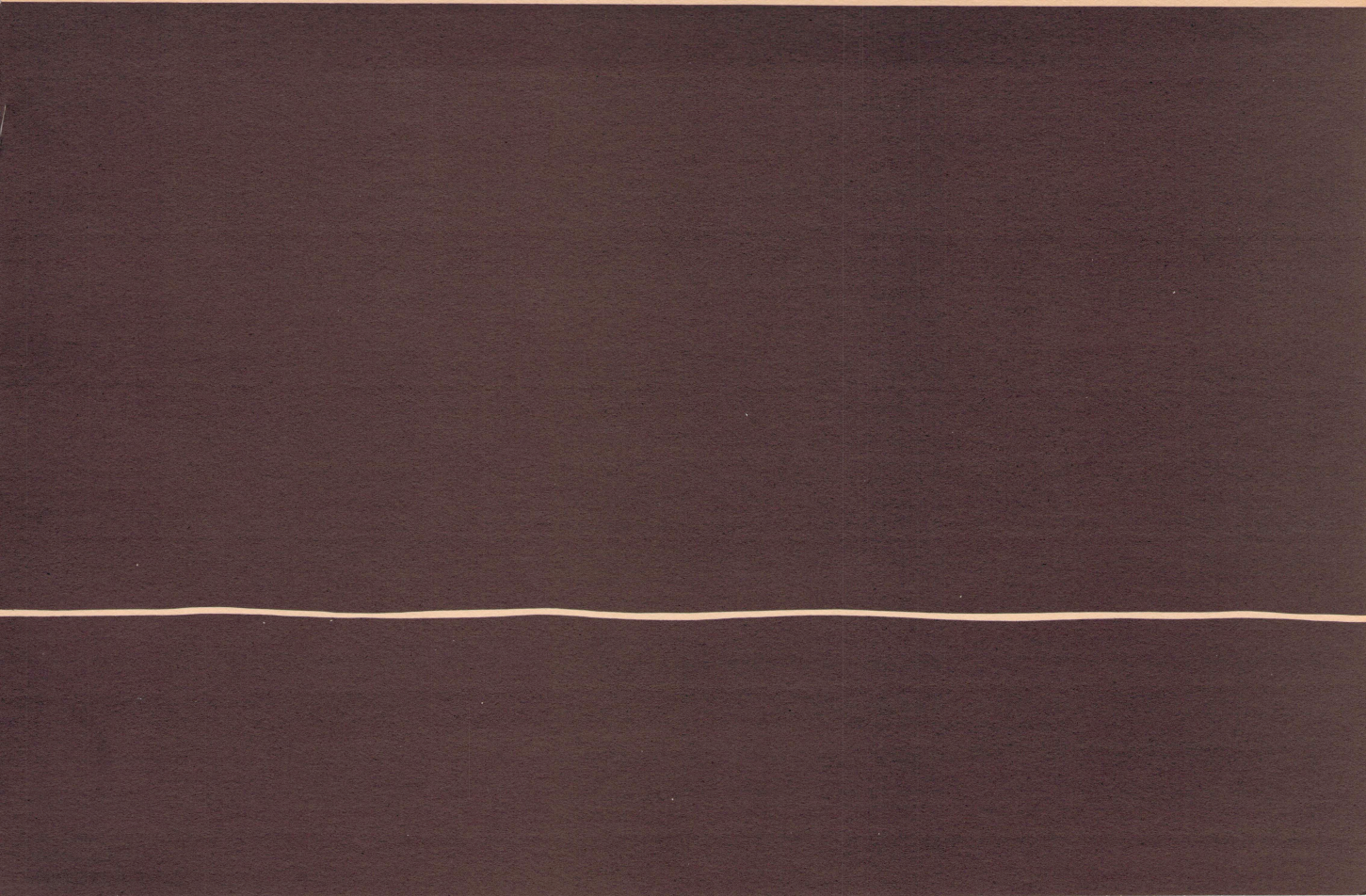
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In the beginning was the word and the word *was* God and has remained one of the mysteries ever since.

What *is* word?

To ask this question assumes the *is* of identity: something that word essentially *is*.

Count Alfred Korzybski, who developed the concept of General Semantics in his book *Science and Sanity*, has pointed out that the *is* of identity has led to basic confusion in Western thought. The *is* of identity is rarely used in Egyptian pictorial writing. Instead of saying he is my servant they say he (is omitted) *as* my servant: a statement of relationship not identity. Accordingly there is nothing that word itself essentially *is*. Word only exists in a communication system of sender and receiver. It takes two to talk. Perhaps it only took one to write.



It is generally assumed that the spoken word came before the written word. I suggest that the spoken word as *we* know it came *after* the written word. In the beginning was the word. In the beginning of what exactly? In the beginning of *writing*.

Animals communicate and convey information. But they do not write. They cannot make information available to future generations or to animals outside the range of their communication system. This is the crucial distinction between man and other animals. Korzybski has pointed out this human distinction and described man as "the time binding animal." He can make information available over any length of time to other men through writing. Animals talk. They don't write. Now a wise old rat may know a lot about traps and poison but he cannot write an article on *Death Traps in Your Warehouse* for the *Reader's Digest* translated into 17 rat languages with tactics for ganging up on dogs and ferrets and taking care of wise guys who stuff steel wool up our holes. If he could rats might well take over the earth with all its food stocks human and otherwise.

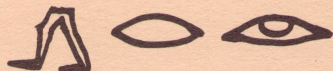


It is doubtful if the spoken word would ever have evolved beyond the animal stage without the written word. The written word is of course a symbol for something and in the case of a hieroglyphic language like Egyptian it may be a symbol for itself that is a picture of what it represents. This is not true in an alphabet language like English. The word leg has no pictorial resemblance to a leg. It refers to the *spoken* word leg. So we may forget that a written word *is an image* and that written words are images in sequence that is to say *moving pictures*. (Lest I be accused of using the is of identity I could amend the above to read that word serves *as* an image). So any hieroglyphic sequence gives us an immediate working definition for the spoken words. Spoken words use any verbal units that refer to this sequence. If we know the script no matter what our spoken language may be we can immediately communicate in writing. A simplified pictorial script adapted to the typewriter would constitute a workable international means of communication.

Another special feature of pictorial script is that the pictures are capable of infinite variation. The English word leg has to be written in one way. A pictorial leg can be written as any number of legs.

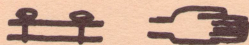
# ELEMENT CHART

coming forth



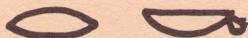
LEGS MOUTH EYE

waiting



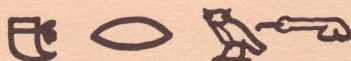
ROAD HAND

for thee



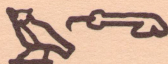
MOUTH CUP

from of old



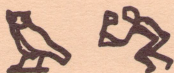
SHEAF/WHERT MOUTH OWL Eejack. PHALLUS

in the presence of



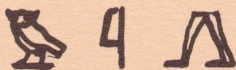
OWL Eejack. PHALLUS

death



OWL MANAXE

comes



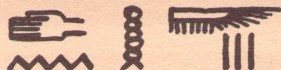
OWL REED LEGS

on



FACE

wings

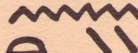


HAND ROPE WINGS  
WATER




to 

WATER

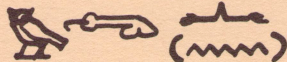
who 

WATER  
CAKE

terror 

WRUNG NECK GOOSE

in the absence of



OWL EEJACK PHALLUS

SHRUG-ARMS  
(water)

by means of



OWL

COMING FORTH

WAITING

FOR THEE

FROM OF OLD

COMING FORTH . . . LEGS, MOUTH, EYE

WAITING . . . A HAND POINTING, A ROAD

FOR THEE . . . MOUTH, CUP

FROM OF OLD . . . SHEATH OF WHEAT, MOUTH, OWL, EJACU-  
LATING PHALLUS

Any variation of sets and pictures can be used . . . harvest moon over the  
corn shucks and pumpkins, boy with teeth bare as he jacks off, howling wolf,  
owl in a tree



WHOOOOO  
WHOOOO  
WHOOO

distant train whistle, Oliver Twist holds up his empty soup bowl, sun light on legs, mouths, eyes

Models can pose the glyphs and act them out in charades. It's the great work of making words into pictures into so called real people and places

COMING FORTH

IN THE PRESENCE OF

COMING FORTH . . . LEGS, MOUTH, EYES

IN THE PRESENCE OF . . . OWL, EJACULATING PHALLUS

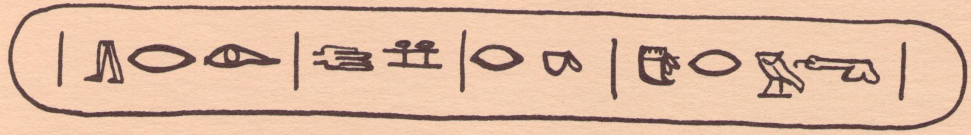
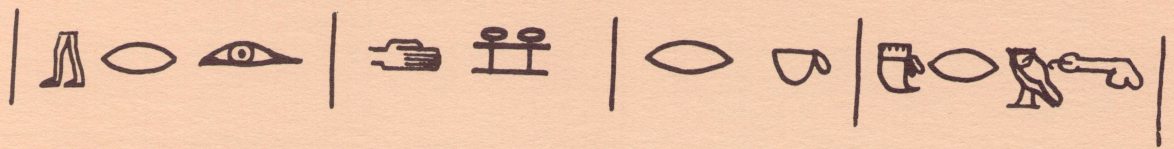
Transposing these stylized glyphs into photos and drawings we find that there can be any number of representations of any glyph any number of COMING FORTHs or IN THE PRESENCE OFs.

Coming Forth

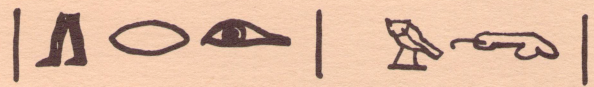
Waiting

For Thee

From of old



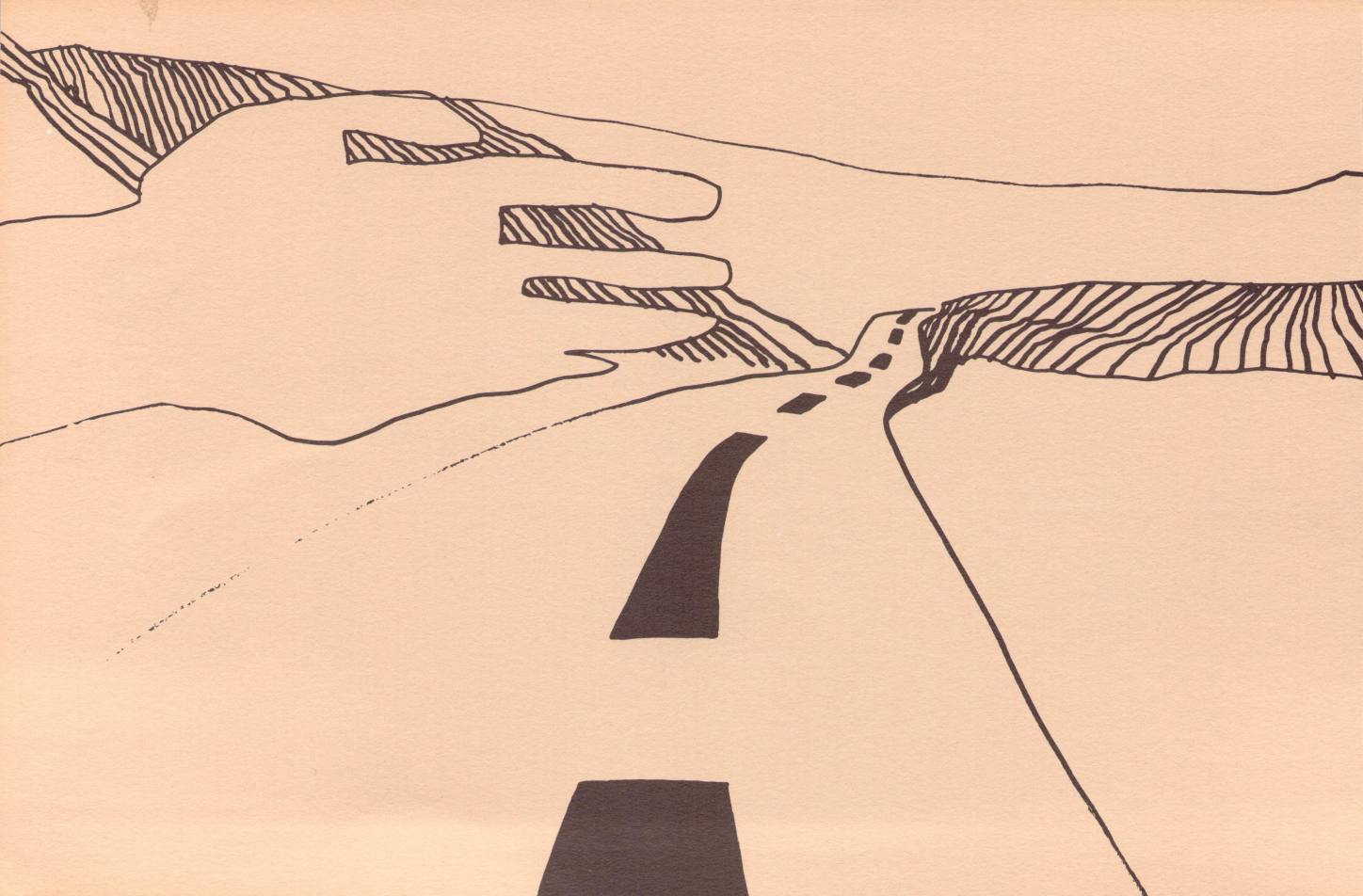
Coming Forth In the Presence of



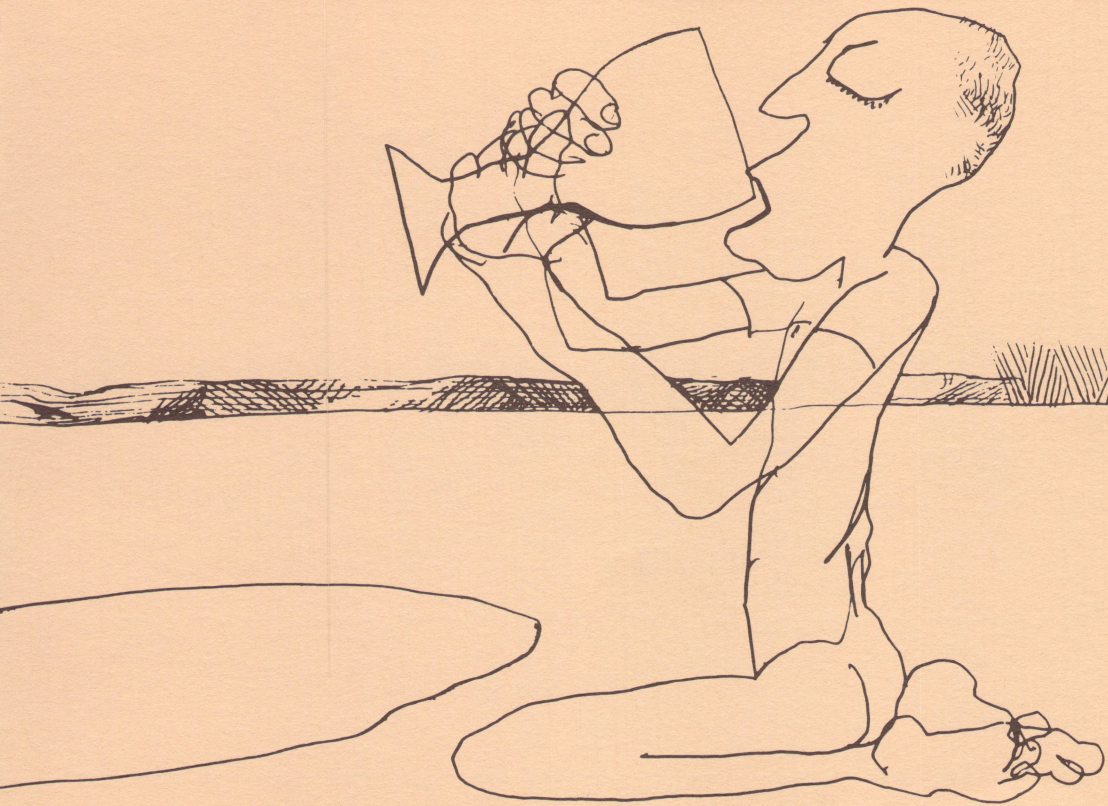


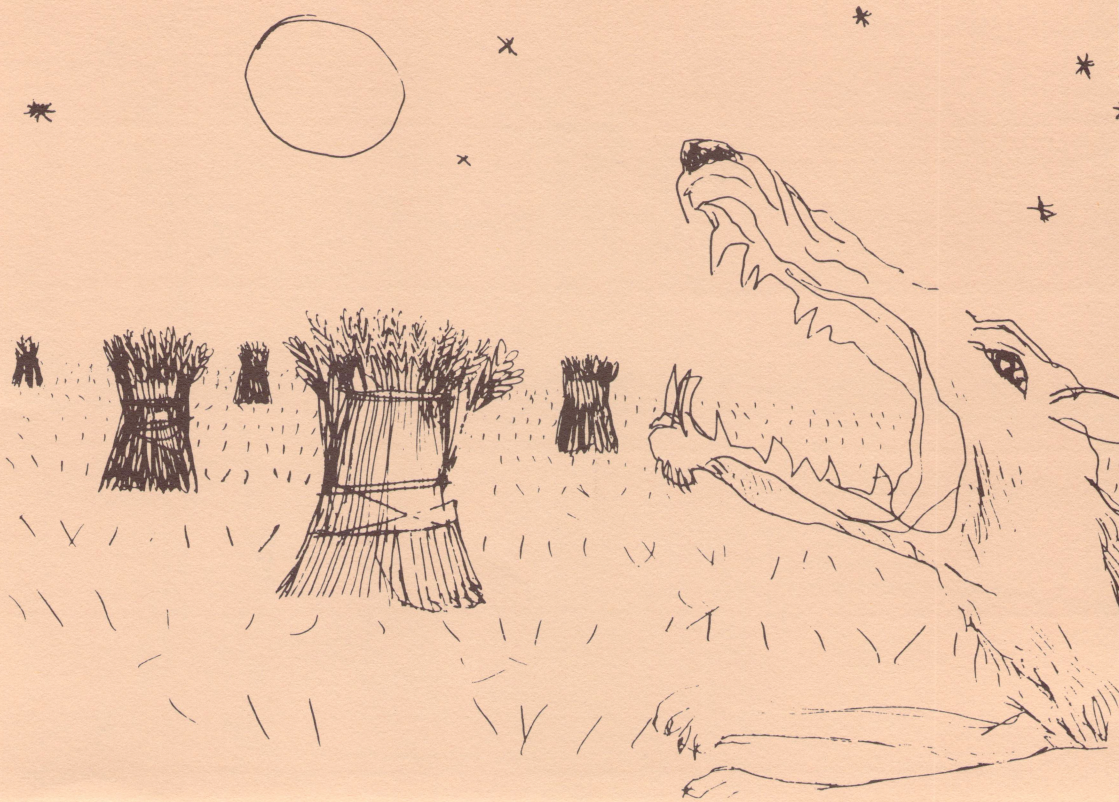




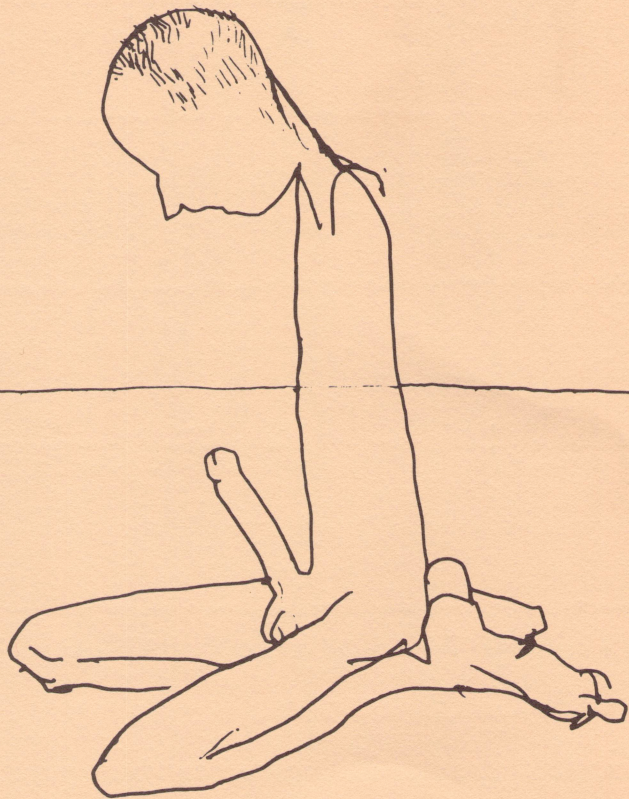


















26 05

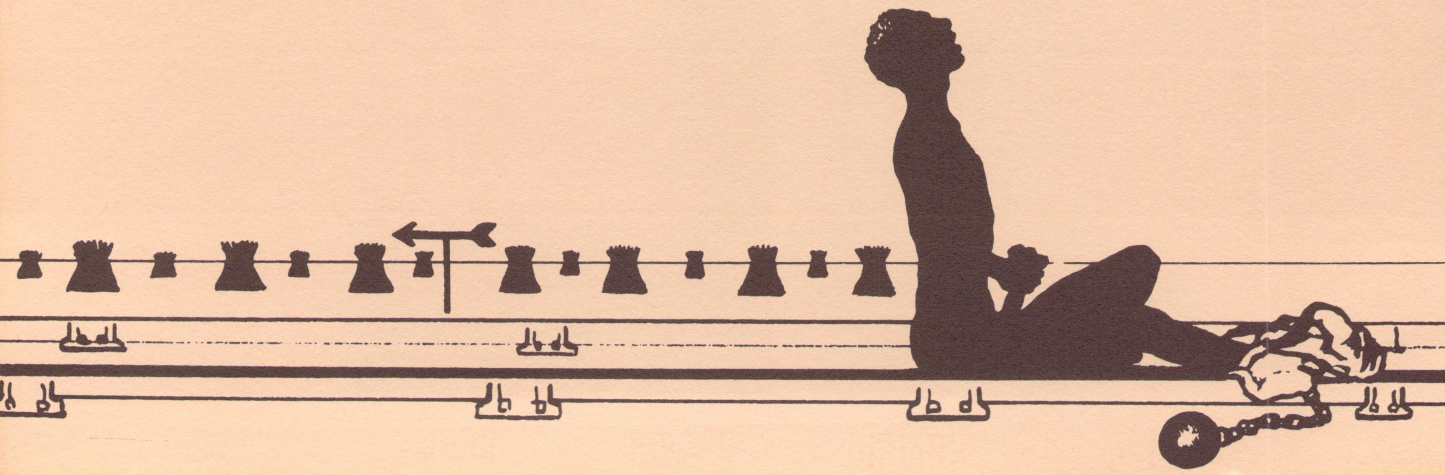
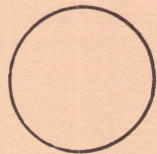
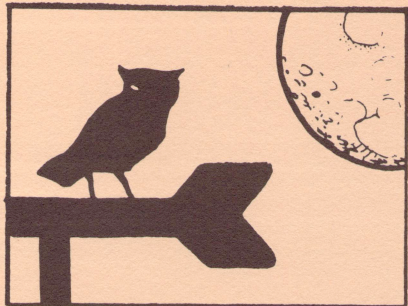
26 05

26 05

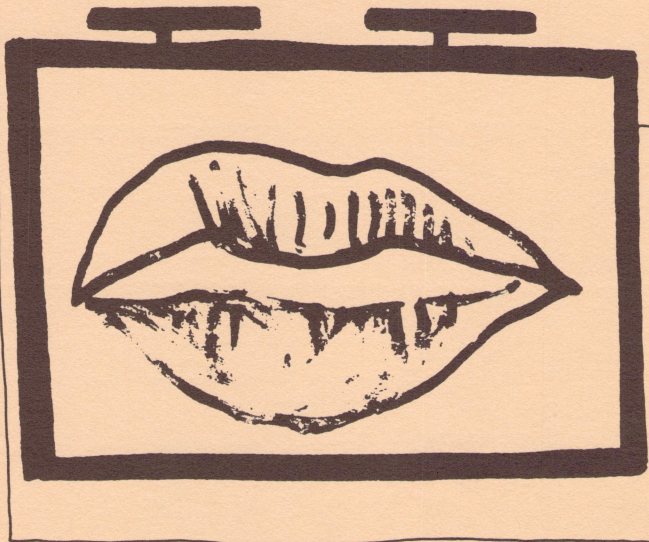
26 05

26 05

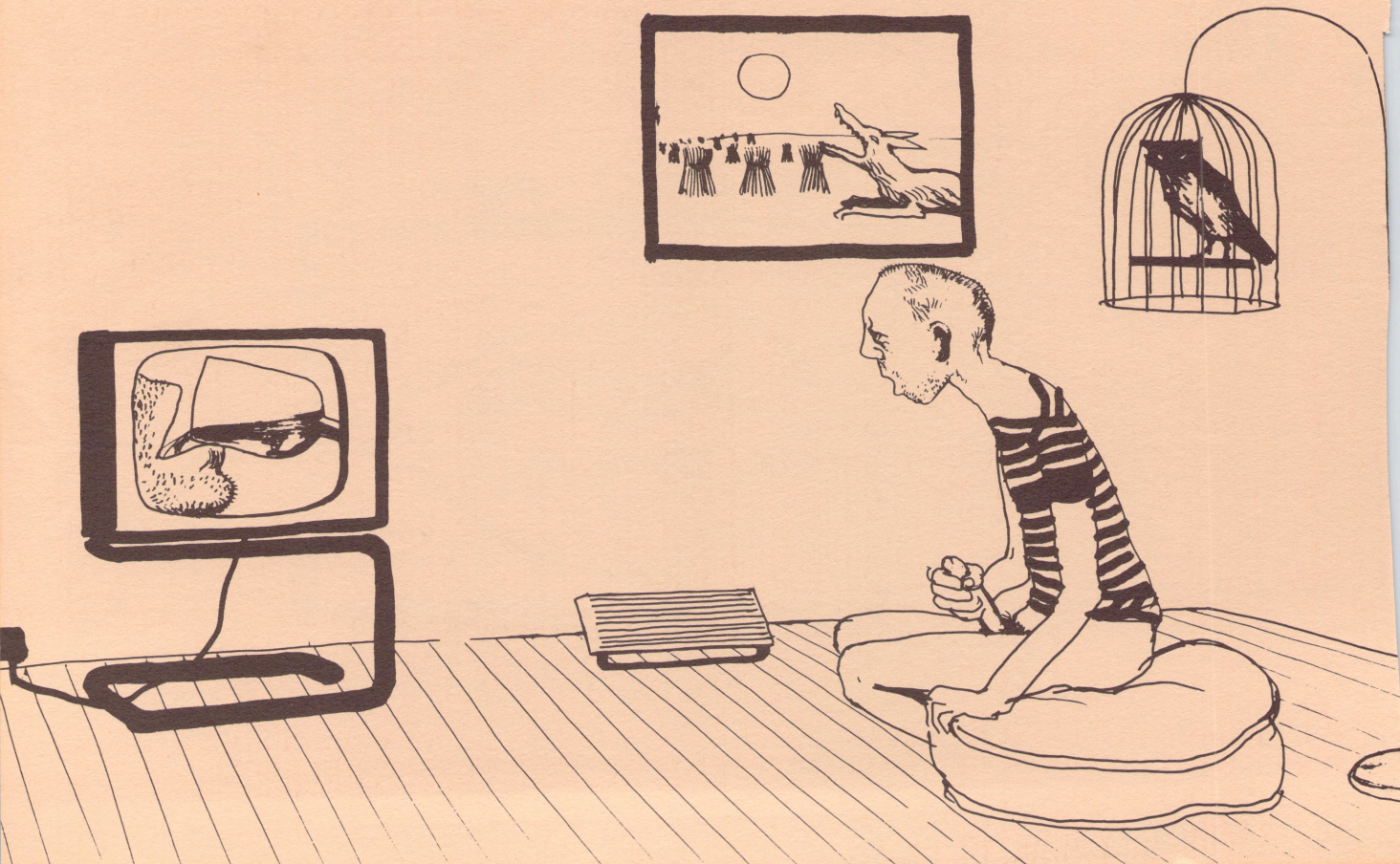
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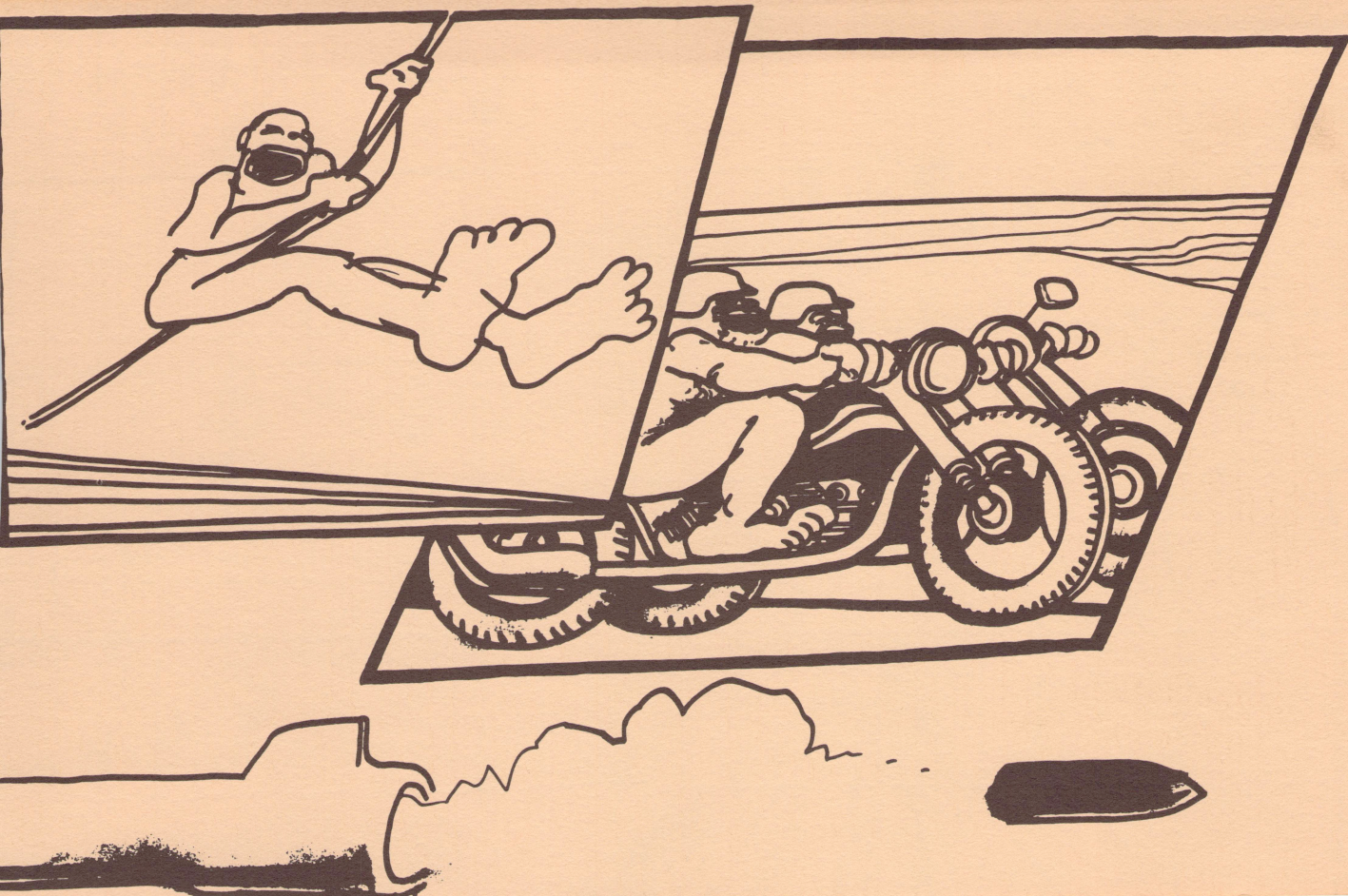




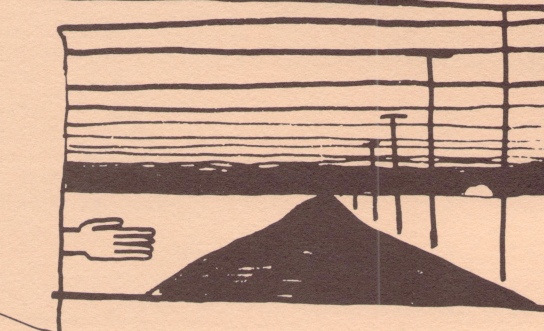
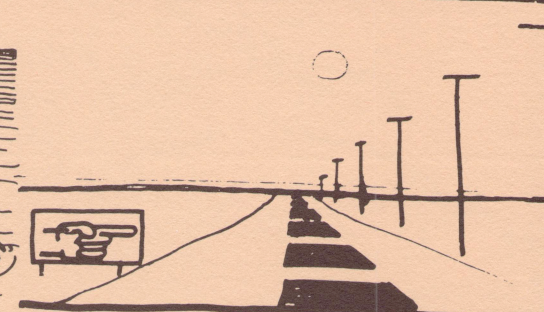
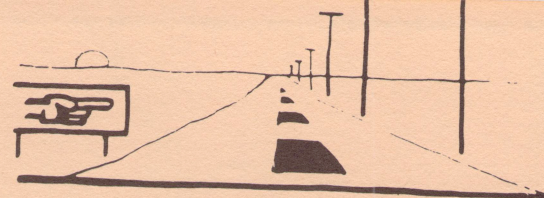
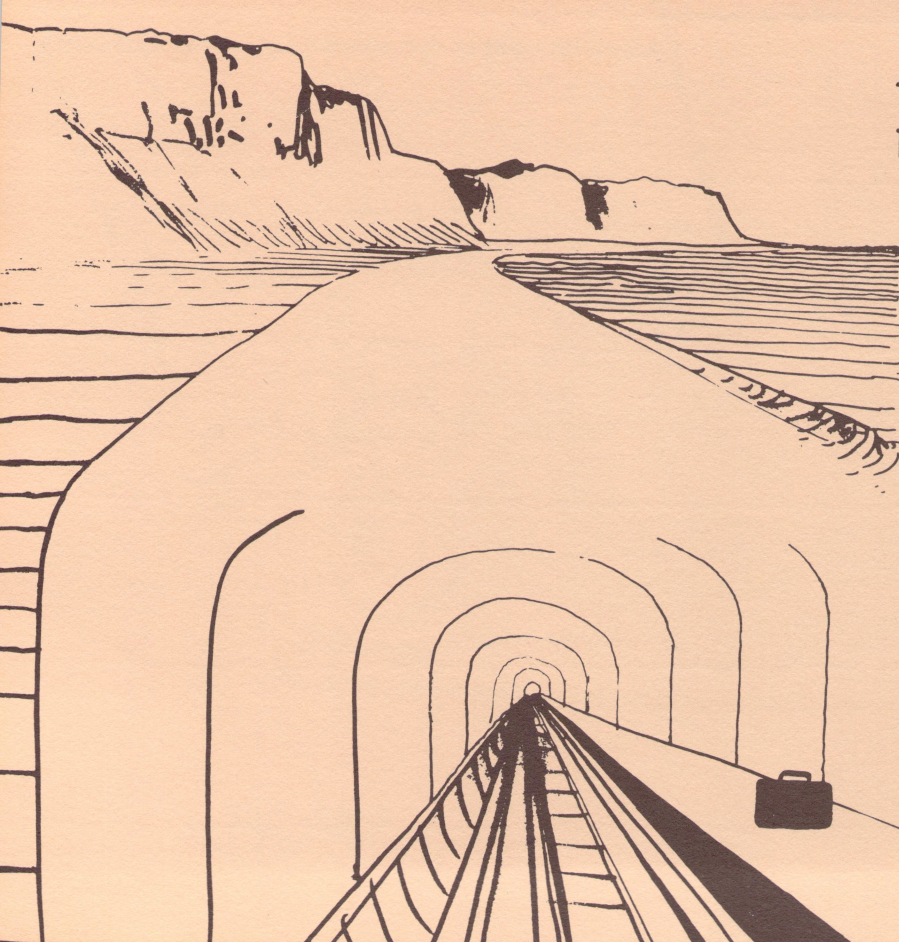












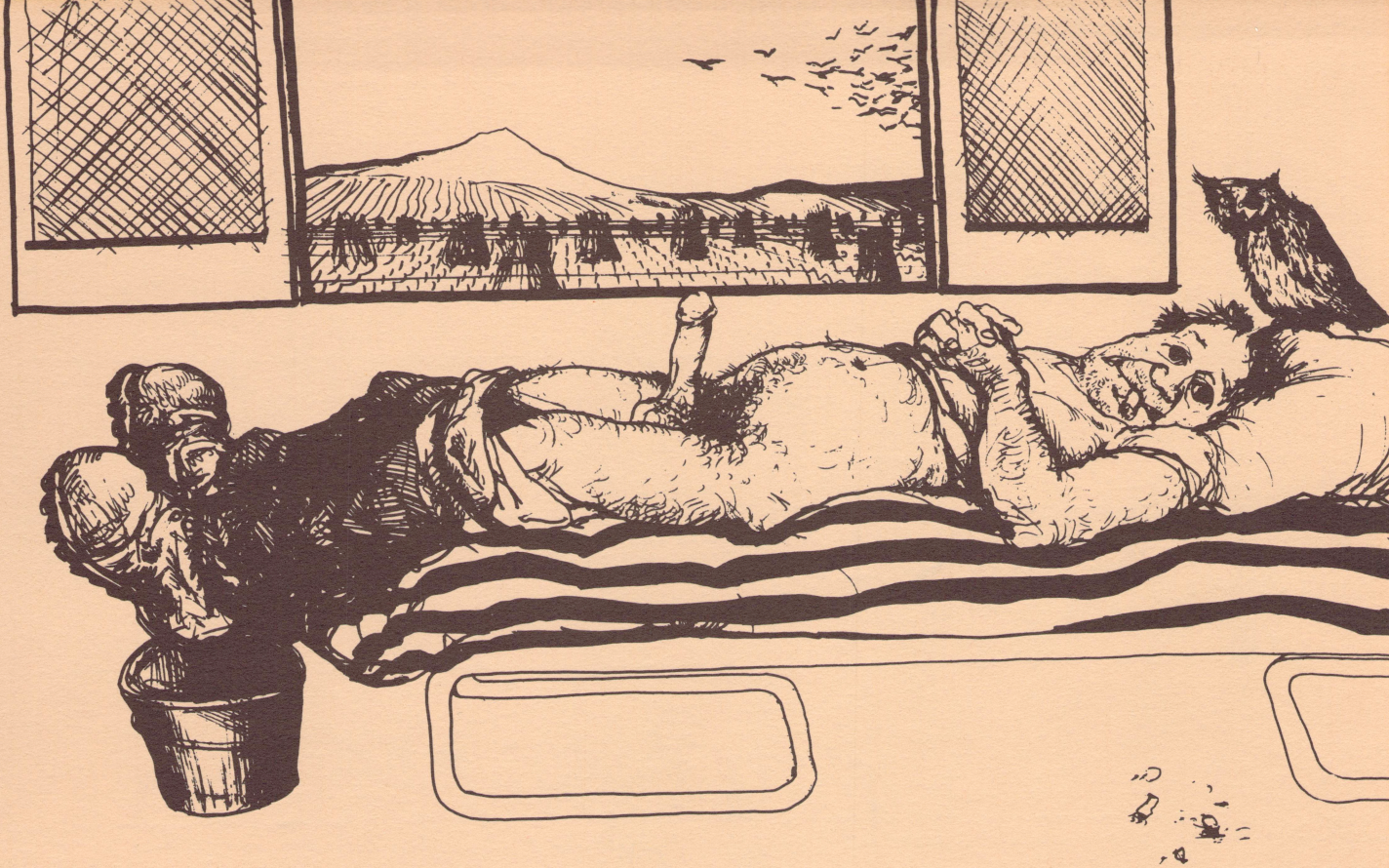




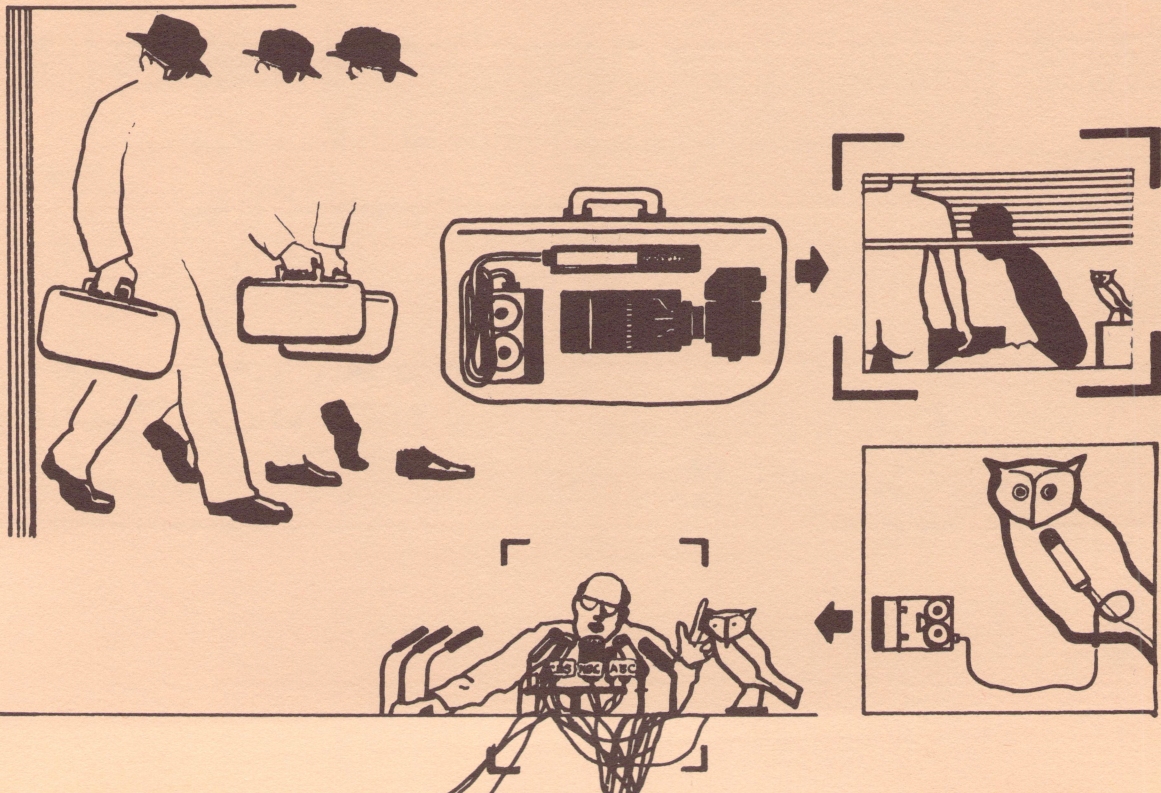














## THE CURSE OF KING TUT

An ancient Egyptian relic with a strange inscription had an honored place in the spacious London apartment of Lord Westbury for seven years. It had been taken from the tomb of the boy Pharaoh King Tutankhamen by Howard Carter, the famous English archaeologist who had discovered and excavated the tomb. The inscription as translated by scholars read:

DEATH SHALL COME ON SWIFT WINGS  
TO WHO TOUCHETH THE TOMB  
OF THE PHARAOHS.

(Above quoted from *The Desperate Years* by James D. Horan, Bonanza Books, New York, page 22)

This is the famous curse of King Tut and 14 people connected with the opening of the tomb died in violent or mysterious circumstances over as many

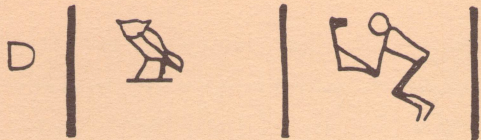
years. One died in Egypt from an infected mosquito bite. Another was killed in a car crash near Columbus Texas.

Lord Westbury made little of the curse. "Nothing to it" he told reporters. "Just a lot of superstition."

Then one day in 1930 he stepped out of a seventh floor window of his London apartment. As Westbury's body was being taken to a crematorium the hearse knocked down and killed an 8 year old boy.

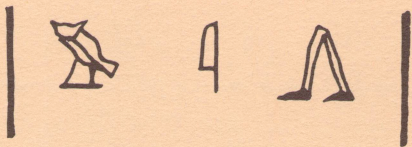


1



COMES

2



1

2

3

4

5

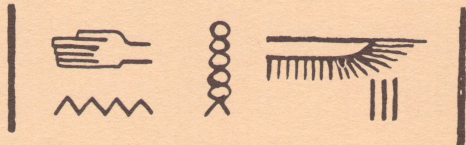
6



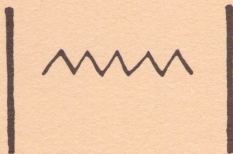
3



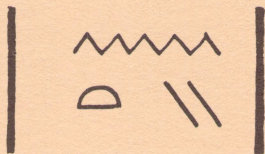
WINGS 4



TO 5



WHO 6

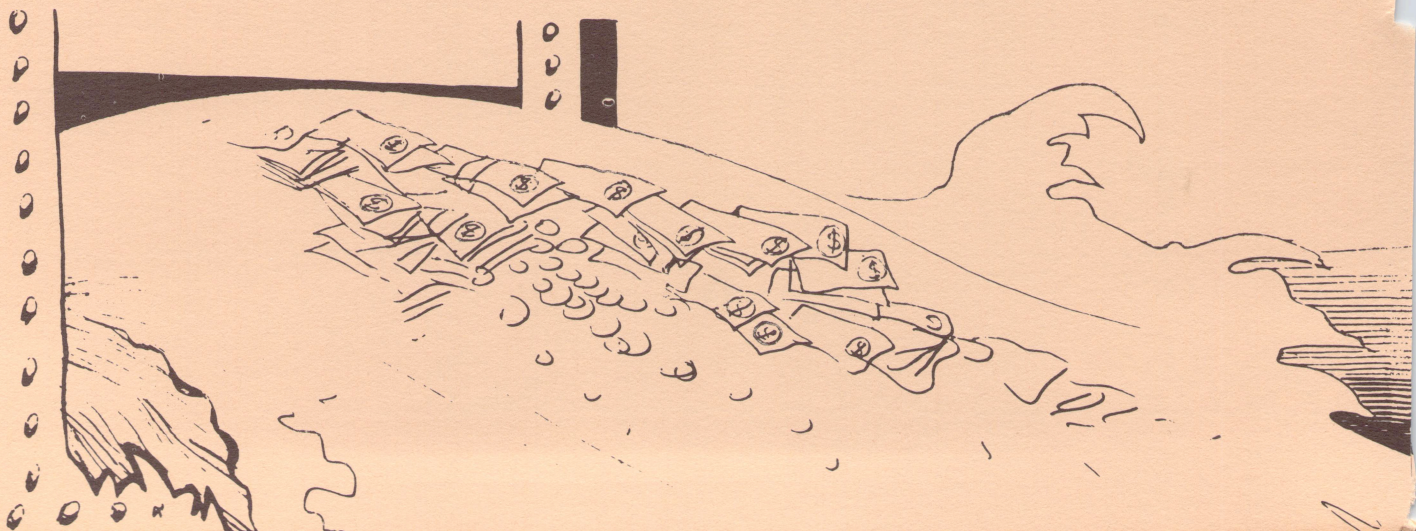
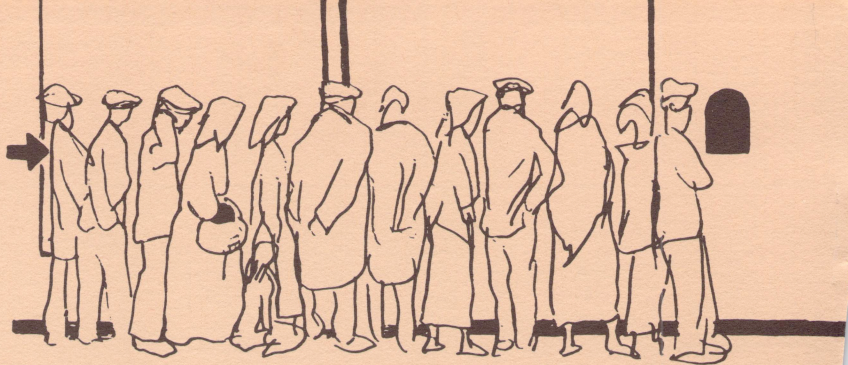
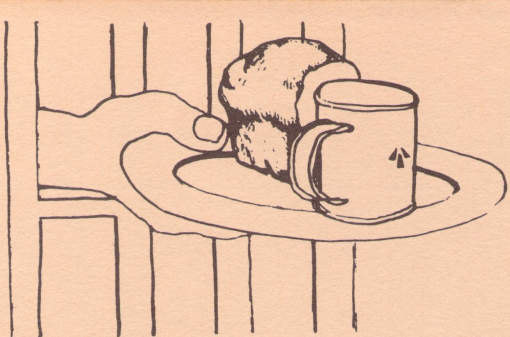


Notice that the death glyph is a man splitting his own head with an axe. Recall a time when you painfully bit your inner lip. Recall a time when you hit your shins against a chair or table or stool in a dark room. Recall a time when a cigarette stuck to your lip and your fingers slid up the cigarette resulting in painful burn and shower of sparks. Death is here conceived as coming from within, as an implanted self destruct mechanism. A curse operates very much like a virus and is equally indiscriminate. Notice that the glyph for who is bread and water. A curse is a formula and any who can be fitted into this formula by association . . . bread and water diet, bread lines, money since bread is an old slang term for money, Watergate, floods, tidal waves, wet streets. . .











Written across a dark sky in silver letters . . . THE 1930s.

Cut to end of excavated passage . . . "This is it gentlemen. The tomb of Tut-ankhamen."

Glyphs blow out across the dust bowl. Bank robbers shoot it out with FBI agents.

Strikes, bread lines, ruined brokers leaping from windows

Luxurious London apartment of Lord Westbury. Westbury is drunk. The lights go out. He reels to his feet shouting "GRIMSY . . . BRING CANDLES . . . OPEN THE CURTAINS . . . Nipped off to the pub most likely" . . . He gets up to open the curtains and stumbles over a coffee table . . . crash of glass . . . his body draped in a red curtain plummets to the street . . .

Lord Westbury's coffin covered with flowers is put into hearse by pall bearers . . . gangster funerals intercut . . .



Hearse on way to crematorium. Driver is smoking cigarette. He puts two fingers on cigarette to remove after inhale. Cigarette sticks to his lip. Finger slides up cigarette burning fingers and showering his pants with sparks. Driver curses brushing sparks off pants. He looks up and slams on the brakes. Hearse skids on wet street.

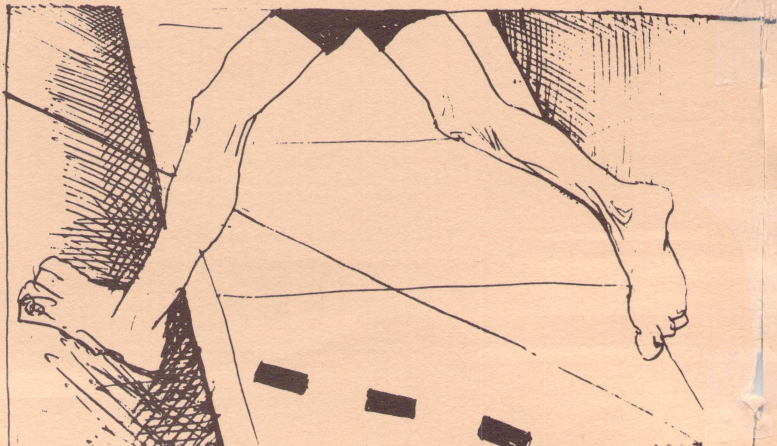
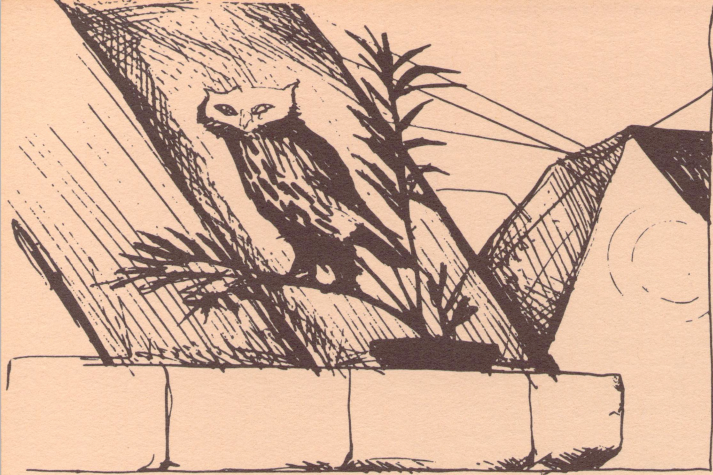
Casket jolts violently forward.

8 Year Old Boy Dead on Westbury Street.

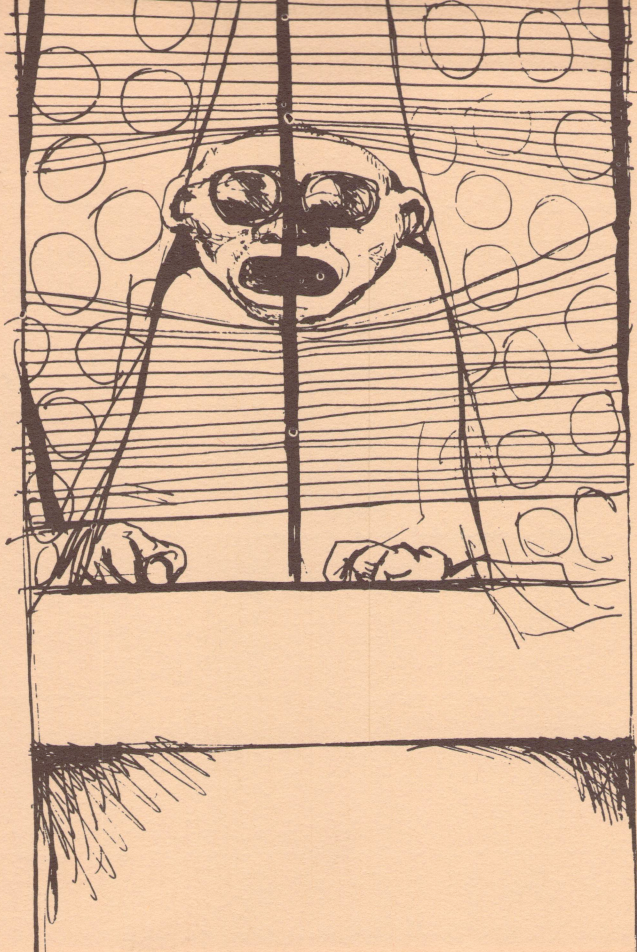












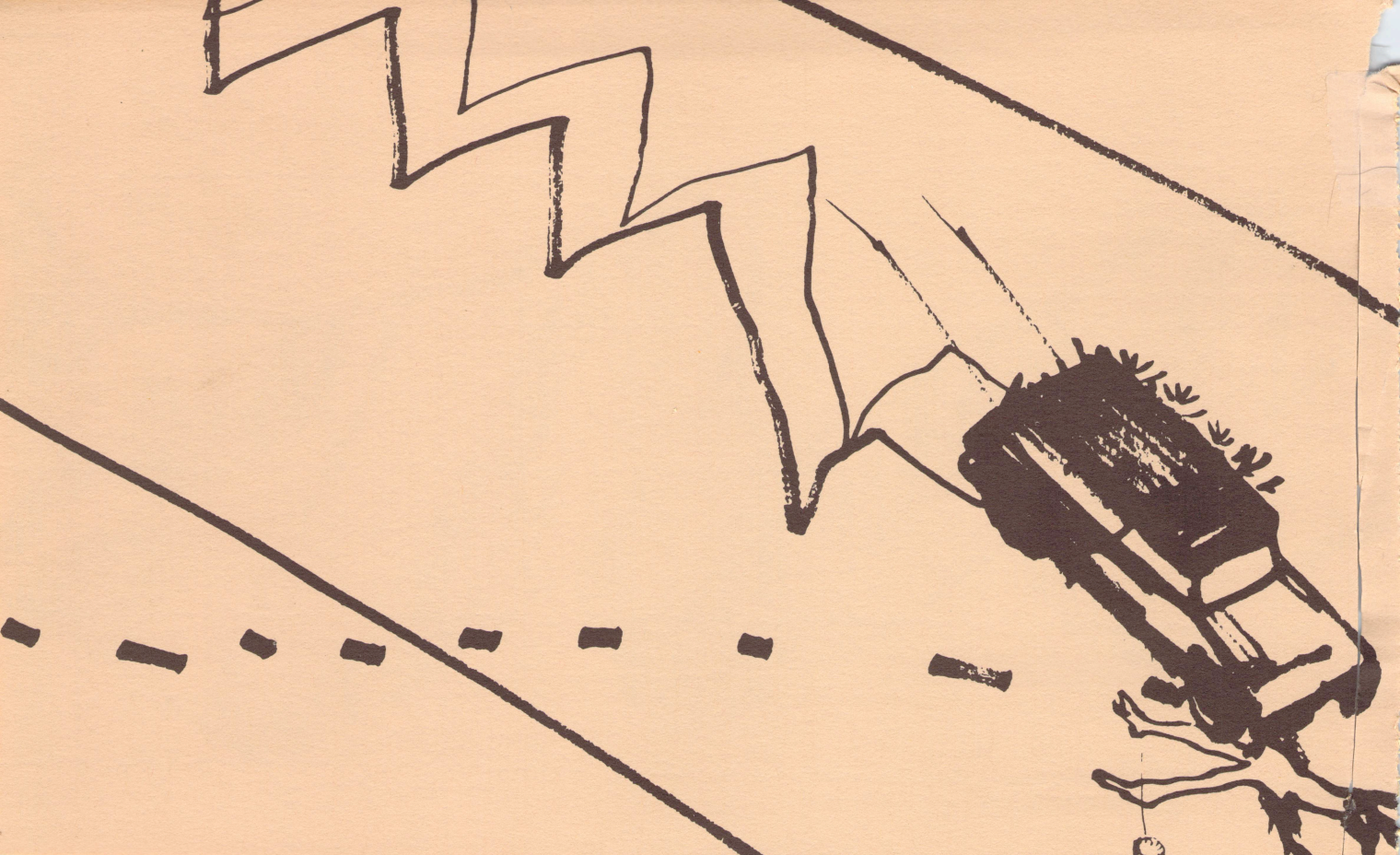




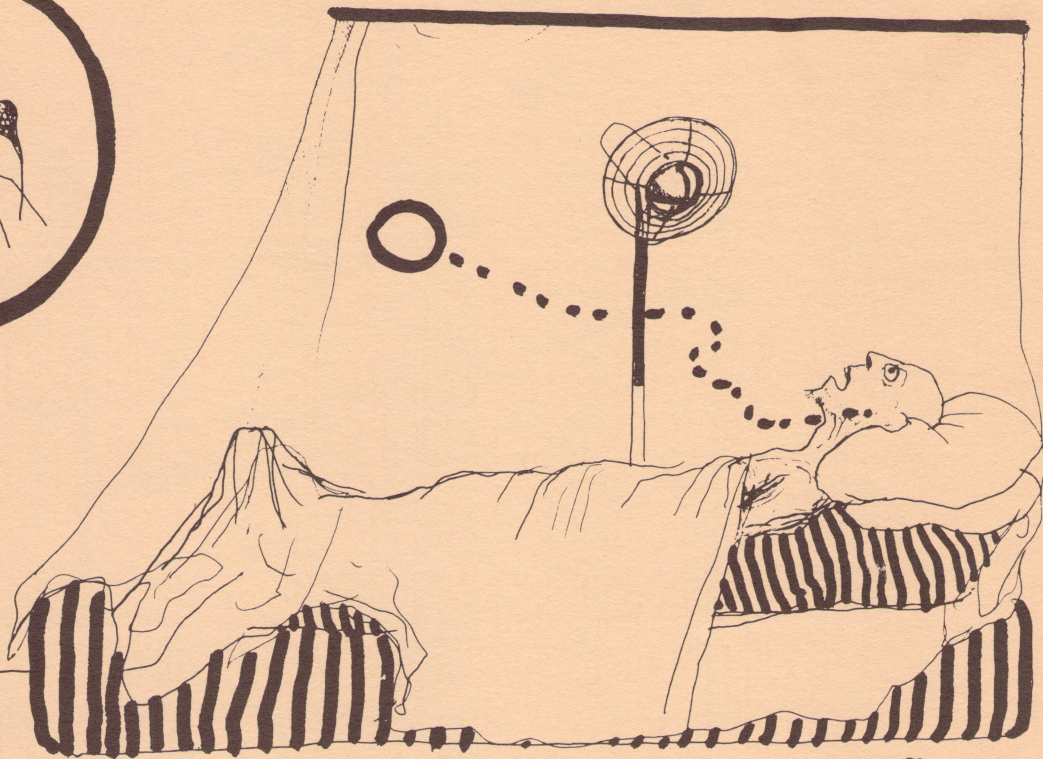
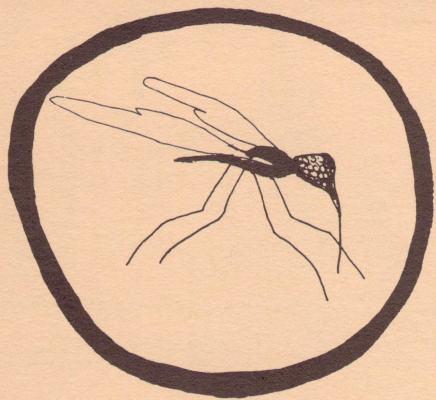




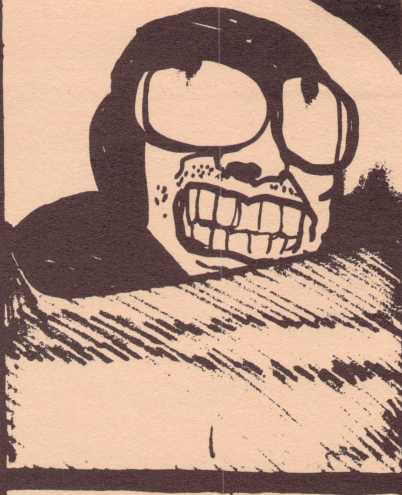
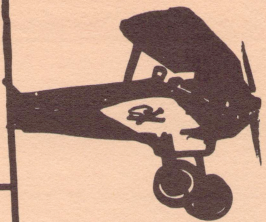


















DEATH

IN THE PRESENCE OF  
ALAMOUT

BY MEANS OF

Hassan i Sabbah was a boyhood friend of poet Omar Kyam. He became a convert to the dissident Ishmaelian sect and fled from his native Persia to Egypt where he spent several years. I put a question to CONTROL:

Question: What secret did Hassan i Sabbah learn in Egypt that enabled him to control and activate his assassins from a distance?

Answer: Energy from virus.

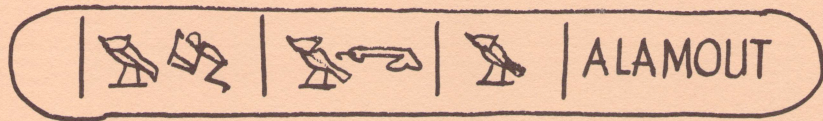
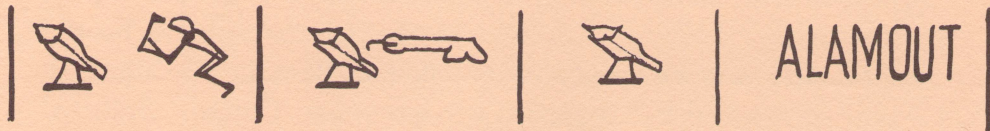
After years of wandering with a handful of followers Hassan i Sabbah established himself in the mountain fortress of Alamout in what is now northern Iran. Dispatching his assassins from this fortress he became known as the Old Man of the Mountain, Master of the Assassins. What training did his assassins undergo? We know that Alamout was an all male community of several



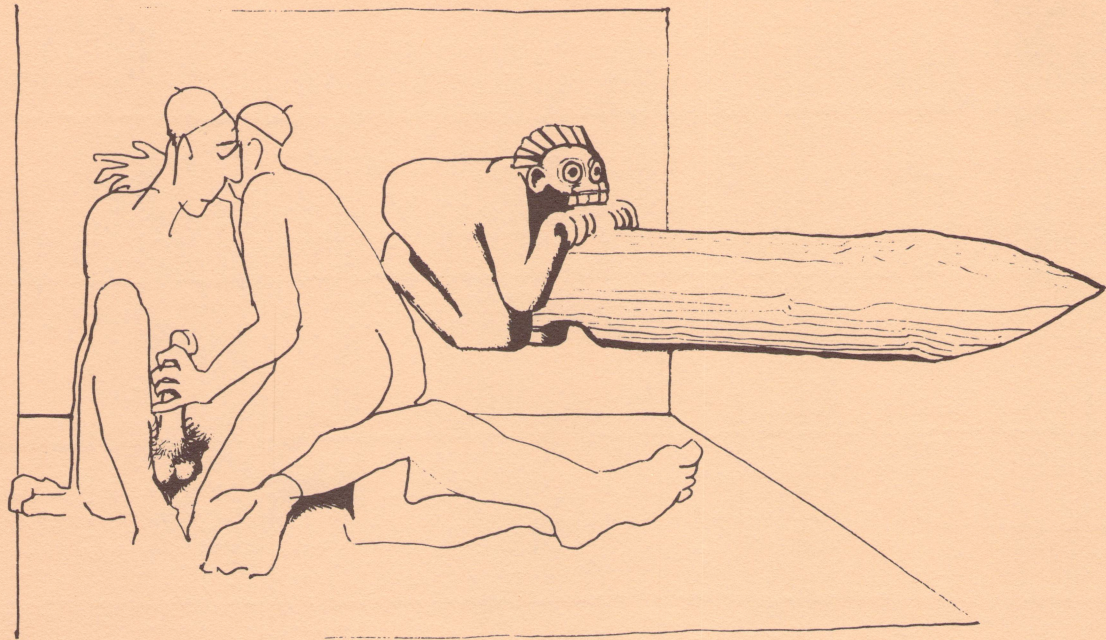
hundred apprentice assassins. Undoubtedly homosexual practices formed a part of the training which sometimes lasted for years. His assassins spread terror through the Moslem world. Whenever a move was planned against Alamout the assassins struck. Energy from virus? And what is a virus? Perhaps simply a pictorial series like Egyptian glyphs that *makes itself real*. Before the pictures conceived in opposition to Alamout could make themselves real the assassins struck, deriving their energy precisely from these hostile pictures. A general who planned an expedition against Alamout was killed by an old man who had worked in his garden for ten years. Caliphs, Sultans, Emirs were killed in their palaces by trusted servants.



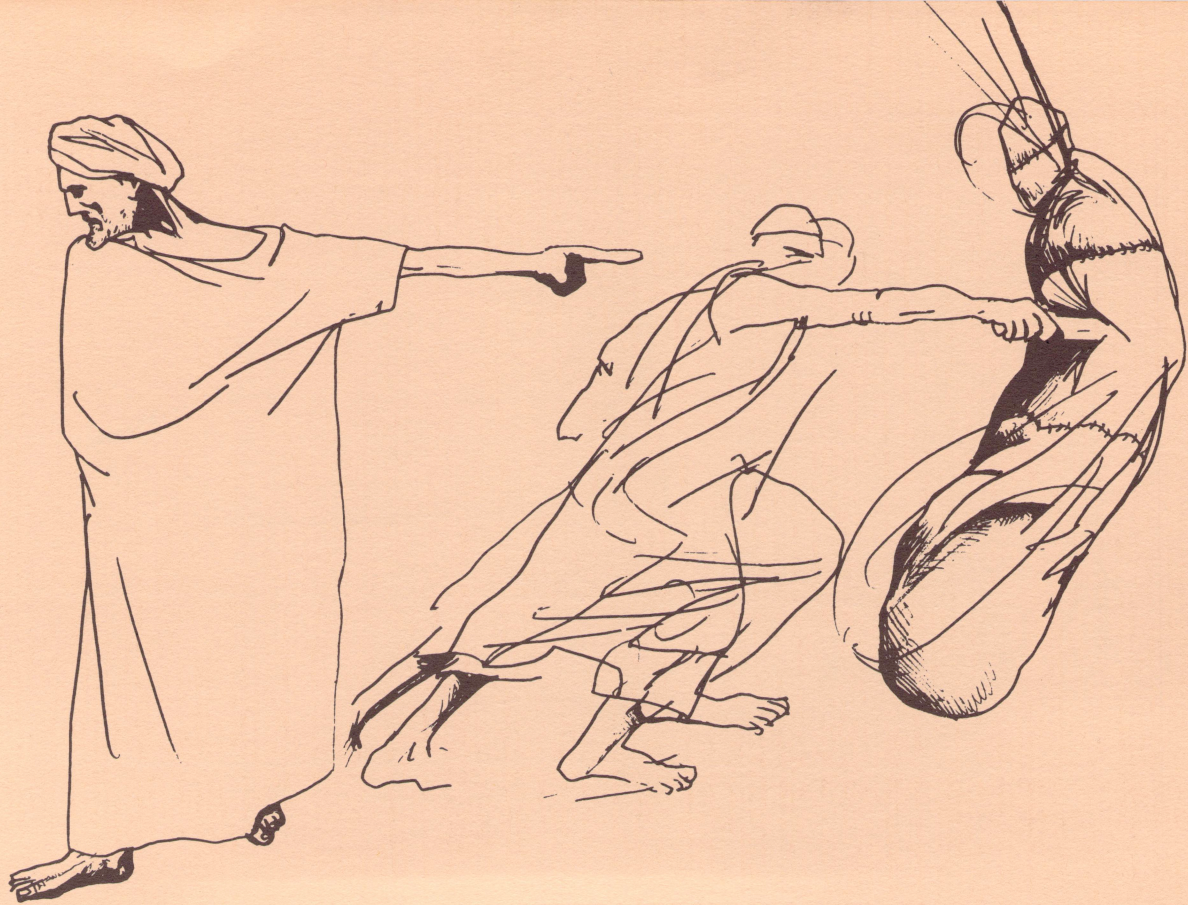
Death In The Presence of By Means of ALAMOUT



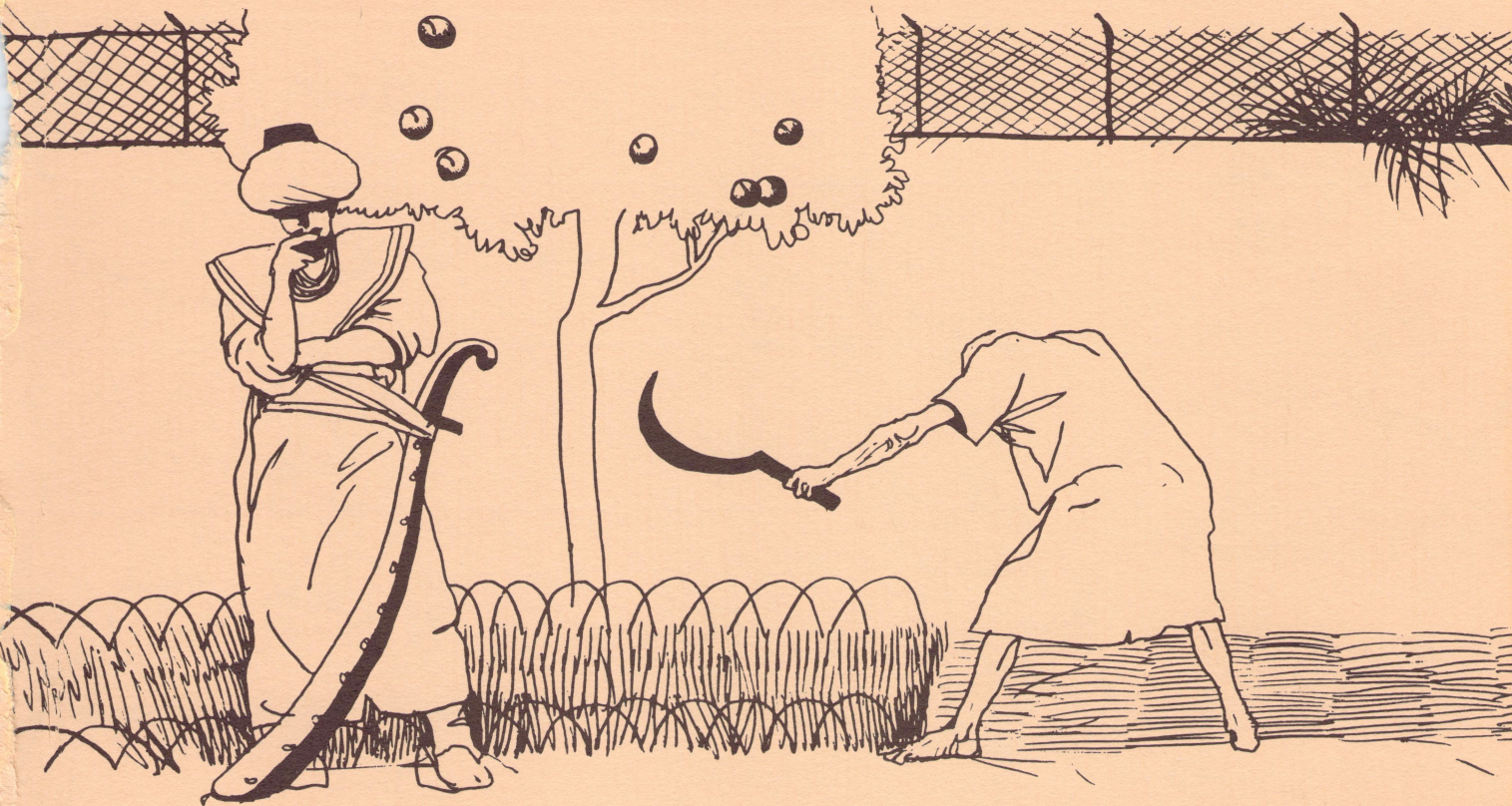














Order... Capture...  
Alamout... seize...

...Sabbah : skin

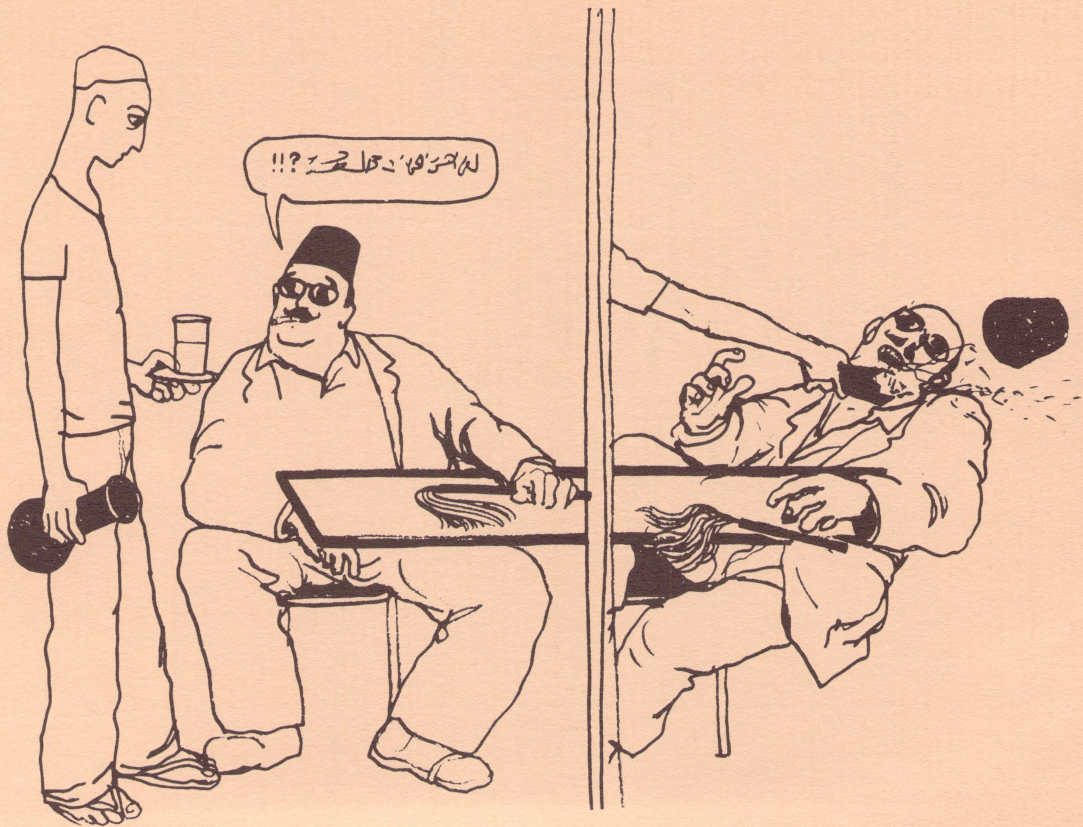
skin . alive .









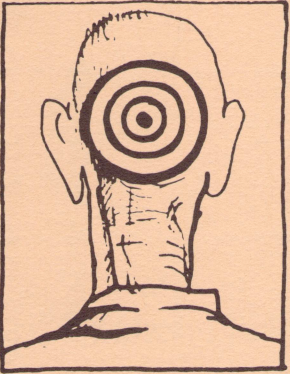




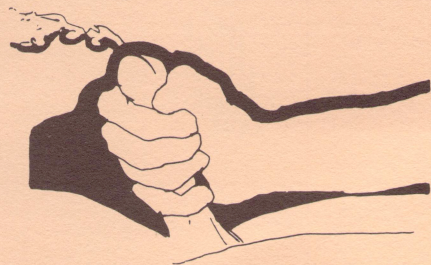
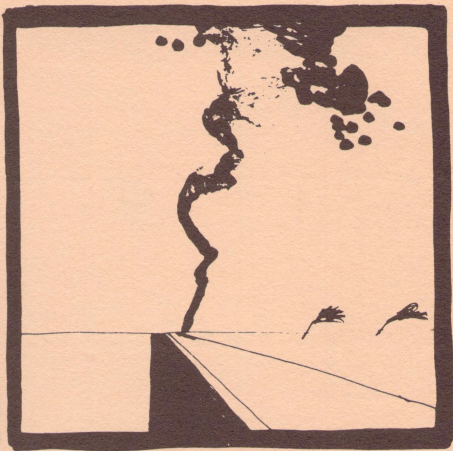
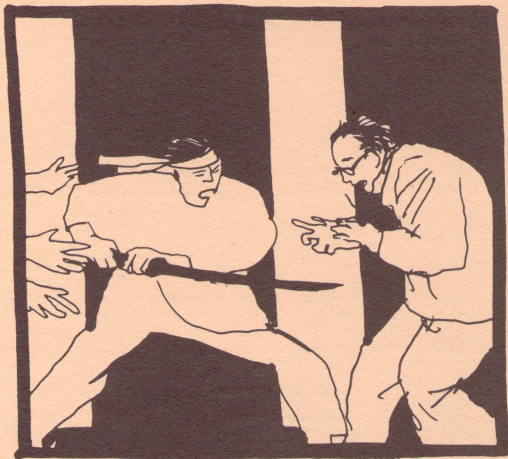


CHARLIES

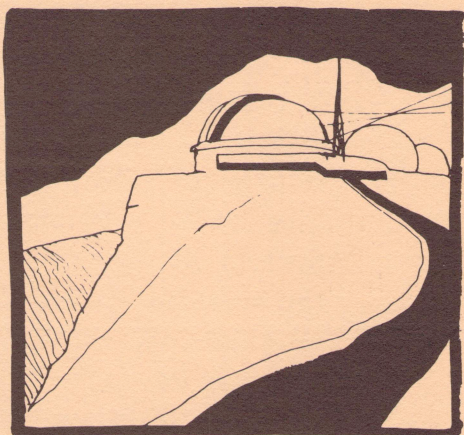
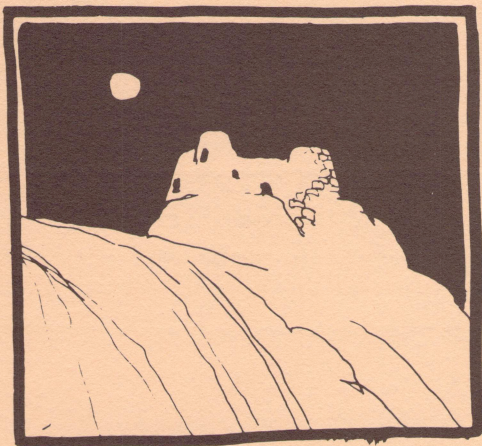
EXPRESS













Brion Gysin has just returned from a trip to the fortress of Alamout in northern Iran. He showed me photos of the ruins and a copy of an article he had written on Hassan i Sabbah the Old Man of the Mountain and his assassins. The information assembled in this article raises a number of questions:

The living quarters are quite small and it seems that not more than forty people could have lived there at one time. Certainly the historical estimates of several hundred resident assassins must be modified. Emphasis was on inaccessibility. Altitude of the living quarters is about ten thousand feet. The fortress must have been bitterly cold in winter. There is very little timber in this area and what fuel they had available must have been used for cooking. We must conclude that Alamout was virtually without heat during the long cold winters . . . ?

The word assassin derives from hashiesh. It is reported that the Old Man gave his followers hashiesh which transported them to a garden of delights. They were then told they could live in the garden forever after carrying out



an assignment of assassination. Those who have used hashish will question this legend. The effects of hashish alone under ordinary circumstances will hardly produce convincing hallucinations of paradise . . . ?

There are persistent reports of an extensive library at Alamout that finally fell into the hands of the Mongols. However no texts that can reliably be traced to Alamout have come to light. Of what then did these books consist? Why and how have they remained unavailable to scholars?

In a number of discussions we arrived at some possible answers to these perplexing questions:

Question: How do you sit out a freezing winter at ten thousand feet with no heat?

Answer: Opium.



Question: Under what circumstances could hashiesh produce the hallucinating effects that would account for the legend of the garden?

Answer: During opium withdrawal.

Question: How else do you sit out such a winter?

Answer: You don't sit. You work all day. At night you have sufficient cover to prevent fatal refrigeration.

Question: Under what other circumstances could hashiesh produce the effects described in the legend?

Answer: After the privations of such a winter.

Question: How else could you beat the cold?



Answer: Take a tip from the Siberian Chuckchee: Construct a wood frame about two feet high, eight feet wide and long enough to accommodate personnel. Cover frame with leather or rugs to form a long shallow box. All hands strip naked and get in the box heating it with their bodies. This promotes esprit de corps.

Three systems here described would be more effective if used in rotation.

Question: Of what did the missing books consist?

Answer: Hassan i Sabbah spent several years in Egypt during which he seems to have picked up some clue that subsequently enabled him to train and control his assassins. This clue may have been Egyptian hieroglyphs and the missing books may have consisted of text and extended glyphs similar to this Book of Breathings: pictures of the students in training, the fortress, the garden; detailed illustrated blue prints for operations against enemy personnel. This means that some students were trained as scribes.



Question: Why have none of these books come to light?

Answer: Too hot to handle. They were destroyed or kept secret. Similar methods now used by CIA and other intelligence agencies: to produce assassinations and revolutions: the operation is mapped out in stills animation and moving film:

CIA man looks through a stack of photos and picks one.

"Now that's a nice face for you . . . good strong lines . . . cast him as the Strong Man who will bring law and order peace and prosperity back to Chile. He'll win an Oscar for the ugliest performance of the year . . ."











This operation applies the curse formula. Recall that the death glyph is a man splitting his head with an axe. To what forms of self destructive behavior is the target liable? Is he a fast reckless driver? Smoke too much? Eat too much? Drunk too often? Prone to loss of temper or other emotional excesses? Alternative programs can be set up and the operation computerized.

Newsweek, October 1, 1973, page 8 . . . "Allende knew he was on the verge of being ousted . . . took to drinking heavily . . . tension getting the better of him . . . at one meeting he broke down and wept uncontrollably and had to be led away . . ."

A curse is activated by hate. Mixture of sexual and hostile elements in the basic death formula.

Newsweek, October 1, 1973, page 8 . . . "Railing against the moral decadence of the Allende government and spreading lurid rumors of a secret Presidential cache of pornographic films and sex devices . . ."



To control any situation it is simply necessary to place yourself and keep yourself in Third Terminal Position with respect to other participants in the situation. T.T.P. is no effect position. Hassan i Sabbah took and held Alamout a Third Terminal from which he could reach and affect his enemies and where they could not reach or affect him. This is a classic 3T and shows how simple the operation is. The Old Man has taken up 3T in Alamout. Let us see where this places him with regard to his opponents.

Terminal 1: General Whoever. The Old Man has his picture in his books. He knows the General's weaknesses and fears. The General knows nothing about the Old Man.

Terminal 2: Anyone with whom the good and soon to be lamented General comes *into direct contact* . . . servants, friends, associates and above all *sexual partners*.

Terminal 3: Anything the General cannot control or affect but which can



control and affect him: in this case *Alamout*. If the General can't get it up or if he has indigestion he will attribute this to Alamout.

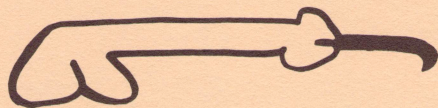
He who controls the Third Terminal controls T1 and T2 as well. The Old Man knows a lot about the General. The General doesn't know anything about him. A servant who will kill the General will be accepted into his service. It is written in the books. Destructive sexual partners will be welcomed. The Old Man knows every kink of the General. *3T cone taken and held sucks in everything in the General's psyche and environment that he cannot understand or control so that he understands and controls less and less.*

Now of course the Old Man could plant someone in the General's kitchen to hex his hard ons or give him the shits but he doesn't really need to do that. The General knows that *he can do that* and that is enough to hex his hard on and give him the shits and make him fire a kitchen full of loyal servants leaving the way open for The Old Man's agents.

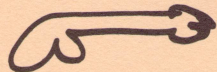


Possession of the Books puts The Old Man in 3T.P. He has his opponents in his books. They do not have the information access or skill to compile such books on him. The Old Man must have been a very great artist.





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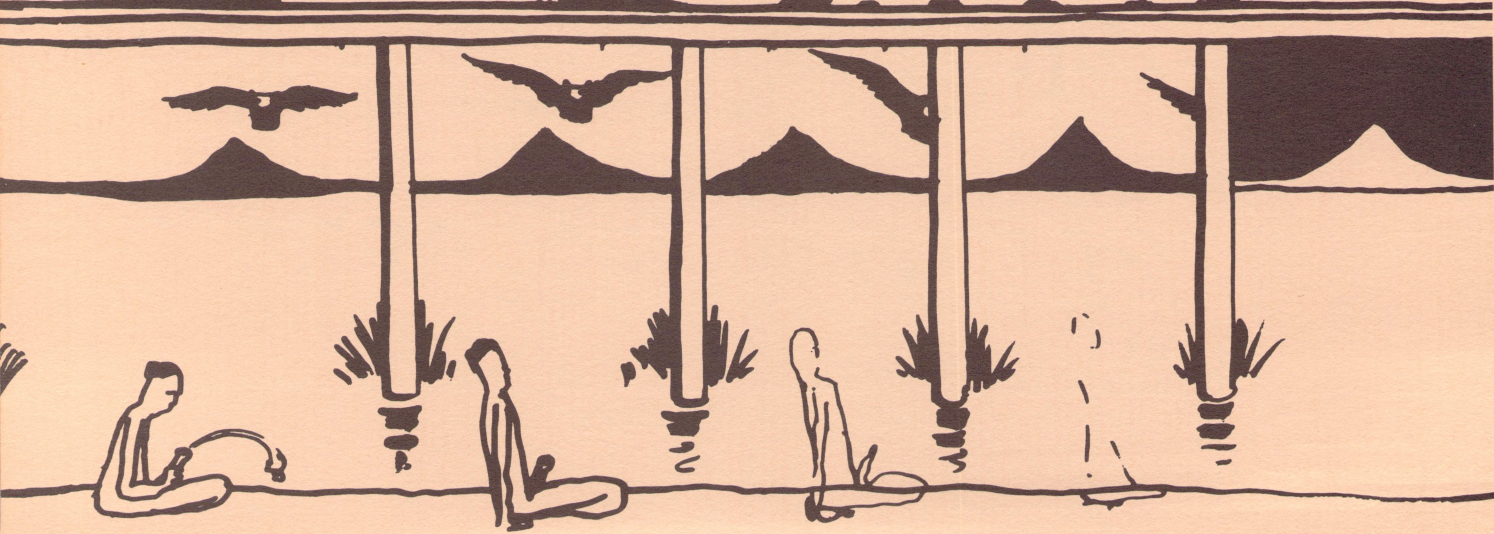
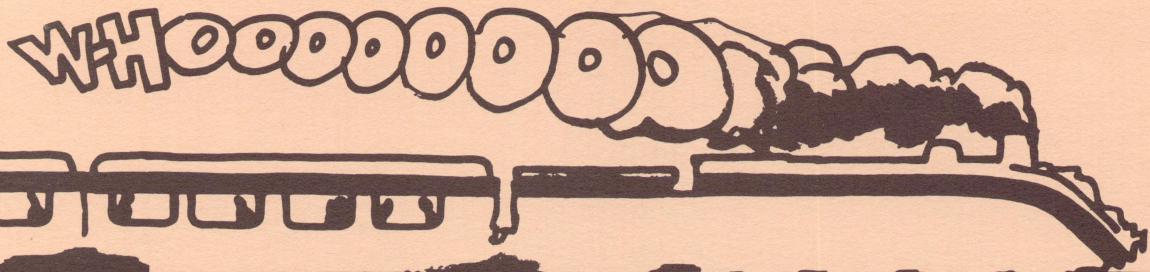


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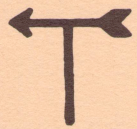
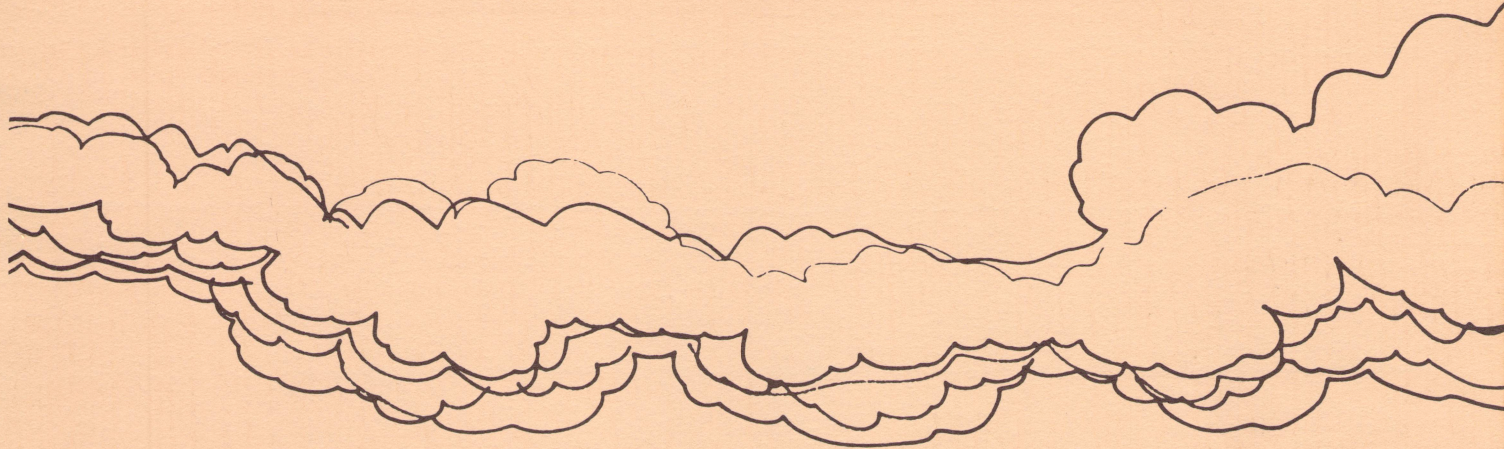


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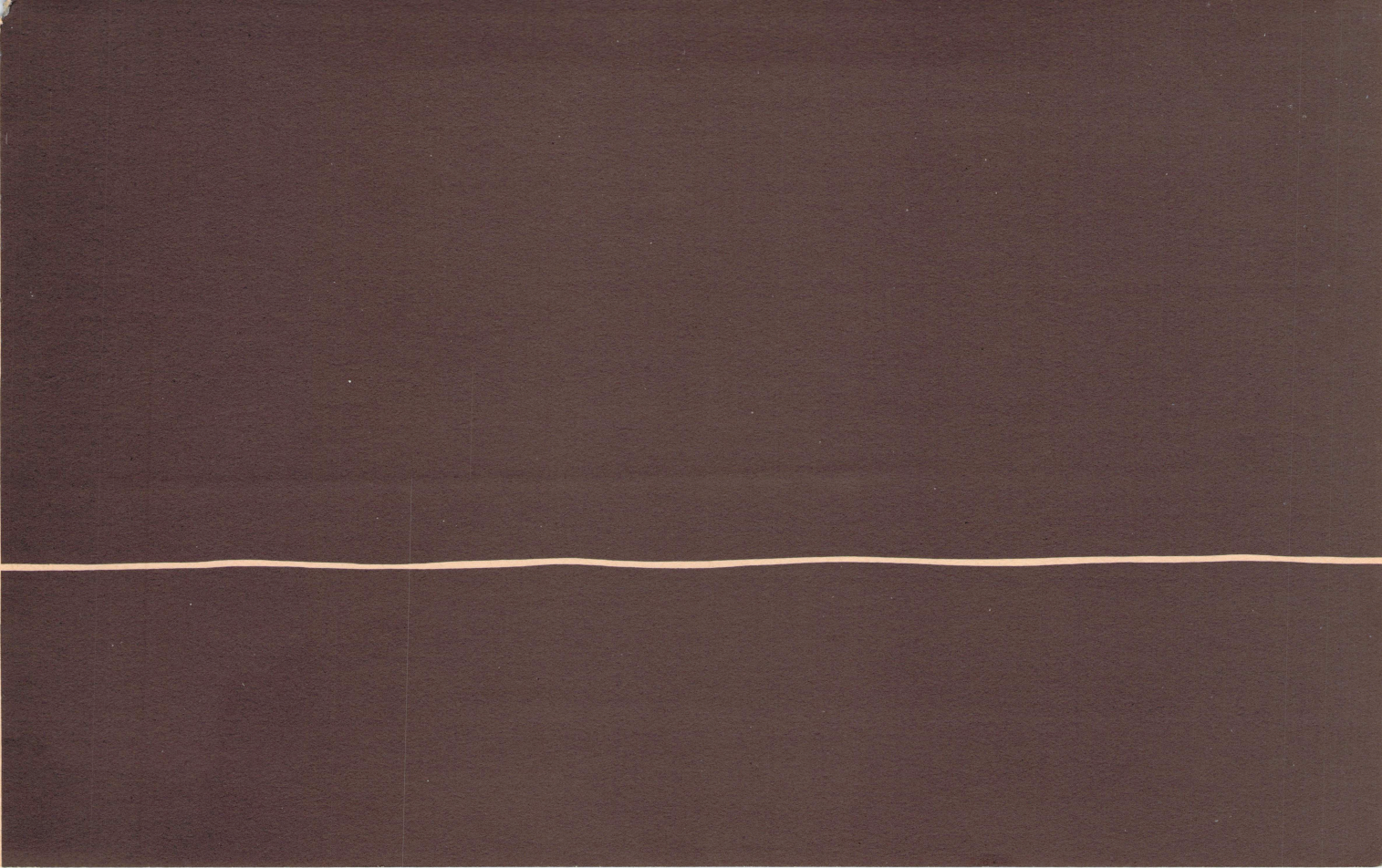




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