FISHSLICES
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As before, this edition is dedicated to Boris Vian. '324' is dedicated to Eric Basso.

'African Brink' previously appeared in Bloodroot.

Revised and Expanded
Second Edition
20 copies

Obscure Publications
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"Watch Out for Obscure Publications"
fish, n. pl. fish or fish-es often attrib [ME. fr. OE fisc; akin to OHG fisc fish, L piscis] (bef. 12c) 1 a: an aquatic animal — usu. used in combination (starfish) (cuttlefish) b: any of numerous cold-blooded strictly aquatic craniate vertebrates that include the bony fishes and usu. the cartilaginous and jawless fishes and that have typically an elongated somewhat spindle-shaped body terminating in a broad caudal fin, limbs in the form of fins when present at all, and a 2-chambered heart by which blood is sent through thoracic gills to be oxygenated 2: the flesh of fish used as food 3 a: a person who is caught or is wanted (as in a criminal investigation) b: FELLOW PERSON (an odd...) c: Sucker 5a 4: something that resembles a fish; as a pl. cap: PISCES 1, 2a b: TORPEDO 2b — fish-less adj — fish-like adj — fish out of water: a person who is in an unnatural or uncomfortable sphere or situation — fish to fry: concerns or interests to pursue — usu. used with other — neither fish nor fowl: one that does not belong to a particular class or category

Paul Rosheim

Obscure Publications 2003
"Cimmerian books are all unfinished," Uzzi-Tuzil sighs, "because they cannot continue beyond...in the other language, in the silent language to which all the words we believe we read refer..."

Italo Calvino

If on a winter's night a traveler
SOUVENIRS

For Pepe and Lalique

Masticating hard cheese in BRF, I remember nights roaming
the rat infested Prešov bus station like a frozen ape,
waiting for the last bus to Svidník;
I saw the biggest misfits of my generation,
deformed by jealousy and stupidity, consumed by backbite
and slander, lurching ugly to bus stops
for sardine rides to oblivion,
who, desperate as aging virgin blimps, begged for, and got,
bureaucratic buggery from the cranky and ignoble
Program for International Social Services, and
who, clotting in Washington for a three-legged journey
to Slovakia, were pressed into the first of endless PISS
sessions where the weak-minded wallowed in pathetic
stories, inane questions, and general mind-numbing discussion, who, after a time warp of blurry daily commutes through an emptiness ending in Modra, a town attractive as a babka’s privates, for instruction in Slovenčina and other gothic horrors, were promoted to regular PISSers, who insatiately damned John and I for haunting the Happy Pickle, the crypt-like Shooter’s Bar, the Relax Club, and foremost, the Barcardi Club, whose urinals drained directly onto unsuspecting feet, where Luba served-up Gutbuster beer and lust & where she legendarily displayed her crotch during our first foray, condemning us to maintain a vigil never again rewarded: oh Luba, where is your Skoda parked now?

bam: it’s five a.m. and Big Eva raps at the bedroom door, another day in Petrazálka, a prefabricated concrete dung heap piled outside of Bratislava, where Gregor, a pony-tailed hipster who ignores anybody not worshipful of his drear cool, wouldn’t bring the PISS van to a complete stop when depositing me to learn tidbits of language and culture
from my new host family, the Mikadays:
to drink Corgon beer with Papa Jan in an angry local bar
with busted plumbing and rivulets of pee on the floor,
to be accosted by schoolboy delinquents
in the no-man’s land elevator lobby abandoned
in darkness to filth and debris,
to be harassed by Ernestine Borgnine, Papa Jan’s sister
and the ugliest woman who ever wore tube socks,
whose emphatic plan was to get shit-eyed and fornicate
as a means to becoming a hairdresser in Chicago,
to watch the local SWAT team pinch a heroin dealership
on the first floor above the batcave,
it’s about time to go to school
but first a hard roll, soft cheese, and strips of tomato
& peppers, no joe (PISS paid a fortune to board us; the
Mikadays bought a Felicia with my food money), and no
hot water for a shower, it’s turned on after I leave
and shut off again before I return,
leaving my things to be pawed over in my absence,
I start the two-hour commute by bus to Modra
with a ringside seat to a fistfight aboard the number 38,
a drunk lout socks a young swain in the snout and a couple
of would-be peacemakers to boot, final score:
Drunken Asshole 3, Good Samaritans 0,
the Champ and most of the ambulatory disembark
at Nivy, the central bus station in Bratislava, where
on platform 5, I encounter fellow travelers Morris and Dotty,
a nice kid from Texas & a granny who inherited a house in Florida, then torched it for insurance (she bought an
Alfa Romero and is now beau hunting in Manhattan),
a bit more haggard and dejected every morning,
we ride the Myjava rocket dog that finally pulls into Modra
after sniffing every corner along the way;
at Bajkalská in Nové Mesto, another skid mark in Bratislava’s
underpants, we pick up more trainees: Class President, and
Roberto and LuAnn (he: punk rocker, she: abused wife);
at Svätý Jur, add Buck Dobbs, a hillbilly “bleak of brain”
but stud of Buck Naked Nature Hikes,
also aboard is Frank Knot, old bastard and veteran
of six marriages, who felt it his fatherly duty
to warn the younger women against me,
at Pezinok, where John suffers the outrages of living
in the beery eye of the storm that’s his host brother, Slavo
Vlkolinsky who growls ‘Jano, go we anywhere?’ and
who, in a coma, collided his bicycle into John’s one night
reenacting *Apocalypse Now*,
nobody gets on
as there’s a local for Amelia Goose, Wounded Inner Child,
Capt. Larry, USN (retired), and his wife, Sherry (nit-wit),
a victim of her own perms, and devout sex maniac, and
my buddy John, the universal ire magnet;
like cows returning to the barn, we parade in pecking order
down the street to the Secondary School for Wine Growing,
this grotesque, slow-motion derby of foibles collapses
at the scrabbled campus shedding plaster chunks
on a dusty hilltop crowned disconsolately
by the 8:00 meeting in front of the Modra Barracks,
where I awoke that first night being choked by the Stork,
6’4” and 130 pounds of pure dork, allegedly for snoring,
& where Side Show Bill conducts his effulgent morning litany
of program terrors, inoculations & crackdowns
to be visited upon us, Wounded Inner Child pipes up today
and asks about Delores, 86, who’d passed through stints in
Burkina Faso and Hungary prior to her Slovak trifecta
meanwhile losing her mental faculties,
Dr. Helena kept her doped in a backroom for six weeks
before shipping her C.O.D. to a nursing home in Iowa, Side Show equivocates & so we pose for a group photo later scanned into a gray blotch on the cover of *Cabbage Squirts*, the internal PISS organ; having prepared on the bus my daily two questions to ask the teacher, e.g. what color is your bicycle? & some other burning issue, I feel reasonably well prepared as our language classes are tracked and I enjoy being "medium-low," avoiding the stigma of being a dullard yet not having to worry about any progress being made by my classmates: Dotty, Frank Knot, Mrs. Milquetoast, and Bobbi Douglass, the latter is Karen Black gone to seed, a predatory alcoholic and maniac who later ran amuck, nude and drunk, at her remote posting until, she too, was shipped home but not before souring PISS with reports than John and I practiced bestiality & harbored negative attitudes; Svetlana, our beloved teacher, after fielding our questions, asks what did we have for breakfast? knowing expectations are now at their lowest point, I volunteer: "I ate for breakfast [so far, so good]
bread, soft cheese, tomato, and pepper,"
Dotty sees these menu items and raises with tea,
Frank also adheres to the classics, so after a final
vote for the Slovak breakfast of champions from Bobbi,
we’ve apparently beaten that subject into the ground
but now sly Svetlana springs her trap,
“Paul, go ask Radka what she had for breakfast,” mulling
over the possible meaning of this utterance
I conclude it involved Radka, the gnomish creature teaching
next door, so I undertake the peregrination, relieved, yet
disappointed, that the object of my quest was not Simona,
ah, a rosy bud of Slavic feminine beauty,
who uses hand puppets in her lessons and lavishes attention
upon preppy Calvin Leggit, instead the classroom I enter
seems devolved from the pages of Charles Dickens,
I see the strained, forlorn freakish faces of Buck, the Stork,
& Dandy Don, a quarrelsome coot obsessed with his daily
intake of fluoride and vitamins, and appreciate
that I’m in the pedagogic hell of the lowest track,
Sweet Mother of God, the horror—
some believe that looking at another man’s shame is a sin,
that being the case threefold, I focus on Radka’s wizened
muzzle and blurt out my question, to which she replies
"Fruit," and I depart

Abandoned, 2000
SCREENPLAY

1. CLOSE ON TV SCREEN

ANNOUNCER’S VOICE:
Good evening. Welcome to tonight’s
drawing of Rich Boy Lottery.

CAMERA ON LOTTERY APPARATUS IN
WHICH A SINGLE BALL LABELED ‘ONE’
DROPS DOWN.

CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK PAST
RICH BOY’S HEAD WATCHING TV.

ANNOUNCER’S VOICE:
And tonight’s winning number, worth $1
billion, is ‘one.’

2. ON RICH BOY

RICH BOY:
I won.

FADE
the lion of us
deloious f
where's my eclair
my eau claire
my cologne
AFRICAN BRINK

see willy nilly
walking down the street
bop bop bop
and see wild edna
coming up
wife of a missionary
edna is pedaling
hard
she knows
willy nilly
has no sense of humor
sure
she knows
if she stops
she's gonna tip

1977
ON THE SHY HORNS OF
A KAPUT SNAIL

'caring not for fame'
delmore's toilet
flooded
so he learned
to pee
in the bathtub
drain
a true talent
lost in
souix city
delmore offered
me velvetta
velvetta.

1978
MY LUCKY NUMBER IS 324. REMIND ME TO TELL YOU WHY. I REMEMBER NERVAL, A DOG SHOW IN TRAVERSE CITY, THE SMELL OF DIESEL EXHAUST, CERTAIN SECRET AGENT EPISODES, BUYING A CAN OF BEANS.
THE PALINDROME EXPERIMENT

red road ruts, eve's turd,
a order
THE VIRGIN AND HER BACHELORS

in a theatre
in paris
franklin
meets voltaire
they embrace
and
kiss
the audience
applauds
such
a brute
franklin
turns and
says
no lunchmeat
here

1978
three gobs for sologub
a monument to taste
deposited here

1988
THE ADVENTURES OF MISTER PIE-IN-THE-SKY

Nothing is forever

Leo Tolstoy

1.

High above the Mississippi stream
Mister Pie-in-the-Sky dreamt his mighty dream.
Phantom spells he translated into eclogue,
Faustroll & Onegin rolling into travelog.
In this your piebald narrator is harmonious,
I point my finger at Puskin’s famed
likeness and exclaim, “That’s the Poet of us.”
For these blighted rhymes, his vestige is blamed.
(This act is required by II.40 of EO). In this den
He pronounces us mortals, dead men.
2.

From his perch atop this red-bricked pinnacle
Mister Pie spied orthodox domes and tabernacles,
toy houses set in clumps of green-dyed lichen.
Dreams, purple prose and verse, awaken
our somniloquist's brain. Here's a puny sample:
Into a Wild West saloon walked a Redskin
named Bob. For a drink here, a nickel is ample.
Dry Bob croaked, "Me-whiskey. Many-whiskey."
Again the bar is wiped, as the Barman had but one ruin
to offer. He replied, "You-gin, one-gin."

3.

Caught up in reverie, Mister-Pie-in-the-Sky hied
through the years to a night, it seemed to Childe Pie,
with wintry riverbottom all around. O Wysalusing!
A silver Zephyr on Burlington tracks passing
nearly flatted our hero and his callow friend Dale.
No black bear chased our young Scouts to camp,
rather the spector of Fate close by their tails.
Childe Pie never scrambled faster. The lamp
of the onrushing E-9 illuminated their flight
up a ravine and through the woods that cold night.
L'ETOILE AU FRONT

raisin of the nile jitney

furred to rivet convertible

the flowers the ales the éclairs

the rich plant of truth

don't we have to suffer a while

without saloons of opal foundations

the fruits of crayons

1987
THE DREAMER & THE DREAM
The Dreamer
The Dream
1962-2003
Paul Rosheim was born in 1956, and grew up in Traverse City, Michigan, and Madison, Wisconsin. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1978. In 1982, he obtained a law degree from the University of Minnesota Law School. He then practiced real estate and business law for fourteen years. Disenchanted with his legal career, he joined the Peace Corps. From 1996 to 1998, he served as a consultant at the Regional Development Agency in Svidnik, Slovakia. Upon his return to the U.S., Paul moved to Black River Falls, Wisconsin, where he now works as an economic development planner for the Ho-Chunk Nation, a Native American tribe. He began Obscure Publications in the summer of 2000.
Obscure Publications – Series One

Paul Rosheim, *Fishslices*

Peter Ruric (Paul Cain), *The Tasting Machine*

Eric Basso, *A New Shade of Gray*

Raymond Queneau, *Five Stories* (trans. by Barbara Wright)


Tom Whalen, *The Wrong Mistake*

Greg Boyd, *The Nambuli Papers*

Harry Mathews, *Calibrations of Latitude*

Stephen-Paul Martin, *Pictures of Nothing*

Kirpal Gordon, *Jazz Tales from the Ghost Realms*

Dallas Wiebe, *Prolegomena to the Study of Apocalyptic Hermeneutics*

Tom Whalen, *The Baby*

Tom Whalen, *Report from the Dump*

Harold Jaffe, *Son of Sam*

Tom Whalen, *The Internecine Wars*

Eric Basso, *Actinic Light*

Eric Basso, *Anonym: 4.1-4.10*

Tom Whalen, *Concerning the Vampire*

Tom Whalen, *Twenty-six Novels*

Stefan Themerson, *Fragments from Darkness* (trans. by Barbara Wright)

Stefan Themerson, *Critics and My Talking Dog*

Franciszka Themerson, *A View of the World*

Christopher Middleton, *Crypto-Topographia: Selected Stories of Secret Places*

Georges Perec, *Attempt to Exhaust a Parisian Spot* (trans. by Mary Folliet)
Obscure Publications – Series Two

Eric Basso, *Distant Voices: French Poetry in Translation*
Eric Basso, *Anonym, 5.1-5.10*
Kirpal Gordon, *Round Earth: Open Sky*
Stephen-Paul Martin, *Collapsing into a Story*
Tom Whalen, *The Cosmic Messenger*
Tom Whalen, *Memoirs from a Mousehole*
Eric Basso, *Anonym, 6.1-6.10*
Eric Basso, *Anonym, 7.1-7.10*
Cecil Helman, *That Girl on the Aeroplane*
Greg Boyd, *The Tide Writers*
Rikki Ducornet, *Two Fictions: With a Tip of the Hat to Borges*
René Daumal, *The Anti-Heaven, Parts 2 & 3* (trans. by Jordan Jones)
Cydney Chadwick, *Under the Sun*
Lawrence Fixel, *All This is Here*
Dallas Wiebe, *Vibini in the Underworld*
Kirpal Gordon, *Traces of Love*
Tom Whalen, *Quantum Surge in O Central*
Harold Jaffe, *Nazis, Sharks & Serial Killers*
Eric Basso, *Revagations: Selections from a Book of Dreams*
Mel Freilicher, *The Unmaking of Americans*

Upcoming OP2 authors: Kirpal Gordon, Jordan Jones, Pierre Albert-Birot (trans. by Barbara Wright), Stefan Themerson, and Robert Walser (trans. by Christopher Middleton).