

+ I feel like a cannibal as I tug at a bagel with my teeth outside Ludlow's Smokers' Palace where I bought it, because this must be the way to tooth-wrestle with raw muscle, *this* of all the things I could think when I know that I am my killer's target, when the muscle itself convinces, wait and see, not many can take exception, target that I am, I gnaw bagel while availability for assault gnaws on me – *this* – if my killer gnaws on me *this* way before or after the fatal stab, there'll be an answer, when he owns the killing, there's every reason to assume some of his teeth hook back – uneven edged, genetic ridge malformation – *just like this* – so that he rips, his rip-bite is more complex, exceeds most human mouths, just ask a forensic dentist – *verify this* – I'm pretty sure my assailant is rare, jackpot, *just one* of all possible assailants designates himself for me – in the boutique window next door to Ludlow's I see myself gnawing on the bagel – *this* – tough, but I'm undeterred, the bagel seems to replace my chin on the flat surface that gives back what it can – *this too*– amazingly depth is easily compressed, crackpot, my reflection is between some mannequins whose faces have no well-defined features – the more universal, the more bland – they suggest images of mountains on the moon before there was good resolution – not that Galileo was deceived – they have solid alternatives to mouths and noses: sources of many problems and solutions, uninterrupted plaster of Paris, flawless skin for which they have no optical capacity, senseless, they've been diminished, subtracted from, not because of amputation from accident, or saving life, or preference not to have a limb, rejection of bothersome appendage, it happens, so will *this*, my murder if my killer becomes a killer, diminished to approach the universal, to cost less, the mannequins are subhuman, yet wear clothes better than I do, who's the dummy, who's perfect, removable heads, when they come out of the mold, back first, there's a chance for globes as smooth as I like to imagine all legs, as hairless as I like to imagine all armpits, the smooth necessity, mandatory electrolysis in order to appeal to a man who has a good way to deal with his obsession, pretty young things more hairless than a hairless dog, just to look at me at Ludlow's you'd never know, would never guess the status of my private hair, unshaken confidence, with him too because I'm shaven, like a cracked egg, but we broke up, crackpot, now it's my killer or no man, a real need for dedication, I can't cheat my death – in some cases, rare, it can't be nicely-kinky acquired-got-to-have-no-hair-on-a-lover or no touching, because absolute *hypotrichosis* sets in: medical condition present at birth – jumpstart – waiting for a trigger, maybe environmental, maybe hormonal, maybe the moment the effects of womb-immunity-protection wear off, something, when the hypoK kicks up, hair growth stops, hair falls out, wasted land, death's smooth dream kingdom, jackpot, we are the bald men, we are the bald sisters, we

are the hairless toddlers, we have completely inactive or absent hair follicles from which nothing erupts except pathological statistics, not quite total body baldness, not quite, very, very rare to be born with the whole ball of completely bald wax, called alopecia universalis, not even eye brows and lashes, complete absence of fiber, but the standard mannequin is that way right out the mold, the way those who make them, make them, the expectation except special orders for a model with signs of puberty, it can be done, has been done, will be done, hand-attached mohair, or cashmere, didn't start with me, the possible still needs to be milked, you get what you pay for, fiber by fiber, it'll cost you, otherwise: pure solid milk mannequins, never ever weaned, totally consistent, *just like this*, I read that the Chinese crested hairless dog is more genetically balanced, one gene for hair, one gene for hairlessness as two of those would be fatal, no perfectly matched pairs, one litter often gets you both, one with more hair, one with less hair, the only way to get the one you want is the gamble, deal with it, the possible still needs to be milked, one litter often produces the Chinese crested and the full-hair powder-puff, eternal struggle for dominance and submission, shared custody of dispensation of hair, yes, the fancy way to say this, only those with the genetic invitation, the possible still needs to be milked, when the two of us, me and my killer, peach and bald nectarine, get together, only one survives, this is the arrangement, unless he kills, he is no killer, and then I walk the long way home in the dark for nothing, *forget this, Ludlow's* the only thing on the storefront that glows at this hour, blacked out *Palace* is not palatial while I'm pursued, while I'm the possible milk, his attention is not on any other woman, all other women are spared his advances, it's as if I command him, the Chinese crested doesn't bark much, I'm killed in peace, the dog loses many of its teeth, usually the canines, I die with mine intact, we each have distinctive bite marks, mine in bagel, milk deep, I don't bite into a Chinese Crested with history where so many say history started, in Africa, milk darkest, the origin so best chance of simple root, milk darkest, superlative of undeveloped form from which complexity branched off needing somewhere to go, here, *this*, now, restless: I walk, four hairless breeds in America, some highly prized, I favor the Peruvian Inca Orchid, especially after my most prodigious shaving, my arms and legs clean as my head, good girl, my razor is a little toro, pup toro, it grazes, an Inca Orchid Club is on a street called Jubilee, honest-to-God, milk it, the only way to say exactly what I mean, the best place, some claim the Aztecs ate their hairless dogs, how do they know, except that hairless dogs are surely edible, I am too, perhaps more tender than most bagels, the possible still needs to be milked, it would be convenient not to have to pluck a chicken, someone please breed them featherless before I die, for reward, *just for this*, milk, lollipop life dropped in shag carpet and sucked anyway, that covers the love of fuzz, fetish, *this*, suck-beard

sustenance isn't good for much, but the bald-as-a-moonflower dog sheds nothing, a pleasure to have around, what would a flea want there, take fleas away and more, keep taking, milk *this*, the last thing subtracted from will be essential unless it starves, I know I won't, I'll be dead before the chance, I picture myself cannibalizing a man and being murdered by a man while I look at mannequins and wonder about the price of the dress and whether it will look right on me who is size six here, size eight there, wider-hipped for a reason, *this* milk, the love of saddles can be the love of being supported by one, the driver's seat, can also be the love of supporting one, being driven *to this* =

Thylas Moss *a courageous scientific imagination was needed
to realize fully that not behavior of bodies, but the behavior
of something between them, that is, the field, may be essential
for ordering and understanding events.*
[A. Einstein & Leopold Infeld: *The Evolution of Physics*]

CROPS OF UNIVERSES:
A RED DOT'S MENU

+ a block past Ludlow's Smokers' Palace – on the side of the street that gets less sun, doesn't drain well after storms, melt sits, residue of violent weather has no place else to go, homelessness seeps into basements, storerooms, seeks small motors, makes them sleep, beyond the dream-state – is Red's Dot, an Italian rib joint reopening under new management, that's the truth, anybody can marry, now at Red's Dot: perfumed menu, marjoram, you want to nibble it, hallow the flavored printing press: seven subtle mints deliver pages, before temptation dries, lick names of spices, the hooks of fennel: bulb and stalk, strands, fruit, its full formality: *foeniculum vulgare*, once grown in monasteries as if just to get the journey to Red's Dot started, of course, in Italy the pollen is the spice of angels: *spezia degli angeli*, and *finocchio* is Florence fennel, Venetian, a full range of fennel of Italy succeeds in Red's Dot, it bumps into taste buds and teeth grind –*shazam*– just like magic except – tongue-searches for recipe-coordinated ink, how many have licked the menu before me, lucky so and sos, lick the residue of licks also, balled up in a hand, the rag of menu wipe-down is like a hair elastic scrunchy, on a plate creates the hankering for food colored or genetically altered rainbow tripe and chitterlings, *trippa e chitterlings del Rainbow*, gastronomic belts, *articolazioni* – sweet knuckles, beef cheeks floating in pomegranate spritzer – *del melograno* – upped to dead whale feast in the Atlantic, island, *isola*, deserted except for taste buds the size of trees, the island is a sun-dried tongue, slice of specially cultivated tomato, solid link in the food chain, solid ink in dark island segments of Red's dot stenciled menus, tastes like what the words mean, fed by a corrupt atmosphere – *atmosfera corrotto*, the system of carotid arteries and bleu cheese veins in service as templates for each other, an atmosphere that prospers, no ordered surprises, no breath of fresh air – *alito di aria fresca* – on the menu, fresh out, entrees to be eaten as indicated: with sweetness, with reciprocity, with reservation, with a hammer: *con dolcezza, con reciprocità, con prenotazione, con un martello*, my last supper, should be dead before the next one, glad that it was at Red's Dot, the romance of *atmosfera corrotto*, so many say the food is to die for – *ha-ha* – neck bones and gnocchi, looks like only I mean it, only my killer makes me mean it, he knew the way I slurped pasta and BBQ sauce was definitive, he could not let me live to try to exceed perfection on another night at Red's Dot, the light that extends shadows, his mouth waters taste buds the size of trees – there may need to be a better reason to kill, but you seldom get one – except for Cain: the inventor, and –if I'm lucky– maybe this one might stand out: right outside Red's Dot my killer (all mine) grooves me with a split-

artery system, this day skids, impact brings on darkness, his breath swerves on my neck at the height of flattening my throat between his hands, pat-a-cake, or he won't be able to clap, it's supposed to happen, equal opportunity crops of universes, worlds within worlds, it happens somewhere, everything somewhere, nothing everywhere, all bases covered: aromas weight the Red's Dot air, *atmosfera corrotto*, bait-filled, no other air like this air, slue air, a slue of perfumes is its invisible flowing tresses, its hair of invisible slinking curlicues and slues of pasta, it falls in Red's Dot from clouds that drift from the kitchen, clouds line up above tables like patio umbrellas, a rain of spice: what is being forgiven, tongue-caught marjoram slurs each word into it, a slug-move, my killer-to-be, my deadly intended with whom I consort, scratches my face, scores it, American as apple pie: *torta di mela*, sniffs fresh face, fresh cuts, cross cut through which the holiday tree drinks without roots, my first year without a Fraser fir will be my first year dead, Red's Dot translates the pasta served under collards on the menu, I place my order in English over a speaker that can be heard as far as Ludlow's, it draws a crowd, savory and unsavory slues of people, creates a sensation, works up frenzied appetite, I sing my choices for my supper, my fingers feel the rhythmic pulse in my throat, Red's Dot customers are vortex-fed fried potatoes with marjoram, legumes with marjoram, succotash and marjoram, venison marjoram, cabbage and marjoram stew, marjoram hot slaw, the welcome cover for unripe plums, as common as bastards, all for the love of pasta that gets it right: some little hunchbacks, quills, little tongues, priest-chokers, little worms, big fat bridegrooms, flying saucers, lilies, little Frenchies, wolf eyes, little ankle boots, knuckles, priests' ears, little moustaches, radiators, cigarettes, badly-cuts, sleeves: nothing will be wasted, all things in the Lord's name when He is bread that sops the plate, the neat wheat, durum semolina fulfills all debts, payoff as follows: *gobbetti, penne, linguine, strozzapreti, vermicelli, zitoni, dischi volante, gigli, francesine, occhi di lupo, stivaletti, nocche, orecchie di preti, mostaccioli, radiatori, sigarette, maltagliati, manicotti*, the truth of strings, macaroni strings always ring true and *al dente*, macaroni and cheese, little extras, homemade, Kool-aid, deep-fried squid and porgy nuggets with Tee-Tee's hot sauce, T²'s spiked juice, let it drip, on sunny days, on cloudy days Enrico Fermi helped dish up quantum theory, little bits, affects us all, taste and aftertaste, power of the particle, his mother was Ida de Gattis, little pig, little pig – *maiale piccolo* – let me come in the cyclotron, the hair on my chinny-chin-chin is blazing, there's long been heavy water, now Fermi's beta decay pushes the periodic table past its finite setting, help from slow neutrons, a chain reaction under the squash court, my school did not have a squash team, unless that was forbidden knowledge, classified, we never squashed a rival, we had birds and bees but they avoided travel in the same circles, nest and hive are whirlpool gestures, they want to live in approximations of vortex – rotate, little world, rotate – *shine little*

glowworm hotspots on the x-rays, Enrico Fermi died of cancer, after he fathered Giulio and Nella, after he fathered the atomic bomb, after he married Laura Capon, a taste of that, a need for Thanksgiving, the blessing of the bird, the fat castrated capon of a chicken, a red dot next to that and every other menu special, tongue-searches for recipe-coordinated ink, o improve growth and flavor, render them in olive oil, white wine sauce, marjoram pinches in the turkey's dressing, the capon's stuffing, dredge, dread, dead, Pam won't let the skin stick to the row boat shaped fat-encrusted pan, how many have licked the menu before me, lucky so and sos, lick the residue of licks also, balled up in a hand, the rag of menu wipe-down is like a hair elastic scrunchy, on a plate creates the hankering for food colored or genetically altered rainbow tripe and chitterlings, *trippa e chitterlings del Rainbow*, today's special from the baby back pieces – this is what surfaces, the bread, the bodies cast upon the city's treated water =

[A. Einstein & Leopold Infeld: *The Evolution of Physics*]

+ it's unfortunate how anything can become precious, old recruitment poster framed behind Ludlow's Smokers' Palace's counter, larger than life, so when my killer takes my life, I won't be losing the biggest thing, the law of inverse is too precious to defy, everything I've found has inversion, can be stood on its head, turned inside out though that can be painful, and the next inversion won't be an exact return to a previous condition, there will be effects of having been inverted, so I've got a killer coming, and coming, and coming, slow learner, late bloomer, I've been schooled to maximize potential, that's what I do if it qualifies as potential in any way at all, good for my killer's self-esteem to succeed at something big, pardon this allusion to my own grandeur, everyone has some, victims of luster, supposedly life itself, bright spot in the universe, blue dot planet, sticker shock, precious rarity, one of the potable few, liquefied sapphires are expected to be berry blue Kool-aid twin, so much works against the dream of tantalizing blue phenomenon, sky without constancy, satisfying too many conditions, a load of angles, the atmosphere cried rivers, the most shameless incontinent clouds had full range of the continents, the earth was a Devonian masterpiece, the best in brachiopods, period, a point where evolution peaks, best of form, then descent, after prime: decline, it sticks out, that fat finger of Uncle Sam is positively irresistible, Uncle is saying *I want you* to suck this thumb precious and beige like quartz jam-packed with occlusion, pretty much through and through, thumbprint ridges, fossilized curdles of topaz, how does a thumb-sucker from way back, ever since crib days, keep from licking every recruitment poster, originals, replicas, plaster models, independence day floats, the thumb can do you in all right, in *Macbeth*, act IV, scene 1, by the pricking of the thumbs it's recognized that something wicked this way comes, fanfare as that pricking – announcement of his arrival, stand still for the mogul-in-waiting of death, his reputation precedes him – follows him, it is fitting to call the offspring of his double-acting reputation a litter, there's a fine for littering, the two Sams, the follower, the support of the ring bearer, Sam: the truss, everybody's all-American icon, he's who we're all about, swallowtail coat like a forked tongue too long to fit in the mouth, but it was stylish in the 1800's, can't fault a costume for that, I know what I would've worn at Ludlow's Smokers' Palace when it was nothing but plantation, default festooning of my station, nobody knows for sure where Uncle Sam came from, but that doesn't make him enough like God, Uncle Sam has a rumored ancestry, some say he came from Samuel Wilson, a war of 1812 meatpacker who could slaughter with the best of them, who could still give my killer a run for his money, human history is nothing but a story of survival, on this page, struggle for survival of my right to a

death that's right for me, Sam Wilson's big boxes of meat for the army were stamped, as they should have been, US, it was suggested because Uncle Sam Wilson sent them, Uncle Sam Wilson cared for soldier boys as only a relative would, certainly not a government, it was a war against a government, anybody's ancestry leads to him who's capable of fictions, this uncle or that uncle, Remus, the others, even if you're black and for some reason absent from middle-earth, often you have to dig deeper to bring racial implications to the front, but is that where you really want them, just like to see them, make sure they're not going anywhere important, just holding their own, now and then jockeying for better positions, I just don't think of Uncle Sam that way though I know *uncle* meant Uncles Tom, Dick, Harry, one of them sang bass, every death for the country is also death for the self, a rocky road to glory that might explode in your face, but I do it anyway, I believe in it beyond races mixing as best they can, hair more one thing, face another, IQ another, my people screwed up everywhere, were screwed everywhere, couldn't find a single category of person with whom they couldn't reproduce, when in Rome, when in wherever the hell they were and still are, some cream from every crop, mutt and masala, all I get to do is embrace conflicting ideologies, you think we agree just because I need to be killed and he wants to kill me =