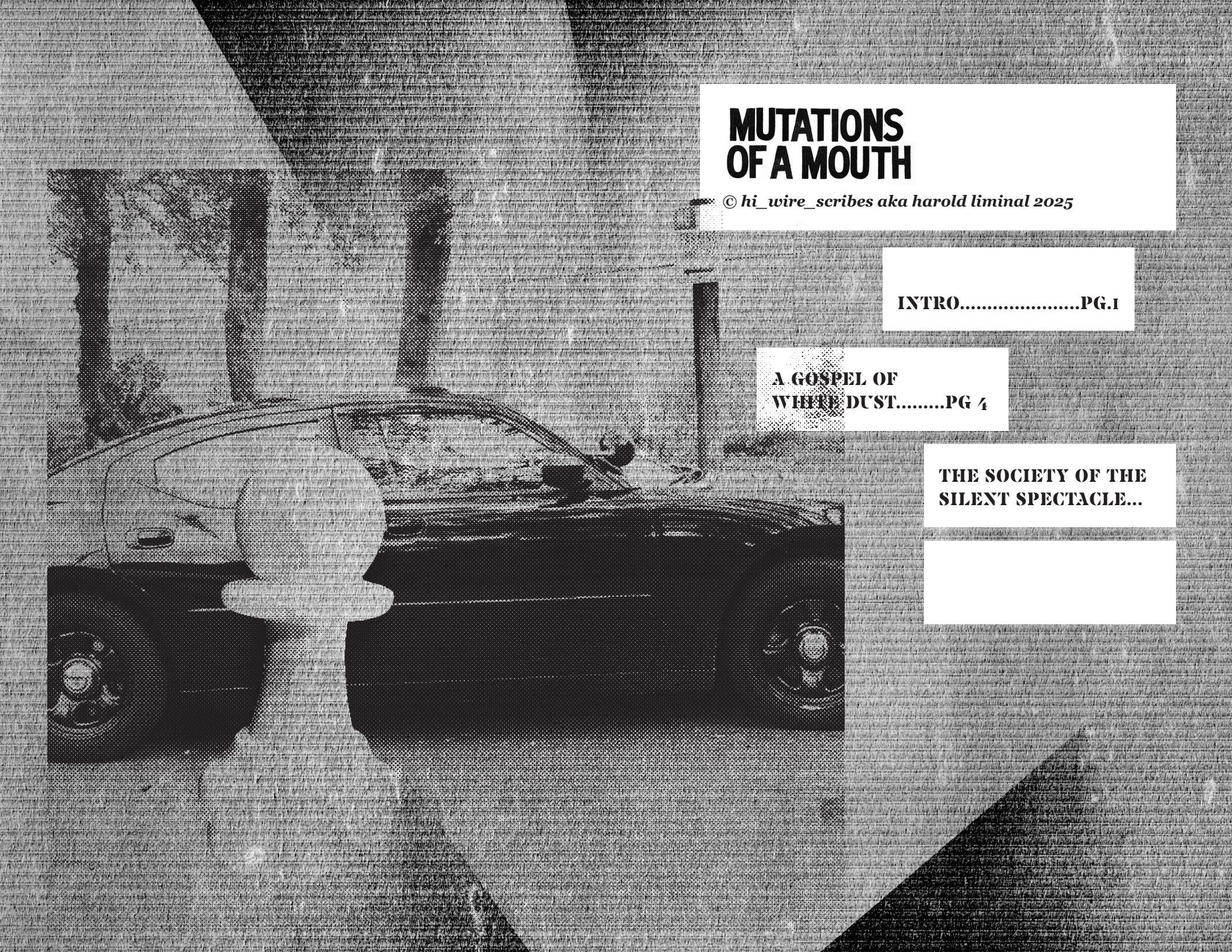


MUTATIONS OF A MOUTH

Vol.1

by **Harold Lehmann**





MUTATIONS OF A MOUTH

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INTRO.....PG.1

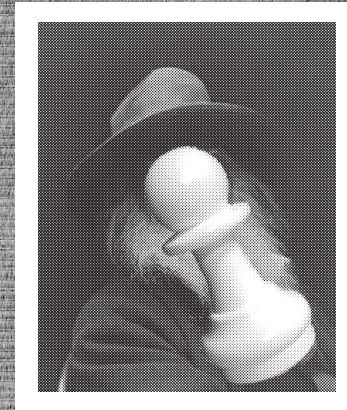
**A GOSPEL OF
WHITE DUST.....PG 4**

**THE SOCIETY OF THE
SILENT SPECTACLE...**

but how to get majik ?
mouth sez be a sacrifice

not just a mouth
a tube or intestine
a line reaching out

tongue clicking teeth in a waiting room
this mouth must be sick
there are those who will eat anything
others will not touch a bite of toast
anything we eat with eyes
with fingers
with noseicles
with tongues
with salivating skins
we simply try
to stop glands
to stop episodes
to stop over-simple-fixation
freezing our mind or
grunting our guts
and yes think of those
who record every morsel ask my mouth to
STOP
but mouth will not
Mouth is not done by a long shot
such codes and urges demand everything



GOSPEL OF WHITE DUST

A GOSPEL OF WHITE DUST

Hamlet. Do you see nothing there?

Gertrude. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

BEFORE

this is the story of O. She lost her mom and dad to tragedy and then they got replaced by robots- artificial parents programmed to feel. Another idea for how to fix life, didn't work out as planned

O short for Ophelia and she was not gonna to drown for nobody

fast forward to NOW-

2 cops watching O in a cell

"I feel bad for the kid."

"She killed her dad."

"Not a real dad- a robot dad."

"Murder is Murder Buddy."

"but What about the rumors?"

“What rumors?”

“Like how a kid her size smashes a robot his size?”

**

O would not forget the time the social worker sleazed into her math class and sat down next to her with the overcooked face, “hey O- Wanna a cookie? Listen, there’s been an accident...”

His eyes reminded O of dirty water. O short for Ophelia and she would drown for no one. His name was Mr. Grim or J Grim. He made that sympathy face and went to touch her shoulder-

O explained, “move your hand or I cut if off .” Much business afoot.

Across town an inventor by the name of Herbert Rank was developing a plan for Caretaking_Autonomous_Robots_for_Everybody or Project C.A.R.E-

“We Really CARE! It’s Our Project!”

Rank was making Robot Moms and Dads, replaceable parents for those in need- it so happened that O was the first test subject. Her instincts said beware- sure they looked like mom and dad, but they did not move right.

O knew the score- that bad luck kids get sent to group homes, sweaty blocks where kids fight over crappy food, cigarettes and

reputations until it gets worse. She prepared herself

But unexpected people & situations can happen. This teacher walked in- Mr. W- hyper and skinny with a giant head. He looked at O and kept ranting about ‘reinvention by word’ and his hero Walt Whitman- “I want Y’all to know the songs of Old Walt”. O didn’t care about songs unless they played so loud to drown the noise in her head. Still something about this guy.

Mr. W stood in front of the class and recited one of Walt’s poems, “I sing the body electric...” and black smoke poured out his head. The fire alarms went off and they had to evacuate the school. Mr. W did not return, O saw him later in the street, black smoke all around.

He became The White Dust Poet, preaching black smoke.

O got the news- she would not be sent away. Miracle of Miracles. Her folks survived the accident. Ruth and Dan coming home to CARE for her. Miracle of Miracles.

And so Ruth and Dan standing in front of the house with shiny smiles. O had suspicions- anytime people try to prove or improve situations, some thing is gonna get sacrificed.

Herbert Rank the genius engineer watched the reunion nearby. He whispered awestruck to his team, “It’s our Moment People!” He includes the others in his accomplishments to feel better-

“We changed this kid’s life and now from the family back into the world!”

Herbert had a habit of talking to his robots when he programmed them. He was lonely, an orphan himself and he nerded out on poetry. Shakespeare. He liked to challenge his robots with quotes.

“I could count myself a king of infinite space!”

“Were it not that I have such bad dreams” responded Ruth Robot.

“Exactly Ruth!”

“Tis inevitable Sire!”

Rank smiled and tears were in his squishy eyes. He imagined the girl now safe and sound at home, sitting at the dinner table with her robot folks. Programed to CARE and they did!

**

from reptilian mouth hisses savage words

The White Dust Poet walked for miles in black smoke

I could count myself the king of infinite space!

outside he felt the walls closing in

The White Dust Poet stole a copy of Walt Whitman’s poetry
He down sat down by the East River, listening to the current

Reading Walt’s words

Walt’s watery eye

Walt said-

Those who corrupt their own bodies conceal themselves.

What Gives Walt?

The White Dust Poet was restless and he had flashbacks
standing in front of those kids, saying Walt’s words

I sing the body electric-

and the Black Smoke started

OK WALT!

THANKS A LOT WALT!

WHAT GIVES WALT?

the Smoke was Walt’s Fault

obviously

this need to be everywhere

to be a cowboy on a made-up horse

I sing the body electric- so what?

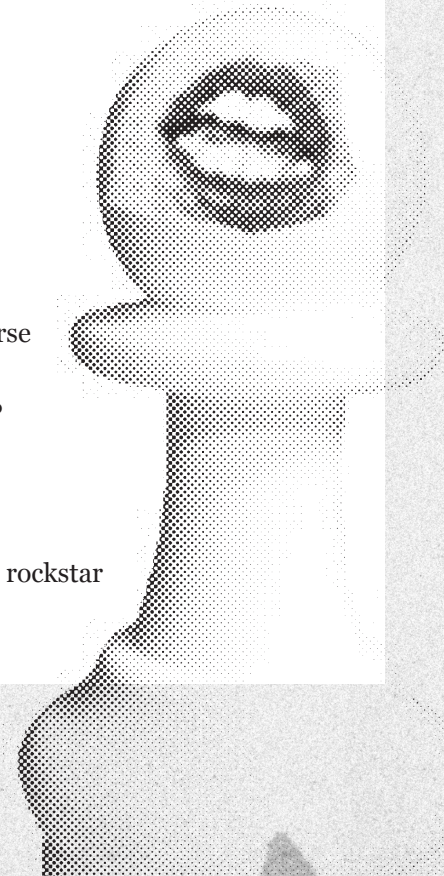
Walt wanted to be the internet

a drifter

a microscope

actually Walt just wanted to be a rockstar

words everywhere



basic and American
a dollar bill eye that will not sleep-
race cars, smoke and all-night conversation – FINE
then smoke hits brain
Whatever Walt!

Are we not electric with needs
bright ideas that blind
restless legs that give out?

what about you Walt?
living inside the drum of War
haunting the Bowery in stench of horse shit
for what were you electrified?
any need is dangerous so
go eat your poems
and Leave Us Be!

The White Dust Poet was recollecting those kids,
wide eyed smelly brats
he lost his nerve
then his voice
black smoke pouring out
no doctor to diagnose him

Wandering
Rehearsing
Seeking out a program to follow
Looking at the water and wondering
is it cold enough?

Then he thought of the girl-
so determined in her look
Kids don't need poetry, they are poetry

And what about these grown-ups pretending to be kids
cutting losses
trading desperation

into black smoke

The White Dust Poet stood up on awkward legs

...

O didn't know if her parents were robots, but she had suspi-
cions. She was trying to remember a time before. And what
about Granma? What really happened?

Ruth robot was scanning the Kid.
The Care Code was activating, clicking the options

“Why do you frown O?”
“I guess I feel like it.”
“ But O you are home!”
“Really- I didn't notice.”
“We only want what is best O...”
“And who decides that?”

Robot Mom was calculating. Before she was a combat robot
and got blown up. Herbert Rank bought her cheap at the scra-

pyard and reprogrammed her. Why not? These Robots can learn. Ruth Robot learned to CARE.

O was thinking to stab her, but then maybe she might need to feel bad or get in trouble or both. And what about that weird ass teacher coughing up smoke at school? What happened to him? The class just laughed, but something was going on, she just didn't know what.

..

situations & premonitions

Those same kids showed up on bikes and stared at her.

“What?”

“We saw your Granma last night.”

“That's interesting because Granma is dead.”

“We saw her by the bridge, collecting bottles and talking to herself.”

So O took off with the kids on bikes after dark. She knew how to disable the sensors or maybe Ruth and Dan just pretended not to notice. But then it was true- she saw Granma under the bridge or a Ghost Granma. It was less creepy than annoying. The Granma in the past did not match up to the Granma in front of her.

“Mark Me,” said Ghost Granma.

“Granma- what are you doing here? Why are you acting like that?”

“Maaaaark Me...”

O was freaking out. They told her Granma died of a heart attack. She went to the funeral and left flowers at the grave. She loved Granma. Granma was mean, but she was not a robot. What was Granma doing here by the bridge in a dirty coat, collecting bottles?

Then O worked up courage and spoke,

“GranMa – it's me...”

Ghost Granma whipped around and stared at her. Then moaned, “I'm Hungry...”

“No problem- I can get you some Kung Pao chicken if you want?”

“Invite me to dinner!”

“Okay- you wanna come over?”

“They must invite me!”

“What are you saying?” but she knew what the ghost meant.

The kids watching O watch Granma.

O thought, fine I’m gonna go and say- there’s this lady- may be GranMa- maybe not dead- I dunno- anyway could she come over for Taco Night?

O in this cloud. Who even cares about ghosts? Why do see-thru people get more attention? Whatever. And so what if her parents were robots? Fine! They were programmed to care but isn’t that how nature operates- Thru Programs? Big Whoop.

then O shouted at Granma,
“I’m not gonna ask them, because they don’t decide, I decide and I’m asking you to dinner so if you wanna come over, just come over!”

Ghost Granma whipped around again,
“I am not to be looked upon. They replaced me. Count your blessings. You are well-positioned. What matters more?”

...

O decided to invite Ghost Granma and the White Dust Poet to dinner. She explained the plan to Ruth and Dan Robot to observe reactions. The Robots in their feelings, programmed but still. The robots were relay machines designed to detect and minimize risk. To protect O from whatever happened. It

was a simple solution and totally weird.

...

Back in the kitchen the robots de briefed

Robot Mom always spoke first-
“that old lady can not be here.”

“but it’s her grandma,” said Dad Robot, “a kid deserves the connection- what can it hurt?”

“ The Codes are specific and that old lady is compromised. You are to eliminate Granma.”

“ Whoa- seriously? That seems kind of extreme.”

Ruth Robot loved to quote Shakespeare, or her program did,
“What’s it say in Hamlet- her death was doubtful. Get on with it!”

After dinner Ruth Robot went to O’s room. O was listening to music, trying to make a cave out of memory.

Ruth Robot said,
“listen sweet_daughter_object_nomenclature no one loves you as we do so, with gratitude and recognition that we are providing and learning to love you better every moment for that is the way to a society of strong social bonds. Factory Guaranteed.”

“What?”

“Nothing. Can I kiss you?”

“No.”

O was pissed about the conversation and went to school and punched this girl in the face before math. Robot Mom and Dad were called in for a parent teacher conference. The teacher looked nervous and apologized. Robot Mom spun her head and said,

“that kid insulted our daughter, she deserved it.”

Robot Dad did not speak, but the next day he made O pancakes with that too bright smile reassurance mode. It made O’s skin crawl.

“Why are you so weird?”

“I am your father and I am tasked, I mean I cannot help but CARE... it’s who I am. Eat up or your griddle cakes or they will lose thermal energy.”

so it goes-

O got the message it was her fault she got stuck with robot parents and she did what any kid would do in such a situation- she took off

...

Robot Dad followed O to the bridge that GranMa haunted.

“She cares more for this ghost than us.”

Ruth Robot was in front of him.

“I told you to do your job.”

“But we are programmed to CARE.”

“You’re too romantic- it’s not right!”

She swung out and smashed Robot Dad.

Robot Dad was squirming on the ground-

“but what about Negative Capability? The Poet Keats praised NEGATIVE CAPABILITY- to be with ‘uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without ... reaching after fact & reason.’

“Give me a break!”

She smashed Robot Dad to pieces.

Robot Mom called the cops and framed the murder of Dad Robot on O- she made tears and edited the CCTV footage to match her story.

The White Dust Poet saw what happened. He ran back to get the kid and protect her from this Mom Machine. GranMa nowhere to be seen.

...

The White Dust Poet was confused. He wanted to write poems, but every time he spoke, he belched black smoke, causing people to cough or cry or laugh. He imagined Walt stalking the streets with a giant beard and hat; He decided he needed a big hat. He thought - if I can’t speak, at least I can walk around and send smoke into the atmosphere-

ashes to ashes, sunk to sinking

what the heck was this robot thinking

making up lies

Walt said-

here there are faces, I see them and complain not...

The White Dust Poet decided to walk and look at faces, but a signal interrupted.

He took another walk. The I AM of Walt hit him like a hammer. Was the I AM shadows sleeping on the train; Was the I AM cops in an unmarked car; Or was the I AM a cook doing dishes at 4; Or was the I AM a couple arguing or kids at a dance party or workers taking out the trash; Or was the I AM a cat watching owner watch phone? What was the I AM? Was it the opposite of outcomes and if so how is that machine learning? There was a kid on a couch eating chips and watching videos. There was a Granma smoking a cigarette. The I AM scanning it all for what purpose? For the proper distribution of data? Was that liberation? Maybe

O got picked up by the cops. The White Dust Poet ran into to the precinct and started coughing black smoke. The cops went nuts. The White Dust Poet grabbed O and they took off

But Ruth Robot was waiting for them outside

“Get away from my daughter Creep.”

The White Dust Poet opened his throat
And black smoke surrounded Ruth Robot and her program crashed.

And the black smoke

and the black smoke
and the black smoke ...
and the... (cough)
an ad for a mechanical mouth

out of mouth
and out of mind
get thee to the outlets
for an opening

wall to wall mouths
scowl
pucker
sneer & leer

mouths in opposition quite hot
choose a new mouth
a mechanical mouth
perfect to keep in the pocket

once home
toss mouth on the bed

mouth is ready
but do not give in
yet

tragic
& mechanical

we yawn before we kiss

THE SOCIETY OF THE SILENT SPECTACLE

THE SOCIETY OF THE SILENT SPECTACLE

yes i hate Time but not for why you think. Some people rage at politics or even fashion. My beef is with Time and no it's not because I am afraid of getting old or falling apart or pissing my pants or ending up toothless and alone. I hate Time because Time is annoying and does not even exist. We know that Time is a construct, but still it's working on us. Why do we allow that? Fossilizing ourselves? We are trapped between Time and Speed, because they are in cahoots. Speeding up to stay in front and we end up falling all over ourselves. Like in the Silent Movies where the bodies of the actors run back and forth and then fall inside the frame.

A perfect example is Sherlock Junior starring Buster Keaton. In the film, Keaton plays a projectionist who wants to be a detective. Right at the start, this title card warns- "Don't try to do two things at once and expect to do justice to both." See that- doomed from the beginning.

In a pivotal scene, Keaton falls asleep while working at the Movie Theatre and a ghost body or a dream body leaves his body and enters the film on the screen. This ghost body or this movie body starts working as a detective. I know it's obvious, but also accurate. This ghost body fulfills Keaton's purpose in a series of crazier and crazier stunts. At one point, Keaton is chasing the bad guys to save his one true love and he jumps onto a passing motorcycle; we see Keaton balanced on the handlebars, oblivious that the driver fell off miles ago;

he is flying into danger with no one at the wheel and so he is all of us

Thus begins The Society of the Silent Spectacle

They said that I could only save my soul by being in a silent movie but what do I care about silent movies? The actors greased up and doing bad gestures like they are directing traffic from a sinking ship. To me silent movies always feel like porn, but the kind of porn that doesn't turn you on. Am I allowed to say that?

I joined The Society. How do we account for that? take a breath WHEEZE

I was very lost and bloated. I landed in this quaint little town where the big city types go to shop for cakes and antiques. Well there I was, strolling down Main Street when I saw this sweet shop called Mirandas. MIRANDAS and I needed something, I wasn't sure what and in I went.

Miranda was at the counter. She held out a cone with a shiny smile-
Mint Chocolate Chip. I might have melted-

"Oh Brave New World that hath such people in it!" I recited,
"That's from Shakespeare,
The wizard Prospero has a daughter named..."

"Miranda, I know," she eye rolled me.

I hung my head in shame- in such a town there is only one sin which is to be the smart-ass from out of town, but then Miranda shifted suddenly and handed me a flyer-
The Society of the Silent Spectacle

"If you like stories then this one will knock you out!"

Almost instantly I lost the flyer, but then by magic it jumped into my hand when I was looking for my keys. I set off to attend my first meeting with The Society of the Silent Spectacle. There was a fellow pacing back and forth in front of the members. I learned later it was Tommy Tempest, Miranda's brother.

"Well of course we all gotta wonder - what is really going on with these Silent Films? All of the Big Gestures and the Wild Stunts and the makeup- The People blinking their eyes; To me-if you ask me Tommy Tempest - it's about obsession- The need to Disappear and Reappear. Y'all know the story of WAKEFIELD by Nathaniel Hawthorne?"

Wakefield leaves his house one day and moves down the block for 20 years- watching his family from a distance. Why is Wakefield spying on his family or his life from a distance? As if to defy time by remaking space? Wakefield is down the block in a parallel universe which is really sick but also fascinating. Then one day- out of the blue- Wakefield walks home, breezes in the front door to the shock of his wife. She can't believe because she remembers burying him- so who is this



dude standing before her with the odd smile? Wait a second! I am getting off track.. See that- again it's about wanting to disappear and reappear- That's it. And the story of our Society of the Silent Spectacle mmhmmm."

The audience erupted in silent applause. It seemed like Tommy was the only one allowed to speak. Then Miranda introduced us. I took a closer look at Tommy- he was handsome in a kind of freaked out impersonation of a Hollywood Hero. I thought to myself, but who is this wacko with the C list good looks and a dangerous smile? But then Tommy shook my hand and said-

"Hey Bro how'd you like to star in my latest flick- The Feckless Fireman about a fireman who always shows up too late?" he gave me that twisted smile.

"I believe that Film is a language- a complete language because it enters your head and translates before you realize it. And the purest kinda film is Silent Film, that's the source! When they started talking in movies, it got corrupted, but we're turning back now to the good old ways!"

I couldn't really comprehend the meaning of Tommy's speech, but I did think about Buster Keaton in Sherlock Jr. when that dream body exits his body and goes into the movie and achieves a real purpose. This seemed like a new possibility to beat time or tangle with time by making entrances and exits. To reappear and disappear, so yes Tommy had me. They put me in white make up and I started doing moves.

Making faces, waving, slipping on banana peels, the usual silent movie garbage. To be honest, I was disgusted, but as I moved, I realized there was no escaping from the character. I was already in the Silent Spectacle. Time seemed to slow down or at least it felt manageable for once. So Tommy was on to something. The Silent Spectacle was happening.

“Stories as a way to get organized. Why not? afterall the Tempest is the story of a storm and a shipwreck. And it could be the silent movie is my shipwreck which lands me on some enchanted island?! To be repaired. Lots a people find salvation in storms or different disasters so why not a Fires? And yes to- Prospero believed this storm is to teach people a lesson. No way. Nature doesn't care. But a silent movie could be about laughing at time and getting free.”

I didn't even realize I was talking out loud. Tommy was waving hands at me, “Bro shhhhh and what are you saying? The Feckless Fireman does not talk like that!”

“ Sorry - a bad habit- when I get stressed or confused I start talking to myself..”

“Well you gotta break that habit. Remember A silent movie star is pure action- I mean sometimes there's a title card with some dialogue, but mostly it's flashing eyes and looking surprised like a big kid or an animal.”

“You're right- sorry Tommy.”

“No problemo Dude.”

He shut me down and he shamed me, because now I agreed to follow the rules of the Society of the Silent Spectacle . I was alone for too long. Sometimes we need to be a part of something even if that some thing is lousy. I had reservations about the Society of the Silent Spectacle and Tommy was on a power trip; But power is so mysterious- this guy with bad breath and stringy hair was pulling everybody a long- how did he do that?

Do not listen, just follow. Do not listen, just follow

Then they dressed me up as the Feckless Fireman . The costume did not fit- too tight and too loose in all the wrong places, but somehow that was part of the action. I worked on my focus

“When do we rehearse?”

“Rehearse? You think Silent Movie Stars Rehearse?”

“ I thought they did..”

“ No Way Pal! The Silent Film is about Pure Instinct! It's about release!”

“If you say so!”

“OK.”

Then I was thinking about Caliban the monster from The

Tempest who is of course pure instinct and always complaining. Caliban spitting out curses. Caliban seeking deliverance from fools and thus he is the funniest character and maybe the only human being in the whole play.

Tommy gave me his haunted director look,
“We’re gonna shoot the film backwards to make it more real.”

“Ok.”

They drove us out to the location.

It was an old sinking house in the middle of nowhere whatever. A creepy mansion with crooked windows and a sagging porch.

Tommy said, “okay this is the hideout for some bank robbers. You go in there to put out a fire, but then you realize they are also holding hostage this beautiful bank teller who is your true love. The Feckless Fireman must save the day.”

Tommy called action and the house immediately set on fire.

I was astounded- “Are those Real Flames?”

“Of course? All the silent movie actors did their own stunts! Camera Rolling !”

Tommy sliced his hand and Ol Timey Piano music started playing. He looked at me and I snapped into action- running

to the house, I kicked in the door and crashed inside. The bank robbers were all around this table in the living room playing cards. But on second look I saw they were actually just giant dolls. A scene staged like a display in a store!

Tommy and the camera guy were following me. Tommy called out to me, “ Let’s go Feckless-Do some wild stunts!”

Nodding, I leapt up onto poker table with flames crawling up the walls around me and the doll robber. I tried to kick one of the bad guy dolls, but I slipped on the cards and fell on my butt.

“See that!” shouted Tommy, “it’s pure comedeee now- a freaking natural I knew it!”

I jumped up and grabbed one of the dolls. I swung it around and knocked all the other dolls to the floor. Uh huh. Then I jumped down and raced upstairs to save the beautiful girl from the bank. In all the silent movies, the hero arrives just in time. I knew this movie was about me getting there too late. Maybe this was for reasons of humor or poetry, but I didn’t agree. I never understand the rules and I don’t have timing.

I swung open the door and it was Miranda- just standing there. Not a doll, but Miranda from the Ice Cream Store with this sneaky smile- a Wakefield smile like the joke was on me.

“What are you doing here? This place is on fire!”

“So what- it’s just a bad movie.”

“ I don’t get it – you told me to be here?”

“What are you doing Sis?” shouted Tommy.

“ I am taking your Silent Movie hostage Tommy. You seem kind of lost so I am changing the story. It’s a real family tragedy now. What happens when the evil sister steals the movie?”

“You keep talking but this is a Silent Movie!”

“OMG –I know that Tommy! Remember in The Tempest when Prospero promises to drown his magic book? I think that was a trick. He just pretended to drop the book so someone else would find it– like maybe the monster?”

She gave me the sneaky smile, “So then the monster dives down in and steals the book? We we need the Monsters to win. I love that line of Caliban’s – “You taught me language, and my profit on it is I know how to curse!”

Miranda looked even more glamorous and extreme surrounded by flames, then she fixed her gaze on me and said-

“Here you go Caliban- Get to Work!”

She tossed me this giant book and pointed to the window.

“but what about You and Tommy?”

“Don’t worry about us. You just set up for the next spell!”

With the flames at my back and the silent movie stars watching, I leapt out that window- it was my final stunt. I decided to wave my arms for extra laughs like I was swimming through the air and I swear I could hear people cheering, maybe even Miranda and Tommy were cheering me on..

But that’s how ideas operate
From the mouth into mutation