

1941

The fall of 1941 was warm. The light was crystal. Father and I were driving by the ramshackle city of poor people living in cardboard refrigerator crates, rusted trucks, broken cars, and blanket tents in the garbage dump next to Newark Airport called Hooverville. "Take a good look at this, Eagle Eye," my father said, "Never forget it. This is proof beyond Germany there is no G dash D. For if there were a G dash D would He let people live like this? In rags? In filth? With kids eating rotten meat from dead cats? This is proof that people are too dumb to run businesses and G dash D. If there is One, Knows it. Only depressed humans and gods see the truth." My father drove us through the Holland Tunnel and to the poor packed lower East Side of Manhattan past a jungle of pushcarts, street vendors, and the slum tenements in which he had lived in his father's time. He was little, and in rags when he was little, to an ancient Victorian palace of men's clothing.

surrounded by the flying banners of laundry of all nations waving on rope lines across the traffic and laying out

windows in all colors and on all the fire escape steel rails in all sizes above Essex Street. This ancient palace of suits was entitled in elegant ornate gold letters on the windows: Shitté Brothers. I asked my father what kind of name Shitté was. "German," he said, "His name was Pierpont Schitt. So to make it fancy he went to a judge and asked him to change it to Pierpont Shitté. My father always made a joke out of having been poor off the boat when he was little but I could see in his bittersweet smile that he had once stood in poverty outside the elegant granite, shining brass and glass facade of Shitté Brothers watching the fortunate enter. After the salesman exchanged elaborate, *-When we got off the boat and we were starving in rags up to our aching coogles in starving misery selling gafaerlicht forvitz and lousy Brooklyn Eagles for a lousy nickel at midnight in blizzards around the corner,* memoirs the smooth promoter, Jewish salesman, wearing a peller-hub nose, no chin in Jewish salesman, wearing a shiny shark skin suit, shark oil hair tonic, and slim shark smile, hooked me with his pale shark fin gray finger as thin as a whipped sun shining laundry line snap into that tasteful fabled ancient procession of triumph entitled, *-Here comes the next clever little Jewboy escaped of hunger,* around what seem ed to me to be a glor ious

Burnished gold exact replica of the Paris Opera Lobby in the movie The Count Of Monte Cristo and unlike the poor wretch discovering the huge cave full of treasure screaming out: The World Is Mine! Shitté Brothers screamed: The World Is Yours!

:IN A BIG GOLD: CITY: SHINING:
 :ON GRANITE HILL: FULL: TABERNACLED:
 :BRILLIANT: MONOLITHIC: SARTORIAL: GONG:
 :THICK: SLICK: HIGH: BRASS GLASS TEMPLE DOMED:
 :SHINED GOLD LEAF RAILS: FAUX MAHOGANY WALLS:
 :THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE: THREE WAY MIRROR STALLS:
 :In musty gold balconied pantheon: Golden camel hair piled on:
 :Amber mohair: Plush wool folds: Thick tweed: Fine sable swells:
 :High old ivory columned: Palid: Intricate priest salesmen:
 :Eyeball of Barracuda: Brain of Shark: You like it dark?:
 : CHUTZPA! : :SANG THE PEACOCK SONG: : CHUTZPA! :
 : CHUTZPA! : CHUTZPA! : : CHUTZPA! : CHUTZPA! :
 “:This smooth worsted silk knit midnight serge is a hit:”
 “:Surely this suit has Shitté Brothers written all over it:”

:Shark smiles glide so smooth under seraphimèd rotunda of blythe dusts:
 :You can't live without the sharp musk of the plush life's gold rag musts:
 :Work: :Might: :Make: ➔ :Money: :Fool:
 :Clothes: :A r e : :Life's: :Beautiful: :Tool:
 :Work: :Might: ➔ :Make: :A Life: :Sweet:
 :Clothes: :Make: :Even A: :Schlump: ➔ :N e a t:

*I was in awe of the ivory shark's honey smoke screen phony sales tone,
 His pointed teeth's weltanschauung's smile's forefinger's pushed bone.*

**Relentlessly he mock kissed my touchas as if I were king of some rich little
 Austro-Hungarian Duchy in New Jersey. I knew he did not like me. I could
 see he had come to loathe his work many years before my arrival. He felt these
 clothes were shark shit and that whoever bought them was shark fodder. His
 tired performance as the world's most loving, sincere garment salesman em-
 barassed me. I had reason to loathe fake warmth schmeers that covered up
 contempt as I constantly got them in my family's fake blood is thicker than
 water warmth prior to sharp dog snaps at the heart of the heart of my
 mind, the heart of my life, my Self.**

☆ [noitcurseD ehT fOyromeM nl] ☆

**The old tapemeasure tailor arrived to measure me on a pedestal; his finger
 skin transparent blue veined; he measured me cautiously from head to crotch
 to ankle to sigh: “What a lovely specimen. What a beautiful physik. In proport-
 ion how like a god. The boy has : Shitté Brothers : written all over him.” Now,
 In his infinite wisdom, my father ordered me a nice brown wool
 suit with long pants, two white shirts, and a paisley tie, brown
 wing-tip shoes, two pair of brown wool socks, and a camel hair
 overcoat, and a brown fedora so I'd be properly dressed when I went
 To New York with him on exten- sive gastro-cultural expeditions.**

**For Samuel Daniels his sheep crooked
 Store, play, and restaurant as others sheep**

**to concert, opera, museum, book
 to church, mosque, synagogue hook.**

A few weeks later, Sunday, December 7, 1941, I was sitting in our window wall sun porch reading *The Robber Barons* and listening to the New York Philharmonic on the radio. The broadcast was interrupted to announce the bombing of Pearl Harbor. My entire family ran out onto the sun porch and made intense comments such as the Japs hate the Jews worse than the Nazis. I had never heard of Pearl Harbor. I asked my brother where Pearl Harbor was. He replied that it was an island. I only knew of two Islands, Jones Beach and Coney Island. The next week I saw a picture in Life of a bombed hot dog stand. I assumed that Pearl Harbor must be near Nathan's in Coney Island. The FBI came to Clinton School and took all our fingerprints in case we were bombed and our parents wanted to find our fingers. But soon it turned out to be we had to buy U.S. War Stamps every week in school for ten cents to paste in a book or The Great Lord of Lords could not win the big War of Wars for the big Country of Countries in the Land of Lands in the Struggle of Struggles to achieve the Hope of Hopes to make the world safe for the sensitive, tender, kind, warm little homilies of we Pure, wholesome little American children at play:

!
W
ese
Good!
Yeah!
Clean! Yeah!
Religious! Yeah! Wese listen!
Yeah! Wese clean! Wese Best!
Yeah! Fuck use, Hitler. Fuck use, Tojo. Fuck use, Benito. Yeah! Eat hot shit ropes.
Well! Fuck use! Yeah! Fuck use in the teeth with a blow torch, use rat mopos.
Fuck use! Use lousy, green-balled, Jew, Christian, Bhuddist, Chinese, Popes,
Moslem, Negro, Eskimo, and Hindu hating, lousy grandmother raping dopes.
Wese gunna wash out use powermad paranoid assholes wit shit bomb brown soaps.

