



Source: 'Unite or lose cash: US to Iraq', *The Times*, AP in *The Australian online*, 22/02/06.

Tags: [espionage](#), [travel](#), [literature](#)

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Eric [AKA Erica] completed the *Resurrecting Duckling* exercises perfectly, perfectly understanding the concept: 'secure transient association': *the association between the controller and the peripheral must be transient, as well as secure (whatever that means)...as long as the soul stays in the body, the duckling remains alive and bound to the same security system...*

Now, he turns out the lights. They set off in the dark, he and Camelia, leaving the bowl of disinfectant containing ten thermometers in the lounge room. *House locks are completely uncontrolled.* Lines of text from the workshop float around in Eric's mind at first but gradually, as they travel further and further towards the Hotel Margin, the feet of their camels plopping quietly in the soft red dirt...*death can be designed to follow an identifiable transaction...our thermometer can be designed to die, and lose its memory...they fade.* Before them the night is brilliant, lit by a Zen moon. Only 11 kilometers across country to their destination.

It is unusual for them not to be fighting, or cranky or irritated with each other. At odds. Ever since they applied for the volunteer spy course, and presented as women, only to be disguised as men—Eric Tripple and Con Argent—now on their first mission, it is as if they are being written by a different writer than the one they know. It is as if their writer has become unreliable, gone off the rails, enrolled in a Creative Writing course, or undergone some journey of the soul from which she may never return. Puzzled, perplexed, they furrow their brows. They are not used to this harmony. They mount their camels as a cloud darkens the moon. All through the night. Plop rock plop rock they are rocked to sleep like babies.

The camels' course is set indeed like a ship by the stars. All through the night Eric and Camelia's dreams concur harmoniously—about security, robots programmed to walk on a long blue road, watches whose hands go backwards, jackets and trousers, the Kiama blowhole, crystal glasses held in stainless steel fingers, a black bag

inside a closet...so we may consider the device to be *endowed with two souls..., a random secret.* 'Camelia requires that we know that being an artist isn't child's play: equivalent in difficulty—surely—to playing chess. Furthermore a work of art is not ours alone but belongs also to the opponent, Eric, who is there to the end. Anarchy?'

The two spies wake in fright. They have been fraudulently dreaming inside a quote from John Cage. ['Quote and be blessed'] Where is their writer, any writer who will write them properly? Panic sets in as they look about them. They have arrived at the Hotel Margin but there seems to be no entrance. The camels kneel and drop them head first into what seems to be a grave—an oblong hole in the garden full of dead oak leaves. They peer out like cartoon characters....*only part of the duckling's soul should perish...*

Inside the hotel the writer wakes. It is morning. She stretches, looks out on the long blue road, no travellers in view. Where are Eric and Con—they should be here by now. Damn, are they lost? She can't see them in the hole where they are now arguing about the Five States of Preparedness, embedded in the thermometers meant to measure their surveillance fitness...

But the Entrance is missing, along with the Exit. The writer cannot go for a walk in the garden, the spies cannot get into the foyer...*command the device to commit suicide...*

Let's face it, we are lost, says Camelia.

We can't be, I checked the map, replies Eric, smartly.

Don't be cranky with me...look, it's 4:40, replies Camelia, checking his watch.

...again, we might think that this is easy to do...

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Loma Bridge.