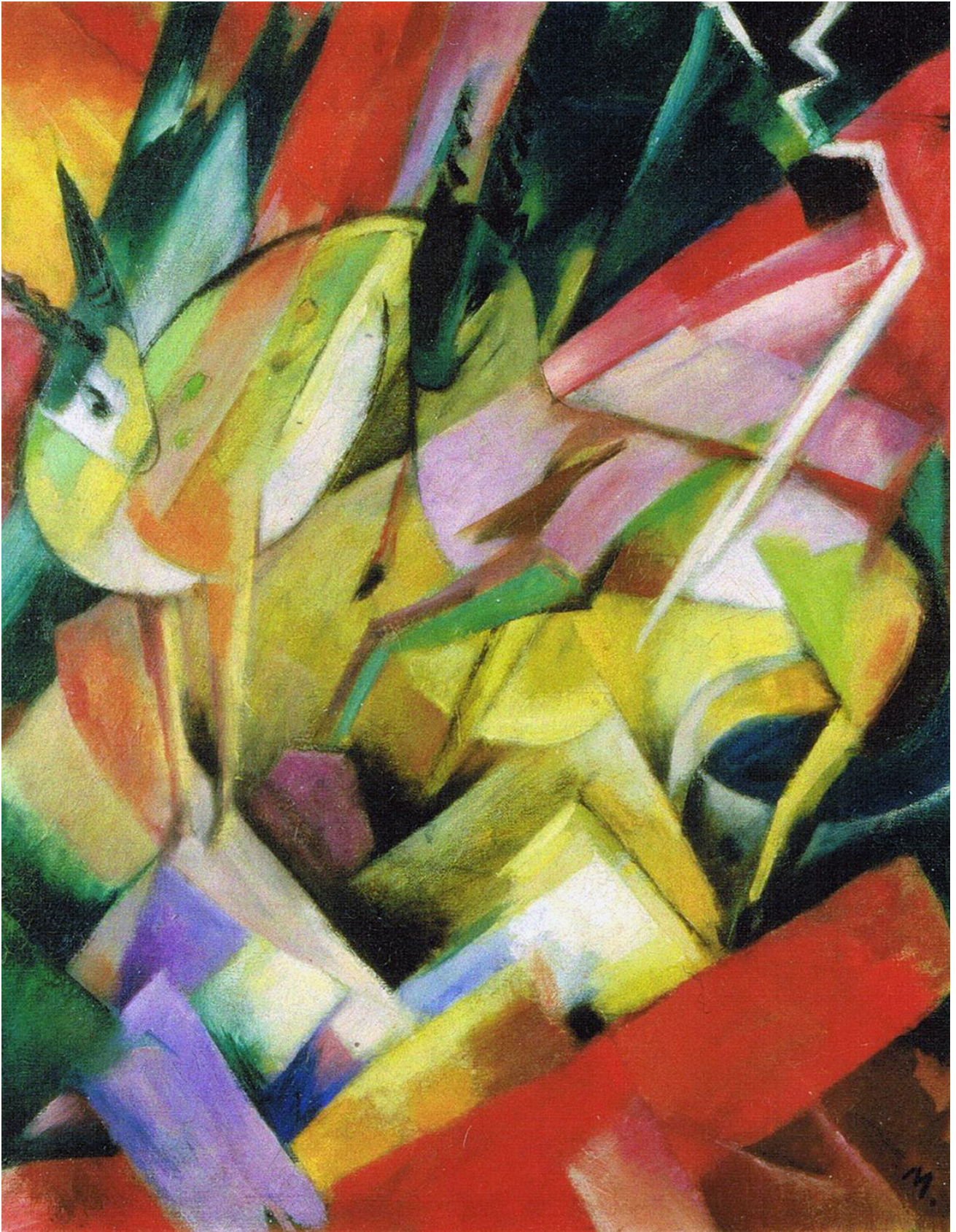


# Malarkey Presents the Golden Grovels

by [Robert Gear](#) (June 2021)



*Mountain Goats*, Franz Marc, 1913

Malarky, a swaggering member of the 'Berkshire' pig breed was

this year the presenter of the "Golden Grovel Awards," a ceremony annually broadcast far and wide to those who were prepared to watch it. He had been given this honor several times in the past, despite the accusations metoood at him by a varied collection of sows. These hadn't stuck; the Lizard Men having made sure of that.

For the occasion he wore a shiny black tuxedo and bow tie, and his general appearance was nicely set off with a fedora balanced over a rainbow-colored wig. The ears pointed through coyly. The hat was emblazoned with a conspicuous red star of which he had been the proud recipient. This had been awarded to him for participating in a farmyard event. It was said that he could trace his ancestry back about twenty-seven generations to Napoleon himself.

The Grovels were held at a venue on the west coast of The United Conglomerates. The occasion always proved memorable, and several prizes were awarded in ascending order of appropriateness. Before the prize winners were named, a strict agenda was adhered to.

Every year a different presenter was chosen to oversee the event. Often this was a mammal whose past thoughts or words had been carefully vetted; the records of past indiscretions stretching back thirty or forty annums. And so presenters were those without sin. They could cast animal dung at the color 'o\_\_\_\_\_', and at those disfavored because of their perceived melanin deficiency.

Of course, I do not name the 'o' color word since a few sensitive souls have taken offense at the use of it. Indeed, this color had not been truthfully or even factually removed, but those who could speak (or write) usually referred to it as 'the color situated between yellow and red on the visible light spectrum.' In that way, almost everyone was satisfied.

The proceedings opened with a band of moaning markles playing "It's a Wonderful World." They looked as happy as the night is long. The audience was encouraged to boo and make other animal noises when the name of a once-famous leader was mentioned. On each occasion they raised high the roof beams with a variety of farmyard sounds. That particular human had lived several hundred annums prior to these events; that is, before The Great Riddance. Nevertheless, it was felt important to keep his name, and therefore his hateful memory before the menagerie controllers, that name being forever associated with the hair color situated between red and yellow on the spectrum of visible light.

Let me also remind you that in those days, the word 'p\_\_\_\_\_' had been cancelled from popular usage. This was because the menagerie guardians had decided that the word was offensive, which truly it may have been at one time; and offensive words were just not allowed. Most animals, and some people, who needed to use it would refer with great sensitivity to the 'P word.' This happened, for example, when non-pigs tried to describe prejudices that were to be avoided. Sometimes, the transcripts of kangaroo-court cases were made public. Apparently, at these events creatures were brought to justice for inadvisably emoting audibly, 'Oh, p\_\_\_\_\_!'

Please note though, that some pigs continued to refer to themselves using the actual 'P' word. But they pronounced it as 'Porkah,' so as allow seepage of their own virtue. So that was alright, then.

After the mule brays, the catcalls and other palaver, the event opened with Malarky introducing the third-prize grovel. This winner would be presented with a small statuette in the shape of a golden calf.

He oinked and puffed, grinning broadly, and excited expectation saying, "And, wait for it, wait for it!" He pulled an envelope from a back pocket and announced, still grinning

broadly,

“Floyd Hilter! Hilter, the Goat from Weston-Super-Mare! The prize has been awarded to it for having its flanks so nicely branded! ”

This goat had made its name by having its flanks branded with depictions of goat-suffering in the olden times. He strode onto the stage. The branding, more like a tattoo some said, depicted goats of the past living in pens and apparently not being able to remain segregated from the sheep, which they hated, but secretly admired.

Hilter was presented with the small golden calf and a garden rake. It left the stage with a foolish smirk on its face, although this was hard for the audience to detect since it wore a muzzle to prevent it from eating its bedding or biting other animals. Also, the muzzle prevented it from being heard. The applause was muted.

“And now, and now,” announced Malarky, “and now,” he glanced down at the next envelope, “and the second prize goes to “Odd Pig.” He paused and looked down again, “I mean, I mean, “K. B. Harris!”

Some uncertain, but at least audible applause echoed around the hall.

Malarky did not announce the reason for K. B. Harris’s selection. Perhaps, it was for the affair of the rain barrel. Harris, for those of you who don’t already know, became well-known for his clever attempt to weigh an oversized cockerel named Mo, by submerging the said bird in a 94-gallon barrel of rainwater (which can be read about [here](#)).

Others whispered that no one knew how or why Harris was selected.

Harris, cackled and smirked its way onto the stage,

rotating its hind quarters rhythmically to the enthusiastic applause of the congregants. He held up a large banner on which was written 'WE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOUR BABIES.' Those who applauded loudest sat in the back row in very large seats reserved for Lizard Men. Some of these looked like olifaunts, and some retained their ancient reptilian appearance, and sported fake dorseys and nose rings galore. Their name tags indicated that they were named after vastly wealthy and powerful human creatures of several centuries prior.

These name tags contributed to the fame of the original mammals living on in perpetuity. The names chosen were, for example, William B. Grates, another was Sugartown, another was Sultan bin Dorsey (after whom the justly-famous fake beard was named), and yet another one was an adorable little human boy called 'Sally Joy,' an adoptee, so it was said, of one of these aforementioned mammals. And then there was 'Ferkel,' a name derived from the long dead language of ancient Germania, a once important nation within the European Caliphate.

Others were there, but I do not want to catalog them. Those interested, can find the names engraved on the 'Plinths of Wonder' in the region of the ancient lands of the Dakota Redskins. But you probably knew that.

Harris was presented with a silver statuette sculpted to look like Fiddle Castro-Moore and a book token that could be exchanged for any permitted work. It left the stage still wiggling its hind quarters in time to the beat of the moaning markles.

Now a frisson of anticipation spread through the awaiting creatures. They wondered to themselves, "Who would get first prize in the Grovels this year?"

Malarky reached his trotters into his back pocket, and with a sly grin took out nothing. Then he tried another pocket

and found nothing there. Of course, he knew where the envelope was, but he wanted to build the tension. He continued to rummage through his tuxedo, finding nothing. Then, as though suddenly remembering, he lifted the fedora off his piggy ears and pulled out a piece of paper on which was written the name of this year's 'Grovel of the Year' first prize.

"Wait for it! Wait for it!" he exclaimed. The tension in the great hall continued to mount.

"This year's winner is . . ." he paused and adjusted his rainbow wig. "This year's winner is . . . MO, the GIANT ROOSTER!!"

Naturally, the applause was thunderous. In the back row, the dorseys were ripped off and thrown high into the air. The Lizard Men hissed and the oliphaunts trumpeted loudly. Chicken feathers flew up and around and fell like snow on the assembled multitude. The cacophony was deafening—so loud, in fact, that not even the moaning of the markles could be heard.

Later it was reported by the media controllers that two chickens and a small dog had perished in the tumult.

Mo strutted onto the stage pecking and bowing vigorously.

Malarky took from a table a beautifully rendered golden pig, which Mo grasped cleverly in his beak. Then he tried to do three things at once. He bowed down, pecking vigorously; he crowed out loud and clear the ancient song of his race which resounded deafeningly around the space, and he then reared up high and, dropping the golden pig, lunged full beak at the neck of the presenter.

The Berkshire struck back with all trotters flailing.

As you know, in any pig vs. chicken combat the outcome cannot always be foreseen. It wasn't clear who would win.

Malarky got the upper hand, and then it was the turn of Mo. Eventually though, they both lost, which was a satisfactory outcome for menagerie controllers. The Berkshire bled profusely from a nasty cut across his thick neck, and Mo lost a leg and part of a wing and had an eye smashed out. These things often end injuriously.

Afterword:

At the following year's Grovels, both pig and chicken attended, but neither presented nor won prizes.

The markles moaned out their version of "It's a Wonderful World." Those with good eyesight could glimpse the pig and chicken licking their victimhoods, seated at the back near the Lizard Men, the oliphaunts and little Sally Joy.

And joining these onlookers, this year for the first time, were some nicely melanin-adjusted hybrid spiders, basking in new-found celebrity. One of these appeared to have purloined Harris's sign. It was held up proudly announcing: 'WE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOUR BABIES.'

But rest assured, there will always be other Mo's and other Malarkys waiting their turn for the limelight.

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