

Deus Ex Machina

By Dr. Peter Fraser MacDonald

A sentinel at the oracle of Phoebus;
The white-robed priestess stands guard over the shrine of the blessed, terrible God.
The incandescent hum of electric light filaments,
And the insistent rattle of metal,
As a Gamelan orchestra at a Balinese Requiem.

A nervous shudder betrayed my anxiety,
As she fastened the buckle of my helmet;
A chivalrous knight - Indeed!
Shoved helplessly into the thorax of the great beast,
As Jonah tossed from his vessel and into the belly of the whale,
I sought my destiny!

As I tightly closed my eyes,
Strange and hideous visions,
Melded in my diseased cerebellum:
Antigone's screaming execrations at her inevitable immolation;
Fortunato's blood-soaked scrapings -
A grotesque cave drawing,
Tinged with sienna and umber hues.

I desperately began counting by thousandths.
One thousand forty-nine!
One thousand fifty!
My prognosis?
One-thousand fifty-two...
As hopeless as this position from which I could not wrench myself!
One thousand fifty-four...
For what further proof was necessary?

One thousand fifty-six...
Our Father who art in...
One thousand fifty-seven...
I pledge allegiance to...
One thousand fifty-eight...
That all men are created...
One thousand fifty-nine...
The whale disgorges its prey.
Apollo's wrath awaits me.

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