



Harmen Gerbens the Cairo Dutchman rests now in the briefcase above my seat—a name and a history, chronologically the first on the list, without my knowing at the time that the list had begun and that I'd end up carrying it to Rome five years later, all trembling with a terrible hangover exhausted feverish not able to sleep, would I have chosen the Vatican if Alexandra weren't waiting for me at Trastevere, in that little ground-floor apartment by a pretty courtyard, Alexandra called Sashka Russian painter with the face of an icon the worst is over now, the worst leaving everything behind quitting leaving my strange employer, ever since Venice after my two years of war I've never been so free, I own nothing now, not even my real name—I have an appropriated passport under the name of Yvan Deroy, born almost at the same as me in Paris and locked up a long time ago now in an institution for psychotics in the suburbs, he never had a passport and his doctors would be quite surprised to know that he's wandering around Italy today, I got this document in the most legal way in the world with a record of civil status and a doctored electric company bill at the 18th arrondissement town hall: I've had so many different names these past years, on identity papers of all colors, I'll become attached to Yvan Deroy, tonight the mute psychotic will sleep in the Grand Plaza in Rome, he reserved a room on the Internet from a cybercafé on the Champs-Élysées, Yvan Deroy won't go see his Roman lover right away, he'll hand over his last suitcase to whoever has a right to it, as they say, someone will come visit him in his room they'll proceed with the exchange before Yvan Deroy disappears more or less for good, Yvan has had a new life since last month even an account opened in a big branch of an ordinary bank, which changes him from his postal savings account where his parents regularly deposit the price of his little extras in his "residence," today he owns an international credit card—Yvan bought himself two pairs of pants and as many shirts in a big department store, withdrew cash paid in advance for one night in the Plaza and an airplane ticket he didn't use and now he's playing at making out the landscape in the gathering dusk, far from Venice from Alexandria from Cairo from Marianne with the white breasts a little closer to the end of the world thirty kilometers from Milan [. . .] Yvan Deroy the mad or catatonic schizophrenic committed in a specialized institution in L'Hayles-Roses, in the asylum they used to say—Yvan emerges from his lethargy only to shout and assault the staff and the other patients violently, to try to kill them for they are his

enemies, he shouts, they wish him harm he is simply defending himself nothing more no mystical flights of fancy no voices no hallucinations Yvan emerges from his semi-comatose state only into the pure violence of a wild animal according to the phases of the moon or the changing course of his treatment, and this has been so for almost twenty years despite the quantity of medication he has taken he resists his sickness resists therapy, he is me now Yvan had a shaved head the time he raised his right arm in salute wanted to put an end to democratic corruption the servants of Bolshevism and international Jewry, he went to church on Sundays to hand out pamphlets to middle-class housewives whom he frightened more than anything else, he read Brasillach and every February 6th visited his grave with other militants to celebrate the martyr and promise revenge for the victim of Gaullist injustice and Jewish hatred, Yvan and I visited Maurice Bardèche official fascist who offered us a volume of his pro-Franco history of the Spanish War written in collaboration with Brasillach—Yvan Deroy went mad, I forgot him as I went through a normal military training then a paratrooper military training and finally all possible military trainings before going to serve France, volunteer for a long period of service they said at the time, months slogging around in the mountains, team spirit songs weapons marches nighttime commandos grenades light artillery a hard happiness shared with comrades I wasn't a little proud to come back on leave to tell about naïve martial exploits, the kid from Arès was still just a puppy on parade, in training, on maneuvers in the South of France, on maneuvers in the North of France, on maneuvers in the Alps always happy to have a life so full of weapons honor and fatherland, sweating in the mountains on the Saint Bernard Pass [. . .] Yvan Deroy remembers today in this train that his parents were proud of him, that those fervent Catholics thought of his army as a scout camp that would fortify body and soul, his mother whispered in his ear, prophetically, don't forget, your homeland is also Croatia [. . .] Yvan Deroy has just crossed the Alps one more time while his actual body languishes waiting for the end of the world prostrate in a wheelchair—now I'm traveling incognito while still being "legal" a good suitcase-carrier invisible in the crowd of identities and minor bank transactions . . . █