

CONCERNING A JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE TARAHUMARAS

The Mountain of Signs

The land of the Tarahumara is full of signs, shapes; and natural effigies which do not seem to be mere products of accident, as if the gods, whose presence here is everywhere felt, had wished to signify their powers through these strange signatures in which the human form is hunted down from every side.

Indeed, there is no lack of places on earth where Nature, impelled by a kind of intelligent caprice, has carved human shapes. But here it is a different matter: for here it is on the entire *geographic area of a race* that Nature *has intentionally spoken*.

And the strange fact is that those who pass this way, as if stricken with an unconscious paralysis, seal their senses so as to know nothing of this. That Nature, by a strange caprice, should quite suddenly reveal a man's body being tortured on a rockface, one might at first suppose to be a mere caprice, a caprice signifying nothing. But when, day in and day out on horseback, this intelligent spell is cast repeatedly, and *Nature stubbornly manifests the same idea*; when the same pathetic shapes recur; when the heads of well-known gods appear on the rock-faces and a theme of death emerges of which man bears the burden — and in response to the drawn and quartered form of the human, there are, *becoming less obscure* and more freed from a petrifying substance, those forms of the gods who have forever tormented him, — when a whole country develops on stone a philosophy parallel to that of men; when one realizes that the original men used a sign language and that one rediscovers this language enormously magnified on the rocks, then indeed, one can no longer suppose this to be a caprice, a mere caprice signifying nothing.

If the major part of the Tarahumara race is indigenous, and if, as they claim, they fell out of the sky in the Sierra, one could say that they fell into a Nature already prepared. And this Nature wanted to think as man thinks. And as she *evolved* from men, likewise she also *evolved* from rocks.

I saw this naked man they were torturing, nailed to a rock, with certain forms at work over him even as the sun was evaporating them; but I don't know by what miracle of optics the man beneath them remained complete, though exposed to the same light.

Whether it was the mountain or myself which was haunted, I cannot say, but I saw similar optical miracles during this periplus across the mountain, and they confronted me at least once every day.

Maybe I was born with a body as tortured and counterfeited as that of the immense mountain; but it was a body whose obsessions might be useful: and it occurred to me in the mountain that it might be just useful to have an *obsession for counting*. There wasn't a shadow but I had it counted, when I sensed it turning, hovering around something or other; and it frequently happened that in adding up these shadows I made my way back to some strange hearths.

I saw in the mountain a naked man leaning out of a huge window. His head was nothing but an enormous hole, a sort of circular cavity, where successively and according to the hour, the sun or moon appeared. He had his right arm outstretched like a bar, and the left was also like a bar but drowned in shadows and folded inward.

His ribs could be counted, there were seven on either side. In place of his navel, there gleamed a brilliant triangle, made of what? I could not really tell. It was as if Nature had chosen this mountainside to lay bare her imprisoned flints.

Now, though his head was empty, the indentations of the rock on every side imposed on him a definite expression, the nuances of which changed with the changes of hour and light.

This forward stretching right arm, edged with a ray of light, did not indeed point in any commonplace direction . . . And I questioned what it portended!

It was not quite noon when I encountered this vision; I was on horseback and rapidly advancing. However, I was instantly aware that I was not dealing with graven images, but with a predetermined play of light which had *superimposed itself* upon the stone relief.

This likeness was known to the Indians; to me, it appeared by its composition, its structure, to be governed by the same principle by

which this fragmented mountain was governed. In the line that arm made, I saw a rock-girt village.

And I saw that the stones all had the shape of a woman's bosom with two breasts perfectly delineated.

Eight times I saw the repetition of a single rock, which cast two shadows on the ground; I twice saw the same animal head holding its own likeness in its jaws and devouring it; I saw, dominating the village, a sort of huge phallic tooth with three stones at its summit and four holes on its outer face; and I saw, according to their principle, all these forms pass little by little into reality.

I seemed to read everywhere a tale of childbirth amid war, a tale of genesis and chaos, with all these bodies of gods which were carved like men, and these truncated human statues. Not one shape that was intact, not one body that did not appear as if it came out of a recent massacre, not one group where I could avoid reading the struggle that divided it.

I found drowned men, half-nibbled away by the stones, and on the rocks higher up, other men engaged in driving them off. Elsewhere, a statue of Death loomed huge, holding in its hand a little child.

There is in the Kabbala a music of Numbers, and this music which reduces material chaos to its prime elements explains by a kind of grandiose mathematics how Nature orders and directs the birth of forms she brings forth out of chaos. And all I beheld seemed to be governed by a Number. The statues, the shapes, the shadows all yielded a number, — such as 3, 4, 7, or 8, — which kept recurring. The truncated female torsos were 8 in number; the phallic tooth had, as I have said, three stones and four holes; the evaporated forms were 12 in number, et cetera. I repeat, these forms may be assumed natural, granted, but their repetition is far from natural. And what is even less natural is that these forms of their land are repeated by the Tarahumara in their rituals and dance. And these dances result from no mere accident, but they are governed by the same secret mathematics, the same concern for a subtle play of Numbers which governs the entire Sierra.

Now this inhabited Sierra, which breathes a metaphysical system into its rocks, has been strewn by the Tarahumara with signs, signs

which are perfectly conscious, intelligent, and concerted.

At every crossroads one sees trees *deliberately* burnt into the shape of crosses, or of beings, and often these beings are doubles, and confront each other, as if to express the essential *duality* of things; and I saw this duality reduced to its prime elements in a sign . . . enclosed in a ring, which struck me as having been branded on a tall pine tree with a red-hot iron; other trees bore spears, trefoils, acanthus leaves surrounded with crosses; here and there, in sunken places, corridors choked with rocks, rows of Egyptian ankhs deployed in files; and the doors of Tarahumara houses displayed the Maya world-symbol: two facing triangles whose points are joined by a bar; and this bar is the Tree of Life passing through the center of Reality.

Thus, as I was making my way across the mountain, these spears, these crosses, these trefoils, these leafy hearts, these composite crosses, these triangles, these beings which confront and oppose each other to signify their eternal war, their division, their duality, awakened in me strange memories. I recall suddenly that there were in History certain Sects which had incrustated the rockfaces with identical signs, and the members of these Sects wore these signs carved in jade, hammered in iron, or chased. And it occurs to me that this symbolism hides a Science. And it seems strange to me that the primitive Tarahumara people, whose rituals and thought are older than the Flood, could have already possessed this Science long before the first Legend of the Graal appeared, long before the Rosecrucian Sect was founded.

The Peyote Dance

The physical compression was still there. This cataclysm that was my body. . . After waiting twenty-eight days, I had still not come to myself — I should instead say: come out into myself. Into myself, within this dilapidated shambles, this ramshackle piece of deteriorated geology.

Inert, as some earth with its rocks can be inert — and all these crevices which run in the huddled sedimentary strata. Friable is the word for it — I was; and not just in some places, but through and through. Ever since first coming in contact with this terrible mountain, which

I am sure had erected barriers against me to bar my entry. And since my experience there, the supernatural no longer seems so extraordinary to me that I may not affirm that I was, in the literal sense of the word, *bewitched*.

Taking a step was for me no longer a matter of taking a step, but a feeling *which way* to point my head. Is this understood? Limbs which obey, one by one, and are advanced, one by one; the above-ground and vertical posture to be maintained. For the head, overflowing with waves and no longer in control of its own rotations, feels the rotations of the earth, and this drives it to distraction and bars it from staying upright.

Twenty-eight days of this ponderous compression, of this mess of badly assembled organs that was me, and of which I seemed a mere spectator, as if I gazed upon an immense glacial landscape at the verge of breaking up.

So the pressure was there and it was so terrible that in order to go from the Indian's house to a tree standing scarcely a few yards off, I needed something more than courage, I had to muster the truly *desperate* reserves of my will power. For having come so far, to find myself at last on the threshold of an encounter and of this place I had hoped so many revelations from, and then to feel so forlorn, so empty, so un-crowned. Had I ever known joy, had there ever been in this world one single feeling not of anguish or of inexpiable despair; had I ever known a state other than this grief cracking up and pursuing me through the nights? Was there anything for me that was not at the door of agony and should I contact at least one body, one single human body safe from my perpetual crucifixion?

Indeed, I needed willpower to believe something would happen. And all of this, for what? For a dance, for a ritual of some lost Indians who didn't even know who they were anymore, nor where they came from, and who, when I questioned them, answered me with stories whose mystery and coherence they had garbled.

After labors, I repeat, so cruel that I can no longer believe that I was not actually bewitched, that these barriers of collapse and cataclysm I had felt rising in me were not the result of an intelligent and

concerted premeditation, I reached one of the last places on earth where the Peyote medicine dance still exists, the place, in any case, where it was invented. And yet what was it, what false intimation, what illusory and spurious intuition had led me to expect from it some sort of liberation for my body, and also, above all, a strength, an illumination throughout the width of my internal landscape, which at this very minute I felt to be quite outside all possible dimensions?

Twenty-eight days since this inexplicable torture had begun. And twelve days since I had been in this isolated corner, of earth, in this walled-in compartment of the immense mountain, awaiting the pleasure of my sorcerers.

Why was it that every time, like now, when I felt I was reaching a crucial phase of my existence, I never could get there in one piece with my whole being? Why this terrible feeling of loss, of something lacking to be made up for, of a happening that miscarried somehow? Indeed, I would see the sorcerers perform their ritual; but what good would this ritual do me? I would see them. I would be compensated for this long patience that nothing so far had been able to dishearten. Nothing: neither the terrible road, nor the journey with this intelligent but unattuned body which had to be dragged, which should be killed almost in order to prevent it from rising up against me; neither nature with her storms which enmesh us in their sudden nets of lightning; nor this long spasm-crossed night, during which I saw an Indian boy scratch himself (while dreaming with a sort of hateful frenzy) at exactly the places where those spasms crossed my body — and he said, who only a day earlier had scarcely known me: “Ah, have everything bad that can happen happen to him!”

Peyote, I knew, was none of White men's business. So I must at all costs be prevented from getting a cure from this ritual devised to act on the very nature of the spirits. And a White, to these Red men, is one the spirits have forsaken. If I got any good out of the ritual, it was so much the less for them, with their intelligent spirit-lining.

So much the less for the spirits. So many more spirits they could no longer take advantage of.

And then, there is the question of *Tesguino*, this corn liquor it takes

eight days to macerate in jars — and there are neither jars nor willing hands enough to grind the corn.

The liquor drunk, the Peyote sorcerers are of no further use, and a whole new preparation has to be gone through. Now, a man of these tribes had died when I arrived at the village, and it was required that the ritual, the priests, the liquor, the crosses, the mirrors, the graters, the jars and all the extraordinary apparatus of the Peyote dance be directed for the benefit of the man who had died. For, once he was dead, his double could not wait for those evil spirits to be got rid of.

And after twenty-eight days of waiting, I still had to endure a whole long week more of the most incredible farce. The mountain went wild with the comings and goings of messengers supposedly in touch with the sorcerers. But no sooner would the messengers leave, than the sorcerers would arrive on the scene and get indignant that nothing was happening. And I realized they were putting me on.

They brought me priests who were dream-healers and spoke after dreaming.

‘Those of the *Ciguri* (Peyote dance) no good,’ they said. ‘They no use. You take these.’ And they thrust on me these old men that would suddenly get the bends and jiggle their amulets in a queer way under their robes. And I saw they were palming off jugglers — not sorcerers — on me. And I learned these fake priests were intimate friends of the dead man.

One day the excitement cooled; there were no screams, no arguments, no more renewed promises on my behalf. As if all that had been just part of the ritual, and now the preliminaries had lasted long enough.

Indeed, I had not penetrated the heart of the mountain of these Tarahumara Indians in search of memories of painting. I had suffered long enough, I thought, to deserve a little reality.

Nevertheless, as night drew on, a vision possessed my eyes.

I had before me the Nativity of Hieronymus Bosch, arranged in order and turned so the old uneven clapboard roof was sloping down in front of the stable, with the flames of the Child-King gleaming on the left among the animals, with the scattered farms, the shepherds;

and, in the foreground, other animals bleating; and, on the right, the dancer-kings. The kings, with their mirror-crowns on their heads and their rectangular purple robes on their backs — to my right in the picture — like the Magi of Hieronymus Bosch. And all of a sudden, as I was turning around, doubting to the last of ever really seeing my sorcerers arrive, I saw them coming down the mountain, leaning on their huge staffs, and their wives with huge baskets, and a retinue armed with crosses loosely bundled like fasces or trees, their mirrors gleaming like patches of sky amid this vast array of crosses, pikes, spades and lopped tree-trunks. And this whole crowd was bending under the weight of such an extraordinary array, and the sorcerers' wives like their husbands were a head shorter than the great staffs they leaned on.

✓ Bonfires rose on all sides in the sky. Below, the dancing had already begun; and confronted with this beauty at last achieved, this beauty of imaginations radiant as voices in an illuminated cave beneath the earth, I felt that my efforts had not been in vain.

Higher up, on the sides of the immense mountain which were falling in terraces toward the village, a ring of earth had been traced. Already the women kneeling before their *metates* (stone vats) were grinding the Peyote with a sort of scrupulous brutality. The officiants started to tread down the ring. They treaded it out carefully and in all directions; and they kindled in the center of this ring a pyre which the wind from aloft sucked swirling upwards.

During that day, two kid goats had been slaughtered. And now I saw on a lopped tree-trunk, it too hewn into a cruciform, the animals' lungs and hearts quivering in the night wind.

Another lopped tree-trunk stood next to the first, and the bonfire in the circle's midst produced in it innumerable glints and glimmers, something like a conflagration seen through very thick, dense layers of broken glass. I drew nearer, to determine the nature of this focal point, and I perceived an incredible tangle of little bells, some silver, some horn, attached to leather jesses, and awaiting the moment when they too would act their role in the exercises.

Facing the quarter of the sunrise, they raised ten crosses of irregular

size, but all lined up in symmetrical order: and to each cross they attached a mirror.

Twenty-eight days of this horrible waiting after the dangerous constraint now culminated in a ring inhabited with Beings, here represented by ten crosses.

Ten, to the Number of Ten, like the Invisible Lords of the Peyote in the Sierra.

And among these ten: the Male Principle of Nature, which the Indians named *Saint Ignatius*, and its female, *Saint Nicolas!*

Around this ring, a zone morally deserted, in which no Indian would venture: they say that birds that stray into this ring fall, and pregnant women feel their embryos decompose.

A history of the world is danced here in the round, squeezed between two suns, the setting and the rising. And so it is, in the setting sun, the sorcerers enter the ring, and the dancer with six hundred little bells (300 of horn, 300 of silver) shrieks his coyote call in the forest.

The dancer goes in and out, yet never quits the ring. He deliberately advances into Evil. He plunges into it headlong and with a sort of hideous courage, in a rhythm which transcends the Dance but seems graphic of Disease. And we imagine we see him emerging and vanishing by turns, with a movement suggestive of I know not what obscure tantalizations. He goes in and out: 'To go forth by day, in the first chapter,' says the Egyptian Book of the Dead, of the Human Double. For this advance into disease is a journey, a descent in order to GO OUT AGAIN BY DAY. He spins round and round like the wings of the Swastika, forever right to left, top foremost.

He leaps with his army of little bells, such a swarm of frantic bees, stuck fast to one another, rustling blind in a crackling and tempestuous disorder.

Ten crosses in the ring and ten mirrors. One beam with three sorcerers on it. Four officiants (two Males and two Females). The epileptic dancer, and ME for whom this ritual was made.

At each sorcerer's feet, one hole, at the bottom of which the Male and Female of Nature, represented by the hermaphroditic roots of the Peyote (the Peyote, as we well know, bears the form of a man and

the
Peyote

woman's genital mingled), are sleeping in Matter, that is, in the Concrete.

And the hole, with a wooden or earthen bowl turned upsidedown over it, represents fairly well the world-Sphere. On this bowl the sorcerers grate the merging or separating of the two principles, and they grate them in the Abstract, that is, in their prime elements or Principle. Meanwhile, underneath these, these two Principles are embodied and repose in Matter, that is, in the Concrete.

And the whole night through, these sorcerers restore lost rapports, with triangular gestures which strangely intersect the air's perspectives.

Between the *two* suns, *twelve* periods in *twelve* phases. And the procession round and round of all that swarms about the pyre, within the sacred limits of the ring: the dancer, the graters, the sorcerers.

Between the phases, the sorcerers were eager to get physical proof of the ritual, of the efficacy of the operation. Hieratic, ritual, sacerdotal, there they go, filing back and forth on the beam, cradling their grater like a babe. From what conceptions of a lost etiquette do they get the sense of these bows and courtesies, and of their marching round and round as they count their steps and cross themselves in front of the flames, saluting one another and going out?

So they get up and go through the bowings I have mentioned, some like men on crutches, others like decapitated robots. They jump out of the ring. But once out of it, scarcely a yard outside, these priests, moving between two suns, are suddenly turned back into human beings, that is, organisms of abjection that have to be washed, and this ritual is for the purpose of washing them. They act like sewer-men, these priests, like some sort of toilers in darkness, created to piss and throw up. They do piss and fart and throw up with dreadful thunderings; you would think; then, to hear them, that they wanted to debase real thunder by adjusting it to their need for abjection.

Of the three sorcerers present, two, the two smaller and shorter, had three years previously won the right to handle the grater (for the right to handle the grater must be won, and besides it is upon this privilege that the whole nobility of the caste of Peyote Sorcerers reposes among the Indians of the Tarahumara); and the third priest had won the right

ten years before. And it was the oldest in the rite who, I must say, pissed best and farted most ardently and loudest.

And this same one, with a conceit born of this kind of uncouth purgation, started spitting a few moments later. He spat after having drunk the Peyote like all the rest of us. For the twelve phases of the dance were done, and as dawn was about to break, we were handed the grated Peyote, which looked like some kind of slimy chowder; and in front of each of us a fresh hole was dug to receive the sputum and vomit of our mouths, which had been made holy by the Peyote's passing through.

'Spit!' said the dancer to me. 'But spit as deep in the ground as you can, for not one bit of *Cigouri* must ever come up again.'

And it was the sorcerer grown old in harness who spat up the most copiously and in the thickest, heaviest gobs. And the other sorcerers with the dancer huddled around his hole to admire this.

Soon after spitting, I began to fall asleep. The dancer in front of me never stopped passing to and fro, whirling and screaming *superfluously*, because he had discerned that I took pleasure in his screaming.

'Get up, man, get up!' he shrieked, with each of his more and more futile gyrations.

Awakened and staggering, I was led toward the crosses for the final cure, in which the sorcerers rattle the graters on the patient's very head.

Then I shared in the water ritual, in blows on the skull, in this sort of mutual healing passed back and forth, and ablutions beyond measure.

They pronounced strange words over me and sprinkled me with water; then they sprinkled one another nervously, for the mixture of corn liquor and Peyote was starting to make them crazy, too.

And it was with these last passes that the Peyote dance ended.

The Peyote dance is inside a grater, in its time-tempered wood, endowed with the occult salts of the earth. It is in the taut and involuted fibres of this wand that the healing virtues of the rite dwell, and it is so complex, so withdrawn, it must be hunted and tracked down

like some beast in the forest.

There is, it seems, a certain cranny in the high Mexican Sierra, where these graters abound. They sleep there, waiting for the Predestined Man to discover them and make them *go forth by day*.

Each Tarahumara sorcerer, when dying, abandons his grater with infinitely more pain than it takes him to abandon his body; and his children and intimates carry the grater out and bury it in that sacred corner of the forest.

When a Tarahumara Indian feels himself called to the vocation of the grater and the healing dance, he comes for three consecutive Easters to spend a week in the woods.

It is there, they say, that the Invisible Lord of the Peyote speaks to him with his nine Assessors, and hands down the secret to him. And he goes forth again with the grater duly macerated.

Carved from a wood of the warm zones, gray as iron ore, this wand bears notches from end to end, and signs on either end: four triangles, with one dot for the Male Principle and two dots for the deified Female of Nature.

As many notches as the sorcerer had years when he acquired the right to grate and became also free to practice the exorcisms by which the Elements are drawn and quartered.

And this is just the side of the mysterious tradition which I never succeeded in penetrating. For the Peyote sorcerers seem to have really acquired something at the end of their three years of retreat in the woods.

Here we have a mystery the Tarahumara sorcerers have so far jealously guarded. Of what else they have acquired, of what they have so to speak *recovered*, no Tarahumara Indian outside the aristocracy seems to have the slightest idea. And, as for the sorcerers themselves, they remain resolutely silent on this point.

What is the singular word, that lost utterance, the Lord of the Peyote passes down to them? And why do they need three years to handle the grater properly, this grater on which, it must be admitted, the Tarahumara sorcerers perform some rather curious *auscultations*?

What is it, then, they have torn from the forest and the forest yields

to them so slowly?

What, finally, has been handed down to them that is not of the outward array of the ritual, and which neither the gimlet screams of the dancer, nor his double moving back and forth like some kind of epileptic pendulum, nor the ring, nor the pyre at the center of the ring, nor the crosses with their mirrors dangling in which the deformed heads of the sorcerers are now distended and now vanished amid the flaming pyre, nor the night wind speaking and breathing on the mirrors, nor the litany of the sorcerers cradling their graters, that astoundingly vulnerable and revulsed litany — what is it that none of these can succeed in explaining.

They had lain me down on the ground itself, at the foot of the enormous beam on which the three sorcerers sat, in the breaks between dances.

Lain me down low, so the ritual would descend upon me, so that fire, litany, screams, dance and the night itself like a living human vault might wheel as a living being over me. So there was this rolling vault, this material intricacy of screams, tones, footsteps, litany. But above all, transcending all, this impression, which recurred, that behind all that, and more than all of it, and beyond it, still something else was hidden: namely, *the principle*.

I did not renounce all at once these dangerous disassociations it seems Peyote provokes, and which I had for years sought by other means; I did not mount on horseback with a body torn from itself and which the constraint I had imposed on myself had deprived of its essential reflexes; I had not been this man of stone it took two men to make into a man on horseback, and whom they hoisted on and off my horse like a broken robot — and once on horseback they put my hands on the reins, and in addition to that they had to close my fingers on the reins, for it was only too obvious that I had lost control; I had not conquered by force of spirit this invincible organic hostility, where it was *me* that did not want to continue, in order to bring back from it a collection of motheaten imagery, from which this Age, thus far faithful to a whole system, would at the very most get a few new ideas for posters and models for its fashion designers. From now on it

Handwritten notes in the right margin: "Dancer" and "Peyote" with arrows pointing to the text.

was necessary that whatever lay buried behind this ponderous trituration, which makes the dawn one with the dead of night, be dragged out in the open and put to use, that it serve precisely for *my crucifixion*.

To this, I knew my physical destiny was irremediably attached. I was ready for every burning and I awaited the first fruits of burning, in view of a soon-to-be generalized combustion.

Rodez, 7 September 1945

My dear Henri Parisot,

I wrote you at least three weeks ago a couple of letters instructing you to publish the *Journey to the Land of the Tarahumaras*, but appending to it a letter replacing the *Supplement to the Journey*, in which I was fool enough to say I had accepted conversion to Jesus Christ, while in very fact Christ is that which I have always most of all abominated, and this conversion was merely the result of a frightful spell which had made me forget my very nature and had made me swallow, at Rodez, under the guise of Communion, a frightful number of wafers destined to preserve me for as long as possible, and if possible for all eternity, in a being that is not my own. This being consists of ascending into the sky as a spirit instead of descending deeper and deeper as a body into hell, that is into sexuality, soul of all that lives. While that which is Christ carries the being away into the empyrean of clouds and gasses where since the beginning of time it has been dissolving.

The ascension of the so-called Jesus Christ two thousand years ago was nothing more than the ascension, in an infinite vertical line, in which he one day ceased to be, and in which all that was left of him devolved on the sex of all mankind as the basis of all lust. Like Jesus Christ there is supposed also to be one who never would descend to earth, because man was too small for him; and so he stayed in the abysses of infinities, like some so-called immanence of God who indefatigably and like some Buddha in his self-contemplation awaits the day that BEING will be sufficiently perfect for Him to descend into it and slip inside it, which is the infamous scheming of a slothful and

cowardly rotter who would never have wanted to suffer the Being, the Being in its wholeness, but to make it suffer by proxy for another, in order subsequently to exorcise this wretched other, and relegate it to hell, when this mad visionary of anguish would have made out of the being of HIS suffering a paradise all prepared for this ghoul of sloth and villainy called God and Jesus Christ. I am one of these sufferers God has the nerve to lower himself to when I die, but I have three daughters who are three more of them, and I wish you to be also another one of them, in your soul, dear Parisot, because next to God and Christ there are angels with the same pretension he's got, who have forever claimed to share the consciousness of every being ever born, while they think themselves to be pure innateness. I want you to understand that it was not Jesus Christ I went looking for among the Tarahumara, but myself, me, Antonin Artaud, born September 4, 1896 at Marseille, 4 rue du Jardin des Plantes, out of a uterus I had nothing to do with and which I have never had a thing to do with even previously, for this is no way to be born, to be copulated and masturbated for nine months by the membrane, the yawning membrane which toothlessly devours, as the UPANISHADS say, and I know that I was born otherwise, born of my own works and not of a mother, but the MOTHER tried to get me and you have seen how that turned out in my life. I was born only in my own labor-pangs and if only you could do the same for yourself, dear Henri Parisot. As for these pangas, we must conclude they tasted good to the uterus, 49 years ago, for it tried to have them for itself, and has nourished itself on them in the guise of motherhood. And Jesus Christ is this thing born of a mother who also tried to get me for himself, and that long before the beginnings of time and the universe, and I went to the heights of Mexico only to rid myself of Jesus Christ, just as I plan on going some day to Tibet in order to flush god and his Holy Ghost out of me. Will you follow me there?

Publish this letter instead of the *Supplement*, and return the *Supplement*, if you please, to me. All best,

Antonin Artaud

Translated by David Rattray