

THE GOSPEL OF GENIUS LOCI

(excerpt)

The Main Course

FIRST SPEAKER: We recount here the Gospel of Genius Loci, that the Genii Loci of Jackson Park may hear our words and reveal themselves to us. Though each of us recount the story in his own voice, and each according to her own imagining, may the truth of our Gospel be good and acceptable to you. Grant us signs of your presence and your will, and reveal yourselves to us in our days and our time.

LEADERS: May the **TABLE** see, and the **CHAIRS** remember.

SECOND SPEAKER: First, let us toast the sacred **DINING CHAIRS**.
The second speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **CHAIRS**!

THIRD SPEAKER: This is the story of the most glorious **DINING CHAIRS** that did grace the Holy Apartment: of their origin, and of how they were first brought to the Holy Apartment, shortly after Betty and Henry Porter did move into it.
The third speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the most sacred **CHAIRS**, and how they came to the Holy Apartment.

LEADERS: And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

FOURTH SPEAKER: Let us now toast the most honorable **GOOD SILVER**.
The fourth speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **GOOD SILVER**!

FIFTH SPEAKER: This is the story of the **GOOD SILVER**, that did great service to the Porters, and how it was pawned in the year 1931, and how it was recovered thereafter
The fifth speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the **GOOD SILVER**.

LEADERS: And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

SIXTH SPEAKER: Let us now toast the **DINING TABLE**.
The sixth speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **DINING TABLE!**

SEVENTH SPEAKER: This is the story of the blessed **DINING TABLE**, that did grace the Holy Apartment; and how it came to pass that Gus Gyveson, childhood friend of Matthew Porter, did set fire to this table; and of the damage it sustained; and of how it was restored.
The seventh speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the holy **TABLE**, and its great suffering.

LEADERS: And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

EIGHTH SPEAKER: Let us now toast the **GOOD CHINA**.
The eighth speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **GOOD CHINA!**

NINTH SPEAKER: This is the story of the **GOOD CHINA**; of its most functional yet elegant design; and of how the Porters' youngest child, Loretta, did at the age of thirteen break all of the **GOOD CHINA**, and how she was repaid for it.
The ninth speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the **GOOD CHINA**, and how it was wronged.

LEADERS: And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

TENTH SPEAKER: Let us now toast the **SIDEBOARD**.
The tenth speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **SIDEBOARD!**

ELEVENTH SPEAKER: This is the story of the sacred **SIDEBOARD**, that did in 1944 serve up a magnificent meal after the funeral of Matthew Porter; and of the great service it did that afternoon.
The eleventh speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the sacred **SIDEBOARD**, that did bear upon it the funeral luncheon of Matthew Porter.

LEADERS: And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

TWELFTH SPEAKER: Let us now toast the **RUG**.
The twelfth speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **RUG**!

THIRTEENTH SPEAKER: This is the story of the gracious **RUG**, which did for several months bear upon it the children Donny, Harriet, and Anne Marie, when they slept upon the Porters' floor; and how it was a great comfort to them.
The thirteenth speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the **RUG**, and how it was a companion to those children.

LEADERS: And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

FOURTEENTH SPEAKER: Let us toast the **LIQUOR CABINET**.
The fourteenth speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **LIQUOR CABINET**!

FIFTEENTH SPEAKER: This is the story of the **LIQUOR CABINET**, and of the merriment and good cheer it provided at the wedding of Loretta Porter in the year 1949, and of the destruction that ensued when the bounty it provided was too great for the mortals that did partake of it.
The fifteenth speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the **LIQUOR CABINET**, too magnanimous for the desires of mere humans.

LEADERS: And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

SIXTEENTH SPEAKER: Let us now toast the **GRANDFATHER CLOCK**.
The sixteenth speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **GRANDFATHER CLOCK**!

SEVENTEENTH SPEAKER: This is the story of the most magnificent **GRANDFATHER CLOCK**, that presided over the Holy Apartment, how the Porters did first acquire it in the year 1952, and how it was transported to the Holy Apartment, and the misfortunes and accidents that accompanied that process.
The seventeenth speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the **GRANDFATHER CLOCK**.

LEADERS: And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

EIGHTEENTH SPEAKER: Let us now toast the **SILVER CANDLESTICKS**.
The eighteenth speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **CANDLESTICKS**!

NINETEENTH SPEAKER: This is the story of the **SILVER CANDLESTICKS**, that did adorn the Holy Apartment, and how it came to pass that they were stolen by a most wicked and impious man, and recovered again.
The nineteenth speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the **SILVER CANDLESTICKS**, how they were in great peril but did survive it.

LEADERS: And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

TWENTIETH SPEAKER: Let us now toast the **PORTRAIT** of Cornelius Porter.
The twentieth speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **PORTRAIT**!

TWENTY-FIRST SPEAKER: This is the story of the **PORTRAIT** of Cornelius Porter, that did hang with great dignity upon the wall of the Holy Apartment, and of the comfort it did bring to Henry Porter in his time of illness and distress.
The twenty-first speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the **PORTRAIT**, that hung in the Holy Apartment.

LEADERS: And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

TWENTY-SECOND SPEAKER: Let us now toast the **GRAND PIANO**.
The twenty-second speaker offers a toast.

LEADERS: To the **GRAND PIANO**!

TWENTY-THIRD SPEAKER: This is the story of the **GRAND PIANO**, that for many years did bring music to the parlor of the Holy Apartment; and of how, after Henry Porter had died and Betty Porter moved into a nursing home, the **PIANO** was taken forth with great difficulty from the holy apartment, and of its fate thereafter.
The twenty-third speaker recounts the story.
Thus concludes the story of the **GRAND PIANO**.

LEADERS:

And the **TABLE** saw, and the **CHAIRS** remembered.

TWENTY-FOURTH SPEAKER: Now has the Gospel of Genius Loci been told from start to finish; now may the spirits be pleased by our retelling of this, their history. May they join us here, that we may know them and speak to them at this meal and for all meals to come, forever and ever.