

## Intersections

by Jns & mazaher

February-April, 2012

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The hiatus years, seen through the eyes of Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes.

A long, rambling prequel of sorts to *Shanghai, straightaway*, a double 221b by mazaher, at [http://www.mazaher.org/BBC-SH\\_shanghai.pdf](http://www.mazaher.org/BBC-SH_shanghai.pdf).

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(voice over)/Jns -- Lucida Console 10

Harro Troezke (voice over)/mazaher -- Courier New 10 -- HT

Sherlock/Jns -- Arial 11 -- SH

Sherlock/mazaher -- Verdana 10 -- SH

Mycroft/Jns -- Baskerville 12 -- MH

Mycroft/mazaher -- Times New Roman 12 -- MH

footnotes: Verdana 9

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Artwork by Brody Neuschwander from his website at <http://www.brodyneuschwander.com> and from *Belle Lettere Book. Una lettera, mille parole*, edited by Carlo Buffa, Verona: Fedrigoni, 1997, pp. 158-159.

Sherlock's handwritten notes courtesy of athens7.

All unattributed photos and manip by mazaher.

Very special thanks to Adrienne J. Odasso, for allowing two separate real worlds to touch.

And to pennypaperbrain, who writes.

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51°30'26"N -- 0°7'39"W

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HT:

The story begins in mid-air.  
Or rather, it proceeds from a fall  
to a flight  
to --perhaps-- a landing.

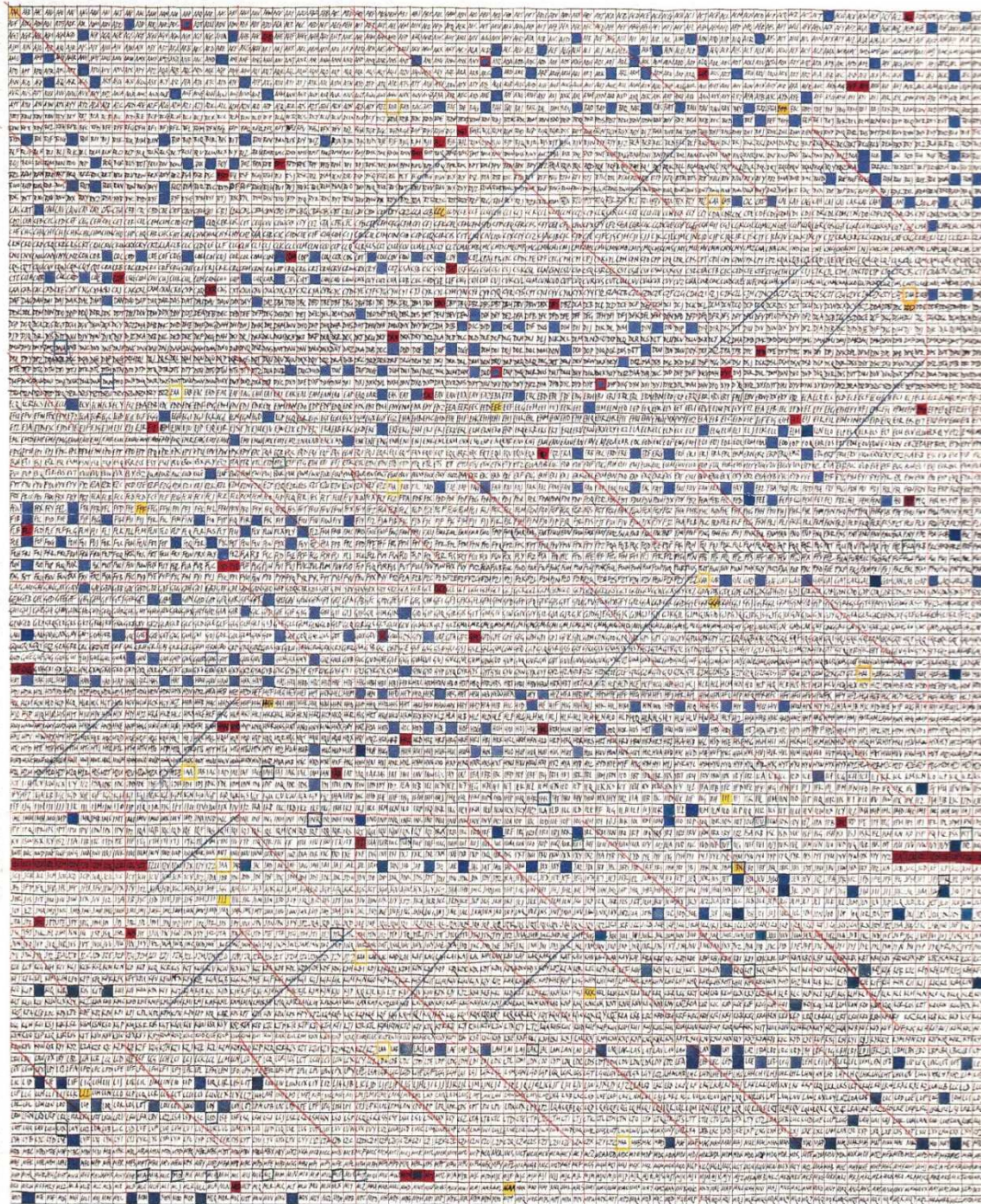


 London from space looks like a bullet through bullet-proof glass  
this is the only thing one need remember to navigate it

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<sup>1</sup> London from space ([http://www.sopitas.com/site/154519-la-tierra-vista-desde-el-espacio/london-from-space\\_2192333k/](http://www.sopitas.com/site/154519-la-tierra-vista-desde-el-espacio/london-from-space_2192333k/))





HT:

There was an angel with sooty-gray wings  
who ruled straight lines across a grid.  
Red and blue for two brothers  
(square to each other, slanted  
sideways, intersecting)  
red or blue squares the hits  
in a never-ending  
game of Battleships  
between them.  
The squares, nucleotids in DNA

<sup>2</sup> BRODY NEUENSCHWANDER, *The Book of Births and Beginnings* (1997)

👑 This is the map Mycroft would draw,  
with each white cell a crime linked to Moriarty and each square  
something  
Sherlock or Mycroft's people did to prevent or solve  
or conclusively bring  
it back to Moriarty and his clients.  
Yellow would be the Met. The block  
of red is Reichenbach (Sherlock as flashpoint)  
and 13 in one. Mycroft  
would analyze the diagonals of squares and draw in lines of connecting  
crimes, similar, possibly related crimes.

HT:

The mind rewinds, traces itself back  
searching for the mistake.  
A mistake.  
An explanation.

SH:

we agreed I wouldn't leave the flat for anything less than a seven (halogen, prime, neutral)  
on a scale of fourteen, two above chromatic, two below two octave, two weeks  
that is what I have with John; agreements  
Mycroft makes laws-- Boxing Day, morgues, caring  
Moriarty calls  
it is less than a six, more a five  
or three: the Game and Richard Brook (trinity, his holy ghost)  
John makes agreements, they're for the best, they're sensible and I break them before I...  
fall. fell.

HT:

Sherlock Holmes is dead.  
Sherlock Holmes, the fake genius, has thrown himself from a roof after his last  
victim, the actor Richard Brooks, shot himself.  
The fact that Sherlock Holmes is alive and breathing  
(breathing rather hard, right now: dying does tend to be  
a bit breath-taking)  
doesn't help much in dampening the shock.

SH:

Sherlock Holmes, the genius, faked throwing himself from a roof after his arch-enemy, the  
criminal James Moriarty, shot himself.

I'm a fake either way.

I thought life thrived on truth. But without this fake death, three very real deaths would have  
happened. Three people are alive because of a lie. How many more lies are going to be needed  
to keep them that way?

MH:

I told John, my brother has the brain of a scientist or a philosopher--  
A brain, to be sure. Obviously a brain does not define an individual  
though it may be a particular, perhaps distinguishing characteristic.  
We seem to identify the brain, the imagined seat of intelligence,  
placed opposite the heart, the imagined home of emotions, and define  
person, personality, personhood with the relative weight of the two.  
I say this because Sherlock's brain has sustained significant trauma.

And what of his heart? My brother's EKG clips quietly while he lies  
suspended in coma. Our people have done what they can. Everything  
remains to be seen.

I asked John, what can we deduce about his heart?--  
Unfair, to ask a leading question, textbook. He answered admirably,  
honestly. John's not one to hold back in expressing his opinions  
a quality one comes to value in an environment of stilted communications.  
Intelligence, you see. Sherlock never disabused him of the notion  
that my words mean what they say. Perhaps my brother forgot, perhaps  
it was uncommon mercy to me. I could guess, but with Sherlock  
it's better to remain uncertain.

Sherlock knew this was as much the Queen's game as it was Moriarty's.  
How could he not?

I will arrange for helicopters to escort John Watson to Buckingham Palace;  
I will grant Sherlock unrestricted access to classified laboratories;  
I will stand down entire investigations and rewrite the records; neutralising  
unwanted elements residing near 221B Baker St is not, as the Americans say,  
a hardship.  
Yet they remained. Alive. Monitored, of course, under constant surveillance.  
The fact remains: alive.  
At one point, we added two of our own to the fray.

John believed it a matter of trust, of confidence, of failure, my disclosure. In fact,  
I tried, as much as possible, to give fair warning. He is a soldier.

There were other signs.  
The trial. The press. The police. The existence of Richard Brook.  
John accuses me of having a power complex.  
It's because silence is an insidious power.  
The power of not. Discretion to act, or remain.  
Silence communicates much, if not more.

Sherlock already knew. He did not guess the endgame; he could not

know the stakes. No one did.  
No one could.

Myself included.

As ever, we see but do not observe.

I told John, I'm sorry.  
It was not an apology to Sherlock.

Because: Coventry.  
The wheel turns.  
Nothing changes:

.  
Sherlock was codebreaker. Moriarty's message  
was apt— Sherlock held the key.  
In making my brother the target  
Moriarty made him a flashpoint  
he moved all parts of his network  
he exposed entire ligaments and agglomerations  
to destroy Sherlock.  
Sherlock realized this, and used it.  
I used it.

I told John, he has to stay with him.

John stayed.

.  
I have done many things in my life.  
I have long known that the price is unforgiveness.  
All lives end.  
All hearts are broken.  
Caring is not an advantage.  
Asking is not an option.

My brother's EKG clips steadily, marking my thoughts.  
The wheel turns.  
The world rearranges.  
My hand rests on my brother's hand.  
Our breathing quiet.  
Everything changes.



There are no definitive solutions. At best, only well-articulated problems. Our conversation has always been a tight black-and-white. Colours a scandal.

SH:

The side of angels is a foggy place.



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<sup>3</sup> Inspired by this beautiful artwork: <http://olmes.tumblr.com/post/20556408832/i-may-be-on-the-side-of-the-angels-but-dont>

210 : 12 = 175  
420 : 14 = 30  
840 : 15 = 56

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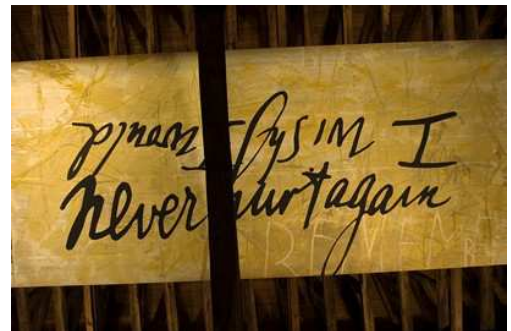
SH:

in the days recovering and internment-counterplaning they (Mycroft) ply me with low tar cigarettes  
and plastic ashtrays to keep agreements and the peace  
I visit my grave once every three weeks; it clears my head  
Mycroft insists on attending from fifty metres-- laws on morbidity  
I don't leave the compound for more than a fifteen, metric  
they've got me in Dubai  
my brother's idea of humour; flying BondAir from false terminals  
Baltimore to Heathrow to Milan to UAE and an American CIA envoy from DXB to Deira  
jetlag leaves four hours

Time either goes very slow or it goes nowhere.  
And all I ever erased is what was never useful (enough).

I resist running my hands over my arms when women pass, hijab black

This is becoming an exercise in style  
written on walls with the still-hot embers  
of my burned-out heart



HT:

Sherlock ceased believing in miracles at the age of three years and two months,  
when for seven hours and forty-three minutes he prayed God with perfect faith  
that Grand-mère be spared.

He was interrupted by his father, who took him by the hand  
and led him to her bedroom.

Grand-mère was lying there, very pale, very still, very cold,  
and very obviously not sleeping.

He didn't understand why his father insisted that she was.

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<sup>4</sup> BRODY NEUENSCHWANDER, *Ceiling painting* as part of a mixed media installation at Memling St. Jan, Bruges (2008).



Since then, he's known that miracles don't happen.  
Also, that everything has a price, and that the bill  
always comes after the fact.

He's learned that the wonder is most often in the eye of the beholder; that  
being able to reduce most phenomena to applications of known natural laws  
drastically reduces the number of serendipitous surprises.

One of his favourite hypotheses, one he wears like an old pair of slippers, is  
that no event, living being, person or relationship  
is truly unique.

He calls this realism.

He doesn't realise that it can be a form of selective blindness.

Like a cayman after a great extinction,  
everything is changed around him.

What does he want?

He's not sure anymore.

SH:

Maybe I shouldn't go back at all.  
Mycroft would be relieved if I didn't.

Maybe I should just settle into this Sigerson persona. Coordinating ecological surveys  
in at-risk areas for the UN offers safety and some interesting opportunity for detection, at least  
for a while. Five-year patterns of berry consumption by Estrilidinae in Australia; regrowth after  
slash-and-burn clearing in Mato Grosso; statistical incidence of early rescue in survival of  
seabirds after major oil leaks. Nature presents almost unlimited variety. It also ignores  
dissimulation. This increases its relaxing potential, but may increase the likelihood of  
borderline dullness.

Or I may accept that teaching post at the École Nationale Supérieure de Chimie in Montpellier.  
Their AM2N lab for nanostructures is fascinating.

I used to be able to do this... leaving whole sections of my former life behind and move on.  
Now would be a perfect time, no loose ends left.

*Mors omnia solvit.*

Or does it?

Now, I feel ties holding me back.

Attachment.

How curious.

Attachment is a risk.

It could end, and what would be left of me then?

Or it could not, and then...

*Love is a danger of a different kind.*<sup>5</sup>

John. I could leave him behind. Forget him. He's strong, he will manage. He's survived worse.  
Everybody likes him; it's easy for him to make friends. He would not be alone, now would he?

He could get a life. A better life. He's got time. We would fade into memories of each other.

They say that time heals. Perhaps, in time, the bitterness would make room for sweet  
nostalgia of younger days, a shared flat, a happy time.

John.

He can find someone else, someone who will be better for him than I could ever be.

John.

He felt like a miracle.  
But miracles don't exist.

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<sup>5</sup> EURHYTHMIC, *Love is a stranger* (1991)

MH:

I should have trained myself more carefully to the sight of blood, like Sherlock did.

I always refused to take part in the bloody sports that other boys seemed to enjoy, or at least take as a given for our class.

(If this gave me rather a queer reputation, I more than made up for it by playing an aggressive polo game and sailing my wooden 470 in every sort of weather).

I find myself rarely surprised, but my own attitude re: Moriarty has surprised me.

To begin with, I waited much too long. I didn't want to watch myself facing him. I can't make head or tail of his strategy. A spider, Sherlock called him, but no: Moriarty is (he still is, in what he left behind) slippery as an eel, and equally misplaced-- a creature of borders between water and mud, water and air, sweet- and sea-water, in-between, unexplained, tough to kill, and with a secret agenda of worldwide proportions.

I wanted to grasp him, hold him still, look at him and know everything that was there to be known. But he revealed nothing.

I revealed too much

about my brilliant, unloved younger brother,

*tall, proud, sparky, dare-devil asphodel* that he is...

*with its reckless glory, such as the Greeks loved.*<sup>6</sup>

Such as Moriarty hated, as much as he loved it.

After all was said and done, what did I know?

That Moriarty's not changeable, unpredictable.

He's unstable, radioactive in that he decays.

His head an oily place full, oddly enough, with self-loathing.

I should have had him killed,

and spared my brother's blood, not his.

SH:

better to have laws, metrics

codified words and times for speaking-- corporations

Jim Moriarty's genius was that one, two, and dregs are participants;

conspiracy is the sum of petty crime

there are no monopolies

angels will fight in grids, but reveille dissolves in the chatter of everyday speech

Mycroft wants lines severed, cells popped, signals reorganized

useless to explain detective cases to someone who sees systems in all phenomena

which is why he's asked me

"thirteen," he said "and I'll let you go home"

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<sup>6</sup> Mycroft is quoting from DAVID H. LAWRENCE, *Etruscan places* (1932).

MH:

Thirteen-- Sherlock's system is not a scale of ten, but a scale of fourteen.

Fourteen: a B/baker's (Street) dozen, twelve plus a one-sixth bonus,  
a flourish, a flower, a buttonhole.

Witness to his irrepressible generosity giving so much of himself (of what he feels  
is best in himself).<sup>7</sup>

He and John have agreements: he won't leave the flat for less than a seven.

But he and I have rules, laws.

I work on metric, base ten. Sherlock is not allowed to leave for anything more than a fifteen.

(scientist, philosopher, consulting detective).

Our priorities are different.

And yet...

Fifteen:  $10 \times 1.5$  but also  $60 : 4$  or  $120 : 8$ , closing the circle back to the duodecimal system:  
I could map the intersections.

Thirteen falls in both our scales of interest/urgency, it's one less than two weeks, it's an unlucky  
number, it's aluminum...

it's not anything like a discrete set of tasks, but a case.

HT:

There is one thing nobody knows about Mycroft, not even Sherlock.  
When he was a young man, when he still could, he would disappear  
for half a day, and go hang-gliding.  
The mass of his long lean flowery body an advantage, stabilising  
the narrow, swift wing  
even in crosswinds.  
He plunged, and soared on thermals, and did slow, lazy aerobatics  
for sheer fun, watching from above  
the harriers hunting, the jackdaws  
mobbing the seagulls trying to rob the nests, and the play  
of shadow  
and metallic light the clouds moved on the country.  
Weight, becoming lightness.  
Knowledge, becoming grace.

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<sup>7</sup> "It is only goodness which gives extras, and so I say again we have much to hope for from the flowers" (ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, *The Adventure of the Naval Treaty*, 1893). Flawed reasoning on the biological as well as the theological level, of course, but one of the rare glimpses of Holmes' other side, where hope is, sometimes, allowed to be.

SH:

My brother was bred and raised for his post.  
I could never understand why he accepted this as fact.  
How he could choose to conform to expectations  
he hadn't had part in shaping.  
I didn't see until too late that  
even those who have been bred  
are born free and belong to themselves.  
I think that Mycroft's worked hard  
so that he's never ordered about.  
I think his self-control is tight  
not on drug use, not on rich food,  
but on his own power.  
That his effort is constant  
not to start any war before teatime,  
although temptation's calling, calling.  
I think he tries to wind wars down instead,  
slowly like making slow love,  
the sort of love that aches.  
I see that now.  
I had to die to see.



Population density in London: 12,892/sq mi

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HT:

Alone, everything is simpler. And much harder.  
No written notes, no conceptual maps on scraps of paper and clippings  
on the wall. The mind palace is cluttered with trivia  
he can't risk deleting.

Sherlock almost drowned in Switzerland, when Sebastian Moran rolled  
a stone on him as he walked along the path from Meiringen to Rosenlauri  
and to avoid being hit, he had to plunge into the foaming cauldron  
at the foot of the waterfall.

He barely escaped being poisoned with tetrodotoxin in Gwangju.  
That was just after he'd cut the throat of Moriarty's Far East MD,  
whomanaged the sex tourism department of the organization.

A gas leak almost got him in a hotel room in rue Servan in Paris;  
the crowing of a couple of magpies, flying noisily at dawn outside  
the window toward the Père Lachaise, woke him up just in time. He tracked  
the chambermaid to the meeting place of the local cell of the band.  
Within the next 12 hours, la Sureté had secured eight major members and  
plenty of proof of their crimes.

He's been (more than) half strangled; risked burning when a fire broke  
out on Frecciargento as it sped down the Apennine tunnel between Bologna  
and Florence at 200 miles an hour; he's been hit by a van (he got lucky  
and only broke a toe in his right foot), bitten by an adder while having  
a bite of *al fresco* lunch in Lomopardo, near Jerez de la Frontera,  
and by a funnel-web spider when working as a caddie  
on the Royal Golf Course in Sydney.

Now he's in Kigali, Rwanda. Two minutes ago he's been shot  
in the lower left arm. The wound is not serious; he makes his way  
to Place de la Constitution, where he expects to find more traffic and  
where taking aim may be more difficult for a sniper. He holds his arm  
with the right hand, hoping his dark burgundy shirt with long sleeves  
will disguise the small, but rapidly spreading spot of blood from where  
the bullet has grazed flesh and bone.

While his eyes automatically  
take note of every detail from which his survival may depend,  
his mind  
races on completely different tracks.

SH:

Alone. I used to work alone. Concentrating resources to keep myself safe. Outside the vulnerable shell of my skin, there was only danger. Contact, links, dangerous. I used to feel strong alone. I didn't know that John (John's ...love? how curious) would make me stronger. Am I weaker now that John isn't here? I am hurt, but it's nothing. I can take care of it myself. I have done good work until now. Not much left to do. Would I have been able to do it if not for John? Am I doing this \*for\* John? And myself. For us. Because I want him to be safe. And... Yes, because I want to go back.

.

MH:

He lives to go home.

But he is not immune from temptation. Remaining dead, not returning, would be an immortality of sorts. Going back, the story would start again-- and at some point it would end.

Even the most intense love stories sometimes wither and starve.

Either he or John at some point will die for good: it's too much to hope for simultaneous deace.

Going back means choosing, irreversibly.

Love is so final.

.

I think I have been a little jealous of John,  
of the companionship Sherlock accepts from him and not from me  
(not since too many years).

I never knew if there was more.

I never wanted to.

I hope there was.

I do not know.

.

One of the earliest posts in his blog said

*I've been going out at nights because  
I have a roommate; we go together  
I need to do something for myself  
I don't care about my job right now  
trying to reestablish some semblance of balance*

SH:



You need trust when you don't have control.  
I found that I can't control John.  
So I trust him.  
Is it illusion, this feeling that I can trust him?  
In my experience, it usually is. But doesn't  
taking this as a postulate prevent me from  
observing the facts as they are, and from  
recognizing the miracle of...  
Is John a miracle?  
Perhaps everybody is afforded one miracle. If it isn't  
recognized, it gets lost like rain  
down the gutter.<sup>8</sup>

MH:

I will admit to equal measures of pride and aggravation when Sherlock put on his performances  
it's familiar-- his narrowed, darting eyes and the concentration of a held breath  
I've often thought it similar to diving, or a particularly difficult aerial dismount

Sherlock has gotten much faster than five seconds; the urgency of second death, you see  
I will admit to equal measures of pride, contrition to hear him recount, in his own fashion,  
the misshapen adventures  
exploits, run-ins with the criminal element, chases, cases-- there's a wide array of terminology

he reports directly, it's safest this way. the map of connections becomes ever more complete  
when the analysts begin to talk of our next strategy, Sherlock excuses himself, stiff and bated  
I will admit to measures equal of pride, distance that I let him go-- to the morgue, to his grave,  
never 221B

we both know in time, he might forgive me  
for now, we don't admit to anything but the dismantling of Moriarty  
Sherlock only looks; I nod  
I admit to brittle pride in that

SH:

Mycroft never says "I can't"  
he simply swallows the words  
imagines the faceless lives of all those British citizens at stake  
and carries on.  
Keep calm, carry on, live for queen and country.  
Bloody rot  
It began, these things always do, with childhood nutshells  
I threw tantrums

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<sup>8</sup> Image from <http://blog.cyber-rain.com>

Mummy despaired  
 Mycroft cultivated a voice he thought was persuasive but instead was grating  
 I say "can't" "won't" "will not" "will never" "waste of time" "boring"  
 Mycroft simply smiles and swallows  
 the times he can't make things happen by sheer force of leaning on his umbrella  
 are bad days  
 BondAir can't go  
 the project is cancelled  
 the snipers can't be neutralised  
 Moriarty can't be persuaded  
 I can't go home  
 John can't know  
 every can't can't can't recanted  
 can't die, can't live, can't say, can't make two bloody phone calls  
 all those "can't"s my brother couldn't say  
 reverberate in my skulls like a silver hammer  
 Mycroft only fears that which he doesn't know  
 he can't name Moriarty's second in command  
 keep calm, carry on, celebrate her jubilee.  
 I can't think without pretending  
 the imagined safety of our walls  
 the kitchen chemistry quietly bubbling  
 a laptop and a typing cadence  
 my dressing gown  
 I am comfortable these days in morgues  
 it's the only place I don't do damage  
 Mycroft ignores the fags I hide in cadavers  
 it's a Law.  
 He can't predict; I can't solve; we can't deduce this canticle crime  
 whatever comes, they'll be cremated  
 Mummy thought Mycroft's cantatas sublime

MH:

Seduction: an obnoxious word for an obnoxious concept.

It suggests that the seduced willingly abdicates to their personal responsibility, under pressure from desire artificially instigated by the seducer.

It's the temptation of discharging responsibility on another:

*The woman You put at my side — she gave me of the tree, and I ate.* (Genesis 3:12).

Or, much too often in the last two thousand years: *I was only obeying orders.*

My orders, as often as not.

Prostituting one's own will to someone else's, and it doesn't matter whether the other is one's elder and better. Abdicating to one's own sense of justice.

Sherlock never cared much for the abstract concept of justice, as in giving each their due according to impartial criteria. He used to be too set on having his own way. Now however I find that he does care. Now he knows what justice means. Perhaps one day, if John will help, he will begin studying forgiveness.



55°45'N -- 37°37'E

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HT:

There is a pair of street buskers on the Red Square in Moscow, playing a duel of violins, one fiddle incongruously clover-green, one blue, their strung-out voices twining, crossing, in a wordless argument of bright notes cascading.<sup>9</sup> Sherlock doesn't think back to the evening after he declared he wouldn't accept the post he'd been offered at the Ministry of Defence. He doesn't. Not at all.

*He had refused; he thought Mycroft had a hand in this but he hadn't, not this time, the head hunters had spotted him from his uni curriculum. Later, after Pater had commanded Sherlock back to uni with the milk train early the next morning, Mycroft --alone at the piano at a quarter to three in the night-- had been playing Sibelius' Valse triste. Sherlock had padded in, violin in hand, and begun an especially wailing rendition of Paganini's La campanella. Mycroft had shifted to Khachaturian's Flight of the Bumble Bee, and Sherlock had retorted with Il Moto perpetuo. The duel had gone on and on, the fluidity of the bow on strings against the predetermined sound of the keys, running water against a bridge of squared stones, Mycroft using his long hands and quick fingers for all they were worth and Sherlock rushing forward with whatever toss and slide and somersault may disturb the carefully planned sequence of piano notes. They had been interrupted at 3:23 by the butler, who silently presented Mycroft a card in Mummy's handwriting on a silver salver. The card read: "Such a noise and so late!"<sup>10</sup> Mycroft had closed with a resounding, Beethovenian chord, Sherlock by drawing from his violin a terrifying screech. Without a word, they had turned and walked out of the opposite doors.*

Mycroft never thought he'd miss him so.  
Like the wheat field misses the glorious flight of the kestrel above.  
He remembers the time before. Before Sherlock.  
Things were simpler then.  
Now when he plays the piano  
he only plays pieces for piano and violin,  
the violin part silent,  
the piece  
lopsided and crippled.  
That's how he feels,  
an angel with only one wing left.



Things are half, it's great for puzzles  
terrible for other things.

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<sup>9</sup> Máiréad Nesbitt and Cora Smith at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywMPtwM8avs>

<sup>10</sup> You can listen to the pieces they played at these links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FV99gA3XQw4> -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dr2E-5ACa-Q> --

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XC4\\_6Lbdjas](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XC4_6Lbdjas) -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPRWshWq9E4>.

"Such a noise, and so late!" was the complaint muttered to one young woman and her roommate, then seventeen, in the corridor of the housing where they stayed while in London to give their Proficiency, and where they had been celebrating after passing with excellent marks.

SH:

I used to get hurt so I could show  
how brave I was.  
I quit  
when I realised nobody cared a damn.  
Not even Mother.

HT:

Then he remembers how it felt, standing in the sunlight  
on the edge of the roof and spreading his arms like wings,  
knowing he wouldn't fly;  
and he jerks his head back, his eyes close, a shudder shaking him.  
It's at times like this that he wishes he had been born  
with only half a heart, so the grieving wouldn't hurt so much.<sup>11</sup>

SH:

*most languages, including English, conflate  
two definitions of heart  
John is a doctor  
and he always does*

I'm moving into the silence of the heart.

The worst of all things is knowing  
with utter certainty at the bottom of my lungs  
that John is blaming himself,  
for not holding my hand on the parapet of the roof, not stepping off together  
but even more for the pride he took in his blog,  
in my notoriety  
(which made things so much easier for Moriarty)  
for his words  
(which helped him kill me).  
I doubt that he will ever feel forgiven.

MH:

Moriarty... is blackthorn, poisonous but dapper in small thick foliage and perfect  
small white blossoms with their thin fresh scent of cyanide.  
Yet he has one quality which I cannot but appreciate: he does everything on  
purpose. Whatever evil he does, it's not by neglect or inattention or disregard.  
"If you're going to hurt them, do it on purpose".<sup>12</sup> Rimbaud would have liked  
Moriarty.



---

<sup>11</sup> HAROLD WADLEY, *Spirit blending foals before and after birth, an old way continued*, Victoria: Trafford, 2003, pag. 164.

<sup>12</sup> From *Total Eclipse*, directed by Agnieszka Holland (1995).

::



Mycroft's cologne isn't a male scent at all. Flowers-- not the young and light and airy flowers that young and light and airy girls wear, but a mature, female scent that almost borders on the strange and musky perfumes that cling to old ladies who still wear hats every Sunday to mass. It has faint echoes of their mother, enough to irritate Sherlock but not enough to make it a direct association. It makes one think of old houses and the moulding smell of furniture after winter-- Mycroft can be imagined to be some combination of that old furniture and flowers, not blossoms, but imaginary scent of crocus, saffron. Pressed flower preserved between old books, the yellow pollen staining the old pages, sunflowers (he's tall with a slight stoop to his shoulders, yellow, and slightly top heavy. Also the seeds, Mycroft tastes around the edges of sunflower seeds), old furniture amidst the daffodils. He doesn't remind of autumn, Mycroft. Mycroft can be pictured disingenuously (or genuinely?) stopping to look at the cherry blossoms and smiling that half sardonic, half sincere smile of his. John's like long grass with large boulders growing on England's gentle hills, but Sherlock's like the moors-- in late winter, early spring he's swampy and muddy and cold, but when the sun comes out he's a sudden blaze of wild flowers that go back to dry grass in summer.

HT:

The knife Sherlock always keeps on himself is a Bahco K-AP-1 with a 3" Sheffield blade. It's thin, flat, smooth, with a perfect lockback, and although he kills four men and a woman with it in three different occasions on two continents, it's just a trimming knife for gardening and doesn't attract attention. Sherlock is finding out that, given the potential of destruction implicit in even the most common man-made tools, one extraordinary fact about people is not the horrible things they do to each other, but the horrible things they don't.



MH:

I am having unusual dreams.  
I dream of the time when I was small  
and the rooms seemed immense.  
I dream of the day --it was a Sunday-- when I was  
summoned  
by a tight-lipped Pater and a radiant Mummy  
to the library.  
I was six and a half.  
“You will be a brother soon,” Pater had said.  
“How soon?” I’d asked.  
“January,” Mummy told me.  
“Good,” I replied, “I will have time to prepare.”  
But in my dream  
January never comes.

HT:

Mycroft was really only overweight briefly, around 13.  
He thinned out soon after and even now, on the threshold of middle-age,  
he’s lean and tough like a wolfhound under his tailored three-piece suits,  
despite the disgust for aimless exercise he and Sherlock share.  
But he’s inherited the large frame and heavy bones  
of their paternal grandfather,  
and the scale never stops below 15.4 stones for him.<sup>13</sup>  
It was his interest for food and the pleasure he’s always drawn  
from eating that initially prompted six-year-old Sherlock’s mocking, at a time  
when he was wielding self-starvation as a weapon against Pater  
in his neverending feud with Grand-mère.  
Sherlock would stubbornly refuse the porridge and roast-beef  
which were presented to him meal after meal (on a famous occasion, he  
used bluish, week-old roast-beef as bait for jackdaws in one of his  
earlier experiments) but he would happily gorge himself on cabochis  
and crêpes delivered by Grand-mère in the small hours of the night.  
Mycroft would scowl at him the next morning, but he never reported him.



14

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<sup>13</sup> Equal to 98 kg.

<sup>14</sup> Photo by Keith Jones at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/nature/galleries/snow/04/>



SH:

I remember how extraordinarily stressed out Mycroft was starting out in the service,  
for reasons I'm not sure of.

Strange how the matter seems to have become important now that'm dead.  
(last time I saw him he showed exhaustion, a bitter tiredness that pinched his mouth  
and burned his eyes.)

He must have felt a lot of pressure and responsibility and uncertainty-- within six months  
he was already working/coordinating/managing being the person responsible for more than he  
ever let know, and trying to make sure all the disparate people depending on him  
had the support they needed.

It's impressive that at the age of 23, he found himself making steps towards management.  
Perhaps it was mostly because there was no-one else to do the job and he knew he was  
able to do it.

Constantly reaching out and emailing and making sure everyone was on the same page.  
It must have been exhausting.

But even when the weight of power became heavier, he never lost his grace.  
I think Mycroft never realised how much his careful phrases, the pauses, sound  
like poetry.  
My brother loves simplicity, that's why he works on the most complex systems.



HT:

45°17'N 11°50'E  
A sunny morning in April  
Open country, gray herons  
(Sherlock watches, and thinks of Mycroft)  
something like a leopard scarf  
thrown by the breeze on an apricot tree  
but it is the heaviest fruit instead,  
ten thousand bees  
golden and bronzed  
swarming,  
their voice much older  
than human words.  
A blessing.

MH:

Our mother's voice:

"Sherlock, listen to yourself!"

He seldom did. She, never.

HT:

Sherlock has acquired since his teenage years the habit  
of muttering to himself when he remembers his mistakes  
(and, yes, there is a number of them).  
It happens mostly when he's bored-- on early mornings when London  
is grey and damp and dreary  
and it feels like nothing interesting will ever happen again.  
Recently  
--since John, in fact--  
social faux-pas have swelled the ranks.  
\*That\* had never been a problem before.  
When he remembers other things, the bad ones,  
he cries silently.<sup>15</sup>

MH:

When was the last time you felt that inner joy? that feeling that things would be right, and fix themselves, and end well? When your heart leapt in your chest for the sheer happiness of what was coming?

SH:

In this third-order café in Rome, not eating a cornetto, the radio plays  
an old pop song too loud.  
I was only four at the time, but I remember I wondered  
with chagrin at why people  
seem to only write songs about love  
(meaning sex)  
when the world is so wide and filled with other wonders.

Sex is not so important as it seems.  
It amounts more or less to a bait that nature uses  
to trap us into building and maintaining stable interpersonal relationships--  
damn hard, time-consuming work.

(Victor Trevor:  
I fell in love with his Etruscan smile  
like other men fall for a pair of tits.)

---

<sup>15</sup> CARL GUSTAV JUNG, *Liber Novus* (1914-30): "The spirit of the time mocks wisdom, since mockery is his weapon... No one will laugh more than I laugh at myself". Now go and read *Extremely British* by pennypaperbrain at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/295916>.

Now,  
if I want sex, I masturbate.

If I get involved long-term with a human being, at the very least it must be ...John?  
(surprising)

HT:

The thin blade penetrates between right collarbone and shoulderblade, thirsting for the artery. With his left hand, Sherlock draws his knife from the sheath at his ankle and pushes it in the attacker's navel (*thumb on the blade, strike upwards*), then, as the killer folds on himself, he cuts his throat (*backhand stroke, ear to ear, mind the bloodspray*).<sup>16</sup>

He resheats the knife. Eases himself down the riverbank, collapses.

In the flood of breathless pain, he thinks of

*John. John's wound. John's pain.*

*God, let me go home.*

Because, seen from this exact moment, his whole life seems to have been spent on his way home.

And home is a person. His.

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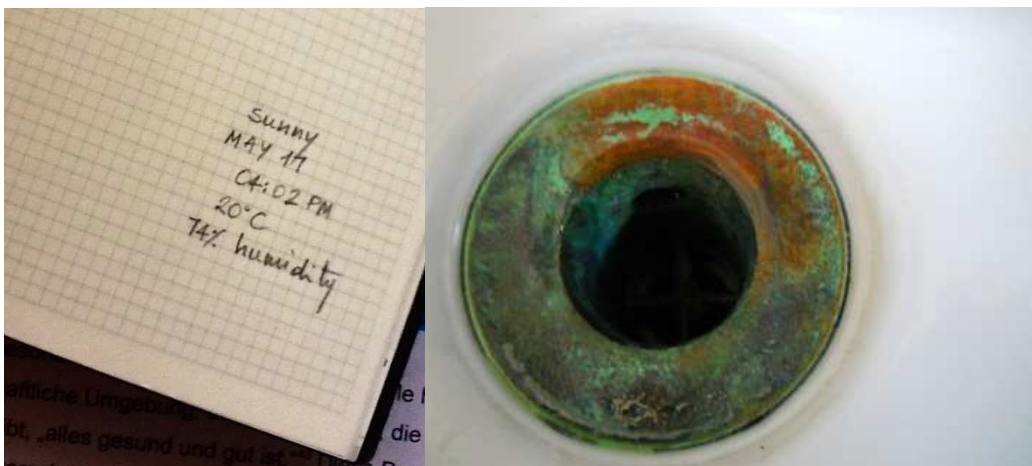
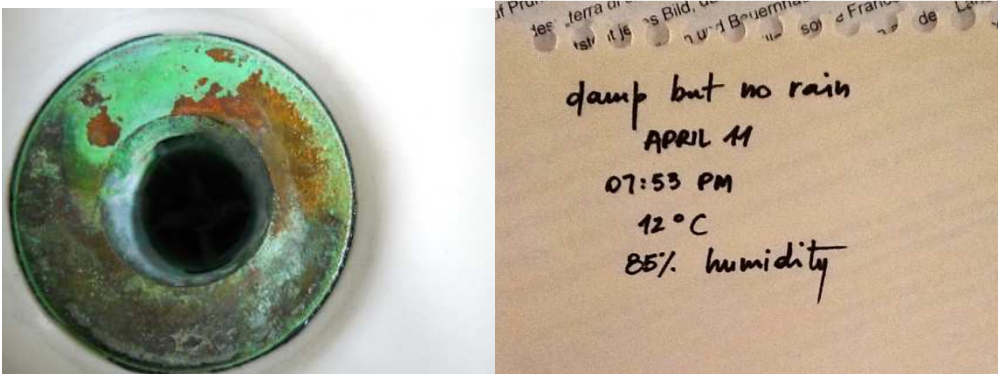
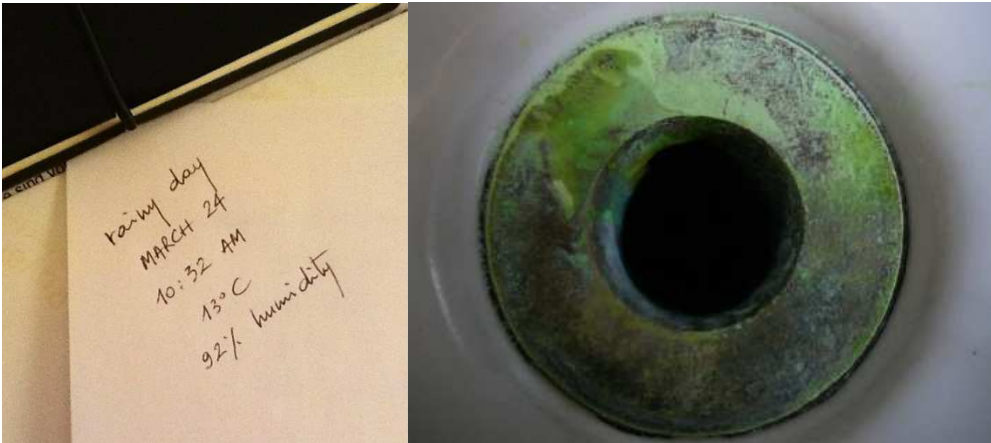
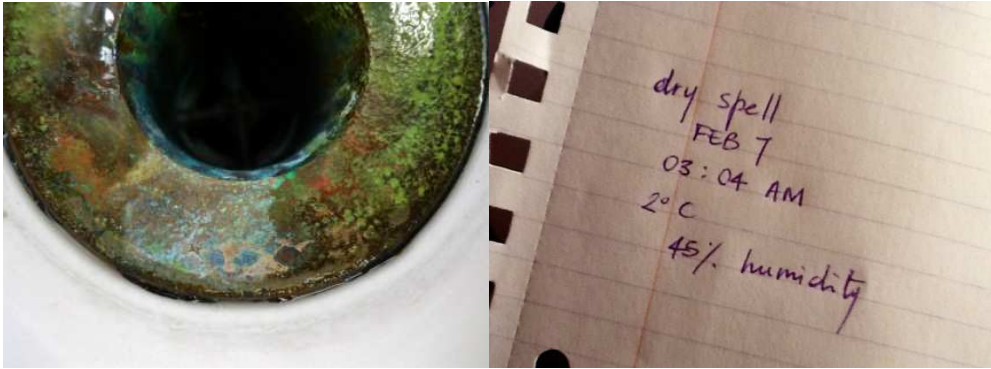
MH:

At school, Sherlock was fascinated with the strangest things, much to the chagrin of his teachers. One of them was the bronze ferrule on the hole in the sink next to the window in the boy's lavatories, and the way the colour and pattern of oxidization changed according to the season, the weather and the hour of day (or night). He had a whole collection of photos, carefully glossed with temperature, humidity and weather report.

At the time, he was still willing to share his interests with me.

---

<sup>16</sup> An English clergyman gave the last rites to a brigand of Sicily, and on his death-bed the great robber said, "I can give you no money, but I can give you advice for a lifetime: your thumb on the blade, and strike upwards." (GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON, *The Man who was Thursday*, 1908).



I miss the indomitable complexity that Sherlock's always been.



HT:

Sleeping with someone. Sherlock has tried it, and abandoned the idea.  
He never could relax, always wondering what the other person  
would be doing next. Or not doing. The fine line  
between feeling invaded and feeling rejected was a thin one at best.  
He would curl around someone's warm body, or let them curl around him,  
and he wouldn't find a comfortable position.  
Or if he would,  
he'd soon get too hot.  
They would lie side by side, or back to back, and he'd begin wondering  
what had gone wrong this time, without him noticing.  
He'd doze off but wouldn't fall asleep,  
caught in the white nothing  
where there is no sense of time but the awareness remains  
of every little noise, every subtle shift of position,  
and there is no telling whether they are dream or reality.



Sherlock was used to stepping on a crime scene and command everybody's attention. He worked his habit of superiority in a different style, but every bit as shamelessly as Mycroft ever did.  
Now instead he puts to good use the many ways he also knows of making himself invisible. Much of this knowledge he learned from his irregulars.  
One way is playing an irrelevant role. He washes windscreens at traffic lights in Frosinone, delivers take-away pizza in Napier and sweeps floors in a cinema in Petropolis.  
Another is doing things, going places, which are psychologically impossible. People see him and delete him.  
He lifted the briefcase of the fourth-but-last in Moriarty's organization as he sat in the tenth row from the front at an economists' congress in Barcelona, a cordon of police outside watching a peaceful but noisy no-global parade.  
The briefcase contained the encrypted plans for a terrorist attack in Djibouti. No-one stopped him as he was going out.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> From an incident mazaher witnessed in Milan, 1992. No terrorist plans involved, however.

SH:

There is a number of blogs Mycroft follows, from a carefully screened IP address, late at night when he tries to relax. Sometimes I follow his steps. I know where he likes to browse. Locked in our permanent astrological opposition (he Leo, I Aquarius) this is the only way we can intersect without drawing blood with words. He clicks on picture upon picture on an amateur photographers' site in Germany. He searches for Renaissance cryptography treatises on GoogleBooks and Gallica. He reads poetry on ajodasso's LJ. He leaves polished comments like Victorian cherrywood or malacca walking sticks manufactured by Smith & Co., est. 1830, 53 New Oxford Street, WC1A1BL.<sup>18</sup> Another of his nicks is Helianthus. (But I see him as an Allium instead, standing straight and proud with his umbrella and his big head crowded with seeds). He gives only praise, and he always writes why. I find myself checking time zones. 03:15 here, 21:15 there. 09:04 for me, 22:22 for him. I find myself looking forward to being online at the same time.



---

<sup>18</sup> James Smith & Co., still owned and run as a family business (<http://www.james-smith.co.uk/>). One of Mycroft's comments is posted at <http://ajodasso.livejournal.com/1766980.html>, together with a reply by Sherlock who's never been one to think twice about butting in. They say:



Smith&Co1830:

Your verses and your voice are unforgettable, like scents / remembered from childhood. / Thank you.



optimegessit:

Geneviève: Cuir de Russie par Chanel l'hiver, / Coquillages par Schubert l'été / Siger: Tabarome by Creed / (But, really-- umbrellas?!)

The sticky post in their LJs is attached *in calce* here below as appendix.

HT:

Sherlock disguises his hands. He makes them callous, dry, and scratched.  
He bites at his nails.  
Then he takes a job as taxi driver in Cincinnati.  
He has learned his lesson;  
he makes himself invisible behind the wheel of a car.  
He drives like he used to play the violin,  
the stick his bow, the engine his instrument.  
The tired, spent cars he drives love him.  
When it is not enough, he disguises himself in the same way Yudhithshira did in  
the Mahabharata.  
Yudhithshira was famous for losing at dice,  
so he disguised himself by winning.  
Sherlock's enemies are hunting down a genius, so  
he disguises himself as a dull, slow-witted beanpole from Covert, KS.

MH:

Sherlock doesn't like most people. The reason is he fears them: he fears that they may mortify him.  
(Regrettable as it is, it is the only form of control I ever had over him.)

An additional problem is that he also fears the few people he does like.

He knows sooner or later he's going to unwillingly mortify them.

Therefore he doesn't want to have power over people.

Sherlock is fine with people keeping their distance; he doesn't miss them, doesn't seduce them  
(unless it's instrumental to solving a case), he doesn't bait them, he doesn't flatter them.

But he doesn't like them.

They embarrass him. He can't understand their motivations for how well he can read the signs; he  
wounds them involuntarily, they wound him, and he can't tell if it's on purpose.

Neither Sherlock nor I have ever been personally attracted by "professional scolding".

The concept involves being shown affection ...of some sort,  
as a consequence of willful misdemeanours.

I want to be loved, if ever, for what I have striven to do right.

Sherlock always wanted to be loved despite his bad behaviour, not because of it.

Neither wish has ever been fulfilled.

SH:

In the hard light of Italy I miss  
the soft grays and saturated reds of London  
where it rains every day  
and the milk goes sour.<sup>19</sup>



Seeing myself from the outside  
such a horrible person  
listening to people talking about the fake genius who killed himself  
watching the news  
a little girl piping up  
"He's so shy, why don't you see he's just shy? He never looks at people.  
Only at dead people and at things-- only one detail at a time".

---

<sup>19</sup> Translated from a line of Diana Grayson (Sinéad Cusack) in BERNARDO BERTOLUCCI, *Io ballo da sola* (1996).

HT:

When Sherlock is alone, "I" fades into the environment with all its past and present history. If the environment is good (and Baker Street is distinctly better than Montague), "I" ceases to be separate, and feels good also. Outside, or worse when home is invaded, "I" is led back to its container, with the double insulation of social identity and of self-image. It feels like a violation; a rape; a freak show, because "I" is not acceptable.

SH:

I lost myself  
I had built a safe place within my own skin  
everything outside was danger  
now I lost myself  
danger has entered  
I am not safe anymore as myself  
I must be someone else, and  
I don't know how  
not just for two minutes until a door opens  
but for days and months and years  
What does does someone else remember? What does he think?  
How does he see the world?  
Most of all, what doesn't he see?  
  
seduction-sex-power-fear-love.  
scarlet veering on purple and indigo blue.  
the first three make a circle, love  
the tangential escape

HT:

Sherlock is learning the lesson of fear.  
He had a first taste of it in Dewer's Hollow, and at the time  
he didn't really understand how it worked.  
Now he does.  
Now he has something to lose.  
Now he wouldn't give in to the curiosity of discovering if he's chosen the right  
pill.  
Now he has somewhere to go, someone worth surviving for.

MH:

Pater used to say  
"None of us is so special that he's worth saving for a special occasion."

HT:

The old, old question: what to do in front of the physical certainty of death?  
Run away, run towards?  
(the things that matter, the only thing that matters. \*John\*)

He begins to find himself the subject  
of disturbingly vivid flashbacks.  
The things deleted,  
the things irrelevant (or undesirable),  
the things obsolete (or too hopeless for thought)  
flood his mind in the least expected situations.

Sitting at a corner table in a dirty bistro in La Courneuve, warming his hands  
around a cup of espresso --the only possible use for such dubious liquid--  
he smells the scent of not-so-clean humanity + rarely aerated rooms, and the  
quiet desperation of his university days catches at his throat with something  
suspiciously akin to crying.

The crowd, the animal warmth, the hourly press of bodies along corridors too  
narrow for the height of the ceilings; the darkness in the corners, the darkness  
in his mind, ceaselessly grinding trivial information. Melancholy lurking in the  
libraries at dusk, when the yellowish light of the lamps threw spots of faint  
glow on worn oak tabletops. The feeling that here was where the wonder and the  
beauty of the world came to an end, turned into dust in dreary pages, and there  
would never be another spring.

SH:

When I was five, I read about mosquitoes spreading yellow fever and I was scared.  
They flew around and bit unseen; only a thin buzz could sometimes be heard,  
and they injected people with death.  
A nice metaphor for the lethal lies  
which infested air at home.  
The wicked art of parental omission.

MH:

I remember the colour of green tea leaves, settling  
perhaps that is the one thing I and Sherlock could ever share between us--  
the image is strong:  
the two of us, leaning with elbows on the table  
watching the tea leaves float through transparent glass

Between.

Between brothers.

Between fall and return.

Between Sherlock and John?

I'm sure there is a significant measure of reassessment on both parts.

Miracles are elusive. When they end

(if ever they end, or seem to)

it's easier to believe they never happened.

SH:

sex doesn't frighten me; seduction does

Moriarty calls beyond the grave, more alive than the living  
names are stale but this-- this is the heart and I was right to say

you should never let it rule your head

not love, something worse than love:

speech



**This be the verse you grave for me:  
Here he lies where he longed to be.  
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.**

**-- ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, *Requiem* (1879)**

::

I was in Vienna on the evening of February 25, 2012. I had made my escape from a camping park after shooting dead with a poisoned dart the third-in-chief in Moriarty's organization. I ran toward the Kaisermühlendamm, until I crossed the road and reached the Danube. I slowed to a walk. I looked back westward, to check I was not being followed.. The new Moon, Venus and Jupiter shone bright in conjunction in Taurus, just to the west of Orion. I want to go home.



20

*Some days are special.  
Some days are so, so blessed.  
Some days, nobody dies at all.<sup>21</sup>*

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.emilivanov.com/Other\\_Images/2012\\_02\\_25\\_Venus\\_Jupiter\\_Mercury\\_Moon.htm](http://www.emilivanov.com/Other_Images/2012_02_25_Venus_Jupiter_Mercury_Moon.htm)

<sup>21</sup> This a shameless lift from *Doctor Who*, season 4, episodes 8-9, *Silence in the Library* and *Forest of the Dead*, written by Steven Moffat.

I have been daydreaming. (Curiouser and curiouser.)  
I've been daydreaming about knocking on the door, John opening, looking up at me.  
(Yes, I'm sure he's still there. He's a soldier, won't turn heels and fly just because death  
has visited the place where he lives. We lived.  
He will have gone back there that first night, and the next, and the next,  
if only to save what can still be saved.  
To diminish Moriarty's victory.  
To show them all.)

I will turn up on our doorstep (his doorstep?) with a new haircut and a suit.<sup>22</sup>  
But what if he can't believe it's me?  
If his mouth tightens in a hard line and his eyes narrow in that cold silent anger of his.  
It's obvious that the simplest way for Moriarty to get the child to scream when she saw me  
was telling her that if ever they'd be rescued, someone tall and dark-haired  
with gray eyes and a so-and-so coat would come in the very safest room at NSY  
and take them back  
and...  
No need for disguises, doubles, tricks. So simple, Stockholm syndrome is child's play.

But I can't imagine what would pass through John's mind, seeing me.  
Probably he'd want proof.  
Something more compelling, after all the spider's poison, than just the touch  
which satisfied St. Thomas.  
What can I say? What can I show?  
Something only he knows. Something silent that happened inside 221B, in pitch dark.  
No CCTV, no night visors. Something we never spoke about, later.

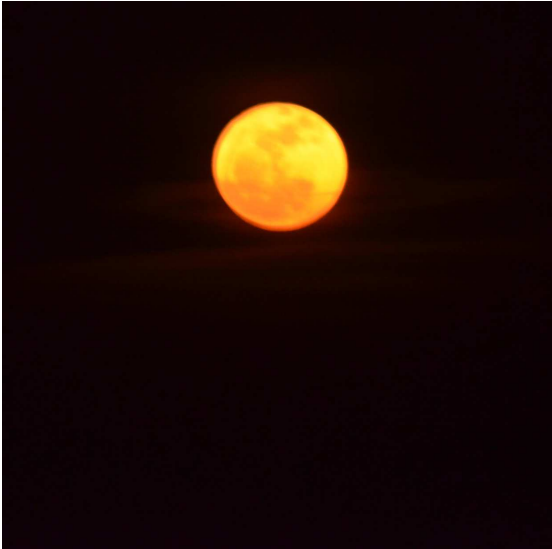
I know what.

The scar on the left sternocostal head of my left pectoralis major, thin and short and white,  
where the blade of his pocket knife drew blood one night of bad dreams when I heard him  
cry out and tried to wake him up.<sup>23</sup>  
He was so sorry.  
I said it didn't matter.  
But it does. Now it will.

---

<sup>22</sup> Again from *Doctor Who*, *ibidem*.

<sup>23</sup> It can be faintly discerned (or imagined), oblique just below the clavicle, in this screencap from episode 1 of season 2, *A Scandal in Belgravia*: <http://sc.aithine.org/sherlock/201/05/sherlock-201-04972.jpg>



HT:

It was the first full moon in springtime  
and  
finally  
it was finished.

MH:

Sherlock-- Moran  
I've called Mrs. Hudson  
in case you need assistance  
John's been following  
no, I haven't told him  
he doesn't suspect  
he's simply following  
yes, a circle

Sherlock  
Moran  
however you choose

when it's finished  
go directly  
(home)

SH:

Mycroft has become a door  
(carefully lacquered red, brass knob shining)  
to something warm and familiar inside.  
He used to hang-glide. Yes.  
I'd like to tell him  
about Shanghai at sunset.  
How it smells like  
when the spring moon comes out after the rain



There was a spider who thought in webs and nets,  
circles rather than cells and grids.

HT:  
But even the web of a spider (*Araneus diadematus*) can't hold for long  
a French wasp (*Polistes dominulus*).  
The threads are broken,  
the wasp is free to fly.  
The spider,  
dead.

SH:

Alive, recovered. I'll manage to get home. That's all I have so far. I feel sort of.. I keep thinking the word stunted, but that's not quite it. Just, thoughts jump and don't express themselves fully.

*31°12'N 121°30'E*  
*Nan Jing West*  
*Starbuck's Coffee*  
*Wed, 10 am CST*  
*if convenient.*  
*If not, wouldn't you come anyway?<sup>24</sup>*

Breathing is distracting.  
The absolute can only be experienced in apnea.

I hit "send".



25

<sup>24</sup> From *Shanghai, straightaway*, by mazaher, at [http://www.mazaher.org/BBC-SH\\_shanghai.pdf](http://www.mazaher.org/BBC-SH_shanghai.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> BRODY NEUENSCHWANDER, *Video installation* with music by Jeroen D'hoer as part of a mixed media installation at Memling St. Jan, Bruges (2008).



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# smithandco1830

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## Two realities

Apr. 30th, 2012 at 8:26 PM

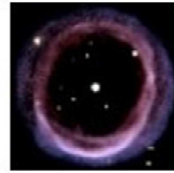
They call them RL and VL.  
Like they were essentially different.  
They aren't.  
They're touching right now.



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## Comments

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[mazaher](#) wrote:  
May. 4th, 2012 02:53 pm (UTC)  
The body as book, the book as body?  
Stories like tattoos on the living skin of the world.

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## Page Summary

• [mazaher](#): [\(no subject\)](#) [+0]

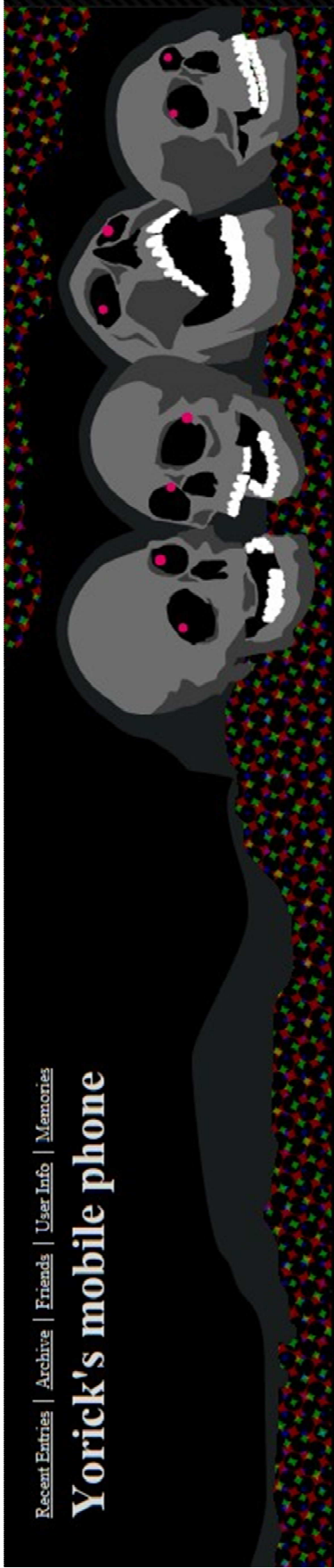
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# Yorick's mobile phone



## texts from the other side

Apr. 30th, 2012 at 8:19 PM

...of the world  
of the worlds--

Are you still there?  
I know you must be.



::

Music: Penguin Café Orchestra, "Music for a found harmonium"

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## Comments

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**smithandco1830 wrote:**

May: 3rd, 2012 05:33 pm (UTC)

You may as well know that he \*is\* still there, doing as fine as can be expected under the circumstances.

Also, that there are young eagles, old eagles and prudent eagles.

Old eagles used to be young, prudent eagles.

Plans involving at some point a safe landing at that particular nest are best pursued without unwarranted (although

poetical) brotherly web aerobatics.

Your LJ theme is outrageous enough, bBm.

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