

Iowa Young Writers' Workshop, A Perusable Feast – Specialists and Naifs

Description - The first assignment we had to do for the Iowa Young Writers' Workshop was a description (up to 250 words) detailing the examination of a creature—real or imaginary—from the perspective of a scientist studying the species. Below is the description:

S. Thompson Log Entry #27

*I have spent the past six months tracking the *Canis rubrodelirium*, colloquially dubbed the Revelry Hound, and still, I cannot fully reconcile the contradiction of its existence. Picture the barrel-chested bulk of a German shepherd, but garlanded in thick swaths of what appears to be velvet—no, not velvet, but a dermal layer resembling crimson felt, warm to the touch and faintly moist, emitting a coppery tang like oxidized blood and incense ash. Bells—organic, chitinous nodes—dangle from tendrils along its shoulders and haunches, chiming in chaotic counterpoint with each step, an unsettling music box in motion. Its face is a macabre theater mask: lips fixed in a grin too wide to suggest goodwill, exposing teeth shaped not for mastication but display—thin, glassy, unnervingly precise.*

The pinwheel structures in its eye sockets spin laterally, not radially, perhaps an adaptation for scanning both prey and threat in low light. Beneath the felt integument, the skeletal framework—pale and porous as driftwood—shows no sign of necrosis, though it is fully exposed. The muscle fibers are bare, twitching, and somehow unspoiled by exposure to wind, rain, or carrion insects. I've observed it resting only once, curled beneath an uprooted pine, its breath high-pitched and tremulous, like a flute catching on phlegm.

It is not a hallucination. I have seen it leave tracks, felt the static in the air when it passed. Whatever it is, it lives not despite its design—but because of it.