

# Hebeloma's Swamp Fantasy Overture

a post-existential musical score  
generated through a  
non-idiomatic improvisational creative process

Hebeloma Crustuliniforme  
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*Each of the three-hundred sixty-five passages in this book was written in its entirety to the accompaniment of a recording of a particular piece of music. The work is identified at the end of each passage. The process of “writing as listening” admits the embodied cognition in the music. Furthermore, as the American pianist Vijay Iyer has noted, “[M]usic can be viewed as a consequence of active listening...Placing the skillful listener in such an active role explodes the category of experiences that we call listening to music...”*

*An index of musicians appears at the end of the book, as do several other related indices.*

# Hebeloma's Swamp Fantasy Overture

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# Afterword

I'm trying to take a long view  
within reason  
about the music  
I cannot tell  
or say  
anything  
about the music  
No expectations suggested  
... the individual listener  
let the music  
is all I can offer

—Henry Threadgill  
from *Tomorrow Sunny / The Revelry*, Spp  
(PI Recordings, 2012)



## A Musical Score

For those who hear naturally the music embodied in these written words, no further explanation is necessary. For other readers, a brief justification follows. Ostensibly a novella, Hebeloma's *Swamp Fantasy Overture* is a musical score of a modestly unconventional form. It follows a tradition in improvisational music of non-idiomatic formats for conveying musical ideas. We need think no further than Pauline Oliveros who allowed instructions for meditation to guide her music, Anthony Braxton who generated abstract diagrams describing his compositions, Fred Van Hove who regarded the editing of silent films as a “real score”, or Butch Morris who developed a system of conduction, which blended composition and improvisation in transient gestures. That

an author should describe a novella as a score requires a lesser suspension of disbelief, compared to these more ambitious precedents.



### **The Size and the Instrumentation of the Ensemble**

As written, Hebeloma's Swamp Fantasy Overture is intended for an ensemble of nine musicians, though independent-minded interpreters should feel no obligation to adhere to this original intent. Each performer is assigned one of the nine roles in the novella:

- the narrator
- the heroine
- the custodian
- the faerie
- the frog prince
- the oracle
- the first paramour
- the second paramour
- the high priest/cultists/turtle-woman/beast

While the author imagined various combinations of instruments with which this score could be performed, at their request no prescription is reproduced here. The selection of the instrumentation is secondary to the identification of an ensemble of players with sympathetic relationships and ears for improvisational narrative. With that said, there remains an expectation that the role of narrator is performed by a percussionist of one sort or another, setting the rhythm of the retelling.



### **The Duration of the Piece**

This work contains 365 parts, one created each day of the year in 2021. The writing from each day is a measure. If each measure were performed in one second, then the piece would last six minutes; if ten seconds, then an hour; if a minute, then six hours. If performers chose to rigidly mimic the tempo of the author, then each measure is a day and the piece would unfold over the course of a year. We expect realizations of this score, should any ever come to pass, to fall somewhere within the limits of this temporal spectrum.

*written on May 31, 2021 by the Staff of the Poison Pie Publishing House while listening to: Vijay Iyer, Linda May Han Oh & Tyshawn Sorey – Uneasy (ECM Records, ECM 2692, 2021, Germany, lpx2)*

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## About the Creators

It can be said that the fruiting body of *Hebeloma Crustuliniforme* sprouted from an extensive subterranean network in response to a spring rain, sometime during the last quarter of the twentieth century. She pursued an eclectic education, typically outside the institutional credentialing process. She has worked in Europe and America as an anthropologist and as an editor. She currently serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Exploratory Meta-Living* and occupies a similar role at the Poison Pie Publishing House.

Her interest in a literature of non-idiomatic improvisation arose naturally from her study of apophenia, the human perception of patterns and intent in random or meaningless data. There is a great joy to be discovered in what others might regard as a deep self-delusion. *Hebeloma* asks the readers' indulgence to allow her to share that joy.

Julia K. Keffer is the creative force behind the Bus Stop Art Show of Phoenix, Arizona. The Bus Stop Art Show embraces the ephemerality of art and its unknowable impacts through the unsanctioned placement of artwork in public spaces. The dismantling of the art is an invited act inseparably entwined with the self-selecting distribution of the works by passers-by who discover something that appeals to them and who take a piece with them.

The twelve works, one appearing at the beginning of each chapter of the *Swamp Fantasy Overture*, are portraits of characters and scenes, informed by descriptions within the score. No further instructions were given. The publisher required that black and white versions appear in the paper version of the score. The electronic version contains the same dozen artworks in color.



**Also (Un)Available from the Poison Pie Publishing House  
Post-Existential Fantasies Generated through  
a Non-Idiomatic Improvisational Creative Process**

Novels

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- *A Practicum on Divination via Cleromancy* (2019)
- *A Fractured Portrait of Iris* (2018)
- *Piecemeal: Proceedings of the International Congress on Exploratory Meta-Living* (2018)
- *2017: The Year of the Every-Day Magician, or A Second-Hand Account of the Rise and Fall of the Renegades of the American Muslim Registry* (2017)
- *The Ornithological Collection of Uwetsiageyv: A Flight of Fancy in 201 Parts* (2016)
- *Wouldn't the Wood Weird, or Impractical Prayers from the Spindle of the Void* (2016)
- *The Portable Library of Hong Samud: a novel that grew as a vine grows, guided by an innate, phototactic sensitivity* (2015)
- *The Augur in the Arbor Inn: A Tautological Myth of Evolution* (2015)
- *The Implacable Absence: A Non-Idiomatic Improvisational Duet* (2014) (with Henry E. Gorton)
- *The Ruins of My Daughter's Cities: An Imaginary Travelogue* (2013)
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- *The Horties: An Invisible Novel* (2010)
- *Owen & Dolores: A Sketch* (2000)
- *Perhaps: The Continuing Exploits of Alton & Eugenia* (2000)
- *Alton & Eugenia: Twelve Stories* (1999)
- *Slow Ecclesiastes: An American Novel of the Late Twentieth Century* (1998)

### Novels (continued)

- A Memory of Fire: A Novel of Indeterminate Conflagrations (1997)
- Symptoms of the Lunatic (1997)
- The Wooing of Eva: An Empty Journal (1996)
- Hysteresis: An Asymmetric Account of an Individual Apocalypse (1995)
- novelwise: a treatise on wisdom by process of elimination (1995)
- June and Jitter (the bugs) (1993)
- insect: an entomological fairy tale (1993)
- These Stars Are All The Same: A Survey of Constellations (1993)
- I Saw Blood and then Everything Went Black: Sixteen Dark Fables from the Future (1993)
- this is how we are: a daemonic debut (1992)

### Illustrated Books (with the Keffer family)

- An Ornithological Grimoire of East Tennessee (2017)
- A Bestiary of East Tennessee (2015)
- The Faerienomicon (2014)
- The Mushroomnomicon (2013)
- Tales of the Mushroom People II: Call of Cthulhushroom (2012)
- Tales of the Mushroom People (2011)
- Eugenia and the Forest (2000)

### Prayer Books

- Jacob's Dream (2015) (with Ruth Keffer)
- A Prayer Book for the Damned (2014)

### Collected Stories

- The Leg & Other Stories (1991-2013)