

Maestro Insana's Room 24

Since we had decided to withdraw
From this mouse-race, it was only
Proper and fitting that the management
Return our fifty dollar deposit
For the echoing marble hall.
But, they argued, the contractual
Agreement has been signed.
And you may audition and rehearse
In Insana's quarters since his rent
Is quite overdue. Screw you, we
Shouted. We want our money back
Or we'll wreck the place. And that,
Dear Maestro, explains why Cuscaden
Set fire to the drapes, Offen wrecked
The piano, and Nash and Puechner left
Their swastikas carved in your door.

Maestro Insana's Room 25

Time was when it would not be
At all unusual to hear the Maestro
Talking to himself as you passed
His door. It was an old habit
Of his acquired from listening
To wretched little children sing
Scales as he contemplated throwing
Himself out of the window and into
The courtyard down below. Instead
He took to muttering to himself,
As old men have a habit of doing.
It was hard to distinguish the words
Of his Sicilian dialect, but no doubt
They were ancient and revered curses
Which he had brought over on the boat
And carefully smuggled through customs.

-- Oliver Haddo

Milwaukee, Wisconsin