

Art is the sex of imagination.
-George Jean Nathan

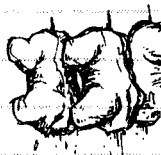
Aa

a persona a persona grata a persona non grata a persona impropria

A dark winding street somewhere, Amsterdam perhaps, where an abattoir and art gallery are neighbours. The storefronts are indistinguishable, unremarkable, the same face presenting different bodies. I follow the health inspector into the abattoir. My mistake. He is dressed in black like an art patron. Everything is white - walls, floors, counters, doors - white file cards spin in a Rolodex, the meat is alphabetized by cut located by locker number. Next door, the art gallery walls are stripped down to red brick, the floor covered in sawdust, blood drips from carcasses hanging in the rafters. I am issued a black umbrella at the door.

I adore silk stockings

I abhor sackcloth and ashes



Adams, Ansel
1902-84
U.S. photographer
famous for his landscapes
of the Western States

Ansel Adams photographs in every restaurant washroom throughout the west, black and white on black and white. His subjects never grow old, only grimy. Photography is a pox on Father Time, but he has decay on his side. "Subjects are subject to decomposition," this warning should appear on all photographs.



Acquired a dog today, will call it Anubis

The Ancient Egyptians had guts and knew how to store them. No gloom and doom for that bunch. Embalming rooms were called "the house of vigor" (rigor mortis to vigor mortis) and black was the colour of rebirth. The pleasure of eternity depended on the dog god. Anubis took the human soul between his teeth, as gently as a retriever with a dead duck, and deposited it on a set of scales balanced by truth in the form of a feather.

ANUBIS
jackal god of
funerals
please return
to owner



Bb



bravery bat baptism bit bestialities big Bingen batty blow

NAME THAT BEAST

MATCH

SYMBOLIC TRAITS

BEASTS

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1) diligent, unenlightened & aimless, holy creatures to the goddess of farming | APE |
| 2) wisdom, hatred, holy creatures of the sun, strength, longevity, high rank, god of dance, vanity, greed, lechery, god's spies | CRAB
VULTURE
PANTHER |
| 3) envy, good fortune, virtue, natural death, intelligence, fallen angel, vigilance, fertility, shrewdness, timidity | MOUSE |
| 4) chaos, misrule, protection from hail, hypocrisy, fertility, fortune, power, greed | DOG |
| 5) loyalty, guardian against ghosts, companion of necromancers, guide in the afterlife, unclean, uncontrolled wrath, marital fidelity | CROCODILE
BAT |
| 6) needs human urine to protect itself against poisoning, "fragrant" voice, cunning, enemy of | ANT |

the snake, savage, associated with Christ,
aggressive women, shaman

- 7) the soul, demonic and prophetic powers, originated from the mud of the Nile, lasciviousness, female sex organs
- 8) gift of prophecy, associated with childbirth & motherhood, visitor to the "towers of silence," symbolizes the Virgin Mary, longevity
- 9) misfortune, rain, "casting off of the old Adam," enemy of snakes, bravery, pregnancy, imprisonment, baptism, rebirth, the grave

The name game! I spy with my little eye something that is peculiar. No. No. No. Give up? People! Peculiar = People. Proof? This odd obsession with putting a human face on animals and insects, fish and fowl, not to mention bowls,

"The name of a man is a numbing blow from which he never recovers."

- Marshall McLuhan

jugs, combs, chairs. Nothing is safe, most things are sacred. So, what's with this naming thing? What drives people to label the seen and unseen, the clean and unclean, the mean and unmean... enough, enough! A humble form of homage? Sometimes. Take that bit of fur suspended between leather wings. Medieval bestiaries put this spin on the beast, "When bats decide to stay in one place for an extended period of time, they hold on to one another and form clusters - an exchange of favours of a sort quite rare in human society." So says UnterKircher according to Biedermann. More names!

Homage? Perhaps. Humble? Hardly. The measuring stick here is human society. And it's a big stick. Everything comes up against it. Name denotes value, value on the human scale. "In ancient China the bat was a symbol of good fortune, primarily because of the homonymy (sic) of the words for 'bat' and 'luck' (fu)."

"Names are but noise and smoke,
Obscuring heavenly light."
- Goethe

While the ancient Chinese were painting pictures of lucky bats, others were concocting bat recipes. Waste not, want not. All creatures are pressed into human service. Some 800 years ago, the flittermouse could be found in the medicine chest of St. Hildegard of Bingen. Her cure for jaundice was batty:



- 1) "carefully impale the bat so that it remains alive"
- 2) "attach back of bat to back of patient"
- 3) "then remove bat and attach to patient's stomach"
- 4) "leave on patient's stomach until bat dies."

The sixteenth-century Flemish botanist, Clusius, came up with two hundred new names for two hundred "new" species of plants in Spain and Portugal. Didn't they exist before Clusius?

Beast Key: 1) Ant 2) Ape 3) Bat 4) Crocodile 5) Dog 6) Panther
7) Mouse 8) Vulture 9) Crab

Cc

circus carnivorous carnage charnel cannibals capitalism Columbus

Discovered Scratch & Sniff today. A page in a magazine that commanded me to perform this act. Scratch what? Sniff where? Surely not a portion of my anatomy? (Although I have observed this practice in social settings, particularly at sports events.) But no, the directions referred me to a card protruding from the taut spine of the magazine.

Impregnated! The card was impregnated with scent. I buried my nose in the slick folds and closed my eyes. The pages became the petals of a huge redolent flower, the card a stiff stamen. In my desire, I scratched so hard my fingers tore the card and underlying pages.

Up came the smell of flesh. Hot as a circus tent in summer, the sawdust steaming, giving off the smell of wet hair and boiled flaxseed. In the ring, the scat of carnivorous animals mixes the jungle with the savannah with the prairie.

