

The Wooden City

by Jack Swenson

La Branche

Just outside of town there is a tree of pink flowers guarded by a red bull. "You may pick just one," says the bull that ignores the naked maiden hiding among the branches. The young man smiles. "To be sure," he says. "One will be enough."

Ballet Russe

On high a centaur is pulling a yellow chicken on a sled, and below, in the streets, a woman in her nightgown carries a spear while behind her a man waves the flag of revolution.

The dancers are aloft in midair, high above the houses of the city, unmoored by mortal earth. The man holds his partner's waist lovingly; the dark-haired girl spreads her arms and legs and flies.

Paradise

Their naked bodies enjoined, they lie beneath a verdant apple tree. A sliver of moon gives a woman with red hair light to see. Ah, how sweet is forbidden fruit, how delicious undiscovered sin! The man in his innocence dreams of the woman's hair, her soft, ripe breasts. The woman holds the succulent orb in her hand.

War

The Hun has set fire to the town. A woman sobs by a body in the snow covered village street. A horse-drawn wagon filled with refugees begins its plodding escape. The sky is dirty with smoke. A snow white beast with horns and a beard looks on while in the distance a figure in rags hangs upon a cross.

