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*40 Pest Street*

Organized by Dillon Petito and Malte Zander  
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This is not the way that I had imagined New York.

It was so hot that I got palpitations when I ventured out into the streets—so I sat and considered the house opposite and occasionally bathed my sweating face.

The light was never very strong in Pest Street. There was always a reminiscence of smoke which made visibility troubled and hazy—still it was possible to study the house opposite carefully, even precisely; besides my eyes have always been excellent.

I spent several days watching for some sort of movement opposite but there was none and I finally took to undressing quite freely before my open window and doing breathing exercises optimistically in the thick Pest Street air. This must have blackened my lungs as dark as the houses. One afternoon I washed my hair and sat out on the diminutive stone crescent which served as a balcony to dry it. I hung my head between my knees and watched a bluebottle suck the dry corpse of a spider between my feet. I looked up through my lank hair and saw something black in the sky, ominously quiet for an airplane. Parting my hair I was in time to see a large raven alight on the balcony of the house opposite. It sat on the balustrade and seemed to peer into the empty window, then poked its head under its wing apparently searching for lice. A few minutes later I was not unduly surprised to see the double windows open and admit a woman onto the balcony—she carried a large dish full of bones which she emptied onto the floor. With a short appreciative squawk, the raven hopped down and picked about amongst its unpleasant repast.

The woman, who had hemplong black hair, wiped out the dish, using her hair for this purpose.

Then she looked straight at me and smiled in a friendly fashion. I smiled back and waved a towel. This seemed to encourage her for she tossed her head coquettishly and gave me a very elegant salute after the fashion of a queen.

“Do you happen to have any bad meat over there that you don’t need?” she called.

“Any what?” I called back, wondering if my ears had deceived me.

“Any stinking meat? Decomposed flesh... meat?”

“Not at the moment,” I replied, wondering if she was trying to be funny.

“Won’t you have any towards the end of the week? If so, I would be very grateful if you would bring it over.”

Then she stepped back into the empty window and disappeared. The raven flew away.

My curiosity about the house and its occupant prompted me to buy a large lump of meat the following day. I set it on the balcony on a bit of newspaper and awaited developments. In a comparatively short time the smell was so strong that I was obliged to pursue my daily activities with a paper clip on the end of my nose—occasionally, I descended into the street to breathe.

Towards Thursday evening I noticed that the meat was changing colour, so waving aside a flight of numerous bluebottles, I scooped it into my sponge bag and set out the house opposite.

... *Excerpt from Leonora Carrington’s “White Rabbits”*