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Karl Marx, that old communist coot, pretty much nailed contemporary Western industrialized culture when he coined the term "commodity fetishism."

Of course Marx died before the automobile was invented, back around the time that offset lithography was coming into vogue. But for those unimpressed with photocopiers, there hasn't been a significant improvement in printmaking technology since, and—more than ever—we fetishize pretty much anything we can buy or sell. We especially covet objects that have been successfully "branded" regardless of whether or not we genuinely need them.

Using a hot iron to brand animals in order to indicate ownership is at least as old as the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (c. 1760 BC). Of course that's now considered barbaric: these days we track our animals with microchips and we exercise our free will in order to purchase items that are already emblazoned with the logos of corporations that own us, or at least own our spending habits. We're the ones who are branded now and we happily inflict it on ourselves. We are abetted in this folly by a parallel "celebrity fetishism." Our favorite stars appear in fashion and style magazines and point the way to Nike, Apple, Chanel and we follow.

"Experts" claim the best brands create an emotional bond—something eerily similar to love—between a product and its ready consumers. Advertising, in particular from the pages of magazines, has become expert in projecting moods that people identify with and quite literally objectify. Lust, sullenness, surprise and affected removal are all used to demonstrate idealized conditions that seem outside the scope of mortal existence. The result is a grand and macabre theater that we passively blink and yawn at, even as it unfolds in ever darkening and manipulative levels.

That Peregrine Honig intuits the intricacies of such a bizarre dynamic indicates life in the wake of thinkers like Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard, as well as mainstream cultural criticism like *The Simpsons*. But that Honig is able to so plainly translate her own distinct observations into succinct narratives of the contemporary condition is evidence of rare craft and a hand swollen equally with irony and talent.

In Honig's work, we see the deity of celebrity and consumerism, but through simple juxtaposition, our collective mythologies of sex, violence, science and disease are likewise revealed to be supernatural—if contrapuntal—forces. When Honig's sparse line and expert, miserly color excoriate celebrity twins as fondlers of each other's vapid prepubescence, we feel our own numb guilt splayed across the smooth, rebellious nub of the composition. When Honig digs through the dirty handbag of high consumerism and ignoble reality to blandly combine Armani with autism—puts a full spectrum to our uncomfortable half-truths. When she positions herself as the widow, the princess or the vaudeville harlot, she cuts the flesh of a pretense of progress and reveals the raw bone of a people still ruled by superstition and archetypes.

Honig's lampooning of the cultural pantheon is not only successful because of its acute aim and fearless execution, but because of its tenderness, its girlish fantasy, its knife edge balance between succumbing and destroying. Honig is a draughtsman certainly, a pervert thankfully and a keen jester in the service of noble impropriety.