



Summer Madness by Cy Twombly

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Department of Natural Wonder

By Matt Ellinwood

I am fairly obsessed with food. This obsession has led me to uncover the stories of from where food comes. As soon as you begin investigating food, you have to get to know animals; they are inextricably linked to every sort of food that any human being eats. The most delicious is the pig. The most fascinating is the bee.

Bees are getting a lot of attention lately, because they are being ravaged by Colony Collapse Disorder, which is apparently like AIDS for bees and I think is probably due directly to commercial agriculture and its abuse of bees. Commercial beekeepers truck their bees all over the United States and work them wherever flowers are blooming. They collect fees from almond farmers for those services and then harvest the honey. Bees have not adapted to working year round and being confined to hives and trucked around a giant territory. I think it's clear that when you take an animal—wild, domestic, or human—and you force it to behave in a way that is against its evolutionary nature, it gets sick.

Interestingly, it is a honeybee's nature to make honey for humans. Honeybees are domesticated animals, and if you encounter a honeybee hive in the side of a house or in a tree stump, those bees are technically feral. Hives work incredibly hard to make honey from nectar, and honeybee hives will continue to make honey until they run out of room in their hive, even if it is double or triple the amount of honey they need to sustain themselves. They just keep making it—for us—a lot like a dairy cow

...continued on page 5...

The Spectrum:

A personal perspective into relationships

By Herman Dulay

Thanks to Mr. "mjue" and Mr. Fritz for giving me the motivation to finally give my **two cents on the subject of relationships**. I hope that through sharing a piece of my own beliefs, I can find others who can add or amend this view for the better. So let's get into it, because it's **LONG, REAL LONG**....

"Disney Social Programming" (DSP)

It all starts before men and women even have the slightest "urge" to pursue the opposite sex...**Childhood**. Young boys and girls go through a process that I like to call "**Disney Social Programming" (DSP)**. Now, this is not an attack on the entertainment company but merely a term to describe the stories, societal views, and cultural norms that facilitate this type of social programming. Boys and girls are being taught behaviors and concepts that are in total conflict with current ideas of gender equity in favor of a fairy tale construct that puts them in cartoonish roles.

...continued on page 9...

Tower of *Babble-ON's*
Before and After Corner

By Susan Fritz

“Falcon Crestfallen”
☒

New German Idioms

By Nathan and Shelley Beach

“Wer die Gartenhacke entbehrt, den frisst das Unkraut.”
(spare the hoe and eat the weeds)

“Nur ein Pferd setzt sich als es singt”
(only a horse sits while he sings)

“Nie die Orangen mit den Radieschen aufrechnen.”
(never count the oranges with the radishes)

“Der Tisch ist abgeräumt, doch die Krümel bleiben erhalten.”
(the table has been cleared, but the crumbs remain)
☒

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the final edition of America’s number one, something-or-other, online magazine. This truly has been an enjoyable endeavor for me, giving me a creative outlet and allowing me to keep in touch with lots of people. The articles in particular have been amazingly fresh and witty, and it’s always given me something to talk about other than cubicle-bounded duties. Not too bad for 1,850 days’ work.

I love stats (my stats, that is), and you can find several of them related to this publication on the last page of this issue, as always. The sheer volume of material is a testament to the success of the idea, and I am proud to say that this publication has even seen a couple of contributors I have never even met. That’s standard protocol for for-profit, widespread publications, but for something as relatively closed as this, it’s quite impressive.

With all this in mind, I leave you with a motto of sorts. Unlike the succinct message Mr. Olson and I discovered one day under a bridge in Wisconsin, namely “Spread Herpes,” I recommend something wholly better, as coined by Mr. Babooram: “Spread Your Love Like a Fever.” And write it all down, so we can read about it.

Signing off for now,
Dan, editor@babbleonline.com ☒

Right Before I Got Kicked Off Kids Incorporated

By Nathan Beach

For many of the cast members, *Kids Incorporated* was the beginning of a fruitful career in the music industry. For me, it was the beginning of the end. Long hours indoors in the darkness of the studio led to a vitamin D deficiency that would change my life forever. Chosen as one of the five backup dancers during the 1987-88 season, I had some of the fanciest moves on the show. Moosie Drier was my mentor. The day I got that letter of acceptance was the happiest day in my life. But you see, vitamin D is required for proper calcium absorption in my tummy. With the absence of vitamin D, I couldn’t properly absorb dietary calcium. This led eventually to a skeletal deformity in my legs known as “the rickets.” Over the course of the season I gradually couldn’t keep up with the other dancers, until Thomas Lynch finally told me one rainy Friday that my dancing days were over. ☒

Flower Man

A wood carving by Jerry Myhr



Asinine Aphorisms

By Susan Fritz

“Never bring a ham to a bris.” ☒

Article Ideas

Write everything now and give it to me next year. I mean it this time! ☒

Recipe of the Month:

Chicken Cashew

By Elizabeth Carlson

Ingredients:

2 cups of cooked chicken
1 can cream of mushroom soup
¼ cup milk
4 oz. or 1 can of mushrooms (with liquid)
1½ cups chopped celery
½ cup cashews (for top when served)
small amount of onion (½ onion) chopped fine

Mix all ingredients. Bake in a greased casserole dish uncovered 45 minutes at 350°. Serve over Chow Mein noodles or rice. Sprinkle cashews over top.



The Rope Swing

By Nathan Beach



Notable Quotables

Compiled By Nathan Beach

"You could get bass, crappie, buffalo and perch out of Brushey Creek, Gaines Creek, Buffalo Creek or any of the streams around here and you could get squirrels, wild turkeys, and even some deer; there are deer in the Kiamichi Mountains right now. I have seen panthers around here as late as 1896."

- William Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory Pioneer

"The different kinds of storage that are possible in C itself are very simple in just the automatic variables, stacked variables and static, statically allocated things. There's no built in off-stack heap type storage. There's no garbage collection. Whereas language design – I mean, probably because it's easier to do a language than to do an operating system, there's less work in producing the compiler. Language design has sort of always had a little more freedom associated with it."

- Dennis Ritchie, creator of the C programming language

"On Friday, the President meets with the President of Tanzania in the Oval Office, and that evening the President will attend, at the United States Marine Corps Barracks in Washington, the Evening Parade."

- Gordon Johndroe, White House Press Secretary, 22 August 2008

"The urgency to develop a healthy right hemisphere through coordinated interactions between mom and dad and baby sets the scene not just to understand self and other and social interactions, but it sets the stage within the brain to balance the outside neural system and the inside neural system. So that we can respond to the outside if there's an emergency and yet quiet down inside of our brain when there is no emergency and you're trying to think."

- Anita Remig, Child Psychologist ☒

Annunciation

By Kim Phillips-Fein

Often, you would tell me of your dreams:
of balancing on an tightrope sea of blue,
or schools of fish that swam from braided loaves,
or waking those who had seemed lost to sleep.

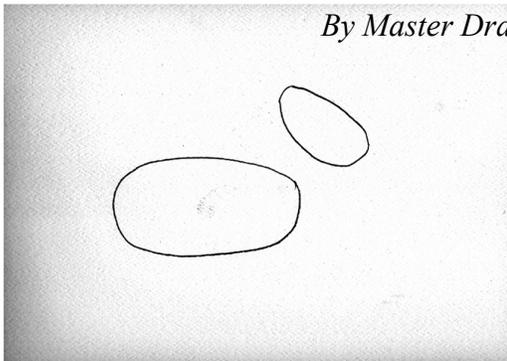
I would smile, remembering your miracles—
how you stood alone, when only months before
you drank milk from my blood. I breathed your curving breath
and prayed for ordinary joys.

Now, the women are whispering. But I am silent as fire,
as I was when I learned of you. That day, I read my book
as though I were consumed. I spoke to no one (not even the angels),
for fear they would take you away. ☒

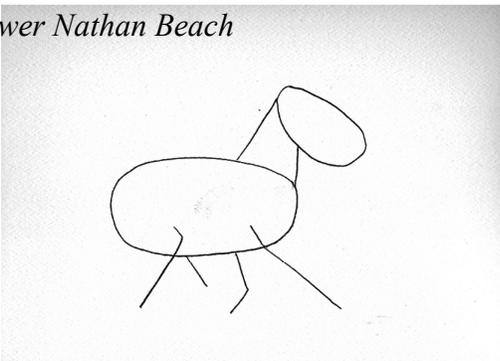
Also I Can Draw A Horse. Will You?

By Master Drawer Nathan Beach

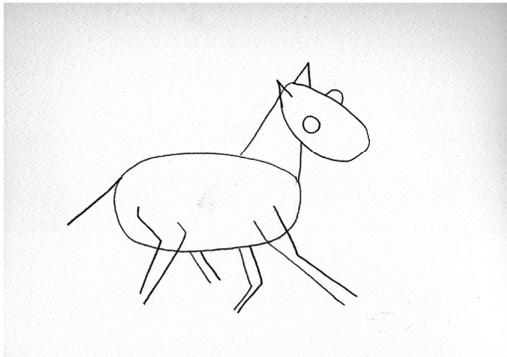
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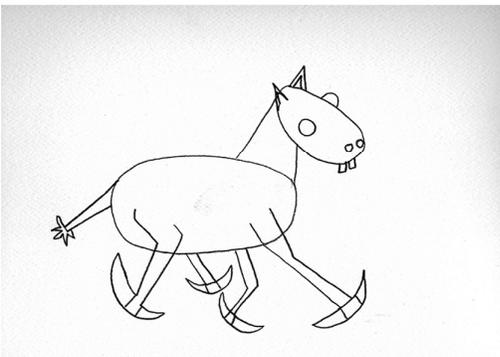
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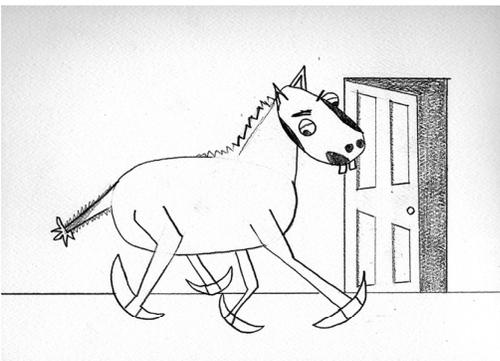
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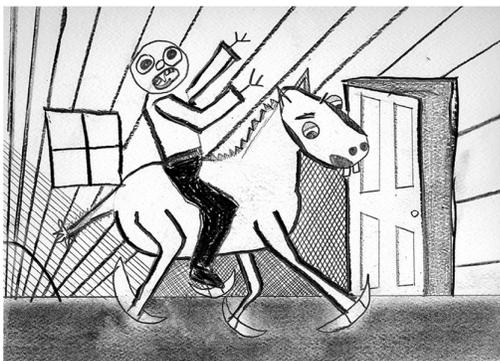
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7.



8.



9.



10.



Famous People from the 'Flyover' States

This month: Montana

By Dan and Susan Fritz



Which powerhouse of a flyover state gets the spotlight this month? That would be none other than the state larger than the size of Germany with less than 1 million inhabitants, namely the good ol' Big Sky Country of Montana. Not many people come to mind when thinking of famous Montanans, unless you count Violet Beauregarde (a fictional character) from Miles City or Robert Redford and Brad Pitt from *A River Runs Through It*, neither of whom are actually Montanans, unlike the author of the story (Norman Maclean). In spite of this, there is an unexpected list of characters below.

Artists:

Charles M. Russell: famous painter of the American West (the "Cowboy Artist")

Entertainers:

Dana Carvey: Legendary *Saturday Night Live* cast member and comedian, famous for playing Garth in *Wayne's World* and lots of other stuff

Gary Cooper: Two-time Academy Award winner and highly regarded Classical Hollywood film actor

Patrick Duffy: Actor, most notably from the television series *Dallas* and *Step by Step*

Susan Myhr Fritz: perhaps the greatest alum of C.M. Russell High School in Great Falls; outshined only by her purple '59 VW Bug

Robert Craig "Evel" Knievel: daredevil motorcyclist and record-bone-breaker

Myrna Loy: Famous actress of *The Thin Man* series and classic movies; distant cousin of the famed Susan Myhr Fritz

David Lynch: Missoula-born filmmaker, creator of *Twin Peaks* and nominated for three Academy Awards

Sports Heroes: In spite of the closest U.S. professional sports team of any major sport being over 300 miles from the border, Montana has produced quite a crew of pro athletes. Below are a few notables.

Phil Jackson: former NBA player, famed championship-winning coach, and current coach of the L.A. Lakers

Jerry Kramer: Famous Montana-born Green Bay Packer lineman

Ryan Leaf: Biggest NFL bust of all time

Other Prominent Figures:

Jeannette Rankin: In 1916, became the first woman elected to the United States Congress

Ted Turner: Non-Native Montanan but famous for owning huge chunks of the state and huge chunks of American media ☒

Potential Band Names

By Nathan Beach & Darren Frayne

Brave New Combo
 The Library Dudes
 Dr. John Pepper
 Touching Peter
 Mecca Titties
 Cookin' Somethin' G'd
 Matey
 Humongloid
 Various Artists
 Texicles
 Nanook & Granny
 Nanook & Cranberry
 Cran-grandmother
 Turbot
 Cuddluds
 McMasters
 The Retarders ☒

The Younger Grimm in Marburg

By Greg Vargo

Elms scourge a one-half moon.

Ill, my dreams do not stop
 till morning's work. At noon,
 poplars strike house, roof, gabletop.

A crow caws and is dumb,
 then lights on my chimney.
 Though not all birds are emblems,
 sometimes one guides fear to me. ☒

'A laundry chute dropped...'

By Greg Vargo

A laundry chute dropped
 two floors to a cardboard box in the basement.
 Shirts rattled

the long, tin sheets as they fell.
 Some stuck midway when I let go too many.
 A heavy book dislodged them,

restored the square at the drop's bottom.
 My mother would call up through the passage.
 My voice stranged by metal. ☒

Duchamp at Chess

By Rory G. Gargove

1. The Opening

A brick of light
pitched through a latticed aperture
broke into shapes upon a screen,
which tumbled
from the scrim
into the left, outstretched hand
of Marcel Duchamp,
who pocketed them.

It is doomsday.
A pawn leaps from his company.

2. Tactics

Amidst saplings and ashes,
paths and columns,
the knights describe queer compasses,
imperfect dials.
The king and queen surrounded by swift nudes
in a crepuscular garden
at a table set with wine...
where he forgets the wind chime
and the house's musical clock
whose melody
is strange as a number
held too long in the mouth.

3. Exchanges

Down a path where sight breaks off,
past the alternative the mind discards, which crowds
the board with its pattern, he looks
at a square a piece would fill
filled by an emptiness.
When Marcel restores the queen
something continues along its track.

4. Endgame

The moon, a numeral
on one face of a die,
turns, a charm above the players,
above the last delicate arrangement
of their collaboration, the empty
square (there is no center),
a rook's clean shot,
thought's gesture.

☒



Welcome to the 20th Century's Litany of Depressing Books

By Dan & Susan Fritz

WARNING: WE BASICALLY TELL YOU THE END OF EVERY BOOK MENTIONED. READ
ON AT YOUR OWN RISK!

The 20th Century was filled with depressing events, like mass murder and mustard gas. Not surprisingly, lots and lots of artwork (novels, paintings, poetry, songs, etc.) reflect this negativity, allowing the artist to effectively play Russian roulette with his ball point. Even when times got better later in the century, the drive toward negativity remained. Just take one look at the following list of standard curriculum literature you were most likely subjected to sometime between the 6th and 12th grades. Even if you don't recall the plot details of these books, you may still be left with the impression today that something bad happened, and it was very upsetting at the time.

The Jungle by Upton Sinclair—You should pray you don't study this before or after your lunch period during high school. Let's just say it describes in detail the evils and ills of the meat industry.

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls—Guess where the red fern grows: where the loveable hunting dogs are buried. Sound like a good book for a 2nd grader?

Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes—This tale of hope and recovery is squelched by the death of an adorable mouse and its main character, Charlie Gordon.

A Day No Pigs Would Die by Robert Newton Peck—If the story of the death of a young son's dad and the slaughter of his beloved pet sounds endearing to you, then you'll surely love this story of a butcher, a son, and a pig.

Old Yeller by Fred Gipson—You are crying right now reading this notorious tear-jerking title. There's no academic benefit that justifies the sadness of another dead dog tale.

The Red Pony by John Steinbeck—This is the best example of a book about which you remember nothing. There's only malaise...and a dead pony.

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck—The natural beauty of Salinas, California is overshadowed by crushed dreams in this tale of tragedy (and, yes, death).

Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway—A book intended for middle-aged teachers and AARP members, *not* bright-eyed 6th grade kiddies, this novel is yet another misty-eyed fish fantasy of failure.

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens—It was the best of times, it was the worst...emphasis on the *worst*.

Lord of the Flies by William Golding—A book named after the devil. Need we say more?

The Scarlett Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne—Not even Demi Moore's scarlet breast (in the film version) can save this novel from its oppressive themes of societal judgment.

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger—Add one reclusive, anti-social author, mix in one teenage boy in private school. Stir. Bake for approximately 200 pages until admission to insane asylum. Enjoy bitterly cold or bitterly hot.

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley—Welcome to dystopia.

Animal Farm by George Orwell—Welcome to dystopia.

1984 by George Orwell—Welcome to dystopia.

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury—Welcome to dystopia.

All right, so a couple weren't from the 20th century, but you get the point. ☒

Superlatives and Other Awards

As given by the Editor

BABBLE-ON SUPERLATIVE AWARDS

Best “buried in the middle of an issue” article:

“The Fake Science News” by **Marisa Fenn**, Issue 3.1 (January 2005)

Most gratuitous padding for greater word counts:

“The Tragic Tale of Madeleine Albright’s Career as a Fashion Model in 19th Century New York” by **Several Bored Office Pukes** (2005-2006)

Longest series, even when half-finished:

“What Life is all About” by **Srida Joisa** (2005)

The article which I most wish I had written better:

“As Many Sensual Perfumes as you Can: Ithaka and Odyssey” by **Dan Fritz**, Issue 4.4 (December 2006)

Best rap poem:

“Balboa Rap Poem” by **Browning Nichols**, Issue 6.2 (July 2008)

Worst joke submissions:

Anything submitted by **Garrett Calderwood**

Longest writing drought: **Nate Herr** went 18 issues from 1.1 (July 2003) to 3.5 (May 2005) before submitting his second article, “Eric’s Evil Plot”

Best use of gnomes in a series: Gnome Chomsky’s electrical grid adventures by **Susan Myhr Fritz** (2003)

Best article by an acting CPA: “Loser Lunch” by **Colin Patrick**, Issue 2.5 (December 2004)

Most liked series that never won Readers’ Choice: “Wine Country” by **Steven Fritz** (2005)

Most articles about not understanding women: see articles by **Brett**

Biggest submission drop-off after the “original articles only” rule was instituted: **James Schneider**, circa Issue 5.5 (August 2007); from an average of 860 words per issue contributed to, to an average of 265 words, to 0 submissions

Most prolific original adages: “Åsa Say” wisdom by **Asa Hadsell**

Highest volume of recipe submissions: “Recipe of the Month” by **Elizabeth Carlson**

Most outstanding analysis of a character from the TV series *What’s Happening!!*: “Koob’s Korner” by **Koob**, Issue 1.9 (November 2003)

...Superlatives and Other Awards, continued in the right column...

...Superlatives and Other Awards, continued from left column...

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

PLATINUM SEAL OF EXCELLENCE:

Winner of the elusive Alfred, Lord Tennyson Platinum Seal of Excellence for her cumulative articles written under the pen name “Arthur Miller,” please send your congratulations to **Amanda (Hall) Petry!** See issues 3.6 (June 2005), 3.7 (July 2005), 3.10 (December 2005), 5.3 (April 2007), 5.6 (September 2007), and this very issue. From his dorm-style apartment with other famous writers in heaven, Arthur has taught us to appreciate good writing and the aesthetics of reading actual books again. Bravo, Arthur, and thanks.

Tennyson Honorable Mentions:

“Cashing in on Intelligent Design” by **Brett**, Issue 3.10 (December 2005)

“Digits, Drama, and Discourse” by **Lynda Calderwood**, Issue 6.2 (July 2008) ☒

Babble-ON Historical Facts

By Dan Fritz

I started compiling *Babble-ON* at work during the tax off-season in 2003, at which time I worked (somewhat inexplicably) in the tax accounting business. My job was horrendous for the sole reason that my boss was indescribably terrible. The pain could only be mitigated by one or more of the following treatments: 1) heavy drinking, 2) a frying pan to the head (mine or hers), and/or 3) self-distraction. And so, using method #3, the “newsletter” was born!

The name “Babble-ON” was borrowed from a two-hour, weekly, college radio show, hosted by Mr. M and me, with help from our field correspondent Mr. Olson. The format of the publication was based loosely on our dorm’s newsletter, though it never took a true newsletter form. Some people think of it as a blog-like publication, though I tend to consider it an online magazine, with no ads.

Incidentally, the newsletter was not my only mental outlet in the summer of 2003. I also stoked quite a bit of office-wide interest in trivia questions I wrote and distributed via email and in hosting an online version of the strategy game *Diplomacy* by Hasbro. Office productivity was, of course, unaffected, though I phased out these other interests in favor of more newsletter writing.

The newsletter originally had a release schedule of once every two weeks, which soon became “once a month.” In spite of the advertised goal, the most issues published in one volume were actually ten in Volume 3 (2005). Not bad at all, considering it’s an entirely voluntary operation.

I have published the newsletter from three different states, including Texas, Connecticut, and New York. Any gaps in publishing are largely due to this fact of transience. ☒

Seven Words You Can't Say in Heaven

By George Carlin

Wow. Fuck me. I built my whole career fighting the establishment, religion, and conformity. I made an entire industry off the seven words you can't say on television (which F/X completely obliterated). I said religion is a sham and the afterlife is non-existent. This would be a "whoops" moment for me right now.

Well, a half "whoops." I wasn't totally wrong.

Let's go back. My name is George Carlin. You may remember me from my many comedy specials and great acting turns such as *Outrageous Fortune* and *Tommy the Tank Engine & Friends*. I am primarily known for my distaste for organized anything and my snappy fashion sense. I was hailed as a visionary and a pioneer (titles that both humble me and yet feel so right). I died a few months ago from heart failure, which, if you knew anything about me, pissed me off.

I was surprised to find, however, that as much as I held firm to the idea that this world would be the end, I find myself writing to you now—once and for all proving that a teapot circles the Earth (zing!).

Here's the deal, though. Nobody has it right—death, that is. Not the Catholics, the Atheists, the Buddhists, the Muslims, the Smurfs, the Neophytes, the Half Pints, the Agnostics (how would they have it right, though, since their very tenants are that they don't know—there in, however, making them the closest to the truth), the Vegetarians, the Sectarians, the Lovers, and the Fighters. You are all wrong. While I love pointing out how others suck, I too was unfaillingly inaccurate.

I know what your question must be now: what is it like where you are? Well, first of all, nobody would call it Heaven, nor is it anything like the living world. But, I cannot describe it to you, for it is different for each individual. Let me just say again: "whoops."

That whoops is certainly not directed as an apology. Organized religion still gets my ire and does not accurately reflect this "place" I inhabit. But, to all you believers that life ends with your last breath, let me tell you something: while our bodies may be weak, think about what people have proven that our minds can do. People can bend metal, can show psychosomatic symptoms or heal themselves through use of placebo (just believing that it worked), can improve their golf game just using visualization, can create or destroy the most magnificent, beautiful ideas. Why was I so loathe to believe it had powers beyond my understanding? Perhaps I spent too much of my brain power on how many wings I could eat at Hooters before they finally kicked me out.

Perhaps my distaste was a rubber band effect, a backlash at those who were SO SURE that an afterlife existed—and used their vision as a tool for judgment and hate. What I didn't recognize was my own use of tools for judgment and hate. Just because I didn't attach people or places did not make the scope much different. I disliked my fellow man, and I saw myself as better (well, maybe I was).

All I am saying is that the seven words you shouldn't use in your own version of Heaven, wherever you are right now, is: never, always, foolish, finished, hate, end, and impossible. I would also add the word "tinkle." I just don't like that word. ☒

Cantankerous No More!

By Arthur Miller

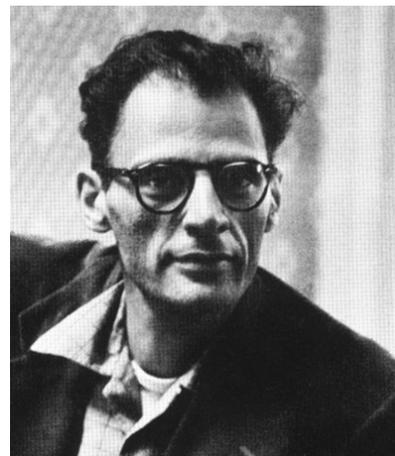
Well, you little punks, I am finally through being a grouchy old man. I have seen the light. For the past few years I have been writing about the death of the written word and the hostile takeover of all things electronic and easy (like a Fembot). However, you, dear readers, have lifted my spirits and brought me new hope for a literate future.

Through your vast and varied contribution to the tome-like collection of newsletters, you how shown a bright light in the wasteland of sound bites and text messages. You have proven that the written language cannot die, but in Darwin-like fashion, continues to transform and evolve as its threat is ever eminent.

You, dear reader, are my Noah's ark, going two-by-two, preserving that which cannot die when new spawn continues to be brought forth.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dan Fritz, the Noah of this brave ark, whose perseverance and dedication proved unwavering and revolutionary. Thank you Dan, for giving me a forum to write, bitch, extol, exalt, and entertain. You are my hero.

To the rest of you, enjoy my last glimpse of brilliance. Soak it up—it's awesome. ☒



...*The Spectrum*, from p. 1...

The dashing hero and the damsel in distress, the princess and her many suitors, etc...

These stories and ideas similar to it are what I wish to critique. They only reinforce and perpetuate a view that originated from an *arguably patriarchal society/world*, an idea that the role of men is taking charge, being courageous, and being assertive while the role of women is (or was) being submissive or being a "grand" prize to be won over. Take a step back and attempt to look at this from the other way around? *Why can't men be a prize to be won over?* I haven't heard very many arguments that can explain this without reinforcing the patriarchal view of the world. This sudden realization leads me to another question. *Why does anyone have to be submissive or be a prize in the first place?*

...continued next page...

...The Spectrum, from previous page...

“Tabula Rasa Phase”

Let's fast forward a couple of years...the time when puberty hits, and boys and girls no longer become "stupid" or "icky." We are now programmed sufficiently to know that boys should be encouraged to make the first move and show interest in girls. Girls are encouraged to wait for the first move and either acknowledge a mutual attraction or deny them. This brings me to my next concept, the **"Tabula Rasa Phase."** Prior to this contact, boys and girls have no experience with relationships, only vague notions of it through our friendly DSP. At this important time in life, boys are all romantics hoping to win the heart of a girl and marry her. Girls are all hoping to find that "Prince Charming" that will sweep them off their feet and fulfill their every desire, like a dashing hero should.

What both boys and girls fail to realize is that they are nowhere near the level of maturity needed to even attempt such a relationship. I will go on to even argue that this relationship cannot exist or is extremely rare. What's the consequence? Things inevitably go wrong and their naïve view of the world has been challenged or permanently damaged (not all that was seen on TV or said to them by their parents was true). Which leads to the inevitable breakup. This is the end of the "Tabula Rasa Phase" and is a defining moment in everyone's lives. Depending on the severity of the breakup (amicable to extreme hatred), **this begins the embitterment and separation process in which boys and girls start to develop into The Spectrum.**



The Spectrum

To simplify my explanation, I will stick to 2 types of men and women (i.e. the 2 extremes of The Spectrum).

For boys/men, when the DSP has been sufficiently challenged they can respond in either two ways.... One, they can deny what has been challenged and hold steadfastly to the DSP. They continue the search to find that princess who will be the love of their lives. These boys continue to be what many people call **"Hopeless Romantics."** The other extreme is to fully acknowledge the challenge, permanently rejecting the DSP and seeking retribution for their hurt feelings. This is what many refer to as "the scorned lover" who, I believe, becomes the **"Arrogant Asshole."** They are confident and assertive but also calculating and manipulating. They use the DSP, to get what they want from unsuspecting females.

For girls/women, when the DSP has been sufficiently challenged they can also respond in two ways. The first category is the same as the boys—girls continue to believe that someday their prince will come. The other extreme is slightly different. This is due to the inherent nature of the DSP, namely that boys make the initial contact and are supposed to be romantic. This new type of girl, one that has already had a bad experience and wishes to seek retribution can now exploit the DSP to get what she desires. She can play one boy off another, she can use the tabula rasa boy to acquire things. I refer to this type of girl as the **"Calculating Bitch," "Gold Digger,"** or **"Mistress."**

“The Optimal Middle Ground” (OMG)

The Spectrum is the playing field where these boys and girls (and ultimately men and women) move and interact with each other. I believe that their relative positions in The Spectrum can predict the dynamics of most relationships. This explains why seemingly good guys seem to get used and abused. Why nice girls always seem to find the jerks. As much as this may seem painful and unfair, I contend that this is the natural progression in each individual's journey in love. What I believe wholeheartedly is that with each experience, we fluctuate between the two extremes, trying to find the **"Optimal Middle Ground" or**

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OMG, a place where romance and confidence meet, a place where both men and women know with greater certainty what they want and actively search for it.

It is through The Spectrum that I am able to understand certain viewpoints on relationships. Below is a few of those perspectives:

“Guys are Jerks!!! — If anything, I have been labeled as a "good/nice guy," which obviously necessitates that my college life gave me very many girl friends but not many girlfriends. What I heard **CONSTANTLY** was how men are dogs and that men are jerks, and that they wished they could find that special someone. All I could do was attempt to comfort them, but all I could think of was how hypocritical some girls can be. Now before you start yelling at me, please read further. What I find as a tendency for the majority of women whom I know or know of, is that in some aspects, they are closer to the Romantic Side of The Spectrum (because if they were calculating bitches, they wouldn't be **COMPLAINING!**). They continue to search for this illusion of a Prince Charming but fail to realize that they are dealing with the other side of The Spectrum. They become the unfortunate victims of those previously exploited by Calculating Bitches. Girls in the OMG, toughened and wiser with each experience, are able to minimize their risk with the naïve Hopeless Romantics and Arrogant Assholes. This replicates itself and can be seen from the male perspective of The Spectrum.

“The Bad Girl Tendency” — This could also easily apply to the “Bad Boy Tendency,” or the phenomenon in which men actively seek the wrong type of girl. She's that girl on the stripper pole, that girl with the oversized sunglasses and oversized sense of superiority, that girl you just can't take home. I see this not as an aberration, but a typical response when the DSP has been challenged. Instead of looking for Ms. Right, men have a compulsion to seek the opposite. Any potential relationships are most likely to fail, leading one to question why one would consider such an option. I assert that this experience is a subconscious desire to reach the OMG by forcibly rejecting the DSP.

“Objectification” — Most agree that men have been known to objectify women. Under this belief, men are seen using women as objects of desire. According to the DSP, men must idolize their mates, beautiful prizes to be won. This is the seemingly hopeless fate that romantics aspire to have. Arrogant Assholes manipulate the DSP to seek retribution for past wrongs. Using women becomes the sedative to the pain. Both extremes objectify women. However, if it is wrong to do so, then it should also be wrong for women to **EXPECT** that they should be won over. If women continue to feel this way about themselves, there will be no way that this objectification will ever fully disappear.

I will go one step further to argue that women are not completely innocent of the same accusation. Women **ALSO** objectify men. I explain this as the **"Ken Doll Tendency,"** or the tendency to view men as "projects" or something women can change for the better. This is an off-shoot of the DSP, as young girls are programmed to believe that they can control the relationship.

I have my Barbie, with my Barbie Dreamhouse, Barbie sportscar, and Perfect Ken. I have the perfect life...

Every action is controlled by the will of a young girl, who does not necessarily understand the realistic need of negotiation or compromise in a relationship. It is only through relationship experience that women may begin to realize and reject this form of DSP. Unfortunately, it is through these experiences that Arrogant Assholes are created. A wise man, Dave Chappelle said it best: *Chivalry is dead...and women killed it.*

The Optimal Middle Ground is a chance to move away from the unfortunate extremes. It is a place where I truly believe gender equality exists. I even argue that women **SHOULD** initiate the “First Move” (This is a separate article/conversation entirely). This is not to say that men and women are exactly the same. I believe in a gender equality where both man and woman accept the other for who they are. This can only occur if the person has had enough experience with relationships to understand who they are and what they want. This self-realization can only occur after one has made his or her unique journey through The Spectrum.

In constant pursuit of a deeper understanding of relationships, I'm happy to hear any feedback. I find this is always a great conversation to start in a group. hermandulay@yahoo.com ☒

