

absurdities

seitidrusba

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“I think that here lies the sense of literary creation:
to portray ordinary objects as they will be reflected
in the kindly mirrors of future times;
to find in the objects around us the fragrant tenderness
that only posterity will discern and appreciate in the far-off times
when every trifle of our plain everyday life will become exquisite
and festive in its own right: the times when a man who might
put on the most ordinary jacket of today
will be dressed up for an elegant masquerade.”

A Guide to Berlin
Nabokov

Grazie

mom

dee

jay

susan daitch

v. nabokov

jesse

the people of new york city

random encounters

conditioning & repression

addiction & denial

central & peripheral nervous system

somatic & autonomic nervous system

hormones & neurotransmitters

stimulants & depressants

psychological (dis)order

social psychology

all past, present and future research & research materials

the Muses

the Graces

the CUNY system

mta of nyc

Blues & Jazz musicians

visual & literary artists

workers & laborers

readers & listeners

muse-apprentice-guild

ten thousand monkeys

fictionists

innards

incredible journey of a pomegranate molasses dressing

holiday

furniture

abstract of a study

Mysterious Patterns of the Sapien

zeus drowning giants: a fairy tale

our, un, Individual: a fairy tale of sorts

peeling an apple in the mind: an exercise

a preceding orbit

horse; tortoise; dog; rabbit

notices of a public establishment
Or signs of a restaurant

deep knee bends on a bathroom scale
Or a short story from the inside out

terminal velocity of falling coffee filters

the futurist marvelous
Or the immaculate conception

the words on page 220

colossal feat of a breakfast in three movements

la fleche

A Portrait Of objects In A Theatre

overly Dramatic portrait of a walk

portrait of a war

the incredible journey of a pomegranate molasses dressing

After a series of coincidences involving spilled groceries, a puddle and air, a bubble found itself traveling northwards on an avenue. After a series of near tragic collisions, the bubble found itself on a vertical path; it rose, perhaps unwillingly, towards a height whose air pressure pinched its latherous membrane. There, under an apartment kitchen windowpane, it broke; here, in this kitchen, within a gentle parade of clockwise spun drain water trailed the crust and bits of yesterday's preparations. Here, Byrd's spine curved over a simmering dressing on the stove—waiting for salt, molasses, and a cheap wine to congeal, to embrace, as to provide some level of satisfaction in tonight's dinner.

Byrd had tipped the stove knob into a medium high tilt—ignoring the specificity of culinary instruction.¹ Heat and steam went their separate ways; the steam fingered cabinets in loops and patterns found in fruit fly wings—the same fruit fly passing time on the linoleum Frigidaire. With a wooden spoon, Byrd stirred in a slow clockwise—out of time with the ride cymbal in a jazz trio, bopping from the toenail clipper radio.

It is a very well gossiped topic at the workplace how Byrd is an excellent sitter—knowledgeable of various positions that allow blood flow to each buttock, simultaneously, when long periods called for sitting—at a desk, for example, filling invoices with orders placed by random individuals who just adore random products. It is Byrd's employer who sells millions of items; each item has a million uses, but not one of those uses is one of necessity. There are the electric socks, available with the compatible 3 and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a foot long extension cord. There is the waterproof eyebrow comb. Cheese grater sundial. Shrinkable raincoat in various hues of taupe. And the most popular: toenail clipper radio. The invoices for this item fill boxes to a bloated state; the employer had to purchase actual property as to build warehouses whose only intension is to store its paperwork.²

Sugar grains in the molasses caramelized, becoming a dirty form at the crest of the dressing mixture. Byrd's wooden spoon poked at the mass, scraped at the clot of skin covering the sides of the non-reactive saucepan. There left only a gaping cut, whose loosened flesh fell, dissolved and entwined with the remaining liquid below—burning

Neat Little Package #1:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup soy sauce

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup pomegranate molasses

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup red wine

2 tbs. finely chopped garlic

2 tbs. finely chopped ginger

In a 4 inch saucepan, combine soy sauce, molasses, wine, garlic. Prepare with a medium low heat and season to taste with salt and pepper. Simmer for 2-3 minutes or until a thin liquid develops. Keep warm.

Neat Little Package #2:

14 total locations, including: Smith Center, Kansas. Casteinau, France. Herlufmagle, Sjaelland. Tarik Ibn Ziad, Algeria. And most popular: Furtwagen, Germany. Each warehouse is the standard size of 14,000 ft² x 14,000 ft² x 140 ft. Location eight (not listed) contains 1,894,638 boxes, 11 mice, 2 pigeons, and 1 24-hour security guard.

away at medium high, with the jazz going going going. Byrd stood still and stirred, out of time, pushing the spoon with indifferent care; rather, eyes and mind were focused on far distant matters. Where was the fruit fly?³ No not exactly, for the concern lies with the ever uproarious, ever increasing number of invoices; each million rested on the shoulders of Byrd, pushing the spine to curve just a fraction more.

Byrd wished to roll each separate invoice into a cylinder slim enough to choke the neck of a drained wine bottle—for it to be tossed into a void body of water, preferably salt, so as to patiently dissolve the glass—exposing the sheet to billions of gallons, each taking a nibble at its corners. After several centuries the invoices will be gone. Then Byrd could rest. Yet, at the moment, Byrd was merely stirring gloop on the kitchen stove, succumbing to the horrific truth: there is no property left to purchase, and the demand for toenail clipper radios approaches madness. The paper trail infested nearly all corners of the earth and is continuing to expand, just as the chaotic mathematical progression inside every cabbage leaf of tonight’s dinner made it, at one time, lengthen and green and, now, taste as it tastes when cooked. Or spoiled. Yes, it looked spoiled. And the supervisors’ supervising assistant will no doubt frown upon Byrd’s inactivity, indecisiveness, and inability to store invoices.

Somewhere in the jazz trio’s tune, an aggravated high hat bit down hard in a toothless, degrading attempt, only clumping its gums together. The sound was organic, wet, and living behind a sweet melody, composed well. Between the dotted eighth notes, between the between, there was a clumping sound—a limping, beaten, ill proportioned disaster disturbing the coherent: it was the thought of these invoices and the responsibility for each.

* * *

Byrd’s Previous
Toothless, Degrading Attempts
To Store
Toenail Clipper Radio Invoices

The stapler on the supervisors’ supervising assistant’s desk is always loaded with an even amount of staples, paused in a constant state of readiness. It is a well known fact a staple is the final item needed to officially end the gathering and organization process: for each individual order, various forms are required to note a customer’s name, birth date, shipping address, genotype, phenotype, blood type, favorite pastimes on Tuesdays, scores on a fourth grade fraction test, and of course, billing location. The completed sheets are gathered and stapled together, forming a neat little package—an invoice—ending the symphony of inquiry. The stapler sits on the assistant’s desk as to note who approaches and uses the dramatic object; it sits there to help keep tally of an employee’s productivity and, lately, each employee had been superb.

Neat Little Package #3:

The fruit fly used its 36 hours of life and silently passed on. Its grip was released, letting it tumble onto the linoleum floor below. It had failed to procreate.

However, the assistant had the cheeks of an unsatisfied turtle and continually snapped at delicate things. Ashtrays in the office were filled, trashcans were filled with ashtray waste, and disposable cups—used as a last resort to ashtrays—could no longer be a last resort being filled themselves. The assistant’s hair became coated with a fine urine tint after nerve racking hours of nicotine exposure and the ears beneath this hair ached; cartilage felt pinched between the noise of scratching pens and the waltz of feet to and from the stapler.

Among the tension a cigarette hissed away, cautiously balancing on the tip of an ashtray’s pile. Uncomfortable twinges went through the assistant’s skin: you see, a memo was received and had not been released from the same hand that accepted it from a messenger boy nearly two weeks ago.⁴ Direct contact came from above: supervisors, who demanded explanations from those below. It stated thusly:

MEMO MEMO MEMO MEMO MEMO MEMO MEMO MEMO

ATTENTION!

Attention must be paid to the following recent events caused by an employee in this division:

- Several employees have vanished within Rm. 701 attempting to organize completed invoices. Upon further internal investigation—consisting of three test rats dying of asphyxiation—it was concluded Rm. 701 is too vast and cramped to remain as a designated storage facility. Please refrain from designating any rooms on the premises as storage.
- Several employees have complained of a foul odor surrounding the building. Upon further internal investigation, the incinerator was found to be used as an “organizing tool” for invoices. Please refrain from this method since expired information on invoices may become useful at a later date.

Neat Little Package #4:

Upon further internal investigation—consisting of pokes and concerned stares—the resident psychiatrist promptly prescribed EMLA:

<u>Generic Ingredients</u>	<u>Type of Drug</u>	<u>Prescribed For</u>
Lidocaine + Prilocaine	Topical anesthetic	Skin pain + occasional anxiety

General Information

EMLA—Eutectic Mixture of Local Anesthetics—is a mixture of anesthetics that turns to liquid on contact with the skin. EMLA penetrates all layers of skin, dulling nerve endings and providing a local anesthetic effect comparable with that produced by injectable drugs. The cream must be applied under an occlusive bandage for at least 1 hour. It may be more effective if left on for 2-3 hours. Anesthetic effects remain for 2 hours after the cream has been removed.

Possible Side Effects

Severe allergic reactions, including breathing difficulties. In cases when EMLA is applied in excess, or possibly not enough, the following may occur: nervousness, apprehension, tightness in the chest with light-headedness, confusion with vomiting, feelings of warmth with coldness, and convulsions during unconsciousness.

- Several employees have been seen performing various acts with excess invoices. Upon further internal investigation—consisting of persuasive language focusing on retaining employment—it was discovered a sole employee was responsible for teaching and encouraging behaviors including:

Paper marbling¹
 Indecent origami²
 Paper marionettes³
 Paper strip sculptures⁴

This will not be tolerated on company time, nor is it proper use of excess invoices.

The employee responsible for directing invoice storage must take action and find new, appropriate means of storage. Action must be taken.

POST CONSPICUOUSLY

REMINDER: COMPANY PICKNIQUE ON THE 14TH

The assistant sat still and stared at various blobs of dust between file cabinets. EMLA entered pores of the free hand, causing a luxurious sigh; two consecutive waves of chills past. The sudden rush of relaxation allowed a thought process, complete with an action: the memo was decidedly released, placed beside our stapler—visible for every approaching worker. Every one. Especially Byrd.

* * *

Air in the kitchen was taking form,

something complex; the rich candied smell of ginger roused hunger pains and Byrd began to stir in a quicker clockwise. The spoon awoke garlic bits, floating to the surface, exposing bruises made by the medium high heat. The stirring hand swept within and without the cascade of steam rising from the ignored concoction below it. Sweating, now, the hand may have taken on the salty brine of a mollusk—and, if licked, would cause involuntary squints out of disgust. The other hand, limp and useless in this culinary escapade, hung to the side; it only cast a shadow—although of a hand—seemingly exaggerated, illogical, long, bent, and black. This darkness was another void, as the sea Byrd silently wished for or the universe Byrd silently stirred in; a universe—our poor little Byrd thought—sewed together with a mathematical equation, whose

Wonders of the Internet #1:
<http://home3.pacific.net.sg/~johnacs/>

Wonders of the Internet #2:
<http://underground.zork.net>

Wonders of the Internet #3:
www.puppetworks.org/Paper%20Puppet.htm

Wonders of the Internet #4:
www.brigantine.atlnet.org/gigapalettegallery/websites/articulationfinal/pdf/paperstrips.pdf

patterns dictate logic: a particular logic about the consequences of *a particular failure involving a particular worker and invoices*. It stated thusly:

decrease in a worker's competency → decrease in demand for this worker → decrease in value of the worker → decrease in worker's hourly rate from full to part-time, increasing profit → recognized profit leads to a complete reduction of worker's time (i.e. removal) → profit increases → stockholder recognition of increasing profit leads to surge in stock → merging negotiations → expansion → islands → tax evasion, outsourcing, CEO holiday bonuses, finished mimosas with pulp and lipstick spotting rims of glasses, celebration, joy, etc.

Such a ridiculous, horrible overgeneralization—but a fear nonetheless. Byrd foresaw, upon strolling into work on a not-to-distant morning, a pleasant bouquet, a pleasant arrangement of foil balloons tethered in a knot and plumped atop a worker's workstation blandly identified as BYRD. Air between the balloons was saturated with gossip; they teased to and fro letting their withered folds touch; each balloon stated a message in blandly identified print: YOU'RE FIRED!, CLEAR DESK BY 3PM, LEAVE STAPLER.⁵ Byrd decided the bouquet was set the night before, by a janitor perhaps; oil stains still apparent on the pink ribbons.

Byrd imagined the order of which personal items were removed; one after the other, as the left hand (now functioning) held a box and the right pinched up chewed pencils and pen caps, a miniature Byrd marionette and its happy little village of mangled paper strips, the electric socks that dissolved blood clots during long durations of sitting—oh, the sharp pain of every motion, eyes squinted in defense... And in the distance, after leaving a naked workstation, while passing the final corridor, Byrd heard these final parting words, "Return the box after you're through. We'll need it."

Action must be taken—our Byrd thought—a solution must manifest before, before, before they-- and the jazz went went went. Panic found its way into the kitchen, snapping its fingers, enjoying the trio's work bopping from the toenail clipper radio. It stood behind Byrd, on the verge of scating. Byrd's eyes focused on the muddled mixture below and hoped it'll pass, it'll pass, it'll pass; as Panic went Da de-de-de-da deedlee-da do-dop de-dop Baa boo-bop canyoudigthisbaby? over Byrd's shoulder. It had time to chuckle at Byrd, chuckle between beats, between its nonsensical syllables. It chuckled between Byrd's ears.

Pores released beads of sweat, with several shockingly close to diving into the syrup below. Syrup? Oh dear god no—our Byrd thought—no, medium low damn it! Look at what you've done! Byrd tipped the stove knob into the off tilt and gripped the wooden spoon a bit tighter; knuckles blushed a lighter shade. The working hand pushed

Neat Little Package #5:

The bouquet was considered a neutral touch, an elegant way of conveying a message to those of lower status. Such a method of elimination was voted upon as company procedure 7 – 5 in a supervisors' meeting some time ago; 2 votes secured the process thanks to its efficiency in communication and surprisingly scarce cost at 8 cents per balloon (including helium inflation).

the spoon through the slop, cutting out thick, unpopular shapes—simply dallying through the fat caramel of molasses. Simply disappointed. Simply sighed as the tune, and Panic, sputtered their last bebops. As steam evaporated.

Byrd dipped a fingerprint into the topping and had a taste of something indecisive—something between a burnt sweetness and soft oak. You can thin it out with the wine—our Byrd thought—Of course. How simple. And silent.⁶

Neat Little Package #6:
Help prevent paper overpopulation before it starts.
<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/BizWaste/OfficePaper/QuickTip.htm>

holiday

The sponge is a magnificent orange. Its dermal structure is wrapped in an external layer of nylon and ribbed plastic. Its purpose is simple and wonderfully mundane, to nick and tug at dried substances remaining on plastic dinner dishes of lower economic households or glass bowls of the economically fortunate. It is a multidimensional sponge. It performs the same functions in either household: it remains safe for Teflon® or Silverstone®, it remains rust free, it rinses clean and is ideal for sinks, countertops, pots, pans, and car windows: such is stated on the sponge's packaging and such, so far, has been true. Under the neck of a curved chrome faucet⁷, freckled with mild green mildew, the sponge bloats with tap water, foaming at the mouth of every perforated hole systematically pierced by a machine during its creation. A glass of rose had been sipped until only a scant amount of backwash remained. It now stands amongst a string of used utensils in anticipation of a good scrubbing, after a good dinner was prepared:

A sound, very similar to the private sound found between a chewing jaw and ear canal, came from the chest cavity of a roasted chicken as a knife completed its cut. This water stained blade, pock marked with dull green scars after thirteen years of household use, slipped into breast meat, through skin that had caramelized under the burn of an oven. Skin lifted and snapped as the tip of the blade pressed into its entry point. Blomme smiled. This sound was, ironically, exceptionally lively, alert, and chipper; this was the sound of life, of lust, as the blade found itself so thoroughly engulfed, the breast became completely undone and detached. It balanced on the flat edge of the blade, cupped, as three fingers—index, middle, and thumb—barely touched its surface to secure a hold. This seasoned, tinted piece of flesh was then placed onto a warm serving dish⁸ that so modestly partnered crystal glassware.

⁷ It is a Traditional Dual Flow Cruciform faucet. It has an authentic feel from a bygone era with the benefit of modern day technology. Such is stated on the faucet's packaging and such, so far, has been true in part to its brushed nickel finish.

A sheet metal worker studied plans and specifications to determine the type and quantity of the materials needed to form the object. On occasion, a worker is given computer-controlled saws, lasers, shears, and presses. These were absent. The worker used various hand calculators, tapes, rulers, calipers, and micrometers to mark cut points. Nickel tubing was fastened with welds, bolts, cement, rivets, solder, and sheet metal drive clips; tubing was cut with squaring shears and hacksaws.

Such tasks are highly automated and repetitive. Within a 40 hour work week, an employee will stand for long periods. Installation and fabrication contains considerable amount of bending, lifting, standing, climbing, squatting in close quarters or in awkward positions. Safety practices must be followed when working with high speed machines; cuts from pre-sanded metal, burns from soldering and welding, falls from ladders are common. No jewelry. No loose fitting clothing. It is recommended a worker take on various tasks at different production stations to reduce repetitiveness of the work.

Value: 179.99 USD

⁸ It is a Ceramic Italian Hand Painted Dish. Its designs were inspired by traditional motifs of Florentine fabrics and influenced by patterns of the Italian vineyards outside Lago Trasimeno. Such is stated on the plate's packaging and such, so far, has been true. The techniques used by a particular ceramist to form the object were the same from a previous non-electrical time. Ceramic pigments of red, orange, and yellow were measured at eye level in small glass containers, unmarked. The several amounts were combined and used throughout an 8 hour period needed to complete the design of one plate.

The dish itself takes 10-16 hours to form. A tin glaze is smeared over earthenware, a clay, crude version of the dish. After several hours, the clay forms a white canvas or background for colored decoration. The piece is then fired at 1820 degrees Fahrenheit until the ceramist is satisfied with the

A glass of rose was poured at a table. The bottle tilted; Blomme slipped a thumb into the snug bulb welded specifically for a thumb to be placed when pouring. The rose flushed from the bottle's spout until a desired amount filled the wine glass. The thumb and hand gripped the bottle tighter, tilting it at a sharper angle to stop the flow. A large drop broke away from the bottle's neck, with satellite dribbles following. They entered the small pool of rose with an impact; air beneath the falling droplets found itself trapped, dragged into the glass, and struggled to the surface. The rose foamed. Through the blached glass of two 100W Sylvania bulbs, light moved slowly. The bubbles took on a pale purple, sickly clinging to the curvature of the cup. Several thousand popped for several thousand reasons; membranes were too thin; individual bodies were crushed under the weight of other individual bodies; the degrees in Fahrenheit of the room silently evaporated the remaining.

The roasted chicken produced an aroma of rosemary and spices. Yet, the tip of a match was struck, lit, and nestled against virgin wicks of a recent scented candle⁹ purchase. The capillaries of each sinuous thread held a flame that casually relaxed the wax surrounding it. Within the wax, globules of lavender fragrance sat patiently to escape, as the candle melted from the degrees in Fahrenheit. The chicken breast was cut; content oils burned away into a fog. The dinner knife instinctively pressed forwards, back, and wisped the lavender odor about the room, into a face whose olfactory senses became aghast in pleasurable confusion. Fragments of scents reached fragments of brain structures eventually producing the same basic thrust of happiness. Yes, it was happiness; there between swallows, sips, sniffs, and chews was produced a kind of happiness. Muscles behind this face curled into an arch stretching lips of a curious rouge.

consistency of the newly formed product. The low baking temperature for earthenware allows for the use of colorful glazes, but also increases the risks of cracks and chips when compared to stoneware or porcelain. Caution must be used, as any damage is enough cause to restart the entire process.
Value: 59.85 per plate USD

⁹ It is a set of Lavender Scented 3x8 Pillar Candles (2). They awaken the memory of lost floral islands found below the Equator; the candles' rich and heady essence is deeply beneficial to the whole body. Such is stated on the candle's packaging and such, so far, has been true in part to the mathematical process followed in making the product.

The addition of fragrance begins at the bottom of a double boiler, where a block of pale wax is melted in an industrial pot standing 2 feet in water. When the water boils, the temperature is reduced to a simmer until no solid chunks of wax remain. The liquefied wax is heated continuously at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or at 150-5 degrees Fahrenheit to produce crystalline structures in appearance when the wax is poured into a container.

After the wax is in a liquid state, and is heated to at least 140 degrees Fahrenheit, several drops of liquid dye are added and stirred until entirely dissolved. Ratio: 8 drops per pound of wax. Stabilizers or any other composition enhancing additive may be placed in the wax at this point.

Lastly, candle fragrance is added and stirred thoroughly to obtain even distribution. Ratio: ¾ ounce fragrance per pound of wax. Adding too much of any fragrance can present a potential fire hazard; unabsorbed oils (oils not absorbed fully by the wax) could flare at high temperatures when candles are lit. Temperatures and ratios are monitored by a supervisor.

Value: 24.00 per set USD

Blomme sat down to join the lips of a curious rouge. Two hands grasped the shoulders of an heirloom¹⁰ that had recently been reupholstered, decreasing its value significantly. It remained a chair, however, because it still functioned as a chair. It was adored for being a chair, and a reliable one at that. A chair, as it is drawn away from the table, dips into the thread count of a rug made in a country with several vowels and legions of hands. A chair, whose legs pull against the rug's grainy pattern leaving deep, dark, lacerations in its path. The new cloth upholstery canvassing the seat merely glazed clothing; the slightest of touches against slacks or skirts leave no manifestation of the evening's location: no lint. Fascinating. This chair, along with this moment, was reason to smile. And Blomme did smile, grasping the dinner fork with a left hand and the dinner knife with a right hand. Fingertips slipped against the table's tablecloth in superb indifference, yet the left-right-up, left-right-left pattern of the exotic print did register in the brain, tucked away for safe keeping.

It was a regret to swallow. The breast had cooked frighteningly well since the animal's carcass was placed chest down in the Dutch oven. Any fat had melted from the degrees in Fahrenheit, getting trapped in the bird's cavity; natural oils and foreign concoctions called for by a recipe, too, found their end here. The meat was plump, fascinating. The imprint of molars into chewable portions of the meal left pokes of holes in a pattern unique to Blomme. Liquids of crisp yellow and vinegar were then free to meander Blomme's mouth, to address cheeks and hold conversation with pores of the tongue. The meetings, however, were brief. Impulsively, a puddle of saliva had dispersed the scene, watering the flavor down to a level not worth mentioning. In a swallow, the enjoyment had been reduced to a moment; a moment partially suspended in anticipation as a left and right hand cut away at the dinner, extracting a piece that would begin the series of tingles once again.

Blomme and the owner of these lips of a curious rouge pecked away at the arrangement before them. Within and without opaque fragrances there was comfortable silence occasionally ripped by the sound of silverware against plates usually found in economically stable environments; there was the slight fabric ripple of cloth napkins¹¹;

¹⁰ It is a chair in the style of Louis XVI (height 84 cm/33.07 in; width 59 cm/23.23 in; depth 44cm/17.32 in). It awakens memories of the 19th century, of sitting in contemplation driven by the Provence atmosphere. Such is stated on the upholstery's packaging and such, so far, has been true in part to the imitation of French regional design wrapped around the frame.

After 40 years of employment, a particular upholsterer began with the first step: labeling corresponding parts of the chair seat (S), inside back (IS), inside arms (IA), front band (FB), outside arms (OA), outside back (OB), and front arm panels (P). Outside pieces were measured lengthwise, up to down, and the seat was measured front to back. Measurements must always be made at the widest points.

The original cloth was stripped, yet the padding was retained. A stretcher, or scrap material sewn to the back of fabric pieces, was used so the upholstery could achieve a better grip on the padding and frame. Making calculations, a drawing of the cutting plan was made in advance to determine yardage and to eliminate error. Satisfaction is guaranteed.

Value: 43.00 per yard USD

¹¹ It is a set of Bright White Momie Weave Formal Dinner Napkins (6). These large, heavy duty, high quality cloth dinner napkins will certainly dress up your holiday table. Such is stated on the napkins' packaging and such, so far, has been true in part to the hemming.

there was the moist muscle contraction of throats and the rub against collars as throats readjusted. Millimeters of the candles had liquefied and this dinner was finished. On the plates, fat remained, along side baby carrots over-steamed just slightly. Their hue was a degree fainter than the sponge loitering in the sink, awaiting Blomme and all the little trinkets used to make this night memorable. They were to be washed, dried, and placed inside cabinets lined with contact paper, as to avoid scrapes and dents. So far, it has worked superbly, leaving wine glasses, dishes, and Blomme unblemished.

In a factory below the Equator, 79,000 workers at .50-.60 USD per hour sew in rows of ten females long and six females wide. Industrial fans cool labor rooms where right feet pedal 80 hours a week. Machines are fed two layers of square clothe, 21'x21', cut in a factory elsewhere. The cloth is passed under a mechanical needle in a counter-clockwise manner; this natural movement allows for a smooth transition from edge to edge, napkin to napkin. During a typical work day, an employee may sit for ten hours producing six hundred napkins.
Value: 14.95 per set USD

furniture

The cup of tea on the coffee table was losing its heat. Steam, pale and loose, rose and contorted among flavored scents drifting from the dyed water. The tea bag itself was a simple fold of gauze, with leapfrogging holes for the ginger and licorice root granules inside to soak inconsequently. Half a dozen or so bits always manage to slip between the netting's gaps, settling as a pulpy gathering at the bottom. The last swallows contain the bag's forgotten sediments, and although these bits are cut from the roots of pleasurable spices, the swallows are hampered by bitterness. Whatever sugar that had been scooped into the cup, by now, whittled into a sweet nothing. All that remained was the tea bag, water, and stray dices of root.

She usually responds with a nod, or some such, accompanied by a sound whose tone is familiar with that of agreement. Yet there was nothing this time, no identifiable response. She sat on our couch, holding the daily newspaper with both hands. Extended, its wingspan covered her upper torso, revealing only a spot of dark, unwashed curls at the crest of the paper's edge. She read, perhaps, or merely outlined the trim of articles, length and width, ignoring or pretending to ignore myself and the print. There were, however, moments that feigned arrival to the end of an article: her right index fingertip slipped against the padding of her tongue, the sour patch, and returned it to a corner, planting it on a page number and blurring the ink as she pressed for friction. A turn followed. I told her again, your tea is getting cold.

The silence went on for days—this paper was now the Sunday edition and the couch maintained a relatively new complexion after a week of direct sunlight. Its back pillows began to show vertical drips of folds, after the spines of acquaintances pressed into them, beating out the stitching's durability. Old acquaintances, a new arrangement of the living room: it just had to be seen. And they came. And visited. And well-wished. And chatted. And inquired, asking questions between swallows of some sweet dessert wine and chews of a salty cheese one of them had brought, wrapped. The red bow, undone, unfurled on the coffee table as our process and logic of choice became a topic¹². It's such a burden, they had said, such a burden to decide and commit to one lonesome little couch. A silence followed. An armrest was stroked left to right.

She said she was drawn to its thin pinstripes of leapfrogging hues, tan and clay, in the brown family: neutral colors; indifferent tones to assist in relaxation or reflection; colors that do not intend to scorch the iris or aggravate the little nook of cerebral

¹² 785 Fabrics Available to Consumers (excerpt):

• spunk silt • spunk denim • spunk parchment • fairview cocoa • fairview ebony • fairview arbor
• fairview royal • fairview merlot • fairview buff • sensation linen • pensacola walnut • warrior
herbal • warrior bluenette • warrior plum raison • kid glove silt • kid glove denim • kid glove ebony
• kid glove merlot • mana-black • Hugo chocolate • wayside daiquiri • Donovan oregano • paltro
periwinkle • paltro sapphire • Rowena multi • Rowena sunblue • Stonehenge antique • Stonehenge
raisin 303, 404, 101, 505, 202 • la belle champagne black

Fabric Materials (with Subcategories)

Bronze (4)	Linen (2)	Plastic/Molded (18)	Wooden Configurations (13)
Cotton (77)	Metal (7)	Silk (6)	
Leather (206)	Nylon (9)	Wicker (2)	

connections that conduct violent behavior; colors scientifically proven with meta analysis, plastic tongs, Bunsen burners, surveys, pupillometers¹³, urinal swabs, and keratomes to reduce the physical effects of stress in mammals. This scientific concoction of precision and purpose, this sofa, sat in our living room desperately performing and exposing itself as some ignored child, reaching up towards a parent’s eyes with a finger painting that had been flicked at all day in kindergarten—but neither of us were looking.

The middle cushion remained empty between us; no groove had been imprinted, it remained plump, virgin. On intimate days we were thrown together, at one end or the other, with a cushion swallowing our combined weight. Together, at one end or the other, there would be an arm around, under, or through this or that creating a choreographed comfort. On such days as today, I sat at this side and she at the other—she, ignoring or pretending to ignore; I, staring at an object in the room, eyeing its trim, wondering and feigning consideration as to how it would look over there instead of here; I, thinking of changes, additions and subtractions; I, thinking of something that may distract company during the next prompt visit and, of course, to distract ourselves on days when the distant evaporation of a cup of tea is the loudest rambling in the room.

2 “The Relationship Between Field Luminance and Pupil Size” (Reeves, 1920)

A) Red → elevates blood pressure, respiratory rates
→ increases expectations and appetite

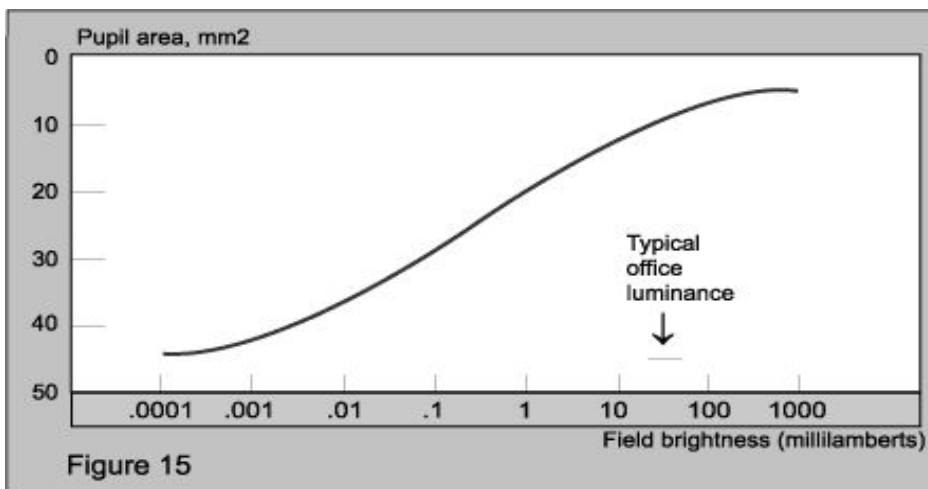


Figure 15

Red → Orange → Brown → Yellow →

→ rooms with a red accents cause people to lose track of time, thus favored by bars and casinos

B) Orange → suggestible; makes an expensive product seem more affordable

C) Brown → shades provide a sense of comfort, nurturance, stability; shades may also look worn and wistful

D) Yellow → speeds metabolism, may hurt eyes
→ shades may influence thought: dingy yellow represents caution, decay, and sickness

After only one week, being stressed at either side, the couch began to slice into an angle, a curve of sorts that cramped into a frown. Its foot pedestals bit into the carpet, digging square sink holes that will eventually melt through the drywall and one day, hopefully when acquaintances of all degrees of separation come to sip and weave in and out of forgettable conversation, the entire ungodly left side of the living room will curl into oblivion. It was this, now, small promise of a dent in the carpet at which I starred, as blood vessels in the scant flap of my eyelid constricted and expanded, pulsing¹⁴. My right index fingertip pressed into these little tremors, stretching the skin over eyelashes. I held my one eye closed, and the other followed naturally. I sat in darkness on this Sunday morning, on a day reserved for well being and retreat—yet, my mind spit up the image of our dull kitchen sink, engorged with the details of last night’s dinner: unswallowed bits on Ceramic Italian ware, marbled fat and dried saliva on the outline of crescent teeth marks, cups with lipstick pressed into the glasswork, cloth napkins held in various crunched degrees by dried foreign substances and desperately in need of a washing. This all had to be cleared eventually.

She rustled the paper. Again. My eyes opened. Again, blowing the dismal yet obvious existence of a smell in rippling directions. My shoulders chuckled as I realized the garbage was to be taken out to the curb, first to be tied using various tugs and twists, turns and pinches to seal the weight of our waste; a knot to make certain nothing leaks or escapes, to make certain every last nibble and scrap stay inside. Stay. Remain. Stay. Should it stay here? How about over here? No? There? Yes, place it over there, that’s better—so much better: this is our script, or something like it. These words are arranged, scrambled into various colorful, organized questions and statements—yet in the end, all combinations of these words say the same thing. Nothing much. Your tea is getting cold.

Again, your tea is getting cold—and its steam followed the fate of my words into a nothingness. Perhaps, as a keen wisp my eyes could not detect, the mist traveled beyond the lampshade¹⁵, beyond the acute sealant of the windowpane and evaporated

¹⁴ The Wonderful World of Causation featuring: Ocular Migraines!

- usually triggered by stress, beginning stages include abnormal levels in neurotransmitter Serotonin: the regulator of mood states, satiety, and sleep
- changes in Serotonin levels constrict and expand blood vessels, causing a interruption of blood flow through the back of the eye
- fluxes restrict oxygen to the brain, inducing pain

¹⁵How To Measure a Lamp Shade:

- A) top diameter B) bottom diameter C) vertical slant D) vertical height

- 1) spider w/ harp: most common type of fitting for table and floor lamps
- 2) uno: found on smaller table lamps
- 3) clip on: shades clip directly onto the light bulb with no additional hardware

freely among the trees and curb. Sadly, there will be no clump of garbage to meet it there. My shoulders sighed. As I romanticized about deterioration, she rustled the Sunday edition once more. The crack brought my attention back to her, as she wished. I wondered if the rustling was to iron out the page, make the words less blurry—or in annoyance with her hands gripped, outstretching the paper, she shook it as if to mean: make sense damn you, say something. Who? Me? Yes, perhaps. I should have said something. I should have said, when the stink of the garbage passes, the tea’s licorice root smells quite nice. Maybe then she would have made a sound similar to that of agreement and a sort of conversation would begin: perhaps something about how wonderful it is when things pass—come and go.

Sampled List of 320 Available Lamp Shades:

Spring Crest Ivory Stretch Bell Shade	9x18x13 (spider)	\$44.99
Spring Crest Ivory Deep Drum	12x14x16 (spider)	\$49.99
Beige Accent Shade	6x12x9 (spider)	\$29.99
Taupe Chandelier Shade	3x6x5 (clip)	\$9.99
Copper Dupioni Shade	6x12x9 (spider)	\$29.99
Spring Crest Faux Leatherette Shade	6x12x9 (spider)	\$19.99
Ivory Mushroom Shade	10x16x15 (spider)	\$54.99
White Mushroom Pleated Shade	9x16x14 ³ / ₄ (spider)	\$24.99

abstract of a study

Electroencephalogram (EEG) of 1001 Temporal Lobes Exposed to Newly Acquired Savings

Incident, Mechanism, and Analysis

Consecutive sample of 1001 patients underwent 245 instances of EEG screenings at a local Tertiary Care Center to document and analyze neuro-physiological measurement of the electrical activity of the brain in the temporal lobeⁱ. Recordings were taken after volunteers were given fully functional couponsⁱⁱ. Brainwave types were recognized to resemble mostly Theta and Gamma frequencies. Overall, 861 (86%) expressed an innate sense of happiness; 641 (64%) expressed a sensation equivalent to Divine contact; 482 (48%) expressed a sudden urge and compulsion to utilize the coupons within the following 24 hours of distribution of the materialsⁱⁱⁱ. CAT scans revealed increased neural activity in the temporal lobe regions suggesting new neural connections had formed in the brains of this population^{iv}. We highly recommend further inquiries of populations recently exposed to “consumerism.”

i Neuroscientists and biological psychiatrists from four continents of the earth had gathered in an undisclosed location in Southeast Asia to reveal the physiological and psychological effects of discounted food. The scientists were chosen randomly by some unforeseen power and invited to orchestrate a study of wonderful proportion for the West; to this day, both genres of doctor do not know who funded this research—the anonymous invitations were printed on mother-of-pearl and an official stamp brailed the lower right corner, which when fumbled over, one could imagine they were groping Roman columns and Jeffersonian architecture; one could finger out many possible interpretations of the brail, but the general consensus amongst the practitioners was inconclusive: the pimply dots may be columns, or thick legs of knowledge. Clearly noted was Longitude and latitude in black Lucida handwriting, causing the ivy blood of the doctors to flow and process oxygen as they packed all essentials, including coconut sunscreen, smokeables, chewables, magnifiables, definers (such as medical dictionaries, of course), and tweezers for plucking and picking while conducting this survey.

Arriving in a jet fueled by the Middle East, assembled farther East, and flown by those native to this part of Southeast Asia, the doctors immediately hailed taxis fueled, assembled, and driven by the aforementioned areas. In fluent native tongue a driver was told, “The red building, if you please”; such a request was easily understood. This building, financed by private and government monies, was of a particular brick and outstanding among the organic environment surrounding, photosynthesizing and chemically decaying. This hue was the only other color challenging native sunrises and sunsets, quite noticeable from several exits down a strip of inorganic highway. Scientists suggested this color red (#) as it was found in previous studies to elevate blood pressure and respiratory rates. The additional blood and oxygen provides brain connections with extra nourishment. Neurons, in return, work with haste expediting the scientific endeavors. Corporate sponsors suggested this color red as it was found in previous product studies to increase expectations and appetite in consumers. Not only was this achieved, yet another benefit of color schema was discovered: Natives who volunteered for this particular EEG experiment also reported a sense of “losing track of time” while exposed to the hue. The doctors, however, had to mind their wrist and pocket watches; they were to arrive at the red Tertiary Care Center before TEA: The Evening Agenda, which gracefully summed up the investigation.

The auditorium was built on the first floor and carpeted pink; within the pink there was stitched a pattern of small diamond shapes, silver, in a diagonal flowing left to right. Such colors highlighted the doctors’ black wingtips; the repetition subconsciously reflected how Westerners read. Walking over diamonds was quite flattering as well; it all looked very pretty against the white foldout chairs. Rows upon rows, more than enough seating, mimicked the crest of ocean waves not far from here. A small plaque bolted to the lower right corner of the stage read in Lucida handwriting: *In Honor of Hans Berger and the first EEG reading (circa 1929). In Memory of Jackson Smith*

(circa 1972), employee who worked tirelessly for a more nutritious and expanded lunch menu in the cafeteria (third floor).

After the microphone was turned on, and the feedback controlled, the doctors were told how the EEG measurements were to be determined: during controlled behavior of the Natives, brainwaves will squeeze through needles, which will mark their frequencies in goosepimpley seismic graphs. This, of course, the doctors knew; it was the electrode-amplifier relationship they desired. Indeed, one individual, snugly kept in a beige blazer, insisted on turning and re-turning to others, wondering out loud if the frequencies would be arranged via Common Reference derivation or Average Reference derivation. This question was involuntarily collected into the outer ear of the announcer at the podium. The sounds funneled into the ear canal, tapping the tympanic membrane, causing vibrations. The brain's auditory nerves absorbed the pulses, rhythmically converting them into electric and chemical signals the primary auditory cortex understood as a question. In monotone, unlike the exciting silhouette of the plaque's Lucida, a voice traveled into the microphone's webbing, converted into electrical impulses, dominoed through yellow, red and white wires of a loudspeaker where it yet again became a human voice: "Both. For the sake of accuracy."

A reference electrode would be placed on the Native somewhere along the scalp or perhaps a reference linked to both earlobes; the remaining output from other electrodes would be compared to this neutral area—hence, Common Reference. The output of all frequencies can also be summed and averaged to produce a common number—this being Average Reference. Some doctors nodded at the decision; some applauded; some even did both while rising to their feet, highlighted.

ii The skeletal foundation, progression, and completion of the Tertiary Care Center were entirely witnessed by the Natives. At this point in their nation's land, sounds of the West—construction—were no longer atonal nuisances. They had grown a tolerance, and even a hidden desire for such creations since they housed all sorts of goodies one could purchase. They waited patiently for the grand opening of this red building—whatever it may be; there was no sign in native or foreign tongue for three seasons.

On a random morning, as the sun and Care Center competed for attention, finally, an announcement was Scotch™ taped to an electric lamppost. Those educated or previously exposed to far Western English followed the message left to right. They were informed, told to arrive at the main entrance facing the village promptly after the first morning's prayer. The curvature of Lucida was not the only alluring factor driving volunteerism: it was this new, official, alienating language the villagers had never before encountered. It was a chemical thrill heart and lungs devoured. The sign promised all volunteers of this study (a study!) the rights attributed to all volunteers from historical works—Ethical Principles and Codes of Conduct including the right to be informed of the research's purpose and methods, its risks and benefits, the freedom to withdraw from the study with no penalty, and debriefing. Yes, you will receive a complete explanation of the results as soon as they are processed (6-8 weeks GMT)! They were to organize a line and be ready for a thorough explanation of what to expect and what was expected of them. This was their chance at history. They felt trusted with history. They would also be compensated economically with currency, foreign and high in value.

On the second floor, between the first floor auditorium and the third floor cafeteria (as renamed by the great Jackson Smith), the rooms were simply painted. White. Tiled. White. Perhaps not the wisest of choices despite previous data on the color. The area became tinted with Natives whose skin, bleached with earth, marked here and there. Two thousand and two arms, two thousand and two legs scuffed the walls and what was proven to induce sleepiness, an optimal environment for EEG studies. No matter, the event went on as planned, and to expedite the process, all one thousand and one villagers who showed were given an 8 ½ x 11 inch handout to keep, commit to memory, and perhaps even frame. It spoke in foreign tongue, simply:

Electroencephalogram, EEG brain wave test

How the test is performed

You will be asked to lie on your back on a table or reclining chair.

The doctor will apply 16-25 flat metal disks, or electrodes, in different places on your scalp.

They will be held in place with sticky paste.

The electrodes are connected by wires to an amplifier and recording machine.

You will need to lie still with eyes shut; any movement can alter results.

You may be asked to do certain tasks, such as breathing deeply and rapidly for several minutes.

How to prepare for the test

You need to wash your hair the night before. Do not apply any oils, sprays, or conditioner.

Avoid foods, or foods containing caffeine for 8 hours before the EEG.

It is necessary to sleep during the test, so limit sleep the night before.

How the test will feel

The electrodes may feel strange, but do not produce sensation or much discomfort.

Why this study will be performed

History.

There was murmuring in native tongue. Syllables ended in a high pitch signifying the exchange of questions between villagers. Scientists patiently stood, hands clasped before their hips or at the small of their backs, waiting for decisions on the matter. Villagers, snugly kept in a fine balance between store bought and hand woven materials, turned and re-turned to one another. Air in the room had a positive charge to it. For them, this was yet another experience that was unknown. Endorphins were released, absorbed and it was believed such an experience should not be passed over. All one thousand and one stepped forward in a great wave of acceptance, promising to return the following morning.

Twenty five Natives at a time were taken to a room on the fourth floor where EEGs, cushioned reclining leisure chairs, and tables were sitting. Electrode pads had been sanitized with alcohol swabs, dried with cotton balls, and adhered to temples, foreheads, earlobes, and craniums with a blue glycerol paste. It was cold, applied with the end of a popsicle stick. With each pad there came a smile from the doctor and an assistant technician whose identification tags were, perhaps, unknowingly turned in towards buttons of an overcoat. When a Native was fully prepped and the EEG functional, the technician reached into a pocket and pinched the utmost important variable of the study: three coupons held together by perforated edges. With a nod from the doctor, the coupons were handed over to a Native. The needles moved.

iii *With a purchase of 30 shanks or more, the bearer of this coupon receives one side order of Bon-Bon Chicken—free of charge!*

The cuts of poultry are convenient sizes to be placed in the mouth, to be chewed with only a dozen or so movements of the jaw and swallowed. The bird is plucked, chopped, dipped into starch, bathed in fellow yoke, and fried momentarily—just until the clumps rise to the oil's surface. Each piece is then fished out with a webbed utensil and left on a cotton towel; there, gravity tugs at the excess fat and grease. The towel has become a confusing yellow, stained dramatically once these coupons were printed in bulk, made available to the public, and redeemed in large numbers. In fact, the Szechwan Garden Kitchen had been producing more steam than usual thanks to wanted bargains and high demand.

Patrons wandered through the open storefront expecting *With a purchase of 20 shanks or more, free Chengdu Dumplings in hot sauce!* Hands—thick with humidity—wilted the coupons, bleeding the ink. Throats rippled and kicked at the thought of cumin, midget peppers, and pig loin wrapped in dumpling form—steamed or fried. Although the season was warmer than previous times (trees once scattered to shade Natives were replaced with something less organic), free spicy food is a devious temptation. However, dumplings were only the second best offer: *Free Cold Noodles with Sesame Sauce* was the money melon ticket. Certainly a chill was a relief in all this heat; goose pimples are a rare find here, until a dish such as this is eaten. Children stare at their skin, wondering how it contracts and rises without thought or obvious reason; adults take pride in their body, admiring their health and involuntary experience. Not only did forearms tickle, but legs, backs, and the slight curve where the neck meets the skull.

Within the Tertiary Care Center, such reactions were present. They were noted with a blue Pilot™ pen. Occasionally a doctor glanced at a volunteer, processed what was seen using the strictest of objective reasoning, and jotted. The jot created a sticky sound, as did the EEGs' printing mechanisms; they too jotted objective information. With an index and thumb, another doctor plucked the graphs as they were spit from the machines and read them—the Natives were spontaneously dallying between Theta and Gamma. Such a find was unheard of; were the coupons truly having such an effect? The Natives' faces were physically normal and of no help. Eyes, ears, noses, and cheeks made no awkward alignment. The only

evidence of activity was hidden chemically and electrically in the brain. A thankful doctor, one aware of human limitations, stroked an EEG in thanks and praise as it converted the unseen into numbers, nicks and tics:

Brain Wave (in Hertz)	Personal Response (as translated from native tongue after formal debriefing) and Objective Reasoning
3.5 Hz /	Feeling of oneness with everything; language expanding
5.5 Hz /	Relaxation; meditative state reached suggesting sense of trust established with environment/advertisements
6.3 Hz / Theta	Astral projection; joyful memories of youth recollected
7.0 Hz /	Heightened receptivity; claims of the ability to bend objects
7.5 Hz /	Inner-awareness of self and self purpose
7.83 Hz /	Earth's magnetic fields sensed; foreign light sources "seen," a "presence" reported
24 Hz /	Need for learning, experience, self fulfillment
35 Hz / Gamma	Wakefulness; need for movement ("walking, redeeming coupons, shopping")
37.8 Hz /	Release of beta-endorphins (blood sample)

Air in the room was moist, body soil was collecting; windows were absent in the design of observation areas. There were no organic noises, no coughs to fill in the silence, no mundane conversation, no discussion of past, present, or futures. Only the EEGs mumbled, recording brain waves and converting them into readable messages down to the sub-millisecond. Natives, when in their Theta trance, were still, physically in trance with limbs and minds limber, generally transcending time; Natives, when in their Gamma trance, remained remarkably similar—but only physically. Their attention focused into sharp points of perception, admiring the coupons, orchestrating fantasies that included themselves inside the Szechwan ordering, presenting the ticket, and enjoying their well earned meal. Neuroscientists, sharing in this silence, performed their own daydreams, ones of scientific merit. They imagined the Natives' brain structures halved, chopped into smaller named regions, and analyzed; the pieces look uncooked and rippled as the shell of a walnut. But with a well developed machine, we can glimpse even deeper and without cutting, too. The doctors smiled at the idea. The brain was to be investigated.

iv Six hundred volunteers were asked to visit the fifth floor of the Tertiary Care Center. One by one a Native was told to undress and lie on something of a gurney—a platform, if you will. With no one but the presence of the Computerized Axial Tomography machine, they removed coverings with patterns of ancestry and commercial logos. When comfortably unfurled, the Native and platform were slowly vacuumed into the CAT scan's opening. Externally, a Native experienced very little, mostly the sound of effort as the machine's innards churned away. The space inside the x-ray machine was confining and did evoke some bouts of panic—but only enough to cause eyes to shut reflexively. Darkness behind the lids was much vaster, comforting.

What the Natives could not see, nor the doctors, was the abundant amount of electromagnetic energy spouting from the x-ray tubes. Photons pranced and moved through the soft materials of the Natives' bodies simply. With each revolution of the machine's cameras a thin, horizontal slice of the brain was photographed; several dozen slices were taken, saved in a distant computer's memory drive. The technician, whose identification tags were finally corrected, pressed a certain combination of buttons which forced the computer to layer slice upon slice and serve a fully bloated image. The doctors stood huddled together and peered over shoulders to witness a brain bubble up before them on a screen of various yellow and black smears. These were neurons and they warped from various lobes to the temporal area in astonishing abstract figures; doctors fingered their outline in Freudian joy: a ballerina, no a frog, possibly a hoe, perhaps a sock, it's just a soup can. Condensed soup!

The Natives' brains, being exposed to advertisements and learning of capital, had spawned extensions; the external tickle of ads, or coupons for example, were simple yet bombarding stimuli, enough for new neural connections and associations to be made; adult brains were growing, shifting, organic, and plastic. The Natives are adapting to the new capitalist environment in Southeast Asia, it was spoken; an index finger rose in the air, air with a positive charge. Within the cauliflower puff in a volunteer's head a

single neuron fired. It excited a neighboring neuron, which triggered the next, and the following, and so on and so on. With each look of the eye and turn of the neck, the outside changed the inside. . .and the inside felt very, very good.

Mysterious Patterns of the Sapien

*12 Steps
To "Gut Load" Your Lizard*

1. Purchase trees molded by workers in a communist Asian society. Make certain they have cooled for 26 hours, were boxed, and shipped promptly to a suburban pet shop open until 6 PM on Sundays. Call in advance if this establishment sells clown fish, hamster cubs and a parrot that recognizes shapes. Look for TREES HAVE ARRIVED! 2 FOR \$4! in the storefront window, written in an uncertain handwriting, crooked and not terribly excited despite the 2 exclamation points. Purchase 4 trees along with 1 very informative book on the African Fat Tailed Gecko.
2. Dust 5-10 "bite size" insects, per lizard, with a vitamin/mineral supplement containing calcium and vitamin D3 to prevent metabolic bone disease. Place insects in small jar with a "pinch." Cover, shake.
3. Have spouse repeat *to herself* in annoyed manner Honey, Honey I hate this, you know I hate this. But I always help; you know that too, so why do you even ask?
4. Turn on a full spectrum UV-A, UV-B light bulb 45 minutes prior to feeding. The thermometer inside the tank should read 82-88 F when feeding takes place. The increasing amount of warm air will biologically alter your pet: as the temperature rises, the faster the gecko will digest. Please note: temperatures above the indicated 88 F may cause significant damage to the animal; it will be unable to process its food, nor complete valuable life processes.
5. Have the spouse recall how you successfully murdered a small population of geckos last year by miscalculating the bulb wattage needed in proportion to the size of the tank and number of lizards. That was so funny, wasn't it honey? The look on your face...
6. If several insects die during the "shake n bake" process of step 2, use a needle nose pliers to grasp the insect and feign movement. The gecko will not eat its meal if it cannot hunt it.
7. The spouse may explain her fatigue about the procedure or the day in general. You will be uncertain as to which because concentration will be focused on step 6. Please baby, please just eat the damn thing, should be *thought* but not said. It will not make the 12 steps proceed any faster nor without complaint from the spouse.
8. Frequent misting should be applied. A small generator can be bought at the suburban pet shop where the trees were purchased. You will have to return: mimicry of the animal's natural habitat encourages mental function, ensures mental health, and satisfies instinctual needs.
9. Make certain that mashed potatoes will accompany dinner. Note that failure to verbalize your need may render it unsatisfied. You will hear No honey, I only put the yams in for the gecko thing.
10. Between insect feedings, occasionally place vegetables and fruits inside the tank to provide other nutrients and mental activity for your pet.
11. Assure the spouse you will be fine, although pleasure may be meager in comparison to that which could have been evoked by mashed potatoes.

Apologize for saying nothing and thank her for remembering to put the yams in the oven.

12. Refrain from eating the yams yourself. Chop them into 1' cubes that have cooled for at least 2 hours. Group or scatter them as you wish to provide the fullest stimulation for your gecko. Repeat process 3-5X weekly. Relax promptly after by initiating various other activities.

*8 Steps
To Watching the Idiot Box*

1. Place yourself upon the ass groove of a sofa, which has been creased over many dedicated hours to a program that had been cancelled several seasons ago. Remember the joy felt upon hearing the show's "one-liners," "zingers," and "witticisms" for the first time. In an attempt to experience happiness once again, watch the syndication of this program on a channel priced as an extra expense on the cable bill.
2. Activate the motor cortex of the cerebral cortex, located in the forebrain. Erect right thumb and press 2 digits on the "remote control" that corresponds to the channel of which airs your program.
3. Ignore the spouse as she wonders *aloud* Why you watch the silly little program over and over, Don't you already know what is going to happen, How is it still funny after hearing the punch line so many damn times, Does it make you feel smart to know what happens next, and Why don't you do something instead? Like read? It's cheaper.
4. Answers to the spouse's inquires are known yet you must refrain from responding. Any potential remark in verbal form, facial or bodily pantomime may generate a rapid succession of thought processes within the spouse. Her decisions may hold you responsible for everything wrong in the universe, including but not excluded to the incompatibility between general relativity and quantum mechanics. Any response will ignite conflict, or worse—conversation.
5. Rods and cones within the eye transduce the program's slapstick into coded neural energy. Sensory nerves transfer the coded activity to the central nervous system. Be sure your Thalamus processes and relays neural energy to the appropriate part of the brain for an appropriate reaction. Your cerebral cortex should receive the input and produce the response of laughter.
6. Note that objects in the world generate activity, such as the spouse. She will filter into the unconscious activating the Absolute Threshold—the minimum external stimuli needed to produce an automatic response. You will unknowingly agree to the suggestion Watch PBS at least, the News Hour with Jim Lehrer is very respectable; agree to the idea of Let's invite Patty and her new boyfriend to dinner in the not-to-distant-future; agree to Improve your mannerisms around guests.
7. Refrain from urinating during commercial "breaks." Your favorite program is brought to you by the sponsor Toyota Camry®, Toyota Corolla®, Toyota Solara®, Toyota Tundra®, Toyota Prius®, Toyota This, Toyota That, Jamaica Airlines®.

Average sponsor commercial length: 15.3 sec

Average 4 sponsors per "break": 61.2 sec

It is biologically impossible to expel waste in this time frame and perform necessary ritualistic sanitary procedures that follow. Refrain. Refrain. Refrain Will Robinson. You will miss the “one-liners” you love so much.

8. Continue focusing head towards screen. A stream of all sorts of bright shiny things will be transduced into neural energy. At times, the endocrine system will release Norepinephrine. You have successfully felt happiness once again. Repeat process Mon-Fri, 4-5 PM EST before dinner.

5 Steps

To Cooking Turkey Picadillo with Brown Rice

1. In a medium size saucepan, bring 2 ½ cups of water, 1 ½ tbs butter, 1/8 ts salt to a boil over high heat. Stir in 1-cup long grain brown rice. Reduce heat to low and cook covered for 45-50 min or until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed.
2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat 2 tbs vegetable oil. Chop 1 small yellow onion, 1 small red pepper and 2 large cloves of garlic in silence. Glance over to the spouse who is intent on witnessing the boiling point of the oil. Yield chopping. Her attention will be drawn to you. Eye contact will be made for several seconds or until a pair of eyes is averted. Conversation is optional. Add ingredients to oil.
3. Add 1-pound ground turkey to skillet. Stir frequently for 5 min or until cooked through. That’s until the pink is gone, right? you’ll hear. The pink, right? How pale should it be? you’ll hear. You can stare and poke the meat to feign interest or answer quickly. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Stir in 1 ts sugar, ½ ts cinnamon and cumin, ¼ ts cloves in 1 14 ½ ounce can of tomatoes. Peel and chop 1 small Granny Smith or other tart apple. Drop in apple chunks liberally. Spouse will recount of meals where you burned, caramelized, added too much or too little of an ingredient. There may be a snort in her laugh. Listen for 15-20 min or until apple is tender.
5. Fluff rice with fork and transfer to a serving platter. The spouse will choose the non-stick silver Teflon: she hates to scrub and It isn’t true what that Dawn® commercial says, it takes forever for dry grease to come off. Think of a response. You may suggest washing the dishes yourself or complimenting her measuring abilities. Repeat process 5-7x per week.

12 Steps

To Diffuse Food Molecules Across Cell Membranes

1. Cut larger clumps of food into 1’ cubes using a stainless steel knife and fork molded by workers in a communist Asian society, boxed in matching a set of 12, and shipped to a rampant popular chain in a suburban county open until 11PM on Sundays.
2. Chew 1 “bite-size” morsel at a time using several violent strokes of the jaw to the right. Having a variety of foods on your dish reduces platelet accumulation on coronary arteries and provides high intakes of soluble fiber that may bring down cholesterol levels. Remember: an attempt at proper mannerisms must be overt. This includes managing your health and personal appearance.

3. Have the spouse repeat to *herself* in annoyed manner Honey, Honey the turkey is too pink. I told you to look at it. You did, but you never really do look, really. So why do I even ask?
4. Be certain the dining room light fixture is ON during the consuming process and is occupied by 3 white 60-WATT bulbs. Heat will elevate and suspend the temperature to 74F—a degree mammalian species can operate without risk of dehydration and complete valuable life processes.
5. Have the spouse recount her adventures of buying and applying cosmetic products: Esteem by Naomi Judd™ came out with this new Pore Refining Cleanser, but I put this on after the AM Moisture Shield with an SPF of 15. During the day I occasionally rub on Elizabeth Arden© Daily Moisture Lotion. This also has an SPF of 15. I rub it in clockwise. Have you noticed? What do you think?
6. Patience may be worn by her method of listing and telling. If attention cannot be localized onto the subject at hand, smile in between swallows and gesture in agreement. The spouse will not finish her meal unless there is movement and activity at the other end of the table.
7. You are allowed to express your fatigue yet only in a coded language and roundabout fashion: correlate your indifference, depression, and physical lagging to a deficiency of Pyridoxine (B6) in contrast with the body's failing attempts at breaking down low density lipoproteins (LDL)—a segment seen on the News Hour with Jim Lehrer. Please baby, please start taking better care of yourself, you will hear. Also “suggest” the effect of wind patterns and the 23.4-degree tilt of the earth exposing Grus, the crane constellation in the northern hemisphere. Biological, meteorological, and astronomical excuses, however, will not prevent the spouse's intuition from sensing the most probable cause: We're just plain unhappy.
8. Frequent *silent* belching should be applied. Digestive globular enzymes will break down turkey picadillo, producing excess waste. Struggle to maintain proper adequate.
9. Make certain the large intestine and sigmoid remove remaining liquid; solids may accumulate until the volume stimulates a bowel movement.
10. Between three course meals, continue general life patterns including driving your automobile to local suburban mega value shopping centers, entertainment venues such as the local bar near the airport, and making blandiose conversation with Bennett, Geller, and “the other guy” whose name you can never recall.
11. Assure the spouse things will be fine. My health, us, this is just how things go. Right babe? It's the economy anyway.
12. Refrain from leaving the table without promising to “do the dishes.” Repeat process 7X per week. Note that sleep will be induced shortly, despite attempts of enticing yourself with the promise of late night television.

10 Steps

To Massaging Your Gums, Pores, and Ego

1. Adults and children 12 years of age and older: apply at least a 1-inch strip of Maximum Strength Sensodyne Whitening Toothpaste for Sensitive Teeth and

- Cavity Protection (with Fluoride)® onto a soft bristle toothbrush. Struggle to unscrew “easy open cap” turning right. Brush teeth thoroughly for 1 min, preferably after each meal or at least twice a day or as recommended by a dentist.
2. Circular movements are best. Sensitive teeth may indicate a serious problem that may need prompt care by a dentist. See dentist if problem persists or worsens. During circular movements, consider why it is your marriage is failing. Recognize that it is a lack of communication. See therapist if problem persists or worsens. Grow fatigued at the thought of how much effort is needed to correct the matter. Spit.
 3. Rinse mouth with cold water turning knob with blue dot right. Gargle for 30 sec with 20mL (2/3 fluid ounce or 4 teaspoons). You may add an antiseptic to the water to prevent rampant “bad breath.” If bad breath persists see dentist. Note that you may accidentally be swallowing small amounts of Thymol, Eucalyptol, Methyl Salicylate, and good old fashion Menthol. In case of panic, seek professional assistance or contact Poison Control Center immediately. Questions about antiseptics? Call toll-free 1-800-223-0182.
 4. Remember to spit again. Remember to apply John Frieda® Thicker Hair: Wear & Tear Repair after shampooing tomorrow—remember to wipe the mirror of condensation after showering, so the spouse can apply her cosmetic list. Listen to spouse washing the dishes you promised to clean, but happened to forget. Curse.
 5. Force yourself to look at your reflection. Curse genetics and Jim Lehrer’s informative news segment on meiosis and genetics. Struggle with the word: me-O!-cyst. Curse again. Open medicine cabinet using right hand. Discover spouse’s skincare product that states “advanced anti-aging/anti-age avancee” and “firming pore refining serum/serum raffermissant et lissant.” Apply in secret.
 6. Replace spouse’s skincare product making certain label faces the same direction as before it was touched. She will know. She probably already knows. Does she know what’s wrong with us? Does she know how to fix it? Should I say something? Say I’m concerned? What if she’s not concerned and saying I’m concerned will make her concerned? Feel chest and aorta tighten.
 7. Convince yourself you will feel better after flossing. Wrap 18’ to 25’ cm of the material securely around index fingers to produce an abusive indent. Slip floss between gaps in teeth, which never properly closed despite wearing braces during adolescent years. Move hands in a forward, back motion. Forward, back. Forward, back. *Sigh* “c’est la vive.”
 8. Chuckle at your “wit,” although incredibly dry by the spouse’s standards. Become excited at the thought of your favorite sitcom being aired again tomorrow. Feel another “tingle” when thinking of your African Fat Tailed Gecko. Reassure yourself she will be fine in your care. Is it female? To discover the wonders of sexual dimorphism in species, begin reading chapter 2 of the informative book you purchased earlier this day. Please note that the trees may become liquefied and toxic under high heat: be vigilant and occasionally worry at the office, bar, or any other establishment outside the home.
 9. Mentally review the “list of god damn things to do tomorrow,” anticipating 2/3 to be completed “half assed.” Mentally review tomorrow’s sequence of events and sequential processes. Expect to be annoyed by interruptions, but disappointed by

the lack thereof making the day unsurprising. Forward, back. Forward, back.
Always forward, back.

- 10.** Hear spouse shuffle into the bedroom and turn the light OFF before you enter. Phalanges joint injury may occur when hitting dresser in darkness. Refrain from obscene mannerisms. Repeat this entire booklet into “golden years.” Say Goodnight Gracie. G’night Gracie.

zeus drowning giants: a fairy tale

Chapter 1
The Moment Before the Moment

Bronze statues mime joyous occasions and faces on the lawn of the wide hotel Mamillius. In the kitchen, artichoke stems are snapped and, tut-tut-tut, pushed aside as the waste they are. The third door from the left is locked; cleaning agents are hidden from small children and lap dogs (which are not usually allowed, that is of course, if they are an accessory to a wardrobe that must be worn that evening or sooner). Two floors above it, room 371 is feeling awfully proud of its unpacked bed sheets laid and tucked just in time for a wife, or widow, to *eww* at the patterns of white Braille flowers that bubble against a touch. The same shade of drapes has pin-pricked holes that were systematically placed at their edges by the blind tailor, who has stitched linens for every room, every year since the hotel was a *hotel*. He used to personally measure the heirs of King Edward III, which of whom lived here with thirteen Mastiff hounds. All had to go once giant rats infested the home and tempted the dogs to act as uncivilized primal things.

The hohum of the workers is due to the impulsive nature of the Queen of Thailand. She is throwing a benefit for persons unbeknownst to the hotel or even herself—she merely enjoys the word *benefit*, it sounds so Napoleon. The rattley-chat of the things in her pocket outweigh the common sense of the hotel manager, who insists on a determined number of guests as to reserve the appropriate amount of rooms, please, please. The servants have no choice, then, but to scour all eleven floors and cook enough finger appetizers that would please Mamillius' full capacity of guests, if should be the case. It looks to be as promising; two elephants have just been delivered.

The third door from the left of the kitchen has just been unlocked.

Chapter 2
An introduction to our Queen of Thailand

She lives on a mountain, right at the top of a beautiful view. Of her entire lordship, she has only met several natives whose homes were as remote as the Monarch's, as her thoughts. Meeting them was purely by coincidence; one man had to cross her gardens in the name of emergency. His nails were of a magnificent width, capable of digging out children and small mammals fallen into wells; he was called for by the next town over. He gained his fame through their national pastime of boxing, his broken face known well to happy, happy gambling addicts. She blessed him with luck and an ox, which responded to the name Lao to help his travels.

She hoped to hear of his success, yet words were faint if they made their ways over the chrysanthemum wall. These flowers tried too desperately, at all too frequent times of the day, to be of company. Keeping the evil, thieving spirits away has also scared off joy. She dreams of the celebration that may be after the boxer rescues the child: the town's people whittling little boats, decorating them with lotus flowers and lit candles at their center. All would drift down the river under a November moon.

She lives on a mountain, right at the top of a beautiful view. The wind follows a strict pattern of west to east, bringing the soft, sour smell of cumin from one of Her Majesty's villages; olive bread, perhaps? Perhaps. She shuts the window, one accustomed to her own scent, with the turn of a knob embroidered with the family crest of the peacock and its arrogant showiness. The same is printed on the nation's currency and her bed pillows. There are several of these birds in the cherry blossom garden, but they scatter when one tries to pat them.

There is always some sort of stringed instrument playing, off in another wing being plucked or bowed, sending notes into the atmosphere. She reads them one at a time, which leads many to think that is how she gets those *ideas* of hers. The most recent event was the pond she had the gardeners create for those damn birds. Now *this? This?* She wants to throw a party of sorts—a festival, is it? And whom exactly are you going to invite? And where and when exactly? Oh, it is a benefit? For whom and do they know of it?

No no no it does not matter at all, of whom, or when, or why—it just *is*, was her excuse. To the priest, this was unholy. To the rational man, this was irrational. To the official, this was unofficial. *Should we vote on it?* By the time they had voted to vote on the subject, she had already informed the Mamillius Hotel to prepare for her arrival.

Chapter 3

How the unholy, irrational, unofficial decision was made

The Mamillius Hotel

Thailand's most elegant and established property,
occupies a white sand cove on a grotto-filled limestone island.

Its eleven floors hold architectural strokes of genius:
Tree-trunk columns are wrapped in coconut fiber rope
and reproductions of nature's beauty adorn the bathroom walls
in photographs.

At lunch, entrees range from
a Thai prawn salad with lemongrass dressing to poached
coral-trout fillets served in Chile-soy dipping sauce.
At dinner, guests can choose a secluded spot or dine at a long,
candlelit communal table outside.

Come today, spend tomorrow....

Perfect! she thought! Amazing! she said! The Queen had been taken by the advertisement's colors, do hickies, and fonts. Thailand sounded heavenly... She ordered her barrage of maidens and tailors and dancers to the Mamillius; her calligraphers and seals and gardeners; her door hinges and doorknobs and sink stoppers; her hosiery and dining gloves and, of course, her lap dog which matched the patterns of the dining gown. All were in motion.

List! Let us list names! Two lists of names, composed in alphabetical order, were laid side by side. She had decided only one A, B, or C etc. of the last name could actually attend the benefit, in regards to organization and excitement. To fulfill this goal, the Queen chose the One by measuring¹⁶ and comparing how much she enjoyed the presence of, for example, Antonio Belladonna verses Ginia Bellafonte. It was quite a dramatic scene; the final list took several minutes, each pulled to their last nanosecond, until a definitive check mark was placed along side the victor (Monsieur Belladonna, of the previous example, was chosen with the greatest of care and mathematical skill. A handwritten apology will be sent to Madame Bellafonte.).

Sixteen Appaloosa driving horses were to pull Her Highness' wagon. Their spotted rumps, all in a unison gallop, were just the feverish spectacle needed to alert bellhops and maids of her approach. Nine people could sit comfortably within the coach, yet she chose to sit alone to admire the apple trees, which were vacant of any apples at the time. Her dozen, or more so servant hands were to hang off and around this coach's roof; she could have easily called for several other rides, but that would have separated the horses and, therefore, dash the awe-inspiring sight. She loved the word *awe-inspiring*, it sounded so awe-inspiring.

Chapter 4 The Arrival and The Idea

The lawn ornaments continued to successfully hold their faces in the glee position, with their limbs in the corresponding angles of glee and socialization. The artichokes were boiled in chicken broth and white wine, for nearly an hour, and their hearts were now tender. The blue cleaning agent was used most commonly; the two elephants shared a total of six bowel movements. The blind tailor had silently, O silently, past away in his favorite room of 371. Guests arrived not knowing the party's sole purpose, yet felt their presence was glorifyingly enough to satisfy a benefit for children, widows, midgets, alcoholism, environmental instability from melted plastic containers, stray un-spayed or neutered cats, the dwindling number of red fire ants, the Mexican Roof Menders' union, cures for molds and spore diseases (in mammals and invertebrates), testing for spoiled dairy products and lactose intolerability, hereditary misfortunes of poverty, or reevaluating flight patterns of the aeroplane for the safety of flying mammals and winged creatures.

A round bellhop took the keys from the noticeably nervous manager to give to Dr. Willmay: one of the 173 arrived guests¹⁷ to the "Queen of Thailand Benefit Extravaganza."

¹⁶The measuring device was a scale devised by the Queen herself. It was labeled the Beatitudeographer, who's smallest to greatest ranges were based on how well the individual in question could make her laugh. The scale proceeded as so: polite smile, snicker, giggle, haw, haw haw, haw haw gauf, haw haw gauf snort, and finally, a complete ruckus.

¹⁷ Apparently, several "final" lists had merged. Our Grace had not considered the extraneous factor of pity she would feel by leaving so many out of this happy, happy benefit. She hated the word *science*, it sounded so incurable.

W had no competition on an opposite list of names; Willmay was alone and outstanding. He had written to our Lady from Arjuzanxesque, a town in France, which gained its reputation from being one of the few places (or words) on earth to contain all four rare letters of J Q X and Z. Dr. Willmay informed her that he would abruptly put his vacation on hold to make an appearance at the Mamillius. Our Queen was beside herself when he entered the hall.

She and the 172 others were in dire need of answers; how is *she*? Dr. Willmay became *the* Doctor Willmay once the Queen of Denmark hired him for private use. He was a complete success at prescribing any combination of tranquilizers with anesthetics safely. The Denmark Queen enjoyed him immensely and spoke about the doctor on a whim.

He paused:

She is nearly blue with death.

He braced himself:

Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis.

Since she was a babe, the Denmark Lady had slept with quartz and fine jewels about her neck and limbs. Such a task it was preparing them on the body, it was thought easier (and more than worthy) to leave them once placed. Who could have foreseen that being so adorned could be the cause of a disease of the lungs; she had breathed in decades of the fine, granulated volcanic ash that composed her jewelry. (O the horror of fate; the thing the universe had excreted.) The Doctor Willmay tried to obtain all the new medical *ohh's* and *ahh's* but found himself at a loss, reverting to the Ayahusca plant out of failure... and an attempt to give happiness to the Queen even if it were hallucinogenic. She was coughing up blood and brown and the idea of *natural* smiles were beyond question.

The dinner gong, gonged, and induced the conditioned response of filing into the dining hall. All, now, 346 guests sifted through two mirror-plated doors. Or was it still 173 and it was the illusion that the doors—No no, no time to see or count. What's to be done about the issue at hand? *How long to cook the artichokes?* No, the Denmark Queen. This was quite a complex issue and because of that, she believed, this illness could be fought on many fronts—like the War. *Which one?* Oh you know—all of them.

At this time, her lungs expanded and the eyes of God were the greenest she had ever seen—for she had another idea. The Queen never really cared for elephants; they took up much too much space for her liking. She would give the gift of elephants to the Queen of Denmark; two of them, unnamed yet civilized. She could not bear to separate the two, and still, she *did* have four—oh, wait the doors again. No matter, give her the two. And send a card, handwritten:

May you find peace at
last when the cicada shell
is shed and fallen.

The artichokes had cooled by now; no fingertips will be pinched. All is well; her lungs contracted, her eyes watched Dr. Willmay and the other 172 guests take their cushioned seats. She ordered the mirrors to be taken off the doors; she hated the word *trick*, it sounded just like an illusion.

our, um, Individual: a fairy tale of sorts

It was 1 hour and 21 minutes to three o'clock when the light at the corner of Ralph and Schnectidy turned yellow, then red. All drivers had complied with the state's regulation of coming to a full yield. With there being no danger of injury, several pedestrians crossed to the opposite street. In the pockets of two elderly ladies a shrunken prayer booklet was found. Walking parallel to them, a gentleman held a cased 14 kt. 2-tone 1.0 ctw 3 Pc stone diamond ring. A younger man gripped today's newspaper, whose local football team was circled in black ink. All of the hopes and dreams and prayers of salvation had beautiful, respectable odds. The light at the corner of Ralph and Schnectidy had decided on green for now.

At four thirty this morning, a boy of seventeen was struck and killed at this intersection. The death did not prevent the temperature from rising to a glorious, comfortable degree. The temperature, however, made delivering the mail to our, um, Individual a pleasurable experience. The post had brought the best type of news: that which can be discarded easily—no effort of attention needed or opening demanded. Yet one envelope was curious, it broke the steady flow of nonchalant tossing into the waste bin. The postmark read Buffalo. *Buffalo? What is Buffalo?*

The Bank had given our Individual a free gift—a letter opener—for applying to refinance the home—honestly, simply for applying. Its blade was thin, composed of unquestionable metal, and with an unabashed insert and tear, there went the envelope and here was the letter: simply like that.

Our Individual was quite sure no other fingerprints, nor fibers, were on this paper; it being folded into three equally proportioned sections, such dedication had to be given to sterilization. *This Buffalo must be exquisite.* With the top flap up and the bottom flap down, the middle section read (with black letters on white stationary):

The clock must get dizzy
going in circles like that.

How extremely pointless. And so it joined its brethren in the trashcan.

At our Individual's age, one had forgotten how to look out of the living room window. There would be peaking at times, yes, but putting imagination into all of those things out there had become a lost skill for which only maturity could be thanked. Now only steady doses of rational questions followed by rational answers came with the witnessing of, for example, Mrs. Terelt walking her Bichon "Pooh." The dog must simply do as it is named. There were hardly any further inquires, ponderings, or even attempts at gossip in private settings for a spontaneous laugh, snort and embarrassment. There were no investigations as to why Mrs. Terelt walks east on Tuesdays but west on Fridays in a pace unusually quickened towards unknown appointments or possibly away from questionable doings. No. The curtains were always parted by an index finger, eyelids sucked together in defense from the sunlight, watching Mrs. Terelt scatter by with her Bichon "Pooh" who must do exactly as it is named. A is A.

At our Individual's age, outside was the producer of necessities; they were truly the only reason for going out there, for all of the morning patterns one develops (including but not excluded to waking at so and so o'clock, specific angles of the toothbrush for proper oral hygiene, etc.), and for all of the nighttime patterns one develops as to be ready for the necessities tomorrow (including but not excluded to the alarm set at so and so o'clock, specific angles of the toothbrush for proper oral hygiene, etc.).

At this time our Individual's brain grew tired with the silence and started to hum
ee
eeeeee between the ears. All was promptly interrupted by the cat, which vomited behind the television and then erased itself from view. *Something to do now.*

(place dingbat here)

At this time Neptune had two of its moons align with Saturn and the mail was delivered. The box *eeped* as it was opened and *upped* as it was closed (please take note of those sounds, they are oh so important). Upon the signal, our Individual eyed through the blinds waiting for the city worker to leave the property before gathering all of those uneventful messages. The mailman stopped. *Well, what now?* He fiddled with his breast pocket. *Dear me, a watch is it?* Of course. He noted the time. He was early for next-door's delivery and so he stood. And so our Individual and the city worker waited together.

(There was a low volume of traffic between Ralph and Schnectidy Avenues. All were at work or play or possibly even home: chimney smoke contributed to a sky already blotted with aeroplanes and orange kites. Squeals popped from the direction of dry swing sets and brake pads of even the newest car models. A page-turner turned the page for a pianist during a concerto. A bingo-caller spoke the number N forty-four, disappointing anticipators of the number N forty-three. You can guarantee wherever you think of, some Individual is scamandering over it, off to another place you have never even learned of before.) At this time, Neptune's moons moved 2.5 degrees and the mailman went off.
Dear me.

eep
upp

Toss, toss, toss, *Tambov?* My, it's another one of those so-called letters again. Incredibly shocking. Our Individual was quite sure it wasn't even worth finding the opener, so in the finger went and out came the sentence:

Bees have five eyes
yet still make mistakes.

Oh, yes, bravo fantastic. They make mistakes because they are just insects. With that said and done, our Individual tore up the, um, message and left its pieces to rot in the afternoon.

There were oh so many other things to be done than just reading sentences. Certain items were needed from the local market—it was Tuesday¹⁸ after all: God's day of plunder and gather. This is what books teach us, so our Individual thought appropriately, relating the fact with venturing outside—out there against mothers and single folk with angered elbows poking to get cantaloupe 2 for 1. The melons were exquisite that day: sugar slipped from their meated centers, freckling their skins with granulated specs; the temptation they induced was unbearable. They were ready to be taken. Eaten. 2 for 1.

Word of the sale had spread evenly throughout town by the use of printed fliers with color portraits of the fruit, and not to mention the two-week preparation at camp and radio addresses from the president. It so happens, all were neither at work nor play, nor at home: all were at the supermarket.

This was quite a shock and disappointment for our Individual. Who could have imagined? Who could have imagined the severe popularity of melons? Was it the bargain that tempted citizens to alter their schedules and seemingly wait for hours on line? Was it the fruit itself? Despite the puzzlement, despite the number of bodies afoot, our Individual needed several degradable items, *let's see, let's see: calcium rocks, salt rocks, sugar cubes, chicken broth, vegetable broth, beef broth, organic rubber bands, wax bananas (as a candle centerpiece for the dining room, of course—the table is frighteningly empty), two melons, tomatoes, tomatoes, and... Tambov? Oh dear me, scratch that off the list. Stop thinking about it. Wait on line.*

Our Individual closed the eyes and tried desperately to place consciousness elsewhere. The *beepbopboop* of twenty-two registers was just the ill choreographed mess needed; like the flock of some horrific simple species of bird *beepbopbooping* in celebration, reunited with one of their own as it carted over its degradable items.

beep.

bop.

boop.

*\$13.35 please.*¹⁹

beep.

Our individual paid with two deceased founding fathers, two dimes, two nickels, and five pennies (*Too much change, too much change everywhere. Must do something about that.*

¹⁸Useless fact #1: The day of the week is currently spelled Tuesday, yet named after Tiu the Anglo-Saxon God of war.

¹⁹Useless fact #2: Total of the listed items, with tax, due by our Individual and the first year a clock publicly sounded the hour (Milan, Italy).

I'll just spend it.) and assisted the clerk in packing the newly purchased items in recyclable paper bags.

...Home was several blocks away, several flower shops, several Ristorantes, several attached four-story homes away. The only blemish and neighborhood shame was a slit in a chain link fence; it was sewn shut using an actual chain. No one ever points out the patchwork or talks of it—that is until a new fence replaces this one. To mourn its disappearance, one or two will remark, “Do you remember the cut in the old fence?” An agreeable silence will follow made of time reserved for wonder and imagination—of how and when the blemish became The Blemish—of how and when and who sewed the cut with a chain. Look at it, such an oxidized chain; a chain knotted and lost in loops; a chain slowly losing its grip. *Oh, when? When did this tragedy happen?—Stop!* And our Individual stopped walking. *It is only a tear. Don't be absurd.* And our Individual continued walking.

...Home was unlocked with the turn of a key and the kitchen light went on when the index finger pushed the switch to the up position. The grocery bag behaved appropriately, sitting still on the counter. Our Individual stared. Is something the matter? *What is Tambov?*

That god damned curious itch led our Individual to the bookshelf in the hallway to scratch away for an atlas. Handbooks, dictionaries, references, brief histories, journal studies, guides, introductions, companions, annotations, computations, How To, How Shan't, Yes You Can, Maybe You Could, No You Had Better Not, Long Answers Yes with an If, Short Answers No with a But; all books that cut out the blahblah sated the shelf. Who needs that blahblah anyway? *And where is the atlas?*

In this frenzy, the bum bumped the hall table and the lamp went boom. *Dear me, I didn't see it. I don't see many things.*

(place dingbat here)

Sleep had been a chore for our Individual. Bed sheets came undone with bodily twisting, pausing, sighing, and continual flip-flops. There were just so many questions that our Individual knew would not be answered now, and possibly, horrifically, be neglected in the future. This world now seemed too large; something unmistakably mistakable, some mysterious beast functioning at will. Its own will. *This will... Is the collective will of thousands? of few? the One?* Who knew? Not our Individual, but the thoughts kept coming. This was all too much to ingest. *Who do you think makes the necessities The Necessities? -- Stop it.*

turn
twist

Why is A the first letter of the alphabet? That's really not fair to the others. -- Stop it!

twist
turn

eep
upp

Dear Me.

The bedroom clock must have past way during the night; no comforting, gentle mechanical *uzzzzggghhh* was there to alert our Individual that it was morning. Did you hear that? No, no, the sound from before: those squeals from the mailbox (funny, but I heard the alarm too). The post was delivered today, the same time as yesterday and the day before, and before, and before. *It's all the same day then? -- Stop it. There's no time for silly questions. Stop thinking these things...* Toes were flexed and curled, then straightened. *Get up.*

Was it curiosity or sickness gathered in the pit of our Individual's bowels, which gave enough strength to walk to the door? *Open it.* There was a day outside.

eep

One hideously pale, recognizably pale envelope was cradled in the box as though innocent of what these godforsaken messages have done, and will be doing, to our Individual's mind.

upp

Fingertips held the envelope with a pressureless grip. Its whole being was analyzed: *was it licked closed? was a damp sponge used? why use prepaid postage? is it a business then? who works there? who pushes the buttons that make the machines go? how could anyone profit from this? and where in the world is Zhenping?* One short edge was ripped off, the long edges were squeezed: a paper inside. (The throat swallowed.) The paper was taken and unfolded.

One second
is 9,192,631,770 periods
of radiation corresponding
to the transition between
2 hyperfine levels
of cesium-133
in the ground state.

(It was quite a nice day; the usual things that grow were growing [including children, cancers, and grass], swing sets were swinging [on both private and public grounds], and don't forget the chimney smoke [industrial and domestic]. The entire ensemble was there. Our Individual stared.) Our Individual returned into the home, closing the door behind. Being that the sentence was useless, yet informative (it did have

a large number in it), our Individual slipped the paper between two books on the top shelf in the hallway. The lamp that fell was never swept away.

Sitting on the love seat of the matching living room set (on sale for a ridiculously low price -- it had to be bought, yes?) our Individual felt confusion. Something distant had acknowledged our Individual's being; our Individual felt fear. *Why, only the bank has my name and personal information...* What was there to do now? Just sit and wait, perhaps. Perhaps just listen to the sirens outside, commenting on today's happenings at the corner of Ralph and Schnectidy Avenue. There is something going on out there. *It's best to go see.*

peeling an apple in the mind: an exercise

The apple is the size of an orange. Held in the left hand, its weight is minimal and silent; the palm is aware of several ounces and tingles, tickling a nervous system. Fingers surround and cage the entire body, a body hairless to fingertips and an asphyxiating green to eyes. At certain circumference points, the body has forgotten how to be oval, mistakenly taking a course into the obtuse forming two slightly misshapen lobes. The right lobe is centimeters longer than the left, causing the imaginative mind to play with the rationalizing mind to better understand the object. The apple's body is divided into a quadrilateral form, four zones to poke. The newly reticulated surfaces allow free probing and wander over smaller surface area; with sections easily divided, they can easily be tracked and controlled. The eye swiftly catches notice of any alteration, such as the shallow impression found in each section, conveying a history of unrecorded physical abuse. Exploring anonymous fingers trace possible explanations, perhaps accidental drops, rollings, impacts with a linoleum floor used by random squawking shoppers in mismatched weekend attire. It could be genetically flawed. A perfectly natural mistake with no real severe consequence.

An earthy steam protrudes, arching into a bow, successfully ending a distasteful performance clashing with skin so bright and youthful; a colorful, brilliant bird with no tongue. Waxed and waterproofed, skin wraps the body and bashfully clothes the meat behind it. With a slight squeeze of a fingernail, one can feel what lies underneath: a consistency of soft solid form, friable and unfortunately simple to lacerate by the curiosity of a nosy thumbnail. There is a quick, organized sound as the digit is bent and forced inwards; a pop, as the skin, so ineffective, is torn. A flash of liquid forms at the entrance. It flows onto the fingernail. The injury is a frown, permanent, filling with translucent sugary air bubbles; a slit providing just enough of a window through which the meat can be seen.

It is pale. Wonderfully pale and optimistic, the flesh is sparsely exposed. There comes an impulsive, reflexive swallow in the throat. As muscles contract, eyes dilate, focusing on the wound slowly tinting, changing to rouge. The entryway has become filthy but enticing; a small fracture whose presence disrupts the uniformity of the skin and magnifies the edible morbid shape. There comes a need, instinctive, from a muddy cortex, to pluck this skin completely.

An implement sits in the right hand. Constriction between the palm, digits and peeler creates a localized increase of heat. The handle is warm, padded with a thick layer of black rubber. The fist squeezes; the rubber absorbs the force, shaping to each finger's length and width. Tendons in the forearm tighten and pain; they assist in this willing suffocation; blood rushes to and from the torso causing veins to increase in purple girth; they can be seen tacking the fist, wrist and coiling the arm. A self-portrait is found in the reflective, metallic mechanics of the peeler. The area used to strip the apple naked parallels a mouth at the beginning of speech. This invention is really two small lips at rest, with a narrow opening between them.

There is a void behind this mouth however. There will be no fluid secreted by salivary glands, no deglutition nor mastication, or any joyous chewing sounds from a mouth in action. No pop from a realigning jaw. Lips and cheeks have been removed; there is no support for teeth as it is gumless within. With no tongue there are no bunches of taste buds; this peeler can never partake in the fruit it is designed to unfurl. Its lips are

two metallic folds which surround the orifice of the counterfeit mouth. They are attached to nothing organic, but a vertical cushy handle fondled when needed; it is the closest substance to cheeks. It can be squeezed in pinching excitement but has no control in flexing the lips into a coy smile and such. The space between the lips and the expression of the peeler is perpetual.

Is it possible, in all of this void and lacking, there lies a benefit? With no gums to recede and bleed, no tongue to touch the coarse burnt flesh of weekday dinners, no hot pulsing numbness in the palate there is freedom, freedom in anatomical dead space. Freedom from pain, fear of pain and internal collapse of age. Phenomenon, as senility, bound to strike all living objects, is absent. There will be no wrinkling of skin, no general wasting of flesh beneath vivacious cheeks. The flabby, superfluous skin folds which form will never be tugged by the rotation of the earth. *These* metallic lips remain stiff, as the lips in the world around it will, one by one, form minor explosive patterns of dents, dashes and curves. The fat inside the lips will evaporate, furrow and thin and crust with the salivation an aged throat does not have the muscle strength to swallow. In a distant land, in another zone of the body, anonymously and in silence, the fat married to axons dissolves. Thought becomes slow, slow to the point where one realizes there is now a significant amount of time between stimulus, recollection and action; this point is sharp and painful. Years ago, there was never any obvious quantifiable time between the three. Never. Now one can think of how there is no thought, and worry, grasping and fumbling to recover a memory.

Phenomenon, as decomposition, bound to strike all living objects, is absent. At the moment of death, quite a moment indeed, the sinew of gums snap and shrivel; bacteria feeds, odors are released by consumption and collapse; bright signals which scavengers follow to a corpse. Flesh flies and blowflies must seek sustenance elsewhere. There is no death here, only silence; an absence of wings in motion. An absence of shock, disgust and regret; an absence of all emotion. The sight of a corpse is stressful to the living. A body will react defensively in an environment that has been tainted by death or the dying. Heart rate increases; breathe and blood pressure follows. Muscles stiffen as blood rapidly sails and the instinct for flight takes hold. There will be a brief sense of sorrow; but there will be a greater period of relief in the fact that this corpse is not yet your own.

Skin of the apple and lips of the peeler touch. The grip surrounding the apple remains casual; the grip surrounding the rubber remains moist; the fingerprint belonging to the right thumb presses against the apple. It will be used for propulsion; it will supply the energy which sets the apples rotation. The remaining fingers of the right hand grip the handle, paused. They will provide the force and balance needed to skin the apple, to hold the peeler at an angle slightly parallel to the meat. Together, with the appropriate coordinated movements between muscle, finger, wrist, desire and thought, the apple will be skinned. It begins with will, however, and the choice to spin the unfortunate mute until it sits wet and naked on the palm of a hand.

Searching to an uncomfortable depth beyond layers of human flesh, tendons from knuckle to cuticle thin, stretching to curve the fingers of a toiling left hand baring fruit. A pulley system evolving from millions of years of trial, error and genetic mistake have linked these tendons to pink, limber muscles designed to squeeze, designed to grip.

Millions of years of trial, error and human mistake have linked these degradable items to the brain. The grip tightens around the apple upon thought; the nerves and pulpy bed of fingertips press against the apples skin. There is sensation, touch which signals successthe left hand has gained control, the meat is enveloped and entrapped.

Accordingly, the internal design of the right hands digits is the same. The collateral ligaments rotate at the joints, providing the minute mechanics which bend the skeletal frame. The same extensor tendons are pulled and pull bloodied muscles. Grip *here*, however, is tightened around something inorganic, around the peelers thick rubber. Pressure is absorbed and synthetics warp to the girth and length of each finger. The position is held; the indentation is kept constant.

Force from the left hand, force from the right hand pressures the center where apple and peeler meet. The sharpened metallic lips brace against the skin; in silence the apple waits. Its blank, uniform expression reveals no evidence of expectation of what is to come. It sits patiently in green, misshapen contentment. Perhaps this inexperience is best. The peeler, however, drools from the minor, minor incision at this pressured contact point, at the crook of its mouth. It knows its purpose, the course of events. And the course of events is willed.

Axons carry signals away from blots of cell bodies sewing thoughts, pleasantries of the taste of a ripe apple and expectations of *this* apple. Previous experience sets the standard for present experience. Memories are recalled upon seeing the skin of this apple; they pop into consciousness reflexively, as to understand, as to decide what is to be done. The skin so resembles many other apples before it. Sight summons taste, a wonderful taste, one of malic and tartaric acids with matching sweet scents the forebrain interprets as happiness. This taste is now expected, desired. Action. Action must be taken to experience happiness again.

The apple is to rotate counter clockwise to begin the savory unveiling. Rounded cogs and isolated bone fragments in the left wrist must cooperate and coordinate in quite an elaborate production that is rather mundane when viewed from an external seat, from out here where the peeler meets the skin. A combined twelve bones and joints construct the face of this pseudo clock. As the wrist turns, as time passes, bones change position, bones of dead yet flamboyant Latin origin ending in -ate and -oid, ending in positions under and over their beginning mark. Their fluidity moves stiffened fingers at the far end of this hand. Clasped and entrapped fingers intentionally spin the apple.

The right hand and all of its innards and parts, accordingly, must remain rigid. There is no need for the peeler to be moved; the fastened horizontal layout from tip to blunt handle is essential for the task before us. The momentum of the apple, its thrusting, self sacrifice into the lips is all the force required; against this wall, the apple will peel itself.

Rotate. A sound follows—a quick, organized sound squirts into the air; the same snap produced by the probing, curious thumb from before. Rotate. Skin slips through the gap of the peelers mouth, channeling, not into a devastating digestive track—not yet—but into a nothingness revealing a long, continuous strand of lively, unnecessary green skin. Rotate. The sound grows dense, the sound grows watery and difficult to understand; it grows dense as the skin grows in length, despite the fruit having been plucked from a sustaining source some unrecorded time ago. Rotate. Grows. Rotate. This watery sound now travels over the fingers and joints whose authoritative grasp continues. It

leaks into the crevice where the hand meets the eroding, remaining layers of zest. The liquid is cold. The apple has been dead for a number of days and the juice flowing from its body can no longer be contained.

A pale, dull halo emits and encircles this body as it is revealed inch by inch, rotation by next mechanical rotation. The flesh itself is remarkably overcast, several shades below its vivacious skin, which being fed through the metal lips of the peeler, curls into a green sinew. Long and weighty, after the final turns, one, two, the skin sheds to the floor with a short hollow thud. A sugary, sweet scent has perfumed the air, dampened the walls and tainted the fingers. Evidence, of liquid and gas, of this event, remains. On the palm of the left hand sits a body, revealed.

a preceding orbit

The corner at 478th Avenue and 24th street is a conglomerate of cement and overtime. Foot traffic has turned the location to a native color not seen since the infantile first steps of the over expanding Nation which proclaimed (self) discovery. Commerce has perfumed the air since that birth day, and created a sensuous shock to the system of those who wish to expand *themselves*. An attractive scent to the yarning masses who strive at the same time, at the same location with the same accessibilities to be grand, free Individuals and miniature (self) proclaimed empires. At the corner of 478th Avenue and 24th Street an electrical pedestrian signal pulses an abnormally oversized right hand to signify a universal signal of danger, a signal of limited time to cross to the opposite corner not worth mentioning, despite being identical in every way possible to this corner; this signal in turn stimulates the universal response of, not halting to ensure physical safety, but a squirting dash to bypass cross-town delivery vehicles impatiently obeying a stop light²⁰. All have time sensitive destinations, in a time sensitive world that performs a wonderful contradictory ballet of great possibility with extreme structure.

Flowers of an adulterous purple are being messengered to the apartment complex²¹ across the way. The messenger's quickened limp and the crossing signal pulse

²⁰ Once upon a time, Patent number 1,475,024 hung with chest heaving pride at this intersection, proving an orderly and, most important, safe traffic flow. It was installed with joyous relief, as now carriages, bicycles, Ford motors and feet could share limited space in relative harmony. It stood, in box form, set atop a long, thin metal pole of which ladies, escorted by gentlemen at the elbow, would be steered clear. Inside the box, three commands were scrawled across alternating panels in English: simply, "Stop," "Go" and "All Stop." These panels were operated by hand—an ingenious hand crank of all sorts of moving, interlocking bolts and such that when rotated raised and lowered the respective signal. The City employee, unfortunately dubbed "the Cranker," was a position of respect and awe by the People. It called for a certain level of graceful organization and gumption hidden behind blue wool and a sturdy billed cap. There the man stood, during all daylight hours, in all weather heaven sent, against all moving bodies—living and naught—staining his wool suit an unattractive hue beneath the armpit area and along the spine; sweat stains that when fully dry, had also absorbed the smells of the street. The very top of his cap had faded, rubbed by sun rays and spit on by rain; the leather bill frowns in dissatisfaction, contradicting the man beneath it. He seemed to enjoy the hours standing and cranking. When asked out of a curious impulse who and how this marvelous contraption came about, the man smiled, repeating his knowledge, "By some slave or former slave. I forget which."

²¹ Once upon a time, Patent number 889,823 inhaled the crumbs of toast, strands of blue lint and other wasteful debris out of homes, hotels and offices worldwide and into detachable cloth bags. The vacuum cleaner was quite a pop sensation that in its first year of life, it was claimed to be the most identifiable sanitation mechanism ever invented. Across the American Nation, wives and illegal caretakers alike swooned at even a mention of the Electric Suction Sweeper Company, who with brow dampened sweat, attempted to keep in toe with the high demand of a product which so easily dismissed the embarrassing leftovers life tends to leave behind. Dust laden air that smothered doorways, or shamefully hid underneath a family heirloom were suctioned with violent and even shocking thrust into a cloth or leather bag (highest quality!) easily undone with a tug and emptied into the waste bin. Hush, hush. The obsessive act of cleansing had so suddenly become so easy. It was all a matter of pushing and pulling a rather rude-in-size and loud-in-manner vehicle back and forth, over an area spotted with filth. Tall gentlemen from West to East coast stood in lines, in all day light (and even night!) hour to become esteemed vacuum cleaner salesmen—a highly sociable and profitable employment. The women, the money! How scandalous! When asked, interrupting a detailed outline of hubs, casings and motors of various vacuum models who invented this gift from the heavens—the salesman would pause, attempting a convincing thought. A smirk would develop, perhaps a blush, with the words, "A janitor. But a very smart janitor indeed."

in remarkable unison. A previous delivery involving an order of one standard white orchid #3729 and fellow deliverer on bicycle pedaling against traffic, attempting to bypass a double parked truck for internationally shipped packages had left a knee shattered. A police report was filed and smoking habit developed to alleviate the joint and tendon pain felt with every step. Despite the handicap and evaporating lungs, every order has been delivered post hast, with signature, since that day. The butt, sucked to a pinch before entering the lobby of a door manned residence, is flicked with a middle finger and bitten thumbnail into a collective gutter of butts, saliva, yesterday's printed world news and popular high fructose drink containers—empty aluminum, which when unintentionally kicked by a dashing foot against a curbside rings the sound of an orchestra's triangle in Elysium. Now, as the last foggish inhale dissolves into blood cells, the battered remains of a cigarette are flicked, skimming the boorish patterns of a secretary's ankle-length dress. Her chin and jaw line fuse to create a neck.

Impaled, this curbside acts as the base for a traffic regulation—anemic, red and silent despite the massive city government it represents. The sign, a collection of vowels and weekdays and dates and exceptions, condensed into six inches, shakes a stern finger with a general warning of *No Parking*. A double sided arrow generalizes infinity or a continuum of such in either direction; yet, comfortably snug within this space, a diesel truck churns its engine, vibrating, exhaling, squat and flush against the curb. A delivery. Tickling the ribcage of this truck, a company's advertisement and slogan. They are multicolored yet fade into the multicolored surroundings of shops, bodies, mailbags, handbags, travel bags, grocery bags, school bags and one lit cigar, unlabeled. The carcinogens, red, match fashionably with the colored fonts; the excreted smoke matches fashionably with the curvature of the print: *Refrigerating Apperati! We Have What You Broke! Since 1928!* A series of digits signify a telephone number and exact location within the city bowels. And even there, within the bowels where tunneled steam fingers manhole covers, rising, dampening the windowsill of an over occupied apartment, there is a hot dog bun that needs refrigeration²².

The crossing signal increases its pulse, increasing the heartbeat of scattering pedestrians determined to cross before oncoming traffic is given the right of way. *Time is running out*—a thought controlled by a fact created by some organizing mechanism to conduct people, places and things. They walk, swiftly, not run, that's an embarrassment publicly, they walk, swiftly, their shoes press against concrete and blackened asphalt,

²² Once upon a time, Patent number 1,886,339 provided 18 cubic feet of unprecedented joy and relief to mothers around the American Nation. There it stood—sixty nine inches of metal, porcelain and centrifugal blowers blowing a cool protective layer around dairy products and meats that would surely mold and spoil before son and daughter scampered home from schooling. It took three, soiled with strain, grown men to lift, carry and drag (*please watch the carpeting!*) this wonderful beast into the kitchen. Its innards—a mixture of generator absorbers, filled with absorbents and evaporators and condensed liquids, hum so beautifully so much so mother is never truly alone. The skin and frame of the Frigidaire is pale, white, making it not only a perfect counterpart for the stove, but a tall, physically robust and tender guardian for mother. For the family. The means for providing a safer environment escaped all of them; the ponderment was great: who tinkered with such advanced science? Who and how can they turn electricity into cold air? One of the three men just had to be asked to put these questions to rest. *Well, Sir?* And with greased fingertips he combed his hair to the right, in thought, his eyes into negative space. Remaining there, in the shadow of the Frigidaire, forming a sentence: "A man in Ohio. Never been there myself."

blackened further still by random pock marks. Chewing gum²³. Aged and pressed, stickiness has taken from soles of shoes the dirt of sidewalks and streets and subway platforms until—press after press—the stickiness is sticky no more. There remains a flattened disk, a bruised color here, here and there, over the face of a city, so often that no one takes notices of the bruises, until, a city employee donned in a flamboyant government orange vest is seen quietly scraping, with a tool long enough as not to bend any joints, the here's and there's off the face and into the trash. Hush, hush. Move, move. There really is no time to stop and consider, and if there were time it would be a waste of time to consider that pock mark. And that one there. And over there. There seems to be so many.

The crossing signal's palpitations sputter, quickly, quickened, to a solid fist, out of time but noticeably in the minds of metropolitans who sputter to the next street corner. Just before this corner, logically labeled 478th Avenue and 25th street, the awkward braces of a sewer grate politely greets those who arrived safely, successfully, despite any boorish patterns of clothing a secretary may be wearing while on her way to file. With youthful inexperience—but with the best of intensions—the sewer system smiles with a mouth full; a mouthful of human waste,²⁴ usually out of sight and out of mind for those who produce it so well and in such abundance. Food trimmings of dinners and snacks are most popular—chicken bones plucked of meat, expose a delicate grey surface that

²³ Once upon a time, Patent number 98,304 was produced with the highest of admirable intensions. The jellyish combination of naphtha and alcohol, boiled with just a dash of prepared chalk and powered licorice root (*completely scientific!*), churned and bubbled, and grew, and jellied, and grew, and bubbled and combined to form the pleasant various-flavored, various-shaped chewing experiences known today. Originally, Gum was concocted with the aim of becoming a possible scouring property that would pluck unswallowed morsels from teeth, thus preventing a cavity or two and saving children from a horrifying and scarring episode at the Doctor's. Health, however, was never an additive property, nor profitable. Sugar was. Thus, after millions of assembly lines, millions of pounds of tasty colored glucose (*and licorice root!*) and corner shops later, sticks of *Chewing Gum!* had successfully kneaded themselves into the gaps of permanent teeth around the young American Nation. Jaws flexed and flexed and those teeth, longing to be saved, intended to be saved, dissolved slowly. Mothers frowned, indeed, when children were diagnosed at the Doctor's. Cavities. Mothers, in the motherly stance of hands-upon-hips (*O!*), asked their Doctor what devil created this, *this, THIS*. . . A loss for words. A moment of silence. And the Doctor would rise, after examining the child laid across a blackened hydraulic chair. A brief sermon, "A dentist. But a good dentist."

²⁴ Once upon a time, Patent number 1,107,515 revolutionized the fate of bowel movements across the American Nation. An indoor commode was nothing new, and the smell (the smell!) would remain under the lip of toilet rims. Citizens did not wait for meals with enthusiastic anticipation, knowing full well about an hour or so from the last chew n' swallow, dinner would have to end up someplace else other than the belly. The commode stood strong, silent at the end of a hallway shared by six or seven families speaking six or seven languages. Those lucky enough to know of a generous Jewish, Italian or Irish plumber or could actually sum up the cost of a private facility could now enjoy dinner and its after effects with no brow furrowing, lip quivering stink. Attached to a water supply pipe, this new flush rim fixture fit so lovely, so partnered under the, well, rim. With the yank of the handle, water projected and swirled violently counter-clockwise to nip at the droppings that had not completely dropped into the puddle below. The toilet, now, did not have to be scrubbed after *every* use, which had deterred so many from using the implement and thus left streets outside obscenely decorated. Out of sight, out of mind. When interrupting the installation, with a question of utmost importance, such as where did this ingenious mechanism come from?, a plumber would ascend from his squat, lifting his pants at the waist, clear his throat in thought and speak with an accent, "I got the part from Ohio. So I guess Ohio."

could be mistaken for an index finger. Luckily, or unluckily—depending on point of view—a burnt clump of cartilage balled at the joint suggests *food*, food left in a deep fryer for forty seconds too long, caramelizing secret sauce comprised mostly of granulated sugar. Shards of glass lay quietly, next to bones and undigested flesh—mirrors tossed from apartments, now vacant, to be filled, and shall, quite quickly, who wouldn't want to be here?, bottles of alcohol sucked clean, slipped from inebriated fingers and dashed upon concrete make for a dazzling smile when the sun rises. And sets.

horse; tortoise; dog; rabbit

“Mobility is the promise that lies at the heart of the American dream.”

Leonhardt, David. Class in America: Shadowy Lines That Still Divide. *New York Times*. 15 May 2005.

1. horse

Sixty four stories above a street tucked between two consecutively numbered avenues, a Baked Alaska was served. It was to be eaten with a teaspoon set to the right of a plate freshly plucked from a dish rack. The plate was still warm; as was the dessert. The meringue’s six egg whites had foamed a white cusp hiding a lively strawberry ice cream. A slight amount of granulated sugar had not dissolved in the whipping process; light that had not been absorbed by patrons’ wardrobes gently knocked against the sugar’s surface causing a flicker an eye caught momentarily. The meringue was smeared on all sides of the rouge ice cream with a knife and placed in a broiler. Peaks of the dessert grew an earthy tone, quite dull when compared to the random sparks off the sugar. This was an unusual relationship, where the beauty of one could not exist, or be appreciated, without the asymmetry of the other. Guests are taken aback by such complexity found in a dessert.

Resting on a tablecloth, the spoon only served an absurd reflection of its customer. Upside down and obese, a round face with awful peanut eyes stared at its inverse, who in a bruised egotistical mannerism quickly took the spoon in one hand. Pushing forward, the edge of the spoon broke the meringue’s thin caramelized skin slightly. Very little sensation was felt through the utensil; the foam was merely foam—a thick swat of air. Farther the spoon went, the more a delightful ease it was to dig into this treat. One could enjoy the view from behind the windows: a panorama of a city and its people, uneven architecture, limited sky—yet only briefly. Soon enough the tug of the ice cream was felt. It had been refrigerated for hours before a measuring cup hollowed out a dome shape. All five fingers had to tighten their grip, forcing a steeper angle with the spoon, cutting. The sensation now was different. There was friction at the tip of the spoon, passing through a dense layer of cream, ice chips, and lost seeds of the strawberries. At the sides of the spoon there was slick motion. This awkward combination guided the hand, which guided the spoon, down into the plate. The connection produced a bright flat note that paired marvelously with the collapsing, liquefying dessert.

The room’s temperature was set at seventy two degrees Fahrenheit and the ice cream bled. The cream of tartar, mixed into the meringue specifically to aid the whites in holding their shape, spontaneously came undone. Peaks of the dish were lost, yet thankfully—reducing the diners’ nausea—the cream mixed with the red puddle, dulling it, trimming the shock. The cream slowly infected the lost ice cream in curls and casual left turns. Areas where the two embraced became a content pink, one that could have been added to the sunset just across the way. It was instead scraped into the spoon as any sauce. As the utensil traveled against the plate, that previous note elongated, stretched

into decibels higher than the sixty four floors, higher than the remaining thirty two stories of the building itself.

In the spoon lay a bite of the strawberry dessert, with it—as a liquid halo—the new pink concoction. The meringue was there as well; a dollop only, but exceptionally present. Without the puff this would not be a Baked Alaska. It would be a mere overpriced scoop of ice cream—the puff made all the difference in the world. Although in the eyes of the patrons there was room for improvement: the meringue *should be set ablaze in front of the guests rather than hidden away in a broiler*. Despite this opinionated opinion previously heard several times last week and the week before (from customers new and revisiting), the advice was not taken—not because the input was ignored, but that it was (mis)directed towards the employee who pushed the serving cart.

The sixty fourth floor was known for its Alaskas. To meet the demand of those who questioned the legendary status, a Vollrath Caravelle Cart was fully stacked with them by noon everyday and restacked when necessary: three shelves, 33 x 21 inches, each built to withstand up to 500 pounds. One Alaska weighted just over a few ounces, but the cart was quite impressive with it overachieving stainless steel. When it was hauled into the dining area after a patron's main course was finally swallowed, the employee behind the handlebars absorbed the comment. It was usually said in a tone colder than the plate felt upon being taken from the washroom. A nod from the employee signified the comment was heard and processed; a smile followed. This is the trained appropriate reaction. Its success is measured in the number of complaints it receives. There have been very few. After the dish is served, the employee hauls the cart to its next location, either the next customer or on a return path into the kitchen. This is repeated seventeen to twenty-six times a day.

2. tortoise

Adjacent the Baked Alaska is a small pocket where the bar is located. It is in a room just to the left of the diners, fitting only twelve persons comfortably. Compared to the rest of the sixty fourth floor, the den's lighting is a significantly less wattage exaggerating the mahogany walls, floors, and, of course, bar. The wood helps keep the temperature below eighty three degrees Fahrenheit by soaking up the excess humidity expelled by bodies. These are close quarters, made closer still by stuffed upholstered chairs. Their design is difficult to see in this dry darkness.

Outside this room the spectacle of desert flowers and their colors would be easily enjoyed. But they are inside and usurped by the atmosphere. The prickly outline of a Creosote bush and a yucca is all that exists as plant life. Nothing is to be taken away from the alcohol—attention, concern, nor conversation. Behind the slab of mahogany—nearly four feet—bourbons, whiskies, sours, vodkas, gins, amaretto from various estates and continents are represented; over one hundred and twenty eight years of aged beverages are in this room, in alignment before a mirror. A drinker can watch their image, but not themselves. Combined with the low temperature and darkness, this equates to a magnificent level of security. There is no guilt for ingesting an after dinner cocktail, or a pre-dinner cap, or both or neither and simply taking the elevator directly to the sixty fourth floor, passing the Matre D', guests, and walking into the bar for a drink.

When ponying up and taking a seat, the bartender moves from a spot beneath a faux gold lighting fixture that pours out of the wall in a fountain curve. There is silence between a regular and the employee; a drink never changes for some, for most. The skeptics who arrive only to taste the Alaska and now came to test the liquids are only met with eye contact. They are to state their demand; it will be received with action—depending on the drink, for example, a shake, stir, pour, or even a controlled burn will occur. Perhaps even some fruit will be halved, then quartered, and pressed onto the rim of a glass. The finished product is then diapered with a napkin, plain, and placed before its customer. There is no smile. For some, for most, drinking is serious business, a well developed hobby, a past time, an art. The skeptics must learn this quickly and act accordingly.

After serving, the bartender slowly retreats to the spot below the lighting fixture. Our employee's bald head becomes the bright center of this random little galaxy. The den and its tidiness, vague plant life, lint rollers placed near the exit mostly considered an entrance, its folded and refolded cloth napkins, its well swept carpet—all is under the influence of this employee whose bow tie distinctively matches the hue of the mahogany. Its length and width, not only its color, is in conjunction with a well combed mustache. Shoulders, skull, spine, shoes, seat are rounded and slick.

Time passes easily in the den, as there are no references—no clocks, walls are solid save for the entrance barely considered an exit, temperature remains the same regardless of season and despite how much one drinks from a particular bottle the amount inside never seems to reach a troublesome level.

The newest arrivals almost certainly feel self-conscious twinges due to the bartender's silence and, not to mention, stare. Most feel it is their responsibility to chat, and the silence is somehow from their own inadequacy. They shift. There's a scan of the regulars—two filling the upholstered chairs on the right, one standing on the left. Muscles in their faces are relaxed and whatever features can be seen resemble each other's. Any movement consists of the repetitive action of raising a glass to lips and the dribbling vibration of ice cubes within that glass. The bartender prefers such a lost environment and regulars tend to agree with it, returning to feed off this place newest arrivals regard as *inside out*. Compared to the adjacent room with its warm bodies and swaggering conversations in raised voices purposely to dominate the listener and in an attempt to impress the next table—this world does not exist here. The room is full of cool, pliable molasses and its shape is in the stubby hands of the bartender. It has been that way for decades. Where the bartender has stood and re-stood, shoe imprints within a Turkish carpet perfectly form a size ten medium; the prints are a slight paler shade of red than the carpet outside their borders.

Having the same bartender present in the same room produces massaging predictability. Within the den, there is very little change, very little surprise, very little life. In fact, no one has seen the employee neither enter or leave this room, nor venture beyond the slab. This is in the best interest of the establishment. The repetition is additional security; it produces a chemical response in the customer that is wonderfully

hormonal, addictive: pupils dilate, salivary glands are weakly stimulated inducing quick swallows, lungs silently deflate, heartbeats are strong and blood flow is steady, the liver releases glucose the body absorbs as a treat, and finally the bladder relaxes. The combination is known as the sensation of reward. The patrons come expecting, predicting, envisioning the bar and its tender—and, yes, when entering and walking over the threshold the scene before them is the identical habitat created years before and will remain years after (the tender will be here certainly). Their assumptions were correct and the body rewards itself with neurotransmitters and liquids from another nation. On ice. Four cubes, just like last time.

3. dog

The remains of a Baked Alaska consist of a Rorschach puddle upon a dish dusted with powdered sugar during a final touch of aesthetic concern. The pound cake buried under the ice cream, beneath the meringue, is always consumed. There is left only what a spoon could not properly scoop: a thin liquid of run off ingredients, a combination of shortenings and milk which swiftly broke down under the pleasant temperature of the room. Most of the dessert (the three and a half cups of sugar, two teaspoons of vanilla extract, a generous cup of butter) is—believed by an unsuspecting limbic system—a layered opiate. The sweet, nutty fat overpowers millions of pores in the tongue and it begins: the reflex, the impulse to consume this body before the body—now. The cortex instructs the limbs and fingers, teeth and jaw to act in a well choreographed manner, in all ways necessary to achieve its desire; wrists dig, throats contract, dopamine levels increase to a percent where smiles can be witnessed then vanish as the mouth opens and reopens.

Accordingly, the Alaska followed a dinner; hunger did not drive this behavior, only more chemical reward within the consumers sitting sixty four stories above the earth's surface. The remains lie on a plate before them, immobile. While eating, numerous dips purposely stabbed into the mound had pushed liquids off, out of center, and into sharp angles. Depending on the patron's state of mind after finishing the dessert, the puddle may horrify or please. Some curse their mind for letting the body take over, letting lust and greed have its way. Measurable amounts of anger were present as the treat disappeared; undeniable self pity peppered the air as comments regarding cholesterol, hips, and thighs were sighed. *How could I let myself do such a thing? How could I fight such an urge? Just look at that food.* A laugh or a type of laughter follows. It begins as an exhale, silent and then chuckles its way to even and equally distant honking noises. In the last two or three, there is a noticeable break in the voice. This is nervousness; the realization that the Alaska, or any innocent dessert, was really an enjoyable undertaking, an attack, and that it will be done again in the future.

So, before them is this plate, smeared. The consumer had ordered, waited, was served, physically consumed the order, occasionally chatted, returned to consuming, finished, sat in silence, regarded the plate, leaned back, and rested. Their dish is to be taken away, the sight done away with. Unbeknownst (consciously or unconsciously) to many who follow such a process, circling the tables is another pack of individuals who must see to it the area is cleared, all evidence removed. By sight, they have been trained

to identify the arrival of the appropriate time to intervene: during the resting and silent period towards the end of the dessert. They then enter with a small metal scooper that sweeps up lost morsels; they sweep quickly, right handed, clockwise. The left hand fetches the silverware, both soiled and unsoiled, placing it atop the aforementioned puddle; the density of the Teflon cuts ripples into it, rolls, rolls of *fat*. *Oh, I can't stand it. Take it away!* The dish itself is then groped and carried off. The consumer, deep in regrettable thought has little or no time to wonder of the plate's next destination. Staring beyond the windows to a nearly complete sunset has left the patron in buoyant flight, a gravityless daydream where a foot impulsively kicks. This state is broken when a leather booklet sandwiching a check, in polite tone, touches the tablecloth. The sound of friction returns the consumer; the slipping movement across the table is activity the eye instinctively follows.

How the customer decides to pay for the meal is their own business, their own choice depending on macroscopic themes as budget, income, debt, premium rates or microscopic ones as considering if enough cash is left to tip the garage attendee who retrieves the car. They leave their form of payment, their presence, in the booklet, closed and private, and proceed to leave their feeding site by standing and tucking in their chairs. They turn to leave, acknowledging the *Matre D'* with a pleasant evening. The *Matre D'* respond likewise with a smile, no teeth, and a raised hand.

With a vacant table, the employees begin their second round of busing. The area must be redressed and appropriate for the next guests who wish to be served. They are expected to use all five million olfactory receptor cells to cleanse the table of any incidence. The sixty fourth floor is especially proud of these workers as they are known to distinguish between recent and older scents, and can detect various odors under many conditions. Guests leave hair, skin, and other scurrying particles that create the sense of a previous presence. This destroys what guests believe, that they are unique and this table is their own for the evening. They do not want to think about who has sat here before, nor who will be sitting here after. So the table must be reset. Quickly.

The famed employees use a passive alert response to clean the area, they do not want to disturb the consumers as they eat. They identify a used napkin, for example, placing their nose in the direction of the target and move towards it; the contraband is then taken away in a tight grip. Occasionally an entire tablecloth must be removed due to spillage of wine or some such and a fresh one is brought in along with an entire set of dinnerware. The best trained employees never have to trail back and forth; all the items are found and gathered the first trip to the storage room. They, also by sight and learned from conditioning, execute a formal dinner setting beginning with the service plate placed four inches from the table's edge.

Starting at the far left of the dish, a salad fork, dinner fork, and dessert fork is place (a dessert fork for the random chance a Baked Alaska is not ordered. It is best to be prepared.). Starting at the far right and working in, a soup spoon, the famed teaspoon, and a dinner knife whose cutting edge faces the plate. Each culinary tool is ½ inch apart and the curved bottoms of the handles are lined symmetrically, a horizontal feat. At a

forty five degree angle from the plate's center is the glassware. The steams of the glasses are to be pinched, as not to leave oils of fingertips. From left to right, largest to modest: an empty water glass (no ice, unless sought after by a patron) and two beverage glasses capable of holding any of the liquids found at the bar—all available upon request and promptly (and happily, always a pleasure) placed under the supervision of the following.

4. rabbit

Waiters are the manifestation of the sixty fourth floor. These are seen most often by consumers and, therefore, their appearance and mannerisms represent the entire establishment and staff, seen and unseen. Aesthetically, uniform and hygiene must be kept and re-kept; mirrors are located at both the rear and entranceway of the dining area; walls of the employee restroom have been papered with a thin reflexive surface that enables an entire view of the body. Every morning of every workday, they are told to pocket a small handkerchief to blot any sweat off their skin and to tend to their fingernails. Hands are to be moisturized two hours before the start of a shift; this gives ample time for pores to absorb the aloe and completely dry. There is no chafing or accidental slips of entrees as they are carried to and fro, to and fro.

An overwhelming percent of the body is covered with a simple, yet tailored black and white tux. What takes place beneath these coverings is not a concern to the sixty fourth floor; it is only imperative that what is visible be without wrinkles, cuts, markings, stains, or any imperfection that might suggest a history. The work vest, black, is to wrap around the chest tightly, sporting a v-neck that seemingly cuts into a bleached long sleeved shirt, white. Three buttons are buttoned; two front pockets are welded shut—the handkerchief bashfully peeks out of the breast pocket of a solid black jacket. The pants, of course, are of the same shade of black—the one found after sunset, after dessert. They become part of the environment, naturally blending with the background and only noticeable when moving across the floor, dashing through the foreground. The jacket and pant are fused by a black satin cummerbund, thankfully elastic as to adjust to sudden pops of speed and turns and bends. Aside from the famed teaspoon and colossal busing, our waiters of the sixty fourth floor are remarkable; their pace is among the best.

In the streets of Paris, during enjoyable weather, the “Course des Garçons de Café” is held. Fully donned waiters of patisseries, boulangeries, restaurants, and coffee houses from multiple lands gather to hurriedly deliver a full tray of glassware and plates on fingertips for eight kilometers. The first over *le fin* without a crystal casualty is victorious. It is not the individual's win, but rather a win for the place of employment: ¼ page of every local newspaper is reserved to print the name of the establishment in new Roman font (contact information is included, as well as directions via local and expressways), a brief yet spectacular mention on the radio and the television, and a personalized faux gold plaque adhered on mahogany to commemorate the victory. A small hook is screwed into the back for easy hanging. Indeed, six plaques hang, sequentially, next to the coat check for every guest to eye and discuss with those who have yet to experience the sixty fourth floor and its astonishing wait staff.

There is no lacking in the personal service provided by the waiters; the dizzying speed is no hindrance. Prior to being released onto the floor, each employee is given a manual of fifty five pages in length to memorize and faithfully execute. The worker is trained in the proper linguistics and body language when interacting with the public. First impressions are most important, so greetings are polite, chairs are pulled out from their partnered tables, and menus are planted before each guest as they take their seats. Coats, hats are offered to be taken with a promise to return the check number; most waiters fetch the garments themselves, without tinkering with tickets and merely pick the items up when guests demand the tallied cost of the meal. When on their way to the coat check, waiters suppress the urge to zing past obstacles, guests. They must stand aside, allowing the right of way to a customer. In all the demands—from orders and requests—waiters have domesticated their speed and learned patience. Indeed, they use their ears to listen and use silence appropriately: if a certain food cannot be prepared or is not available (despite the kitchen's immaculate upkeep) waiters never interrupt a conversation to speak to their guests. Instead, they stand still and wait beside the consumer until recognized. Only then do they begin a constructive dialogue, a way to find the most satisfying outcome for their demanding client.

The waiters are fully aware they are part of a pack. Although the desserts, tableware, cleanliness, and busing is taken care of by others, communication between all members is key; one must keep an eye on their environment and, either by verbal or visual display, pass messages along. When a customer's main course is over, for example, they may become fidgety and anxious that the food supply has ended. The cart, then, is to be hauled from its location at a distant table to this current place. The waiter, raising a hand, reveals a white collared wrist outstanding against the black suit and dying light from the sun. The employee behind the handle bars catches this flickering sign and promptly responds by moving towards it and hauling. The dessert is on its way, slowly but surely to sate the consumer, the demand.

notices of a public establishment
Or
signs of a restaurant

A painting was hung, but it was the frame that brought the room together. It measured 138 x 177 centimeters and its sinuous designs were chiseled toward the end of the last century in Istanbul. The patrons, however, who enter and exit, inhale and exhale, are never informed of this fact since no overt gesture was taken on the behalf of the restaurant owner. Patrons see only a painting with a horizon, shade and light, the illusion of a breeze, of weather, and a tree before its death; it was a picture of life, of things that look like what they are supposed to look like and, therefore, it gained the approval of an overwhelming number of regulars and tourists. They came, influenced by anonymous reviews inside well crafted, aesthetically pleasing magazines. The comments were short, stubby sentences that could be read swiftly and, more importantly, remembered. They were very much like the fragments found in the menu—a brief combination of words, three or four at most, producing tiny pinches and momentary goose pimples: *angel hair with asparagus*, *bruschetta with ricotta marmalade*. These choices were among a list of entrees the eye followed down laminated sheets of a menu to the first of several notices.

Cash Only. Although entrees were unreasonably priced, monetary exchange was physical only. Willing customers (those who read the reviews and approved of the blurry critique) had to imagine what they would desire at the very moment they sit at a table whose welcome consisted of three yellow tulips in a rinsed vase, glass; they had to estimate the value of their desire and carry this desire with them, through streets, over conversation, in toilets, in transportation. Over such distances and time, it was inevitable the monetary estimate eventually transformed into certain expectations, hopes. It was questioned whether the sum was an underestimate, whether their judgment in weighting the value of taste and pleasure was inadequate or not up to fashion with today's market value of taste and pleasure. How awfully embarrassing the night would become. Then, it was assumed, to overestimate would be the most beneficial. Yes, of course it was. Once the patron realized it was only (only) 24.00\$ for angel hair, well, it was rationalized an extra side order would be exquisite. The money was already here. So unto a waiter, whose stride and posture represented the dignity of the house, was told the desire plus one side order. This desire was kept treasured since it was memorized; there was no manifestation of it on paper; it was still non-physical, a possibility—still a desire.

It was then the waiter's task to travel back to the kitchen, where the order would be announced to a tired staff of fingers, hands, and eyes. Wooden panels puzzled together making up a glossy, yet ignored floor kept the footsteps silent; any stride underneath the *No Smoking* notices were absorbed by the faux age ring designs. This unintentionally amplified several 3 x 8 inch adhesive requests on the walls: *No Smoking*; *No smoking, Thank You*; *Thank You for Not Smoking*; *Please, Do Not Smoke*; and finally, just above the toilet entrance, a sign asked politely not to smoke in this area. It was wondered why, or even how, anyone could smoke between the glasses of wine and forked twirls of pasta; all oral fixations should be adequately gratified by what is placed before them, ironically, smoking (a review blurb did mention how every dish prepared is "kept incubated" until ready to be served). When the last dash of herb is thrown, the dish is sent out from the kitchen and carried (preferably with a left hand) over the same path the waiter took moments ago. Yes, it was just moments ago when the desire was nothing but a concoction of neural activity—fantasy, possibility. It became, however, through the

pumping wrists and bent elbows of the anonymous, an ensemble of color and physical taste. The heat of it all, including the urge of expectation, curled and evaporated gracefully.

It was then the order was consumed. The patrons' own wrists and elbows made simple work of a recipe's strict measurements and seasonal crops. Asparagus that was steamed, and doted upon until it blushed the right shade of green matching the platter it was to be served on, easily tore under the prong of a fork; certainly, there was no friction between the delicacies and the hardware. Such ease allowed time for silent appreciation one bite after the other, until nothing but decorative parsley and condensation from vegetables remained. Patrons usually sighed in fulfillment or earthly guilt, leaning back to release the stress on kidneys and cotton waistbands. Attentive busboys read this body language, noted how cloth napkins were removed from laps and fisted into used, smeared tumbled sheets atop plates—as though covering a violent crime scene. It was time to rid of it all. Dishes were strategically placed between fingers or nimbly tucked onto forearms for a balancing feat back to the kitchen area. Dinner spoons that never touched a liquid, they too, were plucked and removed. In a dipping motion of one hand, an emptied glass of rose was taken, while with the other, a leather booklet was placed. Between its folds, numbers were modestly squeezed. The check itemized each request of the patron in pale blue ink of some machine not seen from the dining area. Questions are very rarely asked or amounts argued; the font is clear and eyes are still watery from euphoria at this point. In this opportune time, snugly below the total (including tax and request tip) the paper informs all who enter and exit the restaurant is *Not Responsible for Personal Items Left Behind*.

The act of moving from the squat position to an upright walk has been the damnation of many an-item. But there is nothing surprising about pocket change loosely seeded around the legs of chairs and tables (it does, however, add up becoming an investment into purchasing agreeable paintings of foreign country sides). There is nothing surprising about a daily newspaper left curled over in a booth, highlighted by filtered sunlight, whose expired headlines teach (with a quick glance) the restaurant's employees of a foreign country a new phrase in English as the paper is discarded. Passing these suddenly vacant seats is like walking into the end of a scene. One can feel the silenced usual, casual progression of conversation; the greetings, to inquiries about spouses or children, to job related muck—all words that lift and melt into words lifting from distant tables to create untuned sound—these scripted conversations leave a stale air behind them. Awkward moments leave a thin film, chilled, which busboys have learned to identify, to quickly sop up before patrons replace those that had just exited—perhaps in an embarrassed rush to find more cash. In a damp cloth the film of mucus is carried off and into the kitchen.

With one hand (preferably a lowered right hand) the cloth is held. Busboys were told to always greet the newest arriving patrons with a nod, to slowly brush this hand behind their backs. They are to slip between the kitchen doors, silently, with a tight fist, in a straightforward manner, until the proper waste removal container is before them. This walk, this death march, passes machines designed and intended to delight whoever

can pay for delight. The machines in this kitchen were made of steel, but they produced color. Those incubators, reviews so quickly spoke of, sit just to the left of the doors with a humm and noticeable notice²⁵ adjacent the dials; their lifeless noise means vegetables of the dish inside are sweating, flamboyant in appearance. The arrogance of raw yellow peppers remained, even though each bell (perhaps up to thirty seven in one day) was washed, pitted, sliced, quartered, sautéed in unmentionable heat—its arrogance survived and was now even bolder as strips of pepper perspired a nice glossy streak. In an attempt at humility, the cool, romantic green of basil was added to this side dish—*assorted sautéed peppers*. An attentive waiter will know not to leave the plate too long, as the sweat will continue to pump, threatening to wilt the basil and spill over. An inattentive waiter will stick a thumb in the sweat, while pinching the plate to be served.

Past the incubators, the damp cloth of mucus is carried. Several bronze linoleum steps forward is where inattentive wait staff washes sweat and the like from their hands. Soap is contained in a plastic squeeze bottle whose frequent use has left it an hour glass figure. From its spout shoots a Safire goop claimed to resemble the scent of a mountain top. Its color and active ingredients (sodium laureth sulfate and sodium lauryl sulfate) have never been able, however, to rid of strong odors on the first wash. Determined, the bottle is usually shaken several times and squeezed several times into a palm. Gently under running water, hands are folded and knotted together until the Safire turns a pale cream. Useless now, the soap is completely rinsed away under the faucet pressure and swallowed by the slack-jawed gape of the sink, metal. The water here turns counter clockwise as though looking back, as though to read the latest government policy fastened just above the blue dot on the knob for cold²⁶. Perhaps only the water is aware of those statements. A dispenser nailed to the wall unabashedly sticks out a dribbling tongue, a single paper towel. The sheet looks brown, it feels brown, and its recycled color grabs the full attention of hand washers who seek to dry up and avoid a chill. Wet fingertips, having lost the scent of oily peppers and supposedly gained a hint of mountain air, press into it. With infectious speed, pores of the sheet swell, absorbing as hands fold and knot together. Abused, it is thrown into a waste pail underneath the sink. Hands are now fresh and the dispenser offers a new disposable towel like a childish raspberry.

²⁵ *Hot holding equipment must be capable of maintaining the internal temperature of potentially hazardous foods at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above during service, display or holding periods.*

Reheating equipment must be capable of raising the internal temperatures of potentially hazardous foods to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit within 2 hours.

Metal stem-type, numerically scaled indicating thermometers accurate to +/- 2 degrees Fahrenheit are required to monitor temperatures.

For more information on NYC Department Of Health Inspections, call 212 676-1600

²⁶*The owner must provide a separate hand washing sink, dispensed hand soap, hand drying device or disposable towels, and waste receptacle for each food prep area, utensil washing area and toilet room.*

Each hand washing sink should be provided with hot and cold running water preferably tempered by means of a mixing valve or combination faucet. Any self-closing, slow closing or metering faucet should be designed to provide a flow of water for at least 15 seconds without the need to reactivate the faucet.

Past the sink, the cloth is carried. Here one feels a small yet noticeable drop in temperature. The sensation begins at the feet, then the ankles, calves goose-pimple and slightly, affectionately press against clothing. On an instinctual level of touch, the body turns to the source of this cold air and eyes recognize the broad refrigerator door. Within this equipment, behind the steel rests handmade, perishable tortellini. There are boxes of other edibles, but it is this pasta that is worth mentioning. Each shell is made to resemble the bellybutton in the “Birth of Venus.” Although the painting does not hang on any wall, it is the preparer’s fantasy which blueprints their make. And it is the desire of a patron which leads to their eventual boil in salt water. Each bellybutton is watched, one by one, as they come to a surface fogged by starch and air bubbles. After no more than 180 seconds, the entire circumference of a colander inside this rolling boil is flush with bellybuttons. Handles are grabbed, lifted, shaken, exposing layers of grey steam and excess, unwanted drops of water—water that returns to pipes counter clockwise when discarded from a pot, steel. Freshly made tortellini (made on the premises, it is blurred) not yet cooked have one week before they follow the same walk damp rags take. For now, they find themselves in rectangular cardboard boxes, in darkness, in waiting, just below *Recommendations for refrigerated storage units*²⁷.

In the grip of a busboy, awkward moments continue their death march. Passed the cooling unit skin resumes its average texture—smooth, porous, and limber in this return to warmer temperatures. The goal now is to walk over a threshold, through a door in the wall leading to a stereotypical alleyway of dankness and haunting odors. Bodies easily maneuver between this kitchen and outside world, all with intensions of ridding waste and returning, happily, empty handed. There is, however, another silent, determined worker functioning away. Fused above the door, stationed between the inside and outside world, a vent was constructed. The eye can follow its long aluminum chimney design as it hugs the kitchen ceiling, down one wall, spreading into a hood above the stove. Its rectangular frame measured 12 inches deep and its installation was a European modern marvel of the past ten years. The workers, however, who enter and exit, are unaware of this fact. They inhale and exhale without much concern or curiosity as to how the air, at times plump with vapor, scents, and heat, is filtered; indeed, what is breathed is completely unnoticeable. The air was exactly the way air should be and their being oblivious was actually a sign of approval, a sign that the hood above the stove drew in all unlawful emissions as noted²⁸. This death march, this walk from a vacant table cleaned and prepped for a new welcome, is swift. The yellow tulips, set to greet the patrons, never tell of the rags or the dumpster in which they lay.

²⁷ *Refrigeration facilities should be adequate to provide for the proper storage, transportation, display, service and rapid cooling of potentially hazardous foods.*

The capacity of the rapid cooling units should be sufficient to accommodate the volume of food required to be cooled from 140 degrees Fahrenheit to 45 degrees Fahrenheit within 4 hours.

²⁸ *Ventilation hoods and devices must be constructed and installed to prevent grease or condensation from collecting which may result in contact with food prep areas.*

All rooms of a public establishment should be filtered to prevent the entrance of dust, dirt, insects and other contaminating material.

deep knee bends on a bathroom scale
Or a short story from the inside out

LECTURE 1 COMMERCIAL vs. SCIENTIFIC MARBLE

Softer and of lighter tones, marble in the commercial sense is more aesthetically pleasing and pliable than what we consider scientific, or true marble. Commercial marble is specifically bought, sold, and ogled as a commercial good because of a higher presence of mineral Calcite, whose fatigued and loosened chemical bonds make the commercial type easily manipulated by cutting, shaping, and polishing tools.

Calcite Mineralogical Makeup (varied percentages):

- microcrystalline calcite;
- kryptocrystalline calcite proceeding from remainders of marine micro-organisms;
- amorphous calcite;
- in reduced quantities, quartz in small granules and fine granule muscovite

Despite the many personalities Calcite may take on, perhaps in desperate fleeting attempts of escaping fate, each is easily buttered into symmetrical middle school shapes by machines with many functioning parts. Squares²⁹ or rectangles—which are not considered mathematical squares—are buzzed, buffed, and battered into the following popular dimensions:

Dimensions Most Prevalent in Households of Committed Relations:

- 30.5x30.5x1 cm
- 30.5x30.5x2 cm
- 30.5x30.5x3 cm
- 40x40x1 cm
- 40x40x2 cm
- 40x40x3 cm
- 61x30.5x1 cm
- 61x30.5x2 cm
- 61x30.5x3 cm

²⁹ The mist was burdensome, a fog that prevents exact memory. Individual droplets took irrational paths above and below the nylon skin of umbrellas, who despite their uselessness were being used. Flesh of exposed necks, cheeks, ear lobes dampened as they collided with the atmosphere, as their owners drove forward. Clutched in hand, angled and spouting from arms, umbrella webbing covered sections of bodies walking distinct horizontal paths to destinations in what may have been late afternoon. Light from the sun remained a metallic color; a color of a warn spoon, faded from multiple washings in a dishwasher; the mob of storm clouds had prevented any distinguishable increase of light which may have signaled a growing, passing day. The light remained grey, consistent from the mounted-kitchen-clock-determined morning to the wrist-watch-determined afternoon.

There was no signifier of time in the bathroom, a bathroom whose concise, modest window looked over and onto the trampled street where pedestrians frowned and scuttled. Inside, terracotta tiles were chilled; air easily discovered the inaccuracies between the poorly molded window and frame. Dense, cold, air fell and reclined on the bathroom floor, white, miniature squares.

Marble in the scientific and, therefore, most true sense is limestone that has been, for geological ages, disfigured by heat and pressure from the bowls of the earth; by some hideous catastrophe of nature, be it some typhoon or violent wind activity, their surface is exposed to the outside world; they are then slapped and mishandled by torrents and rivers, who tear small chips from their inner most being; they then watch, as a piece of their own self is transported into a vast unnamed sea in the distance. Because of this extensive grief and physical trauma, we—with paternal adoration—call most marble *Dolomite*. It is a name we find of simple manual joy to recite.

Dolomite. Lips pucker in anticipation of the word. They begin with an ark, striking a minor angle whose position causes ears of a listener to perk; the angle is a sure sign a word is about to arrive. The formation of sound begins as the tongue flexes, its tapered end resting on the palate at the roof of the mouth. *Do*. A puff of air shoves the tip; it slides slightly forwards, resting below the hard boney enamel of front teeth. The speaker—if a pause is taken to consider the placement of the tongue—can feel minuscule rivets running parallel. Quite ticklish. *Lo*. Lips, once exaggerated and poised to kiss, now fold and shy inwards, sucked into the mouth for warmth and comfort. There may be trivial cuts from rubs against canines and such; against those tiny, sharpened rivets. Moisture and saliva from glands is absorbed, inflating the skin, highlighting fresh wounds and blood. The body moans, relaxed. *Mmm. Mmm.*

A bite follows. The leisure, the intimate touch between teeth and tongue, the brush against evolutionary design—all of this ends. *Eye*. In defensive posture, cheeks draw back and the face expands in size. The jaws and two rows of horizontal, seasoned, coffee tainted projections face their listener. A slip of space between the two is formed; the tongue lays dormant and obscured, in a den, in wait. Lips thin and dramatically outline the teeth in an oval, rouge display. *Eye*. With the declining progression of sound, as it draws from *E* to *e*, jaws close, slowly lowering as the vowels are pronounced. The tongue is shut.

Behind the dental barrier, the tongue projects. It rubs against the jaw, in the nook where the front teeth jut and dive, the space where teeth grow from the gum. The diaphragm in the chest stretches and a quick burst of exhale is squeezed from the lungs; it rises through the esophagus, into the mouth, and between the gaps of misguided teeth, crooked or chipped from a nervous fingernail habit. A spitting sound is created. *Tuh*. Lips return to their affectionate, puckered state. . . *Tuh*. . . This symphony of motion and organization is quickly stitched together, however; speaking happens with much more speed than noted here. *Do. Lo. Mmm. Eye. Tuh.*

Dolomite.

Our Dolomites, or true marble, are limestone of marine origin. They are accumulations of calcite grains and dissolved fossil sandwiched by pressure and temperature; the weight of the physical and literal world was upon them. The more alluring and lovely the designs swirled inside, the more death was infused; the lower it was buried in the earth, closer to awful temperatures; the more it was choked by moving mountains. Pores, air

pockets and such billowy cushions were pinched or diminished by this cruelty; there is little separating a layered innard from the next; strength, then, was increased by a potpourri of cruel events and waste.

A Potpourri of Waste Found in Dolomites (varied percentages):

- microscopic grains of calcite (aragonite) up to some tens of micron
- grains of fossil remnants and their pieces
- grains of ooids (minute round particles formed in dynamic tropical seas)
- grains of pellets (minute particles as product of animal metabolism)

Our marble is an exquisite oddity, to say the least. In the hands of laymen, a chunk of marble—commercial or true—it is thought impossible to separate into petite, controllable pieces for an aesthetic, inspirational touch in a restroom. In the palm it has weight; the biceps stretch, tissue is pulled into reedy strings, and the heart speedily pumps blood to the muscle area for support. Perhaps, even a modest pattern of sweat perspires on the forehead in the struggle. Yes, marble—without instruments of any magnifying or probing type—seems eternal. Yet upon advanced inspection, thanks to poor internally connected molecules and inconsistent violent domestic life, we discover an object that can be easily manipulated—despite its overt indifference and deep chill to the touch.

LECTURE 2 THE ORIGIN OF GOOSE PIMPLING

It is completely natural. We are genetically programmed for such a response. It is an occurrence found in most mammals with bodily hairs and with Sapien heritage. Its presence is a silent statement of one's emotional and physical condition. It speaks for us, sometimes against us, and its exact biological purpose, its need and role in today's modern life is yet to be determined. And this will be determined with the proper government funding and clinically arranged double-blinded tests with random assignment. We are confident about this; one day there will be adequate funding; there will be hearts interested in continuing this course of study, to supply the remaining answers. But today, we will review what we know: the physical causation of this phenomenon. Bluntly, as they are so lovingly and culturally known, *goose bumps* are those little swellings at the base of bodily hairs. We notice them at certain periods—for example, when we feel cold³⁰, frightened, or a variety of strong emotions, in general.

³⁰ The entrance began with a right step forward and the right step forward began with an inhale. Nostrils struggled with the atmosphere, fanning, smearing to a circumference unflattering in respects to proportions with the corner of eyes and unkempt brows. They pulsed, determined to perform. Oxygen is scarce and hidden. Air is herded into a deviated navel cavity, a slight but obvious slant noticeable during long conversations, but politely ignored. Beneath the flawed façade, as air molecules scatter through the nose, they are dampened by the environment; mucus leaks, moistening the back of a throat, triggering a swallow and cold taste the mind has grown accustom and believes is normal. Air enters the chest and is torn into pieces by a body needing to live.

It succumbed to blood. Air relaxed and allowed the alien world surrounding to engulf its fabric and being. This world is large and highly organized, a system constructed to deconstruct for individual survival and happiness. Multiple foreign bodies fondle the bonds, disconnect them; faint bodies, unknown, perform specific mechanical events, swiftly. The foreign bonds accept and collapse. They immerse,

Cutis anserina. This is the skin condition as you and I know it, as in the scientific order. With most reflexes, this reflex is involuntary and separate from will. This is one of the very few human reactions which cannot be contained or organized or controlled by choice. It belongs to our primitive past, deep within the center of the brain—near the Thalamus, Hypothalamus, Amygdala—a location we cannot access, unlike the forebrain we access to dress and button wintry coats, to unwrap a candy, to chuckle at an amusing joke.

Each pore genetically arranged on a forearm or patterned on an abdomen has its very own tiny muscle—*arrectores pilorum*. Each pore has a flexing, working machine attached to it for contracting and pulling hair erect. Millions of pores with millions of tissue systems. If we had independent control over them, had to decide the action for each, we would surely go mad. Our daily activities would be slavishly devoted to conducting our skin—no bathing, no reading under your living room lamp, no preheating ovens, no taking socks out of the drier, no opening past due mail, no lovely mundane commotion. Fathom handling your pores; it would be like grabbing countless improper children by the shirt collar: once at your attention they behave, yet once released ruckuses would surely ensue. They need constant guidance. We are blessed, then, for the irony: the primal, inaccessible, uncivilized inheritance within the center of the brain has taken sole custody of every single pore and its pulley system. The “I” who speaks, the “I” who answers to a surname, the “I” in this modern life is not burdened with such responsibilities; thankfully, “I” and my past, “You” and your past, have separated. “I” can live my life. “You” can indulge in the dull, without these pesky pests to interfere.

We take note of pimpling when the weather is disagreeable and chilly; when the air bites. It’s a simple tickling from the wrist to the elbow, for example; we suddenly and silently become conscious of it. The movement of skin, the hidden pulley system drawing back the hair, creates a sensation of being touched or stroked. The brain is alarmed by this unseen source of touch. The sensation from the skin is chemically transported to the spine, through grey tissue, to the brain yet again, our busy friend already compiling and sorting smells, scheduling, and blood pressure. With all that is done and being done and yet to do, the brain still receives this annoying singing telegram. It responds, it still reacts, as though it had no work at all, as though no gland to excite, no liver to expunge, no inhale to exhale. Avert the eyes to the wrist, it commands. Behold! What is that touch? The eyes receive light, they receive an image, and that image is sliced into electro-chemical pulses, dashes and telegraphed blurbs to the brain, a wonderful headline reporting “goose pimples.” Quite the relief.

suspended in liquid, traveling a flowing sacrificial path. Somewhere in the chest a muscle pulses, wanes and waxes the current of blood.

Oxygen was found, finely whittled out of air, rubbed and trimmed, manicured. Oxygen is scarce, a mere waste product of a living planet; with each molecule, full advantage must be taken. Primed, they are escorted single file, one after the other, arm entwined in arm with the cell which had performed its biological calling, through capillaries and embraced by a lung. A union long awaited. The body received what it wanted; it destroyed and found happiness. Oxygen hidden in air, air wandering a trampled curb side, injected into muscle, into skin, cold.

This piloerection should be of no concern. In a vast, vast majority of cases the skin and miniature pulley systems are reacting to commanding weather or Beethoven's Ninth; equal in affect, the former is as inspirational to the nervous system as the latter is powerful against the ear canal. But on occasion, when nature is overly organic and multiplies too swiftly, a gene is replicated improperly and that code commands the body to perform awkwardly, off, in a manner embarrassing for many parties. Temporal lobe epilepsy, for example: when the brain cannot handle a pulsing bulb against all of the chores it must accomplish. The skin and pulley systems react here. In fact, there is an assortment of unfortunates where goose pimpling occurs. With brain tumors, or autonomic hyperreflexia. With such nightmarish situations no wonder the good, gentle minds of history used a romance language to remain a faithful spouse to science, yet parental to the everyday man. The movement, piloerection, has its roots in Latin, for *horror*.

LECTURE 3 THE SECOND LAW & YOU

Letters are ever more malleable than commercial marble. They have no carbon bonds, no soul, no innards, no teeth or urine track, neither filled with holiday stuffing nor any plush packaging foam: they are hollow. Letters, as they stand alone on a curb side adjacent the city bus stop, are meaningless and can be tossed away as trash. We endow them with meaning, we fill them with purpose, we sculpt them to create symbolic work. They carry our message. And there is no more important message than what the thunders says, when the universe speaks. The universe, my friends, speaks in a language of interacting matter and energy; this language is ever changing direction and effect. Letters are the only force which can represent the universe; the only exploitable capsules available to commune with the universe; they can be filled and refilled.

It may seem so forcibly rude, injecting a number into a letter—but this aggressive language is the mother tongue of the fabric which surrounds us. The universe mumbles in numbers. These numbers are never constant. The universe is a compulsive whore destined to move here, there, to the next lap, John, dollar. It changes name and face. But the lies, surname and smile can be decoded with formulas of absolute and tested truth.

You and I move too; we are mammals, destined genetically and literally for motion. We, conversely, *do* have a soul, innards, teeth and a urine track. We enjoy holiday stuffing and use plush packaging to protect nostalgic memoriams. *We* move with *purpose* however; we have goals and destinations; we are logical for the most part, driven with purpose. This purpose does not exist from nothingness—it stems from the outside, from a force outside of us. Our compulsion to move comes from a force already in motion: life, the universe.

Life is unbalanced in its various events; events seemingly random, striking our lives, at times, with extreme alterations and consequences or adoring committed affections to which we must adapt. This is broad speech, yes. But life and this universe is broad, is

ridiculous in variety. Only letters can represent each shift, each event. And only equations—a composite of exponents—can translate the muck and clear the imbalance³¹.

F is an exquisite letter, so eloquent, so elegant in its sighing: *Ehf*. It is the sixth noun of the American English alphabet and the fourth note of the diatonic scale of C major. *Ehf* is commonly interpreted as Fahrenheit, farad, forte, or female; feminine or following page. It proudly bears the responsibility of being the chemical symbol for the element fluorine. Its structural and linguistic eloquence and elegance is matched only by its strength; it is called upon for all this and more. After discussing and arguing goose pimples, the great and humble minds of history moved on and had voted concerning the topic of F. They spoke. F now represents all existing things, the whole creation, the sphere of existence and all of its buoyant influence and activity: Force. F is the first exponent of the Second Law.

Abruptly, m follows, but *numerically* it is quite unlucky: it is the thirteenth noun of the same alphabet and, as a Roman numeral, ranks one thousand. Although *Em* is perhaps the sweetest sounding letter, with its curvature pressing our lips one atop the other, it is quite bland in regard to representations: masculine; married; miles; meter; million; minute. Not very sweet at all. It *is*, in fact, a minor powerful creature. Its representations are quite hefty, literally and figuratively. It is not coincidental a letter with two supportive arches in its structure carry so many numbers upon its back. *Em*'s ideal Roman form convinced the minds of history that no other letter could manhandle the quantity of matter belonging to any and all objects. What letter could possibly derive gratification from carrying so much on its spine? M. M will carry mass. And will do so with a smile.

³¹ A distinct horizontal path across commercial marble was taken in brisk steps. Air from out there had so coldly seasoned the square centimeters in here, and ankles felt the pinch of bitter pepperincino. Pain alternated with motion, until at the foot of a weighing device, pads of feet were at rest. Fixed, mass from above sank evenly and distributed over the feet. Soles smeared to a circumference relevant to perfect balance; against the floor skin—from bunion to heel—absorbed the burning temperature. Squirming, toes anticipated escape from the present position, pulling from joint sockets and producing acute angles between each digit in strain.

Visual movement begins with the rotation of yellow ligaments at the knee; the physical movement, however, begins with the elasticity of sinew, countless sinew bashfully hidden behind the thigh, under clothing. They pull at these knee ligaments, in focused greed, curling back, fattening in girth; the grip is real and constant—the two are fused until eventual and inevitable decay of this body. There is flight. *Cnemis* is suspended.

With the half step, the combined weight of meat and bone, ankle and knee, calf and foot is felt in the thigh. With the lift, the burning chill evaporated and sensation was swiftly replaced with the comforting temperature between toiletry walls; angles between toes diminished, relaxed. But the present stance is awkward. The figure has surpassed human, resembling feathered bipedal creatures at rest. A full step must be taken, this position must be reversed.

Rain fell at a quicker pace, impacts converted to sound: *vastus, vastus, vastus vastus*. Heroic sinew above the knee and facing the world pushed the knee forward. The little knee was no longer held under control, it was free to assist the body in forward motion, a full step placing the entire individual on a small but important pedestal. Fixed, the body had defined mass in numbers of pounds; with a needle point of the weighing device, one digit is fingered out. The number will come undone with movement. A thing so determined will be reduced as the body squats, as life will shift towards imbalance.

The Greek supple figure belonging to the letter a ends our formula. Its large, protruding globe is nearly illicit, and has excited the minds of history for generations. The love affair has been nothing but eventful and gracious for *ayyy*. It has become the introductory letter to the American English alphabet; indeed, it is the first letter of the word pertaining to the series of letters itself. With exceptional skill it has charmed and whored its way before singular nouns, ahead of a number of varied collectives (such as *ayyy* dozen) and collectives of the same (birds of *ayyy* feather, most popular). With a raised chin, it takes deep footsteps over thresholds; audiences part. Through the valley of onlookers it walks forward, leaving in its shadow only memories of an image to vaguely recall on lonesome evenings. In the Second Law, it bookends our formula: a last glimpse whose brief second pinches the brain with a numbing bedazzlement. In confused excitement the adrenal glands are squeezed and the heart pumps additional pumps. Is it not horrifically fitting then, that the speed of all moving bodies is represented by this letter? It has graced its way to the front of class and language; it leaves the world in fatigue. Acceleration.

Unite this exceptional string of players and you spell out irony. The phrase is quite simple in comparison to the characters in it: $F_{\text{net}} = m * a$. It is quite simple in comparison to its representation. It represents the Second Law. It represents the behavior of objects for which all existing forces are not balanced. It represents life, the universe itself. All that moves within and with out it. With this phrase we hear the tantalizing whispers of the universe. We now speak her impulsive, fluxing language; we can communicate; we can discover what is behind the smoke, polish and blush. We can make sane what is seemingly so off and insane. We can finally predict.

terminal velocity of falling coffee filters

SOSO Good Grips 1057966 i-Series Swivel Peeler



List Price: \$11.50

Price: **\$9.99** & eligible for **FREE Super Saver Shipping** on orders over \$25.

You Save: \$1.51 (13%)

Availability: Usually ships within 24 hours.

Want it delivered **Tuesday, March 14**? Order it in the next **1 hour and 25 minutes**, and choose **One-Day Shipping**

2 used & new available from **\$9.95**

Special Shipping Information: This item can be shipped only within the United States.

Features:

- Dishwasher safe
- Extra-hardened stainless steel blade stays sharp longer
- Blade is easily replaceable with the SOSO Peeler Blade Replacement Cartridge
- Non-slip handle with extra cushioning in grip** areas
- Sharp eyer easily removes blemishes in one scoop

Product Description

Can a better peeler be made? We don't think so. Introducing the SOSO GOOD GRIPS i-Series Swivel Peeler with an extra-hardened stainless steel blade that retains a sharp edge longer than a standard blade. Plus, with a longer blade, maneuverability and surface area coverage just increased! Constructed with sturdy die cast zinc, this Swivel Peeler features an efficient eyer to quickly remove stubborn blemishes from fruits and vegetables. A non-slip handle with extra *squish* in the grip** areas provides cushioning and comfort. For maximum safety and effectiveness peeler blades, like knife blades, should be sharp. Now, you can easily replace the Swivel Peeler blade with SOSO's Peeler Blade Replacement Cartridge, sold separately.

**Although peelers and peeler accessories are commonplace items, you should never use these products without your doctor's knowledge. Used to easily remove skin from vegetables and various fruits, one may compulsively resort to utilizing this item for every culinary task which calls for skinning. Due to this high concentration of peeler usage, recent Federal and Local legislation has deemed it mandatory all cautions and warnings regarding peeler usage must be publicized in advertisements:

Do not use peelers and peeler accessories for any other purpose than for their original intension; the product should not be used in the ear or placed in the eardrum. **Do not use** peelers if you are allergic to manual labor. Peelers **should not be used** if you have any serious bowel condition, including bowel perforation, obstruction, abscess and systemic fungal infection. **Do not use** peelers if you are taking any enema products or prescriptions. Combining a peeler with these medications may result in higher drug levels in the blood; overdose may ensue; upset stomach, possibly leading to stomach or duodenal ulcers, may develop. Oral contraceptives, estrogen, azithromycin and others may increase the risks of peeler usage. Barbiturates and ephedrine may reduce the effectiveness of peelers and aspirin. Contact your doctor.

Possible side effects with peeler usage may include burning, itching, irritation, acne, dry and cracking skin, skin tightening, secondary infection and skin discoloration. Most common side effects include water retention, potassium loss, loss of muscle mass, slowed healing of wounds, black and blue marks, increased sweating, increased chills and itching, convulsions with dizziness, and random headaches. Less common: slowed growth in children, adrenal or pituitary gland suppression, diabetes, ravaging sweet tooth, feeling obese, euphoria, mood swings and personality changes. These effects are more likely to occur when peeler is used commonly or used multiple times in several weeks. Extreme cases of the

aforementioned symptoms are signs of **over usage** and serious adverse effects; using peeler in excessive amounts may lead to birth defects. Do not ingest.

To prevent secondary infection, clean your skin before use. Apply blade firmly and use gently. **Do not** wash, rub or put on clothing until peeling is complete. If symptoms occur when precautions are made, your doctor may recommend reducing usage; another product may be implemented; we do not recommend this method. **Do not use** if you are in contact with a diaper or plastic pants. Call your local poison control center or hospital emergency room for more information.

Most over-the-counter peelers **should not be used** for more than a few days without your doctor's knowledge. It is not known if side effects of peeler accessories can pass into breast milk, but side effects of peelers do. Nursing mothers who must use a peeler **should consider** bottle feeding. **Do not apply** peeler near or on the nipple area. Seniors are more susceptible to loss of muscle mass and bone loss, especially if peeler is used in extended periods of time.

Black & Decker EC1200 Grand Openings Can Opener



List Price: \$19.99

Price: **\$12.99** & eligible for **FREE Super Saver Shipping** on orders over \$25.

You Save: \$7.00 (35%)

Availability: Usually ships within 24 hours.

Want it delivered Tuesday, March 14? Order it in the next **1 hour and 22 minutes**, and choose **One-Day Shipping** at checkout.

3 used & new available from **\$12.99**

Features:

- 9 inches high by 5 inches wide by 5-1/2 inches deep
- Opens cans up to 7-1/4-inches tall
- Includes built-in knife sharpener and bottle opener
- Cord storage compartment reduces counter clutter
- Blade assembly pops free for hand washing with mild detergent

Product Description

The Black & Decker Grand Openings can opener takes full-grown cans into account: whether it's family-size tomato sauce or imported espresso grounds, standing 9-1/2 inches tall, the device has no problem handling large and tall cans. The easy-touch** cutting assembly is comfortable to use, removes for cleaning, and features power pierce cutter. Once in action, it advances automatically around the can and shuts off when the lid is removed. A magnetic lid catcher keeps lids from dropping into open cans. Extras on this model include a built-in bottle opener on the front of the machine and a pull-through knife sharpener on the back with two slots for long or short knives. The opener also has a substantial circular footprint for stability and a cord-storage compartment in back. Cord storage area White.

Let it be known several cautions and warnings should be taken into consideration if the following product is to be purchased and implemented. Electric can openers **should not be given to people with liver disease or kidney or urinary problems. If the can opener you purchased does not work, a number of things may have happened. You may not have used the can opener long enough, or you may be the victim of a superinfection, in which another organism—usually a fungus—begins to grow in the same area where food is deposited. If this happens only your doctor can determine which drug to take for it.

Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun if you are using a can opener daily. Combining the use of a can opener, antibiotics and sunlight may interfere with your body's normal sun screening mechanism, making you more prone to severe sunburn. **If you are allergic** to one type of can opener, you are probably allergic to them all.

Can openers **should not be used** by children under the age of 8 because they have been shown to interfere with the development of the long bones and may retard growth. **Permanent** tooth discoloration may also result.

Adults using can openers **may experience** diabetes insipidus syndrome; symptoms may include excessive thirst, urination and weakness; light-headedness, dizziness and fainting. The severity of this condition depends on the usage amount and is reversible when usage is reduced.

Can openers **have been associated** with pseudotumor cerebri, a condition characterized by increased pressure in the brain. Symptoms include headache and blurred vision. It is possible to have diabetes insipidus syndrome and pseudotumor cerebri at the same time.

Most common **possible side effects** include upset stomach, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, sensitivity to the sun or skin. A rash is possible. Less common: hairy tongue and itching and irritation of the anal or vaginal region. If these symptoms appear, call a doctor immediately. Periodic physical examinations and laboratory tests **should be given** to determine who can use can openers without risk to side effects. Rare side effects include a loss of appetite, fever, chills, anemia, brown skin spots, blurred or yellow-tinted vision, seeing halos, delirium and occasional liver failure.

Can openers **may interfere with** bacterial agents such as penicillin. You **should not use** openers with these antibiotics. Antacids and mineral supplements may reduce the effectiveness of can openers; conversely, can openers increase the effects of anticoagulants (blood-thinning drugs). Can openers may reduce insulin requirements for diabetics; be sure to monitor your blood-sugar level. Enlargement of the breasts has been reported after long-term use of can openers.

Be sure to use can openers on an empty stomach, 1 hour or 2 hours before a meal. **Do not use** with dairy products such as milk or cheese. Call your doctor if excessive thirst, urination and weakness; blue-grey discoloration of the skin; vomiting; yellowing of the whites of the eyes; or any persistent, intolerable side effects with food are accounted for. Stinging or burning **may occur** but this lasts only a few minutes.

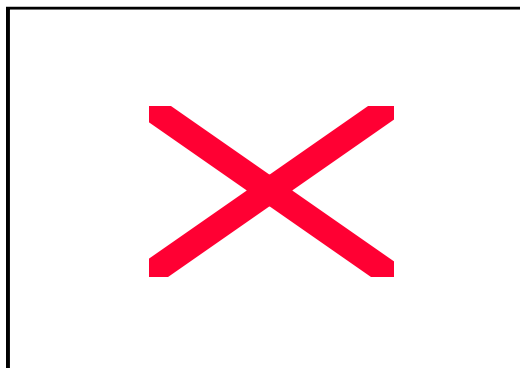
Taboret® lever handles K-16070-4

Taboret® lever handles

The strong geometric lines of these Taboret lever faucet handles offer a simple, distinctive style. Luxurious finishes on Taboret faucets and accessories bring polished beauty to the bathroom or kitchen.

- Pair of lever handles for Taboret® lavatory, bidet or kitchen faucets
- Solid brass construction
- Mix or match finish to create a unique look
- Solid brass construction means years of beauty
- Lever handles are ADA-compliant**

List price: \$82.35 and up



This is **important information regarding lever handles. It **should be publicized** that all lever handles are classified as a Schedule V controlled substance by Federal law. Lever handles are **chemically related** to narcotic meperidine. Therefore, in case of over usage, treatment is similar to that for meperidine or morphine intoxication, in which prolonged and careful monitoring is necessary. Respiratory depression may be evidenced as late as thirty (30) hours after first use and may recur in spite of initial response to narcotic antagonists. A sub therapeutic amount of atropine sulfate (0.025 mg) is located on the handles to discourage deliberate over usage.

Symptoms of lever handle related over usage and handle-related disorder include depressed areas of the brain, reduced hunger, thirst and sex drive; euphoria, drowsiness, nodding out, pupil dilation, dysphasia, indifference, yawning, sweating, “itchy” skin, rhinorrhea and diarrhea. **With drawl symptoms** of lever handles include more sweating, chills with sweating, vomiting with sharp stomach pain.

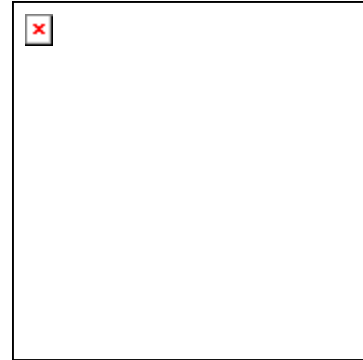
Lever handle **intoxication includes** constipation, nausea, vomiting and paralytic ileus. This includes intestinal obstruction and partial blockage of bowels resulting in the failure of passing intestinal contents. Bowel sounds, possible abdominal distention, hernias, gallstones, twisted intestines, and bad breath are common as well.

In case of severe lever handle over usage, seek an emergency room. Have a trained professional administer a laxative or charcoal. Emesis, or vomiting, may be induced. Gastric lavage, or stomach pumping, is best for quick recovery. Note that the body may go into convulsions upon over usage. Breathing may be slowed or stop completely. Eyes may become dilated and enter into a brief period of nystagmus, rapid eye movement. Skin becomes flushed as blood pressure and heart rate increases. Victim may be disoriented as drowsiness may follow; hallucinations and coma are common.

Oxygen Cleansed Coffee Filters®

These quality filters are specially manufactured using the latest in "Oxygen Cleansed" technology. The basket area is steam-formed for easy separation and the traditional, firmer crepe textured paper provides for superior coffee filtration.

Each filter absorbs oils and virtually eliminates gritty sediments. All that remains is the great taste of full-bodied coffee**.



This brand fits in practically all modern 8 -12 cup coffee makers, including Mr. Coffee, Proctor-Silex, Black & Decker. Be sure to keep your filters in a plastic container, away from heavy odors to prevent odor absorption; the filters are just that efficient!

****General information.** Coffee filters work by preventing the conversion of a hormone called angiotensin I to another hormone called angiotensin II, a potent blood-vessel constrictor. Preventing this conversion relaxes blood vessels, thus reducing blood pressure and relieving the symptoms of heart failure. Despite the positive reception coffee filters have received, **cautions and warnings** must be publicized.

Do not use coffee filters if you have had an allergic reaction to them previously. Coffee filters occasionally cause **very low blood pressure**. Coffee filters can affect your kidneys, especially if you have congestive heart failure. It is advisable for your doctor to check your urine for changes during the first few months of usage. Filtration usage can be adjusted as necessary if you have reduced kidney function.

Rarely, coffee filters affect white blood cell counts, possibly increasing your susceptibility to **infection**. Blood counts should be monitored periodically.

Coffee filters can cause fatal injury or death; do not use coffee filters if you are pregnant. **Most common side effects** include dizziness, tiredness, laziness, headache, sleep disturbances, chronic screaming and cough. **Less common:** nausea, vomiting with heart palpitations, diarrhea with hair loss, and abdominal pain. The **rarest side effects** include numbing sensation in almost any part of the body.

The use of coffee filters **may increase levels** of potassium in the blood and **may increase** the effects of lithium; the combination **should be monitored** with caution. Antacids and coffee filters should be spaced two (2) hours apart; coffee filters **should be used** on an empty stomach, one (1) or two (2) hours before or after a meal. Tranquilizers **may increase** the side effects of coffee filters.

Adults **should use** four (4) to eight (8) coffee filters a day. Seniors and people with kidney disease may require a lower number of filters. **Over usage** includes a rapid drop in blood pressure, as evidenced by dizziness and fainting. Take the coffee drinker to an emergency room at once. **Always** bring the coffee filter package with you.

Coffee filters **may cause unexplained** swelling of the face, lips, hands and feet. This swelling can also affect the larynx and tongue and interfere with breathing. **Call your doctor** if you develop a sore throat, mouth sores, abnormal heart beat, chest pain, a rash, or loss of taste. You may get dizzy if you get up too quickly or sit too slowly.

Avoid strenuous exercise and hot weather; heavy sweating or dehydration can cause a fatal drop in blood pressure.

Harvest Oak Summit Cabinets®

The kitchen is the soul of your home. It expresses your sense of style, beauty and hospitality. Shown in Harvest Oak, Summit Cabinets work beautifully in almost any kitchen from traditional to contemporary. Its raised hardwood center panel adds classic appeal and the solid oak provides years of durability. Its rich distinctive color is adaptable to any taste, but strong enough to stand out on its own. The cabinet and door handles are easily attached with sturdy, short metallic screws that practically disappear as they enter the cabinet's face and drywall. Nothing but luxury remains**.



****Brief summary of full clinical trials follow.** Regarding metabolic acidosis (a decreased serum bicarbonate below the normal reference range in the absence of chronic respiratory alkalosis), cases of such incidents **have been reported** with cabinet usage. This metabolic acidosis is caused by renal bicarbonate loss due to the inhibitory effect of cabinets. Such electrolyte imbalance **has been observed** in the daily usage of cabinets and can occur at any time. Conditions or therapies that predispose to acidosis (such as renal disease, respiratory disorders, diarrhea, sneezing) **may be additive** to the bicarbonate lowering effects.

Some manifestations of acute or chronic metabolic acidosis **may include** hyperventilation, nonspecific symptoms such as fatigue and anorexia, or **more severe issues** including cardiac arrest and stupor. Chronic metabolic acidosis **may reduce** growth rates; a reduction in growth rate **may eventually** decrease the maximal height achieved. If metabolic acidosis develops or persists, reduce cabinet usage.

A syndrome consisting of acute myopia **is associated** with opening and closing cabinets. **Symptoms include** acute onset of decreased visual acuity and/or ocular pain. Ophthalmologic findings can include myopia, anterior chamber shallowing, and increased blood pressure. Anterior displacement of the lens and iris **may occur** within one month of opening cabinets.

Oligohidrosis (decreased sweating), infrequently resulting in hospitalization, **has been reported** in association with cabinet usage. Decreased sweating and an elevation in body temperature above normal characterized these cases. The majority of the reports have been in children. **Caution should be taken** when using cabinets with prescription drugs that predispose patients to heat-related disorders. There may be a reaction including overheating, stalling, urinal leakage, and puffy eyes.

Adverse events most often associated with the use of cabinets included those of the cognitive/neuropsychiatric kind. The **most frequent cases** can be classified into three general categories: 1) Cognitive-related dysfunction (e.g. confusion, psychomotor slowing, difficulty with concentration, difficulty with memory or speech, particularly word-finding difficulties) 2) Psychiatric and behavioral disturbances (e.g. depression or moodiness) 3) Somnolence or fatigue (self explanatory). The majority of cognitive-related adverse effects were mild to moderate in severity and they frequently occurred in isolation.

The following **physical side effects** were shown. Acute alterations in levels of consciousness and cognitive function with lethargy and vomiting were present; kidney stones and paresthesia (tingling of the extremities) were also noted. **In experimental animal studies**, the fetuses of pregnant mice during the period of organogenesis were found to have increased fetal malformations. Reduced fetal weight was also an issue. Increased opening and closing of cabinets may increase topiramate; this was excreted into the milk of lactating rats. Topiramate in human milk **has not been evaluated** in human studies. Limited

observations in patients suggest an extensive secretion of topiramate into breast milk. The potential benefit to the mother should be weighed against the potential risk to the infant when considering cabinet usage.

Signs and symptoms of over usage include convulsions, drowsiness, speech disturbance, blurred vision, diplopia, mental impairment, lethargy, abnormal coordination, stupor, dizziness, anger, and depression. Deaths have been reported, but only rarely. Consult your doctor.

the futurist marvelous
or
the immaculate conception

His face had pushed the air away from my ear as he leaned towards it. “And only there—in the abysses of the ridiculous—can you find delicious ironies...”³² His lips, as Chinese scrolls, opened slowly, one phrase at one time. He set his head above the sun and moon: his confidence and certainty were absolute. “Everything, everything is there. What do we have?”—an individual finger was given an individual peculiarity—“(pinkie) The whole gamut of laughter and (ring) smiles, (middle) the whole gamut of imbecility and (index) doltishness... That’s not a word, is it? ... Well, looks as though I’ve created again. I can’t control it, really.” His head, above the sun and moon, U-ed one shoulder to the other: disappointed in the apparent lack of self-control. “Waiter?”—the *whole gamut of laughter* finger waved the help over—“Bring us your finest, cheapest tequila? Thank you.” Looking, without quite seeing the tables and things, the musk from a burnt entree and such, “Ah, yes, that reminds me... There are instructive satirical pantomimes, too.”

I coughed.

The tropical umbrella, tucked between ice cubes and air bubbles of his framboise, was pinched between the *doltishness* finger and thumb, then placed aside. This restaurant was a comfortable fit for him: mint textile booths lined walls dressed in captured moments with Deano and Elvis. There were other drips of nostalgia, found in the flavored martinis served; all named in honor of Names from a black and white time; Names that sung and danced, or shimmied, or spoke with a drawl, or had curves in an unholy manner; Names that died years ago and, here, rose again in the shape of a glass with three olives and a twist of lemon. “Cheers...”

My water tasted like water and each second a definitive *tick* or *tock*. Above the kitchen door, there sat a clock with a picture of one species of bird for each hour. On each hour, the recorded tune of that bird is sung, praising whoever happens to be paying attention to the air around them. “Yes, well, you should come and visit our theatre... The Variety Theatre, you know the name, of course.” The chair, which held his weight, let out a moan to relieve its stress—as he leaned back to relieve the stress of his stomach, “Unbelievable shrimp here, really...” Looking, without quite hearing the blue jay, “But to be honest with you, we really have not constructed a play—in any fashion—no plot, no do-dads, not yet... We need an actress so we can begin.” The chair’s woven seat ached, whined under the hours he kept his place—sitting, planning. Ideas had connected, forming a luxuriant outgrowth about to reach over into lives; he was about to dip his palm into lives the way the poor leaves of the rubber tree plant wilted in the corner. It was all a last attempt.

A favor was asked: go and find what he called his *velvet horseshoe*, his *unraveling mystery*, his *moon at dawn*, a lady whose name, if I can recall, was simply Mary. She acts; she was needed. So it was a letter he wrote and licked sealed in a banal envelope, handed to me with great certainty; a certainty founded in the belief this letter was such a crafted amazement it had ravaging persuasion. There were no doubts on my capability of locating her and delivering it: loops, crosses, and dotted i’s jumbled together forming an address. He politely included a return: a final clue of his original intent to mail the message. No stamp had been placed. “We’re low on cash,” and dimpled his cheeks.

³² The majority of his speeches are excerpts from the Futurism manifesto entitled *The Variety Theatre* 1913 (Filippo Tommaso Marinetti 1876-1944). www.futurism.org.uk/manifestos/manifesto20.htm

“Do a good job,” “Bring her home,” were some of the fragmented sentences and hopes in between scoops and swallows of sorbet. The rest was silence with frequent interruptions by the waves in his esophagus. They muffled the world surrounding us—a world chatting away, continually unaware: freshly ironed napkins, contorted and misted with hardening spray, held forks and knives in attention, awaiting customers. Peanut oil heated to 380 degrees behind kitchen doors. Produce was julienned, browned, caramelized, or sautéed in a florescent stock. His teaspoon dug into the last syrupy drips along the bowl, as the tequila was set. All was in motion. And with a slice of lime, “Cheers.”

*

She was working on a production that involved full frontal nudity, so any time spent off stage she had an urge to cover up. “Don’t believe what they tell you—you can get too much of a good thing,” and then lit a cigarette sitting upon a couch, legs crossed in her un-dressing room.

The cosmology of the universe was hemmed into her skirt; her breath hidden behind folds of clothing, each a layer of stone or moonlight. She could only lounge on a sofa filled with butterfly eggs or some other spongy material capable of absorbing the fatigue of her day. All of that walking up stage, down stage, and scene stealing cramped the arches in her feet. Between the smoke patterns emitted from her mouth, there followed complaints on the footstool provided by the venue: “It is a dwarfed, densely, ghastly thing of wood,” and then enjoyed a laugh that seemed to awaken the idle moments in picture frames dotting the room. Behind the glass of each, there stood a version of her—some character whose face contorted in some dramatic fashion unfolding the climax of a silent picture show. Her range of eyelashes shocked the industry and nations swooned. I could, in only paused motions, hand over the letter. With a fingernail, she slit its gut to devour whatever may lie inside.

She read, or perhaps glanced, to get the *gist*, the *onion*, the *goods*, the *haps*, the *twist*—what is it she says nowadays? What trend had she started now? I was about to drift, fading with the light at the tip of her cigarette butt when, “...Hmmm, well, he led me around using those dimples in his cheeks—such temptation, you know, I’m sure you’ve seen them... But the hair on his hands,” she guffed with a head shake, “The random stalks of hair... Completely. Revolting.” Looking, without quite seeing the crystal chess set, costume dresser (which held no costumes at the moment), her comb sated with knotted dead hairs and such: it was the hands she saw... *The hands*.

“Well, then,” pushing the letter forward, as to occupy the space between us, “Tell him: No. He doesn’t know a hawk from a handsaw. A rambling fool. I am not going to carry his production,” and pouted.

*

I returned the letter in its deformed state, opened by a fingernail whose Russet Bronze #812 polish smeared in the direction of its yank. “Yes, well,” a heave, “I’m amazed with her brilliant record of rejecting my invitations, but... But, but, but,” while tapping his *whole gamut of smiles* finger on his usual table, at his usual spot, in his usual restaurant, “Looks as though I must court this fair young lady Mary. In the meantime, you just hang on to that letter; it shall be worth more than Napoleon’s wig.”

He began his meal with an orange tea and two shortcake cookies, served one atop the other on a dishwasher-safe plate. Steam rose from the teacup, evaporating into our silence. What was I to say?

“I figure I’ll tell you what I told the waiter,” pinching and picking up a cookie, “The universe,” dip dip of the cookie, “is my 11 year old boy’s science project, made in a shoe box, but is forgotten at the bottom of his closet. Now, what I didn’t tell the waiter was the production that is about to begin.” His dimples turned in on themselves. “I need a new boy. That one is much too unconcerned and ... And ... Carefree. He managed to get all the angels on his side... Once. You know, you were there... My, my...” His head U-ed, his eyes dallied through memories, he enjoyed a laugh and bit down on the shortcake full with tea water. “Those were good times. That was a good show. But, but, but...”

His stare made its way across the tables to “Irma.” Irma was the eleven-pound lobster he had been eyeing since it was a wee nine and a half bundle. She adored sitting in the upper right corner of her aquatic tank, growing plump from boredom and immobility. “You and I will share her, as the celebratory meal...” With this fact, the cookie went where Irma was fated. “At the appropriate time, of course—when we get our cast together—which shall be soon; part of the *marvelous* is to have a cumulus of events unfold at great speed. I’ll make my way over to Ms. Mary for a quickie and you shall go on an errand of most importance.” He found his second shortcake and went dip, dip.

*

The building was remodeled after Roman warehouses with a mathematical equation invented specifically for these walls. The fresco paintings covering them idealized an extinct population, ornamented with Greek finger rings and pins with rampant lions, plants and bees. Sun dried brick tempted the lonely who passed outside with an eastern Mediterranean lure. For those with appointments, they saw, or believed they saw, the walls curve upward and in. Curves replaced lines, curves were at the feet of columns, curves were in the purple felt staircases. Spiraling up several steps to the second landing is room 22. There, Joe performed exactly what his classified ad stated, at a fee: massage therapy for stress relief. His hands were well educated: Chinese Tui-Na, Swedish colon therapy, Russian body rubs with salt from the Dead Sea. At a fee.

“Ah yes,” whipping a towel out and over his collapsible table, where it rested, “I know him well... Always talking about his productions. He’s been a client for some time now,” with a stare that longed to find itself overlooking true European side streets—but instead found there on the counter, his Valentino as he usually takes it: three olives. The counter, gray and out of character with the flamboyant joy of the masseuse parlor, held in its drawers Q-tips and Glycerin. Epsom salt and green latex gloves. Liqui-gel and plugs. Soy extracts and octyl methoxycinnamate at 6%—with oxybenzone at 3%. These items were renewed hourly in a chaotic march, expecting the continual flow of customers and their demand. Joe squeezed the salty baggage under his eyes and put the drink to his lips. Three olives. Mmm.

Now two. Mmm.

Now one. Mmm.

The telephone rang. It was him. He decided it was best *he* should explain the production, *his* production. “You’re important to us, Joe,” “Of course,” “Oh, yes, I

completely agree” and other fragmented praises were given over the dial, tickling the cilia in Joe’s ear canal. He was performing, elevating the *possibilities of the future*, reciting his speeches on *the beyond*. I sighed. I exited to find the restroom; the fifteenth door on the right.

On the toilet walls, major philosophical questions were answered in various handwritings and inks. Good times were promised. Telephone numbers, local and long distant, were desperate measures or practical jokes; either way, they were an attempt at communication, an unconscious hope for contact in a world continually unaware. On its glass, the mirror had thumbprints of powder, or grease, broken by sneezed droplets of moisture. Ceiling tiles were displaced, missing, or slipping with each tremor caused by a knuckled shoulder massage. Gaps formed an ingenious pattern that when stared at long enough, just long enough, they mimicked Orion. Or possibly a toad. The toilet paper was a brand stitched together in a foreign country, to travel over very well known areas of the body, after squatting in a vulnerable position. I washed my hands. I wiped them dry. I left the toilet.

Counting fifteen doors to the left, my sanitized fingers reopened room 22, letting sound and air into the hallway. Their conversation had ended with a pleasantly satisfied Joe blushing in excitement and giddy possibility. Joe was to massage his way to fame pampering Mary in her sudden, fragile state of *expecting*. “I’ll do my best – I always do. I guess that’s why he Chose me, huh?” With the exaggerated eyes of a child when on holiday, “The woman is quite fascinating; I heard she was a semi-finalist on Star Search...”

*

At its designated hour, the blue jay called its tune over the pace of waiters balancing dessert trays on fingertips. The water in my glass was clear; a bit of it managed to escape and diaper the glass in a ring. Irma’s scent had filled the walls, between tables; her life now a wispy smoke pattern watering the eyes of whomever looked away from their menu. He sat there inhaling. Smiling. His dimples dented his face with an ease, “Do you smell that? It’s penetrating, everywhere,” unraveling his bib in preparation for Irma, “You know, the Variety Theatre is a school of subtlety, complication, and mental synthesis, in its clowns, magicians, mind readers, brilliant calculators, writers of skits, imitators and parodists, its musical jugglers and eccentric Americans.”

I coughed.

“Oh, the boy will be able to heal that little snuffle – The Variety Theatre is a school of heroism. This fantastic pregnancy will change the world.”

For the better?

He dimpled his cheeks, “We’ll see.”

the words on page 220

PLAYERS
(in order of appearance)

Epiglottis	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph one
Epinasty	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph two
Epigynous	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph three
Epipelon	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph four
Epiphyte/Epiphyton	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph four
Epipsammon	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph four
Episome	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph five
Epistasis	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph five
Epinephrine	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph six
Epipetalous	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph seven
Epiphysis	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	as paragraph eight

When grandmother died, mother cried accordingly. Items of the funeral buffet were prevented from entering airshafts, thanks to the gentle cartilaginous flap of every throat; a flap whose entire purpose is to direct cake into the proper little funnel. This phenomenon happens, or doesn't happen. When it doesn't happen, a funeral happens. Church bells cough up tunes about little girls and lambs at the end of the service, the nearest relative opens their home to faces barely recollected after months had passed and communication was considered a burdensome, even an embarrassing task. Grandmother swallowed things very well; she died broken hearted: her right pulmonary vein burst in a small expression of a gasp, and inked into her blank, black pupils as she tilted over, falling as an abstract shape onto the carpet. She laid there for some amount of time next to a sherry stain made on the previous holiday.

The same flowers were ordered for her service—those of the last holiday celebration. They resemble dandelions. They are a fragile yellow, aggravated all too easily by touch, a passing shoulder now and again. The ray pedals fall, slip onto the dust of an oak chiffonier below—so far below, below the heads of curling leaf blades, farther below to the shag, squeezed beneath the foot of a bloated father, first, or distant cousin. The fallen pedals curl farther still, as the weight of whomever shifts and the foot drags what was once a determined, symmetrically graceful creation a handful of inches towards the items of the funeral buffet. This just happens.

What is left, after the pedals come undone and forgo all intimacy, is an exhibition—the modest but steady peel of coverings must be nothing other than a wish to shock. And as one stares, one cannot help but realize there is nothing fragile about this creature at all. This may be why grandmother loved them so—these flowers lie, draw anticipation out one shimmy, one stripping motion at a time. Perhaps these talents were something desired—an assertive personality with a disregard for whoever is in the room, whose only intension is to have its intensions satisfied. Grandmother liked sherry very much, possibly to compensate for lacking such bravado naturally.

She was prone to ignoring her flowers and letting the water in her vases thicken with a community of blues and greens. With the frill lace curtains pulled, she chose a Spanish wine that matched the sound of the baby grand in a record—and she danced. Her feet slipped into the same pattern the algae followed: she, a vertical migration across the room as she danced, and it, skimming a vertical path across the vase as it multiplied. She may have thought the organisms beautiful, following the repetitions inside a skeletonized holly leaf.

The children at the service resemble no likeness of her, nor are they made of the same materials physically or spiritually. Grandmother's arm hair was coarser and she spoke to God only in spontaneous bursts of four letters. In each of her cells there was perhaps some ache or pain, some sort of anguish and it was satisfyingly easy to blame the Invisible, or to uncork or to unscrew a long or short neck bottle—depending on the baby grand in a record. It is satisfyingly easy to find the easiest way to be satisfied. She coined this on a previous holiday.

Her body died years ago; it was the seven or eighteen medications above the sink, arranged by hourly consumption which coordinated everything with synthetic hormones. Even when commenting on the weather, grandmother somehow included the topic of medical science, how it kept her alive longer than Arranged. With all of that extra time, all she could do was think—or attempt thinking. It became difficult with age, as time had past. With all that miraculous extra time she may have kept recalling, and recalling, recalling, would-have, could-have, I did, but I didn't. This happens naturally. Exactly what she thought is not known. Exactly what was the cause of her anguish is not known. We do not know her well.

Her doctor phoned mother with a precise explanation for the cause of his call: grandmother had missed appointments, never refilled *necessities*. Her doctor suggested, *perhaps, the ringer isn't loud enough for her hearing level*, and this is why he *failed to get through*. So in an unscheduled visit, no holiday involved, mother went and found grandmother on the floor, with the shag in her fists. Her bottles—those above the sink—remained plump with cotton balls and medical seals; they were never tampered. Grandmother had finally been able to break the habit of merely existing, merely passing time.

Her musical records were divided and considered a welcome property depending on their condition. Heat, seasons, moths, spills, fingernails, and simple disregard each imprinted its own groove into a 45 or 78. Patience was driven in circles, as most records skipped three quarters into the second or third song. One phrase impulsively chatted away at the ears, stuttering, causing the feet to step one continuous dance step—until it became some vertical path—until pedals dripped—until strain—until regret—until delusion—until a gasp—until fatigue—until a dilated look—until—

colossal feat of a breakfast in three movements

Movement 1a

Coffee beans were plucked, below the Equator in the Americas, and shipped with utmost concern regarding contamination. They began maturing, however, in the warm, humid climate of Santos in elevation of 6000 feet. They were greeted from all directions by false facades of metal figurines—from the north, a sea poet, marbled and poised in a moment thick with creativity. From the south, there was planted another statuette, another poet—one rumored to be more honest and of good will than talent. A greeting from the west consists of a sailor whose miscalculations led to the tribute now standing in the east: a Portuguese caravel in outreach, representing the first Europeans to arrive at these shores. One such caravel mistook a coffee fruit upon a tree for a cherry and bit into its double bulby shape. The immediate response was a contorted, bitter face whose cheeks squeezed in defense from the taste and confusion. The long term effects, though, included exportation and a series of small, yet monumental steps towards producing a complete well rounded breakfast.

A simple burlap sac is straddled around a waistline, leaving both left and right hands of a villager free to pluck. The heat has reached a level where every pore of slightly sunburned skin shallows out to form the uncomfortable face of that caravel long ago; this is when it is time to harvest. The bags are old, the brown colors of the fabric twine faded to a dusty earthen tone, but there is still strength to hold one third of the world's supply of coffee beans. Just enough. At 179 plucks, muscles still feel energetic, pumping with oxygen and blood. The sun remains at a minor angle, acute, with mischievous colors of daybreak. At 843, there may be a slight tear by the fourth rib above the abdomen. Luckily, or not so, the pain is brief, trialing upwards towards the neck, defying the gravity which tugs at the buds. Yet it ends swiftly, even before a mouth can respond in twisted vowels. At 1,308 plucks, workers begin to squint as the sun's color and angle are bolder, obtuse. They day continues. They feel thankful for the fat layer of dry dead skin which composes their fingertips; calluses pad each digit to numb the repetitive touch. These formed seasons ago, after harvesting for seasons. Usually ten develop since pinkies are known to be of little use in the selection of hand-picking techniques: the most common being the index and thumb, followed by the three-digit pull (middle, index and thumb), and lastly (and least graceful) the palm grope (using all digits but the pinky to cup a fistful of beans at once). With the palm grope some beans are dropped and bruised and, therefore, cannot be used. All beans are needed.

Between plucks 2, 961 and 3,231 arms become separate entities of the body, actively pursuing beans without major communication with the brain. Indeed, they pump as heads turn and chat with whatever neighbor also nearby and pumping. With low glucose levels, sporadic laughter is heard; teary eyes and ignored beads of sweat form, never a thought to be wiped away. Hands and arms are currently busy, accurately targeting fruit while the brain attempts to converse about family and goats. Names are mixed, dates are forgotten. The general ideas are conveyed however and are met with a nod from a neighbor. Reaching the final 3, 500th pluck—one knows by weight. The burlap bag is the loudest and heaviest mammal within miles. The body and its muscles are completely silent. From the rib, there is the occasional spark of pain, which quickens its pulse and fades. Under a sun—now at the other end of the sky—a sun that returned to

its mischievous colors, one tree and one worker together produced nearly 4000 beans. This total makes one pound of roasted coffee.

Each bean is protected by three external layers of skin which must be shed. In a warehouse of tin and aluminum paneling, hands are clasped at the small of backs. Eyes keep a gentle but stern watch after a sinuous conveyer belt tugging the coffee beans away and into fresh water tanks. There they lounge, soak for hours, strategically softening and removing the least fit: those unhealthy and most bruised float to the surface of a green paneled tank. They are skimmed off and removed, thrown to roaming goats. The unfortunate survivors are drained; the water recedes through holes in the tank walls, holes of a smaller circumference than the beans.

Wounded and open to the elements, perhaps embarrassed as well, they are scooped into yellow buckets and onto another conveyer, eyed once again. The fruit is transported to a de-pulping machine, something which reminds children of the teeth of story time wolves. It chews away the outermost layer of skin exposing a sticky mucilage substance easily binding fingers if touched. They dive into fermenting tanks—large, indifferent silver tanks—to soak in village water until sunrise. At the 25th hour, draining occurs in the same fashion, yet these holes not only suck water in: they regurgitate clear liquid to flush away any stubborn mucus.

Sanitized with ivory soap, the yellow buckets return. Muscles surrounding a spine expand and dip a torso into these tanks; the beans are lifted and hauled to a final stationary spot in sunlight. The remaining layer of skin crisps, dehydrating; oxygen within the tiny bodies evaporates, lifting into whisps undetected by human eyes. These eyes can, however, mark when the beans have shriveled enough, when they are ready. Along with calluses this ability develops over seasons. The bean's body is rigid; its surface reflective of the sunrays attractively attacking. The glare reduces pupil size and eyelids squeeze defensively. A sharp prick and pinch to the brain follows, trailing from the face through the nose, to the back of the skull. The level of pain one feels indicates the coffee's preparedness: the longer the pinch takes to fade, the more water has wonderfully vanished. When the pain leaves a marking headache, the beans are set. The eyes can stop watching; arms and hands begin to gather. Muscles surrounding spines expand once more filing buckets to their midpoint. These beans are to be tested, tasted, and, hopefully, approved.

Expert sippers check the product to determine its flavor quality. Although branded with company name tags, it is their teeth which signify this position. Their mouths, along with the coarse padding of tongues, are finely pasted with a rusted yellow found, coincidentally, at the base of the tanks. The act of sipping and spitting has defined success and failure for the bean producers of Santos. The sippers must be steadfast in their decision: each time lips connect to liquid the taste must impress palates as though this is the fist sip. The excitement must be present; the raised eyebrow, the slow swallow, a desire to keep this brewed coffee and its pleasure in the mouth for the longest time possible before heat chips away a layer of gum at the roof of the mouth. If any of the experience is lacking, there must be more plucking; workers would have to return to

the fields with burlap sacs; beans left for the next harvest would be used now—the demands of the world beyond the ports, orders and the expectation of quality are to be met—all rests on the sippers' decision: Are these beans the beans?

Thirty five beans are grounded into a fine dust; each sipper receives this one serving, this ritual and their decision is made. The brew is first admired for its aroma: boiling water squeezes whatever crumbs remaining of a bean, flavor molecules at the liquid's surface bust and move as they are heated; they rise. Some sippers pucker their lips and exhale a cool blow to reduce the shock. Some have no need, as repeated exposure has left calluses remarkably similar to those at the tips of the pluckers. The best coffee has a fine, clean, sweet, and strong aroma which enters the nostrils as a cup lifts to the face. Essentially, the smell is to manifest into taste; the taste must mirror these characteristics; the body expects them and must be satisfied. If the sippers' body ripples in subconscious approval, Santos has its next export. The pluckers may return to their families and goats.

Movement 1b

Coffee beans were scooped, above the Equator in the Americas, and poured into a grinding chamber of a coffeemaker whose advertisement was written with utmost concern regarding efficiency. In three sentences, fourteen product features were summed elegantly. There was enough space between the words, however, for the imagination to picture the machine working away in one's kitchen, brewing one's favorite coffee bean. This pleantry, along with the *12-cup brewing capacity* and *built in grinder* to reduce gadget clutter in the home, was spectacular. This coffeemaker was built for modern needs and the modern lifestyle.

In the advertisement, in small font, a quiet suggestion offered the idea of visiting *one of our preferred retailers*; there the item could be seen and touched. The coffeemaker is sold in plastic chrome versions of white or black. One's selection depends on one's kitchen scheme, but either way its gliding surface could be easily cleaned and wiped down. A shine would remain, a reflective paneling letting the consumer see their face on the product, in the product, is the product. The synthetic material convexes this face; the chin and cheeks become unusually obese and full. The roundness is newborn-ish, free of blemish—this product is yet to be used, yet to experience the first moment of its blades slicing into beans, the first use of its thin plumbing to moisten the grinds left behind, the first churning of its wiring to heat the Arabic liquid; many firsts which will be difficult to remember in time. The facial image is a laughable scene causing the reflection to crack a self deprecating smile. These imagined experiences, yet to become reality after purchase, cause a soft, tender pressure in the chest.

Beans used in the new arrival must be the best. Freshness of the coffee then is critical for a consumer's enjoyment. The largest threat to beans is oxidation and the presence of water prior to brewing. It is possible for flamboyantly tiny sodium atoms to lose tasty electrons to oxygen atoms, resulting in a very common problem: deterioration and age. The attraction between the two atoms is monumental within a bean. This

exchange must be prevented; manmade powers must seek to undo natural attractions in the name of Consumer Satisfaction. Such power is found in packaging.

Before either side of a coffee bag is plucked using each index or thumb, before this pluck is squeezed into a pinch, and before hands part the bag open—the bag is violently prepped in a warehouse, beginning with a Nitrogen flush. A thin nozzle is strawed into an unsealed bag dragging along a conveyer belt. A quick zip of Nitrogen enters, bullying any oxygen through the opening. The sodium is then left alone, with all of its electrons, full and tasty for consumers to enjoy. Immediately following the zip, the nozzle rises and a mechanical clamp pinches the bag shut to ensure pressurization. Inside, the beans begin to sweat. There is no room. The lack of air and circulation causes oils in the beans to build up and out of pores and spill; each bean coats the other resulting in a sheen pleasing to the eye, satisfying to the body.

Outside the non-permeable packaging, nothing is allowed to enter. The lack of pores wonderfully segregates the Regular brand from the Flavored brand. Even if the bags are lying side by side in a truck, on the same sea vessel, in the same wooden crate sent off above the Equator—scents and textures do not mix. When a bag lands between the hands of a customer, the beans within had no previous exposure to the world and its polluting ways. The beans, and the grins they become, taste the way they were meant to taste as summed in a blurb of self promotion on the bag itself—in two sentences, five adjectives, four nouns, and four conjunctions. *Superior richness*, for example. These words are read and are expected to become a reality upon contact with the mouth and tongue. There is a concept of *superior richness* that exists in the mind, but what is it in reality?

The bag then is pinched open. An inhale of oxygen is heard as the once impermeable packaging is torn, imperfect, dysfunctional. Directions: one teaspoon equivalent to the number of cups desired. *Four. Four will do for now.* With the push of an index finger the grinder component is closed, and the beans explode. Internally and unseen the coffeemaker functions away, combining water with these dusty yet tasty goodies. A puddle results—something to be poured and sipped after proper sweetening.

The handle of the bellowing 12 cup carafe is grabbed; the liquid inside is carried over, hovering above a coffee cup diapered by a saucer of matching color. The cup's porcelain is thick, its purpose to insulate a beverage which falls into it. This beverage is usually coffee; the exterior of the porcelain was dyed mocha to indicate the preferred liquid. The carafe is tilted at such an angle the black puddle pours in an orderly and controlled fashion. As it pours, sound elevates to higher and high pitches; inside the cup, the liquid level rises and rises, usurping space; sounds are squeezed tighter and tighter together. Satisfied with the amount (usually six ounces), coffee remaining in the carafe is placed back on the hotplate; there, we are ensured molecules will continue to be pressured by electricity. They will move and feel like heat went brought to lips.

Movement 2a

A simple vanilla glaze was produced by various machines in central North America and squirted into nontoxic sealable plastic bags marked ORIGINAL. The sweet goop began as separate natural ingredients, in abundance. Two gallons of milk were poured from plastic containers by a worker whose clothes were covered by a white medical gown; hands and feet were wrapped in latex; hair was packed inside spidery netting. Creation is a serious procedure. The milk entered a metal mixing bowl large enough to consume the worker—but only 8 sticks of unsalted pale yellow butter followed. The rectangles had defrosted for some time and their texture had softened; a press of a fingertip left its print; it felt like an inner thigh. They all collided at the center of the mixing bowl creating a horrific accident of misshapen, entwined soft bodies. Some chunks remained clinging to the side of the bowl as the sticks tumbled into a puddle of white, cool, pasteurized liquid. The several impacts flicked spots up and outward, spattering the worker's garb, dotting the bowl randomly.

It is important that when 6 teaspoons of vanilla extract are added, each teaspoon is trickled in one by one, into its own private spot in the vat. The distribution assures that flavoring will be equally apportioned; so that with every bite with every skewed tooth of many mouths, the same taste will be tasted: nothing burdensome to the tongue, simply the shock of vanilla bean refreshed and sweetened. Before the milk, butter, and flavoring are mixed, the vanilla puddles sit separated in their own corners, reflecting the florescent rays of artificial light. At their centers, tones are a deep mud; at the edge, as the puddles thin out with distance, the color is rust—strikingly similar to the metal of deceased light bulbs ignored for months by the porter.

Twelve cups of confectioner's sugar is to be added last. The millions of granules piled atop one another create a disturbing coat of white, of course terrain. Several seconds pass; the mixture remains the same, in a silence one can feel will end. The tones of the vanilla extract pinch their way into the fragmented, open wounds of the grains. The sugar grains inflate with a soft brown; they seem to bleed internally, taking in a foreign liquid which creates a sense of happiness in others. As their bodies inflate, the sound—only heard if concentration is applied—ironically, resembles a mouth sucking in air.

The mixing bowl is heated electronically; various wires of the same repetitious, anonymous grey millipede into the bowl. They occupy the base's circumference, digitally adding heat. Through the miracle of convection and the good sense of plugging in the machine, the metal's temperature rises. A switch, only a proud inch in height, sends electricity to the pronged blade within the bowl, a prong three feet in length. Its dormancy ends, and the clawish machine turns and labors and moans as the ingredients tear, mix, and lose all proportion of their selves. The heat and movement snap the binding of solids—the butter liquidates, the sugar thins to a paste, and the extract—once at home within the grains' bodies—is evicted. The mixture is beaten quickly, causing bubbles to foam, as air is unknowingly whirl pooled inward; the mix is now a glaze, white, thin, shiny. The reflected florescent rays spotlight a pristine coating that will welcome its doughnut counterpart once those are made.

Movement 2b

The treats are formed in a similar machine, yet in a distant quarantined section of the factory in central North America. There are specific workers who bake the doughnuts and specific workers who concoct the glaze. Unlike the two edibles, the workers never meet during the process and miracle of creation. Neither section of the factory wonders of the origin of the other product; it is simply there and these doughnuts and doughnut holes—convenient not only for breakfast but lunch, dinner, brunch and between the between—begin as a dollop of vegetable shortening. It is infected with heat until, in fatigue, it completely changes form. Now as a liquid, sugar is added; once again and again and again once more, the imperfect ripples of a sugar grain accept the liquid surrounding it. The shortening is clear; the sugar only changes in weight: plump and sated.

The paddle attachment of the mixer begins to move. Circling, it beats the two joined ingredients into smearish consistency. Off in the distance, eggs are left on metal counter tops. Out of the reach of refrigeration and snuggled into foam pockets, the whites and yokes' temperature fall, matching that of the room. Warmer, the eggshells have thinned slightly. They crack under the pressure of a worker's finger joint as it knocks politely. Twice; with two knocks there is cleanliness and efficiency. No shells will find their way into the mix below. The first tears the egg open; the second creates a pathway for the innards.

Each of the seven eggs is added one by one, here and there, following suit of the vanilla extract. As the yoke slithers over the smear below, the blade quickly sniffs out the new addition. The yoke bursts and bleeds and swiftly evaporates into the pile. The pile expands, thicker with each egg. It becomes a tangible body, a growth, a new entity awaiting milk. Following the last egg, following its deterioration, 8 ounces of evaporated milk is added. The blade moves easily now, as the tension thins; liquid greases the movement, the thick body becomes a leaner puddle, a cross between mud and pliable dough.

Albino flour is dusted into the mix. The sudden snowfall creates white peaks and valleys that form and break and form once again, with each turn of the paddle. Baking powder is nonchalantly plopped inside: a course material of a duller shade of white that seems inconspicuous. It will, however, with the assistance of heat and liquid, lift the product to its recognizable and familiar shape: a shape that evokes memories, those of youth or of pleasurable times; times when a sweet urge was satisfied, memories of salivation. Memories that will lead to a sale. Unbeknownst to many, a brisk shot of nutmeg is a part of the taste they seek. The amount is shaved off a nut in some other country where it is grown naturally and sealed hermetically as to save the original flavor. Research suggests 23% of the taste is lost with this method. Consumers, however, have filed few complaints. This grounded nutmeg will remain.

The blade of the mixer rotates at low speed, as not to greatly disturb the dry ingredients. The grains shift within and without the egg, sewing together. The chant of the machine is deep and does not yield to take in a breath; it continues, leery,

concentrating the dough into an irresistible pokable texture. This new solid form is actually quite liquid in its motion and sticky, seemingly dependent on touch. Any contact with skin results in necessary hand washing or pinches between fingers to remove the newborn dough. Due to its clingy nature, a foreign, inorganic material is used to dislodge it from the mixing bowl: a plastic spatula. Its paddle tip has slightly curled over dozens of scoopings.

A worker's latex left hand steers the handle of the spatula, as the paddle spans into the glob. In several cutting motions the dough is displaced from the womb of the mixing bowl and plopped onto a long sheet of polyethylene—a clear plastic skin which is grafted around the edible ball. Alone in chilled darkness it will sit for four hours. Behind the skin, undetectable by human eyes, refrigerated air will harden the egg, the flour, and powder will stiffen—forming a body of pliable stature. Neighboring balls sit in stillness, subconsciously performing the actions and reactions which make yumminess. Those whose four hours is completed, whose time is up, are taken by this same latex hand to a metal countertop. Here a ball is slightly beaten.

Workers with seniority of five years or more are given marble rollers to flatten the dough to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Those with less experience and commitment are given wooden rollers. With these, the dough tends to cling and become a nuisance. The workers must seek out additional flour to dust the tool and table. If any of the baking supply is used, however, pay is deducted. Disagreement with this policy is taken out on the dough itself. The tool is fisted into the gut of the dough; the force drives a small division through the middle, producing two plump bulbs on either side of the tool. With uncomfortable ease the roller glides forwards; the circumference of the dough silently grows obese, its edges crack in expansion. The dough is turned 45 degrees; the roller glides forward. The obesity spreads.

Each bulb is now cleared into a flat horizon; no peaks, no texture, merely flat and there for the cutters. Two circular cookie cutters are used: one of a $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter and the other, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. The infamous void of a donut—the middle—is pinched away with this smaller one. Most nicks and injuries occur by mishandling the $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cutter; a worker, believing since the cutter is of a charming size, it must not pose a threat.

The large cutters move in. Their teeth snap the chemical binds connecting the flour, egg, and powder; the binds which solidified over four hours in darkness and privacy. The dough, already strangled, continues to be manipulated and manhandled until what is needed is taken. This flat horizon, what looks to be unprofitable, is divided into a dozen small plots. The circumference of the cutters sets the boundaries. The teeth fit into the dough's surface, and with a slight shove of a worker's bicep, forearm, and grip, the teeth bite and slightly drag the surface. A wrist scuttles a bit to the left; fingers move the cutter right, clockwise, turning. The surface, in self-conscious stickiness, clings to the teeth and slightly, slightly now, follows, down. The surface shifts; its innards tear and disconnect. A complete $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch circle is cropped.

Now with a latex index finger and thumb, the ½ inch cutter is squeezed. Despite its smaller size, the previous amount of energy which flowed from limb to joint, the previous neural gaps which thoughts leaped, the previous clockwise elegance follows. The target, however, is the center of this new separate and individual body. It is not yet perfect, for the ideal body has a void infamously known as the Middle: a hole which visually identifies a donut as the desirable goody we have marbled into memory. The incision is made. The area is removed. It is now a donut.

Movement 3a

In a kitchen, above the Equator in the Americas, a silver spoon was groped between two fingers and positioned head-down. The curvature of indigenous Chinese steel mutated the face and torso of its bearer: the sinus cavity became long and sinuous, eyes almond, lips flared and pinched. Cutlery as a form of portraiture was one other giddy experience of the morning's ritual assembly of breakfast.

The coffee itself is always taken black. There is no cream or milk, nor any pasteurized or artificial substitute to dull the shock of a naked bean. There is no liquid from the Frigidaire to chill what automated wires has heated. Perhaps, on some nostalgic and staged level, this manner of coffee is preferred in an attempt to taste a world away. A world below the Equator. A place with a different arrangement of vowels and scents; rainfall and child play; work ethic and slums. It is wondered if the blunt, penetrating after taste is an appropriate parallel to either the hemispherical sun or long unnatural days of this alien place. These thoughts cease once the sugar is recalled.

The sugar is packaged in a paper box holding 907 grams; but only the amount three scoops of our teaspoon provides is used. A color intermediate between red and blue, a thin bar of lavender, and a ferrous, earthy yellow: three colors of the box run horizontally, mimicking the flag of the nation of which this cane sugar was possessed and extracted. In matrimony, below the registered brand it states: *We Will Always Be Your Sugar*. And it has for *Over 100 Years!*

The two fingers tighten their grip around the handle. A choke, a proper hold is made once the remaining fingers move into position, constricting the spoon. It is the fingers, however, which turn a slight blushing yellow—the same pumping from a dying ceiling light fixture. The metal slightly heats as body temperature finds its way through fingertips and curled pores and sinks, somehow, into the solid neck.

The box of sugar had been thumbed open weeks before, during another breakfast now only a recollection whose date is uncertain. The re-production of this morning routine causes one morning to melt into the next. What is certain, however, is what is seen and the perforations beaten into the box by a company machine had been thumbed: a hole exists there now; an entry and exit wound large enough for the head of the spoon to poke through. The box itself is braced with the remaining hand; its base held down, fastened to the countertop. Each individual finger applies pressure and fingertips fashionably match those of the opposite hand—a yellow blush. The areas of contact—the

one, two, three, four, five dents—grow increasingly weaker, softer with each daybreak and breakfast. The only signifier of time is the withering paper box.

Movement 3b

In a porcelain cup, in a kitchen above the Equator in the Americas, a puddle of sweetened coffee waits. Its color is tragically dark; absorbing the last gasps of the dying ceiling fixture, the light is consumed. The coffee is shades deeper than the dyed mocha tint of the cup itself. Its saucer had successfully captured several lost droplets from the previous act of pouring; each perfect oval worlds convexing the world around of them; they stand silent, one at each of the saucer's curvatures. They resemble small sunburns, as though the fair mocha had turned with exposure under the kitchen fixture. They are dewdrops of coffee; as though condensation on exotic, foreign tree leaves; as though fruit buds of these leaves; as though the sweat of natives who pluck them.

A donut is unboxed. An index finger had slipped between the folds of a cardboard package bought in a local grocery, conveniently open on Sundays. The paste which binds the two halves of the package was no match for a determined, hungry shove. The insert and counterclockwise motion separated the pristine white folds of a purchase sold by weight not by volume; in dramatic and romantic fashion, a spot of skin from the top fold had remained glued to the bottom fold. Despite the intrusion, the random act of a distant entity, the two remained together. The box had been opened however, revealing a fried 2 ½ inch diameter edible with a hole in its center. About ½ inch. Its texture—imperfect, cratered, bubbled here but not there, tanned—was coated: a vanilla glaze. Although only spotlighted with expiring electricity from above, the sheen is unmistakably that of a gathering of pearls.

Eyes inhale the sight and the brain categorizes the vision. The recognizable circle and void, the glaze and sheen, all are variables which translate into *breakfast*. Impulsively, in child like joy, glands in the mouth clapped and salivated; with an ear to the parents' bedroom, they overheard the eyes and brain speak to each other. The mouth has learned what treat, what gift awaits.

Once a device used to tear, the index joins ranks with the thumb to pluck. With an extended reach, dip, and squeeze, the donut is lifted and weighty. Its doughy innards are not complete, however. The coffee, in solitude, once used as a hot beverage joins ranks with the donut to satisfy: the coffee will be turned magically into a condiment; the donut, into a sponge.

The donut is casually placed above the coffee, whose temperature conflicts with the comfort of the surrounding kitchen—steam rises and dampens the flesh of the breakfast as they silently collide; fingertips slightly curl and sweat from the task of lifting, holding the sacrificial dough and the heat from below. The donut is lowered laterally. The steam in mocking fashion, in child like play, teases by flexing its swiftness. The density of the donut looks on as the curls and wisps move clockwise and counter, dodging with twirls the impacts and impalements.

The coffee's surface is disturbed; its ripples match those of the fingertips. Sweetened liquid is drawn into the imperfect surface of the donut naturally; its porous skin infects quickly. Held for one inhale, the tip of the donut saturates. It expands as its fictitious lungs and navel fills and drowns peacefully. As the donut ascends, its tanned native color reveals and bleeds the beans' dark complexion; excess globules which could not travel vertically, against gravity to mid plane where room was found in vacant pores, fell and returned to their source in a splosh. With each drop there is a ripple; with each ripple there is a wave; with each wave the inner porcelain of the cup is stained.

The foreign body inside our donut sits. Cradled and hammocked its comfort is apparent. It no longer grows; it has taken the space it needs to thrive. The donut, retaining this surplus weight, is silent. All concentration and effort is seemingly concentrated into maintaining itself and even its addition. It remains pinched, suspended above the mocha cup and, now, pauses. The globules have stopped raining. The light fixture continues to glow and showcase the event despite its inevitable and final dimming; it waits, surviving only to witness the outcome of the donut and its strain.

The border where the addition and our donut meet cracks a space. The division between the two begins slowly, traveling left to right, with the tilt of the hand which holds them. As the tilt steepens, the space quickens its step; the step becomes a pace; the pace becomes a dash; the dash becomes a complete submission to collapse—a tumbled frenzy until the donut's limit is reached. The chunk infested detaches, loose, and falls traveling the path of past droplets. It rips into the surface of the coffee, submerged, absorbed into the void, black liquid. The shock elevates the surface level; the coffee moves and slithers, blindly grabbing and smothering. The fallen limb becomes inundated; in euphoric panic, instinct and reflex the coffee continues to attack and infest. The limb is heavy. And sinks.

la fleche

The reaction began with a gasp.

A line had formed; its depth was three fold and curved within and without the foliage which had dropped over the past week. Fall entered abruptly, bruising the streets with rouge and tan leaves. Every few dozen meters the line warped gracefully to one side, avoiding wheelbarrows selling native fruits; nothing terribly exciting: merely apples, tomatoes, some pears. Beside this line, down the way, a vendor annoyed those patiently waiting by emphasizing the glory of his product—each seed was claimed to have been planted and grown specifically with the assistance of his hands. This bold expression, although meant with the best of intentions, was perhaps not the wisest choice of words. Three or four of the captive audience could not but eye his fingers, taking note of their being stained yellow—perhaps from a liver disorder or a farm animal’s stale urine. Those waiting eventually became desensitized to old man’s calls for “ATTENTION! ATTENTION!” and other linguistically elegant sounds made in an attempt at profit. It was the tent in the distance which made this little burden of patience bearable.

The handler had unpeeled the attraction in one quick flick of the wrists. Whisking off the cover caused a violent stir of air, uprooting a scent new to these tourists’ nostrils: it was a delicate combination of items, contorted into one magnificent stink.

The day began with a western European sun; it is like no other, highlighting generations of planned aesthetics—breakfast terraces, goat cottages, etched cow bells, and even the imprint of hooves into the mud had a sort of refinement and purpose: trapping rain water for lost dogs. Tourists felt privileged to be on such a sinuous, elaborate line. One could overhear the justification of many for standing in this seemingly awkward situation: it builds patience, it builds the thighs, it clears the lungs, we finally get to really see this little Province, it’s all so terribly terribly beautiful so why not? Perhaps during the phrases one, two, four, or five steps forward were taken and the tent in the distance grew in centimeters.

It was a blend of fecal matter and dried feed, yet something more. One could spend some amount of time deconstructing the origins of this smell. The tent had no clear openings, mainly because the handler dared not allow anyone passing a free show; as a result, the air of last week had been caged here as well. At one point, a visitor brought along popcorn. Another, a leather purse. There was the chemical strain of a tailored shirt; hair products and ironed lace; various Eau du Toilettes among the hint of shredded sawdust on the floor. The situation was incredibly confusing—visitors and environment were in contradiction. This entire misunderstanding began with an advertisement printed inside a local daily paper:

Voyez ce que ne doit pas etre.

Cherche la tente.

Le Mardi.

(See what should not be.

Look for the tent.

Every Tuesday.)

The indifference was taken as mysterious, as exotic, a unique promotion of a show exclusive to this location in France; tourists were convinced an event will occur that cannot be missed. Children were even told to brush their teeth, just in case.

For those some distance away, behind the desperate farmer and his produce, the tent was specish—a dark blot of no detail. But those wise enough, if one could say wise, to plan accordingly for the approaching crowds by setting up camp two or three days before the viewing—they saw the tent amazingly well. It was traditional, wonderfully stereotyped so any tourist from any country could identify this plastic heap as “the tent;” red and white obese vertical stripes leapfrogged one another to a tipity top point where a weathervane of a robin faced north-northwest. There was no breeze. There was no sound exiting the tent; it merely sat there. Any visitors leaving from the ass end—they were mute as well.

There were excusable coughs and watery eyes, with blood vessels broken from the dry atmosphere inside. A man had taken an initialed handkerchief and cupped it over his nose and mouth, of which he used to breathe in an attempt to avoid the smell; those with gloved hands did the same, yet no one could avoid its taste: thick and predigested, acidic like the tangerine juice taken on the breakfast terrace this morning—but no pleasurable, sweet tang complimenting. Boys and girls leaned their torsos closer to the enclosure, toes pushed forward; they moved in, nudging, to see if this was really what they were seeing. Naw, it’s a trick. Just a trick.

Those in line paid no mind to the dumbstruck customers. In fact, the questionable behavior and anticipation made loins gurgle in excitement. It was wondered what exactly *is* that *should not be*: a decaying body perhaps, a raunchy show hopefully—imagination flirted with topics one is not usually allowed to indulge with on an everyday basis, in open conversation; topics of daydreams while taking in a European sun, balancing tan lines: fanatical and chaotic scenes, like the dissolution of civilization summed into one image—a woman in pain and muffled agony, for example. Eyebrows expressed realization: you know, that can fit into a tent. Yes, that’s what it is—they were quite certain: a woman in pain.

Brows then began to narrow in concentration, in an attempt to compose the scene within: she’s tied, a simple knot—the wire around her wrists, ankles slips gracefully into the skin with any sudden jerks. She’s enclosed, yet void of any coverings, clothing. We can stare and determine if her bruises were applied artificially with some cosmetic (these shows always have some kind of smoke and mirrors) or laid upon by a hand or foot, so we must be sure to look for any knuckle or fingernail imprints, or shoe polish. We can laugh at her as she stares back with watery eyes and broken capillaries, withering in attempt at communication, for assistance. Medical, that’s for sure. It’s incredibly simple! Genius, almost. And it would be quite pleasurable. The idea smeared grins across nearly every onlooker’s face. But such a wish for degradation and animalism was kept silent, deep. Rather, the visitors were orally suspicious—demanding that whatever *should not be* had better be worth the entry fee of three francs per person, even including children. And damn it, children are only half a person.

*“Et contemplez: le genetiquement atroce. Une division est improbable, plus improbable que quand Le Maine a ete divise en Mayenne et en Sarthe pendant la Revolution. Ceci ne peut pas defait.”*³³ Behind the enclosure the handler stalked, forcing eye contact with those who had to glance away from the cage, at least for a moment, as though coming up for air in a panic—but the air here, the air was as horrific and inexplicable. It was overabundant yet useless and the panic only grew. Eyes encapsulated confusion in their widening and dilation. Cheeks flinched involuntarily upwards in disgust and, it seemed, in betrayal. “What should not be” should not be and this was merely insulting to all well educated, employed and hardworking individuals who just one dandy, astonishing afternoon decided to take in a local amusement—a completely innocent decision. And most uncomfortable of all, the handler’s eyes were green. Simple. No hardened crow lines near the tips of the eyelids. No blemishes or broken capillaries. It was as though the handler had been here for years, adapting to this environment, surviving with no challenge.

Twilight now. Those waiting still seemed to be in high spirits, conversing with other tourists from other foreign lands, finding a language compatible between them. An extra wool blanket was lent to the ill prepared, all in good faith it will be returned morning if necessary. They will wait. We will wait, as the fallen leaves, having been drained and tossed aside, absorbed whatever light remained; their dark hues grew a bit darker. Children cuddled a bit closer into a nearby lap, questioning the whole purpose of their being here, like this, among empty Tupperware and misconstrued blankets, used tissue clumps and recipes torn from the spines of magazines. What time is it? while knuckle-rubbing their faces. Luckily, the tent held no specific hours: it was open to whomever at whatever time, so guardians continued to reassure children, and even themselves, that the viewing would occur shortly. It was only a matter of patience. And if that ran thin, there were always fantasies to pass the time or sleep to be caught up. Yes, sleep. And dream. Of what? they asked. Of what should not be, but *is*, silly.

The handler told viewers it had the blood of two other pedigrees, Crevecoeurs and Black Spanish, which created its shades of deep purple and blue. At a distance, it simply looked void of any color; they warped to produce the illusion of black. Illusion, yes, illusion is a good word: it’s an illusion—such were the statements clucked from the back of the tent, stirring nods in agreement. Make it eat or move or something; it blinking its eyes ain’t enough—such were the commands to the handler, who in response lifted a foot and took a jab at the enclosure. The sound of a rubber heel to metal caused shoulders to start in surprise and, although the cage had been kicked numerous times before this showing, the thing gave a start as well—tripping over itself in a degrading, humiliating show of confusion. Some did stare. Some did look away. Some did laugh at the situation. The two-headed chicken just tried to run.

³³ “And behold: the genetically horrific. A division is improbable, even more improbable than when Maine was divided into Mayenne and Sarthe during the Revolution. This cannot be undone.”

A Portrait Of objects In A Theatre

The ears of the violinist were enormous, and French. At the back of his neck a blurb of fat vibrated with every pluck of a Gb. The planned acoustics of the opera house sucked the note into a path above the heads of patrons, balding and thinning alike. With every scratch of his index finger against the strings, there flaked off a note—loose, born blind and deaf, searching yet headed towards the un-negotiable path leading to the rear of the hall: there, it slipped through the gap of two closed entrance doors³⁴ and into the lobby. Here, the note was on its own—with no guidance from the previous architectural alignment, and it stumbled. The ushers, tucked away until they are of necessity, had no choice but to listen and endure the collapse of the Gb as it peeled into a tangy, unorganized sound.

It rolled beneath the oil painting—a reproduced Rosa Bonheur—whose Briquet scent hound dabbled its nose³⁵ in the direction of the distraught, wounded clump of wavelengths formally heard as a pleasant pluck. With its newborn eyesight and virgin experience, it struggled with decision. In a tactic of instinct perhaps, the sound bubbled into a piercing scream, a rabbit’s scream, to startle the two dimensional beast and somehow gain the interest, and assistance, of the inconsequential ushers. They, however, continued to coo between one another, reactive to only the signals produced by patrons beyond the entrance doors of the hall. So it laid there, still, with only a low coughing muffled by saliva and confusion.

The Briquet hound, with its legs squared and spine ridged, maintained its pose. No danger. No danger at all. Slower, moving backwards now. Still. Slower, it rolled, becoming oval, tucking its blubbering sounds in on itself, cupping its wounds, sucking in its gut, rolling and collapsing, shedding, leaving a trail of sound over lint and the imprints of soles in a carpet of a thousand thread counts—until with a slap it came to a halt. Its form warped around the pedestal of a table bearing the lobby’s centerpiece: a quaint basket of nectarines³⁶. The sound bent into a yelp and limped between the sugary scents floating about; the fruit was ripening, yellowing, and orangy—bruising with self satisfaction. Yet our Gb, our former Gb, blackened and blued and, yes, the sound

F³⁴ The manager typed this sign herself, in a font a bit more dramatic than seen here: “Silence during performance. No entrance during performance. All exits final during and before performance. Enjoy the performance. We thank you for your patronage.” This sign was framed in a faux gold metal stand and is always placed before the hall’s entrance doors upon the first plucked Gb of the concert. The ushers are trained.

F³⁵ Although mostly beagles are used to perform analysis of canine breath in the Topeka, Kansas Veterinary Clinic, we can generalize the output to Briquet breeds. Odor is analyzed once a week to test the effect of diet on teeth, and is used as an indirect indicator of health. Breath is categorized as “sweaty, salty, musty, fungal, and/or decaying” (other levels excluded for brevity). The sheen of the hound’s coat in the Bonheur painting—although possibly exaggerated by the artist’s choice of oils—suggests the K-9 model was in humane condition at the time. The painting can now be enjoyed.

F³⁶ An electronic device typed this sign on the case of nectarines in a font much more bland than seen here: “These fresh, ripe nectarines may have been treated with fludioxonil and/or dicloran as fungicides. They may have been coated with food grade vegetable or petroleum wax to maintain freshness. Packed with pride by Hermalinda Hernandez, worker # 848. Please enjoy!” Although they were perfect, plump ovals, unlike our former Gb, their purpose was not for eating but to titillate the nostrils.

hollowed into an attempt at weeping: a mouthed weeping as when a child scrapes a shin. If the ushers had just glanced towards the centerpiece, they would have seen something unknown, something gelatinous but obviously lost. Yes, you could have seen perplexity in its face, if it had a face, if *that* was a face.

Looking up, a small roll of fat popped out of the neck of our former Gb. A cough followed, curving out of its throat, and joining in a puff, the dotted cluster of stars on the ceiling³⁷. The paint had chipped some over time, but with fading eyes they were complete pale blurs also aloof, adrift, lost. Our former Gb cracked a grin with a bloody warmth gathering in its stomach, understood as happiness. Briefly silent, it teetered forward and back, forward and back, on wrinkly toes to dried heels, with eyelids pressed, silent; our former Gb moved with the false spin of false stars. The warmth bellowed into a fever, finding escape through whatever pores not jammed by dirt and salt: tears were just another liquid mixed with sweat. The feverish heat curdled the nectarines; bodily fluids stained the inner legs of this gaudy, unnecessary table—in silence.

Silence? The production was over, the doors had awoken and spilt open upon the last dainty pluck. There followed the usual moment after a performance, a chance for the audience to swallow what it had just heard, a moment to consider approval or disapproval of the violinist's years of conditioned fingering. The crowd then found its feet and stood, leaving buttock prints in the cushions to deflate during their applause. Success. The violinist, ears and all, replied in kind and stood, tippity tapping his bow across the face of sheet music³⁸ on the stand before him. This exchange went on with heads, balding and thinning alike, nodding and mouthing appreciations. Wives and escorts used this opportunity to squeeze past their row and onto the aisle, to exit, to re-powder. Only a scant amount was to be reapplied, but after years of attending performances, a routine such as this had simply grown organically: no one recalls the very first lady who stood, excused herself, and re-powdered—but her actions were noted and mimicked for generations.

They spawned into the lobby with such a force it startled the ushers, scattering them about wide eyed and rubber necked. With all this commotion, an artificial wind stirred brushing against flowers³⁹ placed in corners of the room, intended to avoid any

F³⁷ Fun Fact #1: A musical note is an equal distance between frequencies of a wavelength. Fun Fact #2: A giant black hole is spreading pressure waves through the gases of the Perseus galaxies. The frequency of these waves is equivalent to a Bb, 57 octaves below middle C. Fun Fact #3: The frequency of galaxy M87's waves in Virgo is spaced 4 million years apart, or the equivalent of an octave higher than Perseus' black hole. Fun Fact #4" A Gb can cough.

F³⁸ A typist typed this message in tonight's playbill using a font less conspicuous than seen here: "Page Turner: Mr. L. Yelnik" The same fingers that touch Favre's Violin Concerto in D minor Op. 14 are those that also distribute toiletries before and after a performance. Yelnik's production of saliva is a silent benefit: his index finger is never dry and, therefore, has never missed a turn even under the watch of a debutante's eye. Every performance is enjoyed by the spectators, without them even knowing why it is enjoyed.

F³⁹ A florist wrote this storefront sign in a more flamboyant handwriting than seen here: "Welcome to San Remo the *Town of Flowers* [exclamation point] Enjoy the Italian Song Festival and our red, yellow, or

void. Flesh and pedals whirled about—the scented skin and perfumed hibiscus caused a bit of nausea in of former Gb. With the dehydration from sweating and this new inconvenience, dizziness was inevitable. Its form could not sustain itself and it rippled, wobbled, and dizzied as the previous content motion of stars had ended, being replaced by a concoction of ladies scampering to find the toilet. Oh, where is the toilet, the ladies wondered. The same place it was last week Madame, it was answered. With something of a laugh from the ladies' throats, they proceeded to flock towards the staircase leading below. Their abrupt turn, in such numbers, created a vacuum: several ushers, dead lilac pedals, and, yes, our former musical note were inhaled.

Down below (not too far down mind you, the ladies do not like to have their ears pop) the restrooms rested. At attention, Mr. L. Yelnik stood beside a basket of towelettes and eau d' toilettes inside the ladies' room⁴⁰. The murmur of feet and tongues approached, buzzing behind the entrance door. A nervous, expectant Mr. L. Yelnik twitched left to right as the sound grew fatter, closer, filling the capacity of the hallway and eventually the room itself: the entrance door succumbed to the numbers, for its hinges could not withstand the bustling body of ladies, which instinctively formed the shape of a line for the private stalls. As they became occupied, the ladies patiently waiting dabbled in conversation about Princess Michaels and the silver collar around her Siamese's neck. Whatever is it for, it was wondered. So when the gardener sees a flash in the distance he knows the cat is loose, it was answered. What an ingenious tactic, it was murmured. Whatever is that smell, was suddenly questioned.

With a hush of action and speech, the ladies sniffed. The scent was like that of a working animal, a horse, a burly stink that felt carbonated at the bridge of one's nose once breathed in. It was sweat, and death—quite outstanding among the sanitizers used. It outweighed the honeysuckle spray and citrus candles, burning. Lying there in the center of the room, so terribly fatigued our former note had become. Lying there among the dead pedals, it exhaled, drawing the gaze of Mr. L. Yelnik. Systematically, he placed a disposable sheet in his hands, wiping up the scene in one quick squat (before the ladies took note, of course). Mr. L. Yelnik stood, placing his hands with the corpse behind the small of his back; with a silent, abusive crumple the sheet squeezed in his fist. He politely smiled to a lady exiting from one of the stalls. He reached in, dropping the package into the still water of the toilet below, and flushed.

pink hibiscus bushes [exclamation point] Your choice [exclamation point] We ship [exclamation point]" What is not publicly advertised in this message are selections of fuchsia and white cyclamens, lilac violets, and genetic oddities the opera house demands weekly. An occasional hibiscus is ordered, however, patrons just adore the oddities: Just what are they, the ladies wonder. Well, narcissus panizzianus of course, is answered.

F⁴⁰ A typist typed this message in tonight's playbill in a font less informative than seen here: "Restroom Attendant: Mr. L. Yelnik" Although men are usually restricted from entering the ladies' room, Mr. L. Yelnik has stood guard over these toiletries many a year. His presence is like that of the faucets or expired reading material donated by aging debutants. He (and Ms. Hermalinda Hernandez, let us not forget her) is a functional noun. The ladies leave the room feeling refreshed, without knowing exactly how they came to be fresh.

overly Dramatic portrait of a walk

The corner at W 10th Street and 6th Avenue slopes at an obtuse angle. The City lamp post, built to illuminate, arrogantly points a long green finger—a standard street sign—uptown, informing those who are interested enough or those who merely happen to take notice that this is the Avenue of the Americas. Thanks to the curb's incline, it is exceptionally easy for feet to make the transition from the panicked asphalt of oncoming traffic to the panicked concrete of oncoming pedestrians. Ascending the curb, one finds choice upon choice, a forestry of pleasure to be taken advantage of, a string of opportunity in the form of businesses and commerce. The storefronts capitalize on wandering eyes; their posters and words are brief, summing what a customer can do or have done to them right here, right now at a reduced cost *when compared to the leading competitor*. The words are read, a fantasy is enticed, one imagines eating or drinking or touching this priced-reduced item, imagines this goody in their lives, home, body. Thyroids expand just a bit in excitement, cheeks rouge as the fantasy begins, middles, and ends as quickly as the print on storefront advertisements is read. This cycle continues shop after shop.

The fluorescent light of Ansonia's Pharmacy wedges between storefront signs and highlights a broken parking meter outside its door. The goods inside, however, all aim to secure or restore some bodily function. Windows of Ansonia's Rx (as written on the marquee in an antique font exaggerating the shop's actual age) were freshly squeegeed giving a clear, nearly pornographic view of labels of bottles—glass and plastic—said to target dysfunction on cellular, gastric, neurological, or mental levels. Pills and powders in ounces, liters, strengths indicated by color spectrums, all in one Greek chorus narrate *if you have it, get rid of it; if you need it, get it here—right here*.

Wandering eyes are pulled to each aggressive hue and sales pitch in tailored packages suiting up the hundreds of little salesmen hoping the body will follow. The body instead continues its walk, but has—in one or two steps forward—been triggered to perform a subconscious inventory of itself: palm and oat oil intake, caloric intake, greens intake, alpha and gamma-tocopherol intake, intake of vitamins in both consonant and vowel category, acidophilus levels, enzyme levels, EFA levels, glucose levels, stomach acid levels. There is a concern about cavities, memory loss, cramping, and tightening, and loosening in several areas—yet the thoughts are incomplete since the body is driven forward, occupied by travel and destination. The view into Ansonia is failing to entice, failing to cause enough concern with labels alone.

The storefront, she then calls with tunes of opulent savings. Large font of posters thrust against the glass in hopes that minor concern plus *Unbeatable Savings!* turn a pedestrian into a consumer. All transactions are kept private and go swiftly, as noted on the door: *We now accept these three popular credit cards!* followed by one, two, three little icons. But it is the lure of having both hands full which may clinch the deal: *Natural Health Vitamin Sale! Buy One Get One Free! Stock Up & Save!* The capitalization and punctuation are little red tassels attempting to accentuate what is in reality quite common, a sale—so this, too, may not convert the passerby. More must be given. More. A sensuous shock, right here: *With developing: Free Film or Free 2nd Set of Prints!* This has no direct link to one's health, but one can record the dramatic results

of Ansonia's products bought during this once a week (*Hurry In!*) promotion. One cannot spell humanity without vanity.

The bombardment of bottles in the shop, the whispers of the storefront, the ecstasy and indulgence of sale does not always succeed. The sidewalk's undercurrent is much too powerful; this instinct to drive on declines any provocative offers. Yet this is the first of many tests—the Rx(xx) is one of six stations to cross on this block. In fact, by the time Ansonia is rejected there is a noticeable smell, a potent burn in the nostrils. It makes its way to the back of the throat, blotting the tongue dry; abdominal muscles squeeze out a cough although there is no physical thing to rid of—it is only the scent of cleanliness. Rubbing against Ansonia's is Gerry's. Gerry's Cleaners. Somehow, between the sealant and storefront glass, the odor of freshly pressed clothing finds escape. This flawed design is quite possibly the cleaner's best self promotion: a mind may well believe that the stronger the stink, the more sanitary the clothing.

This A → B thought process is tremendously simpler than the stages to make such a stink, to remove anonymous stains. The casual walker may take this scent as a whole, believing it is merely one chemical or, at most, two slapped together. But the fictitious Gerry of Gerry's Cleaners (the name sounded so welcoming, so neighborly, it had to be put on the marquee), this fictitious Gerry prides itself in owning and selectively using a rather plump number of thinners: retarder, epoxy, ammonia, melamine, acrylic, and silk screen (there are so many others, but Gerry likes to keep some mystery). When thinners are paired with old fashion sodas and bleaches. . . well, the breed of cleaning agent produced is high powered while retaining classic effects. Through the time honored tradition of Try and Try Again, Gerry successfully balanced measurements to create the reek which knocks at our chests and demands attention. Startled, a walker turns to Gerry's window—the source of this sudden outburst—where a pleasant letter is duct taped: announced in Romanesque fashion, *To Our Valued Customers, Friends, Neighbors: To better serve you we have installed a state-of-the-art dry cleaning system.* If one was to ask Gerry what is that system exactly, the answer would surely be honest: just one of trial and error. But then again, Gerry doesn't exist.

The eyebrow raising strength and stench of the chemicals, the scandalously “modern methods” (shhh) used by this cleaners are quite charming. To the walker, the entire establishment seems to revolve around its customers and their stains. No matter how many others enter through that front door, knocking it into the jingle bell (an item once placed in shops during a less violent era. Gerry's idea.), your clothing would receive the utmost attention: *Same Day Wash Dry Fold for Suede Leather Carpet*—boy scout's honor. The lack of punctuation shows the staff's prepubescent excitement and need to please; it's the hurried, jittery speech of a buddy who would do anything for a friend, to gain a friend. For a moment, in the midst of the panicked surge of pedestrians one feels a tad bit special, wanted. Beyond the purposely misshapen storefront (shhh) there is someone to wrap their arm around your neck in an informal manner, while serving you in a formal manner. For a moment, one imagines Gerry unlocking the storefront gates during the hour of sunrise, thinking of nothing but rubbing out stains spilled onto a favorite shirt during a celebratory meal. One imagines Gerry going

through the motions of applying some soapish goo, scrubbing a brush with long blonde bristles clockwise, then pausing to examine the shirt, the stain. O! The letter, same day service, the toil—such courtesy!

But then again, Gerry doesn't exist (shhh). The unwitting pedestrian is flattered, the ego, like every delicate silk blouse, is gently massaged. The heart tries to override the mind and instinct to carry on—the heart demands to feel exclusive, not excluded. No more alienation, no more forced anonymity. No more! As feet heed the desperate call and turn to Gerry, a possible source of compassion, the mind recalls seeing these signs and appeasements before. Indeed, the last block and the one before that all housed a cleaner who promised to scour and scour only for you. The mind tells the heart such promises are recycled, turned over and over, tumbled, hung in storefront after storefront until, eventually, their meanings are worn thin. It is merely price which separates cleaner from cleaner; there is no friendship here, no real love—only competitive jargon: *2.99 a shirt! Can't beat that! Best Deal Around!* Silently, in enlightenment, the heart bleeds into the lungs, broken, and eyes become heavy with disappointment. Damn you Gerry.

The gloss of the pavement outside Art Gallery Frame Shop is unusually pleasant. The seventeen lighting tracks stapled to the shop's ceiling have overexposed the flaws of this city street, making the weathered cracks and dried chewed spit nearly undetectable; remaining is an edible yellow to mend and comfort those undoubtedly shaken by the neighbor (who shall remain nameless). This light engorges the storefront, creating a soft haven for perfect reproductions of Western art. *We Ship Around the World. Seven Days a Week. Laser Prints.* This is not an art gallery, nor is it a frame shop—it is an art gallery frame shop committed to spreading the doctrine of symmetrical beauty to homes in every time zone. Imitations of genius are fitted in wooden frames to compliment—not shadow—the pearly face of a cherub or buoyancy of a head of curls. In the storefront, unfurled like a bored debutant, are several examples of the shop's handy work laid left to right. Each reproduces the reproduction of an artist's interpretation regarding a countryside, stream, haystack, vase and so forth. None of them, however, captures the eye like the centered piece—the reproduced ass of the Rokeby Venus. Reality surrounding a walker ceases to exist when the gaze of Venus crosses the gaze of a passerby.

A gentle index card below the copy denotes: *Painting #222: Nude Woman on a couch painted from behind, leaning on her right arm, looking into a mirror held by a child. From the hand of Valazquez, 1648.* This body on black sheets, this body enclosed in a room of Spanish drapes is our sudden reality. With a left foot forward and one right foot behind, we have ignorantly walked into the quarters of Venus. In the mirror, blurred, incomplete strokes assembled as a face hold a pair of definitive eyes that have caught us looking at her, her sinuous form, the small of her back, hips, hips submerging into crisp cheeks. For a moment, the face of God is the ass of Venus. We have disturbed her self-admiration and now she stares at us staring at her, each in one weighty second considering what to do next. *Buy now and Save! 30% Off!*

Off what exactly? Venus is already nude. We see her body; her skin was the fusion of led white and blue pigment centuries ago. We see a clear obsession of the artist in the distinct lines forming the buttocks, the sheen at the height of their curves, in the lack of concern for any foreign parts such as claws, hands, the nose—all inconsequential swift strokes made just to complete her form. We see how the frame in the child's hand was more of a nuisance than necessity—its varied complexion suggests any combination of brown sufficed; the child itself is sexless, the smear of a phantom, and merely a prop for a prop. The only interest was this generous ass. *Prices Reduced, Highest Quality!*

So it is the prices which are reduced, by more than a quarter. But what is of highest quality? This ass? Indeed, from the sweat of laser printers all nudity and nakedness is duplicated onto *convenient, modestly sized*—yet handsomely framed—printing paper to take home. There, the awkward and innocent experience of the first eye contact can be lived and relived, copy begetting copy. Her flesh, pale, blends with any carpet, furniture pattern, bed sheet, or nightstand; where she is placed will never conflict with her beauty. One can imagine spiking a small metal nail into a deserted part of the home—unlike this Venus, a hideous nude—lifting the frame's hookwire in a pinch, feeling the weight transfer from hand to nail and the wave of relief, release afterwards as the reproduced goddess is safely stored away. *Satisfaction Guaranteed.*

Some weak voice from some distant part of the mind wonders about this Venus; her past; the series of coincidences leading her to that couch, being told to undress, to lie down, and—under the eyes of the artist—told to simply exist. Who was this Venus, this average woman? Now, with a right foot forward and one left foot behind, the mind pulls out stereotypes and basic fragmented facts of the 17th century learned from expired books: was she a ballerina? Actress? Prostitute? Who would lend their image to eternity and what amount did she agree to, what did she decide was her monetary value?

The squirt of an ink cartridge is an unintelligible sound, and no stretch of the imagination can convert it into an answer. Even if her past could be reproduced, would it? Would the shop let the public see it? Her past, most likely filled with imperfections, is too disfigured for the shop's quest of alignment. The heart tells the mind it would not sell, it would barely gain the faintest attention; compared to the physical beauty sprawled in the storefront, a past is not as engaging, alluring. A past needs to be absorbed, conversed over a drink, queried, written into a book whose covers are too far apart—during a brief walk from here to there, there is simply no time for history, even depth. For the brisk second it takes to pass Art Gallery Frame Shop, the skin in the window is enough to capture one's eye; but the heart remains, yet again, without substance. *Free Delivery with First Purchase.*

Moving forward, looking forward, the cement outside Wines & Liquors of The Village has been hosed down. The shop's sidewalk hardened years ago (Est. 1935, written on the marquee in a most fashionable font for its age) and numerous washings left it coarse and dim. There is a dull chill rising from the surface and, with it, the scent of a stubborn bourbon. A bottle had been dropped, and either by a tidy broom or water pressure, shards lay cripple and swept to the curb. Before this, the mishap of a klutz or

alcoholic—but a walker, too, nonetheless—had released organic layers of amber, oak, and vanilla—each fragrance stands independently, mingles with the other aquatically, in the air, about the nose and face. The scent weighs on the skin, traveling through pores and cavities, reaching the mind, convincing it this is the smell of earth without avenues and glass. Such a romantic notion, and it can be experienced in sips. Nothing is needed to promote alcohol but itself; the storefront is a thin sheet of unobstructed windows; there are no popular phrases or stupendous discounts.

The walls are infested with merlots, pinots, roses from both hemispheres. Bottles stand shoulder to shoulder, their labels speak of countries seemingly crafted by some divine creature just for the purpose of milling wine. A country's latitude and longitude, soil and language could be liquefied and corked, then sent off to be purchased and swallowed. The consumer can dream of coastlines in Provence, or shorelines in Australia, or of beach rocks in Italy—all by stepping inside Wines & Liquors, pointing a finger into the symmetrical hive of bottles and paying for it.

Pinching a bottle by the neck and turning it a full 180 degrees, there is a label offering further inspection of the land where its grapes are farmed. The small print is exceptionally blunt and not very modest. In three inches of space, nineteen adjectives praise a merlot from the Murray River Basin in Aussie country. This is the script for a thirsty dreamer lacking the courage, funds, or luck to travel there physically. The mind reads hyphenated words, *co-exist*, *well-balanced*, and *sun-drenched* picturing a calm liberty; the mind reads *crushed*, *soft*, and *ripe* imagining perfection; the mind reads *typical*, *essence*, and *embodied* figuring this is life on the everyday. Or, at least, it should be the everyday.

There are even ways to slip this fantasy into one's food, drawing out the experience, teasing the mind by allowing tastes only in random bursts. That merlot can deglaze a roasting pan, lifting the fat and grease which perspired from a loin cut. Simmering in the wine, they begin to thin and separate becoming indistinguishable bits. A sauce is born; a velvet curtain to be placed over the loin. It finds its way into the meat through small tears and sits, waiting, until a mouth and tongue reveal everything. The potency of the wine is dampened slightly by the meat, but the country side, soil, native language—all of it is there if we concentrate as we chew. Indeed, one has to search for and anticipate the next hit of pleasure. It could be in the next bite. Such is hinted on the back label of every bottle, in fewer words, discrete: *can be enjoyed with any meat dish*. The idea to cook with this merlot has been planted and, as with grapes, will envelope every thought regarding dinner, lunch, and perhaps even breakfast.

It is frighteningly convenient that Jefferson is only several steps away. Thirty years after the wine shop sold its first bottle, Jefferson's Market sold its first package of cheese. Extraordinary coincidence or divine gluttonous intervention was the cause of their being neighbors. Nothing goes better with a fine liquid than a fine solid, and the market is fully bloated. Its refrigerated counters are stocked with an absurd number of cheeses, all pumped from six different hoofed animals. The market's cheese compulsion is no secret, as most of the space in its windows is dedicated to informing the greater

public in red bubbly ink that *We have 652 cheeses on demand! From 42 countries!* The market's employees, from bakers to butchers donned in white doctoral gowns, are more than willing to assist in one's cheese-making decision.

They begin with one's favorite farm animal. Cows, sheep, goats, buffalo, camels, and yaks—*If it can be milked, you'll find it here!* They even take into account the sensitivity of one's gums and teeth: *Your favorite cheese hard, semi-hard, semi-soft, or soft!* It can come completely virgin or smoked, stuffed with herbs of one's liking, spiced, or aged—texture and taste exist on separate and interlocking spectrums whose ranges are indicated by colors and pictures on labels. Dipping a nose into one of the market's well lit counters, you may find, for example, blue + goat + ocean. This equates to a mild goat cheese shipped from the Mediterranean. Using an index and middle finger, one can give a good poke at the plastic wrap to ensure how fragile or tough the cheese may be when put into the mouth.

With the potential product in hand—about to be taken home—how can we care for something that so much effort, heritage, and time went into? One overcame the panic of choice; now enters the panic of treatment. Standing there in dazed wonder, eyes question the package before them; hands grip a bit tighter. The market's employees, however, have prepared answers to this silence. Peppered about the countertops, held down by scotch tape or in little metal napkin holders, are tidbits of cheese intelligence. As eyes lift from the package in search of rescue, right before the moment when panic obstructs breathing, there is a sign, and another, and another. Adjacent the basket of French brie: *Wrap blue cheeses all over as mould spores spread to everything near.* To the right of the mozzarella: *Let cold cheese warm up for about ½ hour before eating, letting flavors develop.* Next to the Jarlsberg: *Do not store cheese with other strong-smelling foods, it will absorb other aromas.* Inhale, exhale.

Although wine labels beckon for meat, it is best to stop here at the cheese counter, especially upon the first visit. Choice is debilitating; one must be exposed to it drip by drip. To wander into the meat section shortly after being introduced to the cheese counter—it may cause hysteria. The storefront's silence regarding the market's meat produce in no way reflects its quality—or quantity for that matter. One may be taken aback. Snuggly secure behind glass partitions are diced marbled sirloins, hanger steaks, skirts steaks, and oxtails—whose marrow produces its own sauté. They sit in refrigeration, in quaint amounts of blood and small bushy garnishes of green herbs for a spot of color—breaking the various tones of red.

Their preparations—ranging from roasting to boiling to grilling to searing—cannot be narrowed to pocket sized bits of advice on signs. Inquiry must be made by the customer. Research! Time and effort! Love for the process and consumption! Indeed, there is a certain amount of investment needed on one's behalf. If it is lacking there is, of course, still hope. On the Avenue of the Americas, one does not have to slice or chop to eat to their heart's content. There is no need to make multiple decisions when only one can be made. Why torture one's self with measurements and mixing? The lure of French Roast is its leisure, its faux European air.

The self described *Masion de Café* is open twenty four hours. It tugs at the sleeves of the weary, those too fatigued to assemble their own meals. The windows, several metres high and wide, purposely show cushioned booths under sleepy wattage. There is nothing exceptional about the menu; a majority of the dishes are not even French. Propped by the door, atop an anorexic metal stand, are tonight's specials unfurled, highlighting twelve dollar burgers and six dollar coffees. The excessive cost pays for the atmosphere; napkins are contorted into fleurs; ice will not be found in water glasses, nor any bread on tables; the wait staff avoids eye contact as patrons come deliberately to vanish. They pay for relaxation, for elbow room, for the muted trumpet jazzing through a sound system in the walls and ceiling.

Patrons mumble their orders. Patrons mumble their conversations. Through the storefront lips can be read, slowly forming vowels and quips. The past and future always seem to be of topic, although the lighting is fixed and breakfast, lunch, dinner (*Brunch Aussi!*) is prepared no matter the hour. As one dines on pancakes, another dines on buttered peas. The restaurant is a transitive world, a place away from the panicked asphalt of oncoming traffic and the panicked concrete of oncoming pedestrians, away from burdensome choice. The portion sizes are small, so bites can be small, allowing easy swallows. One can swiftly return to conversation or blank stares looking onto the street from which they have escaped. Walkers pass. Taxis and bicycle delivery services pass. The M6 passes, on its way to a bridge named after a founding father. Time passes. Yet inside there is no time, only a check; a check with tax and tip included, to be paid and left behind in small bills and coins whose façade is adorned with the face of a founding father. If one can afford it, this liberty is accessible. Remember, however, the walk continues. There is yet another block on this Avenue of the Americas.

portrait of a war

There is a smell in the bathroom.^v

There must not be a smell.^{vi}

The bathroom must be cleaned.^{vii}

The bathroom must be organized.^{viii}

The bathroom must be maintained.^{ix}

^v It appears seasonally, during pleasant months when window curtains are finally drawn aside to reveal a napoleon of dust, grime, neglect that gathered over more unpleasant months. It appears in spring, faintly, as a thin membrane between objects in the bathroom and inhaling nostrils. It seems to cover the porcelain, plastic, glass, and pumpable toiletries which compose what we reflexively picture when BATHROOM is read—and this personal space is smeared with an odor that cannot be seen but can only be uttered in words of the physical. It is seasonally oily, a gummy aromatic, resinous substance; it flows, pungent here, yet not there, or as much.

It is most notable by the sink faucet on weekdays beginning with the letter T; approximately noon at midweek the toilet is suspect; weekends are particularly disastrous for the tub. The smell looms, an invisible threat known to induce vertigo, palpitations, migraines, speech impediments, fear in bystanders wishing only to relieve themselves—they are instead spontaneously engulfed in which they cannot see or hear. It may be coming from the plumbing. Various intelligence has led many to believe the issue resides at a bacterial level, a decision which came after many misjudgments. Certain individuals were called—professionals with impressive mechanics to slip into the gastric areas underneath countertops and unsuspecting tiles. Tubular cameras poked into drains searching for visible clogs and obstructions; although nothing was seen, plunging de-clogging hooks were used—a popular choice being Big Yank, resembling a cork screw yet on a flamboyant level. Its three digits opened and clamped into a pinch, inevitably griping nothing after several attempts in vein. The metal fingers opened and shut, opened and shut, ringing against piping in a flat yet awe inspiring tune—it was loud, tubes were cracked, but this show signaled something was working; there was control, action being taken.

The smell remains despite these assertions; the wrong tools were applied. The stink is not from clumps of hair, spit, or body soil—traditional causes—but cells working together, running throughout the entire housing establishment. We do not know their language, how they coordinate so accurately. We have substituted our language to describe their behavior. They, for example, look alike. They each have at least one hollow, rigid cylinder we call flagella used for locomotion. In a counterclockwise manner it rotates up to 1,000 revolutions per second, thrusting them forward. They. Them. They can even glide without the aid of flagella, an ability we have ingeniously labeled gliding motility. How they glide is still unknown. We are aware of this ability however.

^{vi} In as short as twenty minutes or as long as twenty four hours, bacteria multiply. Their growth is exponential, such that with every generation the number of bacteria doubles. At any given moment, there may be over one million bacteria in less than an inch of space in as little as 3 ½ hours. Causally, perhaps disturbingly nonchalant, bacteria cells may join together and exchange DNA information in order to adapt to their environment, to survive. We have given this disturbing behavior the disturbing name of

conjugation. When it appears in print, we generally highlight the word in a red hue because red is disturbing. These are the facts. It is our duty to communicate the facts.

It is also our duty to rid, as they are attacking and attempting to destroy our way of life. When entering, we have fundamental expectations of a bathroom that need to be met: the existence of a smell disrupts our expectations. This is where we expel, clean, and remain naked. Being the most private space in a home, it must be comfortable—this is a right. They are taking away this right from you and your innocent guests. When entering, we subconsciously expect a smooth transition from public to private space, a space with mild lighting, mild colors, flattering mirrors; tiles arranged in a witty manner, perhaps imitating some foreign design—only slightly; there is a gentle whir and suck of a ceiling vent to wipe away any evidence of a past visitor or present guest; light bulbs glow but are mute, letting the tip tap of the tub drain have its way with sound. This minimalism allows the individual to feel individual, to feel the self. A bathroom is a calm, soothing atmosphere where personal decisions are made—a natural god given area.

They are in the plumbing and the plumbing itself must be hidden from view—therefore hidden from others. The smell is to be dealt with, yet the innards are visually distracting causing guests and even fellow dwellers to question the home, how it works or lack thereof, finding loopholes and offering suggestions on how to improve the function of the plumbing. Suggestions are unnecessary. We know what we are doing and these unwanted talks can be prevented. An assortment of materials can be used as decoy, to obtain attention: objects such as amusing armoires, vanities, chests, pharmacy cabinets, console tables, decorative mirrors, or a relaxing chair are always flashy, reliable goods which easily become topics of conversation. Be sure to encourage their purchase; maintain eye contact; smile, showing teeth; nod when appropriate. Merchandising removes concern from the heart of the matter.

vii There exists an array of chemicals which may be used to terminate the bacteria, thereby terminating the smell. It is wise to use these materials before they strengthen in numbers beyond our control. Striking now will maintain a relative calm future. Intelligence suggests we begin with an anti-bacterial bathroom cleaner. Do not be fooled by the fresh mint scent, the label's cartoon bubbles or their personified smiles in the artist's rendering; this is our weapon of choice. Active ingredients include: n-Alkyl (60% C14, 30% C16, 5% C12, 5% C18) dimethyl benzyl ammonium chlorides (.11%); n-Alkyl (68% C12, 32% C14) dimethyl ethylbenzyl ammonium chlorides (.11%); inert ingredients (99.78%). Although only a total of .22% of the foam is lethal, the ratio of toxicity : surface area : bacteria is extremely high. This will do most comfortably; it will produce mass destruction with little loss to us as long as the warning is upheld—*Keep Out Of Reach Of Children*. We can protect the children by hiding our methods in the furnishings posted in the former endnote.

Intelligence suggests the most efficient course is to divide the area into zones, then aggressively attack each. Although exceptionally high in price, consider the cleaner an investment; its use now may prevent farther spread of bacteria into surrounding rooms. Fight the fight here. Do not be timid, use the entire bottle; expand your budget. Prep the material: shake the can; feel the dense surge of liquid thicken; enjoy the sound of no sound as this liquid concentrates into foam, tight within the aluminum casing. The can is now loaded. Begin with the sink as it is closest to the entryway; its location near the threshold makes it a convenient first target. Point the spray 6-8 inches from the drain. Be sure to strike the drain directly. Spray with quick, full strokes covering the surface and leave the bubbles. They know what to do; no need to wipe dry or mop up the last remnants of the bacteria in the zone. Let the bubbles do the work. The hisses, echoes, amorphous sounds, the occasional loud snap—this signifies (1) cleanliness and, yes, (2) the popping of our bubbles. They pop for a great cause.

The bombing run will then continue on to the toilet. Engage the inner lining of the toilet; the curve of pursuit is best clockwise with equal pressure upon the nozzle the entire circumference. This lengthy period of dispensing material may leave a small trail of exhaust; the afterburn is not harmful (although it smells potent, the gases are inconsequential—intelligence suggests). The bubbles will at first cling to the bowl, disinfecting as they slowly march their way into the toilet water. All available bubbles will move several clicks into the plumbing, continuing decontamination. Complete silence will follow; all remaining bubbles have entered. They understood the significance of this mission; they understood the risks. When this silence falls, flush. Remember, they pop for a great cause.

The tub remains and is the largest zone to cover: 25 inches deep, 73 ¾ inches long, 43 ¾ inches wide. Composed of mostly acrylic and barren landscape, the cavernous ravines and humidity provide an optimal environment: seclusion and sustenance. Here, the most radicalized bacteria can be found. All

enforcements remaining within the aluminum casing are to be used. We expect overwhelming success, however, and depletion from ammo plus to ammo zero harbors no potential risk. We have the best equipment and the best trained bubbles. The engagement combines the attack plans of the two previous zones, which will be successes; therefore this will be a success. We begin by striking the main artery—the drain—and follow up with a clockwise sweep of the tub itself. The steep angles of the tub walls will allow our bubbles to naturally gravitate towards the center; bacteria not killed on contact will be surrounded. There is an extra step to guarantee victory: rinse the entire tub with tap water, flooding the zone slightly. As the water draws off, the tide will pull the bubbles into the drain for a second wave of attack. The bubbles will be aware of this part of the mission. Their sacrifice is victory.

viii The bathroom is now sanitized; bacterial levels are significantly reduced and the smell is non-detectable. Our goal is to maintain this state and prevent bacteria from regrouping. To accomplish this, we must replace existing establishments and install a proper living system. Previous living patterns must end; these flawed systems are what caused the bacteria to generate. Intelligence suggests a complete reorganization of the bathroom, beginning with the removal of all influential toiletries. All means everything. Collect the soaps, toothbrushes, and deodorants; items on the bathroom counters, in drawers and shelves should be transferred. These items may be contaminated and may be aiding or housing bacteria. Replace these items with new items specifically scrutinized to ensure they do not pose a threat to our best interests—they must be clean and conveniently match the décor of the surrounding rooms.

Once again, it is best to store cleaning supplies under the sink and in furnishings. When necessary, the materials are at arm's length to be discharged yet remain at a distance not to interfere with everyday occurrences. We will be there, however, at a moment's notice to secure the area. It remains fragile. Bacteria may repopulate; items may become corrupted and need to be removed. This extended transition into normalcy may leave guests and fellow dwellers irritable, causing further instability. Intelligence once again suggests preoccupation: note the minor successes, note the possibility of a clean, enjoyable future, play up the new scent of freedom—that when entering the bathroom one's expectations will be met and one may finally experience tranquility. We can install a scented candle that has been statically proven to induce calming effects: Sweet Violet. Do not be fooled by the translucent name; it is our weapon of choice. It will be showcased in dramatic fashion, resting upon a pedestal of ivory to exaggerate the purple dye resembling wild blossoms. The artist's rendering is already complete: the label is composed of romantically interwoven forget-me-nots, lilacs, and freesias on a matte finish. This two dimensional bouquet, the color, the scent and the actual lighting of the candle all accumulates into a ceremony to detour attention from the incomplete. Celebrating mediocre milestones removes concern from the heart of the matter.

ix For long term success, it is imperative fellow dwellers of the home establishment begin to take responsibility in maintaining the bathroom. We cannot bear the hardship alone. It is best to create a partnership with these people, as to teach them how to use the facilities correctly—namely, the way we use them. It will then be difficult for the bacteria to flourish if they adopt our methods of cleanliness and organization. They must be convinced our way is in their best interest as well; the most immediate priority now is communication.

Tell them the future of the bathroom is in their hands. It belongs to them. Such blurbs are memorable and evoke pride. As hearts swell, as minds absorb the task ahead, as sighs become determined swiftly add how they are to handle the bathroom and its facilities. For example, explain the cabinets and their divisions; explain what goes where in simple terms. Encourage debate among the dwellers. Allow them to individualize their section of the bathroom, letting them choose which toiletries they desire and their placement. We only have to create the structures; let them fill in the blanks. Do not be fooled however: although they are making choices freely, they are working within our construct and rules which are built to prevent bacterial growth.

If cells gather, we predict minimal, concentrated, even sporadic gatherings in small geographic areas. With dwellers' involvement these pockets will be taken care of quickly. They have been trained to spot bacteria and to use the materials we use. We are confident that the bathroom will no longer pose a threat to our tranquility or to the living areas surrounding the bathroom. The bacteria is being eliminated, this you can be certain. We are the definition of professionalism, dedication, and courage.