

12

*The Coughing*

Unlock the gate. Swing it inward. Drive the truck through. Stop.

Swing the gate outward. Lock it tight. Fifteen feet of galvanized steel.

Return to the truck. Drive the final mile past hackberries and chokecherries, the single willow and disabled windmill. Park behind the house.

Unload cargo. Stack it on the mudporch. Peek into the kitchen.

Not so bad...

Could've been a genuine gore-orgy instead of just looking like one.

But the linoleum's a mess, the spilled-bourbon reek hasn't ebbed, and sticky brown pawprints are all the hell over. So bring in the new broom, the new mop, the new sponges and jug of cleanser, and start swabbing. *Whiskey here, whiskey there, whiskey almost everywhere. Whiskey is the life of man, always was since th'world began. Whiskey-O, Johnny-O, rise her up from down below...*

(Or not.)

(Never mind.)

Collect the broken glass. Make a second sweep and a third, keeping eyes peeled for odd fragments. Amounting to a couple shovelfuls of shattered bottle, plus a bucket of suds that can be emptied down the drain.

Now fetch the new detergent and take it to the cellar, along with a week's worth of dirty socks and shorts and sheets. Wedging the cellar door firmly open. Even if it were to shut accidentally, I don't imagine I'd be trapped down here; but no sense taking chances.

The McRale cellar is cool and dry. Free from mice and mildew. Pays to have a master plumber as your landlord. Pays him even more to put coin-operated Maytags in this time-share. Good thing I didn't spend all my quarters on breakfast at Big Red's Diner. Biscuits and gravy with a side of homefries: guaranteed bellyache. But better than facing that kitchen floor on an empty stomach.

Load the washing machine. Adjust its settings. Splurgle and slosh—the washer lives, after who knows how long a dry spell.

Back upstairs to move the other provisions from mudporch to pantry. Watch your step carrying these new bottles of Heaven Hill. (We're done with Wild Turkey for awhile.) Less care's needed lugging in the Meow Mix and proper litter. Open both bags; fill Willamene's dish and box.

“There you go, cat.”

No answer.

(The best of all possible.)

Clean the rest of the house while I'm feeling hygienic? Considering I'll just have to do it again when I pack up to leave in two weeks—

WHANG WHANG WHANG WHANG WHANG

Yeedge! Sounds like something's busted loose in the cellar. Hurry downstairs, expecting to find the Maytag dancing across the cement. But it's still snuggled against the wall where it belongs. Shifting cycles from rinse to spin, while the submersible pump replenishes the holding tank with fresh gallons of well water. All systems seem to be go.

Warily I lift the washer's lid.

*Harrumph* goes the drum as it slows to a halt.

Nothing looks amiss, inside or out. Lid clangs shut; drum resumes its whirligig. No unusual pounding or thumping. Just a splurgly *P-P-P-P-P*, like a frightened Shemp.

(Wise guy, eh?)

The washer finishes its job without further clamor. I transfer wet socks and so forth to the other Maytag. Insert more quarters; push to start. *Bumble, bumble, bum-bur-umble.*

Stand there and listen awhile longer.

Head upstairs, pause on the mudporch, listen some more.

Enough. Go park the pickup in the stable. Return to the kitchen and uncap a beer. Raise it almost to your lips before noticing half the food's gone from the dish on the floor.

"All right, where are you then?"

(Silence.)

"Show yourself so I won't be stepping on you."

(More silence.)

Celebrate! Cat's away—Bird should play. Put Charlie Parker on the boombox, deal a deck of cards across the kitchen table and brush up on your Canfield till it's time to take that Saturday night bath. With a clean washcloth, and clean towels afterward, and clean sheets to spend the night on and under.

Fresh start Sunday morning. Progress now, instead of nonsense. Eat a digestible shredded breakfast, to jumpstart regularity. Drink the first of many mugs of java, to jumpstart creativity.

Get that second panel down on paper: *The Three Fatefulettes*. As portrayed by Plue, Sage, and Amy-Kay—not necessarily in that order. Figure on the left is spinning forth; figure in the middle is measuring out; figure on the right is cutting off. "Together they weave destiny's tapestry." Like that whoozamacallit, the Triple Goddess—Maiden, Mother, Crone.

Sage Maltese as the latter, of course. And Pluanne just as obviously playing the Maiden... except that Amy-Kay's visible ribs and starveling breasts are more suitable for that role. Cuddly-ripeness would qualify Plue for the central figure. Yes: she and Amy-Kay swinging the tabernacle basket between them, while Sage the Crone scatters torn petals (or splinters, or crumbs) of Fortune.

Next step: design an arrangement. Rough doodle to begin with. Then a whole sketchpad of revisions and enhancements, reducing the Bruynzeel to a charcoal nub. I don't generally attempt trios—too many tensions and balances. Not that a duo's immune from

complicated dynamics. Or even a hard-to-get solo, one-on-one—

*(Nightjars sing and me want to go home)*

Skipping lunch again, unintentionally. Compensating with another chuckwagon supper, fresher and less greasy than Friday's. Followed by a legstretch around the grounds; then a couple of drinks in the rocker on the porch. Where, for once, I get no zoom-pow! cat on my lap.

I can live with that.

Look at that constellated sky. Hark at those crickets chirping near at hand, the coyotes yipping further off. Breathe in the bucolic evening air. Sip unspilled Heaven Hill till sack time.

Rinse the glass in the kitchen. Skin out of your shirt on the way to the bedroom. Pitch it onto the armchair by the chifforobe—

—and be convinced for an instant that Willamene's curled up there, lying in wait.

But the shirt sags vacantly over the overstuffed seat.

Even so: strip off blanket and topsheet, give the contour a couple of swipes sideways and longways. Use the new broom to probe beneath the bedstead.

Game-playing. Trick-doing.

Seeing things, hearing things—be smelling them next.

All clear...

Okay. Fans on. Lights out. Drop off. Return to that scene in the ponderosa grove, with the butterfly triumvirate gliding toward me through treeshadows. Clustered they are and twisted around, like tendrils of long dark hair caught in a—

—nervescape.

Back awake. Heart pounding in the darkness.

Lie quietly. Breathe evenly. Slow yourself down... to a dampened yet crackly sound. Not coming from me, but underlying the fan-thrum like a case of pneumonia:

*HUH-HUH-HUH-HUH-HUH*

Elmer Fudd as poltergeist.

Climb out of bed. Track the *huhs* down the hall. Into the bathroom, behind the throne—aha. Might have guessed. Same thing happened to the toilet in my last Chicago garret. As its ballcock wore out (happens to the best of us) a “water hammer” developed in the pipes. Which would account not only for the current racket but the earlier whangfest.

Phone Mr. Wilson in the morning to confirm this diagnosis. In the meantime (after a prudent whiz and flush) adjust the valve below the toilet to shut off the flow. Along with the *huh-huh-huh-huh-huhs*.

Result: silence. Blessed blissful silence...

And no relapse at eight a.m. when I turn the water back on.

Get out the BlackBerry anyway. Pick up a fairly strong signal. Call the Wilsons in Zerfall and leave a message on their machine. Remain on guard for half an hour or so.

But the silence stays unbroken.

Refocus then on the dining room table, the portable workbench, this sheet of Strathmore Rose Gray. Yesterday’s sketches laid out on either side; *Plue Velvet* positioned straight ahead (minus its velour cowlmask, which vanished from the kitchen drainboard). Today we devise the final composition, using Conté crayons in sanguine, bistre and white. Begin with two thin verticals flanking a substantial curve, and go from there.

On the left: a figure bemused by doom and maidenhood. Amy-Kay with heron neck, egret legs, and feathery hair like Just-Hatched Chick.

On the right: a figure trying to deny the mundane. Sage Maltese with lopsided coif, saccharine throbs, and lurid scraps of passion.

In the middle: a harvest deity, a Nubian Ceres with cornrows in her hair. Torso a series of fertile crescents; milk and honey by the double jeroboam. And an unforeseen impulse for Pluanne’s eyes to bulge and her tongue to protrude, protrude, *protrude*—

—X through that—

—tear it up fast, halves to quarters to eighths—

—to confetti for the catbox.

Cold-sweat creepers for me.

Steady now. Settle down. Don’t let your wits go wandering, or next thing you know they’ll run riot.

Fresh sheet of Strathmore. This time start by copying the central figure's head from *Plue Velvet*. Sweet cherubic face, the color of Snickers or Mallomars or Nestlé's Quik. But with saucer eyes glinting sphinxily. Yes. Good. Extend that up to the cornrows, out to the earlobes, down to the throat—which has nothing around it. A throat neither thick nor fat, but—undaunting. Ditto the rest of her body: abundant in places, but nowhere attenuated. Leave that state to Sage and Amy-Kay.

Yet we mustn't let them dwindle to mere handmaiden and footcrone. If Pluanne's to be an African Demeter, play up the other two as opposite phases of Persephone. Abducted Virgin on the left, pale and rueful; Netherworld Queen on the right, chill and stark.

And no visible tongues.

By evening all three figures are done, and I've regained sufficient appetite to devour a Hungry-Man pot roast with apple crumb dessert. Followed by a long hot shower and lengthier cooldown, rocking and sipping on the front porch.

At which point it occurs to me I haven't had a reply from Green Creek Lane. Check the BlackBerry: no messages. Signal appears strong enough. Tap in the Wilson number and try again.

Ring. Ring. Ring. Ring. *We're sorry we can't take your call...*

Strange. It's Monday night; they ought to be home at this hour. Doesn't really matter, though, since the plumbing's sorted itself out.

Or has it? If the toilet ballcock's not at fault, what was making that noise? Pipes disturbed by the seldom-active Maytag? Complaints from the well pump or the holding tank? Neither sounded off during the shower I took just now.

So why am I heading down to the cellar?

Tank's pressure gauge reads 50 psi. That's adequate; don't futz with it. Dad was the physicist, Gramps the boilermaker; call me if you want wood chopped or planks planed or—

—skrrreeeeek—

—race to the top of the stairs and stop the goddamned door from closing in the very snick of time.

Yeedge...

Don't imagine I couldn't have been imprisoned underground. Without even a shot to solace myself, having left my tumbler up in the kitchen, along with the BlackBerry.

Get the hell out of this pit. Lock the door from the outside, thank you very kindly. Enter the house; lock the mudporch door also. Pocket the BlackBerry, pour a good-sized slug, plop in an ice cube. Glance down at mottled linoleum as I start to depart—

—and there in the corner are a dish and a bowl, both picked clean as any bone.

“Here cat,” I gargle.

“Come here, Willamene,” I try to call more audibly.

“*Key key keeee-eeey*,” I chitter like a gooney-bird.

(Silence.)

Oh man. Oh MAN.

Beast from water, beast from air—and me with no pig's head on a stick to offer either.

Make do with what's on hand. Dole out extra helpings of Meow Mix and non-dairy creamer. Switch off the overhead, back away from the kitchen, retrieve *Plue Velvet* from the dining room and stash it safely in bubblewrap.

Then—casual as all get-out—have a little look-see roam-around. Walking on tiptoe to exercise calf-muscles. Trading in the new broom for a fireplace poker: you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.

“*Key key keeee-eeey...*”

Come-out-come-out-whenever-you-are-and-have-a-slice-of-pie. Pumpernickel pie. Devil's-food cake. Blackened Cajun *keeee-eche...*

Nothing doing.

I put away the poker, which was hurting my hand. Finish my drink; brush and floss. Close the curtains, hit the hay, count a few shavings in hopes of sleep. One, two, pare with a view. Three, four, shear it some more...

\*

Tuesday morning I choose a butternut panel for *The Three Fatefulettes*. Kiln-dried. Sure to have a satiny luster. Straight coarse grain for fine smooth curves. But will split in a wink if tools aren't razor-sharp, so hone and strop every implement in the box.

Then transfer yesterday's design onto the face of the blank. No rush. No haste. Steady as she goes. Same for the second she, and for the third. Maiden. Mother. Crone.

After lunch and a nap, I outline them with a V-trench and set that in with a chisel. *Tap tap. Tap tap.* Grounding the surrounding surface with a No. 3 gouge. *Chock chock. Chock chock.* Bringing out the ladies in proud relief.

Good to be wielding a mallet again. Time to quit, though, when you get tired: Sculptor's Rule of Thumb No. 3. Unclamp the work-in-progress, slide it into the Waning Gibbous, brush off the portable workbench. Yawn and stretch and adjourn to the kitchen. Can of soup—easy to heat. Bag of apricots—easy to eat. Venture a squint toward the dishes on the floor... and find them full. As they were left last night.

Adjourn to the bedroom before it's altogether dark out. Crawl between the sheets. Relax and float downstream. Go with the flow, ride with the tide, swirl in the whirlpool with a *lub-a-dub-dub...*

*UGH.*

Wha'?

*UGH-UGH.*

Got to be kidding...

*UGH!—UGH!—UGH!—*

Fortunato in the catacombs. Seeping through the boxspring, the mattress, the pillow to worm its way into my ear, my skull, my brain: a wracking phlegmatic *UGGGH-ugggkh!* *UGGGH-ugggkh!* *UGGGH-ugggkh!—*

—leap and stride and stoop and twist the toilet valve, flaying flesh off your thumb—  
—as the noise goes on. And on. And on.

No way am I setting foot in that damned cellar tonight.

I've slept through the sound of coughing before. Many a time in childhood, thanks to my mother's habitual three packs a day. Averaging a couple coughs per coffin nail. I once calculated that to be 800-odd a week or 40,000-plus a year. Nonstop to the end.

She won minor celebrity as a film critic thanks to [a] *Terms of Endearment* and [b] a radical mastectomy, with her review of [a] turning into a critique of [b]. Identifying first with Shirley Maclaine as the übermother of a star-crossed daughter, then with Debra Winger

as a professor's wife cut down by malignancy, and lastly with their enduring strength of will as they withstood frustration, misfortune, and so forth.

This became the title essay of my mother's first book—*Amazonian Women*—which landed her on the talkshow circuit. Including *A.M. Chicago*, hosted by not-yet-nationwide Oprah Winfrey, who (or whose staff) clued Mom in about the U of C's experimental treatment of metastasis. My half-sister signed her up for a course of this, leasing a house in Hyde Park for the duration and compelling me to come share it with them.

"*You CANNOT go on living this way!*" declared Cassandra, meaning my post-Strichleiter existence. Which in truth was not all beer and skittles—more like vodka and Pop Tarts. "*You have GOT to see somebody!*" Cassie added, herself selecting Dr. Harvey for that purpose. And scheduling my first appointment with him. And depositing me bodily on his doorstep.

(The Friendly Ghost jumped at the chance to discuss *Amazonian Women* with its author's son. How, for instance, had I reacted to my mother's mastectomy?)

(I told him I'd been bottle-fed and could deal with it.)

A few months later Cass carted our uncured mother back to the Bronx, further down the road to the urn in her handbag. I moved into the first of my Chicago garrets, traded in vodka and Pop Tarts for bourbon and granola, and continued to see the F.G.—

—though in the end all I got out of that was Vicki Volester.

My eucalyptus-skinned Significant Other. Trying so hard to look like Susanna Hoffs of the Bangles. Last seen running like an Egyptian up the El station stairs, refusing to listen to reason or give me any of her own, other than the eternal female "*You know why!*" Along with accusations of stalking her, harassing her, taking surreptitious photos of her—I who hadn't touched a camera since Milwaukee.

Silly disproportionate bitch.

Up the El stairs before me she ran. In a burnt-orange bubble skirt that, like her heart, was two sizes too small. From its askew hem a loose thread trailed; I gave it a tug and Vicki, with a shrill cry, whirled around to take an openhanded swing at my face. Missing by a mile and toppling off-kilter to be caught in my arms, pressed to my chest, and for one fractional moment I could sense her relenting—

—but no no no flail flail flail scratch scratch scratch. Squirm free, wriggle away, *ay-oh-whey-oh* out of my life. Leaving me holding the loose thread, which unraveled for a yard or more before it snapped.

Except that in my dreams (for thirteen years) it neither snaps nor stops unraveling, but spools into a tangled skein all over the El platform. The skirt-thread's connected to a blouse-thread, which is attached to shoulder-pad-threads, which are fastened to camisole-threads, and so on down to the last intimate scrap of polyester. *Gahd oh Gahd oh Gahd oh GAHD!* shrieks Vicki, frantically trying to cover herself with fibers that scatter like urban tumbleweeds. But all she accomplishes is to snag her poufy-perm in the unravelment, swiftly exposing a smallish slightish noggin to every commuter in Chicago plus a trainload of paparazzi as defoliation spreads from bighair down to littlehair, yanking that curly pubic star right off her private Christmas tree—

Wake my heart wide open.

To face the dawn with morning wood in my hands.

Having gotten next to no sleep, thanks to the sound of one lung coughing.

\*

Flash-forward to dusk.

I'm in the truck driving back from Town with six new stitches in my "Mount of Luna." Whose numbness is wearing off fast.

Should've known better than to seek help from the plumbers in Hubsker's paltry Yellow Pages. Number One put me on hold and abandoned me there. Number Two said he could check the coughing pipes "sometime next week." Number Three had just answered my call when the wireless signal flickered or faded or whatever causes calls to drop—and deny me reconnection. Even when I went outdoors and pointed the BlackBerry at the sky.

Probably just as well. Bring in an outside plumber for anything short of a flood, and Mr. Wilson would consider it first-degree infidelity. And needlessly: when the sun rose all was again quiet on the McRale front.

So I tried to forget the night's noises and give my attention to *The Three Fatefulettes*. Right hand propelling, left hand guiding as I shaped and modeled. Digging deeper, delving further, maybe not the wisest course to take when sleep-deprived but that's how you separate

the dextrous from inept, the dabhanded from fumblefists—

—as my grip slipped on the No. 11 veiner, and my right hand propelled it into the heel of my left.

Initial reaction: *DON'T BLEED ON THE PANEL!!*

As opposed to everywhere else. I wrapped the gash in a T-shirt that went from dry off-white to dripping crimson as it daubed the kitchen and mudporch and stable and steering wheel and lock on the gate when I swung the thing wide and stomped on the gas and ploughed through a wind filled with flecks like a desert simoom, trying to hold the oozing mitt above my head without sticking it out the window to attract thirsty birds of prey before I could barrel up to the county hospital, fist held like a weltering Olympic torch for a triage nurse to ignore while paramedics rolled in gurney after gurney of burnt-to-a-crisp chawbacons that shunted me off to a corner where I tried to dwell on something other than the clots in my undershirt...

On inner visions.

Of lovely women.

Such as Nicolette Ningal poring over this very hand, identifying its heel as the Mount of Luna, hallmark of creativity and imagination—but still declining to pose for me. Or introduce my Luna to her Venus. “No pain, no palm,” she sighed, squeezing my hand as she pushed it away.

Spacy lady. And the young charmer who finally treated my wound might have been her love child by a merman. Chestnut ringlets, moss-green eyes, water-lily complexion, and an eminently sculptable seersucker blouse.

“Mr. Hummums,” she announced, “you’re a lucky fellow.” Had I waited any longer, the risk of infection would have been too great and she’d’ve had to send me home unsutured. But Nikki Jr. reckoned I was just within the safety margin, so—*jab! jab! jab!*—she stuck me with three different needles. First to numb, second to stitch, third to tetanus-boost.

Fairly deep laceration but no tendon damage. Keep this dressing clean and dry. Watch for swelling, red streaks, pus. Here’s a prescription for antibiotics. Come back in seven days for suture removal. Now go out and have a nice evening you hear?

Easier heard than done.

No food inside me since breakfast. No fun opening a pack of drugstore Cheez Doodles with one good hand and blunt front teeth. No urge to revisit Big Red's Diner; no hope of leaving Old Blue's Bar & Grill sober enough to drive. So I settled for burgers (easy to hold) at a fast food joint. Meaning I now have to wait two hours to take my asthma controller, and hazard its interaction with antibiotics and pain pills *and* Heaven Hill.

Onto the road. Into the dusk. Half past eight in the P.M.

Numbness wearing off fast.

Traffic's thick en route to Schraube Reservoir. Past that, I'm by myself. Maybe I should make a U-turn, spend the night at a Hubsker motel—one without APPY L ND on its signboard. Accompanied by Nikki Jr. as my private-duty caregiver. See her riding shotgun in sheer seersucker like a downhome debutante. Maybe a latter-day Lucinda Faye, out to evade a Jonesy of her own generation. *Yes, he scares me, Mr. Hummums—says I remind him of a lost love—wants to buy me clothes and make me over and change the color of my hair! Can't I hide with you tonight?—*

—BUMP—

Hit the brake.

Engine idles unconcernedly.

Gaping nightfall on either side.

No traffic behind, but pull over to the shoulder anyway. Get a flashlight out of the glove compartment. And... pause.

Could be a possum. Or a pothole. Or a pulped tumbleweed. (Of Vicki Volester's unraveled underwear?) Or...

Stay seated. Drive onward. Turn east on the gravelly road—and be confronted by a single big-ass headlight, glaring at me over the horizon.

Full moon.

No wonder this day's been so catawampus.

Keep going. To and through the wide-open gate. Leave it like that. I closed it every night for the past twelve days, and what's been the result? Marauders; mayhem; malice aforethought. All the comforts of home away from home.

Pull into the stable. Park the pickup. Unbuckle the seatbelt... which refuses to come apart. *Now* what the hell? Am I supposed to *fight* my way out of it? Make like Bogart breaking free from crook-manacles—Bogart forgetting the flashlight and bag of stuff from the drugstore—Bogart having to dive back after them and risk being recaptured—

All that damnfool moon's fault.

It's behind me now. Casting my shade across the yard. Along with the ghosts of hackberry branches, pointing and gesturing at the mudporch door I left wide open. Wider even than the front gate: gaping like the nightfall. Might as well have unrolled a red carpet for whatever...

...is making...

...those noises...

...inside.

Oh shit. But don't funk. Follow the Ray-o-Vac's narrow beam. One, two, we're past the porch. Three, four, we're in the kitchen. Five, six, we're *stepping on things that crunch like tiny bones* but are in fact capsized catfood, as we switch on the overhead *and see a bloody smear across the wall* that YOU left there your own helter-skeltering self.

Yeedge.

No, don't yeedge. Rescue inhaler's on the other side of the house. Beyond those noises like audible Rorschach blots. Take a deep breath of ordinary air, and exhale it s-l-o-w-l-y...

Right. Next. Forward into the dining room, or turn left into the hall? Edge round the corner and stumble upon—what? A pair of lurking girls who'll ask me to come play with them, forever and ever and ever?...

No corners. Step forward. S-l-o-w-l-y...

White oak table. White oak buffet. Workbench, clamp-vice, toolbox.

And whispering hisses concealed in the shadows, muffled and indistinct.

Sudden thought: could they be coming from *upstairs*? In the Wilsons's private quarters, there behind the shuttered dormers? Picture the McRales themselves, laid out side by side like tomb effigies—Cy who was never the same after the barn burned down; Mona inscribing a banister before eternity beckoned—the two of them causing pipes to hammer

and chains to rattle and me to go BUMP in the night—

Unless it *is* the cat, after all. Making these noises.

Except this can't really be a cat. Not a mere spreader of fleas and ticks, content with kibble and soy substitute; you and I know better than that. Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could haul and toss! Much less deep-six, bump off, rub out, blow apart—

“HUHHHHHHH-UGGGKH-UGGGKH-UGGGKH”

I go, unable to restrain a tremendous convulsive tsunamic cough sneeze snuffle keck gurgle choke hiccup hurl that shakes not simply me but the entire Place, from rooftop to basement. And then...

Silence.

Dead silence.

Goat-sweating silence.

Through which I g-r-a-d-u-a-l-l-y return to the kitchen. Where a bottle waits upon the drainboard. Down the hatch without a glass: swallowing one, two, three different pills. Mixing meds in an 86 proof solution.

I've had four minutes of sleep in the past forty hours.

I've got six stitches embedded in the heel of my hand.

I just let a cacophony fly out of my trachea.

So let me saw logs. Conk me out swiftly.

*But my eyes refuse to close.* The upper lids dangle like marionettes; like a pair of lurkers at the end of their ropes. With an interminable night ahead.

See, I'm in the bedroom. See, I'm in the armchair. See, I'm going to read myself to sleep. Not *All About Cats* but a book I brought with me—a Raymond Chandler paperback or Sweetman's biography of Gauguin, or *Baseless Mime*—

—what the hell is THAT doing here?? I didn't pack it, I swear I didn't pack it—

Stop. Get a hold of your sorry self.

Go ahead and reread the thing: it might have a sedative effect. Open the book, skip the intro, hit the text...

(And may I be damned if my eyelids don't go slack.)

*About this note. I've been told before you take your own life you're supposed to... Testify your testament and say... Catholic doctrine would have you believe... Hell awaits, so abandon all—*

—whoa there. Wait just a second. Eyelids back up:

φ *About this note... I've been told... Testify your... Catholic doctrine... Hell awaits—*

*About...  
I've...  
Testify...  
Catholic...  
Hell—*

*A...  
I...  
T...  
C...  
H—*

Skip ahead skip ahead skip ahead skip ahead skip ahead skip ahead skip—

- φ *Aquinas... Is... The... Crossroads... However—*
- φ *Appearances... Into... Twice... Crazy... Hope—*
- φ *Anti-Oz... It's... That... Curses... Here—*
- φ *After... Illicit... Tenderly... Calling... Humiliated—*
- φ *Appropriately... I... "Thank"... Cruel... Harmony—*
- φ *Addio... I'd... Thrown... Closing... Home—*

Constantly repeated, right up to the final

φ *And... It's... They... Chances... Hell—*

Oh my God.

OH MY GOD.

**OH MY GAW-UDD—**

