

The Portable Library of Hong Samud

a novel that grew as a vine grows,
guided by an innate, phototactic sensitivity

David J. Keffer

written August 25, 2015-December 11, 2015
Knoxville, Tennessee

The Poison Pie Publishing House
Knoxville, Tennessee
www.poisonpie.com

Copyright © 2015 David J. Keffer
All rights reserved.

The portrait on the front cover was painted by Mr. Nobuhito
Tanaka.

The crow faerie finger puppet on the back cover is the work of
Miss Ruth Marie Keffer.

ISBN-13: None associated with this edition

This initial printing is a limited edition of ten copies.

*This book is dedicated to librarians of all stripes,
found the whole world over.*

The Portable Library of Hong Samud

Table of Contents

Part One. Hong Samud & the Crow Maiden

On the Librarian.....	1
On Creating a Demi-plane	2
On the Architectural Layout of the Library	3
On the Contents of the Library	4
On the Librarian's Favorite Books	5
On the Unexpected Expansion of the Library	6
On the Purpose of the Library	9
On a Patron of the Library	11
On Library Cards	13
On the Descendants of Angels.....	16
On the Many Entrances to the Library.....	17
On the Exits from the Library.....	21
On a Reprieve from the Library.....	23
On the Rescue of the Librarian.....	25
On Charity toward Librarians.....	27
On an Excised Digression.....	29
On Ornithological Libraries.....	30
On the Other Librarian.....	31
On the Meeting of Two Librarians	33
On an Agreement between Librarians	34
On a Tour of the Library.....	36
On an Unintended Acquisition	38
On an Examination of Entrances	41
On the Return of a Patron	43
On the First Morning of Research	45
On the First Afternoon of Research.....	48
On a Book of Mythology.....	50
On Lunch with the Prospector	51

Part Two. The Captain & His Apprentice

On a Lord of War	57
On the Warlord's Library	58
On the Warlord's Librarian	60
On the Librarian's Nephew	62
On the Librarian's Mark	65
On the Failure of a Librarian	67
On an Unwelcome Patron.....	69
On the Librarian's Apprentice.....	72
On the Training of the Apprentice Librarian.....	73
On the Fate of the Librarian	76
On the Talent of the Apprentice	78
On the Lending of the Apprentice Librarian	79
On the Retrieval of the Apprentice Librarian	82
On a Translation of the Apprentice Librarian.....	83
On the Reunion of the Librarian and his Apprentice.....	86
On the Studies of the Apprentice Librarian.....	87
On the Foreigners' Excursion.....	89
On the Filial Duties of the Apprentice Librarian.....	91
On the Unlucky Assignment of the Apprentice Librarian.....	94
On the Apprentice Librarian's Departure	96
On the Prospector and the Apprentice Librarian	97
On a Dream of the Warlord.....	99
On the Mishap of the Apprentice Librarian.....	101
On the Second Reunion of the Librarian and his Apprentice....	103

Part Three. The Clerk & the Prospector

On the Clerk's Termination	106
On the Persuasion of the Librarian	109
On the Description of the First Library to the Clerk.....	112
On the Departure of the Clerk	116
On a Daydream of the Clerk	119
On the Clerk's Audience with the Warlord	121
On Connecting Libraries.....	125
On Establishing a New Entrance to the Library	127
On a Concise Description of the Library	129
On a Conversation between a Father and a Clerk.....	131
On the Revelations of the Apprentice Librarian.....	133
On a Belated and Postponed Reconciliation.....	135
On the Descent of the Clerk.....	136
On an Audience with the Diabolist.....	138
On a Confession to the Diabolist.....	141
On a Locked Entrance to the Library	143
On a Delivery to the Library.....	145
On the Incomplete Transfiguration of the Prospector	147
On the Ministrations to the Prospector	150
On a Discovery in the Library	153
On Waking in the Capital	156
On an Inhospitable Reception.....	159
On the Summoning of the Librarian	162
On the Librarian's Audience with the Warlord	166
On the Wrack and Ruin of Angels.....	168
On Putting the Plan in Action.....	170
On Hong Samud's Visit to the Underground City.....	173
On a Lost Opportunity.....	177
On the Fate of the Diabolist.....	181
On the Angel and the Devil	183
On a Trio of Dark Gods	185
On Tea with the Warlord	187
A Denouement.....	188

I have squandered and consumed my years in adventures of this type. To me, it does not seem unlikely that on some shelf of the universe there lies a total book. I pray the unknown gods that some man—even if only one man, and though it may have been thousands of years ago!—may have examined and read it. If honour and wisdom and happiness are not for me, let them be for others. May heaven exist, though my place be in hell. Let me be outraged and annihilated, but may Thy enormous Library be justified, for one instant, in one being.

Jorge Luis Borges (August 24, 1899-June 14, 1986), from “The Library of Babel” (1941), collected in Fictions, translated by Anthony Kerrigan, John Calder Publishers Ltd, London, 1965, p. 78.

About the Author

David J. Keffer was born in Kansas City, Missouri. He pursued a technical education earning a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Florida and a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Minnesota. After a year as a post-doctoral scholar at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C., he began his career as an engineering professor at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, where he remains today. He has published about 100 technical papers in archival journals. He was awarded a Fulbright Grant to learn and to teach about sustainability in Seoul, Korea.

Outside of engineering, David Keffer studied world literature and creative writing. He has published analytical articles on the works of Primo Levi and Kobo Abe. He created various reading aids to several classical Chinese novels. Over the past two decades, David Keffer has been active writing novels, poetry and stories. Several novels and illustrated stories are available from the Poison Pie Publishing House at <http://www.poisonpie.com>.

Beginning in 2012, David Keffer began teaching a course on the subject of non-idiomatic improvisational music, of which he is a devoted listener and a topic which has led aided him on an investigation of a literature of non-idiomatic improvisation.

David Keffer lives in Knoxville, Tennessee with his wife, Lynn, and two children. As a family, they enjoy hiking through the local mountains and are always on the look-out for poison pie and other ambivalent mushrooms that dot the landscape.

Also Available from the Poison Pie Publishing House
Books by David J. Keffer

Novels

- 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)
- The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath (Revisited): A Modern Adaptation of the Novella by H.P. Lovecraft (2012)
- The Sutra of Reverse Possession: A Novel of Non-Idiomatic Improvisation (2012)
- The Horties: An Invisible Novel (2010)
- Perhaps: The Continuing Exploits of Alton & Eugenia: (2000)
- Alton & Eugenia: Twelve Stories (1999)
- Slow Ecclesiastes: An American Novel of the Late Twentieth Century (1998)
- A Memory of Fire: A Novel of Indeterminate Conflagrations (1997)
- Symptoms of the Lunatic (1997)
- 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)

Illustrated Books (with the Keffer family)

- 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)