

We exit the tentacled corridors
by forking out our dough in the gluttonous palace of
the Octopus — Money, opulent and agile, is made to
be consumed. (Wherever Money feasts, that is the best
segment of this terrestrial mandarin.)

Now look at these:

“rogues”

others: placed and weighed on golden scales,
their power measured in “*Pounds*”
others: weightily mark their merit through dense, sym-
metrical, closed, reinforced concrete columns;
“markedly”...

Others: artistically travel their “*lyre*”.

Each individual is frank or free by the number of
“*francs*”

that he possesses;
this one here — only 1 franc (so hard earned) —
can only free his stomach. And now? Meat?
Too expensive! So, this Horn-of-Hunger, this Horn-of-
Soul,
Alcohol;
would that suffice?

Those over there have freed
their arms, their legs
and their mind
with so many, many, many francs;
incalculable!
(*The long, winding tributaries of the great River of Fortune.*)
Servants and limousines
answer to them
and their white hands
liberated
distinguished aristocrats
and so many fleeting flames and fires of joy;
fireworks
— so precious — all around them!

(*This is how Body Heart Mind escape from captivity. But
who — can afford — to pay off Conscience — with generous
alms?*)

.

The Octopus
however, digests slumbers devours
on its
Mound.

Kaleido discovered an era

(long ago)

when

Talent

was a rare commodity

while

Genius

(so it is said)

in mercantile memory

wasn't worth anything

in an entire lifetime.

Never did a *Boss* have to purchase or pay anything

for his *Entire person* as offered on the market.

First he must be

decapitated

and *minted (in effigy)*

onto discs

of a mixed metal.

Alloy

Effigy

This is proclaimed (with great clamour)

to be Mould and Money;

this hybrid reduction of

EVERY:

one.

.
.
.

5th VOYAGE

ALIBI

A telephone
is off the hook (*it's obvious*)
in the Kaleido (where each detail — of the apparatus —
takes on a human form).
Many complaints (*from the Subscriber*)
and *endless*
research.
A clairaudient (and claudicant) Administration
declares (at last)
that its BATTERY is low.
Will we replace it?
Be patient
(and take good care of your vocal chords in the interval
between two single calls — an interval brought about by
force majeure)
while waiting;
Battery

will be judged based on its demerit and the rigour of the
Laws of Acoustics.

(Here they are:) Wires. Poles. Ringer. Microphone. And
others. Witnesses of its charge.

Subscriber: the civil section
and the brilliant Members of the *(telephone)* Office
After their oratorical prowess *(in this Environment that is
so sensitive to the charm of Speech)*

Battery
is convicted. To the scrap heap with it! It will be battered!
*(In the end, it was all the same: the conviction was fatal. And
the battery: used.)*

Upon exiting the Assize, Kaleido imagines that
maybe

Battery
suffered from variations in the Air? And merely went with
the Flow, for better or worse, of the ensemble.

So? Being part of the apparatus (of the telephone), would
— certainly — confirm its alibi?...

which. . . then. . . when a mistake.
. . . is made. . . among us. . .
.
.

(Five minute break: we are out of electricity)



CHAPTER VIII

LETTER

TO MR. JOËL JOZE

INVENTOR-DIRECTOR OF THE GREAT

VOYAGES IN KALEIDOSCOPE

— PARIS —

Wednesday March 17th

I congratulate you, my dear Friend, on your success! Bravo! — Like me, you fly from victory to victory. I like that. “*For victory*” is my motto — You know that. And you? What has happened to you? Fortune and the Kaleidoscope aside?

Do you still have that symbol that I gave you at the beginning of our friendship?

A fist clasped around lightning. Motto:

I dare!

You understood me back then!

You didn’t do anything without my advice.

How come your extravagant personality, violent language and unfairness had to ruin things between us at some point? Let us speak of this no more. I hate this pettifogging. Without further ado, I am telling you to come over! Come to my house, my dear friend, and you will find a welcome worthy of your valour.

I am adding a wing to my Theatre. I want a Kaleido room. I am counting on you to set it up for me. With the latest upgrades.

Saturday night I am dancing the *Delirium*.

Did you see me in *Heraclea*? And my costume? I made it myself. It was splendid! Bakst and Barbier never made something so good.

I am proud of my genius. I say this without vanity.

You also, my dear Joze, have immense talent. — According to all the reports, the Kaleidoscope is priceless. Your shareholders are delighted. Bravo once more!

So, *Heraclea* Saturday. I will be resting before the spectacle. I will not receive anybody. Except you. Come at 3:00. We have things to discuss. — I hope and believe that, due to your good fortune, you no longer cling to and are no longer ensnared by your asperity? You were so complicated back then! Sympathetic, as I always said, but with such terrible tendencies to be dramatic! This

time, you don't need to be.

Saturday, 3 o'clock.

Oh! Don't forget: you owe me an explanation for that absurd empty screen 3 years ago.

You mentioned it contained something?

What, then?

By my own hand,

C^{tcss} V.

LETTER FROM JOËL JOZE
TO GRÂCE

Friday morning, March 19th

My Dearest Friend,

I swear to you that I did not even think to withhold that letter from you *for one instant!* Your *incredible* prescience beat me to it. That is all.

What could I have done? Be fair! And *I beg of you*, don't let your imagination run away with you over an absurd letter which I barely skimmed over and forgot about as soon as I had read it. It goes without saying that I will not reply!

Why do you even take the trouble of sending me your advice?

I affectionately ask you if you believe me to be completely incapable of controlling myself?

This insolent caprice deserves no more than silence. That is clear.

See you this evening
with all my soul,

J.J.

LETTER FROM
JOËL JOZE
TO
THE C^{TCSS} VÉRA

Friday at noon
March 19th

Madame,

I am infinitely honoured by your attention. However, the
reclusive life I lead and my work with the Kaleidoscope
prevent me from paying my respects to you.

I still remain your servant and admirer and as both of
those, I must hasten to address the subject of the screen
that was the cause of such outrageous notoriety 3 years
ago.

You are quite right, Madame, I must not dramatize things.
This meaningless incident, which you consider to be so
important, will be forever forgotten if you take the time

to read this letter.

That evening — so distant from us now — I was very emotional at the thought of carrying out my first important experiment for you, Madame. In my eyes, your guests were nothing but your puppets.

Individually, the majority of these guests could be worthy, kind, eminent or decorative people — all of them worth their salt. — They undoubtedly keep their standing with elegance. Some of them are charming. I even know some of them to be kind and *gentle* according to the exact meaning of the word: *gentle men* (as you know) — This was clear from the tactful encouragement they gave me during my trials and tribulations.

However, the interesting thing that I am sure you are aware of, Madame, is that while the responses of a colourful crowd are almost always beyond comparison, when these people are chosen from a select group, civilized and thoroughly screened, it will only result in — and this is a fact — an agglomeration of lame and limp people, lacklustre and one-sided.

If I did not fear stumbling into the complications which you so wisely warned me about, I would compare this phenomenon with our inability to digest certain sterilized foods. This is because impure germs (contrary to popular

opinion) often work to our advantage.

Please excuse this pedantic digression.

Take a moment, Madame, and try to imagine the overwhelming emotion I felt that evening because of *you*.

While none of you were able to make out anything, before my very eyes unfolded the vision of a thick swarm of disparate forms — larvae, caterpillars, beetles — in an angular, airless cavern in which membranophonic-pillars held up a low vault defaced with the flippant writing:

Why give an eyepiece

To the cross-eyed and blind?

It's quite the fit

A diamond for a nit.

(This snippet should suffice.)

Wearing diamond-encrusted Chinese hats and with foreheads encircled by enormous spectacles, the larvae insistently threw themselves head first against a celluloid wall, behind which — coming from above — poured in a boundless lucidity, invisible to their blind eyes.

Imagine now, Madame, my despair and horror at that

moment:

I lost you!

I had a mind-trip.

I was far from the realization that it was only me that lived that nightmare.

Why *just me*?

This question troubled me for a long time. I could not find a plausible answer.

An admirable Friend, whose light guides me in everything, recently tried to teach me:

While a child's eye would have been fit to confirm my discovery, the reflections of weary experience can only result in doubt and disappointment. Eyes eviscerated by scepticism, worn out by profane observation, obscured by the glare of artificial light. Blasé retinas, refracting the pure rays, *will not* be impressed by the image of their own occult form.

We are compelled to deny that which we are incapable of seeing.

This is because Nothing can only contemplate the Void. Please accept this expression of my deepest respect, dear Madame.

JOËL JOZE

LETTER FROM

GRÂCE

TO JOËL JOZE

Sunday, March 21st

I refused to see you in the heat of my anger. I still haven't calmed down. How could I! You insist that you will not respond to that woman? And — *because I guessed it!* — you claim to have responded only to substantiate your disinterest?...

I couldn't care less about *the tone* of your letter! Does that make you less deceitful? — And your adversary is well-known: you are playing a dangerous game.

My pain is infinite.

For some time — I have to tell you now — other things have been worrying and upsetting me.

You are too preoccupied with the commercial aspect of the Kaleidoscope. You seem to be forgetting what you discovered — by the grace of divine Inspiration — a

Mirror of Truth.

You are currently turning it into an instrument of vanity.

Be careful.

Go back to your *Parables*. Enlightenment should be your primary goal, not profit. Otherwise your visions will inevitably become obscured.

Friend, *I do not want to* lose you.

Return to yourself. Otherwise, I will be forced to keep my distance.

Let us avoid painful words which ferment in the soul, insidiously rising up, propagating themselves, corrupting and finally decomposing. I prefer not to see you for a while. Call me when you agree *completely*.

GRÂCE

CHAPTER IX

ON THE TELEPHONE

(Monday morning

March 22nd)

(A voice:)

— Hello... Mr. Joël Joze?... Is that you?... don't hang up, hold on.

.

Hello, hello, don't hang up madam.

.

(Another voice:)

Hello! Is that you, Joël? Do you recognize my voice?...

Yes, it's me! It's really me!... Your letter was charming,

my dear! I have found you!... But, as you know, I hate

pettiness! It is nothing but a waste of time! We are both

worth too much... Yes!... I need you. Right away... My

Kaleido room... you are flattered, I imagine?... My archi-

tect can't get it right... Hello? Can you hear me, Joël?... If

you don't answer, how do I know if you are on the other end of the line? That's crazy!...

... Well then... I will be waiting for you this evening...

... and I insist *this* evening... alone... To talk. . . .

... You still have your roguish charm! How exquisite!... I like originality. Always. All it will take is a little polishing and I will make you presentable once again!... I assure you!... Bravo for your latest stereoscopic projection. Everyone talks about it. It was splendid!

... Oh yes! People are saying that you spend your evenings at the house of a crazy lady who invites heaven knows who to her winter garden?...

... Yes!... I assure you!... I know. I will find you... You will rust away there!... So, this evening. My car will be at your door. To pick you up. 8 o'clock...

... I insist... No, let me put it more clearly... I WANT IT!... Hello, Joël, you are popular!... so, bring your Kaleido to see if my screen is the right size... It never leaves your Laboratory?... For me... Just once?... Okay then... That is kind of you... Enough said then...

Good-bye!... 8 o'clock...

. . . .
. . . .

THAT NIGHT

A PAGE FROM GILLY'S DIARY

(at the age of 16)

Troubles and tribulations at home.
The Boss has changed so much.
Madame Grâce and he no longer see each other.
What could be the reason?
And this afternoon, unintentionally, I was startled to overhear snippets of a conversation: Mr. Joze on the telephone, very distressed.
I entered the Lab. The Boss gave me instructions not to organize the new projection tablets.
And to leave right away.
Why?
Around 8 o'clock, someone knocks on the door.
A car parks. It is a very nice Rolls-Royce.
The driver insists on talking to the Boss himself.
The Boss says "ah" and goes pale.
"One moment," he says.