clockwork prayer

by

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Readers: Keith Taylor and Raymond McDaniel
Dying to know
And control on command
So incomplete
Minus machine

—10 Years, “Minus the Machine”
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Abstract

I first heard Monkbot’s story on a Radiolab podcast two years ago. I was immediately captivated by the myth with its twists and complications. I became obsessed with the idea and began researching and recrafting the narrative as my first poetry collection.

Players like San Diego de Alcalá, Juanelo Turriano, and Monkbot have plot holes in their histories that I took advantage of. Although they are quieter characters than Don Carlos and King Philip II, I find that their mysterious nature and missing historical contexts allowed me to use their point of view to explain deeper complications than the father-son conflict that many historians dwell over.

The collection starts in a specific moment in time (Don Carlos’s accident and sickness) and digresses into insanity and complications over intertwining timelines. The dramatic decline in each poem and throughout the collection draws from the hyper-realistic attitudes of art in Golden Age Spain.

Although many writers pull from personal experiences, I like to find moments in history that are less explored and expand on them through persona poems. I see this collection as an engaging history lesson of one moment in time that has implications we can visit in the Smithsonian today.
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Author’s Note

On Sunday, April 19, 1562, Don Carlos, the heir-apparent of Golden Age Spain, tumbled down the last few steps of a barely used staircase and cracked his head against a door.

Although he was dazed at the end of the fall, he did not lose consciousness immediately. Household servants carried him to his chambers where he was taken into the care of the best physicians and anatomists in Europe. While the doctors addressed the head injury, Don Carlos’s symptoms worsened. The head wound festered, his fever grew intense, and he lost his appetite. He was oversleeping, had swollen eyes, and disappeared into delirium. Across the country, citizens of Spain grew panicked because this tragedy was clearly an angry act of God. Spaniards fasted and prayed for God to save their Prince. By the end of the third week, the surgeons concluded that Don Carlos would not survive the night.

Upon hearing this news, his father King Philip II of Spain knelt at his son’s deathbed and made a pact with God: if God used a miracle to heal his son, the King would give a miracle in return. Additionally, he asked his royal priesthood to smuggle the deceased body of friar San Diego de Alcalá into Don Carlos’s bed. For centuries, some claimed the corpse had healing powers and was linked to many miracles. The priests took the friar’s hand, wiped it across Don Carlos’s face, and waited.

Within a week, Don Carlos could see again and within a month he was visiting the church. When Don Carlos was finally able to speak, he told his father about a dream he had during his illness. He claimed that a figure in Franciscan habit holding a wooden cross entered his room, approached his bedside, and told him that he was going to survive. When the King heard this story, he knew he now owed God a miracle.

Philip II decided to hire Juanelo Turriano, a renown clockmaker, and asked him to make a mechanical version of Alcalá. When the project was completed, Philip II presented the automaton to God, and the pact was complete.

The automaton, commonly referred to as Monkbot, has been in the Smithsonian’s possession since 1977 and is in full working order.
Dramatis Personæ

DON CARLOS . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . PRINCE OF SPAIN
PHILIP II . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . KING OF SPAIN
JUANELO TURRIANO . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . CLOCKMAKER
SAN DIEGO DE ALCALÁ . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . DECEASED FRIAR
MONKBOT . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . AUTOMATON
prologue
MONKBOT

Prayer in a Glass Case

I have forgotten the taste of dust
and the clicks of my own legs
that you know by now
are not legs but two tiny feet
that are nothing more than an illusion

that used to be.

Having the assets to see through me
is not seeing me and how I work
    or where all prayers come from
    and where they go after I’m done with them.

The reconstruction of me is the copy
of someone who died trying to understand
why people on the streets remained there.
I’m trapped inside a force
that’s stronger than what I imagine
gravity tells me to do from a few meters high.
I can see through it
but have no conclusions of how to escape
(much like what you have tried to do with me).
clockwork prayer
a story in one act
Stair’s Edge

The less-used stairs he tripped over could have been less used for a reason.

It could have been an unused wing that could have had some sort of toxin or haunting coursing through it. When he fell, the stench must have been the agent that could have made him mad.

Maybe his lusting after his stepmother caused one foot to lag in front of the other by the lethargy he gets when he sees her with his father.

He might as well be his stepsister and there would be no harm done.

It could have led to a room that his mother died in because if he wasn’t born then maybe his mother could have lived a few years longer and could have had more children.

Those children could or could not have been sane like him except that he could not have been crazy at all but, in fact, could have been driven mad at an early age from simple motherlessness, or worse fatherlessness, as his father the King could have neglected him while trying to find a Queen to rule.

If the edge of the stair could curl itself up a little further maybe the boy would have been saved, but what could have been is no longer.
Dips in the soft
cloth are like calm waves
gently crashing along the spiked rocks
that cut into the ocean
and make it bleed out over the sand.
The ocean cries

at its inhabitants aquatic, *make way*
for *less room*.
Some find their way
grasping
for sanctuary in the ocean's tears
between tiny glitters of sand.
The Prince saw the lost fish too—the same soft waves
that make his head float

through his contingency that
makes him feel like he has only been
on his boat for a short while.

When he reached the shore, he picked fish up
by striking a finger through the eyes
and forced the ocean to eat its excrement.
The Illness

When I walked into the room
I noticed his eyes became bulges
that wanted to escape the infection
in his skull. Eyes so swollen
that they reached past
his nose and I wondered
what he saw that God
found it necessary to blind him.
Tomorrow will be three weeks
since he has been in a state

that lingers slightly past the midpoint
of any journey. I cannot tell if the end
for him is black suction coming
from the black of his soul
or the crystal light that shines
on his bedside slightly after noon.
The physicians are giving him
another look during long-winded
conversations that feel empty
in attempts and arguments.
The heir-apparent fades
into the pale cream of his seats.
He cannot open his eyes

and I feel that he may be seeing more
about his country than the King ever could.
Dry blood didn’t look black
when I cut my toe
on the rocks outside.

Perhaps I didn’t stay long enough
to watch it turn into a tiny dark ocean
with cracks on the edges
that flake up like snow.

It was a dark red,
my favorite color,
and when I touched it,
the black hole on the back of my head,
I think I may have touched my brain.

Maybe the part that perceives taste
or sound because I haven’t used
taste for anything besides saliva in days,
and I don’t see green and red patches
where my eyes used to be.

The doctors are still talking
in the other room.

I wonder where my father is.

Is he beside me like days ago,
or is that someone else
that makes a shadow
where my father should be.

I wonder where my father is.

I try to remember when the crying stopped
from other people.

I never cried
or couldn’t because when I woke
from whatever may have happened
I couldn’t see,
but I could feel
a sharp sting where the black hole is.

I don't think they knew I was awake.

When will the doctors ever stop talking and
let me tell them that I stopped seeing colors.
Fault Line

The fault line builds pressure and beats
to itself as the other palaces pulse with fear.

It's the first thing they saw—
the dark brown that buries the red
where gems of every color are made

special—
when they heard of the sight
they adored.
Cracks

now have little families in
the splinters of the fault
that shake the unwanted
out and feed hungry lava.

They marvel at the view,
how the sun gleams through
the fault's trembling edges,
wondering why majestic

matters seem better at a
lower angle than above—
where slants in lines
make colors sharp.
PHILIP II

Invitation to the Deathbed

All candles except one fade as
the surgeon packs his bags
for the last night. No wonder

the surgeon failed his King,
and by extension or not,
his God by trying the rip
the poison or curse or soul
out of his little fragile body
swollen with something
as captivating as the light
that has turned its back.
The surgeon looks at his tools

now stained with black
royal blood and believes
pulling pieces of the boy’s skull
out was the only best choice
that someone had to make.
This must have been what
it felt like when the Garden

was left behind. The boy lies
still and too quiet to be alive.
PHILIP II

Bedside Manner

This will be my last time
kneeling to You when I have more
power to bestow what I want

for me, and my son.
I’ve brought Your best physical servants
here to help him

and in Your country
they tamper with science
and alchemy that would make
You smile so wide
that Your clouds would split

and show me that You have the power
that I have to bring my son back
from whatever oblivion You sent him to.
I could never do that to my son.
I will trade You and see who does better.
Miracle

1. a welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency; see also: mana

2. if there is anything holy left in these slums it is him and he must be saved before the kingdom goes mad. Take these beads and coins on his behalf. I have little more than clothes and thin shoes, but please take my prayers and unforeseen miracles and give them to the King and his son, with love.

3. brought upon by a specific divine agency that I am in personal contact with as I am the closest to this golden standard

4. getting on my knees, I ask for what is certainly within reach and I will make it worth Your while

5. can’t remember what day it is haven’t seen light in days may not be the light but the mirror of my bedsheets in the bed or my head under the bedsheets I haven’t been outside and can’t seem to see when
DON CARLOS

Dream

A tall man, I think, was standing at the foot of my bed and shined.

If my eyes were open, they would have shut and burned the spirit in the back of my skull.

He could not touch me even though he was so close that I imagined him breathing on my hand.

I wanted his robes to be brighter so that I knew for sure that this ethereal thing was not a trick of a sorcerer that I have seen before.

But I cannot
find the source.

He looked into my eyes without having some himself as if they sunk to the back of his mind or as he has been living without them for some time.

Even without eyes he saw me like I felt him and reassured me that things, what things? were going to be alright.

In the morning no time had passed when I finally woke.
Someone picked me up today to see if I was still awake. Of course I was, and they took me by the ankles, back, and neck and covered my face with my robes. I’m a little embarrassed to be out in uniform when I haven’t had my head shaved for years. My hand slides off my torso as we travel. I feel the dirt between stones on the ground and know that we are outside. It’s a little wetter than I remember. I get lost in thinking about where I might be going when I feel my hand get shut in a door. One eyebrow moves, but the priests don’t seem to notice. Then I remember a bed. The nicest bed I have ever touched. I could feel the weight of sheets on my ribs and wanted to breathe just to feel its weight. When they uncovered me, I noticed that a young man didn’t know he had company. I felt rude and out of place until priests rubbed my hand over his swollen feverish face. All that hustle and stealth and this is all they wanted from me?
Sans Rigor Mortis

Still sweet nostrils
flare when a girl
with an appetite for
the slums walks by.
Reaching out to touch
her hand is a reasonable response
until the detail in the preservation
under my skin is more telling
than my sharp nose.

Push it down to see if it bounces back.

If my nose is that sweet,
my eyes should be plump
and reflective like a polished
door knob. Perhaps removing
the eyes would be better
for those who have trouble
seeing common friarhood plagues.
One day, someone will catch
my foot twitching and they’ll know.
Horses scare the mightiest men
when eyes twitch and skin
flicks making parasites cling
to their skin nervous.

A little imbalance will do
and gravity will take care
of what comes next:

- there are thirty-two bones
- in the human arm
- and two of them decided to break,
- maybe even shatter, like
- a piece of rosin under a foot.

When the king sang
of his intense pain
the doctors didn't know
what to give him
or what to say
as doctors usually do.

Still singing, he came
to me and begged for
his arm to be replaced.

I could not stand his singing.

His squires took me
out of my casket cell
and sat me upright next to him
like friends on a sunny
and singing day.
He kissed me on the shoulder,
which I've never seen

a man do to another man,
then took my hand and put it
on his injured arm.
Pieces of bone were trying to
escape his being since
they were mistreated
for their lifetime's use.
I told the bones to be quiet
and the singing stopped.
Dear Lord, My Demon Is Reading

Speaking words so sacred
is only good for the poor
where I spent most of my time
serving, and I can’t help
but to wonder that You have
me here because of my demon
that I can fix with a few lessons
from men at the church. I stare
at the books on the tables
and have tried to learn letters
that make sounds into
internal silent stories. They know,
and I know, but we do not speak
of it. I want to write down what
I want on my tombstone when
they decide to bury me, but I probably won’t
have anyone I care about to come
read it.
SAN DIEGO DE ALCALÁ

Abscess

keep it covered
tear open
spill out
find nothing
open again

still nothing
except ichor

prayers

possibly food
worse demons

but in letters

can't find
sounds nice
but why
wish I could
for the best

demons really
I tried
wouldn't let me
out once more

sweet relief
once infection

now open
covered again
open suffocate

closed tomorrow
not enough food
sorry
can't help

arm's use
not anymore
maybe next day
promise

letter here
open and read it
me no couldn't
wish I could help
Falling backwards is my specialty—
  into beds,
  on benches.
Looking backwards before
I fall, I see sick people
who make eye contact with
my shoulder blades before
getting what they ask for.
My toes now accessorized
with clouds and two suns,
one stuck
to the back of my head,
shine on. There are days
when my neck feels tired
from looking down.
Hand

My hand no more nimble than yours is infamous for bending at the wrist and each joint without cracking which is replaced with the snap of pliable fingers and lingering pointing at you whoever you are to reach out and touch man like an angel touched the hand of God but it was my left and not my right that caught the sweat from his growth which kept my hand moist for some time after and stained the rim of my cloak with uncertainty.
Reality

A strong immune system despite his lack of perception.
Nothing more than a lymphatic system overworking to attack its owner for nothing in return.
When the Emperor asked me to fix his grand clock
I told him it was eroded beyond repair.

The chains skipped beats with
bird feces and corpses fused to the cogs.

I told him that I could try to restore its beauty
but there was a greater likelihood of failure

if it looked nothing like it did before,
which I would notice because

I’m capable of recreating this clock
mostly from memory and some drawings

that I’ve kept in my chests for years.
I told him that I would have to tear it apart

and rebuild it exactly how it was.
The Emperor trusted me enough

to give me the project even though
in reality there was nothing wrong with it.
I teach them prayers

are the same and equal in need
and rhythm and time.
I do not feel this way.
There is a weight to many
things that I have heard
and carried throughout
my time frolicking on tables

that I carry all too well.
They won't stop telling
me to keep praying
and rape me with a key.

I feel like my cross will break
in my hand if I hold it
too tight. Sometimes my arm
is weighed down by a crucifix.
Movement

When I found it difficult to make the toy horses
for the Emperor without making
them bounce,

I could have painted
a smile and a little blush on their faces

so they looked like they had just finished giggling.
But paint seems to chip away, especially if the owner

of the toys has longer fingernails and a nervous habit of picking
scabs. No, I found that the movement
inside the toys was much more
telling, more real than any paint could have accomplished.

Even the portrait of the Emperor on the wall
looks like a fake ghost that has a need to blink.

I can see the cracks in the portrait’s edges
and he cannot move or the cracks will become worse.

Portraits are nothing but a fake art.
DON CARLOS

Marquis

with Friedrich Schiller

The voice of rumor,
the joy-delirious man of this blasphemy.
I foresense a moment of disaster.
It will collapse if his sublime heart has
forgotten how to beat for human kind.
Dreams, prince? Could they have
been nothing more but dreams?

My punishment for some misdeed.
Don Carlos Doesn’t Do His Homework

Oh my ___________ I am ___________ very ___________

for all my ___________ because they are ___________

oh ___________, oh are.

I firmly ___________, with your ___________ of your ___________

To make up for my ___________ and to ___________ as I should.

______________.
Guiding Waters

There are days where I want my harbors
to fail and flood the city
to show people that dirt can rinse off
but too much can turn to mud
and stop them from getting to wherever
they’re trying to go. When I fit mechanisms
together, I try to make them like little toys
that break if a child throws a tantrum
across the city from hunger or boredom.
There’s something more important than flooding
the city that only shapes and intervention
can construe to make the city I build
one before its time, where the eyes of the beholders
know nothing about the sound of water in their lungs.
PHILIP II

Prison Cell

The bed is soft from feathers of baby birds grown older, leaving softness stuck to the splinters of twigs and between threads of an old rag. This nest is softer since there has been a prisoner inside. The walls look softer as the burgundy turns into a welcoming pillow and echoes. When bodies slam against the side wall, muffled screams linger through the halls, screams that are forced through the tiny spaces between door and floor. The room grows softer when the steam from hot mouths sticks between layers in the bed making the space between the bed and floor more hospitable for our guest prisoner.
Each revolution one hour. One
more spin to make quarter-days into half-days
by buckets of water and counterweights
where the operating rope twists and challenges
the bucket to get lighter.
The weight of the bucket is heavy
like a severed head
with a heavy collar from a winter coat.

Slow dripping.
The bucket gets lighter
to rise to the height of its time
before it returns to its soaked depths to start
the cycle over again.

Each empty bucket a tranquil release.
Dancing, she grabs her lute
and clinks with the tings of bells
sharp in the ear washed out
by the pleasantness in her
painted smile and nodding
waist, bobbing and swinging
to please.
call the spirit
only the one I name

where the shadow
leaks through
cracks in floor
swallows dust
to reach my toe
only the one I name
bring up
promised witch

you will not
be punished
for this

shadow
under toenail
empty stinging

I want it badly
to be there

the stinging

seeing a figure
coming from
dirt

looks not young
anymore
and wearing a robe

answers
she has them
from the abode
of the dead

she puppets me
complain
says it will

be over soon

figure fades
shadow remains

witch leaves me
with answers

called my name
shadow remains
Anonymous (The Monk)

(Characteristics and layout determined by radiography)
DON CARLOS

The Illness, Part II

Failing nodes
behind head
creating all symptoms
equal.
Affliction no
more than
space
between nerves
disrupted by abscess.

Tiny bodies through veins
out of
order
increase in number
through heat
eating
memories fleeting.

Eating contestants
constant restraints
leaving now want to.
DON CARLOS

Chiasmus

Bring me food for the dogs
and make my father regret the day he locked me here.
I stick old meat in the door's mouth to fill the hall with the smell
of my body decaying in the sun with no food and no water
and being sore from sleeping in my bed and smelling my skin's dust.
Don't bring me food so I can starve.
I'll starve until I'm let out of this room
and sleep to hoard energy when my bed is filled with death.
Skin begins to crack from being dry in the sun with
the smell of my chamber pot filled with my old meaty body.
My father will lock me in a new cell.
Bring me my meals and cold water.
Thump

My lungs take up my entire torso from my neck to my ankles. The thump rings between tings and clicks of my insides despite my lack of lungs and humors.

Thumps come from the middle of the case I live in when I am not home or teaching the lot how to pray correctly. Thumps hurt most of the time.

Thumps wrapped in twine or silk are muted, but my spine still rubs against the side of the trunk, and I can’t help but wonder if this is what a coffin feels like on the inside, rubbing knuckles until they bleed still blood or how the lid snags hair as it’s moved through the city.
Assumption

Heaven’s teeth are iodine
with pools of brown
where the roots sit
on clouds full with the stuff
of stones that cast a deep gray
over deep veins
in the surface of the earth.

I climbed up to see them once,
the teeth,
and hopped from mountain
to mountain to see if
I could lick the
syrup. It wasn’t sweet

but tasted of
being above ground
and condensed.
The smothering
made me miss home,
and I told the teeth
that I could stay
no longer.

I made the rocks
from the clouds welcome
guests for my pockets.
I returned to my room with
them, but they were wasting
away under my bed.

Once, I saw a cloud come down
to retrieve them
because it was losing pieces
of itself from people
like me. I licked the rocks
and told her never
to return.
Has following me thus far helped in your success?

Ask me again: what should

I draw on my bedroom walls? Where should I leave room for the blank wall to stare? What does gold paint feel like? Can poison only come from bad-tasting things? Perhaps, if you were to visit me someday, you will let me go and then what? Shall I write you another song about my father? Why is the back of my throat bleeding? Can this count as flogging? Can blood make a diamond softer? Will the bearer kill me? Maybe if I asked him to? If I have to do it myself, will he follow? Who will clean up if I am gone? What if I need him to tell the other I’ve given up to force out a reply?
Today we mourn after struggle
a lost man of God and Son
of Spain. Tomorrow I will not
can’t find The ways that have shown themselves
over the years,
for which I am not regretful,
repent for our son that has passed. My face stiff
With justice,
our country will find vibrant ways to
stain history dark purple like ink
new leadership in newborns that grows mad
with the hunger to lead and bleed guts over
things that don’t exist like poison that drips
off the cuff of the sleeve that sticks to the walls
of this place——— as he did and bring us new light to this day.
MONKBOT

Monkbot Gets Forgotten

I miss playing
and the sounds of hollering
after dinner interspersed with laughter
of one wine too many. I dream

about my creator and his hands.
I miss the smell of hands,
the way they clamor when
I'm being wound for rounds
of kidding and patting.
It has been dark here.

I can't tell time without the sun
or the pressure of anything moving
around me. Even under darkness

I feel a presence in my nose
and I want it to go away.
The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth—it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true.

_Ecclesiastes_
All these things must always be kept in view in order that the work may go well, and thus there will be nothing to desire, unless it be fitting place so formed by his own nature.

Juanelo Turriano
XII

The sharp nose points to God
and cuts through the veil of angles

which have not, according to the nose,

assumed human figures
but rather human figurines
that step along
in squares of penance
addressing every corner
of the room
where dust clings in the creases
huffing concerns that get stuck
between the nose and its gears.
XI

Holes are made from keys
forced through exoskeletons of toys
savaged in swift motions.

Plump fingers cannot find their way
to the moist center of the springs and levers
that will lead him to where
some beetles find solace.

One, two, three, four
and go until it's time to stop
or fall off the edge
to crack the wooden face in.
X

Deconstruct the eye's orbit
for images reversed and upside down
projected on the back of the soul.

Carlos floats from the bottom of the staircase
up to perfect balance.

Eyes like his roll into its chambers
and see all things in perfect order
that latch onto pounding hearts and kisses.

The cross in its hand stands
on point no matter the direction.
Intimacy between
a tool and a bone
has a delicate imbalance:
one has control,
the other can’t
relinquish
in order
to maintain
harmony.
VIII

Locomotive corpses find conduits—

the spine of an alive book

heel of a shoe before britching age

yarn that won’t be woven until tomorrow

almost silence behind the left eye’s nerve—

to be familiar through failed

motions as they should be

away lest needed.
VII

Day: platforms are smoothed, ready for edging
Day: flaws emerge from tools and start again
Day: wires pull levers, jaw unclenched
Day: joints cramp while tinkering
Day: structure is stable, may be too heavy
Night: motion reveals its pattern, master disapproves
Day: inception is not prepared (this day)
VI

Fill in leftover
inhibitions containing wires
and noisy cogs
for the twit that keeps
feet warm
with friction.
CAPILLA Y ALTAR
DE SAN
DIEGO DE ALCALÁ
CUERPO INCORRUPTO
†1463       1975
IV

There are four points on the cross

Father, Son, Holy Spirit

and the missing one—

Automaton.
Confusion of God on Earth

more poignant

for chains and cranks.
II

technology (1) the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes
(2) the foundation of a Second Coming
I

See what makes God tick.
Notes

The epigraph of the collection comes from an album by rock artist 10 Years entitled *Minus the Machine*. The album as a whole supplements this collection through its diction, allusions, and images.

“Henry IV of Castile”: This illustrates one of many of Alcalá’s miracles, which are found somewhere in his book of miracles (as it is locally referred) where believers documented their miraculous recoveries.

“Dear Lord My Demon Is Reading”: Alcalá’s greatest weakness was illiteracy in the eyes of Lope de Vega, a playwright who made a short play to illustrate the life and challenges of Alcalá.

“Abscess”: It is rumored that Alcalá died of an abscess in his right arm.

“Reality”: This poem comes from an essay written by L.T. Andrew Villalon that illustrates what happened to Don Carlos in his accident using modern medical inferences.

“Woodcut Panels”: From Cornelius Galle’s *Diego de Alcalá (vita)*, a woodcut first published in 1614.

“Replications”: The clock Turriano was instructed to rebuild was the astrarium built by Giovanni de’ Dondi in Padua.

“Movement”: Inspired by the Spanish idiom “You demonstrate movement by moving” that appears in the epigraph of Elizabeth King’s article.

“Marquis”: Lines that appear in this poem are spliced from Schiller’s *Don Carlos*. Marquis is a High Knight and utters many of the things I would have said the Don Carlos. These lines are from the English translation by Charles E. Passage.


“Guiding Waters”: Turriano’s codex is mostly about how to build efficient harbors for which he is the most famous for.

“Prison Cell”: When Don Carlos became distractingly mad, King Philip II locked him in his room under solitary house arrest six months before his mysterious death.

“Water Clock”: The water clock is described in illustration 470 in Book XXI of Turriano’s codex. It is described in little detail compared to how much he describes the construction...
of harbors, but he does have a couple of illustrations on what these non-traditional clocks may have looked like.

“The Lady and the Lute”: Turriano’s most famous automaton.

“Don Carlos and the Witch of Endor”: Taken after 1 Samuel chapter 28; referenced in Schiller’s Don Carlos at line 5288.

“Anonymous (The Monk)”: The figure was originally drawn by W. David Todd. (Components of the internal mechanism of the monk; National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C).

“Prayer”: Inspired by the speculation of Monkbot’s movements during the Radiolab podcast A Clockwork Miracle.

“Don Carlos Takes His Life”: Taken after 1 Samuel chapter 31.

“Assumption”: After the Catholic dogma Assumption of Mary.

Epilogue epigraph is a fictionalized verse that was crafted by Jean Baudrillard in his digital media essay “The Precession of Simulacra” (1983).

Appendix epigraph is from Book XX in Turriano’s codex about the construction of harbors in Athens.

“V”: San Diego de Alcalá’s epitaph.
Works Cited


Scharf, Thomas L. “The Year 1588 and san Diego de Alcalá.” *The Journal of San Diego


