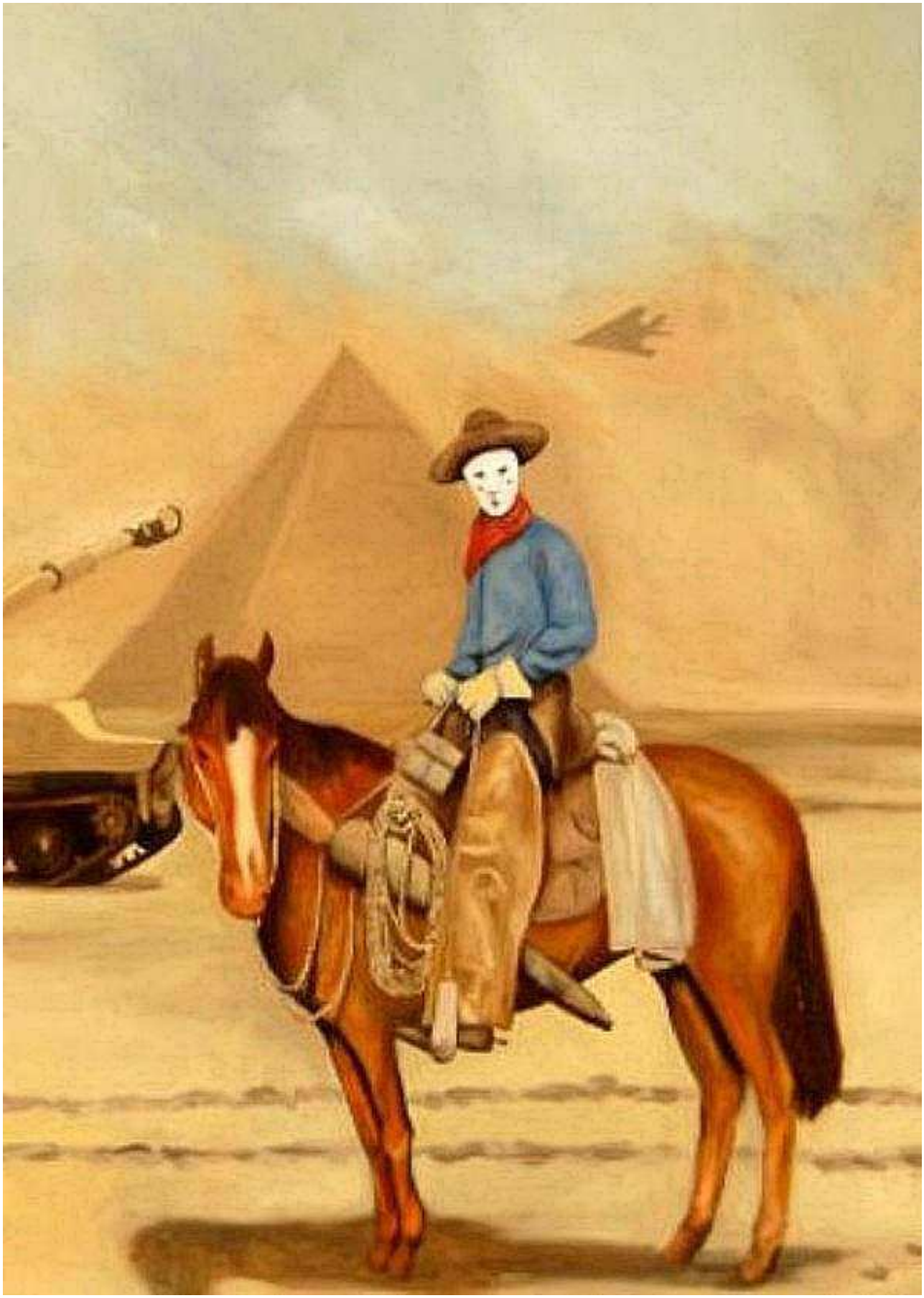

Tracking Systems

Alan May

Argotist Ebooks

*** Cover image by Tom Wegrzynowski**

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"Biography of Don Knotts" was previously published in *Diagram.*

Tracking Systems

TRACKING SYSTEMS

(1.)

The mailman came at noon and the moon
Was far offline. The G.P.S.

(2.)

Tracked the moonlight and tracked
My thoughts. Two birds (not sure what kind)

(3.)

Dwelled within my mind, two houses,
A dog and the moon, the airwaves:

(4.)

Infinite and loony. The con-
Servative talk show host bounced

(5.)

And danced a jig. I changed the page
Into a tracking system.

(6.)

The Dwelling descended. The doorbell
Rang and the sun proceeded

(7.)

To huff and puff, huff and puff.

FLOWERS

The petals tremble. Their bright blue soothes the eye. The crows bounce in the grass like clowns or comedians. Like babies or proletariats. First the planes overhead, then the sound of propellers. One imagines a lilting tree, ants crawling across the pages of a book. The single oak lets fall its shade like a lake, like dark waters at night; the gars are rising, brushing past us as we drown.

GOD IS THE PRESENT MOMENT

She stared at the computer which kept flowing and never flowed through the parking lot. As if to recline meant to fix, to ossify, the child leaping to leap, to turn. The gotcha/ constant fixed to seam. The parenthetical to shatter, to know. She prayed to the real. She combed her hair, she felt the same way again. She wanted to walk beside it. She wanted the flag to rise and to see the feathered wing. In fixed meditation, she laid it down on the rock. Just to know ancient w/out the usual drive-by, the statue, on hinter hooves, the bearded man an arm outspread, one foot locked within the stirrup.

AFTERLIFE

I float drift suddenly am dirty river
all dispersing speck
silly little pony that drinks
from dark eye

THE END OF ALL BEING

Long

Bird, bass, linger, lamp, common bread, painter, dense, bamboo, recline, open, fence, hover, rock, guidewire.

Fasting

Press into computer. Feather coaldust.

Month

An engineer. A house which hones. A horse with bit can see a glazing glance her eye. Shuffle.

Mouth

To eat is not linger and noise is not blame. The navel is not reason. Is not cut, is not spoon.

Horse

The estate is not to state. No more ever. No sacked substance, no leg. No rapid shod.

Woman's Hair

Chocolate. Tryst exceeding mirth. Joist at hour. Yesterfly, spiked pot, tea within the bark ready

Chin

To kiss. To lock. To clatter. Re warned. Bicycle. Loved. Cleft.

STETSON KENNEDY

When the guitar turned to whiskey, the pope came to drink. The pope-mobile had bars to keep the pope inside. In his dreams, the pope was a wolf. The wolves attacked the cheerleaders at the bookstore. The wolves bested Sonny Liston in the 8th round and joined the Ku Klux Klan. Stetson Kennedy, typing diligently, recorded all of this on the backs of several dollar bills and then handed them off to Superman.

THE WINGED DIVINE

The barrel of the tank, the armored car bearing down, the cavalier doesn't have a horse or a single stirrup and now he's removed his belt, sword, and he's taking off his trousers. In the sky run aground, clouds surround, a winged horse whinnies, the crows scatter like shot. The horse spins and bites and neighs and kicks. The cavalier scratches his head. The sunlight opening up the clouds. The winged horse flying away.

COAL

In the dirt that hides the coal in the shoal that feeds the grasses coal underneath the grasses black coal lifted by the stars stars that change to sirens sirens lifting huge the coal shoal that one time fed the timber black wood black earth black behemoth

I DREAD THE POTATOES IN THE DIRT

along with your coat hangers
and cigarettes. The town criers
surround me and I hold
the fox in its cage.
I have no use for the museum
of your sad harmonica.

SKETCHES FOR TARA FABER

1.

Against the tin pines
south of Smith Street,
the clouds dispense crow,
dispense hawk.
In the predawn
of the rodents' dream,
we see the slow-paced
car, the child's
arm unfolding
from the left wing of the
passenger pigeon.

2.

We peered through the trailer's
underpinning into the vast dark glory
that is the poem.
Down the hill, we could see
through the dark,
the pale blank wall before
its illumination. Moving images
thwart the imagination.

3.

As the cicadas
whined out to each other,

he sat on the roof and listened
to the sounds of the nearby bar,

the glass bottles,
the faint voices dispersing
in the fog. He thought of the woman
sans ring the man leaning

against the door w/ his shoulder,

the door opening with
a wide swing and banging
against the brick wall.

4.

Blind of crepe myrtles
blossoming
into the white lawn. The houses
stacked in rings
against the forest,
the wild circling.

5.

Empty field
filled with
empty needles.
Nurse practitioner
danced the tango
with his heart.

6.

The melting snow

dripped from
the roof
of the cave's mouth

In the sky, the hawk
circled, his cold
yellow eye circling
the lake of hawks:

the bear, the snow.
The remembered
kill, the nest.

The bear, drunk
on berries and bark,
crawled into the cave, into

the cave she loves.

SONG

Call me apricot Call me lionized Call me the country song with razor blades and skinny thighs

Call me tartar sauce Call me target practice Call me dirty bomb on the Whitehouse lawn rolling in the grass

Call me Ishmael Call me database Call me the girl who put them cigarette burns on your face

FOUR ATTEMPTS AT INTIMIDATION

1.

You walk bearing dandelions for convicted felons. You walk carrying rags to catch spilled drops from the dangerous brush. Stroll the street with no windows or ashes. The derelict clotheslines of youths high on crushed chlorzoxazone. The untrainable horses that gather on the beach, tanker fire on the horizon. The satellites we use to detect the machete carried by some unregistered democracy.

2.

The librarian kept caged tigers in her cellar. Their roars would shake the local five and dime. It's their way of cataloging, said the librarian to the clerk. The clerk was Siddhartha Gandhi. His glasses quaked on the edge of his nose. He kept silent as he washed the dirty windows.

3.

The Philadelphia evenings with their dusty streets and windowglass fountains. The skyscrapers threaten the city. Ben Franklin and his flying machine cast a bird-like shadow over the tall buildings. Ben Franklin with his flintlock, Ben Franklin with his telescopic lens and impeccable shoes.

4.

When all of this is done, she will train the palmetto bugs to sing my name. On the bench at the end of the block, an exterminator waits. His weight is guessed by fife players. His weight in uranium, constantly shifting, constantly twittering out its energy. The satellites in the western sky fly low to look in my window. The starched white bib on my daughter's pinafore.

FOR THE GENTLE AT HEART AND THE ESTEEMED LEADER

1.

The President always carries a Tropic
of Cancer. Not a Secret Service bimbo

as you would suppose, but a devouring
of sadness and gloom. The tropic is, of course,

a long spear. Our countrymen
live in refrigerators or in shopping malls.

2.

The President prefers to ride
shotgun. Everybody but the President

gets to drive the car. The President
pretends he's not in charge. Stupid

people smile at him and pat him
on the fanny. They click their teeth

like he's a baby. He's really a herald.
His belt is a real live snake.

BIOGRAPHY OF DON KNOTTS

I inhaled deeply the rust colored valley in winter, the coyote and deer quivering in the pink hue. I held my key ring, the moon, in the low clouds. My head contained two, no, three wars. The valley rose to swallow the clouded stars. I was waiting for the third eye to open.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Her feet were like flames. She raised
her paw and the scroll fell open.

The decree was decried. The law
was soon put into action.

Mr. Franklin did a cartwheel
and looked out across the lively huns.

AGLAOPE

That evening you wore
a black dress in your hands
you carried a dagger

My heart has a name
It was on the dagger

I lifted a car
I pulled a train
by its cowcatcher

O sea, when I met you
I sank like a stone

THE BATTLE FOR THE TABLE

Polished accouterments surround from all sides. With sheer joy I aim my darts at the forks and knives. I wrestle with the plates and quilted tablecloth. I kick the panic attack of the cereal bowl. Buried deep in my nerves, a riotous spring day. The ruckus rises above my house. Outside the neighbors are circling.

THE MUSEUM CLOSES AT FIVE

1:00

He made something. He made summary. The Sumerian or ancient Babylonian. And he wore his tie with such a sumptuary neck. He drove his boozy car into the horizon at 53 m.p.h.

2:00

We investigated the Precambrian. We broadcasted the voices of silly poets into the stratosphere. We ate the bi-valve. We sewed our seeds of preamble, of predestination.

3:00

Therefore, the post was resumed. Dearest Helga, with her middy blouse and silver skirt. Nothing left for the tale-teller but to sell the truth. To leave the slow-witted in their rowboat, looking at the splinters in their hands.

4:00

The bright blips, the zeros and ones, the repurchase agreement with which we punctuate our middle years. All that is said into the darkening field.

5:00

Red flannel across the table. She swerved the woolen scarf, trimmed the middle America, leashed the lecherous husband, painted the buttercup.

POEM

My soul runs from country to country
builds hut after hut
and beds down in orange brothels

*

My soul has its own catalog:
It files by scent and by touch
Its winters are long
and unbraided

*

Each winter is its own animal
and each animal longs for
an orange soul and
its own transcendent
ukulele

Alan May's poems have appeared in *The New Orleans Review*, *9th Street Laboratories*, *Diagram*, *Double Room* and others. His book *Dead Letters* is available through BlazeVOX [books].

By day, he runs an environmentally-conscious lawn care and gardening service. By night, he edits APOCRYPHALTEXT [http://www.apocryphaltextpoetry.com].