

W a T e r y
g L a s s



J a N u a R Y
E d I T i O N

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WATERY
GLASS



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Rădăcini Surori
'Roots' for Watery Glass

We run in tandem, you will be mine for my whole life, as you promised to be.
The walls painted mismatch with our colours- cinematic production company.
I'd absorb you if I could – though I'm sure we were tied together?
Nuclear fusion between palms, an injurious balm.
Poverty burns my skin, the 3rd degree shivers, silence only you hold subdues me.
Accompaniment plays. My notes are still the same. The gap in my refrain
deafens.
Singing to you at night, a covenant, to see your ribbon thread through the chasms of my skin.
My salty cheeks.
Stupidity- patience is a virtue?
Two sets of lungs in the night, soft sleeping. Waking confusion.
To catch weaving in my periphery – flashing of light. FLASHING. ONLY. MOMENTARILY.



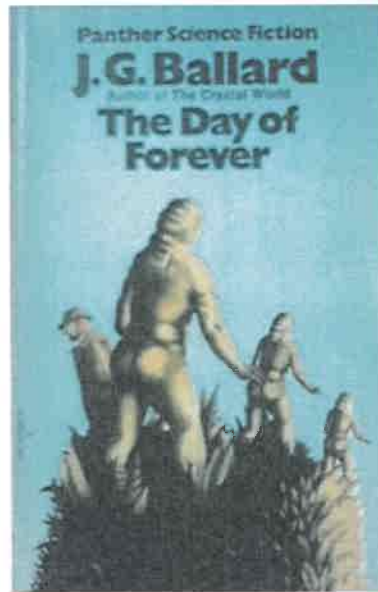
Dialectical Wishes

J.G. BALLARD AND THE SURREALISTS



Katie Joslin-Allen

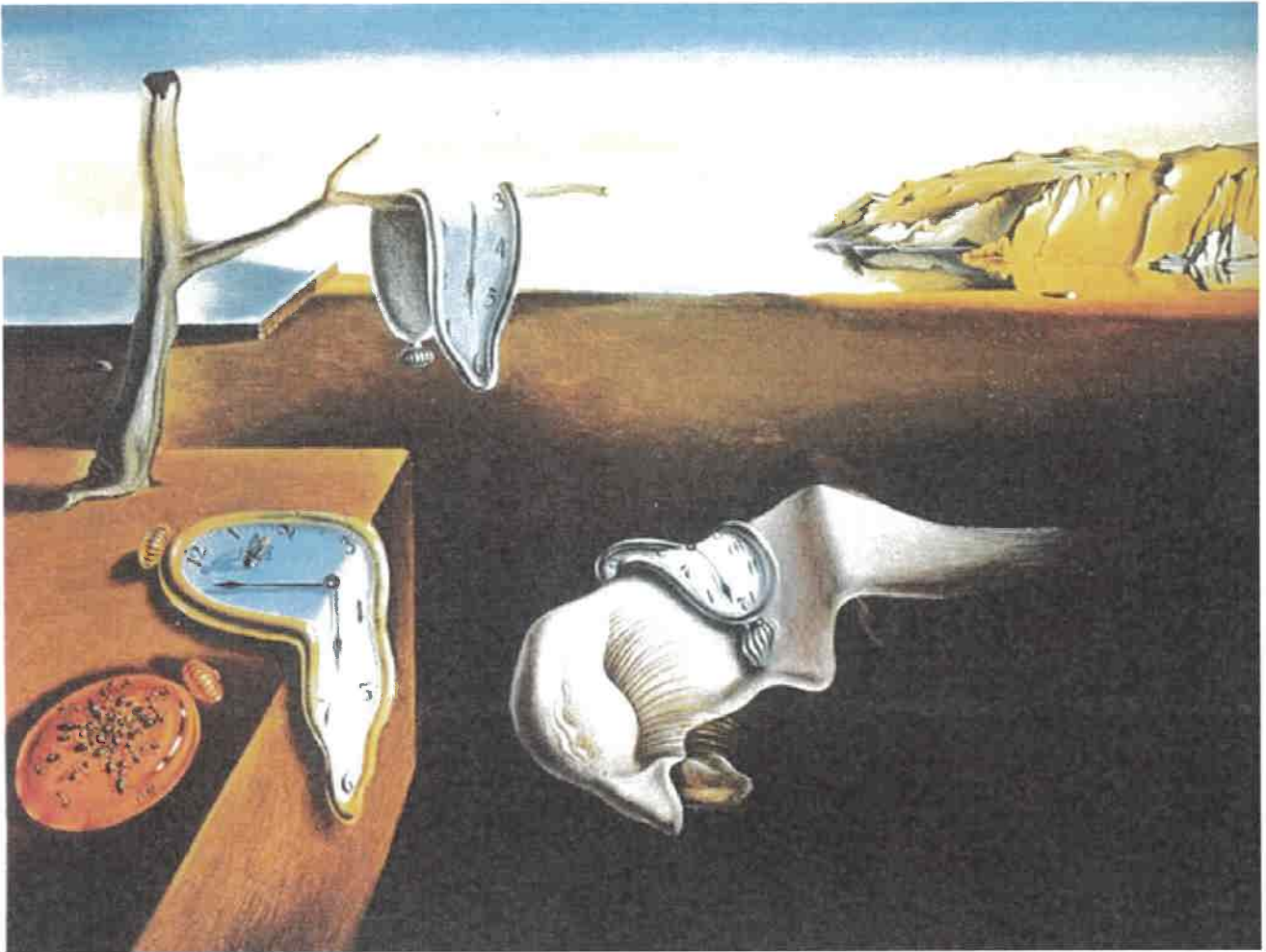
The Day of Forever



The titular story of this collection - *The Day of Forever* - reads as a quilt of all too familiar images: shorthand for a reader who sees in surrealist. Leonora Carrington's illusory presence - across many of Ballard's short stories - stirs a relentless curiosity in me, those frail archbishops *The Day of Forever's* protagonist, Halliday, describes (painted by a Leonora) conjure those very trailing, conspiring, mystics of paintings like *The Pimps of the Subsoil* and *Tuesday*. I desperately want to imagine - indulge in - a substantial connection. Ballard knew Leonora's name and work - her name appears, this time in its entirety, in *Notes Towards a Mental Breakdown*, but assigned to a character far removed from Carrington herself. The only explicit connection I have encountered so far lies in Ballard's 1966 essay *The Coming of the Unconscious* - in which he names her as one of the Surrealist movement's most "remarkably beautiful women". Even here, amongst the likes of Dorothea Tanning, Meret Oppenheim and Georgette Magritte - Carrington is paid special attention, the only woman he marks out as an artist in her own right - whose work finds itself woven into the very stuff - the look, feel and texture - of his worlds. To Ballard, she is "the mystic Leonora Carrington, painter of infinitely frail fantasies".

Though this particular connection proves difficult to excavate - as frail and translucent as one of Carrington's mystics - Surrealist artwork's role in imaging - articulating - Ballard's impossible worlds seems not only undeniable, but *fascinating*. What follows is an imagined discourse - my dialectical wishes - between Surrealist artwork and Ballard's writing.

THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY, SALVADOR DALI, 1931



“The clocks, set to the imperceptible time of the forever day, he had brought with him to North Africa in the hope that here, in the physic zero of the desert, they might somehow spring to life. The dead clocks that stared down from the municipal towers and hotels of the deserted towns were the unique flora of the desert, the unused keys that would turn the way into his dreams.”

J.G. BALLARD, THE DAY OF FOREVER, 1966

LEONORA CARRINGTON, THE GIANTESS, 1947



“Perhaps the future belongs to magic, and it's we women who control magic.”

J.G. BALLARD, RUSHING TO PARADISE, 1994



SALVADOR DALÍ, MOUNTAIN LAKE, 1938

“The marriage of reason and nightmare that dominated the 20th century has given birth to an ever more ambiguous world. Across the communications landscape move the spectres of sinister technologies and the dreams that money can buy.”

J.G. BALLARD, HIGH RISE, 1975

“Halliday glanced at the half-completed painting on the easel, a landscape across which bizarre figures moved in a strange procession, archbishops wearing fantastic mitres.

These strange fantasies...were her (Leonora's) only activity.”

J.G. BALLARD, *THE DAY OF FOREVER*, 1966



LEONORA CARRINGTON, *TUESDAY*, 1946

“The only truly alien planet is Earth.”

J.G. BALLARD, WHICH WAY TO INNER SPACE?, 1962



LEONORA CARRINGTON, HOW DOTH THE LITTLE CROCODILE, 1998

“Au revoir, jewelled alligators and
white hotels, hallucinatory forests,
farewell.”

J.G. BALLARD, NOTES FROM NOWHERE, 1962, 1966

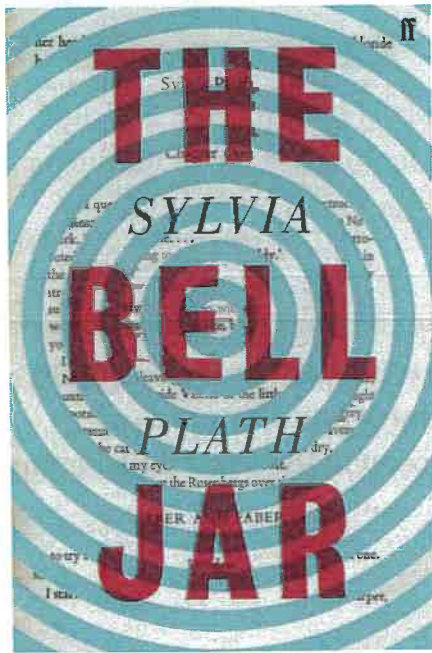
Further Reading

- J.G. Ballard, *The Day of Forever*
- J.G. Ballard, *The Atrocity Exhibition*
- https://jgballard.ca/non_fiction/jgb_notes_now_here.html
- <https://www.press.uillinois.edu/wordpress/qa-with-d-harlan-wilson-author-of-j-g-ballard/>
- http://www.jgballard.ca/non_fiction/jgb_time_memory_innerspace.html
- <http://www.nicolasnova.net/pasta-and-vinegar/2007/11/23/jg-ballard-and-empty-swimming-pools>
- <https://apersonalanthology.com/2023/12/01/notes-towards-a-mental-breakdown-by-jg-ballard/>
- http://www.jgballard.ca/non_fiction/jgb_reviews_surrealism.html
- <https://www.johncoulthart.com/feuilleton/2024/04/17/ballards-sextet/>

Bell Jar-ring

By Rose Virgin

I didn't enjoy the 'Bell Jar'. Through persuasion and the hope of enjoying this highly renowned novel I began to read Plath's modern classic, fully expecting to join the ranks of a Plath-devotee. This was in fact the second time I started this book – the first time I stopped due to general indifference towards the novel, characters, and narration. To concur, second time is not the charm for me. We are launched into the life of Esther Greenwood, a lucky winner of a one-month paid internship at Ladies Day magazine in New York. Her time in New York is unfulfilling as she struggles through her own issues such as societal and identity norms.



Esther's struggles and vivid experiences, paired with the conversational first person tone would seemingly draw me into this narrative, allowing me to share Esther's experiences. No. Instead I am completely isolated – I feel no pull towards the tired, bleak and dry tone; the lack of emotional attachment to characters; the disinteresting narrative. To me the book feels flat, lacking progress and slightly barren – unhooking me from this deemed iconic book.

Sylvia Plath has been hailed a hero for successfully conveying society's stifling constraints of women who are deemed

inferior to men in all aspects – Esther rebels against societal norms by refusing marriage and having ambitions for her writing career which would have been strikingly unusual in the 1960's. Plath also demonstrated an incredible ability to strike a contemporary chord, facing issues such as psychiatric treatment, mental health and identity. For this, praise is completely deserved. However, The 'Bell Jar' can be seen to façade as female empowerment, hiding the racism deeply prevalent in her work. This white supremacy completely degrades her writing authority and is completely overlooked when Plath is praised, so perhaps this should be brought more firmly into light before she's deemed a literary hero.

My opening statement is a lie. I lacked enthusiasm for the substance of the book, but enjoyed reading it – a little book, finishable in a short amount of time. This critique stems from a personal demand of a book to truly excite me, and selfishly not leave me feeling slightly disturbed and on edge from the visceral replication of her mental illness. The sense of ultimate isolation from the characters and narrative, I felt may in fact be Plath's superb ability to construct a reality replicable of Esther's spiralling mental health, and her disassociation from reality. Here this intense read is able to undergo an intense transformation from unenchanted (to me) to an incredible depiction of her deteriorating mental health. The 'Bell Jar' successfully symbolises the stagnant and suffocating feeling of madness Esther feels, and from opening this book I felt the intoxicative emotion too, but this instead put me off the book.



Reading *The Bell Jar* is a worthwhile endeavour. Although I found that the ultimate feeling of isolation from the narrative and characters dissuaded me from this highly renowned novel, you may have found your new favourite book! As I've only tried this book twice, will the third time be the charm?

Further reading:

<https://www.wweek.com/arts/books/2017/10/04/its-time-we-had-a-talk-about-the-bell-jar-the-white-feminist-racist-literary-icon/> 'It's Time We Had A Talk About 'The Bell Jar,' The White Feminist, Racist Literary Icon' by Crystal Contreras.

How significant can Polish Folk Ballads be?

Polish Romantic poets put four groups of people on the pedestal as "the chosen ones". The bards themselves, of course, as those "connecting the world of God's spirit with the material one" had to take the first place. How differently could it be with their egos? Nevertheless, you had a chance of winning their praise by belonging among the following: madmen and women children or... the common men.

Romantic poets' fascination with the folk tales of the simple people came from a conviction that they were unmarked and unaffected by the modern education and lifestyle, which was supposed to enable them to see and *feel* more than an average person. The inspiration, especially coming from the stories told by the common men was the striking, simple folk morality in them. Where there was a crime there was always a punishment. It can be explained by looking at the social relationships of that time. The simple people were exploited by the rich, like the peasants by their owners. Their oppressors had the power which set them above the law so they were never to be punished for their crimes while on Earth. Thus, common men comforted themselves with the vision of justice, inevitably meeting their lords in the spiritual world. That aspect was more than a source of poetic inspiration. As romantics, they fell in love with folk stories' darkness, wittiness and weirdness. Their hearts were by the magical creatures that were born in the imagination of common men. That fascination made ballads highly popular among the works of Romantic Poets. It is a syncretic genre, combining realistic elements with fantasy, and an atmosphere of mystery with awe.

The master of Romantic ballad in Polish literature was the national bard Adam Mickiewicz, who in 1822 published his first volume of poetry. His earliest works were a rebellion against the Enlightenment Ages' praise for the mind and knowledge. The choice of ballads was a perfect sword with which to express that revolt as they were focused on the invisible world of spirit and feeling - exactly what the Romantic poets stood for. "Romantyczność" ['Romanticism'] is part of Mickiewicz's *Ballads and Romances*. It is not only a discussion with previous era's ideas but also a manifesto of romantic movement. The ballad is set in a small, simple country village. A girl named Karusia mourns the death of her lover even though it has been two years since he is gone. His ghost, which is seen only by the girl, haunts her. Karusia is left misunderstood, alone in a state of agony due to her longing for the past and the terror inspired in her by the visits of the dead boy. The poet presents two perspectives on the situation: that of the common man in the village and the narrator and that of the "Greybeard" who represents the ideas of the Enlightenment with its empirical approach to learning.

"The girl is out of her senses!"
Shouts a man with a learned air,
"My eye and my lenses
Know there is nothing there."

While he criticizes the emotionality of the girl, village inhabitants trust her beliefs, trying to understand her state and bring her consolation. In this way Mickiewicz represents the romantics' ideas of faith and the heart's power.

His piece inspired Władysław Broniewski (1897-1962) to write a poem called *Ballads and Romances*, thus of the same title as Mickiewicz's collection of ballads. The two poems start with the same quote: *Listen, young maiden! But she's not listening...* introducing the character of a young girl in madness. However, in the second poem, her name is Ryfka. A young Jewish child with red hair is running solitarily through the ruins of a destroyed city. Her mother is buried under the rubble and her father was murdered in a concentration camp. Passing individuals toss her penies and dry food, but none of that can save her as she is long fated to death. The square is entered by SS-Mann, leading an agonised Jesus Christ. Ryfka and Christ are then shot together.

The poem shows the reality of the Second World War, survived by the author, in which over three million Polish Jews were killed. It is a picture of the Holocaust, in which the death sentence was *Sie Juden*. Jesus and Ryfka are accused *for your crown of thorns, for your red hair*. Those who had seen them did not do anything to save them. Their gestures of help came only from a selfish desire for a moral peace. The poem in a simple way evokes a creeping atmosphere by combining a war setting with a reference to a naturalist ballad. One of the most striking things is the vulnerability of the girl, who is running through the city naked, and her nakedness is seen as a sin. The thirteen-year-old does not acknowledge the death of her family and when offered a bread roll, she promises to share it with her parents. She has lost her senses, is laughing and spinning around. The image appears in our minds as easily as if we could see her right before us. The piece encourages the reader to reflect and loudly proclaim: *Never Again*.

Broniewski had shown high skill translating the dark experiences of the Holocaust into a ballad. The original piece by Mickiewicz is not only a masterpiece in itself but also a remarkable inspiration for later writers and poets. Mentioned works are only a few of numerous examples of great Polish Literature pieces. I deeply motivate you to discover more of our amazing culture.

To read:

Konrad Wallendrod. An Historical Poem. By Adam Mickiewicz.
Kordian. By Juliusz Słowacki
Tadeusz Rozewicz: Selected Poems

Ballads and Romances
By Władysław Broniewski.
Translated by Joanna Trzeciak Huss.

*"Listen, young maiden! But she's not listening...
Broad daylight, small town..."
Not a living soul left, the town is gone
Red-haired Ryfka, a child of thirteen,
runs naked through the rubble.
Hefty Germans drove in, in hefty tanks*

(Run, Ryfka, run, run, Ryfka, run)
"Mom is under the rubble, Dad is in Majdanek, ..."
she smiles, turns around, and is gone.
A good man she knew drove by from Lubartów:
"Ryfka, take this roll, it'd be good for you."
She took a bite, flashed a smile and said,
"I will take it to mom and dad."
A peasant drove by and tossed her a penny.
An old woman gave her a little something.
Many folk drove by in droves
wondering why she was red and had no clothes.
Lord Jesus drove by wracked with pain.
The SS were leading him to his death.
They brought the two of them to the edge of a field,
and aimed their guns at them.
Listen Jesus, listen Ryfka, Sie Juden, you Jews
for your crown of thorns, for your red hair
for your nakedness, for our guilt
both of you shall now be killed.
A "Hallelujah" sounded in Galilee
and the two turned angels in turn
a hollow salvo resounded then
"Listen young maiden!... But she's not listening..."

THE ROMANTIC

By Adam Mickiewicz.

Translated by W.H.Auden

"Silly girl, listen!"
But she doesn't listen,
While the village roofs glisten
Bright in the sun.
"Silly girl, what do you do there,
As if there were someone to view there,
A face to gaze on and greet there,
A live form warmly to meet there,
When there is no one, none, do you hear!"
But she doesn't hear.
Like a dead stone
She stands there alone,
Staring ahead of her, peering around
For something that has to be found,
Till, suddenly spying it,

She touches it, clutches it,
Laughing and crying.
Is it you, my Johnny, my true love, my dear?
I knew you would never forget me,
Even in death! Come with me, let me
Show you the way, now! Hold your breath, though,
And tip-toe lest stepmother hear!
What can she hear? They have made him
A grave, two years ago laid him
Away with the dead.
Save me, Mother of God! I'm afraid.
But why? Why should I flee you now?
What do I dread?
Not Johnny! My Johnny won't hurt me.
It is my Johnny! I see you now,
Your eyes, your white shirt.
But it's pale as linen you are
Cold as winter you are!
Let my lips take the cold from you,
Kiss the chill of the mould from you.
Dearest love, let me die with you,
In the deep earth lie with you,
For this world is dark and dreary,
I am lonely and weary!
Alone among the unkind ones,
Who mock at my vision,
My tears their derision,
Seeing nothing, the blind ones!
Dear God! A cock is crowing.
Whitely glimmers the dawn.
Johnny! Where are you going?
Don't leave me! I am forlorn.
So, caressing, talking aloud to her
Lover, she stumbles and falls,
And her cry of anguish calls
A pitying crowd to her.
"Cross yourselves! It is, surely,
Her Johnny come back from the grave:
While he lived, he loved her entirely.
May God his soul now save!"
Hearing what they are saying,
I, too, start praying.
"The girl is out of her senses!"
Shouts a man with a learned air,
"My eye and my lenses

Know there is nothing there.
"Ghosts are a myth
Of ale-wife and blacksmith.
Clodhoppers! This is treason
Against King Reason!"

"Yet the girl loves," I reply diffidently,
"And the people believe reverently:
Faith and love are more discerning
Than lenses or learning.
"You know the dead truths, not the living,
The world of things, not the world of loving.
Where does any miracle start?
Cold eyes, look in your heart!"

W to W... a First Line (ided)
like book.
son.

**LIKE MOTHER,
LIKE BOOK**

Short story for Watery Glas

"What's a better word; cuts or slashes?"

His wife ~~dragged~~ ^{dragged} the dishcloth slowly across the rim of the mug, scrubbing at the crusted chocolate powder that should've come off easily. In an ideal world, the cup would've been soaked overnight – but let's be honest. In an ideal world, she wouldn't be the one cleaning it.

"In what context?" She didn't turn around, just placed the cup on the drying rack and moved on to the next dish. Always a next dish in this house...

"You don't need to know the context."

"Well then, *you* don't need my help."

His foot tapped on a white tile. The sound would've been more intimidating if he'd bothered to change out of his flip-flops. It was inappropriate footwear for the beginning of their dance; the opening of their eternal push and pull.

the dancers hold their closed position. the music refuses to move, the dancers fall into silence. something needs to give, and her husband

* to have and to hold *

had never been one for patience.

"No, no it's – ugh. It's my opening line. *A scream –*"

"Opening line of what?" She said in a bright tone. A fake smile stretched over her face.

"I was just about to – don't interrupt me, you know how I hate it when you –" His wife felt his strangled scream more than she heard it, and she rewarded herself with a single glance backwards.

For a moment – a glorious, long sought for moment – one of his precious hands curled into claws as the other dragged across his face. Unfortunately, her husband

for better for worse

quickly calmed down, and continued.

the dancer's hands intertwine. the leader's eyes shift to the side as the follower's hand hovers above their shoulder, feigning shyness. slowly, letting the beat of their heart follow the tempo, the leader steps forward.

"I'm starting a new book, and I'm trying to edit the opening line. '*A scream slashes through the silence. The child stopped in her tracks.*' Which one should I use? Slashes? Or cuts?"

The timer went off. His wife walked to the oven, turned it off and opened the glass door, shuddering as the slick black oil on its handle smeared on the side of her hand. A billow of steam filled the kitchen. She peered inside. The cake's tops were risen high, cooked as brown and crisp as it should be. But, catering to his insatiable appetite as always, she closed door to let it bake for longer.

"Stopped?"

"No, *slashes* or *cuts*. I want it to feel disruptive to set a... to set a tone. you know? But it almost feels too aggressive. The alliteration, or sibilance, or whatever feels like I'm trying too hard, don't you think?"

She started to empty the drain. A drowned string of spaghetti wrapped around her pointer finger when she picked it up, and a clump of starch squelched beneath her nail. The wife grit her teeth.

the dance slows. notes and breaths are held, and all are suspended in animation.

"Hello? Ugh, you always do this – never paying attention. Did you even hear what I –"

"Neither."

the leader ghosts a hand over the small of their back, looks in their eyes. the follower falls back.

"Neither?"

the pace increases, the grip tightens.

She tuned out the rest of his spluttering, and let her husband

For richer for poorer

run
Run his mouth as she ran cold tap water over the soap bubbles in the sink. There was no point in looking at the pimpled flabs her husband

in sickness and in health

oh
Oh so generously called a mouth flapping up and down when she'd practically memorised his movements. She knew it almost as well as she knew the accompaniment to their endless, endless dance – but out of the two, there was only one sound that she loved.

the leader pulls them back up. the follower rises into the air. the music exhales in relief, and the dancers sweep across the stage.

She cuts him off. "Neither, because you're writing in past tense. You either have to change it into 'cut' or 'slashed', or rewrite the rest of your book entirely. Or you could..."

"I could?"

the leader closes the left foot to the right, and the follower...

well, you can put two and two together.

“Cut it entirely? Why do you even need the ‘aggressive’ opener?”

“Of course I need it! If I can’t grab the reader’s attention immediately then why should they bother with the rest? They’ll put me back on the metaphorical shelf.”

feet fly across the ground. arms wrap around each other.

“They won’t if they care about the character. Why don’t you start by introducing – what’s her name – the vampire lover?”

“Christabel. And she’s not the vampire lover yet, *that’s the whole point of the story.*”

“Then start with her! From what you’ve told me she seems plenty interesting.”

the leader follows, the follower leads.

“Start with Christabel? I guess I could use the opportunity to establish her narrative voice – but I was planning on doing that with a little bit later in the story...”

“But it’s supposed to be,” what was the word? “Character driven, right? It’ll make it easier for a reader to care about her if they know her.”

all that’s left is the dance.

“Yes... I could flesh out her perspective –“

“ – bring in their personality –“

“ – develop her relationships –“

“ – her motivations –“

“And all the narrative stakes in one fell swoop!”

but even the dance has to end. the music runs out. the dancers
step back. hand slips out of hands.

“Maybe you should start writing first.” She stepped away from
him. The dishes needed drying, after all. Always something in this
house...

but some dancers never have to leave the stage.

“That’s my hook! My protagonist!” He said. It was funny – it didn’t
matter that her husband’s

to love and to cherish

eyes were trained onto her – what difference did it make when his
mind was miles away?

His wife ~~dragged~~ ^{dragged} the dishcloth slowly across the rim of the mug.
She didn’t bother turning see her husband

till death do us part

Leave the room, just held in her sigh until the breeze of a closing
door hit her back. His wife decided to leave his serving of desert in
the fridge – he wouldn’t be looking for it that morning.

The things she did in this house...