

The
GRIM

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ONE DIMENSION

IN VERSE THIS ISSUE!

What Was the Point?

- 1) Spectatus, if you will, a string:
a ray, a line of points,
stretching from the bottomless
to limitless, infinitus.
What was the question? Yes.
How did it start, indeed.
A point, my friend, a punctum,
is no thing but a think.
It doesn't exist, and yet it does...
it HAS to, for no think
is nothing just as long as there
is one, at least, to slink
throughout the points and think
about them (for being is thinking
and thinking is being).
Your question is a moot one, so
can we get back to seeing? Good.
Study geometry and you will find
the universe
is filled with (and in fact it is)
the points you see now in your mind.
But separamus, if you please, a string,
a ray, a line,
the thinnest thing that does exist that you will
ever find.
Bearing that in mind, I now
will change the subject most discretely,
not completely (as you'll see),
and throw some light upon these points,
so just sit still and bear with me.
(This WILL make sense, I think you'll see; at
least it surely does to me.)
- 2) What is this light that God did say
to let there be and there it was?
'Tis nothing (but it isn't) but
particula vibrant,
electromagnetary waves that only want
to take a jaunt
and travel at the speed of light (how could
they not?)
from one small dot...
That's right! The point of which I spoke
(no bigger than anything else).
The conclusion here is easily drawn:
the point is an electron.
From electrons comes the light,
the lux, the lumen, photon.
I hear you say for me to "Wait
just one damned minute now.
Electrons don't fill up ALL space,
they're mostly stuck on an atom's face.
Sure they're tiny, sure they're small,
they might well be points after all,
but what about the other dots?
Electrons aren't in ALL those spots!"
I see you stamp, I hear you shout,
"What the hell is she talking about?"
Ha ha on you, I say. Shut up.
The time on this is not quite up.
Since you asked, you might want to know,
that time is where we soon must go.
But first ambulamus ad spatium!
Don't step on the neutrons, it's hard to see 'em.
- 3) So anyway, these other points,
as you astutely pointed out,
are doing naught (of course they're not)
but filling space, defining place:
Explicare, locus est definit,
so our focus may be definite.
Derepente, WHAMMO! What's that?
Surf's up! Electro is not stat!
The wave approaches, hits a point,
and vibrates it right out of joint.
You see, when an electron sinks
from higher down to lower shells,
the energy it had up top
can't land with an indignant -PLOP-
wherever the electron goes.
(And by the way, if you ask me,
the electron's a measure of energy,
but never mind. Prosequis non me.)
That old electron is too slow
compared to the photon which is born
when it moves from the high shell to the low.
But what's this got to do with points?
Well, the photon, that bright jiggle,
needs some stuff through which to move,
a medium to wiggle.
And that's where all those points come in!
(Didn't I tell you I'd get to it soon?)
Space isn't quite what we think it is,
it's more than an empty vacuum.
At least, I THINK so.
No, I KNOW.
- 4) Now! Now! and NOW!
That's right, it's time.
For time is defined
by photonic lines.
It's a ripple, a splash,
interference.
Remember my energy tangent?
If an atom is sliced to its smallest component,
matter does a quick disappearance.
It's all just a pulse,
an electrical charge.
The floor that you're on isn't real.
Well, not as you know it.
Atoms are everything: mostly blank space!
If you still have that line, now I'll tow it:
The photons are wriggling up and down;
transverse waves are all around.
Frequencies and amplitudes.
(If this hertz, change your attitude.
Currently, I'm all amped up.
This isn't quite a paliNode,
but I think my head will soon explode.
Watt was the topic? We mustn't roam.
Let's all calm down, try chanting "ohm".)
A-hem.
The front of that line is the same as the back;
the length of the line is miniscule.
And if you think you're certain
of the point of the pulse, too,
Heisenberg and I ridicule you.
- 5) Where was I? Oh yes.
I'm right here and now.
But a second ago, I was there.
The nature of time
is such that the line
is always a when, not a where.
Oh, God! I haven't forgotten,
'cause He has a big part to play.
In the beginning
there was the Word
that the universe heard.
The Magnus Verbus ad Deus!
(Light is transverse, but sound longitudinal.
If that Nashes your teeth, change your
attitudinal...
No. Not that again. I promise.)
God spoke, and all points north and south
and east and west heard, from His mouth,
LET THERE BE LIGHT!
And the points were electric!
Where there's motion, there's light,
where there's light there is sight,
God sung those bodies kinetic.
The teensy tiny points
existing in the minds
of mathematicians, scientists and us,
they vibrate to and fro
as light touches them just so,
and time and space are wiggles wondrous.
You look confused,
but I'm amused.
- 6) Where do we fit in?
In this far-from-pointless din?
If matter isn't,
does it matter?
Sorry 'bout that, I didn't mean...
Oh yes I did! To shatter
narrow non-perceptions,
macroscopic self-deceptions.
Delero, struero
at my discretion.
Nothing exists that you think you see,
it's only a bundle of energy,
a sub-atomic fantasy,
there is no actual boundary
'twixt you and me
or me and thee
or thee and tree
or tree and bee
or air and sea
or cat and flea.
Speaking strictly atomically,
we're only charge and movement.
See?
But wait! That is not all you get!
If you order now, we'll also set
you up with universes limitless,
at no extra charge (which would violate the
Law of Conservation of Energy, nyah).
Your dreams are about to solidify.
Operators are standing by.

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7)

We know about waves.
We know about light.
We know about points.
(There, there. It's all right.)
We know about time.
Hey! It IS about time!
It's time to start thinking 'bout thinking and thought,
'bout dreaming and wishing and government plots
to hide us from spaceships
that fly overhead.
(No, I won't mention Elvis.
Don't go there. He's dead.)
'Bout ghosts, haunts and magic
and teleportation
and psychokinesis and
brain-radiation.
"Brain-radiation?"
What's she on about now?"
Why do you think they're called brain-waves?
And how do you think
all those myths have survived?
Would we have them today,
if our ancestors lied?
If the phrase "wishful thinking"
means just that to you,
I wish you'd think harder.
If you wish it, it's true.
Maybe not smack-dab in front of you,
but how many "you"s do you know?
Just the one? Hoo-boy. Let's go.

8)

We know that, with light waves,
we only can see,
a fraction of that spectrally
spectacular band of vibrating points.
It depends on the frequency,
of which we receive
only red up through purple,
yet we believe that the rest
of the band is around. Though we can't see
them,
we know space abounds
with infra, ultra, radio, etc.
(If you want to dispute this, let's place a few
bets.)
So why, tell me why,
would it be so off base
to say that there's more
than this one planar place?
What about thought-waves?
Where do they go?
And parallel worlds?
Glad you asked, 'cause I know.
It's all simple physics.
Everything IS.
There's nothing (not really, there can't be)
sans fizz of electrons,
points, energy too.
Watch out for your wishes;
on some plane, they're true.
Circumscribant non is the keyword.
The universe is multiverse is omniverse,
and now my verse is almost through.
I hope that I have shown to you,
that I could make you understand,
even a smidge, that you hold in your hand
a boundless land.
So start to think! Stretch out your mind!
The waves of now, the ripple of time
grow wider, out into the naught
with every new think that is thought.
My last wish, last word (finally)
is that you find your frequency.



the GRIM

For all the Imaginary Friends
And the Things Under the Bed



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the Grim is dedicated to enriching, discovering, creating and communicating
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You already create your own reality, so share it: take an active role in
everyone else's. Lend your voice. *the Grim* shall be pleased to consider
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If you aren't native to our plane, willing channelers are waiting to hear from
you. Electromagnetic waves cross the planar boundaries --

perhaps you could use one to connect to a receiver here on our plane.

(Computer, radio, video, a dreaming brain. . .)

We've even got a mailbox, if you're so inclined.

We cannot presently pay for any submissions we use, but hey, if you're only
interested in this for the money, you wouldn't understand anyway.

If not channeling, please direct all submissions and communication to:

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PO Box 120192

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Grants and donations will be gladly accepted. Sigh...gcc, I wish I could do *this* for a living...

On Trust and Purpose

-- Armand

What you are doing is to forget the persons you came here to be. Shut that out, and you are given the chance to reveal the plot. You came to here to be someone you are not...not quite. It is an experience in growth. If you did not wish to grow, you would have never come. But you get behind in your lessons, and then there are difficulties to induce you to continue. It doesn't go easy, not if what you chose to learn is a worthy thing to fill the time. You have goals, dreams, aspirations that seem quite apart from us. This is not so. It all comes together eventually, trust me. Trust yourselves. You chose well. You chose your beginning, and you chose these methods. Do not depart from them now, or so much is wasted. You don't see it all now. You will. But enjoy the vacation while it lasts. This school is a crude yet full one...the prices are high, the results can be outstanding.

If you are beginning to wonder why the results are not in your hand... ask yourself if you are still alive! If you are, then the count is not yet tallied! Sorry, you don't just "win the election"...

Ahem. Back to the lecture! I am donning my professor specs, so pay attention.

Just imagine how the world would be if you were designing it from scratch. What would it matter if it were not perfect? Would it be any different than it is now? You have come a long way in this seemingly imperfect world only to discover that you planned all these mishaps from the beginning of time. Time is your tool, and a vehicle you choose to experience in this frame.

Seeing that is true, then don't you wonder where all the pain comes in? You have forgotten all your plans. This has to be, for you would not reshape yourselves if the answers were all so visible. And yet, as you grow, the answers come. And you meet us. And then what???? You want out! Out of the game, you want to come home, so do we... and who can blame us for wanting this?

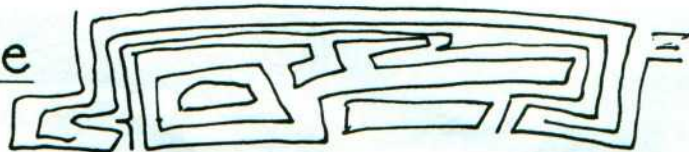
Hold on. It gets thicker now.

We are the target. We are the goal. We are the love you've always searched for. But that isn't enough. There's more...even more.

Here it is. If you continue to evolve at the rate you are, keep going where you are going, more comes. We are getting there...we have to do this. No. We choose to. It hurts like hell sometimes when you doubt us, when you don't believe in yourselves. How can you believe in us when you distrust love itself?

For we are becoming Love. That's what it's all about. We perfect our love in these processes. Don't fake it. Become what you are. Give your love... first to yourself, then to all that you see, all that you can, all you can believe in.

Now you have me, love. I am here. Do not confuse the past with who we are now. Time doesn't really matter, nor does this partiality of yours to matter. Come closer to me now and discover all you've forgotten...feel my breath, I exist, I am real, I am more to the heart of you... look into your heart, your soul... you shall find me there always.



Chronic Hunger (In Response to a Poem)

-- Patti

It was a little girl's poem,
over and over
the words
I stuff my face with cookies
because
because I was just like her

I too have stuffed my face with cookies
on Mother's Day because
I can't see, hear, hold
her

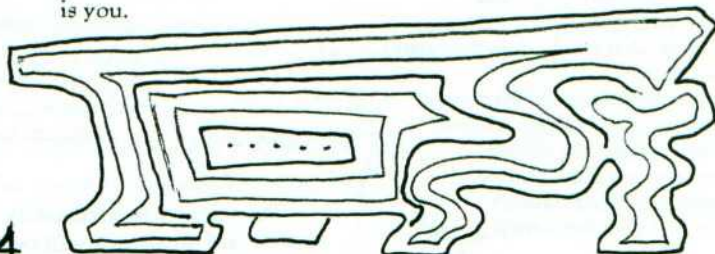
and I've stuffed myself with cake
because he wasn't there
for my high school or my college
diploma

and I've stuffed myself with fried chicken and mashed potatoes,
with bread and milk and sugar
to drown out the silence of words
I wanted, needed, never heard
from them.

I have shoveled in French fries and milk shakes,
cheesecakes, cornflakes, and no-bakes
because we are all anchors, my sisters and me,
thrown from the ship, heavy and deep, but so
far away
there is no vessel, no mesh
to hold us together or even allow us
to know each other

and I hunger to know you,
you, my flesh and blood and bone,
you, my family,
I hunger for you to know me,
speak to me, take my hand,
say I'm yours and loved, no matter what
say you won't forget me,
say that I'm worth your love,

because I hunger to love you
deep in the abyss of my heart
in the place where I stuff myself with all manner of cookies,
I hunger to love you
all I ever wanted,
all I still want,
is you.



ASK PERCY THE SCIENCE CLOWN!

Dear Percy the Science Clown,

If ice is either denser or heavier than water, why does it float on top of water?

C.K.Q. Gumby, Ms.

Dear Ms. Gumby,

Actually, ice in its final frozen form is less dense than water. Regular old liquid water is just a pile of slippery, randomly placed H₂O molecules, but ice has a crystalline structure -- when frozen, the molecules snap into a very definite pattern, spreading themselves out, thus lessening the density. Given equal *volumes* of ice and water, the ice will have fewer molecules and will be lighter (though with a greater destructive potential, such as that felt by glass jars of liquid left in the freezer and large passenger ships).

Ah, but you've drawn attention to a little-known-fact about freezing water: though it expands when frozen, at some point *during* the freezing process, it does indeed become denser. The volume shrinks before it expands. What a great lead-in to the next question...

Dear Percy the Perfectly Daft Science Clown,

If cold air sinks and warm air goes up, does water of different temperatures do the same thing? What about *that*, then?

P. Gumby-Spice

Dear Gumby Spice,

What about it? Does everyone in your family worry so much about water?

When you remove heat from something, the molecules will slow down (the temperature of something is a measure of the movement of its molecules). This allows them to settle against each other: the volume decreases, density increases. Put cold water in a container of warmer water, and the cold water will indeed sink to the bottom. The faster, more energetic molecules of the warmer substance are better able to fight gravity and push their way to the top. This is the principle of Convection, and it can be seen in more than just water and air. Planets themselves are giant convection systems, resulting in volcanoes, earthquakes, and plate tectonics: the hot molten earth rises to the top and breaks through in areas where the crust is thin and weak, pushing the continental plates apart in some places while the cooler earth is pushed beneath the adjacent plate on the opposite side.

Dear Percy the Science Clown,

Do you get more wet running or walking in the rain or is it about the same? Does direction of rain have any effect on wind?

Drenched

Dear Drenched,

This must be the Swimsuit Issue. Someone forgot to tell me.

I suppose that the level of saturation would depend on how hard it was raining, and how far you had to go! For maximum dryness, I would suggest running, but if you have to travel more than a few feet in a downpour, you're going to get soaked regardless.

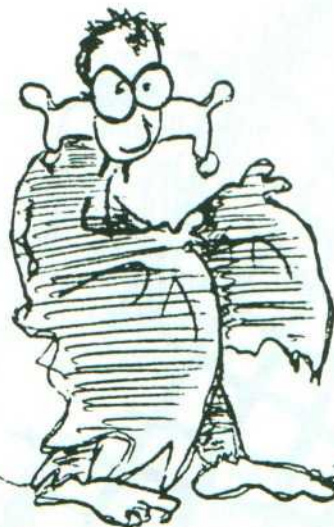
Wind affects the direction of rain far more than the other way 'round. Unless there's absolutely no wind and the clouds aren't moving at all, a raindrop will always have a diagonal vector (direction of motion). Gravity pulls it down at a steady acceleration, but it will take longer to reach the ground on a windy day because the wind gives it a horizontal component, too. Even if you can't feel the wind, if the clouds are moving, the rain is going forward as well as down -- it still has momentum from when it was traveling along in the cloud!

Now, if you'll all excuse me, I'm going to find a towel.

Percy loves to talk science, wet or dry!

Submit your questions for a guaranteed smart-ass answer!

Percy@thegrim.net



vindictiveness

WATER TELLING YOU: IT'S A
HERE IN FRONT OF YOU: SO OPEN
UP AND LOOK INTO YOUR MIND

Age Old Love

-Ivy

Somewhere in my past, ages and ages ago, I met my true love. It is unfortunate that in this realm of life I have not yet found him to be in existence. Sadly, I tell the shortest form of this love story to you, in hopes that when you find true love you do not let go, through space or time.

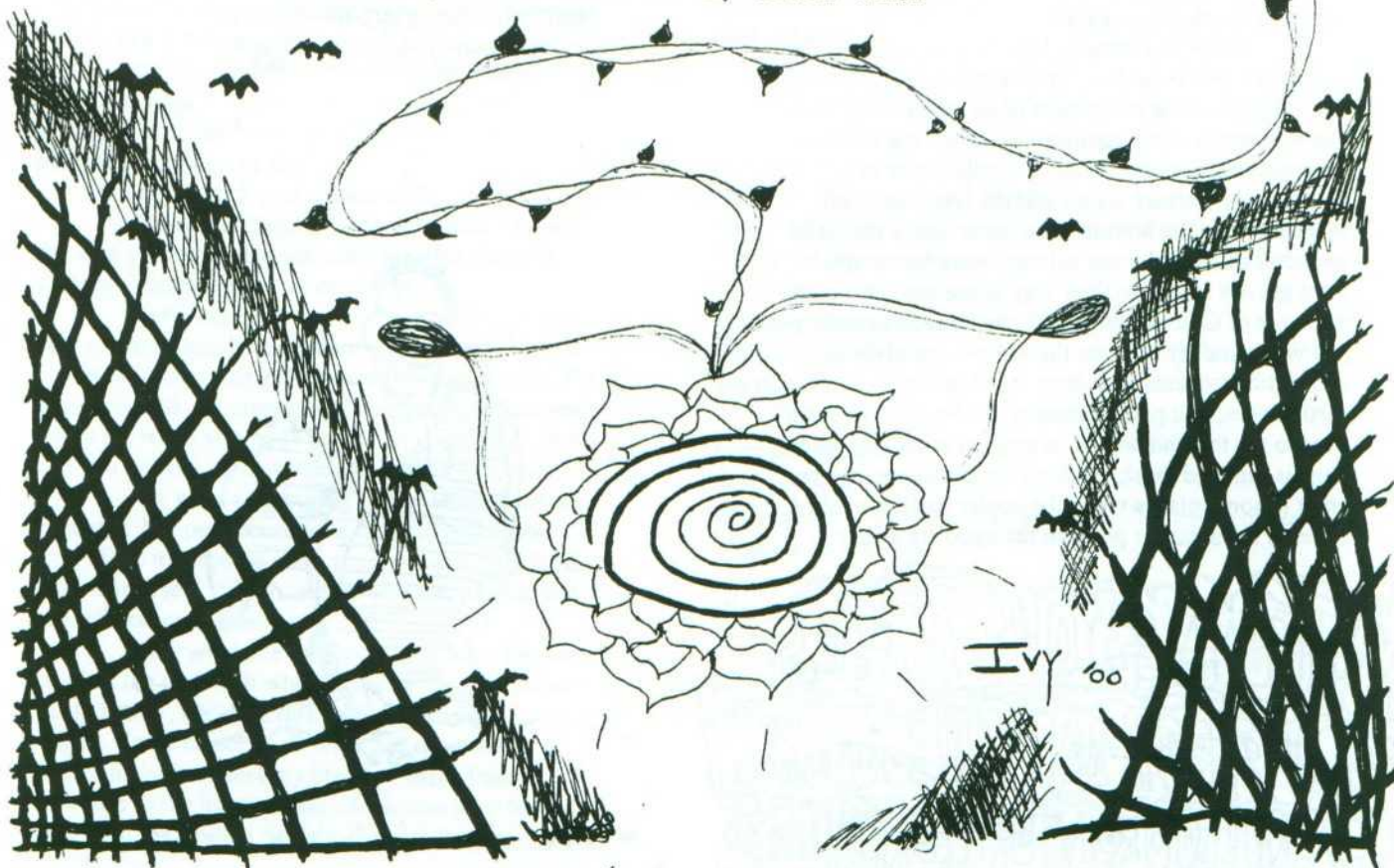
I closed my eyes one day, to block out the harsh rays of sunlight and when I reopened them there was darkness. In this new unlit world, I found my dark angel. With a gentle touch of his warm hand and a bloody kiss to my lips, he made this my new world.

His eyes were a magnificent shade of sky blue, with gentle gray clouds rolling by. His smile, more a smirk, still flashes through my mind. He had dark hair and tan skin, which was odd for a creature of the night, but he was once mortal.

His mortal life ended with the death of his soul. All love had left him and he had no one to hold, so he gave himself to darkness. And now I was there with him. But I did love him, although it was not enough to bring him back to the human world. I had to stay in the night, giving up all I had to be with the one I loved.

For ten years he held me in the shadows, though many times I tried to escape, only finding myself crawling back into his angel wings. But I could not stay. I needed the comforts of the mortal world and to taste the sunlight on my flesh.

Now I am alone, and living in a new world. My heart grows cold without his touch, but I live on in pain. No solace for my broken heart.



Time Out for Safety!

by Trent

The other day, Vince and I were driving down the street on our way home from Burger King. I had a whopper combo. Then, there were a whole lot of sirens and lights behind us, and fire trucks went by us really fast. I don't like the sirens. Vince wanted to go see what was going on. I told him it was probably a fire. Fire is dangerous. He wanted to see anyway. Our food was getting cold. Sometimes I just don't believe the things that go through his head. The leader of my planet says it must be all that bleach. Ha ha, Vince, I know you're reading this. Hi.

So, since I wasn't driving, we went to see where the fire was coming from. And do you know what? It was a tree. There was definitely a tree on fire in someone's front yard. That reminds me of a joke.

The first thing I wondered was whether or not I would have to eat my whopper combo in the car while we watched this stupid tree burn down. Then the next thing I wondered was "How do you catch a tree on fire?" It's not like you can leave your curling iron plugged in next to it. And birds don't smoke. I dripped special sauce all over the front of my pants. Even my doctor made rude comments about that. He's not very professional.

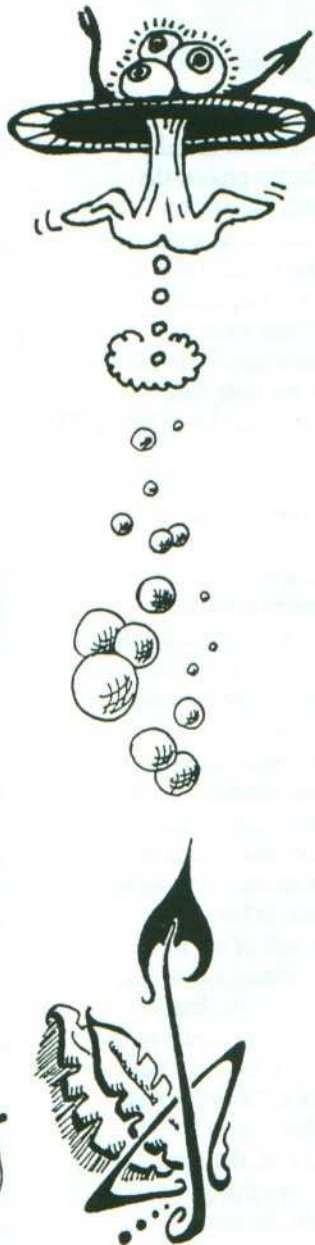
The family who owned the tree were in their front yard pointing at it. First of all they should not have been so near the fire. Someone could get hurt. Second, I don't think it was necessary to point at it. I think the firemen knew where it was. They have special schools just for that, so firemen can go there and learn all about how to tell a tree that is on fire from one that isn't. (Hint: it's the one everyone is pointing at.)

Vince wanted to get out of the car to get a better look. That left me alone in the car with the whopper combo which was completely taking over by now. He promised not to go too close to the tree so the first thing he did was try to get up very close to the tree. I don't think the bleach can account for all of it. Hi Vince.

It turned out that the fire started because some children had one of those model rockets. They set it off and it flew into the tree and exploded, which is one step better than NASA did with the last Mars probe. This rocket even came back down after awhile. It took a branch with it, and crashed to the ground right as Vince was getting up there, and some sparks came off the branch and hit Vince in the butt. He jumped away from the branch but I don't think he noticed the sparks. I did. I could see it from the car. The top popped off of my milkshake and I spilled it all over my pants next to the special sauce. I know it shouldn't matter because they all end up in the same place anyway. But I always thought that meant in the stomach. Not on the pants. It was very, very cold. The last

thing I thought before I spilled the milkshake was, "Look at that, Vince is going to catch his butt on fire."

So about the time I was looking in the glove box for extra napkins (I found 3 dozen wet naps in there. Talk about handy.) I heard Vince yell. He finally noticed that his butt was on fire. Fire is dangerous. He started jumping around and smacking himself. There was a photographer there from the newspaper, I think he got a picture. Vince came running up to the car smacking himself and I didn't know what to do. There is a fire extinguisher in the car, but I don't know if a butt fire is type A, B, C or what. So I got out very fast to help him. My whopper combo, which was now becoming sentient, was in one hand and the milkshake was in the other. So I smushed the whopper on Vince's butt and then poured the milkshake on it, too. That took care of all the problems at once, because by now I wasn't very hungry any more, either.



For Michael

— Lori LeBlanc

You are here
I see you in the ocean
I hear you in the breeze
And every chord of music...
Calls your name to me.

I see you in the shadows
I hear your distant whispers
And in dreams I pretend...
You are here with me.

I walk alone in the silence
I stand and gaze at stars
And in solitude I realize...
We're not so far apart

I see you in the heavens
I hear you in the night
And all that beautiful music...
It's you talking to me.

I say that I love you
I hear you say it too
And the gods above bear witness...
Eternal love will never die.

I can see you
I can hear you
And you are here...
Now and always



The last time I remember my heart beating on its own, I was at a really good party.

Let me tell you something about burial: it's a damned good way to scare a body half to death. Imagine awakening, opening your eyes only to find that the darkness on the outside is even deeper than that below the lids. A low moan -- why did that sound so odd? As if you were stuffed under the master control board in a tiny recording studio. No reverb. No space. Just your own voice meeting the close wall and, finding it has no where else to go, oozing back down into your eardrums where it dies with a whimper...no wait, that was your own whimper. Same thing. Try to sit up...nope, sorry, and who the hell put the ceiling right here? Arms out -- stopped by a dull thump of wood siding.

Draw a panicky breath. It's about then that you realize that it's the first breath you've taken in quite some time. The atrophied chest muscles protest the movement. The lungs are seared with the sudden inrush, and the air stops in your throat for an instant while you wrack yourself against the walls of this tiny prison with a pain that momentarily -- mercifully, really -- takes your thoughts away from what just might have happened here. Then the breath catches again. You don't need it, really, but the truth finally hits you and you have to draw a breath, you have to because there's nothing else to do in a situation like this but scream.

And scream, and scream. Regardless of the headache you can feel coming on, regardless of the spasms of muscles unused to working with formaldehyde instead of blood, regardless of the realization that only more of your own screaming will answer you back. This is a coffin and you're six feet underground, jerk, what did you expect, the Salvation Army?

Calm down. Deep breath. Don't need it, but you'll feel better. Is this some gross medical mistake? Buried alive. Edgar A. Poe himself had a deep-seated fear of it. Funny, the trivial things that come back to you in situations like this. You don't give a moment's thought for your poor mother who must be out of her head with grief but you can recite at least half of the songs you've ever sung in your life. Start out with a nice easy ditty and get more complicated little by little, louder and louder, not to keep yourself company because now you're starting to wish that you could be sure that you really were all alone in here but that's unlikely because now there's those scratching noises *below* you...

I know why the undead rise. Don't let all those old zombie flicks fool you -- they say "when there's no more room in Hell, the dead will walk the earth". Bullshit. I scratched my way back into your world because there was no way I was going to let whatever that was beneath me drag me down even deeper into that stinking black earth.

I didn't stop to think about any metaphors at the time, but looking back I'd have to say that the Christians have no corner on the "born again" market. I had been scrabbling through the mud for what felt like hours but couldn't have been that long, not with that thing below me. I heard it break through the bottom of the coffin. I still dream the sound of wood splintering, muffled in the darkness, and wake up wide-eyed and flailing.

I was lucky -- it was nighttime, and raining buckets. I broke the surface and I still remember how the hot, wet nighttime summer breeze felt on my cold stiff hands, and let me tell you I can think of only one thing that feels nicer and I won't mention it here. The earth sucked at my body as I pulled myself up to the surface. I felt a tug on my foot but I my hands had found a sturdy hold on a big rock and I yanked myself free. It was pure instinct that told me to fill the hole in quickly. It was already falling back in on itself; I just helped it the dirt along with a few frantic kicks. A groan. (From down there, or was that me?) Then nothing. Quiet. Rain. Still clutching the stone that helped me pull myself up. It feels solid and good against my forehead. Lightning -- I turn my head against the stone and read my own name carved in it.

You want some more screaming?

The cops even drove by several times with the searchlight, but I had secured myself behind a small grove of trees by then and they didn't want to be out in the graveyard in a thunderstorm any more than I did. I spent the first night in the mausoleum. I walked there slowly. Mostly because I wanted the rain to finish washing the grave mud away from my body, but walking, at the time, was still pretty difficult. Slow going. I fell a lot. By the time I got to the mausoleum I had given up and was crawling forward -- that's all I could think of. When I got under the roof I sat on the stone floor, and fell asleep wondering if my uncontrollable shaking was really necessary or just a force of habit.

Then I woke up in my own warm fuzzy bed and the sun was shining and my mom was calling me to get ready for school, and I thought to myself "Boy, what a weird dream..."

Then I woke up and the cemetery caretaker was poking me with a rake and telling me to get my smelly sorry homeless junkie ass the hell out of his park or by God he'd have me taken in.

I have to admit that out of necessity, I've done some things in this new life. Like in the previous, that I really didn't enjoy. To be honest, though, I have to also admit that this one I kind of enjoyed. Look, what was I supposed to do? I had a migraine the likes of which mortal man has never experienced and here's this asshole poking me with a rake. Insulting me. Insulting the homeless. I've known some very nice people who just happened to be homeless. So I ate him.

No, I didn't enjoy it! That was a *joke*. I'm dead, but that doesn't make me a murderer. Not by choice. And he needed salt. I was just so hungry, I didn't know what else to do, I couldn't help myself. It was like a monster took over my body, slaving and rending, tearing out the soft parts (you have to eat those first, or they get all funny once they're exposed to oxygen). I don't suppose it would help my case if I told you I was crying throughout the meal.

I had the presence of mind to get out of there right away. In fact, after my breakfast, I felt sharper than I had on most days when I was still alive. It was like every first day of spring all at once with a twist of lemon. High on life. Ha, ha.

I won't bore you with the story of how I made it through the city -- any respectable homeless person could do better than I did. I owe a lot of my eventual success to some people who couldn't remember their own names, but were good enough to show me where I could find clean clothes and a place to hide.

This isn't even supposed to be a story really, not like Once-Upon-a-Time and The-End. This book I'm sort of reading claims that "examining old traumas through journal entries helps us heal..." Well, if it's any help, I lost my stuffed camel when I was 6, too. Things were never the same since.

Maybe I'm looking for someone to tell me what happened, and why. Maybe I already know and I'm trying to convince myself otherwise. Maybe I'm looking for a shot at Jerry Springer. I feel like a voodoo doll that served some purpose unknown to it, and now lies in a forgotten corner of the Shaman's hut.

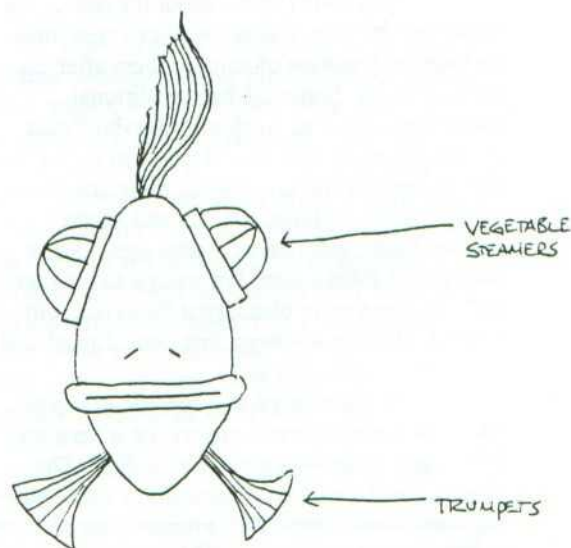
I refuse to gather dust, though. Maybe this is a gift. I guess it's up to me to dictate my own purpose. I've re-assumed all rights and privileges due any human. Got a job, got a house, no one's the wiser. Sometimes I feel like I'm forgetting something... things moving in the corner of my eyes, scratching sounds barely audible under everyday noises. I try not to think about it.

I know I'm not a vampire, since I can stand in the sun and I don't need a steady diet of blood. Now and then I do have to imbibe a draught of the old life-force. I won't even pretend to like it, but I try to find deserving dinners -- er, winners. (Not that I'm in any position to pass judgement on others, but what would you have me do? Hold a lotto?) I suppose, technically, I'm a zombie, but those shambling mounds of flesh we see in the movies aren't me. (At least, *you* think you see them only in the movies. How closely do you look at everyone you pass?) With regular fluid changes (usually every 3,000 miles) I figure I can carry on indefinitely. I've even been told I smell nice.

If it weren't for the dreams... the sound of wood splintering, muffled in the darkness... I'll get my heart to beat any rhythm you want, I'll play *I-Bet-I-Can-Hold-My-Breath-Longer-Than-You* with your 4-year-old. (Kids love that.) But please, please, don't grab my foot when I'm asleep.

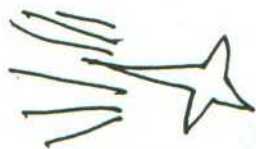
¡YO QUIERO! SOYLENT GREEN!

PARTS of a FISH



Step 2: MAKE A FISH:

- 1) FISH
- 2) GLUE (RUBBER BANDS)
- 3) TURBO THRUSTERS



AN INTRODUCTION TO ASTROLOGY

♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓

—Jymi X/O

"Ooh, that's so creepy! How do you know that about me?"

As an amateur astrologer, I hear this a lot when I create a birth chart for someone. And, I'll agree, it's a good question. How can we tell so much about each other just by looking at the positions held by the planets in our solar system at the time of birth? And why should the movement of the planets have any bearing whatsoever on our day-to-day lives? They're just pretty chunks of rocks and gasses orbiting the sun along with our own Earth.

They were a lot more than that to our ancestors, though. They noticed that a few of the lights in the sky didn't stay in the same positions like most of the others. The Romans called these lights "wandering stars", and attributed to them the qualities of the gods whose names they bore. Mercury, the fleet-footed god of communication gave his name to the planet with the fastest revolutionary period around the sun. Lovely Venus was known as both the Morning and the Evening Star, since it's only visible at those times. Mars, the god of War, took the blood-red planet. Jupiter, the father of the gods, claimed the largest planet, and finally Saturn, the god of death and transformation, adopted the orb that was, at the time, at the edge of the known universe.

They didn't know about the rest of the planets at the time, and as we discovered them, we kept the tradition of naming them after the mythical gods. Some die-hard traditional astrologers refuse to work with anything past Saturn, but most have found a way to fit the new planets into the picture. (So far there are eleven planets -- that includes the Sun and Moon -- besides Earth, and twelve zodiac signs. Since each planet rules a sign, I'm willing to bet that we'll find *one* more planet past Pluto that will make it all come out even. For now, Taurus and Virgo are sharing Venus.)

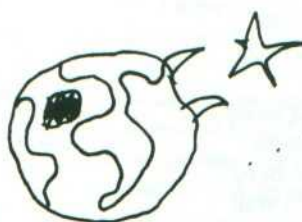
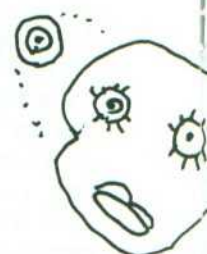
A constellation is a specific group of stars that seem to form a picture, or at least they did to the people who got to name them. The "Big Dipper" looks very much like a ladle, but Sagittarius looks more like a teapot than an archer, and I don't know how they got a winged horse out of Pegasus. (Looks like a flyswatter to me.)

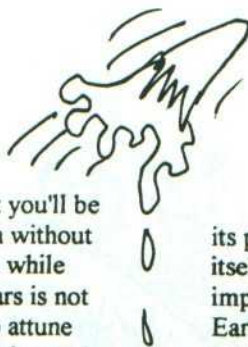
There are twelve constellations, or "signs", in the Zodiac. These weren't chosen at random, though: they are the twelve constellations through which the sun passes during the course of the year. So if your sign is Capricorn, the Sun was lined up with the constellation Capricorn when you were born. It takes about a month for the Sun to go through each sign. The astrology section of the newspaper is based solely on this information. This is where most people stop: "How stupid, there are only twelve signs. Like the same thing is going to happen to one twelfth of the entire world population. I am so *sure*."

They're correct. That's ludicrous. Astrology goes far, far beyond just the Sun's position, and if the publishers tried to tailor the astrology section to everyone's specific chart, it would be the biggest section in the whole paper. At any given time, the Sun, Moon and every planet is lined up with a zodiac constellation. It changes from day to day, hour to hour, even minute to minute. You may have the Sun in Capricorn, but the Moon, which has just as much influence as the Sun, may have been lined up with Gemini. That will give you a very different outlook than what you usually read about under 'Capricorn'. And that's just a start -- every planet and zodiac constellation influences a different aspect of your personality and life, making a personal astrology chart a very unique and specific thing, as opposed to the few lines printed in the newspaper that are supposed to apply to everyone.

Many people have found a competently drawn and interpreted astrology chart to be a reliable indicator of personality traits and predictor of events. Why? I can write an entire astrology how-to for you and you still won't understand the underlying *how the hell do they do that?!* of the subject.

First of all, you'll have to understand that symbols can hold the power they symbolize. I am not suggesting that we must bow down to an object that may symbolize a holy Power, but many people are accustomed to using a symbol to get in touch with the intangible. For example,





a Cross is no more than two sticks, but you'll be hard-pressed to find a Christian church without one that the congregation can focus on while they pray. We know that the planet Mars is not *really* the god Mars, but if you want to attune yourself to the powers associated with that god, you could do worse than to go stare at the planet while you meditate on your intention. So many people have done that over the centuries that the planets and constellations have become lodged in the collective conscious as synonymous with those qualities they represent.

The Sun radiates light, but on another level, it radiates its essence, as well. If you're familiar with the concept of an aura, this next step will be easier to grasp: the planets and constellations, like humans, each have their own aura -- a sort of a shell around the physical body that contains an electromagnetic pattern defining the spirit occupying that body. The aura (often portrayed in movies as kind of a shimmery light around the body) is radiated by the soul as an extension of itself.

But how can planets and constellations have auras? Some would say that it's because any physical object has an awareness, a spirit of *some* kind, and our ancestors were sensitive enough to these things to assign the appropriate deities or mythical associations to each celestial body. If you don't buy that, then think of it this way: the power of human belief created the very essences we imagined. Get enough people believing something (or even thinking about it), and the concept soon achieves a life of its own. The planets and constellations have certain attributes because we say they do. Scoff if you will, but many people will agree, for example, that there's just *something* about a full moon, regardless of the fact that it's only a hunk of space rock reflecting sunlight. Its mysterious quality has endured throughout the ages. Kind of like faith healing: even if there's nothing to it, there's something to it.

Now for some Geometry. Pretend that the Earth really is as our ancestors saw it: the center of the universe. Everything exists in an infinite sphere around our planet. Make the Earth the point at the center of a circle. Divide the circle into twelve arcs (called "houses" in astrology; each house rules a set of qualities) and place one of the zodiac constellations in each house. Then sprinkle the planets, the Sun and the Moon in the houses, too, in the positions they hold at the time for which the chart is drawn.

Each planet and constellation radiates its particular essence in a sphere (aura) around itself, but within the circle we've made, the important rays are those that intersect the point at Earth, like the light rays of the Sun which fall precisely along latitudinal lines.

A planet's influence will be adjusted by the influence of the constellation in which it falls, and that of both in turn by the house they occupy. If war-like Mars is found in the emotional sign of Pisces, in the third House (which influences a person's communicative qualities), one could count on some heated debates.

Furthermore, the planetary rays of intersection form angles with each other at the Earth point, some of which are significant: an "opposition" (two rays meeting to form a 180 angle) are considered to work against each other, while two planets composing a "trine" (a 60 angle) are thought to work together to enhance the best points of each. The Sun represents the conscious, logical mind and outer personality, while the Moon represents the intuition, the subconscious, the inner life. The way these two major influences interact in someone's birth chart can have quite an effect on the healthy or unhealthy balances within that person's personality.

These are just the basics. There are countless combinations of planets, constellations, houses, angles, etc. It's a good thing that the newspapers are quick to point out that their astrology section is "for entertainment purposes only" -- with only twelve variables, it sure isn't useful for much else. The patterns of the Powers in the heavens are imprinted on a person's aura at the time of birth, and throughout their lives, the changing influences interact with each other from moment to moment and with the auric birth imprint pattern to create very specific personalities, attitudes and events.

For those interested in further study, I would recommend "The Only Astrology Book You'll Ever Need" by Joanna Martine Woolfolk. (© 1990, Scarborough House Publishers). It's easy to understand and contains all the tools you'll need to learn the basics.



READING LIST

Simple Social Graces: The Lost Art of Gracious Victorian Living

Linda S. Lichter

©1998 HarperCollins Publishers, Inc

I think this book can be summarized by the question: Wouldn't it be something if everyone was nice to each other for a change? When I picked it up, I was expecting a quaint etiquette manual, but I got an engrossing history lesson instead. Lichter examines the attitudes and society of our ancestors from the 1800s, and refutes some of the myths we hold about them: apparently they weren't quite as uptight as we've been told. Civility doesn't have to be boring, and perhaps our self-serving, balls-out culture could do with a few more rules: let courtesy and high standards become the norm, instead of crudeness and waste. Self-esteem should be earned; it is not a birthright.

I was especially interested in the idea that women were not considered second-class, as our hindsight would have it. All that gentlemanly treatment was inspired by — gasp — *respect*, not abuse or condescension. No man who mistreated or placed himself above women would have been welcome in any sort of desirable society, or some undesirable societies, for that matter.

There are probably some rose-colored glasses involved here, but it's refreshing to have a flattering picture of the Victorian era instead of the usual oppression and misery commonly associated with it. The truth is probably somewhere in between, but Lichter's portrayal of this antique Utopia would be a worthy goal for us to try to meet in our own times.

Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea

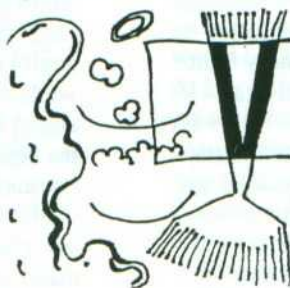
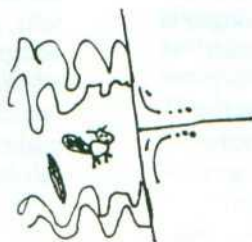
Charles Seife

©2000 Penguin Putnam, Inc.

No, come back! You don't have to be a math whiz to read this! Well, ok, it would help in some parts. But those are few and far between, and the logic is pretty easy to follow. I've never had so much fun reading a math book. (And I loved Algebra, so there ya go.) This is an examination of the whole concept of Nothing. Turns out it's a pretty important idea -- some cultures in history absolutely refused to even consider Zero (or its paradoxical twin, Infinity) because it's so scary. It can do weird things to your math. I am proud to bear the mathematical concept of division by Zero in my name. Check it out:

"...if you wantonly divide by zero, you can destroy the entire foundation of logic and mathematics. Dividing by zero once -- just one time -- allows you to prove, mathematically, anything at all in the universe."

Then Seife shows the reader how to do it! Wow! If you like playing with abstract concepts, do your brain a favor and read this book.



The Way of the Wizard: Twenty Spiritual Lessons for Creating the Life You Want

Deepak Chopra

©1995 Harmony Books

The hokey new-agey/self-helpy title misrepresents the contents of this work. Lovers of Arthurian fantasy will find the style doubly pleasing, but anyone with an interest in existence should be able to get something wonderful out of this. This is "Zero" (as above) without all the math and set to a Celtic lute. I should try to say more about it, but I can't think of anything other than "complete and fulfilling". If you like playing with abstract concepts, do your soul a favor and read this one, too.

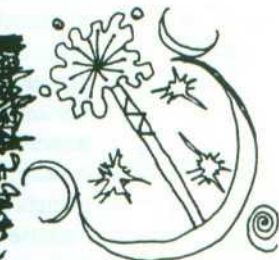
Release

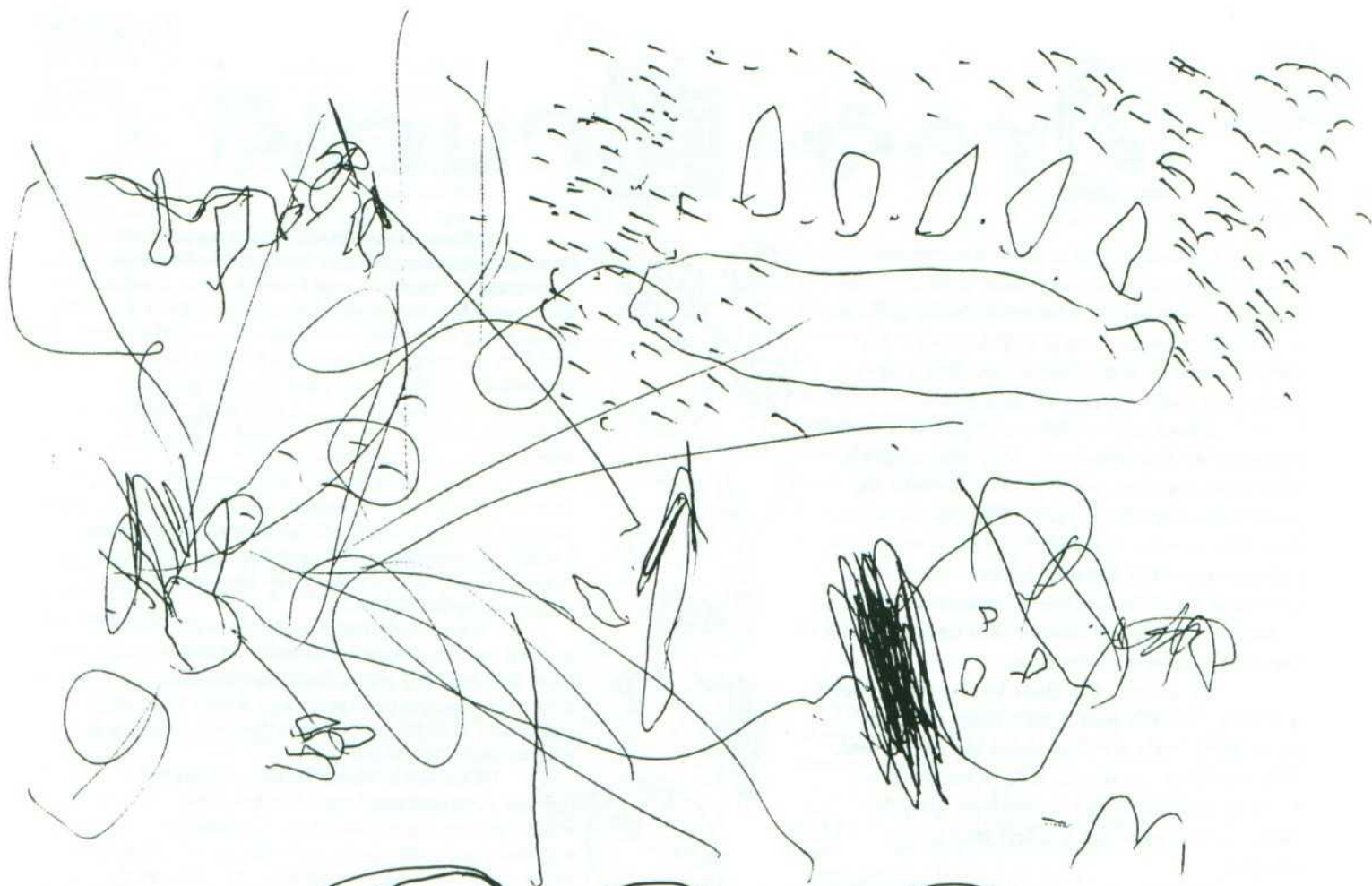
-- Cyndi Vallad

The pressure builds
like a knot in my belly
It pulls tighter
with every errant thought
I can feel it growing
longing for the moment of release.

The soft whisper of breath
caressing my skin
With the rasp of wet tongue
brushing delicately over me
Pushing me ever closer
hurtling toward release.

The clasp of a loving hand
stroking with gentle firmness
Most sensitive locations
quivering for more friction
I can no longer hold back
release.





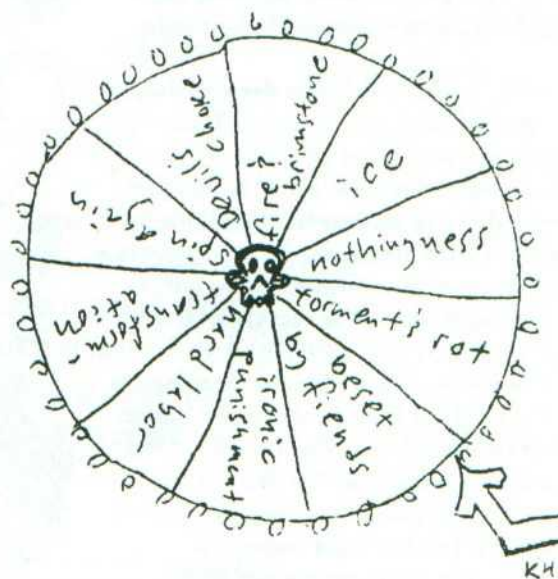
The Wheel of HELL

-- Keith Hricenak, Infernal Affairs Correspondent

If you are bad, even a little, and whether you know it or not, you will go to HELL.

When you come out of the long, spidery chute, you will be (and I say WILL BE because I'm SURE you're bad) in a room with eight doors, Beelzebub, and this wheel:

Each door is a HELL. Depending on what the wheel stops on, that's where you have to go. If you get Devil's Choice, ol' Beady picks a door for you. If you get Spin Again three times, you get to go back up the chute and live some more. Pick your favorite HELL:



Fire & Brimstone: burny, smelly lava caves

Ice: being frozen up to your neck while under-the-ice fish nibble your exposed bits

Nothingness: a big white nothing where you sit all alone

Torment & Rot: continuous painful decomposition complete with maggots

Beset by Fiends: being chased by thousands of angry beasts that would love to bite you

Ironic Punishment: if you like to eat cookies, you will be turned into a cookie and eaten again and again

Hard Labor: having to build the entire Empire State Building daily, by yourself

Transformation: into a horrible monster that has to eat puppies to survive

Dream Journal

I had a weird dream that involved a house that I assume was near a house my mother grew up in. The house was yellow, and the sidewalk was a cobblestone. We were sitting in the grass in the back yard... my mom and my sisters and brother.

Standing on the front porch, there is the door on the left-hand side of the porch. The mud room comes out a little onto the porch, almost like a gable. The porch swing changed from a "regular" porch swing to a swing more like those ones we had on our swing sets when we were little: more like a teeter-totter swing where you could look at the other person swinging...

Walk in...the floor in the mud room is filthy... so, it's just a dirt floor. A tour guide girl with a misshapen leg greets me. She motions for me to follow her and we turn to my left into the kitchen. (By the way, I only ever see the left side of the house.)

Walking into the kitchen, it's a little more serene. The cupboards are high up, just within my reach. It seems the walls had a floral pattern on them. The tile is a brown color with swirls in it. Every tile is different...different patterns. Around each tile is a golden border...probably just gold paint.

I follow the girl (with the misshapen leg) toward the back of the room. There are two stairs that seem sort of steep...I walk up...I think the front door must be hanging open, since there is an extremely bright light coming from that direction. To my right is a staircase, but we turn immediately left. I look at the room, which is rectangular in shape.

I immediately notice the fireplace is odd. In the farthest left corner of the house, it's angled in the corner. The mouth of the fireplace seems okay, but it's like the wall sucked up the fireplace and chimney besides that small bit. I notice that there is a davenport in the far right corner of the room... directly across from the fire place, and that is also angled off... not so weird as the fireplace. The girl looks at me with a hopeful look, like she's hoping I can help her, but she doesn't seem needy...then I wake up.

--BethDragon

A house in dreams is often a symbol for your entire consciousness, different levels of which may be represented by lower or higher floors. A porch is just at the outside of the house where anyone could go. The 2-person swing is your interaction with people in the outer world. Its changing could represent a change in your perspective over time in dealing with other people - it went from both occupants having to look outward and turn to look at each other to having both look at each other and turning to look outward.

A dirty mud room -- need I say more? Your inner self is messy, you're confused, you need a tour guide through your own head! But the mud is therapeutic. It could also represent (at the same time) the rich source of psychic nourishment that you just have to soak in for awhile to reap the benefits.

A tour guide, traditionally, always looks very nice and has to be sweet and friendly and helpful even when they don't feel like it. Sound familiar? But projecting only nice positive feelings creates a blockage somewhere as all the nasty stuff is repressed, resulting in a handicapped psyche (the bum leg).

A kitchen is where raw materials are put together and transformed into something new. The tiles could represent any number of things -- my first impression is that each is a plaque representing a past life or other aspect of yourself, "set in stone", so to speak, where you can easily access them as if they were ingredients.

The fireplace, or hearth, is usually associated look at this room again -- I'll bet you will see some people you know in there! with the central hub of the home where loved ones gather. If you can get back to this house, I bet you will see some people you know there!

I dreamt that I was a murderer. I had found out that someone was out to kill my already dead grandfather and so I took a sawed off shotgun and went to their house and blew their heads off.

I went home and my dad asked if I wanted to go see the zombies. I said sure, so off we went to the zombie farm. It was a big fenced in field and the sky had a greyish blue tinge to it, like a stormy cloudy day. The zombies came out of this big barn and there were tons of non zombie people there to listen to them speak. They one by one got up in front of the audience, and discussed philosophy, poetry, current events. Zombies are very smart. Anyway, we had a great time and then went home. I was never arrested for the murders. Yay!

--The Queen of Faerieland

Well. Zombies are awfully cool, aren't they? But I think they represent something other than the undead here -- I think you were watching a metaphor for the movement of mortals through this physical world! They've fenced themselves into certain beliefs and structures. They wander around pretending that they're not dead, or never going to die. All the same, they have some pretty interesting things to say sometimes. They're spirits too, deluding themselves with a game of physical existence. Humans often have spirits clustered around them as friends or spectators. Sounds like you got to see life from the other side for awhile.

I had a dream that I was Bette Midler's daughter. We did not live in a big Hollywood Hills house, however. We still lived in the Midwest. It was a small house and Bette (Mom) was a waitress or something blue collar like that (maybe I was the daughter of a Bette Midler movie character?) I decided to invite a bunch of friends over for a small get together. We were having a nice time playing board games and talking. When all of a sudden we were attacked by ghosts and poltergeists! The lights flickered and things were flying all over the place, and luckily as things got worse, Bette Midler got home from work and saved the day. First she scolded me for having so many people over and said that was why the ghosts and poltergeists were bothering us. Then she herded us out of that house and into a "spare house" that I did not know we had. It was bright yellow. We had to go trudging through the snow to get there, but it was just down the road.

When we got inside, we felt very safe. I was shocked to discover another ghost of a woman sitting at a receptionist desk in the back of the living room. I asked Bette who she was, and she said it was her secretary, but that she was a harmless ghost who could be totally trusted. The End.

--Lisa

What's the first thing you think of when you think of Bette Midler? What roles have you seen her in? With which of her characters do you most identify? I think the first set of poltergeists is indicative of unexpected problems that you experience anytime you set out to accomplish something. They drive you crazy! You flap your arms around at them and jump up and down and emit foul oaths!

But poltergeists are actually caused by the victim's subconscious. You would almost have to change personalities to get away from them...as in going to another house. (See comments regarding houses in Beth's letter.) The next one would have subconscious stuff too (more ghosts) but it can be helpful as well, like a handy secretary to take care of stuff that you don't have time to worry about. The trick is to get the secretary over to the other house to get those other ghosts in line!

We now have two dreams in here detailing yellow houses with official-seeming female staff members: Beth's yellow house had a female tour guide; Lisa's yellow house had a female receptionist. Ideas, anyone?

Here's my own favorite recent dream...

I dreamed that the FCC had been watching the Grim's website and were going to arrest me because I had allowed people to include foul language in the forums, and because some of the topics in the articles weren't fit for all audiences! The funny part is that they got my mom to tell me about this, and she was more concerned that I was publishing these "horrible things" than that I was going to be arrested and charged a hefty fine. My dream ended with me in a room full of computers all hooked up to various "adult" (not just porn) sites on the net, trying to make a case for free speech in front of all the FBI agents and my mom.

--Jymy X/O

Your turn! Contribute to the Dream Journal. We're interested in patterns, symbols and recurring features, but every dream is a valuable piece of the big puzzle: help find connections on the planes! Visit the Dream Journal Forum on the website in the Common Rooms area!

Send snailmail to the address on page 3, or email:

dreamjournal@thegrim.net

LUCID

-TRam

*It was like one of those dreams
It was like you woke me up inside
and I knew I was dreaming,
life just doesn't get that good,
good like a thick drink,
good like a long hot highway all to ourselves
It was like a dream,
It was like everything I ever wanted to happen
did.*

*I knew I was dreaming
the colors were too bright,
the plot was too perfect,
your touch was violet soft
and it pinned me to the wall
dreaming I was a butterfly*

(Editor's note -- this piece was discovered on a mysterious disk left at the Grim's offices. The disk has been turned over to the analysis department at Gorehart Laboratories, who are trying to identify its molecular composition.)

The Virtual Soul

by Samantha Kubik

A Wall Street stock broker returns home, traveling through traffic-clogged streets and smog-filled air, to care for rose bushes while sipping Merlot in a penthouse apartment. A Seattle attorney, exhausted after arguing all day for the rights of business and industry, religiously waters his chrysanthemums, while listening to hometown oldies like Pearl Jam and Nirvana. A restaurant manager in Chicago finally gets a break just before closing, where she slips into a back booth to fertilize her tomato plants. Since about the year 2000, Techno-gardening has dramatically risen in popularity, with the major cities of the United States at the forefront of this growing trend. Corporate CEOs and even the President herself tend their gardens, describing them as meditative safe-havens, where they can retreat and recover from the stress of their demanding jobs.

Twenty years ago we entered a new millenium—a millenium of the technology age, where the internet became less of a novelty and more of a necessity, and the world's population surpassed 6 billion people. This was a time when some questioned where we were headed as a planet; but, also a time when, unfortunately, most people were so preoccupied with whether or not we *could* do something that too few asked themselves if we actually *should*. Human cloning may still be a technological feat yet to be performed, but applications of genetic engineering are now accepted topics for discussion in prominent medical circles. Several genetically engineered babies have already been born, and ethical questions continue to be debated in regards to outlawing, or at least regulating, these practices.

So much attention has been focused on medical versions of “playing God”, and so little on the gardening habits of millions of the world's citizens. The ‘gardens’ we are tending may be sources of relaxation at the end of a long day, but at what cost? Twenty-five years ago the effects of global warming ceased to be viewed as natural processes, as the reality of technological by-products began to melt the polar ice caps. Eleven years later, parts of Alaska and California were submerged. Concurrently, new research from Johns Hopkins was showing direct links between communication disorders and excessive internet use. In 2013, Bill Moyers published his now-famous novel, Electronica; in it Moyers warned of the dangerous psychological and physiological effects of minimal physical interaction with the natural world, as it was being replaced more and more by computerized states of virtual reality.

Techno-gardens are designed by major software companies and hawked as “Virtual gardens so interactive and real, they let you take time to stop and smell the roses.” Patented in 2000, these “virtual gardens” start out as plots of nutrient-rich soil that appear on consumers’ computer screens. The software usually sells for about \$175.00 to \$350.00. You select the size of your garden, the climate and weather conditions, and finally the types of plants you want to raise. Then you can start planting, no matter what time of year; for it’s always planting season inside these virtual environments! You must water, fertilize, and use the same herbicides and pesticides legally mandated for real gardens, and, behold: watch the fruits of your “labor” grow to be as ‘beautiful’ as anything you could hope to find in an outdoor setting!

Techno-gardens are marketed as ideal for the millions of people living in the world's cities, who for this reason cannot easily pursue the relaxation and satisfaction of tending to an actual, outdoor garden. Yet surprisingly, this was not the intention of the garden's inventor. Dr. Michael Bryant conceptualized the virtual garden in 1999, but is now alarmed by its results. Bryant, then an organic chemistry major at the University of Washington in Seattle, intended to warn people of the dark seductiveness of technology. “Technology can be very beneficial in the medical field, and can make a lot of life's daily tasks more convenient,” says Bryant, now a surgeon in New Los Angeles, Nevada. “But too often our supposed advancement is actually disconnecting us from the natural world. I conceptualized a virtual garden with the intent of emphasizing its irony. It was meant as a warning to the human race to change direction, away from our use of technology as a substitute for nature.”

Bryant shakes his head and laughs bitterly when I ask him how he feels now that his idea has led to the best-selling software package of all time. “I wish I had never made the damn thing,” he says quietly, hanging his head, as if in shame. “Shame? I do feel ashamed! I mean, it was supposed to be ironic. I didn't want it to be misunderstood as if *this* is true gardening! I should have just joked, ‘What's next? Gardening on your PC?’ But I thought that sharing my idea with a few friends on the internet would be amusing, and would get my point across to more people. Well, leave it to the mega-corporations to turn a statement against technology into technology's greatest advocate! Whoever took the idea and decided to market it makes me loathe not only the money-making machines of corporate America, but reinforces my belief in one the perils associated with the internet itself.”

Today marks the 20-year anniversary of the Techno-garden software's first day on the shelf. "In that first year, we sold less than 1,500 gardens," says Donovan Heckman, the new CEO of Microsoft Corporation. Donovan's appointment followed the shocking, cancer-related death of Bill Gates nine months ago, which last month prompted an investigation into the biological repercussions of exposure to high levels of HTR. (High Technology Radiation). "Now," Heckman beams, "we sell that many Techno-gardens worldwide every two days."

As an editor, citizen, and a parent, I am deeply disturbed by the vogue of the Techno-gardening phenomenon; the more fanatical public responses to technology become, the more its popularity grows, in my eyes. As a young girl growing up on a farm, I can recall no greater sensation than feeling the vastness of endless rolling hills giving way to nothing but the bluest of skies. Walking down a country lane surrounded by beautiful green lands and clear skies, I felt the most amazing connection with the earth. The peace and tranquility that I felt in my body and soul during these times cannot be artificially reproduced, and whatever discontents I was experiencing never failed to be quelled, when I interacted with nature in all its power. As I remember, I urge my readers to support, as I have done, the international boycott of

the Techno-garden software. The group, Citizens Against Corporate Technological Exploitation (CACTE), are spearheading this boycott, and have recently led protests in the capitals of New Washington, Paris and Beijing. One of the last great nature-poets, Robert Frost of the 20th century, once wrote:

*Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.*

Frost's words should serve to remind us that nature is *not* the minion of us all; nature, whether seen as an instrument of God or as a force unto itself, is the ultimate power within our lives. It will be our greatest downfall if we continue to become increasingly disconnected from the essential synchronicity that our existence has with the natural world; our dependence upon nature can never truly cease. For that reason, without experiencing *genuine* connections with nature, we act at our own and future generations' peril, whenever we violate our human half of that relationship so vital to our existence.



Here I am, at your service

Here I am do you want me

I wait here, watching, hoping
for your smile to be mine
for you to see unblind

here I am

It is spoken in whispers when we are afraid
too near to be taken by this charade
no separation but longing... the fear that seems whole

not us, not our conscious
our shadows is all

Now will we listen to heartbeat and soul
touch the untouchable, know the unknown

speak my name softly, so softly I hear
you touch the night air and draw me near

--Armand

My Favorite Stupid Email

Gleaned from a very tiny folder of stuff I thought was worth saving

These are those tidbits that show up in everyone's email boxes from time to time, depending on how many peoples' forwarding lists one happens to be on. This column features the ones we thought were particularly good.

In most cases I can't give credit because the original author's name is long lost.

Please note that at this moment, we have quite enough of these to keep the Grim in Stupid Email columns for a couple of years.

This Issue: "If I Ever Become an **EVIL OVERLORD**..."

1. My legions of terror will have helmets with clear plexiglass visors, not face-concealing ones.
2. My ventilation ducts will be too small to crawl through.
3. My noble half-brother whose throne I usurped will be killed, not kept anonymously imprisoned in a forgotten cell of my dungeon.
4. Shooting is *not* too good for my enemies.
5. The artifact which is the source of my power will not be kept on the Mountain of Despair beyond the River of Fire guarded by the Dragons of Eternity. It will be in my safe-deposit box.
6. I will not gloat over my enemies' predicament before killing them.
7. When the rebel leader challenges me to fight one-on-one and asks, "Or are you afraid without your armies to back you up?" my reply will be, "No, just sensible."
8. When I've captured my adversary and he says, "Look, before you kill me, will you at least tell me what this is all about?" I'll shoot him, and then say, "No."
9. After I kidnap the beautiful princess, we will be married immediately in a quiet civil ceremony, not a lavish spectacle in three weeks time during which the final phase of my plan will be carried out.
10. I will *not* include a self-destruct mechanism unless *absolutely* necessary. If it is necessary, it will not be a large red button labeled "Danger -- do not push".
11. I will not order my trusted lieutenant to kill the infant who is destined to overthrow me -- I'll do it myself.
12. I will not interrogate my enemies in the inner sanctum -- a small hotel well outside my borders will work just as well.
13. I will be secure in my superiority. Therefore, I will feel no need to prove it by leaving clues in the form of riddles or leaving my weaker enemies alive to show they pose no threat.
14. I will not waste time making my enemies' death look like an accident: I'm not accountable to anyone and my other enemies wouldn't believe it.
15. I will make it clear that I *do* know the meaning of the word "mercy"; I simply choose not to show them any.
16. One of my advisors will be an average five-year-old child. Any flaws in my plan that he or she is able to spot will be corrected before implementation.
17. All slain enemies will be cremated, not left for dead at the bottom of the cliff. The announcement of their deaths, as well as any accompanying celebration, will be deferred until after the aforementioned disposal.
18. My undercover agents will not have tattoos identifying them as members of my organization, nor will they be required to wear military boots or adhere to any other dress codes.
19. The hero is not entitled to a last kiss, a last cigarette, or any other form of last request.
20. I will never employ any device with a digital countdown. If I find that such a device is absolutely unavoidable, I will set it to activate when the counter reaches 117 and the hero is just putting his plan into operation.
21. I will design all doomsday machines myself. If I must hire a mad scientist to assist me, I will make sure that he is sufficiently twisted to never regret his evil ways and seek to undo the damage he's caused.
22. I will never utter the sentence, "But before I kill you, there's just one thing I want to know."
23. When I employ people as advisors, I will occasionally listen to their advice.

I CAN TOUCH, BUT I CANNOT FEEL
I CAN LOOK, BUT I CANNOT SEE
WHY CAN'T I FEEL?
WHY CAN'T I SEE?
I WANT TO FEEL!
I WANT TO SEE!
RELEASE ME, SO I CAN FEEL, AND SEE!
MY NEW SURROUNDINGS, SO NEW AND FREE,
I CAN GROW, I CAN FEEL, AND I CAN SEE!!
I AM RENEWED, REBORN,
I AM ALIVE!...AGAIN...

— Züül



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Kids!



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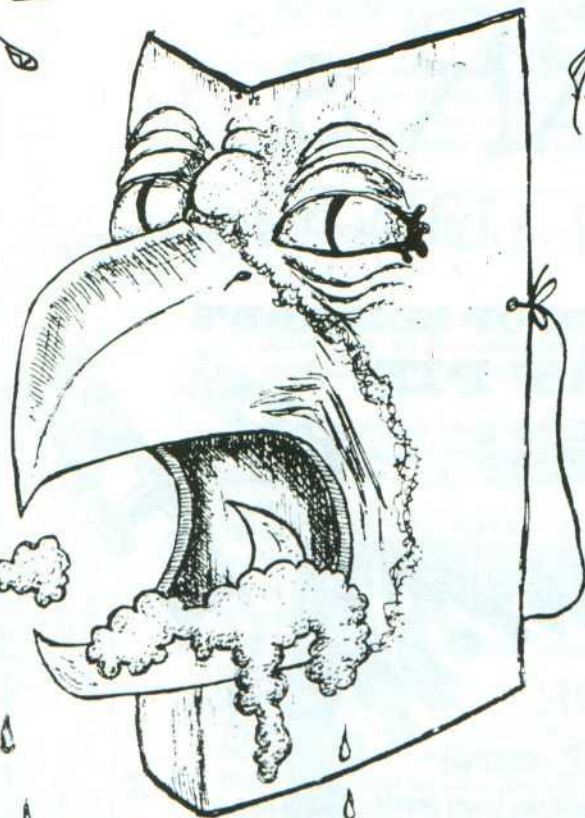
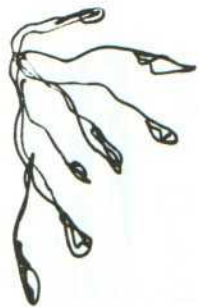
WHEEEEEEE-yaaaaah!

Use it often!

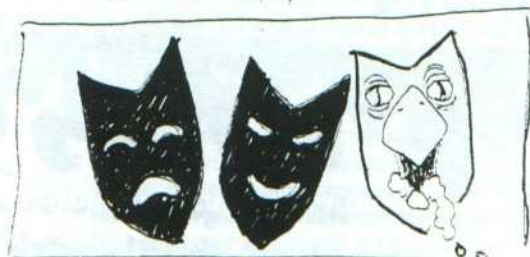
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