



THE SURREAL TIMES

Special Edition News Briefing

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WORDS FROM THE THE MOUTH OF THE PIG



This just in: Armădeius Galouei contacts The Pig using mysterious and unknown means, and hears with his own ears words FROM THE MOUTH OF THE PIG.

"Marked hydra fills several vestibules"



ACCOUNT: HAND SANITIZING VIGILANTES

~ Carl Mon, Head of PIA, carl.mon@surrealtimes.net

BREAKING NEWS: The government is unprepared, outmatched by this corona-virus. The only answer: good-doing people taking things into their own hands – or, some might say, putting things into dirty hands. Groups of vigilante sanitization militias have been seen roaming the streets, grabbing unsuspecting unsanitary passersby and slapping wads of rubbing alcohol on their palms.

One civilian explained, "I was just going to grab a takeout donut.. or maybe a few of them. I didn't bother with a mask or gloves. So I was walking, swinging my arms back and forth, enjoying the breeze. Then some masked guy grabbed my hand. A second person put me in a chokehold. Someone else, also masked, lathered a bunch of rubbing alcohol all over me. They put a mask on me and then ran away."

A Surreal Times reporter asked him, "How did that make you feel?"

And the victim responded, "Strangely enough, clean and dirty at the same time."

"Did these people say anything to you?"

"They just said, 'Do your part.'"



PROBABILISTIC FATAL JUSTICE SYSTEM TO TAKE EFFECT MONDAY

~ By Tommy Potentuary, Surreal Times Reporter, tommy.potent@surrealtimes.net

Beginning this Monday, the punishment for all convicted criminals will be the same: death. However, depending on the crime committed, a probability of death will be assigned. For instance, of those convicted of murder, 90% will be randomly selected to be executed. The remaining 10% will go free. Of those convicted of a traffic violation, only 2% will be executed. Most will go free.

The full table of crimes and punishment probabilities, as originally stated verbally by the Head Justice of the United Realms of America, is reprinted here:

Crime - Chance of Execution %

Murder - 90%, Lying - 15%, Speeding - 2%

Saying that the sun is real - 30%

Tax Evasion - 10%

Assault on a terrestrial vertebrate - 15%

Assault on a terrestrial invertebrate - 10%

Assault on an extraterrestrial - 99%

Salavia Embezzlement - 30%

In recent years, the United Realms has tried various methods of curing crime - corrective punishment, rehabilitation, retribution.... community programs, neighborhood watch, various social services and other methods. These approaches are deterministic spot fixes.

A wise man, Sir. Jack O'Doyle, once said, "If people can predict the future, they will." What we need is a probabilistic solution that spans the entire time cone."

Good news: starting this Monday, we'll have one.

This systemic change is predicted to vastly lessen the number of crimes in the United Realms. Perhaps more importantly, people will be free to choose for themselves which crimes are worth it and which ones are not, regardless of their background.



VOLCANO GODS DEMAND TRIBUTE

~ by Grand Elder Edna, Surreal Times Reporter, edna@surrealtimes.net

Greetings my fellow citizens of the Greater Volcanic Area, the time of year has come again to pay tribute to our fiery lord and master Volcano God. Now I know last year there were some complaints that Volcano's God request that the most beautiful person on our island be thrown into the volcano were too vague, and led to much infighting and resentment, so this year Volcano God has agreed to get a lot more specific. I implore you to think hard about whether the following description might match you, because if it doesn't you might just be the lucky special someone Volcano God has been looking for.

First of all, I'm told Volcano God wants someone who's not afraid of commitment but also isn't trying to rush into anything. Secondly, it would be preferable if whoever is tossed into the volcano has similar hobbies and interest to Volcano God. Our all-powerful god enjoys bird watching, exploring the outdoors, astrology, oozing lava, and poetry. Honestly though, Volcano God is really just looking for someone to watch a good show and chill out with, you know? But if you're someone who always falls asleep before the movie is over Volcano God isn't interested. Volcano God is center-left but doesn't think difference in political views should keep people apart. Oh, and importantly, Volcano God needs someone who always remembers to text good morning and good night, because otherwise do you even care about Volcano God? Last of all, Volcano God strongly believes in Climate Change, and if you don't this just probably isn't going to work out.

If you're reading this and think, "Hey maybe I'm the type of person Volcano God is looking for!", then I implore you to consider whether or not scaling mountainous cliffs and throwing yourself into the mouth of a volcano sounds like something you'd be into. After all, you never know, you might think you're falling to your death only to realize you're falling in love.



AIRPLANE STUCK IN ORBIT

~ by Carl Mon, Head of PIA, mon.carl@surrealtimes.net

This weekend a commercial airliner began leaking fuel while on its way from Los Angeles to Hawaii. With 150 passengers on board and miles of ocean in all directions, the pilot needed to act fast. He stepped on it, burning what remaining fuel he had to climb further upwards. Instead of looking for a place to land, he climbed higher and higher, eventually out of the upper atmosphere and into orbit! The engines stopped just after he'd reached critical velocity, leaving him soaring safely through zero gravity.

To this day, the aircraft continues to circle the earth safely

Flight staff report that they have enough animal crackers, water, and Jurassic Park movies on board to keep the passengers alive for a few weeks. The problem, they say, is the lack of gravity. Passengers are chaotically floating around the cabin, enjoying themselves but oftentimes colliding and getting into tiffs.

SpaceX flight teams say they are preparing for a rescue mission, but they have not yet published a plan. Rumor has it that it involves a large net and a grappling hook.



NOT ENOUGH KARMA FOR HANDS

~ by Common Observer, Surreal Times Reporter, common.observer@surrealtimes.net

According to sources, the Background Facilitator has instituted various levels of karma-activated privileges and punishments, the most troublesome of which being the "not nice enough for hands" rule. People whose karma levels drop below a certain threshold now have their hands removed like *poof*. The rationale: Handlessness slows down "bad" people in their attempts at doing "bad" things. Having hands speeds up "good" people as they do more "good" things. Over time, ultimately more "good" will be created and less "bad", thanks to this chakral incentive.

Those affected by karmatic hand removal often panic, thinking that their hands are gone forever. But, don't worry! All a karmatically handless person must do to regain their hands is a number of good deeds. Remember, hands are earned, much like boy scout badges.

However, some still complain that the karma-activated anatomy rights create vicious cycles of bad karma. One handless fellow explained, "I made one mistake, and now that the Background Facilitator took my hands, I can't do anything but mess more stuff up. When I tried to light my cigarette handlessly, I couldn't help but drop the match, which then lit a building on fire. Then Budha took away my nose, and, not being able to smell my own stench, I couldn't help but stink up every place I went."

Despite protests against this new form of Karma, the Background Facilitator is suspected to be considering extending the program..



VIBRATING BRAINS IN THE MIDWEST

~ by Common Observer, Surreal Times Reporter, common.observer@surrealtimes.net

This just in - bellowing cortical reverberations in middle America! Perhaps because of the alignment of the stars, or perhaps due to contamination of our water supply, people's brain bags have been vibrating wildly. This has caused a number of effects. First, extra layers of pillows are now required in order to prevent people's heads from vibrating their bed frames and thereby their homes while they sleep (In one case, a vibrating head attained the fundamental frequency of a 20-story apartment building, thereby causing it to collapse). Furthermore, thoughts have been sent bouncing around brain bags like ping pong balls. People are having more thoughts per minute than they ever thought was possible. Unfortunately, when they reach in their skulls to try to grab one of those thoughts, it nearly always escapes them, and, in a Schrödinger's cat-like fashion, they pull out an entirely unrelated thought out instead. It's like we have a 8 billion thought lotteries all walking around playing each other, having conversations in which nobody knows what they or the other guy are saying. God help us, doing anything on purpose has become impossible. Send in the troops.



PRESERVATARIANISM: A MANIFESTO

~ by Leonid Chelmsford, proponent of objectively ethical consumption

Long has my mind been wrought with the idea that amongst all the choices regarding *cibus quorundam haereticorum*, none stood fair to the objective truth that comes when deciding and adhering to methods of consumption that are thus *objectively* ethical. These modes propound within them certain ideological roots which drive their mechanism. Hither thus, cancelling an entire ideology with a mere phrase: plants too, are living beings. Alas! Already I hear cries from the balcony! "*Chelmsford you silly, silly fool. With any scientific education at all, you would understand the existence of organ systems which are required thus in experiencing both qualms and fears, which plants, unlike animals, do not have.*" I hear you, devout rationalist. I hear you. Now allow me to dissect your conclusion metaphysically.

Firstly, it would be foolish to claim otherwise that your notion of a *scientific education*, is nothing but a far reaching construct built and expanded upon by a series of individuals advancing but one proposed ideology. Tomorrow, a Newtonian or Ramanujanian figure could arise in some corner of the world, and too with their series of *scientific instruments*, find yet a different, and apparently esoteric, explanation for the emergence of life and its sustaining qualities.

Secondly, playing the devil's advocate in thus the idea *science* is in fact true, does not render unto the fact that while we may study and relate the experience of other living beings to that of our own, nothing can be guaranteed, and rather these studies relate nothing more than in the image of a rough sketch done by a small unassuming child, as opposed to the actual inner workings of such complicated mechanisms. Be it if you will, a plant studying a human body; what is observed by the plant is not an objective truth. A hypothetical quote from a plant interviewed in regards to its study "*The appendages which grant the human movement, look something like our roots, and being located near the bottom of the specimen, I must conclude that the appendages which facilitate movement belonging to the human must be watered for continued survival.*" This is of course not the case, human legs do not need to be watered in order for our survival. Which leads me to my final point.

In a devout effort not to kill, Vegetarians and Vegans kill by the billions. I hear you saying it now, "Riddle me then, O, Sire Chelmsford, the objective truth when it comes to your mode, your *credentes cibum*." Would it baffle you to know the answer is simpler than it seems? Answer thus: my proposed ideology, an effectual remedy : PRESERVATARIANISM. What is preservatarianism? Simple: it is food so chemically altered that its original state has been lost in translation. McDonald's Hamburgers, Digiorno Pizza. Anything where the preservatives overtake the original composition of the food. This is objectively the most ethical mode of consumption.



PROFILE: THE SKATEBIRDER

~ by Dernberger Spengleton, Surreal Times Staff, spengleton@surrealtimes.net

Mr. Antonin travels back and forth between Harvard and M.I.T. three times a day, always atop of his one-of-a-kind set of wheels: two skateboards duct-taped together, with a milk crate on top, and pulled by a dozen or so pigeons attached by strings. It's like a dogsled from the dusty corner of your imagination, and although not the quickest way around, it's got style. When its captain tosses pieces of bread ahead of his pigeon crew (plus one bluejay), they waddle towards the snack and thereby pull the guy along.

You may know Antonin for the way he meanders about Mass Ave with seemingly not a worry in the world, reading a book in one hand and occasionally tossing bread crumbs with the other.

Sometimes he sits in one spot for a while, leaving his pigeons at their own devices to hop around on his legs and shoulders, or to wander off.

He rarely is one to initiate a conversation. But, if you say hello to him, you're almost guaranteed to learn something subtle and interesting about the world that you'd have never considered otherwise. Just keep poking the conversation along, give Antonin space to talk, and see what comes to fruition.

Much like the way Mr. Antonin allows others to be the ones to initiate conversation with him, he allows his pigeons to come and go freely. Somehow, his good nature attracts them and the crew continues to grow.



Big Animal Planet or Big Animal Hoax?

~ By Cryptic Mark, Surreal Times Reporter, cryptic.mark@surrealtimes.net

Tomorrow morning leading jazz fabricist Dr. Fabio Faberge has concrete proof of “the Universal Bowel.” Currently the bowel is purely theoretical, but also a foundational principle for many jazz fabrical theories on how the universe functions. More interestingly, however, Dr Faberge has discovered what he terms “Big Animal Planet (BAP)- a planet of animals that are really big, or perhaps some of them are normal sized? To be quite honest I'm not sure if this is even real, but it probably is.”

Tonight Fabio will awake to find his private quarters filled with bronzed (and nude) men, crowned by a variety of wreaths (floral, laurel, etcetera) purporting to be Guardians of the Bowels. The Bowels allow individuals to travel from one point in the Universe to another. At present, it's unknown (officially) how an individual would be granted access to the Bowels- an arrangement that Dr. Faberge believes is further complicated by the Guardians. Amongst these naked and physically impeccable males will be a carrier pigeon the size of a horse. He will get down on his knees and beg Dr Faberge for help.

"Please, Dr Faberge, you are our last hope; I am the assistant of detective-philosopher-horse Samantha Manthamanths. She has lost her left hooves and...---" At this point, he will be interrupted by a superbly endowed and oiled god (the meaning which connotes sexual prowess) who whispers "Your time is almost up."

With pleading in his eyes, the pigeon will leave a dossier on Dr Faberge's lap before being escorted from Dr Faberge's bedroom and, presumably, disappearing to whence he came.

Inside the dossier, the following events, and more, are detailed, here. Only the most important events are explained to provide a "story."

On the 12th May 1458 detective-philosopher-horse (Ms. Samantha Manthamanths) awakes to find her left hooves missing, replaced by duplicates of her right hooves. Being philosophically inclined in the way she is, Ms. Manthamanths decides to continue life as usual- carrying out her duties at the police station and continuing to philosophise, her philosophical-disciple-carrier-pigeon Mr. Ernie Nienis continues to write down her philosophical outpourings (something she refuses to do). By the 14th May 1458, she has discovered leading her normal life to be impracticable. She reports her left hooves missing to the police department (in which she works) and is allowed to work the case.

With no leads, Ms. Manthamanths leaves the station and approaches the first animal she sees (a penguin, their identity remains unknown) and requests information on the whereabouts of her left hooves. The penguin does not know anything. At this point Ms. Manthamanths returns to her squad car and retrieves her police standard issue AK-47 and really goes to work on the penguin; it was horrible, the penguin was an unrecognisable bloody mush by the end of it. There were several more incidents like this.

Ms. Manthamanths philosophical output at this point becomes increasingly original. Academic followers of her blog begin emailing to ask "what she's on" and where they can get some- they are "getting tired of writing about other people's ideas."

Here's a quote from Blog Entry #1956 (17th May 1458): "The search-and-destroy missions allow me to gain deeper insight into what it means. We are all so big, we are all the size of a horse. It is from this premise (alone) I deduce that the animal must become small, we must lose this antiquated conception of size and through this (alone) we will discover what it

means to be NORMAL sized animal(s). The search-and-destroy is effective only in reference to the individual, but perhaps on a grander scale it will present a yield of a higher grade?” Mr. Ernie Nienis was becoming increasingly concerned by Ms. Manthamanths behaviour and philosophical output, in some ways this fear prompted him to retain close to her.

Although police were allowed to use their standard issue AK-47 as and when they deemed it appropriate (for example, firing it into the air to celebrate victory over the forces of evil) Mr. Nienis couldn't help but feel: “If this keeps up there will be very few animals left on this planet. It is tradition, but we should we really stand by and let her blow the head off of every potential thief? I am beginning to suspect Samantha took her left hooves herself, she always complained that they slowed her down and would say ‘If only I had four right hooves, I would surely be twice as efficient?’ and I would laugh- I assumed it was all in jest. Perhaps she's angry because she's wrong, and she's simply taking this anger out on others.”

Some months later (June 1458) it is reported that half the population has been obliterated by Ms. Manthamanths' hooves/AK-47. Mr. Nienis is becoming desperate and, being closest to Ms. Manthamanths is receiving text messages from secret government agencies, with advice on how to stop her. The Psychological Help Agency (PHA) suggested Mr. Nienis be asked if she felt okay (“say R U OK?”), or if she'd considered her actions as bad (“say wat do U thnk abt wat Uve dne?”)- Mr Nienis had already given this a go, to no avail. The Blacksmith and Whitesmith Agency (BWA) suggested hitting her with a hammer (the whitesmiths suggested he do it in reverse)- Mr. Nienis couldn't stomach this.

Blog Entry #2976 suggested there was little chance of Samantha's slaughter coming to a close: “Left hooves are beyond reach of those who all right: the paradox of the all life lies betwixt these few hills- as a tussock upon a mound is so much in the wind that it can not hide... Almost (I must be smaller) I must slip between the cracks, we must become so small- it is preternatural to be big. There are certain texts which catalogue the forms of animal(s) and we are in the wrong. In this age we seek only for truth, but this can not be found if we are in the realm of the wrong- just as the Right can not grasp upon the Left. Search-and-destroy will continue as per: see you all on Thursday night. ;)” It is unclear whether Ms. Manthamanths suggested Mr. Nienis add the winking emoticon, or whether she herself winked and Mr. Nienis thought it essential to the meaning of her work. Indeed, Nienis' diary suggests Ms. Manthamanths philosophising was becoming evermore intertwined with her besticidal behaviour.

Mr. Nienis' diary also suggests that he has discovered the solution to the problem facing Big Animal Planet. “They have told me of The Men, led by the Dancer that listens to the melodies of our lives (our deeds and thoughts). If I can contact them through-” and here pages and pages of Nienis' diary are censored by thick black lines, except for one passage: “Tonight I had pilau for dinner, it's one of my favourite meals. Pilau makes me think of – [text censored].” It is unclear whether this censorship occurred before or after Mr. Nienis made contact with “The Men.” Dr Faberge assumed “the Men” to be the very charming gentlemen that filled his bedroom (hence it is assumed Nienis made contact with the men).

After tonight Dr. Fabio Faberge felt very confused as to how he could help resolve the case at all; there is only a single direction of communication. Nonetheless, he published his findings. After tomorrow night Dr. Faberge lost all academic credibility; his peers having criticised his choice to “write whatever comes into his waking mind after a night of exceedingly rambunctious debauchery.” After his death (in 50 years time) future jazz fabricists realised the true meaning of Faberge’s work and its importance in their field.



SHIFT IN THE AXIOMS OF THE UNIVERSE

~ Common Observer, Surreal Times Reporter, common.observer@surrealtimes.net

Last week the fundamental particles of existence, electrons and protons, became confused and suddenly changed roles. Electrons, while typically negatively-charged, became positively-charged. Protons, normally positively-charged, took on a negative charge.

This change, although microscopic, produced widespread effects.

In just milliseconds, every molecule turned completely inside out. All chemical bonds were broken for an instant, and during this period of complete chemical detachment, the world went fuzzy like the picture on a television from the 1960s whose cable had been chewed.

One woman explained, “If I had been able to observe this occurrence – and I couldn’t, due to my eyes being chemically unbonded – I might have described it as looking normal, but that’s only because my vision has gotten blurry with old age. In any case, things must have been weird.”

Miraculously, all the inverted molecules in the universe began to function almost per usual. “It was like Mother Nature had a brain fart for a second,” said one Amherst resident, “but she figured things out before too long.”

There were lasting effects, however. In the wake of the shift individuals found that power outlets, instead of charging their devices, would now pull energy from them. Plugging your phone in overnight will render it dead in the morning. Refrigerators are becoming heat boxes, electrical cars are driving backwards, blow-dryers are swallowing people’s hair. South is North and North is South. It’s calamity out here, and there’s no chance it will change unless someone rewires the entire world in reverse. But, then again, if we did rewire everything backwards, who’s to say that the universe won’t flip the switch again?

If we are indeed living in a simulation, whoever is at its helm deserves a spanking.



ALAN PARTRIDGE RETURNS WITH ADVICE

TO THE EDITORS OF THE SURREAL TIMES - STOP -
LONG HAVE I BEEN UNDERCOVER IN SECRET MISSION FOR BUREAU - STOP -
DARK DAYS AHEAD - STOP -
DO NOT LOSE FAITH WE WILL PREVAIL - MESSAGE ENDS -

The above message slipped down our downspout several weeks ago, and when we fished it out we were delighted to find the ink had not run. At that time we could only presume this is the work of Alan Partridge, our Dreams Correspondent and shadowy employee of a shadowy organization he seems to be referring to now as the Bureau. It's nice to have it named. Our hopes were confirmed when just last night a neatly typed page slipped under the door of the Surreal Times Editor's Office. The envelope was marked: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -AP. Here is the contents of that message:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

My dear Editors, these are dark times. I hope my short missive reached you in time. The dreams of humanity are growing ever more dire with each passing night. Last night I dreamt of fire, of suffocation, of gnawing emptiness consuming my soul, and I lost my very best left sock. I am afraid for the state of the world. I am not sure if you have noticed this yourselves, but all across the world my fellow agents and myself have been noticing growing trends in the dreams of humanity. Themes of entrapment, defense, pain, and fear grow like weeds in the pavement. My own mother admitted to me last week that for the first time in 85 years she had dreamt of her home, only to see it drowned under a flood for the second time. Humanity is floundering. Our dreams reach out for a life preserver that isn't there and with every night that falls our head remains submerged just a bit longer. My friends, we must be vigilant! All is not lost! This I promise you, all is not lost. You must be prepared for the first time to dream with purpose! This bleakness over the land dampens our lives but it **MUST NOT DAMPEN OUR DREAMS**. Dreams forge reality and may you never make the mistake of remembering that wrong. If you would make a better world, you can start by dreaming. It may be work, but it is not hard. If you follow my instructions you **CAN** dream a better future.

ALAN PARTRIDGE'S PROPER PROGRAM FOR ENLIGHTENED DREAMING

1. Cardamom and mugwort tea with ginger and a touch of honey.
2. Meditate before you dream on what you wish to dream about. We cannot control the scenario we find ourselves in, but we can set the tone. When I go into the local dream state for my research I meditate first on the location I find myself in, how it makes me feel, how it makes others feel, and the sights and sounds experienced by those within it. For our purposes, meditate on something that makes you feel whole.
3. When you sleep, do so with purpose. When I began the science of researching the world's dreams, I would repeat "I sleep to rest, I sleep to learn." It was a mantra that did me a lot of good, and so I pass it on to you.

4. Carry a dreaming token. It can be as simple as a small coin in your pocket that, every single time you touch in the waking world, you stop and take stock of the world. Ask yourself "How did I get here? Where am I going? What is the time?" If you cannot answer those questions adequately, it's time to start going to work.
5. Fix things. If you are in the throes of a bad dream and trigger your awareness with a token, take steps to change it. Perhaps every night you spend your evenings dreaming of a locked door with no key. Reach into your pocket for the key and find your token, it will open the door if you believe it will.
6. **BELIEVE LIKE YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.** Holy symbols are holy because we believe them to be. Dreams are frightening because we believe there is no other option than fear right now. Laugh and believe it to be different. That is truly all it takes.

Here are three kind dreams I have kept in my archives for times such as these. May you take them and use them when next you fall asleep.

Dream One: *The Atacama Desert, Chile*

Ordinarily, this place is as sterile as an operating table. You need no fear of infection here, the ground is devoid of water, and as such, devoid of life. However, yesterday, it rained. Tonight I rest my head on flower petals. Desierto Florido, the desert is in bloom.

Waves crash overhead, the land dreams of the sea. Between my toes rise tiny purple florets, with every step they float ever upward like the finest silt. I take a deep breath, the air smells of faint perfume, of wet dust, of patient seeds. I walk on. The waves roar, the sun flickers and dances. My feet leave a path of white petals like snow. The snow capped mountains in the distance are just another bloom. At once a wind picks up, rushing over countless little flowers, buffeting me and driving me forward. I trace its path in the ripples across the plains and walk on. Someone sits before me, his fire just starting, just ending, roaring hot, a dying ember. She is old and young, male and female. They speak with all voices in the language of birds. The sun goes out, comes to life. I am wrapped in fiber, buried beneath the red dry sand. The rains come. I bloom.

I awaken in the fog.

Dream Two: *The Tundra in Spring*

The land of the midnight sun. One would think sleeping would be hard here, but for all the effort I have expended to get here, kayaking through sea ice to reach this abandoned hunting cabin, sleep finds me as easily as in a feather bed.

It has been many years since a human has dreamt here, and it was many years before that that no human has ever ventured here, but here is where they came for seal, when the ice melted, when the tundra began to warm above the permafrost. I see the seals now, their populations receding in the real world, they are remembered by the land, and the land dreams of them. I leave my cabin and as I shut the door it becomes a scrap of leather flapping in the cold breeze, the hut now made of bleached white driftwood. Those who came before me left these fragments here when they departed, I am grateful. Though the air is cold, the sun is warm here and there are flowers blooming, sheltered by a nearby rise. They are blooming out of a rotting skull. In 1960 musk oxen were brought here from Iceland, and they thrived. This one was slain by a polar bear, and its body laid to rest here in the shelter of the dirt and rock rise. From its death, from the very body it once lived, flowers now bloom. My breath steams in the sun, I do not pick the flowers. Next week the whole tundra will be alive in the short summer season, but here, death brought life a little sooner. Dream of things and they happen, sometimes things happen and they are dreamt as well.

Dream Three: *A Walnut Grove*

Black walnuts are native to North America. Their nuts are delicious, if difficult to process. Near my hometown there was a large hill known to the locals as Walnut Hill. At the top stood a huge walnut tree, the mother of the thousands that dotted the whole hillside. Black Walnut grows fast. My brothers and I used to play with the nuts, staining our hands and clothes a ruddy brown, my grandmother burns the husks in her wood stove in the winter. They give off a powerful heat, and a smell that once you know, never truly leaves you. Tonight I sleep at the foot of the mother tree, a walnut in each hand for wisdom.

Soil, cool and damp in my fingers, under my back. I am lying in a warren, deep under the ground. It is all I have known, it is all I will know. My forebears lived their whole lives here, and yesterday I knew my descendents will do the same. Today, something is different. A smell permeates the air. It promises so many things, food, warmth, words, knowledge, water. It promises sensations, wind on my face, heat on my back, light, something I have never known, in my eyes. I follow the scent. Climbing higher and higher in the warren, away from my family, away from the larders, along smaller and smaller tunnels until at last I am on my belly wriggling through a tiny crack. The scent is stronger here, but I just can't reach it. The tunnels have stopped. In desperation I lash out with my hands, the vision so strong in my mind that my eyes see things they have never known. I weep. I break. I sob. I rip at the dirt with my hands, clods falling off behind me.

I AM BLINDED.

The LIGHT. My eyes scream.

I scream.

Is this death? My hands are still tearing at the soil and everywhere they pull the light gets stronger and stronger. I feel it burning my skin. My eyes are clenched tight and everywhere, all around me, the smell of walnuts makes my head swim. The hole is large enough now. I climb forth into the light. Ahead of me is something soothing, something dark. I rush towards it, out of the bright white light of the sun to where its rays are shielded by the roots of a tree, but they are growing up not down, covered in green leaves not hairs. In my rapture I step on a hard green object underfoot and tumble to the ground. In my rage I smash it into a rock, and something wonderful comes out. I am overcome with hunger and greedily devour it.

Rapture. Worse than the light. My mind is overwhelmed with words. With ideas. I am afraid though I had never known fear. I am aware as if I had never known myself. I am myself. I see myself. I know myself. I may never return.

I awake.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Liberty & Her Many Problems, by Harold Knatt

He was raining, and I think rain is stupid, and when he rained all of his stupid poored right out of him and went on my shoes which pissed me off. I love to hate things, sunbeams of hate burned my face until it blistered and my cheekbones began to smoke. I love being burned by fire except when the clay dries, then I'm just stuck and I feel so trapped I could implode his rain used to keep me wet and slippery. When I was younger, I enjoyed making small duckling sculptures but after some time there quacks turned to cracks. Step on a crack, break your momma's back. My mother is the statue of liberty. And that's why I hate the Statue of liberty.

I Wish I Was Not A Smelly Robot, by Sarah Chatham

The robot is smelly. And I don't care if he can recite the alphabet backwards, my nose is 8000 times more sensitive than a rabbit's. My nose is so big it blocks out my eyes and all I "see" is carrots, clouds of orange folding over each other. I hop around eating carrots and kicking random insects I find beautiful. I think insects are the greatest invention. I think I could make a greater invention than God did, but I wouldn't dare. God is 8 feet tall and wears a yellow toga. He told me "I love you, it's not easy for me to say that." I said "Aw, shucks, I can't really be in love with anybody right now."

Patriotism And One-Wheeled Vehicles, by Alonzo Tottman

I don't like unicycles. They are ruining America. Good thing this isn't America, is it though? What does "American" mean? Fuck telephone poles. Fuck light posts. Hey don't say that about light posts! My cousin was a light post. I'm so sorry but I hate your cousin then. I am my cousin. I am your cousin. I am I. That's why I hate my name and everything it represents. Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Shit! Shit! Shit! Shit! God bless America.

Untitled, by Anonymous

I left my womb at Coachella. She was talking about energy healing, and all of my tomorrows with tea parties and playdates got up and dipped in the lake naked. It was then the womb laid its eyes on a half-human-half-donkey. It had three eyes, all bright blue and electric. They told me, "you're not heavy enough" so I started gulping air. The air smells like sweet kettle corn and organic pussy. I stood in line and waited to hear my name called. I knew it would never be called.

"Not enough, not enough, not anything."

Oh well I still have my phantom womb.

If Only An Orphan, If Only A Nostril, If Only...

There are shadowy figures coming in and out of the library, they all pretend to be orphans. We all know that they are secretly 43 year old men or old greasy Grandmas. What is going on?! How are we getting all this grease on all these old Fucks! Like that nut Dumbledore (who is my dad!) I was born out of his left nostril. It was tight. Who was born out of the right nostril?? It's me. Dumbledorothy. They call me "father" and I don't like when they say it.



WHERE DID PAST MATT HIDE MY CIGARETTES?

by Future Matt

I know this was Past Matt's doing. He thinks he's so much better than me. Past Matt has all these hopes and aspirations, and I must look like a total disappointment. Past Matt is so naive, though, and he has this unrealistically sunny outlook on life. Me, I'm just tired all the time. I get home from a long day of work and I just want to relax and smoke a cigarette. I know that I made a promise with Past Matt and I'm sorry for letting him down. One day, he'll understand. He'll have to deal with nonstop rushes and rude customers all day long.

He will be just like me.

By that logic, though, I guess I was once like him too. It's bizarre how much time can change a man. I'm sure if Past Matt and I were in a more casual relationship, we would get along just fine. We're in each other's business. I appreciate what he's done for me, but now I just want to be left alone. Look, there were only about 2 cigarettes left in that pack. I would have smoked both of them tonight and totally quit after that. I promise. I won't let my own future self down.

COMMUNITY CLASSIFIEDS

(email classifieds@surrealtimes.net to inquire about or to place an ad)

YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME: Let me know and I'll never get close to you. I promise you'll never even know I'm not there.

FOR RENT: Cozy bungalow in my armpit. \$2,250 a month, No Smoking Please!

WANTED: Mind Reader who is good at fighting

WANTED: Spray on insect attractant

FOR SALE: My left nostril

WANTED: Altercation with my neighbor. Not fatal, but serious enough to rile me up.

FOR SALE: Bonkers little crackhead goldfish from the 4th dimension

HIRING: Four of each of the colors of the rainbow. Each must bring its own tools and duct tape.

TRADE WANTED: Assorted baby doll parts in exchange for cuddles

WANTED: Grapes equipped with mouth-targeting guidance systems.

WANTED: VHS tape of the 1997 foosball world championship

FOR SALE: 1997 foosball world champions

WANTED: More lengthy small intestine. Needed for daily use.

FOR SALE: Single hair from Frank Zappa's mustache

FOR SALE: Four sails.

FOR SALE: Button that allows you to experience a brief but specific moment of time from the past. Various moments available, but only one permitted per person.

NEEDED: A baggie of monkey teeth, unflossed, and forty pounds of Big Chew BubbleGum

[[ABOUT US]]

During the Fall of 2016, a group of aspiring doctors sat on a stone wall outside a conference on the future of journalism hosted by one of their fathers. They enjoyed the cool breeze and spoke their minds over a shared cigarette. Together, they realized that, **"In these *surreal times*, a newspaper is required to document the history currently unfolding."** From that moment on, they dedicated themselves to unearthing the truth that lies somewhere beneath the crust of what was formerly perceived.

Today, The Surreal Times newspaper reports on events observed in reality as well as the broader surreality. Its headquarters is located in Amherst, Massachusetts, on the commonwealth's flagship campus, and it operates satellite branches in Boston and Los Angeles . It publishes online and in print bihexically.



THE BIHEXICAL SEARCH

Thanks to a spectacular isomorphism, the solution to this maze corresponds directly to a solution to an abstract problem in our world. In turn, by solving this maze, you make the world a better place. If against all odds you find a solution, please email it to isomorphism@surrealtimes.net so that we can put the fruits of your labor into action. In return, you will be awarded a **secret prize**.

