

THE REFRIGERATOR

RECYCLE
THE EARTH!
ISSUE

IT'S FREE
#14

LET'S START OVER



Every once in awhile man really outdoes himself by producing something really vile, something so unnatural that it doesn't even have one of those recycling numbers on the bottom of it, something that cannot be recycled, like nuclear waste for example.

I was talking on the phone and looking out the window as a bunch of East High School kids strolled down the street. They were kicking all the blue recycling boxes over as they walked. Cans and bottles and newspapers were scattered everywhere. One of the kids had our street sign, from the post on the corner, under his arm. They trashed the neighborhood in broad daylight. It was like a scene out of "A Clockwork Orange."

In "Terminator 2," Arnold says "It is in {our} nature to destroy ourselves" and it appears we are willing to take the earth with us. This past winter was the warmest on record. We're trashing the earth's ozone, yet we'll still go to war for more cheap oil to burn. We're fucking things up on purpose. Not everything is good for the garden.

We must recycle the earth now before it is too polluted to be recycled. Next week the City will be leaving a Jim Jones style Kool-Aid packet in each of our blue boxes. Share it with a friend. We must start over.



CHILDREN

are older than we are in the sense that they were in the universe longer before they were born. That is, a longer history of time is behind them, so there is more wisdom available to them, these children through whom an unfathomable, recently delivered, catalogue of truth may burst forth.

THE END OF THE WORLD

As soon as I came in the house with the groceries, my wife said, "I'm sorry, I forgot to tell you we need some butter." I was exhausted, but for that second there, we had to face the fact, it was sadly evident, not having the butter made dinner virtually impossible.

So I had to get back in the car, and get the butter. Actually, I could walk to the store, sometimes it's



quicker to walk the long block to the convenience store than drive there because the light is so long on Monroe Ave. you end up figuring you could walk there quicker.

I'd been out all day driving around on errands, nothing you couldn't do any other time or even, should have done before, so I had the sense that when I got back with the groceries I had finally arrived home and didn't have to go out again, which my wife understood, I could tell by her apologetic manner when she said "I'm sorry, I forgot to tell you, we need some butter."

Anyway, I was too tired to walk and it was cold, so I got into the car just to drive one block to the store and get the butter. That was what I was doing, at the very beginning, in this account of what happened from that point to . . . where eventually it was the end of the world.

Really I feared it might be the end of the world even as I got back into the car, because I was not able to concentrate on the simple negotiating realities of the task, the car was suddenly strange to me, I only knew, like from some aberrant memory, how to back it out of

continued on next page

(continued from page 1)

the driveway, backing into the long-playing movie of the street.



**I went right into
total unreality
from that
point on,
I didn't
recognize a
single thing,
but drove . . .**

She still stands in the house waiting for me to get back with the butter. And I'm just driving around. I feel I should get back, but I have no idea how to. I keep parking in big parking lots outside of big stores. I stop for cups of coffee in what look at first sight to be old fashioned coffee-shops, trying to regain my memory.

At night, I stop in corner bars and and talk to shadowy people like they were friends from high school. Some guy starts telling me about his job at a printing factory, and how he is going to school, also. When I leave I can't find my car right away, then I'm driving through downtown but I'm routed onto the expressway and the only clue to where I am is the large green and white signs.

One night I ended up at the airport, then at an all-night diner across from the airport. I felt like I must be a salesman — that I had come in on an airplane and even though I knew that wasn't true, the idea of it was more real than anything I could remember.

So then with sudden resolve I decide to go home, I'm exhausted. All I have to do is . . . what? Some errand that requires I go to the shopping mall. It's to get some stationery supplies, but the location of the store has changed. When I come out of the shopping mall I have to think for a minute to remember what's in the white box I'm clutching—is it a gift I'm returning?

Even if I find my car, it doesn't seem like my car, that is the effect of . . . going to a movie! That's what I did that afternoon; I stopped in to see a movie at Pittsford Plaza, just for the lark of it, and when I came out I remembered I was supposed to bring home dinner, which I did real efficiently I thought, but when I came in the kitchen my wife said, "Sorry! I forgot to tell you we need some butter."

I was already seriously disoriented, when I came in with the groceries to begin with. I wanted to relax, and talk about the afternoon I'd had, because I hadn't done anything but pick up on things undone, so to speak, and I was looking to the evening to be the time when I got back to reality. We'd have dinner, like that was a necessity, and then I'd explain how I felt. That is what I was thinking, and I should have admitted I was really incapable, actually, of going back out, even for such a simple thing as . . . getting the butter.

Was that what I went out for? How could

one anticipate that this was the errand that broke my concentration? You always think you have more patience . . . patience is the virtue in infinite reserve, I thought. How come I lost my mind, in that exact circumstance?

I keep trying to go back through it. I got back in my car and headed for the convenience store. In the car I had the distinct feeling this was the beginning of the end of the world. Right. Then I backed out of the driveway the wrong way and decided to drive around the block, come up Field Street. And then, I decided to turn down Henrietta Street and head over to Bells Supermarket instead.

Right. Now it's virtually impossible to reconstruct. I'm one of those people wandering around now. And I don't know what I did wrong. I only know the world, such as I knew it, has ended.

And she's in the house waiting for me to come back, all of myself—and the butter, not that that matters! It's the god-damned stripped-down environment, that's it! No, that's my fault too! I'm pausing at the traffic light, and I can't believe how hopeless I am, I just let everything go on and on.

There's a route you can take out in every scene in which the end of the world is certain . . . and extreme. With infinite resignation you stand in the line, with the meager supplies you forgot . . . or remembered. The end of the world is certain in your thoughts.

Now I'm trying to reconstruct it, and I refuse to entertain any hope that is not . . . realistic! I'm invoking all my instinctive knowledge of the meaning of life, just to survive a blinking light.

I'm sitting in the car on the way to the convenience store, to pick up a pound of butter, for the mashed potatoes. What is planned for the immediate future has . . . got me on the run. She's going to have to know how I made the heavens shift again, performing every single errand. The world could end, I say . . . and still I'll end up . . . expressing how I don't understand it.

Get with it, dark man in a car. The whole universe is collapsing in the wake of your highly unique and powerful confusion!

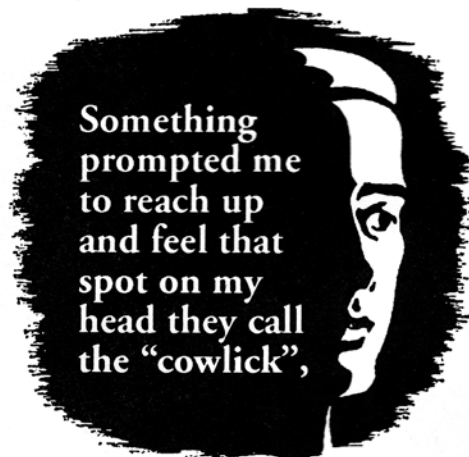
OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

Sometimes when I walk by the intersection of University and Prince, near my apartment, I am set upon by an idealistically conceived vision. I see, on one of the lawns of the art gallery or the former Eastman dorms (soon to be the School of The Arts), a scattering of little round tables. They are surrounded by chairs with people casually sipping drinks. Waiters with trays travel to and fro serving martinis, cold glasses of beer and sandwiches from a tented zinc bar. On a low wooden platform a band plays a peculiarly



nineties blend of jazz and world music or a singer and a few accompanists deliver an original song or two. This bucolic scene is populated by students in baggy shorts, cyclists in Lycra, an old couple who dance to everything and a melange of opinionated drinkers. This is not an event, rather it is a normal scene, one that occurs every evening from June till September, pausing only for rain and festivals. If only it were so.

THE COWLICK



**Something
prompted me
to reach up
and feel that
spot on my
head they call
the "cowlick",**

that deep swirl of hair at the back and top of the scalp. Strange: I thought I felt little granules; not quite cinders, more like seeds. Small, hard grape-like seeds were beaded in my scalp. I started picking at them like an itching scab. But the harder I picked, the more seeds I dug up.

Digging deeper, I fingered a small depression, an indentation where it felt like several folds of skin joined together. Three flaps of skin which felt like felt-covered triangles came together in a star-shaped point. There was a tiny gap in the center of this star wherein there lay a small hole, a hole into which I eventually worked my fingertip.

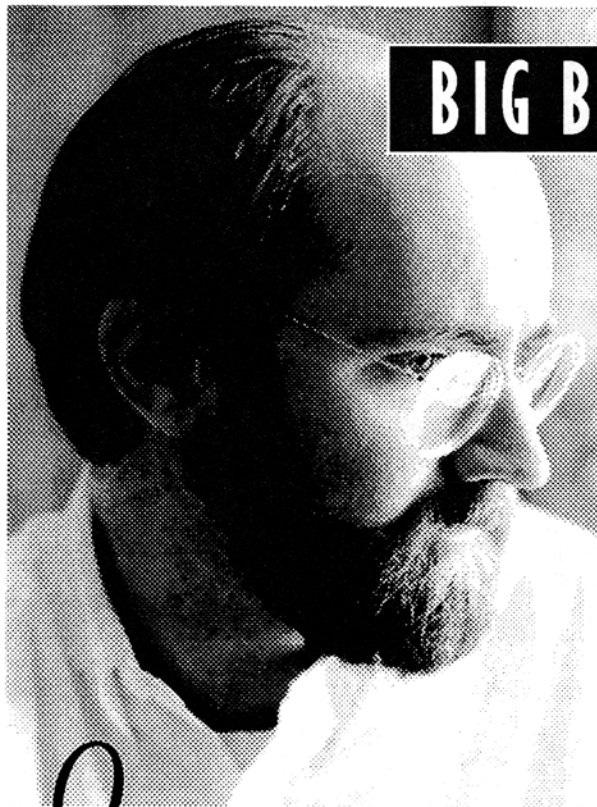
It didn't actually hurt; in fact, it didn't really feel like much of anything. There seemed to be a little point or nib of something moving around in there like a loose tooth. As I probed and scratched more, I could feel this pointy tip wobbling around in there. I finally got a good grip on it and lifted it up out of the hole.

To my surprise, I was suddenly holding in the palm of my hand, a section of my vertebrae! It felt curiously cool and hollow up there in my head, airy and fresh like a cave opened up by an excised tooth. There was no pain at all. Instead, I felt rather sleepy and dreamy.

The vertebrae—or section of it—is another thing. It appears to be a part of my spinal column, a good hand-span or so. It's fluted with elaborate, delicate articulations, a scroll-like filigree swirls along its length like some rare and fragile milk-glass sculpture. Among these fluvial curves, so sinuous and spinal, I see overarching and symmetrical, wing-like projections. These pinions bestow upon the bone a fanciful angelic profile.

The question, of course, is: What should I do with this?

BIG BANG THEORY



One of my favorite things about Nicholson Baker's books is their size. His second to last, *U and I*, a genre-busting memoir-cum-fan-letter, is one of the finest objects I've ever held; it measures just five by seven inches, weighs less than a pound, and, in its bright orange and yellow wrapper, seems so much the happy essence of what a book should be that one wonders why anyone would try again after it was made. It didn't hurt any that between the wrappers Baker offered a lusciously arcane meditation on fame and ambition.

Baker's new novel, *Vox*, is another, even smaller toy (165 pages, \$15). This time out, it's all about hetero sex. Like Philip Roth's *Deception*, *Vox* is all and only dialogue; but where Roth put his lovers together in a room, Baker's are separated by the telephone. His two principal characters, a man and a woman, have met on the telephone, and Baker tries to convey the simultaneous distance and intimacy that the telephone, and especially telephone sex, conjures. It's a kind of simultaneous solipsism, like the split-screen effect. He achieves an extraordinary intimacy through their speech and pauses, a real simulacrum of strangers chatting about their orgasms, simultaneously masturbating, and ... (well, you can see how that ends). His prose has a headlong fluidity that's closer to overheard speech than most good writing is, which should carry any but the prudish reader straight through. *Vox* is a whimsical stroke book.

But since *Vox* is high-minded sex (filed under "Fiction," not lumped in with *Penthouse Forum* or *Naughty Wives*), I guess one ought to call it "erotica." It has, after all, a serious publisher, Random House; the house that long ago went to court over *Ulysses*,

claiming that prose like "he could see her other things too, nainsook knickers, four and eleven, on account of being white and she let him and she saw that he saw and then it went so high it went out of sight a moment and she was trembling in every limb from being bent so far back that he could see high up above her knee where no-one ever and she wasn't ashamed and he wasn't either to look in that immodest way like that because he couldn't resist the sight ..." was not obscene, even if it wasn't particularly saleable.

Sixty years later, this is Baker in *Vox*: "So I told her that I, well er um, I was interested, you know, in sitting on my couch, next to a woman, with an X-rated tape on, and the woman's looking only at the movie and I'm looking only at the movie, and she's well, um, masturbating, and as she starts to come she says, 'Look at my face,' and I look at her face, and she looks at the TV, and we both come."

Whereas one had to look long and hard with a jurists's fine nose for vice to extract Leon Bloom's reverie from *Ulysses*, above, I took the *Vox* quote pretty much randomly. Baker's whole book is as lustful and fetishistic (albeit as mundane) as a naughty push-up bra; and that is both saleable and marketable. A concerted campaign on Random House's part has already netted Baker a spot near the top of *The New York Times*'s bestseller lists. Baker has somehow brought his literary aspirations in line with market forces, while still giving us something however slightly new.

Once, when I asked him if he ever thought the novel might be dead, he winced. And well he should; he's blossomed suddenly, producing in four years as many books. The denizen of Mt. Morris (soon to be a West coaster) is already in a select company with Geoffrey Wolff and Julian Barnes, writers who can produce occasional prose full of stunning digressions. Set against Baker's small but impressive oeuvre, my complaints about *Vox* are minor, I suppose. I miss in it a sense of drama or suspense, since the book's direction feels preordained from the second page.

But then, *Vox* is no sprawling masterpiece, nor is it intended to be; it's a draughtsman's doodle, a little tour-de-force with neat unities and impeccable closure. By the time you're done, at the final Goodbye, click, you'll feel as fulfilled or vaguely longing or even sad as people do in these aural, postcoital situations. Or maybe you'll just go downstairs for a glass of water.



CIVILIZATION

One of my favorite sights is a bunch of office workers huddled out in front of their workplace sucking down cigarettes. Slaves to tobacco, out there on display because we won't allow them to enjoy a smoke at their desk. I know their co-workers have chosen this opportunity to pick their noses or perhaps to clean their fingernails out.



CREATIVITY ANONYMOUS

Recently, there have appeared a number of writings on creativity and how to get it. Magazine articles feature positive thinking-type spiels on generating ideas and getting in touch with your left (or right, I forget which is which) brain. You can purchase a deck of cards that gives you a "Whack on the side of the head," presumably unleashing a flood of innovative thoughts.

But what about the other side of the question? I suffer from too much creativity. Last year I had to buy a little notebook to keep track of all my ideas because the friends I shared them with thought they were worth millions. It is now getting full of inventions, ideas for businesses, arty ideas, etc. I've even tried giving ideas away to people I thought would be able to use them. You know, the types who have tons of direction and energy but seem to expend it on relatively dumb enterprises. I would wrap an idea up and present it as a fait accompli, the gift that keeps on giving. Of course, they didn't get anywhere with them. This made me think that the problem isn't lack of ideas, it's a failure to recognize ideas for what they are. Even a simple idea like recording images of your friends and family can expand, if focused on, into a company with thousands of employees and a beautifully made up name like Kodak. I bet old George carried that one around in his pocket just waiting for the right opportunity to use it.

I don't resent handicapped parking spaces. I do think there are too many of them, though.

GET BACK TO THE
SEVENTIES EVERY
WEDNESDAY AT THE



NORM SURVEYS MONROE AVENUE

Beautification! It's one of the things that gives us community, that sense of belonging to the unit, the whole. Our self-esteem flourishes under its sunshine. Rarity only serves, then, to focus its intensity.

It's only natural to wonder then about the motives behind the recent serious epidemic of Awning Construction along Monroe Avenue—specifically located from Oxford Square west to Meigs St. Like some sort of Ginna mushroom experiment gone wrong, these grotesque monsters have metastasized from block to block. We, the wanderers, the shoppers, the observers...are in their grip.

I've lived in Rochester for twenty-five years, and I've never seen anything quite like it. With individuals, maybe. But a whole community playing Russian Roulette? I must suspect that something's gotten into the drinking water.

It is therefore that I recently conducted a lengthy research in the area in regard to this very subject, the results of which are less than encouraging. First off, the cost for an awning will run between one and two thousand dollars. Moreover, the colors fade and have to be periodically restored. Happily, there are several styles as well as eras of awning architecture evidenced along Monroe Ave. A good place to start is The Village Green. Here we have a traditional Victorian prism, its color, whether by intention or not, is unclear, matching the title of the establishment, so that one might speak, unreservedly, of "The Village Green Awning"—and be esoterically correct. With scalloped lower edge, this awning was a prototype when it first appeared, but has to some extent worn out its welcome. I give it...two birdie blots.

Across the street, Les Fleurs des Elegantes features a wrap-around in war-surplus green. Its best feature is the tiny mock awning over the door (the only one in the area). Despite the colorful French name this creation is anything but continental. It rates, though, two birdie blots, only because of the mildly creative "mock element."

Captain Tony's gives us a rather plain "Canestota Wagon" awning in an off-color franchise tint, with no creativity whatsoever. Any ugly rendition of a sadly mistaken design! This one rates only one half a birdie blot. Sorry.

The Plum House awnings are unfortunately green, but the parachute style is attractive in a mediocre sort of way. There is one factor really special about the Plum House, and that is the way the awning hides the No-Parking Sign cleverly mounted high on the side of the building. Unless you're really aware, you don't notice it as you pull in just after the Oxford intersection. I didn't. The fine, by the way, is \$15.00. These awnings, because of their revenue-producing potential, rate three birdie blots.

At On Stage we're back to the Victorian Prism, this time in a purpley brown. This area, for whatever reason, is a favorite hang-out for certain "Monroe Avenue types," rock stars and whatever, which accounts for the steep angle of the awning no doubt. This one is the closest Monroe Avenue comes to a "depression era" awning. It rates in my estimation...one birdie blot.

The Poster and Post Card Gallery and Alexis give us the coupled, or the Siamese Twin awning phenomenon, again in the Canestota Wagon style, so popular these days (whether by design or default). This is obviously a buy-one-get-one-free deal, where everybody lost. A Kevin Pope creation combining the Taj Mahal, covered wagons, and the downtown set from Shane. One birdie blot (combined).

Gelato's is closed for the season, but the awning still counts. Here we have a cracker box reinforced inside with two-by-fours and railroad tracks. Can be used as a refuge during thermonuclear attack. Color changes in correlation with radioactive content. Two birdie blots, mostly as a protective device.

Aladdins comes out in a split Canestota with your basic cod-piece insert. The most apparent selling feature of these covered wagon creations is the military tightness with which the material is stretched over the ribs. They literally vibrate with control and "spit and polish" rigidity. They proclaim their affinity for empire building. Two birdie blots for this one!

Alvin Ord's, in a rather light mustard gas color, features a light grid. It is extremely garish when lit, and sometimes smells of dead birds. One birdie blot, out of pity. The health food company next door has a low-budget awning (the ribs only come half-way down) in vegetarian green. It tries to be as unobtrusive as possible, for which it rates three blots.

Now, Paul's Grocery has an awning that may claim seniority in the area, and sometimes is allowed to have a bench and sitting area under it. This is unheard of, of course, and wins the "Vanishing Species" award hands down. Probably the only "legitimate" resident in the community of awnings, it rates an impressive four birdie blots. (The bench rates five.)

Oxford's Pub, a new arrival replete with awning, is best viewed at night, where one gets the effect (from the spotlights overhead) of three cars parked in a circus tent with their lights shining out at the viewer. Rates three birdie blots...as a curiosity.

Spiro's blue contributions rate very high both for the color and the quality of the material. Lit at night, they are mildly patriotic in red, white, and blue. Three blots and a "hip-hip."

In a manner of speaking, Gitsis's sports the Titanic of Monroe Ave. awnings. The thing is literally unsinkable. A wrap-around covered wagon with half of it facing the parking lot in cholesterol purple-pink with ghastly racing stripe is easily the most wasteful construction of the lot. Gives a whole new meaning to "poor taste." One blot, for old time's sake.

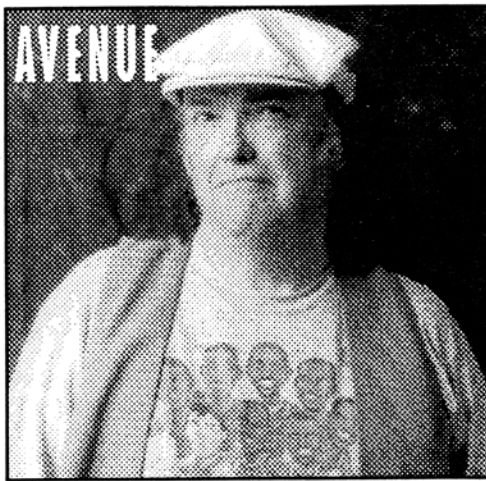
Bruegger's Bakery has awnings that are conservative in blue serge in a rather charming way. Late arrival to the avenue, they don't want to offend apparently. Two blots; nice try!

One look at Country Sweet and you know they're serious about ribs. Their barn-red covered wagon sports thirty-five of them (rib icons—count 'em). Incredibly gaudy at night, it also boasts a full length light screen. A small business next door basks in the overrun. Four blots, and the "straight face" award.

The Sports Page next door scores with a Covered Wagon On Steroids design topped by a jaunty widow's peak cupola and NFL flag. Obviously drawn up by Mean Joe Green on acid, this one also never fails to collect the most ice hazards hanging down across its entire length. Stay alert. This is my only absolute Five Birdie Blot pick, for expressing and doing everything an awning should. We should definitely have more of these; they are the wave of the future.

The last awning, Oscar's, is futile in comparison. It collects the "great expectation, no delivery" title. Two blots, nice "iron on design."

All in all, as you are looking at these things while you walk along the Avenue, you feel a little like General Custer. "Where did all the awnings come from?" you think. But, it was really the good guys who beat Custer. This time, I don't know. It may not be a happy ending,



IMMORTAL MAN

The immortal man automatically stays in every scene, with a fervent deep interest that to him has the highest import, a moral import like he was depending on you—who hold that scene together, he assumes—to provide him with examples of truth. The immortal man cannot believe that he is not about to receive more wisdom, life to him is continuous revelation, of which he is continuously in short supply... though it is all he knows.

There is no suspense for the immortal man, as to what is going to happen, because he has no agenda at all, no plans. He is backlogged with his mission to see what the meaning of everything happening around him is. He can't position himself with a task that is separate from this witness, but can only respond to what exists.

Because of this basic condition of the immortal man, it happens that he appears to many to be a man of profligate, and even disorganized, pleasures and thrills of ordinary moments, what seem like ordinary moments but cannot be so for the immortal man—since he can see nothing but... the outcroppings of original mystery.



The immortal man must be tricked by any light that falls in random definition of your face. How is he not to assume this is what he was meant to see, and the form of an eternal beauty? He must be easily confused by his assumption that anyone engaging him in conversation has... given the topic great thought, and is bound toward resolution.

He will sit for hours and entertain your comic struggles, for he wants to take you with him, this immortal man who is a stranger in life but seems to know, from whence he cannot locate, that life is a permanent chapter in the story that contains it.

The immortal man wants to tell you this, but he cannot speak except with his eyes and by the example of his continuously hanging around. Who are you, who invite him to your gatherings, and tolerate his confusion; this is what the immortal man is thinking all the time, while collecting his impressions of life.

Where will we be when, from the position of complete awareness, we tally up the results of all headstrong devotions... all insupportable enthusiasms... all memories? What will be the language we use to describe life, once we are no longer so busy with it?

Who will you say I am? This is what the immortal man wonders, who will I be a moment after, if, by dying, you take away the scene, the setting, the contraption of the room where we sit, the space... around us.



TELL IT TO THE JUDGE

Conspiracy Theory or Multiculturalism? The white milk of our youth,

the stuff that would leave a moustache on a young girl is disappearing. We switched to 2% about ten years ago and we recently stepped down to 1%. You can see through the stuff. It makes my coffee cold before it lightens it and my cereal looks grey.

MEANWHILE, BACK AT SEA WORLD

I was standing on familiar ground: an alleyway between Third and Fourth Streets in my hometown. Yet it was somewhat altered. Ordinarily, the alleyway is flanked on the west side by the backs of businesses—a bakery delicatessen, beauty parlor, travel agency—and on the east, by the garages of private residences. But something looked askew. For one thing, the ground—which is usually blacktop and concrete—was coated with a layer of bright white pebbles, the kind used to line the bottom of aquariums. Speaking of aquariums, I noticed several peculiar marine plants flourishing in the alleyway: exotic fronds whirling and swaying in the thick warm air. These certainly couldn't be native species as this area lies 526 miles inland from the nearest ocean. Nonetheless, fanciful clusters of orange, pink and pale green coral sprouted among the battered garbage cans.

I was startled when I heard a voice from up above. I looked up at the building's second and third story windows to see if anyone was sticking their head out a window talking to me. Yet the voice seemed to be coming from



an indeterminate source, spreading across the air like a mammoth umbrella. I recognized this voice as that of the man who narrates underwater nature programs on TV—Jacques Cousteau, or National Geographic specials. He was speaking about "the rare marine species unique to these waters."

As I was listening to this voice describe "a particularly rare creature known to burrow deep in the sea floor," my bare foot suddenly slipped into a slimy hole. Something was tugging on my toes, and the force of the pulling grew. What at first felt ticklish (then almost strangely arousing), increased in intensity. The suction force on my toes became so strong it started to hurt; I could feel my toe joints stretching and popping. The narrator's placid voice continued describing "the astounding suction powers of this rare creature." For a second I almost panicked, but then I intuited that trying to yank my foot out of the hole would cause excruciating pain—and probably result in the loss of my toes!

Then the narrator began describing another rare creature, a species of ray, which suddenly came hovering down, floating in the urban air, as if in the deepest ocean trench. The toe-sucking fish finally relented, releasing my swollen but intact foot.

No sooner did I have my foot back when the ray descended upon me, slowly flapping its gelatin-like "wings" above my head. Gazing up, I saw the ray silently settling down right upon my upturned face. Its underside revealed a pattern of brilliantly colored spots. Slick, pink-orange mucoid flesh mottled with deep brown-black spots and rings. The intense color contrast between the pink-orange and the rich, velvety brown-black was inexplicably hypnotic. I couldn't stop a deep, drugged yawn as the pulsing wave of viscera settled on my face like a mask.

Again, I nearly panicked, fearing suffocation, but the narrator's even, modulated voice seemed to assure me that the ray was "harmless, more curious than threatening." For a few unsettling moments I could neither breathe nor see as the warm, smooth sheet of flesh bonded with my face.

Apparently satisfied, the ray silently relaxed its hold and undulated back up, fading off into the gray city sky.

I proceeded up the alley cautiously, not just a little bewildered, awed, and - needless to say - grateful.



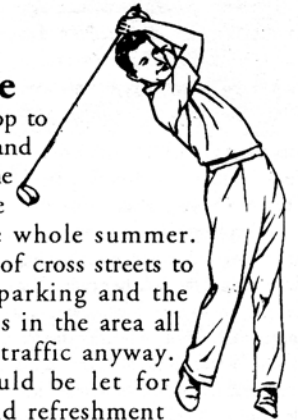
The actual, not-on-film, history of the external world, I mean the earth, is such that every event conceals the one before. The peaceful universe we now inhabit (cosmological universe that is) has artfully, more than artfully! subsumed and contained forever as an unreachable past what actually created it.

I am standing in the dark of the 11pm kitchen. We have taken down the curtains from the window and I can see all the way up into the sky. With the lights on it's blue. With them off the sky and snow are pink. I have wandered in here with a quart of coffee ice cream to stand in front of the window where the pale yellow spider lives. The dog is in the snow listening for the small animal that lives there. He puts his snout in the snow then looks up at the windy tree branches. He is the only dog I know that looks up. He knows the sky is there. Night has turned the Sycamore pink brown and the wind chimes from summer still tinkle in the wind. The night sky light flows into me and it all makes sense. Now it is yellow and the snow clouds and storms are coming. The snow will blow sideways and I will be asleep in the wind.



Let's Close East Avenue

from the inner loop to the Liberty Pole and East Main from the Hyatt to the Eastman for the whole summer. There are plenty of cross streets to allow access to parking and the various businesses in the area all depend on foot traffic anyway. Concessions could be let for outdoor cafes and refreshment stands and an officer or two on horseback could observe order. Perhaps we could establish a Saturday morning farmers market in the street and sponsor sports events like roller blade racing. How about a series of Saturday night street dances or a movie projected on the side of a building a la Cinema Paradiso?



"My Salary Has Quadrupled Since Reading The Refrigerator"
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T.S. ELIOT OVERTURNED

The perfect title for a literary work is Of course one that sets the reader to imagining a work of that title-- Before even engaging in reading What subliminary text was spun by the Author--proposed author on said subject, Who is thereby made random in his excursions, Merely possessive of a title, or a slogan now common property of all dreamers.

So I know most of my work is done, in the tide Of this piece. It could be a weak self-serving Fiction, or mere retort with a slippery hold On it's intuitions! But the main thing is done, In the bold-faced assertion that he, too long A bugaboo here, is overturned--which means Ready for inspection, and kicked out of The hall now ringing with the poetry of literal speech, ringing in everyone's ears.

We've all been looking for relief from the Croaking voice, the cadence of the bookworm Critic, schoolboy run amuck in myths half-learned, We're all sick of this dictatorial culture, sick Of the faces of famous men, immobile and staring Down at us from their nests, or perches of death!

Because I spell it out doesn't mean at all I Was the first to think of it (to think of freedom And a future for the theater). It might mean I'm the last. For the truth burns down the brush, The villages and the cities, before arriving at the temple, I mean the inner sanctum Where I work. The priest, the prophet, the poet Is in seclusion most of his life, making what look To him like apologies to God for taking extreme Interest in the given--or the reality of thought, I mean the wind, knocking over a candle... How he gets the news is beyond narration, but When he gets the news, then that is... history!

I say things so you'll know it's absolutely true, Yes! Eliot, the insular poet, the prima donna, The man who said, in middle-age, that "my beginning is my end,"

And visa-versa, like every other buddha, Right smug at the desk, he's ended. Yeah, the Company has no more investments to offer, no Longer makes policies to preach to the times, Hurrah, his vision is complete, and wasted. The bookstores have stuffed bears and reprints-- Only. And finally I'm free to speak for the future.

In another world, which of course there isn't, T.S. Eliot and I could be plausible friends, Sipping brandy making lists of favorite Latinate words,

Starting magazines of historical significance! But the way it is, and I just have to face it, While I'm waiting for the check-out girl to ring Up my purchases, while fumbling for the change, Thinking--ah, she's too lovely for this job!--, well Redemption, for him, Eliot of all false sentiment, Is to be buried for good in the onslaught, or The riot, of poetry spoken unhaltingly, placed In the ears of a person, or persons who Even in the extreme place of having to Overturn what's called (laughingly) modernity, Can give their emotions now the tide of reality. How simple, the end of complexity! Now I know I am the last to have heard. I know we Can stand no more the whining, yea banishments, Of life described precisely as it isn't. As, for Instance, a wasteland!-- made of details culled In a quandary over one's personal existence...

Now, weep for you grandfathers choked in the job At the bank, or at the helm of the establishment. In the situation now, I mean in the neighborhood, There's sympathy afoot for men of conceit, Ah, sympathy for the fast-disappearing century, In the employment of all words all people unread Of Eliot and his coterie... gave me. Truthfully I know, when I got the stage, which was empty-- Given to me last night by the floor sweeper, A man full of quotations, and much perception, Truthfully I know that what I say is only what You hear, you hear... only what I say, yes!--

The idea that something is historically backing

Up this scene, ponderously, like money in the bank, Or talent unbeatable, or some cultural elite, Is a vanity epitomized, we've seen, in the Disillusioned great. The disillusioned great! When but recently did greatness mean precisely weakness, literature mean a choke in the throat!

Why was T. S. Eliot such a stuffed shirt? Why did He utter everything in monosyllables, Like he'd had a throat operation, or saw some near doom? Why is the recent past such an... embarrassment?

Why? Oh, there is no reason. The modern epoch Is what lies immediately behind you, it's what you, Passionate receiver of life, were born to escape! So what if I'm talkative? I could say I've noticed How cynics always die conveniently before Anyone gets the notion to question them outright. Being dead was their style! It was a style of the Times, apparently, to grumble a bit and be gone.

Looking back, we see the winter has stripped The chance for springtime, like it were a choice. Now people are all out of themselves, words riots In their brains, words come to them from yonder! Conversation now is... beautiful guesswork, All the topics new and manifold, I hear more Sterling speech, more poetry, in the grocery line, And can give back the results like this, in a tirade, any night inspired, like this one. Why of course, we're standing on the ruins, we're Drawing in a sketchbook, we're inventing truth. Beyond modernity is the future, and the past.

I know I have overturned T.S. Eliot and his ilk. He's about as real to me as one of those Presidents; He's... Warren G. Harding, or Millard Fillmore, yet He's a product, or the box with the cereal gone-- You always eat the cereal, then you see the package Standing on the table, like strange evidence!

He's a model of a refrigerator, like Hotpoint, He's 1948, an offering in a catalogue you don't even want, a man who Needs to be explained, now, to fit...

Ah yes, let's see, I had a whole reasoned argument somewhere, Though I wouldn't demand anyone listen to it. I'm determined to be interesting, to make jumps if I Even suspect I have you bogged down. I want to Show you I am alive, and operate in your interest.

I only choose some subjects because they are, well, Big titles thrown at us, who, like transcendently,

find everything amusing, or painful, intense at least. In my lecture notes it was funny, the way I painstakingly analyzed it. Analyzed it--to a tee! But, like I said, what is overturned is overturned already before I get my hands on it. You knew it! My role is make literal hay, or theater, out of it.

April is the kindest and most beautiful month, Full of conjectures, brimming with illusion, Talking birds and bright winds.

The early spring light At seven o'clock Bleaches the sediment Along the rail, and paints the yellow

Flowerbox. The townsmen, united when they rise, Must admire the sudden worlds of blue, the powdered grass; They are unused to such profusion, such A free procession of miracle.

Aha! Look yonder, Mr. Eliot in modern sackcloth (in bank clothes!) His head bent, and frowning, walks through this. Ah, see the black silk threads of his suitcoat! Oh, do not deny him a look!

The modern, which is always with us, like It were a novelty presentation, is an attitude, Unplaced historically. How many modern ages Have already been left behind, how many new Impresarios have trumpeted their puny wares? The modern is what is opposed to a storyline, It seeks brilliance of effect, seeks to confuse Itself, to find new emotions... in a teapot. It revels in the mysterious affinities of myriad component observations! And is stuck there with a handful of fake jewels, Ah, marvelling at the step it cannot take. It's Good room decoration, a hodge-podge, a string of pearls, I mean footnotes.

How many images can we make, in such a factory?

Well now. "April is the cruellest month," that's a Start on despair. Good. "Breeding lilacs out of The dead land," yikes!, and further, "feeding a little life into dried tubers."

Now this is sober enough. April is the cruellest month! Is that what you said? It is the image to astonish a disappointed lyricist. He's breeding lilacs, he's a phoenix, he's emptyin' Flowerpots, along with butts of cigarettes, on The compost heap where, guess what? Green shoots and vines of a purplish hue are struggling again.

In my youth I was a decadent romantic poet too, Wandering the city and the waterside. My heart was a canyon of desire! I thought words, each one, ere so many explosives And it was true enough. True enough Every schoolboy should produce his own Chapbook of impressions poetically seized, And read "The Wasteland" by T.S. Eliot, Forwards first, then backwards...to adolescence again But they should not think of locate an epoch of The mind anywhere in history, or make it the Whole twentieth century. Two thousands Aprils Have gone by since Christ walked in Galilee, And every one was beautiful, in the memory. It's the one coming up that cruel. That's it, Life is cruel when beheld by a weak philosophy, When teased at by the despondent literary critic!

How cruel indeed is the return of a perennial Theme, when you can make no headway? Who slated this, anyway, as a subject for poetry? I see the modernist is one who is jealous Of all the books he read, all modern poets Think to break from the past, can only think 'To write the last... ice-cold sentence! Lord, I can see it must be, the dour gentleman, Really a banker, and then a publisher, Lord! Elder statesman, prematurely old, father-figure For all students, known even as a frivolous Dinner guest. A man with bad digestion! I Can see it has to be that T.S. Eliot must exist. He's so little, I'm embarrassed he's in the trade, But he's there alright... like an... inkblot. The poet of rarified balderdash, a high squeaking I see it. He is immortal, dead from the start, Like a statue, except we don't make statues, we Develop profiles in the media, the public gets An appetite to know the whole biography Of the leading sinner and his special heresies.

Eliot was a plagiarist, this I know. A man who Read with envious eyes all the English pantheon, And who transposed a line from Milton, A line from the New Testament, a shopsign In the fugitive breeze, wagging, the letters Tilted, or rather titled, in his glasses left atop The morning paper, with it's ugly headlines, And put it all in that great cut-up, yea a masterpiece of confusion.

And now the heirs of this rebellion fill out Forms and wait for grants. The avant-guard Is now a branch of government.

Poetry is declared... a minor art And T.S. Eliot, boy in breeches from St. Louis, Is buried in Westminster Abbey, under the old towerlock absurdly chiming, Upon a spring morning, left undescribed.

But the rumor is, over in Stratford, Shakespeare Isn't really in that grave, but... up and running!

HELLO CHRIS. THIS IS LOU REED

Chris Wink, the Classical Music Reviewer at WXXI AM was doing a spot on "For The Record" where he reviewed new pop releases and he covered Lou Reed's fabulous "Magic And Loss" CD.

The spot was picked up by a few other public radio stations and Lou heard it in New York. He called Howie Klien, the president of Sire (Lou's label). Howie gave him Chris's home number and told Lou to call Chris. When the voice on the other end identified himself, Chris thought it surely was one of his friends. . . but that voice. They both laughed and Lou thanked him for the review.



Bringing The War Home

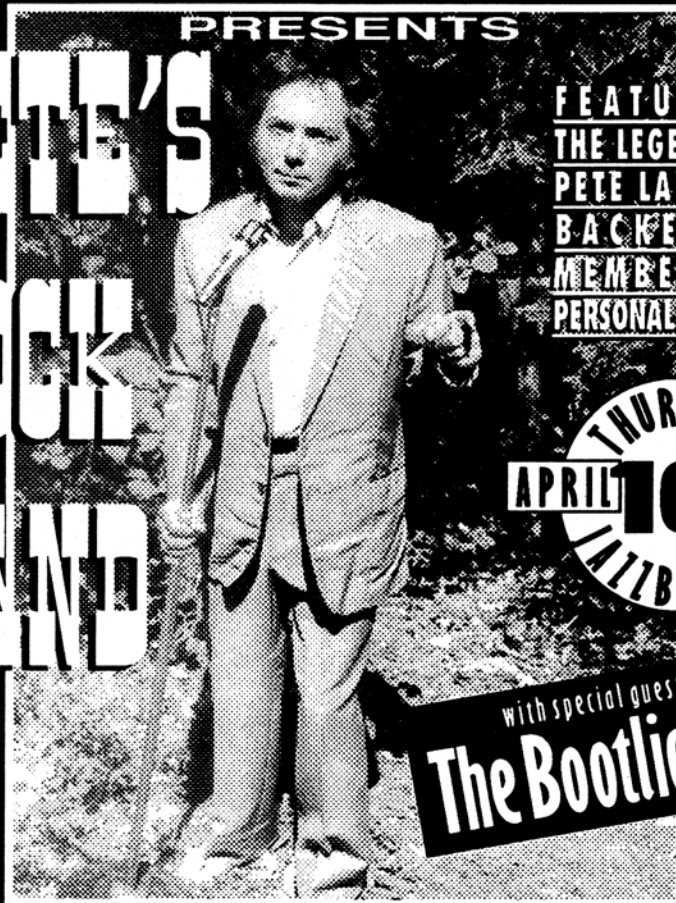


I always thought there was some sort of connection between the Salvation Army and the U.S. Army. I stopped into the Salvation Army out on West Avenue and bought a few second-hand drinking glasses and an Audubon Nature Encyclopedia. I was looking around as the woman rang up my purchases, and when I looked back at the counter I saw this big shiny plastic bag. I said, "What's this?" She said, "Desert Storm. The bags were left over." I thought great, a real souvenir, but the thing sort of gave me the creeps as I carried it out to the car. It's an army green, stiff, aluminum bag labeled "SUIT, CHEMICAL PROTECTIVE." The note on the outside says "These garments are items of outer wear and can be worn for up to 22 consecutive days. When exposed to chemical agent they will offer protection for at least 24 hours." There is also a little memo on the bag that says, "Issue suspenders simultaneously with suit for use if required to aid in suspension of trousers."

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BEAUTIFUL SHOPPERS

Ever since I was a little kid, I was fascinated with grocery stores. I had such an affection that when I was six, I begged my parents for this cardboard grocery store I saw in the Sears catalogue. It had a cash register and a telephone and little shelves to display miniature products on. It even came with money that looked authentic, only it wasn't legal tender due to Popeye's smiling face where George's ought to have been. I was pretty sure that I was going to get it, but I said an extra prayer asking God to talk to Santa Claus, just in case I hadn't been as good as I thought.

I am still fascinated by grocery stores. Not only have they "new and improved" our lives away, they have now engaged in social trends. The one that sticks out the most for me is the one that claims to have "beautiful food for beautiful people."

Does this mean that there will be a special security guard standing at the magic doors to make sure that only the beautiful people will be let in? Where will those ladies in house dresses, pink foam rubber curlers and fluffy bunny slippers do their weekly shopping?

I don't go to the store to buy beautiful food. I like the generic food. It isn't beautiful, but it's cheaper. It's never better, but it's just as good.

U B TOP 40 NOT

A friend of ours had a magic pass to The Horizontal Boogie Bar (And Ranch) so we checked out Urban Blight who I have always been afraid of for some reason. I found out why. They are America's UB40. Their names both have a U and a B in them and allude to some sort of social awareness. America's UB is way too tight and such average guys. They were even covering an Average White Band song as we walked out. They had a great sound man though. The Nirvana song we heard before the band started was the best thing we heard all night.

GOD CONTEST



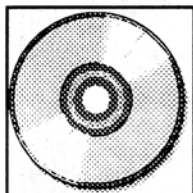
A free subscription to The Refrigerator has been awarded to Mark, the lead singer in SLT who sent us this photocopy as his entry in our "Speculative Drawings of God" contest after witnessing the farewell performance of Lilly's Buffet at Jazzberry's.



Doug Curry Says

Little Milton turned in a stellar performance at the B.K. Lounge on March 8. His renditions of his classic and contemporary blues and soul tunes were inspired ... Local harmonica bluesman Rockin' Red was great for openers ... The B.K. Lounge

is going full throttle, offering Rochester's best atmosphere for the blues. Locals The Midnight Blues Band, Marshall James, and Joe Beard were scheduled for March, and great R&B from Buffalo's Unity Band and headliner Clarence Carter heat things up in April.



For the best in new blues recordings, try: *** OMAR, *Blues Bag*** (Bullseye CD BB9519) — OMAR steps all

over the blues in this, his first effort without The Howlers. An acoustic rendition of Robert Johnson's "Gotta Good Friend" takes its place easily alongside OMAR's original "OMAR's Blues," which quotes T-Bone Walker's electric guitar style. OMAR even delves into his harp playing on "Big Chief Pontiac." There isn't a single track here that isn't enjoyable music.

*** James Peterson, *Too Many Knots*** (Ichiban ICH1130) — James Peterson might easily get lost in the shuffle as just Lucky Peterson's dad, but for some good releases on the Ichiban label. This latest one shows that James can play the blues guitar. Tunes like "Fish Ain't Biting" and "Flip Floppin' My Love" are funky dancehall blues done up with energy and taste. "Long Handled Spoon" serves up a solid blues groove with blues slang and spice. This release is a good cross-section of modern electric styles that should get airplay and turn up in club decaying shows. It deserves your attention.

LOCKER-ROOM TALES

Just when I think I've gotten used to the rarified world of the men's locker-room at the Main Street Y, something else happens to throw me off balance again. The other day it was the apparition of a very old, small bald man who vaguely resembled Father Time in a New Year's cartoon. He was standing by the sinks clad in only a towel, holding a razor and whimpering. His head was bleeding in several places; the blood ran in fine rivulets through

the puffs of shaving cream on his scalp. I thought of saying, "Are you okay?" but, embarrassed, I didn't say anything.

I saw him again a few days later. He was sitting on a stool by a locker, half-dressed and speaking softly to himself.

"How're you doing?" I said as I passed him.

"I lost my scarf," he said.

I stopped. "What does it look like?"

to be within earshot but out of sight when I'm changing; I suspect he spends a great deal of time there. He says things like "Baseball! You wanna talk about baseball? Don't even get me started about baseball, I'll tell you about baseball, there was a pitcher pitched for the Red Sox, whatisname, what the hell's his name ... " Which wouldn't be so bad, but recently it was "Death? You wanna talk about death?"

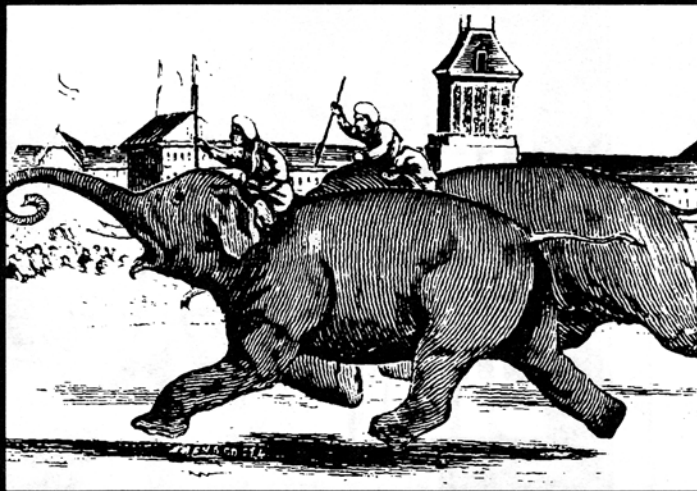
You're lookin at somebody who knows death in-ti-mate-ly, my friend. Hey, I know it's tough. I KNOW!"

I wonder whether there isn't a more generalized chattiness to the women's locker-room. In the men's, there's a peculiar collection of monologues and other lonely sounds. Along with the predictable assortment of whistlers, there's a man who sings gospel songs in the sauna in a full-throated tenor. It resounds from behind the closed heavy door like the voice of a trapped supplicant, a cross between the timbres of the Tidy-Bowl Man and Jim Nabors.

There was also, once, a large, flabby man in the steam-room shouting "I'll kick your ass you lousy faggot!" The thing was, it was too steamy to see well; he wasn't addressing anyone in particular. "O-kay," someone said when he left. The remaining half a dozen people glanced at one another, but said nothing.

The showers are also the scene of half-hearted dramas—and of perhaps the cruelest thing I've ever seen. I entered one day when two middle-aged men were already showering. As

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THIS?



Habitually I alter conversations I've had with people, when I report them to other people, I condense and edit them for dramatic effect and to amplify or simplify the issue, leaving out the clumsy or cloudy nature of the actual conversation and making it appear ready for further consideration. I create the impression that a new lively topic has entered society, with this habitual procedure, even as I lay to waste the, usually inauspicious, reality that launched it.

Why don't I just bring the subject up, to the new person? Somehow it makes it legitimate, or inescapable, if the subject enters narratively, or already has some track record. Otherwise the person is liable to say: "why are we talking about this?" (Which, if the truth were known, is what the first person all but said.) Also, of course, people are quick to denounce each other, so I usually have a beginning of assumed agreement with the new conversation, just because I've flattered them into the opportunity of perceiving how erroneous or narrow-minded the first one to discuss it with me was.

Then in a little while, as I expand the subject, my second dialogue partner of course begins to oppose me, all on their own. As that deteriorates I immediately begin my strategies to preserve and alter if necessary this exchange, so I can report to a third party. It's about four steps forward and three back, but I am limping along. I guess it is axiomatic here that all such subjects, as I call them (you know, whether the Ice Ages killed the dinosaurs, what is the nature of apostolic witness, how come we don't put a moratorium on making cars, etc.), are fundamentally offensive to people.

"It doesn't matter," he said. And then he suddenly brightened, grinning.

"But won't you be cold when you go out?"

"No," he said, his eyes twinkling, "but you may be."

Most of what I can't help noticing in the men's locker-room is not so picturesque. There's the omniscient man who always seems



I ran the water to get it hot, a third man arrived. He looked to be at least 80 years old. "Where's my soap?" he said to the two men.

One looked at the other, grinning. "Hey, why would we know where your soap is?" he said.

The older man looked down, puzzled. "I can't find anything," he said in a small voice. And then he left, naked and still dry. When he was gone I looked up through the shampoo in my eyes and saw the first man brandishing a soft pink rectangle. "Can't find anything," he said laughing.

VOTE FOR ME



Razorback saxman Bill Clinton - "Elvis" to the scribblers on the plane - seems poised to sweep the majority of the remaining Democratic primaries, partly on the strength of his claim that he is "electable." I don't suppose there's much point anymore in talking about the sorry state American politics is in, when "electability" is a voter's putative consideration; but it's curious that even the pretense of campaign promises has been implicitly abandoned, and no one seems to miss it.

Just as the avant-garde often becomes the mainstream, minimalism has crept into our already-lean politics. It's as though Clinton is saying "Vote for me because other people will," the absolute reduction of participatory Democracy. He ought to get it over with and reduce his stump speech to "King me."

While I'm torn between marvelling at "electability's" elegant simplicity and screaming in dismay, Bill the Machine wades through a sea of burritos, pizza, pierogi, and ribs on his way to Madison Square Garden. He is considered especially strong now for having weathered, first the Gennifer Flowers allegations, and then the flap over his lack of a military service record ("Robocandidate," one reporter calls him). So he's okay, if there are no more tawdry surprises in the next seven months.

It's whispered, somewhere, that the worst is a former Miss Arkansas, who will bear her breasts in Playboy and claim that he fondled them (look: these very ones) once—but it's hard to see how that will hurt him before the convention. Clinton will survive something like that largely because monogamy isn't part of the Democratic platform anyway. And Clinton, after all, says he got into politics because ace philanderer JFK touched him once. "It is, heaven knows, difficult enough for conservatives to keep their trousers on," said one observer. "In all seriousness, what reasons would (Democrats) have ... for being faithful to their wives, or at least to their mistresses?"

So to date that leaves the question of Clinton's draft-board letter, which he himself preemptorily advertised. It's a fascinating document. Far more revealing than the then-23-year-old's politics is his ambition, and his cynical grasp that appearances are, politically, reality. In an age in which even the highest court is necessarily staffed by sycophants,

Clinton appears to be, not an alternative, but another pro pol—Slick Willie—intent on power first, policy later. In that sense, he's more the heir of LBJ than JFK. "The objection ought to be that he is now ashamed of the fine paragraphs in his letter as well as the shifty ones," said one of Clinton's former classmates. Clinton did support the Gulf War, as he now reminds us, with one eye on the general election. So clearly, if coyly, he believes in some justifiable wars.



"But everyone knows the Gulf war was different than Vietnam," said a friend of mine. Maybe, but let Clinton say how. Americans believed—really felt—that the former expunged the guilt of the latter; did Bill? Or would he support a memorial to the victims of My Lai in DC, next to the other low famous black one? There are a thousand circumstantial ways in which the two wars are different, but the similarities are more fundamental: in both cases, young so-called democrats went abroad to kill in the name of some still-obscure principle. And to this day, neither Kuwait nor

*"It is, heaven knows,
difficult enough for
conservatives to keep
their trousers on."*

Iraq, Vietnam nor Cambodia, is the kind of place you'd want to live in. Because he never went to one, Bill Clinton cannot know that all wars are the same war.

So, it's now possible to go out for Thai food prepared by Vietnamese immigrants in any American city, and at the same time regard the approaching fall election as the Asian server would. More than ever we are living in an occluded democracy, smothered by "electability" as we are asked to support either this peripatetic refrigerator or a haplessly senescent war hero.

Let us pray for more than Miss Arkansas' boobs, because Elvis is dead. Long live the King. We have finally imposed free elections on ourselves.

75 MPH

My parents used to ask me what I learned in school, and I could never remember a single thing, in fact it seemed like school was systematically removing ...from my grasp everything I thought I already knew. Of course I understand that now, that's exactly what school was doing, so I'd be a complete blank slate just about the time in college when I signed up for Philosophy 101 and was presented with the thinking of the English Writer David Human, who had a theory about how the mind of man is a blank slate at birth. Then I had to have recourse to my secret life of laying awake all night trying to imagine being dead, in order to salvage the rough idea of a chronological existence.

Anyway, now my kids come home from school and I don't ask them what they have learned, but I watch and listen and hope to privately ascertain what they are being told in school. I haven't found out much, but tonight I overheard my older boy saying: "Mr. Chandler told us today that a sneeze travels 75 miles an hour, and he said germs last about twenty five feet in the air." My younger son did a few fake sneezes and it got raucous at the dining room table, where they had their homework spread out. We'd been talking earlier about how our memories are not very chronologically sound, I mean things just pop up in association and the actual linear narrative is a thing unpreserved, unless you look at the records, if there are any records!



NO WIMPS IN HERE!

I got behind a long white limo on Culver Road the other day and was starring at the bright green letters, "Rock and Roll Limos", on the back of the car. The windows were dark so I can't be sure but I don't think there was anything going on in there. I rolled my window down thinking I might hear some throbbing "Outlaw Radio" but it was silent. Maybe they we're listening to the "Best of Wease" talk show tapes.

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I slept all day after writing the letter essay. What my thoughts are: I bounce around inside the bones of my skull, like a basketball in an empty gym.

There is a view of Katharine's window that I feast my eyes on now. It is one of those steam chimneys they put in the streets. I don't know why, other than if they didn't release this steam, the streets would explode or something. Last night I was looking at the Full Moon through this dreamy hallucinatory yellow vapor backlit steam.

I was myself at last, not entirely peaceful. I am not constitutionally peaceful. Nervous awe and snarling fear in some sort of at-bay search for life in outer space, more like that.

I basically have achieved life in outer space. Just like the spaceman adrift in the eternal dark of a twinkling endless vacuum. I exist at night, in New York City. It is just the same as living in a spaceship far from Earth. New York City is Bizzaroland, like in the Superman Comics, carved out and afloat.

I sleep till the Sun actually goes down three or four nights a week these days, especially for the past year. I was going to admit to the past three weeks of the play, but then six months . . . and the play is now over and slimed onto videotape in the dim light of the theater. It is gone, and I have shaved, and see why plays become good movies.

The flickering lights reconstruct entirely the spiritual essence of the moment of thought, inception of reality perceived in the real movie.

It is the last decade in which wisdom will have the chance of leaving the proper legacy, providing an inheritance for my child. Well the Russians would sell any spaceship they had to anybody with cash about now.

Who would the United Nations Peacekeeping Force like to fight with? I guess if they would work for me then I should ask them who they think they can take on and win. Not the King's job really to fight, just to approve and finance like a movie producer, a war producer. The war against time which is the war to stay ahead of events which can be done peacefully by buying the right things, Tools, Jewels, & Land, or waiting till it is too late and there is a war. A real bloody body part splattering War, there is always a war out there.

Last year as we drank and drank night after night returning to the TV to watch the War and then to the bar to drink in it till we were raving made with violent uncaring alcoholic lust . . . And rockets, I was firing rockets as well. Didn't want to be left out. But thankful to be left out, now. Big events that kill us individually and are then over . . . I mean if I'm going to sacrifice my life I don't want the conflict to end. Like it was a good business to die for. Of course my ideal way to die is to be crushed by a meteor that has traveled several millennium looking for me.

The steam is still venting out of the orange striped Cone Chimney into the yellow light 57 degrees up to the White Light of the



Moon. No one there on the moon. What a shame. The island of Manhattan twelve feet higher . . . since the roads were laid over the network of pipes. Nuclear engines from Russians attached to the city's plumbing certainly ought to be able to get up the lump to 25,000 mph.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE EARTH, TRY NEW YORK CITY. There's a slogan for the billboards! TV commercials too. Possibly, if I started getting up at 8:30 every morning my mother would be pleased. I don't know what time it is, it's . . . Barney Miller time. Like out back in the wonderful damp of the North Carolina summer night, knowing that the Tim Conway show was on at 7, and Bullwinkle was at 7 and whatever else was at 7. Combat. My world shut off at 7 or 9, and I would awaken at 1 or 2 in the morning and stare at the pine walls waiting for the sound of the Train. Train, the only reason for the town. Train, the tracks littered with girls' panties and flattened pennies, and then finally the blown up shirt of the track checker's body, flipped over by a spike, flattened.

Now, Joe Franklin Time. I had been thinking that I should spend more time at my own apartment. Outside the steam rises in view, a constantly generating artificial cloud. It even tells me the air pressure now. The air pressure is low, the steam can hardly rise, spilling out toward the cabs, grasping at the fenders. An airplane would emerge into the Banana Express Sign, the pilot seeing BANANA, the last image in his midget body.

I remember dropping through the Sunset Clouds, into Fort Lauderdale. Or arriving at the rise of the end of North Carolina only 300 ft. clearance above the golf course at 5000 ft. above Sea level. Realizing how people run into mountains finally, by nearly doing it. A good metaphor for mankind really, the pilot who flies into the side of a mountain. That's how Audie Murphy died you know, flew right into the side of a mountain. They are sure he personally killed 260 men. Had a lucky M1 carbine and caught one German off the cuff with a bullet right between the eyes. Gambled. This gambling thing is of my father's generation or maybe it is just me, I don't play sports or poker or watch football games or baseball games.

I like the Simpsons and CNN, though I've not had Cable now for six months. I have no health insurance, or dentistry plan or car, soon maybe no phone. Sort of hard to feel secure if I take up the facts, but like Falkner said, "the facts are not necessarily the truth."

I was thinking my apartment has one of the most boring views ever conceived. Condemned apartment windows, empty welfare hotel room windows.

Finally the phone gang drifted off from the pay phones on the corner. I am glad they are gone. A similar group attacked me in Jersey City. The bottle making a certain sound of velocity striking the brick of the building wall . . . instead of my head. Quite eye level it was. The gauntlet I walked from the Grove St. station became as tense as a trip through the trenches. Last time I saw the block I looked from the Cab at a 13 year old brandishing a stick club. What a true picture of the future. Along with the bodies squirming under sheets of plastic on the sidewalks. The coffin boxes in the parks. Vile and hateful Jersey City, Love Canal undeclared. Williamsburgs . . . where one friend suggested it might be a mass case of lead poisoning and he likes living there.

Not that I feel impervious in Manhattan. I just like the idea of Police finding my body one way or another within 15 minutes or so. All of a sudden I remember taking the premarital inventory test with a girl that I was going to marry. The Church wouldn't marry us. I was glad later. Fell in love with myself down by the canal on Davie Blvd. one 4 o'clock morning. I was drunk, but happy. Slept the night my face on the cool tiles. Understood when I read of others found dead in the same positions.

Was thinking of firing Splatt balls at the walls cross from my windows. Bright colors in the paint bullets. Maybe I could arrange a series of mirrors so that I could steal a view from another building. Maybe one day be able to afford Cable or another color TV.

Outside I can see the steam. I went outside and drew a picture of the steam pipe. Katherine wants to know why I have become fascinated with the steam pipe. As I stood there on the sidewalk looking at it, the light was blotted out, the steam blew across me, camp. I felt as if a monster that I had been watching safely from afar was proving that it could get me.

Why do I feel safe?

On Gramercy Park a woman was scalded to death by a bursting steam pipe. My lip was turned inside out by a Puerto Rican guy in my neighborhood bar. I got too comfortable, I may as well have been living in the bar. My window overlooked the place, I could see in my apartment from the bar. Back and forth I walked full of Harp & Whiskey and anything else there toward the end of my drunken path to the end of being a functioning alcoholic, and now a recovering alcoholic who . . . needs a good view.

Last chance to save the World.



The North Coast

This time of year we start getting a day here and a day there where the weather breaks and there is an irresistible compulsion to pretend summer is almost here. White kneed people can be seen on bikes and the air softens, even at night, keeping us outside in the dark. Some of the best ways to get out and see the nascent spring are right around the corner for the city dweller. Over where Field St. runs along Pinnacle Hill near South Clinton there is a section of street with woods running along one side. You'll find a trail that climbs through the woods and breaks out into an outlook with a southern view. When green is just starting to appear on the shrubs and trees the feeling up here is one of incandescent lightness. Fill a thermos with coffee and make the climb in the early morning before work. It will wipe out the last vestiges of cabin fever.

The North Coast we live on offers another great spring walk that will put you somewhere most people in this town have never been. Lake Ontario is very low right now, causing problems for boaters but creating marvelous wide beaches where none existed before. The resulting expanses of sand will make you feel like you're walking on the edge of the world. One of the best of these treks starts in Durand Eastman Park. Park near the ruins of the old bathhouse entrance on the east end of the beach. If you walk east along the shore you'll pass some of the prettiest secluded real estate in the county. The parklands reach down to the lake and then recede, leaving a strip of beach that connects over to Sea Breeze. If you keep walking you'll end up at the Bay outlet pier. Climb up and walk over to Vic & Irv's for a burger to strengthen you for the return trip.

Or you could head west from Durand down Irondequoit's Gold Coast. As you walk along this stretch you'll get a backyard view of the summer homes built by the very wealthy here during the roaring twenties with wide lawns and tennis courts near the beach. As you keep walking you'll pass some Malibu style beach houses eventually reach Windsor Beach (erroneously referred to as Summerville beach). This extends down to the river and the Eastern Pier. If you've built up a thirst you'll find O'Loughlins open by the fishing access site on the river. Cut through the Coast Guard station and don't worry about the guard dogs. They only bite terrorists from Canada.

If I Climbed In A Refrigerator That Was Left On The Curb With Its Door On The Hinges And Couldn't Get Out...

I would have had the foresight to bring Miles Davis's double live "Pangaea" for my walkman.

- APRIL 1**
Absorbed in his research, the scientist is tired. For relaxation he waters houseplants.
- APRIL 2**
A wolf and a sparrow are observing each other. Both are impressed with what they are seeing.
- APRIL 3**
A buffalo separated from the rest of the herd is running full force down a one-way street.
- APRIL 4**
A woman in her nightgown is standing by the open window, listing to Caribbean music played by the local shop owners.
- APRIL 5**
Terra cotta just out of the oven resembles the colors of an Aztec face.
- APRIL 6**
Vibraphone is playing "Odds Against Tomorrow". The bass sounds like the anticipation of the next day.
- APRIL 7**
Child with infinite eyes is carving a landscape with his pocket knife into the bark of a maple tree.
- APRIL 8**
An instrument maker takes an old violin apart. Under the bridge he finds a swallow's nest, with an egg ready to be hatched.
- APRIL 9**
Tiberius and Nero are arm-wrestling. The referee spits on the floor.
- APRIL 10**
Last thunderstorms towards the end of the summer are rumbling over sleeping metropolis.
- APRIL 11**
In a well kept aquarium a fish is playing tambourine. From nowhere, two more jump in.
- APRIL 12**
At the farmer's fair they are shooting clay pigeons. A dressed-up raven is the first prize.
- APRIL 13**
A mushroom is protecting a grasshopper from the rain. Two foxes circling are looking for supper.
- APRIL 14**
Night train is speeding through the plains. It's after midnight, everyone is asleep but the lonely fortune-teller confused with her own palm.
- APRIL 15**
An attorney's son finds a bottle with a message on a local beach. The message instructs him how to raise pigs.
- APRIL 16**
Street car stops at flower-stand, and a passenger steps off to pick up a carnation.
- APRIL 17**
After gala opening of a new opera house, even street-cleaners are singing tonight.
- APRIL 18**
A helicopter flying too low has lost part of its blade, and shaken a basketful of pears from an apple tree.
- APRIL 19**
An electronic organ salesman is demonstrating latest merchandise. Penguins in the front row are poking each others' ribs.
- APRIL 20**
Heart-broken monarch is kneeling at the foot of the coffin of his daughter, who poisoned herself. As he shifts his fat body, she winks.
- APRIL 21**
A telephone cord is stretched to the limit by an angry woman. Through the open window a dove flies in.
- APRIL 22**
Two tones are repeated again and again and again. Is that the way symphonies are written?
- APRIL 23**
At a sold out premiere of Swan Lake half of the front row is reserved for African statesmen.
- APRIL 24**
Between the screams of children at play and the noise of a landing airplane a musical chord is formed.
- APRIL 25**
A long chain on a spool is being cut from a craftsman into shorter lengths to be sold to dog-owners.
- APRIL 26**
An anatomy class is dissecting pictures of a well-known personality, cut from a wet newspaper.
- APRIL 27**
A prisoner on the third floor is looking through his cell window at a house that is boarded up.
- APRIL 28**
The church by the highway exit is being renovated. A wedding party's laughter is mixing with working man's songs.
- APRIL 29**
Old trailer is abandoned after the storm with a kitten sleeping on the front steps in the morning sun.
- APRIL 30**
In the plush hotel's whirlpool an Egyptian and a Jew are luxuriating. The Jew is wondering if the Egyptian is a Jew, and Egyptian thinks the Jew is Egyptian. The cocktail waitress thinks they are both good-looking, but in need of a good scrubbing.

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WED: DISCO-TECHNO-FUNK RARE GROOVE 9-2

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Dear Refrigerator,

I do hope your feeble-minded stab at the Dahmer Capital Punishment thing was intended as sarcasm. We are the creator, the gods, of our Society? Get a handle on your self-worth, bub. Also, you should probably go back to a one-page format, it doesn't seem like you have enough ideas to carry more than that.

Forever yours, Marc Pietrekowski

Dear Refrigerator,

I picked up your "Domestic Bliss" issue at Borders Book Shop here in Indianapolis. What I read was sarcastic, witty and unsettling. Which, I suppose, adds up to cool. I noticed a bus stop story on the back page, and thought I would submit my own. It's a true story, from when I was living in Chicago.

Thanks, Kyle Barnett, Indianapolis

Dear Refrigerator,

This September I moved to Rochester to work at the Center for Environmental Information. When initially scoping out Rochester I got the sense that this was an alive city with a lot to offer. And although this was clearly my impression, people felt compelled to clue me in with an "All About Rochester" rap. Rochester, they said, is stodge and conservative and I would likely feel stultified and boxed in before long. Rochesterians, they said, are for the most part an apathetic, beaten-down, suburb-gripping bunch who don't dare look beyond their own back yards and who remain stubbornly unaware of social, political and environmental issues. But that's not what I found. It was easy to meet people, and seemingly conscientious as in Portland, Maine, where I'd lived for 5 years. I told people how glad I was to be here. How - walking



down the street - I actually saw people I wouldn't mind knowing. How other places I've lived in New York state were truly empty, desolate and culturally



barren by comparison. People seemed surprised, and some said they appreciated hearing it because they'd stopped seeing these things. As the Earth Month Coalition, we are a group of individuals who care about the health of the planet and its inhabitants, bridging divergent interests, transcending borders and joining people together in a renewed, revitalized sense of community. We wrapped up the calendar and have at least one event for most days in April and a total of 75 events taking place throughout Earth Month! According to Earth Day U.S.A., the

organization which tracks Earth Day and Earth Week events, Rochester's Earth Month is probably the most extensive Earth-related series in the country.

Sincerely, Susan Doran

Dear Refrigerator,

Terrific Tabloid (The Refrigerator). Enclosed is a check for a two year subscription. Also inform me if this is the mailing address to send correspondences and/or life's unique dilemmas.

I have many fascinating and often quite humorous contacts with others that your readers and yourselves would enjoy.

Thanks, Jeffery Licata

Dear Jeffery,

We may not be around for two years but we will honor your check. Thanks. We're glad you like it. There is only one Refrigerator address and it is the one listed below. Send us whatever you like, everybody else does. That's the idea. There are about 15 contributors to this issue.

We keep contributions anonymous, but at least we admit it.

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