

Injun
& Other Histories

by Claes Oldenburg



1966
A Great Bear Pamphlet
New York

ubuclassics

2004

INJUN & OTHER HISTORIES

CLAES OLDENBURG

ubuclassics

2004

Injun & Other Histories
Claes Oldenburg

Originally published in 1966 as a Great Bear Pamphlet by Something Else Press.
Text is from 1960.

ubuclassics

www.ubu.com

Series Editor: Michael Tencer

To PAT My Waif
My Orphic Annie
My Faustina
My Aerial

Contents

Two Scenarios from an Incomplete Pageant of America

Injun, Page 5

Crusoe, Page 6

Faustina (Unfinished), Page 7

Faustina (Another Act), Page 9

A Card from Doc (P.S.), Page 11

*Two Scenarios from an
Incomplete Pageant of America*

INJUN

A tavern up the river. The sun's light reflected from the river into the tavern. An INJUN is lying on the bar with his head over the edge. Wine flows out of his face and he is sniffling. Suddenly his body is covered with a hundred little birds.

First thing you know, the volunteer fire siren goes off and everyone leaves the bar, which sinks into the river, out of sight.

The fire is out of control. There's nothing to do but watch. When the fire dies, there is INJUN, red as coals, kneeling and scooping up little mounds of scorched flesh like marshmallows.

The volunteers beat him with their hoses until he turns black, and then they kick his ashes around until they blow away.

They all take out their handkerchiefs and wipe themselves. Then they go back to their work. The tavernkeeper pulls his tavern out of the river and pours free rounds for the house.

A beggar at the back door keeps bothering his wife. He has some presumption, she thinks. He keeps pawing her tits and lifting her skirts while she is making sandwiches. Finally she gets mad and says: "What do you want?" and the beggar laughs so hard he breaks into a whole pile of fresh-cut birchwood.

"Put the wood in the stove," Bernie says. The woman does so, not caring one way or another. The tavern is filled with smoke, thick and black, that makes all the patrons cough and wheeze.

CRUSOE

Crusoe has been sitting in Union Square, and an enormous bird has landed on his head and shoulders. It wont go off. It is Friday the 13th, and Crusoe has been out looking for little boys. Now, with this disaster, he has to go home and clean up.

The whole bunch at the boarding house has a big laugh at his predicament. Major Hoople, an old colored slave (Walt Whitman), takes Crusoe into a narrow toilet on the first floor, on the pretense of helping him, but actually to give him a little kiss.

The bird dies and they lay it on the dining room table. Everybody pitches in to eat the bird, but when they come to the stomach, the damnud INJUN pops out!

Crusoe is in the living room trying to get the land-lady's little boy to bend over and look for something he claims to have thrown on the floor. The INJUN sinks his tommy in Crusoe's head. It turns into a bird and they kiss.

The boy grows up to be Teddy Roosevelt, the President of the U.S.A. As a good gesture, he invites his old pals at the house to dinner.

They go into the dining room, where a congressional orgy is taking place. Crusoe alone takes care of twenty Senators and twice as many Representatives. Teddy says he's got to go sailing, which is the tip off, and the Civil War begins.

Friday and Crusoe are wrestling in the fireplace. Finally Friday changes into a bear and climbs the chimney. Crusoe is alone with the bird, who grows so that it fills the room.

He crawls into its asshole, and he is Xrayed in there, playing dice with Walt Whitman.

He finds himself fishing in a secluded stream. Friday comes out of the trees (an ignorant savage, doesnt know what hes doing). They make love and all the fish of the Adirondacks attach themselves to his string.

Crusoe's wife wakes him. Hes been sleeping there for such a long time. She pulls him back by the ear to the Town Square, where he is to make the Memorial Day Oration. Each word comes out a fish and he cant stop pissing on the stage. At last the police set him on fire.

Now comes the Funeral! The band is playing, and Crusoe has been altered by the embalmer into an obelisk. The whole town hammers him into the ground, all singing.

FAUSTINA

(Unfinished)

ACT ONE

The huge black hands of white day point at 11. Ellis Island. Doc, the photog, has Faustina and her Mother, who is indistinct and remains so, on the photographic plate against the Harbor. If only he wouldn't smoke that big black ox of a cigar so much!

Inside the camera, black as can be, the wind is howling up through the Narrows. Faustina reversed, black and oily as the pebbles on the Staten Island shore, is poked and raped by the cigar until it shreds and bends in her blood.

Outside, all's smiles. The Aquitania blows six blasts in the harbor from her happy funnels, fouling the gulls above. Lilly Bey, the Queen of Roumania, is sick in her cabin. Sick of the smell of her husband, whom she killed just outside Southampton, and longing for the cabdrivers and newsstandtenders and doormen of New York.

The anchor is cast overboard and with his big smile Doc Speedboat arrives.

Faustina has waited days for the examination. Doc takes her into his office and eats her clothes off. He gives her his teeth to play with while he rubs her thoroughly. He sticks his moustache in all her holes and gives her a DeLuxe OK.

"That's how I'd like to live!" sighs Faustina, watching Lilly Bey debark in the newsreels. Doc has his hand under her skirts. He is kneeling on the floor, loosening her garters with his teeth. Faustina gives a fart so that the whole theater lights up. Doc doesn't come home for days.

There at home Pop has drunk the laundry and hung the beer-buckets out to dry. What to do? Faustina borrows all her mother's hair & leaves home.

ACT TWO

Lilly Bey and the Mayor's wife go for a row. They row thousands of feet up, with

the whole city looking up their skirts. Little dirty boys try to hit their pussys with spit. Their graceful, silkstocking legs curl down in the squares of the city like tornadoes.

They have a hot drink at Lilly Bey's place and a little nap. They ride each other's horses up and down Fifth Avenue all night, until the horses perish in a sudden snow, and return for a hot drink.

Abandoned and naked, freezing to death, wounded by Doc's sharp teeth, Faustina goes to the bridge and leaps into the snow. Lilly Bey and the Mayor's wife see the fall on an old film. "There's something I'd like to do!" says Lilly Bey.

"I brought her up," says Doc, "and look how she treats me." He introduces himself and she makes him her number one doorman.

Faustina emerges from the dirty water a young boy. An old streetcar conductor saves him. "What are you doing out on a night like this?" he asks. "I don't remember," Faustina says. The conductor puts the boy in his bed, and himself sleeps on the floor. Later, he dresses him in his clothes and leaves him at the door of Lilly Bey's apartment.

"It's not every day one finds such a beautiful boy on the doorstep," says Doc, and brings him up to Lilly Bey. LB and the Mayor's wife are passing the pipe, sitting crosslegged on the black marble floor. They study him and by subtle kissing raise his prick.

Impulsively the Mayor's wife hoists her skirts and squats on it. Lilly Bey knives her to bits and gives the pieces to Doc.

"My Boy," she says. She powders and perfumes him and brushes his long hair. She presses her snatch to his lips and he wakes. His eyes flutter. He sees first the huge chandelier, and in the mirrors which line the room, a thousand reflections of Lilly Bey's face.

"I jumped off a bridge," Faustina says. "I know," says Lilly Bey tenderly. "I saw it." While he sleeps, she cuts all the flowers in the room. They fall face down. She opens all the windows and the room fills with snow.

THE END (UNFINISHED)

FAUSTINA ANOTHER ACT

Faustina's Daddy, blind and shiny as a shoehorn, is Dolly to his pals, from his habit of finding dollys in the garbagecans and jaggging off on them. Having laid a pile of his turds on someones Cadillac, and rasped his asshole on the mudguards, is struck while crossing the Bowery, and smashed into so many circus elephants lumbering at 3 A.M.

"Oh Dad," she says, and his beard bites her like a pack of dogs. She collects the pieces, bakes them into a sour loaf of pumpernickel, and sneaks them home to Lilly Bey's.

Each night she only pretends to eat, hiding the food in her pantpockets, where it is forgotten and becomes the flats under Atlantic City. She locks herself in her room after dinner and butters a slice of her Daddy. Joboto, her dog, wants some too, and without thinking she throws him some. When Joboto next week runs away, half her Daddy's sentences go with him.

"One does not realize what one can lose until it's gone," Faustina mourns. Each night she prudently saves her crap. She lays it out on her rug and presses it down with her feet, forming it into an outline of her lost family. She takes off all her fine clothes and rolls in the picture until she is black and old as a mummy.

Lilly Bey is dead, oh many years. Doc has been cut up for the stove. Great steel machines roam the house, clanking speaking spikes and humming. Radio signals flash through all the rooms. The jewels, the diamonds, all Lilly Bey's fine things are so much salt for their meals.

Ah, the passage of things! The bridges are joined to the houses and the water is joined to the bridges, and even the clouds are metal, moving against one another like Coney Dodgems, clanking & dropping nuts.

Faustina is forgotten in her cave of dried crap. A tiny thin being layered with excrement, tromping and retromping the portrait of her family. Becoming a great artist with her crap and her piss, scurrying like an ant over the mountains and through the seas.

AwMaMaGeddon! One night the bombras come, splitting and plopping.

Awyah! Down the Hudson, straining the banks and making the flood rigid as Suez, making beaches of soft hair behind him out of his pure patriotic sperm! The Great Ghost G.W., Grand Obelisk, The Polar Beast, the great ravenous Ice, slides down in the night.

Making the old walls scream with pleasure as they crumble, deflowering the bridges, wrapping them around his phallus-head, casting the shouting ships in the air like a bull. Spreading wings to the Bronx and the Jerseys and to Brooklyn, taking all the tortured hordes into his ice-maw, swallowing Staten Island, sucking the statue into his proud nose.

Babbling Ellis slides in the ice like a poker, lodging near the liver where it spills its vulgar tintypes into the bloodstream. The glacier slides on into the sea, trickles over the shelf and dissipates in the vast bottoms.

All's mud and silence. A new map. Faustina, neither human nor recognizable, without pencil or paper to draw a map, tromps on, but the old photo resembles nothing at all anymore.

END.

A Card from Doc

Postscript

The yacht bawls in the harbor. The mayor enters. Old Doc's been away, trip around the world. How are things at the Club? His nose has grown to cover his face, but he's still old sly Doc. Howzaboy? Lotsa backslaps! Well, mayor, what's on the Agenda?

Civic improvement, plazas, malls, centers, ports, projects, projects, projects. Got two heads full! Cut the folks up, cut up the plain folks, trim em like trees, saw em to size, make bricks of em, beams, pile em up, seal em to each other by their juices. Build Build Bld.

Dont forget the statues, says Doc. Oh yeah, bulls and greeks and lots of nekkid broads.

Claes (Thure) Oldenburg

was born in Stockholm in 1929, spent his first three years in New York City and Rye, N. Y., lived subsequently in Oslo (1933-37) and Chicago (1937-56). He attended Yale University (Class of 1950), then worked as an apprentice reporter for the City News Bureau of Chicago until 1952. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago (1952-54), then returned to New York where he supported himself by shelving books at Cooper Union Museum Library (1956-61).

Oldenburg's first one-man show was at the Judson Gallery (Sculptures and Poems, May 1959). This was followed by frequent New York exhibitions, including *The Store* (December 1961), an environment of created store objects in a store-studio on the Lower East Side. His more important exhibitions since then include one-man shows at the Green Gallery (1962), the Dwan Gallery in Los Angeles (1963), Ileana Sonnabend in Paris (1964), and Sidney Janis Gallery (1964, 1966).

His Happenings, which began with *Snapshots From the City* at Judson Church in 1960, include *Blackouts* (Reuben Gallery, 1960), *Ironworks/Fotodeath* (Reuben Gallery, 1961), the *Ray Gun Theater* series created in the above-mentioned Store from February to May 1962, *Injun* (Dallas, 1962), *Stars* (Washington, D. C., 1963), *Gayety* (Chicago, 1963), *Autobodys* (Los Angeles, 1963) and, more recently, *Washes* (May 1965) in the pool of Al Roon's Health Club in New York, and *Moviehouse* (December 1965) at the New York Film Makers' Cinematheque.

His publications include:

1960 — *Spicy Ray Gun, Ray Gun Poems and More Ray Gun Poems*, Judson Gallery, New York.

1963 — “*Wat dwy den theink w MRCA*,” in *V TRE*, Metuchen, N. J.

— *AMERICANS*, 1963, catalogue of Museum of Modern Art. Reprint of statement for “Environments, Situations, Spaces” show at Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, 1961. (The original is out of print).

1965 — Scripts of *Injun* (different version from the present pamphlet), *Worlds Fair II*, *Gayety* and *Autobodys*, and a description of method, in *HAPPENINGS*, written and edited by Michael Kirby, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1965.

- Scripts of *Fotodeath* and *Washes*, Tulane Drama Review, Vol. 10, No. 2.
- 1966 — Excerpts from *Studio Notes*, Art Forum, Vol. 1, No. 5.
- “Climbing Mt. Oldenburg” by Harris Rosenstein, Art News, Vol. 64, No. 10.
- *Injun & Other Histories*, Great Bear Pamphlet, Something Else Press, Inc., New York.
- *Store Days*, Something Else Press, Inc., New York, (\$12.95)

ubuclassics

ubu.com