

Three foot shallows drowner

What is there but hips and thighs
To a black dwarf?
And the rudimentary calls and crying
Of sparrows swinging out
Against the axis of her?
What is there but singing up at lullabies
To black brevity and the squandered soul?
Anthracite too has its night—
It is fleshed-out in length, not light—
And she, who should have stretched
The farther reaches of her life
To suck the top-most branches dry of fruit,
Has limped the bird-worn refuse
To a sour wine
And, with slight amusement, seen it turn to vinegar.

“It could be worse.
I could be blind.
I could be blind and palsied.
But what I want to know is
Jesus: tall, or short
Like me?”

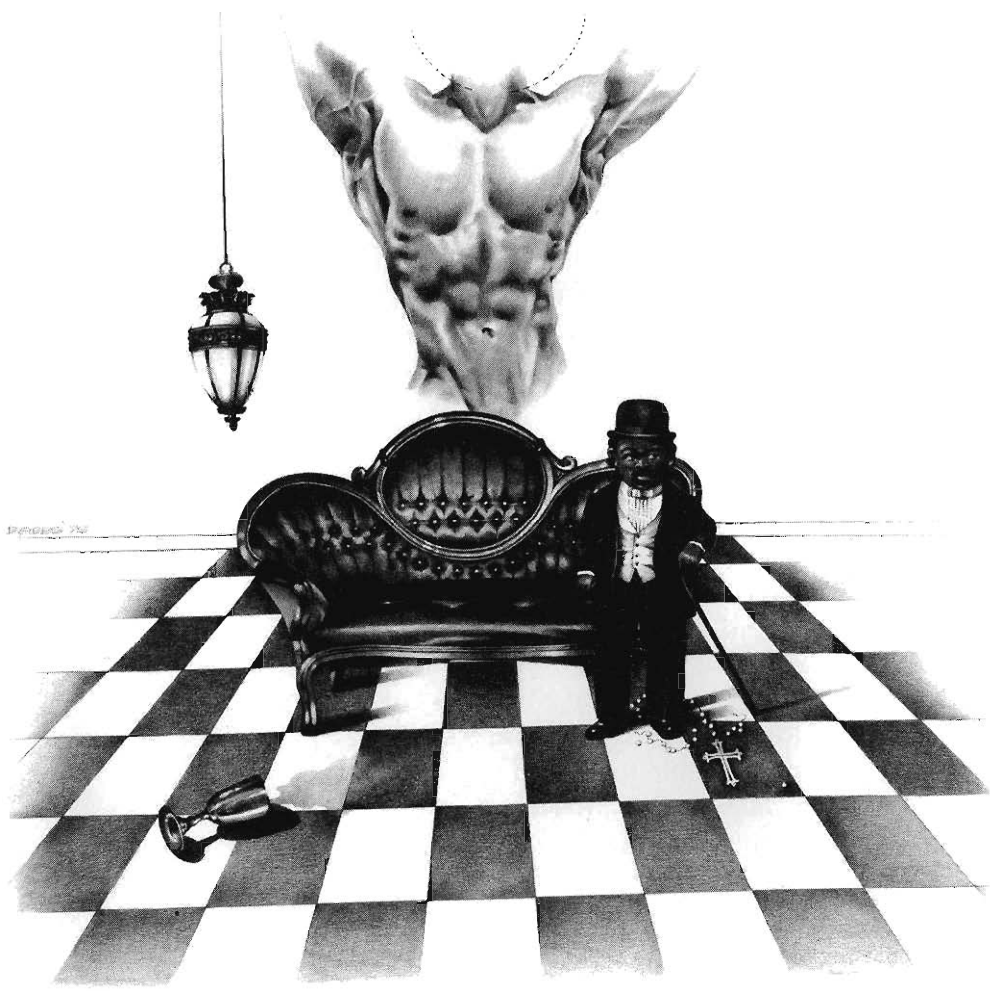


Illustration: 2011

Crippled doves and wounded toms
Have more in common than with others of their kind:
Petroleum drowned fish and blind
Search out a final refuge in the Fisher's net,
Where sparrows wind the coiling twine
Of years about twin trunks
Distended in Omega to support full fruit
On bonsai stems.

Look-up then, dwarf,
At where the night falls, blooded,
Upon final lancets of the day,
And see, along the gore of sun's death,
Him—the dead son risen—riding,
Whose flesh, as white as flame,
Is stretched to sheer, translucent sparsity
Along a nine foot frame,
And—unable to ascend
To palm, wrist, breast—
Reach down to where the pins went in
And touch his name:
Black Dwarf Jehovah—
Brother to your pain.