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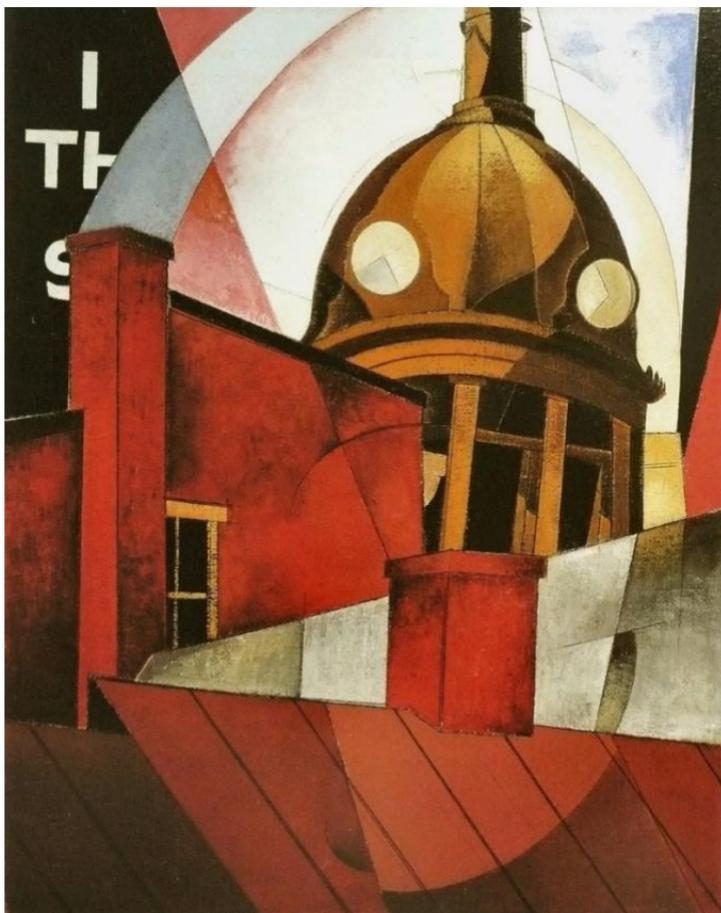


2020 PAMPHLET SERIES
EXPERIMENTAL DISCOURSE

*A closet drama
in two acts*

ANTHONY HAMILTON

...are serious offenses, and...



SPECIAL EDITION

...are serious offenses, and...

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...are serious offenses, and...

ANTHONY HAMILTON

*... are serious
offenses, and ...*

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...are serious offenses, and...

THE PLAYERS

MS. GREEN— a proud spinster

THE TWINS— androgynous young adults

THE LIEUTENANT

THE MEMBERS

OF THE PRESS— a small pack of
beathounds

THE JUDGE

THE MEMBERS OF THE JURY

LUCY, SALLY, DAISY— wily singsong girls

...are serious offenses, and...

ACT I:
THE UN-TRIAL OF MS. GREEN

*MS. GREEN sits in a hard plastic chair, back to the wall,
& flanked by THE TWINS in chairs of their own.*

THE LIEUTENANT calls: "Ms. Green"

She rises & leaves.

THE TWINS' OVERTURE

She don't flinch	She eats guilt
Plays piano hard	
Like slapping a roll of nickels down	
At the corner store	
For a pack of smokes	But they're all loose
& empty besides	By the time she
smokes 'em	
But she's got 'em	She always does
This is not her first time	Nor likely her last
Been done in the past	
	Been done in
Done for	
	Done wrong
Been wronged	
	Been bad
Been had	
	Been accused
Convicted	
	Been sentenced to death by hanging

Anthony Hamilton

Without so much as
a trial

But like I said

She don't flinch

Check it out:

...are serious offenses, and...

THE INQUISITION

Ms. Green & *The Lieutenant*

(in his office)

Do it? Didja do it?

Did I? Did you?

He ate me, Lieutenant Eat him?

Ms. Green—

In a perfect world,
I'd have swallowed him whole,
Words & all.
But no.
He got down there
on his hands & knees
& he ate me

Where is he?
Probably skipped the bridge
Skipped the bridge?
Which bridge?

Any bridge
What's it matter which?

Any one would kill you

Did he do it?
We did it.

Did he
jump?
How am I supposed to know?
All I know is
It gets hard
for them to cross

Back, that is

Once they've been on my side

Listen Ms. Green,
We know you know
him

Knew him

Did you?

Did I do it?

Did you know him?

I told you
In my perfect world
I swallowed him whole,
Words & all
But no
I wouldn't say I knew him

Ms. Green leaves the office.

This is the part
Where I'm supposed to crack
Where I'm supposed to flinch
As they (*the flanking twins*)
Would say

& I did in the past
Flinched so bad
The rope snapped

Landed on my feet those times
Barefoot in the dirt
Where I wasn't ever s'posed to walk again

But they just cut right in with their barking
"Lace her up again!
"It ain't right," they said
"One of her voodoo tricks"

...are serious offenses, and...

“Naaw,” one shouts, fat & loud & foaming
at the lips
“T’aint black magic. It’s the rope is bad
Ferman sold us an ersatz to hang ‘er with”

So next time,
they hang him too—
Mr. Ferman—
Whether he did or no

& I learn not to flinch

& there’s Ferman & me
Swing dancing together
Stupid eyed & quiet in the air
Our feet never quite touching
the ground again

& of course now they (*the jabbering press*)
Are all just dying to find out
Exactly what its like.

THE PRESS

*(outside the precinct
crowding round Ms. Green,
sweating, ragged old hats & coats)*

Is this the face of guilt?

The stories write
themselves

Monster or maiden?

A liar! A vixen!

A cannibalmongoloidterrorist!

Can I use your pen,
Ms. Green?

What kind of a beat-hound—

It's a tragedy

At a time like this?

At a time like this!

You can borrow mine,
But I need it back

Is it true? Is it true?

The guilt! Like a swamp-soaked frock

Rocks in her
pockets!

Rocks in her
pockets!

Rocks?

No.

Stones!

... & on & on ...

Ms. Green: The stories write themselves

But yes,

I did it

in a way

don't we all?

...are serious offenses, and...

THE TWINS' INTERLUDE

If it seems tragic,
& if it seems funny
Yet of course,
One can't help but wonder
& to be clear,
She did
& then of course,
There's poor Mr. Ferman
Right
Now then,
Let's have a joke:
My tongue?
The time?
A paper friend?
Poor taste

It is
It's tragic
"Did she do it?"
In a poetic sense
Oh, poor Mr.
Ferman,
That rope never
should have
snapped . . .
Not that one
Yes. Let's.
What's red & green
& red again?
Our dear Ms. Green,
hanging by
the losing end
I'm afraid so

MS. GREEN'S APARTMENT

*(taking a bath,
smoking)*

I'm not dirty you know
Not down there
Not anywhere

In fact,
I'm clean as can be

So clean
You could—

*(resting on the tub's edge,
the twins cut in)*

Poor taste. . .

& yet. . .

See, that's the thing:
Everyone wants to know

But no one wants to ask

Or everyone already knows
But no one wants to say

—you could eat it

Head to toe,
Bottom to back
Inside & out,
It's as good as the day is long

& that thing about flinching,
Is the naked
eye can barely see

a flinch from a twitch,
Or a writhe from a squirm or a jerk

& the naked hand would never dare discern

...are serious offenses, and...

The shudder from the shiver from the shake
Nor the naked ear make known
The squeal from the screaming from the
moan

“didja do it? didja do it?”
I’m doing it right now
goddamn, I’m trying
“didja do it? didja do it?”
I’m doing it, I’m doing it

my hips my head my toes
never touched the ground
swingin’ an inch above
dancing grass aspiring
to grow
to kiss
to sin
breeze blown by-&-by,
lord, by the skin

by the skin

(the faucet drips)

Hymn?

No.

I don’t know him.

But there’s this joke I know,
Worn like old flannel as it is
It goes:

On & on & on
& only leaves you hanging at the end

By-&-by lord
By the skin

Anthony Hamilton

THE TWINS TAKE THEIR LEAVE

(wiping fog from their glasses)

So Ms. Green goes on

Like a paper doll
Stapled to her own
bedroom wall

& the Lieutenant

& the hangman too

Stripped of all their
pretty clothes

(the twins exit the burning building)

...are serious offenses, and...

ACT II:
THE LATE TRIAL OF THE
TWINNS

The JUDGE in his court:

(stern but quite sleepy)

Order in the . . .

(yawning)

Order in . . .

Let's get started, shall we.

Let's have a look here

(shuffling papers)

Yes . . .

Yes . . .

Yes . . .

Hrumpph . . .

From the records . . .

plainly see . . .

Guilty as the day is long

But

In the interest of keeping up

Appearances

& a good hourly wage,

we'll have to have

your side of things it seems

The Twins:

Your honor,

Be this a trial on a

count of

Hangin'

Or one of burnin'?

'Cause anyone

who's anyone

would know
The woman'd been
hanged
Years prior
To her burnin'

Centuries, sir,
she'd been walking
before the fire
her toes ne'er
touchin'
the ground all the
while.

Now, which
Is it?
Walkin'
Or ne'er touching the ground?

I'll need you two
To make up your criminal minds

If we're calling this a fair trial

Yes, yer honor.
Fair is fair.

All we're saying is:
If you're 'cusing us
of burning her
We might wishta
make the case
Y' can't kill a woman
already dead

Arright then
Dismissed of the woman's murder
On the grounds of
Dead is dead

But as for the building,

...are serious offenses, and...

Grand arson's no laughing matter

Judge,
You'll have to
understand

This whole thing's
got really out of
hand

We were mere
spectators

Real cool, detached,
Fourth-wall types

Our being there
Was purely
incidental,

Purely textual

We'll just let the jury decide on that

*(turns to the jury,
a motley lot of readers)*

Kind people of the jury—

Beautiful, lovely,
In some ways even sexually stimulating,
People of the jury—

The fate of these so called
Textual spectators
Rests in your hands

Now take yer time—
Really deliberate it—
I ask you:

Is these two twins
No more responsible
than a sounding board
to this textual narrative arc?

A narrative arc,
which I remind you,
resulted in
the permissive inflagation
of a million dollar tenement building

Not to mention the multiplic death
of a one Ms. Green

a silence falls over the courtroom

the discrete reader-jurors shift in their seats:

one on a park-bench,

another in a café,

another on a bus

they all set down the text

...are serious offenses, and...

Emptiness . .

. . they breathe

THE VERDICT OF THE JURORS

The deputy-juror takes the stand

“Your honor,” *they begin*

*But they exist outside the text
& their verdict comes out blank on the page*

Juror #5:

...

...

Juror #3:

...

... & so ...

a joke ...

...

Juror #2:

... we fear ...

...

... precedent ...

Juror #12:

.....

Ms. Green ...

... .. a symbol

... *etc.*

...are serious offenses, and...

THE JUDGE THINKS HE HAS
HEARD ENOUGH

Well,
I think I've heard enough
& all I know is I'm sick of this poosyfootin'
around

*The judge leaps down from his highbox
& out of his robe
&, naked,
Garrotes the twins with a piano wire*

STILL, THE TWINS, THEY SING

(blood gurgling)

What's red & dead & read all over?

The twins? the
court?

A painted clover?

The reports of blood
Dawning in the paper

Burn it in the skin

Taste the days

The food

The victim's victimhood

May we never come
back this way again

*Long hang their tongues
from their throats
& they lick their wounds
like salted fish
from the inside out*

...are serious offenses, and...

EPILOGUE:
THE PRIVATE TRIAL OF THE
JUDGE

The JUDGE in his quarters:

*(A whalefat & iron outpost
Out behind the courthouse)*

*Gristle dripping juices down his beard
he works his hobby & laughs his hearty song*

A-to-Z, Z-to-A
Moralize & then fillet

O' say, what does it mean?
Roast the rump & stew the spleen!

*SALLY, LUCY,
DAISY come
A' bang, bang, banging
on his but*

Now goddamnit! what?

Oh Mr. Mincemeat!
Mincemeat!
Wontcha come &
play?

We heard you've got
a hangover
We heard you've got
a fever
We heard you
moaning hard in
there
Sharpenin' your
cleaver

Oh come on Mr.
Mincemeat!

Anthony Hamilton

Dontcha work all
day!

Ah! Mé courtesáns!
(He licks his fingers, grinning)

Patience, ladies
I'm just quartering this lieutenant

(c^o falls back into song)
O' say, can't you see
Presentation here is key . . .

(He coughs up phlegm and bows)

Come in! Come in!
Sausage while you wait?
Purest choice
That Ms. Green
Certainly was a bony one
(He winks)

Take a seat

Perhaps some steaks instead
No! I know!
Liver tartare & salted egg

You'll love it
Though I know you peasant people
Never eat it raw

*Sally, Lucy, Daisy
drink a round of
whiskeys,
A' wink, wink,
winking to themselves*

Oh, Mr. Mincemeat!
Mincemeat!
Ya' haven't got us

...are serious offenses, and...

right!

We never cook our
livers
We eat 'em black
and blue
But nothin' ever
tastes so sweet
As the meat we get
from you!

Oh, you silly
Mince meat,
Wontcha give us just
one bite?

*The judge licks his chops
& he rises from his chair & he raises up his cleaver
& he drops his blood stained pants & in a singly
deft maneuver . . .*

*the news is read again
out behind the courthouse*

Anthony Hamilton

EXPERIMENTAL DISCOURSE

A closet drama in two acts

. . . are serious offenses, and . . .

About the writer:

Anthony Lee Hamilton is a student and emerging writer from New York. His poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Stonethrow Review*, *The Decadent Review*, *The Texas Poetry Calendar*, and *Poetry South*. When not reading or writing, he spends his time hiking alone or playing music with his wife and friends.

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