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# Poetic Instructions on how to stretch brain muscles & examine carnal desires

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**Poetic Instructions**  
**{on how to stretch brain muscles**  
**& examine carnal desires}**

**by Guil Parreiras**

**Mentor: Professor Pamela Laskin**

December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master  
of Fine Arts of the City College of the City University of New York.

*“The way you see yourself shapes your perspective on the world.”*  
Steve Vai

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*To Rogerio, Marilia, Otavio and Elisa*

## **Disease**

(for Miguel Gontijo)

Between blue and red,  
lives a disease that burns.  
It is addiction without water.  
When it is water, it drowns  
and returns to flame.  
When it flames, it hurts.  
When it names itself art,  
it becomes salt water  
that returns to flame.



## **PART I - MUSIC**

## Belle Époque

the mysterious spirit  
of words, images, melodies  
dance away  
in bohemian ecstasy  
tapping, swinging & resurging  
night after night  
as wars, cheap trends  
& real estate raid  
& incarcerate the ancestral art

but just as spring trumpets  
the season of rebirth  
year after year after year,  
staggering in absinthe wintry frost,  
blooming through the cracks of death,

the Belle Époque  
shall flourish  
from the anemic sun  
into a luster  
of rhythm

## **Take the A Train**

the drumming metals  
orchestrate a requiem  
for the commuters

rusty faces peel off  
with the day's worries  
tomorrow's flurries

until the magical goliard  
unplugs the drudging assembly line  
strums chords of rapture

awakening the finite aging smiles  
that reverberate like  
trumpets of the underground

## **Miles in the Sky**

All that jazz  
cooling Harlem nights  
& 52<sup>nd</sup> Street whites  
drunken blues  
Wall Street's pillage

Doo-bop, Hip-hop,  
Acid Rock & Pop  
In a silent way,  
it's all here, Miles,  
in the city

of pangaea, big fun,  
sketches of Brooklyn  
& the bitches' brew

Miles away,  
how beautiful it still looks  
a burst of light  
just the way you left it

## **Wish I Could Party That Hard with a Poem**

whammy-bar-book shrieking a harmonic sound  
high on distortion, bop prosody

mosh pit in minds of the crowd  
screaming for the power-chord stanza

humbucking scotch lick  
of modernist grit

rimbaud lydian riffing  
to the crotch-stained bukowski blues-wine-beats

reverberating to the panty-hose hysteria,  
howling sweat, o'haring pentatonic scales

dissonant kenneth koch wailing,  
harmonizing the destruction of language  
so the eyes & ears of poetry  
can stop thinking too much &  
feel the freaky punk funk, groovy jiggy gyre

## **Bus Station in B flat minor**

(inspired by Sebastian Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto no. 5* and Port Authority)

howling violins,  
wailing cellos,  
& chirping flutes  
varnish the ear  
as eyes witness  
the scatological  
fallen man  
in tattered duds,  
muddy windows,  
gum-stained floors,  
spit- & urine-marinated  
restrooms reeking  
of booze & coffee,  
rat-filled restaurants  
with fecal garnish  
in a swarm of  
buzzing tardies

yet,  
the baroque flair persists  
fawning ostentation  
& finesse

but who are they kidding?  
a shabby honky-tonk lick  
or a blues joint riff  
would've fit in just fine!

**O Sandy**

(inspired by Eddie Boyd's "Five Long Years")

We know we done your mother wrong  
Radioactive cries, lead poison,

Haves and have-nots, genocidal lies,  
Garbage lots – a laundry list longer

Than shame can bear  
And she been more than forgivin'

We drillin' takin' eatin'  
Without a thank-you

But Sandy,  
In New York City,

We, of different skins,  
Creed, looks, hoods,

Blood and sins,  
Come together

To make Babel sing  
Like it's never sung before

O Sandy, you had the nerve  
To kick us out

## **Amused to Death**

(inspired by Roger Waters' title track "Amused to Death")

reclining before plasma screens  
on thrones of inanity,

the eyes stare  
into spectacles of lobotomy

the dramatization of history  
& the glorification of fools

remote controls anesthetize  
a legalized high of commerce

slaughter of the mind ensues  
the rupture of the imagination

the loss of reality  
& the fear of poetry

yet, a selected few  
keep on urging

bipeds to see beyond  
the entrails of the cable box



## **Ubi Maior Minor Cessat**

(inspired by Roger Waters' album *Amused to Death*)

under the blindfold,  
the justice bitch sees  
the hangman's knot,  
myopic on the right,  
astigmatic on the left

the wheel of fortune,  
lifted off its axis,  
runs over the lips  
of the displaced –  
their language reduced to  
grunts of sorrow  
echoing in the vaults  
of silence

no need for the *strappado*,  
the iron maiden,  
or straitjackets –  
polite exclusion suffices

red carpets unfurl  
the chosen ones  
as the unnamed  
remain  
unnamed

## **Semel In Anno Licet Insanire**

(inspired by Roger Waters' album *Amused to Death*)

godless nights inject  
loud shots of stimulation

audio-visual gadgets  
reign in *homo bardus*

obediently marching  
to the next hungry fix

anti-virus software  
defends self-deceit

hip trends & self-entitled  
righteousness

sanitize fanaticism  
amidst nihilism

I search for  
the carnivalesque

leisurely waiting  
to be decoded

so I can be myself  
again

## **Maritime Lullaby**

salty waters  
tempest

my thirst  
sweltering days

trawling waves  
my limbs

in the deep trenches  
mother-night pleads

my peace on a sea-bed  
tomorrow's sharkless dreams

## **Ye Rustic**

(a tribute to the LA pub)

darkness hides the scars n' clouded stars  
in a whiff of carpeted vomit  
    a lingering in the aftertaste  
exile on main street  
    jukebox brew riffing  
    an ass on shady leather seats  
        the beats of a cheap vine  
guns n' roses up for grabs  
    in a 99-cent basket  
with crabs, eros arrowsmithed  
    a dude who's not a dude  
n' a lady who's not a lady  
the last rocks-off gulp drowning  
    the iris on the sun-baked street  
        reminding us of time forgotten  
            like a used condom

## **One Step at a Time**

(inspired by The Rolling Stones' "Beast of Burden")

bare feet,  
(bruised and flightless,  
treading on brutish ground  
abraded over time's wrinkles)  
dragging bloody flesh, broken bones –  
young beasts of aged burden  
plowing, sowing  
conception  
into infertility

## **Slight Return**

Hear your train a comin', magic boy?  
You say it's time to go  
From this lonesome town.  
But don't ya forget  
you're a voodoo child!  
Yeah, you hear that train comin',  
but don't ya dare get on it.  
Don't ya dare put that guitar  
between your legs.  
Gotta populate this town,  
chop it down and put it all in your shoe.  
Gotta wail that hunger away,  
wah-pedal them tears dry.  
We know your mama found dead  
in an alley with a ruptured spleen,  
but don't ya dare get on that train.  
Maybe a ride on that Dragonfly alright,  
but better be back one of these days,  
'cause the Lord knows  
you're a voodoo child.

## **The Ostrich**

(in memory of Lou Reed)

flapping wings  
in courtship

black feathers  
my best suit

serenade  
with a rock n' roll band

my sharp claw  
strikes the D chord

Sweet Jane runs away  
on B minor

40 miles an hour  
my avian self

smokes some grass  
snacks on a grasshopper

& awaits  
the next mating season

but until then  
I will play that riff again

a flightless bird  
shouldn't break

its own neck  
or heart in convalescence

## **If Magritte Were to Listen to Alice in Chains**

(inspired by René Magritte's "The Lovers" and Alice in Chains' "Down in a Hole")

lovers in close-up  
lips sewn

draped cloth  
two sacked

round limbs  
fabric wet

from tongues  
*vena amoris*

a union  
in a tomb

sand raining  
on a flower

portrait *manqué*  
what's a soul

but a portrait  
in bloom



## **PART II – PAINTINGS**

## **The Wedding**

(inspired by Chagall's "Bestiaire et Musique" and Led Zeppelin's "Misty Mountain Hop")

a bride, a fiddler, hippies  
with flowers in their hair  
animals hopping on their hooves

"they really don't care  
where the pressure lies"  
after all, it's celebration day

the notes A, G and E  
LSD  
a cyan-blue-green background

a bend on the G string  
hips swinging  
the misty mountain

the groom hides  
behind the bush  
swaying with the wind

and smoke  
guests get in line for the show  
*theatrum mundi*

Kant said  
"the more civilized men become,  
the more they become actors"

but the bride doesn't care  
the Hippocratic mask  
she refuses

her rigid face a goat's horn  
her eyes dark sclera  
her life a clown in disguise

## **Self-Portrait in a Concave Mirror**

that kid,  
carrying the world –  
weight on shackled limbs –

licking wounds,  
fighting for liberty  
or simply a smile

that kid  
with entrails of fear  
gods tried to soothe

that kid, glad i rided  
to birth me again  
wiser in deed

## **Romantic Until I Screw You**

(inspired by Miguel Gontijo's eponymous painting)

giggles, kisses  
on the oil-rich cheeks  
of the grove  
virgin, limpid, saintly

diplomatic courtship  
showered with  
flowers, chocolate, champagne  
clad in guns, roses, bombs, cologne & catapults

body lotion  
for the sexes,  
rashes & axes  
that spout into the "dark crack with tufted satin"

the sacred turns profane  
in the sanctuary of faith  
insanity  
masked as furtive purity in pedophilic greed

bushes bleed, grieve  
tears pelt  
into the earth  
deflowered, diseased

voyeurs  
watch through the blinds  
as a magical rite  
fails to purify the sweat, spit, gizz whiz

who is god  
& who is the devil?  
propaganda says:  
"doubt is a product"

it's got it right!  
but heretics  
at the corporate pyre  
know better: every dog will have its day

**I Didn't Promise You a Bed of Roses**  
(inspired by Miguel Gontijo's eponymous painting)

hellbent on penetrating flesh,  
perfumed with caustic fallout,

emulsified in a blood bath,  
the clanking of armor

surrenders to the unlocked  
chastity belt revealing

epidermis, penis,  
lubricants & fluids

engrossed in a hand-shake,  
genital-shake,

battling for carnal territory  
in latex pleasure

rapture subsides,  
the manly spear hides,

the war scythe bristles  
hawking for that orgasmic thrill

of slashing, moaning,  
screaming & thrusting

swords & crests  
hold their horses

bodies know not whether  
foreplay or foul play will ensue

as fortuna  
spins the wheel

## **It Will Be a Boy**

(inspired by Miguel Gontijo's eponymous painting)

the haloed monkey of evolution  
blesses fornication –

the indebted gift  
that awaits reciprocity

sanctified in the *venatio*,  
a human *bestiarius* battles another

to ensure the survival of the fittest,  
to appease the christian

& muslim gods of the arena,  
to subdue & punish savagery

in a prime-time sacrificial ritual  
with multi-million-dollar beer commercials

the victor wins victoria's secret's pussy  
& manna from heaven

the r-rated cinema of excess  
euphemizes the consumption

of saints, satans, satyrs, sports & snuff stars  
but wait! the boy must pay his debt:

his body  
at the mercy of *pollice verso*

in the pursuit of fame, country,  
religion & happiness

## No Exit

(inspired by Miguel Gontijo's eponymous painting)

oblation in consumption!  
peddlers of sex, holy water, hollywood, drugs & heaven  
consume to possess the plethora of totemic bliss,  
sacrifice to placate the missing divinity  
*infanta margarita* has a sacred heart  
because she has a dollar bill  
& a wittelsbach diamond  
another human just purchased  
the virgin mary  
that came with soccer shoes and baby jesus  
picasso's *guernica* lives  
in the absurdity of self-indulgence,  
in the dickish dick of the anatomical man  
the mayans for the sun-god,  
the romans for their ancestors  
sacrificed lives as we sacrifice  
for gold, iphones, petroleum,  
nice asses & fake tits  
we all want consecration,  
the apotheosis of movie-stars  
to be seen is to be loved & canonized  
the modern cannibal eats the filet mignon  
of his buddy's wife & country to conquer the (w)hole  
mired in guilt,  
chained to the broken covenant,  
desperate for atonement,  
he crawls to the surrogate deity  
whether it's john lennon  
subbing for krishna  
ginsberg for buddha  
& if not, he's got  
jim jones, lady gaga or reverend moon  
but when the wizard of oz pops up instead,  
he buys lavender soap to expiate his dogma  
& as procreation sows its offspring  
the ouroboros creeps in  
so the cycle can begin  
again & again

## Backdrop

(inspired by Miguel Gontijo's eponymous painting)

religion & industry  
cavorting in sensationalist frenzy,  
converting every truth into a lie  
in a smoke screen of brand names  
dreams mirror truth  
better than blackcoats in monkey suits  
& businessmen who drink my wine  
chained to the booze or to the cult  
in the burger/cola temple of doom,  
the weak worship celebrities  
to escape nihilistic lives  
in the supermarket of life,  
jesus, tom cruise, allah  
& the flavor of the month are for sale  
the ad says:  
“twenty-percent discount on all bad guys:  
free-thinkers, truth-seekers & bullshit-detectives”  
the tragedies in haiti & japan  
no longer the buzz in town  
washout best-sellers  
in the assembly line  
of the devious media  
extra! extra!  
“saint michael to face the beast  
batman versus the joker  
only on paper-view”  
live on wikileaks:  
“the vatican forbade condoms in an aids-ridden continent,  
& just made another deal with *la cosa nostra*”  
maybe superman or mithras oughta save us, or maybe not  
the trouble is:  
we know not if  
we are *homo erectus*, hyperboreans,  
baking power, or a passing cloud



## Leviathan

(inspired by Miguel Gontijo's eponymous painting)

superman falls from grace  
as the right-wing virgin mary  
watches complacently,  
“he was just another batshit immigrant  
with funny clothes, high on kryptonite!”  
the headlines gush:  
“saint paul's hairdo is fugly”  
“the sanctification of michael jackson”  
“season ten of the real housewives  
of butt-hole county”  
“the prudish self-important theatrical  
wedding of the royal brits”  
dreaming to be a star, the child reads on,  
but his aura won't light up,  
so he hangs himself  
his friend, unable to be captain marvel,  
finds a way out: he becomes a gangsta  
craigslist announces:  
“hot-woman-on-filth-avenue-but-really-just-a-floozy  
gives head for a cosmopolitan,  
a balenciaga bag & jimmy choo shoes”  
the daily bugle reads:  
“pussy just went up in the stock market as dick plummet”  
“beyonce's and jlo's asses skyrocketed to thirty percent”  
“teachers, the disposable bastards of education, just got sacked –  
they didn't teach kids how to consume right”  
“models just got another million-dollar raise”  
it must be really tough to look at a fucking camera

### **Three Musicians**

(inspired by Léger's "Three Musicians" on display at the Museum of Modern Art)

to and fro, visitors flock  
to more desirable grounds –  
large rooms, countless riches,

walls that lure gaping eyes  
but there they stand, lonely  
musicians, across from the elevator,

away from a priceless friend  
in a remote corner  
there they stand, proudly

unknown – a trimmed mustache,  
a sailor's sweater, hair slicked  
to perfection, hats, tailored suits,

an accordion, an upright bass,  
and a tuba – ready to perform,  
unflinching in their conviction

## The ABC of French-Tahitian Lust

ample breasts

canvas-drifting eyes

fauvist      gaughin hues

infusing,      juxtaposing

kaleidoscopic      lines

mangoes      nipples      offerings

perpetual      quaking      rite

savory      tahitian umbra

*vas deferens*

walloping

x-chromosomes

yawping

zenith

## **Those Modigliani Eyes**

no uncomfortable seashell  
drenched in salt

no third-wheel cupid  
larking in sight

no chamber maids  
sauntering in & out

on a red blanket,  
on a white pillow, she rests

in her armpit, some bristles  
(I can live with that!)

unsentimental eyes  
denying nostalgia

& obvious signs of romance  
(forget the flowers!)

two-dimensional lines  
silhouetting flesh & brush strokes

## **The Italian Woman**

(inspired by Le Corbusier's eponymous painting)

Your blue eyes,  
the orange light  
on your face  
strike me –  
gallons of paint  
erupting from Vesuvius.

You stand behind  
ancient fluted columns  
of yellow and gray,  
majestic like Nero's golden house.

Your eyes cry out *omertà*,  
shooting lava of disdain  
at your own red lips  
that lust to speak to me  
through a kiss.

## Senescence

(inspired by the Roschach ink-blot test, Robert Motherwell's "Frontier #6," Shakespeare's Sonnet 62, and Reservoir Bar on University Place)

Neon beer signs  
reflect a Roschach

on a tavern's dusty window –  
particles depicting

a Motherwell of myself  
(abstract "tanned antiquity").

My fingers rub off the grit  
to reveal crevices

on the epidermic pores  
and show "me myself indeed."

"Self-love," that being my sin  
reflected on the tainted glass?

Or, self-preservation,  
my need to perpetuate?

"Iniquity," it may seem,  
Or vanitas in ubiquity.

And to mourn,  
I do,

the "painted age"  
and the "chopp'd" carcass.

## **PART III – WRITERS, FILM and THEATRE**

## **Theatrical Face**

My image distorted in running water –  
water that goes through my tears;  
water that reveals my nakedness;  
water that separates my limbs

until I shut the faucet  
and place on my face  
the mask of comedy and tragedy.



## **Morpheus and Juliet**

When he did not disarm  
the panoply of dreams,  
he found her

in a solitary corner  
between walls of love.  
When she morphed into a dream

and ran to touch him,  
he had already turned into  
reality to kiss her.

And so love ceased to be  
dream or reality.

## Spaghetti Western

On a platform of questions,  
a woman waits

for a poem, for the train.  
She holds a notebook. So does he.

Their eyes meet in a close-up,  
threatening to write each other off.

In a wide shot, a standoff,  
deserted tracks, subway tiles.

Eyes meet again.  
Shot, reserve shot.

Extreme close-up.  
No six shooters,

but the power in paper  
and ink.

She draws her pen first,  
but he is faster and writes

one line, then another.  
Her poem slips,

falls on the tracks.  
The train cuts it in half.

It dies, or maybe  
it just needs another take.

## The Last Days of Nietzsche in Turin

(inspired by Bélla Tarr's *The Turin Horse* and Júlio Bressane's *Days of Nietzsche in Turin*)

the mustache gently guides

steps onto cobblestones

antlers defying gods

“all truly great thoughts are conceived by walking”

stalling to weep

for the screaming horse

he could no longer gestate in thought

“if you gaze long enough into an abyss,

the abyss will gaze back into you”

reviled for rejecting

menstrual conformity

& heavenly morals

zonked thoughtless mammals

scoffed at wisdom,

while he, bedridden,

swollen, stark, stared

at his own inertia

fatal dementia

## Mother and Son

Memories dissolve and jump-cut:  
in saturated Technicolor,  
in 8mm black and white.

But one survives the outtakes of time:  
your gift, my first VCR, now a defunct novelty  
that reeled out Patricia Franchini and Michel Poiccard:  
an American girl breathlessly in love with a French rogue;  
Antoine Doinel, orphaned to a troubled past,  
the freeze-frame of a blurry future;  
Fritz Lang and Jeremy Prokosch,  
both contemptuous:  
a director with a monocle,  
a producer with a pen  
and a checkbook.

*Ma chère mère*, as you walk  
near the Invalides,  
your absence, I dread  
like timecode breaks,  
so I resign to a flashforward of you  
tracing celluloid characters,  
my first trip in 30 frames per second.

## Prescription

the pills must be working,  
maybe the wailing guitar,

the tits behind the bar,  
the melon de bourgogne –

my only trip to france – in a glass,  
a film by theo angelopolous,

my only greek sunshine,  
orff's opus, or

the pills must be working  
a new poem, a good night's sleep,

weather talk, cooler talk,  
vitamin c or a kiss,

a lullaby tearing up anhedonia  
something must be working

a god of sorts, iconic beard  
or otherwise, atheist pride,

or the rival's demise  
if not working, something

must be plucking  
at my searching heart

## Hallow Eve

the feast of samhain,  
    drum beats for the dead,  
        cheap whiskey for the living,  
            sugar for the suckling,  
    no boundaries,  
        oneness & otherness as one,  
wardrobe panacea, trickster hipster, gory films,  
    diagnostic eruptions for repressive minds,  
candy, sex, fake blood, more booze, ooze  
    just being silly for a day: *semel in anno licet insanire*

as roethke once inquired  
    “what's madness but nobility of soul  
        at odds with circumstance?”

& as all hallows day creeps in,  
    i search for my body in the woods,  
        on subway tracks  
                                among the rats,  
    on mirrored masks,  
        in gods i don't believe in,  
            in celtic faces i'm yet to meet,  
    in la santa muerte i deeply fear

but my body, i cannot find,  
    so i embrace madness  
at odds with circumstance  
    as it creeps in

## Nocturnal Daze

I flank books  
without reading them,  
seeing their diaphanous covers,  
dreaming of their placid landscapes  
with pronouns and adverbs.  
Facing the pentathlon  
of my imagination,  
I fail.

What remains is a desire  
to write a candid poem  
without having anything to say.

## Fortune Cookie Poetics

paper & ink oxidize,  
but, instinct –  
that's your little bard  
speaking in tongues of truth

and if in doubt, look up!

the neon sign  
above that cheap motel  
flickers to jack kerouac's  
fourth essential belief:  
"be in love with yr life"



## **Prosaic Mixology**

ice cubes  
one and a half ounces of high-proof nouns  
a three-quarter ounce of adjectives (top shelf)  
a splash of prepositions  
a squeeze of citric adverbs

shake, shake...shake it all  
verbatim  
and sip

but something is missing!  
ah, two ounces of fortified verbs  
shake again  
slug it down

the alcohol  
burns down  
warms up the sentences  
trails up in verbose vomit  
forming alphabet soup  
on a clean counter

a poem that spells out:  
READ ME

## **Tom Waits and Lord Byron Hanging Out at a Bar**

Waits sits on a stained-leather stool,  
punctured holes, bourbon watermark.

Byron, a swordfishtrombone out of water,  
a silk scarf on the stool,  
a bottle of wine with a corkage fee.

Waits carves on the counter  
“mad, bad and dangerous to know,”  
growls to a boy on a binge,  
“The piano has been drinking.”

The boy picks up his guitar.

Byron raises his glass,  
“Music walks in beauty, let not excess beguile you.”

“I don’t need no old men telling me nothin’,”  
the boy spits out.

Byron declares, “Glory, the grape, love, gold  
– in these are sunk the hopes of all men  
and of every nation.”

## **The New Year**

A fragmented verse  
tunnels behind

crimson staring eyes.  
Carbon monoxide,

bumper to bumper.  
Beats and brassy horns

silence my searching word.  
There is no light

at the end of the tunnel,  
but a crevice in vernacular.

## Notes

### **Ubi Maior Minor Cessat**

*Ubi Maior Minor Cessat* - The weak (minor) capitulates before the strong (major), or in the presence of the greater the lesser loses importance.

*Strappado* – A form of torture in which the victim is lifted off the ground by a rope attached to the wrists, which have been tied behind the back, and then is dropped partway to the ground with a jerk.

### **Semel In Anno Licet Insanire**

*Semel In Anno Licet Insanire* – Once a year, one is allowed to go crazy.

*Homo Bardus* – Stupid man.

### **Slight Return**

Dragonfly – An old green Plymouth Fury that one of the bands Jimi Hendrix played with drove.

### **The Ostrich**

Ostrich tuning – a tuning that assigns one note to all guitar strings. It was coined by Lou Reed after the song "The Ostrich" – the first he recorded using this tuning.

### **If Magritte Were to Listen to Alice in Chains**

*Vena Amoris* – Literally means "vein of love" in Latin. Traditional belief established that this vein ran directly from the heart to the fourth finger of the left hand. This is one of the reasons why the wedding ring was placed on the fourth finger, or "ring finger".

Portrait *Manqué* – A portrait in which the face is hidden.

### **The Wedding**

*Theatrum Mundi* – World Stage.

Hippocratic Face – The sallow facial expression, with listless staring eyes, often regarded as denoting approaching death.

Sclera – The firm white fibrous membrane that forms the outer covering of the eyeball.

### **Romantic Until I Screw You**

"dark crack with tufted satin" – from Arthur Rimbaud's Scatological Sonnet "Our Assholes Are Different" – "[...] for girls, the most enchanting lurk / in a dark crack where tufted satin grows."

### **It Will Be a Boy**

*Venatio* – Wild-beast hunt.

*Bestiarius* – Gladiator who fought wild animals.

*Pollice verso* – A Latin phrase, meaning "with a turned thumb", that is used in the context of gladiatorial combat. It refers to the hand gesture or thumbs signal to pass judgment on a defeated gladiator.

## **No Exit**

Ouroboros – A circular symbol depicting a snake, or less commonly a dragon, swallowing its tail, as an emblem of wholeness or infinity.

## **Backdrop**

*Homo Erectus* – An extinct large-brained hominid of the genus *Homo* (*H. erectus*) that is known from fossil remains in Africa, Europe, and Asia, is estimated to have flourished from 1.6 million years ago to 250,000 years ago, is thought to be the first hominid to master fire and inhabit caves, and is believed to be the immediate ancestor of modern man.

Hyperborean – A member of a people of ancient Greek legend reputed to live in a land of perpetual sunshine and abundance beyond the north wind.

## **The Italian Woman**

*Omertà* – A rule or code that prohibits speaking or divulging information about certain activities, especially the activities of a criminal organization.

## **Senescence**

Senescence – (from Latin: *senescere*, meaning “to grow old,” from *senex*) biological aging.

Roschach ink-blot test – A test in which a subject interprets inkblot designs in terms that reveal intellectual and emotional factors.

Vanitas – A still-life painting of a 17th-century Dutch genre containing symbols of death or change as a reminder of their inevitability.

## **Mother and Son**

Patricia Franchini and Michel Poiccard – Characters played by Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo in Jean-Luc Godard’s *Breathless*.

Antoine Doinel – Character played by Jean-Pierre Léaud in François Truffaut’s *The 400 Blows*.

Fritz Lang and Jeremy Prokosch – Characters played by Fritz Lang (himself) and Jack Palance in Jean-Luc Godard’s *Contempt*.

*Ma chère mère* – My dear mother in French.

Les Invalides – A complex of buildings in the 7th arrondissement of Paris, containing museums and monuments, all relating to the military history of France, as well as a hospital and a retirement home for war veterans, the building's original purpose.

Timecode Break – An interruption in timecode on a tape which can cause problems when the tape is captured to a computer.

## **Hallow Eve**

Samhain – An ancient Celtic festival held on Nov. 1 to mark the beginning of winter and the beginning of a new year.

*Semel In Anno Licet Insanire* – Once a year, one is allowed to go crazy.

## **Tom Waits and Lord Byron Hanging Out at a Bar**

*Swordfishtrombones* – An album by Tom Waits released in 1983.