

BUT DRUNK AS HE IS, HE DECIDES HE IS STILL NOT DRUNK EN-OUGH. LIKE HE WROTE IN HIS BIOGRAPHY: "WHAT DO DRUNK-ARDS DO? THEY DRINK THEMSELVES... TO DEATH."



BUT THAT KIND OF DEATH TAKES LONGER THAN ONE WOULD THINK AND THE END FEELS LONG OVERDUE..











HE'S MAUDLIN TONIGHT. FEELING FORGOTTEN AND UNDERAPPRE-CIATED, OLD, FAT AND SOFT IN THE MIDDLE.



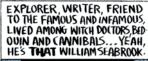
BUT HE'S NOT PATHETIC ENOUGH TO TRY AND DAZZLE THIS BORED, SMART-ASS BARTENDER.



SO HE DOESN'T SAY, "YOU KNOW WHAT, BUDDY, I INVENTED THE WORD ZOMBIE."









































I TRIED TO TELL THEM ABOUT THE DRUSE ...THE BEDOUIN, KINGS OF THE DESERT. I LIVED WITH THEM, FRIEND.



HELL, I WAS ONE OF THEM! DID MOM-AND-POP, APPLE-PIE AMERICA G-IVE A DAMN ABOUT MY INSIDER'S VIEW?



I DON'T KNOW—I DO KNOW THAT <u>ONE</u> OF MITKHAL PASHA'S SLAVES WAS WORTH TEN OFTHEM.



AND DID I EVER GET IT THROUGH THE THICK, HAYSEED READERSHIP OF THE BOOK-CLUB SUBSCRIBERS' HEADS THAT THE "SAVAGES" IN THE IVORY COAST JUNGLE ARE PEOPLE TOO, JUST LIKE THEM?



BETTER THAN THEM! MORE



AND YES, I PROBABLY GOT IT WRONG, AND THE PUBLICITY SHILLS ALWAYS PLAYED UP THE CANNIBALISM AND THE NAKED LADIES IN CHAINS...



AND THEY INEVITABLY PASSED OVER THE GOOD BITS OF WRITING THAT WERE IN THERE. BUT AT LEAST THERE WERE GOOD BITS. I LEFT SOME KIND OF MARKON THEWALL.



MARJORIE TOLD ME, "YOU WANT TO LEAVE A MARK ON THE WALL, BUT IT'LL BE JUST A SMEAR OF SHIT YOU LEAVE IF YOU DON'T STOP YOUR BONDAGE GAMES WITH THE LADIES IN THE BARN."



AND STOP THE DRINKING, OF COURSE.



BUT MAYBE MY MARK ON THE WALL WAS MY HONESTY, THAT I WROTE OPENLY OF THE FACT THAT I LIKED TO TIE UP LADIES...



... AND THAT, YES, THERE WERE SOME LADIES WHO LIKED TO BE TIED UP. SOME LADIES...



AND THAT THERE WAS ONE MAN IN AMERICA WHO WOULD ADMIT, UNLIKE SHAKESPEARE'S LORD AWGELO, THAT "HIS APPETITE IS MORE TO BREAD THAN STONE!"



POOR MARJORIE, SHE NEVER GOT MY LADIES IN CHAINS. POOR UP-TIGHT MINK... SHE TRIED SO HARD TO BE A LIBERT IN FOR ME.





















EVEN IN THIS OLD MAN'S, FAT-GUTTED, SAUSAGE-FINGERED BODY, IT'S A DAMN SIGHT HARDER THAN YOU'D IMAGINE, THIS DEATH BY ALCOHOL



































REMINDS ME HOW OLD I AM. HOW MUCH I AM NOT THAT YOUNG LION HOLDING COURT IN THE VILLAGE WHEN I LIVED HERE.



SINCLAIR LEWIS, THEODORE DREISER, DASH HAMMETT—HOLLYWOOD STARS—AND ALL OF THEM LISTENING, RAPT. ALL OF THEM SEEING ME IN HAITI, OR IN THE DESERT, OR IN THE JUNGLE WITH THE CANNIBALS EATING "LONG PIC."



WELL, THE CANNIBALISM WASN'T EXACTLY TRUE, BUT, BY GOD, I MADE IT TRUE LATER, DIDN'T I? I ATE MY POUND OF FLESH FOR REAL IN THE KITCHEN OF GABBY DES HONS' CHIC PARISIAN APARTMENT.



OH, YES, I'M ALSO THAT SEABROOK. SEABROOKTHE (ANNIBAL.



OH... I GUESS CONNIE REALLY DID TAKE HERSELF AND THE LITTLE GUY BACK TO RHINEBECK.





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## I OFTEN THINK ABOUT MY GRANDMA PINY.



SIX YEARS OLD AND THEY LEFT ME
TO WANDER THE WOODS AROUND MARY-LAND WITH A MADWOMAN WITCH,
HALF-CRAZY WITH LAUDANUM.



SOMETIMES I THINK I WAS INTOX-ICATED BY PROXIMITY TO HER, OR BY OSMOSIS, OPIUM DISTILLATE SEEPING BETWEEN OUR SKIN AS PINY HELD MY SMALL HAND AND LED ME THROUGH THOSE WOODS.



REVEALING HER HALLUCINATIONS TO ME - OR PERHAPS THEY WERE REAL. I BELIEVE I SAW THEM.



I DID SEE THEM. THE WOMAN IN GREEN, BOUND TO HER CHAIR... EVERY DETAIL... GRANDMA PINY MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DRUNKEN DREAMER I AM TODAY.



OH, I CAN'T COMPLAIN. THOSE WERE MY HAPPIEST MOMENTS. ESCAPE WAS ALWAYS PREFERABLE TO REAL LIFE.



I'VE SPENT A LIFETIME RUNNING. MAYBE I'VE ALWAYS BEEN STRIV-ING BACK TO THAT LOST DREAM-LAND OF MY GRANDMOTHER.



HOW TO GET BACKTHERE? I TALK ABOUT SUICIDE, LIKE I'M A HYSTERICAL HOUSEWIFE YET I ONLY EVER TAKE HESITANT, INDIRECT STEPS.



RUNNING IS COMARDLY, BUT IT'S BETTER THAN FACING ALL OF THE PEOPLE YOU INEVITABLY LET DOWN.



AND RUNNING IS THE SOLE CONSISTENT BEHAVIOUR OF MY LIFE.





SO WHY STOP RUNNING? WILLIAM B. SEABROOK IS NO QUITTER.







OR, YOU CAN TAKE THE OVER-NIGHT BACK TO RHINEBECK, SURPRISE CONNIE IN THE MORNING - SOBER-WITH FLOWERS FOR HER AND A TOY FOR THE BOY.







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