Panography

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ABSTRACT

PANOGRAPHY

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Panography is a series of linked poems that develops a disjunctive narrative from a simple premise: it transplants the figure of Pan into the backwoods of contemporary northern Ontario, on the fringes of a rural community. This idea owes much to Knut Hamsun's novel *Pan*, which places a Pan-like protagonist on the outskirts of a Norwegian village. Unlike Hamsun's *Pan*, *Panography* overtly acknowledges Pan's multiplicity as a cultural figure by juxtaposing its own Pan-narrative with nods to (and appropriations of) his appearances in classical mythology and literary iconography, and his rare invocations in contemporary popular culture.

Panography is an examination of rural Canadian ideas of masculinity, an exploration of the backwoods story as social cement, a love poem to the details of the northern Ontario landscape, and a vaguely Jungian study of what happens when psychology embraces the natural world as its substrate (claiming that, despite cosmopolitan postmodernity, this is still possible).

Panography is neither transcendentalist nor environmentalist in its primary agenda. Pan, as a hybrid of the human and the bestial, and as an archetype that has been carried to the present exclusively through artistic and scholarly works, is an ideal nexus for a deconstruction (or even a synthesis) of the received binary of art and nature. *Panography* allows its readers to escape the filtered aesthetic of much literary nature writing, in which the process of artistic representation places nature itself in a subordinate position, fit merely for terror, sentimentality or pathetic fallacy.

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An earlier version of "The Hunters" appeared in *Late Night Translations from the Esperanto.* Montreal: Press5 Chapbooks, 2001.

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The birds
Breath
    trembling
Knit
Led on

and grove
    Pan,
    in dance,

Plate One: Goats, Pine River, 2000

Pan

Here?
—ridiculous.
Goatish dead
gods... on these cliffs?
As what—
half-moose?
Split fellow, cloven
hooves, hunter
and herdsman
(no tilling faun),
Arcadian libertine with a rich
beard and ready
cock in
this
puritan
bush?

(Up here, anything that you might herd
would freeze by christmas.)

Still, this valley
has a repertoire
of strays:
deported dogs and housecats,
two clip-winged grey geese
and, finally, two billies,

not the trim petting zoo
familiars but blinding white
with coral slit-eyes and profiles
from some witches' sabbath, horns
long and slightly askew, sleeping
on the sandbar—
hand-lickers,
polite when fed,
placid, recently tended.

They make
these foreign games
possible: goat, so
  goatherd, so shepherdess,
   (so wine-soaked layabout
    and beery straight-shooter)
    so song, so—perhaps a rifle-toting dead
     god, even here, and,
    if I like, I can explain
  with his shout
 why grouse roar
from the snow.

PAN AND THE KINGFISHERS

1

A cage went / in search of a bird

Pan woke, in his boots, by the river. He
could see only one moving thing, a bird, which
when he sat up, chirred for a second
then nipped above the rapids
and hovered there, eyeing the minnows
to dive on them, the silver ones first
that reflected best, then the brown,
the ones that would grow into pike

Otherwise? Oh, Matti, who had talked stolidly of sheep and Lappe.
He had left the bar without paying. How he got out, got into his car,
Pan did not know. When Pan saw him, he was on the road, but it was too late,
he was already draining down the ravine of the dark, caching himself
in some rive in the land. It could not have been he who said, "the kingfishers,
who cares
if they eat
the pike?"

He had last thought, "The lakes are dead." Then all of them
leaving their drinks, turned on their heels to face him, stared
they did not see, or expect him to talk, they
bluffed, tautened their shoulders, leered, but listened
he muttered and muttered, could not get out of the day on the water
"The lake the whitefish were fat why
did their spawning stop?"

It was then he left

2

Pan thought of the beast on the rock, and of what Mikko said
Ces nymphes"
                but the kingfisher
Si clair"
                but the kingfisher flew north
Assoupi de sommeils touffus."
                she got the color of her breast
                from the flash of a hunter's gun

The rufous band of the female adult is only partially shown in the young female, mainly on
the flanks, and it shows to some extent in nearly all young males,
some having nearly as much as young females; the crest
is darker.

But these things are the truths. The birds.
The stories are
stories. Alive, hovering over an eddy, the kingfisher
will feed upon the enemies of the trout,
and bring the angler luck. And, by its nesting,
keep the schools, with the thaw, well culled.
It is a lie, that it nests with the new year, for the ground,
the ground is frozen. The holes dug in the earth or sand
by this species, in which it deposits its eggs, are generally found
in places not far from a mill worked by water. Here,
on a few sticks and feathers, the eggs are deposited.

On one occasion,
when I attempted to secure one of these birds, long after night had closed,
I tried in vain. The first time I fitted a small net bag to the entrance, and returned home.
Next morning the bird had scratched a passage
under the net, and thus escaped.

Mikko concluded:
Couple, adieu;
je vais voir l'ombre
que tu devins.

3
As the tongues change / the forest
creeps out
even the boulders are taken
pulled
Or
laud
those other mummers we more natively desire
they so parrot our sounds

But the beast
daubed so ruddy on the oldest stone
sounded
was read aloud

as, in another place, were folios used;

(and, now, made fast, a state provided
a safety rope)

"open your pike at the gills, and if need be, cut
a little slit

"and keep his liver
which you are to shred

"*Time, Sweet-margerome* and a little *Winter-Savoury*;
to these put some pickled *Oysters*
and some *Anchovies*

"and to squeeze the juyce of three or four Oranges:
lastly, you may
either put into the Pike with the *Oysters*, two
cloves of Garlick, and take it whole out, when the Pike
is cut off the spit,
or to give the sawce a *hogo*, let the dish
(into which you let the Pike fall) be rubbed with it;

"The using or not using of this
Garlick is left to your
discretion

In this case, the fishermen
(in green parkas, and dirty,
their mullets crushed beneath their caps, and flowing wildly
over their shoulders)
rush in among their family, calling on them
to gut their catch

And now all is clear,
where so lately there was murk
and fertile water, the broth
for thick weeds.

4

Not one catch but many,
not accumulation but static flux, succession proves, succession is
the law

Over the same river I often walk
When pike die pike fatten
Fry, fingerlings, commingle

Out of this appearance, this common model, rises this
valley. What matters it,
if sandbars abscond,
if I find chokecherries now
where I nibbled frozen cranberries before? cormorants

colonize inland? banks spread/are undercut? elk
are introduced, wolves coddled, deer
culled, sold, bred, observed, photographed,
each fall?

To maintain a state without change
is not a possibility

I can be precise. The factors are
in the animals and/or the climate the factors are
populations and/or control, both involve
a balance. And what is the balance? The balance is
an unmanageable series of measurable symptoms distributed through the region

is pollen in air, is
mud in water, is
a state between
the glaciers and
the flood, between
death and the construction of
another grassy nest

is here, presents
no more than itself

And the too taut writing of it,
when it is writ together and condensed
loses it

The very thing I am

II

After the ceremony they kiss their dead
sturgeon axe gun lamb

And she brought home the fish, and cut open their bellies
Ja-Ka-Baysh jumped out
and walked to the shore

Precisely a year from the death, they hold a feast to raise
the spirit of the dead, and distribute
his goods among the people

These nymphs, so clear. Yes. And we must continue. But
their lightness, their touch that is not a touch (a mere brush
on the leaves), if you try, you can lift them, if you wish

for all the life that was required for him, my prop,
to look into the feathered breasts of a thousand specimens

then you must, and in that quickness, into that grace, with what candor, touch

and knowing the roughness of those crags
the lines snarled on these stone snags

(ere long, however, our minds became calmed, and we plainly discovered that
the singular uproar was produced
by an enthusiastic set of Methodists
who had wandered thus far out)

speak,
speak, where the lichens hear
with the old appetites near

Je vous ai fait la chasse et la pêche faciles;
Pourquoi donc le chasseur devient-il assassin?

where it is writ
on the cliff it stays
in the brain / pulp

but under these needles
in the stillness
smell the rot, consider
the duff

whence it arose

with such patience justice is wrought
what trial in practice gesture brings
what rights local slights invoke
who walks
this coast

what tremor democracy ignores
how fire, canvas, and solitude can light
what is stored where hiddenness is law
who watches
unwatched

III

I am no Pan, have not th'advantage.
And, perhaps, no bushman:
he can make a bet that matters
the bet of staying, most of all.

But I have my home, if for no other reason than
(as he said, forebear), I remain myself, and,
given a living, I'd be a fool
if I didn't. Which is simple.

It falls through this way, despite the difficulties:
I'll give, in anticipation, a quote:
These last few days I have thought and thought
of the Nordland summer's endless day.

Despite the deficiencies (money courage work)
this is the truth: if I grow bored
it is only because I have fled
to what was printed on pulp

I'll ask myself this:

What's to be read / in a goat's rank hair?

I fish among stumps.

Pan, charged

I won't bother much
with background;
Pan on the road early,
or late, dozing,

cresting Lankinen's hill,
not seeing
the brown bulk
until his T-top doba's
bumper was about to clip
its ankles. That's a hell
of a story—

they say it landed
on his roof
(though with the
T-top he'd'a been
squashed flat) and
that if you find
the car out back
there'll be bloodstains
and brown hairs on the vinyl. A hell
of a story, but it was too god-
damned dark for me to tell it
right: I don't know whether
it saw him or not, if it was licking
salt from the shoulder,
if it was a cow or a bull. They
say Pan wasn't too upset
about the car—it was a beater
and all—and he was mostly happy
to have the meat...he was dressing
it from the moment the cops left.

But just a couple of years ago,
in January, Pan was driving
home around dinner time. He'd
been out ice-fishing, had two nice
lake trout in the back, his last dog,
Cora, up in the cab. Turning
on to Sturgeon Bay Road, he
saw a big moose in his lights, stopped,
and waited for it to move on.
It looked around, and charged,
keeping its winter-bare head high.

Pan stamped the clutch but
couldn't choose first or reverse
and had it in neutral when
the moose's chest struck
his grille, sending Cora squealing
into the dash, crushing
the front of Pan's hood like so much
brown paper. He got his picture
in the news in colour, all tricked
out in camo and an Armor-All cap,
grinning with his arm on his truck.
They asked an MNR guy about it,
but he just shrugged, told the reporter
It was probably just in a bad mood.

Pan, posing
(for the Pan Painter.)

This obligatory graven image:
gleefully mugging for the keen
panographer, hips, tumescence
always pivoting toward presumed
eyes. It was said that to see Pan
was certain death, that wine, ardour,
fervid terror, could not deter
the mortal panic of matted haunches,
vermiform lips, daggy buttocks.

Never mind this—he knew well
his stories were rustic farce,
that to bugger a quaking shepherd
was more conquest than most poets
would allow him. He called it envy,
killed new birds for breakfast
each and every day, muted
those humiliating folktales
with his bloody, clangorous routine.

Pan knew, though, that someone
had to see him, that modeling
paid better than living off the land,
that if he was seen drinking
with satyrs and bearded, horn-
handed loggers, herming their
women with his rigid crook,
then that time he slid up Heracles'
frock might well be forgotten.

Poor superstitious hick: Pan
had no idea that pictures
are not quite of this world,
that even the glibbest of gods
can't blackmail himself
into conjugal bliss. Once
a chump, always a chump,
as the costumed satyrs say,
which brings us round to Marlis.

Marlis met Pan

at Old Fort William, where she'd been hired
as a clerk's new British bride, to gingerly step
from a bark canoe each weekday of the summer,
four times on Sundays, feigning a coquette's blush,
wincing at the country wives with calculated revulsion.

Pan sometimes worked there, reaping the good
seasonal cash of a brawny voyageur, or wintering
the livestock in their pine barns. He was happy
doing this – in character, he could leer with abandon,
strut for short-skirted Americans, and even spook

their sticky children in the name of Education.
He brought home a few circle-touring mothers,
but they were sticky too, their station wagons
coasting on petroleum and glucose. Marlis
somehow startled Pan – this girl just up

from Toronto, a theatre graduate, someone
he'd seen smiling on his wood-framed Zenith,
her even vegetarian incisors promoting toothpaste.
She was dating Thomas Chien, the quiet Chinese
Ojibway trapper, but Pan had plans for the night

following the Great Rendezvous, when the staff
could drink in earnest, grill burgers instead of bannock,
force hair-metal through a ghetto blaster and dance
on the banks of the Kam. Thomas didn't drink;
Pan would skip his way into Marlis's bunk.

Song and dance: Pan at the dump

(1)

Pan loved going to the dump. Each weekend he'd load the truck high with his trash, toss a tape in and crank it up, and drive up 61 to the Sand Hill, singing so loud you could hear his voice as he drove past. He nearly got himself killed there a few years back, as he turned left without looking, while a Monson was rolling down with a load of newsprint.

That old Dodge would rush up the gravel like the devil himself. If Pan looked in his mirror and couldn't see the turnoff through the dust he'd grin. Even the plastic bags in the trees along the road made him smile, though if you dropped one anywhere else he'd probably kick you.

Rolling in, he'd wave at whoever was working, holler hello if it was summer and his windows were down, and back to the edge of the pit. He took his time at the dump. If old man Hymers was down there collecting junk Pan always talked with him, sometimes even helping drag a box spring, or a table top, or an old crate into the back of his grey Ford. Matti Lankinen'll tell you about how old Hymers got himself that beater by having Pan tow it out of the pit, but that's another story.

(2)

Even better
were the last warm days,
when the bears came by.
Pan always gronked at them, trying
to get them to talk
back, and sometimes
they did. In the fall,
if he'd made
a kill, he'd bring them the bowels,
and do a jig
around the edge
of the pit,
a silvering rope
of gut
in his hands,
Pan leaping around
and stringing it out
so the bears would have to lope
out of the hole,
where he could hear
their voices better.
Everyone else,
even Hymers,
rushed to their trucks
when Pan did this,
but they loved to watch him dancing.

The Great Rendezvous

was a deductible junket for voyageurs
and clerks, half of the Northwest Company
paddling in for drink, talk, and trade.
Now it's a family event for diverted drivers
and airborne re-enactors, keen to enjoy

three long July days of cannon and caroling,
drinking songs chanted by the lustily sober
and covertly wasted, the perennially arrested
blacksmith reprieved from his lines for the nonce,
sent to stand by the river and huzzah the arrivals.

The blackflies were waning, the mosquitoes
were close as steam, the gun-salutes frightened
the children, who wanted the stacks of beaver
pelts to be kitten-soft, not firm, dry props.
False MacGillivrays paraded in pomp; it ended.

Then came the piss-up: enough Blue, vodka,
and Canadian Club to fill an oxbow lake,
real gas barbeques, and no goddamn tourists.
Pan found Marlis at the canoe dock, drinking
a litre of Bull's Blood, cursing the anklebiters

and explaining to some well-meaning boys
just why she wouldn't go see their blues band
play at the Inntowner, when she'd seen Stevie Ray
at the Elmo, and wasn't about to hear "I'm a man"
sung by someone who quite obviously wasn't.

She took a pull on her wine and stared at the river;
three birds quickly rose against the last light.
Woodcocks, muttered Pan. *Really? Yeah.*
Hm. Pan grinned. *Wanna see a lynx?*
Where? Over there. Ten bucks says that's what

scared 'em up. You sure? Yeah. Well...
Soon they were on the water in a staff
boat, rowing to avoid attention. Pan
beached it on a sandbar, left his flashlight
off, whispered a *come on*, and led her

through a stand of ash. They had not
gone twenty feet before Pan nudged her
thigh – *There* – and stepped behind.
Somehow his hand on her hip led
her gaze, darkened shade, quickened white,

and she saw a great airy paw, gloved in thick
ghost's fur; then a loose peaked shoulder;
an ear tuft, silhouetted; and two eyes,
lichen yellow, blinking glacially,
alert and almost unutterably vacant.

Pan kissed her neck, ignoring the familiar
rasping taint of deet, breathing cool air
on her mosquito bites. Marlis closed
her eyes, forgot the lynx, the ashes,
the actors' hubbub, forgot about Pan.

Pan's Hymn

After Hamsun.

26

THE first
haze
can be
a gleam of moonlight.
into the forest with my gun and dog,
a fire, and
among the trunks no frost.
The first
joy at time and place
. . . .
'A toast, beasts and birds, to
night in the forest!
God's in the trees,
silence
A toast to the
life I hear, snout in the grass,
a snuffling over the ground!
wild-cat with throat to the ground
and preparing

the crescent moon,

No one has heard me.

'I give thanks for the hills,
whispering
for
breathing grace of being

Listen and listen
but listen! That
blood
seething, is God
in
the fire's light

Oh, I give thanks

Quiet with a dull thud
A fir cone fell! The moon is
among the half-burnt embers,
And I stroll home

A change from Oakville

This isn't how most city girls end up:
four channels, one of them French,
and a Duluth affiliate when the sky is grey enough.
Custodianship of a line of Chryslers:
three Cordobas for parts, the others
consecrated to rust, vestries for mice. And the river!
Marlis was a nervous swimmer
until she drew her first bloodsucker.
After the salt and the winedark spurt,
it got easy, and she took to summering in a tube,
leaping from the falls morning and night.

Pan in bed

stank.
But what of that?
When his knees swicked
backwards and hooves found purchase
in a synthetic water-shedding mattress
to muster a thrust,
who cared?

Pan and the Geese

"But I have satisfied myself, by long observation, that nothing but the gradual diminution of our forests can accomplish their decrease..."
—Audubon

Pan lay in the field, belly full
of beer-drunk, head sky-
clear, almost empty.

Two Vs had passed that morning,
but he'd just winked at them, the day
early for a shot, idleness in the chill
air finer than an easy kill. Pan
smiled as the third wedge came,
wings quick and out of phase, honks
no chorus, just a breaking shout.

But Pan noticed, blinked, squinted:
there—the right tip of the V—eh? A small one,
a speck, surged ahead, almost thought-swift, soon to pass
the point! He leaped up, shouldered, and sighted—squeezed off
a shot—and down it rushed, falling into the muck just past the fence.

In the likely furrow, a mess
of blood and slate-blue
feathers: a fat passenger pigeon, brown
sharp tongue just pricking
through its parted beak, feet curled,
wedge-tail smashed by the blast.
Not a goose, won't feed them
for days, but it's a night's treat
for Marlis.

Common law

If asked, Marlis would say she'd moved out here for the critters and to display her set of field guides to folks who'd appreciate them: matching blue Petersons and plastic leather Audubons. She was no cook, no gardener, and certainly no birdwatcher, wouldn't hang a feeder or give Dave the life-lister the time of day when he wanted to check the oxbow for ducks, but she had those guides memorized, knew her goldeneyes from her buffleheads, her pumpkinseeds from her bluegills. This wasn't idle dalliance, either, for she kept a Latin dictionary and could muster enough for a Naturalist's Mass, ordered biographies of Louis Agassiz and Alexander Wilson from Minneapolis bookstores, to which Pan would say "what do you want with all those goddamn books?" But at least they could talk: the brown duck roasting for dinner became a canvasback, the knot of snakes by the river were liveborn garters.

Sport

Pan liked stalking
frogs. Each spring
he'd slosh through
the pond, flashlight
in his left hand,
Marlis' net (broom
handle, wire hanger,
gauze) in his right.

Under a tiny bulb the pond was indecipherable:
muck, rush, fresh frogspawn, ramshorn, mayfly nymph,
backswimmer, water boatman, whirligig, water strider, all
black, brown, bronze, rusted, fogged
with the murk-clouds of Pan's steps.

But the frogs!
Fat-toed tawny X-backed spring peepers—
riding old dry rushes, stone dry and tan
as frogs.

Pan would freeze, breathe,
listen, and fix his beam
on a chirping reed. A pop-
throated male might be perched, his call
the size of a raspberry, valley-filling.
With luck, a lover (fatter, fuller,
quiet) would be climbing,
and Pan could swing his net—the singer
arcing into the muck.
Rarely... twice, three times a spring,
Pan would grope to find her wrapped
in the net, and would lift her,
weightless and quick and cool in his palm,
and drop her into his flow-troll.

Pleased, Pan would then
climb to his house,
and place her at eye level
on a window, to sit,
gulping, ready
to again find
her gravid way
to water.

Restless

After Hamsun.

DURING the night I heard Aesop get up
I heard him through
my sleep, but
the growl fitted into the dream
and I was not disturbed
at about two o'clock in the morning,
there were footprints someone had
been to one of the win-
dows,

SHE
asked.

I had not been waiting; she had been there
before me.
'Have you slept ?' I asked.

she
answered. And she told me she
had sat in a chair and closed her eyes.
And she had been out for a walk.

And her face flushes, she
does not answer. I look at her
'Was it you, perhaps?'
close 'It
was I didn't wake did I? I went
quietly Yes, it was me. I was near
once so

Pan and the nest

On my late northern journeys I nowhere saw it.
—Audubon

Pan stood on the cliff, feet
planted in a juniper, hair blown
from below, fly
unzipped, groin tight
with need. He grunted,
softly, through his nose,
and urine arced away, shattering
in the updraft. A faint
squawk from below broke
his mindless ease; his stream
failed, spattering his laces
and the sharp blue berries.
He walked to his left, five
feet or so, kneeled, and looked
over –
        and saw, right at the base, fifty feet down, in a bowl
of frost-cleft rockfalls, a piss-bedraggled turkey vulture
chick, tarheaded, bald from birth, inedible, limp, nurtured
on vomited carrion, furious.

Home that night, Pan called a friend, a life-
lister, and the walker-bound
gasbag told him that an unconfirmed sighting
is worthless. So Pan said goodnight, had some vodka,
went to bed; vultures don't nest this far north.

Wanderlust

After Melville.

To rove , once
the sea
the world,
its arms.

the recentest still gor-
geous
milky
impenetrable

bulk
Lifted by those eternal swells, you
needs must own the seductive god, bowing your head to Pan.

Missing, presumed

Ten days from December, Pan was out on the lake,
paddling his Grumman from Pine Bay to Little Trout,
breath hardening his beard, one hundred dollars wagered
on his pace: he had an hour
to glide up the coast, over weak slate waves,
under dim late sun.

This was a fucking stupid thing to do,
but a bet is a bet,
and when Niccolo put Pan up to it,
he couldn't refuse. He had slept, drunk,
on the shoulder of 61 and lived:
he must be lucky!

Six men watched him leave,
drove to the end of the trip,
and waited.

Pan's canoe slid through the chop like a startled muskie,
but he never made it back; he was barely over deep water
when the weak easterly died and a sharp west wind
brought low grey clouds from inland;

looks like a blizzard, boys, said the referees,
and they decided to have a drink in their cars.

Pan turned to meet the waves
that mounted from calm silted depths,
breaking high, already far beyond his panicked head.
His stomach swelled like a swim bladder as a slap
of a paddle sent him
scaling up to the crest of a wave,
slowing at the peak,
bow reaching past, stern still—
barely—gripping water. But he stayed—lucky,
sure-footed goat—he clung to the tip of that breaker
and raced southeast, through snow and falling dark,
his terror easing into soft, spray-silenced mirth.

In a lake, waves end quickly; Pan was thrown, paddles and all,
over the stone shore of Isle Royale, near Minong Ridge.
He found a hollow, curled, let a snowdrift form a blanket,
closed his ice-rheumed eyes, and dozed, his pulse slow
as a bear's, skin grouse-warm. Rangers found the canoe
shredded on the shore, lifejackets lashed to flotsam;
Marlis took it well.

Et in America ego

Pan slept all that winter, until the thaw chilled him by sending rivulets of meltwater up his cuffs, down his trousers, into his ears and his eyes. Stiff and spring-blind, he climbed the ridge, remembered, and grinned, because he did know where he was. This was freedom—another country, no house or car or guns or Marlis, nothing at all to do but patrol a couple of hundred square miles of bush, teasing the campers and rangers, eating berries and hares and stolen packets of Mr. Noodles.

So it was back to the old habits, or something like them: siestas under frigid sphagnum; coupling lovers watched, hailed, spooked; the instigation of new tales for the hearth, now paper-bound and sold on the mainland beneath signs lettered "Trading Post" in regular, rustic letters. If there had been some real storytellers about he'd have made good, as of old, worked his way into the train of Wee-Sa-Kay-Jac, a comfortable understudy gig with plenty of days off. But there's a dearth of imagination in the national park system—interpreters tell straight stories, and you need a doctorate to rewrite those.

The ferry season was the busiest time of year, and Pan had to keep moving, following the trail circuits, nipping up the lookouts to find new friends. He would accost the few lone hikers, provided they looked credulous enough, sometimes pretending to be a long-lost hiker, occasionally putting on a Kentucky accent and the guise of an old man of the park, full of tales of the mining days—though how could a youngish guy know so much about them? One New England girl was so self-absorbed, so perfectly sufficient, that he tore off his clothes and strode out of the spruces with the jerky pace of a rutting goat. She didn't see him for a moment as she sat, heating water for tea, raptly reading something with a picture of Walt Whitman on the cover, but when she looked up, her high-toned face blanched and she sprinted into the rushes on the edge of Lake Desor. Pan feared for her,

but let her go, knowing that she'd sooner be tangled in water lilies than risk help from his crooked hands. Within a week there were posters of her face on all the park signs, and air and ground searches were underway, orange-clad geezers shouting while a National Guard Hercules passed and passed again. Pan had no trouble staying out of sight, but that was the last time he showed his face to a tourist.

Winters were quieter, with only rangers and biologists to meddle with during the brief days and still nights (when even a crescent moon would bring enough light for sure-footed traveling). Pan felt uncomfortable confusing officials—after all, it was their disbelief that kept his secrets. Still, there were times when he couldn't resist a lark: blasting a snowdrift over a snowshoer, daubing opaque blue paint (filched during the summer) over the lenses of a dozing ornithologist's field glasses, and, once, tuning an old wolf's radio collar to play an Arcadian air. This one great transgression was for the benefit of a sleek Jetranger pilot who spent her nights reading and drinking, then slipping out of Windigo when her colleagues were snoring. She took her Scotch-warmed rambles with her flashlight out, patrolling the verges of the forest, leaning her head back to address familiar Orion, grinning at the bluff roar of ruffed grouse spooked from their warmth. Pan had stealthily favoured her before, rousing the shyer birds for her benefit, calling a great horned owl in with an expert hoot, but he wanted to bless her with a story too strange to be reported, one that would leave her with the lingering pleasure of empty revelation. He never did hear how she had reacted, or if her pale biologists had even handed her their headphones and allowed her to hear the simple music. It didn't matter, really; Pan, having arranged his gift, left to go ice-fishing on Siskiwit Lake.

Miss Lonelyhearts and the Dead Pan

after West

Shrike ignored interruption.
Forget the Renaissance. There
were no brooders

his gestures were
a trick —the
dead pan. No matter he never
changed Under his
brow, huddled dead, gray
he kept
manuscripts and mistresses with great
smooth marbly limbs. . . . expecting
a cow-eyed girl of great
illustrated *intelligence*

Meanwhile

The police were called.
The wreckage was found.
The insurers were satisfied:
Pan was dead.

And what a policy, 500k for accidental death!
No one knew why Marlis stayed on,
but she kept the place, bought a satellite dish,
bugged out in front of the Nostalgia Channel,
put on weight, and seemed happy.
She took up shooting birds, drew beads
on every grouse she saw, so long
as the season lasted.
She no longer ate them, but had them stuffed,
drove to town with windowkill
warblers, lined her kitchen with plumed idols.
This was how to get old: well fed,
dreaming of Montgomery Clift,
twelve gauge booming the hills.

The Life-Listers

After Audubon.

(1)

The Pine Grosbeak is a charming songster.
delighted on the moss
I listened to its continuous lay,

lending an attentive ear
But, reader, I was still farther removed from
my beloved family; the
dark granite rocks, fronting the north, as if

for the advance-
ment of science,

rivetted to the spot, the longer I gazed, the more
I wished but
the bird ceased its song, and all around seemed

(2)

my son
had gone into the interior
but returned having found the flies and
musquitoes intolerable

patched
with dark red, ash, black and white
These sores
are, I believe, produced by the resinous matter of the fir-trees

the excrescences could not be
removed and I was surprised

(3)

during mild winters,
in considerable numbers, some remain
during the most severe cold. A lady who had resided there many years,
assured me that she had kept males
they soon became familiar, would sing fed
on berries during the summer,
they were fond of bathing, but liable to cramps; and
that they died of sores
I have observed the same to happen to the Rose-
breast

Boatman, border, and back again

Pan's fourth autumn on the Isle was his last.
He picked up a hydatid tapeworm
and felt sweaty and stupid in the stolen Gore-Tex
that had replaced his disintegrating jeans.
The hills themselves grew dull with familiarity,
a long streak of stone on the face of Superior,
ridges and lakes running northeast with martial order.

It was high noon when Pan strode out of the bush
at Windigo, scowling with the dignity of a frost-weak overhang.
No one approached him; this park draws no poachers
and the rangers are caretakers, not enforcers.
Maybe this dour scruff had come
by way of Rock Harbour, stayed two weeks,
been caught in Friday's windstorm, the one
that had cut power from Beaver Bay to the Pigeon.
He had fare in his pocket; let him go.

Joseph Kuhn was still running his *Voyageur* then,
sixty feet of naked aluminum and diesel fumes,
and the old German took a calm pleasure
in showing off the buoy marking the intact *America*,
sunk way back with not a soul aboard,
just a Model T and the mail. He, too,
was in an ill temper, the wet fall stirring
in his knees, the cold keeping business slow.
Pan slipped him a fifty, lifted a year back,
now almost mossy with island damp, and Kuhn eyed him
for a good long while before nodding the rank-smelling
stranger on to his deck. Curling up in the open air,
Pan slept in the spray, and the few embarked
backpackers left him. Hypothermia
was his business, not theirs.

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He seemed spry enough when they made Grand Portage,
glower abandoned, greasy red beard the cleaner for its misting.
Kuhn watched him walk out to the highway,
figuring he'd be hitching his way south,
and prepped the ship for the night. But Pan
just crossed the highway, went to sleep again,
shivered in the sodden poplar leaves, waited for dark.

By nine o'clock he was striding the paved shoulder,
dark and moose-like in travelers' headlights, keeping
his flank to the white line so he could feel
the air eddying behind southbound Monsons,
their lights knifing his eyes, pricking the sterile
back of his brain. He wasn't sleepwalking,

but there was no thought as he reached the drive

for the Minnesota side of High Falls, and slipped
down the ditch and into the park, up the trail,
over the sanitized wood of the last lookout,
through brittle willow and soaked dead bracken
to the top of the falls. Here, at night,
you can wade from country to country,
with your cocaine, draft-card, or paperless face.

Marlis was cooking bacon when she heard him come in
and instinct swung the skillet at the shape in the door.
The clear thin grease took his left hand's hair.

Trophies

So you're eating meat?
Yes, she was, and had been for years,
before he'd left, she'd have him know,
and just where the hell does he think...

Well, this went on, but soon Pan knelt
at the warbler cabinet, nose to beak
with a black-throated blue, its wings
half-spread, a tent-caterpillar glued
to its birch bough roost. Marlis
poured him a drink, but the rye
seared his nostrils—spirits
were hard to get on the Isle.

She eyed her birds and stroked Pan's crown.
This was the man who had brought
a passenger pigeon home for dinner;
he could find her a crane, lure
storm-strays from Russia to his
barrel and sight. He was not
quite a provider, not nearly
a husband, but he did have a way
with drawing things near.

The Lammergeir

Pan came slowly back to his guns,
grasping them almost
gingerly, as though he thought
them weapons, their bolts
opening on sterile, fearsome
chambers. He spent weeks
shooting beer cans, report
and recoil easing
their stabs at his nerves.
When he could knock over
a dozen cans at a hundred feet,
he was ready to hunt again,
but the hills seemed filled with the common;
there was nothing he could shoot
that would be new to Marlis.

Still, he tramped the ridges
from December on,
wanting only a strange flutter,
a new pellet or shaggy
nest of alien wood.
He found nothing
until late August,
on a ripe bright day:
a beaver pond sent
rough grey wings
and rust-stained talons
hurtling skyward!
This—what the hell was it?
Pan fired, and missed,
fumbled the breech,
and barely got off another shot,
when a dark, clawed stone
plummeted from above
and struck his left temple.

When Pan woke, it was dusk,
a warm clot stuck in his hair
and his gun still in his hand.
The shell of a painted-turtle
lay beside him, split,
nearly stripped clean.
What the hell? Some kinda
vulture...I'll be damned.

He remembered hating
that form once, long
ago... had he nailed one
with a slingshot? Maybe...

there was a kid,

a cliff, another sudden
blast of feathers.
But when had he last
kept goats, and where?
He thought his skull was bruised.

Eventually Pan picked himself up
and brought the shell home,
for a flowerpot or something,
but he swore off birds after that.

Pan, drinking,

approaches asceticism. Lust
abstracts, appetites ease,
even around a beauty he can't be
bothered. Sipping, pouring, fetching
ice, this is a paced rite, like a line-
worker's timed vocation. This is Pan
in his kitchen:

he twists the red curls on his right ankle,
rolling a short coarse braid—*If I shaved my legs...*
how long would it take me?—
and thinks of drains, of that snake
the Blakes never did give back,
of Marlis, the day she didn't see
the skunk below the dogwood
by the driveway, of rinsing tomato juice
from her blonde hair,
of sponging her back with it,
of the candles burning to take the reek from the room,
of her finally finding things funny when he told
how the same thing had happened
to his dentist's daughter,
and they were panicked by her smell,
but at their camp they'd only had
Clamato; the poor kid's eyes just burned.

Pan's Last Kill

Marlis left Pan for good
within an hour
of his striding on
to the deck, raising his Lee Enfield
to his shoulder, and,
without aiming, running a slug
over the roof of their new black Oldsmobile
and into the front of the chest
of a three-point buck that had strolled
down the driveway.
Heartbroken, and out of season,
he called the Coopers to take the body:
they could use the meat.

Pan, drunk,

is harmless. In winter he'll count
Orion's belt-loops over
and over, in summer he'll scratch
his boots in the driveway, greet
a bird if he thinks he sees one roosting.
Speak to him and he'll fake an old wives' tale
just for you: *moon's got a circle;*
frost tomorrow... remember those ash
berries by the pond, redder than
usual? Means metal beneath
the soil, gold, platinum maybe.
Alone he'll do like anyone else in the bush: ask
the sky for a woman, make up wish-ticket
shooting stars, or declare anything unusual
to be lucky. When he is very drunk,
Pan can only look at the world
for fifteen or twenty minutes.
Then he gets bored, goes inside,
gets another drink, sits, and plans
what to think about
when he's next
outside.

The Wedding Party

Pan did have a sister, a nice woman, good looking and all. She never got married, but she had him a niece anyway, a decent girl, named Rose. Ted Lankinen – the mechanic's kid – asked Rose to marry him, and Rose did. Pan hadn't been close to them for years and years, hardly talked at all, not even at holidays, but after Marlis left him, Pan started seeing them again, and when he got the news, he had to throw a piss-up.

Some night that was. Cars and trucks lined up for nearly half a mile along the road, and there were enough folks to wreck Pan's lawn, tearing the grass right up. His deck was practically bending under all the kegs he had lined up, and his music – the Stones, Ted Nugent, Little Feat, Neil Young – was so goddamn loud even the ravens stayed away from the party, letting the garbage sit until the next day. Pan sure looked happy... proud as a father. He was walking around, talking to everyone – *Yeah, I had Niccolo do the sausage this year... guy's Eye-talian so it's kinda spicy, but I like it. Moose is moose no matter what you put in it. – Whaddaya mean your mom won't let ya? You're fifteen, right? Here, and if anyone asks I said –*

It was June, and we'd had some rain, so Pan had a brushpile ready for burning. When it got dark, him and some buddies dumped sawdust and oil all over it and threw in a few matches, and soon it was going pretty good, sparks and bits of bark slowly flying up. He turned off the music 'cause he said he wanted to listen to the fire, but someone had brought some whiskey out and everyone was yelling and stuff, so it didn't make much difference.

Well, Pan ended up walking off to holler at some of Ted's friends, who were smoking some grass out back of the house. Snuck up on them, he did, and really scared the shit out of them, crashing around in the bushes and making a gronk like a bear, then jumping out and telling them off. Pan wouldn't have the stuff on his property, he said, just having a bit of fun with them, threatening to call the cops until one of the girls caught his

eye and he started trying to chat her up. The wife had left him about a year back so I guess it was about time, but this girl was young enough to be his daughter, and she'd been going out with Ricky Swanson since they were sixteen or something. Pan didn't get a chance to do much, anyways, so I guess it don't matter really.

So anyway, while Pan was out back Bill Constable took out this new Colt that he'd picked up somewhere in the States and brought in under the chair of his car. Nice looking thing – I've seen one just like it in a magazine – but a stupid fucking toy, really. Man who's got a rifle don't need one of those... what's he gonna do with it, sneak up on a bear that thinks he's unarmed? Shit.

Well, you know what happened then. I don't even have to tell you. They start fucking around with the gun and before you know it there's a bang and Rose's friend Clara – this girl from the city, some thought she was stuck up but I liked her well enough – well, she's taken a bullet right in her goddamn ankle. Not sure who was holding the gun at the time – to tell you the truth I was busy puking in the bush when it happened – but Bill grabbed the thing and ran down the hill to throw it in the river. So when the cops came they found him down there, and they took him away. Made real trouble for Pan, that, 'cause the cops kept coming out to look for the gun and the guy couldn't get a week to himself.

Bill went to jail for a week, sold the new Dodge to pay his fine, and then up and moved to the city. I don't know why... Pan's not much around here anymore, and though she was all right nobody really knew Clara. We were all there on account of Ted, and for the beer, of course. But, yeah, last I heard Bill was working as a janitor at some library or something, making ok money but it don't go far in town. But what was interesting was that Pan found the Colt a couple months back, and gave it to Rose and Ted as some kind of anniversary present. Seemed it washed up on a sandbar or something... the wood in the

handle was all fucked but Ted tried it once and it still shot ok. So he's took the firing pin out and has it hanging in his rec room. Rose says she's gonna give it to Clara if Clara ever gets married. But I don't know about that... seems to be pushing her luck a tad there. And who'd trust a city girl with a gun? Shit.

Pan and the crèche

Pan has his devotions.
Each solstice, he climbs
a ghost of a road
at full noon; his ankles tire
from striding over thistles, catch
in green and pale asters.

Near the crest
he must climb
bald shield rock like ice-
lined skin, freckled with flame
and ash lichens.

On the summit
Pan stands, meets his lady, a concrete
virgin, holding her son, roofed in shale, wreathed
in florid plastic—and she listens. Cigarettes.
He lays a pack with the others
and the votives at her feet

Nervous, he steals a glance at the domed
sky, at Superior's haze,
lifts an unwatched arm
for her waist.

Pan, lucky

A few years after Marlis left, Pan won at Lottario—
not too much, about five grand. He didn't tell
anyone, just sat on the money for a couple of months.
Then, in early October, he called up a taxidermist,
one that makes graphite fish for conservationists,
phonies, and braggarts. Pan paid the man one thousand
to design a two-foot long deepwater sculpin,
and had him make eight of the things, at fifteen
dollars an inch. They were beauties, fat spiny
tan, with pale bellies and dirtbrown stipples on
their heads and backs, mouths halted in mid-gulp,
spiky fins spread, spines pointed enough to pierce
a thimble. Their heads were broad, flat, stout, outsize
on these trophy bottom-minnows. The taxidermist
was sent a list of addresses, and bundled his work
off to Marlis, to the Premier's office (with a thank you
note), to the Reeve, to the local paper, to Rose, to Pan's
old high school, to the Customs office. He had been
told to keep the last one, as a tip. It's now on the
wall at Ryden's Border Store, with their sturgeon,
their jackalope, and their beer-drinking bear.

Again, Pan

stoops, squinting
at owl pellets.

He finds mouse
fur, cat claws, small
teeth within the husks
of an evening's hunt.

Crumbling one, he sniffs
his fingers, faint bile lighting
a grin on his thin lips.

That was once sport—
he had merganser on his
table, succulent,
with a thin bill
as a toothpick.
Now, disarmed by a poor
listener, he eats corn,
barley,
        stunted willows,
and wild mint—exactly
like his charges. A dead
god, once lean, made
flesh for an oily stew.

Pan, dead and dying

When Pan died, he had been drinking less,
and his friends put the blame squarely there.
If he'd just kept at it he'd have been fine,
but there's no drunk worse than a drunk ex-drunk.

ꕥ

It had been a bad day. Seth McCartney had been smoking in his shithouse and set it on fire, burning the drought-killed grasses out back to soft grey curls of old man's hair. Pan was out splitting wood for winter, saw the smoke, the Cansos circling, the column that meant a stand of poplar was beginning to go. His nerves went taut. Cursing, he got in his car and drove to the Oasis, where he grabbed a case of beer, opening one before he got behind the wheel again. It is a fifteen minute drive south to the tourist information centre, but Pan did it in eight, polishing off a second bottle.

There's a trail that starts there and runs to High Falls, an easy two kilometres up the Pigeon. He took the low route, past the ruined chimney, carrying the two-four and ignoring the visitors, who had seen the smoke in the east and were making for the highway in tense, talkative groups.

Near the top of the falls, he dropped into the ruined log-chute, up the other side, breaking a bottle, and found a perch on the rim of the gorge, where he could strip, drink a few beers, and chuck the empties at the American cliffs, trying not to eye the smoke that rose in the east. The fire had burned as far as the Lankinen place by the time Pan fell asleep, sedated by afternoon sun, bird song, and booze. There was no lapse from sleep to death: he dreamed, stirred, shifted, and fell, a sullen man dropping the short eighty feet to hard, bronze water, slung through the narrows and over the rapids, past the bridge and on to the

very rim of the lake, where his feet caught on the shingle, his head and arms and shoulders

hanging in the cloudy bay.

A nuthatch found him first, jabbed
its beak beneath his nails
as though it expected woodworms,
drew blood, and sang its hanking cry.
Chickadees were next, plucked his leg-hairs,
and crossbills lit on his knees,
parted the skin, cut small pelts.
Grosbeaks nicked his flesh: rose-breasts
growing ruddier, pines blooming to scarlet,
evenings darkening to the orange of a harvest moon.
Jays took his sinews, wrapped their nests in them,
and a pair of flickers came for his marrow.
Not a bird was friendly, save a green-winged teal
which clung to his belly and hissed like a swan,
but it was mobbed by the jays, pricked by their bills,
and lit out for the east, leaving a burst
of emerald feathers on its throne.

This was the end of him; fish got the leftovers,
sculpins and rock bass and white suckers
did their work, kept the depths clean.
A park maintenance worker found his clothes,
vest and flannel shirt, jeans and shorts,
CSA approved boots, belt, all
overgrown with columbine,
home to a vole's nest.

On the new science of the panographer

After Vico.

8

[882] Since the true is lost in the multitude
we may acquit the charges against
him,

9

[883] base and

10

[884] boorish

11

[885] similes,

12

[886] local

13

[887] liberties,

14

[888] inconsistencies,

15

[889] and his portrayal of men as gods, and gods as men.

[890] In defending myths,
he argues that,
when first sung these myths cannot justify glory

Panography

I

As the protecting spirit of all satyrs, who inhabit forests rather than cities, Pan became a symbol of the impious wanderers of the earth's great forests, who had the appearance of men but the habits of abominable beasts.

Thamus Pan-megas Tethnēce!

O baby, what Hell
to be Greek in this country!
Son of a woodpecker and the mailman,
begotten on the town whore while Matti was working,
wiring some mine's offices. To stride Crown land,
ridges meant for roads, roads meant for settlers,
thin pavements already gone to lichen.
In charge of nothing was our Pan,
a custodian of duff and mushrooms,
panic moldering in a land of awe.

O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
from jagged trunks,
who has for his share every snow-covered ridge,
who stares extinction in its saw, then registers
his fowling-piece, who killed your Eva,
lost Syrinx, Marlis, Edvarda, is there little
to be learned from another exile?
Greece should suffice. Why shout here?

II

J. Elliot Cabot and Louis Agassiz at Pine Bay.

July 27th, 1848

We bid an early farewell to Mr. Robinson and proceeded S.W. under strong but favorable winds. The range that is inaugurated by McKay's Mountain continues unbroken past the Pigeon River, affording a noble prospect. After passing a series of small bays, some gravelly, others offering spreads of heavy shingle, we paddled quite close to a long, low, sheer basaltic ridge that extends almost unbroken from Pine Point to Pine Bay. The bay

itself seemed a fine harbor, well-sheltered, shallow, and muddy, and we abandoned our plan to visit the American settlement at Grand Portage in favor of investigating this locale.

Our men fished the mouth of the river, retrieving a number of Pickerels and Perches. No unusual specimens were caught, but the fish were exceptionally fat, and enough were procured for a fine dinner, the pleasure of which was augmented by a handful of the local wild raspberries. The Professor moved to investigate the abovementioned ridge, which divides the lake and a particularly fine tract of sphagnum which, due to its thickness and shady environs, envelops frozen soil, even at summer's late peak. I chose to take two men and paddle the shoreline, in case the warm waters were a haven for aquatic plants that we had hitherto not encountered. My expectations were not fulfilled, but we did come upon a most unusual cache of bones. Upon closer inspection, they proved to be a jumble; some were clearly human, while others were those of a large, cloven-hoofed quadruped, and a few appeared to be of the manufacture of an ardent but inexpert artisan. A handful of feathers, perhaps those of the Green-Winged Teal, lay amid the remains. Although I surmised that the bones were a relic of another Indian burial, my men were not reluctant to collect them, and quite calmly returned them to our camp.

We found the Professor seated amidst a stand of arbor vitaes. When presented with my find, he seemed to be moderately amused, and pronounced the lot to be the work of a mischievous *voyageur*. The legs were pronounced to be those of a goat, and the cranium appeared to be rudely joined to two short, pointed horns. The pelvis, torso, and upper limbs were undeniably human. I have known since our visit to the Sault that the inhabitants of these parts are very often coarse in speech and crude in humor, but this abomination suggests that, beyond the Canadian Lakehead, the men are only to be distinguished from the beasts by the sheer ingenuity of their animalism.

Setting the skeleton aside, the Professor made the following remarks:

"We have seen along our route but a handful of agricultural endeavors, the most notable being the efforts of the company employees stationed at Fort William. I need not mention why this country is so exceptionally unsuited to the rearing of livestock; the scarcity of native quadrupeds large and small is a clear indication that, climatic considerations aside, the land is hardly fertile. It is possible for Europeans to subsist in these conditions, as upon the eastern coast of Sweden and the western coast of Norway, but it is not my purpose to embark upon a comparative study of cultures.

"It is, however, remarkable that no native species of goat or sheep are to be found in this country; neither *Capra americana* nor *Ovis montana* have any allies to the east of the great plains, and *Ovibos moschatus* does not extend into the northern forests. It is unlikely that the Indian populations to the east of the Rocky Mountains are of sufficient size to have blocked such a natural migration, and we must therefore assume that these animals are unable to subsist out of the alpine environment for which they were created. A hardy race of goats should certainly find this country to be an agreeable one; willow and the soft bark of young pines would offer adequate winter sustenance. To the philosophical observer, it would appear that the Lake has been deliberately made destitute of those creatures that are most agreeable to man, and that any attempt to establish populations of domestic livestock would be futile, as it would move against the natural limits assigned to the species of the globe from the first day of creation."

We made our beds on dry sphagnum pulled from the edge of the spruce swamp, and spent a most comfortable night.

III

As new as Greece ever was, and newer, newer, much newer:
erratics shat by yesterday's ice, and the salt flood
locked in the slate, ground-cool dregs of some
Cretaceous lake. Sediments all dead, all pure,
or so the Professor thought,
no shells, bivalves, petrified fishes,
not north of Michigan, west of St. Joseph's quarries.
But the stones and soil render
Precambrian contributions to the world's museums;
lantern-sized algae cells; squat polished obsidian
fetishized just off Central Park;
figures daubed in ochre, etched in black lichen;
Pukaskwa pits; deer paths;
carnivorous plants; the shield;
old growth; the new world.

An antiquity. A terra cotta Falstaff,
with horns in place of wit.
Shelley's bric-a-brac,
Lawrence's genteel savage,
Faulkner's slothful teenage flautist,
Tom Robbins' stinking rutter,
James Bond's librarian.
Or a bastard goat-singer,
a Thomas Glahn,
no longer a piper.
Don't make fun,
Pan's not for our sport, no god is, and
I wot high noon's his time for taking rest
after the swink o' the chase;
and he's one o' the tetchy sort,
his nostril's ever sour wrath's abiding-place.
Look at Audubon's *fulvus,*
iron clamp cool on taut foxleg,
bared yelp, flat ears, dumb eyes.
That's not panic.
But it is fear.

IV

The reason is this:
they believe Pan to be one of the eight gods
who existed before the subsequent twelve,
and painters and sculptors represent him
just as the Greeks do,
with the face and legs of a goat.
Not that they think he is,
in fact, like that—on the contrary
they do not believe he differs in form
from the rest of the gods.
But that is how they paint him—
why, I should prefer not to mention.

But this is Highway 61, and this the ruined bridge,
where God said to Abraham, "Kill me a sheep,"
and Abraham vowed to sacrifice the finest of his flocks,
but old Goat-Pan made a horned lamb with golden fleece
appear among the flock. He foresaw that Abraham
would claim it as his own. Abraham kept his vow,
by sacrificing the lamb's flesh, but he stuffed and mounted
the fleece and locked it in a chest.

V

If Pan is still here, he woke, in his boots, by the river.
His ears were full of hum, as though the dogwoods
roared with his heart's quick blood.
Inches above his beard, dragonflies, hundreds,
swept, banked. Green predatory pegs,
coupled in slackwater's musky air. Pan whistled.
Dragonflies rolled, banked, spawned.

If there's no Pan here? Just spruce bark. Old sap.
Poplar whining on birch. Ice-split stone.
Pike, Pacific salmon, sturgeon.
The godless shipdestroying lake, the end.

Plate Two: Sign, Pine Bay, 2001

Notes and Quotation Attributions

Some of these poems quote freely from other texts, and some are "ventilated texts"—poems prepared by taking a passage from the work of another author and deleting most of the words to produce a "new" poem. Sources are to be attributed as follows; full citations are provided in the bibliography.

Epigraph

Ventilated text prepared from Milton, John, *Paradise Lost*, Book IV lines 264-268.

Pan and the Kingfishers

The form of this poem is taken from Charles Olson's "The Kingfishers" (*The Collected Poems of Charles Olson* pp. 86-93. I have left his line lengths and stanza structure almost unmodified, have followed many of his rhetorical strategies, and have, as much as is possible, replaced the content of his poem with material that is different, but equivalent.

My interpretation of "The Kingfishers" draws heavily on Guy Davenport's essay "Olson" (*The Geography of the Imagination* pp. 80-99).

"Pan and the Kingfishers" contains the following quotations:

"A cage went in search of a bird." Kafka, Franz. *Collected Aphorisms.* "Aphorism 16". Trans. Malcolm Pasley. p. 6.

"Ces nymphes," "Si clair," "Assoupi de sommeils touffus." Mallarmé, Stéphane, "L'après-midi d'un faune." *Collected Poems.* Tans. Henry Weinfield, p. 38.

"The rufous band of the female [...] is darker." Bent, Arthur Cleveland. *Life Histories of North American Cuckoos, Goatsuckers, Hummingbirds, and Their Allies, Part I.* "The Belted Kingfisher." p. 118. [The complete text of Bent's *Life Histories* is available on the internet at http://www.birdzilla.com/sub.asp?strType=omnibus_intro&strTitle=Birdzilla:+Wild+Bird+Omnibus]

"The holes dug in the earth or sand [...] not far from a mill worked by water." Audubon, John James. *The Birds of America, Volume IV.* "The Belted Kingfisher." p. 206. [Note: the complete text of *The Birds of America* is available on the internet at http://employeeweb.myxa.com/rrb/Audubon/index.html]

"Here, on a few [...] eggs are deposited." Ibid. p. 207.

"On one occasion, [...] and thus escaped." Ibid. p. 207.

"Couple, adieu; je vais voir l'ombre que tu devins." Mallarmé, Stéphane, "L'après-midi d'un faune." *Collected Poems.* Tans. Henry Weinfield, p. 40.

"open your pike [...] to your discretion" Walton, Izaak. *The Compleat Angler.* pp. 172-4.

"After the ceremony they kiss their dead." *Sacred Legends of the Sandy Lake Cree.* James R. Stevens / illus. Carl Ray. p. 10.

"And she brought [...] and walked to the shore" Ibid. p. 105.

"Precisely a year [...] among the people." Ibid. p. 10.

"ere long [...] thus far out" Audubon, John James. *Ornithological Biographies*, Vol. 1. Quoted on p. 153 of *Audubon's Wildlife.* The original context of this quotation is particularly important: Audubon and his party (who are traveling by skiff up the Ohio River) mistake the sounds of the camp meeting for the noises of "Indian warfare," including cries of "murder," making his party feel "for a while extremely uncomfortable."

"Je vous ai fait la chasse [...] devient-il assassin?" Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. "The Song of Hiawatha." Trans. Charles Baudelaire. *Œuvres Complètes* [Baudelaire] pp. 720-1

"These last few days [...] endless day. Hamsun, Knut. *Pan.* Trans. James W. McFarlane. p. 9.

Pan's Hymn

Ventilated text prepared from Hamsun, Knut. *Pan.* Trans. James W. McFarlane. pp. 122-3.

Pan and the Geese

Epigraph is from Audubon, John James. *The Birds of America, Volume V.* "The Passenger Pigeon." p. 30.

Restless

Ventilated text prepared from Hamsun, Knut. *Pan.* Trans. James W. McFarlane. pp. 46-7.

Pan and the Nest

Epigraph is from Audubon, John James. *The Birds of America, Volume I.* "The Turkey-Buzzard." p. 15.

Wanderlust

Ventilated text prepared from Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick.* p. 442.

Miss Lonelyhearts and the Dead Pan.

Ventilated text prepared from West, Nathanael. *Miss Lonelyhearts & The Day of the Locust: Two Novels.* pp. 5-6.

The Life-Listers

Ventilated text prepared from Audubon, John James. *The Birds of America, Volume III.* "The Pine Grosbeak." pp. 179-180.

On the new science of the panographer

Ventilated text prepared from Vico, Giambattista. *New Science.* Trans. David March. p. 384.

Panography

Epigraph is from Vico, Giambattista. *New Science.* Trans. David March. p. 310.

"*Thamus Pan-megas Tethnèce!*" Graves, Robert. *The Greek Myths: Complete Edition.* p. 103.

"O baby [...] in this country!" MacEwen, Gwendolyn. "Poem improvised around a first line." *The Poetry of Gwendolyn MacEwen, Volume One: The Early Years.* p. 79.

"O thou, [...] jagged trunks," Keats, John. Endymion, lines 232-3.

"who has [...] snow-covered ridge," "Homeric Hymn #19, To Pan." *The Homeric Hymns, A Verse Translation.* Trans. Thelma Sargent. p.68.

Section II is an insertion into the text of Agassiz, Louis and Cabot, J. Elliot's *Lake Superior: Its Physical Character, Vegetation, and Animals, Compared with Those of Other and Similar Regions.* As it mimics the style of Cabot and Agassiz, it often repeats their phraseology and alludes to, without quoting more than a few scattered words of, several passages.

"As new as Greece [...] much newer" Wilson, Ethel. *The Innocent Traveller.* p. 166

"I wot [...] abiding-place." Theocritus. "Idyll I." *The Greek Bucolic Poets.* Trans. J. M. Edmonds. p. 11.

"The reason is this [...] not to mention." Herodotus. *The Histories.* Trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt. p. 121.

"God said [...] kill me a." Dylan, Bob. "Highway 61 Revisited." *Highway 61 Revisited.*

"and Abraham vowed [...] in a chest." Ventilated text prepared (and amended) from Graves, Robert. *The Greek Myths: Complete Edition.* p. 406.

Appendix 1: Hunters.

"Was there any sin in that?" Kafka, Franz. "The Hunter Gracchus." *The Complete Stories.* p. 229.

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Appendix 1: Hunters

The year starts to end
and the men return: the ones
who search for fresh shit
as they move. They respect all
the signs: the whispers, the crack
that returns as a boom, the Foley
man's ravens, steam,
the post-mortem pose
with the fresh doll.

One fall, our mutt would appear
each day with something new:
gleaming gut, liver, a hoof
to adorn our lawn.

Then I got a little bit older.
I stole a fable, puzzled a city girl
with a story of a dead bear
piloting a salmon boat on Superior:
he stayed at the old lodge up the road
for a night or two, talked long and low
with the bartender, and left unharmed,
aimlessly reentering the fog.
She frowned, wanting a punchline.

My family's rifle, a half-empty box
of shells, they comforted me
for years, through a winter
when the coyotes dug in the snow
for apples. I worked
in the city, drove there daily.
Was there any sin in that?

Note: this poem, a play on Kafka's "The Hunter Gracchus," is included as a memento. Even though I had not read most of the texts which inspired *Panography* at the time of writing this piece, much of the cycle was implicit here.

Glossary

While, ideally, *Panography* can be read without notes, some readers may find its geographical fidelity and use of natural history frustrating and hermetic. This glossary should add some transparency to the text, but should really only be used as a last resort. A few literary notes are also included here, but they mainly concern modern literature which uses Pan. Robert Graves' *The Greek Myths* provides a useful summary of the classical stories of Pan.

Agassiz, Louis. One of the most influential of 19th century natural scientists, Agassiz was born in Switzerland, educated by Cuvier and von Humboldt, and eventually immigrated to America, where he taught at Harvard and corresponded with many of the most prominent intellectuals of his day—including Thoreau. Agassiz' contributions include substantial work in ichthyology, embryology, and geology (he was the first to offer a convincing theory of ice ages—see "Erratics"). While many of Agassiz' scientific views were quite progressive, he was an avowed (but sophisticated) creationist and spent much of his latter career engaged in anti-Darwinist polemic.

Long after his death and fall into obscurity, Agassiz was resurrected as a sort of literary icon, first by Ezra Pound, then by Guy Davenport. Both authors admire Agassiz for both the rigor of his scientific method and the glorious precision of his prose style. Davenport's own work as an illustrator owes much to Agassiz' scientific drawings.

In 1848, Agassiz led a scientific expedition to the north shore of Lake Superior, travelling from Sault Ste. Marie to Prince's Location, approximately ten kilometres from Pine Bay. The findings of this journey are recorded in Agassiz' *Lake Superior:*

Its Physical Character, Vegetation, and Animals, Compared with those of Other and Similar Regions.

America, The. Isle Royale's most famous shipwreck, the S.S. America is a nearly intact steamer, wrecked in the summer of 1928 with no loss of life. It went down in the North Gap of Washington Harbor, a favoured route of ferries travelling to the Isle from Minnesota, and its bow rests in a mere three feet of water. The America is an extremely popular attraction for SCUBA divers, and a preservation society is now working on restoring it as an underwater museum.

Beast on the rock. Like Charles Olson, with his "E on the stone," I'm being deliberately obscure. This refers to the famous pictographs at Agawa Bay in Lake Superior Provincial Park. Al Purdy has a poem about these pictographs, but I'm referring to the images themselves, not to his work.

Most of the pictographs along the lake's north shore have been lost. Cabot records that pictographs etched in lichen were a common sight on his journey; these were overgrown long ago.

Cabot, J. Elliot. Agassiz' assistant on his tour of the north shore of Lake Superior, Cabot authored a very accessible narrative of the trip, appearing as a preface to the scientific findings presented in *Lake Superior: Its Physical Character, Vegetation, and Animals.*

Capra americana. This is *Oreamnos americanus americanus,* the familiar mountain goat of the Rockies. The professor uses 19th century taxonomies, not the contemporary Linnaean names.

Central Park. Northwestern Ontario, with its exposed tracts of Precambrian shield, is a

favoured haunt of geologists and mining corporations alike. On entering the geological galleries of New York's Museum of Natural History, one will immediately encounter prominently displayed specimens drawn from throughout the region.

Chinese Ojibway. This is not an ethnic mix, but a muddle of casting. Because of the dire economic and educational circumstances of the region, ethnic Asians are occasionally hired by historical reenactments to play the role of First Nations People.

Deepwater Sculpin. A bottom-minnow of the great lakes, sculpins are lumpy, ugly, and very, very small—specimens that are longer than an inch or two are unheard of. In a felicitous stroke of lexicography, the *Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition* defines sculpins as "various small worthless fish having a spiny appearance."

Edvarda. Thomas Glahn's beloved in Knut Hamsun's *Pan.* Edvarda spends most of the novel spurning Glahn, but their relationship goes far beyond simple rejection.

Erratic. A stone so displaced by glaciation that it exists in utterly incongruous surroundings. Erratics can be as large as a forty foot wide lump of granite left in an otherwise empty meadow or as small as a splinter of slate dropped on a basalt ridge. These stones were among Louis Aggasiz' first (and best) evidence presented in support of his theory of ice ages.

Eva. A peasant girl, Thomas Glahn's slavishly devoted lover in Hamsun's *Pan.*

Flicker. The flicker is one of the largest Canadian woodpeckers—it is approximately the size of a crow.

Fort William. The name given to the Northwest Company's fur trading post on the Kaministiquia River. Furs originally passed to the east through a fort located at Grand Portage, but, with the establishment of the American border in 1783, this Company post fell outside of British territory. Fort Kaministiquia was established in

1801, at the starting point of the old French fur-trading route. In 1807 it was renamed in honour of William McGillivray, Chief Director of the Northwest Company.

Between 1803 and 1821, Fort William was the site of the Northwest Company's annual Rendezvous, at which administrative staff and labourers alike would meet to conduct business—the northwest extremity of Lake Superior being an ideal midpoint between the Company's administrative centre of Montreal and its far-flung western trading outposts.

The fort passed into the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company and eventually fell into disuse. It was gradually destroyed during the construction of the town of Fort William, Ontario (now amalgamated into the city of Thunder Bay). In the 1970s, the Ontario Government reconstructed Fort William a few miles upriver from its original site, turning it into a particularly vivid historical reenactment.

Glahn, Thomas. The Pan-figure, narrator, and hero of Hamsun's *Pan*, Glahn is a Norwegian army lieutenant who settles alone in a cabin outside of a tiny Nordland fishing village. Glahn hunts and fishes, dresses in leather and lives in wild opposition to the villagers; most of his half-hearted attempts at social intercourse end in disaster. His tumultuous relationship with the women of the village and his devoted, predatory approach to the land are among the chief concerns of the novel.

Green-Winged Teal. A North American duck, brown and grey overall. The male has magnificent green highlights on his wings and face.

Grosbeak. Familiar songbirds of the northern forests, grosbeaks are bulky, hardy, colourful members of the finch family, equipped with heavy bills for cracking seeds. The females are drab, either brown or greenish grey, but the males are among the

brightest of North American wild birds. The male of the evening grosbeak is strikingly patterned in gold, grey, and dark brown; the male pine grosbeak is a soft magenta overall, with highlights of pale grey; the male rose breast has a black and white back, white sides, and a brilliant rose front.

Jackalope. This curious creature, one of North America's few modern mythical beasts, is said to be the creation of a Wyoming taxidermist. It is a wild rabbit of any species, adorned with a very small pair of deer antlers.

Ja-Ka-Baysh. A hero-figure in Cree mythology, otherworldly but decidedly human. A handful of his adventures are recorded in James Stevens' *Sacred Legends of the Sandy Lake Cree*, which is an excellent introduction to the mythology of the Cree and Ojibway First Nations.

High Falls. A spectacular waterfall on the Pigeon River, located within Middle Falls Provincial Park. The views of the falls are a study in national approaches to nature-as-spectacle: the American side of the falls is built up with sturdy wooden observation galleries, and visitors are restricted to these areas. On the Canadian side, however, viewers are free to climb to the very rim of the falls and dangle their feet over the edge. The ruins of a log chute, used to direct felled timber around the falls, still exist on the Canadian side.

McGillivray. See Fort William.

MNR. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Lammergeir. Literally "lamb-vulture." The approved contemporary common name for these birds is "bearded vulture," for they do not really kill lambs. Calling them by their older name is seen as contributing to this rural superstition, which has led their near extinction in much of their original range. The lammergeir is a large but

cowardly vulture, endemic to central Europe and western Asia. Pliny the Elder records that Aeschylus was killed by a turtle dropped by an eagle; this was thought to be another of his fanciful stories until lammergeirs were observed dropping turtles and tortoises from great heights, in order to break the shells.

Lappe. A small community located to the southwest of Thunder Bay, Ontario. The name is typical of the region's smaller Finnish immigrant communities.

Life-lister. This is a common term for a truly committed birdwatcher, one who maintains a life's list of species seen in the wild.

Nuthatch. A dainty bird that climbs up and down the trunks of trees, using its beak to search for hidden insects, and for seeds cached by other birds.

Old Fort William. See "Fort William."

Ovibos moschatus. The musk ox. This is one name which time and taxonomical fussing have not altered.

Ovis montana. *Ovis canadensis canadensis,* the bighorn sheep.

Pacific Salmon. Most salmon caught in the great lakes water system are, in fact, Pacific salmon, which were first introduced in the 1950s and 1960s. Coho and pink salmon are particularly common, but the bright red sockeye salmon beloved of British Columbians have not been established in the lakes. A breeding population of Atlantic salmon once existed in Lake Ontario, but recent attempts to reintroduce this ostensibly native species have been unsuccessful.

Panic. "Yes, said Mrs. Porter when she had finished reading to her young pupils sitting safely about her beside the fire, now, girls, you understand where the word Panic comes from. The Greeks, you see, believed that whoever should hear the fluting of the pagan god Pan was in danger of a revelation which would turn him mad, and

whoever should see Pan – who was not even a human type of god, if I may say so, but resembled also a goat – might die from the experience." —Ethel Wilson, *The Innocent Traveller*, 166.

"Lurking among the leafy recesses, he was almost more demon than god. To be feared, not loved or approached. A man who should see Pan by daylight fell dead, as if blasted by lightning.

"Yet you might dimly see him in the night, a dark body within the darkness. And then, it was a vision filling the limbs and the trunk of a man with power, as with a new, strong-mounting sap." —D.H. Lawrence, "Pan in America" (22).

Passenger Pigeon. North America's most famous extinct bird, the passenger pigeon was once the most numerous bird in the world. Its populations were estimated to number in the billions, but it fell to unrestrained hunting.

Pigeon River. The river which, since 1783, has served as a stretch of the American border. The Pigeon flows from the maze of inland waterways near Quetico/Boundary Waters to Lake Superior.

Pine Bay. A small bay and cottage community on Lake Superior at the mouth of the Pine River.

Pine River. A rocky, seasonal river, sometimes brimming and black with runoff, sometimes a trickle meandering through a bed of stones. Most of the action of *Panography* happens along its banks.

Ryden's Border Store. This establishment has grown from a single general store to a substantial complex, located in Minnesota, within sight of the Pigeon River border crossing. Ryden's caters to both tourists and locals, offering American gasoline prices and post office boxes to border-hopping Canadians, as well as the usual

tourist bric-a-brac, such as dream-catchers and agates sporting romantic paintings of timber wolves by moonlight.

T-top doba. The Chrysler Cordoba was a stylish, popular two-door car manufactured in the 1970s and 1980s. The T-top model featured removable glass panels in the roof, allowing for an open-air cabin while remaining nearly as sturdy (and well insulated) as an ordinary coupe.

Tent-caterpillar. These caterpillars look harmless, but in boom years they are able to reproduce in almost biblical proportions. They eat the leaves of almost any deciduous tree and are capable of defoliating hundreds of square kilometres of trees in the space of a few weeks.

Turkey Vulture. The turkey vulture is Canada's only species of vulture. Their populations have gradually moved north over the course of the last hundred years. While a nest has never been discovered in Northwestern Ontario, mated pairs are a common sight.

Wee-Sa-Kay-Jac. The ribald, Pan-like supernatural trickster of Ojibway and Cree mythology, Wee-Sa-Kay-Jac is analogous to the Coyote-trickster of the western First Nations. His name has been given to the whiskey-jack, an elegant, tame jay now known to patriots as the Canada jay and to birdwatchers as the grey jay.

Wilson, Alexander. A precursor and rival of Audubon, Wilson's *American Ornithology* is as important to the science as *The Birds of America*. While Wilson's illustrations are very poor and his text shows much of the naivety of 19th century American science (including the author's own doggerel verses to bluebirds and the like), the publication of his work was a turning point in the natural sciences in North America.

Windigo. Another Ojibway-Cree mythological figure with clear affinities to Pan, the

windigo is a ravenous, supernatural terror of the woods. James Stevens notes that "The windigo was once a normal human being but has been possessed by a savage cannibalistic spirit. When a human is possessed by windigo, ice forms inside the human body, hair grows profusely from the face, arms and legs and an insatiable craving for human flesh develops" (122). A campground, landing, and ranger station on the northwest tip of Isle Royale have been named after this malignant spirit.