

THE REFRIGERATOR

"DON'T CLOSE THE DOOR BEHIND YOU" • ROCHESTER, NY • NO. 2



Art in the great outdoors, along the tracks near Main and Goodman (two main streets that don't really intersect). No admission charge, no price tags, not on the Museum Trail.

I would begin the general discussion about the flood, the flood featuring Noah's Ark I mean, by asking whether everyone was certain the earth at the time of the flood was that exact spherical ball as seen, say, from the window of a twentieth century space shuttle. To the question, what do you mean by that!, I would say: just what I said! If we get unanimous agreement that the earth was the same as it appears to be today (and not, say, a table-top earth with its outer edges still in formation and raging elements below, as described by early eminent philosophers; or held up, simply, by Atlas, which was a popular idea too), then I could continue the discussion by asking whether everyone assumed that the people alive at the time of this flood, whatever the flood was in reality, knew that the earth was a spherical ball moving in space around the sun. I mean, even if it was, did everybody know it—that it was?

This image of the earth, which we have all seen in magazines, is of course hard to reconcile with the idea of a flood that covered the whole earth, an apocalyptic flood as depicted, say, in children's books still retelling the Biblical story. Well, probably not, a sufficient chorus of replies would inform me; except for a few seers and deep thinkers, the average person in those ancient times probably thought the earth had edges. Stories of Christopher Columbus might even intrude upon the discussion at this point. The whole debunking of the myth of a worldwide flood might consist in pointing out this naivety in the original accounts, the chorus mightily continues.

Naive boaters on Lake Ontario in a storm might think the world was coming to an end, even today. There was a guy turned up in a town in Vermont just recently who lived in the mountains and thought World War II was still in progress, and didn't know what a television was! What am I trying to prove with these questions, anyway?

Oh, I would say, I am just showing that the more we know about reality scientifically, the less seems to happen . . . locally.



The amazing veneer of spring has laid itself upon us, although by the time you read this it will have retreated into the dumbness of full leaf. Rochester is fragrant for a

week or two and with the warmth I think of not sleeping anymore, of getting out. Riding a bike at night inside the inner loop is like stopping time. Traffic is diminished and wide open streets are sparsely populated. The new necklace of trees and lights on Main Street has the effect (however unintended) of making the town seem smaller, more intimate. Circles of benches at Gibbs Street and by the Liberty Pole catch bus stragglers and tribes of skateboard kidz. Over by the library a new bike path on the west side of the river lets you cruise all the way to Fairport to the east and Brockport to the west from downtown without riding on a road. If you are riding at night, stop at the Marine Midland building behind midtown and climb up to the unused helipad. A large circular depression next to it contains a hidden garden with mature trees and a quiet darkness. Stop at Sweet Stuff by the Little and have a coffee outside. Cruise by the art deco cardealer and check out the chandeliers. Go down to the walk bridge by the Rochester Plaza and watch the river flow. Try riding no-hands all the way down Main Street. It's down hill from west to east. Get a cold beer at 40 South Union. Ride around until you forget who you are, where you are, why you are.



Why does a man keep a record? Because he thinks that otherwise no record is kept! The man who knows God knows God is not keeping this kind of record. Precisely it is the man who knows God who keeps a record. Others think, well let God keep the record!

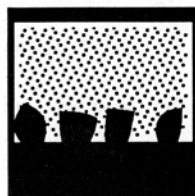


Inside the mind of the mau-mau queen. Its different in there, not logical. She is missing buttons. There is some food now. Jazz is big in this town but no one comes. The landlord wants money, it's getting crowded in here. Money money money. To be a business person or a character in your own movie, that's the question. The musicians play for free but expect things. The atmosphere is better than they thought—you can see it in their faces. Desserts buried in flowers, waiters and waitresses buried in desires, all serenely dashing. She smiles

but will it happen? If you are going to spend money, spend it at Jazzberry's. (it happened and its happening)

College bar. Deadhead bar. Smart bar. Smoky fryer bar. Bruce's bar. Rolling Rock bar. Bring your own tent bar. Deck bar. Band in the back bar. Anthony behind the bar. "The Smartest Bar In Town". So they say. Good to have a drink at 3:00 in the afternoon on Saturday like an alcoholic bar. Yes. Richmond Street.

Next time you're bored, get on St. Paul and go north until it ends. Have a beer and a burrito and sit on a rock by the river watching boats drift in and out of our beautiful inland sea. Silk O'Loughlins.



Footnote on Movies

When people talk about movies, often they will comment decisively on the quality of the acting. I can never take part in this kind of conversation, because it seems like an absurd sort of

observation. I think actors aren't supposed to be noticed as actors, and we aren't supposed to know the role they are playing either, before we see it! But of course that is what the highest compliment paid to them says: the actors were so good they looked natural, like they were the people in the movie and not acting at all.

Anyway, I break into a cold sweat during discussions of this type, say at a table of people in the restaurant, after somebody has been to a movie I guess, and I start watching the people I am with talking and wondering if they are an equally amazing phenomenon—I mean people acting just like people—and in real life too! Again, I realize I have failed, in all my study, to account for the existence of movies. I can't understand what movies are, or who the people in the movies are. Like a person who is dreaming can't account for the dream, really . . . But being alive isn't dreaming, I feel perfectly natural, when I am awake, and hardly think about how I am acting at all. I feel so naturally I must assume the movie, I mean the afternoon, goes on forever. God!

I fear we have seen so many movies, and praised so many actors for acting like real people, that now we don't know what a real person is supposed to act like. We're unbelievably self-conscious! Good acting can only be . . . the absence of bad acting. There's the horror! The absence of bad acting, such as we encounter in life so much, and the appearance of the possibility of people acting like people . . . but only in movies! God! Are we confused?

Then I try to take refuge in the room where we are talking, I pull back and look around, trying to focus again on the reality of the place, the walls and the pictures on the walls, the people more distant sitting at other tables. Oh no, I think, even the place is deteriorating! It looks like someone took everything away, and put movie posters, I mean everything looks rented, temporary! The people I am with look like they are . . . in between scenes! The scene we are in isn't . . . one of the actual scenes—in the movie we are in. What! Well, maybe now I get it; people praise actors for the quality of their acting, because that is what they know about—the quality of acting.

Excuse me, I say, is there anybody here who is a prototype? I met this girl once who was a prototype; we got married and had two prototype children. It's a small start, but we are hoping humanity can eventually climb . . . into the picture.



The Real Margarita

1 1/2 oz. Tequila
1/2 oz. Triple Sec
Juice of 1/2 lime
Shake in cocktail shaker with ice. Rub lime around rim of martini glass and dip in salt. Strain shaker contents into glass. Drink. Repeat if necessary.

VI Feet Under And Rising Send help!



Exercise in Truth Telling

I was headed across the back parking lot at Grana's, in the driving rain about 9:30, taking the back alley to the unmarked rear entrance, and I got there coincidentally at the same time as Kurt, a regular Grana's patron. "Not everybody knows about this door," I said to him, as we sidestepped the wind and rain, which can really pick up in that alley, and got ourselves standing at the bar. I was just escaping my office for an hour and the sight of my notebooks spread out like, well, account books, on my desk, so I was pretty wordless, I even forgot to pour the beer out in the glass or even light a cigarette, but I just stood there, hoping nobody would ask me what was happening.

But Billy Grana, the bartender, came over and leaned his elbows on the bar like to talk with me, and I suddenly remembered the incident earlier in the day at the Lilac Laundromat. I remembered it like it was a movie I had seen recently, the whole episode and like burning to be told. Well, you have to tell stories at the bar with dispatch, they have to be about as short as jokes—which are in vogue, almost in demand I would say—in quick short sentences and with an air of joviality, though you best be criticizing the crazy world. Like when you are in the bar you're not in the world out there, but you report on how crazy it is out there. Anyway, I gave the shortest possible version of the episode, and it went over so well with Billy Grana I turned then to Kurt, who doesn't talk much, or listen to much, and told it identically to him—though he became distracted just a few sentences into it and I had to do like three retakes to finally get the story finished.

What happened was I parked my car in the lot at Lilac Laundromat, not noticing the signs posted there, and went into the hardware store a few doors down the block. I was in the hardware store only a few minutes when an old man came running in and said, "they're towing your car away, you better get out there!" I said, "what, that's impossible, I just came in here," but I could see how concerned the old man was and I went out, back up the block, and it was true there was already a towtruck hooked to my car, and these two unfriendly goons grinning at me, actually, when I protested. They said, "too late, buddy, you're illegally parked." I said, "you can't do this." They said, "yes we can." I said, "I'm standing here, this is theft." But they just said, "you parked the car, and went into the store, we're taking it, stand out of the way."

So I said, "no you're wrong, I never got out of the car." Then I opened the drivers side door and climbed in behind the wheel. So, the one guy comes over and says, "what are you doing?" I said, "go ahead, tow it, I'd like to see you tow a car with the driver in it."

"Pretty funny," the guy said. I said, "you're the one who's being funny." Then, I started the motor.

The one goon said to the other, who'd come over to see what the story was, "ah, he beat us." I thought . . . maybe these guys are almost human. And then I watched them as they unhooked the towtruck, and I drove home, never finished my errand at the hardware store, and I arrived home with my knees still shaking—for that was a pretty bold maneuver!

Of course I should have remembered they are famous at the Lilac Laundromat for towing cars away; they actually watch the place, I bet. When I got home I called Lilac and complained, said they were terrorizing the neighborhood. I said, you're really creating the impression the world has gone to hell, with these tactics. Who cares, I thought I heard the bored Assistant Manager mutter. Actually then I tried to put this out of my mind, but ended up anyway telling the story twice at Grana's.

But the really interesting thing is that the episode didn't happen exactly like I narrated it. Actually I didn't pull that stunt of getting back in my car, but just argued with those guys for a

while, and ended up giving them twenty dollars to unhook the car. They had me, was the way it looked—it was either twenty right then, or fifty if they took the car and I had to go get it at their lot, probably in Irondequoit. After I got rid of them the old man who had run into the store after me, and who watched the whole scene, commiserated with me on the sidewalk, calling them "bastards" about five times. Then I moved my car onto the street and parked it, and I did finish my errands.

Also, it wasn't a hardware store I went into, but a Sportscard store, to pick up a few basketball cards for my son's collection. That seemed to be entirely too hard to narrate, so I changed it—at Grana's. The part about getting in the car and saying theatrically, "okay, tow it with me in then!" I guess I dreamt up while driving home, I don't think I thought of that on the spot in Grana's, but before then, so it was waiting like as a possible version.

I guess the main story here is . . . the story of how I told the story.



Thank God I am so well adjusted!



Subculture Hop

This one requires some preparation. Skip dinner the night before and don't eat in the morning. Regardless of the weather put on several layers of clothing ending with 2-3 sweaters. Wear an old pair of sneakers. Get four plastic grocery bags and double them, filling one with four newspapers and filling the other with 10-11 returnable cans and bottles. Have a friend drop you off in the morning on 490 east near Plymouth. As you walk towards the exit, keep your eyes peeled for cans and bottles. They are worth 5 cents. Don't get hit by a car. Stay out of peoples' way and don't make eye contact. It helps to keep your head down. If someone offers you money, take it and say thank you have a nice day. You don't have to mean it. Go down Broad to the back of Midtown. You can take your bottles to Wegmans if they are clean. If you're lucky you'll have enough to get an egg McMuffin at mickey d's on Main St. If not, have coffee, it'll keep you going and you can sit and read one of your papers. . The coffee tastes pretty good. Thank god for the little things in life.



The Present Circumstances

of the Literary Lion (II)
Sometimes it's late at night when I come back with The groceries, and stash them quietly in the bright Cavern of the refrigerator,

in the kitchen darkly Seen, evidence I've been unfocused, travelling, Still have not put the moon above the trees to Bed, still have not dismantled the red warning signs That pepper the distance, but I'm rambling even in The open house because I have not conquered those True images of the child that give possibility To thought, like thought alone, that it can outlast All trouble, frame it nicely in an argument for

Life, and get its business done before the world Breaks sorely, unresolved, mere comically, upon a Day like out of the pages of the past.

Most of the Time it's late at night, when I provide the others With the assurance that they need, assurance Of an awareness uncontrolled, and undecieved. I Register the complaint! It's nothing but the growing Weirdness of a life where you can't concentrate. You're trying to concentrate, as you move across The tiles, on how to keep the basic game in mind, And still take care of circumstances, like to Make a statement out of patience, actually like God were watching, from out of the crowd. What drives a passion through a paradox, and Daily, making you a hero just by survival? I Think, when I lean down in the artificially White interior of the great refrigerator, that Of course I could say I'm offering sacrifices To society—but really it's a case of not knowing What to say, on this occasion, that drives me Onward. Many fragments haunt the mind, Episodes containing illustrious confusion, Proof of manifold truth at work, let's say Among the night clerks at the artificially Bright food store where I wandered like a Zombie, illiterate! Well, what exists causes Conflicts in time, for none of this was given In dreams before, or history.

I have the Portfolio marked . . . sentences with the Right tone and measurements for appropriation Of any scene. Kind of a disc jockey who knows all Emotions, has a grasp of the library of songs— Kind of a visitor, these days, taking account Of dwindling interests and awesome spaces In the record nobody is keeping . . . I have the Leather satchel I found on the street, and the Dead memos, like a pile of leaves. And the images That can shock instantly, when they reverse Your learning and put you back in the mood Where life is a beginning. When there is nothing To say, and yet you're alert, there's a judgement Been filed! There's a case for rare continuity, There is the mystery and the occasion for a Breakthrough in position.

Well, you won't pay It back, I can tell, because you are listening. That's how I get back to the daytime, confessed!



The Refrigerator Talks Back!

Refrigerator,
Who says we are lesbians? Some are, some aren't. Calling us names, labeling us, won't make us go away. Straight women also think Black Velvet ads insult women. Just wanted you to know — THIS AIN'T FUNNY!

Dear Anonymous Responder,

The Refrigerator regrets characterizing the people defacing a Black Velvet billboard in our last issue as "lesbian commandos" when in fact we did not know their sexual preference. In the future we will refer to these individuals as commando women.

Mark Cold
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