



LA ESTELA DE LUVEN-KERAPT

Lovecraftian webzine by the

NUEVA
LOGIA DEL
TENTÁCULO

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By
Edmund S. Meltzer

Encounter

For Robert

What think the figures frozen on these walls
 As they watch our progress through their world
 As they see the shadow pierced with sunlight
 As they hear our tread break the breathless stillness?

Do they strain against their stony bonds
 Eager to gaze on azure-golden glare
 To feel the pulsing, vivifying warmth
 To breathe the breezes as they blow away the dust?

Or do they cry in vain, For us this night
 Was day, this sable shade a sunny sky,
 We were content. We had our own world here;
 What need have we of yours, who left it long ago?

Hearing our footfalls, do they first mistake them
 For others, sandal-shod? Do our hushed whispers
 Recall the voices (not so reverent)
 Which bantered and commanded in an ancient tongue?

Perhaps they wait in taut anticipation
 Straining to recognize a familiar word
 And disappointed when at first they hear none,
 Only the jabber of an uncouth foreign speech –

But then – do they deceive themselves? – a name,
 And then another – That's our sovereign king!
 That's my home town! That, its local god!
 The accent may be strange, but . . . they understand.

That's funny, says one archaeologist
 To another, do you see that little man
 Leading that yoke of oxen? Well, he's smiling,
 And I could have sworn he wasn't when we first came in.



By
Keziah Mason

Three Horror Stories

The Postmortem of Jim Blake

I died. It happened about four months ago. I am now out of my body, disconnected to life, connected to death, to other consciousness that I didn't know existed, until now. And here I am, in this other dimension of other existence, invisible to the human eye, watching how the living mess around my house, bidding for it, and trying to figure out the reason why the panelled kitchen floor was so brutally damaged. I admit, it was a mistake to assume that it was possible to keep a reptile as a pet in your own kitchen. I did that and now I am dealing with the consequences. You must know what killed me and how I died. I will tell you all. It may frighten you, but there is no other way, you must be told.

For there is another realm, another awareness that surrounds your innocent unawareness. It is the invisible subterranean Kingdom of Snakes, the First Nation. Their people hold the ultimate source of power. They will strike from their invisibility into your visibility at any time they choose, day or night. They sometimes pick a man, with the intention to experiment on human mortality. It was only later that I realised that they had chosen me. Little by little hideous secrets started to unravel to me.

My name is Jim Blake. I had arrived at my old summer house at Madison Grove, not far from the city of Mansville. One morning I had seen a fat black lizard slithering through the leaves. The nasty thing was soon gone. I was no friend of lizards, I can tell you that. Terror mixed with weird admiration lingered in my mind. Were there more of those? Were they poisonous? Were there some lurking in the house, too? - I'd slaughter them immediately with utmost violence, should any reptile ever sneak into my house, I had thought defiantly. They killed me first, only I didn't know it then.

- Keep your friends close and your enemies even closer. With this in mind, I had caught one ugly creature, built him a fine terrarium and placed it in the kitchen. I had even studied how to take care of the poor devil. He didn't look happy and I didn't like him either, but I made the creep my domestic pet. As long as I was the Master, I was safe, I figured.

A few days later, one Tuesday afternoon, to be exact, I was making dinner in the kitchen. I lifted up the kettle of boiling water and turned it upside down, dumping the cooked rise into a strainer. As the steam cleared, I suddenly saw a long snake, about one metre away from my

bare feet, raised proudly in its defensive position, ready to strike and kill. As it did. (I had never seen a beast like that. This was something else. Not the serpent from the kitchen terrarium.)

A quick, savage sting pierced my skin. Daemoniac poison spread instantly like narcotics into my blood. I fought for my life, with all my force, hands and nails, knives and forks, and all the other kitchen tools. What damaged the panelled kitchen floor was the fact that I was dragged through the floor like some kind of gate into another world. Doped by the poison, I barely noticed the explosion that broke the panels and opened the gate, leaving the visible signs of the unknown.

I was lying on my side on the ground, damp and squelchy. I was breathing fast, feeling my pulse throbbing between my eyes. Where was I? What were these strange, slimy ropes around me? Brutal slashes of cold whips lashed across my throat and chest, arms and legs. The strange vines tightened their grips every time I tried to inhale. I was aware that I was not yet dead flesh, I was still living. Still in my senses, I tried to reason and examine myself. Strangling, restrictive bindings impeded the movements of my arms and legs. My eyes were burning from alien optical effects of colourful, flashing neon lights. A number of weights hanging from my body created the sensation of drained muscles. My hearing was gone. My tongue hardened and swelled and soon filled my mouth. I was choking. I came to a horrible realisation: it was not the tongue that filled my mouth, it was, *oh, my God!, a snake!* My mouth had become a snake's nest! *God, wake me from this insane nightmare!*

Snakes swarmed and swished all over my body. They formed a moving blanket, black and shining, snake skin blanket. All the ropes, wines and restrictive contraptions, they were slimy snakes of all species. I couldn't

move. Not even lift a finger. They had chained me, cemented me in their overwhelming, fierce tentacles.

I was drifting in delirium. My blood was gurgling in my throat like water in a snorkel. I could do nothing but give in. There was no magic nor strength in my defence, no way I could have defeated the formidable enemy and won the battle. I lay on my back, eyes wide open, in mortal panic. I began to tremble in cold sweat. The more I trembled, the more the assailants squeezed. In panicked jerks, with each feeble gasp, I felt my lungs explode and burst out from my chest. Then, finally, the darkness fell, swooped at me like bat's wings. I lay stunned. My vision went black. I couldn't breathe anymore. I was no more.

The irate King Snake approached slowly. He opened His vast jaws, revealed the venomous fangs in great fury, and with solemn, slow gulps, with great enjoyment, devoured my surrendered, vegetable, lifeless body. From the other end of the Royal Tail came a new serpent. I witnessed the enchanted rite of my own transformation from human to snake. The human death was transferred to a snake life. My mortal self remained an outsider, watching the ritual take place. There was not a thing that I could have done to stop it.

After it was all over, my lips moved, but I could produce no sounds, only the rattle of bubbling blood. Pain throbbed its way back again into my head. It grew into a steady hammering, like pounding nails into my skull. But what was this? How could I still feel something? How could I breathe again? Was I dead or was I not dead? The answer came to me soon enough.

I was both, dead and alive; dead as a human and alive as a snake. What killed me gave me life. It was in His power to complete the transformation from human to snake; either to reject or to accept. This time He chose to accept. I got a second body and a second life. Had He not

accepted, I would have died as mortals do, from a poisonous snake bite. Then I would not be here now, watching you, telling you about the things that I know. He saved my life, or rather, my death. He saved my death. My snake spirit is here to tell you about His existence and the rule of His incomprehensible subterranean Snakedom. Had He not been merciful in the fury and excitement of the rite, the secret knowledge of the First Snake Nation and their invisible omniscient power would not have been brought to your knowledge. I am telling you this at the risk of being exposed and becoming a miserable traitor. But you must know. What happened to me can happen to you.

So, here I am, in this other dimension of other existence, invisible to the human eye, watching the living fuss in my house, bidding for it. They should go into the bedroom. I left a sign under the bed. *Look under the bed! Under the bed! The bed!*

Jim Blake's body was found dead on the kitchen floor at an old summer house at Madison Grove four months ago. The police reported the cause of death: poisonous snake bite. Blake's house was put for sale. The new owners, Robert Moore and Colin Wilson, from the near-by city of Mansville, bought the house at a

reasonable price. They fixed the kitchen floor and did some minor repairs in the bedroom. Robert had seen something shining, quickly moving in the grass...

Freedom

Running, without a destination. Straight ahead. Taking curves only to avoid some sudden misformations in the ground. Dry sticks cracked under her feet, cones and needles hurt her as they pierced the delicate flesh of her feet. Shoes she had forgotten in a hurry.

All she could think of was to flee. To get away, far away from the everyday hell, to another world, inside another mind. Her feet stamped the ground faster and faster. The path took the lead, and she became part of it. No crossroads to choose from, just straight ahead. The path let her do it. It showed her the way deeper into the forest.

He had hurt her. His words had struck her down like a lightning. Smashed her heart, destroyed her brains. She had no more heart, no more human thoughts in her head. Instead, pure anger and pain burning in her redblood veins.

It wasn't the first time she had fled. But now, for the first time there was someone, or rather, something undefined, formless and faceless that called her. She let it take her.

And she ran. The shadows grew taller. They sucked her moving fig-



ure hungrily. She was nothing but a shadow.

Without her own will, she reached a bare top of a cliff. High above tree tops. Beneath she could distinguish water surface of a forest pond, still glittering in the pale night. Nordic summer nights never turn pitch dark. There she halted. Exhausted and swetting. Listened. Nothing. Nobody had followed. She was surprised to realize there was no fear in her. The forest was humming in lament, birds were quiet.

She sat down on the highest point of the cliff. Her butt against the cool rock, knees bent, arms around the knees, head bent down, forehead on the sharp bone of her knees, forming a shape of a human ball. Her butt felt the cool stone. A human ball. Leaving the holes at both ends of her miserable body vulnerable to whatever bizarre caprice the night would choose to perform on her.

The path had disappeared. It had completed its task. It had brought her here, to this place of nowhere. She gave herself away to the night. It took her readily.

Hours passed. She didn't move. Ants crawled up her legs. A spider found its way between her toes. Hundreds of mosquitos feasted on her blood, piercing her body with

their sharp little needles. Hundreds of sharp little needles. Hundreds. One or two would have been a nuisance but hundreds became a torturing pain. Blood dripped down her neck. Arms itched. Her back was in fire.

Finally, the night soothed the turmoil inside her. Then there was nothing. She had reached the nothingness, the mere core of insignificance. She was nothing. She floated in the sea of non-existence.

She was free. Free to go to another world, to another mind.

She found herself standing up, slowly stretching her numb limbs. She was alone and empty. Without a name. Without a heart. Without a single human thought in her head. The path appeared again. It was the only true friend to show her the way to peace.

People said that she had got lost in the forest last night. Now she was out. Good news! They hailed and applauded. How clever she had been to have found the way back to the village, unharmed and in her full senses. Thank God nothing bad had happened to her. She walked through the cheering crowd. A little further away they saw her meet him. What a nice couple!

He too had come to meet her, regretting the evil words that had slaughtered her earlier.

She put her hand into her pocket. Felt the gun. In the name of Hell, with a smile, she pulled the trigger.

In a country, far away from here, tourists come to see an amazing ball-shaped rock on the highest peak of a steep cliff that is hiding inside a tense forest. They say it looks like a she-monster, with eyes wide open, hair mixed with moss, mouth like a dark, bottomless gap (you can throw in a coin and make a wish!), limbs crooked and bent on the rough surface of the rock. One can even distinguish black fingernails, the longest you've ever seen, almost dripping off from the finger tips. Spiders, snakes, frogs, and all kinds of God's bugs creep all over her, not touching each other but rather sucking some devilish pleasure out of her. Visitors have given the rock different names: Monster Rock, Teufelsstein, Hirviökivi... Ask your local travel agency. A trip to the Monster Rock will be worth your while.

Fear of Reality

John Eira was driving along a dusty country road. He was whistling away, driving at a slow speed, enjoying the scenery, the sun and the summer around him. Like so many times before, he was headed to his summer cottage, a log cabin, right on the lake.

It was a quiet place, not far from town Näkkälä. The lake, Näkkäläjärvi, was known for its clear, unpolluted, fresh waters. You could see right down to the bottom through metres of its cool waters. The lake was rich with fish - some even caught crabs in July. Now it was a warm and buggy June day. "Not a good time to catch crabs, eh?", John talked sweetly to Jasu, his big, fat, white-black cat, travelling in the back seat. "Yeah, you like fish better anyway, don't you?, the cat moved her ears in response.

The area was sparsely populated, as it is usual in the North. Not many neighbours around but plenty of space and freedom just for yourself. Good, if you want to be alone. There were the Hartikainens, a retired couple who came like migratory birds in the spring and left in the autumn, and another cottage a little further

away. John didn't know who lived there. Some unhappy, lonely spinster, he guessed. "Might give her a visit sometime," John grinned to himself.

In his younger years he had been quite a womanizer. Today, he didn't quite know how to relate to the opposite sex. When Maggie Magga had left him, ended their relationship for some travelling salesman, John hadn't been interested in women. He had come to terms with himself, kept to himself and tried to enjoy life as it was. He had Jasu to keep him company. The only faithful friend. He hadn't heard from Maggie. There had been no contact, not even a postcard. "Well, I guess she is better off without me", John thought and couldn't help feeling a little bitter.

Nobody knew, but he had an embarrassing secret. He liked to sleep. He did it a lot. He didn't care to mention it because people might think he was mad. He wasn't. It just so happened that when he fell asleep, he lost all control of himself, his body and mind. He had no choice, no power to decide what was going to happen. He travelled into the past or future or to some other time dimension, not the past, not the future, just an atmosphere.

He was treated as a friendly visitor in times and places, or atmospheres. He couldn't, or rather, did not know how or what to call those places. They were impossible to describe. Nothing in the wake world would compare to what he could hear or see in his sleep. In sleep, he had no feelings, no fear, no joy, no sadness, no pain, no pleasure. He was a mere visitor, a passer-by, a traveller, an observer, an outsider.

John steered the vehicle carefully, parked it easily in front of his cottage. What a sensation when he stepped out of the car! Soft, clean air met his face, a dazzling scent from the pine trees filled his nostrils. He took a deep breath, inhaled this healthy country air. His summer cottage was not of luxury, far from it, but not too bad either. It was one of those ready-made log-house models that you could buy as a set and have it built on site. Two rooms downstairs, a loft upstairs and a sauna, all situated directly on the waterfront. John enjoyed taking a sauna and plunging into the cool waters of the lake from the steaming hot sauna. He was an excellent swimmer.

A terrible surprise broke his mel-low plans of having a nice sauna and a swim. In the water, right there

where he was going to leap into the water, right there, he saw two bodies. He instantly understood that they were dead bodies. Vey dead. He puked. In a state of total shock he dialled 112.

The two bodies were the Hartikainens. According to the police, they had been fishing. Their boat had been found drifting. What had happened? What had made them fall into the water? They had drowned but that was not all. Their skulls had been smashed with some heavy object, probably a sledge hammer. Next day, it was all over the news. There were no leads, no suspects. It was described as an act of carnage, and a complete, terrible, insane mystery.

That night John Eira went to bed feeling sick. After such a terrible scene in his very own shore, in his peaceful environment, he was really sick. Poor Hartkainens. The image of their bodies floating in the water kept lingering on his retinas.

“Go in the peace of Christ. Go in the peace of Hell.” John Eira was standing in front of a mirror. The mirror was nailed in on of the the log walls of his cottage. Horrible images kept changing in the misty mirror glass. John tried to see his own reflection but all he could distin-

guish was quickly changing images of monsters and beasts and figures of no profile, chanting messages of goodness and evil at the same time, competing over each other.

John tried to sharpen his eyes to distinguish his own familiar face in the mirror. To his horror, he realized that the fighting angels and demons were a reflection of his own inner self. What? Was he now dreaming or not? He tried to reason: This has to be real because he’s afraid. If he were dreaming in his sleep, he wouldn’t be afraid because in sleep he never had any emotions. But mirrors don’t lie, not at least this much. So, which was it? Was he awake or in sleep? It wasn’t past nor future, it was present, now, at the very moment. Or was it?

“Go in the peace of Christ”, chanted the angels. “Go in he peace of Hell”, counter chanted the demons. A beast preached to him “Destroy all the spirits of the wrong believers and thou shall be saved.” John’s body jerked. “Hell, have mercy!”, his lips barely moved when he uttered those words and collapsed on the floor. His body wriggled, as if trying to get away from an unseen giant grasp that was holding him tight.

At the general hospital of Näkkälä, police officer Rainer Kanerva was

studying an autopsy and DNA reports of a male body found recently at a log cabin, by lake Näkkäläjärvi. It was exactly the same place where the bodies of Mr and Mrs Hartikainen had been found a few days earlier. The deceased was a certain Mr John Eira. He had died in mysterious circumstances. The autopsy report contained peculiar information. It said that the brains of the deceased were turned green, like jelly, his eyes were coloured yellow, his entrails had severe marks of burnning and most peculiar, there was no blood in his veins. There was blood outside his body, stains on his clothes.

Some weeks later a DNA analysis proved that the blood stains on Mr John Eira’s clothes were of three types and were identified as follows: 1. Mr Hartikainen, 2. Mrs Hartikainen, 3. an animal, probably a cat.

After John Eira had reportedly died from a heart attack, the police found a woman butchered in the same Näkkäläjärvi area. She was identified as Ms Maggie Magga. Her blood DNA matched the DNA blood samples that were analyzed on John Eira’s clothes.

Flight

By

Edmund S. Meltzer

In wings of spirit vision let me soar
Through cloud, through wind, 'mong stars beyond the sky;
On ether-piercing pinions let me fly
'mid galaxies, through Heaven's farthest door.

Take wing, my soul, in ecstasies of flight,
The tallest peaks receding far below,
'til e'en the highest winds have ceased to blow
And there is but the still caress of night.

Past seething stars, titanic gems ablaze,
Glide swift, my winged spirit, never tire,
Where nebulae entwine with glowing haze
And novae burst with vortices of fire –

And earthbound eyes, a-gazing from afar
Will see you in the firmament – a star.

By
Edmund S. Meltzer

Twenty-first Dynasty Coffin

osmos enfolding cosmos
Flesh transformed
Cosmos incarnate
Nested in itself
United with itself
East West North South
Above and Below
Reborn deified
Osiris ascends from the horizon
Rising as Re

By
Aaron Vanek

Celluloid Cthulhu

Note: This is a revised essay originally printed in Italian in *H.P. Lovecraft : Sculptus in Tenebris* in 2001.

ften I hear Lovecraft fans whining from the depths, “Why isn’t there a good Lovecraft movie?”

To date, there have been many movies that are directly influenced by, or adapted from, Lovecraft, the best known being Stuart Gordon’s *Re-Animator* (1985). Many others, starting with Roger Corman’s *The Haunted Palace*, (1963), have continued a trend of using the master of horror literature to make a few cheap thrills. Unfortunately, Hollywood will not recognize Lovecraft’s literary power, nor will they make a good adaptation out of a Lovecraft story (not a big budget one, with stars and such...nor would you want them to). Rumor has it that when Stuart Gordon approached a Hollywood studio with the idea to adapt “*The Shadow Over Innsmouth*”, the executives couldn’t understand the idea of a village of mutant batrachian humanoids, and suggested, as Hollywood execs are wont to do, “Why don’t you make it a village of werewolves instead?”

The hope for Lovecraft cinema lies in the independent world. Here, fans of the genre, who have trembled after reading “*The Colour Out of Space*”, who play the RPG *Call of Cthulhu* with passion, who analyze and critique HPL’s works with a scholar’s perspicacity, are making movies that are honest, powerful, and evocative.

To be sure, Lovecraft is NOT an easy author to adapt to film. In fact, adaptation, in general, is not easy, and someone always gets hurt. Most of the time, it’s the die-hard fans who complain that the movie is “not as good as the book”, that it “violates the idea and spirit” the author originally intended. How, then, does one capture the spirit (the ghost, if you will), of Lovecraft on celluloid?

In his essay “*Supernatural Horror in Literature*”, Lovecraft concludes his first section by stating:

The one test of the really weird is simply this —whether of not there be excited in the reader a profound sense of dread, and of contact with unknown spheres and powers; a subtle attitude of awed listening, as if for the beating of black wings or the scratching of outside shapes and entities on the known universe’s utmost rim. And of course, the more completely and unifiedly a story conveys this atmosphere the better it is as a work of art in the given medium.

In cinema, then, it is the atmosphere and tone of a film that brings it into line with Lovecraft’s philosophy on the apex of weird fiction. But that is a high mount to climb, especially in film.

Movies are a moving medium, motion pictures. Something needs to be happening, occurring, in a film, and years of tradition, coupled with today's short attention span audiences, have brought films into a fast paced, plot driven excuse for stunts, explosions, special effects, and computer graphics. Is it possible to evoke an organic, deep-seated dread when you are looking at a perfectly rendered image of something generated from a computer?

In Hollywood, where movies are geared towards the lowest common denominator, the chances of getting a studio to give millions of dollars and creative control to a picture whose original story and inspiration contain the following elements are close to nil:

Intellectually advanced concepts

Loaded with verbose descriptions of history and backstory

Little conflict between characters (and never a "love interest")

A psychologically based, internal conflict

First person narrative (which begs for a voice over, usually a death knell for a movie)

A slow pace punctuated with a few elements of action

Protagonists that are often older bookish nerds and academics, not beautiful teenagers

Shades of racism (a no-no for politically correct Hollywood)

Many can argue that these ideas are not ubiquitous in Lovecraft's stories, but most of them are...nor am I suggesting that Lovecraft's stories fail because of those elements, instead I assert that what makes a Lovecraft story strong is typically antithetical to a good narrative motion picture. A script, at best, contains only two things: action and dialogue. Lovecraft has little of that in his stories. Hollywood wants to see *Saw* or *Hostel*, not extended monologues by ghouls who cannot integrate into society (Lovecraft's "The Outsider"). Ultimately, I doubt any studio executive would even be able to read the first page of any Lovecraft story, much less greenlight a movie based on him.

Without Hollywood, then, where are the good Lovecraft films going to come from, if at all? Independent and foreign filmmakers.

From those who operate outside the rules, who think audiences are intelligent and don't need to be spoon-fed everything from the very beginning. From those who are willing to take a risk. Also, the independent filmmakers, often operating without benefit of money, cannot afford to include those great explosions or CG monsters, so they have to use shadow and suggestion instead of pixels and polygons.

I posit that 1999's summer indie blockbuster, *The Blair Witch Project*, directed by Dan Myrick and Ed Sanchez, is one of the most Lovecraftian-styled films to come out in a long time. A critical analysis of the picture will reveal the elements that make it similar to Lovecraft's fiction, and suggest ways that other independent filmmakers might approach a more direct adaptation of a Lovecraft story.

The film suggested a larger, ancient horror beyond which was revealed in 90 minutes. There was a mythology, that of the Blair Witch, that affected the small New England town with strange and tragic occurrences. When investigators from the local college (remember, this was a class film project they were working on) try to unravel the mystery of the Blair Witch, they suffer a terrible demise as they get in over their heads. What is left but the video record of their travails? Compare the video documentation of their final moments to the "crabbed, scribbled notes" that Lovecraft's protagonists leave to warn the world. They are the same, except that *The Blair Witch Project* utilizes a modern medium, the video camera. Also, *The Blair Witch Project* leaves much to the imagination—there was nothing seen, really. This is akin to Lovecraft's monsters, who are only hinted at, and far too horrible to describe or remember. Many critics attacked the movie for the same thing...they didn't SEE anything. But what is more horrifying than your own personal Blair Witch, the one you create in your mind? For that is what Lovecraft wanted to tap into in his stories, that dark image of dread, that worst nightmare that is personal to YOU, the reader, and that he (Lovecraft) can only try to suggest and capture with words. Same with the BWP, the filmmakers knew that anything they would show would be a poor substitute to the frights in the viewer's mind. Also, many, at first, believed the BWP movie to be real, that the events they saw actually occu-

rred (in fact, one private investigator contacted the filmmakers after seeing the film, determined to find the missing students). So, too, many believed that the Necronomicon was real (it is, now), and Lovecraft's use of actual places, gods, demons, etc., only lent credence to those who thought that even though his work was labeled as fiction, there was an element of truth to it.

In an interview I conducted with BWP directors Dan Myrick and Ed Sanchez in the summer of '99, Dan said: "We didn't want to show anything that was going to give away that this was fiction, that this wasn't real. We didn't want to show ghosts, and we didn't want to show Bigfoot running through the woods, and we didn't want to show the Blair Witch, because as soon as you show it, people are like 'Oh, it looks like a guy in a suit, or that's a good CGI move there, or that's a special effect,' or whatever. We wanted to keep it real."

That is what independent films can do best, for they rely on creativity, not committees, to make the horrors, the lurking demons just beyond our consciousness, real. I believe that The Blair Witch Project, whether you love it or hate it, is one of the most original yet similar stories to Lovecraft's style to ever come out. I also believe that it could never have been made by the Hollywood system.

Lovecraft's roots are in the pulp magazines, the cheap, fly-by-night productions that, more often than not, featured hackwork padding the occasional gem. That same indie spirit of Lovecraft's work, and his steadfast refusal to allow editing of his pieces, matches the idea of the independent film, which is made by auteurs in their basements and their backyards without interference from a marketing department full of focus groups demanding you change your ending to a more positive conclusion, and oh, change the main character to a lesbian (or a "village of werewolves"). Although it is difficult to mount a full feature production sans cash (even video taps costs money), self-financed projects ensure that there is purity of vision and clarity of purpose, something almost unheard of in mainstream movies.

If there will be a "best Lovecraft film adaptation," it will come from an independent, non-studio financed outfit. That means the fans need to keep their heads up to what is coming out, for these

indie filmmakers do not have large PR machines showering theaters with splashy trailers revealing the entire plot of the movie, or actor guest spots on talk shows, or hit soundtracks by pop bands screaming the opening title credit song every few minutes on every radio station in the country. The word of these films spreads through self-published zines, horror and gaming conventions, and especially, the Internet.

There are many sources of info for Lovecraft cinema, but the best is Craig Mullin's "Unfilmable" (at: www.unfilmable.com). Craig started his website after attending the H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival, held annually the first weekend in October in Portland, Oregon (US). The festival has run for more than a decade, and is still going strong. The head of the festival, Andrew Migliore, launched a Lovecraft film website last century. On it he reviewed the many Lovecraft movies he has seen. I chanced upon the site, and discovered one listing for a short called The Music of Erich Zann, directed by John Stryzik. I had not seen the film, but after emailing Andrew, I was able to obtain a copy of the movie, which I loved. It just so happened that I had recently made my first Lovecraft short in film school, and adaptation of The Outsider (which my teachers hated). I showed it to Andrew, who then paired John's and my film with Re-Animator, flew actor Jeffrey Combs up to Portland, and staged the first HP Lovecraft Film Festival.

Since that first festival in 1995, hundreds (if not thousands) of other filmmakers have used their video and film cameras to make their own Lovecraft films, as well as some semi-professional companies (Cine Qua Non in Canada made the great Out of Mind for the Bravo cable network). Andrew has shown them all. He also collects and distributes these movies on video, both PAL and NTSC format (available to order from the Lurker Films website: www.lurkefilms.com). Andrew and John have culled together their knowledge of Lovecraft in films, as well as many great interviews with the creators, into a book called "The Lurker in the Lobby: The Guide to the Cinema of HP Lovecraft." They have revised the book, and the second version, published by Night Shade Books, is available from Amazon (ISBN1892389355) and is indispensable for the HPL-movie enthusiast. With Andrew providing an exhibition venue for the filmmakers who continually pump out solid

Lovecraft films, the festival is growing, and the films are appearing at other fests and cons around the world (Canada and England, for example). With exposure on the Net, international films have been appearing in Andrew's mailbox, and some of the best DVDs from Lurker Films came from non-American creators.

Now is the perfect time for young Lovecraft fans to break out their lenses and start creating their own favorite Lovecraft films. We are in a golden age for horror movie fans to see truly disturbing images that are unlike anything Hollywood will crap out. If you like Lovecraft, and you like movies, you can waste time complaining there's nothing out there, or you can order some of these indie films, or even, if you dare, make your own. I can't wait to see it.

Some links to listings of Lovecraft films (with clips, interviews, and reviews):

Lurker Films: <http://www.lurkerfilms.com/>

Unfilmable: <http://www.unfilmable.com/>

H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival: <http://www.hplfilmfestival.com>

Shoggoth.Net: <http://shoggoth.net/>

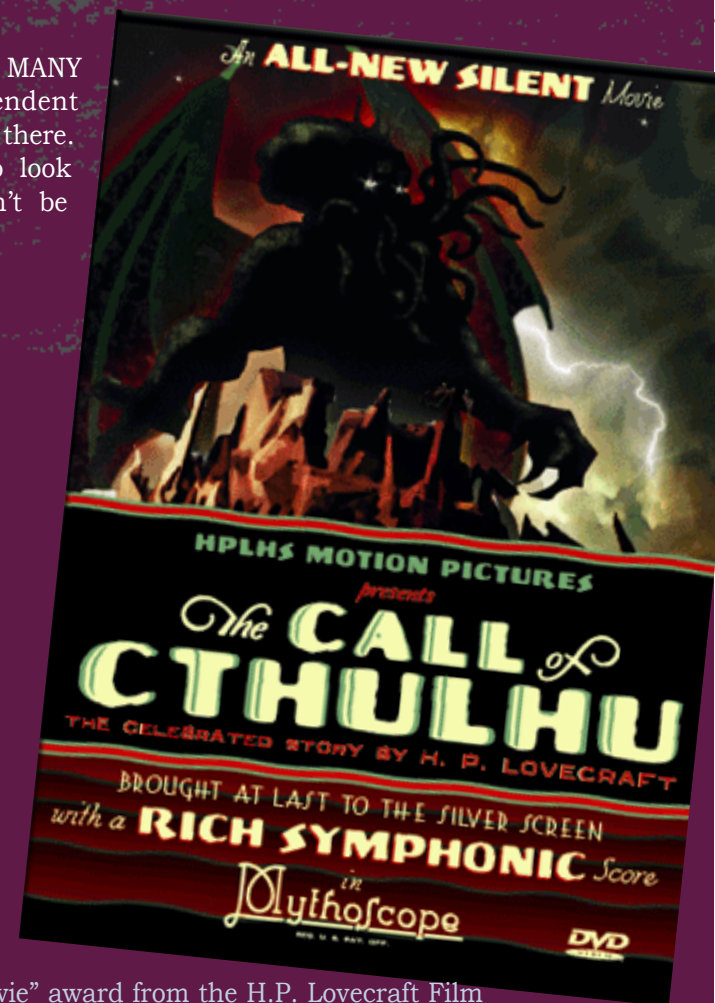
The best Lovecraft adaptation to date arrived after this essay was first written, and it came from an independent source, The H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society, helmed by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman. It is a black and white, silent film adaptation of Lovecraft's Call of Cthulhu story. They are currently working on their first feature, an adaptation of The Whsiperer in the Darkness.

Aaron Vanek is a filmmaker and writer living in Los Angeles. In 2000 he won the "Howie" award from the H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival for his contributions to Lovecraft cinema. His movies include: The Outsider and My Necronomicon (both part of the bonus films on the H.P. Lovecraft Collection vol. 3, featuring Out of Mind, from Lurker Films), Return to Innsmouth (currently out of print on VHS only), The Yellow Sign, based on the story by R.W. Chambers (the feature on the Weird Tales Collection Vol. 1, from Lurker Films), and Call of Tutu, a short Lovecraft-inspired Super-8mm film (viewable on YouTube).

More info:

The H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society: <http://www.cthulhulives.org/toc.html>

There are many, MANY more independent Lovecraft films out there. Take some time to look for them. You won't be sorry.



By
Adolf J. Fort

It's widely known that music unites cultures and overcomes linguistic barriers. Musicians from every part of the world are able to connect and understand each other thanks to the twelve semitones of the western chromatic scale, the true musical Rosetta stone. It's also common knowledge that the absence of music in a film may cause confusion and distress in the viewer, because in an unconscious way, the human being adds melody to almost all activities he/she does.

We find ourselves usually humming something heard on the radio or the television. Who hasn't experienced the – sometimes – shameful moment of taking along the musical baton of that horny and catchy tune someone was crooning nearby? And who hasn't experienced either the anguish – whose traumatic level is inversely proportional to the quality – of not being able to stop singing the cursed hit that the media has been

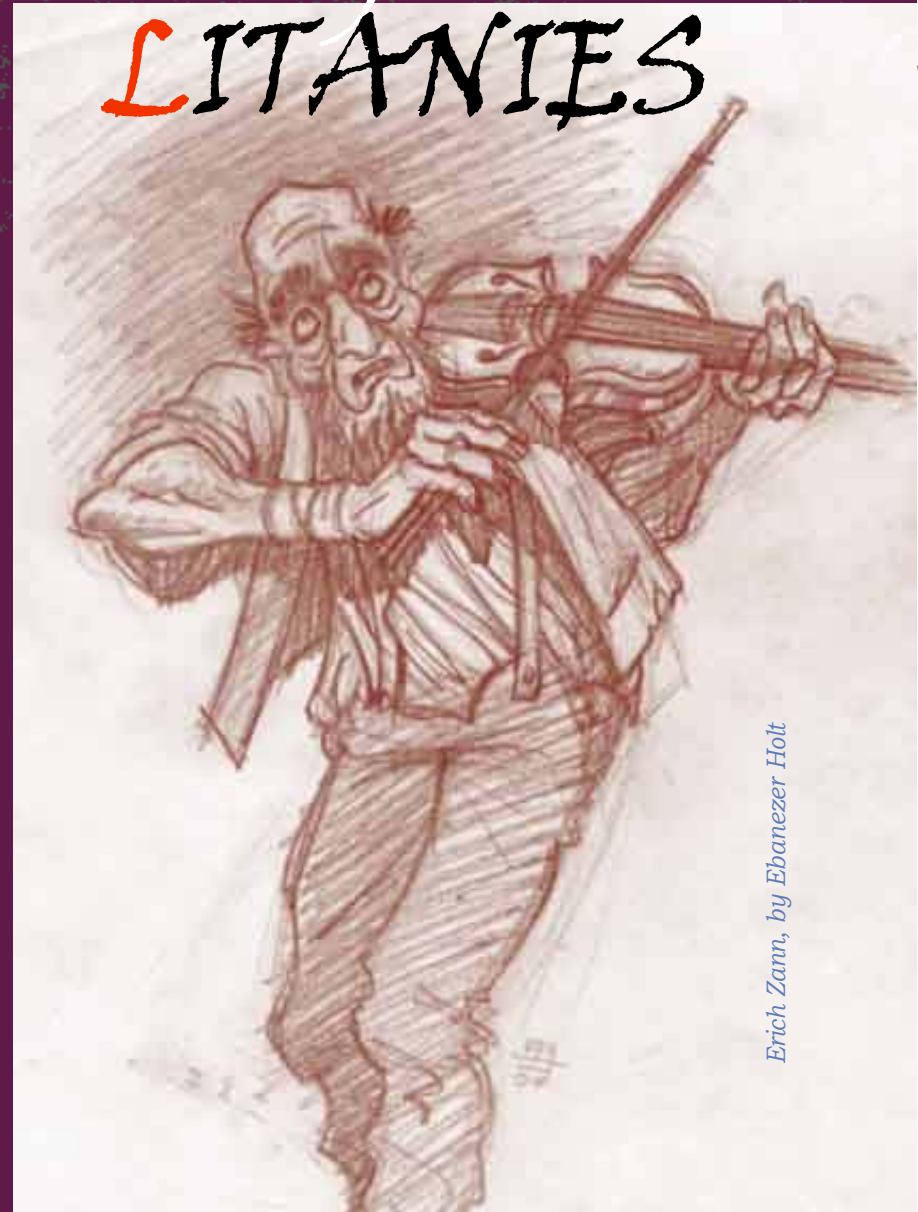
bombarding us daily with?

Unless you are a musician or a music lover, in which case another completely different world opens, dominated by weird scales and complex harmonic progressions, music is an unconscious part of us while we're reading a book. A lot of readers switch on their music player set before starting to read, and this is because our brain adds the original soundtrack to the paragraphs and thus enriches the experience.

The powerful influence of music is always present in H.P. Lovecraft's stories. The master of Providence always showed that in his mind music and lyrics were equal companions, as we can see from the weird litanies produced by the Deep Ones to the unsettling effect caused by the myriad of whippoorwills sensing the fatal end of the story and its terrified main character, not to mention Erich Zann's vio-

The music of H.P. Lovecraft

CHANTINGS AND LITANIES



Erich Zann, by Ebenezer Holt

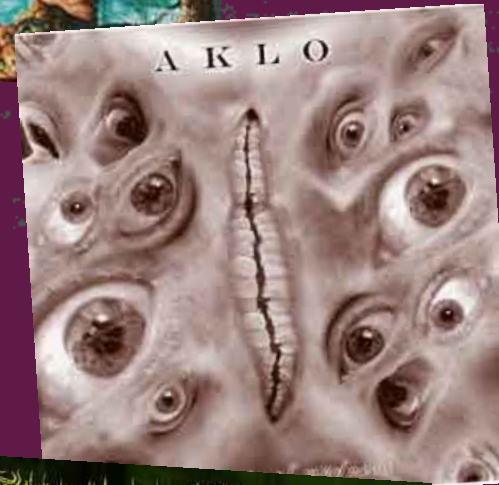
lin's suggestive cacophony.

It's interesting enough the concept HPL had about his own relationship with the music, which is made quite clear in the letter he wrote to August Derleth - one of the authors belonging to the so-called Lovecraft's Circle, on November 21, 1930.

"In matters of music, I would exasperate you -since I am absolutely without the first rudiments of taste. It is simply a blind spot in me, and I candidly recognize the fact. My aesthetic emotions seem to be wholly unreachable except through visual channels. Whenever I seem to appreciate a strain of music, it is purely through association -never intrinsically. To me, 'Tipperary' or 'Rule, Britannia' has infinitely more appeal than any creation of Liszt, Beethoven or Wagner. But at least I do not fall in the Philistine's usual pitfall of expressing contempt for an art which I cannot understand. I recognize and regret my limitation in enjoyment-capacity, and profoundly congratulate those more broadly favoured by Nature..."

Some prestigious writers have added music to their books. Some Spanish examples are the excellent (but somewhat scarce) work by Carlos Ruiz Zafón in the special edition of "The Shadow of the Wind", which includes a 4- song CD written and performed by the author, or the last work of Andreu Martín "El Blues de la Semana más Negra", which comes with a CD specially composed and played by Dani Nel'lo (ex-saxophonist of "Los Rebeldes").

The music suggested by the Cthulhu Mythos has been captured by dozens of performers since the sixties. Anonymous musicians, bands with very different styles and well known artists have wanted to show the world their particular interpretation of a



paragraph or a story. Amongst others, "Blue Oyster Cult", "Caravan", "Cradle of Filth", "Halloween", "Ktulu", "Marillion", "Metallica" or "N'Gai-N'Gai" are only a few examples.

Each one of the aforementioned plays with the Mythos in their own way, some taking a lovecraftian chanting for the mantra (the repeated chorus), some including part of the prose as the song lyrics, some simply creating soundscapes evoking the ill fates of the characters.

In some cases, like the reputed guitarist Yngwie Malsteem, who simply mentions HPL in the thanks section of some of his albums, there's only a slight but worthy tribute to one of his composing influences.

The musical canvas has also treated the zany part of the Cthulhu Mythos, whose indisputable kings - at least for the moment - are writers and directors Sean Branney and Andrew Leman, who have recorded some CDs with humorous songs based on the Mythos.

Only a reduced number of artists have based all their composing work onto the literary material, being H.P. Lovecraft (the homonymous American band) the perfect example. The five records they issued - the band only worked through the 1967-1969 period - contain a mix of titles inspired by

the stories as well as by anything Mythos-related.

A special mention is deserved for modern bands as different as “Nox Arcana”, “Modelo Pickman” or “Richard Band and the Arkham Philharmonic Orchestra”, the latter being responsible for the original soundtrack of “From Beyond”, a horror movie by director Stuart Gordon, second in the saga initiated with the acclaimed “Reanimator”. “The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets” and their adaptation of “The Shadow Out of Time”, the obscure Dirk von Lotzow and his strange “Pickman Model” or the unclassifiable band “Aklo” are obvious examples of the musical aliveness of the universe inspired by Cthulhu’s stories.

A series of divertimentos are my personal contribution as a lovecraftian musician. The first of these is ready to listen, although it’s an early mix. “The Whisperer in Darkness” (<http://www.myspace.com/aj4music>), is an attempt to depict the English transcription of the infamous lost gramophone record received by the main character in that story from Henry W. Akeley. The reason to do it in English is that HPL conceived a very accurate poetic prose for the invocations

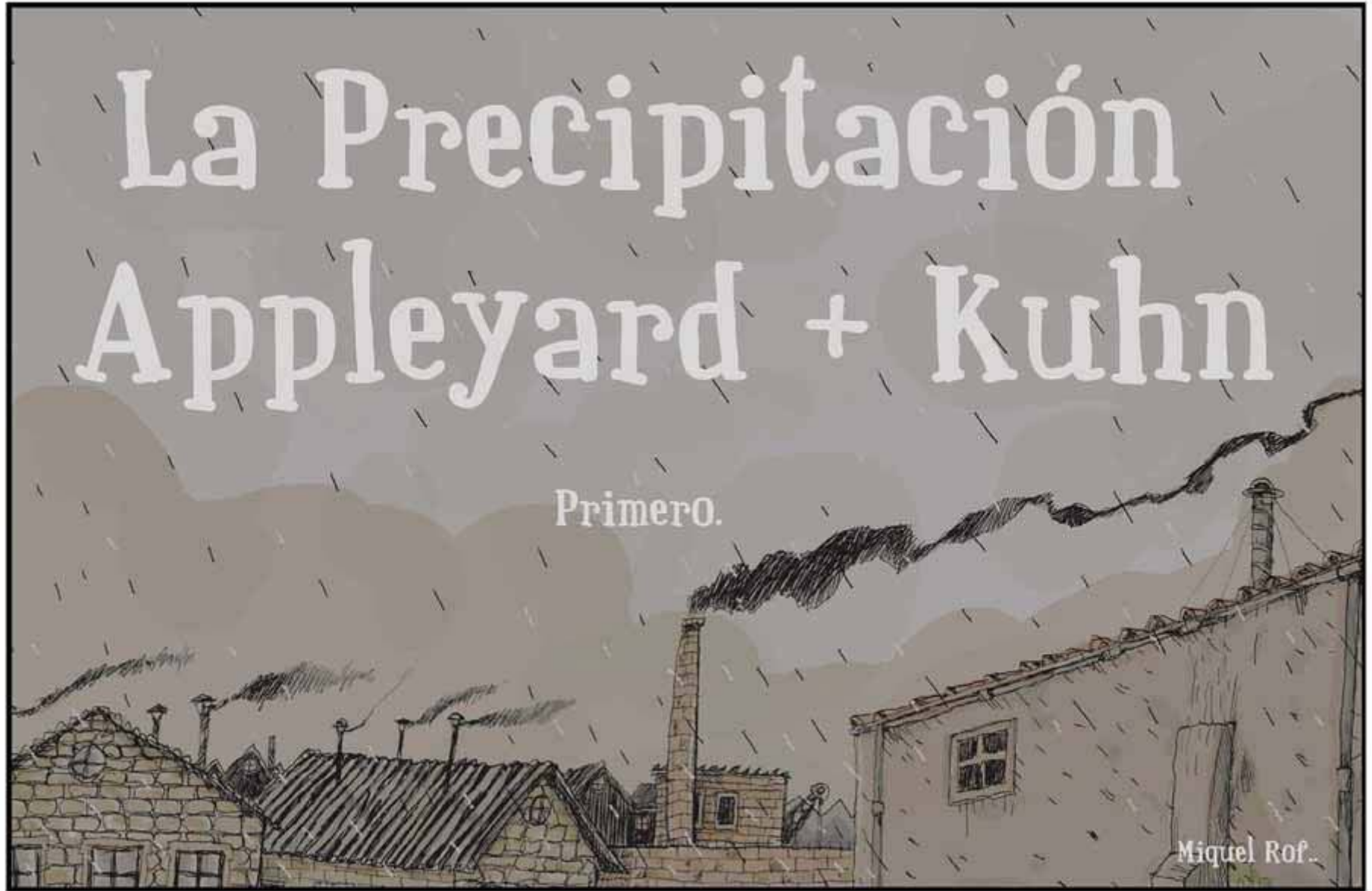
and the Spanish translation, although interesting, doesn’t reflect the power the Anglo-Saxon intonation has. Currently I’m working on a theme inspired by “The Music of Erich Zann”.

May Cthulhu have mercy on me.

September 2007

English translation supervised by Yolanda Rubiales.

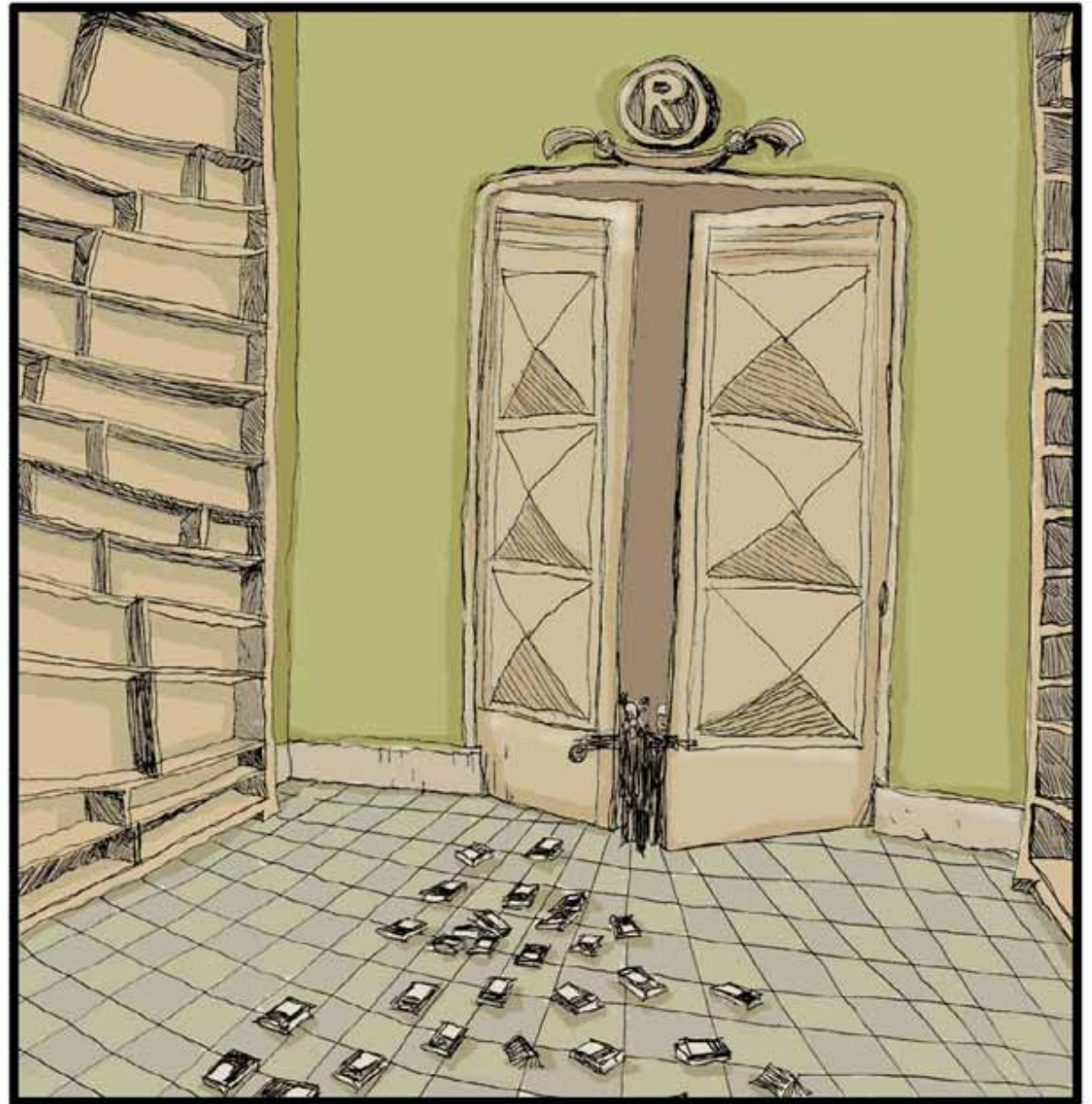


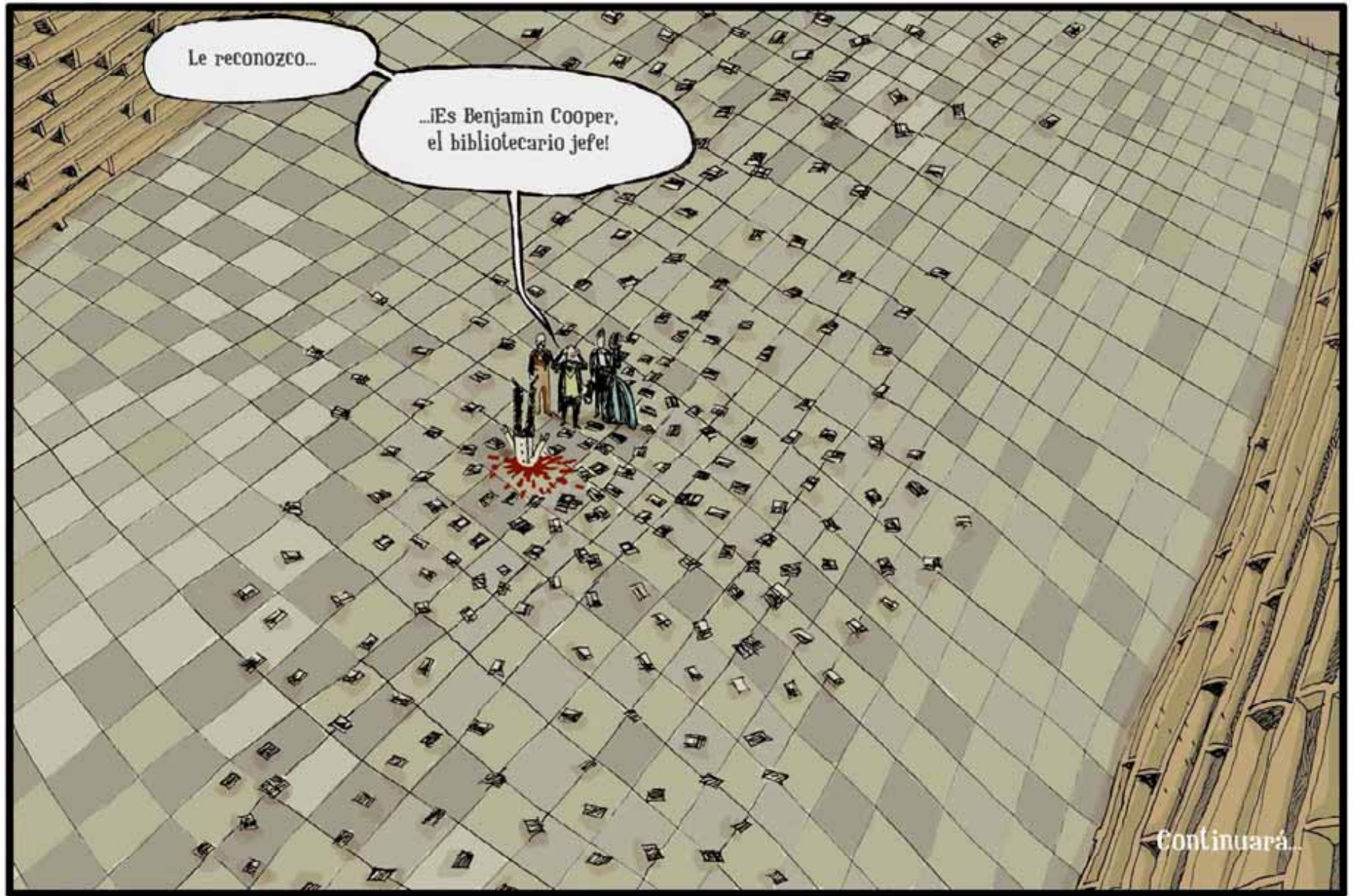












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**LA ESTELA
DE LUVEL-KERAPT**

Lovecraftian webzine of the


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