FeR Fi0'S JourNeY

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FeR FiO's Journey
fER FiO'S journey: Two Fantasies
OP TITLES BY DALLAS WIEBE

Prolegomena to the Study of Apocalyptic Hermeneutics
Vibini in the Underworld
Skyblue’s Memoirs: Selections
The Notebook of Laura Bonair
Fer Fio’s Journey
The White Book of Life (forthcoming)
CONTENTS

The Consecration of the Seed • 1

Fer Fio's Journey • 15
The Consecration of the Seed

I awoke one morning last March, a year ago to the day, with the sun burning the back of my neck and my wife’s ankles pressed into my ears and her fingers wrapped in my toes. I asked her why, in that year of Senach, she had to sleep that way and she said that she slept by day and walked at night. She said she liked to lie on her left side with me on my left side facing her and with my hands wrapped around her right knee and all night listening to me snuffle and snort through my dreams of what we often see and what the queen seldom sees and what God never sees. I told her that that dream had passed away into dreams of a lady in a boat who wears a yellow petticoat and who lives in milk-white halls lined with silk. I said there’s a fountain there and a golden apple. No doors. But thieves break in and steal the gold and run off to their thirty white horses chomping and stamping on a red hill and then standing still in their little heads and small eyes, their short legs and short thighs. The boat lady stands and watches as one-eyed Mother Twitchett, who has a long tail and can fly over gaps, leaves a bit of her tail in the snare. My wife said, “This corner is no corner at all.” And I said, “Roll away, Nancy. So that you can stand up and grow shorter.”

Nancy Beltane, my Phol of thirty years, pulled her fingers out from between my toes, lifted her right ankle off my right ear, pulled her left ankle out from under my left ear, so that my bald head fell onto our stone bed and my left eye, my one good eye, fell open. “Fer Fio,” she whispered into my good right ear, “watch out. God’s before, behind, above and below me. I’m on His path and He’s on my track.” I rolled clear as my naked Phol, gathering up her long, raven-black hair, rolled off the stone slab and there
was a fallow deer and her fawn following her and thirteen brown, hairy, long-horned cattle. The deer cried and the cattle lowed as Nancy herself sang out to gird herself with great strength for the day, invoking the Trinity, Christ’s birth and baptism, his crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension and descent for the Last Judgment. She called out for God to pilot, protect, guard her from snares of demons, the assaults of nature, the false laws of heretics, the spells of women, smiths and druids. She asked for protection from poison, burning, drowning, wounds and the Wallawa. She invoked the strength of heaven, the sun, the moon, the glow of fire, the speed of lightning, the swiftness of the wind, the depth of the sea, the permanence of the earth and the hardness of rock. She wailed against the sore stitch, the carbuncle below and the grim horror.

Usually I don’t mind the moaning and flaunting. The hard stone that we lie on takes my heat away and cools my passions, especially anger, fear or disgust. I usually just roll over and stare at the moss-covered, windowless stone walls of our sleeping room. On my right side, my good ear is covered and I don’t have to listen to the high screeching of begging for luck. But on the day I tell of, a March day in the year of Senach—this being a year later and the year of Cailleach—our stone slab began to sweat in the false dawn in the hour of Aonas MacDougal, cattleherd. As it did this morning in the hour of Isabel MacEachainn, cottar. And the sun through the broken thatch burned the back of my neck as it is doing right now and I do not want to get up because one year ago we did so that Nancy’s purple lips, her green eyes, her hooked nose and her raven hair could flatter, beshrew, wheedle, threaten, beg, insult, cajole, condemn and worship the powers she thinks flick this stony world along. I took no part in it then and I won’t do it now. My magic is my gray eye. My plan is the strength of my flat nose. My course is my toothless mouth. My design is my short
chin. My breastplate is my curdled ears. My luck is the luck I bring from the sixty years of my weakness. My fate is the fate of my strength. My prayers are the whirling suckholes of my mind.

I remember that with Nancy out of our stone bed, the hard slab hurt my left ankle, my left hip and shoulder and the left side of my head. The cold came up into my skull and into my body’s bones. My skin shivered from the dampness. Nancy said, “Come on, Fer Fio. The darkness is over. The sun is breaking across the dry ground. The cold is ending. Our naked children are shivering and slobbering on the stone table and licking their bare, rock plates. The kettle over the hearth is rocking with the boiling barley. Sinthgunt, Sunna and Volla are crying for their father. They chatter for grace and food.” I looked to Nancy and said, “Yesterday I couldn’t belch. The day before I couldn’t spit. And the day before that I couldn’t vomit. Today I can’t move my left leg.”

Nancy went out of the room for a while and then came back with the black wool wrestling thread with the nine knots in it. She tied it around my left ankle and said, “Marrow to marrow. Joint to joint. Bone to bone. Sinew to sinew. Gristle to gristle. Vein to vein. Blood to blood. Meat to meat. Fat to fat. Skin to skin. Spit to spit. Three of threes to the left foot. Heal in the name of Balder, Wodan, Frija, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Balthazar, Gaspar and Melchior. Mary, Joseph and Jesus. Queen Elizabeth, Charlemagne and Tamerlane. Abraham, Isaac and Joseph. Marcus Porcius Cato, Reverend Thomas Cockayne and Abraham Potter. Amen.” My leg moved. I got up and walked into our stone-walled kitchen where our three bald little daughters and our seven bald little sons sat on stone benches by the stone table and waited in their stony blindness for barley porridge and light.

I didn’t enjoy my breakfast because, as usual, I sat and ate and thought only of the day I was making glue to repair the
harness for our mule Dererustica and spilled the bat vomit on the pigs’ feet stolen from the nuns Mary MacDonald, Mary Macrae and Lizzie Simpson over at Tara and the children ate the pigs’ feet and went blind without me knowing for days what happened until the pigs’ feet began to glow. I can’t forget my mistake, especially when I see my sons, Maximianus, Malchus, Johannes, Martimianus, Dionisius, Constantinus and Serafion, their little bald heads bobbing over their rock plates, licking up the last blobs of barley porridge and wagging their heads from side to side. Their curdled ears. Their cloudy eyes. Their unending darkness. Their protruding teeth. Their stubby hands and legs. Naked on the cold stone bench by the stonc table in our little windowless stone cottage surrounded by fire thorn, inchworms and pigs. I poured the porridge, the slurping kids licked the stone plates clean, I put the plates on the mantel over the stone fireplace and then brought out the crock of goats’ cheese with the chopped fennel in it and the pieces of mushroom that Lachlan MacDonald, crofter, picks for us in the Valley of Seeven Stoons.

I remember I was thinking of my terrible mistake when the cottage began to shake. The children scurried under the table, grabbed onto each other and huddled in their cold darkness. Nancy ran to the bedroom. I walked to the windowless, oak door. I heard the voice of the Old Orkney Woman cry out, like nuts dropping into a tin bucket, “Fer Fio, you Hibernian leaf, get out here. It’s time to get on. Your time is up.” The cottage shook again, I knew, from the stamping of the horses’ hoofs. I stood behind the oak door and waited. The voice of Lacnunga cried out, like spittle into fire, “Fer Fio, you Hibernian log, come forth or we’ll stomp your roof.” I heard their dogs snarling and the cottage shook again. Pieces of stone broke from the walls. I waited. The voice of Garmund, roaring out like the snoring of thieves, bellowed, “Fer Fio, you Hibernian mud, this is your last chance. Come out now.
You have a journey to make.” The cottage rocked and snapped. Splinters fell from the ceiling beams. The stone benches and the stone table toppled. The children lay weeping under the weight of the stone. Because I’d made the journey before, I called to Nancy and asked if she’d join me. I assured her that the children would lift the stone off themselves. Nancy said, “Let’s go now together.” We took down from the oak doorposts our leather pouches, checked the contents to make sure all was there and then tied them around our waists. We were ready.

I opened the door and looked into the bloodshot eyes, the long, red tongues and the eye-level teeth of the eight gray mastiffs. We stepped out, naked except for the leather pouches that hung by our right hands. The mastiffs backed away snarling. I could see the band of warriors on their thirty champing and stamping white horses on the red hill that stood across the road and on the other side of the Valley of Althochdeutsche Lesebuch. I could see the band of women, led by the lady with the yellow petticoat, where they waited by our little stream, the Exeter Brook. I could see the Old Orkney Woman astride her black ox. I could see Lacnunga standing beside her brown crooked crane and Garmund standing, holding onto the reins of his green turtle. Nancy, shivering in the March cold, put her arms around my waist from the back and laid her head against the back of my neck. I could feel her tears sliding down my nude spine. I pulled her arms loose, turned to face her and told her that we must.

We lay down in our delirium of cold and drug. On our backs in the dust by the stoop. The mastiffs took us up roughly. One mastiff at each wrist and one at each ankle so that we were each carried by four of the great gray dogs. The Old Orkney Woman pointed north and led us away from our stone cottage on the road to Merseburg. Our faces looked up into the slanting sun. Our heads hurt from holding them off the ground and soon we left a
with very wide gaps between the branches of the pectoral fins. This feature is a tech of the pectoral fins very well developed and adapted for swimming and flapping the wings. The middle fleshy body is broad and flat, and the tail is slightly rounded. All the toes are furnished with strong claws.

7. The Snipe, or Gallinago, is a small bird adapted for aquatic life. The bill is long, pointed, and slightly arcuate at the base, with the same curve at the tip. It has a strong, powerful, and curved beak. The duck's bill is somewhat flatter and broader. The snipe has long, slender toes, and a very short tail.

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The head of the snipe is shown in Fig. 174. The bill is long, pointed, and slightly arcuate at the base, with the same curve at the tip. It has a strong, powerful, and curved beak. The duck's bill is somewhat flatter and broader. The snipe has long, slender toes, and a very short tail.

Fig. 173. Head of the Snipe.
trail of blood. Our leather pouches slid around to the middle of our backs and bumped along below us. The dogs ran on, led north by the Old Orkney Woman, across the Valley of Whippersnapper, across the River of Whatlivesinthe, past the Mill of Abel’s Blood with no tracks around it, past the featherless white bird that flew from Tara. Past the Castle of Lord Landless, whose handless arms took up the bird and carried it to the king’s white hall. Over the Mountains of Dombibliothek. The band of warriors and the band of women following. Germund and Lacnunga pushed aside the trees, threw rocks our of the way, parted the mountains for our passage.

In the late afternoon, in the hour of Locgaire mac Neill, we came to the cave of the Muckle Wallawa and the mastiffs dropped up at its flinty mouth. “Stand up,” the Old Orkney Woman said, and we did, with blood oozing from our rumps down the backs of our legs. Our knees hurt as we bent them after the long pull by the gray mastiffs. Nancy and I stretched out our arms and reached back and pulled our leather pouches around to our sides. The Old Orkney Woman led us into the glowing cave. It was warm there as we walked with Lacnunga on our right side and Garmund to our left. The walls of the cave seemed to be black onyx with bright red veins of ruby running through it. The band of warriors and the band of women followed us into the light that came from the distant end of the cave. The gray mastiffs followed last of all, slobbering and snarling.

And there was the Muckle Wallawa himself. Sitting on his throne of green barley sheaves, stalks of green wheat, bunches of green oat plants, pine boughs under his feet. The golden torches stuck in brackets on the walls gave off some light, but we soon saw that most of the light came from a purple orb encased in four bands of gold with emeralds stuck into the gold and a gold cross on the top of the orb. Beside it lay a bronze scepter with “Crux
Mattheus, Crux Marcus, Crux Lucas, Crux Sanctus Johannes” incised into the barrel lengthwise from the top down. The orb and the scepter lay before the throne of green. When Lacnunga, Garmund and the Old Orkney Woman bowed before the Wallawa and moved aside, I could see the hard, gray worm to the left of the throne, the mindless black chafer to the right and the two-headed serpent lying at the feet of the Muckle Wallawa, whose green left fist was raised in greeting and power, whose green right hand lay closed in his lap. Drivelling outwardly and snivelling inwardly, he seemed higher than a house or a tree. His four horns were at play. His head was nailed on at the top. His eyes were black and his nose hooked. Around his neck a sealskin thong with a horse’s tooth hanging from it. His robe of green moss, studded with aminita mushrooms, was folded over his legs which were crossed under him. The Muckle Wallawa stared at me and spoke, “Fer Fio, carmina gadelica?” I answered, “Wallawa, hicky-picky. Fireside stories.” He said, gazing around, “Fer Fio, thesaurus palaeohibernicus?” I answered, “Oh Muckle Wallawa, squirrel nutkin. Girls’ book of diversions.” He closed his eyes and sneered out, “Fer Fio, suovetaurilia?” I whispered, “Oh Wallawa-wa-wa-wa-wa-wa-wa-wa, erce. Pleasant exercises for little minds.”

Nancy wept in fear as we stood before the Wallawa, the two-headed serpent, the hard, gray worm, the mindless black chafer, the band of women and the band of warriors. I stood quietly in the golden light, knowing that my breastplate was strong, my chanting firm, my tomb not readied, my strength increasing, my authority ennobled. I felt my quality of electrum and the presence of my Silver Champion, who will not die. Wallawa arose from his throne of green leaves and spoke, “Fer Fio, who harnesses the plows, extends the yokes one by one, desires the favors of the gods and scatters the seeds in the prepared womb?” I thought of my Silver Champion. I thought of his thought. I thought of his thought of my
thought. I thought of his thought of my thought of his thought. I thought of his thought of my thought of his thought of my thought and I said, “The poets harness the plows, extend the yokes one by one, desire the favor of the gods and scatter the seeds in the prepared womb.” The Wallawa turned from green to brown. He sat down on his throne of husks and hulls. He turned to his attendants. He whispered to the band of women and the band of warriors. They marched out, the women to the left and the men to the right. They took with them the golden torches.

The cave filled with the pale purple and green light from the orb and the Wallawa whispered to the two-headed serpent and the hard, gray worm. They ran their red tongues over his eyes. He rose from the throne of husks and hulls. “Fer Fio,” he cried, “if the lance-pointed, well-lying, smooth-handled plow turn up cow, sheep, a laeceboc and an on-going chariot frame, what will rise in the furrow at the foot of the plowman?” I watched my Silver Champion open the Book of Ariel and scan the mirror pages. I watched him scan until he read for me the story of how Wallawa whispered to the two-headed serpent and the hard, gray worm and how he arose from his throne of husks and hulls to ask Fer Fio what rose at the foot of the plowman and how Fer Fio watched his Silver Champion open the Book of Ariel and scan the pages for the story of the Wallawa and his asking of the question about the furrow of Fer Fio and how Fer Fio turned from his Silver Champion and faced the Wallawa and said, “A plump wench.” The Wallawa wept, turned black and sat down on his throne of dirt. The two-headed serpent slipped down the round hole under the throne, taking with him the purple orb encased in gold and emeralds. The hard, gray worm chewed up and swallowed the scepter and followed the serpent.

In the gray darkness, the mindless black chafer approached the dirt throne of the crumbling Wallawa, twisted his ears, pulled
Harness

Poets

Plows

How to Measure the Distance Traveled in an Hour

The following table gives the distance traveled in an hour taken together with the contents of a quarter of an hour. The following table gives the distance traveled in an hour taken together with the contents of a quarter of an hour. The following table gives the distance traveled in an hour taken together with the contents of a quarter of an hour.
his nose, pinched his lips and poked his eyes. The Wallawa stood up, weeping, and said, "Fer Fio, if the draft animals be successful, the men successful, the plow be successful, the straps be bound successfully, the earth drip with oblation and the herbs be rich in berries, what must you do when the milk of heaven flows?" I wrote the question in the dust with a pointed stick so that my Silver Champion could speak into my speaking by speaking into the speaking that I must speak if I were to speak the speech that my Silver Champion was reading from the dust so that he could speak into my speaking, and I said, "Wallawa, when the milk of heaven flows you must brandish the goad." The black chafer shriveled into a clod. The Wallawa screamed and fell apart into a hundred seeds. His throne turned to smoke and drifted away. Lacnunga, Garmund, and the Old Orkney Woman ran for the opening of the cave. The gray mastiffs chased after them, snarling and ripping at their legs and backs as they fled out of the flinty mouth.

Nancy and I knelt in the dust and the dusty darkness. She prayed, "We have drawn water through a reed for love and warmth. We have arisen on Sunday to the broad, flat slab. We have taken the monkshood and the butterbur. We have lifted them to our shoulders in a wooden shovel. We have gathered the nine fern stems and cut with an axe three bones of a dead man and burned them to ashes on a fire of faggots. We have shaken the ashes on our breasts against the sting of the north wind. Globular, spiral, spherical, fluxy, pelley, grim, bless these seeds that we kneel in." We crawled forward in the dusty air, feeling our way along and feeling for the seeds which we gathered, one at a time, dropping them into our leather pouches, letting the seeds fall among the bat bones, the rat teeth, the eyeballs of deer, the toenails of ferrets, the dried brains of wolves, the tongues of magpies, the powder from dried and pulverized fox kidneys.
When the seeds were all gathered, we stood up and walked out of the empty cave. The chamber of the Wallawa was barren, musty, arid, gray, dim. The bare stones of the walls were unmarked. The ancient air seemed now stifling so we walked back through the dark passage to the flinty mouth. There was a light wind from the west. The setting sun was shining. The land was bare and damp. It was the hour of Alexander Cameron, the Bard of Turnaig. I took some seeds from my pouch, stepped out and put my face into the wind. I threw the seeds into the air. Some fell on rocks, but most fell into the soil. Nancy sorted out the seeds in her pouch and I threw them up into the wind and they fell on the soil. When all the seeds were scattered, we sat in the cave of the Wallawa and waited for Friday when the dew fell in the hour of Isabella Chisholm, tinker, and the seeds became full. After the merciless cold, every seed took root and the soft western wind blew life into them.

We turned and headed south, singing of Ariel and the nine angels, of Gabriel and the kind apostles, of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Until the Feast Day of Michael when, in the hour of Aonas MacVuirich, crofter, we returned and I put my scythe around the roots of the grain and made the first cut quickly, turned my back to the north and my face into the sun, turned the first cut three times around my head, chanting, "Peace of joys, peace of lights, peace of souls, peace of heaven, peace of virgins, peace of fairy bowers, peace everlasting," and I threw the first cut as far as I could. I closed my eyes twice.

The sheaf fell in one bunch and I knew my stacks would be fruitful and lasting. I knew the hag would not come to ask for a palm-cake and eat up our luck. I knew that when the rough storms came there would be neither want nor suffering. I knew that in the lunatic cold Nancy would not make a whip of porpoise skin and flog me with it. I knew that in the deadly cold she would not take
part of the grave of our dead child, wrap it in black wool and sell it to the merchants of curses. I knew that in the pitiless cold no one would sing into my left ear, then into my right ear, no one would write Malchus on a wafer, bring in a virgin to hang it around my neck for three days, and the spider would not walk in with his hat in his hand and tell me I’m his steed and put cords on my neck and ride me over the sea and back until his beastly sister walked in. I knew I need not fear the teeth of the wolf, the testicles of the badger, the three crooked cranes, the crooked bones, the three crooked wound scars. I knew I would have no need for little stones from a swallow’s stomach. Nor take the green centaury. Nor bathe in a cow’s hot urine. I knew that if I continued to take feverfew and rednettle boiled in butter that Nancy’s ankles would not crush my head, her fingers would not unwind from my toes and we would both sleep on our cold stone bed until it would sweat again and the sun would burn the back of my neck again and again, as it is right now, until we two would lie down among roots forever.

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13
Les entrées se divisent en sept parties: Entrées de boucherie, de porc, de gibier, de volaille, de poisson; entrées froides et entrées de four.

Bifteck au naturel

Le faux-filet et le rumpsteak sont les deux pièces les plus couramment utilisées pour faire les biftecks, mais le meilleur est le filet.

Prenez un bifteck de trois pouces et demi de large, que vous placez sur le travers du fillet de boeuf; pourrez-le; ajoutez des poissons. Faites cuire le bifteck au grill à feu vif, pendant quatre à cinq minutes de chaque côté. Lorsque la cuisson est terminée, mettez sur un plat chaud avec un morceau de beurre. Servez sans tarder.

Prenez et servez avant la cuisson domine une grande partie de la viande; c'est en valeur de la perte du temps, il faut servir aussitôt seulement après la cuisson.

Bifteck au brochet

Préparez et opérez exactement comme pour le Bifteck au naturel. La cuisson terminée, mettez le bifteck sur un plat et entourez-le d'une garniture de crevettes ou de sonnée de sel et de vin blanc.

Bifteck à la hongroise

Préparez et opérez comme le Bifteck au naturel. La cuisson terminée, déposez dans un plat chaud, mettez un morceau de beurre, versez un peu de vin blanc et servez sans tarder. La viande, une assiette creuse et lisse et laissez le jus se faire ainsi pendant trois minutes, découpez et servez.

Ce genre de bifteck est de bon goût de bois clair et mieux de servir le vin blanc.
Fer Fio’s Journey

Fer Fio sat naked on the cold stone bench by the cold stone slab table, eating his cooling porridge from his stone dish. It was the hour of Dinny-Mara and the first light of the day was breaking over the Red Hill on the east side of the Exeter Brook and the road to Merseburg. He was talking as he squished the porridge around in his toothless mouth and telling his Phol, Nancy Beltane, who was naked and squatting by the fireplace, that he had to go to market because last night, while recording the laundry lists of the Banshee, he ran out of his golden ink for his silver pen and needed to travel out for more so that he could record on the dried skins of swallows the golden words of his Silver Champion. That he would take his stallion Whuppity Stoorie to lead him back and that he would return six months hence in the Month of Tatterfoal when the Exeter Brook would be brimming with the spring rains, the inchworms inching out, the fire thorn greening up and their white, blue-eyed, red-eared pigs would be rooting through the Spunkie Marshes. When the morning sun would shine through the crack in the oak door and cast a slit of light on the west wall of the kitchen. Nancy blinked her green eyes, pursed her purple lips, rubbed her hooked nose with her left hand and flipped her long, straight, raven-black hair over her shoulders. Rose from her squat by the porridge pot hanging in the fireplace, walked naked across the dirt floor in her wooden shoes with the red heels, looked into Fer Fio’s good, gray left eye and told him to head out.

Fer Fio licked the stone dish clean, held his nose shut and thanked his Silver Champion for the meal and the permission. He got up from the table. Put the dish on the mantel over the fireplace. Unhooked his leather pouch from its nail on the doorpost and tied
the thong around his waist so that the pouch hung by his right hand. He wrapped up the dried mushroom that served as a pot for his golden ink and put it in his pouch. Put on his sleeveless sheepskin, wool side out. Put on his gold shoes with the silver soles. Opened the pewter can by the door, cut off a piece of the white snake and ate it so that he could understand the speech of animals. Walked out into the cold winds of the Month of Cabyll Ushtey. Nancy slammed the inside latch tight. His ten blind children did not awaken.

Fer Fio walked south along the Exeter Brook to his stone stable where he kept his white mule Dererustica, usually called "Rusty," and his stallion Whuppity Stoorie. His bare arms, bare legs and bald head ached in the cold wind. His silver soles squeaked on the frozen ground. His gray, left eye watered. He opened the black oak door to the stable and entered, tossed some hay to Dererustica, who stamped a granite hoof and hoo-hawed into Fer Fio's flat nose. Fer Fio then carefully entered the stall of Whuppity Stoorie which was lined with mirrors because Whoopity ate so fast that he could see what he was eating only in the reflections that winked out more slowly than the fodder disappeared. Fer Fio threw the fodder into the crib, the mirrors flashed, and it was gone before it hit the bottom. He took down the golden comb, climbed up on a barrel and combed the white mane and the white tail that when spread out could cover a house. He took the silver brush and brushed the green hide and the green legs that could leap so high that the hawks ducked. He took out of the bronze-colored cloth and wiped the clots from the jade eyes that could see through stone. He wiped the mouth that could neigh so loud dead bodies rose from the waters. He took out the iron file and trimmed the blue porcelain hoofs that could run so fast the horse never heard his own hoofbeats. Filed the hoofs carefully because Whoopity was always careful not to step on the little
blind children as they played in the inchworms, the fire thorn and among the pigs. Took out a hemp rope, tied it around Whoopity’s neck, led him out into the winter while Rusty hoo-hawed a faretheewell and together they forded the Exeter Brook, headed north on the Merseburg Road. It was the Hour of the Fachan. The southeast wind Volturnus ruffled Whoopity’s mane and tail and the wool on Fer Fio’s cape. The sun broke over the Red Hill and Whoopity Stoorie dropped a little round brown turd every twenty-three feet and six and one half inches so they could find their way home again.

On the third day of their journey straight north to the market, Fer Fio leading the great horse because only a nude Nancy could ride him and he’d tolerate no bit, bridle or saddle and all others who sat on him stuck to him and were drowned when the stallion ran into the water and Fer Fio singing, “To market, to market, to get me some ink and if I don’t get it I’ll not know what to think” and Whoopity whinnying so loud the toes of the dead twitched. When they came to a fork in the road to Merseburg, Fer Fio was confused. It had all seemed unfamiliar and Whoopity stood silent while Fer Fio looked for tracks to find the right way. They could see the Scalp Mountains to the north. Graham of Morphic sat on a stone by the fork in the road and said to Fer Fio, “If you will answer three riddles, I’ll tell you the way.” Fer Fio, the great solver of riddles and the great revealer of all mysteries, smiled and said, “Lay on, Graham. I’m the great seer.” Graham took off his red mask and said, “My hair is red, my corpse is black and I eat candles by the stack. What am I?” Fer Fio took a wingbone of a bat out of his pouch, scratched his bald head with it, looked to his Silver Champion and said, “Fire.” Graham took off his gray nose and said, “Right. You were lucky. Now. Underwater I breathe and snort. My head is branched. I need support. In winter, my eyes are blanched.” Fer Fio took a rat tooth out of his pouch, scratched his
flat nose, looked to his Silver Champion and said, "The moose." Graham of Morphie pulled out his eyes and threw them over his left shoulder. "You're really lucky. Now try this one. My belly saves me from sinking. My coat is yellow. The mermaids keep me thinking. My world is hollow." Fer Fio took a pinch of pulverized fox kidney from his pouch, sniffed it, scratched his curdled left ear, looked to his Silver Champion and said, "The polar bear. Thalarctos Maritimus." Graham spit out his tongue. Took a stick and drew an arrow along the right fork of the road and disappeared. Whoopity whinnied and the kneecaps of the dead flipped over. Fer Fio took the rope and they journeyed on. Along the right fork with the Scalp Mountains to their left. Northeast.

On the tenth day of their journey they found star-shine beside the road and knew that Merseburg was elsewhere. Fer Fio was lost and Whoopity knew it. They feared the Fachan. The Month of White Ladies was upon them. The east wind Eurus blew cold and bitter. To keep warm they sucked on the dried eyeballs of deer that Fer Fio carried in his pouch. Until a sign. It said, "Do not crush the flowers. Do not shatter the trees. Do not hide from the showers. Do not smash the bees." They journeyed on northward and entered the Glass Forest. There everything was clear. The path was straight and narrow. By its side there were marigolds, tulips, crocus, all made of glass. And the oaks, elms, ashes, maples, were all made of glass. Glass bees walked over the glass flowers and a mist of soft glass fell onto the little man and the great horse. Slowly Fer Fio and Whoopity became covered with glass while the faint laughter of the Fachan rippled through the forest. The path ended. They reflected everything and were reflected in all things. They could not tell where to go, where to step, where they were. Fer Fio said through his glassy lips, "Whoopity, we've got to do something about this. I'll never make it to market if I'm a man of glass. And a glass horse can engender no foals." Whoopity
turned and said, “Stand between my front legs.” Fer Fio did. Who knew the world of mirrors. Who took the mirror from his pouch, pieces of glass clattering from his moving body. Who looked into his mirror to find his Silver Champion, who signaled to try the tongues of magpies. Fer Fio took two from his pouch, glass tinkling around. He ate one and gave one to Whoopity. They turned into a cloud of mist and drifted slowly to the north. Eurus did not deflect them as they shattered no flowers, broke no trees, did not hide from the showers and smashed no bees. The Fachan could not hurt them nor follow them with his one eye in the middle of his forehead, the one horny hand from his breast bone, his one leg out of his haunch. Unreflected is unknown and the thirty days of their drifting were as one, the Fachan seeing only the little round balls of dung that dropped every twenty-three feet and six and one half inches and became covered with glass that sparkled in the low sun.

At the end of the Month of the White Ladies, with the Fachan screeching out curses and the north wind Boreas blustering, Fer Fio and Whoopity drifted out of the Glass Forest, ate some toenails of ferrets, returned to their original forms, traveled along a pungent road of skin to the Kerroo Clough on the Dark River. There they found only a small, windowless stone cottage thatched with reeds. On the door a note: “Who fords the river will never live. Who floats across must surely give.” Fer Fio looked to his Silver Champion, who told him to lay two rats’ teeth on the stoop. He took them from his pouch, laid them down and the door opened. Out hopped the Fachan, his great-eye winking, his one hand grabbing, his one leg scissoring. Fer Fio and Whoopity both ate quickly the toenail of a ferret and became corpses. The Fachan giggled, hopped over them, dragged them to his boat. There he put the tooth of a rat in the mouth of the little, bald man and one into the mouth of the great green and white horse. He launched his
wooden boat out into the Dark River, that churned in the cold buffets of Boreas. Hoisted his black sail and ferried them across the mile wide river. On the distant shore, he dragged the bodies onto the bank, took the rats’ teeth from their mouths, spat on them, urinated on them, threw dirt over them, sailed away laughing over the wide waters. Three days later, a falcon from the Ur of the Chalders pecked on their noses and Fer Fio and Whoopity stood up, shook the dirt from their coats and journeyed on towards the market.

After Fer Fio and Whoopity Stoorie had crossed the Kerroo Clough on the Dark River, they turned westward in the Month of Guytrash and came to the Cave of Frid. It was the Hour of Gyre-Carling. The snow covered Scalp Mountains were now to the southwest. The road led directly into the Cave of Frid and beside the road a sign, “No Pets!” Whoopity neighed and the navels of the dead puckered. Fer Fio tied him to an oak tree and told him to wait and then, alone, entered, purchased two orange tickets from the booth where the three ticket sellers wore monkey masks. The person who sold him his two tickets for two hunks of dried wolves’ brains wore a yellow mask. Fer Fio pushed open an iron gate and entered, found himself in a large zoo filled with apes and monkeys. The floor was concrete and at the north end of the zoo was a large concrete stage with a black gorilla on it. The gorilla had an iron collar on and the collar was chained to the concrete wall. He paced back and forth, bellowed, and someone said to Fer Fio that that was the great beast. Fer Fio wandered on past monkeys chained to posts, to chairs, to tables. The shrieking monkeys trembled, scratched, fought.

When the sun began to set in the Hour of Thrummy-Cap, Fer Fio came to an oak door in the southwest corner of the top floor. He knocked to get out of the cold that now lay over his bald head. The door opened and he saw wooden stairs curving down to the
second level. He descended the narrow steps with voices confusing and antagonizing him.

At the bottom of the stairway, Fer Fio walked into a dark room filled with the heavy smell of excrement. Sullen monkeys lurked in the shadows. It was dark and he was afraid, wondering where to go. The large monkeys moved about in the darkness, brushing against Fer Fio, snarling into his flat nose, nipping his curdled ears, slapping their claws against his bald skull. He was lost and frightened until he saw a white, glowing figure. It was his mother Amalburga, who had died twenty years earlier. From the back. Her straight golden hair falling to her waist. All in white and shining. Fer Fio called out to her, but she only kept her back turned and lifted her right arm to beckon him on. Glowing with light, she led him through the monkeys' teeth to an iron door that led farther down into the Cave of Frid. As he again entered the wooden stairway, the voices came again, antagonizing, confusing, pinching, squealing, haggling, sneering, flaunting.

Fer Fio entered the third level, sweating, scratching, yawning. He was exhausted and his mother refused to look back at him. Amalburga, now dressed in a black cowl, her hair short, black and tightly curled, led him into a huge empty cellar with a dirt floor. No windows. Walls made of soft red brick. Arches along the walls. Faint light circling. A great, black falcon, three times Fer Fio's height, stood in the southwest corner among layers of rubble. The falcon, who yearly flew from the Ur of the Chaldees to the Cave of Frid for the winter, raised his long, black wings straight out from his sides and said, "If the three men in the tub were a butcher, a baker and a candlestick maker, who made the tub?" Fer Fio, the great cracker of riddles, turned to his Silver Champion, who wrote on the inside of Fer Fio's skull. Fer Fio turned his left eye over and looked in, read and said, "Bobby Griglans, the thumper of Wild Edric." The falcon's black wings
dropped off. His wrath burned in his yellow eyes. He said again, “If the man of double deed sowed his garden full of seed, where is the garden?” Fer Fio called upon his Silver Champion, who wrote in Fer Fio’s nose. Fer Fio pulled out a leaf of dried mucus and read and said, “In Barra Head where the Hawkie lives.” The falcon flopped into the rubble. Again the black bird from the Ur of the Chaldees spoke, “If you ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross to see a fine lady upon a white horse, when did she die?” Fer Fio summoned his Silver Champion, who wrote on Fer Fio’s tongue. Fer Fio spat upon the dust and read in the red spit and said, “In the Hour of the Bulbeggar in the Month of Joan the Wad.” The black feathers fell from the falcon who then stood in skin like burlap, who slipped and slopped and chased Fer Fio around the empty cellar, trying to kill him with his beak. Blind falcon. Fer Fio running in circles. The bird snapping. The falcon ramming the wall. Until Fer Fio found the door out. The falcon raced and screeched in circles as Fer Fio entered the little door in the northwest corner of the great empty cellar.

He ascended a circular iron stairway. At the top, another door. He opened it into a cage of yellow monkeys with red faces. They bared their teeth, snarled. Fer Fio slammed the door shut and descended backwards. He turned around and opened the little door he earlier entered. His mother was gone. The great featherless falcon lay dead in the center of the cellar. In darkness. His beak open. Water running from his mouth. Fer Fio rolled the great bird over and saw beneath the corpse a cross drawn in the dust by a large beak. Fer Fio dropped to his knees and began scratching at the dirt. His stubby fingers bled. The cellar was filling with water at the south end. The rubble was washing toward him when he found a little steel box. He blew off the dust, stood up, opened it. In it was a dried mushroom bottle filled with golden ink. He ran to the door in the northeast corner where he had first entered the
falcon’s room. He heard screaming and running. He heard howling and wailing. He ran up the long wooden stair. At the top, he held his little steel box and saw that everything was burnt away. Only ashes and the smoldering corpses of the monkeys remained. The great beast, still chained to the wall, was a pile of black, dead flesh.

Whoopity Stoorie was still tied to the oak tree and was waiting for him when Fer Fio walked out of the western end of the Cave of Frid into the Month of Marool in the Hour of the Hedley Cow. Whoopity explained that he had run from the Kerroo Clough on the Dark River westward before the Fachan could hear the sound of hoofbeats and that they should head south out of the rasping cold. Fer Fio wrapped his steel box in mauve linen and put it into his pouch with his right hand. He was ready and they set off. Whoopity leaving a trail, hoping the Fachan would think Fer Fio dead in the Cave of Frid and that Whoopity was still tied to the oak at the Kerroo Clough on the Dark River. It was the Hour of Kunal-Trows when they set out south so Whoopity neighed and the nipples on the dead leaned left.

When they came to the River Boing in the Hour of Cutty Soams, Fer Fio and Whoopity started over the Hickathrift Bridge but stopped when the giant Eilian of Garth Dorwen crossed their path. His golden eyes glittered. His four ears curled out in the cold north-northwest wind Thrascias. His nose hung to his chest. His lower lip fell to his belt. His long, black hair fluttered in the blast. He stomped his black boots, waved his fingerless hands, spat green slime from his toothless mouth and said, “You cannot cross the bridge unless you bring me a gift.” Fer Fio took out his mirror and looked into it. His Silver Champion was scribbling on a wax tablet. The pointed stick flapped across the wax and Fer Fio understood and said, “Say on.” Eilian of Garth Dorwen spoke. “First you must bring me the red eagle that flies over the Scalp

24
Mountains.” The Silver Champion scribbled on. Fer Fio read and spoke to Whoopity, who ran, unable to hear his hoofbeats, to the Scalp Mountains, leaped into the sky over the Valley of Neman, snared the red eagle in his mouth, returned, followed by a thunderous day of the hoofbeats he had left behind. Eilian took the red eagle and shrank. Said, “Now you must get my mother from the bottom of the Boing.” The Silver Champion scribbled. Fer Fio read the mirror, spoke to the great horse who neighed and Eilian mother, Hilda Crossbrain, burst up from the bottom of the Boing, her corpse in shreds of flesh from the nibbling fish, her bones green from the moss, her hands still clutching the red iron shoes in which she danced to death. Eilian pulled the corpse up onto the frozen bank and shrank some more. He trembled and said, “Now you must tell me the number of iron nails in Hickathrifi Bridge.” The Silver Champion scribbled, Fer Fio read, spoke to Whoopity, who could see through stone and who said to Fer Fio, “Two thousand one hundred and thirty-seven.” Fer Fio repeated the number. The giant, now smaller than Fer Fio, raised his tiny tin sword, Fer Fio glared at his Silver Champion, spoke into Whoopity’s left ear, held his mirror up to the wintry sun. Whoopity looked into it and Eilian of Garth Dorwen and the Hickathrif Bridge disappeared. Whoopity spat out 2,137 iron nails from the bridge and the golden balls that were the giant’s eyes. They crossed the River Boing on the ice, leaving behind the steel shod corpse, a pile of iron nails, two golden balls and a frozen red eagle, and headed south into the Desert of Killmoulis. In the east they could see the Scalp Mountains still covered with snow.

They entered the desert in the Hour of Kirkegrim, Whoopity straining to leave a trail, and they feared the Fachan because shapes changed, their eyes deceived them and they walked in purple sand up to their knees. Cold sun. Caurus, the west-northwest wind, blustering. The sun still low in the south. Scalps
to the left and eastward. At night, they dreamed of the Meester Stoorworm, who came to Whoopity in the form of a quivering white mare, to Fer Fio in the form of Nancy Beltane before she was his Phol when she wore daffodils in her black hair that hung to her waist, and when his Silver Champion said to him, “Go ahead, boy. Take her.” And he did until the bat vomit spilled on the pickled pigs’ feet and blinded his ten tiny children ten years later after Nancy had come to his stone cottage and no longer wore daffodils or even a dress. And rarely shoes. Her nakedness imposed on the rest in their spine-tingling cold. On the cold stone slab of a bed. In the cold stone of the porridge bowls. In the world of no windows. In the world where every year in the Month of Tatterfoal he and Nancy were carried out by the eight gray mastiffs to meet the Muckle Wallawa and answer again his inane questions so that the crops would grow. At night Whoopity neighed in his sleep and the Adam’s apples of the dead bobbed. During the cold, gritty days as they floundered through the sand, keeping the Scalp Mountains to their left, Fer Fio’s Silver Champion growled and giggled through the mind Fer Fio’s head foiled by the windy cold fell forward the rope of Whoopity hanging voices of silver gold old rags pouch full of bat bones rat teeth eyeballs of deer toenails of ferrets dried brains of wolves tongues of magpies powder of dried and pulverized fox kidneys the mirror for feeding the great horse magic mirror to watch behind for the Fachan clinking apace shadows lost to the Fachan dreams from the Meester Stoorworm golden ink in mauve linen wooly cape flapping blue porcelain hoofs buried in the sand bald head stubby fingers curdled ears wishing for hog sweat for thirst mule cakes for food chicken vomit for boils cow spit for cankers sparrow droppings for eye sore snake urine for horse teeth robin scabs for earlock skunk pus for headache cockroach eyes for redcock ant blood for spirit crash until the sand ended shadows
returned Whoopity neighed and the dead swallowed.

Then it was the Month of Churnmilk Peg. Fer Fio could tell by the restlessness of his Silver Champion and by the pain in his skull. They stood on a hill. It was the Hour of Mabuz the Enchanter. Before them lay the Vegetable Plain. Whoopity stared southeast over it. The west wind Zephyrus came with high clouds. They stood, silent before the plant world. They descended and waded into the soil made of carrots and rampion. Mandrake roots wailed. Radishes and beets nipped the fetlocks of Whoopity, chewed off the skin on Fer Fio’s shins. They bled into the turnips and artichokes. Cabbages tripped them. Lettuce wrapped around their ankles. To the northeast, the Scalp Mountains, beyond the forest of corn and tomatoes. The squash tripped the wanderers. The cucumbers knocked against their knees. They waded through a river of onions. They scaled a hill of Brussel sprouts. They walked through a valley of cauliflower. They stumbled through a hedge of asparagus. They crossed a field of broccoli. They leapt over a chasm of spinach. They lay down to rest in a bower of eggplant. They fell exhausted into a labyrinth of sweet potatoes. Fer Fio’s restless Silver Champion urged them on. The Silver Champion goaded Fer Fio up. The Silver Champion rode inside Fer Fio’s ear. Who put in his short finger and pulled out some wax and read, “Eat and go.” They ate. Fer Fio gnawing his way slowly along. Until stuffed. Fer Fio holding the mirror and Whoopity chomping off the vegetables too fast to see. The way opened and the Scalp Mountains loomed, snow covered, to the north. To the east, the spires of Merseburg.

Exhausted, stuffed, belching, vomiting on the run, they came to the Chapel of St. Punk on the left of the path. Africus, the southwest wind, blowing over the grass. The chapel squat and made of cypress beams and black plaster. The spire shaped like a crooked finger. Muffled bells tolling the Hour of the Joint-Eater.
Fer Fio’s Silver Champion told him the chapel was the Church of the Fachan and that it was haunted by the enchantress Madame D’Aulnoy, who eats little boys and spits up little girls, who combs her long red hair over the altar and leans, face down, to lure worshipers into her snare, who brands “JBW” on the rumps of her converts, who raises the three fingers on her right hand and the dead lie down, who raises the two fingers on her left hand and the leaves of the oaks fall. Whose breath is the work of a thousand corpses. Whose eyes are the light of rot.

Fer Fio thanked his Silver Champion—it was the Hour of Selema Moor—tied Whoopity to an oak tree and stooped to enter the little, brass-studded walnut door. He entered. The door closed and locked. Inside, a large golden orb hung from the beamed ceiling and turned slowly, flashing the Mersburger Zaubersprüche on the onyx walls” “Sloth is the inspiration for all poetry,” “Masochism is a kind of generosity,” “Light is not necessary,” “Intelligence is corruption,” “God loves your bad smells,” “Pleasure is embarrassment,” “If you have no sense of humor don’t laugh,” “Only the faithful practice infidelity,” “Kick people while they are praying,” “Spit on good works,” “Heresy pleases the heart,” “Anger cures warts,” “A heavy heart is the beginning of lust,” “Greed is the song of things,” “Giving alms shows contempt,” “Cows know where the milk comes from.” Fer Fio stared at the flashing words. A cold wind blew from the granite altar. Red hair gleamed like a curtain over the damp stone. Above the altar, a crucifix upside down. Fer Fio genuflected and walked to the red curtain. It parted. He saw the two fingers on the left hand. No fingernails. The blue face covered with warts. The eyes black. The nose and lips touching each other. On her forehead, a tattoo: “SON.” Her lips parted. Toothless. A long, black tongue emerged, touched the left cheek and then the right cheek of Fer Fio. He winced at the pain. The tongue wrapped around his neck.
and lifted him over the head of Madame D'Aulnoy. His wool cape and his pouch hung in his eyes. Spun him around and set him down. Blood ran from his broken nose. On each cheek a "Z" burned into the skin. Fer Fio took from his leather pouch the mirror. Held it up. The face shrivered; the hairy curtain closed. On the rooftop, a cock crowed. The Chapel of Madame D'Aulnoy disappeared and Fer Fio was standing by Whoopity where he was tied to the oak and watching the new grass breaking out around his blue porcelain hoofs. He whinnied and the dead licked their lips.

In the Month of Melsh Dick they came to the great city of Merseburg where the starshine lines the streets and the holly hangs from the balconies. Whoopity neighed as they entered the gate and the teeth of the Merseburgers rattled in their jawbones and the noses of the dead twitched. Fer Fio reached up, flipped Whoopity's muzzle shut and when the great horse winked his eyes the ladies grabbed their nipples. In they came, Fer Fio and the great horse Whoopity Stoorie, into the worshipful astonishment of the burgers who stared from their green hats and suits as the little, bald sheepskinned man led his great green and white horse through the narrow streets, the horse careful not to step on his leader, his ears knocking against the balconies over the cobblestones and the half-timbered houses.

In the square before the Ruthos, Fer Fio tied Whoopity to an oak tree and wandered out among the merchants. The glockenspiel turned overhead. The mechanical peasants in green berets and red scarves turned slowly as the chimes rang out the Hour of Arkan Sonney, when the merchants lay out their best wares and all the pockets of the buyers are filled with gold. The knights in the glockenspiel charged and one fell over backwards. Fer Fio wandered. Until he saw the bodice of spun silver, the skirt of spun gold, the shoes of stained glass. The colors running over in the light, the eyes dimmed by the glow. In the glass pieces leaded
Teeth of the Men's Bu

ttle boy. "Come, don't your ma
be she said, 'the mellow, the cow in the
form."

"What's the little boy that looks at the
He's like a toco cock, just asleep."

"Won't you wake him?"

"No, or if I do, he'll be sure to cry."
together for Nancy’s feet an ant, the leaf of a linden tree, a little white snake, the smile of a ferret, the sweat drops of a wolf cub, the call of a nightingale, a lily’s root, a black falcon. All in amber glass to match the swirling, rising branches of the reeds of gold on the skirt, the reeds rising and twisting out of the hem made of the River Composure. Twisting up to the waist where the spun silver casks for Nancy’s breasts were bound by encircling silver ribbons. “Wrap it up,” said Fer Fio. The one-eyed merchant with the long black beard said, “Will that be throts or barter?” Fer Fio opened his sheepskin coat, pulled his leather pouch forward, held it open with his right hand and withdrew with his left hand the allotted price as set by his Silver Champion, two magpie tongues and a ram of dried and pulverized fox kidneys. The long-fingered merchant patted Fer Fio on his bald head and wrapped the shoes, the skirt and the bodice in the burlap skin of a black falcon. Fer Fio returned to Whoopity, tied the package under Whoopity’s mane and they left the great city of Merseburg with Whoopity leaving a little marker every twenty-three feet and six and one half inches.

They hurried south because they were in the cusp of Melsh Dick and Tatterfoal. The rivers were high and fording them difficult. The grass was greening. The south wind Notus was warming the soil. The snow was almost all gone on the Scalp Mountains north of Merseburg. They found the trail left by Whoopity at the fork in the road where Graham of Morphie still sat on the cold stone, eyeless, noseless, tongueless and writing in the dirt with a stick, “Men are beguiled. Whose is the child?” Whoopity neighed and the eyes of the dead opened. Graham of Morphie raised his pointed stick and threw it into the sky. Fer Fio cried, “Fetch,” and Whoopity Stoorie leaped, scattering the singing robins, scattering the V’s of migrating geese, scattering the sun’s rays so that he ascended in a whirl of green, white, blue and
breaking light. The lightning flashed. The thunder cracked. The rain broke over the Valley of Althochdeutsche Lesebuch. Whoopity landed with the jeweled stick in his mouth. Fer Fio checked his package for Nancy; it was still under Whoopity’s mane. He took the rope. He took the amethyst stick and they walked off into the rain.

When they came, following Whoopity’s trailmarkers, to the Red Hill in the Month of Tatterfoal, they paused even though they could see the little stone house across the flooded Exeter Brook. Everything was neat and clean. Fer Fio could see where Nancy had taken Dererustica and plowed the field for the turnips and the rampion. He could see his blind daughters—Sunna, Sinthgunt and Volla—playing and bleeding in the firethorn. He could see his seven blind sons—Maximianus, Malchus, Johannes, Martimianus, Dionisius, Constantinus and Serafion—playing among the inchworms and the white pigs with the red ears. Their little naked bodies. Their stubby feet and hands groping in the muck and the thorns. The door of the house closed. The smell of Dererustica’s stable, the pig sty rotten, the light flashing from Whoopity’s mirror-lined stall. And the sounds of laughter dimly across the flooded stream bed. The sound of heads hitting stone. The squeaks of pain for cut feet, broken skin, scratched heads. The naked children living the spring and the growing grass, which they might remember, but probably not, and would never see again because of the drim of bat vomit spilled on the pigs’ feet stolen from the nuns Mary MacDonald, Mary MacCrae and Lizzie Simpson over at Tara. Even though he and Whoopity could hear, see and smell all that, Fer Fio took the lead rope of Whoopity Stoorie and they circled the Red Hill three times counterclockwise and three times clockwise to cleanse themselves of the Fachan and leave him dizzy and confused in his pursuit.

When Fer Fio and the green and white Whoopity Stoorie
came to the flooded Exeter Brook, following the little brown balls of dung that Whoopity had dropped every twenty-three feet and six and one half inches as they headed to market, his Silver Champion told Fer Fio to hold onto the lead rope when the great horse entered the broiling waters. Whoopity entered the flooded stream, putting his blue porcelain hoofs into the cold water and splashing mud and grass over the golden shoes with the silver soles that Fer Fio stuck into the churning bottom. The great horse swam into the water and dragged the coughing and spitting man onto the western bank. They came out, shook off the water and headed for the little stone house where the cries of Fer Fio’s ten blind children arose. Fer Fio tied Whoopity to an oak tree, emptied the water from his shoes and went up to the oaken door. Knocked. Nancy hollered, “Who’s there?” Fer Fio answered, “Your only husband.” The latch clattered. Fer Fio entered. The children squealed with joy and clattered their empty stone dishes against the stone table. Nancy tossed her raven-black hair over her shoulders, squeezed her breasts, rubbed the cracked skin on her round stomach and laughed for her little husband now home. Who said, “Nancy, the crocus, the daffodils, the hyacinths, the tulips and the pussy willows are breaking out. The sparrows and the cardinals sing sweetly in the rushes. The sun is warming the clods and the graves of our dead. The cows are dropping their calves. The red-eared pigs are snuffling in the Swamp of the Pisgies. The mares are squealing for Whoopity Stoorie to come out and play. And my body is tingling for your clutch. So, dance, Nancy. Dance on your wooden shoes. It’s spring and I’ve returned with the golden ink for my silver pen. I’ve returned with the covering for your nakedness. Dance for the whole of it. Dance for the Virgin Mary, for the twelve grisly apostles and for our Savior who died on the cross and rose again from the dead in the spring. Dance through the firethorn, the inchworms and the rooting pigs. Dance
under Whoopity Stoorie and around Dererustica.” Nancy leaped. Her red heels clapped against the dirt floor. The stone cottage shook. The oak door crashed open the Fachan entered with a smile upon his face.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The *Slapsticks* collection consists of four sections of short stories:

I. Baseball

The Measure Thereof Shall Be After the Homer  
The Squeeze Play  
Ending the Slump  
A Man Gets Might Tired Getting a Lot of Thoughts  
The Interview

II. Writing

Kreutzer Studies  
Introduction to American Literature  
Fairy Faucets  
The Grant  
Creative Writing  
The Light of the Republic  
The Sentence Salesman  
The Notebook of Laura Bonair

III. Old Folks

Walk Man  
The Straight of Malacca  
The Thief

IV. Fantasy

The Entrepreneurs  
Trivia  
Home on the Range  
The Consecration of the Seed  
Fer Fio's Journey
DALLAS WIEBE was born in Newton, Kansas, on January 9, 1930. He grew up there and attended Newton public schools, graduating from high school in 1948. He attended Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas, and graduated in 1954 with a B.A. in English Literature. From 1954-1960 he studied at the University of Michigan, receiving his M.A. in Literature in 1955 and his Ph.D. in English and American Literature in 1960. His Ph.D. dissertation dealt with the fiction of Wyndham Lewis. He taught at the University of Wisconsin from 1960-1963 and then moved to the University of Cincinnati. After teaching for thirty-two years at the University of Cincinnati, mostly in the creative writing program in the English Department, he retired in January of 1995. He is now Emeritus Professor. His publications include two novels: Skyblue the Badass (Doubleday-Paris Review Editions, 1969) and Our Asian Journey (MLR Editions Canada, 1997). He has published four books of short stories: The Transparent Eye-Ball (Burning Deck, 1982), Going to the Mountain (Burning Deck, 1988) Skyblue's Essays (Burning Deck, 1995) and The Vox Populi Street Stories (Burning Deck, 2003). He received the Aga Khan Fiction Prize from Paris Review in 1978 and the next year a Pushcart Prize. In 1998 he was awarded the Ohio Arts Council's Governor's Award for Individual Artist. His stories have appeared in many journals, including Paris Review, North American Review, Epoch, Fiction International and others. His poems have appeared in numerous journals and he has published a book of minimalist poems entitled The Kansas Poems (1987). He was a founder and editor of Cincinnati Poetry Review through the first twenty-four issues. He is a founder and former president of the Cincinnati Writers' Project. Currently he is at work putting together an anthology of poems about Mozart and rewriting his unpublished book of short stories entitled Slapsticks.
This edition is limited to 72 copies.

This is number 6.

Dorothy Wordsworth
GREATER CRACKER RIDDLES

HOW TO DETECT COUNTERFEIT MONEY.