

2/19/01 Monday's Rock, Sandro Lingam  
Closing time: 9:56 p.m., C.S.T.

The surprise from our experiments on equine intelligence suggests that these animals are capable of remarkable feats of navigation, computation and communication. And what was more puzzling, is that we found no structures in the horse brain that seemed able to support such a dazzling array of intelligences. We leave it to other researchers to replicate our experiments, and to establish some theory that may account for these extraordinary phenomena. We put forth here only an untested, and perhaps untestable, hypothesis, that the unaccepted and controversial theory of Rupert Sheldrake's "Morphogenic Field" may provide some clue to this enigma. Perhaps the structures of intelligence are not generated in the individual creature's brain at all, but are some how "received" by establishing some sort of resonance with the general environment. Although such blasphemies fly in the face of all of our current empirical practice and scientific heritage, how else can we explain the uncanny results of so many controlled trials? Perhaps the 'fault,' or in this case, the 'wisdom,' really is in the stars and not in ourselves.

Ainsworth Hangii  
"Transfer Learning and  
Communication Skills in Horses."  
*Journal of Equine and Veterinary  
Science, Vol. XIV, #7*

### Horsing around

The country hereabouts was like a hunk of dough, seemingly flat, but with the knuckle-dents of a giant slugged randomly about so that a slight indentation might surprise a soldier afoot with the sudden appearance of an uncovered grave. Some of these dents were just the usual large caliber shell-pocks, Wottan pummeling East Prussia on both sides of the line, German and Russian. Others were made by the Lords of Geologic Time, glacial retreats, erosions, the long weathered stumps of moraines that barely raised a welt on fields and woods, flat enough to the eye, but hiding their share of nasty surprises. Mauzers strapped to their backs, Asköl and Heiner trudged across this dough, shovels slung over their shoulders — burying detail — a bit behind the lines where only an oddly aimed shell fell now and then or a Russian sniper — fat chance! — would squeeze off a round from a treetop on the other side, out of drunken boredom or from suicidal leanings. Most of the moujik firepower being reserved these days of summer for their own officers, Kerensky's Provisional Government not being in particularly good odor with the frontline troops. And speaking of odors — the nose knows first — looking up, our two troopers saw that distinctive feature that Sargent Grausam had indicated as the marker for their task. And a surreal marker it was! There, seemingly at eye-level, as they marched on the higher plateau of the road, a few score meters upwind, was a depression in the landscape from which there was splayed a blasted tree with the front half of a horse skewered in its charcoaled upper branches. "That's the place," spat Asköl, expelling a phlegmy gob inadvertently onto the cuff of Heiner's surprisingly unsoiled

tunic. “*Ach! Es tut mir Leid!*” he said, with a snorty laugh that indicated to Heiner that *Freund* not *Lied* was the word Asköl meant in describing his wayward green projectile. Heiner fell out of step and lay his shovel down carefully, then somewhat daintily lifted his bayonet from his field belt — and with its polished point, meticulously removed this little souvenir of Asköl’s TB, flinging it off-road so that he wouldn’t have to step in it on the way back. By now, Asköl had stopped at the crown of the dip, and when Heiner caught up to him, the pair looked down together on the remains of a pack wagon, shivered to splinters by a direct hit, its human occupants spread like lumpy preserves across the kneaded ground and its six horses, lying split in two groups, right and left, hoofs to hoofs, as if the tooth of a an enormous comb had parted them. Only the rear half of the right lead animal lay on the ground, its front quarters wedged as the strange fruit of their signpost in the fork of the shattered tree. Yet the other horses seemed completely intact, almost as if they were sleeping, and were only now being covered by a gentle unseen, hand with a thickening blanket of flies. “Schieß!” spat Asköl again, Heiner jumping back to avoid the missile. “Fuck Sargent Grausam! If he wants horses buried he can do it his own fucking self!” And with this august pronouncement, he tossed his shovel down on the shambles, stripped himself of Mauzer and rucksack and slipped “the latrine” out of his gear to engage in a sit-down and eat. The latrine was a little flat piece of tin with hinged, retractable legs and an ass-sized hole snipped in the center with wire cutters and hammered smooth on its twisted edges with a rifle butt for the user’s safety and comfort. This was probably Asköl’s most prize possession, a bit of unauthorized field gear which he claimed was as “indispensable for trench warfare as a gasmask,” the obvious connection of the two items revolting the more sensitive Heiner. “Go ahead, Professor, start digging, I got an important job to do.” Asköl eased his braces, dropped his drawers and sat down on the hump of the hill to attend to Nature’s duty, and Heiner thought that soon there would be something else on the road that he was going to have to avoid stepping into. When Asköl reached into his rucksack to pull out a piece of gnawable sausage, Heiner thought it would be better to start digging a hole for the dead horses than to have to talk to Asköl while he relieved himself at both ends, a job — at least from the rear position — which might take upwards of an hour. Yet Heiner, in his typically passive-aggressive style, remarked, almost inaudibly as he unshouldered his shovel, “Perhaps, Herr Corporal, you could come down into the dip in the road to be out of general view.” Asköl evidently found this comment highly amusing and laughed until a phlegmy chain of lung-smegma interrupted his entertainment. “Heiner,” Sargent Grausam is right about you, you are a bit of a Süsse.” Heiner, barely looking up from his spadework, flatly replied, “I mean, as a precaution against snipers.” “Unwritten code, Heinnie, even at the Somme they wouldn’t shoot a man taking a dump.” Heiner, wincing at the presumption of the nick-name, turned back to his shoveling, but remarked “As you will, Herr Corporal, but the Russians might not be quite as English in their manners.” Asköl shrugged this off, and continued his work, but he was not quite as relaxed as before, knowing that the private had a point. “Fucking crazy assholes.” An epithet likewise often applied to Asköl, a soldier known for both his ferocity in fighting and his open mockery of *die heilige Pflicht*, nothing being particularly sacred to him, duty or otherwise. In fact, Asköl and Heiner were somewhat of a problem for their commanders, but for wildly divergent reasons, neither trooper being particularly well-oiled cogs in the Kaiser’s *Obrigkeitsstaat*. Heiner was an intellectual, a Berliner by way of Salzburg, and

was altogether something of mouth-shitter, reading avant-garde poetry, waxing philosophic, and making unwelcome moral and hygienic observations that generally tended to lower company moral. Asköl, on the other hand, was a bit too whacked to be a particularly good soldier, although in the go of battle, he was so maniacally ruthless that he gave the whole unit a reputation for ferocity that had somehow even spread across the lines to the enemy trenches — “Asköl’s on the loose!” being a particularly terrifying cry for friend and foe alike. Everybody — including the non-coms and officers — was a little afraid of him, and this generally got him transferred around a bit. He’d seen action on both the Eastern and Western fronts and his experiences definitely were not therapeutic *vis à vis* his various problems with authority. It was Herr Sargent Grausam’s plan to throw these two together as often as possible, on the odd chance that their diverse eccentricities would somehow cancel each other out, or failing that, that they could both be offed at the same time, killing two birds, or discipline problems, so to speak, with one stone, or more accurately, with one mortar round. While Heiner continued his digging, Asköl, thinking about the unpredictability of moujiks with rifles, hiked up his britches almost as far as his knees and short-stepped awkwardly down into the depression, his sausage clamped in his mouth like an enormous fat cigar, his latrine clamped to his ass with the hand that wasn’t holding his pants halfway up his fish-belly white legs. When Asköl got settled again, he looked up in astonishment and disgust to notice that tears were cutting clean tracks down Heiner’s dusty cheeks. “Ach, Heiner, there you go again, you are such a Warmer Bruder!” It was Heiner’s annoying habit not only to engage in these unsoldierly displays of feeling, but also to pontificate about them as if some intellectual explication could erase the stain of his effeminacy. “I was only thinking about the horses, their innocence, their endurance.” Asköl made a grunting sound as he eased his bowels, tore off a hunk of sausage, and with his mouth open and chewing, mumbled: “Ugh! Obstinate, stupid beasts! Bad meat and worse transport! Devils on the hoof and not worth hauling fodder for!” “Well, Asköl, as usual you are as ignorant as you are crude. But even such an ignoramus as you must have heard of Karl Krall’s book *Denkende Tiere*, and so you must be aware that it is proved that horses are thinking animals. “Ja, they think like my asshole thinks when I make dreck, and like my mouth thinks when I eat sausage.” A little silence reigned after this remark, except for the sounds of the filling and emptying of Heiner’s shovel and of Asköl’s alimentary canal. But Heiner, soon tired of digging, and resumed his lecture. “Herr Krall inherited the great “Clever Hans” from the genius Animal Behaviorist, Wihelm von Osteen, and he refined the master’s methods.” Heiner looked up at Asköl, and wondered, even to himself, how he could speak of any sort of “refinement” to such a coldbloodedslopnoggin. But Heiner knew that his dissertation was annoying Asköl, so he continued. “Herr Krall taught his horses mathematics and devised a code in which units were tapped out with the right forehoof and tens with the left. Also they had a system of communicating letters with a certain number of taps with each hoof. They could talk as well as you, Asköl, and they wouldn’t say shit with their mouths full.” Asköl, unimpressed by this learned report, stomped his foot on the ground a few times from his crouched position, and vibrated his lips like a stallion. “And what am I saying to you now, Heiner, huh?” Ignoring this provocation, Heiner continued with his exposition. “Eminent men of letters from the renown learning citadels of Europe tested the Krall horses. The inquisitors devised peep-hole tests to be sure that the animals were not

responding to subtle visual cues from Herr Krall, and still these equine geniuses were able to solve the complex mathematical problems that were written on a black board in their stable. Ja, and they were also able to tell the researches when they were tired or hungry, happy or sad. Hänshen, Herr Krall's little Shetland, told Herr Krall when he was beaten by the groom. And the stallions Muhamed and Zarif could give the roots of unrehearsed numbers in the millions." "Ja, Heiner, maybe you could do the square root of this pile I am making with my ass right now." Heiner didn't answer directly, but looking down at his shovel as he worked, he mumbled. "And you Asköl are the square root of a minus one." Then, once more, Heiner begin to silently shed tears. Suddenly he stopped, and looked up at the unperturbed Asköl, crying out in anguish: "Ah! Asköl, this one has a little star on its forehead, just like our Zarif, and this one a leaf mark on her croup like our little mare, Gnade." "Ach, Heiner, why do you carry on so, like a woman, like a child, what are these horses or any other horses to you?" "Oh, Asköl, I was the groom that little Hänshen snitched on. I should never have touched him, they were such angels! *Und* now the army has taken them all, just as they have taken me!" Heiner's sentence was punctuated by the crash of a random shell, which blew Asköl out of his pants and boots and deposited him in the mudbank on the opposite side of the dip. Heiner, too, was slammed down and slathered with mud and shit from his soles to his eyebrows, while the latrine was sent winging through the air to wedge itself singing like a chime in the charred hide of the ragged tree. Mauzers, shovels and rucksacks tossed aloft, came clattering down. Both men finally stood up, shook the ringing from their heads and fingered the glop out of their eyes, ears, nostrils and mouths. The shell had left them otherwise unharmed, but had liquefied the remains of the pack team, and thus obviated the need for any burial. When Asköl, standing barebutt naked finally stopped coughing, he looked up at Heiner and gave him an obscene one-fingered gesture. "Count this! You bloody fucking faggot!"

*1/7/01 Sunday's Rock, Fergus's Druid Dreamstone*  
*Closing time: 11:45 p.m., C.S.T.*

It might be hard for a historian to accept the idea that a geometrical arrangement of stones and holes can provide evidence much stronger than that of a document, but I believe this to be true.

Although misgivings have sometimes been expressed concerning the accuracy of the archaeological positions themselves, the present argument strongly suggests that these positions are singularly accurate. That they should be so, after all the generations of people who have pulled and pried and dug and rooted, is admittedly remarkable. One might have expected that stones moved, stones taken from the site, stones collapsed by the ravages of wind and water, would all have conspired to garble the message. The wonder of it is that the message is still there, almost as clear as it was in the beginning.

Fred Hoyle  
*On Stonehenge*

### On Stonehenge

The shoes of the former keeper of the departed “wild swan of Trouville” were found on the beach near to where those of Francis, *l'enfant sauvage de la mer*, had been discovered a few short weeks before. The swan-warden's disappearance was ruled a suicide, an event which might have, in other times, prompted more of an investigation by the authorities, in so far as no body was discovered. But, as was understandable, it being late August, 1914, officials had more pressing concerns. More than 40,000 French soldiers had been slaughtered in a bizarre self-immolation against impregnable German positions in Alsace and Lorraine, and tattered remnants of the French and English armies in the west were fleeing for their lives in a furious and exhausting effort to reach the Marne. An Angel the size of an enormous cumulus cloud was bolstering the morale of the dispirited British near Mons, and General Joffre was frantically cabling Paris to ask officials if the city were prepared for a siege. In short, there was plenty of news that month that might lead a man to take his own life, and plenty of French corpses around, so that it seemed rather superfluous to insist upon finding another. The only mystery about the affair concerned a manuscript found in the suicide's dingy room. A rambling farrago in English (the keeper was only known to speak a rather rustic fisherfolk French), the epistle was written on what appeared to be an antique lamb-skin vellum, and for that reason alone, it was considered important enough to forward to the British Library's Antiquities Room. There, it was haphazardly placed by a newly war-widowed assistant librarian among the papers of the notorious Elizabethan necromancer, John Dee. A trivial error, no doubt, one whose consequences could hardly be said to matter set against the backdrop of a disintegrating world. And yet, this manuscript has become one of those few sheaves of text that the Scientists of Awareness cleave to as if it were holy scripture. Presenting the epistle below, we leave it to the impartial reader to decide if their devotion is warranted.

### Swan Talk

For the most part our agents prefer to infiltrate the mundane affairs of humans in mundane ways, appearing as pets, as dreams, or as snippets of conversation or song that take an obsessive hold on the mind. The chronicles of our activities are not imperceptible to humans, but are often encrypted in ways that elude betrayal by the misnamed conscious mind. Perhaps a scrap of paper rolls down a sidewalk, a few words showing as it skitters by. Maybe a poster on a wall is torn in such a way as to reveal another poster beneath it, words or letters suddenly being juxtaposed in a manner that enables them to infiltrate the unspoiled layers of the psyche. Fairy tales often encode quite precise histories of our machinations. Jump rope chants and riddles, caught in fragments by demented tyrants, have been known to avert wars or foment insurrections. We birds are especially adept at bending personal and social histories. Our alphabets are the shapes of our flocks writing on the dawn skies or the song of a lone warbler at dusk beneath a window. By these intromissions, we create upheavals in dreams, foment sexual dementias and cure deformities of perception. Wild creatures of every species are especially useful to the Council, in so far as their lives are generally unmeasured, if not altogether unobserved. Individual animals — a sparrow, a spider, a mouse, a lizard, a swan — have been known to inhabit the

same theomorph for centuries, even millennia, in order to track a lost human soul across several incarnations. These time-warp shadowings can shape the temper of an entire historical epoch, and can serve as triggers for social disintegration or regeneration. Our manipulations are for the most part so subtle, so seemingly a part of the accepted drift of things, that they create their effects beyond or beneath any possibility of human detection. There are, of course, occasional large-scale interventions, frog falls, red tides, herds of beached whales, but these are rare. Suffice it to say that we do what we must. From ephemeral singularities to monumental migrations, our innumerable agents work unceasingly to awaken wayward humans, our vast conspiracies always coordinated by the wisdom of the Collective, and specifically guided through our internal modems by the dictums of the Council.

Although the reestablishment of the primal unity of humans may appear to be our main objective, to assume such would be an excessively anthropocentric view. In truth, many agents regard humans as pathogens, and have undertaken, as their primary directive, the task of purging the most virulent of them from the vector. These cleansings are not always undertaken by any such obvious means as the enactment of a cycle of transgression and retaliation. If that were the case, our operatives would have been exposed eons ago. Agents have a variety of options open to them. They may, for example, directly punish transgressors. The Council's judicially decreed eliminations can be accomplished, in cases of individuals, through the cultivation of ordinary diseases, economic pratfalls, accidents, and the like, and in the cases of societies, through epidemics, wars, religious manias, meteorological cataclysms, and even large-scale shifts in climate. We also have the option of absorbing negative vibrations ourselves, thereby purging, through a willing martyrdom, vast clouds of particularly noisome etheric and physical pollution. For the lowest echelon transgressors, agents generally seek to engender in the violator a yearning for the Council's protection by simply fomenting copious amounts of terror. Less damaged criminals can be turned towards the wisdom of the Collective through the promulgation of remorse, pity, compassion, and in very rare cases, even love. The one hallmark of everything we do is the shaping of consciousness, for there is nothing to be gained by the multiplication or annihilation of physical bodies, since these are often mere automatons driven by the storms of fate.

In this particular vector, Gaia herself, the planet, is the chief inlet of consciousness from the Monad. All agents know that her basal metabolism must be kept constant and healthy no matter what levels of toxicity are spewed froth from the human virus. Thus, in many instances, our direct work with human beings is only a secondary phenomenon conducted to achieve the homeostasis of Earth. The bodies of individual human beings, or even entire populations, while important, and duly esteemed by the Council, are often sacrificed to achieve this higher purpose.

In this juncture of time (read: “nodule” or “nexus”), the Council has decreed that these words be arranged so that a few waywards can gain at least a miniscule inkling of certain specific operations. While it would be impossible to enumerate so much as a tiny fraction of the particulars of even one fairly straightforward mission, in the interests of metaphoric clarity, I (we) have been authorized to proffer forth some hints regarding our intricate methodologies.

Since this is Saturday, the Day of Fergus’s Druid Dreamstone, I will begin by elucidating some of the mysteries of Stonehenge and the people popularly known as Druids. In the first case, I will offer an agent’s interpretation of the origin and purpose of the structure, and in the second case, I will give an explanation for what seems to most waywards to be a particularly horrendous example of human and animal sacrifice, namely, the holocaust of the so-called “Wicker Man.”

Your anthropologists, those earnest, but misguided, Scientists of Awareness, are nevertheless correct in dating the monuments from 2500 to 1000 B.C.E. (Before the Christian Era) as measured in your present primitive time scale. But their efforts to attribute the “construction” of these colossi to Neolithic human agency are ludicrous. Their hypotheses concerning the transportation of the famous bluestones across more than one hundred and fifty miles of open terrain, or else floated on barges over now-defunct inland waterways or seasonal marshy seas, are beneath serious consideration. However, this image of primitive humans rolling the stones on logs and creating elaborate rope harnesses to coordinate the energies of multitudes of their greasy hoards, as preposterous as it seems, has, up to now, fit the motives of the Council. In any case, the present report, which offers a radically different view, will hardly disturb the theories of these waywards, who, even if they should chance to read it, are not at present sufficiently endowed with the mental acuity to assimilate its intricacies.

The rope and pulley theory has of course been challenged by more imaginative investigators who have hypothesized that now forgotten technologies of sound were used to transport, hew and place the stones. Sound was used in this manner to create some ancient monuments in the Near East, in Egypt and in Mesoamerica, but in the case of the various henge monuments, the truth lies elsewhere. Finally, there are those who obviate the whole question of human agency by attributing the monument to alien visitors whose more sophisticated technologies enabled them to master the enormous problems associated with manipulating objects of such magnitude. To date, at least in this Earth vector, no one has come close to suspecting the truth, which is, that *the stones moved and erected themselves*, or rather, to speak more precisely, that the stones were moved by stochastic processes which arise whenever Gaia’s homeostasis is threatened.

“But,” you might ask, “how is this possible, and why should any rational human accept such an outrageous and patently absurd hypothesis?” The answer is: No rational human would accept it. But rationality is the major stumbling block to the re-assimilation of *Homo sapiens*, and the Council has long since scheduled all

rational waywards for purging. No. This report is not slated for their derisive eyes. It is meant for those few human beings who are clumsily feeling their dark way back to the Collective's blissful embrace. These words are for those who are ready to accept confabulation as a substitute for the inane illusion of explication. For them, expressions of folly alone are accounted wise.

But let us place the explication and the confabulation side by side, and see if your rigidity of mind can be set into flux by a few pertinent observations. The rationalists assert that since Stonehenge has been demonstrated to possess a wide array of precise astronomical synchronicities, the explanation for its function demands the existence of an external, and, yes, even human agent. They scoff at suggestions that a random sequence of so-called "natural" processes could ever produce such exquisite harmonies. But note this: even your primitive materialistic science has demonstrated the intelligent arrangement of inorganic substances time and time again. For example, consider the element of iron, whose presence in oxygen-breathing organisms must be maintained in a life-enhancing or life-threatening balance between panacea and toxicity. Yet, the process of endocytosis enables the cells to extract iron from transferrin, enclose it in a protective membrane (lest it "rust" in the oxygen-rich environment of the body), and release it as needed into the bloodstream. The shape of the cell, which is organic, and that of the iron molecule, which is inorganic, interact in complex, functional and purposeful ways. This interaction takes place solely as a consequence of inner homeostatic responses initiated both inside and outside the body, and obviously does not require the manipulations of an outside agent. Its intelligence is merely the foliation of the Monad lending energy to energy, life to life. Immense as they are from the viewpoint of human beings, from the perspective of Gaia, the bluestones are mere molecules, and as such, are only a part of the planet's natural systemic functions. That this particular function is carried forth by certain magnetic shifts in the earth-body, rather than through systolic and diastolic pressures, as they are in the bodies of animals, does not alter the basic veracity of the analogy. A mere glance at figure 3.5, page 41 of *Iron, Nature's Universal Element*, Mielczarek and McGrayne, (Uncorrected Advanced Proofs, Rutgers University Press, 2000), clearly shows how a schematic cross-section of a ferritin iron-storage molecule replicates the morphology of Stonehenge. The reader may reference the fold-out page between pages 22 and 23 of *On Stonehenge* by Fred Hoyle (W.H. Freeman and Company, 1977) to make the comparison. But any other accurate depiction of the monument will serve the purpose. You must remember consciousness is everywhere. And you must remember iron is a key component of consciousness. In the super hot, hyper pressurized depths of the earth, even inside of rocks, *archaea* (read: *Bacillus infernus*) pulsate information to the Council. In addition, Earth's magnetic field is teeming with living anaerobic bacteria (read: *Magnetospirillum magnetotacticum*), which align themselves to the planet's magnetic field by metabolizing their own tiny strips of magnets located inside their infinitesimal worm-like bodies. Even the most benighted molecular biologist would never dream of attributing the placement of those magnets, which are less than 50

nanometers long, to an external human agency. Nor would a physicist consign the construction of null lines in the complex of subatomic space to an organic intelligence.

The fact is that just as there are organic beings with organic intelligence, there are also inorganic beings with inorganic intelligence. The bluestones and the later sarsens comprising Stonehenge are the result of both organic intelligence, agents of the Collective like myself, and inorganic intelligence, the so-called elementals, like gnomes and undines, choreographed together by the Council to perform their “dance.” Now ours is a very, very slow-motion dance, to be sure, from the viewpoint of wayward humans, but one which is quicktime in the life of Gaia herself. This dance is merely a foolproof (should we say “ironclad”) method for consciousness to assist in the planet’s thermoregulation. Thus, the stones, like the iron molecules in mammalian blood streams, did not move over the Earth, but through her, making their way through a vascular system of channels and locks that open and close according to a very precise coordination of internal tissue function. Your scientists are blinded by a psychological bent to see themselves as large and the objects of their study as small, so they concentrate their observations at minute scales of existence. Their instrumentation, even their telescopes, eventually spews out data that is compressed down to the state of the investigator’s awareness. At large, planetary or galactic perspectives, they have no such psychological motivation, and no instrumentation to clock time scales other than their own. With these prejudices in place, it took your scientists more than two centuries to uncover the crude astrological significance of the monument. We agents shudder to think you how long it will take for them to ascertain Stonehenge’s many other functions. Obviously, the henge is a janomorph and has both macro- and micro-scale faces. At one scale, it serves as a data enhancer/storage unit for agents like migratory birds, fish, or insects. At the another scale, it directs the in-depth work of microscopic entities like *archaea*. Space and time forbid the enumeration of all of the henge’s many functions, suffice it to say that the monument itself is a great inorganic being, an adept of very high standing, who works incessantly to keep the planet healthy and expand limited human understanding.

As promised, I will close this report with a brief explanation of the histrionic and seemingly horrendous phenomenon of the Wicker Man. Lights draw attention. And the light of the Wicker Man filled with the death screams of its supposedly innocent sacrificial offerings (mostly the conscious and willing martyrs for the Collective) have drawn the attention of humans for centuries. The mental and emotional agitation that you feel in contemplating these atrocities creates vortices of energy, which circulate around the amygdala and generate new synaptical responses across the barrier of the *corpus callosum*.

Let us illustrate this with an historical example. In classical Briton, Roman soldiers patrolling Hadrian’s Wall (the island’s geophysical version of the *corpus callosum*) would sometimes hear strange howls, sirens, whistles or moans coming

from the lands of the Hyperboreans. These were the vocalizations of what the Scottish clans, descendants of the blue-tattooed and savage Picts, came to call the “weird,” a.k.a. *Homo sapiens ferus*, the unacknowledged wildness living in the very heart of the familiar. The civilized Romans had to guard against this call, which was, while being utterly terrifying, also strangely alluring. As you converse more and more with stones, the whistling stone, the voice of the Council, will start to wind its horn deep in the inner ear. And although it is dark, and fatally dangerous, you may be drawn beyond the fortress walls.

Mr. Erskle thought Mr. Reardon a supercilious Public School Kyber Pass, who reasoned through his Farmer Giles. He detested Mr. Reardon’s fondness for Browning and his arid whorship of the apostasy of Mr. Huxley. Mr. Erskle never tired of haranguing his China’rs at the pub about his stultifyingly boring yokemate. “ ‘e is at best a prig with UC pretensions and no pedigree, and at worst a bleedin’ Ginger Beer with a stick up ‘is bum where ‘e hangs ‘is bleedin’ Bowler ‘at.” Mr. Reardon, for his part, found his East End colleague an upstart, foulmouthed ruffian. Daily, Mr. Reardon would whine to his adoring Mother over tea, repeating the vulgarisms of the Cockney autodidact with mawkish glee. Mother Reardon shared with her son an abhorrence of Mr. Erskle’s ghastly habits of quoting that daft William Blake and of spouting as wisdom the absolutely medieval balderdash of the tiresome Theosophist, Thomas Troward. Mother Reardon agreed with her son that being forced to endure such a troglydyte as a colleague had certainly made his plumb assignment of work in the Rare Books Room a trial.

Mr. Erskle’s right arm was pierced by shrapnel in an artillery barrage at the Somme. Mr. Reardon, as chance arranged it, had suffered a similar fate, also at the Somme, when his left arm was shattered at the shoulder by a grenade fragment. Mr. Erskle and Mr. Reardon had become friends at the Lowestoft Military Hospital where they were both made amputees by the same surgeon. Their mutual hatred of this sawbones was the bridge that allowed them to cross the class divide and apply together for work at the British Library. Walking side by side, the empty sleeves of their tweeds neatly pinned, they looked like Siamese twins that had come from two different planets, hapless foes whom circumstances and sutured together, rather than cut apart.

Just now, the twins sat in an odd corner of the Rare Book Room out of sight of the Chief Librarian. Cheek by jowel, the two had perched to “ ‘ave a butcher”, as Mr. Erskle would say, at the portfolio that “Doctor” — they both wanted to address him as “Sir” — Dreemstun had been reading beneath Smirke’s great Rotunda. Erskle was in charge of page turning at the left side of the portfolio, Reardon at the right.

Mr. Erskle: What ‘a you make o’ it, Reardon?

Mr. Reardon: It’s a hopeless farrago, but awefully curious, what?

Mr. Erskle: Right, a genu-ine Loaf breaker. But what about the bloke what was readin’ it?

Mr. Reardon: Awefully smart dresser, quite a Beau Brummel. And I must say, the chap does put me in mind of someone, Mr. Erskle.

Mr. Erskle: Go on now' Mate, I was just a thinkin' the same?

Mr. Reardon: And who would you say he reminds you of, if I may be so bold?

Mr. Erskle: Call me barmy, but 'he puts me in mind o' Dr. Izard back in Lowestroft.

Mr. Reardon: Indeed.

Mr. Erskle: O' course the Captain was a damned sight older, and bleedin' Brown Bread now, if the Newspapers aren't a baken' more porkies for the devouement o' the genr'l public.

Mr. Reardon: Indeed. But still, a dead man doesn't pop back into this world younger and richer.

Mr. Erskle nodded and the rubbed a leaf searchingly between the thumb and forefinger of his remaining hand.

Mr. Erskle: Well, they ain't no Baxter Blakes, now. These 'ere papers is antiques, but, I am a thinkin' that they ain't been residin' with us for too long.

Mr. Reardon: You are in the right, Mr. Erskle, they got sent over from France at the end of Mrs. Ratchet's tenure, in August of ought fourteen.

Mr. Erskle rolled his eyes, and circumambulated his tongue counterclockwise lustfully round his lips.

Mr. Erskle: Now, Mate, that Bird was o' real stunner, yes she was. I don't mind admittin' that she made the ole' pan handle stand up to be counted . . . and a widow now, too.

Mr. Reardon: Mr. Reardon, mind your manners!

### Up in Flames

I choose a stone, and fold my hand around it.  
It moves me, as the sun is moved, as the moon  
And sea are moved, humanely, but not by  
Any human. I pass through wild terrain,  
Through smooth terrain. I pour through torturous lives  
And torture others. I shape designs  
Around mysterious centers. Whoever finds me,  
Finds a blessedness. Whoever loves me,

Sleeps within a cradle, livid with flames  
Of agony and joy.