

Imaginary Places

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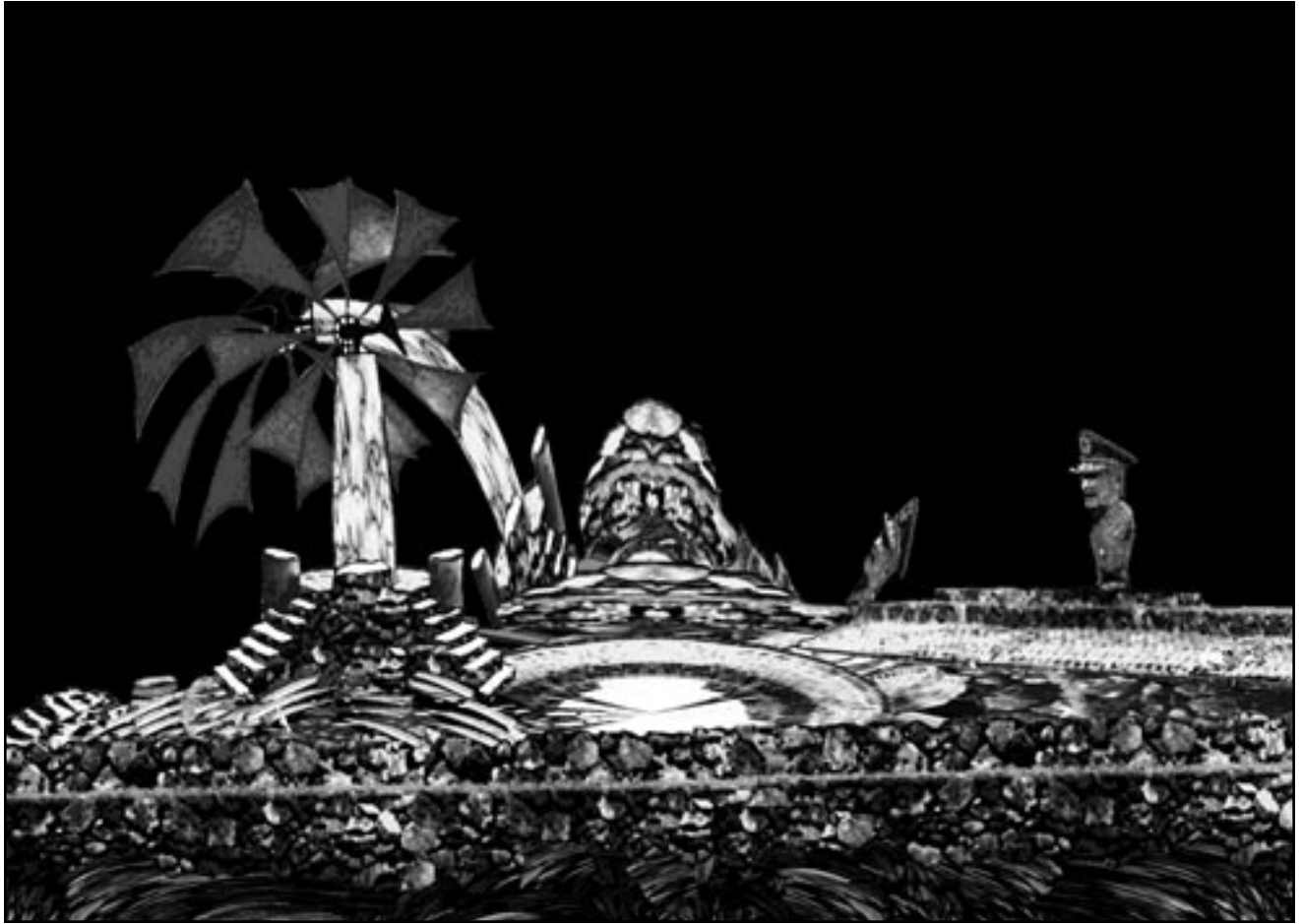
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IMAGINARY PLACES V

Plaza of the Patriots

E. R. BEARDSLEY



Plaza of the Patriots

The statue of the proto-patriot, Hugh Lindfors, occupies the central platform overlooking the plaza. The windmills must turn constantly to repel the cold stream of souls, the remnants of the dead women and children who are **the fodder of patriotic acts**. These tragedies drift ashore day and night, it seems, threatening to erode or topple the unmortared stones of the monument.

The plaza plays no favorites. The frequency of new entries is a constant expressed in very large numbers. Torturers and mutilators are

given special favor, although bombers are showed preference on important anniversary dates. And once a year **The Proctoriate** sponsors a no-host barbecue celebrating the reign of terror led by Lindfors and his Militia of Twenty.

The monument is now **off limits** to the general public owing to the considerable damage caused by indiscriminate urination, which is apparently how some people have seen fit to pay tribute to the honorees.



The Cost of Doing Business

Beneath the plaza there are chambers by the dozens. In some are bones of the nameless millions whose bad luck it was to be on a street, sleeping in a bed, or just being alive and in the neighborhood when a patriot, armed with his cause, did his thing. The bones have no value except as proof of purchase should some future authority need an accounting of such collateral damage.



The Proctors

Recognizing that some people may think a dead patriot is a dead patriot and nothing more, and that the causes of all such selfless sacrifice become immediately irrelevant upon expiration, a Proctoriate was established to issue periodic encyclicals designed to reassure the living of the continuing necessity for patriotic entertainments and occasional bloodlettings. The three-member Proctoriate serves staggered terms of six years each. The tendency has been to draw candidates from among the clergy, who are persons used to finding truth where no fact is in evidence.



A Policeman on Duty

The brutes selected for service at the monument must meet rigid standards. Too much schooling has been the kiss of death for past applicants, but in recent times, with the sorry state of our modern schools, it is not considered a complete obstacle for entry into the service. The in-service technical training is strictly hands-on stuff, usually in the field. It is said that a good policeman can disable a troublemaker in less than ten seconds without damaging the goods beyond repair.