

## EXTRACT: JOHN DOUGLAS MILLAR

She sports an eyepatch of unusual design. As she carefully arranges her hair in the mirror it can be viewed much closer. A series of unicorns? No, seahorses, their tails elegantly looped as they sport around a larger green jewel, an emerald pupil at its centre. Look closer. The seahorses are picked out in tiny diamonds, each with its own single ruby eye. She continues. Falling from those fingers, would the pages hold their message, maintain their urgency, that strange raging, lit on the flames of a witch pyre, blowing out across the river, catching on the leaden water, fluttering through the world like a plague of moonstruck moths? Pages perfumed with the fire that will engulf them. The book, a black oozing, a womb filled with crude, a match struck at the vulva. Clean the gallows, she says to the mirror, it's the least one can do.