

The Editors Are Probably Smarter Than You – The Booklist
by Wythe Marschall (Paul Vargas' list TBA)

My Tetragrammatons

(originally sketched for *That's Plenty*, but tonally inconstant with that fine publication, thus inseminating itself here)

OMG, blogging about reading is like meta-reading or something. (Thanks, Baudrillard; thanks, Foucault; thanks, Borges: Y'all have SO permanently fucked up my ability to think about anything without meta-thinking about it, to the point that the raisin bagel I found at work was already, as soon as I had it in my grasp, a future log of excrement; the divinely post-hangover-thirst-quenching glass of ice tea, already mere urine...)

So let's talk about books. I like them. I read them online, in the W.C., on the train, at night, in the car, the plane, the boat (if I was ever on a boat), on skates (except I hate to skate, which is the writerly way of saying "am deathly afraid/utterly unable to skate"), etc. In fact, I read so damn much I got problems. Mainly, eye strain. But also, my friends are always asking, "Wythe, what are you reading? Is it any good? [Ten minutes later.] Wow. That's really too much information, but the book sounds amazing. Can you tell me the title and author again, so I can purchase it, so I don't have to talk to you any more? [Two minutes later.] No, no—really, I just need the title. [Title.] Thanks."

So here, in all her glory, is a booklist. I know, I know—how Unholier Than Thou. But, come on, it's what I do; don't fuck with me. Unless you want the Pain brought. Cause I bring the Pain. You know the Pain? When the ant-bites on your finger turn purple and start to sweat toxins, and the adjoining fingers start to itch, and your foot starts to itch, and you're pretty sure that's unrelated, but, I mean, *come on*, how can you really be sure? Or when all the ice melts in your G&T, like, before your evil grandparents have even arrived? Or when you run out of mixer later, and the ant-bites have turned the same color, the same gray as your grandfather's ear-hair, and you think you should do something about that, the discoloration, and you're drunk, which isn't good, because don't they say you shouldn't drink if you're taking pills, which is probably what they'll give you, when you go to the clinic down the street, probably some sort of Benadryl, or the generic equivalent, like how they gave you that fake Canadian hep-B vaccine when you were a little kid, and now you can't shower when it's cold out or your lymph nodes swell up?

So, yeah, in conclusion, don't fuck with me. If you want to read a good book, a funny, deep, [adjective 3], [adjective 4], [idiomatically hilarious adverb] [adjective 5], etc. book, just look below. You don't recognize an author? Fine, skip him. Think he's "pretentious?" (Going to have to meta-blog about that vastly misapplied word at some point.) Okay, just dial 1-800-THE-PAIN and I'll be there in five. Or maybe you started reading said book already, then put it down for a while, then found it hard to start again, because you thought you were still on that story about the monkey who becomes a

preacher, only you'd actually finished that one and were on the one in which Marat, in his fatal bathtub, dreams he's riding a bright red horse around Greece while singing "Auld Lang Syne?" No problem. Skip what you want to skip. Said another way: Enjoy art. I think that's rather (one of) the point(s).

Anyway, here's the list. No author gets more than two shout-outs at present, to conserve space, and I've kept my old-school (pre-WWII) homies off the list for now (sorry, Sir T.B., Carlyle, De Quincey, H. James ["Tha Hen-Jizzlah"], Kafka, Proust), and maybe this list will be added to, periodically, or ferociously, or spasmodically. That said...

BOOKS TO ENJOY:

Valis, Philip K. Dick.

The Transmigration of Timothy Archer, Philip K. Dick

The Age of Wire and String, Ben Marcus.

Notable American Women, Ben Marcus.

Super Flat Times, Matthew Derby.

The Human Country, Harry Mathews.

The Sinking of the Odradek Stadium, Harry Mathews.

Pastoralia, George Saunders.

In Persuasion Nation, George Saunders.

The Tunnel, Russell Edson.

The Rooster's Wife, Russell Edson.

Labyrinths, Borges (which is really two books, *Ficciones* and *El Aleph*, plus some bonus featurettes called "parables").

The Mezzanine, Nicholson Baker.

The Size of Thoughts, Nicholson Baker.

Homage to the Lame Wolf, Vasko Popa.

Shadow Train, John Ashbery.

In the Penny Arcade, Steven Millhauser.

The Barnum Museum, Steven Millhauser.

The Word "Desire", Rikki Ducornet.

The Complete Butcher's Tales, Rikki Ducornet.

A Bend in the River, V.S. Naipaul.

Shame, Salman Rushdie.

The Satanic Verses, Salman Rushdie. (Ryan In Exile adds *Midnight's Children* to the Rushdie list, but I haven't read that one yet.)

The Woman in the Dunes, Abe Kobo.

Secret Rendezvous, Abe Kobo.

[more to come, including an Old Skool list; start with these...]