

THE REFRIGERATOR

**SPECIAL
"NO-HUDDLE
OFFENSE"
ISSUE!**

**IT'S FREE
#12**

Rear View Mirror

I finally snapped into a realization today, of something I had been dimly aware of I guess for quite a long time, namely that police cars have the ability to disappear in the rear-view mirror. I wonder if anyone else has noticed this. They are following you on city streets for a few blocks and then they just disappear, in the space between two (consecutive) glances into the rear-view mirror, they vanish like you had only imagined them.

Of course it occurs to me I might have just been imagining the police car, for its appearance was sudden, and I suddenly had a gulp in my throat and wasn't sure how to drive correctly; then of course, if it was my imagination, the disappearance is easily explained (then I have a different problem). But I think, no, I am not that paranoid. The truth is with the first observation, police cars have this ability to disappear into thin air, at any time while following you.

You might say it is just they suddenly turn down sidestreets, because of course police cars aren't going anywhere (unless they are racing there) but cruising around, and they make amusing or perplexing decisions, giving the appearance of having a purpose but actually trying to simultaneously be on the lookout and not appear as a threatening presence to naturally apprehensive drivers like myself. Why I panic inwardly and nearly flinch whenever I see a police car is a question, since I'm never doing anything wrong, am not wanted in any state by the police, though it's possible I unintentionally, say, just turned right on red, when a sign said not to, or forgot to turn on my headlights in the snow — a new law they passed this year which has produced quite beautiful lines of glowing traffic in late afternoon semi-blizzards on Monroe Avenue.

It's mostly on Monroe Avenue, in fact, or coming toward Monroe on Goodman St., as it happened today, that I notice this phenomena of the police cars that trail me for a few blocks, not coming too close as I study them in the rear-view mirror, mentally tallying my condition, driver-wise, at the moment (whether I have my wallet or not, etc., is the car inspected?), and then disappearing without a trace in just the one split-second it takes me to recheck the scene ahead.

When driving, you see, I virtually live in the rear-view mirror — so I know what is going on there.



Countless Times



Two aristocrats are out horseback riding and one challenges the other to see which can come up with the larger number. The second agrees to the contest, concentrates for a few minutes, and proudly announces, "Three." The proposer of the game is quiet for half an hour, then finally shrugs and concedes defeat.

Innumeracy, John Allen Paulos

We were in Latin America looking for rebels. I don't suppose it matters much which rebels; they were generally short, dark men with mismatched fatigues and complaints. We were looking for them to count them — no one really knew how many there were because they were scattered between their base camps north of the mountains and the country below. For a long time everyone had accepted an estimate of twenty to twenty-five thousand, but we knew that that was just one of those things that became a fact because everyone repeated it. Journalists lazily conspire to make data of appearances, the way Superman used to be able to squeeze a piece of coal and form a diamond.

I didn't blame them. My friend Henry and I were at the bar of the Royal Maya drinking beer with the U.N. observers when we were ordered to go south and count.

"Tough luck, mate," one of the Australian soldiers said, when Henry came back from the house phone and explained what we had to do. "I wouldn't want to smell those buggers, much less count them."

He was at a table with a Canadian officer, another Aussie, and a large, taciturn Samoan. The Samoan was picking at one of the free hors d'oeuvres, which resembled a scale-model of a hamburger.

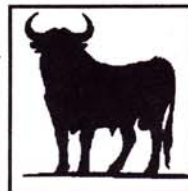
"Sonofabitch has no manners," the Canadian said, pointing to the Samoan. "They don't have forks and knives where he comes from."

The Samoan lifted the little burger up and examined its underside. "Good man to have on your side in a brawl though, I'll tell ya that," the Australian said, watching him carefully.

continued on next page

Talk Is Cheap

Local seers make their predictions for 1992



"I predict that National Ambulance is going to do really well in 1992. They're going to keep their city contract. I predict that the water in Texas is going to dry up. I predict they'll have crops that they've never seen before as a result of the flood. I predict that hairstyles are going to go back to the seventies; people are going to go back to that layered, feathered — the globe look, the football helmet look. There's going to be a resurgence in seventies paraphernalia; it's going to be worth a lot of money.

Bernie Heveron, local bassist

"Lower car prices, better interest rates."

Rick Lynch, massage therapist

"It's too early to say."

Mike Rey, music archivist

"1992 will be a year of missed chances, missed opportunities. The year Mario should have run for president."

Janet Marshall, teacher

"California is going to fall off into the ocean, and all of us in Arizona are going to have ocean-front property."

Patrick Morgan, visiting dignitary

"I predict Shep's Paradise will be the new hot spot in Rochester."

Debra Clifford, antique dealer/musician

"Everyone will find happiness in their coffee beans."

Bruce Handleman, educator



Notes From Little Flossie Inside

Countless Times continued

The rebel camps were spread out along twenty miles of foothills and scrub. For the first few hours we wandered, trying to extrapolate a total number of rebels. Then, walking from one tent-camp to another, on a deserted stretch of road, we ran into a patrol. The men were heavily-armed and carried full packs. Henry waved. They stopped. They were on their way back to their base camp, coming from the southern foothills, they said.

"How long have you been walking?" I asked one of them.

"Months and months," he said.

He wore a wristwatch. "What time is it?" I asked him. But he only extended his wrist so that I could look at the watch. "Belonged to a fascist," he said proudly.

"Ah, lovely," Henry said. "And about how many troops did you leave in-country, behind you?" Henry was a better reporter than I was.

"Oh," he said, "twenty, thirty"

"Twenty, thirty ..." I said, encouraging him.

"Thousand," he said. "Or maybe forty. Yes, forty." He looked around. A few of the other men nodded: Yes.

Henry looked at me and rolled his eyes. "How many soldiers do you figure you have here?" he asked.

"Here?" the rebel repeated, looking at the other men. There were about two dozen of them on the road.

"No, no," Henry said, "here in the camps, altogether."

"Ah," he said, "fifty, sixty, sixty-five...seventy..."

"Thousand?" I said.

"Thousand," he said. "But we've just come back."

Based on our previous estimate, the total number of rebels now had increased three or four hundred percent, give or take a patrol. Either they couldn't count, or we had made a very important discovery.

"And what about right here, in your unit," Henry said.

"Here? A hundred men."

And that's how we got the number, or a number. We just divided everything he said by four or five, and figured there were actually close to forty thousand rebels. Later, when the war ended, the U.N. soldiers left the bar and counted all of them. They got 39,482 — a figure which surprised everyone, not least Henry and me.

If not the Samoan. I saw him one day after that, working in a demob camp in the south. He was dismantling the rebels' rifles with a blowtorch. Although he worked slowly, he had a

huge stack of them already finished. I saw him working day and night, like some new Vulcan, until all of the rifles in the world were done. How long would that take?

"If they stopped making them?" he said.

And then I saw it differently: guns on the march like the brooms in "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," endlessly multiplying, countless platoons of FALs and Galils and AK-47s. And I've wondered since then whether there's a universal human tendency to over estimate any number of things.

The question came back to me the other day, when a friend of mine insisted that 50% of Rochesterians are Italian-American.

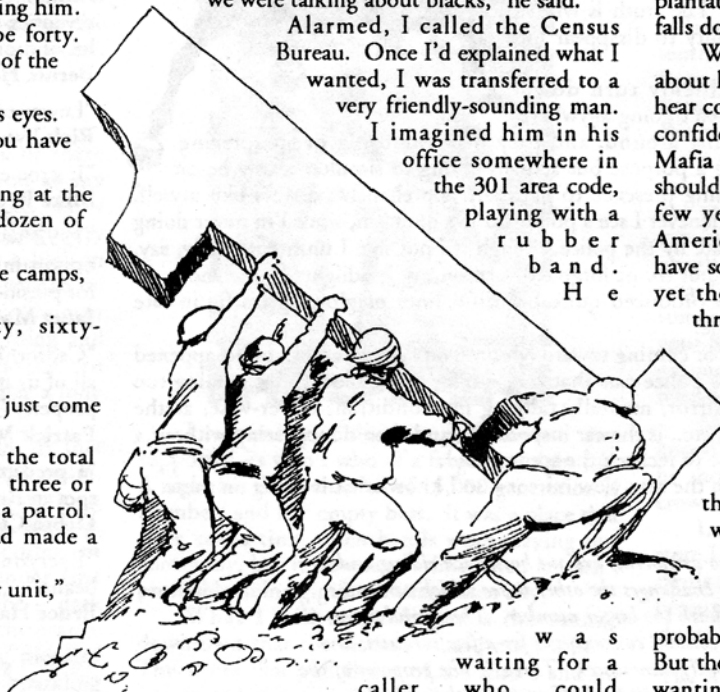
"Fifty percent? You can't be serious," I said.

"Well, it must be close to that," she said. "It seems like that." (She is not Italian-American.)

I repeated her observation to a friend of mine, whose parents emigrated here from Sicily. He was incredulous. He guessed the figure was more like 5%. "I mean, I could see the fifty percent if we were talking about blacks," he said.

Alarmed, I called the Census Bureau. Once I'd explained what I wanted, I was transferred to a very friendly-sounding man.

I imagined him in his office somewhere in the 301 area code, playing with a rubber band. He



appreciate what a task it was to count all of the Americans — who are, after all, a nation of rebels. "How many are there altogether?" I asked.

"Two hundred and forty-eight million seven hundred and nine thousand eight hundred and seventy-three," he said.

"Not seventy-two, or seventy-four?"

"Nope."

He gave me the breakdowns for Latin and black percentages, which is as far as the government discriminates. Meanwhile, I'd been taking my own survey. I asked white people what percentage of the country they thought was black, and got estimates of 30, 40 and even 50%; the average answer was about 25%. According to the man at the Census Bureau, however, the actual figure is 12.1%. By my very unscientific count, white people think there are twice as many blacks as there are.

And I discovered that it's no different with the number of Jews non-Jews imagine, only perhaps worse. The guesses I got for the percentage of the U.S. population that's Jewish ranged from 5 to 20%, and 10% was about the

average. Since the Census Bureau can't collect data on religion, I called the Rochester Jewish Federation. The woman I spoke with there wanted to know what I wanted the information for before she'd give it to me.

"Because I think people think there are more Jews than there are," I said. "Because there are all of these phantom Jews out there, and who knows what they're doing and being blamed for. And because I think I'm going to write an article about political innuendo."

She didn't seem reassured, or impressed, but she told me anyway: there are approximately 6,840,000 Jews in America, which is roughly 2.7% of the population. So, according to my amateur survey, non-Jews imagine that there are four times more Jews than there are.

I can't help thinking that that's not unrelated to the Holocaust. And, if I follow that line of reasoning, I'd have to conclude that whites imagine there are more blacks than there are, from condign guilt about slavery (every plantation an Auschwitz, a Treblinka). But it all falls down when we go back to the Italians.

When Mario Cuomo was still on the fence about his presidential candidacy, one would often hear completely unfounded speculation, earnestly confided, that he wouldn't run because he had Mafia connections in his closet. Or perhaps I shouldn't say *completely* unfounded, since a poll a few years ago found, incredibly, that most Americans think that most Italian-Americans have some connection to organized crime. And yet the numbers are simple enough to work through: If Italian-Americans were as little as three percent of the U.S. population, that would give the Mafia at least 3,730,648 employees. Which probably means that the real *Cosa Nostra* is innumerate spite.

Surely some people overestimate things partly from an innocent fear of being wrong, because it seems safer to overestimate than to undercount. And because the world is an impossibly large and unknowable place, some people probably guess high just to fill it up a little more. But there's the darker reason, too: While what is wanting cannot be numbered, the needy make facts anyway. There is a premium these days on victimhood, a prize for the newest oppressed grouping. One way to get it is by dividing the world into ever-smaller subsets. The other way, equally common, is to exaggerate a homogeneous multitude of others. The first approach is no boon to humanity, but it's the second that yields a republic of suspicious, pumpkinheaded rebels; and one lonely guy at the Census Bureau, waiting for your call.

Not to mention the Samoans. They usually live on islands, where they have no need of forks and knives.



My friend John watches cartoons with his kids although I suspect he would watch them if didn't have any kids. He was wondering if we had seen the "Dinosaurs" cartoon. Apparently the dinosaurs have electricity and worship their **Refrigerators**. They don't celebrate Christmas but their big holiday is *Fridgator Day*.

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THINK

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Notes From Little Flossie

On the first note the band played, I just pushed back my chair and put my boots right on the table. Right in front of me, shining cowboy boots, just like that. I'll tell you a little secret — Lemon Pledge. That's what I used on my boots back in the old days, right before I went on stage. Mack would say somethin' like, "It smells like you been pickin' on a lemon tree, Flossie." I'd laugh, but it worked real good. So there I sat, boots gleaming in the flickerin' candlelight. Thinkin' of Mack.

A few people looked over, kind of wondering what I was up to, bein' so bold. Then I couldn't take those boots down. It was a matter of pride, and that, I have alot of. Seein' it wasn't very comfortable, I decided I'd leave 'em up high until the band could play one song that I didn't know. Sort of my own version of "Stump The Country Singer".

"It Don't Hurt Anymore," now that was one of my favorites. Once I sang that right on the radio station WHAM. Mack said I sang like I was headin' for Nashville on the next train. See, I was quite a singer. A real sweet songbird. "Little Flossie." That was my name. He used to call me up to sing the last 4 songs of every set. "Mack Sandle and the Hi-Boys with special guest, Little Flossie." Those are some memories.

"Tonight I'm Cryin', I Got My Foot Up On The Rail." It use to really floor me when Mack sang that song. It was about a woman leavin' her man and now he just about lives in a honky tonk, with his foot up on the rail. I look over — there's no rail in this bar. Now that gets me to thinking that maybe there are no rails left in this

whole city. I mean, every bar had a rail then, must have, or Mack wouldn't have been singin' about it.

Isn't it funny how when you're doin' somethin' you just don't realize how good it is until you can't do it anymore. That's the puzzle of life in a nutshell. I mean, I'd give these boots and a whole lot more to relive just one night with Mack Sandle. I think of him in that wide brimmed hat, hand sewn sequined shirt and a guitar that was so played, the finish was just plain



We had a good life together, Mack and I. A life filled with music, good friends and song. There's not many that can say the same.

"He'll Have To Go." Now there's one I always loved. Gentleman Jim Reeves. Mack's favorite crooner, I think. It's a crying shame we lost Jim in that plane crash. It sent another young star with everything to live for on a direct flight to Hillbilly Heaven. I like to picture them up there, all together, havin' one helluva country western pickin' party. Mack included.

I swung my feet down from the table. Even though I knew every song by heart. I didn't see anyone I knew tonight. Sometimes old timers would recognize me and call out my name, "Sing a song Little Flossie." After Mack died, I still did some singing into the seventies. Jamborees, shows, VFW halls. But all that's over now.

You know, tonite this bar is just too slick for me. It seems it's traveled too many miles from The Bar B Circle Ranch theme. I guess I'll go home, listen to some Patsy Cline and fall asleep with dreams of Mack circling my mind. Happens every time I hear the old songs. You know, these boots will retire tonite without dancin' or havin' kicked up a single step. But don't worry. I promise next time I get out the Lemon Pledge, I'll let you know.

Happy Trails, Little Flossie

missin' in some parts. Gone for good. It's not like that now. I look over at the guitar player. He's got some space age lookin' thing in his hand, like a guitar from the planet mars. And it's makin' loud noises no guitar should ever be allowed to make. Mack would spin circles in his grave if he heard some of this stuff they call Country. He died in 1965.

Havin' been married to the man for 22 years, I was too distraught to pay much attention at Mack's funeral. But I do remember some of The Hi-Boys singing an old Carter Family tune. Alot of people took his death hard — Mack was famous in this city. Had his own nightclub on Honeyoye Lake. *The Bar B Circle Ranch*. Once Tex Ritter came into town, stayed at the house, and did a double nighter at The Ranch. Tex Ritter himself. Now you know, when I say memories, I mean memories.

I considered myself just about the luckiest girl alive to be Mrs. Mack Sandle. Used to write it a thousand times just to look at it. Flossie Sandle. Mrs. Flossie Sandle. Mrs. Flossie Mack Sandle.

Paradox of The Quality Man



I had this friend who wrote books, I figured they were great books (that's benefit of the doubt), and I was pleased and rooting for him in the scene when

finally I saw him lash out at this arrogant jerk of a Real Estate Salesman, last night about 11:30 at Grana's (The Literary Bar), blasting him good with a volley of unchecked and well-aimed verbal abuse, because the guy obviously deserved it, and the writer friend of mine obviously deserved to air his position once like this, because, damn it, why should he be on the defensive his whole life and let these well-fed slobbs interrogate him like they were doing just fine and he had a problem.

"Give it to him!" I said.

"Yea," my friend said, "tell me what's more obscure and useless," to the sharply dressed salesman, "a man who tries to write books about why he is alive, or a man who sells real estate?"

"What?" the guy says. As if that was not stated clearly enough.

"Choose it," My friend said. "What's more obscure, a man who questions what he is doing with a spatula, or a man who flips the hamburgers grinning for all the heavens in the late afternoon light?"

"Yea!" I shouted; "give it to him!"

"What's more ridiculous," my friend thundered on, "my broken down car, or yours that eternally, but not eternally, works, when, I say, eternity itself is broken down like . . . an



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CARPE DIEM

ignored concept in the mind."

I couldn't believe how articulate my friend was. I wanted to jump into his shoes, he was saying everything I wanted to say and had wanted to say for a long time.

"What is more appropriate as a mode of existence," he said, lowering his voice like the whole room was now listening, "being able to pay for lunch, or not being able to pay for lunch?"

"What?" said the salesman, who now looked . . . seedy and who was glancing around like he lost his buddies. "What are you talking about?"

"Are you so hungry," my friend. "I'll tell you what. You make me sick!"

Damn, I thought, he's got him. He's made mincemeat out of him. I could write a book about this! All my life it's been the wrong way around, people who are doing something have to make excuses for it, people who are lazy and take the easiest path in front of them end up smirking and acting like life were a big game, the bastards! I was rooting for my modest friend, a mere heroic poet-man, a harmless genius-type, talking to . . . an ape in store bought clothes, with money-lined sidevests, a beer-slinging animal who doesn't even know how to talk, and my spokesman, never before irate, somehow tonight got ticked off, and was turning the tables!

"Let's get out of here," I said to myself - for, frankly, it was I who was my friend all along. And I left the flatfooted society in arrears, I took myself home and I was vowing on the route to never again be silent, but to terrorize the ignorant with volumes of, torrents of, description of the world we shared . . . ignobly!

"Worthless, stupid creeps," I wrote, "don't even deserve to be immortalized. This is the last time I'll mention them!" Dawn was at the window and I was still wrestling with this problem of humankind. Other people, other people, other people! I was pounding the desk, banging my head on the desk, practically. What is the purpose of other people exactly?



Dave down at Printing Plus told me his parents retired and moved to Florida with their cats. They stopped at a motel and of course the cats were all freaked out. When they woke up the next morning they couldn't find

one of them and figured it had climbed through a hole in the wall behind the dresser and was somewhere inside the motel's walls. They bought some expensive cat food and put it by the opening but were not able to lure it out by checkout time. They sat by the hole all day and later that evening the cat decided to come out.

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THE ANSWER.

DEAR BABS,



I am seriously considering breaking my engagement to "Lilly." She's obsessed with her dreams - not her hopes and aspirations, but those little movies your mind plays for you so you won't get bored and die when you sleep for eight or

ten hours. She insists on sharing every detail with me each morning, which I think is as boring as someone telling you about the silent film they saw. When we first met I thought it was a bit charming and eccentric that she dreamed that she was a brontosaurus in love with another brontosaurus and she felt some kind of reptilian melancholy about their impending extinction. But now, she sulks and stares all day in some ridiculous outfit that looks like underwear over her clothes because she was dreaming that she and Madonna were best friends and I woke her just as they were about to go shopping. I love her - but how can I marry this lunatic?

Stymied

Dear Stymied,

Your letter reminds me of the end of the second chapter of "The Sheltering Sky," by Paul Bowles. Kit and Port, the already married couple, don't have the most enviable relationship. He persists in sharing his dream with his wife and their friend Tunner in spite of Kit's bitter plea that he not bore them. She even calls him egotistical and thoughtless, but he tells the dream anyway (quite a good dream, in my opinion) and she flees in tears.

I don't think you and Lilly should be married. Why should a woman with such imagination and sensitivity want to be stuck with an unappreciative boor like you for the rest of her life? Why would you want to be with a woman you refer to as a lunatic? You want the perfect woman? Go to bed with your favorite Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue, and awake refreshed to no morning breath and no senseless chatter. Sweet Dreams.

Dear Babs,

Did you ever do something so regrettable, way back in your past, that you couldn't even think about it sitting alone in the dark? I did something to my brother when he and I were children and although he may not remember it

or realize how deeply mean I was to him, sometimes feel that he, too, cannot bear to think about it or voice it. Once we were in a museum and he stared with watery eyes for about an hour at a painting with two small children at the seashore. I want to tell him I'm sorry but I don't want to bring it up if it would mean hurting him again. We are very close now but he is young and I'm protective of him. But I wonder if I sometimes looks at me as we eat dinner or play game and resents me and hates me.

Worried

Dear Worried,

Everyone with a younger sibling has probably done something that they're terribly ashamed of. When my little sister and I were three and seven respectively, I was always devising ways to test her trust and assert my dominance. We shared huge, very high double bed, and I would tell her to look over the edge at something very beautiful on the floor. She would do it and I would push her off. My heart would break because she was so surprised and hurt and she would sob as I held her and comforted her. I could do this five times in a row with the exact same results and she never wavered in her absolute trust in me!

My sister does remember this now and jokes about it whenever I try to control her. We're able to discuss it and now I end up crying with her comforting me. Talk to your brother and you will be able to help each other to understand that you were children surrounded by the confusing behavior of already spoiled adults. That's sort of the way my sister explains it to me



Standing in the Kitchen
I'm standing in the kitchen in awe of life, Coming around the corner like in a story. I'm a comedian, with suitcase of explosives, Ask me a question, you get

a rare response!

I'm reigning supreme, in a world of chaos, Nothing says anything about my project - I've got everything figured out, on a grand scale, And this kitchen is perfect, it doesn't apply. I must have been imported here, to wonder aloud,

Or give to life a grand smiling indifference, To end up loving every object in sight, for It's not repeatable, it's a miracle to be here - Be wordless, have no emotion, but a king with No judgements or decrees, be a little person Standing in the kitchen, before and after the Hour, the chapter that is unforgettable time. It's just we are infinitely removed, I said; Swear upon the morning light you shall endure!

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My Little Runaway

What with the breakup of the Soviet Union and all, we're suddenly hearing about a lot of countries no one knew about before. It's kind of nice, that feeling that, after all this time, the world is

suddenly a bigger place than we imagined; or, at least, it breaks down into more and more intricate parts than we realized. It's more like a toy.

Matters got worse, though, or maybe better, when we found out about Starskayana. A part of the part of the USSR that hasn't been independent since well before the last czars, it's a remote and strange place. Its denizens have that hollow-eyed, sleepless look one sees in so many news photos of Muscovites these days, but there's one key difference. The entire state is dedicated to, fashioned around, and warped by a singular theology: Ringo was the best Beatle.

The really frightening part of all of this is that Starskayana — who knew — has nukes. Apparently Moscow deployed several dozen strategic nuclear weapons in and around the capital, now rechristened Starangrad, back when the Politburo was riding high and fearless; now, as of New Year's, they've fallen into the Starskayanites hands. Of course, these people don't have any other weapons or an army to speak of; just a few tarnished sabers, and some missiles that could wipe the world off the map.

I sort of imagine it this way: The Starskayanites will hold themselves and the world hostage, like Cleavon Little's scene in "Blazing Saddles," except it won't be funny. Already there are reports of their demands, that all Wings LPs be melted down and made into ashtrays, that Yoko be traded for the missiles. Of course, the ad-hoc government spokespeople deny all that, but it's hard to know whether they mean it.

At a ceremony last week, marking their imminent independence, they adopted "Octopus's Garden" as their new national anthem, and proclaimed themselves as harmless as the Fab Four on acid. But I'd keep an eye on them. Already there are rumors that they're trading their mineral rights to the Japanese for old copies of the White Album, and then publicly burning the other three photo inserts. There's even a radical faction which holds that Ringo was the only Beatle. He was a genius, they say, and dubbed all the other parts. Of course, they don't have much power. Yet.



I had a dentist appointment the other morning and was on 590 South going about 60 miles an hour when a couple in the next lane got my attention. The woman in the passenger seat was making little circles with her

forefingers and thumbs and looking through them at me. I almost stuck my tongue out at her but she was pointing to the back of my car and I turned around to find my favorite pair of sunglasses sitting on the trunk so I waved back sort of sheepishly. I slowed way down and went around the Monroe Avenue cloverleaf at about 5 mph.

I was thinking about calling this 800 number for these Zygon cassettes. I think they said they were \$149.95 but they "supercharge your brain," "zap stress" and enable you to "think like a millionaire".



strip during the VP/Drugs segment. What's next? Are they going to refuse to run ads for the JFK movie?

**I see the street has made wide passage
For the firetrucks. The gods who ruled
Are a board of tired executives. The paper
Dragon kite is in the trees, when I look up
Toward the skies unleashed. And even if
Disguised, the devil is limping, badly,
Wandering about the sudden Country Club.
Reality has made it . . . to the surface!**



If you want to get a reputation as an intellectual, it's pretty easy, just try speaking in complete sentences. Also, bringing up subjects you have been thinking about, say if you are having lunch, bringing up subjects like "the history of science," that will establish you, or proposing a solution to the problem of how to make downtown Rochester actually exist, that will do it!



Whenever I get the urge to take on another activity I remember my college soccer coach telling us, that as hard as it was to believe, when we commit to the long hours of practice and road travel (this was Big Ten soccer) our grades would actually improve. I couldn't understand the logic of this but I liked his philosophy and wanted to believe it. Then I remember a nun in second grade telling us that it was actually shorter to take a right angle around the corner of Brookfield and Humbolt Streets than cutting across the neighbor's lawn. I couldn't imagine how this could be true. As Christmas approached the same nun asked, "How many of you still believe in Santa Claus?"

Bald people with a beard look upside down to me.

The Times Union gave The Refrigerator a Star in their Stars & Bars column but we have got to give them a set of Bars back for their refusal to run Gary Trudeau's comic

1992 is off to a good start if the recent batch of promos that crossed our desk is any indication. All should be available in local record stores by mid-January.

Betty Jo Dean *Mama's Lace Tornado* Countrystyle Records

Who'd have thought that the biggest-selling country lp of 1991 would be a blend of traditional country music and free-association, stream-of-consciousness poetry? Not many, I suppose. But this strange lp from Betty Jo Dean is all of that and more.

Mama's Lace Tornado is quite a departure for Miss Dean, whose last record, *Country Girl*, was a tribute to the late Patsy Huff. What led her from classic Huff compositions like "Memories of My Home" to the likes of the title tune and the unusual "Dance of the Woodburning Stoves" is anybody's guess. But what caused this strange transformation is not as important as the fact that it worked. Country music may never be the same again.

Scully Quilp *The Complete Recordings* American Archives Records

This magnificent eleven CD boxed set chronicles the career of this giant of American music, from his pre-vaudeville days, through his blues, pop, gospel, and rock periods, and onto the final stages of his career, as a writer of jingles for Detroit auto manufacturers.

Critics might find the collection over-long (did they really need to include three entire CDs of conversations between Quilp and his mother?) and the \$215 retail price might strike some as excessive. But that's carping. Scully Quilp's *The Complete Recordings* is a thrilling journey through the history of American music.

Steel Teeth *We Will Bite You* Metallic Records

It's been a long time since Steel Teeth hit the big time with their metal debut, *Big Ugly Dank Stupid Stranger*. *We Will Bite You*, though possibly lacking the poetic tone of the earlier lp, exceeds it in sheer noisy magnificence. It is a metal masterpiece.

Vocalist Joey DiLeona is in top form; his high-end wailing will not only shatter glass; it will pulverize it, melt it down, and shape it into strange and ghastly forms.

If there is a heavy metal record greater than this one, please don't tell me — I don't think my nerves could handle it.

Billy Love *Do the Scary Potato* Large Records

The list of popular "dance craze" tunes is a long one, reaching way back to Scully Quilp's 1933 rendition of "Let's Call This Dance Howdy." Do the Scary Potato is Billy Love's heroic attempt to breathe new life into this lost form.

Though best known for his forays into new age opera and hieroglyphic rock, Love seems entirely comfortable with the material here. Maybe a little too comfortable. His version of "(Can You) Do the Flop (Safely?)" lacks the raw energy of the original, while his own "Ludwig Shuffle," (based loosely on Beethoven's Third through Seventh Symphonies) suffers from rampant pomposity, and a ukelele that is badly out of tune.

Still, there's plenty to like here, from the intriguing title cut to the strangely named "Do the Dyin' Cowboy With Me, Please." While he isn't likely to please old fans with his latest opus it is Love's most listenable, accessible work to date. Whether it will spawn any modern-day dance crazes is anybody's guess.

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PINTS



Graham Parker at the Horizontal Boogie Bar

We won tickets on WTR by guessing four of the labels Graham has recorded for. Actually we only guessed three of them correctly but we knew the

DJ and he gave us the tickets so we really don't have any right to complain...but like the Commitments, the British/Irish hardly ever get this R&B thing right do they? Irish Soul. What is that? It is usually the drummer's fault. They like to get out in front of the beat and decorate it in a pretty way instead of layin it down. This was particularly obvious in this case because the bass player was the great Rick Danko from the Band. Rick did smile too much though and he was making me nervous. Graham may have a future in the new Nashville.

Ice, Ice Baby

How flattered we were to find a small pile of *ICE*, the take-off on *The Refrigerator*, at Writers & Books. Our favorite article goes, in its entirety, "I walked down the street. My wife agreed."



Instamatic: An Observation

There's an old saying, "One may either experience life to the fullest by living it, or you may live it vicariously by simply attending one of the numerous and frequent

'estate' or household sales in the Rochester area." Organized by such firms as Fabulous Findings, or Hidden Treasures, these events give the curious voyeur/vulture a chance to see, hear, touch, and most often smell the former habitrail of a fellow critter who has moved on. And if we are to trust in another old adage, "You are what you don't throw out," you would not believe the amount of Kodak Keepin' Kreature's livin' and dyin' in the immediate area.

The SnapShot City, The Shutter-Bug City, A Developing City, Darkroom Town, MagicCube Central!, The City With The Lens-Cap and carry-strap, The City that says "Cheese!", all former nicknames and slogans used in the past to promote and describe the city of Rochester. And boy oh boy they weren't kidding! Step down into the cellar/basement/crawlspace of any home under occupation (siege) by an estate sale, and brother you don't need a pickaxe and shovel to unearth this archeological evidence....

There they sit like lone Easter Island statuettes, idols to our recent heady hobby-hayday manufacturing past, rows of squat Bug-

eyed n' boxy Brownies, tall & tippy Hawkeye triple reflex jobs with flip tops, the simple yet smug-looking Instamatics, weird-green Kodaslide Ray-Gun-like personal slide viewers, splicing kits, jaunty salad bowl/headlamp-like flash attachments and scores of other big K products

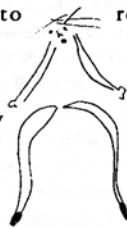
No doubt about it. Rochester is a product loyal kinda town but what will Elroy and Judy Jetson discover on an estate sale jaunt 50 years from today? As of late there have been less lovable future memorabilia being manufactured; the cold hearted and calculating disc camera, the shameful suit-losing Polaroid-type thing. What will our grand children find in lieu of Fling cameras that have been flung, dad's old CD-imaging set-up? My guess is that 4 out of 5 households will contain a musty warped volume of *The Story of Kodak*...This humorless tome will be up for grabs at a real reasonable price. Until then, don't forget to take your lens-cap off!



A friend of mine wondered out loud whether he was going to fewer movies these days because he didn't like Karen Krenis' movie reviews or that the movies were actually lousy.

By the time New Year's day rolls around, the money's spent, energy is at an all time low after endless social events and minds begin to wander into that part of us that tries to evaluate personal accomplishments and what lies down the road. This may add up to The New Year's Blues. It's a blues chord...augmented. There's lots of ways to

resolve this blues progression- do something illegal and or sinful to clear the mind (the obvious choice), spend a lot of money (what's left doesn't qualify as a help magazines many times but definitely often only lasts as long as it takes to read and rip out the important pages for future reference), go jogging (I have experienced, I think, that "runner's high" a couple times - a sure sign is you suddenly discover that you've been running in a zig zag down the street for who knows how long), get a pep talk from husband (now this is quite effective), listen to subliminal tapes while sleeping (this sounds like it would be fun and easy), listen to Jimi Hendrix's extended instrumental on Electric Ladyland while jogging (mmmmm), write a Refrigerator blurb and see what comes up (I'll let you know) or read the Refrigerator (very good medicine!).



More Talk Is Cheaper

"I think this year will run all the way to next year. I'm pretty sure. If I have any say in the matter, it definitely will."

"Diamond" Bruce Diamond, fiddler

"I'm predicting next year's calendar will be quite different than this year's calendar."

Dr. Brad Landsman, psychologist

"I think we'll see the demise of the Soviet Union in 1992; I think it's going to fall apart. GM will come out with a new car that runs on hot air. The U.S. Department of the Interior will declare that the Badlands are actually getting better. By 1993 they actually might be quite good. Finally some good news for the environment."

G. Elwyn Meixner, gentleman farmer

"I predict that someone will open an acoustic cafe that sells great soup."

Angela Amato, artist

"George Bush will have hemorrhoids, but we won't find out until 1997."

Steve Piper, photographer



It's true that a carefree expenditure of money actually produces an equal (or greater) carefree source of income, because money is like water, it seeks its own level, and if you keep drawing in the reins,

pulling back and don't splurge on these small extravagances (like a Coke in a machine because you think you've got that 75 cents budgeted elsewhere, say, in the roadtrip you planned like a fanatic), then everyone around you begins to feel stingy and deprived themselves, and eventually everyone is miserable... and broke.

A room constructed and furnished in this mysterious world is a statement in defiance of the temporality of life. You set the lampshade at a slight angle to create an arc of light that catches the miniature portrait in its glow. You do this in a mood that believes in eternity, and with an unspoken conviction that this little scene survives forever.

The idea of north is one that Geese seem to understand.

Those cries speak of an inner resolve Confounded by nothing.

By the authority of the Bishop of Leiria, 100 days of indulgence is granted each time this following prayer is uttered:

O my Jesus, forgive our sins, save us from the fire of Hell. Lead all Souls to Heaven, especially those in greatest need of Thy mercy.

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Fighting Words

"Well that's your opinion," he says. Lord, I thought, I didn't think I had even said much, to suddenly be meriting disapproval.

"Oh," I said, "what's your opinion?"

"I have no opinion," he says. The way he said that, I knew what he meant. He meant to say he has no opinion because, well, every opinion is just that — an opinion. So why have one?

"Did they teach you that in school?" I said.

"Teach what?" he says.

"To have no opinions," I said. "Do you think it is possible to know anything for sure?"

He says, "What?"

"Well actually," I say, "I don't think my opinion, as you call it, is an opinion at all."

"Then what is it?" he asks scornfully. I could see we were going to lose track of the subject matter. There was a different issue brewing.

"Well," I said, "I am of the opinion my opinion is the gospel truth." Then I started chuckling, because this was such a lightening-up kind of thought.

"Sure," he says, "that's your opinion."

"Yea," I said, "and so what's your opinion?"

"Of what?" he says.

"Of whether my opinion, like on anything, could be the gospel truth?"

"I don't think so," he says.

"Ha!" I said, "That's your opinion!" Now he just stares at me, like I've said something completely beyond reach. "And you're supposed to be the guy with no opinions," I say.

"What?" he says.

"You're the most opinionated person I've ever met," I tell him. "In your opinion there are no opinions. What a proud son of the devil you turn out to be."

"Oh yea?" he says. I could see these were fighting words.

"Yea," I said, "and that's the truth, another truth."

"Yea?" he says. He was clenching his left fist.

"Yea," I said, "but don't let it bother you." Then I swung off the barstool just in time as his arm flew through the air, the force of that mighty miss carrying him right to the floor.

"Get up!" I shouted at him.

It didn't look like he had any interest in getting up, he was sprawled there like . . . with a vengeance. I looked around and was surprised this scene hadn't attracted more attention.

"I think you should get up," I said, "I think you should knock off this routine, and do something."

"Like what," he muttered, not turning his face.

"I don't know exactly," I said, "but you have to do something, you can't just live like this, without a thought in your head."

He was on the floor. This was completely awkward and ridiculous "That's your opinion!" he . . . insisted on this attitude.

"Well you can't just lay there, you have to get

up," I said.

But now he was making like he was actually hurt. But he wasn't hurt, mentally injured at most, it wasn't a big fall—from that barstool to the floor. He wasn't even asking for help, just moaning. I thought, he enjoys this, he's waiting for a crowd to gather.

"What am I going to do with you?" I said.

"Just leave me alone," he says.

"Oh fine," I said, "just leave you alone."

"Leave him alone," someone else said. I looked around and I was suddenly the object of great interest.

"Yea," another guy says, "leave him alone." It



Footnote on Football

When I was twelve I played football in the Western Springs Recreation League, in that train-station town west of Chicago which later

I used as the setting for the childhood of the main character in my first novel, but, anyway, I received a trophy from the League that year because they had made a rule that no one could win Most Valuable Player two years in a row and Bob Molson, the one obviously real football

player among us, had won the year before, though to my credit I was a speedy clever backfield runner, I was terrified of being tackled actually, so it was like self-defense if the quarterback gave me the ball, scoring touchdowns was just getting to safety.

The trophy had a white plastic base and a metal gold plated football player in a stance with his arm raised, passing the ball, and I know I still had this trophy when I went to college because I considered packing it in the big black trunk, along with my collection of 13 pictures of the Great Chicago Fire which I bought at the Science Museum on a school field trip, with a ten dollar bill my mother gave me as I went out the door, that ten dollars I felt obligated to spend. But anyway the arm was broken off my football trophy and lost probably down the furnace grate in my room, the trophy didn't look too good, and it's completely gone now I think, but like other things having a personal history it is so familiar in my mind I wouldn't be surprised to see it again, say at the bottom of a bureau drawer containing old photographs or wrapping paper, maybe birth certificates of our children are in there.

My football career ended in high school when I turned back while walking to the first practice, though I was dressed in brand-new shoulderpads and carrying new cleats, for my parents had entirely supported this effort, but I never showed up at practice, I came home and said to my

mother: "do I have to play football?" She took great pity on me, and let the investment go, it was like the day I went out to the museum field-trip, it was connected in the memory album I mean, though these past events only turn up by association with things happening currently, and they are out of sequence chronologically also.

But the main thing is, football itself has to come into a conversation, then I go back over it. You see, everywhere I go lately, people are talking about football, or watching it on televisions high above their heads, everybody is hoping The Buffalo Bills can win the championship this year, and, on the subject of football, this is what I have to contribute, for the moment.

"What a waste it is to lose one's mind or not to have a mind is being very wasteful. How true that is."

Dan Quayle

DONUTS DELITE EVERYBODY



Our electronic photographer caught Karen Krenis, Gary Proud, Captain Jim O'Brien and Mayor Ryan taking a break at Donuts Delite on Culver Road. When the coffee shop is really happening during the winter months the windows get all steamed up and the new moving neon Coffee Time sign is particularly alluring. "There is only one Donuts Delite" the sign says on the wall and it is "owned and operated by Jim Malley". They serve good coffee in pink cups and I think it is so cool that they don't have any seats at the counter. It is very European and encourages conversation with complete strangers standing next to you. During Christmas they had a fake tree decorated with (what else) doughnuts. I also like the way they manage to misspell both words in their name. I don't know how long it has been there, (I remember it being there when I was a kid) but I noticed the only kind of cigarettes they sell are Pall Malls, Camel straights, Winstons, Marlboros, Lucky Strikes and Kools like the clock stopped in 1960.

was like they thought I had knocked him over, this guy who was, in fact, obviously in the throes of his own . . . dilemma.

"He's acting," I said, "he just doesn't want to get up."

"That's your opinion," some guy says.

"Lord almighty," I muttered. Then I said, like to the Lord almighty only, "okay, I'll tell you what. It certainly is my opinion."

Then I made to leave, before a riot started. It wasn't that easy, people didn't automatically move out of the way, but I kept my head down, didn't look at anybody, and managed to bumble out of there.

When I got out the door I paused on the sidewalk, looked back through the large window with the painted letters that spelled "Bar and Restaurant." Inside, I could tell, it had grown loud and raucous. Probably, there was a riot going on in there.

Dear Refrigerator

I realize that The Refrigerator has some sort of poetic license and shouldn't be expected to conform to traditional norms of "objective reporting" and I appreciate my work being noticed but I thought I'd write to clear up some stuff. (1) The tape is called SHAKE MECHANICS, not SNAKE MECHANICS. (2) I didn't drop of a cassette at Godiva's in order to pass it along to The Refrigerator, I was arranging to have my tapes sold on consignment when The Refrigerator came up with the proprietor, and I mentioned that since City Newspaper is not really an alternative arts and newsweekly (it's more like a cross between T.V. Guide, Ted Koppel and a tweed jacket) that my only hope for a local review would be in The Refrigerator. Anyway, here's \$10.00 for an ad. I appreciate the mention.

Sincerely, Shake Mechanics

P.S. You describe my tape as "dreamy." I assume you used the term in the sense that includes nightmares. I'd hate for people to get the impression that my music is some sort of smooth pastel plabum.

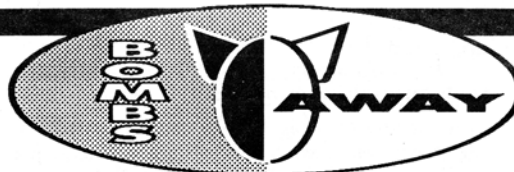
Dear Refrigerator,

I've only met you once or twice or three times, but it seems like I've known you all my life. All of your bath stories for example. How intimate! I wrote down a very beautiful story about my mother giving my daughter a bath in my grandparents bath tub, but then it dawned on me that that scene itself, that collection of human energy was in fact the most beautiful thing and that pretty words are unnecessary to communicate to you what I felt. (What a long sentence!)

Reef (if you'll allow me to call you by that nickname), I'll describe the walls in my room. Oops - I just realized that I took everything down the other day. Almost everything, anyway. All that's up, right now, are baby pictures, an American flag, various spirals, a calendar (the picture on it is too difficult to describe - dark green plant-like shape with a translucent orange umbrella shape - forget it), and a big piece of acrylic that is pink and white and says "sparkling sale." I am listening to "Sign of the Times" by Prince. "The Cross" could be one of my favorite songs of all time if it weren't for the cheesy fake-Beatles ending. Sometimes you have to know when to quit,

'Nuff said.

I remain respectfully yours,
Ed Thompson, Tokyo, Japan



Dear Refrigerator,

I remember that place of urban homesteading and urban decay. Where its counter population considered suppressed culture as tragically hip and suburban wives had their husbands buy them art galleries.

I remember spending eight years living on and off between the suburbs, the country, and the avenue. It was living in that winter wonderland I discovered segregation and myself. It was in that small town I was safe enough to ride my bicycle at three o'clock in the morning, but I had two cars stolen.



I remember reading its publications that supported its who's who of a forgotten night life. A night life that consisted of 15,000 generation X members and five empty bars. It was a place that once saw a time when bands were playing out constantly, but it now saw a time when it wasn't profitable doing gigs in this forgotten city.

What I will never forget is the vacant downtown that the citizens would not support. The stores that pulled out of the spaces and no one would move in to take their places. Most companies would refuse to move within the mystic loop because the taxes were too high or the crime rate too risky, that is to say all of that in the All American City.

What I remember the best and happiest was the solitude I found there. It was mostly in the abandoned production buildings and the empty bars that I discovered the answers to life. Yet. I don't think we will ever have an answer to the

mystique that city holds for most of us that live there or have lived there.

OOOOOXXXXX,

Durinda Underwood, Phil., PA

Dear Refrigerator,

Sunday night I was in the chip aisle at Wegman's East Ave, when I heard his voice all the way over in the coffee aisle. I have come to know my boyfriend well enough to know that he has a few quirks, but I thought talking to the coffee grinder was a bit much, even for him. I had to check this out.

No, he wasn't talking to the grinder. He was talking to a person, a man. Nobody talks to anybody in the grocery store, unless they came together, or are exchanging "paper or plastic?" courtesies.

I don't actually talk to people in the grocery store, unless you count the veterans, the woman in their middle years who know where everything is better than the people with the buttons that say "Hi! I'm ____, can I help you?" Odds are the ladies won't look at you and say "I dunno, lemme ask." These woman know how many floor tiles from the beginning of the aisle the thing is I'm looking for, and can usually comment on the most functional brand. But that's not conversation, not really.

I stood back from their conversation enough not to invade it and still let my ears pick up the gist of it. The guy he was talking to was from a neighborhood group home for the mildly retarded. The guy was really happy he found someone to discuss the advantages of grinding your 8 O'clock Coffee, versus buying the already ground stuff. This was apparent every time he referred to my friend as "sir".

My friend came away from the conversation knowing the guy's name, where he lived, and that he shopped on Sunday nights in order to avoid crowds.

Last time I talked to anybody in the grocery store I came away with the knowledge that Uncle Ben's instant rice is better than Minute Rice because Minute rice cooks too long and tends to clump by the time you get it to the table.

The Refrigerator is published at least 12 times a year. All contributions are kept anonymous. Subscriptions are available for \$10 a year. Price includes postage, a Refrigerator magnet and a Refrigerator card that gives you a discount on Refrigerator sponsored events. Back issues are not available.

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