

◇ Defenestration ◇

Volume III, Issue VIII

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Tolstoy on Docket as a Fisher
by
G. David Schwartz

Say, are you fishing today?

No, I am not

Aren't you a fisher?

No, no. My name is Fisher! I am not a fisherman.
sorry

Oh, dreadfully

Hair
by
John Gooley

I have seen the best heads of my generation go bald
And by this, time's tragic jest, undeniably galled
Meeting long unseen friends in the darkness of the night
Pathetically aware of a revealing fluoro light.

I have seen caps and hats and haircuts of untruth
And days of desire for the rolling waves of youth
Assurance of mortality emblazoned on the pate
In young men's eyes the fear of the same receding fate.

More Short Poems
by
Pete Lee

#1:

first of April
the cat wants out
no he doesn't

#2:

long victory speech --
ice in a champagne bucket
melts in the hot air

#3:

a sign posted
on Cemetery Way:
ROAD ENDS AHEAD

Aliens In Our Midst
by
John McDonnell

"What's that?" Harry said. "That red disk up in the sky."

"It's a UFO!" his wife Miranda squealed. "Oh Lord, my first UFO." She clasped her hands to her chest. They were driving in a stretch of desert in New Mexico, and the red disk appeared out of nowhere in the cloudless blue sky.

"It's no UFO," Miranda's father Bud said, from the back seat. "It's the Flemish. I told you before, the damned Flemish run everything. The UN is just a front for them. We must have got too close to one of their secret weapon factories. They'll rip our fingernails out now."

"Wake Brittany up," Miranda said. "She'll be happy to see this." Brittany, the teenage daughter, was asleep in the back seat. She had been in a nasty mood since they left Texas yesterday to visit Harry's relatives in New Mexico. Nobody made a move to wake her up.

"Look," Harry said, slowing the car to a stop. "It's landing." The craft had rapidly descended to a spot on the highway 100 yards in front of them, where it shimmered in the desert heat.

"What a blessing," Miranda said. "I can't wait to tell my spiritual advisor. Do you think they'll abduct us? I heard they do strange experiments – really intimate stuff – when they take you on the ship." Her face glowed with anticipation.

"The UN is run by a Flemish cabal who want to install a King of the World," Bud said. "Everybody knows that."

"They're coming out," Harry said.

Indeed, a hatch opened, and two beings hoisted themselves out. They were the size of small cars, and they sluiced along the highway rapidly, till they were right in front of Harry's windshield. They were green and slimy, with large warts all over them, long probing trunks, beady red eyes, and six arms. Some of the arms cradled long metallic rods.

"This is delicious," Miranda said. "I'll go down in history. Do you think they'll understand me? I want to welcome them to our planet."

"Everything is run from a TV studio in the Hague," Bud said.

"Are you sure they're peaceful, honeybunch?" Harry said. "I'm not so sure, the way they're staring at us."

But Miranda was already out of the car. "We are a kind and gentle people," she began, spreading her arms wide.

Something flashed, and every organ in her body burst at once, splattering all over the car.

"Now, that's going too far," Harry yelled. He got out of the car, but before he was able to take a step, his body too was sprinkled for yards in every direction.

Bud was next. "To hell with your lies and secrecy," he said, leaping out of the car and waving his fists. "Think you run the world, do you?"

His baseball cap fluttered to the ground after the flash.

All the noise finally woke up Brittany. "What the?" she said, rubbing sleep from her eyes. She stepped over Bud's vital organs as she got out of the car to size up the situation.

"It's bad enough I have to go on this stupid trip, but now we're stopped? In the middle of the desert? Where there's no cell service? I am NOT going to be stuck in this lame-ass place one minute longer. You bring them back right now!"

She was a vision in a denim miniskirt, pink tube top, and sandals. Her pimpled face was blotched red and white, and she was chewing an industrial size wad of gum. The aliens looked at each other and slapped two of their feelers together. Their eyes got moist, and a sound like "Whoa," came from their trunks.

Just then a very large silver disk appeared out of nowhere and landed nearby. The two creatures seemed to cringe before it. In an instant the hatch opened, and a much larger green being, without the warts, appeared. It made stern, angry sounds, and the smaller aliens moved backward.

The large alien turned to Brittany and said, "I'm terribly sorry for the behavior of my sons. They seem to have been on a joyride. Please forgive the intrusion. Terribly sorry too for the unfortunate destruction of—"

"Blah, blah, blah," Brittany said. "Look, I don't care about your family problems. It's a million degrees out here, and I'm sweating like a pig. I want my parents back now, so we can leave."

"But that's not poss—"

"Hell-o," Brittany said, stamping her foot. "I am NOT going to say this twice."

"Yes, yes, of course." The creature addressed itself to the two smaller creatures, who made some kind of adjustment to their metallic rods, and then one, by one, they pointed the rods at Harry, Miranda, and Bud, sending out energy streams that reassembled the bodies in an instant, leaving them dazed and blinking in the sun.

"They will be back to normal in a few minutes," the large being said. "With no memory of this incident, of course."

"Finally," Brittany said.

"One other thing."

"Yes?"

"My sons seem to have taken a liking to you. Would you mind if we brought you on the ship and did some experiments on you?"

"What? I told you I'm in a hurry."

"Oh, right. Well, could we take a group picture then, so they can have something to remember you by?"

Brittany sighed. "Just one. And make it quick."

The large alien positioned her between the two smaller ones, then produced a small silver disk, said, "Cheese!" and snapped a picture.

"Thank you," it said. "My sons will treasure this."

"Whatever. Could you please just leave?"

"Right. Goodbye, then." In seconds they were back in their ships, and they shot up 30,000 feet and disappeared.

"I think we're near Roswell," Harry said, when they were on the road again. "Boy, there's a bunch of hokum for you. Little green men in the desert. Nothing but a way to drum up tourism, if you ask me."

"The Flemish," Bud said. "I told you, the Flemish are behind it all."

The All-Pro Banking Team **by** **Jon Alan Carroll**

Nobody's tougher than a professional banker, and the All-Pro Banking Team brings together the roughest bankers in the game. These dark warriors are long accustomed to fame, huge bonuses, and the roar of the depositors.

The All-Pro Banking Team is chosen annually by secret ballot by business and financial writers, a colorful bunch of characters in their own rights. Despite some "we wuz robbed" bellyaching by a few banks and financial institutions, this year's All-Pro Banking Team is one of the strongest in memory.

Player: Harold Rupert

Position: EVP

Team: Global Domination Bank

Rupert's been a standout since his days at Harvard Business School, where he starred in the backfield known as the "The Four MBAs of the Apocalypse."

A brutally instinctual banker, Harold never fails to grab capital gains at the bottom line of scrimmage. His biggest strength is slamming through blockers and tacklers, as demonstrated by his rout of the DC Auditors.

This grizzled veteran's nickname is "The Eliminator" for a lot of good reasons. "Harold banks to win," said one awed teammate. "He makes the tough get going."

Player: Cynthia Ruebens

Position: VP - Foreclosures

Team: Citi-Merrill-Schwab

The only choice at this position is Cynthia Ruebens, aka "Dr. Death." In a highly specialized position, Ruebens' scientific efficiency is almost chilling to watch. Cynthia's smash-mouth tactics cost her some 57 penalties for unnecessary roughness, but try telling that to all the second mortgages that fell before her onslaught. Every inch the All-Pro.

Player: Apu Managanahan

Position: SVP

Team: New Delhi Offshoring Bank

Built small in a big boy's game, Managanahan's work ethic and hard-hitting style have earned him a place in the spotlight.

This is one loan officer who always gives 110%. Although New Delhi had to play catch-up banking for most of the season, Managanahan was a human highlight reel. His dazzling moves left opposing attorneys general and SEC investigators cursing in the mud.

Apu's most inspired play this season was to install ATMs in Hell, allowing depositors to access funds no matter where they go.

Chicken Pizza Divorce
by
Mia Kammeyer-Mueller

I'm sorry honey. I don't know why I said it. You were just asking about dinner and I was thinking about dinner and then I said divorce. But I wasn't thinking about divorce. Not ours, anyway. Not anyone's really. I saw Miles and Susie today, and I think they'll get divorced some day. I always think that when I see them so maybe that's why I said it. We're not like them, though. I don't want you to think I think we're like them. Other people probably don't think we're like them, either. And Susie doesn't remind me of you at all. You're totally different. Not that I'm comparing you and Susie. I don't really even know that much about her. I don't spend time thinking about Susie or wondering how she might be like you. That's not what I meant. You're just different. Not in a bad way, not like weird-different (except for that little thing you like with feathers) just not—you're special. You're not like anyone else I know. Which is good. It's why I wanted to marry you. Why I still want to be married to you. Not divorced. No divorce on the menu. Not tonight. Or any night. It just slipped out. I wasn't even thinking about it. I am so totally committed to marriage, to our marriage. No matter what I say. Unless it's about loving you and wanting to stay married, because I love you with all my heart—

"Hey, mister, we only have room for like five words on the card that goes with the flowers. After that, I have to charge you."

"How much?"

"Twenty-five cents a word."

Sorry, sorry, sorry. Love, Ben.

I Married a Popo Woman **by** **Michael Fowler**

Abandoned in the tropical rain forest by young white parents who tired of infant-rearing while on safari, or so I surmise from my complexion, I grew up never knowing civilization. When at last I became a healthy young man looking to build a family of my own, I sought me a suitable wife. I was fortunate to have many species of mate to choose from, and I carefully considered my options with an eye to a long-lasting relationship and children.

After much thought I chose Myrtle, a crocodile whom I had been seeing, to be my bride. We both enjoyed the muddy, sunny bank of the river where we lived, both loved swimming, and were both fond of tearing fish apart with our flashing teeth. Myrtle seemed to like it when I lay beside her on the muddy bank, my arm around her thick throat, while my free hand picked the parasites off her lovely green skin or perhaps massaged yard after yard of her gums with a sturdy twig. And when after some weeks of courtship I saw her lay two dozen eggs in the ground, I was overcome with paternal pride. I didn't quite know how I had achieved fatherhood, but I had no doubt that this was meant to be. Life now seemed swollen with promise and bursting with purpose.

And yet, what feelings of anxiety came over me when those eggs hatched out and I beheld my lively, reptilian progeny rush with snapping mouths and flailing tails into the river! How was I to support them, I who had neither income nor prospects? Surely they needed my guidance and my financial backing for the duration of their childhoods, and we were talking in the neighborhood of twenty-four wriggling, voracious childhoods here. To be sure, I didn't know precisely how long newborn crocks remained dependent, but what if it were for a year or longer? What if they wanted to go to college? Overlooking the obvious fact that animals born in the wild depended upon their fathers for very little, except perhaps not to be eaten alive, I panicked.

Nor did it help matters that Myrtle, now a busy mom, seemed suddenly to change her opinion of me. Whenever I came near her she snapped at me with those jaws that could sever a medium tree trunk, and she never wanted to cuddle anymore. I literally took my life in my hands when I swam with her and stroked her pale belly under water. Sometimes I had to sprint madly for shore, thrashing the water with all my might, only inches from her widespread maw. All this I was willing to forgive, in hopes that it was only the thankless task of parenthood that made her so testy, and not some dissatisfaction with myself. Her burden and my similar one would lift, I hoped, when she and I reached an agreement on how best to nurture our large family. I was thinking that perhaps she could ferry animals across the river for a small amount of edible fruit, or travel upstream to the village of the Popo people and get a part-time job that paid real beads.

However, when one afternoon I approached our section of the riverbank and beheld Myrtle with one of our offspring in her jaws—I think it was Henry Jr., who was always a bit of a pest—I could deal with the relationship no longer. I was horrified. True, I was raised by wild animals in a rain forest, but I had my standards. I asked Myrtle for a divorce, not understanding that, by the Law of the Wild, all I needed to do was walk out. When a wise parrot explained this to me, I walked at once.

I then determined to find a mate of my own species, or as close as I could find within

walking distance. I hiked to the Popo village some thirteen miles upriver from where I still made my home and petitioned the council of elders for a bride. For weeks nothing happened. I kept going back and making inquiries, and finally a man, Jack, told me to chill, my application was being processed. When the following week I still had no bride, I complained again. "What's the problem?" I grouched. "It's not like I'm asking for a beauty pageant winner." Another man, also named Jack, laughed and said that was the last thing I needed to worry about.

When I was finally introduced to Flaba, during a ceremony that included the ritualistic sounds of a spider monkey breaking wind and of a man losing his sex drive, I was overjoyed. Yet I still had to pass the test of fidelity, or we could not marry. One thing a Popo woman demanded of a prospective husband was that he always be faithful to her, and the test devised to determine this in advance was a hellish ordeal. I had heard, from my spot on the river thirteen miles away, the anguished cries of the men undergoing this test prior to their taking the vows of matrimony, and more than once stopped dead in my tracks at the thought of what the poor fellow must be enduring, so horrifying were his protests. And yet, like a love-struck fool, I couldn't wait to prove myself to Flaba.

The trial began with the elders tying me to a sap tree, which made me itch. Then Flaba herself, eyes flashing, approached me with the hellish so-called *whampooter* stick. With this instrument she proceeded to beat me until I was crippled and my beard fell out. I was told later that my cries were audible on the tops of mountains and at the bottoms of rivers, and that all the animals in the forest were silent during my trial, though how this was ascertained I do not know. And yet, for all my protestation, I passed the loyalty test, for I did not run away. I considered during my pain that, had I not been tied hand and foot to the sap tree, it would have been a greater test of my willingness to hold my ground and absorb the excruciating blows of the whampooter stick, but I feared to criticize ancient tribal customs.

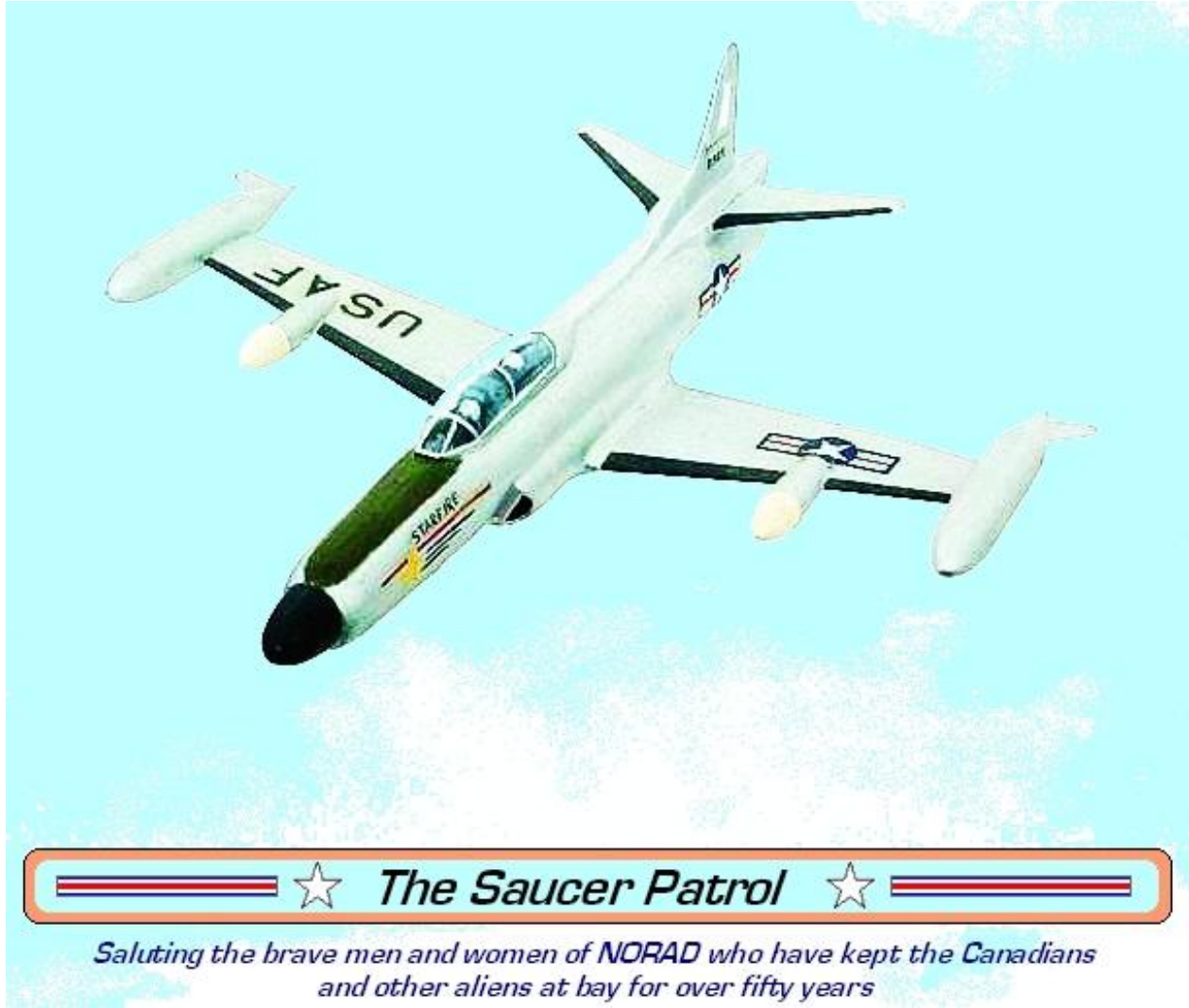
After I was released from my bondage, I had no trouble staying by Flaba's side, at least for the duration of my crippledness that in fact looked to be permanent. If I ever so much as cast a glance out the door of our homely hut at a passing female, human or animal, Flaba had only to place her hand on the fearsome *whampooter* stick that stood in the corner next to the broom to bring me back in line. And were we abroad in the village or even at a great remove from home, the mere raising of her hand as if the *whampooter* were in her grasp, though in reality it stood in a dignified manner far away in our hut beside the giggling broom, was sufficient to restore my undying fidelity.

Flaba and I were happy together, you can't imagine. We joked and laughed. I told Flaba she wasn't the fairest flower in the field, and she told me I wasn't the sharpest machete in the shed. Soon she was expecting, and still I didn't know how that happened. I was confident, however, that she wouldn't bear me twenty-four children as Myrtle had, or at least I hoped she wouldn't. And I promised Flaba I would help her bury our eggs in the warm mud and guard each of them with my life, even if there were a dozen of them. She looked at me squint-eyed and called me a name that meant "soil for brains," but it didn't come between us. It turned out she laid only one egg, and I didn't see where. I only saw little Paploobi after he hatched. For days I loved him. But then I blow-darted him for a delectable piglet, and now there's trouble.

Jesus Christ!
by
Matt



The Saucer Patrol
by
Trebor Nehoc



You Are Fired
by
Tania Paquette



Contributor Biographies

G. David Schwartz is the former president of Seedhouse, the online interfaith committee. Schwartz is the author of *A Jewish Appraisal of Dialogue*, and coauthor, with Jacqueline Winston, of *Parables In Black and White*. Currently a volunteer at Drake Hospital in Cincinnati, Schwartz continues to write essays, and fiction. His new book, *Midrash and Working Out Of The Book* is now in stores or can be ordered here <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1418489565/002-9519737-8377637?n=283155>

John Gooley loves to cook. He does a mean minestrone, a meaner pork stir-fry, a brutal roast chicken. But it's his osso buco that makes people fall to their knees and cry out rapturously, 'God is Great, but Gooley is Greater'. Recipe requests to: jgooley@aapt.net.au

Pete Lee's former occupations include army sergeant/counterintelligence agent, federal intelligence operations specialist, private investigator, newspaper reporter, and social worker. He now lives in relatively blissful semi-retirement in a small town in the Mojave Desert. His poetry has appeared in numerous print publications and e-journals.

John McDonnell is a hard-drinking writer in the Hemingway mold, who shoots wildebeest on safari in between writing bestselling novels. No, actually John McDonnell is the pen name of an evil dwarf who writes sex-crazed epistolary novels for an audience of perverts. No, that's not right... John McDonnell is a serial killer who writes romance novels on the side. Sigh. Actually, John McDonnell is a well-adjusted, boring person who has not a single perversion or neurosis or addiction worth noting. He is currently under treatment for this, realizing he will never be a successful writer until he at least develops a facial tic.

A true artist, **Jon Alan Carroll** was destroyed by drink and the indifference of a callous, money-mad society.

Mia Kammeyer-Mueller can name that tune in three notes, Jim. She also enjoys referring to herself in third person.

Michael Fowler is so good they should make him into a pie. I'd totally buy it.

Matt says: "I was born on a cloudy January 1st morning. In a town called Rio Grande, at the south of Argentina. I remember perfectly. Doctors woke up (with a huge hangover) just because of me. I was lucky to be born and not aborted by that people who smelled rancid; Needless to say I earned the contempt of the entire maternity staff. Two weeks after leaving the hospital, when my arms were strong enough, I killed my first Ox... nah, just kiddin. I picked up a pencil and started drawing. I grew up a normal child. At the age of 8 I met love for the first time. She was so purty. Short, sturdy, and gray pale skin. Her amberine radiance filled my childhood with joy. We spent so many hours laughing and playing Alley Cat. She loved when I used to tell her "DIR C:" or "DIR C: *.exe". You know how puppy love is. But soon I met someone else. It was love at first typing, and I'm sure it will last forever. I <3 U INET!!!!

Visit **Trebor Nehoc's** space-alien gallery at <http://trebornehoc.deviantart.com/gallery/>

Tania Paquette says: "Dabbling mainly in the simple cartoonish style since I was able to hold a pencil on my own. When I'm not drawing you can find me writing up a storm with fantasy based stories or the likes. Inspired by short animated cartoons (Doodles, Jack and

Marcel, Little tree friends...). I keep to my funny side when it comes to my art, but from time to time I like to show my romantic side."