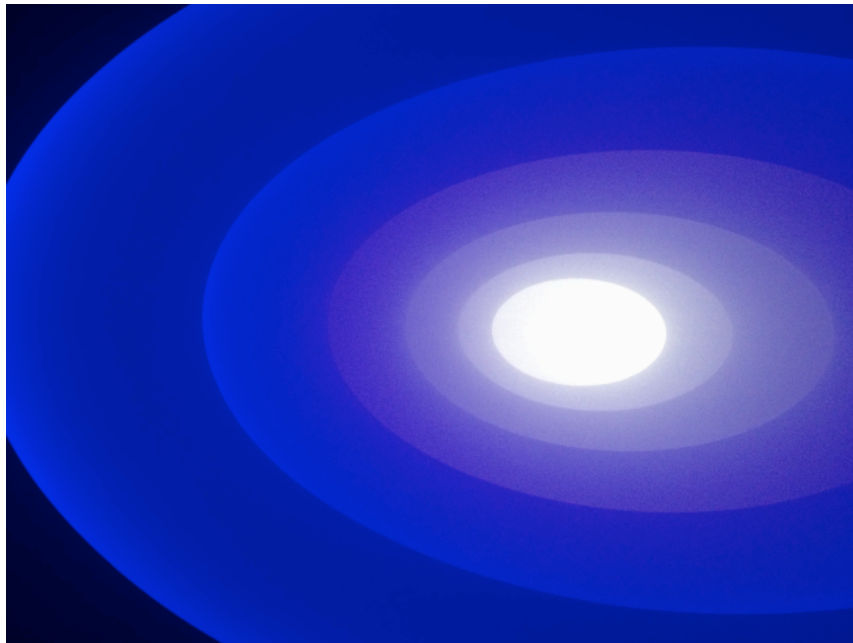




**what we get
for wanting**



**what
we get
for wanting**

**2013 smashed to pieces and put back
together again in poems, pictures,
cartoons, and readings by Don
Shewey**

ADVICE AGGRESSION ANGELS ANIMALS ANTI-PRENEUR
APRIL ART ATTENTION
BEAUTY BLANK
CATHOLIC CHURCH CHANGE CHOICE OVERLOAD COASTING
CONTACT BOUNDARY COUPLES
DANISH DARKNESS DESIRE DIFFERENT
EGO EXPECTATIONS
FAILURE FANTASIES FEAR FELLATIO FORGIVENESS
GALLERY GAMES GARMENT DISTRICT GIGOLO GOD GUNS
HARMONY HEALTHCARE
INTERNET
JUNGLE
KINK
LIBERACE LIFE LOSS LOVE
MACHIAVELLI MAGGOTS MANTRA MARRIAGE
MATING HABITS MYSTERY
NATURE
OBITUARY OBSESSION OPINIONS
PARENTING PLAYWRITING POETRY
QUEEN QUEER QUESTIONS
READING RULES
SACRED SPACE SCOTUS SERENDIPITY SEX SHADOW
SHAMANISM SLEEP SPRING SUSTAINABILITY
TEACHING TECHNOLOGY THATCHER TODAY TRAVEL
UNDERPANTS
VENICE VOICE VOYAGER
WEIRD WRITING
XMAS
YOUNG PEOPLE
ZENITH

ADVICE

My advice to you is as follows:

one, learn meditation practice;

two, empower yourself with your own emotions -
don't be afraid of grief, or heartthrob;

three, be willing to expose yourself and be a fool,
to not be intimidated in the presence of presidents
and rock stars, but come on as a gentle, living,
flesh and blood human being.
Don't treat people as icons.

If what you're doing is considered by all your friends
as too far out, think thrice -
so you don't go outside the bounds of sanity -
check it out.

Get a good education in reading the Eastern and Western classics. Avoid animal fat.

Be a slave to love.

Wear your heart on your sleeve.

Twenty rejections in a row are wiped out by one acceptance.

-- Allen Ginsberg



AGGRESSION

In your society, and to some extent in others the natural communication of aggression has broken down. You confuse violence with aggression and do not understand aggression's creative activity or its purpose as a method of communication to prevent violence. You deliberately make great effort, in fact, to restrain the communicative elements of aggression while ignoring its many positive values, until its natural power becomes dammed up, finally exploding into violence. Violence is a distortion of aggression.

Birth is an aggressive action – the thrust outward with great impetus of a self from within a body into a new environment. Any creative idea is aggressive. Violence is not aggressive. It is instead a passive surrender to emotion which is not understood or evaluated, only feared, and at the same time sought. Violence is basically an overwhelming surrender, and in all violence there is a great degree of suicidal emotion, the antithesis of creativity. Both [sides]...in a war, for instance, are caught up in the same kind of passion, but the passion is not aggressive. It is its opposite – the desire for destruction.

Know that yearning is made up of feelings of despair caused by a sense of powerlessness, not of power. Aggressiveness leads to action, to creativity, to life. It does not lead to destruction, violence, or annihilation.

-- Jane Roberts, *The Nature of Personal Reality*

ANGELS

Recovery model research indicates that the top predictor of people's ability to find their way back from prolonged mental illness to a meaningful life is a relationship with at least one person who's never lost sight of the human being beneath the illness.

-- Kevin Anderson, "Dark Passage," *Psychotherapy Networker*



"After you've wished once for food, you can stop using your other wishes on food."

ANIMALS

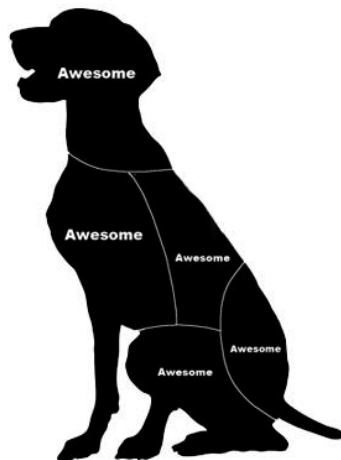
I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained...They do not sweat and whine about their condition, they do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins, they do not make me sick discussing their duty to God, not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things, not one kneels to another nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago, not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

-- Walt Whitman

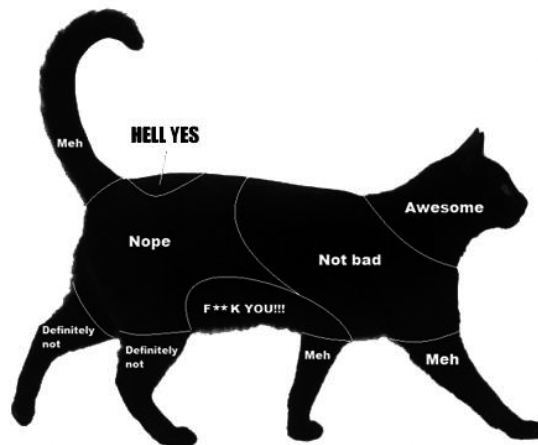
If cats could talk, they wouldn't.

-- Nan Porter

Petting Chart of a Dog



Petting Chart of a Cat



“How to Feed Phoenix a Pill”

I have two friends, Dwayne and David, who are delightful people: intelligent, very original, and with a very special sense of humor. They live in an apartment in the North Hollywood part of Los Angeles, and they love animals. Their upper floor apartment has one of those big greenhouse windows that extends out from a regular window, catches sun, and is appropriate for planting pots. The greenhouse window is home to a couple of beautiful fowl, two small hens named Cacciatore and Parmigiana, who proudly nest there and make their presence known without shame. They have a dog as well, whose name is Oria.

They also have a cat named Phoenix. At one time, for my information, they sent me written directions of how to feed Phoenix a pill. The exact instructions are transcribed below, and they are incomparable:

- 1) Pick up cat and cradle it in the crook of your left arm as if holding a baby. Position right forefinger and thumb on either side of cat's mouth and gently apply pressure to cheeks, while holding pill in right hand. As cat opens mouth, pop in pill. Allow cat to close mouth and swallow.
- 2) Retrieve pill from floor and cat from behind sofa. Cradle cat in left arm and repeat process.
- 3) Retrieve cat from bedroom and throw soggy pill away.
- 4) Take new pill from foil wrap, cradle cat in left arm, holding rear paws tightly with left hand. Force jaws open and push pill to back of mouth with right forefinger. Hold mouth shut for a count of ten.
- 5) Retrieve pill from goldfish bowl and cat from top of wardrobe. Call spouse from garden.
- 6) Kneel on floor with cat firmly wedged between knees, hold front and rear paws. Ignore low growls emitted by cat. Get spouse to hold head firmly with one hand while forcing wooden ruler into mouth. Drop pill down ruler and rub cat's throat vigorously.
- 7) Retrieve cat from curtain rail; get another pill from foil wrap. Make note to buy new ruler and repair curtains. Carefully sweep shattered figurines and vases from hearth and set to one side for gluing later.
- 8) Retrieve cat from neighbor's shed. Get another pill. Place cat in cupboard and close door unto neck, to leave head showing. Force mouth open with dessert spoon, flick pill down throat with elastic band.
- 9) Fetch screwdriver from garage and put cupboard door back on hinges. Drink a beer and fetch a bottle of Scotch. Pour shot; drink. Apply cold compress to your cheek and check date of last tetanus shot.
- 10) Take last pill from foil wrap. Tie the little bastard's front paws to rear paws with garden twine and bind tightly to leg of table. Find heavy-duty pruning gloves in shed. Push pill into mouth, followed by large piece of steak filet; be rough about it. Hold head vertically and pour two pints of water down throat to wash pill down.
- 11) Have spouse drive you to emergency room. Sit quietly while doctor stitches forearm and removes pill remnants from right eye.

“How to Feed Oria (the dog) a Pill”

- 1) Wrap it in a piece of bacon.

-- Ken Symington, *Hypomnemata*

ANTI-PRENEUR

I don't want to be a designer, a marketer, an illustrator, a brander, a social media consultant, a multi-platform guru, an interface wizard, a writer of copy, a technological assistant, an applicator, an aesthetic king, a notable user, a profit-maximizer, a bottom-line analyzer, a meme generator, a hit tracker, a re-poster, a sponsored blogger, a starred commentator, an online retailer, a viral relayer, a handle, a font or a page. I don't want to be linked in, tuned in, 'liked', incorporated, listed or programmed. I don't want to be a brand, a representative, an ambassador, a bestseller or a chart-topper. I don't want to be a human resource or part of your human capital.

I don't want to be an entrepreneur of myself.

Don't listen to the founders, the employers, the newspapers, the pundits, the editors, the forecasters, the researchers, the branders, the career counselors, the prime minister, the job market, Michel Foucault or your haughty brother in finance – there's something else!

I want to be a lover, a teacher, a wanderer, an assembler of words, a sculptor of immaterial, a maker of instruments, a Socratic philosopher and an erratic muse. I want to be a community center, a piece of art, a wonky cursive script and an old-growth tree! I want to be a disrupter, a creator, an apocalyptic visionary, a master of reconfiguration, a hypocritical parent, an illegal download and a choose-your-own-adventure! I want to be a renegade agitator! A licker of ice cream! An organizer of mischief! A released charge! A double jump on the trampoline! A wayward youth! A volunteer! A partner.

I want to be a curator of myself, an anti-preneur, a person.

Unlimited availabilities. No followers required. Only friends.

-Danielle Leduc



APRIL

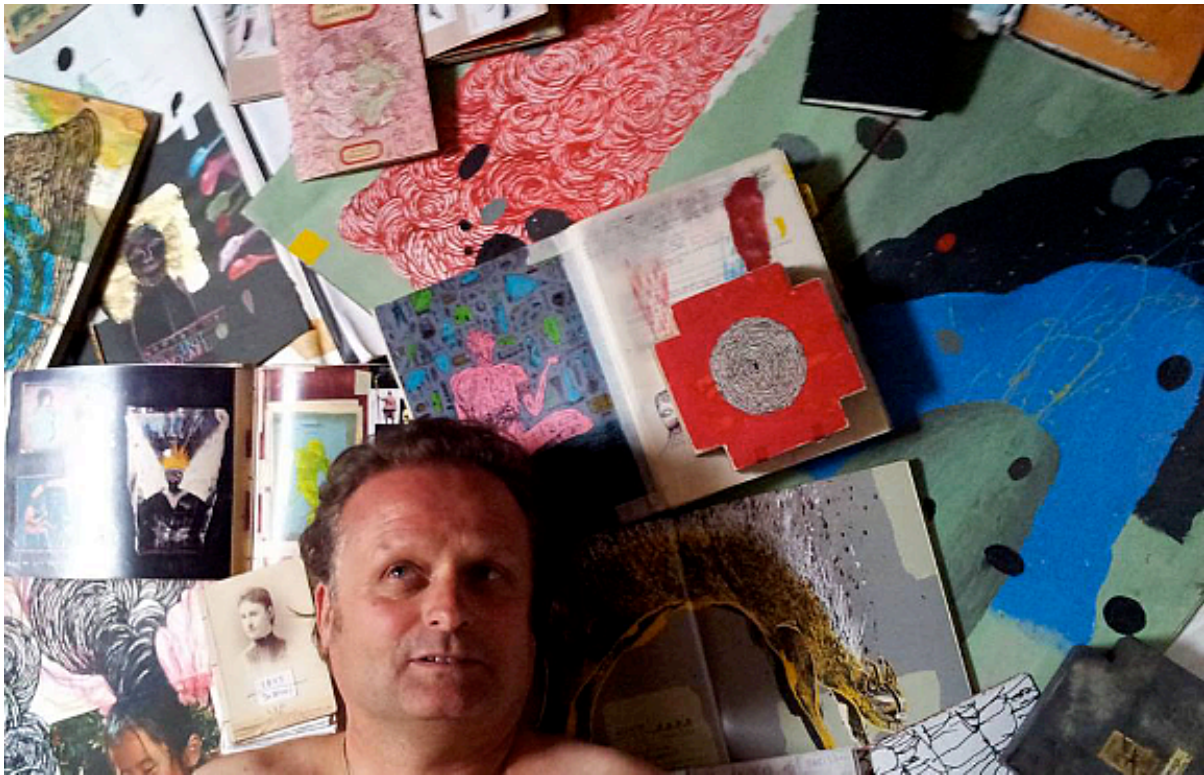
“April Chores”

When I take the chilly tools
from the shed's darkness, I come
out to a world made new
by heat and light.

The snake basks and dozes
on a large flat stone.
It reared and scolded me
for raking too close to its hole.

Like a mad red brain
the involute rhubarb leaf
thinks its way up
through loam.

-- Jane Kenyon



Henrik Drescher

ART

The purpose of art is not the momentary ejection of adrenaline but rather the lifelong construction of a state of wonder and serenity.

-- Glenn Gould

ATTENTION

Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.

-- Simone Weil

BEAUTY

Strangeness is the essential condiment of beauty.

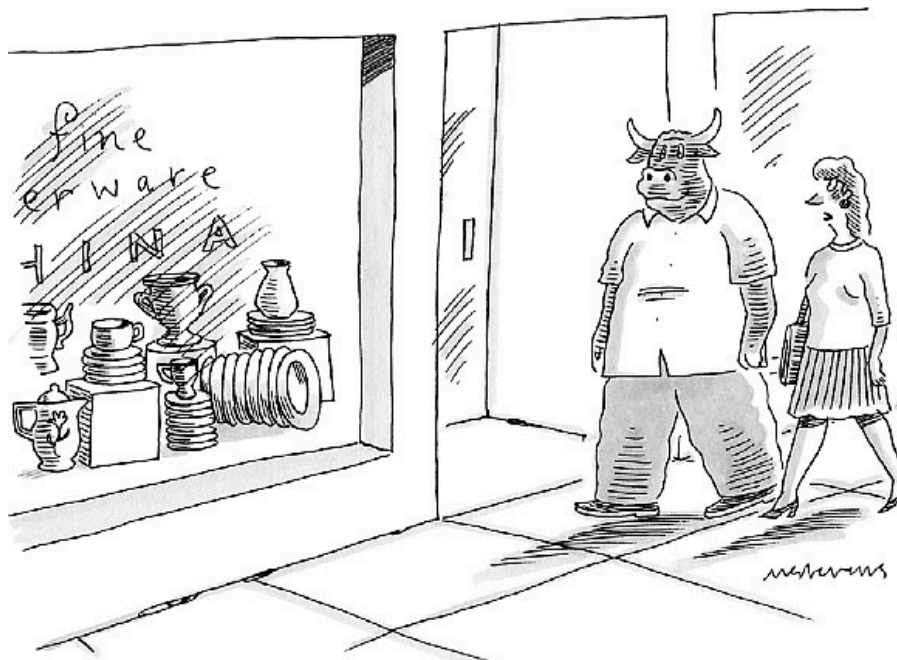
-- Charles Baudelaire



BLANK

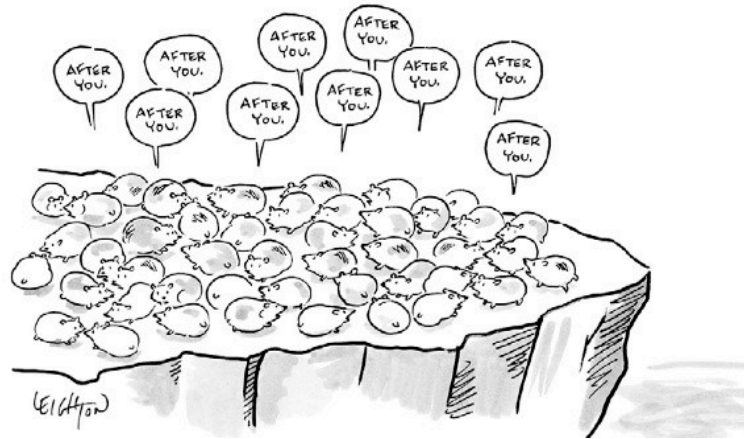
You must never blank people when intimate relations have arisen. You must never slam the door in their face. I've been the victim of it several times – and it's the worst. It gives you no chance of dealing with it and working it through. You just stand there in the middle of the road wondering what happened, what did I do...When the other party has a change of heart but will not tell you why they have, or indeed that they have – this is the cruelest mystery of all, for the mind cannot rest but cogitates ceaselessly.

-- Duncan Fallowell



"Don't even think about it."

CANADIAN LEMMINGS



CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Church is the merciless heart of the State.

-- Pier Paolo Pasolini

CHANGE

In ancient India hunters developed a proven method for catching monkeys. The monkeys were quick by nature and clever enough to dismantle all kinds of traps set for them. The trap that they couldn't dismantle involved a simple trick that trapped them in their own nature. A big coconut would be found and hollowed out. Then a hole would be made in it, just large enough to allow a monkey's paw to pass through. The coconut would then be pinned to the ground and some tempting, fragrant fruit would be placed inside the hollowed shell.

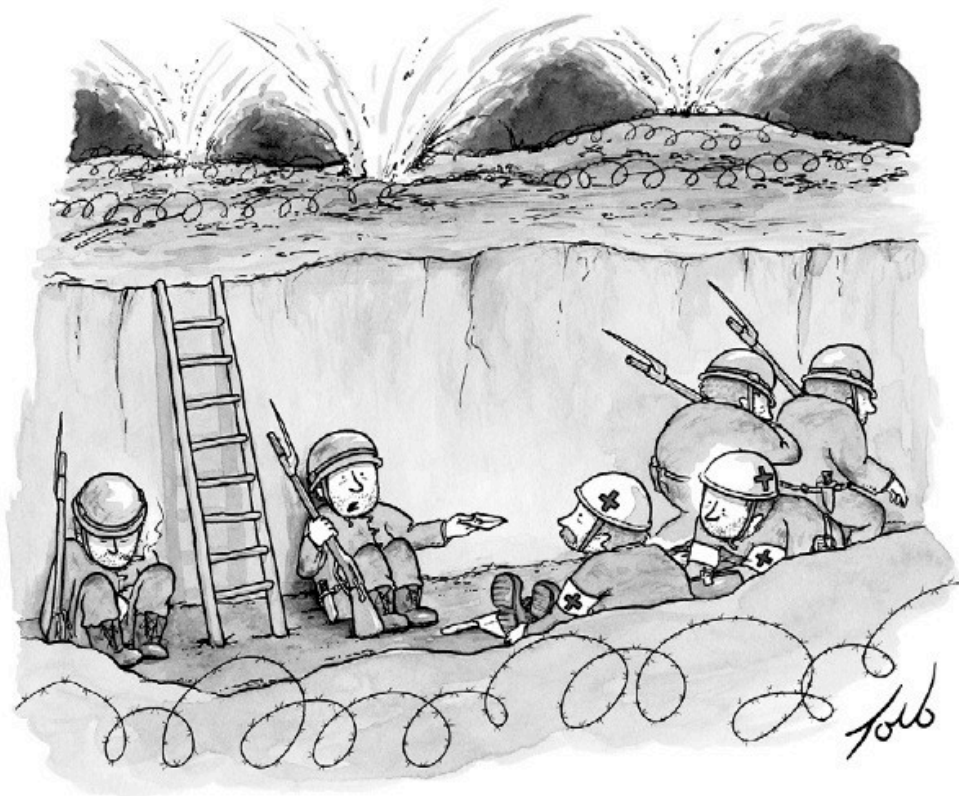
Inevitably, a monkey would approach the shell full of desire for the fragrant food it could smell and almost taste. As soon as the paw of the monkey had slipped through the hole and grasped the food inside the trap, the poor fellow would become caught because the fist holding the food was too large to pass back through the hole in the shell.

In order to become free of the trap all the monkey had to do was let go of the prize that it coveted so much. More often than not, the hand that held the desired fruit would not let it go. Thus, the monkey was trapped by what it desired and held onto no matter how near freedom might be. Release from the entrapment was right at hand and just within their grasp. However, most would stay trapped and imprisoned, caught by a narrow desire, but also by a fierce and blind unwillingness to simply let go of what they held to be necessary or important.

People can be just that way. Many take hold of something and refuse to let go, even when they become stuck in one place, even if they can't taste the sweetness they first reached for in life. Some hold onto another person and refuse to let go, even when each part of the relationship becomes a trap. Others take up an idea, a political belief or a religious notion that was supposed to set them free. After a time, they become trapped inside narrowing ideas or rigid rules. Next thing you know, they are caught in a trap made of their beliefs.

Change is hard because we hold onto what keeps us from changing; because freedom feels like losing something that we are used to clinging to; because real change means that we would no longer desire what others insist upon and no longer restrict ourselves to the game at hand. Fate may be what we wish to deny when claiming that we are free; but it is also what we unconsciously cling to in order to avoid letting go of who we think we are.

-- Michael Meade, *Fate and Destiny: The Two Agreements of the Soul*



"If I don't make it out of here alive, please send my sweetheart this picture of my crotch."

CHOICE OVERLOAD

Choice overload . . . makes people worry about later regretting the choice they make (*If there are twelve things I could do tonight, any one of them might end up being more fun than the one I choose*); sets them up for higher expectations (*If I choose this party out of those twelve things, it had damn well better be fun*); makes them think about the road not taken (*Every party not attended could contain someone I wish I'd met*); and leads to self-blame if the outcome is bad.

-- Robin Marantz Henig, *Twentysomething: Why Do Young Adults Seem Stuck?*

COASTING

New Yorkers have too much reverence for their institutions. A young banker absolutely worships Goldman Sachs. A young journalist is in complete awe of Condé Nast. In Silicon Valley, growing up, your parents approve of you saying, "Oh, I could do something way better than that."

-- Bryan Goldberg, founder of Bleacher Report and Bustle.com

CONTACT BOUNDARY

Experience occurs at the boundary between organism and its environment, primarily the skin surface and the other organs of sensory and motor response. Experience is the function of this boundary, and psychologically what is real are the "whole" configurations of this functioning, some meaning achieved, some action completed.

-- Fritz Perls

COUPLES

A couple is a conspiracy in search of a crime. Sex is often the closest they can get.

-- Adam Phillips

DANISH

When asked by the *Guardian* to account for the popularity of Danish television overseas, the actress Sidse Babbett Knudsen – who plays Birgitte Nyborg, Denmark’s first female *statsminister*, on “Borgen” – replied, “I’ve no idea, because our language is one of the most ugly and limited around. You can’t seduce anyone in Danish; it sounds like you are throwing up.”

-- Lauren Collins in the *New Yorker*

DARKNESS

To go in the dark with a light
is to know the light.

To know the dark, go dark
go without sight,
and find that the dark, too,
blooms and sings
and is traveled by dark feet
and dark wings.

-- Wendell Berry



DESIRE

God gave us desire. Letting go of desire is not the way to peace or godliness. Rather desire is God's way of making sure we join the parade rather than watching from the curb. It's okay to want a bigger TV but no one ever made a movie about a man who finally bought a Volvo. So embrace your desire but ask yourself whether your desire saves lives or whether it all goes with you to the grave. The problem with your desires may be lack of meaning. Love is a common, but not the only, factor that adds meaning to otherwise boring desires.

-- Don Miller



DIFFERENT

Elaine May: What have you learned, Mike?

Mike Nichols: I've learned that many of the worst things lead to the best things, that no great thing is achieved without a couple of bad, bad things on the way to them, and that the bad things that happen to you bring, in some cases, the good things. For instance, if you grow up odd and—what is it when you're left out? You're not an extrovert—

Elaine May: Introvert?

Mike Nichols: No, when you grow up—

Elaine May: Peculiar?

Mike Nichols: Peculiar. Different. The degree to which you're peculiar and different is the degree to which you must learn to hear people thinking. Just in self-defense you have to learn, where is their kindness? Where is their danger? Where is there generosity? If you survive, because you've gotten lucky—and there's no reason ever to survive except luck—you will find that the ability to hear people thinking is incredibly useful, especially in the theater.

-- *Vanity Fair*

EGO

Getting rid of your ego
is like trying to get rid of your garbage can.
No one believes you are serious,
and the more you yell at the garbage men
the better your neighbors remember your name.

-- Jay Leeming



EXPECTATIONS

None of us at Twitter thought during the earthquake and ensuing tsunami in Fukushima, Japan, that our service would be a great alternative communication platform if the mobile networks in Japan were spotty in the aftermath. And certainly none of us even hoped, let alone considered, that our platform would be one of those used to organize protests across the Middle East, in Tunisia and Egypt during the Arab Spring. Here's the amazing thing about what I've observed when I've witnessed all those things. Not only can you not plan the impact you're going to have, you often won't recognize it even while you're having it. ...

From here on out, you have to switch gears. You're no longer meeting and exceeding expectations. There are no expectations. There's no script. When you're doing what you love to do, you become resilient, because that's the habit you create for yourself. You create a habit of taking chances on yourself and making bold choices in service to doing what you love. If, on the other hand, you do what's expected of you, or what you're supposed to do, and things go poor or chaos ensues — as it surely will — you will look to external sources for what to do next, because that will be the habit you've created for yourself. You'll be standing there, frozen, on the stage of your own life.

-- Richard Costolo, CEO of Twitter

FAILURE

If you're constantly pushing yourself higher, higher, the law of averages — not to mention the myth of Icarus — predicts that you will at some point fall. And when you do, I want you to know this, remember this: There is no such thing as failure. Failure is just life trying to move us in another direction.

Now, when you're down there in the hole, it looks like failure. So this past year I had to spoon-feed those words to myself. And when you're down in the hole, when that moment comes, it's really O.K. to feel bad for a little while. Give yourself time to mourn what you think you may have lost, but then here's the key: Learn from every mistake because every experience, encounter and particularly your mistakes are there to teach you and force you into being more who you are. And then figure out what is the next right move. And the key to life is to develop an internal moral, emotional GPS that can tell you which way to go.

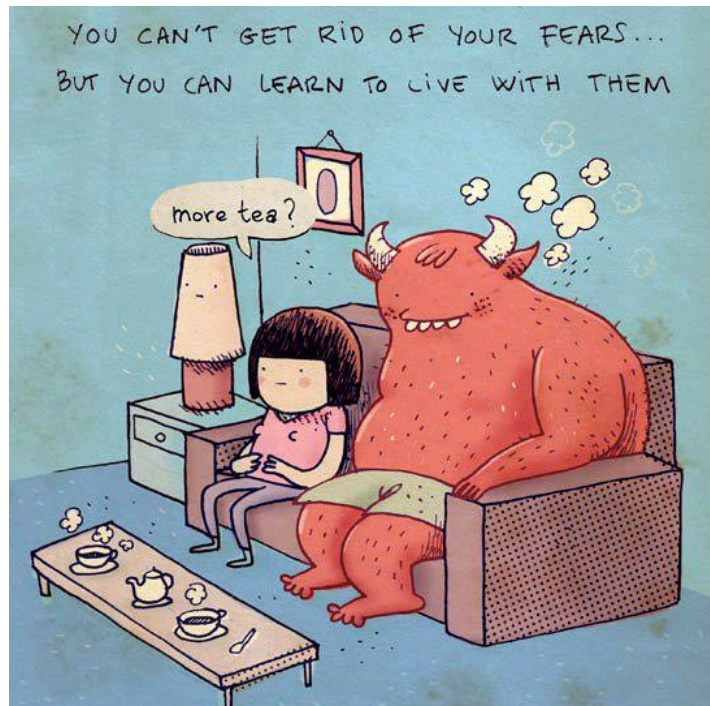
-- Oprah Winfrey

FANTASIES

Some erotic fantasies people want to enact, some they just want to talk about, and some they only want to think about. Knowledge is finite; imagination is endless. If we don't want to act on a fantasy, the question is: Are we really not interested in its materializing, or are we ashamed of it? Sometimes our sexual fantasies baffle us. We can't believe we'd actually be turned on by that. What does it say about us? We're weird. But, like dreams, fantasies are symbolic scripts for our deepest emotional needs. They rarely mean what they appear to mean on the surface and must be decoded. What does being tied up mean to *you*? One person might say, "It helps me realize that I have no choice but to receive. I don't have to feel guilty about receiving, because it's the other person who decides to give." As psychologist Michael Bader so beautifully says, a good fantasy both states the problem and offers the solution. I always ask: What need does this fantasy serve? I might fantasize about spreading peanut butter on my skin because I never thought someone could delight in licking me. It could be a redemptive experience: I can be delicious.

If you want to know the deepest feelings a person brings to sex, ask about her fantasies. The gestures involved, the physicality of it, are like words for a poet. You need the words, but the poem has another meaning beneath the words. Octavio Paz says, "Eroticism is the poetry of the body, the way poetry is the eroticism of the word."

-- Esther Perel interviewed in *The Sun*



FEAR

I must say a word about fear. It is life's only true opponent. Only fear can defeat life. It is a clever, treacherous adversary, how well I know. It has no decency, respects no law or convention, shows no mercy. It goes for your weakest spot, which it finds with unerring ease. It begins in your mind, always. One moment you are feeling calm, self-possessed, happy. Then fear, disguised in the garb of mild-mannered doubt, slips into your mind like a spy. Doubt meets disbelief and disbelief tries to push it out. But disbelief is a poorly armed foot soldier. Doubt does away with it with little trouble. You become anxious. Reason comes to do battle for you. You are reassured. Reason is fully equipped with the latest weapons technology. But, to your amazement, despite superior tactics and a number of undeniable victories, reason is laid low. You feel yourself weakening, wavering. Your anxiety becomes dread.

Fear next turns fully to your body, which is already aware that something terribly wrong is going on. Already your lungs have flown away like a bird and your guts have slithered away like a snake. Now your tongue drops dead like an opossum, while your jaw begins to gallop on the spot. Your ears go deaf. Your muscles begin to shiver as if they had malaria and your knees to shake as though they were dancing. Your heart strains too hard, while your sphincter relaxes too much. And so with the rest of your body. Every part of you, in the manner most suited to it, falls apart. Only your eyes work well. They always pay proper attention to fear.

Quickly you make rash decisions. You dismiss your last allies: hope and trust. There, you've defeated yourself. Fear, which is but an impression, has triumphed over you.

The matter is difficult to put into words. For fear, real fear, such as shakes you to your foundation, such as you feel when you are brought face to face with your mortal end, nestles in your memory like a gangrene: it seeks to rot everything, even the words with which to speak of it. So you must fight hard to express it. You must fight hard to shine the light of words upon it. Because if you don't, if your fear becomes a wordless darkness that you avoid, perhaps even manage to forget, you open yourself to further attacks of fear because you never truly fought the opponent who defeated you.

-- Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*



FELLATIO

Fellatio is the nicest thing one human being can do for another.

-- John Cheever, speaking to a writer class at the University of Iowa in 1973

FORGIVENESS

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.

-- Lewis B. Smedes

GAMES

My son, age 7, is intensely competitive, just like his grandfather. Our house is basically a massive theater for what he calls “the foot game” — whoever manages to step on top of another person’s foot wins. How do I get him to put on his clothes? I time him, and then he tries to beat yesterday’s time. Every walk home from school is a race. He brings games home, too, almost every day. My most recent favorite is a game called “my grandmother’s underwear.” The rules are simple. People call out phrases like “You’re favorite thing to eat is” or “What are you wearing right now?” and you have to answer “My grandmother’s underwear” without laughing. A surprisingly profound game. What makes grandmothers’ undergarments so hilarious? Children are the source of all comic genius.

-- Stephen Marche

GARMENT DISTRICT

A century and a half ago, New Yorkers had a much more intimate connection with their clothes, because New Yorkers were making them. The garment industry was established in the mid-nineteenth century. Then, as now, immigrants supplied the labor, doing piecework at home or working in the small factories for which the term “sweatshop” was coined.

Initially, garment manufacture centered on the Lower East Side, where the labor pool was based. Around the turn of the century, with the arrival of department stores, the garment factories moved to the West Twenties and into the West Thirties, the better to supply Ladies’ Mile, the shopping corridor along Sixth Avenue between Fourteenth and Twenty-third Streets. The loft buildings there provided comparatively airy work environments. A hundred years or so ago, the first zoning laws were introduced, with the goal of preventing the manufacturing industry from encroaching on residential districts. By the nineteen-twenties, the West Thirties had become home to thousands of factories, showrooms, and offices dedicated to the garment trade. More than three-quarters of the nation’s clothing was made in New York City.

Today, only three per cent of the clothes we wear are made in America. New York’s garment district has undergone a parallel decline. Fifty years ago, there were two hundred thousand industry jobs in the neighborhood; now there are about twenty-one thousand, fewer than half of them in manufacturing.

-- Rebecca Mead, “The Garmento King,” The New Yorker, September 23, 2013

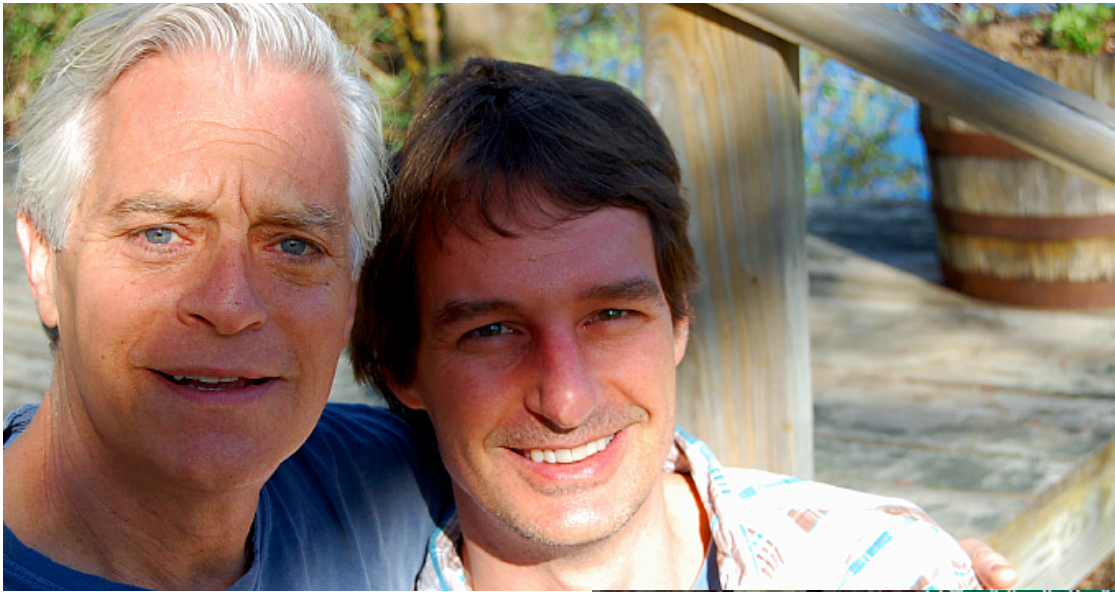


“Son, your mother and I, Grandpa Jack, Grandma Kate, Uncle Danny, Aunt Sue, Grandpa Sy, Grandma Jenny, Cousin Rhonda, Tugger, and Sprinkles are gay.”

GIGOLO

I should like you all to know that I’m a gigolo
And of lavender my nature’s got just a dash in it.
As I’m slightly undersexed
You will often find me next
To some dowager who’s wealthy rather than passionate.

-- Cole Porter





GOD

The Dalai Lama climbed the ladder and entered the dome of [the] Great Hum [and said to him,] “I accuse myself of being a *fakir* who tricks people into seeing God with faces that are nothing but grotesque masks. I’m afraid that my father might get drunk one night and give away the trick. Then all the people of Tibet will know that I’m not God, and the country will fall into despair. I try to let them know that I’m only a boy from the country with a certain amount of religious education and a lucky streak...But they insist on treating my act as a reality. The more I try to act like I’m not holy, the holier everybody thinks I am.”

“The magicians and the storytellers,” answered the Great Hum, “open us up to wonder with their tricks. We are lured into the eternal reality by well-timed illusion, for illusions appear as enticing emanations from around that oval into which all faces vanish when ego surrenders to the mystifying Self...You accuse yourself of being two-faced. Look at me.”

The Great Hum was transforming himself into an old woman, a beautiful girl, a fierce warrior, a child...yet the voice remained the same as it went on to say, “Once you’re free from bondage to your face, you’ll be able to take on as many faces as you like...The more faces you assume, the more your expression will remain the same. Eventually, when you try to resemble me, as you are doing now, you will find that I have come to resemble you instead. But you have much to learn before then. You are faced with contradictory feelings about your role and will remain so until you can assume any masks the world places upon you and wear it with ease. Only then will your own divine countenance shine through...”

While one of the Dalai Lama’s voices was talking to the Great Hum about faces, the other was talking about voices. “My top voice,” said the boy king, “is very cultured and polite. It serves to hide the sensitivities that I need to protect. This voice keeps the silence secret, screens my meditating self from the petty and persistent interruptions of curiosity seekers. My lower voice has to do with the powerful bottom desires and the private urges to become a bodhisattva.”

“Quite right,” said the Great Hum. “Religious ceremonials should be surrounded by clowns. The mask must do parodies of the face beneath it, lest the sacred be profaned and the immortal confound itself with mortality... Have you heard any good stories lately?”

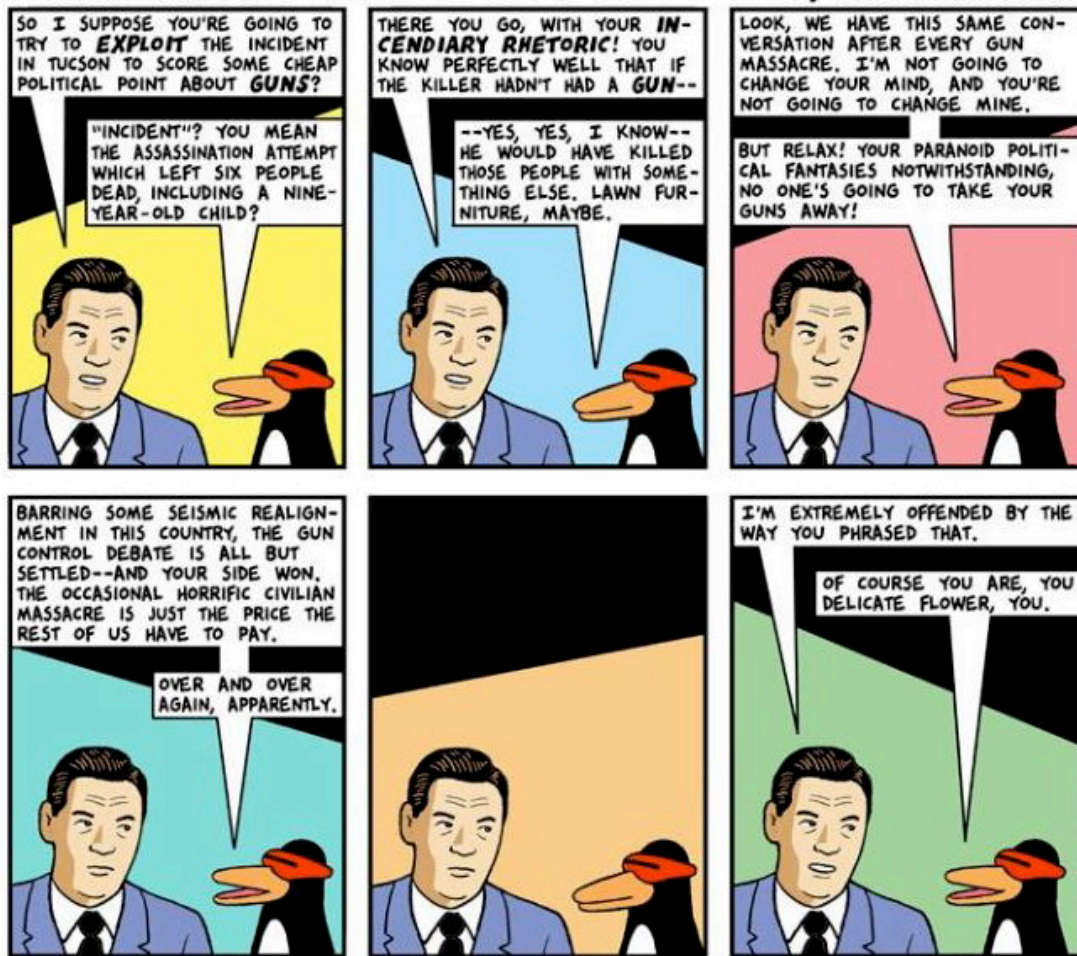
The Dalai Lama was embarrassed. He could not think of a single funny story to tell the Great Hum. “Wisest of us All,” he murmured, “forgive me, for I can think of nothing that would make you laugh.”

“I’m laughing already,” said the Great Hum, “so relax. I’ve been laughing ever since you came in. So much of what you talk about is pure clowning. I know that one of your voices is down in the chapel talking to God, but the louder one is up here on the roof playing games with virtuoso religious ideas and amusing itself with psychological analyses of its ambiguous self. I know that your voice of voices...cares nothing for how many faces or voices it has but only for the continuing beauty of the cosmos. Unless you perfect your style, few people will hear this voice. Try on all the masks you like, speak in as many voices as you can. Somebody you’ll be able to carry on ten conversations at once just as I do. Then you can come up here all alone, and we can talk face to face, voice to voice, one to one, a single presence with nothing to hide.”

-- Pierre Delattre, *Tales of a Dalai Lama*

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



GUNS

A New Jersey driver who had previously seen the Red Hook housing projects only while passing by on an elevated span of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway got off the highway the other day, parked, walked into the projects, and met up with Shaina Harrison, a young woman whose job is helping to prevent gun violence among kids in New York City. Harrison is twenty-six years old and has lived in the Red Hook projects all her life. Watching her approach, the Jersey driver wondered if that could really be she. She wore a necklace of big gold-colored links, a pumpkin-orange top, striped drawstring trousers, and cream-colored pumps with gold tips. She is five feet eleven inches tall. Her long, wavy hair, black streaked with cinnamon highlights, fell to below her shoulders.

"Don't ask me about my hair," she said, joining the Jersey driver on a playground bench. "My hair is this way today, and it will be completely different tomorrow. You've never been to Red Hook before? I love it here. For the rest of my life, I am never going to leave. The apartment I live in used to be my grandmother's. Her name was Myrtee Harrison and she came up from North Carolina in 1942, when she was thirteen, and started cleaning offices and apartments. When I was ten, she got temporary custody of me and my younger sister, Ashley. My grandmother was part Blackfoot Indian and never let you forget it. When she had to fill out a form, she would put 'Native American,' or 'Other.' I would joke, 'Gramma, we're black! Why can't we just be black? I don't want to be more minority than I am already!'"

"Gramma died in this apartment, with just me and my sister there," Harrison went on. "I was eighteen and Ashley was fourteen. After the funeral, we didn't know what to do, so we just stayed. I had a full scholarship to go to Bowling Green University, in Ohio. But I decided I had to stay here and raise my little sister. I went to John Jay College of Criminal Justice instead."

Harrison led the Jersey driver on a stroll around the neighborhood. Almost everybody—kids, old ladies pushing walkers, guys drinking beer on benches—said hello to her. “People don’t shoot here as much as they used to,” she said. “I remember when it was so bad you’d hear gunshots and not even run. It was, like, ‘Oh, who is that shooting now?’ Like the bullets belonged to individual people and had names. Everybody knew what a gunshot sounded like and what a firecracker sounded like. Kids of seven and eight years old could tell you the difference right away—and that’s crazy. But Red Hook has gotten better. We even have our own IKEA now! I haven’t heard a gunshot around here in nine or ten months.”

She and the Jersey driver came to the corner of Mill and Henry Streets, at the projects’ northern border. “This is where Ronald D. was shot,” Harrison said. “There was a corner store here, and one night a guy in front of it started shooting at someone else, and Ronald D.—Ronald D. Williams was his name—happened to be in between, and he was shot and killed. Ronald D. was a funny, chubby kid who was not the type of person you might think would probably get shot. That was the saddest shooting.”

On another day, Harrison wore business attire—paisley blouse, brown pleated skirt—as she sat at a conference table in the offices of her employer, New Yorkers Against Gun Violence, in Chinatown. This time, her hairdo consisted of extra-large Chaka Khan-style curls, extending horizontally on either side of her face.

She held up her nails, polished in a peach-pink shade. “See my nails? The person who does my nails has to have a license to do nails. You have to have a license to cut hair, a license to be a plumber. I went to buy a goldfish and the pet-store person wanted proof that I owned a fish tank before he would sell me a goldfish. Many people do not know how easy it can be to purchase a gun without a license. I teach after-school classes in high schools and middle schools, and sometimes I show the kids pictures of gun shows and I ask them, ‘Who do you see in this picture that looks like you? The guns are coming to your community from places where almost nobody looks like you, and you are using these guns to kill each other.’

“If I ask a room of kids at a high school in Crown Heights if they could get a gun if they wanted to, every hand goes up. These kids can get a gun more easily than a MetroCard. There are guns nobody owns, guns you can borrow—community guns.

“The reason kids pick up guns is that they are powerless. I try to let them understand how they can have power. We draw maps of their neighborhoods and figure out who their representatives are. The first time I ask who represents them in the government, they always shout, ‘Obama!’ I try to show them there are dozens and dozens of other people between them and him.

“People sometimes ask them what they want to be when they grow up. Don’t ask that! Ask what they want to be right now! I want to help them find that out—how they can have some direction and some power, without it coming from a gun.”

-- Ian Frazier



"Et tu, Killbot 9000?"

HARMONY

You know the Beatles could have
afforded another microphone,

but George would always stand
in the middle and step up to

Paul's when it was time to
join in. Because that's the way

harmony is, you need to share the
electricity, the voice, the words.

Just the way we do when we drive
in our cars with the radio on,

the windows rolled down with fall in the
air, dead leaves swirling in the wake,

or in the spring, the earth damp and soft,
the air hazy with pollen. We hear

the song that moves us, crank the
radio and sing along, at the top of

our lungs, as if we just joined
the group. In tune out of tune,

country western, rock and roll, we want
to harmonize. A whole country of

would-be stars losing love, finding love
with the radio in different

cars, on different paths, the dark
road rumbling beneath.

-- Stuart Kestenbaum



HEALTHCARE

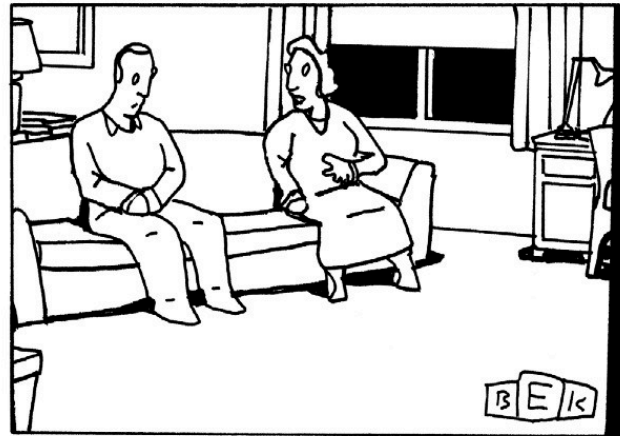


"I have to tell you, I got a totally different diagnosis from someone named PookyPoo on medi-answer.com."

PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS



"It's the only treatment option he has under his current health plan."



"Should we keep talking about it calmly or go on the Internet and get scared about it?"

INTERNET

Jacques Ellul is a twentieth-century philosopher. The core thing I took from him is we should look at any new development and ask, "Will it dehumanize us or make our lives better?" The biggest mistake made with the Internet is allowing anonymous comments. People act like the Vandals or the Huns. Teenage girls are bullied. People post nude pictures without consent. It's a complete junk medium.

-- T Bone Burnett



JUNGLE

In the rain forest, the bugs eat the plants and feed on the animals who eat the plants, bugs, and other animals. While the big bugs eat the little bugs, the big bugs and the animals die and the little bugs eat them. Anything that is left becomes food for the plants, who feed the bugs and the animals, and of course many of the bugs eat you. One of the primary laws of the jungle is that everything eats everything and you become part of the jungle whether you like it or not.

-- Matthew Pallamary, *Spirit Matters*



KINK



LIBERACE

There's been a long, headache-inducing debate about the question of straight male actors "playing gay"—whether it'll ruin careers, whether audiences will find the actor hot, and on and on. It's a nonsense issue that social progress has begun to render irrelevant, and Michael Douglas's spectacular performance as Liberace demonstrates a rarely discussed benefit. Freed from his trademark macho sulk, Douglas gains all sorts of unexpected charisma—he's genuinely funny and surprisingly sexy, even with his toupee off, looking like an unshelled tortoise. His eyes lit with amused intelligence, Douglas's Liberace is your classic "bossy bottom," a gleeful narcissist who treats his hangers-on as a mirror (sometimes literally: he pressures Scott [Thorson, his boyfriend] to get plastic surgery to look like a younger version of him). And yet the man's a charmer. He's playful, even when he's selling the world a line. In bed, the two have loving, affectionate exchanges, candid about their histories. Liberace jokes with Scott about the rumors—ones he encourages, of course—that he's engaged to the Olympic champion Sonja Henie. "As if I would marry an ice skater," he scoffs. "Please. I mean, those thighs!"

The movie is frank, and often very funny, about Liberace's sexual appetites, which he pursued without seeing any contradiction between them and his devout Catholicism. He has a penis implant, likes porn, and late in their relationship he pressures Scott to take risks that seem crazy for a closeted star, like sneaking into a sex store in ankle-length matching furs. When the camera captures Liberace peeking over a booth with a grin, the movie doesn't pathologize his good time—from one perspective, he's a sex addict; from another, a madcap adventurer. During an argument about what Scott will and won't do in bed, Liberace does a hilariously profane imitation of the couple as a gay Ricky and Lucy. "Why am I the Lucy?" Scott complains. "Because I'm the bandleader," Liberace explains, with impeccable logic. "With the *night-club act*."

-- Emily Nussbaum, reviewing Steven Soderbergh's *Behind the Candelabra* for *The New Yorker*

LIFE

Life is always a tightrope or a feather bed. Give me the tightrope.

-- Edith Wharton

LOSS

“The Pruned Tree”

As a torn paper might seal up its side,
Or a streak of water stitch itself to silk
And disappear, my wound has been my healing,
And I am made more beautiful by losses.
See the flat water in the distance nodding
Approval, the light that fell in love with statues,
Seeing me alive, turn its motion toward me.
Shorn, I rejoice in what was taken from me.

What can the moonlight do with my new shape
But trace and retrace its miracle of order?
I stand, waiting for the strange reaction
Of insects who knew me in my larger self,
Unkempt, in a naturalness I did not love.
Even the dog's voice rings with a new echo,
And all the little leaves I shed are singing,
Singing to the moon of shapely newness.

Somewhere what I lost I hope is springing
To life again. The roofs, astonished by me,
Are taking new bearings in the night, the owl
Is crying for a further wisdom, the lilac
Putting forth its strongest scent to find me.
Butterflies, the sailboat's grooves, are winging
Out of the water to wash me, wash me.

Now, I am stirring like a seed in China.

-- Howard Moss

*

Nursing her I felt alive
in the animal moment,
scenting the predator.
Her death was the worst thing
That could happen,
And caring for her was best.

-- Donald Hall, “Ardor”



LOVE

Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within. I used the word *love* here not merely in a personal sense but as a state of being, or a state of grace – not in the infantile American sense of being made happy but in the tough and universal sense of quest and daring and growth.

-- James Baldwin

MACHIAVELLI

If you could require the president to read one book, what would it be?

It would be Niccolò Machiavelli, “The Prince.” Machiavelli is frequently dismissed today as an amoral cynic who supposedly considered the end to justify the means. In fact, Machiavelli is a crystal-clear realist who understands the limits and uses of power. Fundamental to his thinking is the distinction he draws between the concepts expressed in Italian as *virtù* and *fortuna*. These don’t mean “virtue” and “fortune.” Instead, *virtù* refers to the sphere in which a statesman can influence his world by his own actions, contrasted with *fortuna*, meaning the role of chance beyond a statesman’s control. But Machiavelli makes clear, in a wonderful metaphor contrasting an uncontrollable flood with protective measures that can be taken in anticipation of a flood, that we are not helpless at the hands of bad luck. Among a statesman’s tasks is to anticipate what might go wrong, and to plan for it. Every president (and all of us nonpoliticians as well) should read Machiavelli and incorporate his thinking.

-- Jared Diamond

MAGGOTS

Although they make people queasy and uneasy, maggots are the expert cleansers and instinctive purifiers that remove the rot and precipitate genuine healing. Maggots appear wherever the tissues of life begin to rot; they know instinctively how to cleanse whatever becomes diseased. They will remove all decayed flesh but not damage the healthy tissue nearby. The maggots represent a deep process in the soul that knows that whatever ceases to contribute to a healthy life becomes as if a corpse within that will eke its way toward decay and death.

Secretly, maggots are the agents of life and the natural healers of the earth...Although maggots can be seen as the agents of death that eat the flesh away, healers have to have some maggot qualities in them in order to help preserve life. In order for healing to begin, the wound must be opened further. The decayed flesh must be clearly separated and removed in order for the wound to close and for the living flesh to renew the wounded place.

-- Michael Meade, *Fate and Destiny*

MANTRA

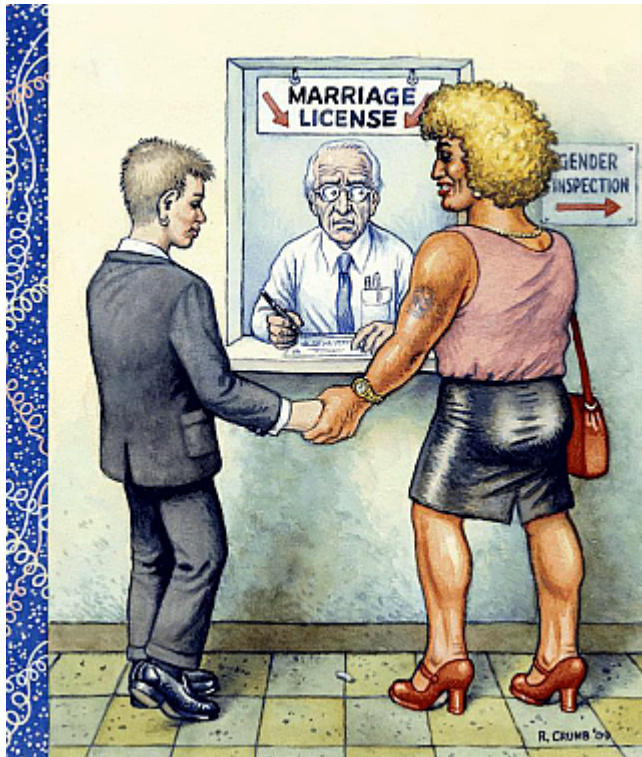
Done is better than perfect.

-- Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In*

MARRIAGE

It's been said about marriage "You have to know how to fight." And I think there's some wisdom to that. People who live together get into arguments. When you're younger, those arguments tend to escalate, or there's not any wisdom that overrides the argument to keep in perspective. It tends to get out of hand. When you're older, you realize, "Well, this argument will pass. We don't agree, but this is not the end of the world." Experience comes into play.

-- Woody Allen



In my view, infidelity recovery has three phases: crisis, insight, and vision. The crisis stage occurs right after disclosure or discovery, when couples are in acute distress and their lives are in chaos. At this point, the focus of therapy isn't on whether or not they should stay together or if there's a future for them, but on establishing safety, addressing painful feelings, and normalizing trauma symptoms.

In phase two, the insight phase, we talk about what vulnerabilities might have led to the extramarital affair. Becoming observers of the affair, we begin to tell the story of what happened. Repeating endless details of the sexual indiscretion doesn't help, but taking a deeper look at what the unfaithful partner longed for and couldn't find in the marriage—and so looked for outside of it—as well as finding empathy for the other, who was in the dark, can elicit a shift in how both partners see the affair and what it meant in their relationship.

Phase three is the vision phase, which includes seeking a deeper understanding of the meaning of the affair and moves forward the experience and resulting lessons into a new concept of marriage and, perhaps, a new future. In this phase, partners can decide to move on separately or stay together. This is where the erotic connection will be renewed (or created) and desire can be revived. In this phase, the meaning of monogamy changes from a moralistic, blanket prohibition on outside sex to a search for deeper intimacy inside the marriage. A vision of the relationship going forward includes negotiating a new commitment.

-- Tammy Nelson, *Psychotherapy Networker*

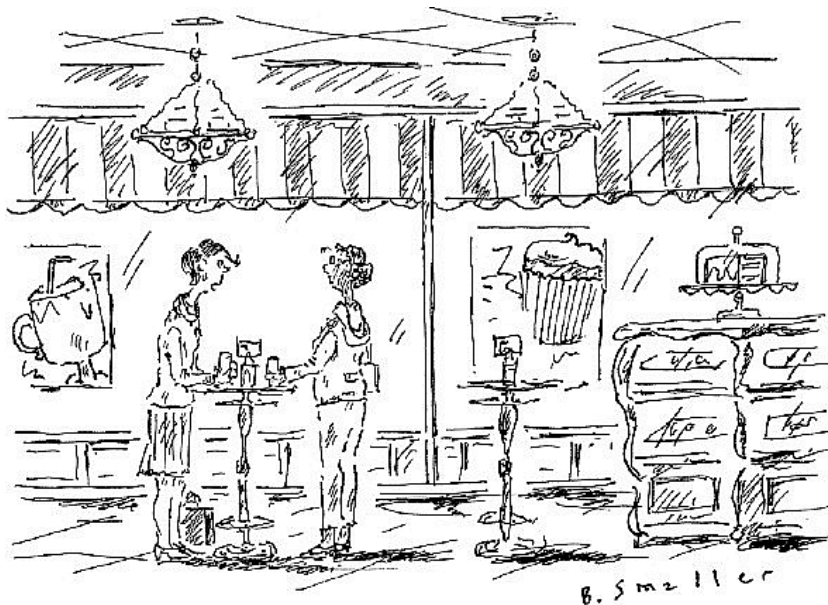
MATING HABITS

A number of articles have been written that tried to attribute promiscuity or adultery in men to a brain disorder. I find this questionable for a number of reasons.

First, it's worrying to me that a group of psychiatrists is trying to determine how much sexual activity and how many encounters we can want or fantasize about before we're considered "mentally ill." Given the embarrassing history of the DSM revisions and all the shoddy science informing them, why should we trust the APA to dictate yet another norm to us, much less accept its judgment about something so personal and intimate? People have markedly different appetites for sexual experiences. I'm uncomfortable with the idea that the APA would determine implicit guidelines, even quotas, for sexual activity, with a view to pathologizing behavior that is, in its estimation, "excessive."

Even if you were in favor of creating such a disorder should the parameters for young adults be the same as for retirees with, most likely, much lower sex drives? Would the standard for "excessive" sexual activity be identical for a newly formed relationship and one that's lasted decades? Why should we see a man's cheating on his wife with multiple women as a result of brain chemistry rather than, say, marital unhappiness or personal recklessness? Personally I think expecting lifelong fidelity to one partner may be asking too much of certain people who are ill-suited to it, or who simply don't believe monogamy is the best way to achieve emotional and sexual happiness. That's surely up to them, isn't it? Yet there's an expectation, even a kind of demand, in our culture that one person will meet all of our needs – emotional and sexual. That can happen, and it's great when it satisfies both parties, but those choices don't work for everyone, and an organization seeking to pathologize "excessive" sexual activity needs to recognize that. We need broader public discussion of this complex issue rather than the kind of psychiatric judgment and ritualized shaming that goes on right now for those who prefer to remain non-monogamous.

-- Christopher Lane, interviewed in *The Sun*



"I was looking for my soul mate—now I'm just looking for someone who's not on a special diet."

MYSTERY

Mystery is not about traveling to new places but about looking with new eyes.

-- Marcel Proust



NATURE

Here in the country beauty and death surround you. They're that close. The hummingbirds whiz in and out sipping the Kool-Aid in the feeder for them. The cat races back and forth in the garden climbing higher and higher in the tree. I see her at the doorway with something in her mouth, it's still struggling. I yell and smack her, and a quail runs away into the garden. It doesn't fly away. I go to see if it's hurt. Ostensibly it's not. Legs not broken, neck not broken. It stands breathing heavily, eyes darting all about. I decide it's just in shock at narrowly escaping death. I talk to it, I point out that it's still alive, it can walk, it can fly, it'll be fine. The cat, of course, can't stay away and comes prowling. I pin her to the ground a foot away from the bird. The bird doesn't move. Still catching its breath. I hesitate to pick it up and move it somewhere safe – doesn't human scent ostracize a bird from the pack? I pick up a stick and try to get the bird to stand on it. It jumps slightly, so it does seem to be able to move. It just doesn't want to. Now I'm feeling restless and foolish. How long can I hold back this cat, prevent nature from taking its course? Maybe this is something I need to watch, the dance of predator and prey. The instant I release the cat, the bird flies away, out of reach.

And then: the next day on the path outside the gate is a dead bird, perhaps a quail, perhaps the same one. The head is missing. Do cats eat birds' heads? The body of the bird has been torn open, and a swarm of bees, perhaps two dozen, partake of it in a literal feeding frenzy. I can't look. I look.

-- Don Shewey, diary entry, 9.23.92



I always think of nature as a great spectacle, somewhat resembling the opera.

-- Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle

OBITUARY

(paid announcement in the East Hampton Star)

To our neighbors:

What a beautiful fall! Everything shimmering and golden and all that incredible soft light. Water surrounding us. Lou and I have spent a lot of time here in the past few years, and even though we're city people this is our spiritual home. Last week I promised Lou to get him out of the hospital and come home to Springs. And we made it!

Lou was a tai chi master and spent his last days here being happy and dazzled by the beauty and power and softness of nature. He died on Sunday morning looking at the trees and doing the famous 21 form of tai chi with just his musician hands moving through the air.

Lou was a prince and a fighter and I know his songs of the pain and beauty in the world will fill many people with the incredible joy he felt for life. Long live the beauty that comes down and through and onto all of us.



— Laurie Anderson, his loving wife and eternal friend

OBSESSION

Opening “Cabinet of Curiosities,” the filmmaker Guillermo del Toro’s oversize new book, is akin to bouncing around inside his hallucinatory brain. In addition to densely illustrated pages from notebooks for movies like “Hellboy” and “Pan’s Labyrinth,” it also includes pictures of Bleak House, where del Toro works and stores hundreds of artworks, figurines and props. “Catholics go to church, Jews go to temple,” del Toro writes. “I come here.”

A giant bust of Boris Karloff as Frankenstein’s monster hangs over a foyer. Most disconcertingly, a lifelike full-size sculpture of H. P. Lovecraft stands in a library, angrily looking up from a book as if you’ve interrupted him.

In an email interview, del Toro said that he started keeping notebooks in his 20s, and that sharing them with readers is an extension of his commentaries on DVDs. “I wanted to open my process a little bit more,” he said. “Dick Smith, Ray Harryhausen, Hitchcock, many of my idols had an open process and inspired me.” He hopes aspiring filmmakers will learn to “embrace your passions wholeheartedly, obsessively, and enshrine images, collect them and study them as a code.”

In “Cabinet of Curiosities,” del Toro says he will pass the sketchbooks on to his daughters: “I want them to understand that being a grown-up is not being boring. It’s being alive.” But the children’s deeper appreciation may have to wait. According to del Toro, “they find my drawings absolutely reprehensible and horrible.”

-- John Williams, *New York Times*

OPINIONS

A friend once shared with me one of the aphorisms of 12-step recovery programs: “What other people think of you is none of your business.” Like a lot of wisdom, this sounds at first suspiciously similar to idiotic nonsense; obviously what other people think of you is your business, it’s your main job in life to try to control it, to do tireless P.R. and spin control for yourself. Every woman who ever went out with you must pine for you forever. Those who rejected you must regret it. You must be loved, respected — above all, taken seriously! They who mocked you will rue the day! The problem is that this is insane — the psychology of dictators who regard all dissent as treason, and periodically order purges to ensure unquestioning loyalty. It’s no way to run a country.

The operative fallacy here is that we believe that unconditional love means not seeing anything negative about someone, when it really means pretty much the opposite: loving someone despite their infuriating flaws and essential absurdity. “Do I want to be loved in spite of?” Donald Barthelme writes in his story “Rebecca” about a woman with green skin. “Do you? Does anyone? But aren’t we all, to some degree?”

We don’t give other people credit for the same interior complexity we take for granted in ourselves, the same capacity for holding contradictory feelings in balance, for complexly alloyed affections, for bottomless generosity of heart and petty, capricious malice. We can’t believe that anyone could be unkind to us and still be genuinely fond of us, although we do it all the time.

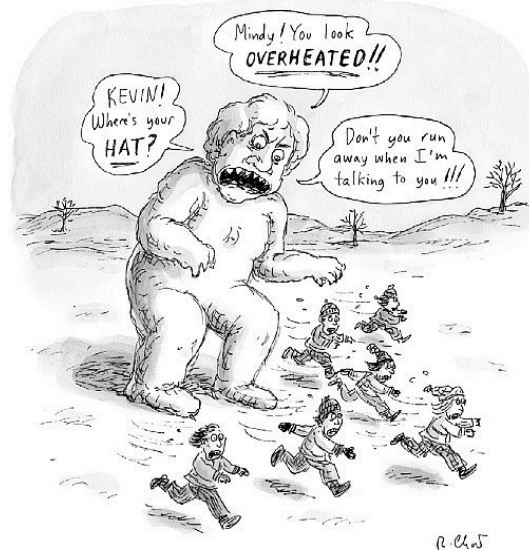
Years ago a friend of mine had a dream about a strange invention; a staircase you could descend deep underground, in which you heard recordings of all the things anyone had ever said about you, both good and bad. The catch was, you had to pass through all the worst things people had said before you could get to the highest compliments at the very bottom. There is no way I would ever make it more than two and a half steps down such a staircase, but I understand its terrible logic: if we want the rewards of being loved we have to submit to the mortifying ordeal of being known.

-- Tim Kreider



“I don’t mind the voices themselves, Doctor. It’s the Jersey accents that are driving me nuts.”

THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMOM



PARENTING

You've said that couples focus too much on children in the United States, elevating their position in the family.

I'd say it's an issue in the West in general, not just in the U.S. Never have children been so central to a marriage or so sentimentalized as they are today. Children used to provide us with their labor; now they give us meaning. They used to be an economic asset; now they're an economic drain. Parents feel a need to participate in the child's every activity, so there's no space for the adults. Why can't the children go to their sports practice alone? Does every parent have to stand on the sidelines and applaud each time the little Smurf touches the ball?

I'm convinced this overwhelming focus on the children hurts the parents' relationship. Fifteen years ago I wasn't hearing couples say that they hadn't gone out on a date in three years. This nonstop child-rearing sucks energy from the union. Women have long known that parental responsibilities decrease the erotic charge. Some couples can re-create that space for themselves when the kids leave home, but some cannot. So at this point we have three marriages: one before kids, one with kids, and one after kids. It's not possible to have a model in which parents are available to their children to the degree we demand they be today *and* be emotionally available to each other in a romantic way. There needs to be a balance.

Moms and dads fear they'll be bad parents if they don't do every last thing they can for their children.

Yes, and God forbid my kid would feel bad or frustrated. What I'm seeing already in the younger generation of couples is that they are losing their desire for each other earlier and earlier – because if you haven't known frustration, it's harder to know desire. You need to *not* have in order to know what it's like to want. We are raising a generation that has been protected from feeling bad. We used to believe frustration was part of growing up, that it built character. Now no one is left out of anything. Everybody gets a trophy at the end of the game.

I'd be the last one to say that the previous generation was glorious, but we can see that certain child-rearing practices have their consequences – for the children and for the parents. Many couples with children aren't closing the bedroom door. They're expecting the kids to walk in. They have monitors so they can hear the little ones in their cribs at all times. Parents shouldn't be afraid to say no to their kids; they shouldn't be afraid of tantrums. Kids should be allowed to feel bad. It's how children learn to be healthy adults. And parents shouldn't feel guilty, thinking that every time kids feel bad it compromises their self-esteem.

-- Esther Perel, interviewed by Mark Leviton in *The Sun*

PLAYWRITING

Many people like to write plays with younger characters, because it's very energetic. I always like to write plays about people who are quite old and sort of tired, but they still haven't gotten anything figured out. The stakes somehow seem higher, and time is running short. For me, that's just very dramatic.

-- Conor McPherson

POETRY

Man fixes some wonderful erection of his own between himself and the wild chaos, and gradually goes bleached and stifled under his parasol. Then comes a poet, enemy of convention, and makes a slit in the umbrella; and lo! The glimpse of chaos is a vision, a window to the sun.

-- D. H. Lawrence

QUEEN

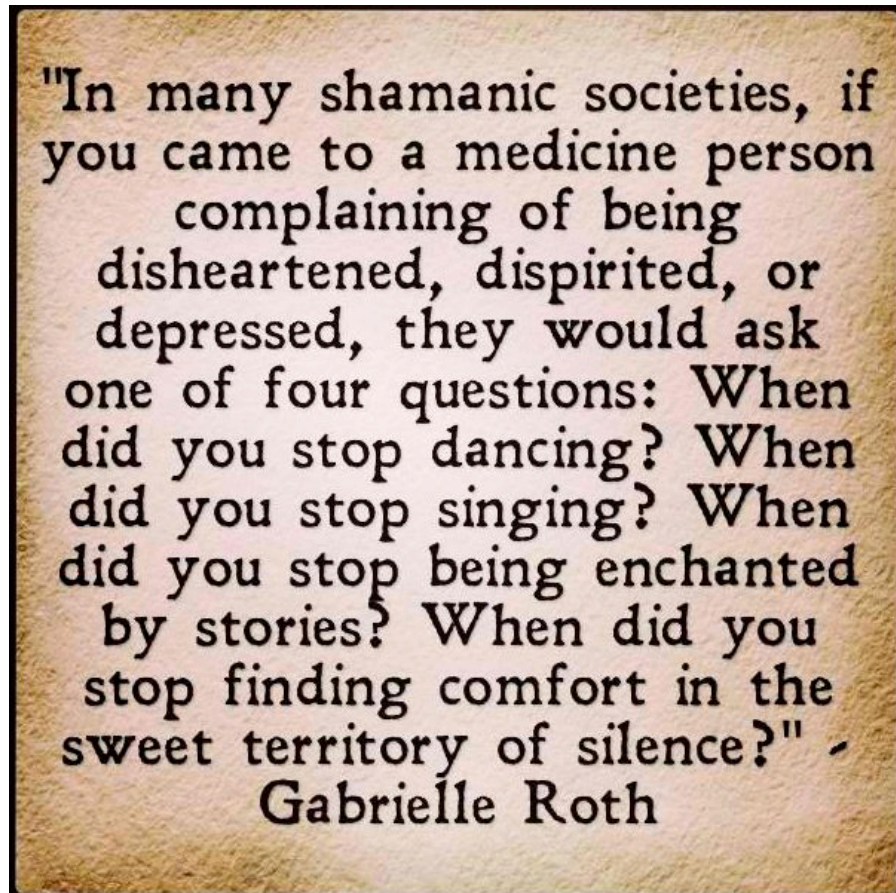
Eighteen-year-old Alexandrina Victoria became Queen of England on June 20, 1837. "Drina," as she was known to her family, had a fairly quiet childhood. She kept a diary, so we know a lot about her private life. She was a lively and sometimes mischievous child, and she was well educated, but her mother was overprotective and kept her isolated at Kensington Palace in London. When she was born, she was fifth in line for the throne behind her uncles and her father, and no one expected her to become a monarch. But one by one, her uncles and their heirs died, and by 1830, she was heiress presumptive, next in line for the crown. The dawn hours of June 20, 1837, brought the news her uncle King William the Fourth died, and she was now a queen. Her first demand was that she be given a room of her own and stop having to share with her mother. She remains Britain's longest-ruling monarch, having reigned for 63 years, seven months, and two days.

-- The Writer's Almanac



"I'm allergic to penicillin—is there penicillin in the salad?"

QUESTIONS



QUEER

I had no IDEA I could be queer as a young person. I was pretty boy crazy up until I realized that girls could be boys, too.

-- Michelle Tea

READING

What were your favorite books as a child?

I know that as a working writer I should answer this question in such a way as to make me seem intelligent; maybe Twain or Dickens, even Hesse or Conrad. I should say that I read intelligent books far beyond my years. This I believe would give intelligent readers the confidence to go out and lay down hard cash for my newest, and the one after that. But the truth is that the most beloved and the most formative books of my childhood were comic books, specifically Marvel Comics. "Fantastic Four" and "Spider-Man," "The Mighty Thor" and "The Invincible Iron Man"; later came "Daredevil" and many others. These combinations of art and writing presented to me the complexities of character and the pure joy of imagining adventure. They taught me about writing dialect and how a monster can also be a hero. They lauded science and fostered the understanding that the world was more complex than any one mind, or indeed the history of all human minds, could comprehend.

-- Walter Mosley

RULES

Rule #1: Always tell us where you are going and when you'll be back.

One boring Saturday night in the spring of 1964, my friend Janet and I, both seventeen, told our parents we were going to the movies. But we'd already seen the main features in the theaters. So we dressed as much like college girls as we could and headed downtown.

Rule #2: Don't talk to strangers, especially sailors.

Janet suggested we go to the Puritan restaurant, where the young sailors on shore leave hung out. We went inside and ordered two cups of coffee, hoping someone would come along to buy the second round. Before long two cute Greek naval midshipmen asked if they could sit down and practice their English.

Rule #3: Don't accept anything from strangers, especially a drink.

Giorgos and Demetri, who were about our age, treated us to three cups of coffee and told us more about Greece than we'd ever learned in history class. At some point a Greek American sailor heard the boys having trouble with their English and began translating.

Rule #4: Never leave town without our permission.

Nick, the Greek American, told us there was a Greek festival that night at the Eastern Orthodox church in Norwich, about twenty miles away. There would be food and dancing, and he had extra tickets. Did we want to go? It sounded like fun, and it must be safe if it was in a church, I thought.

Rule #5: Never get into a car with a stranger.

We all piled into Nick's Volkswagen van. When we got to the church, the party was in full swing. Janet and I barely had time to taste the gyros, spanakopita, and baklava before some older women grabbed our hands and dragged us onto the dance floor. We wove in and out of the line of men, and everyone shouted, "Opa!" whenever someone executed a particularly impressive move.

Rule #6: Never, ever get into a car driven by someone who has been drinking.

It was nearing midnight, and instead of coffee, the Greek boys were well into the ouzo. (We'd tasted it and found it unpalatable.) Worse, Nick appeared totally wasted. Janet pulled me aside and asked, "Do you think he can even drive?"

Then I remembered my father's other rule.

Rule #7: Wherever you are, whomever you are with, no matter what the hour, if you need to get out of there, call me. I will come get you, no questions asked.

To make sure I could call, my dad gave me a dime for the pay phone every time I left the house. I fished that dime out of my wallet now, and Janet and I found a phone booth on the street. After many rings, Dad's sleepy voice answered, and I told him where we were. He started to ask what we were doing there, then said, "Never mind. I know where it is. I'm on my way."

We rode home in complete silence. I knew Dad had plenty of questions, but the deal was that he wouldn't ask them.

I never thanked my father for keeping his end of the bargain, but years later I offered the same arrangement to my own kids. It's the one rule every parent should make, because somebody your son or daughter is going to break all the others.



SACRED SPACE

People cannot maintain their spiritual roots and their connections to the past if the physical world they live in does not also sustain these roots. Informal experiments in our communities have led us to believe that people agree, to an astonishing extent, about the sites which do embody people's relation to the land and to the past. It seems, in other words, as though "the" sacred sites for an area exist as objective communal realities. If this is so, it is then of course essential that these specific sites be preserved and made important. Destruction of sites which have come part of the communal consciousness, in an agreed and widespread sense, must inevitably create gaping wounds in the communal body.

Traditional societies have always recognized the importance of these sites. Mountains are marked as places of special pilgrimage; rivers and bridges become holy; a building or a tree, or rock or stone, takes on the power through which people can connect themselves to their own past. But modern society often ignores the psychological importance of these sites. They are bulldozed, developed, changed, for political and economic reasons, without regard for these simple but fundamental emotional matters; or they are simply ignored.

We suggest the following two steps.

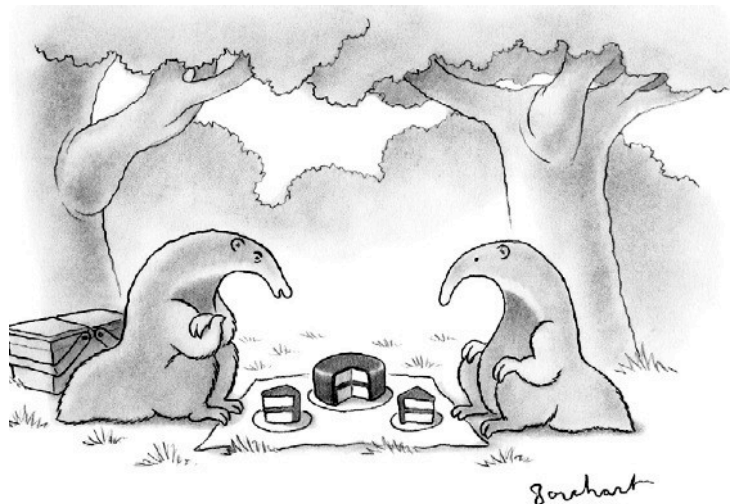
1. In any geographic area – large or small – ask a large number of people which sites and which places make them feel the most contact with the area; which sites stand most for the important values of the past, and which ones embody their connection to the land. Then insist that these sites be actively preserved.

2. Once the sites are chosen and preserved, embellish them in a way which intensifies their public meaning. We believe that the best way to intensify a site is through a progression of areas which people pass through as they approach the site. This is the principle of "nested precincts"....

A garden which can be reached only by passing through a series of outer gardens keeps its secrecy. A temple which can be reached only by passing through a sequence of approach courts is able to be a special thing in a man's heart. The magnificence of a mountain peak is increased by the difficulty of reaching the upper valleys from which it can be seen; the beauty of a woman is intensified by the slowness of her unveiling; the great beauty of a river bank – its rushes, water rats, small fish, wild flowers – are violated by a too direct approach; even the ecology cannot stand up to the too direct approach – the thing will simply be devoured.

We must therefore build around a sacred site a series of spaces which gradually intensify and converge on the site. The site itself becomes a kind of inner sanctum, at the core. And if the site is very large – a mountain – the same approach can be taken with special places from which it can be seen – an inner sanctum, reached past many levels, which is not the mountain, but a garden, say, from which the mountain can be seen in special beauty...Give every sacred site a place, or a sequence of places, where people can relax, enjoy themselves, and feel the presence of the place...And above all, shield the approach to the site, so that it can only be approached on foot, and through a series of gateways and thresholds which reveal it gradually.

-- Christopher Alexander et al., *A Pattern Language*



"Now we wait."

SCOTUS

[In late 1960s Ruth Bader] Ginsburg was a leader on the legal side of the women's movement, especially when she became the first tenured woman at Columbia Law School, in 1972...Ginsburg launched a series of cases targeting government rules that treated men and women differently. The process was in keeping with Ginsburg's character: careful, step by step. Better, Ginsburg thought, to attack these rules and policies one at a time than to risk asking the Court to outlaw all rules that treated men and women differently. Ginsburg's secretary at Columbia, who typed her briefs, gave her some important advice. "I was doing all these sex-discrimination cases, and my secretary said, 'I look at these pages and all I see is sex, sex, sex. The judges are men, and when they read that they're not going to be thinking about what you want them to think about,'" Ginsburg recalled. Henceforth, she changed her claim to "gender discrimination."

-- Jeffrey Toobin, "Heavyweight," *The New Yorker*, March 8, 2013



SERENDIPITY

On January 28, 1754 the word "serendipity" was first coined. It's defined by Merriam-Webster as "the faculty or phenomenon of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for." It was recently listed by a U.K. translation company as one of the English language's 10 most difficult words to translate. Other words to make their list include plenipotentiary, gobbledegook, poppycock, whimsy, spam, and kitsch.

"Serendipity" was first used by parliament member and writer Horace Walpole in a letter that he wrote to an English friend who was spending time in Italy. In the letter to his friend written on this day in 1754, Walpole wrote that he came up with the word after a fairy tale he once read, called "The Three Princes of Serendip," explaining, "as their Highnesses travelled, they were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of." The three princes of Serendip hail from modern-day Sri Lanka. "Serendip" is the Persian word for the island nation off the southern tip of India, Sri Lanka.

The invention of many wonderful things have been attributed to "serendipity," including Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Charles Goodyear's vulcanization of rubber, inkjet printers, Silly Putty, the Slinky, and chocolate chip cookies. Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin after he left for vacation without disinfecting some of his petri dishes filled with bacteria cultures; when he got back to his lab, he found that the penicillium mold had killed the bacteria. Viagra had been developed to treat hypertension and angina pectoris; it didn't do such a good job at these things, researchers found during the first phase of clinical trials, but it was good for something else. The principles of radioactivity, X-rays, and infrared radiation were all found when researchers were looking for something else. Julius Comroe said, "Serendipity is looking in a haystack for a needle and discovering a farmer's daughter."

-- The Writer's Almanac

SEX

Writing about sex is like writing about money. It's a way to talk about everything. When people talk about sex, they talk about what they feel about family and responsibility and monogamy and their own personal balance between their need for adventure and independence, for security and stability. You can't talk about sex in a test tube. It's always about everything.

-- Ariel Levy

Nothing is more real than sex when it is happening, nothing more illusory when it has just ended.

-- Dan Chiasson



SHADOW

In denying our shadow selves, we not only deny our wholeness, in their desperation to be heard, the negative parts of us that we consciously and unconsciously deny existence sneak out when we are not fully aware and we project our faults onto others. In truth, it is the things that we judge and harshly criticize each other for that we hide and deny the most in ourselves. When we come to terms with our own demons based on some form of greed, self-deprecation, impatience, arrogance, martyrdom, self-destruction, or stubbornness, we not only embrace and heal them in ourselves; we contribute to the healing of the whole. In our own firsthand experience of forgiving and acknowledging these behaviors in ourselves, we gain compassion when we see them in others.

-- Matthew Pallamary, *Spirit Matters*

SHAMANISM

Unlike the priest, who is a socially inducted and initiated member of a recognized religious organization, the shaman is one who, as a consequence of a completely personal psychological crisis, has gained a certain power of his or her own. Whereas the priest is concerned with integrating the individual into a firmly ordered and well-established social context, the shaman seeks the release of his or her own wild genius, where that may lead. Almost invariably, an overwhelming mental crisis is part of the vocational summons. Indeed, for the seeker of shamanic wisdom, it is a fine line between mystical initiation and psychological breakdown.

Yet, though this crisis may resemble a mental breakdown, it cannot be dismissed as one. For it is not a pathological but a normal event for the gifted mind in these societies, the realization and intuition of a level of spiritual depth that gives the world a sacred character. By following the solitary vision, the shaman breaks not with the other traditions of his tribe but with the comparatively trivial attitude toward the spirit realm that seems to satisfy the majority. In seeking this most difficult path, the shaman becomes a master of death and resurrection, of health and well-being.

-- Wade Davis, *Shadows in the Sun*

SLEEP

“Cheating Ourselves of Sleep”

Think you do just fine on five or six hours of shut-eye? Chances are, you are among the many millions who unwittingly shortchange themselves on sleep. Research shows that most people require seven or eight hours of sleep to function optimally. Failing to get enough sleep night after night can compromise your health and may even shorten your life. From infancy to old age, the effects of inadequate sleep can profoundly affect memory, learning, creativity, productivity and emotional stability, as well as your physical health.

According to sleep specialists at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, among others, a number of bodily systems are negatively affected by inadequate sleep: the heart, lungs and kidneys; appetite, metabolism and weight control; immune function and disease resistance; sensitivity to pain; reaction time; mood; and brain function. Poor sleep is also a risk factor for depression and substance abuse, especially among people with post-traumatic stress disorder, according to Anne Germain, associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh. People with PTSD tend to relive their trauma when they try to sleep, which keeps their brains in a heightened state of alertness.

Dr. Germain is studying what happens in the brains of sleeping veterans with PTSD in hopes of developing more effective treatments for them and for people with lesser degrees of stress that interfere with a good night's sleep. The elderly are especially vulnerable. Timothy H. Monk, who directs the Human Chronobiology Research Program at Western Psychiatric, heads a five-year federally funded study of circadian rhythms, sleep strength, stress reactivity, brain function and genetics among the elderly. “The circadian signal isn't as strong as people get older,” he said. He is finding that many are helped by standard behavioral treatments for insomnia, like maintaining a regular sleep schedule, avoiding late-in-day naps and caffeine, and reducing distractions from light, noise and pets.

It should come as no surprise that myriad bodily systems can be harmed by chronically shortened nights. “Sleep affects almost every tissue in our bodies,” said Dr. Michael J. Twery, a sleep specialist at the National Institutes of Health. Several studies have linked insufficient sleep to weight gain. Not only do night owls with shortchanged sleep have more time to eat, drink and snack, but levels of the hormone leptin, which tells the brain enough food has been consumed, are lower in the sleep-deprived while levels of ghrelin, which stimulates appetite, are higher. In addition, metabolism slows when one's circadian rhythm and sleep are disrupted; if not counteracted by increased exercise or reduced caloric intake, this slowdown could add up to 10 extra pounds in a year.

The body's ability to process glucose is also adversely affected, which may ultimately result in Type 2 diabetes. In one study, healthy young men prevented from sleeping more than four hours a night for six nights in a row ended up with insulin and blood sugar levels like those of people deemed prediabetic. The risks of cardiovascular diseases and stroke are higher in people who sleep less than six hours a night. Even a single night of inadequate sleep can cause daylong elevations in blood pressure in people with hypertension. Inadequate sleep is also associated with calcification of coronary arteries and raised levels of inflammatory factors linked to heart disease. (In terms of cardiovascular disease, sleeping too much may also be risky. Higher rates of heart disease have been found among women who sleep more than nine hours nightly.)

The risk of cancer may also be elevated in people who fail to get enough sleep. A Japanese study of nearly 24,000 women ages 40 to 79 found that those who slept less than six hours a night were more likely to develop breast cancer than women who slept longer. The increased risk may result from diminished secretion of the sleep hormone melatonin. Among participants in the Nurses Health Study, Eva S. Schernhammer of Harvard Medical School found a link between low melatonin levels and an increased risk of breast cancer. A study of 1,240 people by researchers at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland found an increased risk of potentially cancerous colorectal polyps in those who slept fewer than six hours nightly.

Children can also experience hormonal disruptions from inadequate sleep. Growth hormone is released during deep sleep; it not only stimulates growth in children, but also boosts muscle mass and repairs damaged cells and tissues in both children and adults. Dr. Vatsal G. Thakkar, a psychiatrist affiliated with New York University, recently described evidence associating inadequate sleep with an erroneous diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children. In one study, 28 percent of children with sleep problems had symptoms of the disorder, but not the disorder.



During sleep, the body produces cytokines, cellular hormones that help fight infections. Thus, short sleepers may be more susceptible to everyday infections like colds and flu. In a study of 153 healthy men and women, Sheldon Cohen and colleagues at Carnegie Mellon University found that those who slept less than seven hours a night were three times as likely to develop cold symptoms when exposed to a cold-causing virus than were people who slept eight or more hours.

Some of the most insidious effects of too little sleep involve mental processes like learning, memory, judgment and problem-solving. During sleep, new learning and memory pathways become encoded in the brain, and adequate sleep is necessary for those pathways to work optimally. People who are well rested are better able to learn a task and more likely to remember what they learned. The cognitive decline that so often accompanies aging may in part result from chronically poor sleep. With insufficient sleep, thinking slows, it is harder to focus and pay attention, and people are more likely to make poor decisions and take undue risks. As you might guess, these effects can be disastrous when operating a motor vehicle or dangerous machine. In driving tests, sleep-deprived people perform as if drunk, and no amount of caffeine or cold air can negate the ill effects.

At your next health checkup, tell your doctor how long and how well you sleep. Be honest: Sleep duration and quality can be as important to your health as your blood pressure and cholesterol level.

-- Jane Brody, *New York Times*



"Stop fact-checking my story."

SPRING

“Blossom”

In April
the ponds open
like black blossoms,
the moon
swims in every one;
there's fire
everywhere: frogs shouting
their desire,
their satisfaction. What
we know: that time
chops at us all like an iron
hoe, that death
is a state of paralysis. What
we long for: joy
before death, nights
in the swale - everything else
can wait but not
this thrust
from the root
of the body. What
we know: we are more
than blood - we are more
than our hunger and yet
we belong
to the moon and when the ponds
open, when the burning
begins the most
thoughtful among us dreams
of hurrying down
into the black petals
into the fire,
into the night where time lies shattered
into the body of another.

-- Mary Oliver



SUSTAINABILITY

I run a non-profit that is anti-growth. I am not interested in the "building an empire" model of ever increasing productivity and annual income, but something that is sustainable. My definition of sustainable is a system where you put more resource in than you extract -- the balance is always towards keeping energy and resource within the system. True abundance is always having a positive balance in the bank so to speak (debt, which runs the capitalist system is the opposite of this). Since I am a valuable resource within the system, to be sustainable it is important that my energy not be completely mined out. I experienced this in my first non-profit endeavor--I was expected as a person "doing good work for the good of society" to give every last bit of my personal resource. I find it amazing that those of us who are socially conscious expect that of ourselves at the cost of our mental and physical health. So if I treat myself as a valuable input into my work I recognize the important of self-care and nurturance--that once my energy and health are tapped my work can no longer happen.

-- K Ruby Blume

TEACHING

A teacher must walk a thin line, destroying complacency without destroying confidence.

-- Jeremy Denk

TECHNOLOGY

All the hype about how connected you are has contributed to a counternarrative — that, in fact, your generation is increasingly disconnected from the things that matter. The arguments go something like this: Instead of spending time with friends, you spend it alone, collecting friend requests. Rather than savoring your food, you take pictures of it and post them on Facebook. I want to encourage you to reject the cynics who say technology is flattening your experience of the world. ... Technology is just a tool. It's a powerful tool, but it's just a tool. Deep human connection is very different. It's not a tool. It's not a means to an end. It is the end — the purpose and the result of a meaningful life — and it will inspire the most amazing acts of love, generosity and humanity. ...

I want you to connect because I believe it will inspire you to do something, to make a difference in the world. Humanity in the abstract will never inspire you in the same way as the human beings you meet. Poverty is not going to motivate you. But people will motivate you.

-- Melinda Gates, 2013 commencement address at Duke University



"Why don't I tell you a little bit about myself while you check to see if anything I'm wearing was made in a sweatshop."



THATCHER

Thatcher was not a strong or formidable leader. She simply did not give a shit about people, and this coarseness has been neatly transformed into bravery by the British press who are attempting to re-write history in order to protect patriotism. As a result, any opposing view is stifled or ridiculed, whereas we must all endure the obligatory praise for Thatcher from David Cameron without any suggestion from the BBC that his praise just might be an outburst of pro-Thatcher extremism from someone whose praise might possibly protect his own current interests. The fact that Thatcher ignited the British public into street-riots, violent demonstrations and a social disorder previously unseen in British history is completely ignored by David Cameron in 2013. In truth, of course, no British politician has ever been more despised by the British people than Margaret Thatcher.

-- Morrissey

TODAY

Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; you shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense.

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

TRAVEL

When you travel your first discovery is that you do not exist.

-- Elizabeth Hardwick



UNDERPANTS



VENICE

Travelers travel in search of freedom and therefore should avoid Venice which is under permanent occupation and where their minds will be incarcerated in cliché.

Unable to drown itself, Venice lacks even the power to drown others. The great drownees, Shelley and le Corbusier for example, gulped their last elsewhere. Although people do not drown in Venice, they do get submerged, trapped in an aqua fantasy between life and death, and instead of expiring they go on and on and on about it in their semi-sozzled purgatory, about this or that church, this or that palace, this or that restaurant. But nobody has an adventure in Disneyland or Harrod's. Adventure has been edited out of the programme because adventure is commercially unreliable. The true horror of Venice is that its fate, in a world of too many people, could well be the fate of all beautiful places: the fenced-off national park as much as the railed-off cameo township, trampled because protected, polluted because isolated, degraded because valued. Eventually the only beautiful places will be inside us. What a revolting thought.

-- Duncan Fallowell

VOICE

All these beautiful smart girls crying on reality shows about how they can't get a man. Well, your voice is the *beginning of the problem, don't you think?* The vocal pandemic that is the sexy-baby virus is a form of submission to men, as if you're a twelve-year-old girl. I speak *lower* than my natural voice, especially when I'm on a panel with a lot of dudes.

-- Lake Bell

VOYAGER

I have become an orchid
washed in on the salt white beach.
Memory,
what can I make of it now
that might please you –
this life, already wasted
and still strewn with
miracles?

-- Mary Ruefle

WEIRD

In old traditions those who acted as elders were considered to have one foot in daily life and the other foot in the otherworld. Elders acted as a bridge between the visible world and the unseen realms of spirit and soul. A person in touch with the otherworld stands out because something normally invisible can be seen through them. The old word for having a foot in each world is *weird*. The original sense of *weird* involved both fate and destiny. Becoming weird enough to be wise requires that a person learn to accommodate the strange way they are shaped within and aimed at the world.

An old idea suggests that those seeking for an elder should look for someone weird enough to be wise. For just as there can be no general wisdom, there are no “normal” elders. Normal bespeaks the “norms” that society uses to regulate people, whereas an awakened destiny always involves connections to the weird and the warp of life. In Norse mythology, as in Shakespeare, the Fates appear as the Weird Sisters who hold time and the timeless together.

Those who would become truly wise must become weird enough to be in touch with timeless things and abnormal enough to follow the guidance of the unseen. Elders are supposed to be weird, not simply “weirdos,” but strange and unusual in meaningful ways. Elders are supposed to be more in touch with the otherworld, but not out of touch with the struggles in this world. Elders have one foot firmly in the ground of survival and another in the realm of great imagination. This double-minded stance serves to help the living community and even helps the species survive.

-- Michael Meade, *Fate and Destiny: The Two Agreements of the Soul*

WRITING

You are working on a first draft and small wonder you're unhappy. If you lack confidence in setting one word after another and sense that you are stuck in a place from which you will never be set free, if you feel sure that you will never make it and were not cut out to do this, if your prose seems stillborn and you completely lack confidence, you must be a writer.

-- John McPhee

I am an unashamed dinosaur; I still seek out a plot-driven narrative with a beginning, a middle and an end — the last reached after a steadily accelerating cadence. As to research, I eschew virtually all online fact searching because so much is either rubbish or inadequate. The old ways still work best. I seek out the expert steeped in knowledge of his subject and ask for an hour of his time. I usually secure everything I need and probably several extraordinary anecdotes that would never be on the Internet. The same applies to places — even hellholes like Mogadishu. It is a slog to haul the old bones across the world, but I could never have described Somalia from 6,000 miles away. The obsession with accuracy, deriving from my years in journalism, pays off. The readers seem to like it.

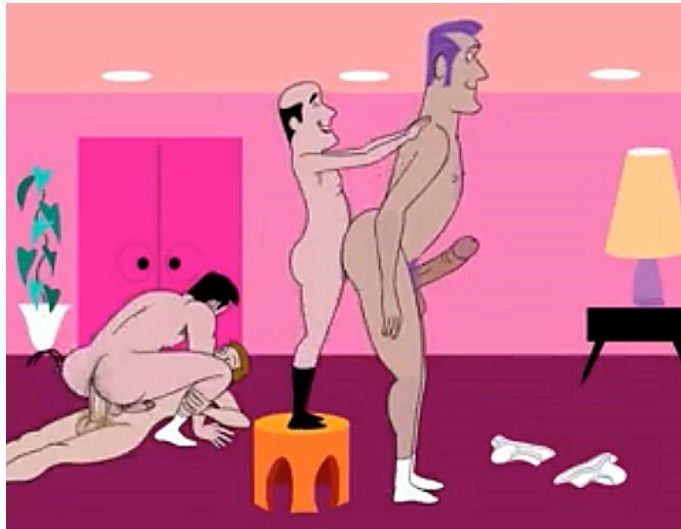
-- Frederick Forsyth

Before the Internet came along, most people rarely wrote anything at all for pleasure or intellectual satisfaction after graduating from high school or college. This is something that's particularly hard to grasp for professionals whose jobs require incessant writing, like academics, journalists, lawyers or marketers. For them, the act of writing and hashing out your ideas seems commonplace. But until the late 1990s, this simply wasn't true of the average nonliterary person.

-- Clive Thompson, *Smarter Than You Think: How Technology Is Changing Our Minds for the Better*

Everything that needs to be said has already been said. But since no one was listening, everything must be said again.

-- Andre Gide



XMAS

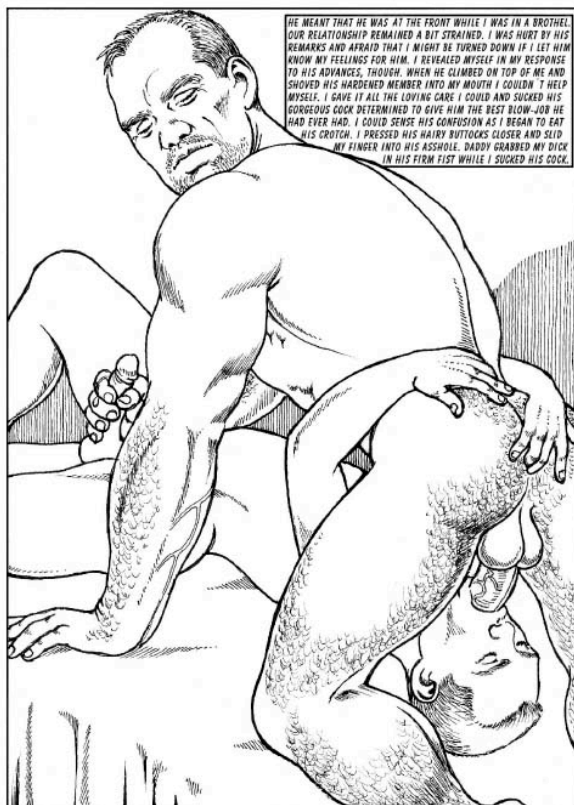
Is there a John Waters version of a lump of coal?

The rudest possible gift is a gift card. It means you think the person is stupid and has no interests. The only good gift card is Bitcoin. You practically have to be a hacker to know about it. I want a Bitcoin gift certificate. That's a glamorous gift card. You can use it to buy hit men or drugs.

What kind of gifts do you give?

I always give books. And I always ask for books. I think you should reward people sexually for getting you books. Don't send a thank-you note, repay them with sexual activity. If the book is rare or by your favorite author or one you didn't know about, reward them with the most perverted sex act you can think of. Otherwise, you can just make out.

-- John Waters, interviewed by Guy Trebay in the *New York Times*



YOUNG PEOPLE

An obstacle to implementing any response to...content overload is that one can retreat into a position of indifference. Young people experience a world where nothing can be done. They sense that society is falling apart and nothing will change. [Mark Fisher, in his 2009 book *Capitalist Realism*] correlates the impotence to widespread pathologization, foreclosing the possibility of politicization. “Many of the teenage students I encountered,” Fisher writes, “seemed to be in a state of depressive hedonia, constituted by an inability to do anything else except pursue pleasure.” Young people respond to the freedom that post-disciplinary systems offer “not by pursuing projects but by falling into hedonic lassitude: the soft narcosis, the comfort food oblivion of Playstation, all-night TV and marijuana.”

-- Geert Lovink, *Networks without a Cause*

ZENITH

Best Theater of 2013:

1. Fun Home – beautiful adaptation of Alison Bechdel’s graphic family memoir by Lisa Kron with top-notch score by Jeanine Tesori, an excellent cast with three Alisons and Michael Cerveris as her closeted gay father, keenly directed by Sam Gold and keenly designed by David Zinn.



2. A Midsummer Night’s Dream – Julie Taymor’s smart, inventive staging with spectacular scenic design by Es Devlin, costumes by Constance Hoffman, and major performances by Kathryn Hunter, David Harewood, Tina Benko, Max Casella and 20 rambunctious children.



3. Love’s Labours Lost – fast funny musical adaptation of Shakespeare by director Alex Timbers and composer Michael Friedman in Central Park, with a cast of newly minted stage stars.

4. Good Person of Szechwan – Lear de Bessonet’s excellent funky staging of Brecht’s masterwork at La Mama ETC (later the Public Theater) starring Taylor Mac and other downtown luminaries.



5. **The Designated Mourner** – deeply affecting revival of Wallace Shawn’s disturbing play with fine performances by Shawn, Deborah Eisenberg, and Larry Pine directed by Andre Gregory.
6. **Here Lies Love** – delirious immersive musical about Imelda Marcos by David Byrne and Fatboy Slim staged by Alex Timbers with a game young cast headed by Ruthie Ann Miles.
7. **Pippin** – Broadway revival brilliantly staged by Diane Paulus as a circus with an instantly legendary performance by Andrea Martin.
8. **Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812** – a chunk of Tolstoy shaped into a dense, hip musical by Dave Molloy and crisply staged cabaret-style by Rachel Chavkin with a memorable leading performance by Philippa Soo and luxurious costumes by Paloma Young.
9. **The Assembled Parties** – Richard Greenberg’s play with a cast of good actors smartly directed by Lynne Meadow.
10. **All the Rage** – Martin Moran’s monologue about loss, death, life purpose, dreams, and anger, delivered with the same beguiling mixture of writerly detail, grace, and humor that characterized *The Tricky Part*.
11. **The Laramie Project Cycle** – Tectonic Theater Project’s documentary about the murder of Matthew Shepard and its aftermath, still powerful 15 years later.
12. **The Flick** – Annie Baker’s latest crack at mining mundane lives for drama with a richness that bears comparison to Beckett (with whom she shares a reverence for silence) and Chekhov, set in a rundown movie theater (designed with hilarious drabness by David Zinn) with a heartbreaking performance by Matthew Maher, directed by Sam Gold.

Honorable Mentions:

Clint Ramos for costuming *Here Lies Love* and *Good Person of Szechwan*
Judy Kuhn for her performance as Fosca in John Doyle’s production of Sondheim’s *Passion*
Marin Ireland for her stylized performance in the title role of David Adjmi’s *Marie Antoinette*
Mark Rylance for his performance as Olivia in the all-male *Twelfth Night* on Broadway
Tom Pye’s set design for Deborah Warner’s production of *The Testament of Mary*
Craig Lucas’s libretto for Nico Muhly’s *Two Boys* at the Metropolitan Opera
John Tiffany’s staging of *The Glass Menagerie* on Broadway, Bob Crowley’s set, and Celia Keenan-Bolger’s performance as Laura



2013 THANKS TO

DAVE ALLEN * JONATHAN ARNOLD * JOHN ATTANASIO * MARCIO BAPTISTE *
MICHAEL BENDER * GLENN BERGER * MISHA BERSON * TONY BESTE * TRENT
BLANCHARD * COLLIN BROWN * BILL BYLEWSKI * RANDALL CHAMBERLAIN * ROZ
CHAST * MICHAEL COHEN * NICK COHN * GRAZIANO CRISTINI * LIAM
CUNNINGHAM * PAUL DENNETT * TOM DENNISON * ERIC DIAMOND * MATT
DREYFUSS * FACEBOOK * HARRY FADDIS * MICHAEL FERRIS * STUART FRANKEL *
JEFF FREEMAN * GAMELAN KUSUMA LARAS * KEITH HENNESSY * RICK
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ARPAD MIKLOS * JOHN MITZEL * JACK MORIN * LOU REED * DANIEL REICH *
REGINA RESNIK * CHRISTOPHER EVAN WELCH



“My worst nightmare is seeing apostrophes where they don’t belong.”



“All Through the Night”

The rotational earth, the resting for seconds:
hemisphere one meets hemisphere two,
thoughts twist apart at the center seam.
Everything inside is.
Cyndi Lauper and I both fall into pure emptiness.
That's one way to think: I think I am right now.
We have no past we won't reach back –
The clock ticks like the nails of a foiled dog
chasing a faster rabbit across a glass expanse.
A wheel of fortune spins on its side,
stops and starts. The stopped time
is no longer time, only an illusion that says,
I can have this, and this, and this.
Cyndi says nothing works like that.
There is no all-purpose plastic totem
that acts like a bouncer holding back the fact
that at least once a day you look up:
it's the self you kept in a suitcase holding the key,
coming to meet you, every cell a node
in a network of ongoing doubling. Cyndi says
the world expands but always keeps us in it.
For every you, there's a riot grrrl in prison
in Putin's Russia. You know the self dissolves
and when it does – no figure, all ground,
like a surface seen microscopically –
you fill the frame and explode,
a rubber-wound inside unraveling and becoming
a measurement of whatever exits. It's like sleep,
if sleep were a film that didn't include you, but no,
whatever is happening, you are always in it,
the indispensable point of view.
Proof of that is that a lift force brings you back
and you wake, back to your face, hands, mirror
image in the bed next to you, Ketamine moment
where kinesthesia is secondary to everything
is possible: you and you and you and now and
you and yes and you with the night-self singing
backup. Onstage, the fractured future of a world
which is the world with the scaffolding folded
and laid on top of this night. All through it.
Until it ends or else begins again. Meanwhile,
that indefatigable wavering between
what you want and **what you get for wanting.**

-- Mary Jo Bang

