



Bernardo Bellotto, c. 1720. *The Piazza della Signoria in Florence*. Oil on canvas, 61 cm x 90 cm

to a world before humanism. After all the rules have been figured out, the

Room for a view

Teeth

He tells me the dentist pulled his tooth because of the transistor in it. He shows me, pulling back the side of his mouth with one crooked finger: *There*.

He's 20 years old and this is his first admission. It is not clear whether he has schizophrenia or if the street drugs he's been taking have caused his symptoms. He's been in hospital for a week now, presumably off everything illegal, and it's not looking good.

I check his mouth as he requests, and sure enough there is a space between two molars. Would any dentist really pull a tooth because a patient said he was receiving messages through it? Perhaps it was pulled because it was rotten, and this is the explanation he's come up with after the fact. The other teeth aren't in the best shape, either.

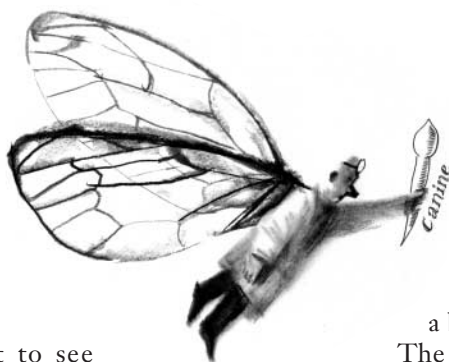
It's not unusual for patients with schizophrenia to lose their teeth. It's hard to remember to brush every day when you're having problems organizing and motivating yourself because of your illness. Dental coverage is also a problem for many people with schizophrenia, and it seems that in such cases dentists often pull teeth rather than embarking on more expensive procedures. On one unit where I worked, patients who knew the system would re-

Mannerists break them. Renaissance detachment and order give way to veiled eroticism, distortions and asymmetry. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) puts the brakes on all that, and Baroque emerges. Annibale Carracci and his associates establish the Academy of Progressives in Bologna and rededicate their practices to objective scrutiny, emulating Renaissance masters and the study of classical models. Rococo is the inevitable antidote, and, in this exhibit, it emerges as a surprisingly rich period in works as diverse as Tiepolo's masterful fantasy, *The Virgin with Six Saints* (1755–56), and Bellotto's two *vedute* (views), both *circa*

1742, which might be regarded as monuments to the everyday.

The indispensable value of experiencing these works in the flesh, and the payoff for devoting oneself to this comprehensive display of minor masterpieces becomes evident as one begins to notice the exceptions to the rules (always more evident in the margins), and how certain powerful works don't seem to fit. Nevertheless the reductive frames of art history are useful as provisional models, and this exhibit provided a splendid, off-centre tour through the canon.

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quest to see the dentist before they were discharged. Back the patient would come an hour later with one less tooth. It was like watching leaves fall, the gum gradually becoming bare as a tree branch in winter.

The emergency room physician says, "I'm not a dentist."

This is only partly true. In my four weeks as a psychiatry intern I have seen him hand out antibiotics for infected teeth, spray dry sockets and inject lidocaine into the gum of a man begging us to just pull his tooth. *Please*.

But this time he is talking to the mother of a six-year-old boy. Her son is complaining that his tooth hurts, and she wants us to sedate him, take him to the operating room, *do* something. "He won't go to the dentist," says his mother. Her eyes plead with us. "He

screams when I try to take him. He's impossible to control."

The supervising physician isn't budging on this one, and I can tell he thinks this is a waste of time. After all, we *aren't* dentists. Down the hall there's a man with chest pain. A child with a broken arm waits in another room. The doctor's voice betrays his impatience.

The mother is not much older than I am, but she looks impossibly weary. What is she going to do after they leave? To my partly trained eye, the boy looks as though he might have attention deficit disorder. I watch him as he climbs up on a stool and jumps onto a stretcher, which lurches dangerously. I think of the tooth, hidden away inside his tight little lips. He is stronger than all of us. Even pain isn't enough to get him to surrender, hold still, and let us look.

Mr. Smith is dying of lung cancer and has lapsed into a strange delirium. His wife catches me outside the door and tells me he's worse, very confused. The family is always catching the doctors outside the door, not wanting to speak in front of Mr. Smith.

He is lying on the bed with his eyes closed. His three grown sons are at his side. He doesn't look appreciably different, except for the slight flatness and lack of focus that are signs of delirium. "How are you today?" I ask.

Mr. Smith smiles a distant smile. "Fine, doctor. Better, I think."

One of the sons gives me a look. "Dad," says another, "tell her about the teeth."

"What about the teeth, Mr. Smith?"

"Oh." Mr. Smith opens his mouth to show me. "There is another set of teeth

lying over my own. Do you see them? No, of course you don't. They're made out of glass, that's why. I'm not able to eat anything for fear they will splinter and cut my mouth." He runs a shaking finger over his teeth. "I can feel them, though."

The eldest son clears his throat. "Dad ..."

"They are there, I tell you," he snaps. Even through the delirium, he exerts his will. Abashed, his son falls silent.

I will have to have another look at

Mr. Smith's chart to see if there is anything else I can suggest. What would it feel like, I wonder, to have my teeth encased in glass? Would it cause my speech to slur? Would every word carry a danger of breakage? Would I still have the courage to bite and snap at my grown sons, or would I fall silent, resigned to my fate, defeated, toothless?

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One thousand words



of choice. You could opt in, or out. Likewise with the march.

The only vandalism I happened to see involved scratched car paint when the march cut through a parking lot, the classic territory of urban crime. *Whose cars? Devil's cars*, the perpetrator cried, the world being raw material, undifferentiated by ownership, for his anger (if that's what it was) to work on. Other marchers objected. But the "diversity of tactics" philosophy of the Take the Capital organizers appeared ready to validate any act, as if all violence were merely commentary.

A snake march asserts an impulse to deviate within the grid of the real, the order contained by office towers and city blocks built by the fathers of commerce. It is decentralized, elusive, a metaphor that resists (or mirrors?) unseen, unelected control. There is no target — except maybe everything: the interconnectedness of trade, equity, privilege, aggression, globalization, consumption and foreign aid. NEOLIBERALISM IS A TRAP, one banner said, and these words were paraded through streets mapped out like a maze, not quite directionless, but without a centre.

In the garden mazes drawn by privet hedges on ancient estates, there is an exit called a fool's gate: a way for the claustrophobic or impatient or lazy or bewildered to get out without having to solve the puzzle. Personally, I prefer the maze to giving up on the confusions of politics and dissent altogether. — *Anne Marie Todkill*

Snake march. The point is to assert liberty at will or whim in any street. This is an annoyance to keepers of the peace, who want a predictable route for their surveillance. The response to the unpredictability of the anti-G8 protest march in Ottawa on June 26 was to position four police officers (carrying gas masks) at every corner along a deeply residential part of town, where the marchers never went. The response was also a spy plane, a helicopter, cordons of police at intersections, busloads of officers in riot gear (so one heard) tucked away unconfrontationally on side streets, and officers on bicycles, wearing short pants, flak jackets and sporty hel-

met — a dress code with a mixed, just-in-case, Baden-Powell kind of message. Walking amid the protestors, officers with palm-size videocams put faces on the record.

Judging from the morning radio you'd have thought all of downtown Ottawa was in a lock-down. Not so. A Laura Secord, icon of all things Canadian and nice, was boarded up, along with (I was told) a McDonald's. A sporting-goods store had plywood over every window; sales staff the same age as most of the protestors posted "Open for business" signs and tied balloons to parking metres. Starbucks, a target in Seattle, appeared unperturbed. It seemed that protestor-fear was a matter