



## **Making Movies**

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by David Halliday

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The BBC is pleased to present the third edition of our series covering the Fathers of World Cinema, called MAKING MOVIES.

In this edition we focus on the works of the Canadian director, Samuel Bremmer.

The filming of this edition was marred by the untimely death of Samuel Bremmer. To him, we dedicate this programme.

The Samuel Bremmer Company of Actors

MAURICE DUBOIS: So we are supposed to talk about ourselves for a moment. This will probably be the last original thing you will hear from my lips. An actor is a puppet. He is the shell, the suit of multitudinous spirits. Our bodies are promiscuous. An actor is the medium of invention, the house that is haunted, the radio receiver, the echo of another's voice. As the child is the product of his parent's lust, we are the offspring of someone's need to speak and another's need to listen... When I joined this company of actors I had only been in Toronto for a few weeks. They believed me when I told them I was in a Shakespearian company in England. Perhaps they thought it racist to call a black man a liar...

BARBARA HARRIS: I don't know what to say really. This is embarrassing. Let's see. I graduated from the University of Windsor's drama department. I worked in a couple of children's programmes on a private television station in Toronto. People told me that I only got into this troop because I dispensed my favours. That isn't true. Mr Bremmer and I have a very business like relationship. These rumours are nourished by jealousy and envy. Because I am so young, people can't allow themselves to believe that I am talented. Somehow it seems unjust to them that someone can be attractive, young, successful and also be talented. We live in very cynical times...

LESJA BROWN: I met Sam when we were in college. In fact we played the leading roles in a production of Romeo and Juliet. During the run of the play we became lovers. Later after a painful separation we became friends. Then I lost contact with Sam. He wasn't one to write letters. I had a child, a little girl. I married my psychiatrist and retired from the theatre, brief as that career had been. The marriage didn't work out. My husband ran off with another young actress. I guess he just loved the theatre. After the divorce I had to find work. I worked as a waitress, a cab driver, a legal secretary. I even had a stint as a stripper. Finally I settled into a job as a librarian for almost fifteen years. But my heart remained in the theatre. It was a complete shock, a wonderful surprise when Sam contacted me after so many years and told me he was getting a company of actors together to make a film...

ROBERT DRAYTON: You've heard the old cliché about being discovered by a talent scout in a drug store. That's how it happened to me. Except of course I wasn't a starlet. I wasn't even an actor. I was just bumming around from job to job when this short fat man asked me if I wanted to be in movies. Made me laugh you know. I figured the guy was trying to put the make on me. I seemed to be marked for the advances of queers. But I took him up on it. I mean, what did I have to lose? I was tired of selling condoms to sixteen-year-old romeos and discussing hemorrhoids with eighty-year-old juliets. And I guess I heard about all the money you could make in movies and all the beautiful women you met...

ANTHONY WHALE: I suppose I forced myself into the company. I was thirty years old and still doing commercials on television for toothpaste and laundry detergent. If I was going to make it as a professional

actor I knew I'd have to make my move soon. I didn't want to be a big name actor, no star or anything like that. I just wanted to act. I love it. Before an audience, a camera, a mirror. My wife says I just haven't grown up. Perhaps. I tried to kick it once. Took a civilian job. Insurance agent. Drove me its. Sure, financially we did all right. I was good at selling insurance. And I had two kids and a wife to feed and clothe. But I started to drink. I was miserable. And I think I was going a little crazy. I began to see things. Not see things but believe things. For example one day I'd believe that it as raining out so I'd leave the house with an umbrella and it would be a bright sunny day. Or else I'd get the feeling while reading the newspaper that a cat was rubbing its back up against my leg. We didn't have any pets. I'd rush to the office only to find that it was closed. It was Saturday. The wife and I had some long conversations about this and it was decided at I should return to acting. The wife's only condition was that I get some permanent ongoing type of work and not do commercials. I heard about this company Sam was forming. I got an interview. I just layed it all it for him. He swallowed my story. I was always good at selling things...

SIR JOHN BIRD: At the time of course I hadn't yet been knighted. In fact I had just returned from England after thirty-five years on the stage. My doctor suggested I retire. My strength, he said, was waning. He promised me five more years if I abstained from the theatre. Otherwise my heart would not survive another opening night. So I retired. None of this was in the press. I said that I had decided to return to my homeland - Canada. I was born in Orangeville, a village north of Toronto. When I returned to my birthplace everything had changed. I hardly recognized the place. Felt like a foreigner and wondered privately whether I had a home at all except upon the stage. It was under these circumstances that Sammy Bremmer approached me in the little cottage I had bought for myself. He was a very young man then, rather brash and aggressive I thought. Very American as many Canadians seem to have become. As I was later to learn it was just the way he expressed his nervousness. He asked me to join his company of actors. They were going to make movies. Films. The doctor had not mentioned any prohibition of films. In England no one had ever offered me a part in a film except a few horror films, which I found beneath me. But here was this young man offering me an opportunity to act again. He told me, quite frankly, that he needed my name and reputation from the theatre to attract investors. I was dumbfounded. Sammy read my silence as reluctance and offered me a

percentage of each film's profits. I'd been miserable not acting. It was like asking a thoroughbred not to run. I thought of the warning my doctor had given me. I accepted Sammy's offer. And look, I'm still here. The last thing I heard regarding my doctor was the announcement of his funeral...

SAMUEL BREMMER: I always wanted to make films. From the first time I stepped into a movie house. Even before the movie began. Maybe it was the architecture of the building. It was the old Carleton theatre. It's been torn down, its ghost living inside a hotel. In those days they built very ornate and beautiful cathedrals to show films in. For most people going to a film was more than seeing a movie, it was an event. Like going to church, except cheaper. That theatre captured the imagination of that small boy. And when the lights dimmed, the curtains parted, and the voices of the audience hushed, I was entranced. At first I wanted to act. To be a star like Bogart, or Cagney. The trouble was I couldn't act. And during college when I started to lose my hair I knew I'd never be pretty enough to become a movie star. So I turned to the mechanics of magic. I worked on quite a few CBC productions. Everything from the news, to ballet, to hockey, to kids' programmes. But no one in Canada wanted to make feature films. Documentaries seemed their only passion. So, mostly through nerve and naivety I collected a group of actors and crew, borrowed or rented equipment and set out to make a movie. We didn't have much of a budget. And we were all learning while we shot. Under the circumstances I think our first film, *The Gunfight*, was rather good although some of the dialogue now seems a bit stiff to me. After we finished the film I managed to corral the actors into making a second film. In the process of making these films we became a family. In a time when the traditional family is breaking down I believe it is being substituted by a new family. Like our company of actors. People joined together not by blood but by a common goal, by a common love...

## The Gunfight

1.  
Around a table four men playing poker  
one is a squat man close to the earth  
a farmer curly red hair invisible eyebrows divided by a scar

shirt sleeves rolled up  
two buttons of his shirt undone  
suspenders and trousers a suit jacket hung  
limply over his chair

to his right a small thin man spider wearing spectacles  
bank teller holds his cards close  
close to his eyes to make sure they aren't counterfeit

to his right the gambler dressed to win  
three piece suit white silk shirt shoe string tie black curly hair  
a smile hidden in a wrinkled mouth

the fourth is a blacksmith shirt stained sweat arms burned  
from the elbows down hands awkwardly large

anyone care for breakfast kitty the owner of the saloon smiles  
behind a deep purple dress with flat mirror buttons

i'd rather refill my pocket the blacksmith good naturedly grins

how about a couple of eggs with eyes bacon with sides  
coffee with cream the gambler smiles

what have you got the gambler asks

pair of aces the bank clerk greedily grins

beats me the farmer replies

ménage a trios the gambler grins while strangling his tie

don't you ever lose the farmer complains  
no one can be so lucky and not own the stars

calm down bill the blacksmith says  
restraining a yawn swallowing his eyes

dealing out a new round the gambler places the deck on the table  
teller and smith nibble at their cards

the farmer rises pointing at the gambler  
with a gun

sitting calmly the gambler holds his cards with five fingers  
another finger beneath the table  
fondling the trigger of his gun  
two bullets splinter the table and the farmer's brain

the farmer's eyes are open round in surprise  
hand drops gun fires into the floor  
falls back into his chair  
blood spits out of his head onto his shirt  
it's a new shirt  
the farmer gasps and dies.

SET DESIGNER: All the indoor scenes, the saloon, the house, the farm, were shot in a warehouse in Toronto. I think the place had been used to store furs or something animal... you could still smell whatever it was. Sam had to live there while we were shooting. He had to; it was his furniture that we were using as props. I don't know how he stood the smell. He told us that at night he could hear creatures scurrying across the rafters. He wasn't sure whether they were mice or ghosts....

SAMUEL BREMMER: To save money we decided to make a western. Everyone wore old clothes they'd found in attics or picked up in the 'Sally Ann'. They were close to the clothes that people wore in the 1800's. Fashions for the poor don't change much over time. And the men, except for Anthony, didn't shave. We shot many of the outdoor scenes in an old abandoned farm near Pembroke, built, I think, about the time the story is supposed to have taken place. We used some of the locals and the crew as extras. And of course with horses you don't have to worry about the date of the model...

MUSIC DIRECTOR: We had some trouble with the background noise. We didn't notice it until we started to edit, but all the indoor scenes sounded dead, hollow. Solving this was more difficult than it might seem. I had to go out and record outdoor scenes. I went into the middle of the woods. I used some very sensitive recording equipment and discovered to my dismay that it picked up the sound of my breathing. So I had to re-record by leaving the machine by itself for a few hours. And

then later i discovered that part of it was ruined by the sound of an airplane. So i had to do it all over again. The third time i was again frustrated. The recorder picked up the sound of a tree falling in the woods...

SCREENWRITER: In the original script there was much more dialogue... which Sam managed to eliminate in many ways... either by eliminating it all together or by making it almost inaudible behind the breathing of horses, or the sound of running water or by having more than one person speak at the same time. Sam explained these changes to me by saying that we were not putting on a play. Film is visual, he said. I asked him why he didn't do the whole thing in pantomime. He didn't like that. Maybe that's why we haven't worked together since....

SAMUEL BREMMER: I am nothing but a bag of voices... if they leave then I am...

SAMUEL BREMMER: I was very pleased with the farmer's death. I played the part of the farmer myself, not only to save money but also I think because i liked the fantasy of being killed. And then of course surviving one's own death....

2.

rain falls down

a river pouring out of a cloud

a man on a horse approaches a farm house and dismounts

knocks at the door a woman in grey opens

the door light flows out into the rain

through the kitchen window is seen the rider holding his hat

the woman turning away face in her hands

veil of darkness rain and silence rain and silence

out the back door the rider leaves heading toward the barn

rain pours down ditches swell rain barrel overflows

SAMUEL BREMMER: There was no rain in the original screenplay. We shot all the indoor scenes first in Toronto while keeping an eye on the weather conditions in Pembroke. Then it occurred to me that the rain could be a fundamental part of the picture. This meant of course that we

had to re-write and re-shoot some scenes. And then we had to rush up to Pembroke and hope it wouldn't stop raining. I sent one of the crew ahead of us just to shoot the rain falling. Luckily for us, because shortly after we began to shoot the scenes on the farm the rain stopped. Looking back i think the rain shaped the film. As if the gods were smiling down upon us...

LESJA BROWN: I saw the woman in two lights. Both in grief and joy. Grief because suddenly she has lost something in her life. I didn't see her grieving for her husband but for herself and her son and a future that was threatening... but also with a kind of joy that she had to repress. Her husband was a drunk and she was probably glad to be rid of him. Although she could not admit this feeling publicly or perhaps even to herself. That is shy she feels a third sensation. Guilt. How many times had she wished, dreamed of him dead... ?

3.

inside the barn firing a harness a young boy  
lifts a hammer kissing metal  
the boy dressed in overalls  
a piece of straw growing out of his teeth  
a lantern lit hangs from a beam  
the rider enters the boy looks up

sheriff the boy says  
billy the sheriff replies  
think this rain will ever end the boy laughs  
come about your pa  
drunk again billy grins shaking his head  
dead the sheriff says  
staring into the fire

SAMUEL BREMMER: I couldn't see Sir John as a Wyatt Earp or Gary Cooper in High Noon. So I had him play the sheriff as a school crossing guard, a man fearful of violence, knowing that he could do nothing to limit or restrain it....

4.

graveyard funeral in pouring rain billy  
stands silent his mother weeps growing smaller

blacksmith is there  
the sheriff  
the minister reads from a book  
a couple of buckboards wait at the border with a buggy  
the horses are nervous  
the hole in the ground filled  
with water pine box lowered floats  
then sinks the woman cries  
remembering that her husband couldn't swim

LESJA BROWN: Almost caught my death filming this scene. It was a cold September day as I recall and I remember complaining to Sam, who just smiled and said it was all in my head. I caught a bad cold and was laid up in bed for a couple of weeks. Sam was very sweet. Sent me flowers and candies. Came to see me about every other day. He was very concerned. Sam is quite superstitious. I think that because we were shooting a funeral, he was afraid we had somehow unleashed death...

5.  
billy and his mother returning home rain pours down  
not a word spoken rain pours down  
not a word spoken water rushes down sides of the road  
eats the earth roots of trees lakes from ponds rivers – paths  
billy wears a straw hat now bent over his ears  
his mother wears a shawl around her neck  
the horse wears blinkers  
so it won't panic

ROBERT DRAYTON: Mr. Bremmer was no help to me at all. I asked him several times what my motivation was supposed to be. How was I supposed to play this farm boy. I had never acted before and felt quite in the dark. It worried me. I couldn't sleep and I looked it. But when I asked him anything, Mr. Bremmer would just bark at me. I'm busy, he'd say, don't bother me now. Several times I was ready to quit. After we finished the film, Mr. Bremmer came up to me, a big grin on his face and slapped me on the shoulder. Bobby, he said, you were beautiful – awkward, nervous, uncomfortable - young.

6.

inside the farm house Billy stares into the fire bleeding flames  
his mother at the window staring into the rain  
shaking  
won't it ever end

7.  
days passed rain pours on night and day are one

SAMUEL BREMMER: One day we left a camera for about an hour shooting rain falling into mud, then by editing, we condensed the whole hour down to a couple of minutes....

8.  
Billy's mother sits at the kitchen table rubbing her hands  
he came again last night came again and stood there stood there  
at the end of the bed and swore I'd never sleep again never again  
until his vengeance was bedded

SAMUEL BREMMER: The only real close-up of the picture, a close-up of Lesja's eyes through her reflection in the window. And the rain running down the glass and her voice mixed with the sound of the rain beating. I was trying to create a mood of forlornness, of people outside the stream (excuse the pun) of history, of important events. This was the worst hardship of these people, these pioneers, the feeling that they didn't matter... it hardened some, destroyed others....

9.  
in the saloon the gambler sits eating his breakfast  
Kitty stands looking out the saloon window  
finally stopped raining she mumbles  
scratching the flesh above her wrist  
sit down you're giving me indigestion the gambler barks

Kitty sits down  
her red dress flowing over the chair  
a small silver hair smothered between her breasts

ANTHONY WHALE: I had to lose quite a bit of weight to play the gambler, which isn't easy when your wife is Italian. Sam's idea. He saw the gambler as an evil character and evil, he said, must always look

hungry. I thought that this was too facile. I was determined to make a gambler into a real person. My dialogue didn't allow this so I decided I'd have to do it through gestures. I'd make the gambler appealing. Practiced my smile. Watched a lot of old Clark Gable films. Practiced grinning in the mirror each morning. Used to break up my wife. She'd laugh and laugh. Sam didn't like the smile. In the end we compromised. I'd be able to smile if I lost thirty pounds. I lost the weight. Unfortunately my grin changed with the loss of weight on my face. My charming grin began to look wicked. Sam was very pleased with himself....

10.

Kitty sits

playing solitaire

read my fortune the gambler yawns

Kitty looks at the cards remains silent

the gambler grabs her wrist and bends it unnaturally  
to one side

you're hurting me Kitty cries

read the cards read the cards the gambler demands

tell me how I shall die

Kitty bites her lip turns over a seven

you will die a rich man

turns over a queen

choking to death

the gambler laughs so I'm to hang

they'll have to bury a bullet in me first

BARBARA HARRIS: I had to learn to shuffle cards. Bought several decks. Practiced between takes. Before I was served dinner in restaurants, during a bath, first thing in the morning. Maurice gave me some tips. He seems to know something about everything. A very talented man...SAMUEL BREMMER: Our budget ran out about this time I didn't tell anyone. Told them I had to take a few days off. A small operation, doctor's orders. I was not specific. Everyone, to my surprise, was quite concerned. I spent the next week haranguing, begging, pleading with friends and relatives. If the film had been a flop I knew I'd end up a sales clerk, or insurance agent somewhere spending years to pay off my debts. Fortunately for me when we finished the picture and I was able (through many frustrating weeks) to get the picture distributed we broke even.

Which for a Canadian film at the time was considered a tremendous success. Since then the film to my surprise and delight, has become something of an underground classic in Europe...

11.

sheriff enters the bar

walks over to the table where the gambler

and Kitty are playing with a cat

the farmer's boy is outside the sheriff begins

he's come armed

I don't want you to draw on him.

the gambler laughs

looks down at the sheriff's muddy boots and flips him a nickel

sheriff why don't you go and get your boots polished.

SIR JOHN BIRD: There was a tremendous fight about how the picture should end. In the original screenplay, Kitty talks the gambler into not shooting the farmer's boy because of the gambler's love for her. We all agreed that this was not satisfactory... Little Barbara thought that somehow Kitty should be killed at the end. This isn't television, Sammy screamed. Then Maurice suggested that the sheriff save the young boy by shooting the gambler in the back. Sammy liked the idea but he was overruled by the rest of us. It just wouldn't sell we all argued, it's too out of character. The sheriff is inept, impotent. All of us agreed (all of us except Sammy and Barbara) that the gambler had to die. It was poetic justice...

12.

a boy's voice cries

out from the street

mr gambler I come to kill you

the gambler stands up checks his gun heads for the door

Kitty jumps up grabs his arm

he's just a kid she pleads

his gun ain't the gambler replies

13.

the gambler stands on the wooden sidewalk

high above the street filled with water

a sea of mud  
Billy stands in the middle of the road  
reaches for his gun too late  
the gambler's gun is drawn  
and fixed on the boy's heart Billy faints  
into the mud the gambler's head falls  
back and laughs

Kitty rushes up from behind and pushes the gambler  
fire his gun two bullets graze Billy's hat  
the gambler falls into the street  
face first in the mud motionless  
Billy remains  
for a moment in the mud  
am I alive he asks

14.

Kitty kneels weeping over the gambler  
the sheriff lifts Billy to his feet  
did I kill him the boy asks  
no one killed him the sheriff responds  
he was just a man who struggled to rise  
finally successful he reached his level.

THE END

SAMUEL BREMMER: I'm still not satisfied with the ending. But to tell you the truth I wasn't sure how the thing should end. I wanted an ending that showed that violence was unpredictable. It was like an explosion where everyone is its victim. My intuition told me that the gambler should kill the farm boy. This was consistent with reality. But then film is not reality. No artistic form reflects reality. And of course everyone wanted the gambler to die. So the ending was decided through democratic means.... So much for artistic integrity..

City of Gold

1.

wind a pilgrim across a cold  
barren flatland in search of shelter

small plants huddle  
close to the ground  
sky dark clouds climbing higher and higher  
falling over each other like wolves  
ravenous.

SAMUEL BREMMER: I took a ride up to Churchill on the rail, the North Pole Express. It's the only way you can get to Churchill by land. Train travels about forty miles an hour. At top speed. Usually goes slower. And it stops periodically when people wave it down. Like you'd wave a bus down in the south... Carries mostly freight and Indians. It's not so much a train trip as a way of life... One Indian stared at my gear for a while and asked if I was going hunting. Told him I was going up to shoot the tundra, to film snow. He looked at me for a very long time before he spoke again. Your snow no good? he said quite seriously. The snow in the south is shit, I replied. There was another long pause before he responded with a smile. I myself have been of that opinion for some time, he said. After this breakthrough the Indian and I introduced ourselves. His name was George although all his friends called him Eisenhower. He had worked for the American forces during the war watching out for German submarines in Hudson Bay. I used Eisenhower and two of his friends in a lot of the distant footage in the film. When we finished making the movie I returned to Churchill with a copy of the film to show Eisenhower. When he saw himself he refused to believe it was him. My legs are not so short, he claimed...

2.  
snow falls quietly crawling across the wasteland like an ant  
across a parking lot  
a wagon ridden by a woman pulled by  
two mules accompanied by two men

stop here for the night a man called Sam mumbles.

3.  
a fire  
flames lick the night sky as if they have  
an appetite for darkness  
we shouldn't have come this way the woman trembles  
tightening a blanket around her shoulders

the other man Nick sits sipping his coffee  
warms his feet by the fire  
his eyes falling deep deep into the night  
icicles hanging from his beard.

SET DESIGNER: All the camp scenes were shot in a huge freezer they had at the Canada Packers down on St. Clair Avenue.' We were lucky: there were plans to tear it down. We didn't need many props except snow. By putting mirrors on the walls and by shooting from certain angles we created quite an effective illusion of depth... We could have shot all the scenes in another theatre, faking the snow and sky but there is no way to fake peoples' breaths, those clouds coming out of the actors' mouths. Bubbles, Mr Bremmer called them... It wasn't difficult to find mules, and the wolves we got from the old Riverdale Zoo... We had some minor problems with the wolves. At first they would only pace back and forth like mechanical toys. The influence of their confinement for so long. And Mr Bremmer insisted that a keeper from the zoo be present at all times with a loaded rifle. Mr Bremmer was terribly frightened of dogs... The only real trouble we had was with the cameras. They kept freezing up. Finally we put them inside heated glass booths. But the glass kept fogging up. Consequently we were forced to film in very short takes. Later Mr Bremmer claimed that this was a technique, an artistic technique. All of us who were there had a good laugh over that...

4.  
three figures nestling around a fire

at a distance are the stomachs of death  
some are lying down relaxing  
others pace back and forth nervously  
young cubs frolic young mothers  
drool.

SAMUEL BREMMER: Our second child, Sandra, was born during the filming of The City. This was a tremendous burden on my wife. I'm afraid that I wasn't much help. I asked Barbara if she'd take care of David, our first born, while my wife was in the hospital. God, did she get angry. I'm an actress, she screamed, not a babysitter. She still believes that her refusal to take care of David cost her the only female part in the

film. I thought she was too inexperienced to play the part. And far too beautiful. I told her this and it helped mollify her. I needed a face that looked more lived in. Since the dialogue in the film was so sparse, eyes were all important. The camera saw only innocence in Barbara's eyes...

5.

fire shinks darkness stronger wolves bolder  
one of the wolves crawls up to the woman  
and sniffs at her face

the woman wakes  
and screams

Nick and Sam shaken from their sleep grab their rifles  
shoot simultaneously

the wolf cries out climbs up  
into the sky trying to escape  
collapses to the ground.

SCREENWRITER: The first thing I asked Mr Bremmer when we began work on the rough draft was what were these people doing out there in that wilderness? He said it didn't matter. I disagreed. An audience, it seems to me, has to believe in the possibility of events as they unfold. There must be a landscape, a historical theatre in which the story is told. Mr Bremmer just stared at me for a long time. He has a way of looking at you that makes you feel as if you have just uttered the most incredibly stupid thing. I never asked another question...

6.

the next day the three move on  
doesn't seem we have moved at all Nick says  
don't tell my feet that Sam replies.

SCREENWRITER: I don't know if this was his normal practice. We talked about the possibilities of the story. He took notes on a deck of cards. When all the cards were filled, he dealt out a hand of poker. These five cards were what we based our script upon. God, he said, plays with dice... I wouldn't say my contribution to the film was much to speak of. I think the only reason I was hired was because I could type...

7.

one of the mules drops dead  
exhaustion Nick says  
i could be next Sam replies

SAMUEL BREMMER: A very dangerous scene. We put the carcass of an old steer from the packing house on the set, figuring we'd shoot the wolves sniffing at it. But they went wild, into a frenzy of chewing and ripping at the animals' flesh. We had some very anxious moments. The wolves could have turned on us. Still we kept filming...

8.

continue on leaving behind the dead animal  
the wolves fight over.

SIR JOHN BIRD: Sammy asked me to play the character Sam with an upper-crust English accent. With the characteristic British humour... well, I know from living in London for thirty-five years that the English have no sense of humour. What people mistake for irony is a mixture of British melancholy and English weather. I told this to Sammy. He said we weren't dealing with reality; we're in the dream business. Besides, Americans think the British have a dry sense of humour, and the yankees are the ones who buy movie tickets...

9.

camp that evening  
will they keep their distance the woman pleads  
as long as we keep fire in the wood  
and fire in our guns Sam grins.

10.

next morning the remaining food  
is packed on a single mule  
the wagon a family photograph a pile of clothes  
bed pan a wood stove  
are left behind.

SIR JOHN BIRD: About this time I received a letter from Her Majesty's Service stating that I was to be knighted. What a shock.. A delightful shock.. I wanted to leave immediately for England. Sammy said I had to wait until the film was finished...

11.

wolves enter the now abandoned camp  
one sniffs the bed pan  
two others tug at a dress ripping it  
another tries on an easter bonnet.

ANTHONY WHALE: I began to feel that Sir John, Our Lord, as we began to call him, was upstaging me. He had all the good lines. I felt like a straight man. I stewed over it. Got on my wife's nerves. She told me to go and talk to Sam instead of taking it out on her. She doesn't know what Sam is like. Don't get me wrong. I respect Sam as an artist and after a film is finished you couldn't meet a gentler more charming fellow. But while we're shooting he's a... he's a bastard. There's no other way to put it...

12.

another camp  
the woman is rubbing her legs  
Sam is smoking his pipe  
Nick feeding the fire

are they still out there Nick asks  
yup Sam replies  
probably comparing recipes  
the woman turns on Sam  
i think you're enjoying this  
savouring it because i preferred your brother to you.

SAMUEL BREMMER: This is the only scene with extensive dialogue. I wanted to keep everything in the film sparse, the landscape, the dialogue, the acting. I wanted no fat. That's why we filmed in black and white. I was almost convinced that I should do the whole film without dialogue, but Sir John refused to act in the film if there was no dialogue. I can't act without opening my mouth, he said. It's like making love to a woman with your knickers on.

13.

another day the endless tundra

on and on and

14.  
three figures are heading  
toward a bright yellow glow  
on the horizon.

15.  
a city of gold  
growing out of  
a glazier

SET DESIGNER: We built a little city, a miniature, out of cardboard and painted it gold. When Mr Bremmer saw it he wasn't pleased. When we film it, he said, it's going to look like a cardboard city painted gold. He said I'd have to come up with something better. I was at a loss. The set designer before me had only lasted one film and it looked like I was going to suffer the same fate. I figured I'd soon be back dressing windows at Eaton's. I went over to the Pilot Tavern, the old Pilot on Yonge Street, and started drinking. It came to me about my fifth scotch. Ice. That was the answer. So a bunch of friends from the Art College and I, got a truck load of ice sent to the freezer we were filming in and we sculpted out a city in a glacier. It was about six feet high and very realistic. To make it look golden we put a yellow light in its base and then filmed it at high speed so that the light didn't have time to melt it. By playing the film at regular speed and projecting it onto a screen, we were able to shoot the three characters gazing at the city... Mr Bremmer was very pleased. When the picture ended, I got the axe nevertheless...

16.  
the dream of death Sam mutters  
dream of death the woman cries  
that's what the Indian called it  
the dream of death Sam says  
chewing on his pipe except we're not dreaming  
Nick laughs  
and I can smell the gold.

17.  
the face of the glacier

a sheer cliff  
flow of melted ice frozen into steps

leaving the mule behind the three ascend.

18.  
after a tiring climb the three collapse on the top step

we've done it the woman cries  
in a laugh  
we've got company Sam grunts  
surrounding the three are armoured giants  
in animal skins giants with flowing yellow hair  
white skin sharp blue eyes  
we're friends the woman smiles nervously  
one of the giants growls  
the woman faints.

19.  
the woman wakes looks across the room  
Sam and Nick are sitting on cushions  
at a low level table  
covered with fruits meats vegetables  
and carafes of wine

is this real the woman sighs  
Sam looks at the woman  
grins holding his stomach  
if this is a dream it sure is a filling one

the room glows gold statues of wolves  
in ivory bowls and plates  
embossed with gems tapestry gold and silver  
woven exotic flowers painted scenes  
battles between Indians and wolves

the woman joins Nick eating  
Sam leans back  
and fills his pipe.

SAMUEL BREMMER: They were recruited from the University of Toronto football team. They looked more terrifying than they sounded. Some of their voices were still changing. As I recall they won the national championship that year in a snow blizzard.

20.

from behind a wall hanging steps a short black man  
white beard white robe gathered and fastened  
by a clasp  
the three look up stunned into silence

are you pleased the dwarf smiles  
compliments to the chef Sam nods

who are you and how do we  
get out of here the woman asks

questions questions the dwarf laughs  
gold teeth sparkling  
have we been so inhospitable  
i shall return tomorrow  
and then bowing the little black man disappears  
behind a curtain.

MAURICE DUBOIS: I played the part of the dwarf on my knees. Through the use of camera angles we were able to make me appear quite small. I suppose I should have seen the part as demeaning, but you must remember that this was the mid-sixties when black consciousness was not yet so fashionable, and, well, it was a job. I saw the dwarf as a kind of devil, a mixture of innocence with deception and cruelty. I think evil is always innocent, it's a form of egotism, a self-deception, a naivety regarding the true meaning of existence. That is what Sam told me, word for word. I memorized it for just such an occasion as this.

MAURICE DUBOIS: I know what the magazines and the trade papers have said about Barbara. Barbara was very sweet, young, innocent and very ambitious. I was like a big brother for her... Yes. We were all close. In those days we were all cheerleaders for each other...

BARBARA HARRIS: Why should I hide it? I was very depressed. Depressed is hardly the word for it. I was sure that Mr Bremmer had given the part to Lesja because I wouldn't take care of his little brat David. I wanted that part so much. Look, I knew I only had a few good years left. An actress has only a few prime years. Finished by the time she's thirty. If it wasn't for Maurice I don't know what I would have done...

21.

we have to leave  
we have to escape  
to slip out when the day is asleep

22.

we'll be rich as kings Nick says  
holding up a golden cup

I wonder Sam says  
the fire in his pipe crackling digestion

in the dream of death the Indian said  
there is a city of gold and giants with skin  
white as snow  
when the gold  
leaves the city it turns into ice  
when the giants leave the city  
they turn into wolves

gold is gold Nick replies.

LESJA BROWN: I've always enjoyed working with Sam. Over the years we've developed a very close artistic relationship. We can almost read each others minds. I know instinctively what Sam wants and I try, within the limits of my talents, to deliver.

23.

that evening the three creep out of the palace  
down darkened alleys along a golden highway  
to the gates of the city

from the sockets of shadows

eyes watch their flight.

SAMUEL BREMMER: You're going to get a certain amount of friction anytime you assemble people in a group, for whatever purpose. I tried to keep everyone happy. Those who were not in the film I asked to be patient. Your time will come. What was important, I emphasized, was the film... My wife was quite sick for a while after Sandra was born. I would never have started making the film had I known beforehand. But once I began, I couldn't stop. There was too much at stake...

24.

Sam and the woman are asleep  
Nick on guard shakes himself from a dream  
opens a pack reaches in for the gold from the city

he finds ice.

25.

THIEVES Nick cries jumping to his feet  
rushing out into the darkness  
firing his gun  
Sam and the woman wake up  
to the sounds of gunfire  
and the cries and howls of wolves

save him save him the woman screams  
and become a meal myself  
Sam barks in reply.

BARBARA HARRIS: Things got worse. I was lonely, frustrated, bored, nothing to do but sit there everyday watching them film and doing small errands. I had sweated through three years of drama school to freeze to death in a meat packing plant. And each day I watched Lesja ruining my part as the woman. Finally I couldn't take it any longer. I cornered Lesja. We were alone. I started accusing her of earning the role on her back. Telling her how she was blowing the role, botching it up. She started screaming at me and I at her. It was lucky that Maurice came in and separated us or else we might've come to blows... Lesja never told Mr Bremmer about our fight. In fact she went out of her way, after that, to be kind to me. Mr Bremmer never realized, I think, how close he came to

losing his leading lady to a right hook. Mr Bremmer was like that about a lot of things. Innocent. Naive.

26.

Sam and the woman next day trudge on  
wolves close behind  
their appetites whetted

it was a dream Sam mumbles into his pipe  
it was a dream but who's.

27.

sitting by a fire Sam cradling a rifle  
the woman lies in her blanket  
praying to the flames  
i wish i could climb inside your belly.

MAURICE DUBOIS: She told you that? Well, it was nothing. She was depressed. And Barbara tends to be a bit melodramatic about these things. You know how some women are...

28.

sunlight startled  
Sam wakes up  
the woman has disappeared  
dragged off in the night without a sound

gluttons Sam cries out.

SIR JOHN BIRD: Sammy only talked about politics once. To my recollection. He said that the nation state was a garment waiting for the great man to put it on...

29.

Sam shoots the mule  
sorry fella  
I gotta eat too.

30.

Sam smokes his pipe by the fire

snow falls heavily  
must remember to go to the tobacconist  
tomorrow.

SAMUEL BREMMER: I think the film is about lust. The lust for money, or fame, or pleasure, or power. It doesn't matter which. Lust kills you. It's a kind of insanity. No reason is given for the characters being where they are. The audience is introduced to a situation, which at the outset seems insane. I did not want any reasons for the three being where they were... Obviously there is a reason why they are. That reason is lust. That is the meaning, I believe, of the dream of death. All animals go hungry, grow ravenous with appetite. Man is the only animal who satiated, lusts. How many times have you seen happily married men make fools of themselves over a younger woman?... In the film I wanted the audience to see lust, not as an abstraction, but as a concrete entity. The wolves play this role... All of us at one time or another are victims of lust, of our ambitions. Sometimes we are not even aware of our insanity...

31.  
all the next day Sam gathers wood  
one eye on the wolves  
one hand on his gun.

32.  
Sam builds a fire in a circle  
climbs inside the fort of flames  
gun in hand  
pipe in mouth.

33.  
fire ebbs  
wolves creep closer

in a rage Sam jumps to his feet  
bullets bursting from his gun  
into the darkness

flames shrink  
Sam grins bon appetit he salutes.

LESJA BROWN: During the making of the film Sam and I used to drop into the Pilot to unwind. On one occasion I remember asking him if he shouldn't be spending more time with his wife, who was quite ill. For a very long time he just stared at me. There were tears in the corners of his eyes. Yes, he said. Yes. She'd like that. She never asks but.., every morning I leave her. I go to work thinking about her. But when we're shooting, when I step onto the set, there's never a single moment when... it's like she's completely disappeared...

34.

snow stops falling  
smoke rises from dead flames  
in the eye of the ashes  
lies a rifle and a pipe

the air is crisp and clear  
the sun rises fat and golden  
the wind howls  
the wolves sleep.

THE END

### The Contract

SAMUEL BREMMER: American culture, the film industry, Hollywood has introduced two new mythic figures into the human psyche. They are the cowboy and the gangster, the representative of goodness or innocence, and the representative of evil or corruption. Both are characters who seek that highest of all American ideals freedom. Besides representing good and evil, they also represent the country and the city. Americans have always had a distaste for urban life. It represents rules, law, restrictions. In a way I suppose the cowboy represents what most Americans would like to be, while the gangster represents what they fear they might be. Simplistic, I know, but it is the American mentality. Being a Canadian I have been both attracted and repelled by the American vision. It is highly romantic and simplistic. So what am I getting at? Well, the Canadian, being a spectator at close range, cannot keep a straight

face. We are born sceptics. We laugh. And so that is why, to answer your question, we made a light comedy out of this gangster film.

I.  
CHICAGO, 1920'S

2.  
black limousine skids a round a corner  
a man hangs out of a window  
sets off the sidewalk with machine gun fire

two men fall down  
a dog bleeds with barks  
an old gentleman comforts his heart  
two little girls drop their dolls  
the dolls scream out  
a woman pushing a baby carriage abandons it for shelter  
the sun seeks cover behind a cloud

SAMUEL BREMMER: Mr Kelly, our financial backer, said to me after I had told him about the project, he said, how are you going to unite violence and comedy?... Of course all comedy is based on cruelty, sadism or masochism. Perhaps that's why we always link a psychotic killer to someone who laughs or giggles a lot. He's enjoying you see, his own private joke It's also true, I think, that every motion picture of importance made in America, must deal with violence. America is a violent land. So much for paradise... What Europeans sometimes forget is that the 1920s in America are somewhat parallel to events in Europe after the decline of the Roman Empire... and I think the gun has represented in American life, what the pamphlet has represented for Europeans...

3.  
night time docks great grey beast rum ship  
unloads two trucks parked headlights on gun fire  
one headlight winks

4.  
dark panelled room meeting  
eight men smoking cigars  
doc, the snake, lacy callegio, skaky reece, eyes bailley,

guido venerio, old jim and the shadow of big al

MAURICE DUBOIS: There is the obvious Faustian story. But what I think the film implies is that all of us make contracts. Call it the gamble if you will. But we throw ourselves out of our youth and into some profession, life style. We all make deals. Call them compromises. We make these deals not fully realizing all the implications, all the consequences until many years later. Call this the mid-life crisis... Sam told me once that evil was the wish to die. It was protracted suicide, a kind of cowardice, an unwillingness to face up to our own nobility. The character called 'the Match' is the personification of one gangster's death wish, which explains, I think, the so called 'twist' at the end of the picture... I never saw the film as a comedy. If it is, it's surely one with a sinister character, a black mood. laughs Perhaps that explains why Sam cast me as 'the Match'...

5.

doc's mouth a scar below a moustache above a chin  
the dutchman has gone too far  
last weekend he opened two new bars  
on the east side  
we gave him the beaches but he ain't satisfied

if we're going to silence him  
let's keep it quiet  
find someone who uses his finger with discretion  
i don't want to donate any more photos of lincoln  
to the police commissioner's personal pension fund

skaky reece speaks up  
i know some muscle from out of town  
couple of swell fellaswho live in Detroit  
one of them is mute  
the other is married to a nun

all members of the committee  
vote by spitting out their cigars  
doc seals the contract kissing the desk  
with his fist

SAMUEL BREMMER: I think that children's cartoons are the most violent of films. You can see animated ducks being grated like cheese, cats being skinned, coyotes blown up, dogs losing their tails. And I think the worst crimes in history began in sand-boxes, under the gaze of smiling mothers. Cruelty begins in the womb... I think we misunderstand violence; too often it is confused with cruelty just as death might be confused with disease. Violence, like death is a part of human nature, while cruelty, like disease, is an affliction. For some, of course, violence should be repressed. For others it should be channeled into other directions. We forget that there is just anger. If you want to get rid of violence, you might as well decide on getting rid of all the passions: lust, anger, love, hate, jealousy, despair. Also, it seems to me we too often align violence with acts committed by individuals. But there are institutional forms of violence: racism, poverty... I might also add that I'm very sceptical about this new notion of preventive medicine, that you can somehow weed out potentially violent individuals or races... The only way to deal with violence, I believe, is to make it creative, into the arts and the sciences, and the laws, and the buildings, and the shops, and the streets in short: culture. I believe in the law: less culture, more violence.

6.

large black limousine  
a long black  
highway  
countryside darkness

inside the limo dutch sits  
in the back seat with his girl  
aiming her nostrils at the carnation in his lapel

just tell my ma we got plans to get hitched the girl pleads  
she'd be so pleased to think she'd whelped a daughter  
and not a bitch  
dutch laughs your mother what about mine  
she'd fall into highsterics if she found out  
i didn't marry a catholic

coppers boss the driver cries  
pull over the dutchman says  
we don't want no trouble

today my horoscope warns i've got to be careful  
of men in blue and sheep in grey

LESJA BROWN: Sam was fascinated by violence. It mesmerized him. And he was very interested in men who were violent. He wondered what motivated them, what passions drove them. Maybe this was because he was such a gentle, civilized man himself. I remember once when Sam and I were in a bar and a fight broke out. I wanted to leave. Sam sat there stunned, in a trance. Later he said to me, Lesja, it happened so quickly. It happened so quickly... One weekend Sam dragged me around to every dive downtown. These places were filled with low life, not much above cess pools. Sam wanted to interview prostitutes. Some of the girls were quite offended, thinking the two of us perverted. I was surprised how prudish some of them could be. Even though their conversations were spiced with colourful words, still they were shy about talking. Sam had to prod them with questions, and money. I didn't find much of what we heard too edifying. Sam was delighted. He said it was all research. I wasn't too sure. I don't think you can divide yourself in half, separating the artist and his needs from the man. Sam disagreed with this. He said he was the living proof that I was wrong... Sam was especially interested in one girl, a beautiful black girl from Jamaica who told us that an old white man had once paid her two hundred dollars to watch her cut the calluses off her toes. Sam asked her if the old man was a vegetarian. The girl laughed. She quite liked Sam and I think if I hadn't been there ... Well that's another story

7.

the limo is pulled off to the side of the road  
one motorcycle in front the second behind  
cops standing on either side of the car  
unloading their guns into the back seat

please no the dutchman cries  
i'm just a passenger the woman confides

8.

the driver stands outside the car facing one of the killers  
you boys from Detroit are real good very smooth  
doc will be pleased  
the second killer shoves a gun into the driver's back

no no the driver cries you're making a terrible mistake  
i was never included in the act

9.

an old model T rolls along the road  
as the cops pump the driver up with death  
the woman in the car says to her husband  
now don't stop walter  
this is none of our business

10.

CHICAGO DAILY STAR  
DUTCH DEAD

police commissioner ted mcguire  
reports that the dutchman has come under recent fire  
the police have no substantial clues  
but one man was told by a second who heard a rumour  
there were two negroes seen in the vicinity

MAURICE DUBOIS: Yes, I think that the whole thing was racist. I know, Canadians think they are beyond racism. But the so called scandal involving myself and Barbara ends that belief. If I had been white, there would have been very little, if anything, said about our living arrangement. But the thought of a big black cock moving in and out a of lily white pussy. You'll excuse me for the crudity but that is the level I imagine the whole rumour spread. All the trash that was printed, inferring that Barbara was committing bestiality... Yes, there were all kinds of threats. And there was the infamous situation in the bar. Even the dailies picked up on the story. The whole thing, I believe, ruined what Barbara and I had at the time. Barbara was horrified at the publicity, afraid that her parents would hear about it, afraid for her career. As it turned out the scandal helped the box office of *The Contract* and probably helped Barbara's career... It left a terrible taste in my mouth though. I felt sick. As if I'd been invaded...

11.

a long parade of limousines  
covered in flowers  
trailing a hearse into a cemetery

terrible terrible a voice from one car says  
a second adds not safe to send your children  
out into the streets to play

SAMUEL BREMMER: We had a lot of trouble shooting these scenes. We wanted to use Mount Pleasant Cemetery but the bishop would have nothing to do with us. Neither the Jews nor the Protestants were any more co-operative. Finally we were forced to rent head stones and mount them in a park that was being built in Etobicoke over an old garbage dump...

12.  
a priest casts words over the casket  
an old woman cries comforted by the tears of others  
hats to hearts the bowed shiny heads  
of notorious gangsters

a beautiful funeral doc says  
dutch woulda 'preciated all duh flowers  
eyes bailley smiles  
i tought dah carnations spelling tot ziens  
were ah noise final touch

13.  
outside the cemetery  
a reporter and a cameraman  
rush up to doc a picture a question  
is it true doc that you are now the boss of bosses

what are you talking about doc smiles  
I run a respectable flower shop

one of doc's boys takes the camera dismembers it  
against the road cops watching smile  
ain't you got no respect for the dead the thug grins  
the teeth in his mouth all in a pile

14.  
night snow falling truck unloading men

bent over carrying crates labeled  
PARADISE FLORIST  
FLOWERS FOR ALL OCCASIONS  
two men nursing tommy guns  
one cries out can't you guys hurry up  
it's Christmas eve i'm a family man

SAMUEL BREMMER: When I was young, I read Dante's Divine Comedy, at least I read the Inferno. And as I read, I asked myself, did Dante enjoy writing this? Did all those Christians enjoy reading it? The answer I think is obvious. Yes. Of course they did. But why?

15.

doc's office a small man blood running out  
of his pockets sits tossed in a chair  
two men stand on either side of him  
to make sure he doesn't get too  
comfortable

the doc stands guarding his table  
if what you say is true  
you'll never have another thing to worry about  
the small man's smile trembles  
it's true i heard a guy in a bar say  
he heard a guy say  
there's a contract out on you

who put a contract out on me  
doc's mouth spits out  
i don't know the little man says once  
and then says again

the two thugs comb the chair for the little man  
who squeals you promised if i told the truth  
doc smiles but his mouth  
cannot hold in a laugh  
and i keep my promises  
you'll never worry again  
never again

SIR JOHN BIRD: Sammy and I were sitting around one evening over a cognac and a cigar. We were talking about some incidental things regarding the film and then suddenly, almost out of nowhere Sammy said to me: John, I looked into men trying to find out if we are good or evil. But the more I looked, the harder I gazed, I found - neither. Later on I thought about what Sammy had said and what I found so peculiar was that this statement was so out of context with our conversation, so abrupt, so unexpected...

16.

eyes bailley wilts in a chair  
doc stands at the window  
blotting out the sun

we dragged dah streets and it's true boss  
dare's a contract signed  
made out to you by a dude called dah match  
no one has heard of him before  
dough dare's a rumour he's from amsterdam  
where he's known as lucifer

17.

doc turns over a grin  
arrange a meeting  
tell this match to dress for the occasion  
i'll pack some heat  
he can fill up on lead

SAMUEL BREMMER: Sometimes I wonder if this world isn't hell. Perhaps justice is God's punishment for our past sins, and our illusions of salvation, Satan's private joke.

18.

PARADISE FLORIST  
shop is filled with brightly coloured fixtures  
exotic flowering plants  
doc stands under a light  
the stranger known as the match remains in a shadow  
  
doc pulls out a gun well match

you were foolish to come here alone and unarmed

i've come to collect what is mine the match says  
from the darkness as if it is the shadow  
which has the mouth

i don't know you doc snarls

a grin lights up the corner  
you remember a young boy who stirred an old woman's face  
into a stew with a piece of iron  
you remember a young boy  
trembling in a men's room begging to be reprieved  
spared recognition rescued  
by a man in black with a foreign tongue  
you remember the price

doc's hands shake i was only a kid  
a minor below the age of consent  
besides i hold the gun and the bullets  
that still need to be spent

MAURICE DUBOIS: No. Its not true. I didn't beat Barbara. Maybe a little slap to keep her in place. But I am no Othello...

19.  
across the street from the flower shop  
two of doc's men wait smoking cigarettes  
and discussing a middleweight  
when two shots are heard  
chased out into the night  
by a death screeching laugh

20.  
a long parade of limousines covered in flowers  
trailing a hearse into a ceremony

terrible terrible a voice from one car says  
a second adds not safe to send your children  
out in the streets to play

SAMUEL BREMMER: I am fascinated by funerals, by the expression on peoples' faces. You see the same facial expressions on people waiting in subway stations or dentists' lounges...

21.

a priest casts words over the casket  
an old woman cries comforted by the tears of others,  
hats to hearts the bowed shiny heads  
of notorious gangsters

a beautiful funeral skaky reece says  
doc would have appreciated the flowers especially  
the lovely arrangement of roses

eyes bailley jerks back a smile  
doc was quite a fella  
saw him commit some wonnerful tings  
and always wid a smile  
but i never taught i'd see dah day  
he'd rise ta suicide.

THE END

SIR JOHN BIRD: There was a problem at the end of the film. What should be the final image the audience should carry out of the theatre? Eyes Bailley's smile? The arrangement of roses? The bowed heads of the gangsters? Sammy finally decided that the screen should go suddenly black and remain black several seconds before 'THE END' appeared in bright white capital letters.

Lindbergh

SAMUEL BREMMER: Have you ever seen pictures of Lindbergh when he landed in France? He has the look of a man who has completely lost his mind. In the excitement and the festivities over his accomplishment the mental state of this hero was never noticed - or recorded. The large events of modern history have been preserved on film. Today we have a

mental image: live footage of that day in Dallas in 1963, and long documentaries on Hitler's tirades, and the landing on the moon. We can imagine all these in minute detail. But for Lindbergh, all we have are newspaper clippings. It's as if history conspired to cover up the truth. Certainly something happened up there, something that scared the hell out of him...

I.

LONG ISLAND 1927

2.

night sleeps dew in her hair  
silver hairpin a runway  
three airplanes resting

around the wheels of the smaller gulls gather  
one perched in the cockpit  
second sits grooming the wing  
a third gull stretches his neck  
sticks his head between the steel blades of the propeller

MAURICE DUBOIS: It was ridiculous. I told Sam it was going to be ridiculous. I'd be made the laughing stock of my trade. A black man playing Lindbergh, all-American hero. I thought that Robert should be given the part. The kid yearned for it. But Sam insisted I take the role. If Olivier can play Othello then you can play Lindbergh, Sam grinned with that mischievous smile of his. The more I read about Lindbergh, the less I liked him. He was part of the American aristocracy, a white supremacist, a nazi sympathizer, and left-handed... I agreed to take the part under three conditions: one, no white face; two, that Sam wouldn't let me look foolish; three, that I wouldn't be asked to go up into the sky. I'm afraid of heights...

3.

two buildings one a barn  
the second smaller ambushed by several automobiles

4.

a room five men dressed in  
aviation uniforms encircled

by reporters shooting questions  
the assault turns upon a  
tall lean young man

SET DESIGNER: We were lucky. Mr Bremmer happened to meet a Mr Thomas Kelly. Around Toronto, Mr Kelly is considered quite an eccentric having become filthy rich during prohibition in the United States. It is said that he once had a fleet of twenty fast-powered boats in Windsor, across the river from Detroit. That's the story that goes around. Mr Kelly collects old aircrafts and when Mr Bremmer mentioned his new film project, Mr Kelly not only lent him some planes, but also contributed considerably to the film's production...

5.  
Mr Lindbergh why have you decided to fly alone  
I'm not alone sir  
the plane will be there

laughter in the room

is it true Mr Lindbergh that you don't plan  
on landing until you reach French soil

Yes sir  
Lindbergh smiles  
that's the plan

but can you carry enough fuel in that little airplane

i only need enough fuel to take off  
Lindbergh replies  
i'll leave the landing to gravity

laughter in the room

the other pilots are asked questions  
but the final question  
lands upon Lindbergh

Mr Lindbergh

perhaps you can tell our readers why you fly

Lindbergh pauses then replies  
in the sky there are no walls around you  
and no reporters

laughter in the room

SAMUEL BREMMER: I never intended that the film recreate Lindbergh's flight. What I wanted to do was to create a fantasy within the reality. I wanted to fantasize the trip as many millions of others have done who lived through those events. That is why we have used a montage effect, splicing together actual film footage of the event, with film footage of other events, with our own footage. The viewer can see the structure of creativity, he can see the trick behind the magic. Even the use of a black man for Lindbergh in our footage highlights the separation of the real event from the fantasy. The viewer, knowing all of this still joins the two parts, and still falls into the dream. Why? For the same reason the world participated in the original flight. Madness. Lindbergh tried to do something that any normal person at the time would have considered insane. Once one is a success, everything is forgiven. There is also a certain madness of the spectator, of the clerk who eats up the stories of historical battles, or the young girl who reads murder mysteries, or the holy man who reads about the lives of martyrs. It is the vicarious lust of the witness. That's what movies are all about.

SAMUEL BREMMER: We did have some trouble. There was only one real role in the picture. When Robert didn't get it, he disappeared. Didn't see him again for almost a year. And Barbara was very upset. What could I do? I told her, you want a role, we'll dress you up as a gull and you can shake your tail feathers at the camera

6.

Lindbergh climbs into The Spirit of St. Louis  
a mechanic hands him a package  
good luck sir

luck Lindbergh grins  
i'm just going to hitch a ride on the first cloud  
headed east

ROBERT DRAYTON: I couldn't believe it when I didn't get the role of Lindbergh. Mr Bremmer said I was too short. Christ, Dubois is black. I wasn't blind. I could read the writing 'on the wall. He wanted me out of the company.

7.

The Spirit of St. Louis  
rolls down the runway begins to rise  
the wheels of the Spirit strum  
a row of telephone wires

in the cockpit Lindbergh shakes his head  
smiles trying to scare me girl

SAMUEL BREMMER: We got a lot of mileage out of an old short film I'd made for the New York State Tourist Bureau.

8.

night cracks open like a shell  
yellow sun yoke  
pours out over the sea

NEW YORK CITY  
sunlight flashing off  
the skyscrapers like lightning

9.

the Spirit over water sky blue sea blue  
Lindbergh munches on a cold hot dog  
i should have slept more he sighs

LESJA BROWN: We were all concerned about Sam during the making of this film. He was always very aloof during shooting, but this time he seemed almost in a catatonic state ... He was off somewhere, beyond everyone's reach. It had been a year since his daughter died. I think he blamed himself. She died of crib death. Sam kept it inside. He keeps a lot inside, well this... I think it just built up inside him. It made him work even harder. It was as if the film was going on in his own head. The

whole dream scene in the clouds was filmed with such attention to detail, that it seemed as if Sam was trying to recreate a nightmare...

10.

YANKEE STADIUM

40,000 baseball fans packed in players  
lined up on first and third  
a priest speaks into a microphone  
sermon from the pitcher's mound

let us pray to our Lord God for the successful  
journey and safe landing of Charles Lindbergh

11.

TOKYO

crowded downtown street horns honking  
people's cries Lindbergh  
Lindbergh Lindbergh  
rise up crowding the stars

12.

AMSTERDAM STOCK EXCHANGE

business suspended everyone frozen  
waiting for an announcement

LINDBERGH

werd opgemerkt  
boven de Atlantische Oceaan

HOERA

the silence breaks

SAMUEL BREMMER: Snuck into a theatre and was surprised at how many people were laughing. The film is a bit corny, but then so is Homer. I didn't like being laughed at though. I felt as if I had attempted something important and no one had taken me seriously. I got depressed. Went out and got drunk. The critics missed the point of the film. They labelled it the first camp movie. It made more money than my first two films combined...

13.

Lindbergh stretches his arms  
each hand touching a horizon  
good morning world  
Lindbergh laughs

14.

Lindbergh looks down at the sea  
a great sperm whale spouts water  
into the air saluting the Spirit  
Lindbergh tips his wings saluting back

15.

air becomes choppy  
Spirit rises

MAURICE DUBOIS: The more we got into the filming and the more I was forced to think about Lindbergh, the more enigmatic the man became for me...

16.

blue sky above white billowing clouds below  
enough to put one to sleep  
Lindbergh yawns

SAMUEL BREMMER: He was a man of incredible innocence, the innocence of America. He didn't understand the world he lived in. He was a man who should have been born between pages of fiction and not a woman's thighs. Everything was too complicated for him. That was his impulse, his motive for making the flight. He wanted to leave the planet. It was a gesture of noble suicide. Unfortunately for him he failed and became a hero...

17.

THE TIMES:

Is Charles Lindbergh dead?

That is the question an anxious world asks itself.

Since early this morning there has been no sign  
of the courageous American aviator.

The world holds its breath and prays.

MAURICE DUBOIS: Sam is like that you see. He's not like an actor who has to hide behind a role, a character. No. Sam has to create a world for himself to escape into...

18.

Lindbergh's eyes begin to close  
he falls into a dream

SAMUEL BREMMER: I wanted to say something about the soul of a hero. And what I found in the soul of a hero was emptiness, a void. This void had to be filled by an event, an experience. And so the hero or the villain, for the two are interchangeable, is a creature who can only come into being through some event, no matter what its moral, social or intellectual value. They may discover a continent, assassinate a pope, fly a plane across an ocean. It doesn't matter. It only matters that they do something...

19.

the Spirit sits motionless in the air  
Lindbergh steps out of his plane  
and walks knee deep across the clouds

in a room Lindbergh sits in a chair  
opposite him an old man sucks on a cigar  
smoke forming clouds

why am i here Lindbergh asks  
we asked you here the old man replies and pauses  
you have offended the gods

how Lindbergh asks  
the old man takes his cigar from his mouth  
and speaks softly  
we gave you eyes you stole fire  
we gave you hands you struck the other  
we gave you lungs now you've stolen the wind  
as your mother dies you flee the womb

Lindbergh's eyes are cast down

he sees an army of avenging angels falling upon him  
he wakes up the plane enters  
a flock of white birds and dives

SAMUEL BREMMER: That old Greek tale of Icarus kept spinning around in my head. It is this mad passion for progress, for making things better. Isn't that why Adam took the apple from Eve, to climb up the corporate ladder? And what was his first invention? The fig leaf. I think that Adam and Eve's sin, that progress's sin, is to separate us from each other. And in this separation we become lonely. I think Marx rephrased loneliness into alienation, we became fearful, desperate, anguished all steps in an ironic twist, toward God... so in the Lindbergh story the world goes mad for a while, and finds its humanity. The hero, in this case Lindbergh, is that humanity come to fruition. And yet you have to keep asking yourself: What did he do? I think the answer lies elsewhere. The hero is a means for the rest of us to praise what we most value, or desire in ourselves...

20.  
FRANCE

21.  
in a small white room a radio announcer  
speaks into a microphone  
les autorités ont demande que toutes les automobiles  
dans les environs iront a l'aéroport  
on a aperçu Lindbergh je répétes  
on a aperçu Lindbergh

22.  
LE BOURGET

cars form two lines headlights pointing into the runway  
a carpet of light out of the darkness  
a small plane is spotted behind the automobiles  
thousands wait  
Lindbergh Lindbergh Lindbergh voices cry  
throughout the crowd

ROBERT DRAYTON: It's no accident that Hitler was an art student, Mussolini a philosophy student, as were Trotsky, Lenin and that gang. Mao was a poet. Poor poets, artists, philosophers, with insatiable appetites to cast the world in their dreams...

23.

the Spirit bounces along the strip to a safe landing  
thousands rush onto the field  
surround the plane  
silent  
waiting for the American to address them

SAMUEL BREMMER: Lesja is right of course when she says that the death of my daughter affected me deeply. But I never felt guilty. I don't know how Lesja could come up with that, unless she's projecting. No, that wasn't it. When my daughter died, I felt as if the rug had been pulled out from under me. I was left questioning everything about my life, why I was here, what I was doing, who I was, all these questions I thought I'd resolved or come to grips with when I was a kid. That's why I was hooked on Lindbergh's story I was living through it especially those first words when he landed in France. You see, he'd been shaken. He was starting from scratch again. He said, I am Charles Lindbergh. What else could he say?

24.

Lindbergh pulls off his protective glasses  
monsieur one frenchman smiles

i am Charles Lindbergh  
the American replies.

THE END

The Avenger

I.  
sun light oozing thick red sticky  
staining the horizon

2.

LONDON, ENGLAND  
LATE 1800's

3.

hearse driver yellow teeth hair  
imprisoned in a slick suit  
green gamy whip raised snags  
in the sky snaps down  
slicing scream splintering teeth jagged  
eyes round and wild  
horse's flesh

SAMUEL BREMMER: ... I think that was his name. All these Anglo-Saxon names sound so much alike. laughs At any rate, this professor from the University of Toronto Dental Clinic phoned and asked of he could borrow a print of *The Avenger*. Wanted to use it for a lecture he was giving on gum diseases, laughs Of course I did use a lot of close-ups of mouths in the film. The picture opens with the yellow stained teeth of the undertaker, Mr Bradley. And then there are those shots of the horses mouths. And of course all the shots throughout the film of the inspector smoking, eating, picking his teeth, smiling, yawning, what have you. This of course leaves a big impression on people. Eisenstein has his faces; I have my teeth... I think teeth are the punishment we are paying for biting into the apple, for the original sin. Damn things always have to be attended to, brushed, cleaned, filled, capped, bridged, pulled. And when they're finally gone, everything caves in...

4.

hearse rushes through the street  
the horse of an elderly couples' cab shies  
the old woman's scream pierces the old man's heart  
a girl watering flowers looks up  
soaks a cat screeches startling sleeping  
birds in a tree into the sunset sticking to the sky

SIR JOHN BIRD: ... grateful for the opportunity to return to London, to renew old friendships, to just smell the English air. Most of my acquaintances imagined that I must have already died. That's where Hades is, they told me - west. And of course they were interested to know how I

liked working in the colonies... We were fortunate enough to find accommodation with friends of mine in the theatre. Sammy was grateful for this. We were on a very restricted budget. Sammy said he could have gotten more money but he hated to break any Canadian traditions... Yes, Barbara Harris came along with us. I don't know why. She had a very minor part in the film. There was certainly no romantic link between her and Sammy. And it's no secret that the girl and I never got along. Maybe it was a recompense for promises broken... We used English technicians which I think accounts for the unevenness in the final version. I asked Sammy what he thought of English technicians. He said he thought their work was a bit stiff... No it wasn't all that smooth. There was some trouble getting shots in Victoria Station. For one thing we had to rent an old antique train from the turn of the century. That took a good chunk of our budget. And in the end we didn't use a lot of the material we shot. Terrible waste of film. And there was Barbara. Impossible girl. Complaining all the time. And when she wasn't complaining, she was warming up to me, trying to get me to introduce her to some of my friends in the theatre. One time I did succumb. Introduced her to a writer friend. Young fellow. Good family man. She disappeared with him for a weekend. Next time I saw her I lost my composure. I informed her, rather sharply, that the theatre is not a brothel...

5.

reins taut steel bit bites into the horse's cry  
hearse's movement stroked  
driver jumps to the street into a crowd  
outside a house where a bobby stands guard

6.

policeman disperses  
the crowd with a wave of his voice  
"Nothing to see folks. Please go home."

the policeman turns to the driver of the hearse  
"Too late Mr Bradley."  
"Too late" Mr Bradley repeats  
"I was here before the news had time to congeal."

"Sorry Mr Bradley. Mr Ferguson was here first."

Mr Bradley turns curses  
"That scotsman hears about these murders  
before the victim."

SAMUEL BREMMER: What is personality but an orderly crowd?  
What is madness but the rule of the mob?...

7.  
tiny tongues flames lick the air  
in a fireplace  
a rich green carpet is invaded by red  
four eyes two detectives scour the apartment for clues

8.  
first detective sacks of flesh coddle his eyes  
a beard flows out of his nose around his mouth  
surrounding a cigarette says  
"Came direct from dinner Mr Sterling  
as soon as I heard.  
Never did finish digesting."

9.  
second detective  
Mr Sterling younger gaunt face caving in over absent  
teeth hair divided in the middle  
reclining on both sides of a jagged part  
"I'm sorry Inspector."  
"Damn inconvenient," the inspector grumbles

10.  
"Any reporters?" the inspector asks  
"No sir," Mr Sterling replies "Damn," the inspector curses "The Ripper  
murders are getting all the attention."

Mr Sterling glances down at the mutilated corpse  
"Bloody awful," he says and turns away  
"Bloody shame," the inspector adds  
"What's so special about the Ripper murders?"

SAMUEL BREMMER:... long shots. Especially at the beginning of the film. As the film progressed the shots became shorter and shorter. I almost counted frames and used a calculator. The idea was that they would build up to a crescendo, climaxing in the final scene with the undertaker holding the head in his hand. And there was a long suspended shot of the head smiling. It seemed like a good idea on paper, but when we began shooting the rhythm had to be changed. Time, as it turns out, can not be measured in frames... Some critics said that the film was based on a joke stretched over ninety minutes. I have no defense. I like bad jokes and fat women... The film was less interested in making a socially redeeming statement than creating some chills and chuckles and, incidentally, putting some cash in all our pockets...

11.  
the inspector stands up stares at a painting over the fireplace  
—young man with a cruel thin smile —  
“The victim,” Mr Sterling says  
“I’m famished,” the inspector replies

12.  
A NEARBY RESTAURANT

13.  
window frames the inspector  
Mr Sterling sitting at a table  
across the street a small boy  
stitched together with rags stares  
with hungry eyes

14.  
the inspector plunges his knife into  
a raw steak blood oozes out seeping into white fluffy clouds  
of mashed potatoes  
“Can’t work on an empty stomach, Mr Sterling.”  
“Thank you sir but I’ve lost my appetite,” Mr Sterling replies  
lips plucking at a cup of tea

15.  
next table couple drinking a glass of wine  
the woman smiles the man’s hand crawls

under the table  
up the woman's knee

"Murder always gives me an appetite," the inspector swallows.

ANTHONY WHALE: There were two versions of the film. A European and a North American version. In the North American version all scenes of nudity, even some of the scenes of the inspector eating were considered too sexually explicit. In Europe, some of the scenes of gruesomeness, especially, it was said, the scenes of the inspector eating, were considered too violent...

16.  
the inspector swabs his mouth with a serviette  
"Now what's this about a note?"

17.  
Mr Sterling reads from a piece of paper  
"Pregnant with death vengeance is my craving."

the inspector lights a cigarette.  
"Same message as the last two murders."  
"The work of a madman Inspector," Mr Sterling responds  
the inspector sighs grinds his cigarette into some brocolli  
"All this poetry has given me indigestion."

SAMUEL BREMMER: Of course in Canada, for something to be art it must be serious. I suppose this attitude is the child of French pretentiousness and English aloofness...

18.  
the inspector and Mr Sterling in a carriage  
passing through the foggy streets of east London  
shadows swallowing alleys  
rats grinding their teeth

women in red bared breasts  
waiting in windows braiding their hair  
a dog's whistle punctured by a foot  
a cat weeps a man at a desk scratches the back

of paper with ink woman holding a lantern at a door  
earns for drink slow sway of ship steeples  
behind darkened buildings horses applauding against cobble stones  
the carriage stops outside a tavern  
THE SAVING GRACE

19.  
inside two sailors sit talking to vacant chairs  
a third passed out head on a table  
rocking back and forth like a ship at anchor

in a private booth sit two women clashing colours  
made up eyes toothless smiles

Mr Sterling and the inspector stand talking  
to the barkeep burly red head thick moustache  
curled up at the ends from habit

SIR JOHN BIRD: ... television I think is closer to prose, or at least that is where it is most effective. Film is a poetic language. Perhaps one shouldn't make such strict parallels. But film depends... listen to me! Goodness, I'm beginning to sound like an old school teacher... Perhaps time molds us into what we most despise...

20.  
"The Ripper is ruining business  
girls are scared, sailors returning to the sea  
but your boy the avenger,  
as long as his palate prefers blue blood,  
he's of no concern to common folk as we."

21.  
outside again he inspector lights a cigarette  
in a darkened alley two eyes watch  
then scurry away  
"he's out there somewhere."  
the inspector sighs then coughs

22.  
A WEEK LATER

## VICTORIA STATION

23.

the London police have cordoned off the area  
two middle-aged ladies stand watch  
behind them a bald-headed irishman holds their bags

"I'm moving back to the country, away from these killings.  
This sort of behaviour is just not acceptable out there,"

the first lady sighs

"It's all these foreigners they're letting  
into the country."

the second responds "Murderers every one."

SAMUEL BREMMER: The most dangerous man is the man who has  
come to a conclusion about life...

24.

in the corridor of the train two constables stand guard  
the undertaker Mr Bradley stands before them

"Don't tell me Ferguson got here first,"

the undertaker sighs

"I'm sorry sir," the constables reply

25.

inside the compartment a well-dressed corpse  
reclines on the floor over his neck

where a head should be

the daily newspaper headline reads

JACK IS BACK

Mr Sterling and the inspector stand over the body

"No reporters again," the inspector says

"No sir, I'm sorry," Mr Sterling replies

"They're all attending the new Ripper killing."

"Don't apologize, Mr Sterling Bad timing, that's all.

That Jack and our fellow answer the same calling."

“A woman overheard voices sir,”  
Mr Sterling adds as he lights the inspector’s cigarette

SIR JOHN BIRD: Friends came up to me and said, though not in so many words, what are you doing making these adventure stories when you once were the voice for the great bard? ... How the great have fallen. laughs ... I am an old man and I felt, yes this isn’t Shakespeare, but.., it’s fun. I’m enjoying myself...

26.  
in the corridor of the train  
an elderly woman is questioned by Mr Sterling  
the inspector holds his cigarette behind his back  
smoke curling up like a tail

“I AM NOT JACK that’s all you heard Mrs Higgins?”  
Mr Sterling smiles

“That’s what I said that’s what I heard,” Mrs Higgins quacks  
turns up her nose waddles off down the corridor

27.  
DAYS LATER AT SCOTLAND YARD

28.  
the inspector sits at his desk  
refilling a silver cigarette case  
jumps to his feet

Mr Sterling turns around  
“By jove,” the inspector cries. “I think I’ve cracked the case.”  
“I’m sorry sir,” Mr Sterling replies “You can always buy a new one.”

“Get your men together. Call the Times. Hire a reporter  
if you must, Mr Sterling.”

ANTHONY WHALE: I felt as if the character, Mr Sterling, was tailored for me. He has a light comic touch mixed with a certain British sobriety. He is a man with suppressed ambitions. He wants the inspector’s job. But the notion of ambition conflicts with that other feature of his

personality -loyalty. And so he waits, to inherit the throne... My wife tells me that I'm not ambitious enough. But I've seen what ambition can do, first fixing itself on small objects, objectives which only feed its hunger, until it fixes itself on abstract objects, an abstract objective such as salvation. In this quest it consumes the vehicle of its search... No I wasn't specifically referring to Sam or to Barbara Harris or to anyone in the cast... I want to be as good as possible at what I do, everything else will fall in its place...

29.

outside building in a fashionable suburb of London

FERGUSON'S FUNERAL HOME

the inspector and Mr Sterling and a reporter from the Times

"So it's your theory," the reporter squeals

"that Jack The Ripper and the Avenger are both parts  
of a split personality, both sides of the same coin."

the inspector nods wishing he could bow

"House is surrounded, sir," Mr Sterling says

"And it's your belief," the reporter continues "that all these murders  
were committed by this Ferguson chap to boost a sagging trade."

"Funeral homes are dropping off left and right,"

Mr Sterling interjects

"Medical breakthroughs are killing off the trade,"

the inspector adds

SAMUEL BREMMER: We go through life in a trance, a sleep walk of assumptions and clichés. Reality can be as much a roadblock to understanding as retardation...

30.

three hands rap at the door

butler answers "Yes gentlemen."

"Is Mr Ferguson in?"

"Yes gentlemen," the butler responds

“But Mr Ferguson left strict instructions that he was not to be disturbed.”

“I’m sorry sir,” Mr Sterling replies  
“But we’re from Scotland Yard  
and I’m afraid we must insist.”

the butler steps aside  
the three men rush up the stairs their pockets  
rubbing the walls on each side  
to a door marked PRIVATE

“Scotland Yard, Mr Ferguson.”  
“Keep out!” A voice from inside cries.  
Mr Sterling puts his shoulder to the door all three men fall inside

Mr Ferguson stands in the middle of the room staring at them  
with two faces  
his own and the other’s whose hair he holds with his hand

the butler faints  
Mr Ferguson blushes turns and leaps out the window  
Mr Sterling and the inspector and the reporter  
rush over to look outside

SAMUEL BREMMER: I have a theory. It affects all of my work. I believe that anything new idea, object, vision, etc. introduced into the world is absorbed by all of us. Absorbed into our genes. Not through our parents, not through the blood. But through the air. As if ideas were like pollen, something in the air that we breathe. It’s not so much that we draw from some common sea of consciousness but that each of us contributes to that sea that runs through all of us. Each of us is the agent, the flower blooming, for ideas, visions, etc. in this great sea. Sounds very mystical I know. But there have been experiments that are pointing science in this direction. Some years ago a scientist was doing some research on rats, running them through a maze of rewards and punishments. When the experiments began, the rats were making anywhere from thirty to forty mistakes. As they repeated their trips through the maze they were able to reduce their mistakes to between eight and twelve. These results were published. A group of Australian scientists

reading the results a few months later took a group of rats of the same type, but unrelated by blood to the first experimental animals. They were run through an identical test. But initially they only made from eighteen to twenty-two mistakes and some even managed to run through the course perfectly. How did these rats learn to do so well. Experiments were conducted in other parts of the world with other animals. In all cases the second or third generation of rats were more successful, although there was apparently no blood link and therefore no passage of genes to link the animals... So I believe that no matter how obscure or unknown the man, his ideas receive the widest distribution. I told this to a friend who then asked me if animals were getting smarter. Smarter? No. But they are changing. They are adapting themselves to us. They want to survive. And us. Are we getting smarter? Are we becoming supermen? A difficult question. I don't know...

31.

on the street below Mr Ferguson lays face down on the sidewalk  
beside him stands Mr Bradley  
picking up a head by the hair swings it like a lantern  
looks up and grins  
"I was sure, gentlemen, I'd be here early enough,  
but I should have known that Ferguson would arrive first."

32.

AFTER THE DEATH OF THE AVENGER  
THERE WERE NO MORE RIPPER KILLINGS.  
BUT JACK THE RIPPER'S  
IDENTITY REMAINS A MYSTERY TO THIS DAY.

THE END

Mirror Mirror

1.

MISS COSMOS CONTEST  
ROYAL ALEXANDRA  
THEATRE

BARBARA HARRIS:... yes the film gave me the kind of exposure I needed to get my foot into Hollywood. But people talk about Mr Bremmer as if he were some kind of Svengali, some Dr Frankenstein and that I was only so much putty in his hands. God. Have you any idea how hard I worked. I slaved during production. Twelve hour days... To my mind there's too much worship of film directors, treating their films as shrines and the directors as gods. To me they're just glorified traffic cops and their films glorified peep shows... No, I am not bitter, just frank... I know, I have heard about those silly comments. I'm a traitor to my country because as soon as I received some acclaim I fled to Hollywood. Rubbish. Canadians are just fond of attending funerals. They're always mourning the loss of something. If they want artists to stay in the country, they should pay some attention to them... All the way through the film Mr Bremmer talked. Talked and theorized about everything under the sun. A kind of desperation. I figured he'd been drinking...

2.

packed house tv cameras tuxedos evening gowns inc.  
rises baggy pants baggy eyes  
suspenders face lift red hair  
not his

opens an envelope

"And the decision of our panel of distinguished judges is..."

raises paper before his eyes

"the next Miss Cosmos is

Miss Japan."

3.

tv cameras pour into Miss Japan

mouth opens a gasp

tear trickle down her cheeks.

SIR JOHN BIRD: Yes, that's true. I can remember one evening after a very taxing day Sammy and I went out for a drink. A nightcap to unwind. He talked and talked as if he expected to be silenced at any moment. Like a lover declaring his love before it wanes... I think it had something to do with the conflict between romanticism and classicism. I've always seen it as a quarrel between the heart and the mind. But Sammy pushed it beyond this, talking about technology and mysticism and the advent of a new classicism. In fact, he said, it had already started

with the microchip. I recall Sammy claiming that if we could transform, for example, a movie into a poem, we would begin to see the structure of the new classicism, its skeleton if you wish. Sammy had great hopes for this new classicism. A renaissance. A new beginning. For myself I've always seen optimism as the absence of sanity. I prefer pessimism. Pessimism and order...

4.

backstage dressing room long stable mirrors stalls  
girls changing unbridled  
out of their dreams

"if there's a winner  
there's got to be a loser"  
Miss Israel's smile sinks

old women  
squires to beauty  
disarm the girls of their makeup

"he promised me I'd win,"  
Miss Spain cream on her utters

couple of girls weeping into  
each others eyes  
another girl sits sucking on a Camel  
cigarette

well heel ed gentlemen  
stock the room with flowers  
teeth dripping with smiles

"Tonight, tonight... "  
Miss Italy sings  
"I'm going to eat myself  
to death."

ROBERT DRAYTON: I was an extra. I knew I wasn't going to be the next James Dean. After a while I didn't want to be. There's more to life than these plastic dreams. I didn't want to suffer a kind of artistic snow

blindness. I want to see life without the fog, the constant need to analyze, interpret, understand, recreate. I want reality, life to be pointless, without ambition... I saw that Mr Bremmer had turned the lens in upon himself, had glorified the imagination, worshipped it. It's all such madness reinventing the world in one's own image...

5.

close up mirror

Miss Canada frozen state thaws tongue drips

"I am the most beautiful  
woman in the world, am I not... "

in the mirror a face darkly appears

"yes my dear..." a voice says

"you are the fairest of them all."

Miss Canada turns around

and finds no one there.

6.

outside streets jammed pedestrians taxis limousines

a woman pregnant

a man roasting nuts

"We'll never get a cab in this flood, Theresa."

Miss Canada to Miss Ireland

"You're not kidding Sandra." Miss Ireland responds and checks  
her smile in an automobile's side view mirror.

SIR JOHN BIRD: I believe that most of us only come to full fruition if we participate in the acts of a great man...

7.

tall dark man appears addresses two ladies so politely

as if his words wore purple robes

"excuse me ladies,

I couldn't help but notice your distress.

my car is at your service

if you'll give me your address."

the girls agree and in the limousine

Theresa's tongue stirs up a storm  
while Sandra stares at the stranger  
something fearful being born.

8.  
to the hotel from the car walking  
the stranger suggests a night cap  
a last drink in the bar.

SAMUEL BREMMER: I know that Robert and Barbara resent me. They're very young and I think I'm a kind of scapegoat for their own personal shortcomings and fears.

9.  
two girls dark stranger at a table sipping  
daiquiris a scotch  
on the floor couples tango and waltz.

10.  
"My name is Nicholas Arcissus," the stranger explains  
"Oh," Theresa responds "the famous photographer.  
I've got all your books, pictures of young girls  
where innocence has fled."  
Nicholas smile s creeps across her face  
hair grey and slick  
hands purple and thin  
eyes sharing failing to be kind.

SAMUEL BREMMER: I created the film as a vehicle for Barbara. I knew it would make her a star. Critics have said that the film is jaded, a disillusionment with beauty, with ambition, with Barbara herself. I have even been accused of hating women. Maybe or perhaps there is a desire in all of us to torture or destroy what we most cherish in life. I don't know. It seems that the older I get, the less I understand myself, and the less there is to understand... Sometimes I feel as if life is a process of emptying oneself out...

11.  
Nicholas Sandra dancing slowly  
Nicholas's eyes dive deep into sleep

Sandra's tossing and turning  
crying mutely... I'm drowning.

12.

elevator rising

Theresa grins Well you certainly made an impression  
on our Mr Arcissus."

Sandra turns stares at her friend  
not being able to remember a thing.

SAMUEL BREMMER: I wish I could have loved every woman as well  
as I have loved film.

13.

THE NEXT DAY

through a warm rain Sandra walks without  
a raincoat an umbrella a squint

wakes in an office

how did I get here she cries but her lips don't move

so no one replies

receptionist pushes a button

and Sandra into a second room

a studio.

14.

in one corner

an old woman dancing mopping the floor

rags wrapped around her feet

dismissed

sings to Sandra

"Keep your name, keep your looks."

ROBERT DRAYTON: ... For example, one day Mr Bremmer said to me  
that this universe might be the dream of a god, a mere celestial fantasy, a  
movie the god was making for the entertainment of his friends... Is there  
to be no end to this curiosity? Why not leave life as it is? Searching for an  
answer is an escape from reality. Why do we need these dreams, these  
ambitions? They just taunt us and in the end, fail us.

15.

Nicholas Sandra sitting on a couch

"I always wanted to be the most admired woman in the world,"

Sandra nods

"Just remember," Nicholas warms up his face with a smile

"don't ever stare into a looking glass

I'll be your mirror."

ROBERT DRAYTON: Mr Bremmer saw all of us in the company as extensions of his personality. I was his rebelliousness. Barbara his ambition. Maurice his violence. Lesja his tenderness. Sir John his coldness. Anthony his mediocrity. Told me that when he died we'd all just blow away like dandelion seeds...

16.

MONTHS LATER

magazine EYES Sandra smiling photo

HOLLY WOOD'S LATEST DARLING

17.

fashionable restaurant

crowd fans

fence police

Sandra Nicholas

diamonds furs

smile wave

exit from a limousine

girl in plump glasses "she's so beautiful."

her friend adds "I'd give my life to be her for one day."

SAMUEL BREMMER: Movies are the voice of the sewing machine, the laugh of the furnace, the eyes of the air conditioner in short, the expression of the machine. Technology has a dispersed consciousness... technology advanced leads to magic... wrong to see technology as some giant rampaging monster. What it really is, is our accumulated inventiveness. It is the chest we store our dreams in. I think we resent it because we perceive it as the cold sinister weapon of the group. We feel alienated from it... Technology is the evolution of the earth itself, a process in which the planet attempts to relate to us. Through movies. Television. Even the

lead pencil... What has all of this to do with Mirror... Mirror..? The film is about supernatural power, the force of spirit. In the tradition of the west, matter and the spirit have been perceived as rivals, or one or the other has been viewed as folly depending on whether you're materialist or an idealist. To me, spirit is the natural evolution of matter. As if matter, in the form of technology, were a cocoon for spirit. .

18.

Sandra Nicholas waiters surround  
Nicholas sips on Napoleon brandy  
"I've never been so happy," Sandra smiles  
"That makes me happy my dear."  
a waiter lights Nicholas' cigar  
"Are you dyeing your hair Nicholas?  
You look so young."  
Nicholas routs a cloud of smoke  
"Youth feeds on beauty," his darkness speaks.

SAMUEL BREMMER: I believe in surrealism, the collage of accidents, the miracle of the ordinary creating strangeness, beauty...

19.

Jay Leno and THE TONIGHT SHOW

Sandra in a chair a throne Jay behind a desk  
one hand shaving his brow  
on Sandra's left two other guests  
tongues tangled in their ties

"Its been quite a year for you," Jay smiles

"Yes it has, Jay. It's been very exciting and rather tiring."

"She's so beautiful," one of the guests moans

"And I hear you're making a film," Jay says  
swallowing a pencil... the lead melts.

BARBARA HARRIS: Yes I believe that. Women are manipulated by men. All of their lives ..they're molded into some male fantasy. Success

as a woman means becoming what men expect of you. Failure means finding yourself, who you really are. That's when they label you bitch, lesbian, cow. To make it as a woman in a man's world you have to have all your wits about you. You have to be cunning. Don't trust anyone, especially yourself...

Sandra giggles.

"Yes, Jay. We've just finished shooting the final scene.

Everyone was so kind. People are you know... very kind."

'How could they help themselves,'" one of the other guests leers  
"Kindness is no virtue when it's not volunteered."

"And I hear you are betrothed." Jay says

"Yes," Sandra responds "to the man who makes everything happen for me."

BARBARA HARRIS: I think the attraction of the film is that people love to see a beautiful woman disrobed...

20.

A FEW WEEKS LATER

small white church blue fence

police fans gathered to wish Sandra well

"To get this assignment," One cop says chewing each word like gum.

"I had to pay Wilson fifty bucks and  
a bottle of Johnny Walker."

"I can't see," cries a child on her father's shoulders  
the father rises on his tip toes

"What's going on here?" a passing motorist enquires  
SANDRA is the only response he receives

MAURICE DUBOIS: ... went to a wedding with Sam and his wife. An Italian wedding. Lots of food and wine. Some couple named Genova. Second marriage for both bride and groom. They'd both been previously married to each other. Never saw Sam so happy. Talked and talked

about the bride and groom whom he'd known for over thirty years. He was at their first wedding. Took place in a park. After the church service Sam's wife had to return home. One of their kids had a cold. Sam and I went on to the reception in a hockey arena up in north Toronto. We got pretty drunk. Danced with every pretty girl there, even got an old lady in her eighties to take a little spin. I don't know how anyone can say that Sam doesn't love life. We drank into the early morning. Sam told me how his father died. Suddenly. A stroke. In his sleep. He'd never told his father he loved him. It seemed to weigh on Sam's conscience. He suffered for it. And then he said to me (by this time neither one of us was able to stand) he told me that all of his work was an attempt to right this omission which it took him several attempts to say, the word omission coming out each time as something like, I miss him. When we decided to call it a day we called for a cab. Neither one of us was in any condition to drive. I don't remember much after that. Except that the next morning we both woke up on the living room floor. It wasn't my apartment and it wasn't Sam's house. I looked at Sam and Sam stared back at me and we both snuck out of there before we were detected...

21.

inside the church Nicholas his shadow the best man wait at the alter.  
Sandra the bride's maid Theresa  
standing at the front door

"Do I look alright?  
I wish I could ask Nicholas."

"You've never looked so beautiful."  
Theresa smiles

"I've got to see for myself.  
I'll go check in the little girl's room."

"Well, hurry honey.  
Time is running out,"  
Theresa says straightening out Sandra's veil.

22.

Sandra sits in front of the mirror  
"I love you Nicholas I want to be beautiful only for you."

lines appear  
"Nicholas"  
hair turns grey  
"What"  
Sandra begins to stoop  
breasts sag  
face avalanche  
veil slips  
off her head dragging her hair behind  
"Have"  
teeth loosen tumble over and out  
flesh swirls into her mouth drains  
skin parches  
"You"

23.  
skeleton sits  
in a wedding dress  
no flesh  
no teeth  
no eyes  
just two puddles of darkness  
round with horror.

## THE END

### The End of the Road

LESJA BROWN: I received a phone call about ten in the morning. I was still half asleep. It was Sam's wife Betty. I thought I was dreaming. What was she phoning me at that hour for? She was hysterical. I realized that something terrible had happened but I couldn't get anything sensible out of her. Except that she was at the Scarborough General Hospital. I rushed to the hospital. When I saw her face I knew what it was. Sam was dead. All the way to the hospital in the cab I kept saying to myself that he was dead, but I just couldn't bring myself to believe it. But there it was written on Betty's face... Sound crazy I know but you know what kept thinking to myself? I kept thinking, where did he go? Like he was hiding on us... I don't remember much of what happened that night.

Betty and I cried a lot. I phoned most of the crew to let them know what happened. To each I had to explain all the details It was like doing thirty takes of the same scene. After a while I felt as if it was me who had found Sam dead, cold as ice still sitting in his chair reading Variety... . Betty said that the last time they had talked they'd had a bit of an argument. Betty accused Sam of making movies a matter of life and death. Sam replied that they were fat more important than that...

1.

#### FOUR-LANE HIGHWAY

running out of long grass into foot hills  
a young boy dinner jacket blue jeans long black hair waving  
down a ride

a car approaches  
passes stillness in the gravel on the shoulder  
of the road a butterfly tries to mate with a piece of coloured glass

a truck approaches swells out of the distance  
slows down kicks up gravel  
a butterfly and coloured glass take flight

from the cab a large red face rises  
smiling like the dawn

"How far ya going?"  
the driver Harry asks  
"End of the road."  
the hitchhiker replies

MAURICE DUBOIS: It was a great shock to all of us. Losing a director, friend, and to some of us a kind of father... All of the crew got together and it was decided we'd finish making End of the Road. We were already three weeks into shooting when Sam died. I was elected director. It was very democratic. Nobody else would take the job. Fortunately for me, Sam had left detailed instructions regarding each scene. It was simple. Like following a cake recipe...

2.

#### THE BOY CLIMBS

into the fur-lined cab instrument panel glowing maze of shapes and colours engine hums

Harry pushes a cassette into music blares

"Listen to that, eh. Steer-ee-phonetic sound.

Rig has all the modern inconveniences.

Cost a pretty penny.

Why not, spend half my life in this cab, someday it might be my coffin."

hitchhiker moves his lips

Harry grins turns down the sound

offers a cigarette to the boy who doesn't smoke

"Where'd you say you were going?" Harry asks

"Into the mountain air," the boy replies

"Indian aren't you?"

"Yes sir."

"Call me Harry.

Everybody does.

Why into the mountains? Nothing there but snow and rocks."

"I'm going back to the birth place of my people the place where life began."

boy's voice soft hardly a smile creases his mouth

ANTHONY WHALE: Mr Bremmer once told me (God don't we all have our little stories about him) he told me that truth was something you didn't have to find. It was something you kept trying to bury... like a seed.

SIR JOHN BIRD: I'm always shocked when someone dies before me. Its almost as if they don't have any respect for the old... ah, Sammy was a good boy. A fine fellow. No doubt about that. I loved him like a son. And yet the strange thing is he always treated me as if I were the younger. I guess I never... You know I've played Shakespeare, Strindberg, Ibsen, Shaw, O'Neil and though they were all great artists I couldn't really tell you why. Oh, they touch the heart, they challenge the mind, and they lift the spirit, but there are some people who will argue that their cat does as much for them. How does one define art? How could I evaluate Sammy's work? You know he once told me that he didn't care two hoots

for art. He just wanted to tell a good story. He had a tremendous faith you know. I don't mean he was a devout follower of any particular religion. No not that. But he believed that if there were anything intellectually interesting, emotionally fulfilling, or spiritually uplifting in his work it would become evident if the story was strong enough. He believed in a beginning, middle, and end to every film. Birth, life, and death is how Sammy would have put it... Sammy and I were sitting in the Pilot Tavern one night discussing the lack of heroes in the modern world. Sammy was against heroes. Surely, I said, you had heroes when you were a younger man. Sammy broke into a big smile. Only one, he said. And who's that? I asked, expecting him to name some athlete or political figure. The little tramp, he replied. Chaplin. Charlie Chaplin. When everyone has forgotten Pound and Eliot, Chagall and Matisse, Einstein and Bohr, when their work becomes commonplace, that little tramp will still be making folks laugh., so don't ask me to evaluate Sammy's work. I loved him too well to hurt him now...

3.

AN HOUR LATER

"I thought your people  
came from across the Bering Strait  
fleeing from the communists or chasing after a steak."

boy pushes back his hair fingers a comb inside  
"That is the white man's legend not the Indian's.  
According to my people the Indian was delivered  
out of the sky."

Harry laughs

"Tell me about this legend."

4.

THE LEGEND

before the white man  
before the Indian  
there was nothing  
but the land

trees and the animals  
the land was lonely

cried through the loon  
this loneliness made TULOC the sun god weep  
one of his tears landed on a mountain side  
into snow. Out of the snow appeared the first Indian  
a beautiful goddess named CREDO  
and from CREDO the Indians stand in a line

ROBERT DRAYTON: He gave me a big break. Mr. Bremmer was always very kind to me. He was in many ways a very civilized man. But I think he was quite mad. He was obsessed by his work. It consumed every moment of his life. He was always studying people, the way they ate, walked, laughed. All research for some future project. His eyes were like a camera, panning the world. He didn't have opinions or tastes or prejudices; he had scenarios. One time we were walking through Queens Park looking, I think, for a location to shoot a scene in one of his films. I forget which one. Anyway, a squirrel ran down a tree and up to us looking for a handout. The squirrels there are real beggars. Well, when the squirrel came up to us Mr Bremmer says, not good enough, too hasty, do it again. He was serious. See, Mr Bremmer was never part of our world. We were all part of his... This artistic passion of his was just a sort of benign megalomania... Here we are in a world going mad, speeding toward Armageddon and he's spinning out his little three reels...

SIR JOHN BIRD: Said once he couldn't believe in a God who made him angry. Hated to lose his temper. Said it was counterproductive. How could there be a God amongst so much grief and suffering? If there was, he said, that God was a son of a bitch... I don't think he meant most of what he said. He just wanted to see how people would react. Most of the time he was disappointed. Maybe that's why he made movies — so he could produce the kind of reactions he wanted...

6.  
ROAD BLOCK  
police cars abandoned  
cop waves Harry down.

"Second time this month. Probably another escaped prisoner from the federal pen over in Freely."

cop looks up from the asphalt Harry looks down from his cab

"Someone escape from the pen"  
Harry smiles "officer?"

"How did you know?" the cop curses  
his question turned to ashes

"Intuition."  
"Well. Just take care.  
Don't pick up hitchhikers This one is a real killer."

the big transport moves on, Harry giving her each of the gears

"Strange. Same cop I talked to last week. And I swear  
those were the same words."

MAURICE DUBOIS: Sam told me once that a good film was like a ghost. You didn't understand it; it haunted you...

LESJA BROWN: I don't think anyone understood him. Not really. You'd think that his films would have shed some light onto the man, but they don't tell you much. They're more like children with a family resemblance and not much more... Now that he's dead I guess there's no need to keep it a secret any longer. We were lovers. Had been for over twenty years. It was always discreet. No one suspected a thing. Not even his wife. Besides it was long past being a passionate affair. Each of us needed an anchor... I'll miss him... He made a terrific omelet...

7.  
SOME TIME LATER

countryside more ancient cows stand on the sides of hills chewing  
grass unchanged  
horse drags a plough through earth  
Harry looks at his watch "Damn. Watch has stopped.  
Brand new. Nothing you buy today works as well as it did yesterday."

"You like the old ways better Harry?"  
the youth asks  
"I think it's that the old ways like me better"

BARBARA HARRIS: Of course no one knew it at the time. Not even Lesja and she's known him since their college days. He was my father. I was born out of wedlock. A 'bastardess', if that's the word for it... He gave me my chance in films. He owed it to me. Never was a father to me. He could have married my mother, the bastard. Except for his almighty career... You know at the funeral when I went up to his wife to tell her, everyone thought I was kidding. That it was some kind of black joke. I had to show them my god-dam birth certificate... You know I'm going to be a big star someday. My name is getting around the studios and I'm considered good box office and I didn't do it all on my back as some would have it... You know I never got the chance to call him daddy...

8.

#### TRANSPORT IS NOW

in two-lane road patches of snow on the hills  
holes in a quilt nature's poverty

"I don't remember the road narrowing down to two lanes. Not for the last five years.

I guess I've done this route so many times it's like driving through a dream."

"How long have you been on this route Harry?"

"Twenty years or so. Loved every minute of it.  
Used to have a partner but that's another story."

9.

#### THE ACCIDENT

old transport truck rolled over  
flames licking the air beast writhing in pain

Harry slows down cop waves him on  
looks like the same cop seen that morning  
fifteen years ago

10.

#### INSIDE THE CAB

Harry shaking his head

"Same truck, same corner.  
Peter fell asleep at the wheel, never woke up.  
I was thrown clear. Terrified of sleep ever since."

ROBERT DRAYTON: Well now we'll hear all the lies about the man.  
All the sentimentality will come gushing out. Pure show biz shmaltz.  
And to hell with the truth. I guess it's to be expected. We all end up being buried in legends...

11.

AN HOUR LATER

"Hungry?" Harry asks  
"Yes," the boy responds

"See a place just ahead. Must have just opened.  
Don't recall seeing it before."

Harry guides his truck into a large parking space  
in front of  
THE LAST CHANCE HOTEL  
parks beside a new Model T  
begins to snow

Harry and the boy climb down from the rig  
and walk toward the hotel

sign on the door reads  
WE DONT SERVE INDIANS

"Well then you don't serve ol'Harry,"  
Harry snorts turns angrily back to the transport

falling snow thickens

12.

INSIDE THE CAB

Harry grunts "No food. Now snow. Trouble travels in threes  
I wonder what's next."

Harry turns on radio  
doesn't work  
"Well, that's three."

MAURICE DUBOIS: Not until I began to direct the film did I begin to understand the man. It's the difference between driving a car and being a passenger. You can feel the film flowing through you when you direct. You get a sense of the malleable shape of creation. It's intoxicating. Exhilarating... Yet I had a strange feeling while we were editing the film. I felt as if my hands, my eyes had been taken over by him. That he was doing the cutting and splicing. And then it occurred to me that he too might have felt the same sensation. Perhaps something or someone takes over in all acts of creation. We share in creating but something else is in control...

13.  
FALLING SNOW  
has become a blanket  
"How can you see the road?" boy asks  
"I can feel it though it's much rougher than usual.  
We're in the mountains now, you can smell them."

14.  
DRIVING BLIND  
Harry slows the truck down  
"I'll be getting out soon," the boy says  
"Out here, in the middle of this storm, nowhere?"  
  
"This is where the world began," the boy responds

15.  
SNOW STOPS  
"O my God," Harry gasps slams his foot on the brake truck slides to a  
stop  
Harry jumps out of the truck finds the transport a short yard  
from the edge of a cliff  
  
"The road has ended.  
Where the hell am I?"

16.

HARRY TURNS

faces a beautiful young woman  
long black hair white buckskin suit  
bronze-coloured skin  
warm brown eyes

“Where did you come from? Who the devil are you?”

the woman smiles

“Welcome home, Harry.  
My name is CREDO.”

THE END

LESJA BROWN: Sam’s wife gave me a poem he had written when they were first married. Perhaps you’d like to hear it...

I cannot pray.  
God is not within me.  
I love him.  
I stand in the wings  
Part of his audience  
Amazed by his sadness...

THE END

David Halliday has published poems, short stories, plays, art works in reviews and publications across the United States and Canada. David Halliday has several published books: *murder* by Coach House Press. Winner of the 2001 Eppie for poetry. *The Black Bird* by The Porcupine’s Quill. *Making Movies* by Press Porcepic. *Church Street is Burning*, a book of poems, was a finalist in the 2002 Eppie for poetry. *The God of Six Points*, published by Double-dragon-ebooks. *Sleeping Beauty*, published by LTD ebooks.com is a murder mystery. Finalist in the 2003 Dream Realm Awards. Winner of the 2004 IP Book Awards. *The Hole*, published by LTD ebooks is one in a series of cop stories. In 2007 David Halliday was short listed for the C.B.C. Literary Contest in poetry.

Further Work of David Halliday can be found at the following sights:

[Bio and sights for smashwords](#)

[i AM a Gallery](#)

[The Hole](#)

## From the same author on *Feedbooks*

*murder (2010)*

Before there was the Simpson trial, before there was Judge Judy, there was murder. *Murder* is a book that unwinds like a movie with each poem a scene. We open with an introduction to the killer followed by the killer's introduction to the victim at the murder scene. We read a report on the victim and then are introduced to the murder scene, the body at the morgue, the meeting of friends and relatives at the funeral. The police round up a group of suspects. An innocent man is charged and brought to trial. The judge, the prosecution, the defense lawyer, the spectators in the courtroom are introduced. Witnesses are brought forward who reveal their version of the events surrounding the murder. A judgment is brought down. The judge washes his hands of everything to do with the accused and turns him over to the mob who crucify the innocent man. After this horrendous lynching, the mob disbands and the world returns to its innocence.

*The Hole (2010)*

Detective Sam Kelly is in the last days of a long career. His final assignment is to investigate Joe Mackenzie's complaint that neighbours are dumping garbage down his well. Kelly soon discovers that many locals have vanished over the years. In every case the disappearances lead back to the mysterious hole in Mackenzie's backyard.

THE ADVENTURES OF FRED AND ME Episode 1 DIVORCE AND KITTY LITTER (2011)

A surreal comic novel (in the tradition of magic realism) about a young writer in the throes of a messy marital breakup and his subsequent drifting into madness. Plus his talking cat, Fred. This is a series of four books, each one an exciting episode.

THE ADVENTURES OF FRED AND ME Episode 2 THE END STARTS JUST BEFORE THE BEGINNING (2011)

A surreal comic novel (in the tradition of magic realism) about a young writer in the throes of a messy marital breakup and his subsequent drifting into madness. Plus his talking cat, Fred. This is episode 2 in a series of four books, each one thrill packed.

THE ADVENTURES OF FRED AND ME Episode 3 REALITY STRIKES BACK (2011)

A surreal comic novel (in the tradition of magic realism) about a young writer in the throes of a messy marital breakup and his subsequent drifting into madness. Plus his talking cat, Fred. This is episode 3 in which me finds himself the main suspect in the murder of a young girl.

THE ADVENTURES OF FRED AND ME Episode 4 LIFE IS ALL ITS CRACKED UP TO BE (2011)

A surreal comic novel (in the tradition of magic realism) about a young writer in the throes of a messy marital breakup and his subsequent drifting into madness. Plus his talking cat, Fred. This is episode 4 in which me (that's his name disguised as David Halliday) follows Nick Charles (of Thin Man fame) into the bowels of the earth, faces death, and something worse.

Bicycle Thieves (2011)

It was the nineteen fifties. The suburbs. Septic tanks. Cape Cod houses. Row on row. New schools. Bullies. Mad boys. Black and white television. Aerials. Dogs running free. Pond hockey. Cigarettes. Teenage crushes. Bicycle Thieves. And death.

Somewhere in the 1970s (2011)

No one was going to tell them what life was about. Or tell them how to party. They were free. And arrogant. And young. It was the 1970s and everyone was lost.



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Food for the mind