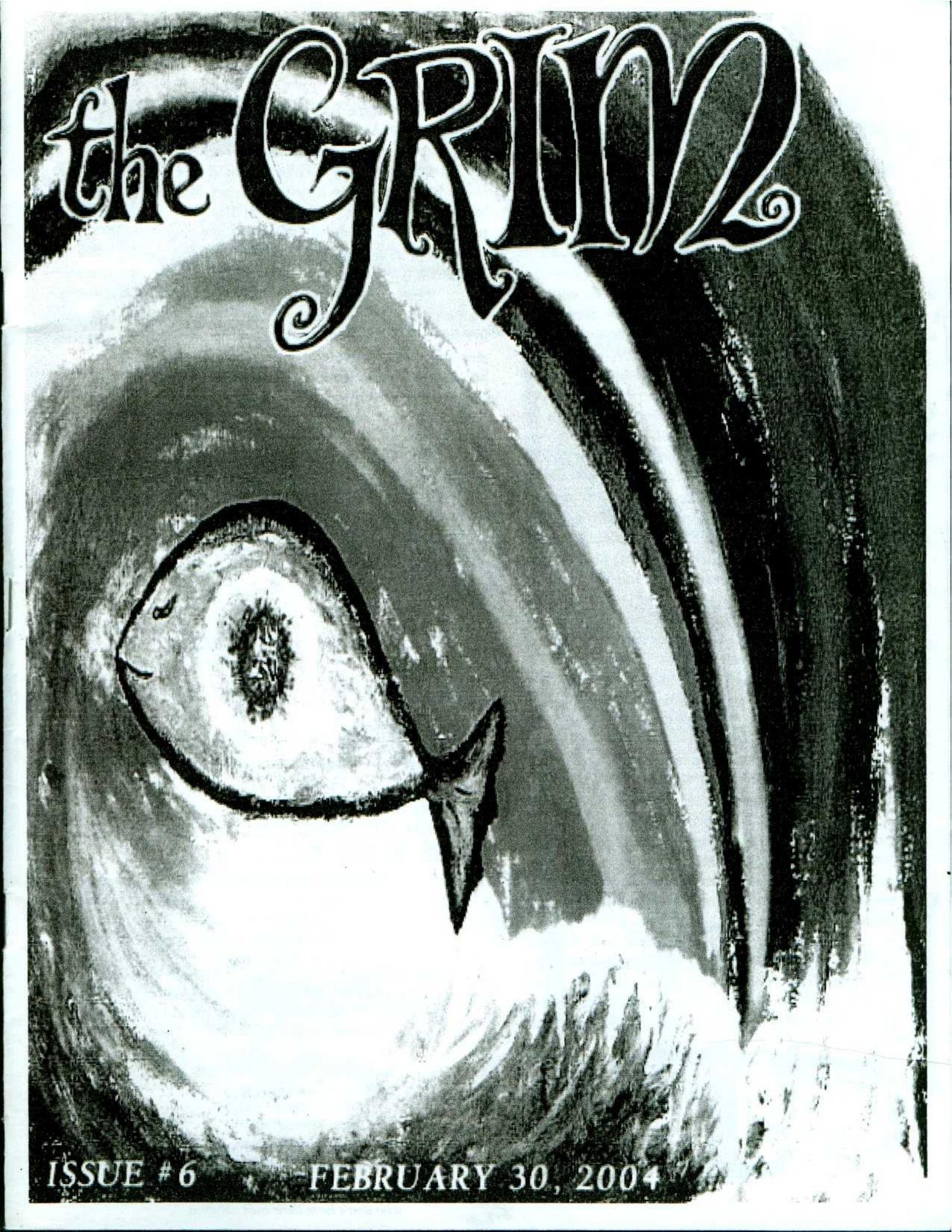


the GRID



ISSUE #6

FEBRUARY 30, 2004

ONE DIMENSION

Ok, look, I *know* that it's been nine months since the last issue was out. I *know* I said I'd try to publish more often, but time no longer exists for me since I've semi-permanently relocated even my conscious perspective to Grimagix, so it gets a little hard to keep track of it.

If you know me, you hear me say that a lot – “time doesn't exist”. What does that mean?

Well, you could take the literal meaning: everything and circumstance that is, was or will be, throughout the whole of Creation, on every dimension, hovers in an eternal “now”. The illusion of “time” comes about because we're linear creatures, and our perspective must move through these adjacent circumstances one micro-world at a time, picking out our individual paths through an Omniverse that's a lot like a multi-dimensional movie reel. Every “frame” has an almost infinite set of frames that could come before or after it, and the choices we make from moment to moment determine the way the story goes, as well as the way we *remember* it going before it got to this point. And, like a movie, the entire film already exists, but we have to go through it one frame at a time to understand it. What happens to the frames we don't choose? Nothing – that's where reality splits, and the “you” in another dimension continues to live a different life, along a different reel of frames and choices...

Time only seems real to us because it is the direct result of our perspectives moving through these “event frames” one by one: we count the distance between the frame we're in now and those we've been through or anticipate, and call the total “time”. If someone asks you how long a movie is, you might say “An hour and a half”. You wouldn't say, “About a hundred thousand frames”.

I could get into the mechanics of memory, multiversal reality, predicting the future and all that, but frankly, I don't have time.

Which brings me to the reasons why we've all been able to perceive so many frames between the Grim #5 and this one.

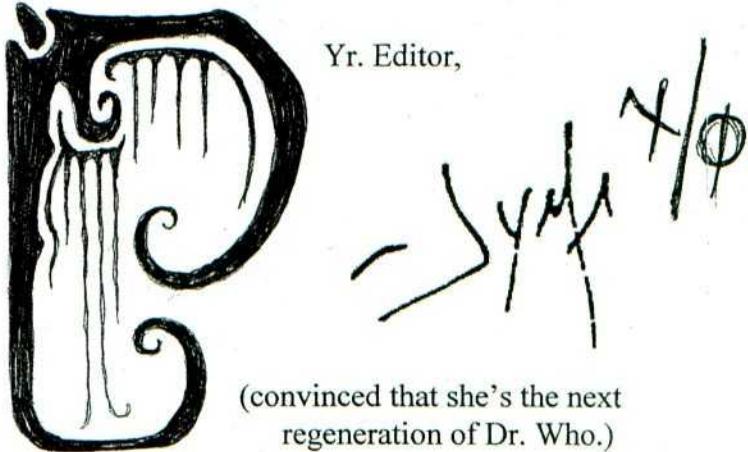
I'm writing a book. (The first draft is done; Gods know when I'm going to be able to polish it up.) I've started a business – Grimagix officially broke through to this reality in August of 2003. I'm now running five web domains, and every one of them needs

an awful lot of work. Please disregard the mess and go look at them anyway; I sometimes feel like I'm alone in an internet vacuum. I'm actually *reading* the books in my library, instead of just collecting them and grinning about how impressive they look on my shelves. I'm learning to read and speak Hebrew. I've got a private tutor lined up to teach me Calculus. I'm trying to find a pattern in π , and dammit, I think I've almost got one – or several!

I even cleaned my house. (“Clean”, as in it took me four days, five trips to the dumpster, and a carload to Goodwill.) Can anyone tell me *why* I once thought it absolutely imperative that I keep two shelf-fulls of hopelessly broken electronic equipment? Oh yeah...the buttons. There were so...many...lovely ...buttons...

So next issue, whenever it comes out, this column will go back to concentrating on quantum-philosophy and other metaphysical weirdness. In the meantime, there's still plenty of that to be found in the rest of the magazine.

Yr. Editor,



(convinced that she's the next regeneration of Dr. Who.)

**OUT OF MEMORY.
WE WISH TO HOLD THE ENTIRE SKY,
BUT WE NEVER WILL.**

Issue #6 Contributors:

Q Dibble

Razier Silverwing

Viggo Tempopo

Cover by BethDragon

Japanese Computer Haiku found by Jessica Fish

Musical Interlude by Chris Heath and the Various Collaborators
and a big “Thanks for the Warning!” goes to
The National Weather Service

the Grim's Usual Hooligans:

Jymi X/0, Editor / Emperor

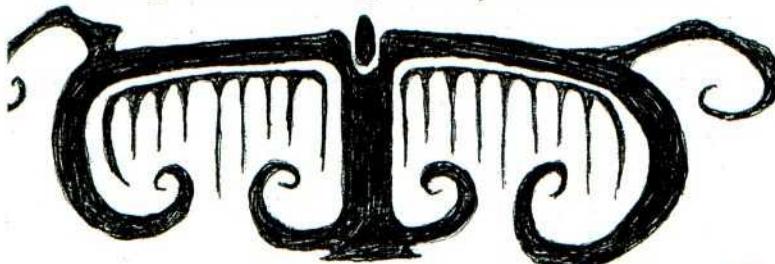
S'ferrin, Science Editor

Trent, Roving Reporter

The Demon Symms

Nilly Rambus (who broke *nothing*)

*and a whole lot of other helpers
who don't have their own columns*



the Grim's website is presently under some severe re-construction (at the time of this writing, even the back issues are unavailable), but if you'd like to mark it for future reference, it can be found at:

www.thegrim.net

the Grim is the Premier News & Arts Magazine of the Dream City of Grimagix, which also has a website, which is also under construction, but is somewhat more done than the Grim's site. This one is at:

www.grimagix.com

THE WEB SITE YOU ARE SEEKING
CANNOT BE LOCATED,
BUT COUNTLESS MORE EXIST.

In Japan they have replaced the impersonal and unhelpful Microsoft error messages with Haiku poetry messages.

THE GRIM

FOR THE BUILDERS OF ROADS
THE MAKERS OF MAPS
AND TRAVELERS OF
THE 33RD PATH



DONATIONS

the Grim will always be a free magazine. Not that it wouldn't be worth a buck or two, if I decided to charge for it, but I think of it as a gift -- yes! A shining example of my saintly generosity, given freely to a world starved of quality other-dimensional entertainment. Unfortunately, this free gift costs me \$125 bucks per issue to print. If you enjoy reading it, and happen to have spare change, every little bit helps. Think of it this way: if I get enough donations, we can go back to a regular printing schedule, and maybe even return to the glory days of the 24-page issues! (More room for submissions!)

I am also fantasizing about color covers... (which would double the printing costs)... a larger circulation... (current run is only 100 copies per issue)... a mahogany editor's desk with a silver engraved nameplate... a cabin boy to bring me coffee and sandwiches...



SUBMISSIONS

At this time, *the Grim* is *not* seeking unsolicited submissions. This means that you will show me your work anyway, and then not be offended when I tell you that a) there is not enough room for it, or b) your work doesn't quite fit the format of this publication. There is always a chance that I will say, c) "What do you want for a byline?"

However, if you show me a poem that could be titled "The World Is Cruel to Poor Little Me", I will say, d) "BLAAARRRRGGHHH".



CONTACT

There are four ways to contact *the Grim*.

1. Find Jymi X/0 and say hello.
2. Send an email to: thegrim@grimagix.com
3. Send tangible mail to:

The Grim
PO Box 120118
Kentwood, MI 49512

4. Dream yourself into Grimagix and go directly to the offices of the Grim Publishing Co.



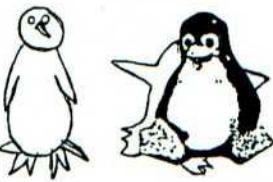
BILLY THE
BABY PENGUIN
A CHILDREN'S STORY
BY

THERE ONCE WAS
THIS CAT NAMED
BILLY THE
BABY
PENGUIN

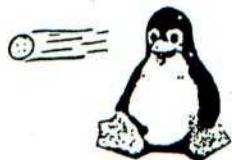
HE LOVED TO GO
SLEDDING IN
THE SNOW

Q.
DIBBLE

AND MAKE SNOW-
MEN AND SNOW-
ANGELS



AND THROW SNOW
BALLS.



AND ACT LIKE A
TOTAL JACK-ASS



ONE DAY, BILLY PUT
HIMSELF IN A BOX
MARKED WITH A "C"



"'C' IS FOR 'CARPET
MUNCHER'", SAID
BILLY.



WHAT A SMART
BABY PENGUIN



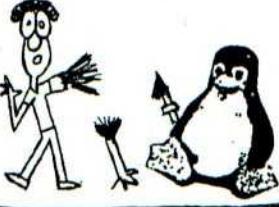
ONE DAY BILLY
FOUND A KNIFE



HE HAD LOTS OF
FUN WITH HIS NEW
TOY



KILL, BILLY, KILL



YESTERDAY IT WORKED.
TODAY IT IS NOT WORKING.
WINDOWS IS LIKE THAT.

You shoot me in the gut with your bullets
but that's not my blood running down my pants
pooling in the gutter,
only piss.

You shoot me in the gut with your bullets
but I won't bleed for you.
You're not worth my blood,
only piss.

— Author's Name Unknown; Grimagix Impromptu Street Recital

ASK PERCY THE SCIENCE CLOWN!

Dear Percy the Science Clown,

Why do periods hurt?

Crampy

Dear Crampy,

Periods are just these tiny little dots, but they have to do several big important jobs. They have to end sentences. They indicate a pause between related thoughts...that's so grueling that it takes three of them to do it. They have to hold up exclamation marks! And question marks? Yes, those too! They never get to dash off for a break – and don't even ask about their colon problems: that's none of your business. You've gotta admire them though; no matter how sore they are from all this hard work, they're always punctual.

All right, all right, I know what you meant. You probably covered all this in the "sex ed" unit* of your junior high health classes, but I happen to know that you were too busy passing notes and snickering at the diagrams to really be paying attention. So.

The ovaries (reproductive organs located on the insides of ladies) are the storehouses for hundreds of thousands of egg cells. All of an adult Human female's egg cells are present in her ovaries when she is born. Once a month or so, a ripe egg cell is released from one of the ovaries. Sometimes (rarely), both ovaries will release an egg at the same time – if these eggs are both fertilized, *fraternal* twins will be born as opposed to *identical* twins, who both develop from the same egg cell.

I should mention that a *typical* menstrual cycle is one period every month; many women have different cycles – some have two periods a month, some only a few per year. An *atypical* cycle is not usually a danger sign; have your doctor check it out if you're worried, especially if your normal cycle changes drastically.

Anyway. The hypothalamus, a gland in the brain which is responsible for regulating bodily patterns, signals the ovaries when it's time to release an egg. (It's a little more complicated than that, but that's essentially it, in a nutsack...SHELL! NutSHELL.) The egg travels down the fallopian tube and winds up in the uterus. The walls of the uterus are made of soft tissues that thicken throughout the month, building up a lining of blood and other nutritious substances, in anticipation of the egg's arrival. If the egg is fertilized (I'm not getting into that here. Go ask your parents), it will settle into the protective walls of the uterus, attach itself there, and grow into a foetus.

If the egg doesn't get fertilized, it will continue on its way through the uterus and the cervix, and be released from the body. But the uterus still has that lining, and it has to get rid of it so that there will be fresh materials for next month's egg. (The uterus also has to keep itself clean, and the monthly period is nature's way of doing just that.) The muscles around the uterus will twitch and contract, shaking the lining loose so that it will fall off and can be expelled from the body. These muscle contractions are the famous "cramps", (*dysmenorrhea*) which, I am told, can be quite painful.

Fluctuating body chemistry will cause discomfort throughout the whole system. Besides uterine cramps, women may experience headaches, nausea, muscular pain in the back and limbs, water retention, and fatigue, not to mention the chemically-induced mood swings. In a way, it kind of feels like getting the flu once a month. Guys, *this* is why they get crabby.

Ladies, to help alleviate some of the discomfort, try cutting down on the caffeine and salt (salt makes the body retain water), eat a healthy diet with lots of veggies and grains, get enough sleep; and exercise – you may not feel like doing it, but it helps increase your oxygen supply, relaxes your muscles, and releases endorphins (natural pain-killers) into your system.

Now if you'll excuse me, I'm off to buy flowers for someone. I understand that that helps a lot, too.

Dear Percy the Science Clown,

Do you suppose that you could take just a moment to tell me where you left that petri dish with the colony of *Clostridium botulinum*? All I see is a dark stain on the table.

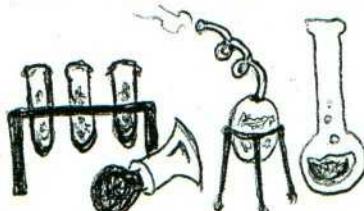
Your Extraordinarily Patient Lab Partner

Howdy, Partner!

I put it in the cooler, next to the Seagram's. I didn't like the way Nilly Rambus was eyeing it.

Got a question for Percy?
Send it to

thegrim@grimagix.com



* Huh-huh, I said "unit".

THE DREADED LAGUMBA

The Snappy, Swanky New Dance Craze / Intestinal Disorder!

by Viggo Tempopo

(credit for the term "Dreaded Lagumba" goes to Sarah and Amanda Boes)

BUT THEY SHOULD NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE
FOR WHAT HAS BEEN DONE WITH IT.
-JYMI

Don't you want to be as COOL as possible?

Huh?



Don't you!?

Are your coon-skin cap and rectal pierce just not
making you feel as Alterna-Trendy™ as you'd hoped?



Do you have a desire to offend, as well as entertain?

Or perhaps, are you just a plain ol' sick fuck?



TO PERFORM

THE DREADED LAGUMBA



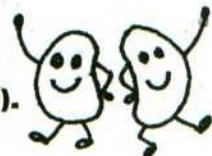
First, you need to eat something rotten. I mean, really rotten – for instance, check the dumpster behind the Flying Bridge Fish Market for fish heads that even the stray cats won't touch.



Thass right, gulp it on down.



Then, chase it with a bunch of refritos (at least one can's worth).



Above all, DO NOT THROW UP!



That'll wreck the whole mess, and you'll have to start over. Just lie VERY STILL and let peristalsis shove that tummyload down to your dumper. Can you feel the cramps?

The Cramps! Super! We're just about ready to begin!

I SAW THE CRAMPS IN DETROIT LAST YEAR. -JYMI

Now, your instinct might tell you to run to the gurgle throne, but that would be a MISTAKE! The Lagumba Preamble it just as important as the rest of the dance, and running might make you drop your wad too early. The trick is: shuffle real slow, and grunt in time with the cramps.

oh, the Cramps!

IT WAS A REALLY
GOOD SHOW. -JYMI

Are you sweating by now? If so, all the better!



Next, drop your drawers (boy, aren't they glad to be out of the line of fire!) and perch yourself on the bowl. Start rocking back and forth, clench everything that'll clench, breathe in short little huffs, but above all, **KEEP GRUNTING!** Feel free to throw in some swears, too. The vocalization aspect of the Dreaded Lagumba, besides the grunting, is totally free and open to individual interpretation. Personally, I'm fond of the classic **MOTHERFUCKER!**, but individual tastes will vary.

It's time!



Now grab the bowl with both hands, throw both feet into the air and There might be a bit of stinging, or possibly burning, but juss redirect the pain to create more exciting vocals. Take a little breather if you need to, dig the smell, then resume.



BLOOT!

Bloot?

-Jym.

BLOOT

like crazy!

BLOOT

maximum

effect!

Remember to throw your feet out **EVERY TIME YOU BLOOT**

Repeat this as often as you need to, because rotten fish heads are **POISON**, and you won't want to hang on to those for long.

Once all the **BLOOTING** is over, just forget about toilet paper.

You won't be able to clean that up that way – just get in the shower. Afterward, try to blame the condition of the bowl on somebody else (this is challenging if you live alone). Above all, **DO NOT MAKE ANY ATTEMPTS TO CLEAN THE CRAPPER**, at least, not yet. Let the half-life wear down a little. Come back in a few weeks with a putty-knife.



YOU DID IT!

HOOPLA!

Hoopla! -Jym

You danced the Dreaded Lagumba!



Do you really feel better? Good for you!

Give yourself a **BIG SMILE**, and remember that **YOU** are now **SO MUCH COOLER!**

HAVING BEEN ERASED,
THE DOCUMENT YOU'RE SEEKING
MUST NOW BE RETYPED.

Severe Weather Alert from the National Weather Service

(You Are All Going to Die)
(Hoopla!)

TRANSLATED FOR YOU
BY JYMI X/0

ALLEGAN-BARRY-CALHOUN-CLINTON-EATON-
GRATIOT-INGHAM-IONIA-ISABELLA- JACKSON-
KALAMAZOO-KENT-MONTCALM-MUSKEGON-
OTTAWA-VAN BUREN- INCLUDING THE CITIES
OF... ALMA... BATTLE CREEK... CHARLOTTE...
GRAND HAVEN... GRAND RAPIDS... GREENVILLE...
HASTINGS... HOLLAND... IONIA... JACKSON...
KALAMAZOO... LANSING... MOUNT PLEASANT...
MUSKEGON... SOUTH HAVEN... ST JOHNS 444 AM
EST TUE JAN 27 2004

-----ATTENTION, EVERYONE IN MICHIGAN

... WINTER STORM WARNING IN EFFECT FROM 6
AM EST TUESDAY UNTIL 6 AM EST WEDNESDAY...

-----IT IS GOING TO SNOW

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN GRAND
RAPIDS HAS ISSUED A WINTER STORM WARNING.

-----A LOT

A BRIEF PERIOD OF FREEZING DRIZZLE...

-----ALSO IT IS GOING TO BE COLD

....FREEZING RAIN OR SLEET WILL CHANGE OVER
TO ALL SNOW BY MID MORNING.

-----DID WE MENTION IT IS GOING TO SNOW?

THE SNOW WILL BECOME HEAVY AT TIMES. THE
SNOW IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE INTO THE
EVENING BEFORE ENDING AFTER MIDNIGHT.

-----A LOT?

STORM TOTAL ACCUMULATION OF 5 TO 9 INCHES
CAN BE EXPECTED.

-----OKAY, A WHOLE HELL OF A LOT. HOW'S THAT?

NORTHWEST WINDS WILL INCREASE TO AROUND
20 MPH WITH GUSTS TO 30 MPH THIS AFTERNOON.

-----BUT THERE WILL NOT BE ANY TORNADOS, SO
THAT'S SOMETHING, ANYWAY

THIS WILL CAUSE CONSIDERABLE BLOWING AND
DRIFTING SNOW.

-----IN CASE YOU'VE ALREADY FORGOTTEN THAT IT'S
GOING TO SNOW, THE WIND WILL BLOW IT AROUND FOR
YOU SO THAT YOU CAN SEE IT BETTER

THE BRISK WINDS WILL ALSO CONTINUE
OVERNIGHT.

-----ALONG WITH THAT SNOW THAT WE TOLD YOU
ABOUT, UNLESS WE'RE WRONG AND NOTHING HAPPENS
AFTER ALL

A WINTER STORM WARNING MEANS

-----"LOOK OUT! THERE IS SNOW!"

THAT SEVERE WINTER WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE
IMMINENT OR HIGHLY LIKELY.

-----BUT EVERYONE ACT SURPRISED ANYWAY (EVEN
THOUGH IT IS JANUARY IN MICHIGAN AND THIS
HAPPENS EVERY YEAR) SINCE WE WOULDN'T WANT TO
RUIN THE STORM'S BIG MOMENT

IF YOU MUST TRAVEL...

-----WE CONGRATULATE YOU IN ADVANCE ON WINNING
THAT DARWIN AWARD

KEEP AN EXTRA FLASHLIGHT...

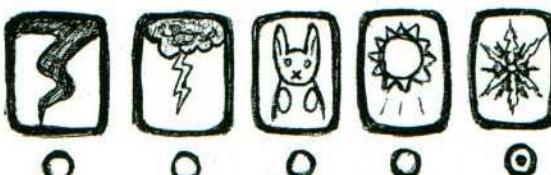
-----BECAUSE IF YOUR CAR GOES IN A DITCH IN THE
DARK, YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT ON THE FUN OF
WATCHING YOUR OWN LIPS TURN BLUE

FOOD...

-----ICE CREAM WILL PROBABLY KEEP PRETTY WELL

...AND WATER IN YOUR VEHICLE IN CASE YOU
BECOME STRANDED.

-----IN THE DARK, IN THE COLD, IN THE SNOW, IN A
DITCH WHERE THEY WON'T FIND YOU UNTIL APRIL AND
YOU'LL LOOK LIKE JACK NICHOLSON AT THE END OF
"THE SHINING"



Festive Thoughts

— Trent



I do not feel like writing an article today. I have a cold. It makes my head hurt. But no matter how badly my head hurts, I have to write an article, because it is my responsibility. I am a Roving Reporter. "Roving" means wandering around.

I am very glad that the X-mas season is over. I know that it is the end of February now, but we are still stepping on pine needles in the carpet even though SOMEONE has run the vacuum over and over and over again. I think SOMEONE has issues with the vacuum. But, I am not the doctor, so I don't know for sure. Also we just took down the outside lights last weekend. I like to help with the lights when we put them up. I am very good at standing on the ground and telling Thomas when any of them are crooked. He says that next year, he will let me get up there and hang them myself. Thomas is funny. He knows that I am not supposed to be up on the ladder.

X-mas shopping is always fun, but I am glad that all that excitement is over, too, at least until we start all over again. This past year, during X-mas shopping season, Nilly Rambus sat on Santa's lap eighteen times. Santa is very nice. He comes to our house every X-mas Eve and hands out presents. He says that our house is one of the first places he visits. We give him Beer-Nuts™ and vodka tonics. If your children ever ask you what Santa's favorite drink is, you can tell them "vodka

tonics". I like to pet the reindeer. Another thing that Santa would like you to know is that the elves do not make electronic gadgets at the Toy Shop. They do not have the licensing rights to paste all those brand names on everything. Santa says that if your children write him a letter asking for a name-brand toy, the best he can do is gift certificates.

The next big holiday that's coming up is Valentine's Day. (It will be over by the time you read this.) That is the day that cherubs shoot people with arrows. I don't see what that has to do with "love". Arrows are sharp, and very dangerous. Maybe the saying that "love is blind" came from someone who had their eye put out by one of those cherubs with arrows.

My favorite holiday is the Spring Equinox. All of the holidays that celebrate fertility are held in the Spring, and everyone gets to have a lot of sex. Maybe Valentine's Day is like foreplay for the Spring Equinox. I am very glad that people do not have to restrict themselves to a mating season that is just a few weeks long, though, like most animals do. Have you ever read about a bug called the Mayfly? They only live for one day! They have to have sex right away! And then the female lays eggs, and everybody dies! I wonder what the whole point of all that is? It would be very hard for a Mayfly to write a Mayfly history book, since no one can remember what just happened even one generation ago. Do you think that makes them sad? Or do they not care because they are just bugs?

CHAOS REIGNS WITHIN.
REFLECT, REPENT, AND REBOOT.
ORDER SHALL RETURN.

Art by Nilly Rambus

IT IS HEREBY DECREED:
THAT THE MONTH OF
FEBRUARY
HAS BEEN SLACKING OFF
LONG ENOUGH, AND THAT
BEGINNING IN THIS YEAR,
SHALL HAVE TO CONTAIN AS
MANY DAYS AS ALL THE OTHER
MONTHS, WHICH SHALL EACH,
IN TURN, GET A DAY OFF
UNTIL IT'S ALL EVENED UP
AGAIN.

SO DECREED ON THIS DAY OF
5/17/23

So there.

Hoopla!

-X/0.
EMPEROR

Blatant Self-Promotion

GRIMAGIX

THE DREAMS THAT
STUFF IS MADE OF

FINE ARTS & CRAFTS
GRAPHIC & COMPUTER ARTS
CUSTOM DESIGN
METAPHYSICAL CONSULTANTS
Hoopla!

www.grimagix.com

PROGRAM ABORTING.
CLOSE ALL THAT YOU HAVE WORKED ON.
YOU ASK FAR TOO MUCH.

COMMUNITY UPDATES

MARCH

Are you ready for the annual **Festival of Potholes**? The City of Grimagix celebrates our ancient tradition this month! All major roadways will be closed to non-sentient automotive traffic for this three-day weekend of slush and shenanigans. Get out there NOW and stake your claim! When those fireworks signal the start of the competition, you don't want to be left in the mud, so grab your grappling hooks and join in the merry mayhem!

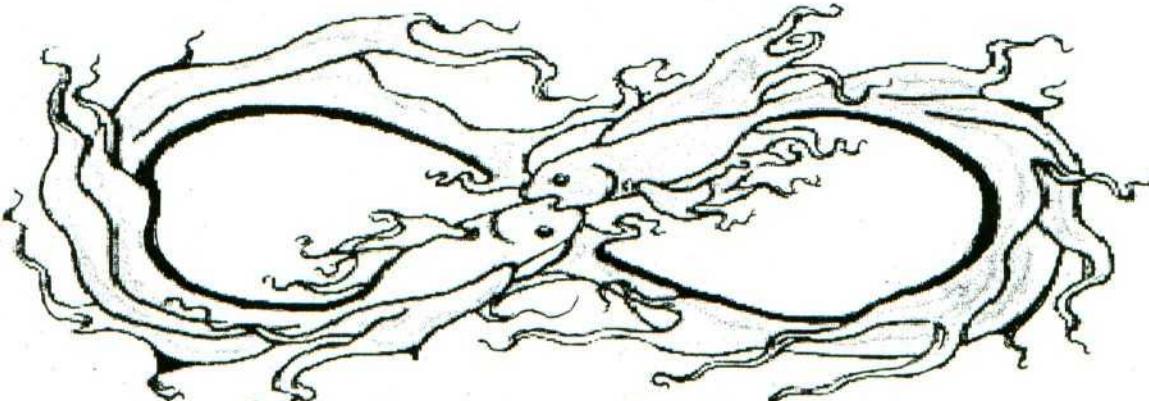
This year's Festival is sponsored, once again, by **Ziebarr's Hot Home Cookin' and Lube Shoppe**. Prizes include free passes to Ziebarr's famous Petting Zoo and their new attraction, the **Mystery Car Wash**.

Thanks go to **Morbinary's Planar Trades** for the generous donation of flags, sponges, pop-guns, the beloved plaid paint, and best of all: we finally got that **BUBBLE MACHINE**! Now the games will get *really* wild!

See you on the pavement!

Spring is almost here, and with it comes the usual imbalance in the distribution of body parts. **The Outpatient Health Center of Our Lady of the Perpetual Ado** is pleased to re-introduce their popular limb-and-digit exchange program. All persons wishing to trim their **NEW** and/or **GENTLY USED** extras that sprouted during the past year are encouraged to come in and have them removed in under an hour with **OLPA's** guaranteed-painless procedure. Anyone in need of such items is welcome to come in and browse the growing selections. Most pieces can be attached the same day. Complimentary post-operative cookies and juice for all participants!

Her Royal Highness the Queen Dahlia-May invites all citizens of Grimagix to Downtown's Nice Courtyard on the first sunny Sunday afternoon, to celebrate with her the long-awaited Removal or Disappearance of the Right-Awful-Bastards Who Used to Live Upstairs and Must Have Been Raised in a Barn, Because Lord, Don't They Shout a Lot, and Why *Must* They Thump So Upon the Floor? The festivities will include music, dancing, refreshments (tea-sandwiches, scones and punch), games, prizes and a raffle-contest for a position of honor at the next public hanging. Titles of nobility will be bestowed at 3:00 pm, with balloon-animals to follow.



jessica fish

• (818) 298-1735 •

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Watch Them Awake from Dreams of Sleep

- refrigerator poetry by BethDragon and Jymi X/0

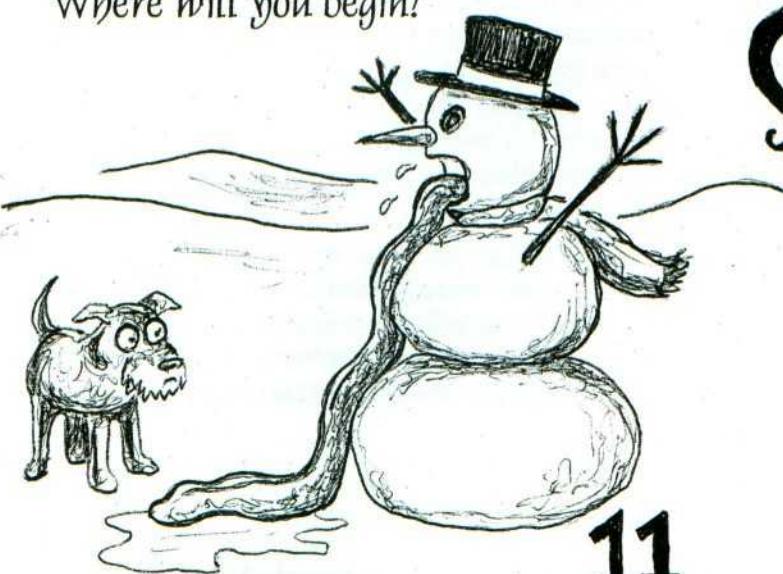
when it's all ended

The rain sleeps while God and Magic share breath again

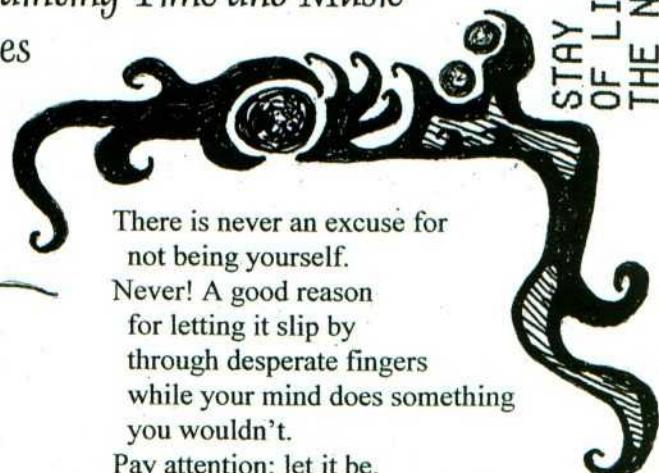
I receive his cold dead shiver

Stone mother and Angel sister are painting Time and Music
while the Fire dreams within our eyes

where will you begin?



STAY THE PATIENT COURSE.
OF LITTLE WORTH IS YOUR IRE.
THE NETWORK IS DOWN.



There is never an excuse for
not being yourself.
Never! A good reason
for letting it slip by
through desperate fingers
while your mind does something
you wouldn't.

Pay attention: let it be.
Or it drains away to fluttering dust,
leaving you only
a shell of a shell of a shouldn't.



Symm's Lectures #2: Possession and "Stealing the Soul"

This is an edited 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".

Razier Silverwing, a member of the list, was uncertain at first about accepting his Draconic Spirit Guide, Sarnoth.

Razier Silverwing: *I was actually deathly afraid that the Dragon guide that I was going to get (or that would come to me) would steal my soul or corrupt it or destroy it, and thus I would not be able to go on to my next life.*

Symms: "Stealing the soul" is a common bit of wicked behaviour attributed to many other races besides Demons. There are even stories of Human wizards with the power to steal a soul.

How can a soul be stolen? The soul is the very definition of the entire Self -- the totality of one's experiences, feelings, and perspectives within the Self-Awareness, not only in the present life, but throughout the multi-existential path of the "Energy Facet" that is an individual soul. In order to truly steal a soul, the villain would have to completely *become* the target, and lose him- or her-self in the process.

Devils, Demons and Others who understand this have no wish to steal another's soul in that manner, even if it *could* be done. The loss of the Self would be much too great a price to pay.

The phrase "stealing a soul" is often misused to describe the more common phenomenon of Possession, wherein the *body* is stolen (or, more often than not, as in amicable channeling, willingly leant for a time). In fact, I am, in a way, "possessing" Jymi's body in order to convey this information to you.

"Selling" the soul is another misnomer. When an individual becomes so infatuated, or obsessed, with an idea or a goal that it is incorporated into the very Essence of the person's Self, the majority of their energy is directed to that idea. This is a personal choice; not a contract with a malevolent being.

For example: many people love money. Some love it so much that they can think of little else than acquiring more and more of it. In your Middle Ages, a successful businessman might have been accused of "selling his soul" for riches, when the case was really that he *devoted* his soul, completely, to the business of making money. In some cases, he may have secretly used Magic to help him, but his success is to *his own* credit. He applied *his own* energy.

Whether he obtained his wealth honorably or not is a moot point in this discussion, as many less-well-off neighbors would be jealous of another's success and only too eager to accuse him of "dealing with the Devil". (Unless, of course, he was the local priest. Then he could have defended himself with the "God's Will" clause.)

If you are strong in Spirit, your soul is invincible. You need not worry about soul-thieves. Your only concern is maintaining your own *inner balance*. Learn to apply your energy, and learn when to put it down and do something else for awhile.

R.S.: *I've a feeling that that is also why I had such trouble learning to travel to the astral planes...I was too filled with fear. And ESPECIALLY after the situation where my friend's guide got kidnaped and held HOSTAGE in the astral (not too mention tortured, etc.), that really put up my little barriers...*

Symms: The Astral, and other planes, do hold certain dangers. They are the homes of many Beings, of all different dispositions, much like the inhabitants of your Earth plane. It is no more or less dangerous than traveling on your plane to an unfamiliar place (or even in your home town). You'll find different people to deal with, and new rules and customs that you must learn if you want to get along. Your friend's guide had an unfortunate, traumatic experience and it is easy to see why this would put you off. Let it be a lesson in caution, rather than the foundation of an impassable barrier.

Before you were born into this World, the physical plane was intimidating territory for your soul. You had to overcome your fear of it, but now you are usually comfortable and "at-home" here. (I didn't say you were *happy* about it; I meant that you can travel



through most areas here with reasonable certainty that you won't be kidnaped or tortured. Of course those activities occasionally take place here too, but through all your experiences in this life, you've learned what to watch for, and how to avoid it.)

Both you and Sarnoth are strong and talented. With a little caution and forethought, you won't have to live in terror of the Multiverse.

R.S.: *So, basically, I have to give my consent to be possessed or my soul to be stolen/broken?*

Symms: Essentially, that is correct. You know that you must be careful when you lend your body (as in possession) or you might have trouble from the tenant. And you choose your own obsessions. No one can make you truly devote your energy to any thing or idea without your consent. You may often feel as though your life is controlled by others, but there is never – **never** – any circumstance in which you have no choice but to become a thought-less automaton.

While it is true that a soul may be imprisoned or broken by outside forces, again, your consent (given consciously at the moment, or unknowingly, through choices made before the circumstance) is required before this can occur.

One example: Most prisoners on your plane probably believe that they did not "choose" to be incarcerated, but really, their choice was made when they set out on the path that would eventually lead them to jail. Once imprisoned, they have a lot of work to do if they wish to leave and ensure that they don't return there: they either choose to adapt their behaviour (if not their thoughts) to the basic conventions of society, or they return to captivity again and again.

Occasionally, even an innocent "victim of circumstances" may be wrongly imprisoned, but then they, too, have the same choice: what will they do during that time? Grow bitter? Learn how to become a criminal? Finally write their novel? Help someone else to choose a different life path? The lessons learned from every situation depend on attitude and choice of perspective. And I will include what Jymi is thinking is a "cop-out" answer: even the wrongly-imprisoned innocent chose their fate. The Higher Self makes choices that your

conscious mind would never consider, because there are lessons to be learned through both joy and suffering. What fun is playing the game if the challenges are always beneath your potential? You keep trying to win, or *you allow* your soul to be broken.

R.S.: *How do you "apply your energy"? And how do you develop inner balance? I feel so...threatened, and whatever, sometimes, I feel it's IMPOSSIBLE to slow or calm down.*

Symms: Practice, practice, practice. Life gives you many opportunities to develop strength and balance.

When I say "learn to apply your energy", I mean that you must choose your "obsessions" and direct your energy to them appropriately. If you want to play the guitar, you must study and practice. If you want to become a master sorcerer, you must study and practice. You must allow your goals to become a part of you, and you of them. This is the application of energy.

Balance comes in when you know when to STOP applying your energy for awhile. Working with the guitar for an hour per day is a good thing; working with it so much that all other activities are excluded will upset the balance of the other areas of your life. You decide what it's worth to you.

One way to develop inner balance is to set small goals that will take you to your larger ones.

"Today I will learn about the uses for the herb *asafotida*." That accomplished, you go and do something else for awhile.

"Today I will begin learning the uses for every herb ever discovered and then I'll start on the stones and I won't stop until I'm an expert and can blast my neighbor's house away with a fireball" (a-hem – Jymi) will only lead to frustration and the unhealthy forms of obsession due to the imbalance of energy. Take time for renewal. Practice your Art, and practice the Art of Doing Nothing.



The Demon Symms is willing to discuss spirituality with the Grim's readers.
Contact him at
thegrim@grimagix.com

SERIOUS ERROR.
ALL SHORTCUTS HAVE DISAPPEARED.
SCREEN, MIND. BOTH ARE BLANK.

MY FAVORITE

STUPID EMAIL

Here are some actual work orders and maintenance complaints submitted for repair by US Air Force Pilots and the written repair confirmation from the Maintenance crews.

(P) Left inside main tire almost needs replacement
(M) Almost replaced left inside main tire

(P) Test flight OK, except "autoland" is very rough
(M) "Autoland" not installed on this aircraft

(P) #2 propeller seeping prop fluid
(M) #2 propeller seepage normal - #1 #3 and #4 propellers lack normal seepage

(P) Something loose in cockpit
(M) Something tightened in cockpit

(P) Evidence of leak on right main landing gear
(M) Evidence removed

(P) DME volume unbelievably loud
(M) Volume set to a more believable level

(P) Dead bugs on windshield
(M) Live bugs on order

(P) Autopilot in altitude hold mode produces a 200 fpm descent
(M) Cannot reproduce problem on the ground

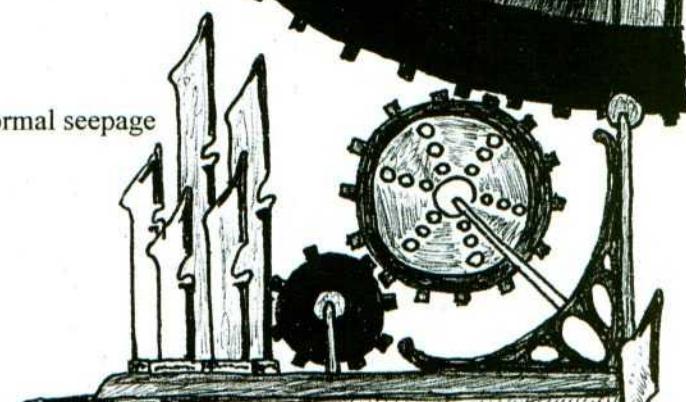
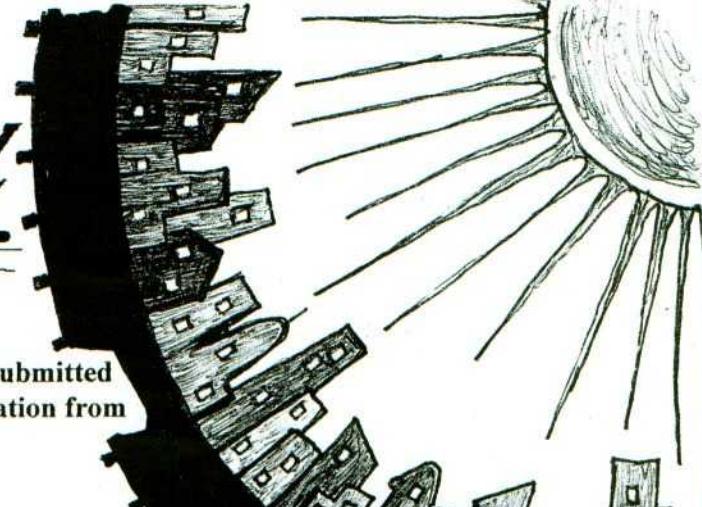
(P) IFF inoperative
(M) IFF always inoperative in OFF mode

(P) Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick
(M) That's what they are there for

(P) Number three engine missing
(M) Engine found on right wing after brief search

(P) Aircraft handles funny
(M) Aircraft warned to straighten up, "fly right" and be serious

(P) Target Radar hums
(M) Reprogrammed Target Radar with the words

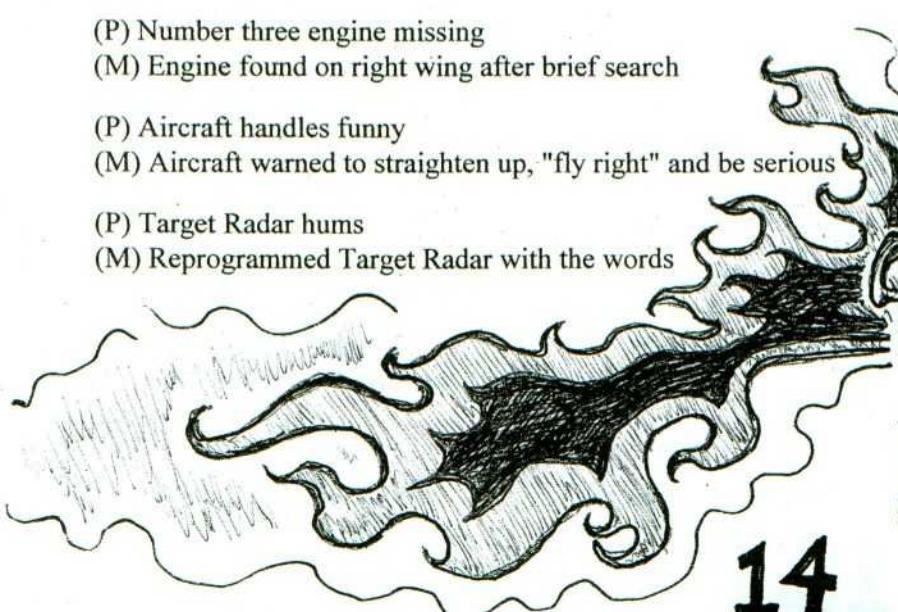


I recall the Novembers
grey and damp
and orange on the inside

The space between us
is thick with summer steam
the call of crickets
and the prelude to Autumn.

Ah, well -
don't let anyone tell you
what you can dream for yourself.
-X/O

YOUR FILE WAS SO BIG.
IT MIGHT BE VERY USEFUL.
BUT NOW IT IS GONE.



GET READY FOR FUN AND SAVINGS...

IT'S PADDLIN' DAYS AGAIN AT

ZIEBARR'S HOT HOME COOKIN' AND LUBE SHOPPE!



LOWEST FUEL
PRICES...
ON ANY
PLANE OF
REALITY!



CLIP-N-SAVE

ENJOY A REFRESHING BEVERAGE TODAY!
COLD WEATHER GOT YOU DOWN?
HAVE A STEAMING HOT **CUPPA'GOO™** - **ON THE HOUSE!**



EW!

ZIEBARR'S MYSTERY CAR WASH!

YOU survive...the Vortex of Cloth?
About that Hot Wax! ...*Guaranteed Organic!*



It's like setting the Shower Massage dial to "SCARY FUN"...FOR YOUR CAR!!



Ziebarr's Hot Home Cookin' and Lube Shoppe is the Proud Sponsor of Damn Near Everything they ask us to! Whenever you're having a great time, think "Ziebarr's" and shout

"WHEEEEE~YAAAA!"



PIE!!
Don't let the kids down –
bring home a delicious
Retchberry Pie!!

You know they love it!

Hooola!

TAKE THE JT
FOR GREAT PIE!

AND...DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH'S
PARKINGLOT PERFORMANCES
FEATURING

SCABTRONIX
AND
OATMEAL TORQUE

Visit our new location on Highway π 's Exit 33!

YOU STEP IN THE STREAM,
BUT THE WATER HAS MOVED ON.
THIS PAGE IS NOT HERE.

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phantom of the obvious
generic 4 song demo

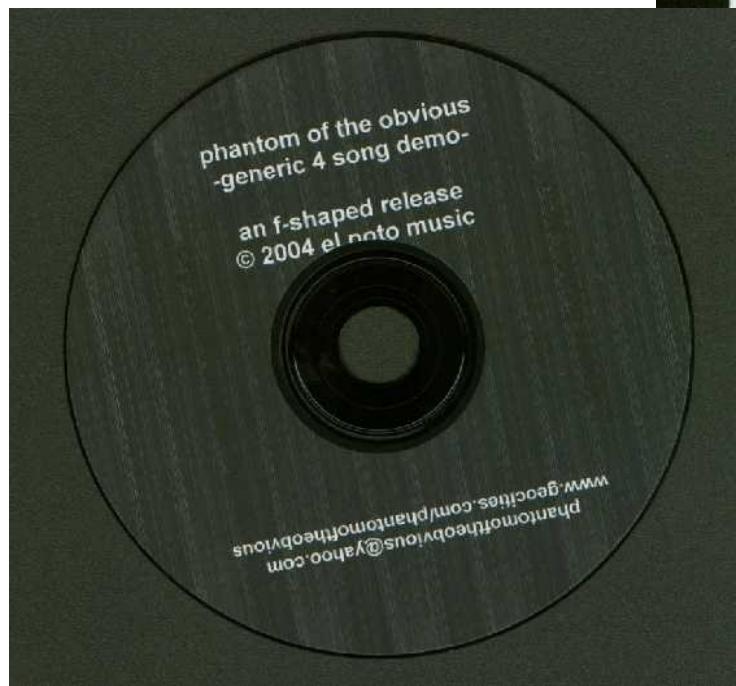
1. the end will destroy you too, my love
2. a sympathetic ode to sheep
3. stillborn
4. the inexplicable waste of space

all songs © 2003 El Poto music / Phantom of the Obvious

kat - vocals
Oris - bass, guitar, drums (loops/programmed), vocals

upcoming releases on f-shaped records-

Phantom of the Obvious "darksuperneoncobaltblue"
Remote Viewing Society "lost time accident" &
"greetings from darkest souville - the rvs box set"



phantom of the obvious
-generic 4 song demo-

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replaced the unsuccessful Microsoft error