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## From "The Fabulous Life of Guillaume Apollinaire"

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somed with white flowers that year. After all Dostoyevsky had never met our old woman.

*Translated by Wai-lim Yip*

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GUNNAR HARDING / SWEDEN

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from *The Fabulous Life of Guillaume Apollinaire*

and here we have Paris and the boulevards  
hum with Citroen Renault Roualt Apol-  
linaire and here we have a huge calligram  
his heart a flame upsidedown burning the  
streets and they become clean altarcloths  
and she moans and the Eiffel tower plunges  
into her and she lies naked on the washer-  
women's raft and it comes adrift and sli-  
thers over cobbled streets and she tries to  
draw the white tablecloth round her and at  
the great banquet aboard the washerwom-  
en's raft they ate her and Cendrars filled  
his fountain pen with blood and signed his  
name on her thigh just before the tricolor  
was broken out and pauvre Guillaume with  
a big bloodfilled hole in his head fluttered  
from the flagstaff in his skyblue uniform  
while two sad languorous acrobats stood in  
an industrial waste land and a blue dog  
loped through the town and drank great  
gulps of yellow chasing after that decapi-  
tated sun whom all seek and it rolled down

from the guillotine while Fantomas fired  
his black pistol out the window and the  
lilies hung from rusty barbed wire and it

was months since they died as all of a sudden the Blessed Virgin put in an appearance and everybody blew his nose in his tie and somebody lying under the table yelled Vive la France at the same time as thousands of wax candles were shot out of machine guns and Bleriot glided in over the town in his puttering monoplane and bombed the streets with electric light-bulbs and the Trans-Siberian express choo-chooed in with a gilded samovar for an engine and somebody sang lalala and she had black stockings and her belly was a sun a disc a revolving railway-carriage-wheel and a hundred men in tails and black moustaches rose simultaneously and began speech-making and the acrobats with sad languorous eyes stood close together and all of a sudden it grew utterly quiet

Apollinaire was perpetually in flight across Europe running with his blue suitcase over platforms and jumping onto moving trains while hundreds of yellow tickets fluttered out of his pockets and once he saw the Venus de Milo throw herself out the window of a compartment and he pulled the emergency brake till the handle came away in his hand and the train stopped in the middle of a black tunnel and when he rushed out he saw Venus lying there all white and cold beside the track with her arms torn off and he covered her up with leaves which he ripped out of his notebooks and the train moved off again and the carafes went on joggling in their stands and the stale yellow water slopped up and down

Apollinaire lived in Germany inside a big cuckoo-clock in the Black Forest and in the evenings the English governess who was living there as well sat perched on the

Lorelei rock combing her long golden hair and Apollinaire used to stand on the bank in his Mediterranean-blue sailor suit and his eyes were filled with tears like two blue lakes and a steamer full of Germans with green hats and red hairy goosepimple legs went down the river and they were all singing "ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten" and it was here for the first time Apollinaire realized that he was headed for the sun that he had to go right bang into the sun and he invented Orphism and the English governess went back to England never dreaming that Apollinaire had loved her and she didn't even know that his name was Apollinaire and anyway it wasn't

and Apollinaire pursued the English governess all the way across Europe and while he was being jostled in the queue at the ticket window in Dieppe he saw her hurrying up the gangway and with a shock he saw the gangway being pulled up after her and she was wearing a big flowered hat on her head and carried a pile of blue exercise books under her arm and the Channel was suddenly full of submarines which changed into huge sharks and they opened their enormous jaws and snapped at him when wearing a polka-dot bathing costume he was about to jump into the water and swim after the ship and there he stood on the lonesome quay with his big red heart sobbing in his hand and watched the ship disappearing in the direction of Dover

and Apollinaire and all the cubists came pattering down the Boulevard Montparnasse in a yellow little car that had a silver trombone as a horn and all the traffic lights changed from blue to pink to an orgy of simultaneous colors and they played the Original Dixieland One-Step on their

horn as they smashed into a wooden ramshackle hut where Rousseau the painter lived in some sort of friendly jungle with huge lions sleeping on tiny cushions and white rabbits sticking their heads up out of flowerpots and Rousseau made them some chocolate and all the cubists laughed so much they nearly died as they looked around but Apollinaire didn't laugh but felt that in some way this was the place where he was home and late at night when all the cubists had fallen asleep he saw Rousseau putting on the parade-uniform of the Custom House and with his head inside the fireplace peeping up through the chimney before he started to paint the faces of the stars on a little wooden panel

camouflaged as a potted palm Apollinaire managed to sneak into the Louvre and stole the Mona Lisa and Picasso painted a replica of the Mona Lisa but in place of her world-famous smile he put Apollinaire's smile. infinitely sad. this is the picture which is now on view in the Louvre. Leonardo's Mona Lisa they threw off the Pont Neuf into the Seine late one night and it now hangs in a hostelry a few miles downstream

yes it was the sun he loved more than anything else the sun and all that reminded him of it oranges grapefruit melons medallions gongs and women and at this very moment especially Marie Laurencin whose elbows were like chickens' legs and who was so skinny and bony that when Rousseau painted her portrait they had to pad her out with cushions and they say that Marie was the one who informed against Apollinaire after the theft of the Mona Lisa and a dozen detectives sneaked in after him when he went into a cinema and suddenly the cinema organ stopped playing and the

lights came up and all the detectives jumped Apollinaire and dragged him to court where he had to strip off his blue sailor suit and in his pockets they found seventy-eight poems for Marie Laurencin and four oranges and a Bosnian stamp all of which was used as evidence against him and he was condemned to imprisonment for life but on the very first day in prison Apollinaire dug a tunnel under the wall and he saw the sun at the end of the tunnel and he crawled in that direction until the whole tunnel filled with light

some time in the summer of 1914 Apollinaire stepped into a painting by Robert Delaunay and in that picture Apollinaire was a goalkeeper diving for a ball which was flying straight into the sun which *was* the sun and The Big Wheel went on spinning round. orange seats skyblue seats lemon-colored seats went round and round and his fingers were clutching after the sun and the whole world and Apollinaire with it flew right bang into the sun with flags and pennants and red blue yellow balls were colliding and went on spinning on the green table and the children were waving their hands and making love in the wet grass with their pink legs twined round each other and all the letters were half eaten away and the rats came out of their traps with big yellow lumps of cheese in their mouths and they gnawed through the ropes and everybody was free again and Apollinaire rose like a huge balloon straight up into the sun in total freedom through white woolly clouds up into cool blue air until the shouts of the people couldn't be heard any longer and the balls were colliding soundlessly and all of a sudden he saw the whole world filling up with rats and that was the opening of

## World War One

it rained and rained and all over Europe  
trenches were dug and filled with slime  
and screams and blood and tattered bodies  
and frogs and rats and lice and pus and in  
Paris people danced in the streets for joy  
and gave flowers to all the soldiers before  
they were sent forward to the trenches to  
be changed into screams and blood and  
slime and pus and Jean Cocteau organized  
a voluntary ambulance-corps with uni-  
forms specially designed by Picasso and  
Madame Delaunay and baskets filled with  
cold chicken and wine and cheese they  
went off to the battlefield but already in  
l'Hay-les-Roses they met what remained  
of a dragoon-regiment that had been under  
heavy grenade fire and it was no longer  
possible to see which were dragoons and  
which were horses and over everything  
there buzzed black clouds of flies and Coc-  
teau jumped out of the ambulance-car and  
puked and so they hurried back to Paris  
and told Apollinaire who didn't believe a  
word but just smiled and said that he had  
enlisted

from Goethe trench the enemy sighted  
Apollinaire on his white horse riding along  
the western front in no man's land and  
straightaway they sent back word to  
Nietzsche trench from which a corporal  
later to be Chancellor of the Reich in Ger-  
many was dispatched and he ordered the  
heavy howitzers to open fire on Apollinaire  
who was slightly wounded when a shell  
went off inside his skull and switched him  
on like a huge lightbulb and he himself  
said afterwards that he saw a big red flower  
shoot up out of the ground and he drew his  
sabre to cut it off and he sat down calmly  
and wrote three obscene postcards to three

different women until he felt sick and began puking glass fragments at this point his subordinates saw clearly that he had been wounded and he was carried to the rear where they opened up his head and took out several tons of broken glass and steel wire and what looked suspiciously like a naked woman and nothing would ever be the same again and Apollinaire came out of the anesthetic and cried out that nothing would ever be the same again and they wrapped him up in yards and yards of white bandages

on his deathbed Apollinaire saw in a vision the three crosses of Golgotha and they stood out sharp and clear for him and likewise the three who had been crucified and when he saw who they were he was smitten with woeful dread and he began to shake all over because nailed to the crosses hung the father the son and the holy spirit and he realized that the two hanging to the left and to the right were not suffering guiltless because one had had his own son killed and the other had seduced a sleeping virgin and that the man in the middle was poetry was Apollinaire himself and among the weeping women he saw his own mother's made-up white face and blood-red lips and he had loved all the other women too and they still loved him and would go on loving him and he lifted up his head and across his face blood and sweat flowed and he moved his lips in order to speak but was seized with a violent fit of coughing and died with a ghastly grin on his face which however soon turned into his usual meek sad little smile

the day Apollinaire died his beautiful red-haired wife threw open the window giving on to the boulevard and let out a yellow ca-

nary. the day Apollinaire died Mona Lisa  
in the Louvre gave such a great belly-laugh  
that the electric alarm bells went off and  
five bewildered janitors ran round and  
round in circles like a committee of crazed  
hens. the day Apollinaire died five weary  
women stood on the Pont Mirabeau and  
scattered paper flowers over the water  
while troops marched across the bridge  
amid the cheering of the populace and all  
the church bells and factory sirens boomed  
out in each others ears. the day Apollinaire  
died a wrongly addressed postcard was dis-  
patched from the Post Office in Pourville  
and the text read:

*Bonjour mon poète je me souviens  
de votre voix*

*Translated by the author and Sydney Smith*

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TOMAZ SALAMUN / YUGOSLAVIA

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## I Have a Horse

I have a horse. My horse has four legs.  
I have a record player. On my record player I sleep.  
I have a brother. My brother is a sculptor.  
I have a coat. I have a coat to keep me warm.  
I have a plant. I have a plant to have green in my room.  
I have Marushka. I have Marushka because I love her.  
I have matches. With matches I light cigarettes.  
I have a body. With a body I do the most beautiful things that I do.  
I have destruction. Destruction causes me many troubles.  
I have night. Night comes to me through the window of my room.  
I have fun racing cars. I race cars because car racing is fun.  
I have money. With money I buy bread.