

introduction to max ernst's natural history

this introduction contains the pseudo-introduction the original the variants of the original the pseudo-original as well as the variants of the pseudo-original the apocrypha and the incorporation of all these texts in an original apocryphum with apocopated whiskers as well as fifty calcinated medals and fifty suns of fifty years because the medal rises. — the medal of light rises. — fifty suns and fifty medals rise. — the wheels turn. — the wheels turn. — fifty suns and fifty medals rise while the pseudo-sun after fifty years of service retires into the calcinated wheels of light. — the wheels turn no more. — the wheels turn no more.

it is man who has replaced alarm-clocks by earthquakes showers of jordan almonds by showers of hail. the shadow of man encountering the shadow of a fly causes a flood. thus it is man who has taught horses to embrace one another like presidents kings or emperors sucking each other's beards licking each other's snouts plunging their tongues into patriotic profundities. the passerby who sees these equine kisses thinks that peace has been established on earth forever.

with his eleven and a half tails of cotton his eight legs of bread his hundred eyes of air his four hearts of stone he goes a-hunting the flying cyclopean moustache without any limbs. but as this moustache is actually intelligible the hunter always comes home baffled. with the help of his eleven and a half tails man counts ten and a half objects in the furnished room of the universe: scarecrows with volcanoes and geysers in their buttonhole show cases of eruptions displays of lava string systems of solar currency labeled abdomens walls razed by poets the palettes of the caesars thoroughly still (and dead) lives the stables of the sphynxes the eyes of the man turned to stone while squinting at sodom the scars of . . .

enter the continents without knocking but with a muzzle of filigree

leaves never grow on the trees. like a mountain in bird's-eye view they have no perspective no soap no hybrid plastron no scotch cheeks no crypt. the spectator always finds himself in a false position before a leaf. he has the impression of carrying his head in his umbilicus his feet in his mouth his unwashed eyes in his hands. as for the branches trunks and roots I declare them to be fantasmagorias bald men's lies. branches trunks and roots do not exist.

like a lion who scents a succulent pair of newly-weds the seismic plant desires to make a meal of the dead man. in his millennial den made up as a foetus it whirls with lust like the white juice of the end with the black juice of the start and the ferocity of its gaze chases the navels around the earth. the lime-tree grows tractably on boarded plains. the chestnut and the oak start out