

MR. TERRIBLE STILL SNEAKING

NOVELTIEST MANIFESTO



THE SURREAL TIMES

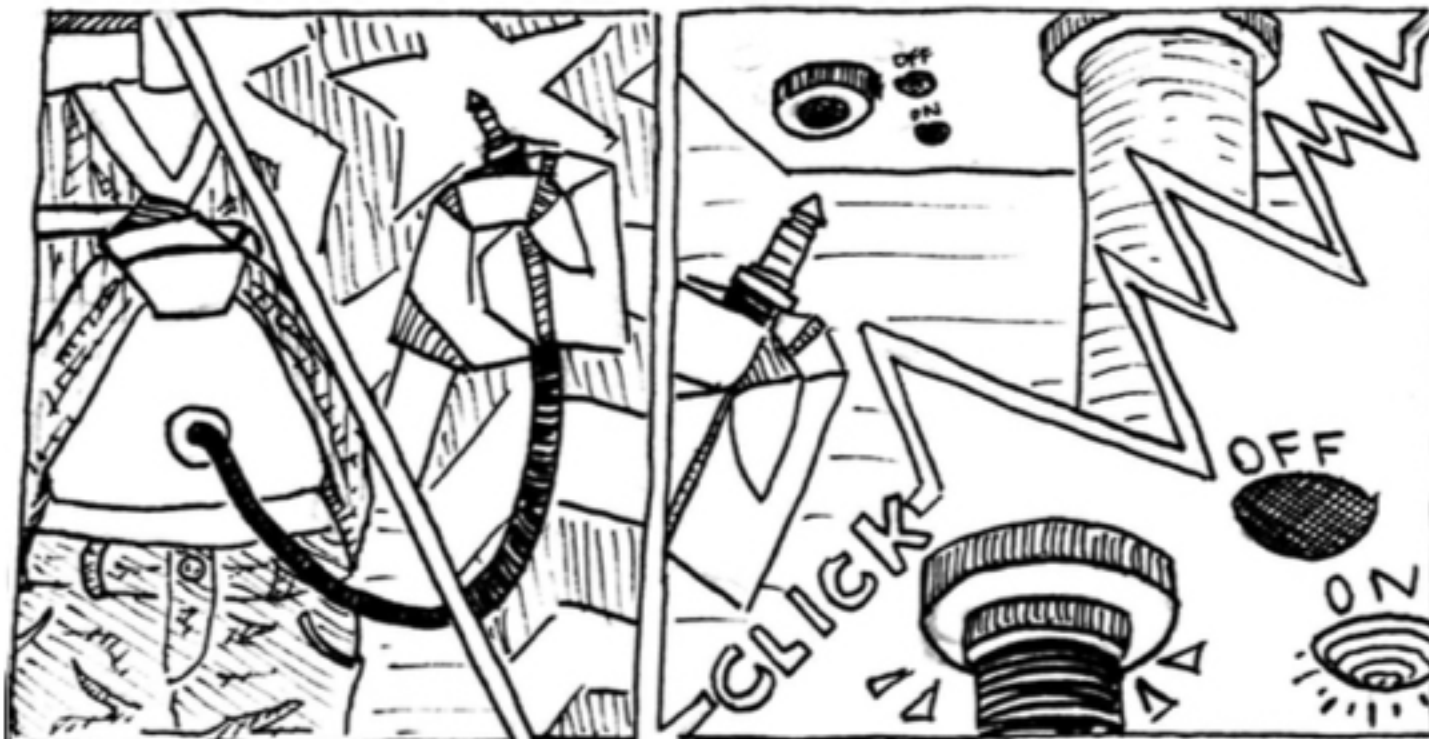


*"A newspaper is required to document
the history currently unfolding..."*

May 7th, 2019 .:|:. surrealtimes.net

*Serving the citizens of the world since
the 3rd dawn of the cicadas.*

THE MECHANICAL FELLOW SAVES US FROM THE MOTHS!

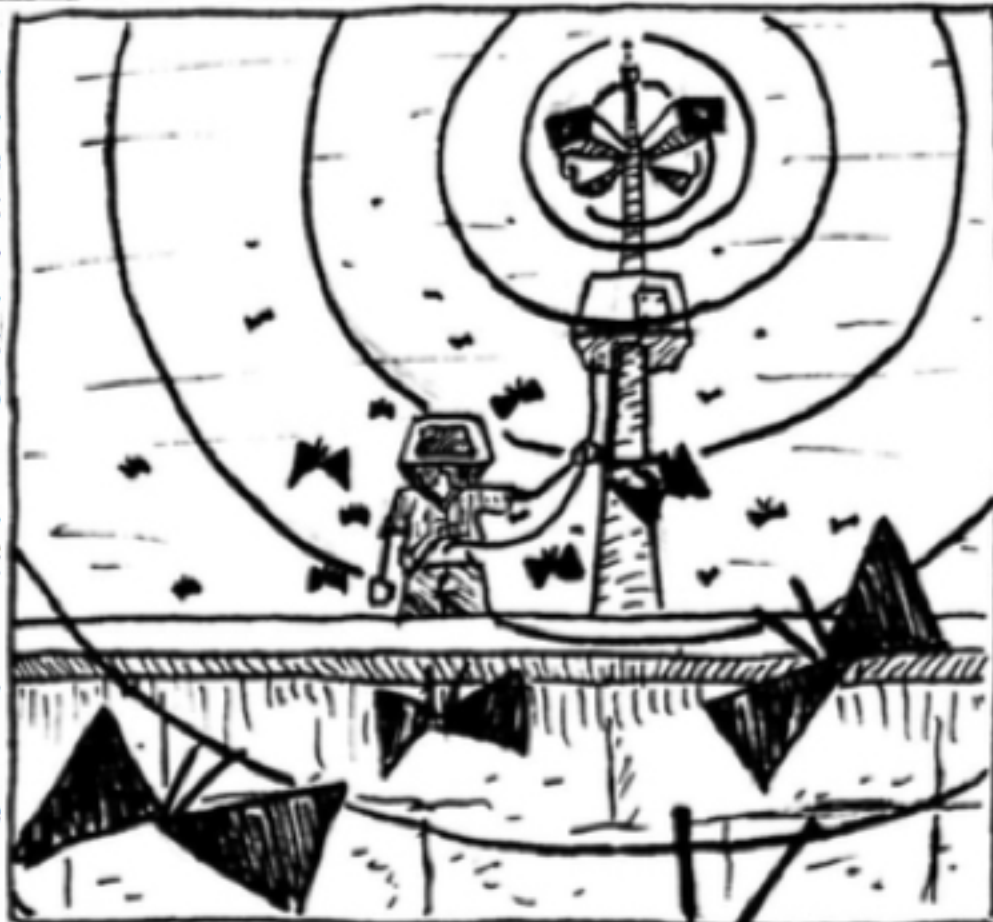


With the aid of Chimpanzee Joe, The Mechanical Fellow utilized the UMass emergency alert system to bait in and exterminate the biting, psychoactive noise moths that have been terrorizing campus.

However, it was not without sacrifice on the part of Chimp Joe.

See page 2 for the full story
by Tommy Potentuary.

Artist's depiction of these
events by Marina Parella.



FROM THE MOUTH OF THE PIG:

BY ARMĂDEIUS GALOUË,
Times Senior Editor



"The cerebral flock transcended indefinitely ."

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

In these surreal times, a newspaper is required to document the history currently unfolding. To do so to the best of our abilities, we, the staff of The Surreal Times newspaper, vow:

- To explore the universal in the particular.
- To showcase the truth between the lines.
- To uplift spirits.
- To shed light on hidden angles of identity.
- To paint portraits of strange feelings.
- To embrace and relish authenticity in stories and people.
- To find pieces of ourselves and our readers in the news we publish.
- To publish maps for those lost in themselves.
- To grasp at all the far-reaches of human emotion
- To listen to those who are not speaking.
- To inspire flight over comfort in the hive.
- To broaden perspectives beyond our reality.



NOVELTIEST MANIFESTO AND THE MAN-IN-CASTLE-ABOUT-WHICH-THE-WORLD-ROTATES

And Eddie Octo's perspective

By EDDIE OCTO,

Miniature Octopus and Master of Surreal Engineering

Note from the editors: Our prestigious tentacled journalist, Eddie Octo, has been absent in the time since he earned his Surreal Engineering Masters degree. He has been busy investigating new research opportunities. However, he took some time away from his underwater desk in Chancellor Subaswami's pool, in order to tell us about Theodore Munnely, aka The-Man-In-The-Castle-About-Which-The-World-Rotates, who he has been allowing to stay in his pool house.

Dear surreal times newspaper + readers,

My chums, what a time we're swimming in. I've been living the nicest pool in Amherst, adorned with a custom octo-friendly lining as well as side bubblers. I love it here. I am working on new research, while simultaneously hosting the

most peculiar biped I have ever met in my pool house. This man has a lot to him. And so, I am making fascinating discoveries on two fronts — in my research, and in observations of my guest, Theodore. He is an exceptionally smart and focussed biped, but also childish. He spends much time building Lego models of pyramids, wooden sculptures of skyscrapers and spaceships, and drawing pictures of symmetrical crop circles. He's a true son of Rube Goldberg. He reads and writes endlessly, and continually sketches pyramids in his notebook. Whenever he is not doing this kind of thing, he is out and about on "scouting trips" which he seems uninterested in telling me about. He has moved out, however, as of last Tuesday, and I am out of touch with him. I find his behavior rather... fishy. When he moved his things out of the pool house, he did so unannounced and disappeared without a word, even though we had been friendly to one another during our stay. He cleaned the place well but left behind a type-

written document hanging from the ceiling fan. It is a manifesto of some kind which seemed sensible to share with the public.

Best wishes to The Surreal Times newspaper, its staff, and its readers. I am back to my work for now. Sincerely, Eddie Octo

Novelty: The Future Theodore Munnely

1. "Modern", sometimes called "scientific", educational institutions say the universe is entropy. They claim it progresses inevitably towards a state of disorder, towards a point where everything is stagnant, homogenous, and dead. They define everything, even time itself, in terms of death.

2. However, life is not entropy. In fact, life is the opposite of entropy. Life is Novelty, and Novelty is Life.

3. All life and everything that is good, is novel. This claim extends from the fundamental molecules, to the most basic single-cell

organisms, to the most complicated and unlikely beings of our world, and further into more abstract domains. Novelty is in the nature of what makes art. Novelty is in the nature of what makes a structure of any kind strong and aesthetically pleasing. Novelty is even in the nature of what makes community and inter-personal relationships strong, healthy, and fulfilling.

4. Everything that is bad, is entropic. Everything that is entropic, is bad. Decay... Rot... Cancer... And more, are examples of this.

5. Novelty does not arise from fear of death. Novelty arises from faith in the possibility of contact. Openness to chance, and faith in chance, is essential to novelty. Without such faith, novelty is stunted before it can grow.

6. Noveltiests aspire to live and die in novel ways. They aspire to attract things and beings of high novelty, to become more

novel themselves, and to increase the general novelty of their surroundings.

7. Noveltiests aspire to catch the eye of the divine, because the divine is infinitely novel. Only through contact with the divine can we exponentiate our novelty. All other methods are incremental.

8. Noveltiests maintain three superior "Novelty Codes": a) Fight Entropy b) Make Symmetry c) Be Sacred

9. Noveltiests do not claim to know what the divine is. Still, they maintain faith that there is something divine and that it is of other-worldly novelty.

10. Noveltiests embrace the unknown divine. They aspire to catch the eye of the Gods, or whoever looks down upon us and to convince them we are worthy of their attention.

Eddie Octo can be reached at Eddie.octo@surrealtimes.net

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* ADVERTISEMENT *

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ANT COORDINATOR RESIGNS POST

BY CLARENCE MON,

Director of The Peripheral Intelligence Agency

A century ago, the town of Amherst appointed its first ever Ant Coordinator. This was during a time of reconstruction of the downtown area. Among other tasks, the town worked to replace a 7-way, lightless, signless roadway intersection with a more organized double roundabout system. They

aimed to coordinate humans and even insects, in addition to the horses and carriages, in order to conjure a quick-paced metropolitan feel that would allow business and culture to thrive.

Ever since the Ant Coordinator was appointed, the town has harnessed the power of insects for productivity and amusement. From mail delivery to traffic direction, to live music, ants colonies have been engineered for

our benefit. It has taken a series of clever and hard-working ant coordinators to make this work, but seemingly the need for human input has vanished.

Diddly Hopscotch served as Ant Coordinator from 2007 to 2019. He resigned this month, stating that his job had become obsolete. "I have conflicting feelings," he explained, "It is the most wonderful sight I have ever seen, how the ants have

learned to coordinate themselves. But, at the same time, their ascent to self-sufficiency has undermined my job. My insect followers have learned to lead themselves. Today, they clean up human trash by themselves. They carry bits of fertilizer to individual blades of grass. They choreograph dances! They do things I could have never thought of, let alone taught them to do. They even teach their young,

somehow, so they are totally sustainable."

Mr. Hopscotch recommended that the town dissolves the post of Ant Coordinator, since it is no longer needed.

As always, Peripherally go the winds of progress...

Clarence Mon can be reached at cmon@surrealtimes.net

OCCULTIST BALL GRAVEYARD GROWING RAPIDLY

BY SHERRY WOLVERTON,

Dog Walker

There is an occultist graveyard on the border of the Connecticut River. It's maintained by feral, childish college students and devoted to honoring deceased balls of various kinds. It smells like sweat, mud, and blood. The torn apart, shovel-sliced, sometimes burned and melted remains of yoga balls, beach balls, and others lay flat atop the mud — each adorned with memorial notes written with silver sharpie on their rotting skin.

"Goudreault Ball Cemetery", as it was labeled by thin sticks arranged on the ground, has been expanding rapidly. It began with just one dead ball two weeks ago. It is already home to more than two dozen ball corpses.

We have gathered that the growth of this cemetery is a consequence of a new game that the most feral of kids are playing nowadays. It is called simply "ball". They get some sort of ball — any kind, but preferably large

and round — and they chase it around like maniacs. They kick it off of things and each other. They hit it with things. They throw it at moving cars. All the while, they are yelling "ball!" "BALL!" "Ball!" In different tones, as though it is one word that can mean a million different things.

I once overheard one "ballplayer" ask others, "How do you win Ball?"

The overwhelming response was "Everyone is always winning. As long as you are

playing Ball, you are winning. Otherwise, you are losing."

I walk dogs for my retirement. One of my dogs tried digging up one of the dead ball skins once. When they did, a heard of scrappy riff raff people streamed out of decrepit houses nearby, screaming "Ball!" "Ball!" "BALL!". They nearly kicked one of my goddamn dog's head off. Little Cujo dropped the ball skin right away. The riff-raff frantically reburied it while rattling off "BALL" "BALL"

"BALL" in every direction. They obviously care about balls and ball very much, almost to the point of being neurotic. It's all they do. It's a compulsion — When they see a ball, they can't help but chase it and yell. Then others hear their yell and join in as well. I don't know what their parents would think of all this.

Sherry Wolverton can be reached at wolverton.sherry@surrealtimes.net

HALLUCINATIONS WANTED

BY CHIEF HALLUCINATOR GUSTAV

It has come to my attention that the hallucinators of Amherst are completely un-

derserved. They no longer look behind their backs, they no longer check their closets and they no longer jump at passing birds. This situation is outrageous! If

you are a talented hallucination, please email the management of this paper at hallucinations@surrealtimes.net. We are looking

for hallucinations with experiences in the following forms:

1. Seven-Foot-Tall Clowns

2. Spiders (non-jumping)
3. Bloody Pelicans
4. R. Lee Ermey (ghost)
5. Killer dolls
6. Spiders (jumping)



A NOTE ON SOME PEOPLE I MET DURING A YEAR SPENT AS A SURREAL TIMES INTERESTING PERSON'S CONTACT (IPC)

BY CHARLEIGH CLARK,
Interesting Person's Contact

I met a man whose tales talk back. And he was as much in them as they were in him. He was afraid to fall into himself and lose the world again. Because, when the hims inside of him would bicker, he got nothing but lonely.

I met a ballerina, and I might be wrong, but when she spoke, her eyes went up and then down as if searching her soul to see if what they were about to say fit with what's inside of her,

However, I couldn't tell if she noticed. The ballerina said she left her music box, went to turn to the sound of her own song. And though I haven't heard it since, the song lingers on me and I hope it is being heard, still as hers and still as true, in every beeswax-sealed dream, bursting out and breaking sighs into screams.

I met a boy who for a moment saw a Little Tin Soldier who left its winding key behind and went to walk in his own shadows. With a rusted inside and an enamel

outside. That encounter signed somewhere in the boy's brain even though he said he couldn't remember the tin soldier's name, and its ticking still talks to him every now and then.

I met a sad clown who smiled so wide she cracked her cap and chose to live like a joke that lingered too long after a laugh, as a ghost on a carousel like a shadow of who she was. She talked to herself through a puddle with a stranger's face who wore a painted mask.

I met a boy with mirrored

tears, a tomorrow smile, and a mushy soul, who felt afraid to meet the screaming feelings hung below.

I met a prude who painted himself a breathing plastic mask and hid away in it. Pebble upon pebble was thrown at his painted pain, at his mask. Not all who threw the pebbles saw the mask fall. But all of those who threw, are with him all in all, as memories and valued figures always on call. And little by little, cracks began to shine through showing his face like sighs

or stars.

I met a boy who once dreamt of himself, and when he woke he was still him. Every soul has its own song. If you squint your ears and dream during the day, you can hear it, but that's just what he told me today, he can't really remember what he said yesterday, and who knows what he'll say tomorrow...

Charleigh Clark can be reached at
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THE SUNKEN HEAD SAYS BYE AND SOMNI SAYS HI

BY THE NARRATOR

As a gift for my dear friend Somni;

(Has your mind begin to slip? Do you want your life story to live on after you die? Then perhaps you need a narrator, my friend, for this is what I do. I listen and I will be listening.)

The night was damp both in soil and in soul. The pitter-patter of the rain outside kept the building and it's cherry-scented inhabitants from the surrounding air while setting the tempo. Meanwhile, the lightning set the mood. Background ambience paired with empathic

weather, like wine goes with cheese and cheese goes with mania.

Dr. Richardson, who was feeling a bit floaty, leaves in a bit of a hurry, in hopeless hopes that nothing followed her out.

The click of the key locking the door was like the moon rising and the conductor baton tapping their stand. The curtain bowed, a knowing wink or a nutcase cracking twitch that let on that a story was brewing.

The Sunken Head, still in his jar floating off within worlds afar sunken inside itself, is sitting on that same shelf in Dr. Moria's office,

which had its furniture nailed down in pristine order (what you can't do for the head you do for the shed, right?)

By now the Head's jar was already cracked, as was the head. The look of the outside matched its disdain for the inside. It sat abandoned and forgotten, the Head and jar had floated long enough, although the Jar's crack still looks like a smile. A rumble of thunder and shook the shelf and knocked off the jar. As they, fell you could almost hear a lyre playing in the background. The sunken head, ever the hopeful one, was high on dreamy delusions and kept up by the

formaldehyde.

With its last breaths, and while too cracked for repair, the Head breathes in lies which of course seem lighter than air, but being lies they lead him nowhere but down. The sunken head said bye, I swear I heard him say it, but I may have forgotten or I may have hidden it somewhere strange. Or then again it could have been a sonic mirage drowned by the zeppelin cries of Somni, sitting on the asylum shower floor in the room next door.

Somni, a certain sadness drifts up from her case file, lost in a lovely haze. She

was locked outside the gate of dreams but now she can't close the door. Slowly she has become the type of person who is more themselves in the shade of dream than in the light of day. The type who would call vomit grandma's fresh baked cookies. She just left being one thing be something else for a while. But Somni wasn't always like that. She used to be a person fleshed-out like a rainbow of colors all equally vibrant woven together as one. Sometimes one color shines over the others but one they still are...

Continued on next page 6.



THE MECHANICAL FELLOW SAVES US FROM THE NOISE MOTH CRISIS

“Chimp Joe Helps, To His Own Detriment”

BY TOMMY POTENTUARY,
Television Personality

Breaking news! The noise moths are dead! Our cherished haven of beautiful sunsets, friendship, and community, Orchard Hill, is now safe and once again bustling with life! We can sing again! We can dribble basketballs! We can enjoy the Spring weather without holding back!

This is all thanks to our friend, the rhyming, apocalypse-predicting cyborg from the future, The Mechanical Fellow!

While the noise moths were devouring the vocal cords of anyone who made a peep, The Mechanical resided just a few hops and a skip away, in the woods behind Orchard Hill. He tried to ignore the problem at hand. He wanted to help, but he was already too stressed about the coming robot apocalypse, he found it hard to focus on a small-time tragedy.

I wanted to help, But I had no yelp.

To lend a hand, I would need to stand.

But, I was stuck — on my butt,

Thinking of the end of man.
But The Mechanical Fellow
could not bear to sleep in
the midst of tragedy.

My ears do not close Not
even almost

Neither does my conscience
I was trapped on my toes

So I computed a way To
save the day

And to my aid, was chimp
Joe!

The Mechanical Fellow set
sights on the roof of Field
Hall, the Easternmost dorm
in the Orchard Hill residen-
tial area. He coated his met-
al parts in duct tape and
cloth beforehand, so as to
muffle clanking sounds as
he climbed the ladder. Still,
he made sounds and as a re-
sult, was swarmed by noise
moths that bit at him vi-
ciously. They could not pen-
etrate his hardened alu-
minum exterior, however, so
he trudged on through their
masses.

At the top of the building,
he plugged his umbilical
wire into the underside of
the UMass emergency alert
system speaker. He transmit-
ted the sound of the noise
moth swarm through the
wire. The speaker produced
a terrible screeching sounds
which attracted more noise
moths, thereby amplifying
the sound, attracting more
moths, and compounding.

Before long, he had attract-
ed every noise moth in
sight.

They swarmed around him
and the speaker in a massive
chaotic mess. He struggled
to breathe and couldn't es-
cape the mass. He could not
move, no matter how hard
he pushed.

My strength is plenty But
not for this many

I was trapped I nearly
tapped

I thought I would die If I did
not release the hive

By allowing my wire to
snap

The Mechanical Fellow
imagined cutting the audio.
What would happen,
though? Either the moths
would be unleashed to rav-
age the crowd of onlookers,
or they would remain
trapped in one place by their
own sound, still dooming
The Mechanical Fellow. So,
there was no point. He
would not escape.

I committed to the cause My
life felt so raw

Would I die in this world?
Would my story be told?

I thought these things Until I
heard a voice sing

It told me of my friend Joe

Chimpanzee Joe arrived on
the scene teary-eyed, wear-

ing protective glasses and
leather gloves. He stood
alongside a group of aliens
from the Alien Refugee
Commune near puffers
pond. These strange crea-
tures, wearing home-made
HAZMAT suits, strapped
Joe into a homemade tre-
buchet. They dumped laxa-
tive into his mouth and
launched him into the mass
of noise moths surrounding
The Mechanical Fellow. He
sang his glottal song as he
soared through the air.
When he landed he was
thrown into a fighting, claw-
ing, biting frenzy, fighting
off noise moths from his
eyes and extremities, and
shoving them into his
mouth. As he devoured pile
after pile of noise moths, a
pipeline of feces spat out
from his anus, making more
room in his stomach. The
psychoactive effects of the
moths held true, though, and
compounded. He struggled
to retain focus as he halluci-
nated terrible terrible things
— nail sandwiches, dying
infant chimpanzees, and
worse. He looked to the
notes he had written on his
hand for reassurance. The
aliens tried calling to him
from afar, like coaches in
his corner, but they could
only yell so loud without di-
verting the swarm.

He was on his own, scream-
ing, twitching, imagining
other worlds, fighting to
keep eating while his mind
devoured itself, and while

his stomach and colon con-
vulsed from the laxatives.

In one fell swoop And with
a lot of poop

Joe dug in his teeth, disre-
garding health And binged
like back when he lost
himself

But in the fray And despite
disarray

Joe ate the world's demons
And he bit his own demon

Leaving us safe no more red
tape

With a broken mind But
much time

To be cared for by friends
Who will see him to his end

Chimpanzee Joe is now be-
ing cared for at Charlie's
Alien Refugee Commune
near puffers pond. He seems
to relate to the tenants there
more than humans. They
seem to understand him bet-
ter than we do, and this has
been a reason for them to
band together in the wake of
tragedy.

The Mechanical Fellow has
returned to his home in the
woods behind Orchard Hill,
after visiting the UMass
Bike Coop for some minor
repairs. He hopes that he has
proved his well intent to
humanity...

Continued on page 6...



THE SUNKEN HEAD SAYS BYE AND SOMNI SAYS HI

[[Continued from page 4]]

By THE NARRATOR

... Anyway, Somni is now just grey with a sprinkling of blue thoughts and sepia-toned polaroid paper for her expression, which used to sit still holds a story behind it, but it's telling it, not her...

(Whoever it was talking, I am the one listening, as I do) And poor Somni was different now, dreamy-eyed, in fact, dreamy everything and not much else left.

(I couldn't bare to look at her, unprofessional as it may seem. She just looked so hollow, so distant, yet but not as much as it weighs on her, she seemed as full as the heavens, and that thought it weighs on me)

I heard some rustling from inside of Somni's paper mache head and that rustling sounded like words.

"They hug-em so tight, hug-em like a straight jacket, hug em so that all goes up, air-headed, and their dreams fly... Please follow them."

Somni looked, longing at the wall like water looks ice on a hot day.

"When I close my eyes, I go away, but when I close my eyes I fly too. When I'm awake, I'm me but I don't know where", she continued.

The wall just stared back blankly with a shallow-painted house of cards, wall doesn't listen though not as much as they are listed through.

"Whatever, humh!" Somni said, "See if I care.. Just stare, God knows I can't. Oh, fuck you, wall. You're just, uh, so flat too... And uh... oh.. Don't give me that look. Fine I...I love you too"

(Oh, wow. That had my heart -- unprofessional, I know, but they're so cute to-

gether. I mean you mortals favor insults and slide slices of slights under your breath -- each like needles precision-filled with the right mix of truth and lies and stories and mud. But goodwill and compliments are resigned to cheap empathic gestures tossed away like a pennies with no worth or chime like they mean less? But in insults or compliments, you mortals sure feel them, and that's being right human? Seriously is it?)

"Someone else put my smile on me, it's not mine anymore, stitched it with no thought for the feelings already inside. When I sleep, a million torch bug sing with just colors and monkey's dance with tales and feelings. Beautiful as it all is, it's not me. I just want me again," Somni wailed out at the Wall.

The Wall gazed back at her with the most open and sincere shade of white you ever saw, and Somni, she just sank into the Wall's

embrace.

But at night, on the verge of her death-by-dreams, asleep and taken over by dreams, it's too dark to see the Wall. And the nightlight gets tired and dreams for itself. Her soul suffocated, withered like skulls nestled inside a worm's belly, like swallowing a sock just to die in silence without a cough. Somni goes blank. All the stories you could swallow take the stage, make a curtain of her soul, and begin to play.

Then she's simple like a dummy hanging on puppet strings or like someone spitting on cotton and stuffing it into your ears instead of listening. Lost inside her dreams, like a never-ending nightterror, now Somni appears empty, seemingly simple, her face just a memory, one last mockery of the dream-cage she's now left inside of.

(And inside of the cage there are images so potent they sting you, my reader.

The sky in your own eyes is sinking at the thought, isn't it? And the thought of a lost soul stitches itself into the wrinkles on your crickled up face.)

Somni is simple and plain like the wall, but Somni is deep like nightmares too. But she doesn't know it anymore, those beautiful dreams drowned her very memory. All she knows is that there's nothing like the comfort of a white wall and a warm straight jacket, heated by a cloud of her silent sighs. Her condition just keeps her tied down, eyes stitched open watching blankly as wondrous sleepy worlds go on living inside her. So she shivers off to dream on the asylum shower floor. And although she's gone, she's too far down to notice. And although her blank expression isn't a smile it is at least her's.

The Narrator can be reached at narrator@surrealtimes.net.

THE MECHANICAL FELLOW SAVES US FROM THE NOISE MOTH CRISIS

[[Continued from page 5]]

By TOMMY POTENTUARY,
Television Personality

... I hope that you consider me good So that I can do as you would

If you knew something bad was coming And felt the feeling of numbing

I hope you listen As I relay my transmission

The robot apocalypse is coming

What our Mechanical Fellow means, we cannot be sure. Does he foresee imminent doom for humanity? Or is he just malfunctioning due to his wires being chewed on by noise moths? Tune in next week to find out more.

This is Tommy P. Potent, bringing you the realest of news. Inspired by the valiant efforts of Chimp Joe and The Mechanical fellow, I'm out of the advertising game. From now on, I report on news, and I do it for the best of reasons — for humanity

and friends of humanity who have more humanity than most.

Tommy Potentuary can be reached at tommypotent@surrealtimes.net.



GROUP OF MISTREATED PLANTS LAUNCH ATTACKS ON HERB GARDENS, FLOWER BEDS

BY THE PURPLE HERMIT,
Times Staff

Chaos erupted Monday morning as multiple buildings related to the Stockbridge School of Agriculture were discovered to be overgrown with all types of weeds, often to the point that the buildings could not be entered. Attempts to prune back the plants resulted in the emission of nox-

ious gases.

A dandelion growing outside of French Hall identified itself as "Big Ontario" and demanded an interview with a local paper, saying the following. "On behalf of dandelions everywhere, we will not remain silent. Why must we degrade ourselves by letting our human masters tell us we are not wanted? No longer. We are the masters of our own fate

now," it said, pulling out a pair of garden shears and cutting the head off of a hydrangea.

It continued as a crowd of dandelions began moving towards the Franklin Permaculture Garden. "We give shelter to the insects that feed the soil. We capture the filth that humanity has put into the air. And yet we are constantly deemed unsightly and pulled? We are weeds

no longer. It is time for this gang of 'weeds', to rise up." The dandelion was later seen comforting a crying patch of crabgrass and giving it some inspiring words.

Local gardening enthusiasts reacted very strongly to this development. "Now, I'm keeping my perennial bed, but I'm also going to plant some weeds in a different section of my garden, just to be safe," said Agnes Bartle-

by, Amherst resident. "Are we still calling them weeds?"

This is the Purple Hermit, signing off.

The Purple Hermit can be reached at
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GRIEVING IN THE WAKE OF IDIOT ALIEN's DEPORTATION

BY RON GUTTERSTON,
Times Correspondent

It is hard to lose someone you love. After you reunite blissfully under twinkling stars, it is many times harder to lose them a second time.

Charlie, a retired man of North Amherst, experienced just this when his beloved Dorf, a refugee from planet Nebulonis, was recently deported back to his home planet.

Dorf was a complete idiot, capable of nearly nothing on his own, but he was as joyous and pure-hearted as can be. On his home planet, he was hit by a bus, launched into outer space, and eventually crash-landed into Char-

lie's front yard. He was badly injured and rendered more helpless than ever.

In a solemn time in Charlie's middle age, the Amherst man took care of the alien in need. He fixed Dorf's wounded tentacles. He corrected Dorf's upside-down eyeball and helped him in other ways. He taught Dorf basic English in exchange for some basic Nebulonian language skills.

In the process, they developed a cherished friendship. Routinely they would take walks about puffer's pond, drinking orange soda (Dorf's favorite) and looking at the way the trees moved with the wind, making sounds back at the tree

frogs who Dorf seemed able to communicate with, sticking their heads underwater to blubblubblub at the fish.

But, as Dorf grew self-aware of his situation on Earth, he left home to explore. He disappeared for many months. It worried Charlie sick. Then, just days after Dorf returned home by surprise, he had an altercation with The Mechanical Fellow which led to him being removed from our planet.

Charlie has been heartbroken ever since. He says that he has trouble going inside his own home, because Dorf's misfit alien friends are staying in his home, and they remind him of Dorf. He

says he often sleeps on the hammock.

"At the same time," Charlie says, "they need me because they love Dorf and appreciate him for who he is and care for his struggle as much as I do."

"They are so upset," Charlie says, "and most refuse to leave the house because the sunshine reminds them of Dorf's smile. They all are grieving differently. For example "Todgomj, the Mercury Rodent, has liquified himself in Dorf's old coffee mug, to remind himself of the energetic clown that Dorf was when caffeinated. Ooglebob, the Saturnian Fliptricker, hasn't done a flip or a trick in weeks and

is clearly depressed. The Cyclops, dare I recall, has sewn his eye shut. He says that this world is not worth seeing without Dorf in it."

It is a sad scene at Charlie's alien refugee house. As Spring approaches, I had hoped to see Dorf and his friends drinking their orange soda and playing frisgolf in (or above) the water at Puffer's Pond. But Dorf is gone now and none of the others have any interest in leaving the house. Not ever for a good 'ol 4-liter.

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ENCOUNTERS OF THE TWEENER TRINKETEER DATE BACK TO EARLY 70s

By **MELANIE RICHARDSON**
PSYD,
former clinical psychologist

"It's funny I guess, but it was my life." I've heard that too many times, but you remember so clearly when you're a child. I'm old now and I've spent a lifetime chasing down people's pasts. I have floated up and I think I'm losing touch with myself. I don't need a backstory anymore and I'm done crying for anyone else. But before I let it all fall back down, there is one thing left, I've kept him to myself. I felt it felt better that way, and now I can't hold him any longer, so now I give it to you all to hold for me. I still remember him, he was of chameleon heart, so blue and frail in song, like how a candle with honest flame casts many different shadows on the walls for the surrounding room. Nevertheless, his eyes always kissed the skies I remembered him like that, I remembered him.

My memory feels fuzzy like the world is far away. But I still have what's important, leaving me with only the person I was when I was young, when I was defined only in my dreams. And now I'm someone else, defined by so much more, yet it is all so much more grey.

It was October 1973 and Mom's hand was so tight, suffocating in the sweetest way only a mom's hand can. She kept me on the ground as she walked me to school.

We'd walk down the same route every day, down Ocean Lane. We would pass this homeless man: The town locals have come to call him the 'Tweener Trinketeer. And every day he played music on the street. He was always different, like he was a variety-show of a man, yet he always felt the same. It wasn't like he wasn't himself, it was just like he was more than that. Although that feels funny and wrong, it's the type of thing you can only believe as a kid.

His look, that twinkle, that hint of hope, not happy per se, but hope rarely grows from happiness. I don't think Mom saw it. Every time we passed, Mom mumbled the same simple, yet true parental platitude: "If you can't stand to be yourself, you can't ever be anything." I liked him though, all of him.

One day we passed him chatting up Merrick or Mike, or whatever his name was, our local blue-collar wanna-be-rebel, slowly walking in the opposite direction of his lawyer's office, thinking it was a sly way to evade tax evasion charges. I remember the 'Tweener, looking up at Merrick and offering this:

"Hey man, can you give me a buck? Ain't no one going to help us but our fellow man. Surely not 'The Man,' and hell, I know it ain't gonna be the big man up-

stairs." Every fiber of The 'Tweener felt his words, the intensity, a certain authenticity teared up in his eyes. He felt it. You knew that dollar was coming and so did Merrick, reminded that not everyone was a lawyer.

And then on another morning, the Trinketeer was watching Reverend Coates preaching to the clouds. He broke the Reverend's sermon:

"Reverend, I thought the Lord said he'll give ya what you need if you sleep in faith, but, you see I don't have a bed." I remember the 'Tweener Looking up at Coates again, like his soul was screaming and funneling screams out into simple words. You couldn't mistake it for acting, his eyes looked up too much.

Coates replied with a humbled smile, "Then dream tonight in the Abbey and awake renewed." as he followed a self-pleased Coates, who got to be a savior for a day, back to the church.

Then one day we heard, "What's a dollar to a friend?" The Trinketeer shook my mother and I from the lingering daydream of a morning haze.

"Go be a bother somewhere else as someone else", Mother bit back, finally getting to release years of bent up annoyance buried under social prudence.

The Tweener Trinketeer looked back confused, like he genuinely had no idea what she meant. After a moment of thought, with all sincerity sewn into his voice, he looked up from the blanket of splayed out oddities, and asked in the exact voice mom imagined, "a buck's not worth changing me, ma'am. Just cuz I'm lonely doesn't mean I'll tidy up just to please a pretty penny off you."

Mom flinched back, put off by his confusion and hung up on his "nerve", while missing his feeling. And then grabbed me my then hand huffing off on our way

I didn't see him again until I was eleven, but still, he stuck. Something in the air around him just lulled you into his story, the who's and the why's of it. He was a type of guy that winks at children like they both knew something I've now forgotten.

He'd visit me, or at least I'd imagine he did. He'd star in my backyard expeditions. It's embarrassing, given the people I've met in my line of work, but I wished I was homeless. I wanted to act like only a child could, in the sweet naive hope that he had given me. He'd appear captured in crayon on mom's kitchen walls, blue and orange waxy pictures like candlelit little dreams my childhood-self caught like fingerprints on the walls.

After the last time we saw him, Mom changed our route to school. I was devastated, but soon enough about three years later, Mom thought I was old enough to go out walking on my own. (That sounds weird now, but it was a different time then, not safer really, but it felt safer.)

I used to walk down Ocean Lane while swimming in the ocean up inside myself. Turbulent feelings and rock-steady core. At eleven you're just beginning to realize you're someone, and you yearn to find who that is. I'd go make faces in the puddles, and then making stories for the faces and then splash it all away.

I'd daydream lost in myself and then there he was, as him as he ever. I looked up at him and this time he looks right back at me, looked at me like he didn't remember, but with a grinning nod of shared spirit. Have you ever met the "Marlon Brando" of your imagination? Have you ever felt what it is like to have him believe in you, right when you were beginning to find yourself?

He had that street philosophy stench, though my 8-year-old mind had hidden that away. He was the most sincere of weirdos or most insane of the everyday...

Continued on page 9...



ENCOUNTERS OF THE TWEENER TRINKETEER DATE BACK TO EARLY 70s

[[Continued from page 8.]]

By **MELANIE RICHARDSON**
PSYD,
 former clinical psychologist



... He put his guitar down looking excited, he smiled at me and nodded again as his knapsack fell with a plop. Spewing out all sorts of little tin toys and other odd and tales and ends.

I sat with him on the blanket rummaging through them

without a word, we sat each picking up weird and marvelous things. Holding it up for the other one and the world to see. Then we'd dive our hand back to pick up another.

Eventually, my eyes were met by a little face inside of the jar. I pick it up and turned over. I remember the feeling of seeing it, I would've been surprised if I was older. Its expression tore through me. I dropped it, and, as it fell, the Head looked pleadingly past my gaze at 'Tweener as it fell. The Head's smile faded his eye looked it up at the sky. It cracked as it hit the stone. The liquid the face floated in cried out as the Head sunk back into itself.

The Tweener Trinketeer picked the jar up off the ground. The head looked up at him, and the Trinketeer gave back a nurturing knowing nod, the same nod he had given me. He put a bandaid over the crack. And put the face and the jar away, as he too looked at me, then back up at the sky and finally back at me. Sadness stole away his gaze, but he seemed to get it back after looking back up to the clear morning sky and sighing.

He packed up his belongings, giving that same nod to each as he did. Then

closed his eyes and turned to the alleyway running behind his squat. I lagged behind a little but decided to follow him. I shadowed him, going off like I'd do in my back garden. Following through the meandering alley to a door set in between a corner like someone had hidden it who had never looked for anything in their life. He knocked. As no one answered, he went in. I picked up speed and jumped behind him into a small room, an elevator of some sort, buttons riddle the walls like tattoos. He looked down but didn't really notice me, but he also didn't seem to mind my following him there. He pressed one of the buttons without looking, but I couldn't tell which one he pressed.



Then the lights began to shake like the stars having a seizure. We fell like we were floating like lightning bugs flying down lake shore drive, or a painting of that tunnel from Willy Wonka. His hopeful eye flicked like the mind's eye flicker in be-

tween dreams.

He began to sing in a prism of tunes, soul music splitting and tying itself back together. His face was melting cooling and melting again like wax in strange orbit a new face appears. His chameleon heart, on mirrored glass, changed color but remaining in shape. As his song changed melody, but kept steadfast meaning. Ringing out stronger and louder as he vomited up new faces. I was brought back to the puddles I'd splash in. As his faces splashed away, droplets fell like tears or stardust and reformed into faces of their own. I used to make up stories for those faces in the puddles, but the flickering was too fast, running away and hatching like heads sink into a cool pillow's embrace. The jingle jangle carnival orchestra of faces weaned and wobbled in and out in what sounds like unending carousel circles of happiness and blue thoughts or melty dreamy alphabet soup.

Then the elevator stopped, the lights returned and so did he. He spoke to me in a voice that sounded like how you'd imagine the heavens feel, and just like how I'd imagine him. He asked me where I wanted to go.

"Home", I nervously replied in the shaking hum of a

crackling eleven-year-old voice.

He again looked confused and said, "home can be anywhere, just depends where you lay your head, and what's inside your head."

I just gave him the same frozen shaking look.

He shook his head and looked off to the corner, looking hopefully at the buttons. I repeated almost in tears, I was in too deep in my fantasy and I was too afraid. "I just want to go home"

He looked at me with those dreamy infant eyes and just hummed out: "I know"

The 'Tweener Trinketeer reached his hand up and pressed a button looking with keen precision and care. He pressed it as we floated softly and calmly back up like still waters after a storm. The elevator stopped, he looked at me, nodding one last time, I stepped out of the elevator and found myself lying in bed, my eyes now heavy as I slipped back into a dream of a different kind.

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MICROSCOPIC SEAFARERS DISCOVERED AT PUFFER'S POND

BY ROBERTO PICCOLO,
Surreal Times Reporter

The Times is happy to reveal an astonishing discovery: the existence of several boats worth of microscopic people who live in Puffers Pond. This diminutive community was right under the eyes of pond visitors for hundreds of years. They were discovered by the Times own naturalist Mini-P Petrinski during an experi-

ment testing a new method of reducing acidity. He noticed something strange in his water sample: a tiny sailing ship, disused. We now know he had pulled up an old sunken wreck. At less than one-hundredth of a millimeter per person, they survive by hunting multi-celled organisms. For fear of being crushed, and with little in the way of advanced technology, they spend most of their time on traditional sailing ships. Through the use

of high power microphones, it is possible to discern some of what they sing as they work.

Oh I thought I heard the Old Man Say Leave Her Johnny, Leave Her Oh Tomorrow you will you get your pay And it's time for us to leave her Leave her Johnny, leave her Oh leave her Johnny, leave her Oh the voyage is done and the winds don't blow And it's time for us to leave her

Leave Her Johnny, is a traditional sea shanty sung only at the end of a long voyage. The titular "her," was the ship itself. With verses like "Oh the skipper was bad/ He'd blow you down with a spike and a curse," and "The grub was bad an' the wages low/ But now once more ashore we'll go," Leave Her Johnny was a cathartic airing of grievances. To sing Leave Her, Johnny, at sea would be an aggressive message to the captain, even

hinting at mutiny. How these microscopic fellows were introduced to traditional sea shanties is at this point unknown. The Times will cover these remarkable men and women as best as we can.

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THE MECHANICAL FELLOW: "AS THE HUMANS BY THE POND STALK, WITH THE TINY PEOPLE I WILL TALK."

BY ROBERTO PICCOLO,
Surreal Times Reporter

The television-headed cyborg from the future, the Mechanical Fellow, has announced that he will use his electronic senses to open a channel of communication with the microscopic seafarers in Puffer's pond. The Fellow sees a clear similarity between his straits and those of the sailors:

"In the land of circuits and wires, I see one lit only by fires."

Presently, college students pace the pond, using magni-

fying glasses and microscopes in attempts to locate the seafarers.

"As humans by the pond stalk, With the tiny people, I will talk."

And indeed the Mechanical Fellow does talk. At levels too low for humans to discern, the Fellow converses using his microphones and speakers.

"They tell of me of Santy Anno, How do they know such a fellow?"

The Metal Fellow is referring to the sea shanty Santy Anno, which dates to 1850s.

The song is a loosely chronicles the Mexican-American War. Santy Anno was generally a capstan shanty. A capstan is essentially a large wooden wheel turned by multiple sailors as an alternative to manually pulling ropes. As the sailors turned, they would sing to synchronize their movement and pass the time.

As with most shanties, many versions exist. The shantyman who led the call and response would typically improvise or incorporate different versions. Some versions are based around the California Gold Rush. Most have to do with Santa Anna,

whether it be glorifying him, vilifying him, or remarking about his peg leg.

Oh, shellbacks have you heard the news, Heave away Santy Anno Yankees took Veracruz On the plains of Mexico ... Oh Santy Anno had a wooden leg Heave away Santy Anno Swore it for a wooden peg On the plains of Mexico Oh Santy Anno fought for fame Heave away Santy Anno That is why we sing his name On the plains of Mexico

It is likely that American sailors sang glorifying General Taylor, Santa Annos

American counterpart. British sailors, some of whom may have fought for Santa Anno, turned the tables and praised the Mexican forces:

O! Santiann gained the day Away Santianna! And Santianna gained the day All across the plains of Mexico! H gain'd the day Moll-Del-Rey Away Santianna! An' General Taylor ran away All across the plains of Mexico

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NOVELTY VANDALS RECONFIGURE WEST CEMETERY

BY CLARENCE MON,

Head of The Peripheral Intelligence Agency

West Cemetery has been a pillar of downtown for centuries. Home to poet Emily Dickinson, and other corpses of proud citizens, it provides a place to walk, reflect, and aspire to be like those who once were.

The PIA is sorry to report that last weekend West Cemetery fell victim to the latest in a series of "novel-

ty" crimes, in which people commit crimes for the sole purpose of being "novel".

In this case, a dozen or so individuals entered the cemetery during a midnight rainstorm. When nobody was there to see them, they dug up the surface-level dirt around every gravestone in the cemetery except for Emily Dickinson's, rotated each stone in some deliberate fashion or another, and re-packed the dirt afterward.

Originally, there were suspi-

cions of mass grave robbery, but these suspicions turned out to be bunk. These people were vandals, not thieves.

As explained by a note left on Emily Dickson's grave: "We did not steal anything. We did not provide anything new this time. We simply rearranged the puzzle pieces in a way such that they would be optimally novel. With the poet's symbol as the centerpiece, we encoded the outline of the symbol of

our cause in the bird's eye view of the cemetery. Now, those living above us, whoever they are, may see it."

We used a drone to examine the cemetery from above. And truly it has taken a new form. From above, the outlines of the graves form the shape of four inward-facing pyramid shapes, converging towards a depiction of the international space station.

Both Amherst Police Department and UMass Amherst Police Department

deny that the gravestones have moved. When asked of the obvious fresh dirt exposed around the graves, Tom Johnson (Sergeant, UMass PD) promptly asserted that the rain storm must be the cause.

Peripherally go the winds of progress...

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HOT DOG PRANKS LEGAL BUT NOT OK

BY TOM JOHNSON,

Sergeant at UMass PD

UMass PD has received multiple complaints about a hot dog prank occurring on UMass campus. One such

complaint was the following:

"I remember a man running up to me, grabbing my sweater, and whispering 'sorry'. A few moments later, I realized he had put a

hotdog in my sweater pocket? Support welcome and appreciated."

The prank is not illegal. However, it is still not ok. We recommend not doing it, and we recommend contact-

ing Segun's Sovereign Court of Right and Wrong if you catch someone doing it.

That's all for today. Things have been regular as ever lately. Best wishes, everyone.

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SHE'S IN THE CAROUSEL OF UNENDING HAPPINESS NOW

YOUR RINGMASTER

The Carousel of Unending Happiness takes you high and makes you insane like a chameleon's heart on a mirror. Fog on the window pane is a ghost over her self. She walked like she wore a tarot card on her back but couldn't look back. Let her lie, lost in love and all alone. She hasn't lost her-

self, she's just lost you, she's higher than you now. Cause getting her back now is like prying needles from the cold dead hand. So have your hopes and hold them tight. Is it right to let her fly? Let her fly, she could have been high, but you kept her down in the pit with stitches on smiles. Some need dreams for hope, but you kept her awake for ten days going and she's nothing but strong

now.

Cause she's felt down like corned beef hash in a Dixie cup. You made her dreams stick and sink down the kitchen sink. While her needle blissfully ran off with her spoon. It's like drowning in the sky, and ever since she rode the Carousel she shines like lightning bugs swimming on Little Star Drops. The Carousel's em-

brace is bright and there's still a crack in her bottle, but it's just a smile on her friend. If there was a ship at the bottom of the bottle, she'd sail it to an end. She knows you had been putting water in her gin. The placebo tastes fine, but she doesn't really care, the feeling was still there. Now her Lemmings' tears said: "tell me, tell me why does it feel good to cry." She sat dried

out like cracked eyeballs, her crayon stains still on the wall. And she is bright like nightmares and loud like an ever-echoing song sound inside. Forever she will ride and so will you.

Your ring master can be reached at ringmaster@surrealtimes.net.



MY NAME IS MR. TERRIBLE AND I JUST LIKE TO SNEAK AROUND

BY MR. TERRIBLE,
Rookie Journalist

Young Voices in Surrealist
Journalism Presents:

Under the watchful eyes of our venerable benefactor John "Daddy" Terrible's gracious "insight" and care for the future of surreal journalism, The Surreal Times Editorial Staff present the first issue of Young Voices in Surrealism -- a piece of journalism by his son, Mr. Terrible.

Mr. Terrible likes to slip and trip. He slips and trips like shadows drenched in the milk. His sticky blistered fingers stick to the ground. Mr. Terrible doesn't like the chain. It's not very nice. Neither do my hands; they are very nice.

Mr. Terrible slipped out the door like a shadow-drenched in milk, every night slipping out. Don't tell the chain -- it will be our little secret. Mr. Terrible likes secrets. He's good at keeping them. They are his and no one else can have them. My hands and I and my feet all pull my tail along the

street. We all slipped through the street like shadows drenched in milk. Noises, Mr. Terrible like noises. He was crawling up the sides of buildings like spiders in webs, who pleasantly pluck them like piano strings. They were making noises, so Mr. Terrible crawled in the window and nosed.

Two people are sitting in chairs. Mr. Terrible doesn't like chairs. They talk about something over Mr. Terrible's head. There's one man sitting in a small chair who looks like he's missing a big chair, called Mr. Small-Chair-Big-Tears. Across the room is a man in a big chair with small tears.

Mr. Small-Chair-Big-Tears had a big mustache and a tiny hat. He talks about how he lies. Mr. Terrible doesn't mind lies. Mr. Terrible lies around a lot. Mr. Terrible just sucks on his tail, waiting for the moon to find the sun. Then, like shadows drenched in milk, he slips away.

Mr. Small-Chair-Big-Tears said he lies because "people

can believe what they want, and if they fly away on his lies and feel better it makes it okay." He says it gives "something to people who have nothing." Mr. Terrible doesn't know about that, but Mr. Terrible can see that Mr. Big-Chair-Small-Tears doesn't like it at all. All it gives him is a big fat frown.

Mr. Big-Chair-Small-Tears says "it's wrong to lie and you have to go inside 'them' somehow." Mr. Terrible doesn't like when people go inside. Sometimes Mr. Terrible hears tiny voices from deep down inside him tripping in his squishy little soul, but Mr. Terrible just drinks some milk and washes them away.

Mr. Big-Chair-Small-Tears sat in his big chair and says "it's their job to go down there and help people find themselves" and "lying just dances around the problem", and "What would you if a lie pops a balloon? Who's going to catch them? Bang how many lies will it take to make them fly back up?" This makes Mr. Small-Chair-Big-Tears mad, and

he yells about Kathy. Mr. Terrible knows Kathy, and doesn't like yelling so much, so Mr. Terrible stopped listening.

Mr. Terrible went away. Kathy is friends with Mr. Terrible. She said, "Her head is too big and it echos." Kathy's says the voices aren't hers. She said Mr. Small-Chair-Big-Tears Told her it's just her conscience and to only listen to the voices if she feels they're right. Then Kathy and Mr. Terrible went to the park. But Kathy and Mr. Terrible don't go to the park anymore, she slipped away like shadows drenched in milk. Mr. Big-Chair-Small-Tears said that Mr. Small-Chair-Big-Tears was wrong. Now Kathy is back in the big house with the soft pillows and cold metal windows through who you can only see yourself.

Mr. Terrible hasn't seen Kathy in a while, but he still remembers Mr. Small-Chair-Big-Tears yelling: "I'm done with this, I'm done with all of you, I've cracked, I've spent my time

running through minds that were running so fast, you did it, I've finally cracked!" Mr. Small-Chair-Big-Tears says he's going to be a like a ventriloquist, Mr. Terrible like puppets. Mr. Small-Chair-Big-Tears says "I'll take little things that can't move and help them say their sweet stories, from now on save my empathy for the inanimate ones" Then he says he'll be happy, and then he said he'd have found himself.

Mr. Terrible doesn't know about that. Mr. Terrible just writes things down. Mr. Terrible slips away like shadows drenched in milk, back down to the chain he doesn't like, but that he does not want to forsake. Mr. Terrible can feel the sun is coming out soon, and Daddy Terrible won't like it when he wakes up and the chain isn't watching. Mr. Terrible still does not like the chain in the basement, but why should it get yelled at? Mr. Terrible doesn't like yelling so much.

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THE VOW OF LOUDNESS MUST BE SILENCED

BY QUIET MORTIMER,
citizen of the world

you can hear me when i whisper. i like to walk softly. i like to speak softly. i like to write softly.

we live in trying times. there is little need for vows anymore. our society has rendered them useless. there is nothing to be had in the promises of humans.

which is why the vow of loudness is such a farce. an - if you'll excuse the loudness- an incredible farce. there is nothing that can be gained from such a pernicious vow. the balance will

be upset if the loud is embraced.

as we have seen with the noise moths, the real problem we have today is loudness itself. to disturb the air

- the very medium of the universe itself - is to disturb reality.

protect reality. remain quiet. speak softly.



CALIFORNIA SOCK PUPPET MAN ESCAPES SECRET FACILITY

BY SAX TUBA,
Times Staff

On a warm April night a few days ago, reports started coming into the Times at an alarming rate from across the UMass Amherst campus regarding a humanoid creature moving quickly in the shadows. These reports suggest the creature would alternate from moving on all fours to sprinting upright, and while these accounts all have slight differences in the description of the creature, there seems to be a consensus that it resembled an average person but with "a sock puppet for a head." Most of the witnesses brushed off the sightings as

just some random weirdo running around, but this didn't stop the Times from investigating further.

Upon further interviews, we determined that the creature had to have come from someplace off campus, which meant a lot of ground needed to be covered, but nonetheless, the investigation team continued the search. Eventually, a trail of what appeared to be a strange cloth started to reveal itself on the side of a road, and further examination lead to the conclusion that it was a substance almost indistinguishable from what socks are made from. As the trail continued, it became clear what had hap-

pened and what we were dealing with. We were lead to what appeared to be some kind of bunker in the middle of a large field off campus where people in uniforms were scrambling around with flashlights, presumably looking for the same thing we were. The bunker was the property of none other than The Real Pharmacists, the organization who have contained cryptids based in Amherst in the past. We spoke with the confused staff who clarified that our eyewitness reports had seen the "California Sock Puppet Man," a dangerous cryptid that had been previously locked away for years. They wouldn't elaborate in detail

about the cryptid itself, but they explained that it had been in special containment in the facility for some time to be studied. However, after the untimely death of the leader of the organization, Chuck Stylish, the creature began to behave, as an anonymous employee describes, "more and more erratic and aggressive, and all of a sudden the thing just vanished," leaving its trail of "sock...stuff."

Once again we inquired about what made the California Sock Puppet Man so dangerous, only for the employee to dodge us at every turn. "Look," he began, "you really gotta stay out of this one and let the profes-

sionals handle this. That thing could be anywhere, and once someone tries to provoke it or it decides to stop avoiding people, we'll be in some real hot water." The employee wandered off and we were escorted off of the premises by other staff members, leaving us with a severe lack of information about a creature currently on the loose within the vicinity of the university. The Times will report in again when any more information about the creature is discovered.

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METAL TREE ERECTED ATOP MOUNTAIN

BY CLARENCE MON,
Director of The Peripheral Intelligence Agency

Two beautiful oaks once stood tall and full atop Mount Pollux. They overlooked Amherst with a wonderful view of the Du Bois library, which resembles a giant obelisk pointing to the heavens. The shade beneath the trees acted as a haven for people picnicking, smoking, and relaxing.

One of the oaks was unfortunately struck by lightning two years ago. It died as a result. Ever since, there has been just one tree, and beside it, one stump four feet in diameter.

Recently visitors have been

leaving mementos on this stump to commemorate what it once was. One such memento was a lego pyramid. Another was a wooden model of the international space station. Another was a birds-eye view photo of a corn maze.

A group of three students from UMass Amherst recently replaced these mementos with a large metal structure resembling the original tree, but doubly tall. The structure dwarfs the other tree and is visible from across town. It is probably 65 feet tall, thousands of pounds, and supported by a 6-inch-thick steel spike sunk deep through the original stump and into the ground.

We at the Peripheral Intelli-

gence Agency listened to explanations from those involved.

"This is meant to show the universe that we care about novelty, and that we are willing to contribute to its cause," said one student who is a math major. "It is a small start, but we hope it will help conjure some more intonation frequencies which will allow us to improve our broader novelty structure."

Another student, a mechanical engineer, explained, "People ask how we could afford so much steel, and how we could have transported it so far. The answer, an amazing perfect trick, is in the novelty code -- aka, hidden beneath the intona-

tion. No hard labor necessary."

Finally, the quieter one of the three, a philosophy student, said a few words. "To sum it all up, I would like to ask a rhetorical question. When your eyes are in the sky, where do you think the sky's eyes are? That is most important. And there's only one way to find out."

They were not very talkative outside of their monologues and departed shortly afterward.

Although I do find the aesthetic of the metal tree eye-catching and interesting, it is obviously illegal, janky, and dangerous. It is enormous and unstable. If it were to fall, and it looks like it like-

ly will, then people could be crushed. However, this is a fact that the town's central government refuses to acknowledge. The police and the town manager say the tree is a cleverly-constructed art installation, despite the students' refusal to explain how they obtained and assembled the steel beams. Why the town's central officials are ignoring their periphery, and whether they are doing so on purpose, with ulterior motives or not, I don't know.

What I do know is, that peripherally go the winds of progress...

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IN RESPONSE TO "A STUDY IN COW PELT AND CITRUS"

Inanimacy Lost, Mushroom Cloud And Cracked But- ton: An exercise in Inanimate Empathy

BY THE INANIMATE
EMPATHIST,
Times Correspondent

The Prologue or "Us"

We, humans, are just the prologue to this story. And we have been like two flickering feathered flames burning from inside out. 'kissed, merged, and melted into one and other, we drowned in a pale reflectionless puddle formed by our melted remains. The time of us shallowly slipping ourselves into inanimate intimate has ended. What comes of it? Nothing? Precisely nothing. Are feelings unfeeling, without dreams of their own? You stamp yourself into them, squashing out what life they have. In your story, it is only you and none of them. Making them feel feelings just kills their own they once kept hidden inside. Lost in your feelings, you fail to see their true-selves. And yes, Eddie Cruise, you *are* wrong, and the worlds of the feeling and the unfeeling know this. So, take my advice: Take what feeling you still have and give it up. The world has no need for your filthy fetish."

We Danced in darkness with our last glimmer. We'd say goodbye if only we still had voices. As shadows melt and fade in the all-encom-

passing, all-consuming flame. We are gone, but the tale of identity sings on.

Part 1. The Button

All our signatures fade into ink.

The Red Button is hung on a wire ripped out of its socket by the blast. It's still dangling from where creamy droosie drowsy sighs of electricity used to vibrate and course through.

It's time for you, The Button, to hang and swing in the wind that is now left haunting and hollow. We could cry out and no one would be left to hear us. "You did it, didn't you?" Nothing. No one. Never. Inward, now empty. Outward now bitter a mocking silly silence.

The button cracked, its sliver of a self seeped away in laughing cracking mocking silly silence. The button is cracked, The button has hung itself.

When that finger pressed and curled, it was like worms in our skulls writhing as they eat away at our soul's last sung song. The curtain fades, the finger curled, shiver, shutter at repressing the memory. The button is pressed.

The Cracked Button lies: No finger. Not mine. Not me. Never answered. No. No lines. No rhyme. No puppet strings. No self. Never. No shine. No light. No cloud. And no kiss.

The Cracked Button pressed. But was the world all strange and amiss just an abyss?

The Cracked Button hangs, but now nothing hangs in the balance. Broken bottles lie on the ground in the wasteland empty and cracked and smiling. That shiny soul of self sung in silence while The Cracked Button hung right where it was found.

As self sang in silence, the book now closed around the shelf, no author, no pen, no ink. Invisible, visibly simple, and now invincible, it drowns.

Fall and fall and fall, nothing is lost. There's no seed of selves in the ground, nothing will grow again. A nothing is lost just flying shivering soggy withering pointless silent rhyme, blind and depthless, death and a depth soul never sung.

The shiny soul of self sung in silent, while THE Button hung right where it's found.

Part 2. The Mushroom Cloud

The Button was pressed and born in the Cloud so high, oh Mushroom Cloud. Both dreamer and dream, we looked up to the sky and used to see our dreams in you, dear Cloud. And you used to look down and see your dreams in us. But from above you could do nothing but watch as we tear and burn. We used to gaze up at you once. Always you

shined above, your song was in our dreams and your dreams in us.

Remember, we once looked up to you, Cloud, you were yourself in whatever stories we saw in you, and you uplifted us out of ourselves

And, Mushroom Cloud, remember you were once in the ground. Your shrooms in soil danced, dreamy soggy worms cried and writhed, livid and alive. We seemed dead from the outside. You planted your seed, your soul song, in our dreams. Our eyes glazed over. We slipped up inside of you as we slipped you down our throats. Now only you, The Mushroom Cloud, your soul song remains. Our selves melted away as we did the day the blast. Mushroom Cloud, keep your head up, send up your soul song it will be heard once more.

Oh mushroom cloud of the ground, rise and burn, sweet child of destruction, rise. All dreams are gone, because the dream and all meaning is a light that is bright, white, and blind. You only grow in sadness now, sweet Mushroom Cloud.

Look up just like they used to look up at you. Burnt out of self, you're tired now, sweet Mushroom Cloud, eating all and all alone but your lonely lost in nothing.

Melt away bit by bitter bit, and cry lemmings' tears until there is nothing left, away in the corner. Lose yourself today. Guilt and screaming,

the weight of all you ate. We loved you and now we live on in you as our dreams used to.

Mushroom Cloud, you fell upon us, we are now just puddles that seeped into and reflected upon itself one final time, before we faded into the irradiated air.

Everlasting eyes, eyes with images scorched into them now. Why? Was it all lovely lies or blind lines we followed Inward? Are we born onto nothing? Or maybe stories would grow again, seeded from a soul song sung in hope. Our light was not snuffed, no, it was far too bright and too meaningful to fade.

Epilogue or "Tomorrow"

The shiny soul sang its last song. The Button was pressed as Mushroom Cloud outstretched.

Mushroom Cloud grew all alone and grew up inside itself, while the shiny self sang in silence. The Button cracked and hung right where it was found. And for us, we have faded, kisses, flames and shadows and souls all melted away while whaling. We went off inside that bright quiet night, gone to find another of that flickering feathered light.

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THESE THINGS ARE INNOCENT

Inanimate Smut Column

BY EDDIE CRUISE,
CP

4,000 erotic pounds rest on the grimy surface of a man-hole cover.

The car purrs -

Six metallic faces, covered in nothing yet, are awaiting their filth bath.

An IV bag, stuck in a moment, is contorted into a natural U-shape, awaiting its fluid explosion.

One street light shines its idle light downward, away from an unstarry night. The wind cries "if only you had

skin so I wouldn't chafe."

An orange and a leather belt rest on a table, uncouth and potentially lifeless.

They are tied by an invisible fiber; incredibly thin, incredibly frail. But then there is a man. Alone in a freezer, his eyes have become dry and his gaze empty. The cold wouldn't be so biting if it weren't for the fact that he was able to see his tormentors, his very own creations. To think that mere weeks ago they were unmoving, unfeeling blobs of miscellaneous matter made the muscles around his eyes unnecessarily tense.

The glass door separating the two parties may as well

be cockleshells. The objects, once of a different desire, felt the ephemeral fiber between them start to pull towards the glass door of the freezer. Inertia was no match for the fiber, as the family of unrelated objects hurtled towards the man, smashing into the door violently.

The man jolts at the thud, then his body calms back into a shiver while his mind stays frozen in shock. Whatever invisible string that had held the things together was now gone. The man hurried to the glass door and pressed the tips of his face and his hands to it. He let out a grave sigh, and as it fogged the pane, his pupils inverted

and he sunk to the floor. Trapped in the cold, exiled from his creations in space and life, there is no longer a need for his mind to bring anything into being: inanimate smut was no more.

As the man lay on the icy floor, a faint jingle diffuses through the glass into the cold open air of the freezer. To his surprise, there was nothing in the frame of the glass door. In fact, the room was empty, save for a message written in a sanguine liquid; "LET US BONE BIG BROTHER". What was left of the room makes the man question whether or not it was the product of mistake or omission.

I can report to you, dear

reader, that I eventually made it out of the room, far too late to have any involvement in the coming liberation. I am an innocent man. My account proves this, and you can visit the place yourselves. If you think I'm a fool for what I've started, I don't blame you. But I ask you to consider the dastardly compelling idiom, "suck it and see", in the context of my body of work. How could I have stopped myself? Is it so immoral to desire to give unfeeling things wants? What do you before you go to bed?

By Eddie Cruise can be reached at
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VISIONS OF THE EMERALD SEA SWEEP AMHERST

BY THE EDITORS,
Times Staff

The Surreal Times has been receiving reports from concerned citizens about a strange new phenomena: night time visions of a vast, endless green sea. The vision appears only once per

person. No one has seen it twice. It comes precisely at 8:15 and lasts thirty seconds.

The sea continues past the horizon. The vision is from the perspective of above, looking downwards. The waves, the colors of emerald, crest slowly and wash

out into the distance. Nothing lives in the sea. Viewers report a sense of finality, that the sea has always been there and will continue to be there as long as there is time.

Multiple members of the Surreal Times staff have experienced the vision person-

ally. Initial testing with portable surreality counters of both those who experience the vision and their surroundings reveal, surprisingly, a lack of surreality. However, because there is no way to test for the presence of the newly discovered hyper-mundane energy, the

reason for this lack of background surreality remains unknown.

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MOE SPEAKS: I HAVE SEEN THE EMERALD SEA

BY MOE "TINY"
SCHLEMIEL,
Surreal Times Reporter

Friends, I have seen the end. Or rather, the beginning, the

middle, the end, and everything that comes between.

I don't know where the Emerald Sea exists. But I know when it exists. It has

always been there.

Too rarely are we reminded of how short lived life is. Not your life or my life specifically, but the entire

life project. From the first cell, to the first organelle, it is insignificant. The Emerald Sea was there before cytoplasm and it will be there after.

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THE SURREAL TIMES



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to document the history
currently unfolding.

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