

Lycée Chateaubriand

Peter Moore

We christened him *Bébé Bibelot*, Hummel-like with a Fragonard-pink plumpness.

Just when you went to pummel him, he would squeeze
his eyes shut and smirk as if he were about to be caked with a powder puff.

His real name was *Beaufils* which meant, “The Good-Looking Son” and everyone would

taunt him: *Beaufils! Rien que son nom me fais rire*,
which meant “His name, alone, makes me laugh,” addressing him as if in absentia.

My best friend, *Lucien*, was the class *Macho*, and lectured us on Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*,

then kicked our asses in—just in case we got the wrong idea.
Although, back then, I think we probably understood the opposite of what Nietzsche intended.

My sobriquet was *Porchon*, a fusion of “Pork” and “Pig,” with a distant reference
to the word *Torchon*, meaning “Rag.”

Defined with such richness, my nostrils would flare with pride.

Nainbo, the principal & biology teacher was 4’11”, *Nain*, meaning “dwarf,”

and “bo” because the first *Rambo* movie had just come out
and we calculated that Rambo held the record for individual kills with forty-seven

and it would still be a few years off before Schwarzenegger’s *Commando* would blow
the record to smithereens with sixty-three. *Nainbo* loved telling us how our heads
were like trash can lids and someone had only to step on our feet to throw away their refuse.

Even if some of us escaped the label of *hydroencephale*, our cerebral ventricles were so soft,
released from their containers,

our hemispheres would collapse on the examining table like entrails.

Delphine was our resident *Noix de Coco*, “Coconut.” *Coco*, short for communist,

she would perambulate proselytizing. A walking book of Mao in proletarian pants
three sizes too short, she had the most magical socks, always perfectly, evenly folded.

As if she wore origami swans. And clogs. She owned more clogs—and clopped

like a giant abacus or albatross. How I lived for ankles under porch stoops that year.
A “belle-de-beaute,” she snubbed us all, all except, *Roger, a Fasco* (fascist) sporting raised collars.

Jean, an *Übermensch*-in-training like myself, was nicknamed *Cuisse*

meaning “thigh,” a euphemism for sex.

Cuisse wrote these bombastic erotic poems on frogs’ legs.

Recipes for *Cuisses de grenouille à la provençale*, *Salade Solomougou*

Cuisses de grenouille façon poulette, a lyric poem.

Cuisse's favorite: *Cuisses de grenouilles bien dorées sur une purée de persil, escargots à l'ail*

Also known as "zee frog and zee snail in a swamp of parsley & garlic." Or the ever long

epic verse: *Poêlée de cuisses de grenouille*,

Fèves et Pommes nouvelles sur une rouille légèrement safranée.