

The Town of Granger  
By Christian McDonough

Coming out from the rear barn door was the young scruff of a man named Daline. He, having just felt the warm-jellied mass of a dying cow's milk-producing udder, was now feeling Solemnly Torn and tearful. Within his barn, with the dead cows, there was the developing green gangrene. It had developed at a rapid pace and, at this time, was eating away at the framework of the barn. Daline took it to be, when viewed at the surface level, an omen of something greater, and when he considered it at the level of the atomic, a comfort.

As he passed through the doorway a large chunk of carpentry broke off from the uppermost corner of the barn. It hit Da upon his head. Immediately, he collapsed to the ground, filled with pain, his face upon the wet grass.

He let out a howl as the night came quickly, deciding he would make the most of this night and finding another of his cows.

"Da," spoke the cow, "Da!" Daline was a comfort to the cow. He stroked its head, tenderly.

"Thank you, Cow." Daline proclaimed. "Tonight, we'll go into town! And tomorrow we'll read of our mischievousness in the morning paper." Daline mounted Cow and they set off on their small journey.

Town was a desolate place. Only three families remained: The Cartezians, The Dearths, and The Truntains. Of the Truntains, only one survived: Celia-Trunto-Truntain. Just the other day, from within The Truntain Mansion, in her young and torrential ways, she screamed and screamed for hours on end, and, upon finding a large and incessant machine deep within the mansion (a machine of noise), she became clear. Clear with the thought that her own desires, her screams, were fully supported and maybe even developed by her ancestors, whom she had never known. Celia-Trunto-Truntain knew that Noise was one with those autonomous operations occurring inside of her at all times; she looked within herself and felt at home.

Those which make up The Cartezians and The Dearth are less noteworthy. Each member of each respective family functions individually to some degree; however, their association as a "Dearth" or as a "Cartezian" is what truly defines them. The families behave as one unit, with each member acting as a piece to the formation of an ideological puzzle. The Cartezians, as a whole, have a focus upon creation and meaning. The Dearth, as a whole, have a focus upon being and behaving.

Of course, the families despised one another, while, individually, each member held secret friendships and relations which they all found to be shameful and beautiful and progressive, leading them towards (as each would whisper to their selves in quiet moments of introspection) "a new perspective."

As Da rode upon the back of Cow, he imagined himself riding upon the backs of men, great men. Imagining himself teasing and taunting, hinting towards a secret something that only he could possess. His words to the great men were thrown with a vicissitude completely absent from his physical life, he would state: "That which I possess makes me the dominant creature. With it, I stand tall. I ride, I ride."

And the great men, in response, "Da! Da! Daline! Oh, Daline! You hurt us, you hurt us... Why, why don't you help us?" And Daline would only mumble something, looking to the sky...

Cow let out a sneeze and soon enough they were in town. Daline, now walking alongside Cow, looked out at the many decomposing structures which made up this shanty town, cursing

that which they represented and knowing how they were in the past. He saw the crumbled factory, in which thousands of objects rested, each covered in millions of speckles of dust and having some function which now cannot be accomplished. He saw into the post office, which was now only an assembly of concrete with an angular disposition, long ago burned out by a fire, and there, ahead of them, Cow and Da saw the home of The Cartezians, still standing, dilapidated, but whole. They heard shouting from within it.

“No! Séree! Are you blind? Can’t you see me, can’t you see my hand? Yes? Then why can’t you see that this is this as well as that!? Yes, it is this in a secondary way, perhaps in a lesser way, but it still is.” shouted out a low voice, rough like mud-soaked gravel.

“But, Trenton, if it was as you say then its creation would be like that of the butterfly... The butterfly is itself, but, in the past, a caterpillar, and when transferring between the two, in its cocoon, it is a liquid without form.” replied a high, womanly voice, tender as the finest meat.

“Are not all things this way?” whispered a third voice, indistinctly present within the home, causing a furious alarm from all voices.

Daline and Cow continued forwards, happily present, laughing at such screams, and then, without warning, came upon a mass of rubble piled together from the destroyed homes and belongings of those who are no longer here and, overtaken with an idea but still holding onto that fantasy of the great men, Daline set upon rearranging the mass completely. Some might say it was, “A mischievous, mysterious joke.”

Cow, witnessing the rearrangement, let out a series of varying moos, expressing happiness in being a witness and helping to bring about something like an atmosphere conducive to a proper arrangement. In the distance, the incessant machine within The Truntain Mansion screamed and screamed, harming Daline’s fantasy. This harm caused a buildup of discomfort and tension within Daline, a Scraping, and the arrangement suffered, becoming completely incoherent. Shards of glass would jut out evenly, yet curved, a long pipe emerged perfectly on either side, stagnant puddles of dust pooled in angular, geometrical, shapes. The arrangement was horrible.

Daline, knowing it was horrible, hearing Cow’s hums and the scream of the machine, knowing that The Cartezians still screamed, let out a noise of his own (a kind of a Caw), even more awful than the rubble and its arrangement. Then saw in the distance a young couple holding hands, intrigued by this noise and pondering upon it in all essential ways. It was Stelat and Rontaug. It was Deart and Cartezian.

They whispered to one another, a gleam of Belief in their eyes, and danced off on the old path of The Truntains.

Daline and Cow continued onward, holding deeply on to this new formation of Deart and Cartezian, while Stelat and Rontaug, deeply in love, danced their selves affront The Truntain Mansion. Their love was one devoid of emptiness, it was filled to the brim with things. Often apart from one another, their days were unimaginably long and their thoughts were fraught with the worst kinds of doubts. The volatile natures of both their homes certainly brought no comfort, with shouting, questioning, and continuous confrontation, it brought the thought of their relationship to the forefront at all times. It seemed to them that the only chance of escape that they had was present within one another, and so they saw each other as if within some blinding light that could only be grasped for a moment. When they were together, they only whispered and danced, hands held tightly. Each word they spoke, in their fullness, was filled with sacred airs, as if each sentence was formed a million years ago, deep in nature; “...Cleft my cheek...” was once whispered, as well as, “...To the sky...”

Yes, they were truly in love.

Now, all Stelat and Rontaug could hear was that incessant machine, pricking their ears with damaging amounts of noise. They cautiously dashed closer, drawn to it and its fullness, feeling a significance in the immensity of its noise and inspired by Daline's Cow. Hand in hand, they moved to investigate, but they felt they could not enter, not like this. They stood at the door, observing it, looking up in awe at the ramshackle beauty that was The Truntain Mansion; with doors of metal, windows of sand, and, up above, barely visible in this darkness, a series of geometrical shapes, the family crest.

Stelat and Rontaug rested their hands on the metal door and felt unbelievable vibrations. The noise was overpowering and now was felt within them. Them, as if one, holding hands and pressing hands together upon the door of pure metal, which was now shaking heavily, threatening to crumble under the force of the noise. They made their way to the back, crawling with a curious carefulness that they could not resist. The basement entrance presented itself to them, and they entered.

Daline and Cow, after causing another small mischief, a mischief regarding the crumbling of grounds, exposing a great abundance of coal present underneath, came to the home of The Dearts and were welcomed. Leiben Deart spoke, shrouded in darkness, "Daline, have you left your home, left your farm, and come to see us on this Seeping night?"

Da lied in his reply, "Yes, I'm here to see you."

"And what do you have to say?" Leiben whispered out to Daline, making sure to speak as a careful questioner.

"Hm... This night does seep, as you've said. It seeps of relations." Daline proposed, and, with his proposal, out came two more heads from within the home of The Dearts. The heads of Suzanne and Reagan, shrouded in darkness. Reagan moved with precision and control, she seemed completely still. Suzanne, as was deduced from her movements alone, was in a fragile state of existence.

"What are you doing here? What are you saying to Leiben? Has another of your cows died? Is that why you're here? Why are you bleeding?" questioned Reagan, still as ever.

"A cow of mine has died and my barn begins to collapse. Is there blood? The green gangrene which develops in my barn is spreading and I have seen something." And so, the head of Suzanne screamed,

"What is it, you bastard?" Still shrouded in darkness.

"I have seen them, Deart and Cartezian, together, in relations, Stelat and Rontaug." solemnly spoke Daline. The others all looked down, Leiben Deart was truly shocked, despite his many secret relations with all members of The Cartezians. Reagan and Suzanne had felt it coming somehow. Reagan remained still. Suzanne growled under her breath.

Daline watched, distantly, as the Deart family approached the home of The Cartezians. Leiben approached the door, now serving as spokesman for The Dearts in their present confrontation. Daline squinted as he saw Leiben enter, along with three other indistinguishable members of the Deart family. They came in all shapes and sizes, though Daline couldn't make out their faces.

Soon, after the quiet whispers from within The Cartezian home, Leiben and three Dearts exited the home with the whole of The Cartezian family. Daline stood proudly under a purely gray sky. He waved his hands, signaling for them to follow as he took them to where he knew they must be. Daline rode on, mounted atop Cow.

In that mansion... The Truntain Mansion, stood Stelat and Rontaug, watching and screaming while witnessing the actions of Celia-Trunto-Truntain. She screamed and screamed with that incessant machine supporting her all the while. Cracks formed in the walls and all was horrible. Stelat and Rontaug knew nothing. Celia was aware of what went on, having thought on this process even as she lived it.

“How could this end any other way?” she thought. While Stelat and Rontaug, in their fullness, had no room for thought, they had only room for their selves, and now, not even that was true. They screamed and screamed, filling the space around them with their Self, expanding, never stopping. Occasionally, from their screams a stray phrase would emerge: “...And all was arranged, as so...” “...Still, there is much to be done...”

And them, The Darts and The Cartezians, stood outside. They stood far behind Daline, and stood as separate from one another as possible, waiting for Da to begin the confrontation. He entered, leaving Cow outside, for Cow had sensitive ears, and the families followed suit. Inside, before the families had arrived, Daline observed the strange forms that Stelat, Rontaug, and the beautiful Celia-Trunto-Truntain, had formed. The arrangement was devastating, and supported by that unseen machine which all felt, vibrating their bodies. Daline, in seeing Celia and hearing her screams, felt as if he had truly returned to the town, he felt as if it was long ago...

The Darts and Cartezians now entered. Immediately, they began to scream. The Darts, because they felt it was appropriate, The Cartezians, because they disagreed upon the meaning of it. There was a time in the distant past when the families would all come together in this mansion, The Truntain Mansion, and make their noise. Speaking of sense and nonsense and the importance of it all. They would speak and speak far into the night, and nothing would be known, but all would leave peacefully fulfilled. As the Truntains began to vanish, so did these delicate times.

Shaking horribly, threatening to collapse, their screams continued. Daline, shaking as well, shaking to the point of no return, as they all were, allowed himself another fantasy. He was standing with all his cows, in a great green field, admiring all of them as they mooed loudly and softly, angrily and tenderly, speaking kind and awful things all to him. Daline was comforted.

With the constant vibrations and the deteriorating state of the mansion, a piece of carpentry broke off and hit Daline upon his head, revealing a developing green gangrene within the mansion and unveiling a great scent of decomposition. Daline collapsed upon the floor. The scent of the green gangrene filled the mansion, smelled by all who screamed. Everything became quiet and still, though the screaming did not stop. The Self of Stelat and Rontaug had completely filled the mansion by this point and became intertwined with the molecular presence of the green gangrene all throughout the mansion. This creation invaded the many guests, as well as the host, within The Truntain Mansion, altering them in some essential way. Completely filling The Truntain Mansion, filling it whole.

Celia-Trunto, upon noticing that Da had collapsed, carried him outside to Cow and signaled for Cow to take him home.

The next day the paper would read, “Daline Strikes Again, Rearranges Rubble.” As Daline would read while standing in his Gangrene infested barn, fantasizing of men, women, and cows, smelling that great scent of the Green Gangrene as blood trickled down his forehead and Cow gently mooed.