

Ruined Books Blog

A Book of Bibliolages—initial post, Feb. 27, 2013

A Book of Bibliolage makes a good place to begin this blog. The website goes back a few weeks now. The practice of bibliolaging goes back seven to ten years, depending on your definition. The word bibliolage goes back about three years, my invention, I think. And the blog starts now.

A bibliolage is always an “altered book”—that’s the family—but, strange child in the corner, it abides by its own rules, sucks its very own thumb. (When I came up with the motto “Puerility Taken to a Whole New Level!” it made me smile, but it’s not terribly self-respectful.)

A bibliolage is also always a collage, but it so severely does not hang on a wall, I had to build a website to hang it anywhere.

A bibliolage sits on a shelf, here a creaky one, because the art takes a heavy book and makes it heavier. It takes a page and squares it, so the binding typically bulges. A library shelf keeps books aloft, vertical, slim, and Ssshhh-ed! My shelves sag, and the engorged volumes seem angry with being books. They protest at gravity, clamoring mirth. They revel in ruin and rue preservation. They do not resign to a system, least of all Dewey decimal. They do not speak for authority but squeal for special attention from the court.

On the site you can find a list of titles, some eighty-six in the columns as of now, but the ranks are uneven, as some have struck off in wayward directions, but so far no new tendency has turned me from the

extraiustrative 'lage. I discovered that it takes a nearly human gestational period to bring about a website. Steps must be taken, matter collected, measures gauged. Designers have lives. During those months, I created eleven new works:

- *Nu Sexpuppen Icones*
- *The Commedia dell'Arte of Andrew Wyeth*
- *Armed America: 'Toons for Our Times*
- *After Nature and on the Eighth Day*
- *On the World of the World of the Art of Art*
- *Zapata Geisha*
- *Water Babies Ten Commandments*
- *The Diagnosis of Wild, Weird, and Wonderful Nervous Diseases*
- *Medieval Guardians of Being Dead*
- *Edward Hopper Hopper*
- *Frank Sinatra: The Robot Who Found America*

I showed all but three of these at the launch/opening on January 10. I did not show *Frank Sinatra: The Robot Who Found America* (based in a book called *The Men Who Found America*—about Ponce de Leon and such people—with additions from a book about robots and another containing photos of

Sinatra) because it's fragile. By the end of making it, I was worried each time I opened the recipient book wide. The men who found America grow frail.

I also didn't show *Medieval Guardians of Being Dead* (based in an Eckhard Tolle book, illustrated by Patrick McDonnell, combined with a book called *Medieval Lives* and another one filled with Day of the Dead images) or *After Nature and on the Eighth Day* (based in a W. G. Sebald book, combined with Abner Dean cartoon images) because I thought they were a tad obscure. I also did not show *Nu Sexpuppen Icones* (based in a deluxe volume showing nude imagery from paintings in the Louvre, combined with images of German collectible dolls and medieval Christian ikons) because . . . well, I'd blush.

All the other bibliolages held their own on the high drafting tables of the theater design studio in which they were exhibited, along with about twenty other, earlier works. I enjoyed watching friends peruse.

Around the time I began planning the opening, I came across the photographer Abelardo Morrell's beautiful *A Book of Books*, and it occurred to me that this book could form a summational hyperilluminative sampler, a chrestomathy (or should it be chrestopathy??) of bibliolagerie, with each picture suggesting a possible walk around the park of ruination. Every page would need a different counterpart.

The book now sits upon [The Creaky Shelf](#) in the website. The cover, of course, re-uses the design of the website, plus some imagery created by my daughters in the form of peel-and-apply-liberally stickers to promote the

website. Didn't need Elmer's for them. The inside pictures give a sense of how I tried to cut my poor nothing into Morrell's rich photographic meditation on the book.

I aim to update this blog once in a while, when I've got something new to show, but I'd also be happy to open up some older work. Have a look at the titles in my [Catalogue of Ruined Books](#), and if you see one that makes you curious, let me know, and I will try to bring it out.

Hopper Hopper, March 8, 2013

Two books about Edward Hopper have (been) joined together to form Hopper Hopper, and those lonely individuals, drenched in anomie, are not quite so lonely now. The anomie has been mopped up a little.

The core book started coming unglued after I was well along in the process, so I stitched it up at the end.

The title page is important to me always, and here I had the multihopper looking on.

Santa Barbara sun coming in through the scanner. Don't forget the screen. Naked Nighthawky.

Back cover: front porch. Hipper Hopper looking on.

More Hopper Hopper images on the Creaky Shelf.

Early MAnthropologie—March 18, 2013

Anthropologie's winter catalogue seemed especially in need of male company—tastefully primitive, thank you.

So I went on a dig and found Early Man, our ancestral nakedness, to liven up the room.

Look at that bone structure.

All this was conceived and executed as a Valentine's Day gift for Wendy, February 14, 2013.

And here is the box.

Webster's International Stones of Summer—April 20, 2013

For this one, you need to know—should know!—the film made in 2002 by Mark Moskowitz, called *Stone Reader*, which recounts his years of hunting for the author of a highly praised novel that came out in 1972—*The Stones of Summer*. The author of that novel, Dow Mossman, had subsequently disappeared from the literary scene and seemed to have vanished in all other ways, too. Mark spent years tracking down every possible pathway that might lead to the man who wrote one of those "great American novels," a book that had especially impressed him as a masterpiece. Along the way, he inquires into the more general aspects of how authors live, how we read and evaluate their creations, how some suffer obscurity because of their own demons or self-doubt or exhaustion.

When he finally found Mr. Mossman, who was living not far from the site of his anointment as a promising author in Iowa, he captured that moment of rediscovery on camera, and the scene made a fitting climax for Mark's movie, which itself went on to win critical acclaim and the sort of reward that comes from "outsider" achievement, which is to say, not a lot. Mark was not in the hunt for profit (he has a business to answer his needs in that respect). Instead he was tracing to its origin the mystery of what makes the experience of reading a great book so gratifying. With the success of the movie, he was able to get Barnes & Nobles to issue a new edition of *The Stones of Summer*.

Since then, he has taken his camera and microphone into other questions of why and how we live now, and a curiosity about collecting led him to contact me. After I met him, I returned the curiosity by following him down the Mossman path, watching his movie and its many fascinating "bonus

features." One day I told Mark that if he would send me a copy of the novel I would "address" it in the ruining way of bibliolage. In a few days, a copy of the B&N reprint arrived in the mail.

The problem was clear to me from the start. Here was a hefty (wordy, garrulous, logorrheic) book, a novel of the sort that seems to resent the space taken by the page margins. Where, and what, was I going to "lay into" this book? At this moment, I have on hand probably 100-150 books I might cut or cut into, a wide variety, but mostly books with pictures, which is the familiar sort of stuff to 'lage. I let six weeks or so pass, pondering the question.

Finally I remembered a book I had been keeping for many years, a ca. 1900 edition of *Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language*. I had acquired this leather-bound, deluxe edition, with its 2000+ pages of definitions, gazeteers, biographical names, history of the language and its grammar, flags and other images, all contained within a leather binding, in a state of catastrophic decay, long before I had begun hyper-illuminating books. Just carrying this volume from one location to another was sure to leave a visible trail of crumbled binding and paper in its death throes. Still, I could not throw it away. Eventually I stowed it under the house where variable weather conditions would only hasten its demise.

As soon as I thought of the book, I realized it would be perfect for this project the chthonic will of Webster would meet the megalomania of Mossman.

On each page of the novel I found one word defined by Webster, and I glued the definition into the margin. The challenge was to find words that would fit, best of all, words that would emphasize the vocabulary employed by Mossman. For the title page and endpapers, I found the definitions of "dow," "moss," and "man," also "stones," "summer," "novel," and, of course, "mark," "mosk," and "wit" (noun plural). To tie it (us) all together, I found all the definitions of "fanatic."

Pictures do not capture the result well, but if you wish to consult the original, you'll have to look into the personal library of Mark Moskowitz.

Little Merry Road Trips de la Biblia—May 3, 2013

I don't know this photographer (Timothy Hearsum), but he has driven through Santa Barbara, as I see from his book of panoramic photos, and his book *Road Trips* was published in Santa Barbara.

I decided to hitchhike along, occupying the wide-openness with my busybody language, spoken with three children's books.

One was *Little Merry Story Book*, from before 1900. It required the most delicate cutting, as the pages were severely browned and brittle. The scissors seemed to crumble the paper as much as cut it. But the paper took up the Elmer's glue beautifully and seemed to regain strength in the process.

One was *Eight Little Indians*, from the 1930s, gorgeously colored bits of myth-making about Native American children, filtered through the imagination of someone who probably didn't know any better.

One was *Las Bellas Historias de la Biblia*, Volume 1, part of a multi-volume series of Bible stories told in Spanish.

As the photos were panoramic, I had to pan-and-scan to get the whole image.

More of this on The Creaky Shelf.

Populuxe Scenery and Lighting—May 6, 2013

Seems like there's always a better idea, and never more so than when I was a kid. Lines got streamed, pep went into the step, and the tube held us fast. We were populuxed indeed.

That word was born just about when I was, and then quietly went somewhere else for a while. My generation tried not to notice the traces of it in us for a few decades, but then it came back as a collectible.

No one has attended to its return so faithfully as Thomas Hine, who in 1986 published a book with that title. He now runs a website called [Populuxe](#), a golden spot for design.

The words of Thomas Hine, from the website: "Populuxe is a synthetic word, created in the spirit of the many coined words of the time. Madison Avenue kept inventing words like "autodynamic," which described a shape of car which made no sense aerodynamically. Gardol was an invisible shield that stopped bullets and hard-hit baseballs to dramatize the effectiveness of a toothpaste. It was more a metaphor than an ingredient. Slenderella was a way to lose weight, and maybe meet a prince besides. Like these synthetic words, Populuxe has readily identifiable roots, and it reaches toward an ineffable emotion. It derives, of course, from populism and popularity, with just a fleeting allusion to pop art, which took Populuxe imagery and attitudes as subject matter. And it has luxury, popular luxury, luxury for all. This may be a contradiction in terms, but it is an expression of the spirit of the time and the rationale for many of the products that were produced. And, finally, Populuxe contains a thoroughly unnecessary "e," to give it class. That final embellishment of a practical and straightforward invention is what makes the word Populuxe, well, Populuxe."

I relocated populuxe in Selden and Sellman, which was long one of the standard textbooks of stage design.

eXtreme garden golf viXens—June 16, 2013

Long and sad story here. I had meant to give this bibliolage to my father as a present, though as I got into it I kept realizing that it might really confuse or even annoy him. His health was failing fast. Not a part of his body or mind was functioning quite right, and the old spirit was not often in him, the spirit of a jokester with a generous, affectionate heart within.

That heart gave out, here at home, on the way to the garden, in Canton. Or maybe it was his brain or his lungs or his guts or his willingness to live. Probably all. May 20, 2013. At the age of 89.

Not a thinker, though smart in many ways, not a gifted athlete (golf, ping pong, etc.), but always game to play, not a strong believer, but in awe of the glories of life (plants, animals, children, music), he and I did not agree sometimes. Politics was hazardous territory, and “art” named two entirely different realms for us. We thought each other odd, but all of that was secondary to love.

The lineage from him to me was unmistakable. He held me close, as a father should do, and I held him close, too. The resistance, the counterforce, which we always knew, had to give way to the embrace, owing a lot to his effort—and mine. From the time I went away to school at 13, I called home every week, sometimes more often, if only just to mouth the expected platitudes about everything being “fine,” even when they were not always. And I hardly ever missed in the rhythm of regular visits, though we each found the father-son thing a bit of an ordeal.

My mother, who died two and a half years ago, got it that I had fallen further away from the values of family, Ohio, the GOP, and St. Mark’s

Episcopal Church than my brothers, and perhaps she even understood why. She also had her issues with Dad, but they were overwhelmed by a mighty attachment. She gave me my melancholy, my quiet sympathy, my attraction to the written word, my capacity to be alone, and my taste for the past. Dad's eye was always on the present or the future, like anyone who cultivates the risqué.

The art of bibliolage plays with those divergent tenses. Books from the past, each a lonely guardian of bygone effect, suddenly open their arms to new interaction, fresh attention. And by "fresh" I do mean that motivated stare or the pinch on the butt that could get your cheek slapped in films of the thirties or forties. So yes, bibliolages are books that, invigorated, now risqué.

I was initially looking for safe ground to hyperilluminate for him, and initially I thought the place was to be the golf course. I found *Extreme Golf*, which delighted in such things as golf courses in Iceland, Dubai, or alligator country. But the perspectives in those pictures I found too limiting, too many distant aerial shots, too many par fives for me to hit the green. So then I came up with *The Garden*, the sort of book I can't imagine anyone reading, and even the browsing of the pictures might narcotize. Especially in his later years, Dad took more joy from gardening than anything, and he took joy in many pastimes and involvements.

He also loved golf, not that he was an expert or even very good. He loved it as "the most maddening game ever," and yet he was skilled and practiced enough that each round brought some little miracle of execution. He watched the tournaments on TV, bought the weirdly deviant men's outfits in colors that would make the Easter bunny cringe, and kept his clubs in the garage, ready for the public course or the neighbor's back yard.

Sunday took him to church, where he sang like an angel in the choir, and attended occasionally to God. Actually, he taught Sunday school when I was a preschooler, nudging his teenagers to memorize all the titles of the books of the Bible. His mother and father were the kind who read only books about the power of Jesus, and so Dad's drinking of the Episcopalian punch (the Perfect Manhattan) was an outrage, one that he kept well covered until they passed away.

During the months I was working on this bibliolage, I heard more and more of his fundamental despair. Someone whose whole life was so dedicated to living well felt betrayed by any divine force that would bring that to an end. The sonorous phrases of the *Book of Common Prayer*, the ones that had never quite penetrated, now had no power to turn back the sad reality that his body just wasn't going to take it any longer. In his many days, he had incinerated enough tobacco, tipped enough bottles, and fully inverted the food pyramid, so that it was a wonder he had made it so far. But, except for in the music of Bach or the books of Nicholson Baker (in my opinion), wonders will ever cease.

So fallen divinity occupies a curious corner of Dad's garden, trampled by the golfer, and overwhelmed by the vixen's parfum. "Smoking, drinking, never thinking of tomorrow." The present probes the future for its soft and slippery spot. It's all good if it's all hilarious—and gratifying. That's what I mean by my self-mocking "risqué." Because this was, on one level, Dad's bibliolage, but it's always mine.

Yes, here we get into the unmentionables, the ridiculous dangling part of a man. Dad's humor went there always, though whether it came back, who knows? That whole category—the X-file and all its documents—

should never even be breached by the son. And I'm not opening it here, except in collage.

Dad died with A and B by his side. It's a long story, but briefly, A and B were people who were glued in to his life in the last decade. He did the gluing, they did the gluing, and glue did the gluing. All in all, the passive voice works best: they were glued in. Cut from another book entirely, one you would not expect, they augmented and enhanced his life, and they ironized and carnivalized his life, and they reaped and they sowed, cooked and mowed, and altogether handied the man.

The family might sometimes seem a closed book, but it's easily reopened, and there are scissors and glue at the ready to make the old book bulge with new intent.

I miss you Dad.

A Summer's Day Man, Myth, and Magic—August 4, 2013

Still holding onto this summer, darker than usual and full of man, myth, and magic.

Finished this book over a year ago, when the son was still shining and the father had not gone down.

It revisits a world I enjoyed well as a boy—my parents frequently scheduled beaches into our holidays.

The shore is where I wound up (washed up?) in life—Central Coast of California—though curiously I don't spend much time on the beach. My vantage point is blufftop on a morning run or a campus walk.

Our beaches hold little scraps of tar, so that after a long walk on the sand your sole is stained with gritty ooze.

Natural seepage it is, they say, though we can plainly see rigs. Earth Day had its origin here after a spill.

A summer's day cannot escape the demons.

Extra Buttons, After Bruegel— August 7, 2013

Among other things, I inherited nearly 50 "Extra Button" envelopes from my mother. They all contained buttons, so I have those, too, but it was the array of these little vessels that appealed to me.

Our local Art from Scrap (title self-explanatory) has an annual fund raiser, and the rule this year was that the work had to be attached to a board nine inches square, provided by the management.

I decided to devote my mother's accumulation, my collection, via scrap to this artwork.

I thought of it as interactive—“Please flip the envelopes to find on the reverse my incisions into Bruegel, especially the grapple of life and death.

As it turned out, I did not realize that the work would have to hang vertical on the wall, so the Bruegel dimension went unseen, which is kind of right. There is in his art a deep awareness that the stuff of life lies within art in a way that you can sometimes only intuit.

I've tried to make a gif of this. I hope it works. Try clicking on it.

The Commedia dell'Arte of Andrew Wyeth—August 9, 2013

Bibliolage is a performance—impromptu, self-interested, of rags and patches.

Arlecchino would know the score, and give a kick.

American art reclines on a field of sepia tone. How many tubes of burnt umber did Andrew milk forth?.

Along comes scissors and glue—right now I'm loving a pair of Alex slims and always Elmer's.

It's worth the gambol.

More of this book on the creaky shelf

The Diagnosis of Wild, Weird, and Wonderful Nervous Diseases—August 14, 2013

There are times, it seems, when I cannot account for the choices I make in devising these ruined books. The choices make me.

Coming from a medical family, I grew up with medical books just within reach. Childhood was laced with the grotesquerie of disease.

What is the proper attitude toward the disturbances of the human condition?

Childhood, as managed by educators and guardians of moral health, regulates the strangeness.

But then, once in a while, the circus pulls into town, with freight cars of disturbance.

The best of children's books do the same.

Frank Lloyd Wright's House Liberated—September 16, 2013

Something about Frank Lloyd Wright just screams out for a tension, and Daumier swoops in with a prayer-y stylo.

Liber-tay. Equali-tay. Fraternali-tay.

Simplici-tay. Natural bow-tay. Pudeur.

Deflation.

Excess.

Hauteur.

Beneath the Rose Theatre—November 15, 2013

The theater (note variant spelling) has been the place I go, the topic I teach, and yet for years I have been leery about being mise en that particular scene. Is it, after, all, a place of some horror (shame, guilt, pity and fear) such as I run from in my days and run to in my dreams.

A wonderful discovery to find that Gregory Crewdson has taken his camera there in pictures that seem heretical some who would rather believe in the camera's cruel capacity to seize the real.

Using all the wizardry available from Hollywood (art director, costume designer, lighting gods), he creates these moving stills--shutter snaps that haunt.

It's pure theater, rendered on photographic paper.

His book *Beneath the Roses* takes us to his familiar New England towns. I remember those rainy streets and cold sunsets from my days at Andover, 1968-1973.

I prowled the woods in search of adulthood, scaring myself with my own shadow.

Plays, to me, seemed to offer a better landscape, one in which I might know how to act.

Actors draw focus, and a focus is a hearth, a burning place. A lens will make the light ignite.

Sub rosa means in confidence—secretly.

At this stage of my development, it seems possible to make an entrance without a blush.

What Collects in the Eye (and Ear)—March 4, 2014

Prominent among the effects of my Life (TM): these daughters, who grow into and out of their collections.

They presented me with this spirited animation this Christmas:

<http://vimeo.com/82595256>

And if, when you are there at Vimeo, you happen to see this other creation, I won't say no:

<http://vimeo.com/81361219>

Space Gods of the Gods—March 3, 2014

Big gap since last post. HUGE new bibliolage, biggest ever. Elephantine. Each page the size of a road map, and many of the images took up the whole page, as big as a Cape Canaveral rocket launch, a Titan V, a Sputnik, Apollo I through Infinity. NASA (and the publisher) reached for the gods--and found them multi-form, in the image of the human ego.

No way to fit the book on my scanner, which is 14 by 17, so everything here is “detail.”

I enjoyed the giant images, but then I got bogged down in the endless quantity of smaller pics—rocket launches and group portraits of Russian astronauts.

But the discipline of bibliolage dictates that EVERY picture must be treated. No favoritism.

And all at large scale. In the third month of work on this labor, I began to look at it as Job. A trial of my patience. Those gods!

But every sentence ends.

Hummel Faust (At War)—March 3, 2014

Since September I have had this deluxe edition of Goethe's *Faust* (by Goethe), awaiting my attention, and at first I said no, but it just had to be Hummel.

Enlightened figurines, on patrol.

The spiritual war was not so easily resolved.

After the morass of *Space Gods of the Gods*, this project was a short walk on dry ground.

Another book too large for my scanner, though not so wildly off.

Human Anatomy in the Romantic Style—April 24, 2014

This post is--prepare yourself--post-Romantic, though not yet Decadent. "April is the cruellest month," says *The Wasteland*, but May is cruel, too, in a modern way. And December, in a post-modern. And cruel, too, all the months that put us in mind of mortality and work. Wandering lonely as a cloud is not consistent with getting anything done, and there are things to do, as deadlines make clear. Dead lines.

So at night, when a DVD of a guttering candle might cast a virtually eerie light on our new furniture, I have been cutting life into art.

A book aimed at bringing that nightingale look to your well-decorated Southern California McMansion forms the base, and the superstructure comes from the history of human anatomy.

"My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains / My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk..."

That interior life, deep in the heart, inhabits these chambers.

Flayed humanity (idea for new Broadway musical = Forever Flayed?), it turns out, "walks in beauty."

She walks in beauty, like the night
 Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
 And all that's best of dark and bright
 Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
 Thus mellowed to that tender light
 Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
 Had half impaired the nameless grace
 Which waves in every raven tress,
 Or softly lightens o'er her face;
 Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
 How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
 But tell of days in goodness spent,
 A mind at peace with all below,
 A heart whose love is innocent!

Soon, a sequel, *Human Anatomy in the Romantic Landscape*—dissections along the Hudson River.

Vol. II Human Anatomy in the Romantic Landscape—May 5, 2014

This material still holds me in thrall, and so, for the first time, I have come up with a second volume of bibliolagency.

"Don't dwell on it," was often the advice of my mother and father. To dwell was to die in life, they thought, as the (normal) drive to move on, or progress on the path, instead settled deeper into the muck of the mind, that endlessly sucking soul cavity, which would grow sore with mortality (rhymes with abnormality).

"Don't be morbid," was another bit of counsel, as if being could be ordered around.

In dismantling the dwelling of my parents, last summer, I came upon the English Lit textbooks of my mother's short college career, which was interrupted by war, marriage, pregnancy, and reality, roughly in that order.

Many fragments of this fine writing ran through her way of talking. Her vocabulary was good and schooled by the greats.

I sensed that reading the Romantic poets had been a trial for her, as they ask you to dwell, even as you would move on.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

The world is too much with us;

late and soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

The sea that bares her bosom to the moon;

The winds that will be howling at all hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not.

—Great God! I'd rather be

A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

More from this book on The Creaky Shelf.

Rousseau: The History of Medicine—August 10, 2014

Many physicians in my family—brothers, father, grandfather, now a nephew, and others—but my pathway was distracted by the likes of Henri Rousseau. Known as Le Douanier (Customs Officer).

When I came upon a book about the history of medicine, I thought to bring them together.

Then I came upon the same two books and decided to . . . do it again.

You see?

More of this on [The Creaky Shelf](#).

New and supplementary bibliolagerria—August 11, 2014

When I created this website two and a half years ago I needed to be sparing in my supply of images because I was employing a (patient) other to do the work of scanning selected images from the bibliolages then take all the steps to get them posted here. I was putting off the day of learning how to do this myself—but not forever. I learned, and since then I have added about twenty-five bibliolages all by myself.

It turns out not to be as difficult as I feared. It's kind of fun, in fact.

So it occurred to me to go back to some of the original books I put up and add some more images. Such as the above, all from William Wegman's *ABC: Red Army Uniforms of World War II*.

I also augmented Keaton Capote, which brings Truman Capote's *A Christmas Memory* with Diane Keaton's edition of tabloid newspaper photos, and *Many Are Called People* (Walker Evans candid + People magazine celebs + Andy Warhol words), and *Bathrooms of Belief*:

And *Light Years Die Welt*.

One of my earliest bibliolages was an illustrated 19th c. Bible with American bumpkins, and then I returned to that sort of combination with an illustrated German book on the Holy Lands. Out of some kind of dream I found the title *Wo Ist Der Heiliger Geist?*

Another volume that was underimaged was *The Real Mother Goose Sex Book*, which stretched the limit of decency:

More (More) to be found on [The Creaky Shelf](#) where thirty-six bibliolages now reside. Or thirty-seven, depending on how you count. One book I did twice—see the next blog entry for that story.

Norman Rockwell: The Faith of the Soviet Image—August 12, 2014

A large volume of photographs from the TASS archives made it clear to me that this summer would be spent cutting up the Soviet Union. Then I found a book on "the purge" and more on the verge that crossed my youth —"missile" was a word I learned in second grade.

All I needed was a place to lie my parings.

I spent an afternoon in a Ventura book barn looking for a repository.

At last I selected an especially unctuous book on Norman Rockwell, put together by *Guideposts*, subtitled *Faith in America*.

I remember there was always a stack of *Guideposts* magazine in my grandparents's w.c., something to pass the . . .

time. And my grandfather once published a little article in its pages.

They specialized in miracles.

Limbs repaired.

Souls in revolution.

Ideology redeemed.

Faith.

But there was more than a touch of Stalin behind the apple cheeks of *Rockwell's America*.

And there is more of this bibliolage on [The Creaky Shelf](#).

Big Farmer Big Jesus—September 3, 2014

On this summer's road trip through mountains and plains, I discovered this curiously shaped book (5.5" x 12.75") in a used bookstore—*Big Farmer Big*. A sticker on the endpapers tells me it was originally bought from Schuster Books in Milwaukee, where, I presume, you would also find *Little Farmer Little* still stuck to the front cover.

I found, instead, a gap there—*LFL* lost, like a soul—just a void.

So I brought Big Jesus in.

We saw a lot of Him, too, on the road trip, in farmer's fields, expressing reactionary political views.

Bill boarding.

I happen to know a farmer—Ruthie—whose views do not line up that way.

Thank the Lord.

More of Big Farmer Big Jesus on [The Creaky Shelf](#).

Why Not Say What Happened Inside the White House –October 12, 2015

This one took forever, with torturous moments, like four years in the White House.

I kept picking it up for a week or two, then losing steam.

Many other bibliolages in between sessions.

On and on, and it really was like different administrations of surrationality. Term after term of tattered books.

No sample would quite capture it.

So what?

Vlaminck Dinosaurs–October 14, 2014

This is one that came through jurassically technological and a real trip to do, too.

Vlaminck was a Fauve—wild manic—who long outlived his fellows, well into the era of signed limited editions.

This particular book (1958) I got at the library book sale for \$2, in great condition, original plastic cover, superbly printed.

Superbly like an art book. #1076 of a limited edition of 2000.

On abebooks I saw a similar copy going for \$250.

And I spent \$2 more for a cutting-edge dinosaur book and \$1 for another.

All together, I figure it's now a \$253 down payment on Vlaming dessert. My Fauve pas.

The Far Eastern Western Horizon of Healing—January 20, 2015

This book is for healing, though books don't do that.

Understanding, though. Could do with the right book.

When I look for a suitable book, I look for an open space, and what more capacious than the horizon of the west?

Crossed with the eastern on the far side.

This book came from the library sale, the Santa Barbara Public Library sale, but it's also local in that the photographer (Macduff Everton) and the commenter/sketcher (Mary Heebner) live here, work here, endure it here.

They didn't ask for this.

If any harm is done, then this book is for healing.

Edward Weston: The Form of the Nude Clown—April 8, 2015

I have been absent for a while, not because of inactivity, but my website needed to be remodulated—something like that. I didn't realize these things needed new grease every 3000 miles or so.

Meanwhile, though, I have finished a few new bibliolages, only one of which I will disclose now. This one began with a small accumulation of books about clowns, especially the big-nosed circus variety that proliferated in the 20th c.

It took a long while, though, to find a home for them, but as soon as *I stumbled on Amy Conger's Edward Weston: The Form of the Nude*, I knewed I had a match. I believe it was at the Strand bookstore that I saw this particular study of Weston.

Conger, in her introduction, quotes Weston, who, on several occasions, declared he could photograph anything, implying no special significance to having a model in the raw.

The picture he took of a toilet, for example, surprised many, as that sort of object had not been addressed in fine art photography in 1925 when he set up his camera on his bathroom floor in Mexico City.

With a long exposure, he captured in "available light" the sensual contours of this modern, yet, in a way, primitive, object, and he called it, mysteriously "Excusado."

Meaning "excused," also "unnecessary," "reserved," "private."

"Place for clowning" is not in the list of possible translations, but I like to think I have staked out one corner of the word "excused."

Conger juxtaposes a lot of photographs other than nudes in order to stress Weston's fascination with texture, form, light.

But really the eye goes (inexcusably?) to those private parts, which W was way ahead of the curve in exposing.

In that white-wall way, she allows vast blank pages in this high-ceilinged book. That I could not allow once the clowns started leaking in.

I bought a second copy of Conger's *Weston* so that Edward's splayed subjects, cut to order, could talk back to the clowns.

And so, finally, *The Form of the Nude Clown* resolved—private, reserved, unnecessary, and excusado.

Adam Sandler: Fear and Trembling and The Sickness unto Death, Vols. I and II—May 12, 2015

This was a custom job for an Andover friend, Bill Crawford, who had written for pay a monograph/throwaway on Adam Sandler, and as soon as I saw it I knew it needed Kierkegaard.

He had sent me two copies of the book, and the duo suggested the Soren K. duo that seemed on every shelf at one point—a rarely read must-read for the dour scintellectual.

Sandlerectual.

AS-hole.

So it's in two volumes, and half of the Kierkegaard went into each, half a page per page.

So you need both volumes to read AS: *America's Comedian* and *Fear and Trembling*

Or Adam Sandler: AC and *Sickness unto Death*.

That is, if you have existence enough.

Mostly it's words, because life is difficult, but there are some pictures, too.

And a box to contain it.

Crime Like a Soprano—June 6, 2015

In my creative community, I am fortunate to have Mr. David Starkey as a friend. He has for years put on a local-access TV show called *The Creative Community*, and not long ago he did a segment looking at my bibliolages, as I mentioned in an earlier blog post. [Click here for a link.](#)

David is a prolific and prodigious poet, and several months back I heard him read from an amazing book called *Like a Soprano* (Sewing House Books, 2014).

He wrote this book in the process of rewatching the complete run of *The Sopranos*, and each poem is titled after an episode.

When I saw all that blank space by which a poem becomes a form on a page, I knew I could find a way to occupy it.

As a gift.

Not a violation.

Not a crime.

Like a dish of gabagool I could bring over.

And True Crime came to hand.

And eye.

Maximalist Interior Body Shots—July 4, 2015

Maximalism seems to be an aesthetic of allowed clutter, which is like a howdy-do to me. Interior designers are usually more inclined to want the I-just-threw-everything-in-the-closet-this-morning-before-the-photographer-arrived look. So this book of decorator self-love (self-abuse) comes at you from a different angle, and I like it—love/abuse. (Fellini)

Enough to contribute.

Each chapterette is a house I have visited, with such an army of images as
Burne-Jones post-raphaelite

clown coulrophobia

Leonardo Da Vinci Da Vidi Da Veni

Luis Royo luridness

Pompeian porn

Expressionist pressions

Degas galore

Vermeer atmosphermeer

tai chi teachers

and much else besides—muchness being the point.

Arnold Palmer Ruins Eurotard—September 24, 2015

It has been a busy summer with much created, including some bibliolage
videos, which I hope to post soon. But then, too, I've been ruining some

books, including a book called *Ruin*, a large photo book of collapsed architecture. The delights of decay. Wonderful quantities of emptiness to fill.

Age does that to you, pull you back into the emptiness of time past, give you the urge to glue something into it.

Only what?

It took a while to find something right, and then I realized it should be Arnold Palmer. Palmer was a winner when these structures were new.

And an army followed him, of the sort that wouldn't alarm, in the day of the bomb: Arnie's Army.

Then Nicklaus came along, and the winning got harder.

No one showed the struggle to win better—and the pain of loss, a missed putt, a flier from the fairway into the trap, a drive that went the wrong way.

I got about two thirds of the way through the Palmering of Ruin before I knew something was missing.

Then one day I was in the department mailroom, and there in the recycling bin was this Eurotard catalogue.

Somehow that seemed right.

Cirque du Primitive City Spaces Avatar—November 18, 2015

City Spaces asked me to occupy, but I had to send my avatar—or my ancestor or acrobat.

Down these mean streets a weird goblin must go.

Weighty and weightless.

Lighten up, whydoncha!

Title page.

The Young King Vargas—December 17, 2015

When I saw the title *The Young King* I knew this could be something good.

The young King would need a mate for play, a girl for this boy.

And what better girl than a Vargas girl, the girl, eventually, of *Playboy*?

Oscar Wilde wrote the story,

but it needed something.

What a varlet!

The Dark Series: G, PG-13, R, and NC-17—February 7, 2016

I have not been idle (though idle hands do the devil's work, which has appeal), but it has been a while since I have reported new bibliolage. It's like the move from feature films to long-form tv drama, and my *Breaking Bad* has been a series of "Dark" bibliolages, generated from Lemony Snicket, of course.

It was at the wonderful Strand Bookstore in Greenwich Village that I first encountered the 2013 book by Herr Snicket, called *The Dark*.

A children's book, with the usual creep-hint of Mr. Unhandler, illustrated by Jon Klassen (Caldecotted *I Want My Hat Back* meister), this volume dealt with fear of the dark on behalf of its secondary character, a kid named Laszlo.

Laszlo has an antagonist, the main character Darkness.

The book seems drenched in jet.

And the noir is, we fear, not 'oir' friend.

What could be so bad about lightlessness is all about where the imagination goes.

On our general fear of the dark, I love Alfred Alvarez's book *Night: Night Life, Night Language, Sleep, and Dreams* (1995).

But I look at Laszlo, and I know there are more immediate experiences of the dark, not all associated with fear, into which he would shine his flashlight beam.

My early experience of adult writing I pretended to have read was Pauline Kael. Her life "in the dark" was about watching the movies I could not.

Instead, I could skim her reviews in the weekly *New Yorker* and hope to find a suggestive paragraph about the forbidden, the dark, especially the forbidden dark as was coiled in my desires.

Access to the dark was graded by the Motion Picture Association of America's film rating system.

Which is a system of aging, by which you go from Generality

To Parental Guidancing. Thirteening. Pretty-much G.

To Restriction. (Ribald? Randy? (In the) Raw?)

To Seventeening. (No children under)

Originally X, which was such an enticing letter, it had to be Restricted. Only the marketers who knew NC-17 was going to prove dull understood the magic of X, which they tripled to XXX.

(More on that in a subsequent volume, perhaps not suitable for this blog.)

Laszlo seemed to know these scary and enticing recesses lay ahead.

With his torch, he dared to look under.

To go downstairs.

So I bought half a dozen volumes of *The Dark*, and four of them unfurl here.

[A G.](#)

[A PG-13.](#)

[An R.](#)

[An NC-17.](#)

I have some ideas about where to go with the other two, but for now, this is the set.

The History of This Is My Wish for the Future—March 3, 2016

What is a gift book—but this? Implies a history, suggests a future.

At present, you have to wonder.

A gift bibliolage queries a history, doubts a future.

Moons the past, eclipses the yet-to-come.

I like the way the dated futurism redoes the ersatz Victorian.

And the way the pretty poesy predicates flash gordon.

A mere bagatelle.

The Nothing King—April 6, 2016

This one I knew for sure because of that title, *The Nothing King*.

This could be an alternative title for *Ruined Books*—the collections of nothing King.

Possessed by monstrosity, bedeviled by lusciousness, off my big rocker candy-ass mountain's majesty.

I guess I'm a special case.

In the thralls of my mind, whatever "thralls" means, I wonder why I start a sentence like that.

Why, oh why?

Leaves of Ass—June 1, 2016

Two smaller projects have occupied me this spring, and this was the first, a study in cl-ASS-ic American literature.

This volume of Walt is just like the one I had when I first read Mr. Whitman, bound in grass-like green fibers.

That is, the book was bound in grass-like fibers. I was not.

I wrote my senior year history term paper on Whitman, and I used this gift volume, illustrated by Lewis Daniel, as my text.

Over the weeks of work, the volume fell to pieces.

And the paper was not great.

Perhaps because I would have populated it in this way.

Indians of the Heidi—June 2, 2016

My mother liked the expression "much of a muchness," which means more of the same. So this new ruined book is more much of a muchness.

Or less?

I loved the colors of W. Langdon Kihn's paintings from the 1950s, which then have a nice struggle with the electrical '80s colors of the Heidi reprint.

And then I kept at it.

Until I had done all the pages. That's always part of the charge.

More of these two books on the creaky shelf.

Post-Modern Prairie Schoolhouse—August 7, 2016

Bibliolage is an art of filling, so what I look for is an emptiness, a capable space. When I saw *The Prairie Schoolhouse*, I knew where to go—that vastness.

It was an answer to my prayer—ies.

Fill 'er up, fella.

Next question, always: With what? A year passed, and no answer.

Then, one day, my wife, who is somewhat more reserved in ownership than I am (compare pond and ocean), came to the decision that a pile of books that had sat atop one of our bookcases, could be . . . released. Donated, dumped, repurposed?

Included among these books, an "art book" about post-modernism. It came in handy to show her students some images of p-mod architecture and painting.

That was before the Internet came along to offer her a vast supply of pictures at the click of a mouse.

So this became my opportunity to venture into biblio-architecturalage—schoolhouses adapted to the post-M and prairie populated with art models.

Incidentally, I did complete another bibliolage this summer--[Indians of the Heidi](#). Have a look.

The Art of the FAR OUT East—September 22, 2016

The books I keep in store for this process of bibliologic transformation are many, and I shelve them by size—saves space. Big books with big books. Little with little.

So books totally unlike each other might stand side by side for years, then go to their tasks when called.

The two that form the core of this creation coexisted in that proximity for years, similarly tall (ca. fourteen inches) and slim, like *The New Yorker* right after Christmas.

They both had numbers in the subtitle (...*16 Plates in Color from the Work of Old Chinese and Japanese Masters* AND *69 ...Blackout Posters*), and they both had been around for years.

Time to serve. The result, though, is a bibliolage too big for my scanner to capture, so you'll have to trust me beyond the margins.

Far out!!

... *16 Plates* is one of those de luxe volumes (printed in Switzerland) that has a blank page on the verso. Thus, lotsa space, and I needed more Orientalia to balance my ample ultraviolet poster.

I also had the Torii masters for a theatrical touch.

The rest was music—and glue. More on the [Creaky Shelf](#).

50 Photographs Black and White—November 23, 2016

Jessica Lange's astonishing book of photographs stands tall on any shelf, and the pictures are vast in black and white. Some spread across two pages.

Others face a huge field of blank.

Leni Riefenstahl got her start making films in Nazi Germany, most famously *Triumph of the Will*. Later—after—she took a still camera to Africa and brought native grace to her white pages.

Kehinde Wiley begins with the art one might find in books and would inevitably find in museums, and then he insinuates his blackness.

There is alignment in this juxtaposition.

And maybe some oneness.

That's enough.

Sunset: The Magazine of Victorian Living—February 6, 2017

Santa Barbara Public Library offered a bound volume of Western American domesticana—*Sunset* magazine, vintage 1954.

Another bin brought a crumbling volume of Victorian domesticana—Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller and Christmas Books*, vintage ca. 1870s.

And another Mark Twain's *A Tramp Abroad*, vintage ca. 1880.

They all know a way home.

Then there is I, vintage 1955.

My name is all over it.

And change to White King!

Oops!—April 23, 2017

Remarkable what cheek one finds in one's life by accident of being rich.
Style for style's sake.

Chic by Accident details the simple elegance of a life with cash and a life with vowels (Spanish, Italian, French).

The book is listed on amazon.com, but its sales rank is over eighteen million, which means it probably never was for sale. One—and only one—used copy is listed for over seven hundred dollars. (I noticed that only after gluing a few dozen pix in it.)

Every feature of this book is a class act (-ion suit of clothes horse set).

There is nothing specific it is trying to sell. A feeling.

An angle.

A life style.

A spin.

After buying it at the Planned Parenthood book sale for ten dollars, at which I gulped, I kept it on the shelf two years.

It's a big book, and so it calls for impressive size in its inserts.

Then I came across *Shameless Art*, a volume of sexy genre images from the pulps.

And that led me to another volume in the same series, *Savage Art*, the same sort of stuff except mostly guys with guns and gritted teeth.

And the scale—it's the scale I liked best, as these pulp figures could fill the vacancies of Euro chicanery. And from all that we derive *Shameless Chic by Accident: Savage Art*.

Vulgarity is in the eyes of the beholder.

West Point: The Collection 2017–May 23, 2017

A quickie. Catalogue that came in the mail. Rooms unaffordable.

Invade.

Armed. Assault.

A little more on creaky shelf.

A Child's Garden of Bonsai Ballet Verses—June 11, 2017

All books start with trees.

Trees that dance over time belong with

Dancers that are poetry

in the world. Be. Young.

Like the verse of Rob Lou Steve & Son

Worse than words.

Sick Kitsch: More Than the Body in Question—November 26, 2017

My recent efforts in bibliolage have gone in the direction of Odd--that wild Norwegian painter, Odd Nerdrum—and in the process I became (or remain) Odd King.

For an intro to Mr. Odd, have a look at the Nerdrum Museum at: <http://nerdrummuseum.com>

See especially the page there called "What is Kitsch?" where you will get a grasp on the be-all and end-all of kitsch and take in the cornucopia of its effects (or is it cornucoprohilia?).

Mr. N has pondered this topic (his version of it) at least since 1998, but in 2011 he published a consummate study called *Kitsch: More Than Art*, co-written with Jan-Ove Tuv and others.

This became my domain of bibliologic kitsch-consciousness.

Kitsch grows from figurative art in the hands of the deft and the blonde.

It's a mushy play for the art market dollar.

Odd and his kind know how to use soft-focus and soft-brain in a way that convinces the patron that the real thing has been seen.

It's the effect of life and idea and lovely form and, above all, profundity--all in heavy daubs of paint.

Nerdrum and Tuv notice this effect in a long lineage of artists—precursors—as well as in Odd and the work of his students. (Above is Andrew Wyeth—also see my *Commedia dell'Arte of Andrew Wyeth*.)

It's about how sentiment dresses the human form, telling stories of the BIG THINGS, like life and death.

And I respect that.

Of course, one could call it sly or cynical or sick.

And I respect that.

I took the affront head on—with dead and diseased and sliced-up bodies.

Plasticination and medical illustration and anatomical simulations; these are all, surely, in the room with Mr. N's kitsch, and so I put them on his pages.

Cut close.

Marvel US Places—January 1, 2018

This one began with a gift and turned into a graft—characters from the Marvel universe settled onto gritty urban scenes, product of Ms. Madoko Takagi.

Marvel characters fly out or up or forward, and that is a way to go in cities. My in-laws Scott and Susan found a sumptuous reference book of the

marvel-ous, and they knew it should be mine (to cut). Curiously, Madoko Takagi's book was published in Tucson, which is where Scott and Susan live, decidedly away from the city.

Characters settle well in these urban scenes. Or out.

The photographer left broad blank pages, the better to highlight her pix, but I have a tendency to fill, and so I got other fine art photos from an exhibition catalogue. Curiously, this catalogue was published in Santa Barbara, which is where I live, decidedly away from the city.

The Americans China—January 31, 2018

Robert Frank's *The Americans* dwelt on imagery of an America startlingly different from the gorgeous vistas of William Henry Jackson, Ansel Adams, or Brett Weston, not to mention Hollywood portraiture and *The National Geographic*.

His photos also stood opposite the fussy formalism of Edward Weston and Paul Caponigro.

In 1955 (my birth year), Frank captured the unsightly yet authentic, the obtrusive ugliness, of brash post-war character.

There were motorcycles, rude and discordant.

Make-out spots, like sacred sites.

And I thought to bring China, in its sad pre-modern face.

I had two volumes of images of imperial China—one was called *The Face of China*.

That seemed a match.

Condoleezza Liberace—February 2, 2018

These names converse/converge: Condoleezza and Liberace.

Rice/Race is the link.

The Condi book is in a huge series of bios of folks like Kobe, Hollywood Hogan, Derek Jeter, Sinbad, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Brandy, and Rafael Palmeiro.

Even a third grader (A in reading) could get through them in an hour or so.

Liberace was not among them.

He was in a book of cut-outs, and he still is!

Ralph Gibson Grünewald El Greco Cosmode—April 15, 2018

Mannerism. It is a term of art history that applies to a late Renaissance push beyond the harmony and balance of Italian ceiling painters like Michelangelo (you really want a stable ceiling!) and the humane portraitists (you really want to contain the imbalance of Leonardo).

The Mannerists felt that art needed heightening and elongation,

torsion and coloration,

dyssymmetry and dyspepsia

to convey the superpower of religious message and its awkward fit on puny human form.

I came upon two books of El Greco and one of Matthias Grünewald,

and I knew I wanted my scissors to trace those stretched contours into the 20th century.

But landing where?

Another chance find was a book about Japanese cosplay with a how-to fashion orientation,

called *Cosmode #1: The Glamour Issue*.

In this world, kids go to great lengths to refit themselves

in the garb of anime or superhero or camp.

They heighten, they elongate, they anime-ate. Icon do!

Still no hall for these outspoken ones, no locality, no home.

Here we go, Light Years closer to here—a book of photos by Ralph Gibson,

another national imager, like Robert Frank, like Walker Evans.

An Artist Poops—May 18, 2018

Poop goes the easel! Darling little books sometimes catch my eye--and my ruinous fancy. *An Artist* looks to be a gift book, and as such it consists of little more than "the thought that counts."

It's a gift I accept.

I think.

M. B. Goffstein, its creator in 1980, was a painter and a Caldecott Medal-winning illustrator of children's books, and her books call for such words as "sweet" and "whimsical" and "wholesome."

"Beneath the delicacy and fragility is a core of astounding strength," said the *Washington Post Book World*.

Her earliest books came out in the 1970s—pint-sized and occupied by line-drawn figures who do the opposite of fill the page.

Her people are small and neat, and they tend to occupy the middle of the page, surrounded by a pastel landscape and sky. I can't imagine a child leaping with joy upon receiving this book, but I can imagine a certain sort of parent taking comfort from knowing it is on the shelf somewhere.

Publishing children's books is a competitive affair. Success comes at the forefront of a cutting edge. At a moment in history when kids were more likely reaching for a Gameboy than a booklet with a little old man on the cover, Goffstein seems to have opted for a moment of reflection on 2500 years of making. (The root of "art" is in Greek verb "to fit," as in "armor"—a shaping production.)

What is it to be an artist? Answer the question in 117 words, the total in this book, words of three syllables or less.

Fewer?

Six of those words must be "God."

A successful artist plumbs the marketplace, and the children's book marketplace has, since Goffstein's tidy tome, unloaded such competitors as Taro Gomi's *Everyone Poops*. That brought on *Everybody Poos*; *Everybody Potties*; *Everybody Poops 410 Pounds Per Year*; *Poems of Poop*; "Bloop, Bloop!" *Goes the Poop*; *Where's the Poop?*; *It Hurts When I Poop!*; *Come Out, Mr. Poop!*; *How to Poop Every Day*; *Super Pooper*; *Everybody Poops in Their Pants*; and *Softy the Poop*.

By the way, there are also books to defang the fart for everybody.

(Artsy fartsy = hard to picture.)

Poop was the thing, and so, inevitably, there arose *Celebrities Poop* and other specimens of pre-school proctology.

And scatology

One of those sad necessary books informs us that, in fact, *Not Everyone Poops*, due to digestive system disabilities. This one offers a cover

illustration showing a bird's eye view of a toilet mid-flush, and the water is ONLY yellow. That one is for the phew.

But EVERYONE makes art.

Full Moon Dancing—August 25, 2018

Lunacy! Several moons have passed since I finished this bibliolage, but I have not gotten around to showing it.

As some of you know, I am a professor of Theater and Dance. That is what I am called because I teach in the Department of Theater and Dance.

But of dance I do little. I like the music. I play the music—gavotte, capriccio, rag.

But on my toes I know my awkwar-

dness.

My clum-

siness

-ness.

Maybe on the moon I'd be light enough

on my feet with no one to watch.

So I had the book about the moon exploration, from blast off to ionosphere
to eagle-has-landed

to giant mankind-step, Rover in the Sea of Tranquility

to Roger, Houston ("Don't screw the pooch!") to splashdown on the Mother.

And my colleagues' retirement discards and some junkshop ballroom
guides and old ABT calendars

gave me Dance—contract and release—

to put on the bright side of the moon, forever.

Raggedy Ann and Ayn Rand: The Lonely Ones—September 26, 2018

This one was at first going to be just a two-way combo—Raggedy Ann and
Ayn Rand = Raggedy Ayn.

The Ayn Rand Omnibus (= Ayn-us) followed on someone's movie about her, and it was loaded with pix of her.

At all ages.

On all sorts of occasions.

Looking always Ayn.

Like she had been drawn, a character--raggedy.

Happy with herself, like Ann. (Andy too.)

Mr. Johnny Gruelle put them in many a strange situation--

This one with a Paper Dragon, but just not enough glue to hold the bibliolage together.

So I turned to William Steig, one of his best: *The Lonely Ones*. From 1941.

And that just caught the mood.

Mine.

The Dark: New Nude X—November 14, 2018

A book in a brown paper wrapper means . . .

Well, let's just say that when I found a book so wrapped on my parents' bookshelves, inside I found not *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, but *Lolita!*

I can't show much of this bibliolage because it is the completion of a series based on Lemony Snicket's *The Dark*—what lurks there—which began with *The Dark G (Disney/Bible)*, continued with *The Dark PG-13 (Secret Language of Sleep)*, then *The Dark R (Sexology)*, then *The Dark NC-17 (Erotic)*, and winds up with *The Dark: New Nude X*.

I had the *Nerve*. (For the reference, Google "nerve" + "erotica.") Fine art nudie photos that poke at the edges . . .

. . . of what we should see.

Feuerman/Vermeer—December 27, 2018

NOTICE: Feuerman. NOTICE: Vermeer. The twain shall be one.

And the one shall be twee.

And the three shall be foe.

And the fire shall be sex.

And the seven shall be eaten.

And the nigh shall be taken.

Shakti Uncle Wiggily—February 5, 2019

What is a "wig," and why is it so funny? Our dog "Wiglaf" (from Beowulf) wears his grizzled muzzle with a grin, and it is as if he understands what it means to "wig out"; to "wiggle out"; to Uncle Wiggily out.

My wife Wendy wiles away her mornings doing yoga.

We all nap in the afternoon. That's healthy, right?

Our childish approach to age is Uncle Wiggily's.

Howard R. Garis's character, who was a favorite when I was a kid, was always gamboling.

Big feet flying.

His clothes were natty.

His pose was in midair.

He told me of the joys of getting old.

And stiff.

Tree of Life (A Performance Event)—June 30, 2019

On June 20, 2019, I carried out the creation of this thing I call *Tree of Life (TM)*. On the floor of the Modern Dance Studio at UCSB I laid out my entire cereal box collection, some 2300 boxes, with the assistance of my daughters Ruthie and Eva. Many people took pictures of the performance and its final product, and I am showing several of them here.

(First, have a look at this amazing time-lapse made by mark Moskowitz:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/6r3odp2hq815zj1/Timelapse_music1_cc.mp4?
dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/6r3odp2hq815zj1/Timelapse_music1_cc.mp4?dl=0)

(link is external)

These were taken by the filmmaker Mark Moskowitz:

These were taken by Maury Lord:

An excellent photo, taken by Paul Wellman, accompanies the article in the *Santa Barbara Independent*, with outstanding article by Charles Donelan:

[https:](https://www.independent.com/2019/06/27/cereal-box-collection-displayed/)

[\(link is external\)](https://www.independent.com/2019/06/27/cereal-box-collection-displayed/)

[//www.independent.com/2019/06/27/cereal-box-collection-displayed/](https://www.independent.com/2019/06/27/cereal-box-collection-displayed/)

[\(link is external\)](https://www.independent.com/2019/06/27/cereal-box-collection-displayed/)

The Santa Barbara News-Press also did an article--page 1. Here is a link, but the story is behind a paywall. Sadly.

[http://www.newspress.com/Top/Article/article.jsp?](http://www.newspress.com/Top/Article/article.jsp?Section=LOCAL&ID=568426308112089099)

[Section=LOCAL&ID=568426308112089099](http://www.newspress.com/Top/Article/article.jsp?Section=LOCAL&ID=568426308112089099)

Pun Chaos Pun Couture—July 22, 2019

Another wonderful old artist's portfolio, picked off a UCSB junk heap, houses this companion piece to *Owls of Old Time*.

This one is huge, almost big enough to contain a full leaf of Kate Doordan Klavan's wallpaper samples, but not quite, so I had to do a little cutting. Mostly, though, I could depend on the crumbling edge of the page to bring me the right proportion.

It was obvious to me that I had at last found a good use of a book called *Punk Chaos Punk Couture*. This deluxe volume was published by the Fashion Institute associated with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. They

wanted to explore the crossing over of punk style in the music world and punk style on the fashion runway.

These two "looks" thrill me not at all. My impulse is to say these people need some wallpaper in their lives. And paper dolls.

So that is where I put them to make a mockery of themselves.

I reused words from the garish Met book to turn "punk" into "pun."

This portfolio held twenty leaves.

I had this book of Marcel Marceau putting on twenty different hats, and the numbers gave me the equation.

No scanner within my means is big enough to grasp the whole page, so I decided to leave the pages in plastic, which brings out a reflective distortion.

Which I like.

Owls of Old Time—July 22, 2019

In fall 2018 I had the privilege of having my bibliolages shown at the Santa Barbara Arts Fund Gallery, in the Funk Zone, along with several other

collage artists. The show was curated by the brilliant Dug Uyesaka, who is a major figure in the collage and assemblage world in Santa Barbara, and he decided to include the work of an extraordinary artist who had died in the summer of 2018--Kate Doordan Klaven.

I never met Kate, but I have heard much about her and seen her dreamy collages, all small in a way that befits an artist who wrote an important book about miniatures, like dollhouse furniture.

She was also at one time the voice of all-news radio in New York on stations such as WINS and ultimately at WABC. But she came to California to care for a brother with a progressive disease, and not long after his death she also passed away, at the age of 72.

Members of Kate's family had the wonderful idea of sharing Kate's collage material with other artists in the show, and by this generous gesture I obtained materials that went into this bibliolage and another one (next blog entry).

Sample books of old wallpaper, from nearly a century ago, and several sets of Victorian paper dolls, and this book about owls.

I already had a large binder that seemed perfect to evoke the wallpaper books, which were fragile in the extreme. And I quickly came up with the title.

As an admixture I used images from two books about proto-humans—prehistoric signs of life that also work as signs of death. Then one day I woke up with the opening lines of a poem, and soon I saw how that poem could thread through the whole book. Here is the poem:

Owls of Old Time

I train my eyes

On the night that is

Experience past,

Life lived down

To zero light.

Eyes peer back at me

In search of prey

For talons to clutch, crush.

These are ancestral eyes,

Mine myopic and blue,

In regard to living

How and suddenly now,

Here and suddenly near.

They press me flat

For the tearing.

Awash in blood lineage,

I descend in dark time.

My name a tomb

For human breath,

I go down stairs

To primate depth.

Cryptic excavation

Lasts till daybreak.

Layers of memory,

Peeled in broad swaths

From bedroom wall,

Unsheathe all that raged,

Uproars of spent years.

Spates of enslavement,

Hacked limbs,

Unfriendly rampage,

The odd revolution—

You could fill a book.

The killers litter history

And its pre-dawn raids

With dismal crime.

Who? Who is above

My paper head,

Wishing the dead

Were not so still

As to be unseen?

Cuba Baba Biblé—August 21, 2019

What goes well with Cuba, the book of photographs?

Christianity and consumerism.

Sort of fun to make those incursions . . . er, obvious.

Sort of obvious to make those incursions . . . er, fun.

And I enjoyed making a neat box for it out of a book I was allowed to scavenge from the Elverhoj Museum in Solvang.

It's called *Erhververnes Funktionær Stand*.

Perfect.

And more

And more

And more

And, yes, more

And still more to be found by clicking [this](#).

Forbidden Springs of Joy—September 30, 2019

By the standards of Facebook, I cannot show much of this new bibliolage.

But I swear all the naughty stuff is about two hundred years old.

And by a famous English artist, much-collected, National Gallery-worthy-Thomas Rowlandson.

A book put together by The Hogarth Club in Los Angeles in the 1970s revealed the hard-core of British caricature.

Where to put it? Ah, a book—a "gift book" (please and thank you!) called *The Springs of Joy*, also from the 1970s.

Heartfelt sentiments, snippets of poesy.

Now the raunchier stuff can be found [here](#) on The Creaky Shelf.

My Dolly's Home by Valentino Pucci Chanel—November 3, 2019

A pretty cool children's book, 98 years old.

A proto-pop-up book. That gate opens.

An imagined space in which a story of a Dolly name Betty has her existence.

See the little cabinets. They open.

This book seemed to want Mexican penance figures, Euro-models, and engraved animals.

Interactive. The fence swings.

Betty swings. Dolly, too.

Real West Sites and Structures—February 9, 2020

The West existed—exists—as a fiction in "the real West."

And the real west had its sites & structures in the West. . .

. . . on the sites of the structures photographed by Edwin S. Curtis, frontier photographer,

who brought his camera there,

where Native Americans lived.

That's art for you.

Two New Projects—March 4, 2020

Two new projects, both a little hard to account for.

A murkiness that comes from the murk we live through now.

How the hell do we live here?

And whyfor?

Something of a mystery.

Something of a struggle.

Or so.

Or else.

Or.

And.

And one more.

