

the GRIM

#5

5/17/23

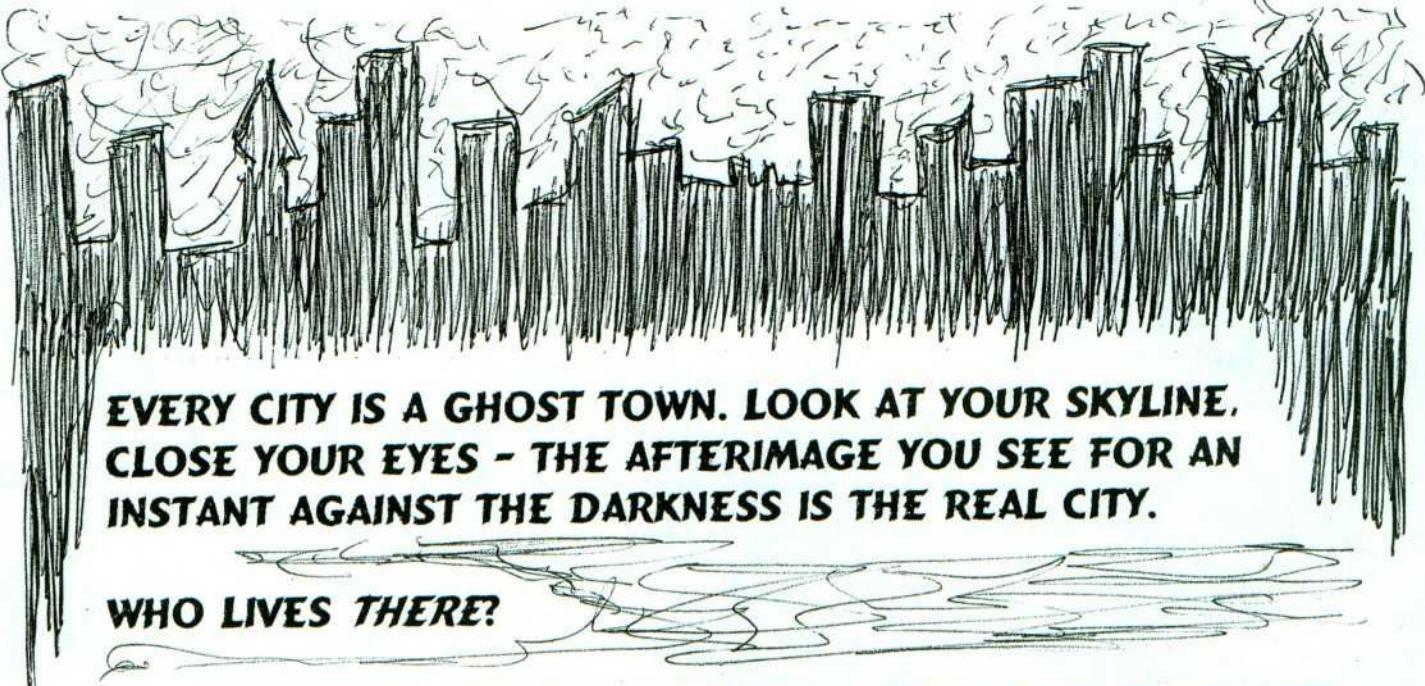
∞

#1



YES IT'S STILL FREE!

AND WE ARE STILL CHEERFULLY ACCEPTING
DONATIONS TO COVER PRINTING COSTS.



EVERY CITY IS A GHOST TOWN. LOOK AT YOUR SKYLINE. CLOSE YOUR EYES - THE AFTERIMAGE YOU SEE FOR AN INSTANT AGAINST THE DARKNESS IS THE REAL CITY.

WHO LIVES THERE?

WITH PRACTICE, YOU CAN EVEN KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN AND SEE THE REAL PLACE BEHIND THE WAVERING OUTLINES OF THE SHADOW-THINGS THAT MOST PEOPLE THINK OF AS SOLID. ONCE YOU GET USED TO IT, IT DOESN'T TAKE A WHOLE LOT OF EFFORT. YOU CAN WALK THROUGH THE SAME STREETS AS EVERYONE AROUND YOU AND BE IN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT REALM. THE COLORS ARE BRIGHTER. THE SHADOWS ARE DEEPER, THE SHAPES ARE MORE EXQUISITELY DESIGNED. EVEN THE GARBAGE IS INTERESTING. IT'S LIKE WALKING THROUGH A DREAM, BUT WHO'S DREAMING?

EVERYONE WHO SAYS THEY HATE THIS TOWN AND THAT THERE'S NOTHING TO *DOOOO* HERE HASN'T REALLY LIVED HERE YET. AND MANY OF THEM, IF THEY COULD SEE IT, WOULD GO RUNNING BACK TO THE OLD FAMILIAR BOREDOM. THERE'S PLENTY TO DO, AS LONG AS YOU DON'T NEED YOUR ENTERTAINMENT SPOON-FED TO YOU. HOW MANY DREAMS HAVE YOU HAD WHERE YOU'RE JUST SITTING AROUND BORED?

adjusted lamp was removed

Do not walk behind me, for I may not lead.
Do not walk ahead of me, for I may not follow.
Do not walk beside me, either.
Leave me the hell alone.

THE GRIM

*For the Dimyoni
and the Hidden Path*

AND FOR ALL OF YOU WHO ASKED ME
IF THE GRIM WOULD E'ER COME BACK

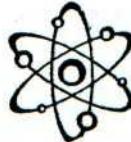
© 2003 (5/17/23) the Grim. Copyrights revert to authors / artists upon publication. All content in this issue was created by X/0 unless otherwise stated or blatantly obvious, duh. Plus I snagged some clip art from my picture fonts, mostly the SubGenius "BOBCO" series. I just love picture fonts, don't you?

O!
HOW I MISSED THE SMELL
OF HOT WAX AND
WHITE-OUT
THE SNIKS OF
SCISSORS AND ALL THE
BITS OF PAPER ON
THE FLOOR
IT IS WINDY TODAY



www.thegrim.net & www.grimagix.com

ONE DIMENSION



Science is proving a truth that ancient religions have known for centuries: reality is subjective, dictated by the expectations of the mind that experiences it. There are as many versions of "the real world" as there are conscious minds to perceive it. There is no ultimate Truth to find, no morals or beliefs that are inherently better than any others.

The One Truth is that There is No One Truth.

Existence is based on illusions. *We make it up as we go along.* We decide what reality will be like, and that decision makes it so - nothing else.

Yet people live their entire lives blindly accepting a reality dictated to them by other minds. *"This is so, and this,"* we are told, *"but not this - you cannot be this, or do that.* It's simply impossible. It's a fantasy."

We learn what to expect, based on others' expectations. And that's what we get.



"There is no reality in the absence of observation."

- The Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Physics

"The more critical reason dominates, the more impoverished life becomes...Overvalued reason has this in common with political absolutism: under its dominion, the individual is pauperized."

- Carl Gustav Jung

"Yet it is in our idleness, in our dreams, that the submerged truth sometimes comes to the top."

- Virginia Woolf

Why do we value money? Why do so many strive to have a "nice" house, shiny cars, expensive trinkets? Do they choose these goals, or do they simply accept them as the goals they should have? Why are some people considered beautiful, and others not? Why do people starve themselves - sometimes to death - to meet a predetermined standard of beauty? Why do people seek the company of a particular society, while automatically joining the collective disapproval of anything different than that? Why is the same mindless drivel regurgitated over and over as art and entertainment, while people with new visions die unsung?

What is the difference between sanity and insanity?

Why do people want what they want, and why do people think what they think?

"Do As Thou Wilt' shall be the whole of the law.

- Aleister Crowley

Those words have been consistently misunderstood ever

since they were first uttered. This is not an admonition to pursue any frivolous whim that comes to mind, regardless of the consequences. Crowley meant this: search your soul. Discover your True Self, and learn your True Will - your purpose in life; that which you cannot help but do and be, the essence of which your soul is composed, once all trivialities and illusions are stripped away. And then go be that, and do that, no matter what. This causes more hardship, and brings greater peace, than any other course of action.

A person full of stories should tell them. One who longs to paint should paint, whether fine portraits, or the walls of buildings. One who feels the pull of distant lands should go explore them. Why shouldn't someone sing, if they want to? Or fix machinery, or prepare food, or mend clothing, if they love to do it?

Society will tell us that these opportunities already exist, that everyone has the chance to follow their dreams, and no one is barred from reaching their goals. This is true, as long as the "proper" channels are followed, and the stated goal is an accepted one, and secondary to the ultimate goal of making as much money as one can by producing goods, services or entertainment that society finds acceptable. How many stories have never been heard because they weren't marketable? How many inventions have never been created because the would-be creator had no time or energy left after spending their whole day working for a pittance to pay the rent? How many farmers have to live in the city because they cannot obtain the capital to pursue their love of farming?

Who sets these ridiculous standards and procedures, and why do they persist?

Taking this a little farther, where does "fiction" end, and "reality" begin? From the day a child is born, it is told that the monsters aren't real, that the dragon exists only in the pages of the fairy tale, that aliens are just humans with costumes, that magic isn't possible, that machines can't talk, and any number of other "truths" designed to corral the imagination and dictate what IS and what IS NOT.

But why not? **WHY NOT??**



"Because...because it just *isn't*," is the only answer that most would bother to give.

Are these ideas fiction because their existence really isn't possible, or are they fiction because enough people choose to believe that they aren't possible? And is there a difference?

Dragons, monsters, aliens, faeries, magic, sentient machines; all the "fictional" creatures and ideas...their legends have survived through centuries of Human history. People long for them still. Our world is full of people who feel more attuned to these "fantasy" lives than they do to their "real" environment.

objection and vomiting deadlines

Multi Level Intelligences

What is the essence of your soul? Is it Human...or something else? What is your true face?

"One's real life is often the life that one does not lead."

- Oscar Wilde

"Nothing is more important than the existence of what does not exist."

- John Hawkes

To remain true to oneself is an enormous burden, and often seems to be more trouble than it's worth. The truth felt in the core of the soul sometimes contradicts everything we are taught to believe. But ultimately, each individual's truths are more real than the collective's "acceptable" truths. One who acquiesces to truths dictated by others will become nothing more than a representation of this watered-down, lowest-common-denominator version of reality. There will be no soul left other than a pseudopod-like extension of the common values of the day, with no thoughts of its own and no personal reality other than that which is fed to it by its environment.

Why, then, do we accept these false forms, and succumb to the mundane reality chosen for us? We have fallen victim to the expectations of the world around us, and made its expectations our own. If you believe that you're going to wake up tomorrow in the same body you have today, that's what you'll get. If you believe that you'll wake up in your True Form, you'll probably still wind up with what you've got now, because everyone you meet expects you to remain the same. They are able to impose their ideas of reality on you, and regardless of how hard you *wish* it otherwise, it will not change until you stop *wishing* and simply, totally, believe.

This is a difficult task when we have to live every day in a reality that flies in the face of our personal truths. Our True Selves are literally imprisoned by the distractions and expectations of mediocrity. It's hard to remember to believe in your "fantasy" when you have to deal with your job, your family, traffic, bills, appointments...

But what if you had someone with whom to share your beliefs and Truths? What if you could agree to believe with other people? If we combine our energy, it will grow exponentially. We can change reality, and there is more than enough room in existence for all our worlds to be real.

Two friends sit across from each other at a restaurant. They look, to most other observers, Human. But the extra spark in their eyes comes from the fact that when they look at each other, they see each other's True Forms behind the facade. One speaks of the latest goings-on in Dragon society, while the other entertains with hilarious stories of a fellow Demon's birthday party. The waitress overhears their talk, and goes away wondering why anyone would take such things so seriously...unless she herself is aware of her own

Elvish nature, and could clearly see the Dragon and the Demon sitting together in the booth.

For those who can see the possibilities, there is no limit to what we can be, and what we can do, other than the limits of our True Selves - whatever they may be.

Grimagix is hereby founded. Believe. Believe. Believe.

Society is a hive, and its Oaf Queen is Mediocrity. Drones are unavoidable, and necessary, but it is not necessary to accept drone-hood as the highest level of existence one can reach. There will be drones in most versions of reality. Watch for those that may be ready to ascend to their True Natures, and help them find their own way (*theirs*, remember - not yours). As for the rest of them, they are there for our use: *they* should be giving energy to *our* realities - not the other way around. Unless and until they threaten our Truths, they should be left in peace. Those who placidly accept others' Truths as their own without question cannot, or will not, understand the art of shaping Truth. They play their parts, but we are the directors.

CONSOLIDATED NET WRATH

This is fun, but we take on a great responsibility: we will now create Reality. This is not a bid for power, or riches, or wonton leisure (though these may all be part of the reward) - this is a fight. We are going to be hurt. We are going to be ridiculed. We will have to make sacrifices - it is hard to let go of old values, even when they are no longer valuable. We have to find that which really matters, and hold on to that - and only that - through the coming transformations.

Call up your magic, your wonderful technology, your amazing powers, gather all of your invisible friends, and stand with us on the ramparts of Grimagix. Together, we can help one another to each achieve our individual dreams.

We hereby declare mental and spiritual war against those who would actively or passively homogenize all of existence. It is time. Let the drones remain below, with the dictators to shepherd them in circles through the blandness. We shall ascend into Legend, and when the faerie tales are next told, our lives will be their fantasies.

It begins.

NOW.

"And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

- T.S. Eliot



TURKEY HARDWARE STAGING



'Tis the Season for Spring!

-by Trent [TRENT.]

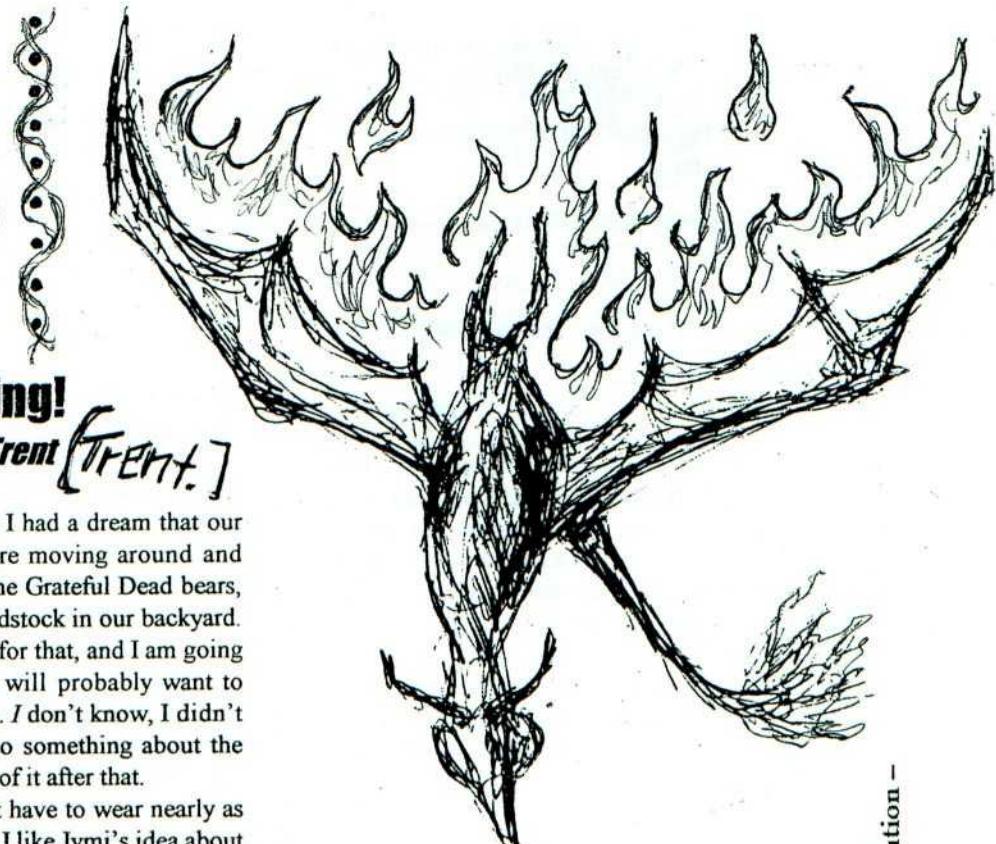
It is springtime at our house now. I had a dream that our backyard was full of teddy bears. They were moving around and singing and dancing. They all looked like the Grateful Dead bears, because they were having a teddy bear Woodstock in our backyard. I would like to know how they got a permit for that, and I am going to tell my doctor all about that dream. He will probably want to know if the teddy bears had any good drugs. I don't know, I didn't go down to the yard. My dream turned into something about the refrigerator and I don't remember any more of it after that.

I like springtime because we don't have to wear nearly as many clothes as we do in the fall and winter. I like Jymi's idea about putting the New Year in springtime instead of in the middle of winter, because this is the time of year when everything really does feel new and people are not as cranky as when it is cold and they have to drive in the snow and return holiday presents that didn't fit or were entirely the wrong color and then go see family and friends that they don't see at any other time of the year and see who can eat the most festive party mints without getting sick. Except Jymi wants to make every day have the same date, and I'm not too sure about that part. What if you had a dentist appointment on that day; would you have to go to the dentist every single day for the rest of eternity? I bet the dentist would get tired of seeing the same people every single day. Is this going to turn out to be something like that movie "Groundhog Day"? I hope not. I already know how to play the piano. And I don't even want to think about what would eventually happen to your head if you had an appointment for a haircut every single day. I had a haircut yesterday, though, so that's ok.

Also in the springtime, you get to open your windows up all the way as long as you are pretty sure that you will not try to jump out of them. Even if it's still a little cold out, it is nice to open up your windows all the way because you have to get that funny smell out of your room. You know the smell I'm talking about. The one that is kind of like old towels and kind of like dusty carpeting and kind of like *all the open jars of peanut butter that someone left under your bed because they were going to play a joke and then forgot about them for three weeks*. I don't care what the joke was going to be, I don't think it was very funny. I know who did it and Nilly Rambus is going to help me get them back. So you had just better watch out, *Michael*.

Springtime is also nice because by now all your taxes are done and you don't have to worry about that anymore. I get a special deduction because I am certified. Every year, they send me *more* damn money. I have already started a scholarship fund for artists, and donated to the animal shelters, and sponsor children in third-world countries, and bought a very nice present for my sister. And they are *still* sending me money. Maybe this year I will buy a major intersection. And some gum.

REVOLTING CREDIT LINE



California is stupid.

If you are not happy in California,
You will be executed
By troops of smiling folk,
with tans,
and acoustic guitars.



Twiddle-dee-twoing-twaing,
Why do they have those acoustic guitars?
Roin-te-twang-toing.

Why do they play them, sitting on the grass,
Beneath the roaring helicopters?

Troops of smiling acoustic guitars
Dropped on happy heads from roaring helicopters.

California is really stupid.

all parties endeavor to reach a solution –
e.g., sale or mutilation

ASK PERCY THE SCIENCE CLOWN!

Dear Percy the Science Clown,
Please tell us all about worms.
Love,
Me

Dear You,

First of all, I'd like to thank you for each and every time I've had circus music stuck in my head in the past year.

Anyway...sure, we can talk about worms! At first glance, worms don't seem like much more than slimy little things that ooze around on the pavement after it rains. But do you know *why* they all come out when it rains? *Migration*. Worms can't go very far when the sun is out or the air is dry; they actually breathe through their skin so they need that constant moisture to keep it flexible, or they'll suffocate and die. You've seen that happen to the unfortunates who get stuck in the middle of the driveway when the rain stops. (You know, the ones with the ants swarming all over them.) Worms need to migrate to access new mating grounds, and even getting a few meters away gives them plenty of opportunities to meet new members of the opposite...uh, other worms.

Worms are all hermaphrodites. That big ring around the body that you can easily see on nightcrawlers is the reproductive organ – it's called the *clitellum* (heh, yeah, yeah, I know). Worms produce both eggs and sperm in there. When one worm and another worm love each other very much, they hug in a special way that allows the eggs and sperm of each to pass between them. A cocoon forms around the clitellum, which each worm then sheds by just crawling out of it, kind of like a snake shedding its skin. The mass left behind contains one to five fertilized eggs. The cocoons will hatch in two to three weeks, but if the conditions aren't right they can wait in dormancy for years before hatching.

Worms do have a front and a back end. The rings around their bodies are called *segments*, and the very first one is where the mouth is. (You can guess what the last segment does.) Worms don't have teeth, of course, except the ones I saw in that movie the other night. Normal worms don't "chew" their food until it gets to the stomach, or *gizzard*. The gizzard contains tiny grains of sand ingested by the worm to help grind bits of food up so that it can be digested in the intestine, which runs down the length of the rest of the body.

Worms are pretty much just a mobile digestive tract, but they have a simple brain and nervous system, as well as five hearts and a couple of light-sensitive patches that serve as eyes.

Worms are important for a couple of reasons: when they tunnel around underground, this allows air, and the nutrients it contains, to reach below the surface of the soil. Then there's worm poop – very healthy stuff for plants.

Oh, and cutting a worm in half won't give you two worms. It will give you a live worm head (which will grow a new tail) and a dead worm butt.

Dear Percy the Science Clown,

Some friends and I were watching a zombie movie marathon, and I got really freaked out. The whole idea of the dead coming back from the grave to feast upon the living is really scary! Someone told me that Voodoo witch doctors can actually make zombies. Is that true? Why do zombies want to eat people?

Still Alive and Liking It That Way

Dear Alive,

First of all, I think someone needs to calm down a little. Remember, those were *movies*, and as I'm sure you know, not *everything* that happens in the movies is just like real life.

The technique used by the *bokors* (or Voodoo priests) involves a secretion from the fugu, or pufferfish – tetrodotoxin, a powerful poison that affects the nervous system while leaving the brain untouched – you've heard about this in some stories about badly-prepared oriental seafood dishes. (Fugu is considered a delicacy, not least because the danger involved in eating it gives the adventurous diner a thrill...or a severe case of sometimes-fatal nerve poisoning. Fun, huh?)

Tetrodotoxin poisoning retards the body functions – your heartbeat slows down, your reaction time becomes more and more impaired, and your speech and movements become slurred, as if you were drunk. This progresses to a comatose state in which your body seems as if it were dead. It's untreatable, so depending on the dose you received and you're body's constitution, you'll eventually recover as the poison works its way out of your system, or, if that doesn't happen fast enough, you'll die. The bokors use the tetrodotoxin (as well as other ingredients) to induce a near-death state in their targets. Since the consciousness is unaffected, the victim feels his or her body become paralyzed and seem to die, hears the pronunciation of death, and is aware of being buried and later exhumed and "brought back to life". Imagine the effect this has on someone who grew up in a culture that accepts zombies as real – they assume that they have become the walking dead, and their minds are entirely receptive to their master's commands. They're not *real* zombies, just very confused live people.

Real zombies don't often chase after people and try to eat their brains, if they've got any sense of propriety. (But talk about *delicacy*...) Already-dead tissues work just as well, and *real* zombies are usually pretty happy with a ham sandwich and beer.

percy@thegrim.net

long distance doo-doo copier



in the dream city of Grimagix if someone does something that someone else really doesn't like it's up to that other person or their friends to do something about it this does occasionally result in little battles but the law is that everyone is responsible for themselves and the things they care about so whoever feels like taking on the most responsibility gets to call the shots if one of us doesn't like something someone else has done first of all we consider whether or not it's any of our business or whether our time and energy might be better spent living our own lives quite frankly we have a lot more interesting things to do than get all that mad about someone else's decisions about their own lives unless of course it really starts to affect us negatively but even then with all this leisure time and everyone able to do the type of work they really like doing, most people don't get that angry at each other and if they do the main concern is to solve the problem instead of trying to hurt and humiliate each other and usually a good solution is to just stay out of each others' way and as for the little battles well our city has a way of taking care of itself so if it doesn't concern you, you should probably stay out of it it'll all blow over in a little while and maybe you can read all about it in the next issue of the Grim we have courts and things too like you do down there in that place you call reality but since we don't have any real laws except to be responsible for yourself and your own life our judges and our lawyers mostly just dress up and act important and arrange ways for people who really need food and someplace to live and decent clothing to find some kind of employment like cleaning up litter or fixing city buildings and streets and they don't send anyone to jail but if you're disagreeable enough you'll just be expelled by the city itself like it was spitting out a mouthful of bad meat.

The lawyers quite enjoy making up crazy indecipherable documents and sometimes on a slow day we like to go down to City Hall

in the dream city of Grimagix our mayor is assassinated regularly he or she does not mind it is great fun well everybody knows that political rallies and politics in general is only so much bunk and hokum so its really just to amuse ourselves after all we've got all of eternity to play around and like the hitchhiker says you can only take so many baths we have to make our own fun and the way we do politics is this anyone can declare him or her or itself mayor or governor or president or anything they want and no one has to listen to anything they say unless they feel like it because really the people that take care of things are the ones who are concerned with them in the first place and we're all supposed to be responsible for ourselves, no one else, and politics is just entertainment so anyone can get in on it if they want to so they find a platform like the big stone windowsills in the front of the library and start giving speeches and if they're good at it others will come around to listen and bring fireworks and then the mayor or governor or president or whoever they are will eventually be assassinated but no one shoots guns at them or poisons them or stabs them with sharp daggers but sometimes we bring a big fine box of long and stretchy rubba-bands so you pop a few to pop nubba-bands at your leaders more often I mean whattathey gonna do about it and who's in charge down there anyhow?

in the dream city of Grimagix self esteem is not a birthright but something that everyone has to earn as they grow up and if you don't get your way then you can just sit and whine if you want to but it's not going to get you anywhere after all what fun is success if you can't remember what failure feels like and using a terrible thing from the past as an excuse for not doing anything in the present doesn't fly very well either we have seen the talk shows from down there in that place you call reality and we are amazed that those people can even wipe their own asses - can't they?

in the dream city of Grimagix there are rich people and poor people but as you can guess it has more to do with how much they are willing to or the part of town where they like to live all the wealth here is in the form of tangible goods or coins or intangible things like talent, knowledge are supposed to stand for pieces of paper which are supposed to stand for chunks of gold that may or may not be enough to go around and

in the dream city of Grimagix people have many many different shapes and abilities all according to the stories that match each individual's spirit and angels and demons and androids and bird-folks and vampires and sentient cars and cartoon characters and space

aliens and some people who shift around and try new shapes from time to time and just about anything else you can think about

everyone is shaped like a human and our scholars are still debating whether that's because humans are an actual race unto themselves or if it's be

in
the dream
city of Grimagix
we do a lot of trading
that is we have what you

would call a booming economy
but no one uses the same money all
the time unless they want to because
often everything is done literally by
trading which goes along the lines of I
want you to give me something or do
something for me so we figure out what
I can do for you or what I have that you
might want that I would be willing to give
away this way all the artists get to eat and all
the farmers and chefs have priceless paintings
and stuff in their homes but it's not just that,
everyone can do something and if they can't
then they trade their time for food or whatever
by helping out someone who needs things done
and maybe teaches them how to do these things
really well but if you don't have time to do something right
away or anything else to trade at the moment or
maybe the other person doesn't know what they
want from you yet but they're willing to trade any
way you can use your very own coin which has
your mark on it and some indication of how
much it's worth like a big favor or a small favor
and the person can keep it and give it back to
you later and you're sworn to honor your own
coin and sometimes they might trade that to
someone else who will come around to you
later and you might not even know them but
since they have your coin you have to perform
the service or provide the goods according to the
worth of the coin if there's any disagreement
about the real value of the coin you'll have to
settle that yourselves some coins are very
beautiful and detailed while others are crude and
you have to be careful how many of your coins
get into circulation because you wouldn't want
everyone to come claiming their value at once
what if down there in that place you call reality
everyone wanted to take home the real gold
represented by all their dollars at the same time?

in the dream city of Grimagix you can take classes at our
schools and University whenever you want and all you have
to do is provide food and goods for the teachers who already
have a place to live they can all live at the school if they
want it really is that big just deliver your food and goods to the
campus collection center and receive your credit sheet
which you give to the teacher when you get to class
furthermore if you want to teach something you place your class
description and your credentials in the monthly catalog and see
how many people show up then you take those credit
sheets they gave you and go pick out your food and goods
from the collection center when you're done with class
every day students can also just pay the teacher with their
coin but that's something they have to work out themselves
or you can just perform work for the school some days when
you don't have anything else to trade and depending on
how much you decide you want to do maybe you can even
live there and receive free classes and credit sheets for food
and whatever else is in the collection center so how much does
it cost to go to school down there in that place you call reality we
have heard that some people there can't even read
or work at a job they studied for years to learn is that really true?

all and read through them just for giggles we have heard that your lawyers write the same exact things except they don't think it's funny.
ing to put into it than how much they're trying to take out and often you cannot tell how well off someone is just by looking at their clothes or their things
edge and integrity unlike down there in that place you call reality where wealth is a piece of plastic which is supposed to stand for strings of numbers which
and we can't figure out how you keep it all from getting confused I mean isn't it easy to make

mistakes and how do you know if your money is really there?
spiritual energy there are dragons here and cyborgs and elves and ogres and talking monkeys

but as well as an astonishing number of humans we notice that down there in the place you call reality

's because the human shape is the pupae state of a spirit waiting to figure out what stories it will become and we suppose it doesn't really matter
but isn't it fun to think about?

HURBLETT

CENSUS-ORED

-X/0



Last summer, I received a letter from the United States Department of Commerce. They wanted to tell me that I was one of a select group chosen to participate in a Very Importat Process, and if I did so, I might have already won ten million dollars. All I would have to do would be to watch my mail for the next week or so (something I rarely do -- usually I let it sit in there until the box is so full that all of the kids on the "Have You Seen Me" flyers have returned from the alien ships and are trying to catch up on all the homework they've missed).

So I watched my mail, and sure enough, in a couple of days I got a big heavy official-looking envelope. I examined it closely, but Ed McMahon's picture was nowhere to be seen. I thought it was a good sign that it wasn't full of stickers that I would be obliged to locate and affix -- if they're still sending you the stickers, you haven't won anything yet.

The envelope was so heavy because it contained a 24-page form called the "AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY". Upon closer inspection, I was dismayed to learn that they didn't want to give me money at all -- they only wanted me to "take about 40 minutes of my time" to fill out their form. The letter that accompanied the AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY implied that not only was it my duty as a good citizen to answer their questions, but that I was very lucky indeed to have the chance to represent my community by filling out the AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, which, according to the colorful brochure, is all about "EMPOWERMENT", and is "an exciting new way for individuals like you to make a difference in your community."

They couldn't be more right. I was so excited that I nearly got up and emptied the cat box, but I managed to contain my enthusiasm. The colorful brochure went on to assure me that my answers would be kept in the strictest confidence, which immediately gave me visions of the employees at the U.S. Census Bureau sitting around, opening piles and piles of dutifully-filled-out AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY forms, yelling across the room at each other, "Hey, Sharon, get a load of this! She's got NO KIDS, and makes enough money to rent a two-bedroom apartment!"

"Yeah?" Sharon would yell back. "Sounds like a good candidate for the Franklin Mint Collectible Shelf-Junk Series mailing list! Put her name in the database right away!" Then Sharon would get on the phone to her friends and family and they'd all have a good laugh over my answer to question 25. ("How many people, including this

person, usually rode to work in the car, truck, or van LAST WEEK?") This is certainly not information I would want to be known by anyone outside of my closest circle of friends.

By this time, I was a little peeved. Not only had I *not* won ten million dollars, but they wanted me to spend an entire 40 minutes listing details about my personal life that I don't spend 40 minutes thinking about during the entire year. According to the colorful brochure, this information would help them decide, for example, which roads they could tear up next summer and leave undone until after Thanksgiving. And as far as me being an accurate representative of my community, they'd have done much better if they'd sent their form to Bonzo the Galloping Wonder-Squid.

So I tossed the AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY into my "get around to it after I've visited Jupiter" file and forgot about it.

Did you know that there's a \$100 fine for not filling out the AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY immediately, completely and correctly to the best of my knowledge?

Fortunately, I learned this before I followed through on my funny, funny idea of telling them that I was a Demon freshly immigrated from the 5th layer of Hell and that my occupation was "Squeezing Things". (I'm sure Sharon would have got a kick out of that.)

Unfortunately, I'd already put this information on the form, and would have to ask them for another blank. So back into the Jupiter file it went while I pretended to get around to thinking up a good excuse for why I needed another form.

They really, really wanted to me to fill out the AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY. A couple of weeks later, without even having to ask, I got another heavy envelope in the mail, along with another copy of the colorful brochure, and a letter reassuring me that my answers really would be kept strictly confidential and that they were very eager to get started on tearing up the roads around my house and would I please do my duty and send them their form as soon as possible. In addition, if I did NOT send in my form, they might be forced to send a census worker to my door and this action would cost the taxpayers more. It didn't mention the SWAT team and vicious dogs that would be accompanying the census worker, but from the tone of the letter, I got the point.

I wonder how much the taxpayers had to shell out for all these colorful brochures?



CAPITAL GAINS & LOSERS

CORPORATE TRIVIAL POLICY

peer deep from your smoky windows
and see the little man
drift along your street

from broken panes
curse the dusty glass
grind your teeth to stumps
chew your tongue
the little man runs along
and you watch
your neighbors
watching
through
too
pulling at the bilious curtains
clawing at the inside walls



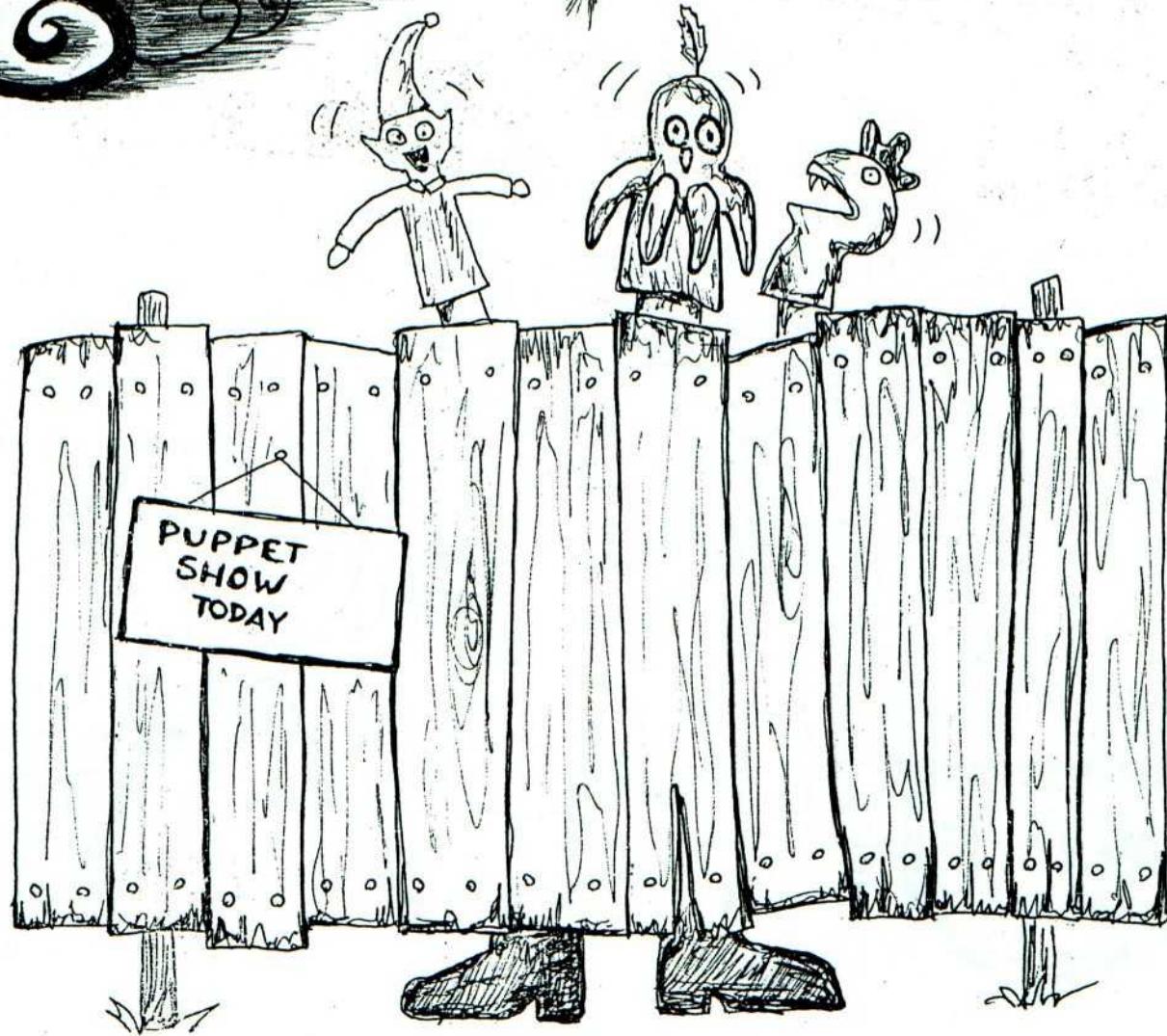
TO OPERATE:
Press down
firmly on guard
and rotate
sparkwheel.
Press lever.

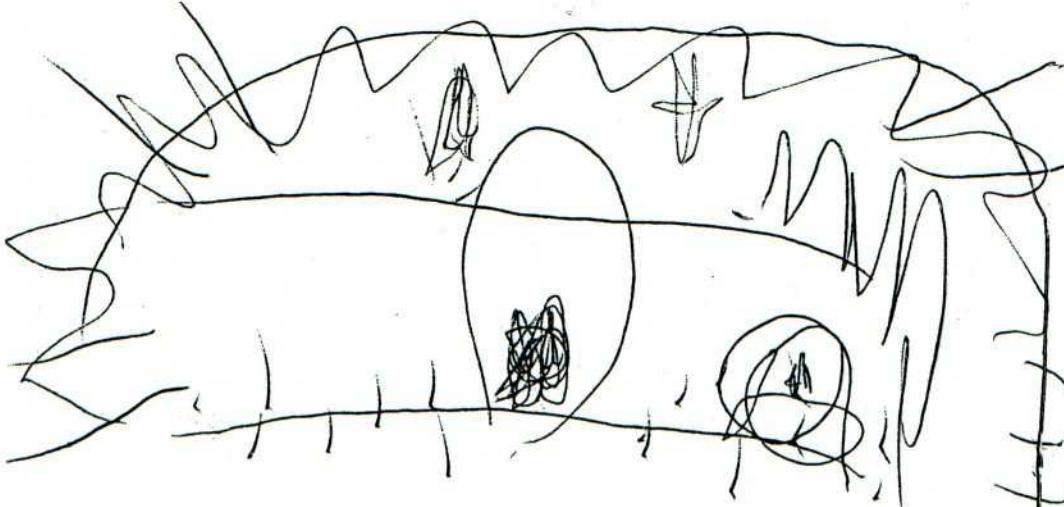
IF SOMEONE NEEDS INSTRUCTIONS
TO OPERATE A CIGARETTE LIGHTER,
DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY'D BE ABLE TO
UNDERSTAND THEM ANYWAY?

That alone
I search an empty circle –
why –
did God dream the binary child?
When will every whisper be enough?
After an undefined few speak magic before art,
then watch the spirit receive its blood rain
in a garden of numbers and stone.

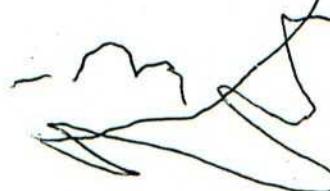
— X/0 and BethDragon

COUPON BEAVER BONDS

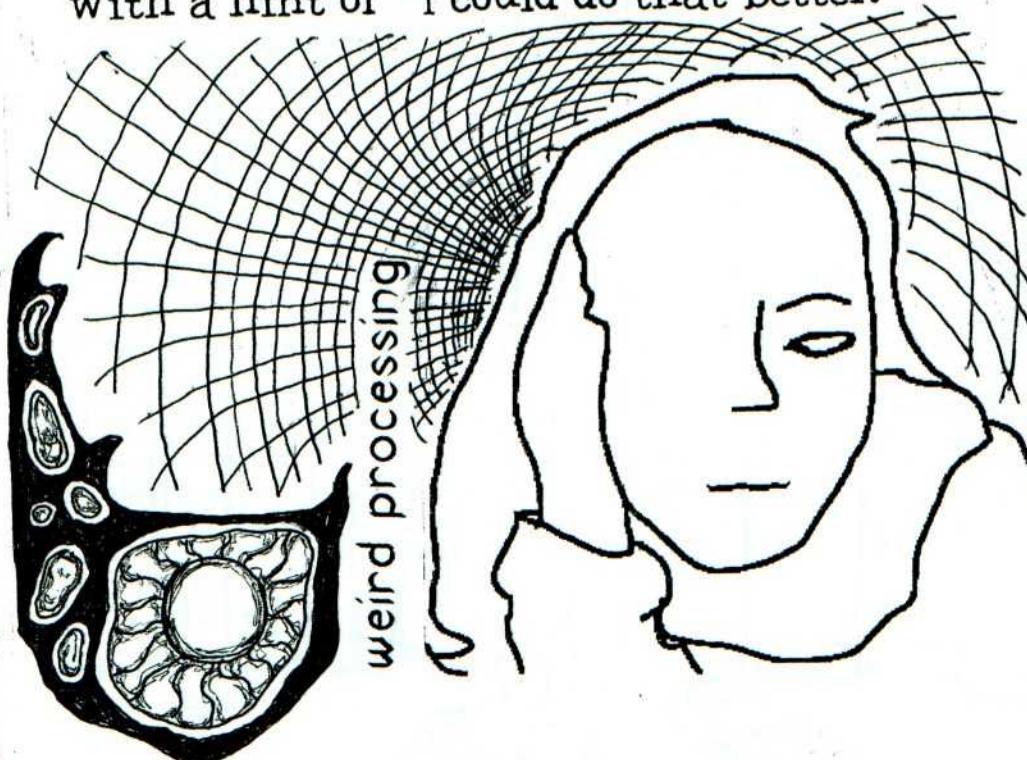




I live (forever) there
and we are Beauty,
Stories, Myths
Beginnings
soundtracks.



We are the bodies before the feelings
behind a symphony.
We are the breath drawn in that pause
waiting for the music to begin
and we are the rising crescendo.
We are the gasp
and renegade awe
with a hint of "I could do that better."



GADS!

Some *horrible* child
has *colored*
all over
my *favorite* picture
of you.
Shoo, shoo!
And it was *such*
a *good* picture, too –
your best side
and everything,
now it's just a *mess*
of mindless scribbles,
and the colors
don't suit you *at all*.
Why, it doesn't even
look like you
anymore.

Your eyes have been
smeared to witless globes
and your *lovely* smile
stretched to a grimace
of oblivion.

Were it not
for the fact that

I have another copy
at *h*ome,

I'd be all mad
and stuff.



Symms' Lectures #1: Demonic Nature

>>My current understanding of Demons, (and I'm eager for your correction because you are one and I've never had the privilege of meeting one before) is that they are beautiful, holy, powerful demi-gods of nature, who oversee and inspire the fairies who generate the growth and beauty of nature.

**

Symms: Hmm...yes, that works, I'll accept "beautiful holy demi-god". <chuckle> **WHAT HE MEANS IS
'ASS-KISSEY' - X/0**

That is one way of looking at it. A short history lecture is in order before I can describe Demonic nature.

In the Christian mythology, which I'll use because most are familiar with it, Demons were those beings who, supposedly, began the war with God and were sent from His presence as a punishment to rule the material world. Of course, the story was twisted way out of proportion and the original metaphors have been lost to most.

God is the Prime Spirit; all else is illusion. In order for God to learn about Itself, It needed to split up, like the facets of a diamond that you described in a recent post. Every sentient being is separate, but the separation is an illusion. At the base reality, if you could step way back and look at existence as a whole, there is no true separation. When a being interacts with another being, God is interacting with Itself. (This spark of recognition is also known as the Holy Spirit.) Humans do this on a much smaller scale when intense loneliness or trauma causes the personality to split. (God has multiple personality disorder -- we are each one personality of the Prime.)

Before the split, the only way that God had to know about Itself was by Its own thoughts. Those self-referential thoughts have an energy of their own and are referred to by some as Angels. By splitting Itself into many different beings, It can look at Itself from every possible angle and get the best view possible. Some of the views are not so pleasant, but since the Whole encompasses both positive and negative energy, the view is complete.

At the time of the split, the illusions were created: anything that is less-than-God is but an illusion, and each facet of God is not capable of perceiving the Whole. Some can perceive more of it than others, but no one but God Itself can experience Itself completely. This is the origin of the "Father of Lies" title given to the ruler of the material/illusionary world, who is in actuality the material world itself. There was no "war". There was only an agreeable, and illusionary, split. God is the Spirit underlying all; "Satan" is the material side of God, the dressing clouding God's perception of Itself. (Lucifer

Morningstar... "Lightbringer"... Let There Be Light... sound familiar?) God decreed that it should be so, in order that It may experience all the different possible perceptions.

While it is true that illusions get in the way and cause no end of earthly troubles, the trouble comes not from the illusions themselves, but when the facets become so caught up in the material illusions that they can no longer connect properly with their spiritual side and God, in that facet, forgets Its true nature. (Commonly known as "selling one's soul".) There must be a balance between material and spirit in order for the facet to be healthy and thrive. Each of the "Seven Deadly Sins" can be traced to over-infatuation with illusions of the material world. By the same token, Spirit can be taken to extremes, too, and this is no less dangerous -- more so, in fact.

Remember what I said earlier about the nature of Time, and the fact that this is really all happening in one infinitesimal instant. Some religions teach that our goal, God's wish, is for us all to cast off every trapping of the illusionary material world and rejoin the Source. If God became One, what do you think would happen to existence itself? God knows only that one instant. If all perceptions reverted to One, existence itself would wink out faster than the last ember of the dying candlelight. That which some call "Evil" is necessary to ensure the continuation of God's ability to perceive from all angles, in short, It's entire existence. The illusions keep everything going.

Angels are the thoughts that God thinks about Itself; Demons are made of the energy the thoughts God has when distracted by -- perceiving -- the material world. It is our task to ensure the continuation of illusions, and thus keep the pages turning in the greatest book of stories ever written. There are many different kinds of Demons, each with its own personality, and so, like Humans, some of us are more violent and malevolent than others. But at the core, each member of my race is responsible for keeping God alive.

What you do with the illusions is entirely your choice and responsibility.

This is an excerpt of a thread from an email list for persons who channel beings from other dimensions, one of whom (guess who) has the Demon Symms as a "Spirit Guide".

Next issue: Possession and Selling the Soul.

MULTIPLE OWNERSHIP WAFERS

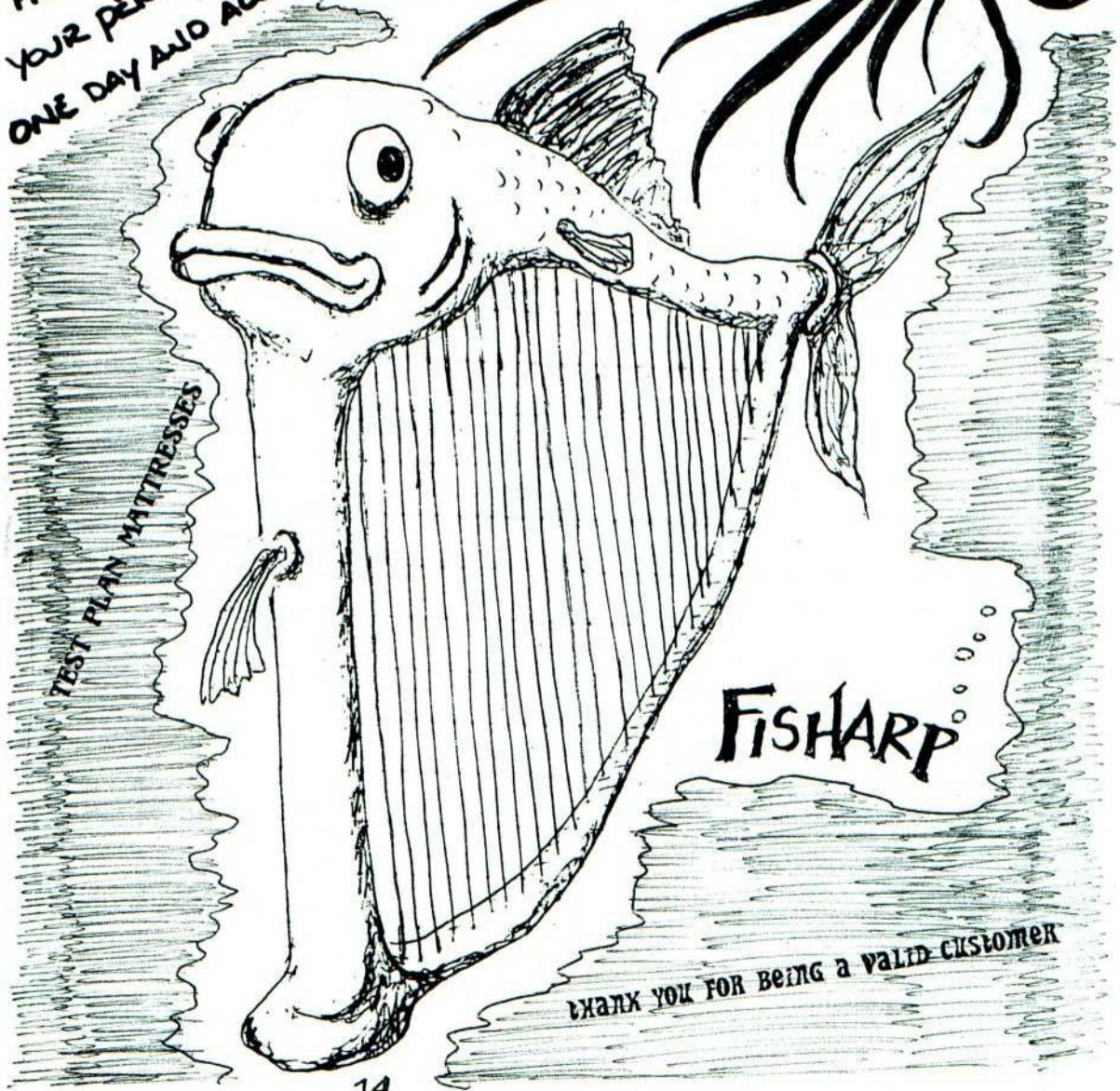
ON THIS DAY I OFFICIALLY DO DECLARE THAT I AM EMPEROR OF ALL TIME

WORLD THAT I CAN SEE, ALSO GRAND WIZARD AND OCCASIONALLY PIRATE OR
WHATEVER ELSE MAY STRIKE MY FANCY AT ANY GIVEN INSTANT. ALL ARE HEREBY HONOR BOUND,
WITH OATHS-BEYOND-BLOOD, TO DO MY SILENT OR SPOKEN BIDDINGS. IF YOU THINK I AM JUST
BEING SILLY THAT IS BECAUSE I WANTED YOU TO THINK THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE.



Rule #7.

TIME DOES NOT REALLY EXIST, AND ALL THIS BUSINESS ABOUT WHAT-YEAR-IS-IT AND HOW-OLD-YOU-ARE HAS GOTTEN ENTIRELY OUT OF HAND. THEREFORE, IT IS MY ROYAL DECREE THAT THE DAY CALLED MAY 27 IN THE 'YEAR' CALLED 23 IS THE FIRST OF MANY DAYS, ALL TO BE HENCEFORWARD KNOWN AS MAY 17, 23. FROM THIS TIME FORWARD YOU NO LONGER NEED COUNT OR CALENDAR YOUR PERCEPTION'S MOVEMENT THROUGH THIS DIMENSION, FOR ALL DAYS ARE ONE DAY AND ALL TIME IS WITHIN YOUR REACH.



MY FAVORITE

STUPID EMAIL

Hello,

I am a very sick little boy. My mother is typing this for me, because I can't. She is crying. Don't cry, Mommy! Mommy is always sad, but she says it's not my fault. I asked her if it was God's fault, but she didn't answer, and only started crying harder, so I don't ask her that anymore.

The reason she is so sad is that I'm so sick. I was born without a body. It doesn't hurt, except when I go to sleep. The doctors gave me an artificial body. My body is a burlap bag filled with leaves. The doctors said that was the best they could do on account of us having no money or insurance. I would like to have a body transplant, but we need more money. Mommy doesn't work because she said employers don't hire crying people. I said, "Don't cry, Mommy," and she hugged my burlap body. Mommy always gives me hugs, even though she's allergic to burlap, and it chafes her real bad.

I hope you will help me. You can help me if you forward this e-mail. Dr. Johansen said if you forward this e-mail then Bill Gates will team up with AOL and do a survey with NASA. Then the astronauts will collect prayers from school children all over America and take them up to space so that the angels can hear them better. Then they will go to the Pope, and he will take up a collection in church and send the money to the doctors. The doctors could help me better then. Maybe one day I will be able to play baseball. Or maybe just use my lungs and heart, when the doctors make them.

The doctors said that every time you forward this letter, the astronauts can take another prayer to the angels. Please help me. Mommy is so sad, and I want a body. I don't want my leaves to rot before I turn 10.

If you don't forward this e-mail, that's OK.

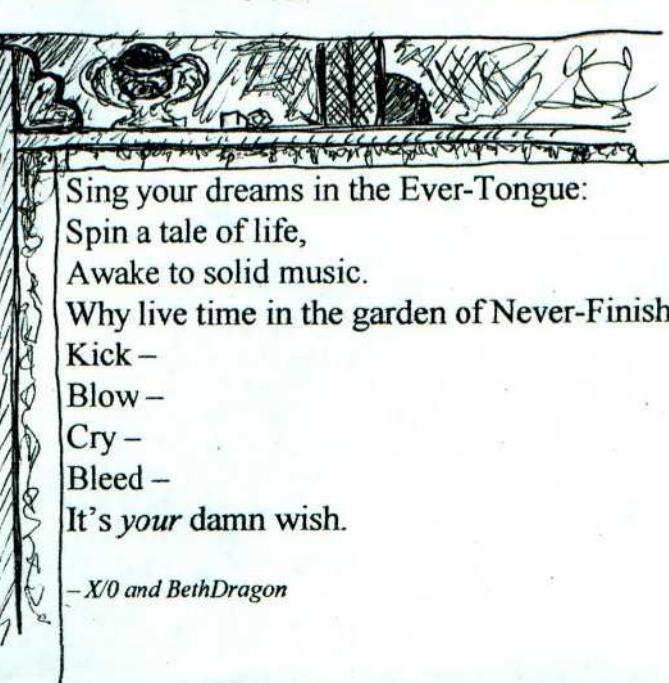
Mommy says you're a mean heartless shithead who doesn't care about a poor little boy with only a head. She says that if you don't stew in the raw pit of your own guilt-ridden stomach, she hopes you die a long slow horrible death so you can burn forever in hell. What kind of asshole are you that you can't take five fucking minutes to forward this to all your friends so that they can feel guilt and shame for the rest of their day, and then maybe help a poor, bodiless nine-year-old boy? Please help me. This really sucks. I try to be happy but it's hard. I wish I had a puppy. I wish I could hold a puppy.

Thank You.

Billy Evans,

The boy with just a head.
And a burlap sack for a body

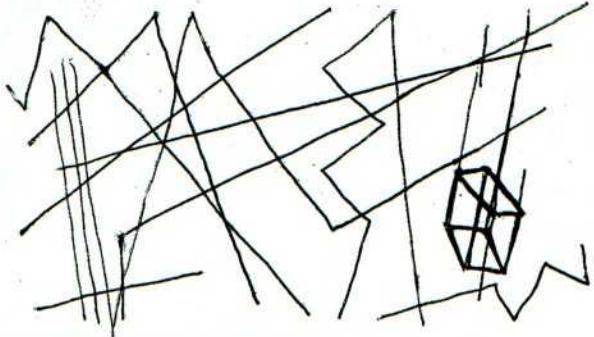
EXTRA
BOMB
BOMB



Sing your dreams in the Ever-Tongue:
Spin a tale of life,
Awake to solid music.
Why live time in the garden of Never-Finished?
Kick –
Blow –
Cry –
Bleed –
It's *your* damn wish.

– X/0 and BethDragon

WORLD WAR III



*"This is magnificent - and it is true!
It never happened, yet it is still true.
What magic art is this?"*

- The Puck, in Neil Gaiman's retelling of A Midsummer Night's Dream

"EVERYTHING YOU KNOW REALLY IS WRONG."

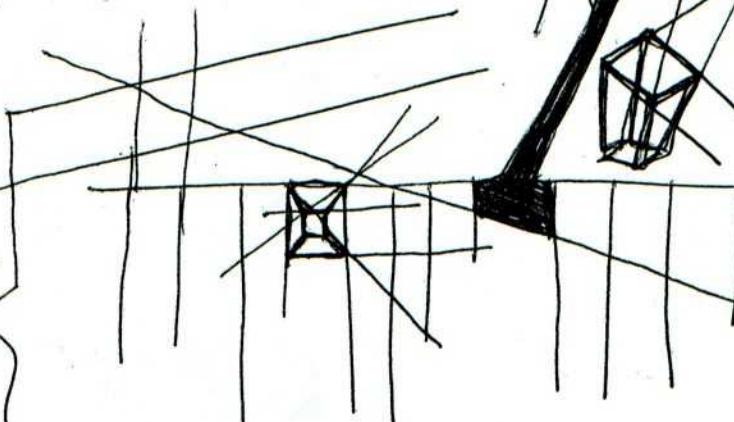
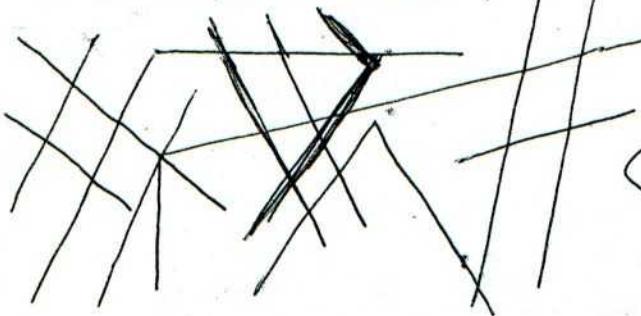
- The Church of the SubGenius

IT...

is waiting to be named.

We walk on

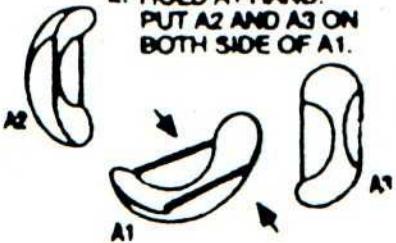
**it clings to our ankles,
shrieking, and
we walk on.**



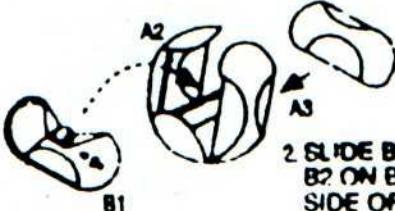
PUZZLE BALL
LET'S DECOMPOSE &
ENJOY ASSEMBLING.

HOW TO DECOMPOSE
EASILY THOUGH IT INTO THE FLOOR HAVE FUN.

HOW TO ASSEMBLE



2. HOLD A1 HAND.
PUT A2 AND A3 ON
BOTH SIDE OF A1.



2. SLIDE B1 AND
B2 ON BOTH
SIDE OF A2 & A3.



3. SLIDE C1 FOR THE
SIDE OF B1 THOUGH
THE SIDE OF B2