

◇ Defenestration ◇

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What Monkey Wants by **Andy Glasser**

The University wasn't too impressed that I had taught the monkey to speak. No matter what I did, they always required more.

I knew that when I taught Chester to clean my office, put away my books, sweep up the cookie crumbs, and make neat piles of paper on my desk, it wasn't going to impress the department. But I couldn't lose with that, so I considered it my first success, regardless.

When I embarked upon my next project, to replicate Dr. Penny Patterson's work and teach him sign language, it was without resentment. I knew I was going to have to do something else.

I succeeded with that, but in too short an order. It should have been impressive to achieve - even such an unoriginal result - in only two and a half months, but in retrospect, the speed with which I completed my experiment may have made it look too easy. Perhaps I should have pretended to take more time. That lack of foresight probably contributed to the department's demand for more.

Regardless, I was up for the task, and ready to make my mark, with something never before done. It took me quite a bit more time, six months, or seven, before I could feel totally confident presenting the results. It was grueling work, and not just for me but for the monkey too, yes, especially for Chester, though I must admit, he wanted to learn and tried very hard. I pushed him, too. It couldn't have been any easier for Kelly Osborn to learn to dance, but that was achieved around the same time, and I'm not too proud to admit that she was an inspiration to us when we really needed it. During one particularly grueling week, in which we worked on one word at a time without break, Chester had a major meltdown, and said, quite by surprise, to me, "I QUIT," A phrase I hadn't taught him, but he must have seen it on *Dancing With The Stars*. It took a boatload of bananas to get him to come back to work, but by the end of the week I finally got him to utter the simple phrase, though he sounded like *The Elephant Man* doing it, "I... AM... A... MONKEY." It was a start.

And by the end of the seven months, having shed seventy five pounds between the two of us, (it helped that in the throes of work, I had forgotten to eat cookies, which was just as well because the Monkey was no longer sweeping up my crumbs), I had Chester debating, with considerable skill, the pros and cons of drug legalization.

The department was unimpressed. They wanted something more original, not just from me, but from the Monkey. They wanted to know from Chester, what it was like to be a monkey, not to hear about drug legalization from a primate who hadn't even tried marijuana (well, so I had to tell them).

They wanted an original story. They wanted, not to see that the Monkey could learn, but to learn from the Monkey. Mother of God! I was exhausted, but I looked at Chester, and he returned my glance, sideways, moving only his eyes. I could see within these large glass domes, pupils of black liquid that flowed with life, as if the eyes had a mind of their own. I believed then that he understood what they wanted, and felt the indignation that I, too, felt

at being underappreciated. But I saw, also, a determination, and it fueled in me a strength that came from unknown reserves.

They would regret it, I thought at that moment. When this monkey could express itself, they would be indicted for the crimes of all humanity. Only a monkey capable of independent perspective and the ability to express it could judge us like we really needed to be judged. It would be historic, an achievement above all previous achievements. I would be judged along with everyone else, but I didn't care. I had such high hopes for him. And they, with their less primitive minds, could not see. Chester smiled at me, and I smiled back.

I knew the old adage: if you put an infinite number of monkeys in front of a keyboard to tap randomly that one of them would produce something identical to the works of Shakespeare, but I didn't want to rely on chance. I set Chester down and began to teach him how to type. I taught him how to tell me he was hungry. I taught him how to tell me he was tired. I taught him to tell me when I hurt his feelings. I taught him about yearnings, for freedom, for trees, and girl monkeys. I taught him that there was no "I" in TEAM, and that our team, he and I, were different than those department pointy heads. He never quite understood what I meant by "pointy head," had trouble equating the "sharp" that meant smart, with "pointy." Nevertheless he was soon writing phrases like "I AM HAPPY." And "I AM FRUSTRATED" (oh proud parent I was).

We started with stories that began "ONCE UPON A TIME" and I did even manage to teach the monkey to lie. But it was hard to get him to write a good opening line.

This was his best work, and alas it was never good enough to earn the funding that we so desperately desired. I remain to this day, profoundly disappointed in Chester, though I would never tell him that:

ONCE UPON TIME ALL WANT BANANA. THEN WANT BACK TO JUNGLE. THEN WANT CITY. WANT TALK. DON'T WANT TALK. WANT GIRL MONKEY, WANT HAIRLESS GIRL. NONE TO WANT. WANT WHAT WANT, PLEASE. HAVE GREAT WANTING FOR WANT WANT.

Not Shakespeare. I tried to get him to polish up the grammar, for the department heads, but acquiesced after he made it clear to me that this was his aesthetic. I knew we wouldn't get the funding, but I stood by my monkey. He had principles. At this point, we had been through so much together I had to accept that he would make his own choices, and that it was time he followed his own path. He ended up in a city zoo, with plenty of bananas and maybe even a girl monkey. That was, after all, what he said he wanted.

It was frustrating to me that he spoke better than this, but who was I to edit? You see, it wasn't that he didn't know the rules, he wanted to break them. He hated grammar and his, by then well developed, style reflected how he thought a monkey should sound in a story. I had no choice but to consider this an objective measure of what could only be "maturity."

So, I didn't have a problem with it, but I didn't like his overuse of the word "WANT." He hated grammar; ok, who doesn't? But it did seem to me that he also hated the thesaurus, and that bothered me.

Three Poems
by
Emily Severance

Sharp As A Tack

Self help insult books are on the rise
Since researchers discovered
the severely critical remain
sharp as a tack into old age;
alzheimers thwarted
with withering stares.

senile freak of a septogenarian
Go drool yourself a pool and drown in it.

Perfection striving parents can now protect against soft plum minds,
stomp out the mush of acceptance,

Buck up pansy boy, and tell your piggy friends to get back to their sty.

and insure the long, mentally alert life of their children.

That's right keep on smiling, beneficent shit for brains.

Having a Divine Time

Creatures Beware!
You're in mortal danger from your immoral living.
Look at the honeybee—smote by God with plague.
They brought it on themselves centering hives
Around gigantic queens copulating with male after male.
God will not tolerate such outlandish promiscuity.
If that means the end of honey, pollination and fruit, so be it.

We've been studying the field reports
We know about you lesbian koalas and Laysan albatrosses,
Gay bottlenose dolphins and bearded vultures.
His grand plan is one male to one female and ALL aberrations
Will feel the force of his wrath. Male on male
Dog humping will no longer be allowed. That's not
Proper for man's best friend! We're calling the pound or destroying
You yourselves: keep God's green earth pure for our children.

We the devout are putting field crickets, frogs, and polecats on notice.
If you continue to create families of one female to many men
Expect to be hunted down. Polygamous walrus and lions, you
May have fooled Lewis Carroll and C. S. Lewis, but we see
You for what you are. Two by two Noah let you aboard,
Not one to five! Rectify your deviant lifestyles before melting glaciers

Flood us again. We're banning Alice in Wonderland, burning
The Narnia Chronicles, then coming after you.

God's calling us to cull the creatures to a divinely guided 7%.
We're collecting nets, rifles, traps and fishing poles.
We're forming brigades and launching crusades.
Pipefish, bandicoots, Galapagos hawks and all other
Unnatural abominations. Change your evil ways before it's too late.

Effigy

we took the effigy to the cleaners
 today
to get the red paint off.
it is my great grandmother before her fiery death.
 my grandmother cries
 everytime she sees it.
we pretend they aren't her paint brushes hidden
 under
 the bed.

The Untold History of Ham Sandwich's First Rival

by
Nelson Lloyd

Everyone knows about the history of Ham Sandwich, left unconsumed in the department break room on the afternoon of December 12th when its then owner, Dr. Perry Birnbo, decided to go out to lunch with colleagues. As most know, the deli-sliced, sourdough-housed entrée—whose genius had until then gone entirely unnoticed—went on to receive its Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Yale in 1960. From its beginning as part of the incoming class of '54, the sandwich defied all expectations by becoming the John Newsmith Fellow in '56, the winner of the third-year teaching award in '59, and the recipient of the Dana D. Hampsted Prize for the best dissertation by a non-eating member since Mary Veneble's teacup had stolen the show in 1892. The rest, involving the mounting accusations of anti-Semitism that led to the "Bad Air Affair" and Sandwich's subsequent precipitous plummet from public grace in the recent months, is popular knowledge. What few have heard, however, is the story of Gregory Baulk, the very last applicant *not* to be accepted to the Ph.D. program in Comparative Literature at Yale in 1954. While this fact alone might not make Baulk's story worth telling—or even historically confirmable—a series of letters between he and the college, including the initial acceptance letter initiating their correspondence, now provide us with a window into a history otherwise forgotten. Unfortunately, subsequent letters have been sealed by state mandate 4.32.115b, and so we will only be able to provide Baulk's preliminary exchange with the institution below.

The Correspondence

April 1, 1954

Dear Mr. Baulk,

Thank you for your submission to the Graduate Program of Comparative Literature at Yale University. We are pleased to announce that your application has been approved by the department and accepted by the college and thus we may offer you a place with us this fall, in the incoming class of 1954. We are also able to offer you a teaching fellowship beginning in your second year and for two subsequent years after that. Please let us know of your acceptance or declination of this offer by April 15.

Congratulations again on your fine application; we do hope to see you in August,

Benson Kruger, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Studies
The Department of Comparative Literature
Yale University

April 6, 1954

Dear Dr. Kruger,

I am writing to accept the offer of Ph.D. candidacy from the Yale University Department of Comparative Literature. Should you need any further information from me, please let me know.

Thank you for the opportunity; I look forward to meeting you in the fall.

Sincerely,
Gregory B. Baulk

P.S. Is there anyone I can get in touch with regarding finding housing in New Haven?

April 3, 1954

Dear Mr. Baulk,

An unfortunate and troubling mistake has been made (two, actually), which I'm afraid will make it impossible for the Department of Comparative Literature at Yale University to offer you a place in the incoming graduate class of 1954. Due to the inclusion of an additional candidate, who we had mistakenly recorded as having declined our offer, which was not the case, we no longer have either the funding or the University's permission to extend an invitation to you for the fall. We apologize for any inconvenience this might cause you and wish you luck in finding an institution whereat to pursue your graduate studies. And, of course, you should feel free to apply for the incoming class of 1955.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Benson Kruger, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Studies
The Department of Comparative Literature
Yale University

April 8, 1954

Dear Dr. Kruger,

I was confused and surprised by your last letter, and thought I would write to confirm what I assume must be an error. I do believe that I applied to and was admitted to the Ph.D. program in the Department of Comparative Literature at Yale University. Certainly, in such a case as this, an exception can be made. Though I know that you try to cap your admissions a six, perhaps this year, you might allow in seven? At the very least, I would expect that you would allow me to defer my acceptance until next year.

Sincerely,

Gregory Baulk
Ph.D. Candidate, Yale University

April 15, 1954

Dear Mr. Baulk,

I do understand your confusion, and I wish that I could allay your worries. Let me assure you that if there were any way that we could be fair to you while also being fair to the other candidates to whom we made offers, we would. Neither the finances nor the staffing resources are available to make an exception in this case. (Eisenhower's redirection of monies to Vietnam has already begun to affect the strength of our endowment; we all must do our part.) Let me assure you that what you are experiencing is an aberration: a simple, honest error has been made. We do apologize for this, but trust that you will one day understand—if not sympathize—with our position. A fine scholar, with a record such as yours, should have no problem finding a placement elsewhere. We do wish you the best of luck.

Lux et veritas,

Benson Kruger, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Studies
The Department of Comparative Literature
Yale University

April 22, 1954

Dear Dr. Kruger,

I have heard some startling information from a friend of mine who currently attends your university. Please tell me that I am mistaken, and that my position on your incoming class roster has not been filled by a ham sandwich. I eagerly await your reply.

Sincerely,

Gregory Baulk
Ph.D. Candidate, Yale University
P.S. My father is a lawyer, and if I have indeed been replaced by a comestible, you can be certain we will press this matter further.

May 1, 1954

Dear Mr. Baulk,

I can assure you that your place on the 1960 class roster was not filled by a ham sandwich. The last candidate we accepted was an exceptional human scholar from North Dakota; though we were very excited about your proposed research into the "secret literature of the pygmy slow loris," we are also very pleased the class we have selected. I wish I could provide you with more information, but such information is kept strictly confidential. I do hope this helps you to begin to put this affair behind you.

Bien à toi,

Benson Kruger, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Studies
The Department of Comparative Literature
Yale University

P.S. I am very pleased that your father has found a career for himself. We wish him the best of luck going forward; we do not, however, believe at this time that is necessary to meet with him in person. We thank you, nonetheless, for the offer.

P.P.S. Incidentally, we did not quite understand your last point, as you were of course replaced by a comestible, i.e., an unspoiled member of the species *homo sapiens*. Did you really not think you were edible?

May 7, 1954

Dear Dr. Kruger,

Sir, I must admit that I am disappointed by the slippery and disingenuous content of your last reply. I have since ascertained the list of the 1960 class:

David Wilmington
Chin Ho Bok
Ham Sandwich
Harold B. Childress, III
Shirley Fincher
Jerome Du Bois

You have clearly selected a ham sandwich instead of me as a member of your incoming 1954 class. Please be honest with me in your replies; I cannot fathom how the work of a sandwich—the most simplistic of all the combinatory hand-held foods—could possibly have warranted such attention from the committee. This inclines me to think that I have been marked as guilty by association.

Given your previous reference to Ike and the effects of the battle of Dien Bien Phu, I fear that you all were threatened by the focus of my research interests as declared in my statement of purpose. Let me assure you that the slow loris is also indigenous to Cambodia, Laos, and China, that my interest in the history of its poetics is purely academic, and, in any case, that I am not focusing on customarily more incendiary syndicalist villanelles or fascist odes. Moreover, may I remind you that McCarthy is not doing so well in his hearings; this is not the time to be conservative (it's 1954 for god's sake!). If your rationale for my exclusion is political, then at least have the decency to tell me so; otherwise, please, tell me this is some sort of joke!

Sincerely,

Gregory Baulk
One-time Ph.D. Candidate, Yale University

P.S. My father, who is very well pleased with his career choice, has been advised. Expect to hear from him shortly.

May 15, 1954

Dear Mr. Kruger,

I am afraid you did not receive my last letter, as you have not replied. Though I assume by now that you have been contacted by *Kendall, Franklin, and Baulk*, I am still hoping that we might conclude this affair amicably and out of the courts. I have all confidence in Yale, and the Department of Comparative Literature, and feel that I can say for certain that they would never deny a man his rightful education in favor of a stack of deli meat on white bread. Please contact me should you have similar wishes and beliefs.

Sincerely,

Gregory Baulk
Hopeful Ph.D. Candidate, Yale University

May 22, 1954

Dear Mr. Baulk,

I can see now, considering your crude and mistaken assumptions regarding our candidates, that I shall have to explain the case in full. Let me remind you, before I begin, that you were at no point in direct competition with Ham Sandwich for a place on the incoming class roster. Once we saw the capacity for erudition and profound attention to detail of Sandwich, it rose immediately to the top of our list, making it in no way a direct competitor of yours.

It was Professor Perry Birmbo who first discovered the sandwich's genius. We were having a debate about whose aphorisms were sexier when translated into Medieval Dutch—Wittgenstein's or Nietzsche's—when Sandwich let drop a piece of wilted arugula that floored us all and ended the debate of a sudden. It was only afterwards that we developed a better understanding of the precise and well-crafted nature of its constitution: its Virginia honey baked center; its incredibly accessible Swiss cheese; its layers of Italian greenery and Shitake mushrooms. The small spice of Aji Molido from Argentina; the Dijon mustard; the German Meerrettich! And the jälkiuunileipä—the Finnish sourdough rye bread—my God! Birmbo was fired immediately for going out to lunch and leaving such a collaborative miracle unattended in the staff refrigerator; he was of course immediately rehired for having not eaten the sandwich and recognizing its unlimited potential in the field of comparative analysis.

Because I fear you may still not be able to comprehend the breadth of Sandwich's erudition and insight without further documentation, I have enclosed a dossier including his recent work on silence and self expression through decay. Phenomenal, inimitable work, I assume you will agree. I pass on this work to you not in order to undervalue your proposed course of study or to suggest that you will not go on to do fine work in your own right; on the

contrary, I suspect you will have great success. I do, however, hope you can see that it is no slight to your own standing as an academic.

Cordialmente,

Benson Kruger, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Studies
The Department of Comparative Literature
Yale University

P.S. Your fears regarding our “fears” of your political leanings are appreciated but misguided. That you would assume that we would be swayed so easily by such factors encourages us to wonder why you were so eager to be a member of our institution. Should these fears be quelled over the next few months, please feel free to reapply this fall, as was originally suggested.

Epilogue

As many know, Gregory Baulk never responded to Dr. Kruger’s final missive. He was, however, arrested 23 days later on charges of trespassing, breaking and entering, and attempted murder. After unlawfully entering Leigh Hall after hours, he apparently sought out the Comparative Literature Department and then forced the lock to the faculty lounge in an attempt to locate the refrigerator Dr. Kruger had mentioned during their correspondence. He did not, of course, find Ham Sandwich, who had by that time been given a private refrigerator in its own office. Baulk was found on the lounge’s couch the following morning, prone and feverish, suffering from food poisoning after consuming a completely untalented chicken club that Newton von Gregor had, to his colleague’s repeatedly voiced dismay, left in the refrigerator since March. Dr. Oliphant Segre—whose recent monograph, *The Ideological Pickle: The Most Important Things Ham Sandwich Never Said*, analyzes “traces of neo-fascism” in Sandwich’s early work—has suggested that Sandwich’s fervor for recognition and ultimate decline into xenophobia and segregationist rhetoric is the long-developing but nonetheless direct effect of Sandwich’s inability to deal adequately with the implications of this early attempt on its life. We many never know the truth; perhaps the mystery is best summed by the following, perhaps apocryphal, comment from Sandwich’s “discoverer,” Dr. Birmbo. When informed of the Baulk’s unsuccessful but intentionally murderous act of consumption, Birmbo quipped, “Maybe the boy was just hungry.”

An Honest Love Poem
by
Adam Gianforcaro

I hear these pop stars
are falling in love,
stumbling blind for
chic gowns
and ballroom brides,

some martini women
falling for Daddy's timeshare
in Guatemala.
They hear the same love
songs on the radio that I hear.

Fine acoustics
and a fragile voice
drawing in teens, their
windows down, smoking
and spraying perfume.

I don't listen. All of the
throw-your-hands-up,
I'm-in-love bullshit.
I believe more ballads need to be
written about burritos.

Now that, my friend,
is relatable.

She Wanted a Romance on Classics Night, but it was His Turn
by
Shelley Ontis

He grunted and wrapped his arm around her shoulders. "Winston Smith is a pussy. They could strap a cage of rats to my face and I wouldn't give up my woman."

"But rats were his biggest fear. What about bamboo shoots under the nails?" she asked. "Hot poker in the eye? You'd squeal like a girl and escort Big Brother to my door."

"Nothing would break me."

"Nothing?"

"Nothing. Except maybe a dentist."

"A maniacal one that enjoys inflicting pain, or just any garden-variety dentist?"

"Any. But you'd be safe, because they wouldn't know. They'd be all with the rats and stuff." He sucked his teeth and dug in the bottom of the popcorn bowl for a blackened kernel.

"Aw we afwaid of a widdle dwill?"

He shook his head. "Needles and rubber gloves."

She turned to face him and crossed her arms. "So if they brought in a dentist, a proctologist or an acupuncturist, I'd be screwed."

"I'd roll over so fast it'd register on the Richter scale."

"Quit eating the crunchies. If you chip a tooth, my diary might end up the entertainment at some dentistry convention." She pulled the bowl out of his hands. "Winston had to have rats strapped to his face. They'd snap a glove and go after a splinter, and you'd draw them a map to my hideout."

"Well, by then I'd have probably already held out for days, what do you expect?"

She rubbed the back of his neck. "I'd forgive you, honey. Right after I told them of the microchip hidden in one of your fillings and the capsule of government secrets you'd stuffed up your butt."

He stopped chewing, took a drink, cleared his throat. "Next time, let's rent 'Endless Love.'"

The Secret of Andy's Success
by
Jim Bennett

I am Andy Garcia's conjoined twin.
(Yes, *that* Andy Garcia. The actor.)
A ghost you could call me, I suppose,
Wikipedia calls me the "dead parasitic twin on his left shoulder."
How would you like that for your epitaph?

They surgically removed me at *Hospital Clínico Quirúrgico*.
Oh, Havana.
They burned me to powder in a medical waste incinerator.
Oh, Havana.
But I never really left.
I haunt him.
I do!

Brother Andy, you see, well,
He went on to hit it big
No incinerator for him, no sir.
Did you see *The Godfather, Part III*?
Oscar nomination!

We were once two parts of the same person.
Today he claims to have no memory of me.
Don't you believe that.
Not for a white-hot second.

You know that thousand-mile stare he has?
That faraway look? Those deep breaths and heavy sighs?
Sure you do.
That's what happens when you're haunted by your dead, excised Siamese twin.
You do stuff like that, stuff that looks great on camera,
And the next thing you know,
Coppola is saying, "Perfect!"
You're on your way.

Still, my very best work ended up on the cutting room floor.

Two Hundred You

by
Alex Koplou

Things You Should Hate: You should hate the name Jen. You should hate that you've said it so many, many times. You will decide that her name looks ugly and foreign, like a Swedish abbreviation for January.

Girls You Should Have Sex With: You should have sex with the exact opposite of Jen. You should have sex with a girl who looks exactly like her. You are not going to have sex for what feels like a thousand Jens.

The WWWs: You should bring your laptop into bed with you tonight because that's when you're most fixated on her cheating on you. You should use the expanse of the internet to distract yourself, but you will spend nearly an hour clicking through photos of her.

You should read your mom's blog like you've been promising. You will be surprised. You expected grocery lists and short phone messages, the only things you've ever seen her write, but her posts are beautifully personal. You will sigh at their length and only read the comments the rest of your family has posted.

You will go back to Jen's photos. You won't see any pics of the two of you of course, you've only been secretly dating all these months. You liked this at the beginning because you thought you'd have fewer responsibilities. You also liked the idea of screwing one of your bosses. You will continue feeling pretty fucking cool for doing that.

Family + Blurred Lines: You will look at photos of Jen's sister, the one who visited a few weeks ago. You will recall how she even smelled younger, with none of the papery, Windex scents of the office you associate with Jen.

Get to Sleep Tactics: You should consider masturbating to Jen's sister. You will think, no, that's just too far. You can assume you are the only person with a conscience left in the world.

You will be bored by the porn you watch. You should start jerking off to the blonde friend of the girl on *16 and Pregnant*. You know she's a slut because of the company she keeps. You will do her from behind. You will make her come. You are unmatched at imaginary sex.

A Strategy of Vulgars: You will come in a sock you wore to work. You should follow your system. You don't use any that are too identifiable by color or pattern, so you can't remember doing it into that particular sock. You have heard something about firing squads, how one of the guns has blanks so none of the executioners has to deal with the certainty of killing a man. You have adapted this practice so that you can never be sure that you're wearing a cummy sock.

The Morning: You will wake up minutes before your alarm, and the pictures of Jen's sister will still be staring at you. You should close them immediately. You will look at just a few more because she uploaded new ones from spring break in Costa Rica.

Breakfast: You will pour cereal and milk into the clear top of the packaging of blank CDs. You have previously used a Pringles can, a Ziploc bag, and a muffin tin when all the bowls were dirty.

Commute: You will drive to work, and no one really cares what you do in your car.

Partly Related Thoughts: You will tap your grey key card against the censor on your office's door and remember those soft nose kisses Jen gave you before falling asleep. You should wonder how many other noses she was kissing before bed. You will miss staying over at her great apartment. You will regret putting so much effort into befriending her black doorman.

Numbers Game Number One: You should imagine how many Jens there are in the whole world. You will estimate 200,000. You should add another 100,000 because you're always lowballing guesses like these. You will say 'of all the Jen joints, in all the world, she had to walk into yours.' You will be a little proud of that, and wish there was someone you could tell.

Under Her, Under Her: You should think, if only Jen weren't my boss, and if only you didn't need her recommendation for the new job you're desperate to get. You will assume that Jen says something about your dick when she describes you to the other company. You will think that she might confuse your dick with the dick of your coworker she's also been sleeping with the whole time.

Three Genie Wishes: You should wish you confronted him at the happy hour last week when he was too tipsy and told you about his secret relationship with her. You should wish that instead of muttering into your beer, you screamed that Jen was only secretly yours, and you knocked him to the floor. You should wish you confessed that you were also screwing Jen, so he could show you how you should react.

A Tree Falling In the Forrest with No One Around Moment: You will wonder, is secretly cheating on a secret relationship even really cheating at all?

Public Secret Rendezvous: You will meet Jen in the copy room two floors down. You need to resist your instinct to kiss her. You should say something very hurtful. You will mumble 'I guess' when she asks if you want to go to dinner and discuss everything. You will ride the elevator back to your floor, and she takes the stairs. You need to consider that a victory.

Numbers Game Number Two: You will wonder how many people have been in space, and you'll guess 100. You should make that 200. You will think maybe two or three were named Jen. You will imagine that space is very dirty.

One More Thing You Should Hate and One Thing You Should Want: You should hate eating Thai and Vietnamese and all those other Chinese food rip offs that Jen loves. You should want to have a new job, so you can stop secretly dating your boss.

Uh-oh: You are going to panic because you'll realize for the first time that changing your job won't instantly solve everything. You will still hate Jen. You will still crave her. You will still have been cheated on.

Numbers Game Number Two Answers: You will read on one site that 453 people have been in space, and another will say 517. You will think that's roughly you and all your Facebook friends going into space. You can include Jen's sister and her younger tits. You will imagine space sex.

Delusions of Mediocrity: You will believe that every woman at your next job will be attracted to you. You slept with one woman, and now you think that you are the most irresistible man that any office has ever seen. You will really think this.

What You Are, and When: You are amazingly pathetic, sometimes.

How You Should Spend the Time at Home before Dinner: You should play Xbox and drink the weekend's leftover beer. You will be sent into a frenzy of emotions after three cans. You will relive the perfection of your birthday when Jen woke you up early and said that she wanted to have sex twenty five times. You went crazy when she whispered, "once for every year, and one to *groan* on."

Promises You Will Make and Things You Should Do: You will drive to the restaurant with the dizzy, over-contemplative outlook of a beer buzz. You should be completely self-centered at dinner. You should hunt for reasons to hate her in the minutiae of what she wears and the way she eats.

Maybe Things Will Be OK?: You won't order extra beers just because you know it's her turn to cover the bill. You should grasp at the tiny satisfaction that she is out to dinner with you and not your coworker. You will see her smile, and you will smile back. You will regret that.

Somedays and Commitments: You should anticipate mornings in the future when you can enter the office and smelling the vacuumed grey carpet won't get you aroused or suspicious. You will reclaim the tip of your nose from Jen's light kisses.

Numbers Game Number Three: You will continue thinking a million thoughts at once, and eventually Jen will be what?—only thirty or forty of them.

Zoo Ghazal
by
Holly Jensen

In Australia, Huntsman spiders kill in cars. One sees a spider the size of a child's hand rush across the dash, one exits the road at freefall. (Clever girl.)

You don't know the first thing about me or my tree. Bananas grow on huge herbs, watermelons are vegetables, potato bugs are crustaceans, and the killer whale ain't.

Take me to the zoo today. I need to carousel a taxidermy bobcat and smear powdered sugar on my face, and I want to wrestle the biggest shark they've got.

Let us pray the cold heart who runs the Darwin Awards gets viciously maimed by the grief-crazed loved one of someone she snickered at for daring to die inelegantly.

Something smells like shit in here, and I hope it's not me.
Something smells like me in here, and I hope it's not shit.

A chain of names, long unchained. Ladybugs are really Lady Bird Beetles, after the Blessed Virgin Mary, or as she was known to her friends, Mary.

Schoolgirls make vicious and perceptive jokes about everyone, even you, and play Fuck, Marry, Kill with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Freedom is Expensive as Shit

by
Matt Rowan

Governor Terrance is governor of our brave colony. He reminds us, "You better believe freedom is not free, because it isn't. It is expensive as stuff." The governor presses his index finger against the top of the lectern very hard, and he does it again and it becomes a kind of violent stabbing motion, which is not winning over the crowd necessarily.

In chimes Jeremy from nearby the stairs: "As *shit*, don't you mean, Governor?" then, "As *shit*?" he repeats, and it's clear Jeremy is fond of speaking that word. The governor regards Jeremy—who is after all only fifteen and prone to saying just whatever he feels, whenever it pleases him. Narrowing his Governor eyes to angry slits but nodding pensively, the Governor says, "Yes young man, yes Jeremy, it's as expensive as how you put it. Thanks so much for that." And the governor begins to clap gingerly, sarcastically, but no one in the crowd is amused by this, and so shortly after he started clapping the governor stops.

Then there's the smattering of boos and fart sounds, and the fart sounds rapidly devolve into what I can only call dump-making sounds. "Dump-making" sounds are the sounds you would expect to hear if someone were making a nasty dump, though in this case they weren't actually making a nasty dump; instead, simulating the sounds of one. The governor knows these are meant as insults and not as positive shouts that he might hang his hat on. "Dump-making" sounds are like the death rattle for a politician's pre-political-death career. Most of our past governors were forced to resign or were extremely hanged in shame, so Governor Terrance shouldn't take the jeers and vitriol and dump-making sounds all that personally, even though he is visibly shaken. He knew what he was getting himself into, seems to be the consensus of this crowd, which is this teeming mob-like crowd.

"Stop the boos and the dump-making sounds for a moment, ladies and germs (this is the governor's ill-advised attempt at levity, and so the crowd boos and continues making dump-making sounds, but with a noticeable whole bunch more of hostility, all of a sudden). I apologize for the misspoken 'germs' remark. You are all hardly germs and, for the most part, gentlemen, and calling you that was a mistake, I admit." The governor is not winning over the crowd with his contrition.

"Let me say that . . ." Governor Terrance looks struck in pain and tries to say more but is drowned out by the boos and hoarsely yelled slurs, and dump-making sounds are still full go. He tries again more successfully, "Let me just say that my plan for lowering the high cost of freedom was a bad plan, and the colony suffered for it. We could have allocated funds to far better programs than the laser tower, which, again I say, was meant solely to lower the cost of freedom around here. The laser tower project killed a lot of fair citizens and angered our freedom-hating enemies by its near-constant misfiring. And I reiterate that it was not firing in the name of villainy and a plan hatched by Dr. Nemesis and myself. It was simply misfiring, and was then blown up by way of sabotage. And I might further add that the sabotage was cause of most of our civilian deaths." Dr. Nemesis is next to Jeremy nearby the stairs, and to be fair to all other concerned parties, he is looking at least kind of "villain-ey or -ful" right then and there.

Dr. Nemesis' presence is not winning over the crowd, either. Dr. Nemesis is widely disliked for his hand in raising the price of freedom and probably corrupting the mind of our

governor, who, to be fair to Dr. Nemesis, no doubt had a fairly corruptible mind from the get go. And that was on us, the electorate, for having voted a corruptible man as him into office.

The governor had a very popular platform though, which was lowering the cost of freedom AND doing so using a cool new method, which turned out to be lasers fired from a tower. It's pretty apparent that the plan had all along been to dupe the dupe-able electorate of us, and then use the governor's mandate to create a laser tower in the center of our colony's major town, Major Town, to then take over neighboring colonies, and building lasers in the centers of those colonies' major towns, i.e., e.g., Big Town and Milk Town etc., and repeating the process until most, if not all, other colonies were run by our colony, though specifically by Governor Terrance and Dr. Nemesis.

The tower blew up, though. Dr. Nemesis claimed to also be a sorcerer, and was to use his magic on anyone attempting to destroy the laser tower, erected in our town square, which his "magic" was all they had for prevention of sabotage and destruction. But he's a liar because as soon as someone did come and did blow up the tower Dr. Nemesis essentially stood there dumbly doing nothing to stop him, and absolutely did not use any magic that we, the citizenry, could see. He stared broodingly in the tower destroyer's direction, but then the tower destroyer started hurling tiny smoldering pieces of the suddenly destroyed laser tower at Dr. Nemesis, and Dr. Nemesis ran without even one salvo of plasmatic sorcery fired from his diamond-studded chest. And that didn't surprise me because why, if he was really a sorcerer, did he go by the moniker "Dr. Nemesis" and not "Sorcerer Nemesis"? Things you have to consider when folks ask you to take them at their word.

"I swear to you one thing," Governor Terrance says, placing his hand on his heart, and by this gesture conveyed that, at last, he would not waffle, "I should *not* be hanged for this. If anyone should, then it's that liar Dr. Nemesis who conned every last man here."

Of course Dr. Nemesis is hanged next thing we do, but sadly this does little for the price of freedom, which remains as expensive as shit as ever. Because now lots of the other colonies are building bigger laser towers than ours, which is still destroyed.

Scrotum Humanum
by
Jennifer Clark

In 1676, because
he did not doubt
the greatness of
man, Robert Plot

mistook that which
remained—the knee
end of a thigh bone
of Megalosaurus—for

fossilized balls
that once swayed
between steely thighs
of giant man. Perhaps

he doubted the wisdom
of a God who would create
massive creatures only to
allow them to disappear,

chose, instead, to hunker
beneath the shadow of a
God who shrunk the
thundering balls of man.

Contributor Biographies



Andy Glasser grew up in New York City, but now resides in Decatur, GA, with his South Carolinian wife, their three kids and a mutt who were all born on neutral ground. He likes to write. His listing of publications includes *Hobo Pancakes*. That's it. Oh, and he whores himself at day as an accountant. He didn't want to admit that, but he says that if he earns publication in *Defenestration* he will leave whoring behind forever.



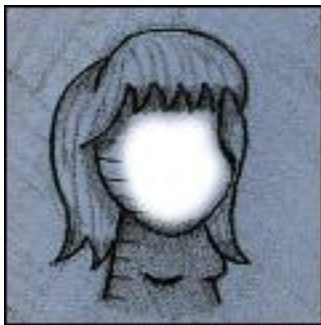
Emily Severance teaches elementary special education in New Mexico. She has a BA from The University of Michigan (where she won a Hopwood prize for poetry) and an MFA in studio art from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She enjoys having her poems published in magazines with interesting names such as *Breadcrumb Scabs*, *Puffin Circus*, and *Sisyphus*. Her brushes with fame include the artist Orlan proclaiming her as "perfect," porn star Jack Hammer taking her to dinner, and Sir Angus Wilson putting money in her UNICEF donation box.



Nelson Lloyd, the fictional result of collaborations between Bob and Grace Nelson and Lloyd and Lola Lewis, resides in a small house off Rogers Street in Bloomington, IN. He lives there with his double, whose daily exploits are so indescribable that Lloyd lost six fingers and a toe trying to write him into this bio.



Adam Gianforcaro is the Social Media Director for *Philadelphia Stories*. He recently graduated from Rowan University summa cum laude with a BA in Writing Arts. His poems and short stories have been published or accepted for future publication in *50-Word Stories*, *Battered Suitcase*, *Short Fast Deadly*, and *The Stray Branch*. He lives in New Jersey.



Shelley Ontis is a freelance writer whose fiction and poetry have been inflicted on the readers of over 20 different publications. She'd like to be a full-time novelist. She'd also like to be a caped superhero but fears the tights will chafe. Shelley blogs about writing at <http://havingwritten.com>.



Jim Bennett blogs at thebloviatinghammerhead.wordpress.com and familymediadetox.com. He lives in rural Illinois.



Alex Koplow is a writer from Virginia. Those are dinosaurs on his suspenders.



Holly Jensen's work has appeared or is upcoming in *PANK*, *wtf pwm*, and *Miracle Monocle*. She lives in the Midwest and has an unhealthy obsession with ghazals, god help her.



Matt Rowan writes, reads and blogs. Previous publications include *Johnny America*, *Jersey Devil Press*, *Bartleby Snopes*, and others. See his online literary journal, *Untoward Magazine*, at untowardmag.com, or check out his blog at literaryequations.blogspot.com. Also, if he could reanimate anyone it would be Vladimir Nabokov, because there's a corpse-brought-back-to-life who'd have things to say, no doubt.



Jennifer Clark's poem "Breakfast Mourning" was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2009. Her work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Editions Bibliotekos*, *All Poetry is Prayer*, *Raven Chronicles*, *Dogs Singing (Salmon Press)* and *Astropoetica*. A hardcore landliner, she does not own a cell phone or i-phone pad or whatever it is called these days.