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Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 1851 (from chapter 32, Cetology)

BOOK III. (Duodecimo), CHAPTER I. (Huzza Porpoise). — This is the common porpoise found all over the globe. The name is of my own bestowal; for there are more than one sort of porpoises, and something must be done to distinguish them. I call him thus, because he always swims in hilarious shoals, which upon the broad sea keep tossing themselves to heaven like caps in a Fourth-of-July crowd. Their appearance is generally hailed with delight by the mariner. Full of fine spirits, they invariably come from the breezy billows to windward. They are the lads that always live before the wind. They are accounted a lucky omen. If you yourself can withstand three cheers at beholding these vivacious fish, then heaven help ye; the spirit of godly gamesomeness is not in ye. A well-fed, plump Huzza Porpoise will yield you one good gallon of good oil. But the fine and delicate fluid extracted from his jaws is exceedingly valuable. It is in request among jewellers and watchmakers. Sailors put in on their hones. Porpoise meat is good eating, you know. It may never have occurred to you that a porpoise spouts. Indeed, his spout is so small that it is not very readily discernible. But the next time you have a chance, watch him; and you will then see the great Sperm whale himself in miniature.

BOOK III. (Duodecimo), CHAPTER II. (Algerine Porpoise). — A pirate. Very savage. He is only found, I think, in the Pacific. He is somewhat larger than the Huzza Porpoise, but much of the same general make. Provoke him, and he will buckle to a shark. I have lowered for him many times, but never yet saw him captured.

BOOK III. (Duodecimo), CHAPTER III. (Mealy-mouthed Porpoise). — The largest kind of Porpoise; and only found in the Pacific, so far as it is known. The only English name, by which he has hitherto been designated, is that of the fisher-Right-Whale Porpoise, from the circumstance that he is chiefly found in the vicinity of that Folio. In shape, he differs in some degree from the Huzza Porpoise, being of a less rotund and jolly girth; indeed, he is of quite a neat and gentleman-like figure. He has no fins on his back (most other porpoises have), he has a lovely tail, and sentimental Indian eyes of a hazel hue. But his mealy-mouth spoils him. Though his entire back down to his side fins is of a deep sable, yet a boundary line, distinct as the mark in a ship's hull, called the "bright waist," that line streaks him from stem to stern, with two separate colors, black above and white below. The white comprises part of his head, and the whole of his mouth, which makes him look as if he had just escaped from a felonious visit to a meal-bag. A most mean and mealy aspect! His oil is much like that of the common porpoise.

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Beyond the DUODECIMO, this system does not proceed, inasmuch as the Porpoise is the smallest of the whales. Above, you have all the Leviathans of note. But there are a rabble of uncertain, fugitive, half-fabulous whales, which, as an American whale-man, I know by reputation, but not personally. I shall enumerate them by their fore-castle appellations; for possibly such a list may be valuable to future investigators, who may complete what I have here but begun. If any of the following whales, shall hereafter be caught and marked, then he can readily be incorporated into this System, according to his Folio, Octavo, or Duodecimo magnitude: — The Bottle-Nose Whale; the Junk Whale; the Pudding-Headed Whale; the Cape Whale; the Leading Whale; the Cannon Whale; the Scragg Whale; the Coppered Whale; the Elephant Whale; the Iceberg Whale; the Quog Whale; the Blue Whale; &c. From Icelandic, Dutch, and old English authorities, there might be quoted other lists of uncertain whales, blessed with all manner of uncouth names. But I omit them as altogether obsolete; and can hardly help suspecting them for mere sounds, full of Leviathanism, but signifying nothing.

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45            Finally: It was stated at the outset, that this system would not be here, and at once, perfected. You cannot but plainly see that I have kept my word. But I now leave my cetological System standing thus unfinished, even as the great Cathedral of Cologne was left, with the cranes still standing upon the top of the uncompleted tower. For small erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity. God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught — nay, but the draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!

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Where is the graveyard of dead gods? What lingering mourner waters their mounds? There was a day when Jupiter was the king of the gods, and any man who doubted his puissance was *ipso facto* a barbarian and an ignoramus. But where in all the world is there a man who worships Jupiter to-day? And what of Huitzilopochtli? In one year — and it is no more than five hundred years ago — 50,000 youths and maidens  
 5 were slain in sacrifice to him. To-day, if he is remembered at all, it is only by some vagrant savage in the depths of the Mexican forest. Huitzilopochtli, like many other gods, had no human father; his mother was a virtuous widow; he was born of an apparently innocent flirtation that she carried on with the sun. When he frowned, his father, the sun, stood still. When he roared with rage, earthquakes engulfed whole cities. When he thirsted he was watered with 10,000 gallons of human blood. But today Huitzilopochtli is as  
 10 magnificently forgotten as Marie Corelli. Once the peer of Allah, Buddha, and Wotan, he is now the peer of Father Rasputin, J. B. Planché, Sadi Carnot, General Boulanger, Lottie Collins, and Little Tich.

Speaking of Huitzilopochtli recalls his brother, Tezcatilpoca. Tezcatilpoca was almost as powerful: he consumed 25,000 virgins a year. Lead me to his tomb: I would weep, and hang a *couronne des perles*. But who knows where it is? Or where the grave of Quitzalcontli is? Or Tlaloc? Or Chalchihuitlicue? Or  
 15 Xiehtecutli? Or Centeotl, that sweet one? Or Tlazoteotl, the goddess of love? Or Mictlan? Or Ixtlilton? Or Omacatl? Or Yacatecutli? Or Mixcoatl? Or Xipe? Or all the host of Tzitzimitles? Where are their bones? Where is the willow on which they hung their harps? In what forlorn and unheard-of hell do they await the resurrection morn? Who enjoys their residuary estates? Or that of Dis, whom Caesar found to be the chief god of the Celts? Or that of Tarves, the bull? Or that of Moccus, the pig? Or that of Epona, the mare? Or that  
 20 of Mullo, the celestial ass? There was a time when the Irish revered all these gods as violently as they now revere the Pope. But to-day even the drunkest Irishman laughs at them.

But they have company in oblivion: the hell of dead gods is as crowded as the Presbyterian hell for babies. Damona is there, and Esus, and Drunemeton, and Silvana, and Dervones, and Adsalluta, and Deva, and Belisama, and Axona, and Vintios, and Taranuous, and Sulis, and Cocidius, and Adsmerius, and  
 25 Dumiat, and Caletos, and Moccus, and Ollovidius, and Albiorix, and Leucitius, and Vitucadrus, and Ogmios, and Uxellimus, and Borvo, and Grannos, and Mogons. All mighty gods in their day, worshiped by millions, full of demands and impositions, able to bind and loose — all gods of the first class, not dilettanti. Men labored for generations to build vast temples to them — temples with stories as large as motor-lorries. The business of interpreting their whims occupied thousands of priests, wizards, archdeacons, canons, deans,  
 30 bishops, archbishops. To doubt them was to die, usually at the stake. Armies took to the field to defend them against infidels: villages were burned, women and children were butchered, cattle were driven off. Yet in the end they all withered and died, and to-day there is none so poor to do them reverence. Worse, the very tombs in which they lie are lost, and so even a respectful stranger is debarred from paying them the slightest and politest homage.

35 What has become of Sutekh, once the high god of the whole Nile Valley? What has become of:

Resheph	Ahijah	Shalem
Anath	Isis	Dagon
Ashtoreth	Ptah	Sharrab
Ei	Anubis	Yau
Nergal	Baal	Amon-Re
Nebo	Astarte	Osiris
Ninib	Hadad	Sebek
Melek	Addu	Molech?

All these were once gods of the highest eminence. Many of them are mentioned with fear and trembling in the Old Testament. They ranked, five or six thousand years ago, with Jahveh himself; the worst of them stood far higher than Thor. Yet they have all gone down the chute, and with them the following:

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Bilé	Kerridwen	Ni-zu
Ler	Pwyll	Sahi
Arianrod	Tammuz	Aa
Morrighu	Venus	Allatu
Govannon	Bau	Jupiter
Gunfled	Mulu-hursang	Cunina
Sokk-mimi	Anu	Potina
Memetona	Beltis	Statilinus
Dagda	Nusku	Diana of Ephesus
Robigus	U-Mersi	Nin-azu
Pluto	Beltu	Lugal-Amarada
Ops	Dumu-zi-abzu	Zer-panitu
Meditrina	Kuski-banda	Merodach
Vesta	Sin	U-ki
Tilmun	Abil Addu	Dauke
Ogyrvan	Apsu	Gasan-abzu
Dea Dia	Dagan	Elum
Ceros	Elali	U-Tin-dir-ki
Vaticanus	Isum	Marduk
Eduia	Mami	Nin-lil-la
Adeona	Nin-man	Nin
Iuno Lucina	Zaraq	Persephone
Saturn	Suqamunu	Istar
Furrina	Zagaga	Lagas
Vediovis	Gwydion	U-urugal
Consus	Manawyddan	Sirtumu
Cronos	Nuada Argetlam	Ea
Enki	Tagd	Nirig
Engurra	Goibniu	Nebo
Belus	Odin	Samas
Dimmer	Llaw Gyffes	Ma-banba-anna
Mu-ul-lil	Lleu	En-Mersi
Ubargisi	Ogma	Amurru
Ubilulu	Mider	Assur
Gasan lil	Rigantona	Aku
U-dimmer-an-kia	Marzin	Qarradu
Enurestu	Mars	Ura-gala
U-sab-sib	Kaawanu	Ueras

40 You may think I spoof. That I invent the names. I do not. Ask the rector to lend you any good treatise on comparative religion: you will find them all listed. They were gods of the highest standing and dignity — gods of civilized peoples — worshiped and believed in by millions. All were theoretically omnipotent, omniscient, and immortal. And all are dead.

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*Sgt Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band*, album sleeve, 1967 (31.5 x 31 cm)

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