

## Slides, Spectating, Wings

While there is much that might be said for roosting in rich gyring pomp it is a fact that angels rarely provide the perfect sound for wrestling. They are often out of tune on account of the altitude, for example, and their constant harping about the difficulty of obtaining decent rosin distracts the competitors limbering in the wings. New members of the host cirrus-stumble and stamp thunders in their irritation that all we groundlings then must bear. Novices are forever trapping their fingers in the music stands then insist on huffing their shoulders and preening their wings with indignant angel-teeth. Sawdust and feathers in the grease, epsteined flesh marbling over with cold—standing beneath them and tilting our heads, we are forced to buy visors from the merch stand at a massive mark-up because even in heaven we know how gravity and guano works.

Sock him in the kisser, Jacob—like donkeys, angels are only good at getting up stairs and I'm pretty sure that the same is true of ladders. It is no mean feat to move quickly while carrying a trombone, Jacob—use this to your advantage. Who knew so many angels played the trombone? Lo-notes and the thought of seraphim practicing their embouchure in the mirrors of their wings, while downstairs neighbours are forced to cover their ears during evening rehearsals. The magnificence of their spit valving, their vulning and stridulation. *Freshly emerged adults known as teneral often obtain their typical colours after a few days. Some have their bodies covered with a pale blue waxy powderiness called pruinosity—it wears off when scraped [during mating], leaving darker areas.* Earnest glissando is a tricky one to master at the best of times but especially around this wrestling ring, its lines scorched in dust by a rolled-away Saturn. The action of might be easy, sure, but comedy never translates entirely well up here despite the creation of the giraffe.

*Insect wings are not modified limbs as they are in birds and bats but exist as entirely new structures arising from the back—a feature, some wag has pointed out, that insects share only with angels.* Chalk it up to oversight and the thrum of hornets' wings not wagging, the purview of tails and tongues and the downstairs neighbours' fingers ever-swatting unreachable mobiles in the sky, Security's glass-light, parping notes. *Locked in combat when the cymbal's symbol clashes, this distinctive posture is called the heart or wheel—the pair may also be described as being in cop.* Who knew there would be quite so many trombones drowning out a crowd's petition?

We do not fare well by comparison. Their bud-shaped mouthpieces make music something calyx-borne and I'll be frank with you, Jacob, there was an open bar so it is only with a panic's pewtered drunkenness that our unfloral incensed hymns twang and twinge and tangle over their clarion call. But! Go get yours, Jacob! Breve as halo! Rest as reprieve, Jacob, and no referee to whistle you down! We replaced their mutes with dunce-caps in the green room, and look at our raised foam-fingers and on handmade signs! It may be a dying fall but! come home and provide your own entertainment with us in the stalls. We are no surer of our footing not always unclamourly, we bob on waves that move us not and all our songs are stopping, stoppered, but the air is cool and the notes are good and—my god—have we been rooting