The following manuscript appeared on-screen while our computer was downloading from an obscure bulletin board. The author claims to be following in an arduous and venerable literary tradition but acknowledges that computers are marginally easier on the head than the typewriters which were his species’ original medium.

where the hell are we, one of them said.
they’d come through the free-standing doorway and were looking around in disbelief.
i kept quiet. nobody notices us much if we’re quiet. luckily i was wearing my pinstriped culottes, not the ones with the red hearts.
dunno. that was the curly haired one. he walked around the door and looked at the other side. weird, he said.
but ray, said the first one, what would hrh be doing here.
and where the hell is here.
you already said that, bodie, said the one called ray.
i could have told them, but i kept quiet.
i could hear sounds in the distance, the shuffling and crashing and moaning and screaming that means my big nosed buddy is having another crisis. he’s always having crises, but he’s had more than usual since bill took up with princess di and started reading descartes again. he was coming toward us.
look, ray, said bodie.
opus was just coming over the hill. he was wearing his jockey shorts. he does that sometimes.
they were looking in the other direction.
a little girl, said bodie. maybe she can tell us where we are.
ronald-ann was standing with her back to them. she turned around as they came up to her. that stopped them. ronald-ann in her madonna starter slut kit would stop anyone.
uh, said bodie.
but ray had looked over his shoulder. he tapped bodie on the arm.
bodie—
aaaigh, exclamation point, screamed opus pulling out his hair which he doesn’t have. even the ack1 support group doesn’t understand, exclamation point. cats, exclamation point.

1. Anxieties from Our Cats and Kitties—ed.
opus uses a lot of exclamation points.
hello, opus, said ronald-ann.
ray and bodie looked at each other.
I see why special branch couldn’t cope,
said bodie.
special branch, hell, said ray. I can’t cope.
do you think the cow has any idea—
no, said bodie.
right, said ray. where’s that description, he asked.
right here.
bodie opened up a sheet of paper. they both looked at it.
hmmm, said ray. orange. thick lips. scruffy.
sounds like you, sunshine.
shut up, bodie. mismatched eyes. plays darts with frozen mice. ray looked up. plays darts with frozen mice, exclamation point, he said. bloody hell, bodie.
exclamation points must be catching.

loud scrabbling noises came from the other side of the free-standing door, the side you come in from, not the side you walk around and look at.
let me get the door for you, sir bill, said a voice.
the door opened and bill fell through. he sat up dizzily.
that’s him, hissed ray.
you’re out of your mind, mate, said bodie.
probably, said ray.

aaah! exclamation point, said opus, rushing over to bill. what have you done now, exclamation point. I can’t let you out of my sight, exclamation point. what’s that book you’ve got this time, exclamation point. oh, no, not epictetus, exclamation point.
he tore at where his hair would have been.
bill leaned over, rather farther than he meant to, righted himself, and gave opus a smacking kiss on the beak.
thppfft. said bill.
oh, no, exclamation point, said opus. all those women weren’t enough for you. you’re starting on male penguins now, exclamation point. is there no end to your excesses and depravity, exclamation point. what am I going to do, exclamation point, exclamation point, exclamation point.
let’s go home, ray, said bodie.
what about him, said ray.
forget him, said bodie.
nothing I’d like better, said ray. what do we tell the cow.
anything, said bodie, as long as it’s not the truth.
ray nodded. okay, he said.
they opened the door and stepped through. it closed after them.
bill had opus in a lopsided but passionate embrace. opus was sputtering exclamation points.
bill must have more of mehitable in him than we ever guessed.
when I get through regurgitating on the azaleas, I am going to rescue opus. if ronald-ann is busy, maybe we can play politically incorrect space barbarians. that should take his mind off things.