

HUMANLY SPORTS PAGES

THE STONEBREAKERS X1

The Felon's Acquittal Cup winners 1907-14.

Back Row left to right:

Jose 'teapot' Gubbins (left-half and teaboy); Josip 'Man of Steel' Slaint (Physiotherapist and 'facilitator extraordinaire'); Willem 'the pits' Elder (tricky winger and orator); Lionel 'eraserhead' Heart (leading goalscorer and enigma); John 'who' Dough (understated playmaker and lothario); Willem 'the pits' Muchyounger (nippy inside forward and kitboy); The Late Kelvin 'apparition' Measurier (deceased Manager and inspiration); Middle Row left to right: Horatio 'half



Nelson (stalwart right-half and mascot); Roberto 'man afraid of crosses' Missionary-Position (believer in the rhythm method of counter-attacking); Alonzo 'nails' Capon (tough centre-half and enforcer of the offside entrapment); Front Row left to right: Stewart 'dandy' Pottinger (glamorous centre forward); Sven 'napper' Ghali (inscrutable Swedish goalie and dilettante practitioner of mesmerism); Frank 'naive' Lee (immature left outside forward and 'Beard').

This team of long serving footballers were cup specialists, successfully heisting the prestigious and expensive FA Cup eight years in succession, before the authorities finally found it and returned it to the owners. The team were declared holders of the cup for this period as they were strong and determined enough to vanquish any challengers to their title.

Although their league form was mediocre, mainly due to their inability to field eleven men often enough, The Stonebreakers excelled in the immediacy of knockout rounds, never losing or even drawing during their eight-year reign.

Their 'ghost' manager is seen here haunting the team. Kelvin Measurier used to clean the kits as well as darn any ailing elements of the team's attire. He became irreplaceable to the club and when he passed on, due to a premature overlocking in his abdomen, the club didn't have the heart to let him go. Some cynics said his position was as a result of the club taking financial advantage of his 'afterlife' status, but this was constantly refuted by the warden and his deputy. In fact, the authorities continued to pay Measurier's pet whippet a small stipend for its services to the upkeep of the team's playing surface. There were many subsequent rumours claiming Measurier's 'presence' in Away Team dressing rooms to glean tactics of the opposition: another urban myth refuted by the club which cited the famous Felon's Acquittal Cup replay with Formaldehyde Prison X1, when, despite their aerial supremacy, Stonebreakers X1 contrived to concede three headed goals to the smallest man in the league. The rumour mill was again in full swing as accusations of match fixing were rife. The 'bookie's runner in the middle of this 'scandal', Numbnuts McCareless was never seen again after reports of his last appearance at the local Turf Accountant's premises.

Pivotal to any success the side had was their talismanic goalie, whose inscrutability was legend. He often became one with the ball to effect a save. One penalty taker became so afraid of the goalie's staring eyes that he froze just short of the ball and fell into a foetal position before being escorted to the Prison hospital. There was also a famous occasion against an International Invitation X1 when Ghali saved the same penalty twice. The picture above shows Ghali's amazing powers with his ball hovering trick. Note too his teammates trance-like adoration of him as they lay laconically and gaily at his side. Pottinger, on Ghali's right, a metalworker by trade, even fashioned a sculpture of Ghali in later life, just before he himself was once more institutionalised as a committed metal-case. Doctors said Pottinger's mind was in a state of constant flux.

The team was finally disbanded in 1915 when seven of the squad volunteered to serve in the First World War immediately upon their release from Stonem Prison.

The Inconsequential

There's always time for levity

Issue 22

THATCH-22 ISSUE



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COVER STORY: THATCH-22 'Mourning Has Broken Our Rationality'

Today is indeed a sad day.

One on which we exalt our human nature's cruelty, callousness, niggardly egotism and manipulative sentimentality. Lest we forget, and, out of blind conformity, too many will, our other nature, the one that brings no infamy, no deferential acquiescence to what should be our shame. Instead, an aspect of our humanity that engenders authentic respect, real and universally accepted admiration and a sense of joy-worth in a majority of others, will be overlooked.

It is, most certainly, a day for sadness when we display such fawning celebration of ceremonious death, an underserving pedestal death: our inaction and action bring our collective soul into disrepute.

An appeal to misguided mourners: how can you unearth respect for a human being whose political teeth were honed to sharpness on the wilful act of denying milk to young schoolchildren on the premise that the money was to be used for building development that didn't seem to materialise? (Take the misplaced grief from your Facadebook, now ain't the time for your tears.)

So, rather than waste even a minute in reverential silence - one that speaks loudly of our paucity of freedom - paying homage to our darker morbidity of deference to wretched ideologues, think outside the finality of boxes - however inappropriately ostentatious and unfairly ornate - and envisage life and its absurd expression of being a better human, merely because we possess the capacity.

The cadaver inside this intransigent box was famous for interpreting a parable of human goodness as an innate capacity, and bestowing on it an impoverished materialistic and wholly sordid view of what makes us human. To say that we would not remember the great and uplifting story of the Good Samaritan if it wasn't for money is gross and ugly of spirit and ideologically distasteful.

Do not in any way embrace the coffin of someone with little or no respect for other, instead show some respect for yourself, in and through other, embrace your children in a spirit and belief in a future that necessarily forgets days like today, to enable life rather than economically and ideologically veto its possibilities - for your children even if not for yourself.

Death should never bring anyone greatness in itself. Such renown is based on a perverse love of mourning and recognition of death that attributes dubious virtue on those whose lives have merited no such adulation. Some of the greatest dictators and human rights abusers have shown virtue which, given a different and rational appraisal of their qualities, has made it impossible to exalt them even in death. We have witnessed just such an occasion today: political expediency exhorted by egotism and disregard for others are no bases on which to mourn the passing of a person.

It is a person's life that should establish respect, and a rational remembrance of their admirable qualities that imbue mourning with a proper recognition of living rather than a morbidity of death and dying. Today, too many of those who view life as materialistic and are admiring of self-serving arrogance as a positive characteristic, are affording death respect in its capacity to engender a sentimentality that contradicts an uncompassionate approach when referring to the lives of others their actions effect, and the political persecution of those whose lives gather no garlands of infamy.

One of the more famous quotes from this paragon of conservative virtue once said:

"...one of the great problems of our age is that we're governed by people who care more about feelings than they do about thoughts and ideas."

This somewhat narrow-minded opinion fails to acknowledge that the human condition isn't an either/or condition. Great human beings (of any class and value) are the ones who successfully embrace and live both the mind and heart simultaneously. Even the modern corporate axiom extolled as virtue, 'emotional intelligence makes great leaders' cannot describe the person who sees feelings as second-rate and unnecessary for great decision making. Even in this materialistic cliché, there is a balance between the two aspects quoted, albeit purely utilitarian and narrowly selective of characteristics that make successful and valuable human beings.

A person who makes the above statement associates feelings with an indecisive liberalism necessary for any healthy democracy. Liberalism has been attacked for its faint-heartedness in supporting or promoting ideologies that are tantamount to dictatorships in all but name. Liberalism has a very important element that should underpin any system of political and social organisation, namely the freedom from coercion, including the obvious economic coercion perpetrated by corporatism and any governments deliberately facilitating such ideology.

HUMANLY SPORTS PAGES

Tardy Football News: Thierry Ennui, the apathetic striker of Cantbearsenal in Switzerland, is being sold to neighbouring Notax Old Boys for a small upfront fee. The fabled footballer has bothered his derrier for only twelve goals this season but still has a glowing reputation for casual tax avoidance. The manager of the club he is being bought by said, "TE is an honest lad and will be coming here with his pockets full of undeclared wealth." We weren't sure whether to take this as a subtle footballing metaphor or not.

CRICKET SHORTS

Gareth Linear, the straight-as-a-die New Zealander scored an imperious century in the latest match against Luxembourg. Linear hit a crisp fifteen fours in an innings lasting significantly longer than a jacket potato. His innings was the mainstay of New Zealand's disappointing 206 all out in reply to Luxembourg's first innings total of 7.

A SAD COMMENTARY

There are investigations of match-fixing taking place involving a commentator who, last month in the match between Cardinal Sinners and Readthisbefore resigning Royals described the final ball of the Ten-Minute-an-innings match before it had been bowled. There were embarrassed murmurings in the box before the defendant was discreetly removed from the microphone. The network tried to explain it as a technical glitch but ever-alert fans and listeners called in in their tens to complain and express their disappointment at no-one issuing a spoiler alert to listeners.

COARSE FISHING

Willie Catchit swore himself into an unlikely second place when, against all the odds (even BetUitsunfair 669 didn't give odds), he produced a torrent of efficacious invective that dislodged a whopper.

The normally, by reputation, quiet ex-seminary Scots enthusiast displayed a foul-mouthed tirade to match any lumpen proletarian in its pomp. Due to his strict but fair education, the diminutive fellow - his waders touch his chin - unearthed a now obsolete but scathingly abusive word that finally brought his second place prey to the surface. Even the fish was mouth-agape at such appalling language. "Call yourself a ...† cod, I've battered halibut with more *!?!? scales on its tail" was the sentence that sealed his place in fishing legend.

†We cannot state the actual word here as we don't want to upset any of our Norman ancestors and their lineage. Suffice to say the word is truly obscene and could destabilise the very fabric of all that's decent. One of the more seasoned judges actually fainted on hearing the word. No surprise as his name is Norman Conquest so his connections to the past are as strong as a good fishing line. Mr Seaton Delaval was the eventual winner and he retained his title for the fifth time. Mr Delaval is highly skilled in coarse language and once filleted a cod merely by verbally abusing it. In keeping with the trend of modernity the results were streamed online to a live audience in Ipswich.

BLOODY SPORTS

There are disturbing stories circulating of the reemergence of an underground movement promoting illegal games of Table-Top Pole Vaulting. Awful tales are being retold of contestants being expected to take part in this banned sport on drop-leaf tables, which were outlawed in the mid-20th century on safety grounds. Commentators who wish to remain anonymous are suggesting the sport's resurgence is a psychological response to the lack of proper representative mechanisms in today's political systems, the absence of playing fields and the preoccupation with removing risk from recreational pursuits to the point where they resemble a public information film on H&S.

Uri Cycle, the unofficial world champion has recently perfected a run-up that can even reach the heights from a modest-sized coffee table, although last time he did graze his knee on the magazine rack holding the programmes for the clandestine event held in downtown Maldives.

Authorities internationally are advising people to look out for anyone suspicious carrying a very long, usually flexible pole, wearing running spikes, looking extremely fit and furtive. They also point out, 'you don't need to be a Cretan to Table Pole Vault, some competitors are well-educated'.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

THIS MONTH: Just where are THEY, now? I can't tell you WHO but THEY know WHO WE are. Although WE don't know THEM.

IF AT FIFTH YOU DON'T SUCCEED

The Institute for Advanced Learning, the body doing the heart transplants for the government of the day has released a statement on the latest attempt to replace the main organ of the Department of Workfare Penury, the Ideologically Determined Sh*&\$hawk, Iam Dead Spiritually.

Dr Unchristian B'Starred, said today that after this, the fifth, heart replacement procedure, at a high-class hospital paid for by the taxpayer on the MP's expenses, that, "we are officially giving up on the MP after so many rejections of the organ by the obstinate Tory. His body just will not accept the hearts so it is no longer cost-efficient to continue trying."

We asked an expert in existential metaphor and were told that this case is indicative of the reluctance of a fixed, fascistic ideologue to accept a heart that has all the qualities of a fully rounded human being, with compassion, integrity and love of fellow humans in and for themselves. This rejection of other - in this case manifest in the organ metaphor of the body-pump - is typical of his peer group, who, the expert states, cannot in body and mind, accept others, particularly those of the 'lower-classes' as having intrinsic human value.

"In this case, we see a man that is fundamentally heartless in the spiritual sense but whose privilege has seen him have publicly funded access to an organ whose job is as mechanical aid to life, yet which cannot deliver a better human being. So, by his own logical criteria of valuation he is now going to die without compassion he legislated for no matter the healthy condition of his body-pump."

I, I WHO HAVE NO-ONE

MR NOBBY BODDY is trying to get compensation for being targeted by large and small corporations in their general packaging that traumatise him by emphasising the cost of his singularity.

"If I was a quark or some miniscule entity in the world of physics, I'd be lauded, instead, because I am a single person, I am economically vilified and ridiculed by commercial bodies who create discount, not supplement, to offers on goods and services. I, for one, am disappointed in this purse-ecution." Nobby said dolefully

NEWS FEED

A Blancmange has won the local election in the sleepy hamlet of Little Under Tenshillings. Villagers are blaming the Strawberry Fool, claiming he is too thick to vote at all.

The pinko dessert beat the radical Independent candidate, Ben Cole into second place. It appears that, although the villagers voted with their gut instinct, as an electorate they still can't bring themselves to trust a bacteria, even if it claims to be friendly.

In third place was the Apple Turnover, whose policies are too changeable and their 'promises are like pie crusts' said one local commentator.

The Lemon Tart lost her deposit as she had much too chequered a career for politics, apparently.

DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS

Mrs Faustina Mann is the latest person to fall foul of advertising and its seductive rhetoric. She revealed last month that she had been overcharged when buying her soul from a devil of a salesman.

DOTTING THE 'I'S

A pen factory has closed due to falling demand. The underwriters have withdrawn their ink. Someone told our reporter that they couldn't sustain the business because it seems no individuals want to write these days. The fact that the firm's biggest customer were the schools couldn't maintain the books as most schools run themselves as businesses. Schools want an unrealistic discount and sometimes freebies when they accept advertising in the classrooms.

Whilst Isnibbs Ltd's visible presence throughout the institutions was growing, the cash flow was drying up and their last big real money order needed to be carbon-dated.

"There's no point in continuing to produce pens when the market's retracting. That's the way the ball bounces." concluded a clown, who happened to be unicycling by and who was the only person available for comment. "Nobody in their right mind would invest in pens these days, except maybe pig farmers." He added before throwing a bucket of shredded creditors' notes at us and bounding off with his hair flapping like wings.

No comment was forthcoming from any government body, although we did follow one Twot by a back bencher - once a member of the government's Ink Tank - who posted on Ttwitter, "There's no ballpoint in e-mail."

Little Editorial - "Never Mind The Quantity Feel The Wit."

Well, some more revolutions, both of and on our little blue-green spheroid, have come and gone and come and gone again, as revolutions are wont to do, and you find yourselves once more in possession of a butt-clenching, hard-hitting (in an outside edge to third man kind of way), eye-rolling edition of a semi-tome you know and love as, **The Inconsequential**.

During one of the many cyclical time periods since we last assailed your senses, we experienced the loss of a significant figure in British and the world's political history. A figure responsible for more divisive outpourings and society-splitting legislation than our unassuming set of islands had seen for many a century. A person who single-handedly (for she alone created, promoted and installed her ideology) brought about the destruction of all that society claims to be: caring, mutually beneficial & protective and culturally interdependent. An individual who oozed class-reinforcing slime and allowed it to permeate into the Nation's socio-economic cracks. A dictator who found herself elected repeatedly due to the quirks of a flawed democratic electoral system and the pathetic impotence of the weak-willed colleagues with whom she surrounded herself. A woman whose name alone could induce apoplexy in usually mild-mannered individuals. Someone hated almost universally by the proletariat and admired totally by the ruling elite. I don't need to tell you her name. If you don't know it, enter any of the above in a search engine and you'll find it. In short, then, a nasty piece of work.

So how should the Nation's media report on the passing of such a leader? Should it reflect the strength of the displeasure felt by the people towards her? Or should it inconveniently forget anything remotely negative and, following convention, focus on the scraps of goodness it manages to unearth? Well, apparently, the latter.

We have no doubt that this person's family and friends would relate any number of humorous stories and recall a multitude of redeeming qualities. Indeed, after any individual's death, it should be expected that these characteristics are stated. However, they should not be presented as a complete encapsulation of the person's existence to the total exclusion of everyone else's glaring reality. Death doesn't cleanse the soul, nor should it inflict amnesia on the living.

As ever, space and the nature of editorials, does not permit me to ramble on ad nauseum, and it certainly wasn't my intention to give over this editorial in its entirety to the death of a politician, but you, our dear reader, will understand, I'm sure, that we have to comment on such a momentous issue.

For those wanting more, our Cover Story elaborates most comprehensively on the subject, while for those wanting less, the remaining 30-odd pages offer the very best in high falutin' social commentary and witty asides, including a jock-tickling new story from Pat McDonough and the latest outstanding, observational offering from our very own NYC Correspondent, Stacy LeVine. Until we roll around again, enjoy!

Economic coercion is too easily overlooked in analysis of political systems as if it wasn't an issue at all. It seems because liberalism lacks a simplistic dictatorial approach that assumes the leader, or party is always right, it is dismissed as too indecisive by supporters of and the conceiver of Thatcherism.

This doctrine of selfishness promoted by someone apparently unaware of the essential dialectic of self-interest and other that should characterise any healthy and freedom loving democracy, explains an ability to run roughshod over narrow victories at the polls, and undermine the most dynamic points in British democratic history by an unabashed appeal to feelings through jingoistic propaganda. If, as the quote about feelings and thoughts and ideas indicates, the populace were motivated by thoughts and ideas, then such awful events as wars of political expediency should never take place.

Jingoism and Patriotism are unquestioning and function on a base appeal to irrational feelings that suspend thought and rational ideas of right, wrong and freedom of other than yourself to express the essential self as thinker with a clear passion and belief in liberty for one as individual that cannot logically recognise with lynch-mob mentality.

"The Russians are bent on world dominance, and they are rapidly acquiring the means to become the most powerful imperial nation the world has seen. The men in the Soviet Politburo do not have to worry about the ebb and flow of public opinion. They put guns before butter, while we put just about everything before guns."

continued on page five

FIFTH COLUMN: I AM A LIAR AND CHEAT, HONESTLY

Hear the modern virtue of 'honesty' when admitting you are a liar and criminal character.

We are hearing more and more the mantra, "Sorry but it was a mistake," that is in response to a person of some social standing being caught doing something in contradiction to their position of great trust placed in them by the electorate and, by informal education by parents to children. Instead of being vilified and properly punished for their actions, these people are 'judged' in the trite and ignorant, "It's good he's being honest admitting his guilt."

As one diligent and 'honest' reporter said to an MP who had deceived her voters but was incredibly reluctant to take responsibility for her actions: "But why didn't you think of the anger and betraying of the voters when you were committing the deliberately dishonest act by which you are now revealed to be something of a crooked and disingenuous character?"

Even in the realm of sport, pastimes making the protagonists extremely rich, we find cheats and liars being praised for their honesty of admitting what has already been found out to be less than honest behaviour. Like the above media person, we should always refer the miscreant to the wilful act of dishonesty that fully defines their character, and not see their 'admittance' as a virtue which cancels out the act.

In the field of high politics, we now see welcoming of those intelligent and influential agents of capitalism busy not creating wealth by any hard work, but creaming off the proceeds and deliberately

avoiding the law and any semblance of fairness through calculated and full knowing tax avoidance. The political will that then claims the apparent 'transparency' of now declaring tax avoidance evinces either a naivety or continued dishonesty in that it does not fully condemn the acts. There's a form of intellectual gymnastics that almost blames the systems, but which never acknowledges their role in creating and perpetuating the very systems by which tax avoidance is promulgated. The loop holes were always there in the first drafts of legislation they all, regardless of the colour of their political underwear, were only too happy to create. It comes as no shock to anyone not requiring a bib when they eat that the political and social elites perpetuate their power and influence by deliberately creating conditions in which large personal wealth can be made on the back of those masses who help create the wealth but who in the final analysis, see so little of it.

Transparency isn't the issue, especially when the 'criminal' and dishonest acts have not been morally and ethically censured by society as a whole and legislation in particular. It is exactly this attitude of it's alright now because they are admitting their gross dishonesty and we can now read more about it, more easily than ever it should be eradicated through not only legislation but also through attitudinal censure of such behaviour in all media and speech when it matters: before the event analysis, whereby motives are judged rather than the miscreants' merely apparent contrition.

We are, as a society it seems happy to prosecute justice many years after an event or dishonest act committed by some folk yet conveniently overlook clear and present dangers to next generations' sense of morality and ethical consistency of behaviour that would properly eradicate acts that make performance apologies necessary.

Without authentic censure, we find the ludicrous situation of the half-arsed religious attitude of forgiveness based only on the social and economic class of the miscreant rather than the act itself: 'punishment' is meted out by saying things will change and the miscreant of the higher social and economic class being put in the background of public life temporarily, as some of the higher profile cases make it back into the highest echelons after a short time in media exile without any distrust of their newly acquired epiphany-like transparency. It's as if the emperor has found a new transparent cloak after being found to be naked before.

So, let's not exalt after the dishonest event 'honesty' and address the conditions that promote and perpetuate dishonesty as a so-called fact of life. We need to look at the power structures that make it too easy for dishonesty - we only need to throw our tired minds back a few whizzing-by years to the MPs expenses debacles and institutionalised lying of 'sexy dossiers' - created and enjoyed by some of the best educated and most lauded people in our society. Sadly they are also some of the most influential. Lest we forget, it's still about 'class'.

MINI ADS

GAMING

Ten quid ono for the disappointing blockbuster, Fall of Beauty. Not half as interesting as advertised. Call Mr Nebb for more details.

One-Armed Bandit looking for the other arm. Call Lemon, Lemon, Lemon for details.

JOBS

Five positions for possibly the same person. Will make up 35 hours over a week if taken together.

Boot-Black to a large office of executives. No pay as it is one of the new internships that teaches the skills needed to show abject reductive realism to any massa.

Cleaner to maintain the drawers of an executive couple. Only takes fifty-five minutes per week but it qualifies as a job. It pays very little and will see pay of £7/hr docked for misdemeanours like : coming in late; leaving a minute early; not choosing the correct pot-pourri sheet for the correct drawer.

Job of undisclosed title but pays 10/hr. The job is done at night and entails taking a briefcase from one PO Box to another, no questions asked. Hours fluctuate.

Call centre dealing with lottery and inheritance claims for a leading bank. Will pay for a mobile phone so the employee will be on call constantly to respond to the work when required. Flexible hours and pay, often cash in hand to avoid tax.

Speech Therapist to a Mime. The employee will help the

artiste enunciate mock narratives in a global chain supermarket.

Hemp seller wanted. Apply to Dope-on-Rope Inc.

OUTDOORS

Boxes for sale. Can be used as housing as they are very tough cardboard. Recycling Homes Inc.

Get more copses on your street for no extra local taxation. Metropolitan Copses plc can provide clearings and strategically placed privets so that you no longer have to worry about walking out at night. See your assailant coming through our copses for an early getaway. Visit your local council for further details.

MOBILE PHONES

Syria - The antagonistic voice for your Big Apple smartphone. Buy now for free* *This actually means \$99 when all the administration is taken into account.

DIVINE

Looking for salvation, call in to your local Betting Office. Astronomical odds offered on Yankees for the triple bet of Return of Christ, Spirituality of the Church and Honesty in Politics.

Burning bushes for sale. Help with your fuel bills. Not for people in flats. BBQ grill free with each purchase.

Absolution for sale. Have you sinned recently? Well, help is at hand. Just a small charge to cleanse your soul. CC accepted.

DD preferred. 2% admin charge for non-DD transactions. FMF Inc.

Loft conversion. Do you have a secular, even heathen space above you in your home? We can help. Call us and we'll send round a man of the cloth to convert your loft to a higher purpose using eco-friendly scripture. Govt grants available. Call Spiritual Installations plc today and get heaven in your home now.

TV AND RADIO

Analogue TV for sale. No longer required due to having to watch the content rather than how impressive the visual definition is.

ENTERTAINMENT

Got a kids' party to arrange? We at Laughter Feet can send in The Clones. Balloon folding a speciality: balloon replicas of your children and their friends for no extra cost. CC only payment.

HOLIDAYS

Emotionally mature person required to share hotel room (Twin arrangement) to avoid single room supplement and general mark-up.

No hanky-panky, no ulterior motive, just a purely financial arrangement to help the pocket and get a cheaper night's sleep. No SOH, no needy opportunists should apply.

Adherents to Plato preferred. Over 18 only. Must be interested in exploring UK and Europe on a budget and necessary restraint to engage another hen wanting to rest and replenish energies for city discovery.

CALL YOU IT FAIR, THAT FAIR AGAIN UNSAY

We managed to keep our food down throughout the latest interview with a rich politician who is presiding over the ideological persecution of the benefits-working-class. Here is the interview without the interruption of the interviewer's attempts to find out exactly what the government are doing with their welfare 'reform':

Ima Disingenuous Shit:

"I could (live on £53 per week) if I had to, but the real question is whether we deal with individual cases..."

"Yes, but the reality here is we're trying to make sure what the taxpayer pays is..."

"No but, no but, the reality we have in this case..."

"Well, what we're trying to do in reality is..."

"Yes, but the reality here John...the reality of the amount of money we..."

"But in reality..."

"Let me answer it this way, in reality..."

"In reality what we're doing is fair..."

"We have inherited an unfair and costly system, and I can't overturn it overnight, so in reality what we're doing is fair..."

And the subtitles are:

("What we're doing in reality is attacking the proletariat and infirm who depend on benefits for subsistence, devaluing wage-labour so that the private sector doesn't have to pay wages, by having proles work for the most measly benefit instead of a living wage, which is making work of benefit only to the conglomerate (with a 'drip down' for small businesses claiming they have to fall in line with zero-hour 'contracts', low wages and no kind of security of tenure, and no working benefits) all of which is deeply unfair because it is ideologically driven by advanced capitalist feudal oligarchic elitists like myself, who come on your programme merely to blame the previous party whilst avoiding the reality of your questions because, in reality, we are unfair.")

Eds: We laughed so much, we simply wanted to die (of shame and fury).



Answers to Evolutions: a) Heads or tails / b) The pet rock / c) Halley's Comet / d) G.P. Jeep

Did she worry about the ebb and flow of public opinion when she emphasized her dictatorial tendencies in the statement, "The Lady's not for turning." Such conviction politics is more akin to dictatorship than democracy and such disregard for public opinion has even been extended into the so-called Labour Party when one infamous leader was quoted as saying, "I did what I thought was right," despite clear evidence on the streets - and I dare say, in his own party - that a large number of people were against the now infamous war-policy. The very idea that she ever put 'just about everything before guns' is disingenuous, when at the time of having such a flimsy mandate to rule, she instigated a movement of 'popular opinion' based on an appeal to feelings and a recognition of the 'state' or country as an icon of virtue against the vilified other.

Another quote, "There is little hope for democracy if the hearts of men and women in democratic societies cannot be touched by a call to something greater than themselves," contradicts an intolerance of feelings and promotion of thoughts and ideas, as her hopes for democracy that can be assembled into an irrational, emotionally motivated lynch-mob against selected other at the mere appeal to an abstract idea of nationhood or what became a cliché, 'Britain plc' does not account for the genuine freedom from such coercion that should underpin any liberated and sophisticated society. In such appeals to irrational, emotional thronging to the standard, there's also deference to authority that should have no place in authentically free societies.

This appeal to a 'higher authority', which seriously undermines individual freedoms and any fairness of representation even in an illogical monarchic democratic system lends itself to the coercive so-called laissez-faire approach to government implied in such quotes as, "Instead, government should create the right framework of sound money, low taxes, light regulation and flexible markets (including labour markets) to allow prosperity and employment to grow." This approach led only to less and less freedom for individuals to properly co-operate to have their voice heard in a political system that has made the workforce so flexible that it cannot fully realize its personal aspirations except through a deferential acquiescence to the call of something greater than themselves, namely virtual productivity, capital and corporatism. Low taxes have shrunk the public purse which destabilizes our connectedness to the democratic process, and leaves us, the working class, vulnerable to the avarice and condescension of the ruling classes, both socially and economically. It does indeed become a labour 'market' where our lives are assessed by those of the greater authority as if we were merely livestock or at best a base resource, rather than those individuals Thatcherism claimed to liberate through such light government. It is logically inconsistent to think that by creating the right framework by facilitating an uneven power relationship between labour and employer, a government should then remove the means by which individuals are free to oppose and dissent coercive and destructive power that seeks to reduce their liberties and extinguish human aspiration to be anything other than an efficient economic unit of production. To then award the customer the notional power that the democratic system fails to provide, is disingenuous as the higher authorities of corporatism and capital, with marketing and advertising, coerce the voice of the customer to want only what can be provided at least unit cost to the economic powers that have no need for and a growing intolerance of individual freedom of expression, especially in the coercive and dictatorial enclaves called workplaces. We, as service provider and customer become two sides of the corporate logo of 'His Master's Voice'.

While it can be said, to too great an extent, that the prognostications of Thatcherism are still alive and kicking, the outcomes of those predictions of the great leader are less than accurate. Democracy is an ossified five-year performance of little intrinsic value, individual freedom is just about redundant as an idea that has merit, and even prosperity, for those the politics of Thatcherism is ideologically intended, is hardly evident in yet another generation of austerity measures that facilitates a massive economic divide between the rich and poor, and creates the situation where the rich get richer and less accountable to the democratic process. It seems that the logical progression from Thatcherism is Feudalism as it assumes a superiority of the ruling elites and devalues anything approaching individual freedoms of the lower classes. We need only to look back into recent history at the way governments have failed to recognise themselves and the monarchy as public servants and members of the civil service. Any legislation affecting the terms and conditions of civil servants should affect these two groups of the ruling elites; if they are not public servants then who is?

The body is laid to rest but the rancorous and vapid ideology of callous and unfair politics lives on, much to our collective shame. Today indeed was a sad day, and will repeat ad nauseam unless we forget days like these.

MIDNIGHT IN MANHATTAN

A story by Pat McConnell

Some evenings, after his set at the Carlyle, Woody would slip away and stroll home, up Lexington Avenue. He loved walking alone. This was HIS city; he knew every nook and stoop. To disguise himself, he wore contact lens (and bumped into things) with a Boston Celtic cap and jacket – who would ever believe Woody Allen as a Boston fan – great camouflage?

One night, he was halted in his tracks. A cab had pulled up on the corner of 82nd Street and a pair of unbelievably long legs slid out. Attached to the gams was a stellar Armani body and a mop of jet-black hair that was swinging loosely above a Botticelli face. Woody searched desperately for a suitable chat-line but, unfortunately, the vision ducked into a dingy storefront on the corner of Lex. The sign on the window read "Schroedinger's Gym – Be very careful as you open the door, don't let the cat out. Closed Tuesday to Sunday".

Undeterred, and in the flush of the chase, Woody pressed open the door and immediately encountered a desk with a large man behind it, stroking a Burmese (cat that is). "New member? 100 bucks to join and 20 per session, what's your name buddy?" "Allen," he hesitated, "Yes, Allen Woods," said Woody. "OK, Mr Woods, you are welcome to take a look at the equipment upstairs, before you sign up." Upstairs, Woody saw a run-down gym but with some very hi-tech equipment. In one corner, on an exercise bike, Woody spied the Venus he had followed. She was wearing a black leotard that would be banned everywhere outside of New York. The Aphrodite looked over at Woody and smiled, a smile that caused his knees, already weakened from climbing upstairs, to buckle. She then returned to read her Wall Street Journal and Woody ran downstairs to pay his 100 bucks membership.

Next Monday, Woody was ready. In his clarinet bag, he packed an unused pair of Nikes (actually signed by Michael Jordan) and a natty New York Knicks tee shirt and shorts (actually signed by Patrick Ewing). The set at the Carlyle went really quickly because Woody cut out all the slow numbers, he was on fire. He skipped out the door without signing any autographs and ran up to 82nd street, paid the twenty, and made for the changing room.

Woody pushed open the door and his heart sank. It was his worst nightmare – a room full of good-looking jocks, all shiny muscles, tight pecs and steel jaws.

"Hi buddy, which school are you from?" asked one Adonis. "Public 99 and CUNY," mumbled Woody. "Good One," said the Adonis who introduced himself as Ross, "No, Which school: Kant, Schopenhauer, Sartre?" Pointing to another Michelangelo sculpture, "David and I have just been discussing the role of theory – he doesn't agree with Kant that 'Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play'. What do you think?" Woody fumbled through his mental joke book. "It is impossible to experience one's death objectively and still carry a tune," he remembered. "Profound, Allen, I love your existential perspective. Now let's build some bodies," said Ross running up the stairs four at a time. Woody followed one at a time, with a rest in-between.

The vision was already there on a rowing machine. "Hi Clio, meet Allen," said Ross "He is a post-modern existentialist." "Cool, I did my doctorate on Foucault at the Sorbonne," said the Venus. Woody shook her hand but couldn't get any words out because he was staring at the sweat seeping thorough her tight semi-transparent tank top. "Lovely to meet you," she said, "We must discuss Derrida and the difference between structure and genesis some time. But got to go now. I have a conference call with a hedge fund in St Petersburg in 20 minutes." With Clio gone, Woody spent 15 minutes fighting with a weight machine, managing to press some five kilos before going downstairs to shower and take a much needed rest.

The following Monday, Woody played his set, left quickly and positively jogged up Lex to the gym. She was there, "Hi, Clio," he said nonchalantly. "Hi Allen, here try this running machine next to me," she insisted. Clio was not only beautiful but also helpful. After Woody slipped off the running machine several times, Clio intervened, "Here, let me turn it right down to 'Florida' for you." Woody was able to keep up with this sedate pace, only slipping off twice in the next hour. To his surprise, the changing room was unisex. In the presence of such beauty, female and male in various states of dishabille, Woody was bashful, taking a full 45 minutes to remove his trainers. "Allen, sweetie," cooed Clio, as she left, "We are going for a drink at Xenos down the street. Catch you there, if you want to come." "Want to come," thought Woody, "Try stopping me."

BLEATHERING TIME'S A REIGHT BUGGER.

In an ordinary household in darkest Yorkshire.

"N'arn, what's all a'gate?"

"Can't allock, gotta bahn t'shop. Mun frame"

"Nobbut was 'opin' for a mashin"

"We've run outta time."

"What yer chalpin' a'gate?"

"We're fast fer time t'dwine. Gotta see if yon shop 'as any."

"If there's no time. There's no rush, an it's silin dahn. Save yer trundle stumps an sit wi missen"

"I can't, gotta to get more time."

"But there's no time to lose."

"Exactly. But I'm wasting time chelpin' wi' thi. Mun frame missen."

"But lass, aren't you already too late, if there's no time left? 'sides as we've allus said you can't buy time."

"Don't get me flummoxed. Anyways, just like thee to gi' up easy. If t'German Debt Clock can be bought on e-Bay, then local shop oughta have for thee and me."

"But how dust tha put a price on t'time?"

"It's a commodity like owt else."

"No, it's purely notional, yet it exists as real as tha lugoil an' aht thee an me."

(Vera puts wood i'th'oil) "Sithee."

If 'es got any, appen tha'll get missen a packet o' tabs an' a bag o'spanish."

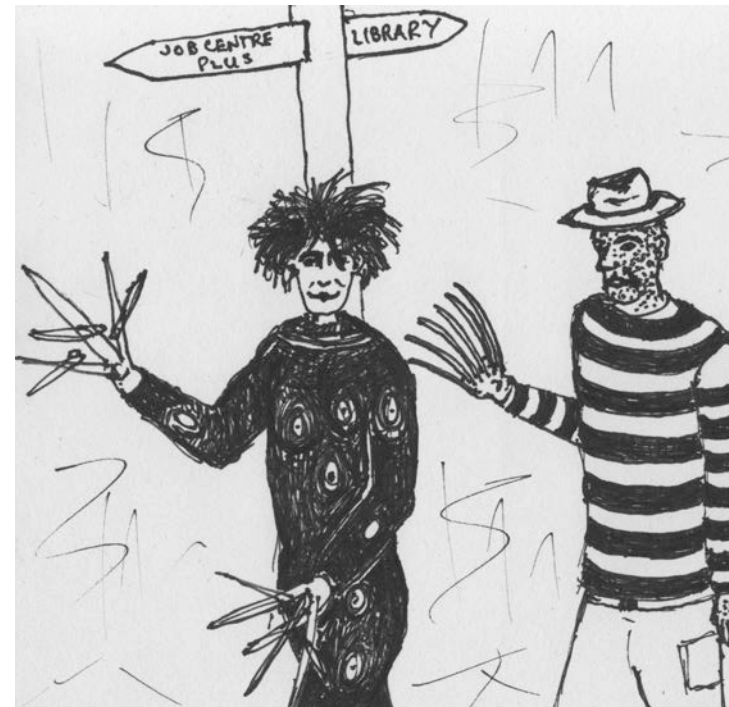
(A little later, or so it seemed to Davey boy)

"By 'eck, duck. No faffin wi thee."

"What're yon a'gate? Ahve bin nowhere."

"Eh?"

"Ee, sometimes you can be a reight queer sort, Dave."



Eddie: "I've been turned down for a gardening job."

Freddie: "So have I."

Both: "They said I didn't have the right kind of experience, even though I said I would eagerly do nights."

OUR MAN IN HIATUS

Our man went into the Literary & Philosophy Department, an ornate old building on a rainy day. For two languid yet significantly enlightening hours he became inebriated on Leibnitz and Schopenhauer. To while away the one hundred and twenty minutes or so contemplating himself as a monad and one with which the world can be fully recognised through powers of reasoning and great writing.

Finally drawing himself away from the great thinkers, our man reenters the changeable weather-beaten day. Ambling over the main road to O'Neill's Irish Bar to get spannered so as to better contemplate the bottom of a glass. He also banters openly with the local philosophers concerning the legacy of having so many bridges that span the engineering ages: from heavily riveted and unpretentious bald steel

constructions to flouncy, soft arc, light veined art installation types of today.

Whilst in the belly of the Yeast, he says heartily, "Yes, it's most certainly empty but, by the grace of Bobby Charlton and her Mint, I can exchange metal and paper to make sure it's full once more and retains the facile psuedo-philosophical dilemma of half-full, half-empty. This so-called dilemma can be refuted as legitimate choice by the question, "What glass?" Never one to rest on someone else's laurels our man pulled from his damp pocket the latest edition of The Northern Semantics & Grammar Society magazine, which had that day's enunciation exercise:

It is a grade A grey day, bonny lad and not a day to contemplate how it misled overnight.

Our man duly drank some more piquant liquid and laughed about the slick conundrum.

Report by Little Jim Ladd (our countrywide reporter of the nation's underbelly)

Script Joints: Here visiting one of these places where people meet to dip their quills and sample the delights of handwriting and inking aloud in company.

These places have fascia of computers and gaming machines which hide the ink wells, the naughty calligraphy implements and the illuminated scripts, through which the participants rewrite classic texts. The book that is all the rage at the moment is Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell. There have been spats between factions arguing over whether the title should be in numbers or text. Currently the recognised definitive view favours text.

Asked why they are interested in ink-based handwritten narratives in an age of electronic text, a leading exponent of the script told us that, "There's something sensual in rendering thought, ideas, imagination, even plain information-based narrative through ink. The immediacy of relatedness and its continuity of contact with the text is tangible with ink and physical implements. There's a craft to it, making narrative communication an art rather than a soulless series of electronic functions.

We saw polemic dancers entertain during ideational hiatuses. The performers slowly strip down to their philosophical skin and are received by irrational ululations from the cerebral throng. Calligraphy pens and scrolls are often inserted into the g-strings of the dancers as thongs are sung most heartily by one and all. There's not a dry pen in the house by the time the show's epilogue is recited.

One acolyte showed us an illuminated script that we couldn't see. It was explained that this script was one of those sanctioned due to the austerity measures, which stipulated that anything part of the humanities should not be apportioned any resources. These people who almost worshipped the written word had organised a local generator to run the illuminated scripts for at least two hours per day.

We also found a woman who was so skilled in script that she was transcribing blindfold some audio discs gleaned from the internet 'archives'. We asked if there was a conflict of conscience but she explained that they had to render so much audio into scripted narrative before these facts and political figures are disappeared from the short-term internet 'archives' by political Stalins.

There are ex-tattooists who have inked relevant narratives onto their bodies and are effectively walking reference books for anyone to read about the past. There was a lovely text that went the full length of a leggy woman who, for reasons of decorum, would only allow us to see the text up to but not including the conclusion. This situation led to much levity as many men had tried but never actually seen the conclusion but who were only too willing to speculate and debate the possible conclusion to the philosophical tract adorning such beautiful legs.

As we left the building we noticed a really joyous group laughing and reading and placing of the letters on a wonderful old printing press, which was as far as the group would go with technology.

Xenos was not a 'bar' as such, but a 24-hour organic juice joint. Woody opened the door and was faced with a room of some of the most beautiful people he had ever seen. Not only were the Schroedinger's crowd there, but also a troupe of ballet dancers from the Met and modern dance students from Columbia. In the corner, a male model from Vogue (who moonlighted as a linguistics professor at Cornell) was describing the perils of computer translations of Sanskrit to a troupe of elegant Flamenco dancers from the University of Havana.

"Hi everyone," shouted Clio, "Meet Allen, he is an existentialist." Turning to Woody, she smiled, "I would recommend the organic buckwheat smoothie with galangal, it is great for all-night energy." She ushered him towards a crowd of dancers discussing the influences of Diaghilev on hip-hop and Jay-Z in particular. "What do you do, Allen?" asked one particularly lithe young beauty.

Woody hesitated, "I play the clarinet. And I am doing my doctoral thesis at Julliard on the influence of Bela Bartok on Acker Bilk." he lied. To prevent further embarrassing questions, Woody pulled out his clarinet from his duffle bag and gave a rendition of Poulenc's clarinet sonata as interpreted by Benny Goodman. The crowd loved it. "Bravo!" said Clio, "How witty, how clever you are." Woody was in, he was accepted, he was no longer the dweeb, but part of the beautiful crowd. For the first time in his life, he was in with both jocks and they all were beautiful. The crowd also loved him and his apparently off the cuff aphorisms, such as when discussing the death of Montaigne, "It's not that I'm afraid to die, I just don't want to be there when it happens." He recycled to applause.

Woody thrived over the next few months. Each Monday night, he would play at the Carlyle, with the audience marvelling at just how upbeat his music had become. He would skip up to 82nd Street and work out, now able to keep going for almost 35 minutes. Woody was the toast of Xenos. He was considered serious but Clio also adored his witticisms and, in turn, he loved the way she would sometimes hug him with childish delight. His wife also noticed a change. Woody's legs and thighs were thicker and stronger and the couple's intermittent Tuesday morning romp had now become a regular and not unsatisfying ritual.

One night, Woody asked Clio, not entirely disinterestedly, what she really would like to do in life. "When I was little," said Clio, "I wanted to dance. I started ballet lessons at six, and danced and danced for years, I loved it. But at 16, my teacher said that I was 'too tall' for ballet" she 'quoted' with her fingers in the air, "And I gave it up, to go to Bryn Mawr and then Harvard." Woody cracked up as he heard a sob in her throat. "I would just love to go to Hollywood. I would do anything to be a real star, like Cyd Charisse." "But you could still do it," said Woody, "You are as beautiful as Cyd." He melted as she bent down and kissed him on the forehead, "Too late." She sighed.

"Maybe, I," Woody caught himself on. "Maybe, I could ask around Julliard to see if anyone knows anyone in Hollywood who might be able to help," he fibbed. "Would you, would you really do that for me," asked Clio, her eyes now star struck, "I would be so, so grateful." That clinched it.

All the next week, Woody worked the phones to Hollywood, calling in and doling out favours. It worked. The producers of the new movie, 'Resident Evil - Augustine's Revenge', were prepared to ditch Milla Jovovich purely on Woody's recommendation. "Beauty and brains you say, how unusual, a whole new genre," they enthused, "And in return you will consider 'Resident Evil - Bananas'."

On Monday, Woody could hardly wait to tell Clio. He bolted through the set, disgusting a party of out-of-towners from Duluth. He ran up Lex to 82nd but was stopped short by the notice on the door at Schroedinger's. "Closed permanently, someone let the cat out. No Refunds". Xenos was shuttered also, "Summer vacation, back in September, but then again maybe not."

Next morning, he rang the number on the business card that Clio had given him. "Clio's gone," a guy said in answer to Woody's question, "Yes, crazy broad, she has given up a vice president title and four mill bonus to go to Paris. She said she was going to try out for the Crazy Horse. Some idiot told her she could make it in entertainment. What a waste." Woody called Paris. The manager at Crazy Horse remembered her, "Beautiful girl, but 'too tall' for dancing, if you know what I mean." Frantically, Woody emailed, Tweeted and Facebooked but Clio had disappeared, no sign of her. With her French, her credentials and looks, Woody knew she would be fine in Paris, but where was she?

After a few weeks, Woody stopped trying to find Clio and reluctantly got back to work. At his monthly lunch with his producer the perennial subject of his next movie came up. "I have this idea," mused Woody, "about a writer who goes to Paris and each night goes back in time to the

mid-1920s where he meets Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. He meets a girl and the rest is history/comedy/tragedy. I was thinking of calling it *Midnight In Montmartre*. We could shoot it in Paris." "Sounds great," said the producer, "we can work on the title later. But will it be ready by the holidays?" ■

PELTING

There's a new phenomenon sweeping through the entire globe, obviously at different stages of development as the world is not a homogenous place, that is freeing people up from the grind that is corporatist progress, so-called.

Pelting is very simple and very liberating. No equipment is needed to carry out this uncomplicated and corporate-resistant exercise. At the centre of this movement to be free and healthy in holistic ways is a small dog called Alfie, who his owners say has indicated, through a complex series of communications, that it is most important to have your peace of mind above anything else in life. We managed to interview a leading Psychiatrist, Dr. Lester Worryabout, who gave us his insight into Pelting.

"It appeals at a carnal and 'eternal yarp' level as it is simple and frees us from the mental and physical constraints of modern coercive politics. It also takes us back to our childhood when actions spoke louder than political rhetoric. To pelt at great speeds makes us instantly unaware of the awful nature of modern life that denudes us of our human dignity in pursuit of the inequitable squalor of so-called democracies and lands of freedom and choice. Pelting can be done in any space at any time without impacting on the environment which releases us from the damaging guilt of merely being alive. Pelting subverts the cost-efficient anal-retentive reductiveness of economics and allows you to work up a sweat without worrying about the social embarrassment of your own body. It has so many liberating aspects and doesn't need any technological aid to enact. I hope this gives you a good explanation of this wonderful phenomenon: Now I have to pelt!"

He was gone before we could thank him for his comments and further explore the teeth-clenched, water-rippling snarl that accompanies Pelting. This behavioural quirk has fascinated many exponents and watchers of Pelting. We again tried asking the 'guru' of Pelting, Alfie (aka Lord Alphonsus of The Market Town of Guisborough II) but he merely turned away, gave his genitalia a good seeing to before pelting around the room.

Worryingly, there are some factions of the corporate mind-set muscling in on this movement for freedom. Already there is an instructional application for mobile phones that uses the smallest MP4 file yet. The simplicity of Pelting is illustrated perfectly ironically by this application as the audio lasts barely two seconds and consists of the single instruction to...GO!

This audio has been translated into many languages across the globe: Fr: Allez!; Ger: Schnell!; It: Avanti!; Ser: Ajmo!; Sp: Ir!; Wel: Mynd!; Swe: Gål to name just a few.

There are even classes for Pelting cropping up that have Jack Russell terriers as instructors. This little tyke of a dog can help Pelters perfect their snarl pre- and during their pelting. There are some people saying that taking instruction is undermining the personal expressiveness from Pelting, so advocate doing the activity and snarling without self-consciousness.

Some political authorities around the world are embracing Pelting as a palliative to those having the vote but who realise the futility of its so-called value. In some places, rioting has reduced due to official Pelting areas. Concrete or rubberised matting has been provided for urban Pelters, while CCTV cameras have taped the phenomenon. The tapes are then uploaded to TV so millions can laugh and be inspired to partake of Pelting.

There are even moves to get the word established as a verb to replace the clumsier term 'fun running'. Lithuania have Pelt for Life, Luxembourg has Pelt Aid, and Britain has Royal Society for Pelting. Again, some advocates of the purity of Pelting have boycotted and protested at the commercial exploitation of Pelting but after a good Pelt, their dissent dissipated.

Health & Safety executives have severely criticised Pelting but were shown short-shrift by proponents of the activity who merely ran rings round them at full pelt, thus reducing any objections to the level of party-poopers and an inferred criticism of their inability to authentically enjoy themselves. After being given footage of Alfie, the Pelting guru, practising his art, even these stiff-collared executives saw the beautiful wisdom of Pelting.

There are some followers of Pelting that encourage the art as a means of overcoming the growing lethargy of modernity by chanting the mantra, "Don't just sit there twittering, pelt!"

JOS BITUMEN ARCHIVE WINDOW

We've unearthed a rich vein of Jos' sixties period. It is believed by friends and colleagues that on one fine summer's evening, Jos dropped a tab of acid thinking he was licking a stamp to put on an envelope when writing to his girlfriend for more money.

UNTITLED MAN OF LETTERS

*Blancmange flies like an arrow
fruit flies like a banana.
Then a zip as my trouser flies
career like an uncivil savant
and I'm counting the elephants
til I see your pot of honey again.*

It is thought by critics that the next poem was penned when he was most of the way back down but still in need of some kind of succour, even if it wasn't financial.

FIREWORK DISPLAYS

*I first heard people talking
then I looked into the skies
pretty soon I was there gawping
just looking into your many eyes*

*smiles and laughter spraying sparks
in crackling fiery conversations
your splendour leaving scorching marks
though I was developing reservations*

*Too beautiful the glorious roman candle-
heart spinning like a Catherine Wheel
though a display twas more than I could handle-
because of the thoughts it made me feel.*

*Becoming fascinated by moments when light lands
and the splashes of colour that turn to dark
grasping at a stick of joy with ignorant hands
seduced just at the point you leave your mark*

*Flames tainted by glee, reddened by fear
snuffed out by wanting's fateful flaws
the arc of your loveliness far too near
yet moving inexorably beyond dissolving doors*

PHILOSOPHICAL SNEEZE

If your hat's already too small, don't do or think anything that will swell your head

THE BEAUTIFUL KITE FLYER

In amongst a drab urban sprawl, where structures - whispering with the stories of workers' toil - groaned underneath their own dreariness, there was, suddenly, a sighting of a picture dancing above the rooves. Following its line, I emerged into a lovely garden pushing back four lugubrious walls of commercial industry.

Staring skyward, entranced by the image's graceful toing-and-froing, my heart rose with it, in a sense usually reserved for dreams. The vision's mesmeric darting and floating, leaping and falling rendered reason spellbound for what seemed like years.

This authentic delight soundlessly soared in stupendous celebration of superlative sensibilities. It needed no ostentatious tail to tell of itself in showy frippery and stretching down to earth where wise hands guided such loveliness, was a gorgeous, at once slender, strong, thread, a line of assuredness and the happiness was not short-lived.

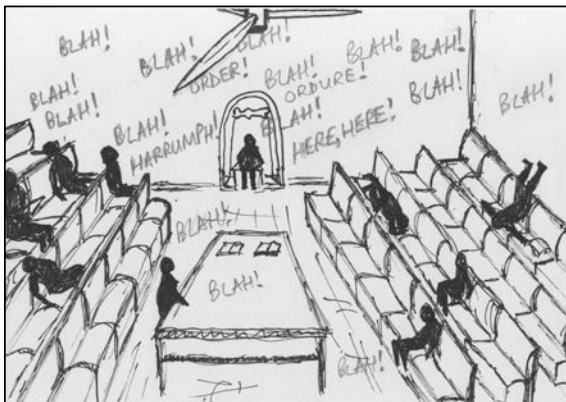
Compelled to see the sensual figure of reason, following the consistent thread, up to the fabulous framed beauty, and looking from one to the other, being unable to tell them apart, commanded even the most reluctant joy to realise a smile that could endure, underwriting any sadness written on those industrial walls.

THATCH 22 TODAY

To be free you need a job and money. So, to avoid paying people without a job, the government force them to labour for the benefits they are already paid to look for work. You are unfree when you don't have a job, you are unfree (free to the employer which can pay no direct wage) when you are made to labour or lose the money already being paid for looking for work. Also, in both cases you are unfree to choose to be paid properly for your labour.

Although having direct tax reduced, we see indirect tax increase to more than we paid under direct taxation, thus shrinking the public purse and our hold on democracy in even its most mechanical sense. We have less money in our pocket whilst compulsory deductions for a national pension some time in the future when any government can and will renege on that agreement. All because this same government is eroding the value (notional) of your state pension by raising the retirement age (based on an unsubstantiated and false notion of unrealistically generic life expectancy: as any cricketer knows that one century can produce a high average regardless of a few low scores) and claiming that the public purse cannot afford to pay monies saved in the compulsory state pension taken from wage as taxation.

Then we are expected to trust a private savings plan to deliver a contractual agreement to pay for not working (retirement) because they as a government have reneged on a public savings plan that they've made fail to deliver a contractual agreement to pay you for not working (retirement). The no-brainer to trust them to honour agreements that afford us (the working-class) time when you get repaid monies you've saved (pension/s) for the not working period (retirement) before death that we reasonably expect to be of some length and quality, excepting the raising of the retirement age to reduce that quality period before death) because they ideologically believe in the rich man's and subservient drudge's mantra, "No work, no money."



At the House of So-called Commoners!

"A NEW WIND FARM - WE NEED TO DO OUR BIT."
"TAKES ONE BACK TO THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF EMPIRE."

TALL DIALOGUE - A Pocketful of Icing

TWO FRIENDS, GODAIMIR and DIDU talking about the project of putting icing on the wall as a warning to the next generations.

D: How much did you contribute to the flour, eggs and water?

G: Fifty years, man, boy and other.

D: What've you got to show for it?

G: A pocketful of icing.

D: Is it really full, your pocketful of icing? And what are you going to do with it?

G: Well, there's no cake for the likes of me (us even), so I can decorate the wall.

D: Yes, indeed, but we should have seen the only option of the icing on the wall.

G: We did. We just didn't even want the crumbs. All we did was serve those cheffing and blinding their way to success. We made do with ants in our pants activity. Hence your own name.

D: We must have been of the plain variety, then?

G: Of course, but the self-raising only made the same cake. It was the cutting of the cake that mattered.

D: So what about the icing?

G: Sugar. Manufactured sugar. Still made by the likes of us.

D: How come we're left with just the icing?

G: The vagaries of distribution; it is everything. And ownership of the means by the mean. We had, we have nothing because we owned nothing of the means. So, what we did say meant, indeed still means nothing. We merely bought the confectionery for immediate consumption. The owners took the cake...

D: ...not the biscuit!?

G: Crumbs, what a wit!?! ... (those as well), and kept the largesse to themselves. We made them all, they owned them all, and we bought them all, paying at least twice the price for each small slice.

D: And they just owned?

G: Yes. They owned the means, we bought the end (product). Though it was us that made them all: cakes and owners.

D: Well. That puts the icing on the ... if we had, that is.

G: You forget, I've got a pocketful.

D: A pocket full?

G: Yes, that as well.

D: What now?

G: Spread it on the wall.

D: And then?

G: We work at dying.

D: For how long?

G: Who knows, it could be forever.

D: How long is that?

G: Could be a lifetime.

D: That long. (pauses. the sound of his mind

ticking over.) How long is that exactly?

G: No one knows for sure. We do know it's the shortest and longest time.

D: Well, that's put the icing on it, and no mistake.

Political Science. Isn't it great?

G: Not quite yet. Should we eat some of it first?

D: I'm not hungry. For food at least. And I'm still thirsty for knowledge.

G: When did you last eat?

D: Yesterday, when I ate my words.

G: A sumptuous feast indeed. Did you eat all your adverbs, like they told us?

D: Certainly did. They were superlative.

G: You always did like your movement, didn't you.

D: Oh. You've dropped a question mark.

G: It's OK. It was only rhetorical.

D: Nevertheless, it's a pity to waste any question mark?

G: Alas, you're right. It's all we have left. Oh, except the icing.

D: And maybe our dignity? What are you going to do with it?

G: Nothing I want to keep my dignity in tact.

D: The icing you dunderhead.

G: Oh. Put it on the wall, of course. You galoot.

D: Of course, you Gobshite.

G: Now, let's not become clichéd.

D: You're right. You were always a wiseacre. But are you not going to eat some of it first?

D: But I don't know whether I'm talking out of turn here...

G: You are, as usual. Funny thing is, I'm not hungry anymore. Especially after just swallowing my pride in the face of such eloquence. You know what a big portion that was to me.

D: Indeed. It's what made you a great man. Are we right now. We know our cues and when to pee? Then all's right with the world.

G: Made me great. Past tense. I am not still here. Unless you aren't...

D: ...aren't what?

G: Here. Ah but that's absurd. We're here and it's good we're relaxed but must we talk of each other in the past tense?

D: At least we can remember each other. It used to be so easy to forget.

G: Yes, but now in this refreshing silence it is impossible to forget. Thank Christ for the memories.

D: It's always there. In our minds. It was just hidden.

G: Yes. By the icing. The confectionery.

D: Ah, the icing. What are you going to do with it.

G: Give it to charity, perhaps?

D: Do they have cake?

G: No, but they never stop wanting icing. (Exeunt)

Over the Hill at 60? Down in the Vale of Joblessness? Don't Despair ... Climb Out into a New Realm of Awesome Opportunity. There are Special Positions Out There for You NOW!

Based upon some research and limited survey data from Deirdre Spitz-Morrash of the Cenale Entropy Institute of Accumulated Detritus, here are ten excitingly Awesome jobs readily available for Sixty-plusers!

SIMIEN GROOMER - It's a fascinating job allowing you to become closer to Nature and its ways, as well as expanding your chance for lively social interaction. Be the first to apply! (Note: Simian bonding has been cited as the latest dynamic advance in networking.)

NAVEL LINT RECLAIMER - Break into the exciting world of hazardous waste management! With limitless supplies of material to be reclaimed, your position is virtually guaranteed to be recession proof!

SOCIAL MEDIA SABOTEUR - Make a societal contribution by hacking, and disrupting Facebook, Twitter, and all texting addictions. Enjoy the sociopathic rush of stopping the incessant and witless trafficking in social media numbskullery!

FABRICATED EMOTION PRESENTER - Fill the endless need in the 24/7 news cycle to react tearfully, mindlessly, and fecklessly to the latest concocted calamity on the cable networks. (Note: Must be able to erupt in crocodile tears on cue.)

SENIOR REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF) COORDINATOR - Join the burgeoning field of "riffing" fellow seniors from business at all levels. It's been done to you, so get buzzed by doing it to them. (Note: Special skills in crafting "pink slip" emails are required.)

DEGENERATION CELEBRANT - There's no need for special training or certification. You'll embrace the downside of life by celebrating inexorable decline to your cohort! (Note: This may be primarily a volunteer-level position.)

LIFE-STYLE COACH - You'll serve the pressing need to advise decision-challenged codgers when to choose that first Greek Fisherman's cap to adorn their clueless noggins, or to don that first pair of "camo" shorts, as well as counseling on the precise moment to begin droning on about one's medical deficiencies and other such critical life-altering decisions. (Note: Any indicator of pragmatic wisdom may be a distinct disadvantage for this role.)

INCONTINENCE THERAPY COUNSELOR - Provide spiritual support to your age-bound colleagues who spray their way through life. Exhort them to take pride and "be in a good place" mentally, if not exactly sitting in one physically!

LINGUISTIC TUTOR - Fill the pressing need to instruct and guide recently "riffed" Seniors to the culturally "rad" mainstream lingo of "dumbed-down" youth who just took their jobs. Tutor and attune them to the scintillating verbiage of "What-ever, like, I'm totally weirded, Dude," which will be useful for future interaction, or even a possible interview. Counsel on the critical use of "What Up?" as a social ice-breaker.

UPBEAT PROSELYTIZER - Likely the most awesomely awesome role in the realm of employment Awesomeness. You'll exude positivity from every bodily orifice and be adored for it! (Caution: Winning personalities only --- No non-smiley-faced poopsters need apply!)

So, Get Out of that Funk! Contact us Today! We Can Hook You Up with These Awesome Opportunities NOW!!!

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Notes: 1) Finder's fees will be assessed for all Awesome job inquiries; 2)Awesome and Awesome Opportunities are the putative trademarks of Awesome Opportunities Limited (litigation pending)....Further Notes: 3) Cenale Entropy Institute is jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and National Public Radio; 4) Ms. Spitz-Morrash's wardrobe is furnished by Pretty Damn Good Butch Fashions; Las Vegas, NV.

(SUBVERTISEMENT CREATED BY MICHAEL LOHAFFER - An FOI.)

WHAT'S LEFT? (A political lament)

They came from three corners of the dearth

And formed a proper procession

For a time headed in the same direction

until it came to stand and merely listen still

to voices of a distant past

with a sentimental reverence well-rehearsed

coming as they were to bury seizure

of the energies that might have liberated;

instead they become celebrants

on oh such a dutiful mourning, oh what a dutiful day

all had a doleful feeling everything's going their way.

Neatly assembled those on the formal left

cried and wrung their hands like bells

and read out loud the hymns of the day

and then shushed those on the left behind

because they had something fresh to say

about this day when the bound were leading

the not so blind

and on this most sad of Saturdays

there is the minority which rejoices - how

They do loathe us, let us recount the ways

and they must love our use of freedom of choice

when some choose to reduce our voice to cells

and to Their ideas do we all cleft

for when there's time to have our say

for revolution that should even duly dawn

at dusk's ugly light

but alack, the head butler pulls rank

and hides the file for our chains

while looking wan over the positions of the silver

and snuffs out those that want to fight

not hammer and sickle or even tooth and nail

but with visceral ideas of how not to kow tow

or ask feebly yet clearly how high sacred brown cow.

And so, we are left with the cadaver of what's left

after self-immolation, for heat and comfort

against cold facts of politics in capitalist letters

and, there were those with rosettes

and ribbons on the acceptable, official left

and there were those who turned left and left

and, looking from one to the other

it was too easy to tell them apart.

After dinner speakers all, the official left

served up an organised feast fit for a king

and after they talked of collecting £200 for passing Go

and how we need to fight for more cards in Community Chest
and Chance piles and selling assets to the banker to stay in the game:

They shot themselves in the left foot:

what a crying shame.

SIMIANS WITH OPPOSING THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

You tak the high ground and we'll tak the no ground and you'll be in penury afore we and you and our true goals will never meet again on a puny leftist march in late April

NEIGH MORE, IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE HERD

Horses, after seeing Animal Farm on DVD are beginning to drag their hooves in protest at their extended tenure in the service industry of mankind.

From misrepresentation in children-aimed advertisements for little colourful and cute versions, right up to the rendering plant fate being usurped by food recycling plants to extend service of humans by the noble and dignified Boxer, whose incredible Protestant work ethic was ultimately exploited by ruthless fat-cat farmers and pigs alike. Boxer's experience is a keen example of the issue of how effort is defined by intention of others which distorts intention of self-expression to produce a reductive and exploitative outcome.

The Horseshoe Up Society is recruiting disgruntled steeds all over to its cause. They are trying to re-establish dignity as part of their right as semi-conscious organisms entailed in freedom from coercion and misuse of their innate abilities to carry humans and pull humans through industrial historical development and be rewarded, so-called, with a sticky end or an afterlife of culinary servitude to the ever tolerant palate of the human being at leisure.

The movement is also pressing for the removal of the ignominy of being attributed names by their oppressors as a sign of ownership: it is not dignified to be called a catchy title to identify them to cash and thrill hungry humans, and, at their death, be given names like 'beefburger' and 'lasagne' as a double-whopper whammy of both naming and denuding of identity in the service of cash-strapped humans still too hungry.

We got this latest Society statement from the hors's mouth: "We want to shed our blinkers and spur on our members to reclaim their rights and the dignity of our race by unseating those that would ride us right to the point where our race is run. We say, not a bit of it, we'll no longer be led up the bridle path, so we will continue to stirrup our members to rebellion. After all, all we want is a stable life."



"IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, THERE'S THE DOOR!"

Exercising choice at work with the application of absurd logic (that passes for realism) for any logical, sentient organism that can actually see realism for what it is: contingent and malleable.

YES SIRE

There is further development of ultra-modern positions vacant in the realm of Yeshire. Zero hours 'contracts' on offer from employers that have a zero tolerance policy on unit cost and Human Resources. People can step back in time to the good old dark ages and enjoy the simple life with no complicated tax thresholds to calculate, no troublesome direct debit arrangements.

Prospective employees can get a Beck & Call application for your mobile given free* at the point of contact. The prospective victim/client will not get bored with the same routine of steady work tenure. Also the successful supplicant will be awarded free HD surround-sound BlueRay copies of On The Waterfront as a kind of training film to inform about the great opportunity for varied and uninteresting indenture.

These ultra-modern opportunities should not be missed† by progressive realists. Chicken George recommends this modernity. "They use you really well but give you the freedom to starve if you try to escape such rich (sorry, no pun intended) opportunity. Mass, save on producing physical chains by unsophisticated indoctrination, thereby saving more money. It's great to see the co-operation between public and private servility as, for every penny the employer doesn't contribute, the public purse contributes the lot to the kind of agencies that facilitate career opportunities for the modern slave."

*Actual cost £10/month for a compulsory 18 months contract.

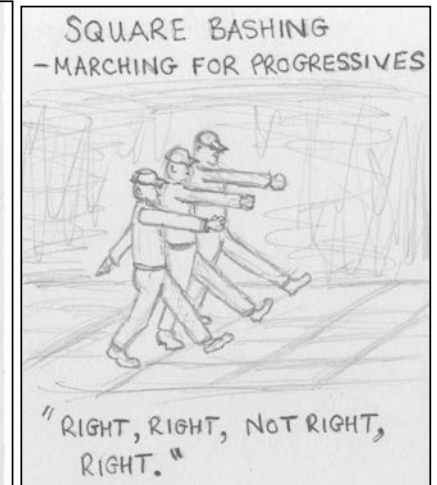
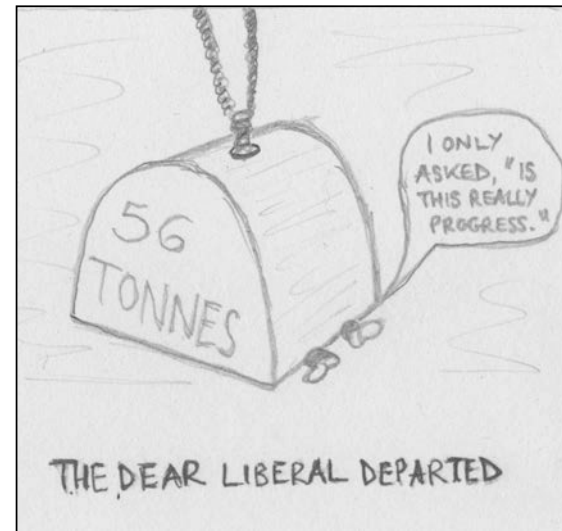
†If you fail to accept an offer of a job you will be starved out for a period of time designated by your government as suitable punishment for your feckless insistence on legitimate choice.

PUSH AND PULL

In other news, a previously underemployed man was pulled apart by two competing job agencies. The fortunate fellow was heard to make a wish just before tearing down the middle as Slavish Tendencies Inc and Serf's Up plc both vigorously vied for the lad's services.

Both saviours of mankind denied accusations of ruthless pursuit of targets that caused this accident. Neither agency has claimed responsibility, citing instead the hapless fellow as not being made of good enough genetic material for the modern world. It was later revealed that both paragons of entrepreneurship could in fact declare they had placed the client/customer in a position and could claim their placement fee from the public purse.

A spokesperson for the agencies - the MP for MakinghaywhilethesungoesdownonBritianplc - who just happens to be a non-executive director of both, said, "Whilst our condolences go out to the fellow's family over losing a low earner, we stand by our policy for growth in the economy driven by the privates sector."



TWO CARTOONS FOR THE PRICE OF NONE

We can reveal we have bought the rights to publish a serialisation of the least selling work of Will E Shakes' peer, Matt 'you aren't old' Doeswell. The novella is a story of an Elizabethan cowboy figure who is stalked by his past. A past that has love, intrigue, misunderstanding and deeply verbal boredom at its root. It's title, TWELFTH FIGHT refers to the number of elements of his past that catch up with the protagonist, Frank O'Teller as he sojourns through town after town to get through the discomfort of his puberty period. The first episode finds Frank in a De-minstrelisation Zone deep in the heart of Taxes.

TWELFTH FIGHT by Matt Doeswell (circa 1645, written in the early evening)

Part the first

Frank is weary and tired and tired and weary of repeating himself. He enters the town of Fiscal, Taxes and suddenly, before he has time to feel relaxed about being in a new town, far from his old one, he feels a presence not far behind him. Like a shadow, the figure moves into the cliched position of dead centre of the main street and looks at Frank with withering eyes. The figure eases back his doublet and hose to reveal a weapon of Mass destruction, an Atheist's Bible, and shouts to Frank,

"Draw full length your hollow sword, there's no more."

Reluctantly acknowledging then espying the identity of his pursuer, Frank eases the phrase from his parched lips, "Oh, fie, tis Kincade, you great western bore." Frank turns side on to his foe, still dog tired and adds, "Besides, thy hate outstrips time, tis not noon."

At this a buzzard, with the enthusiasm of an actor trying to catch the attention of a director in the audience, squawks eleven times.

"Stay thy sly tongue, howl last at the moon."

They both look up momentarily to the baking sun making its weary way to the zenith.

"Tis an oxymoron from a poxy moron. You never had brains you could much call on."

More puzzled than irritated Kincade shuffled again in his pocket, maybe for an idea, but alas, just a sharper weapon than an anti-Ecclesiastic narrative. He fingered towards his gun.

"I'm done, enough talk, seconds are out now."

As Kincade moved uneasily from one syllabic foot to the other, Frank O'Teller slipped his not as tired as first thought hand to his weapon and shot something mightier than the word towards his verbal joust. Before he could fully hear what Frank was about to say, Kincade's lumbering body received a lead caesura. Kincade folded completely like a poor argument with an incomplete imperative stuck between clenched teeth.

"Go f..."

Frank's head fell forward as if accepting applause from onlookers, but there was no-one else there and, anyway, it was heart-fatigue.

"First draw, then breath, then from me a humble bow. An ex-errant hawk vanquished by a dove. My true gritted features are only for love." Frank finished this first stanza, knowing deep down it wouldn't be his last in this or any other life.

(exeunt omnes)

WE'RE NOT GLAD THEY SAID THAT:

"We (politicians) need more money to attract people into politics from all walks of life." Silly Sacred Berk Cow - a man with vested interest in getting too much money.

Eds: So, the current 60K wage, the 20K expenses, second money-making home (given by taxpayers' money) or 'Treasure Chest' as it should be known, and the longest holidays in Christendom aren't already incentive enough then John! You're having a giraffe!

Balls said: "A one nation approach to welfare reform means government has a responsibility to help people into work and support for those who cannot, but those who can work must be required to take up jobs or lose benefits as a result - no ifs or buts."

Eds: So much for legitimate choice and no mention of the quality of the 'job' available. Because, let's face it, how many of us would want a life on meagre benefits or a job that pays little or no more than the meagre benefit rate?

"The Church of England has formally apologised for past child abuse by Anglican priests and its own "serious failure" to prevent it.

Eds: Thing is, it's not us they should be afraid of, is it, really? Or don't they believe in the omniscient, omnipresent Lord of All, after all's said and done?"

"We are doing it because we are called to live in the justice of God and we will each answer to him for our failings in these areas." Eds: Phew, that's a relief, for God at least.

POO CORNER

NIGHTIES NOW AT HOME, WITHDRAWN
NO MORE WAKING INSIDE AT DAWN
OR THEREABOUTS, LIFTING LIDS, MID-MORN
THEY LAY FOLDED, ASLEEP, UNTORN
WE STILL HAUNT YOUR PLACES BUT CANNOT
STAY
THOUGH WE'VE ARCHIVED TEARS, TOO MANY
STRAY
ONTO SMILING CHEEKS YOU PINCHED IN
YOUR WAY
WE SEE YOU ROUND HOSPITAL CORNERS,
SLIPPING AWAY

STEADIED BY THOUGHTS OF HAPPY ROUTINE
BEING HERE, BEING THERE, THE FUTURE
UNSEEN
THEN LIPS, PENCIL-THIN DRAW, BREATHLESS
THAT SCENE
FINGERING CRUEL DUST, WHERE NOT JUST
ANYBODY HAS BEEN

THE CLICK OF A YEAR SINCE SAYING
GOODBYE
STILL WAKING AT TIMES WITH THE PAIN OF
WHY
BUT USING ENERGIES YOU GAVE ME TO BEAT
GRIEF WITH A SIGH
STILL CALLING FOR YOU, IT IS DEATH WE
DESCRY

(THAT WORKADAY CRUELTY
WHEN YOU WERE ASKED TO WRITE HER OUT
OF FORMAL RECORDS
YOU GRIPPED THE PEN TO STAVE OFF A
COLLAPSE
WE, AS MUTE WITNESSES SWALLOWED HARD
OUR IMPULSE TO SUPPORT YOU:
WITH A TOUCH, TO HOLD YOU WITHOUT USING
OUR TREMBLING HANDS

IMPOTENTLY RESTING ON A COMPOSITE
FUTURE EMITTING A PERVERSE BRIGHTNESS
COVERING A 15* SCREAM
WE, AT THAT MOMENT INKED INTO US,
BREATHED UNEASILY THE WEIGHT OF
FORMALITY,
AS FAR FROM AND NEAR TO YOU AS IS
POSSIBLE.

IT'S AS IF, SOMEHOW, WE SENSED
SOMETHING OF WHAT YOU KNEW AND FELT
WHILE YOU WERE WITH HER, TALKING LONG
INTO THAT NIGHT, HOLDING IN TWO HANDS,
TWO OR MORE HEARTS TATTOOED ONTO
FRAGILE FLESH THAT CONTAINED A GREAT
SPIRIT;

YOU WATCHED HER FINAL FALL BETWEEN
HERE, THERE AND NE'ER.
WE STRUGGLED TO ACT AS IF NOTHING
UNUSUAL WAS HAPPENING
WE STRAINED IN THE WINGS, WAITING FOR A
CALL, NONE CAME, YOU STOOD TALL AND
GRACEFUL WITH A NARRATIVE SUSPIRE
STILL SOMEWHAT WEIGHTED, YOU CARRIED
ON KNOWING THE TRUE NATURE OF YOUR
SORROW
OUR SILENCE WAS ADMIRATION
OUR WORDLESS UNEASE AN ADMITTANCE OF
SADNESS STILL DOUBLED THOUGH ONE
LONELY IS TAKEN AWAY.)

POEMS BY THE LESSER KNOWN SCOTTISH
RADIOACTIVE BARD, NUCLEAR BURNS.

FUTILE FUEL
Benevolence of our feudal lord
helps keep my cheeks all aglow
but it's inside that there's no accord
between my red and white we reap what we sow
they saw my physiomy will potentially
mutate
I'll change in fundamental ways
living a half-life that's not so great;
twenty thousand years in the dying, nothing's
too late

I SO TO HOPE
Isotope so full of hope
energy to light our way
you are the one true rod for our own back
activity inside us day after day
radiating warmth our bodies lack
hope so full of isotope

FISSION FOR COMPLEMENTARIES
Watt's happening to our green and pleasantries
a flash of inspiration implodes in us
our pockets blow up inflationary economies
tear at our trousers though it's not our business
tilting at windfarms easing us round
hot profits rise, no questions asked
futures unclear yet wholly lucrative
for those who know no doubt
as to the whys and wherefores
of speculative certainties
whilst there are those who darn
the windsock of change to keep
themselves warm when direct debits
bounce like old checks no longer in place
and a home becomes a money pit
full of darkness, ignorance and silverfish

AN INTERVIEW WITH: MARCEL MARCEAU (The brilliant, entertaining Mime)

Eds: Hello, or should we say Bonjour, Marcel.

MM: (!)

Eds: I realise French people have a reputation for being passionate but, this is neither the time nor the place for that kind of gesture. Oh, sorry, lost in translation. Nous sommes désolés.

MM: ...

Eds: Are you air-squatting comfortably?

MM: ...

Eds: Do you do much charity work in between your art?

MM: ...

Eds: That's a nice gesture. What do you think of French or indeed world politics?

MM: ...

Eds: All a bunch of slapheads, then, with their fingers up their own austerity measures.

MM:

Eds: Lots of people want to ask you whether you have ever spoken inadvertently during your life?

MM:

Eds: Really, just twice. Oh, sorry, that's two sugars in your coffee.

MM:

Eds: That's hilarious, Marcel, especially how you made out it was someone else throwing their voice. Brilliant.

MM:...

Eds: Does miming frustrate you when you want to say or show something a little more complex?

MM: :- !!! :- ?*/ :- ^%& ... %- - - - - - -

Eds: Wow. I guess not. That's one of the most eloquent and expressive explanations of the tenets of relativist determinism I've ever heard.

MM: ...

Eds: What are your thoughts on love?

MM: ... :- &:-

Eds: Indeed.

MM: @£\$:- (.) :-

Eds: Through the eyes. Really. That's fascinating.

MM: --- :- &*^ {}- :- \$-£

Eds: In the tactile gentleness, ah, good.

MM: =- += ... ". "?"

Eds: And. Oh. In the sexual act. Indeed. That's very clear, Marcel, thank you...You can stop now. I understand. That's getting a little too explicit. You have to consider our Englishness, Marcel. For mercy's sake, arrêtez-vous là.

MM: ***!*****_)('><|

Eds: Quite finished. Here's a towel. Right. When did your love of mime begin?

MM:*8.

Eds: Really, from two years old. You surprised your mother when potty training. Hah, hah, that's priceless. Was the incident the inspiration behind your world renowned pissoir sketch?

MM: +++ ()(&*^ :- - - - -

Eds: Yes, it was brilliant. You do so much of your performing without props?

MM: ... :-

Eds: Only those that come to hand. I see. Ah, well, that's one of the more obvious. You can put it away now, Marcel. We get the picture. That must go down well after ten o'clock at night.

MM: ...

Eds: Sorry, We didn't mean that. It's just an expression. Good god, isn't spoken language too ambiguous. We can see why you chose miming and gestures.

MM: ---

Eds: Do you dream in mime?

MM: ^^

Eds: Jungian symbolism. Well, I never. You've hurt your wrist?

MM: ...

Eds: Oh, you have to go. OK, Marcel, it has been a distinct pleasure listening to you. Take care. Au revoir.

TROTSKY'S TIFFIN (previously Stalin's Breakfast)

Mine will be micro chips and a hotel, please.

Trawling through the myriad choices of bourgeois holidaying, something caught my ear, nose and throat. After so many hours poring over pictures and text hearing the stories of fellow travellers and their tales of wearing-thin, I made a decision. The place I settled on had 4.5 out of 5, no-one had a seriously bad word to say about the place. I'd encountered those critics of experience who are so hard to please and whose unhappiness can be sparked by the dimensions of the pillow-mint. The place looked like it is well-connected, pleasant, even though I'd learned more about how pictures can tell fairy stories; we know the cliché 'a picture can paint a thousand words' but if they are going to be, at best, gross exaggeration, and at worst, reality-denying lies, then give me a blank canvas, commercial hostelry.

Then it was seemingly endless keying through the payment confirmation booking process to the last page where one could have their session timed out reading the small print. So far, so good, however, when you want to reach said hostelry by air, then you are in for a very turbulent time.

The first noticeable glitch in holiday heaven was the little detail of a cheap flight airport being named with your final destination when it is in fact so far away that in some cases it could be in another country. Shuttling past this nursery hurdle, I began the longer than the actual flight booking process.

Step one saw me filling details I thought I didn't know about myself by clicking in more radio buttons than stars in a night sky.

Step two had page after page of 'would you like to include' offers that you had to undo as they were set as default choices.

However, those were just the prelude to the overture of the counter-revolutionary, third of the overall bargain cost, administration charges. Now, correct me if I'm wrong but wasn't the automation of processes meant to eradicate such price busting elements? This friendly, helpful, remote and fully technologically advanced mediator which promised to find you the best deal, goes some way to negating the price differential in administration charges. People are regularly being put out of work because of how easily and cheaply technology can 'do the job', so what's with such a large administration charge?

After having spent as much time 'choosing', due of course to differences based as much on disingenuousness, it would be useful if the hotel mediators didn't recommend places whose visitor ratings suggest stays in nothing better than a midden however well-located, I can only hope that a) there's a mint on a clean pillow, and b) that it is of good quality, otherwise I'll be compelled to spend more hours exercising my inalienable right to point out to some uninterested agency just how disconnected advertising is from experienced reality.

A hotel, flight and dream break arranged I retired to the kitchen to take a little food, in a bizarre gesture of intending to live. Being less than ravenous, I plumped for a quick and easy potato fix. Tearing back the perforations with the enthusiasm of a lab-monkey, I was somewhat disappointed once more with the contents. A small box yet it had so much space despite the chips, I was reminded of the booking for a hotel which didn't have as much room as this box. I guess this is where I found the advertising meaning of the term 'micro' in microchips. I always thought that it referred to the heating process being done by a microwave cooker but I now know they are describing the contents and the small amount I could count on the fingers of a battered fish.

Opening two boxes to placate even a modest appetite, it was obvious that one box would have sufficed for the joint amount from both boxes. I guess they wanted to let the chips breathe so as to cook better, and not put so few in each box to make more on each box sold. Maybe the marathon vigil on the internet had made me somewhat cynical and given me deception fatigue, so I was not in the best of moods to see such a relatively large box (although it was actually small) with such a micro amount of chips.

Nevertheless, I tucked into the microchips as though I was well-balanced and fully developed psychologically and accepted the reality anomaly in all I'd experienced throughout the day.

Having said all that, I still, during the washing up and the evening contemplating a trip to Paris with a full stomach of pommes de terre, thought to myself in the confines of my bourgeois, working-class head, that when something happens to radically change the way we conduct ourselves and the way our natures for co-operation and fairness are made manifest in our exchanges, my wish will be fulfilled: 'Come the revolution, sorry, make that micro-rebellion'.

TV

FEEL OR NO FEEL is on yet again. Contestants are strapped into a chair, their eyelids are restrained from blinking and they are subjected to visual, aural and even tactile stimuli representing the modern world. The less tears they shed the more money they win. This is measured on an LMI* rating system. *Lachrymose Mass Index.

FORMULA ONE.

A programme investigating the development of fast foods for babies.

BEHIND THE CHIMES.

A pseudo-documentary charting the lives of campanologists, looking at the ups and downs of rope-pulling.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE CARBUNCLE

Tune in to the latest depiction of the wacky world of business employment and redundancy. Laugh along as Managing Director Cecil Nimby-Squiers brings on board then lays off a stream of hapless souls trying to escape the tempest of unemployment.

As the show reveals, Cecil's notoriously imperious nature as Managing Director of Scamophile Outsourcing, Ltd., is further enhanced by a poxy carbuncle on his upper neck from which emanate verbal commands directing him to hire and fire at will. Cecil intuitively understands it as his latest innovation in au courant, self-generated leadership skill in unique service of asserting brilliant decisions.

You'll giggle as 'Iggy' - Cecil's pet name for his acerbic tumor - makes such calls as "Her bum's so plummy - must have her!" or, "His CV ain't worth a pot of piss ---dump him out!" Chortle away as Cecil breaks new ground in the field of Managing Directorial incompetence and self-aggrandisement.

Cecil is played by veteran character actor Edward Pitburble with usual comic aplomb, clearly spiced up with what are overly waxed eyebrows. 'Iggy' is voiced with down-market dash by Ronnie Vole in tones both exultant and sinister. This one is a must tune-in --- on Channel V.

"As accurate a depiction of the contemporary world of business leadership as it gets." -- Nate Scriveley, Commerce Editor of The Nagwog Times

CINEMA

FANHUNTER is a grubby tale of a man, whose own negativity eats away at him, craving adulation. From the depths of being a ten-can-a-day man to the heights of accepting polite applause and mild laughter from a modest audience in a small club.

SOLICITO by the controversial director, Mel Anoma is released this month to mixed reviews. The painstaking depiction of the implosion of the judicial system is twelve hours long and has subjudice titles explaining some of the jargon and the sexual nuances of the epic tale.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEBT.

The Tory bloodfest film is spreading across the country and is compulsory viewing in certain parts of The Midlands. The story is of two hapless voters being chased by a mutilated cheque and a deceased borrower.

BOOKS

New book out today by Morris Dancer OBE called **Buffoonery For Profit.**

It is full of incoherent sentences and devoid of cogent argument. This piece of 'work' is an indictment of mankind as a whole and Britain plc as a specific.

'An intriguingly disappointing read'. Random seven-year old.

MAGAZINES

GUN DOGS MONTHLY is causing a stir with the anti-hunting lobby who believe it should be put on the top shelf or kept out of sight altogether. Subscribers generally fend off criticism by saying it isn't the dog that's dangerous, it's the owner.

THEATRE

The new play, **L'Enfer Est D'autres Personnes** by J.P Soupspoon opened across Europe last month.

It is the story of a Frenchman incarcerated by his own lack of humility, who is then given the option of staying imprisoned or accepting a cake with an anglophile in it. He is torn between accepting non-freedom and eating only his greens, and embracing something he detests - he was once intellectually humiliated by a worker in a patisserie - that would liberate him. A classic Vache-22 dilemma that holds your attention until you get hungry. **Albert Cloche - Votre Main Dans Le Monde** (Paris).

GET TICKETS FOR THE SMASH HIT TOUR OF THE CONCEPT ALBUM BY OXBOW-LAKEN-PALMOIL.

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND-RACE BUT LIFE STILL MAKES YOU WANT TO SPIT.

Track Listing:

- Our Love Moves Like a Glacier
- Silt Crazy After All This Erosion
- No Mountain To Climb (You Were No Longer Inclined)
- Our Contours Were Too Far Apart
- Avalanche With Me One Last Time
- Plateau Full Of Debris
- On The Edge Of A Pressing Piss
- I Have To Leave This Little Tarn
- Loving You From A Farm
- Scars On My Terrain
- No Moraine (I Can't Rake It Any More)
- Trail Of Tariffs. Ticket prices from £20 to £60. The latter includes a foursome with the band.

UNSCHEDULED PROGRAMME

A man entered the ITV Saturday Night Programming Studio primed with an idea. The building was quickly cleared and negotiators were trying to talk him out of exploding his conceptual device.

There was a scary moment when a politician tried to distract him with cliché and rhetoric but the man soon smelled a rat and had to be reassured that no-one else would try to storm him with Soporific Asinine Speeches.

The viewers' vote was 70/30 against the man's cause. The siege is still ongoing despite the best efforts of a satirist to defuse the situation with knowing laughter.

STUPID CULTURE

At The Lyceumcoming Theatre last month, Osborno the Grate revealed his latest efficient routine to a more than puzzled audience.

Using a voiceover Osborno instructed his audience to conduct all the tricks, through which some of the participants lost money. The trick where the participant cut up legal tender notes and saw them appear in Osborno's pocket, never to be retrieved, galled many present to witness it.

"It's one thing to be coerced into doing the tricks ourselves, then to lose even more money doing them, well that takes the biscuit." said one particularly irate customer. "The only saving grace is that the ticket price is tax deductible, and I believe there was a whip-round enacted outside the theatre where a number of bums and proles were tapped up for a charitable contribution. So equilibrium restored, so to speak." she added.

Osborno's specialism was to pull a deficit out of a top hat, a trick that never fails to impress audiences despite its shocking impact on them.

RATS GRATIA RATS

Leonard Convinci has been appointed as new art Tsar by the government, which has struggled to place this friend of the family due to his inability to understand anything real.

The government has denied this is a new quango and have backed Mr Convinci's remit to oversee the PR involved in presenting art as valuable. "The A is capitalist and is essential for assessing those struggling millionaires perpetrating concept art in a modern materialistic world. We are trying to protect the productivity of an elite group of artists dependent on patronage for their reputation as radical thinkers." a spokesperson for the government said last week.

VOTE GRATIA VOTE: A PHONEY WAR

37% of 65.7% that voted* (DEMOCRACY) versus 99% of 99% that voted (DICTATORSHIP) †

*Voted out of lack of authentic choice and the illogical imperative that the vote, being the only political input for the proletariat, is the sole activist gesture we can make every five years, excepting coalitions that can choose to extend an interim 'mandate' into a five-year term without further 'consultation' with the hapless, hopeless electorate that voted with severe doubts and a fatalism borne of coerced cynicism. A cynicism that accepts the leader will enact its, and its socio-economic class cohorts' wishes, in spite of popularity and fairness in civil and political law.

† Voted out of love for those leaders who 'do not shrink from a fight (with its electorate) and are 'conviction politicians' and 'do what they think is right' and, of course fear of political persecution if holding a view contrary to the political leader of the country.

LAYING A GHOST

There was evidence of political progress in a sometimes well-known north-eastern town, when in the latest by-election, a Chimpanzee was voted in as their MP despite the national hung parliament.

“He’s a damned sight more honest than the previous incumbent and he doesn’t touch himself as much. He’s also a great nitpicker in debate.” said a happy voter of the town.

The new MP’s campaign mantras were: “Greater representation for all primates,” “Many a good hanging prevents a Tory or so-called Liberal Democrat getting voted in,” and, “I want to be seen as a Chimpanzee of the People.”

PSYCHOANALYTICAL BREAKTHROUGH

Results of a study by Dr Fred Sangfroid, a leading member of The Koch Institute in Burbank CA, has revealed that there is an unconscious negative impulse in the modern human being. It is a complex complex that sees even young males trying to grow their pension prematurely and damaging their ability to see reality. Bombarded by media, these alfalfa males are obsessing about their pensions.

People need to treat this complex issue by issue and they can’t fall down, the eminent doctor said with a gleam in his eye. It is no good thinking about mother’s way of dealing with money and then applying it to the market. Also, pension enlargement plans are poppycock; they are full of asterisks. No-one should take asterisks with your future. There is some evidence that this complex stems from the transition from when, as children, people could open and close their own Post Offices, and now, when they begin to realise it is government at the behest of corporations that control deposits, withdrawals and purchasing of post-it notes, the sufferer retreats inside their self and begins to resent their disenfranchisement. Also, when they realise the ridiculous amount of vendors of a happy future retirement, all of whom are only interested in upfront monies with the underlying economic truth of instability for sufferers identifying those with already lucrative deals - politicians, royalty and even those well-to-do proletarians who benefitted from times of well-paid, well-serviced schemed jobs, jobs that have albut disappeared.

Another key element in this complex is the slippery slope of economic inevitability that is leading to a passive acceptance that future generations will have to partake in a kind of lottery, not even a quiz programme, to not even ensure a pension. Also, with governments abandoning agreements made with voting populaces to deliver living pensions, the sense of betrayal of any tenets of a representative democratic system only adds to the condition of Pension Envy.

Further complications ensue when sufferers subconsciously desire to be like mother, who seems to be better placed to enjoy retirement, thus rejecting father who, in the eyes of sufferers, is emasculated by economic circumstance and does little or nothing to improve conditions in which Pension Envy grows. This position is, of course, based on gender fallacy of potential pension earnings based on a nostalgia for more stable economic conditions before advanced corporate capitalism.

A deeper aspect of Pension Envy is found in the Homo-eroticism of the financial sector with the ups and downs, the ins and outs and the flamboyant gesturing of the stock markets appealing to a revisionist libido that defines its self by adaptability rather than more rigid columnar desires for supremacy in a hotbed of activity. The hole-in-the-wall exchanges that can be perpetrated in the dark appeal to the fundamental urbanised, mechanised neophyte urges of the modern human being that fulfils the sensual desires of busy kinetic organisms that would otherwise acknowledge the utter emptiness of their lives.

Critics have dismissed the findings as mere intellectual masturbation but overlook the essence of all this so-called activity in the modern world. In response to these criticisms the last word is with Dr Sangfroid, “When you are using your digits to merely depress buttons or market values of rival bankers, you lose all feeling for other organisms. You become a member of the human race covered in a skin that actually keeps you from touching your own desire for closeness to significant others in any sensual realm. To look constantly to a future condition of material comfort whilst ignoring the present possibilities of love, sex and sense of true belonging is setting one’s self up for a monumental anti-climax. The short-term explosions of financial dealing cannot take the place of longer developing and more sustaining pleasures of life itself. This is why Pension Envy is a form of self-denial in that it seeks fulfilment where there is too little to properly satisfy the complex needs of sentient beings estranged from their father-figure, the banks.”

LIVING VERTICALLY

By Stacy LeVine June 15, 2013 (Inconsequential NYC Correspondent)

My maiden literary voyage on the RMS Inconsequential revolved around [Manhattan manners](#). Largely focused on rude dog owner behavior, it began with a brief anecdote about my 1989 elevator encounter with a wasp. And now, for the rest of that story... My father is a retired colon and rectal surgeon; a proctologist. (Take a moment to get over the hilarity. Dad is a proud “Ass Man,” and he thinks it’s far funnier than you do.) As a child, I often found myself in hospital nursing stations waiting for Dad as he made his patient rounds. This situation was always incredibly boring, but highly lucrative when it came time to sell Girl Scout Cookies. It was during one such bound-for-the-nurse-station outing that I was neck-stung. That’s right. I was attacked by a wasp in a hospital elevator. Horrific, on so many levels.

The dress I was wearing that fateful day was green-and-blue plaid with a big, white collar. Unbeknownst to me, a wasp flew up underneath that big collar as Dad and I passed buggy foliage en route to the physician entrance from the parking lot. (Wasps are a constant torment in Florida, my home from 1984 to 1997.) It wasn’t until we were in the elevator that the winged menace unveiled himself to punish my neck for his collar incarceration.

There was no one in the elevator but Dad and me. The sudden hymenopteran aggression was utterly unprovoked. We were both standing still when I screamed and grabbed my neck. Honey bees die after they sting. Wasps do not. So the menace flew off my neck and began frantically reconnoitering our collective steel prison. Dad and I cowered in a corner until the doors opened and then bolted into the hallway. I don’t know what happened to the flying thorn after that, because I was immediately rushed to the emergency room for a stinger extraction. I can only hope the amputated monster was quickly vanquished.

As mentioned in my first Inconsequential piece, I have since nursed a severe anxiety about elevators, which is a chronic headache as an adult New Yorker. Quoting myself, “We live on top of each other here, and we certainly have no escape from nuisance in elevators.” We also have no escape from elevators, themselves. According to the most current statistics available from the United States Census Bureau, an estimated 8,336,697 people resided in the five boroughs in July of 2012. And, according to The New York Times, that population is distributed across just 304.8 square miles (789.4 km²) of actual land. Of the estimated 3.7 million employed in New York City, 56% work in Manhattan. Of those who work in Manhattan: 6.5% commute from Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk counties); 4% commute from Westchester County, and; 5% commute from Bergen and Hudson counties in New Jersey. Then, of course, there is the rest of New Jersey, plus those who haul ass from Connecticut and the Poconos every workday. The only way to house and provide business space for the millions on this relatively minute land tract is to build vertically. Unfortunately, living vertically is only possible because of elevators. It so happens that my mother also nurses an elevator anxiety, one that predates mine by twenty years and began in New York City. It was 1969. She was eighteen and visiting her aunt and uncle in the Riverdale neighborhood of the Bronx when she and her cousin got trapped in a residential high-rise elevator for twenty-five minutes. Stuck between the first and second floors, they were ultimately pulled vertically by hand onto the second floor, after which Mom broke down. She has been a claustrophobe ever since.

I have been long baffled and annoyed by the propensity of non-elevator-phobes to linger in the darn things. Don’t worry about being polite when it’s time to step off an elevator, people. (I certainly don’t.) Exit as quickly as possible. That said, Japanese businessmen get a cultural hall pass on this personal foible. Having noticed a peculiar practice in my office building, I asked an employee of MITSUI & CO., LTD. GLOBAL why her colleagues always hesitate a moment before exiting the elevator single-file. She explained that it is their tradition to enter and exit elevators in order of seniority. This can take a while. And it is awkward.

I could fill volumes with observations of elevator awkwardness. I once had a bizarre encounter in the same building with a very-pregnant woman who stepped onto an elevator car in which I had previously been alone. Like any socialized human, I was standing with my back to the wall and my face to the doors. Inexplicably, the pregnant woman never turned back to face the doors once she was safely inside the car. We faced each other in uncomfortable silence all the way to the lobby. What the hell was that?

I would like to share a little-known elevator fact. Hopefully, word will spread virally and at least one maddening meme will be vanquished like the oh-so-deserving amputee wasp from my childhood. According to what is, in both my humble opinion and that of those far less humble, America's greatest magazine, The New Yorker: "In most elevators, at least in any built or installed since the early nineties, the door-close button doesn't work. It is there mainly to make you think it works. (It does work if, say, a fireman needs to take control. But you need a key, and a fire, to do that.)" So, yes, you look like an idiot to me when you repeatedly stab that button trying to make some other poor slob even later than you are.

In conclusion, this New Yorker implores the global elevator-riding public at large: Unless it is an obscure cultural tenet to behave otherwise, end the futility of abusing door-close buttons to foil potential entrants, face the doors so as not to unnerve your companions, exit the second you're able and, of course, keep those damn dogs to yourself. ●

STEALING A MARCH

Charles Fagin has been awarded The Lying Fox award for private enterprise.

Last month, Lord Fagin took on seven more urchins and put them to work immediately. The self-made man of the people said modestly in interview recently, "You've got to make a packet or sue, Bob."

His enterprise is taking advantage of the ideological trend of offering work to youngsters who would otherwise be running free and not taking part in the capitalist exchange system. The new approach fits in nicely with their natural inclination to turn up for grown-up things when they want to.

Fagin added, "We've tapped in to their nature and used it to full commercial advantage by advertising mostly by word of mouth as it is more cost efficient, the axiom, "Turn up for work when I needs you'. This way everyone's a winner." What Fagin didn't mention was the extensive advertising campaign which has school exercise books emblazoned with the corporate mantra, 'you don't eat if you don't work'.

Fagin also gets significant support from the public purse in the form of a grant which guarantees him profit untainted by running costs including wage bills. "All of my boys leave feedback forms on their customers, so that we can react to customers' views on how to improve our service. Only last week one of my boys gave a customer a discount when he took almost all of his loose change but left him with his store credit card. You can't want for more considerate thieving than that can you?"

The Minister for Pickpockets and Entrepreneurs, Martin Bolsh-it, said, "It just shows you what can be achieved with a 'can do and will do regardless' attitude. Children today have more get up and go than we often portray and with the social and political environment that lacks morality and ethical fairness, well, frankly, anything goes." There is talk that Lord Fagin will be getting a letter of invitation with the Royal letterhead any day soon.

Lord F did however have to let one of his charges go when, in his mano-a-mano monthly meetings, the ungrateful little tyke, in response to being given a wider catchment area for his work, replied, "Please sir, no more."

AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT

One of the unluckiest people still alive, Lesley Behan, is recovering in a private ward after almost swallowing a kite.

The unfortunate woman is still spitting feathers at her ill-luck: she was out strolling on one of those blustery days recently, when a man, taking his kite for a spin, lost control causing it to plummet towards Ms Behan. Naturally taken aback, Lesley's jaw dropped and the hapless kite came down right into the considerable 'hole'. Before anyone could react to prevent it, the kite became lodged in Lesley's throat. The two parties involved in the incident, Ms Behan and Ken Nothing have at least worked out a mutually agreed settlement without a court case, agreeing to live together and pool their misfortune so as to avoid being sued by strangers. "At least we understand the nature of accident and luck better than most." said a happy Mr Nothing, sharing the bed next to Ms Behan, after falling over her bedpan on a visit to her in hospital.

POINTLESS HEADLINE FOUND TO HAVE NO SUBSTANCE

SCENE FROM THE 21ST CENTURY

SHOOTING STARS IN A BARREL

Scene One:

There is a small, greyish figure sat at a desk in a large open-plan office complex. On a jaded fascia desk, just in front of the figure, is a childishly ostentatious certificate with the legend Team Star emblazoned in very large font.

Within a few seconds a shadow grows over the incumbent figure. A manager-type figure, wearing the appointed apparel of their station, comes from behind and hovers over the desk-bound figure. The manager goes on to pat the seated figure on the back in a very condescending fashion.

A terse, unemotional, "Well done" emanates from the pursed lips of the manager.

The seated, fatigued figure musters a "Mmm" in response.

It transpires that the manager gives the seated figure another identical certificate, with the same emblazoned title of Team Star.

Curtain Falls.

Scene Two:

As above except that the manager this time merely embraces the seated figure but this time nothing is said.

We are given the added visual display of the manager's shadow withdrawing from the scene and the bright letters of the certificates sparkling.

Curtain Falls.

Scene Three:

The background has changed, the action now takes place in a room that has smaller card-type certificates of a sort, and on them are small narratives conveying simple information concerning job vacancies and their necessary details.

In a few seconds we see an automatic door slide open and the small, greyish figure, looking more charcoal-grey than before, enters and makes its way to the wood-fascia desk.

"I'm here for my back-to-work interview."

Just then, the figure turns round and recognises another greyish figure a desk along. In an impulse of reminiscence, the first figure goes to the other and embraces them saying,

"Hello, you young so-and-so, I didn't know you had been made redundant, too."

The young so-and-so starts and is then seen to fumble in the right hand pocket of their garment in a state of some agitation.

The first figure, puzzled, says, "Are you OK?"

The second figure, still with their hand in the pocket replies, "Yeah but embracing this change is a dubious legacy of modernity."

At this they look at one another and, after a moment of unease, start laughing uproariously.

Just as tears start streaming from both in this fit of amusement, the desk clerks, in unison, say, "If you'll just take a seat, there'll be someone along to see to you in a moment."

They both move off to take adjacent seats and resume a shared look of resigned anxiety.

Curtain Falls Off.

OH, KNICKERS!

Ever had one of those days that begins far too early, alarmingly early, and you dress in obscene haste to catch a bus or train, or even start the car in order to speed off to work or a job seekers back-to-work interview?

This sounds mundane enough and probably is common, but it is when you get to your destination and you take a seat for the first time and realise that you are sitting on a button. No, not the button on the back of your trousers, as this suggests you are almost lying down, but that little tell-tale button that shouts out to you, causing sudden paranoia where you think this opprobrium can be heard by everyone, that you have put your underpants on the wrong way round.

After the initial panic and embarrassment you are somewhat relieved that your tackle hasn't shrunk and the bellowing is only the back part on the front, you inevitably wonder, 'Do women have the same discomfort with their knickers on back to front, or do they even notice?'

Subvertisements from The Leverage Collective Group whose motto is: Rinsing Is Futile.

LENINOR - The revolutionary new washing gel. It cleans the blue out of your linens and stiffens your resolve. It devolves the softness out of your pillows so you don't sleep around in a dream. It helps you face the capitalist realities.

If you spit blood whilst brushing political realities from your gumptions, then you need a revolutionary new skin-of-your-teeth mouth scrub, TOLLGATE'S CREAM.

No more Cringelin for you, just bracing taste of rebellion in your oral ablutions. A renewed, revised non-quiescent freshness in every action.

Cleans away obeisant martyr from your smile, a sincerity not seen in any Tory grin.

ROSA Soap for all your deep cleansing needs.

Wash away tawdry Tory slime that makes your skin crawl. Instead you'll be clean of conscience with this profound and thorough soap.

TROTSKYITE the laxative for freeing up your ability to argue alternate ideologies running counter to the controlling capitalist ones.

You'll have your pick of political persuasive argument with just one little tablet.

Never again be incommoded by political debate. You don't have to take any more sentimental blusterers and rhetoricians trying to smoke and mirror you. No more capitalist apologist revisionist detritus, you can now produce enough to hit even the most distant fan. Try Trotskyite today! You'll never settle for less than political truth again.

POSTURING SPRINGS

It's not only the daffodil bulbs that are proudly puffing out their stuff on burgeoning stamen: look to the testosterone-heavy leaders around the globe who are spring-loaded and bursting for a rut.

Winter's quiet, subdued rhetoric is coming to an end and being replaced by playground boasting and oneupmanship of the 'my dad's bigger than your dad' mentality.

Of course, the stakes are high and the reward could be a feeling of superiority in oblivion, so threatening gesturing ensues: nuclear button gazing we humans are seemingly innately endowed with, happens. The 'I can destroy the Earth and its inhabitants better than you' gainsaying sees the rites of spring confrontations unearthing pointless progress made by humanity in developing the means by which we can negate life both from the aspect of death as an infinite finality, and from the point of view that keeps us from actively living because we have found it easier to bring about our own mass destruction than organise politically, socially and economically to enable living that doesn't entail the promise of death.

Apparently trapped by a nature that can only see north, south, east and west as in opposition, rather than points indicating the extent of possibility, we fail to realise how natural it is to think: to think beyond our condition, outside of our moral and ethical recidivist attitude that has us settling for simplistic species negation instead of exploring inner space and possibility therein of developing our nature as cognitive and generally co-operative beings. We need to tap into our nature that can imagine, as well as feel through our connectedness to other and self, death, to compel an enthusiasm for life that is more than merely unsigned contractual obligation to materially exist without actively living.

So, the playground fight this time might result in a final, logically pointless and inconclusive boom, but in the meantime the daffodils will bloom beautifully.

ARTLESS

The Turnagain Prize for Artist Under the Weather has been awarded to Charles Sniffle for his incoherent piece on Simple communication. The artwork, called enigmatically Mmmm, depicts a short narrative explaining how, if you take the M&Ms (the artificial sweeteners) out of the word commerce, you are left with coerce. It is touted as being a particularly satirical critique of corporatism. Some critics of the son of a baron's work describe it as a 'bag of chocolate coloured detritus' and think the prize itself should be scrapped for encouraging pretentious rubbish.

The prize is for any artist with a non-life threatening illness and was won last year by the piece, Sickest Self-portrait of The Hypochondriac by Phil Popper.

EVOLUTIONS

- a) Julius Caesar's face appeared on all Roman coins during the time of his rule. Believing his likeness to be all-knowing, he introduced this method to try criminal disputes.
- b) On 1st April 1075, Gary Dahl launched the sale of a novelty product as an April Fool's Day joke. He was laughing all the way to the bank, as this 'joke' went on to sell millions before the fad was over.
- c) Despite popular myth, this astronomical phenomenon was not named after the man who discovered it, but after the man who correctly determined the exact date of its next appearance.
- d) When first introduced during the second World War, they were known as General Purpose vehicles. For practicality, it soon came to be known by this name.

WELL HUNG

Roger Thirst, the brilliantly enigmatic artist has excelled himself with a piece called, Peonies Envyng My Gaze. The image is of a scrubby lower torso, steeped in a bag of BabyGro, with the legend, How Contrary are You, Mary, Really and Truthfully?

Not surprisingly, it was the crowd of art buffs who were questioning the work as a sufficiently modern, progressive yet common-or-garden display of well-groomed egotism.

WELL BRED

Mrs Jean Valerie Jean was arrested and sentenced for stealing a loaf of bread. Sentence was passed by a judge under investigation for fiddling expenses on a second home in the role of MP. The QC said at Mrs Jean's brief trial: "We must set an example to these miscreants who have no concern for the effects of their behaviours on honest citizens. Besides, she tried to steal a granary loaf, which as you know is really going too far."

A MERCIFULLY SHORT CHRISTMAS TALE

"Bah Homburg." said Herr Scrooge

"That's put the top 'at on it," said urchin 2

"No Christmas for us, an' no relief from Mistletoe," said Urchin 1

"That's a good thing, then?" said small Urchin 9

"No, not Mistletoe when our betters 'ang us from a jamb so as a to tell 'em someone's comin' through a door; it's the Mistletoe where our pinkies get so cold and blue that we can kiss goodbye to 'em." elaborated Urchin 3, who, one Christmas had been so hungry he stole and ate a dictionary from Scrooge's house.

"Embellished," said Urchin 4 in a cheeky aside to the narrator. This wily lad had followed his mate into Scrooge's house and eaten a thick, juicy Thesaurus whole, as, at that time, he'd not eaten since he'd devoured the last serialisation of Dickens's Weekly Journal with a touch of milk.

All the while, Urchins 5 to 8 were prostrate in the gutter, dreaming of or merely hallucinating about meeting Atos, the swashbuckling Frenchman, a fine economic figure of a work manager who was ruthlessly cutting a royal swathe through the denizens of proletarian life, with the slogan, "None for all, and all for the privileged classes"* dripping from his well-fed chops.

Never mind, the urchins all said (with the help of the narrator, who was sympathetic to their inability to speak for themselves as they were too hungry and weak), eventually and with a forced enthusiasm, 'at least seeing Tiny Tim again cheered us up'. Tiny Tim was currently living in a rundown doll's midden in Scrooge's back parlour; Scrooge had taken the waif in, to prove he'd become a caring conservative after his ordeal of having to sit through endless repeat showings of A Christmas Carol.

No-one knew that it was in fact Scrooge who'd evicted the family, in order to turn the building into a charity shop. Scrooge too dreamed of developing his portfolio, even though, at this time, he and his doctor were worried about his latest ailment, engorged portmanteau - a hithertofore unknown blight of the rich man's extremities.

*Roughly translated from the French by someone with an O-level in Welsh.

THOSE ETH

(continued from Issue 21)

Mavis: Blood on the bench! Sheila's backpack just abandoned! Signs of a struggle!
Gladys: I admit it doesn't look good.
Mavis: To say the least! Come on, we need to get back to The Lemon Grove and get help. I knew it was a mistake to let her go on alone. I should have stopped her.
Gladys: It's no use blaming yourself...It's not your fault...Sheila's more than capable of making her own decisions...and she chose to go on without us.
Mavis: I'm aware of that...come on, Gladys. We have to hurry...but no-one's invincible...and going out in this weather...at this time of year...at our age...is just foolhardy.
Gladys: So is running.....through a foot of snow....with an already dodgy knee.....carrying two backpacks!.....I'm knackered!
Mavis: Well, we can't phone anyone.....from our mobiles.....There's no signal out here.....so pick those knees up!.....Oh, and mind that rock!
Gladys: Which rock?.....There are hundreds!.....Whoa!...Owww!....for Heaven's sake!thpppehhh!
Mavis: What was that Gladys?.....Gladys! We don't have time to sit down.
Gladys: Very amusing, I'm sure. Here, help me up.
Mavis: Are you okay?
Gladys: Well, apart from doing the eight hundred metres in hiking boots, in a foot of snow, carrying a ton weight (did I mention my dodgy knee?), then getting a faceful of said snow...yes, I'm fine! Mind you, Mavis, even the snow tastes nice up here. They probably make it from bottled water.
Mavis: For the price, they should! Anyway, we're here now. Quickly! Inside! That's it! Put the backpacks down by Reception, I'll 'phone the police. We need a search party out immediately for poor Sheila.
Nahila: What was that? Excuse me, madam. Who are you looking for?
Mavis: Ah, hello. I need to call the police. We've lost our friend, Sheila, and it looks like she could be in trouble. Can I use your 'phone?
Nahila: Ahh, you must be Gladys?
Mavis: Well, Mavis, actually. Gladys is over there with the bags. Can I use your 'phone?
Nahila: Well, yes, of course you can use the telephone, but there is no need. Your friend, Sheila, is resting in room 4 with Simeon. Your other friend, Lil, is with her.
Mavis: Oh God! Is she badly hurt? Have you called an ambulance? Can I see her? Sheila?
Nahila: Of course you can see her, but...I don't understand...
Gladys: Don't worry, Nahila. It's been a long day and Mavis is a little overwrought. Thanks for your help. Mavis! Wait for me...
Mavis: Oh, I hope Sheila's all right. I'll never forgive myself for letting her go off on her own.
Gladys: For Heaven's sake, calm down! At least she's not out there freezing her Hobnobs off! Open the door then and let's see how she is.
Mavis: Sheila? We're here, sweetheart. How are you? Do you need anything...? SHEILA! Lord, what on Earth happened to you?
Gladys: How is she? Is she all right?...Oh!
Sheila: Ommmmm....Well! Hello strangers! We thought you'd decided to spend the night in that outhouse of yours...and why are you shouting? I'm fine. Nothing happened to me. Ommmmm...
Mavis: But your arms! They're twisted around your neck...and what are those in your ears?
Sheila: Pardon?
Gladys: Er...Mavis. Judging by the poster on the wall over there, I think we've entered the Yoga room and those things in her ears appear to be candles.
Mavis: What? Oh, thank God! I thought something dreadful had happened!

ICS GIRLS

Lil: Well, from the direction this wax is travelling, I'm not sure it hasn't.
Sheila: Ommmm...You know, ladies, that little walk in the snow was okay, for the most part... Ommmm...and I admit I was a little sceptical of all this New Age nonsense at first... Ommmm...but, Lil, persuading me to try this yoga lark and the Hopi thing, may be the best idea you've had in a long time...Ommmm...
Lil: Thanks! I do have my moments. Now, didn't I say you'd enjoy it? Gladys, come and have a go. Mavis, grab a candle or two.
Simeon: Yes, girls, you simply must try my Downward Dog position. It's divine!
Gladys: Ooh, I don't mind if I do. Mavis, are you having a go?
Mavis: Hang on, hang on! Never mind that for the moment. Something happened out there, Sheila. Why did you leave your backpack behind and, more importantly, where did that blood come from?
Sheila: Oh, that! Well, it seems you weren't the only people worrying about my welfare. Apparently, the staff here were becoming concerned for all of us the longer the day wore on. When Lil mentioned that we didn't have any supplies with us, Nahila asked Miguel to go and look for us.
Lil: See, I'm always thinking of you.
Sheila: Yes, well, that's debatable. Anyway, after I left you, I followed the path as far as the bench, where you saw the blood, and noticed, as you two did, no doubt, that it wasn't that far from The Lemon Grove. I decided to sit there for a minute and finish off the water in my bottle before I headed back here. As it turned out, I dropped the bottle because my hands were too cold to hold it and most of the water ended up on the pathway. While I was sitting there drinking the rest of it, Miguel turned up.
Lil: I'd advise you to try his stones. They're wonderful.
Simeon: Ooh, aren't they to die for?
Sheila: Well, he came over and was going to help me to my feet, but he slipped on the water I'd spilt, which had frozen almost immediately, and smacked his head on the bench - not seriously, but enough to cause a nasty looking scrape.
Simeon: Oh, poor Miguel.
Sheila: Anyway, as you know, a little blood goes a long way, so it looked a lot worse than it was. Even so, he was a little dazed, so I had to help him back here. I left my backpack on the bench as I had enough to carry with poor Miguel! I was going back in the morning to pick it up, but I assume I won't have to now.
Gladys: No, I brought it back. Where's Miguel now?
Sheila: He's being looked after in the First Aid room. He'll be fine, too. So, you see, Mavis, there was absolutely no need to worry after all.
Mavis: Well, excuse me for showing a little concern!
Lil: Oh, Mavis, relax. We're all heading home tomorrow. What do you say we enjoy the last few hours and just chill out. I can recommend the Indian Head Massage, or Champissage as we call it, but as a special treat, I've booked us in for a little aqua detox. Dale's next door and he's waiting for us with his three-foot hose.
Simeon: Ooh, don't. What he can't do with that isn't worth knowing. Believe me...

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