

# Finding Mememo

a book in search of an author



James R. Hugunin





# Finding Mememo

a book in search of an author

James R. Hugunin

**Journal of Experimental Fiction #80**



**JEF Books**  
**Depth Charge Publishing**  
**Aurora, Illinois**



Copyright 2018 by James R. Hugunin  
All Rights Reserved

ISBN 1-884097-80-4  
ISBN-13 978-1-884097-80-5

ISSN 1084-547X

The Journal of Experimental Fiction  
"The foremost in innovative fiction"

JEF Books are distributed  
to the trade by SPD: Small Press Distribution  
and to the academic journal market by EBSCO



# Finding Mememo

(A Book also in Search of a Reader)



G.O.N.E.'s CD cover for Sado Muga's *Ballads for Ballard* illustrating the song "Peeking into Another Dimension," whose lyrics include: "Particle man, particle man / Doin' the things a particle can / Is ya a dot or a speck? / When yer underwater does ya get wet?" Muga played on the Serbian rock band Smak's 1999 album *Eggregore*.



Sado Muga, Mistress of Eggregore, author of *The Sound of Time* (G.O.N.E. 2015), at a G.O.N.E. meeting. She sports a tat on her left arm reading: EVER UNFIXED. "The bandwidth of human hearing is a fold on the vibratory continuum of matter," writes Sado Muga, Wishwer Watts' composer/arranger girl-friend; she continues, "There is no difference in principle between a universe, a religion, and a hoax — all involve an engineering of manifestation, or practical fiction." As a child, she wrote an invented version of the South Orkney Islands National Anthem, meant to be performed by a chorus of hundreds of gulls and synchronized singers.

*At this time I also believed, courtesy of my hero Ernst Hemingway, that great writing required a Terrible Event One Had Witnessed.*

— "Vonnegut in Sumatra," George Saunders

*A book of philosophy should be in part a very particular species of detective novel, in part a kind of science-fiction.*

— *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze

*We are weaving participation, disenchantment, and emancipation together into a whirlwind of dissolution toward new worlds.*

— Liner notes to above CD, Sado Muga

*The future is a better key to the present than the past.*

— *Fictions of Every Kind*, J. G. Ballard

*. . . the future has a more intense reality than either the present or the past.*

— from "The Emergence of Hyperstition," Cybernetic Culture Research Unit

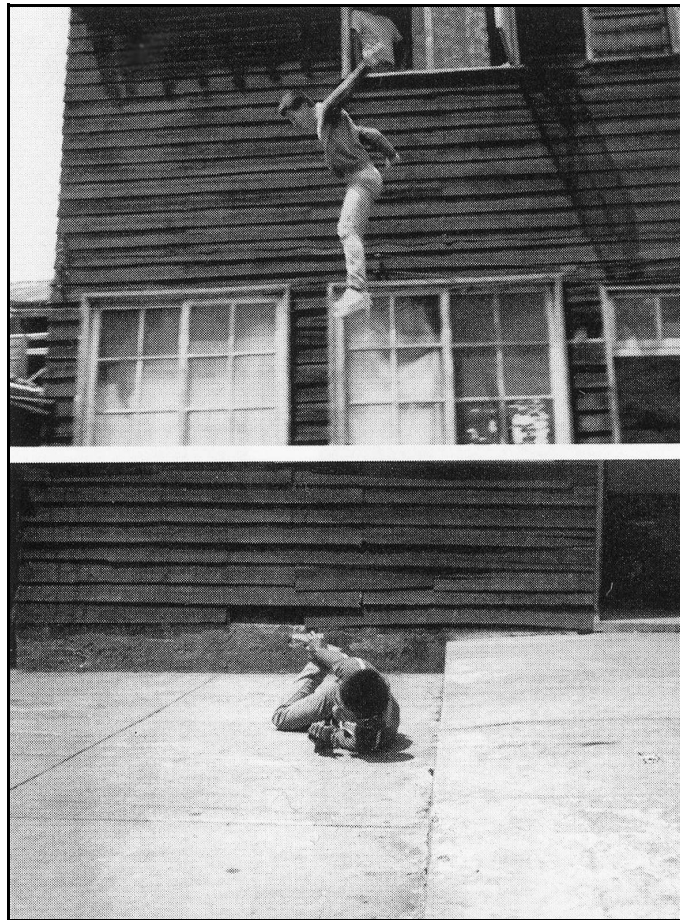
*The reckless future, the mystery of what has not yet happened: this, too, he learned, can be preserved in memory.*

— *The Invention of Solitude*, Paul Auster



# This Text Is Dedicated To

Those who have felt the pain of being  
rejected or separated and felt different  
from what the perceived norm might be.



Tehching Hsieh's art performance *Jump Piece* (1973) from Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump Shots" collection. "After a jump, the momentum remains in your body as a charge, a whoosh, a sense of exhilaration — the effect persists, the fear and exhilaration, the frisson" (Sado Muga to Hy Grader).

*I do like to listen to people who have been sidelined for one  
reason or another.*

— W. G. Sebald in an interview



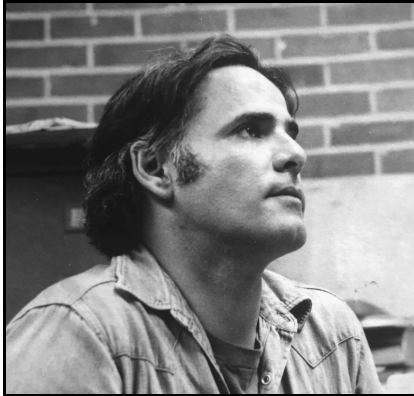


# In Memoriam

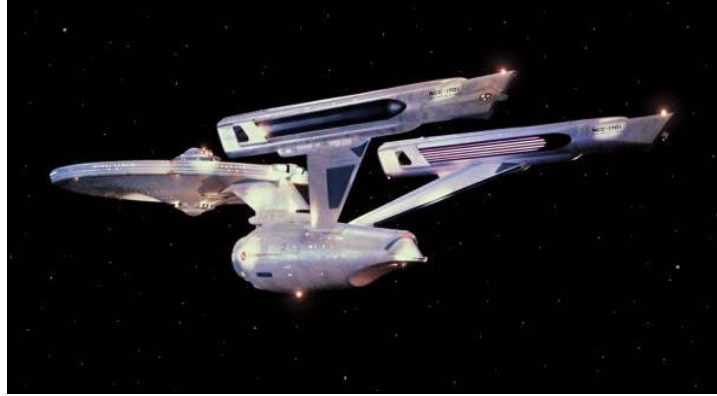
Virgil Mirano (1937 - 2018)

Artist, Special Film Effects, Cinematographer

An old friend whom I went to graduate school with and who hired me to work with him on the first *Star Trek* movie's special effects.



Virgil Mirano as a young man



The star ship *Enterprise* (1978) photo by Virgil Mirano

Virgil's Filmography:

<http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/person/1222237%7C0/Virgil-Mirano/filmography-with-synopsis.html>

Jno Cook, Chicago artist/teacher (1940 - 2018)



A man who always inspired me with his vision and humor

Jno's Website:

<https://jnocook.net/index.htm>



# Special Thanks To

My wife, Marianne Nathan  
Felissia Cappelletti & Ulysses Gerdes  
Lewis Koch & Dallas Johnson  
Al Wayne & Marcus Beaghan  
Carlton Davis & Stephen Perkins  
Colleagues: Lisa Wainwright, Jim Elkins

*To my eyes disciplined thought is not as valuable as free thought.*  
— Hippolyte Taine

*Will you, Dear Reader, be a student merely or a seer? Read your fate, see what is before you, and walk on into futurity.*  
— *Walden*, Thoreau as futzed with by Hy "Mememo" Grader

*Precisely because of its cover-to-cover wrongheadedness and absolute indifference to the monster of "marketability," this ludicakadroman can hardly fail to fall into the wrong hands — that is to say, the hand of the wrong readers, who are, of course, the best of all possible readers: the very ones who are most likely to make the wildest, most imaginative and creative wrong turns of their own, and therefore the most far-reaching discoveries.*

— *An Open Entrance to the Shut Palace of Wrong Numbers*, Franklin Rosemont as futzed with by Hy "Mememo" Grader

*Hypothetical sky, black-airless and grid-tugging. Gravitational field equations, solutions, as language spins on its axis. Sky becomes substance.*  
— "The Distortion of Spacetime," Jessica Reed

*At the gate he stopped me and asked: "Where is the master going?" "I don't know," I said, "just out of here, just out of here. Out of here nothing else, it's the only way I can reach my goal."*  
— "The Departure," in *The Collected Short Stories of Franz Kafka*

This book is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual persons or institutions is merely coincidental.

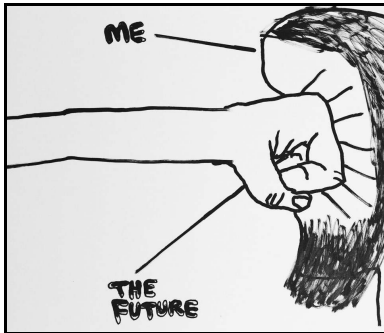
Cover photos, Lewis Koch, 2013 and 2014



# Preface to the Second Edition

*Venice is indeed the surpassing-all-other embodiment of that 'absolute' ambiguity' which is radiant life containing certain death.*

—*Venice Desired*, Tony Tanner



This drawing selected by Hy Grader supports his contention that "I am a ruin among ruins." It may have inspired the photo below (or vice-versa). It could even be seen as figuring Venice's quite dubious future. John Ruskin exercised an historical triadism (beginning, middle, end) in writing about Venice; Hy, adoring Ruskin and seeing much of Ruskin in himself, also meditated on such a threesome as applied to his own life's journey.

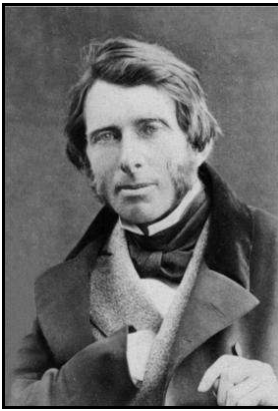
Hy "Mememo" Grader would welcome this second edition of *Finding Mememo*. It proves what he always believed in: "The liquid uncertainty of temporal knowledge," and "whatever roughness rage, some exquisite sea(see)-thing will always surface to save" (in Hy's story this entity is Wishwer Watt's mini-sub and his vision of D-travel, see page 260). What has surfaced since the first edition of my editing of Grader's writings is due to Dallas Johnson's persistence in tracking down the seeming sea-tracklessness of new and revised .wpd files of Hy's text. The land-locked flash-drive from which I culled Hy's text (see page xxv) for the first edition has now been supplemented. Dal cracked Hy's arcane password, "Doge-Fos1423\$" (date of Doge Foscari's accession to power in Venice) to a Drop Box in The Cloud. I worked these new files into this new edition, taking the opportunity to correct typos and improve my own glosses.



Hy "Meme" Grader's photo of a floating hand fragment, Venice, Italy. I feel this image "Meme-izes" Venice, just as J. M. W. Turner's paintings of that city "Turner-izes" it, or Ruskin's writings thereon "Ruskin-izes" Venice.

## Finding Mememo

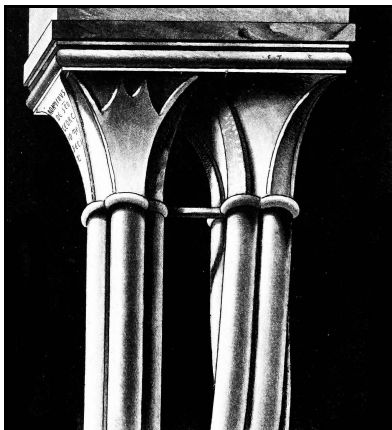
Hy's constant revisions recall to mind something he said to me once concerning his approach to writing: "Trust in sea-tracklessness." As the reader will soon discover, Hy ("Meme") had this "thing" for the sea — "At sea there's rarely something to look at, but always something to see"— for ships, submarines in particular. His writings are suffused with references to such. One notebook entry of his reads: "Enveloped by the waters of Lake Michigan, my body feels unusually agile, free of pain; speeding up my legs and arms, I cut through the waves, wounding them, the waters softened." The best thing his wife, Dorinda, did for him (according to Hy) was to get him to honeymoon in Venice (despite Meme's fear of the odious smell of the canals), get him on vaporettos, gondolas, out on the water. "I do not say *Venice*, by chance," he told me once, adding that, like the



John Ruskin's framed portrait sitting on Hy Grader's desk.

poet Byron, he saw from his approaching motorboat "Venice's structures rise as the stroke of the Enchanter's wand, a pomp of pile in towering evidence of a dreamed of utopia" arising before him. And, ominously in Meme's case, a sign of a sharp sense of loss, of a world irrecoverably changing, and port of *farewell*. There Meme indulged his passion for 1) the sea, for islands (118 such fragments make up Venice; he often spoke of everything disintegrating into parts, and those parts into more parts); 2) for exquisite seafood; and 3) Ruskin's, Turner's, Pound's, and Sartre's response to the city's mysteries. I think that *water* (especially surrounding Venice) was for Meme a trope signifying both the realm of the real *and* the false, Being *and* Nothingness. Venice's topos made those realizations more vivid, to him.

If, for Ruskin, Venice was "fragments disguised by restoration," so could one aptly describe Meme's writing (for that matter, my redaction of his writing). The mysterious and multiple significations of that romantic sea-city — Melville's "reefs of palaces" — mimic Meme's own writing where he coaxes value from his own decline and often explores the present form of his past. Venice, as dreamed by



Straight and twisted columns (Basilica of San Zeno, Verona) as noted in John Ruskin's famous *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53) that inspired Hy.

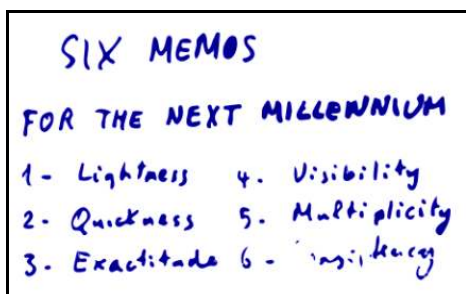
Ruskin and Henry James, figures in Meme's imagination (see page 548). He was drawn to Ruskin for his sense of separateness, his art criticism, and his politics contra a nation despising literature, science, art, and nature, despising compassion, and concentrating its soul on Money. Meme told me once, "I read *Fors Clavigera* [Ruskin's series of letters starting in the 1870s addressed to British workmen] — and saw that author's 'aleatory' ap-proach to writing allowed him free reign to make random associations and digressions. I realized that approach informs my own modest scribbles."

Meme, at times, would (I think unconsciously) put his right hand inside his coat, mimicking Ruskin in a photo that sat prominently on his writing desk. In a notebook entry, Meme notes Ruskin's noting a peculiar pairing of a straight column and a



# Finding Mememo

twisted one found in Verona's San Zeno Basilica. Meme took inspiration and jotted: "The perfect figure for my writing: take something straight, appropriate it, but twist it. Ruskin again inspires me. Fools 'Ruskin' were angels fear to tread." And writing was, for Ruskin, a sacred duty of self, which Hy certainly agreed with; concerning the author's personal vision, Ruskin wrote in "Of King's Treasures": . . . the piece of true knowledge, or sight, which his share of sunshine and earth has permitted him to seize. He would fain set it down for ever; engrave it on rock, if he could: saying, 'This the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another: my life was as vapor, and is not; but this I saw and knew; this, if anything of mine, worth your memory.'" Under Ruskin's influence Ezra Pound celebrated the author's right to challenge the reader's attention, so as to let a book "be a ball of light" in the reader's experience. Let these Ruskin/Pound musings bespeak Meme's bright intentions.



Besides finding previously unknown .wpd files, our PI bud, Dallas, ran across two overlooked notebook entries by Meme, one ominous, one hopeful: 1) "I think contingent faculty are being killed at our school at the rate of one per day"; 2) scribbles in blue ink of writer Italo Calvino's *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, the qualities of "lightness, quickness, precision, visibility, multiplicity." This entry began by citing Austrian writer Robert

Musil: "Construct a person from nothing but quotations!," detailing a visit to a fortune-teller who told our buddy he was "special and not where he belongs," adding, "You are unsure of where your place is. You must seek it." Only two days after this entry, Meme absconded for 11 days to a Wisconsin lake cottage where he stumbled upon Wishwer Watt. Dal's sleuthing up there revealed key clues to the mystery of Meme's demise.



Joliet Prison, panopticon cellblock as featured in the 1948 film *Calling Northside 777*.

By the way, Dal's just started a new cycle of mystery stories featuring a new PI character, Jack "Jump" McFall — suggested by the theme of *falling* as per Meme's novel and a nod to famed journalist Jack McPhall (1904-1983) who rescued a man from a wrongful murder conviction with his probing articles for the *Chicago Tribune* that inspired the 1948 movie starring James Stewart as McPhall, *Calling Northside 777* (a flick adored by Hy and Dal for its shot of the interior of Illinois's Joliet Prison's *panopticon* cellblock).

Dal had got his inspiration while sipping beer in south London's famous gang hang-out, Thomas à Beckett pub, overhearing stories about the infamous 1950s Cockney criminals the Kray Twins, who inspired the infamous 1971 crime/sex/rock and roll film *Performance* starring Mick Jagger and Anita Pallenberg. The result was *Enfantillage*, wherein PI McFall is described physically as "turning corners in a manner mimicking actor Martin Clunes' straightlaced character in the British TV series *Doc Martin*."

# Finding Mememo



*Yeux Glauques* (Glaucous Eyes)



Glock 17 (Austrian)

Each mystery will be, said Dallas, “based on the investigation reaching a critical turning of a corner.” In this initial outing, sited in a Paris besieged by “Yellow Vests”, PI McFall, takes on a British ex-pat crime lord whose flesh has “a cadaverous glow of boiled pork and a glance fixed on nothing from under a forced frown.” He’s known as *Yeux Glauques* (Glaucous Eyes) as he repeatedly uses the expression “You Glock!” as a put down to his largely Austrian underlings. His features are the epitome of violence: “There escaped from his eyes, his nostrils, his mouth, even the palm of his hand and radiant and somber anger visible as a haze.” Dal got a cigarette company to cover printing costs by including many smoking scenes therein: “Glaucques’d take a quick drag on his Gauloises, blow out about a third of the smoke immediately, inhale the rest, and let it come out as he talked. He was incapable of making an awkward move.” In the opening scene, Glaucques bursts into his rival’s hideout, pulls a gun on Schmiedleitner, blows an invisible speck of dust off the backsight, then empties his gun while bellowing: “I am the world itself, come to pay you a visit!” A fun read. Even Dorinda liked it.

Meme’s wife, “Dory”, wants me to tell you that her husband’s practice of “schizo-writing” had, in the past, was aimed at (as he himself put it): “getting through the wall (the reality principle) and keeping-on-truckin’, to suppress the noise of the senses and dip my forehead into streams of transcendence.” Meme, like Austrian Karl Krauss (b. 1874), had increasingly found himself in a world directly opposed to all his convictions and hopes, was then tested by a traumatic event: witnessing a young man’s suicide attempt by jumping from a second-story balcony inside Chicago’s famed Art Institute Museum (see Prologue page xv) — that museum one half of what Hy called “The “Dual Art Monarchy,” the other half The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. What followed is a weird and tragic tale.



From Hy “Mememo” Grader’s “Jump Shots” collection



Afterwards, Meme began his morbid “Jump Shots” collection (see above), became increasingly paranoid and hell bent to write a “Maximalist novel” (see Stefano Ercolino’s 2014 book by the same name on this mode of writing and its complex characteristics) that’d out-perform Thomas Pynchon and David Foster Wallace; in the process he, seeking awe and wonder, came under the influence of Wishwer Watt and the G.O.N.E. D-travel group (see page 297). As Dorinda guiltily put it: “My hubby might never’ve run into the clutches of that damn snake charmer and his goofy G.O.N.E. group if he hadn’t been running as fast as he could from me. He once told me *I leave you behind. You are too slow. I leave you behind.* Wish I had respected his writing more. I wish.”

Ichi is taking on his share of guilt, too. When Hy complained his pillow rarely stayed in place after a night of disturbing dreams, he had told him about a type of Japanese *y kai, makuragaeshi* (pillow-shifters), that futzed with sleepers’ pillows, going on to mention that famed Japanese folklorist Miyata Noboru proposed the pillow was “a threshold device” through which the dreamer crosses into *another world* (my emphasis). In denial, Ichi is, in between re-re-watching *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*, expressing *hanshin-hangi* (half-belief/half-doubt) about Meme demise, going online daily to watch bot artist Dora Reed’s *@infinite\_scream* constantly tweeting its anguished “AAAH” with its varying combinations of A’s and H’s.

Poor Dorinda, her skelter of moles along the small of her back no longer scratched by His Hy-handedness. No longer being amused by his *maybeing*. Now going from birds-atwitter moments with her husband, to recalling their relationship as “unknottable,” to then seeing Hy’s death mask in fast clouds overhead, leaving her behind, she suffers the soul-sapping sudden sorrow of widowhood. Despite her woes, Dory wants to thank you, Dear Reader, for your patience (you will need it) in engaging with her deceased’s odd, meta-leveling text he’d labeled a *ludicakadroman*, of which a hostile critic (he dissed Wallace’s *Infinite Jest*) tweeted of the first edition: “What surer sign the creative aquifers are running dry than a writer creating a writer-character, what with its unstoppable foot-notes, editorial glosses, and shards of pirated verbal material — frequent water and bathroom breaks are needed.”



Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas display

In defense, I must say it is obvious Meme’s aesthetic use of revival and redeployment was influenced by art historian Aby Warburg’s famous *Mnemosyne Atlas* (1924-29), structuring Meme’s scripto-visual material akin to Pieter Bruegel’s *Children’s Games* (1560) where, looking at the overall canvas, one sees only chaos, but when close, examining individual details, one sees playful (adult-faced!) children performing specific language games.

He told me he once dreamt he was Captain Nemo — afterwards dubbing himself “Captain Memo” — ramming an armada of formidable AuthorShips, tearing them apart, and then re-assembling the floating debris into one huge weird pirate ship, topped with a black flag. Indeed, this book is best read one shard and spar at a time, over time, so as to *not* run overtime, inducing the reader’s brain to an untimely time-out.

*I was taken from this world and transported through the skies, past the nearest stars and beyond the farthest, to another world.*

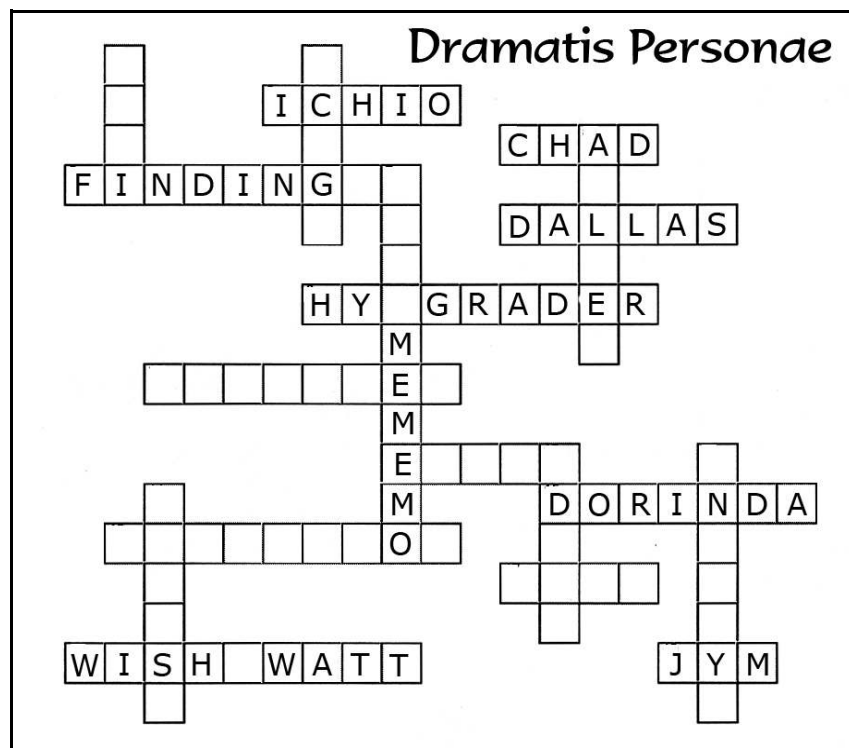
— from *Ojibway Ceremonies*, Basil Johnson

— James R. Hugunin, Santa Fe, NM



# Table of Contents

Frontispiece Gallery .....	unpaginated (56 pages)
Introduction .....	i - xlvii
Hy's Text .....	1 - 450
Epilogue .....	451 - 532
Appendix .....	533
About the Author .....	553





# Hy "Mememo" Grader



*Man and Language* (On the verso: "I always wanted to generate content when I grew up."; also inscribed on the verso, a note from Ichi : "Came Mememo, his mind leaping like dolphins.") Photo by Dorinda Grader, 2010.

*How can we read his [Hy Grader's] theory of writing in order to read him when we would already have to understand it in order to understand it? But he cannot, or will not, say; he can only quote. I had to open five different dictionaries in my browser, scribble extensive notes, to get at deeper the themes in his writing.*

— Vera Wisdom, "Ach! Der Ludicakadroman," in *Das Ding Dong*

*Wanted: Adults seeking moral guidance and intellectual challenge in stories about crazed jumpers, one-eyed giants, nutty knights who fight windmills, paranoid dimension-travelers, martinet academics, and clue-hungry PIs.*

— Excerpt from a promotional mailing by author Hy "Mememo" Grader

*The progress of any writer is marked by those moments when he [sic] manages to outwit his [sic] own inner police system.*

— Ted Hughes

*How does one fashion a book of resistance, a book of truth in an empire of falsehood, or a book of rectitude in an empire of vicious lies?*

— Interview with Philip K. Dick, 1974 from *Only Apparently Real*



Don't Disappear (Hy "Mememo" Grader, 2013) by Ichi Honne

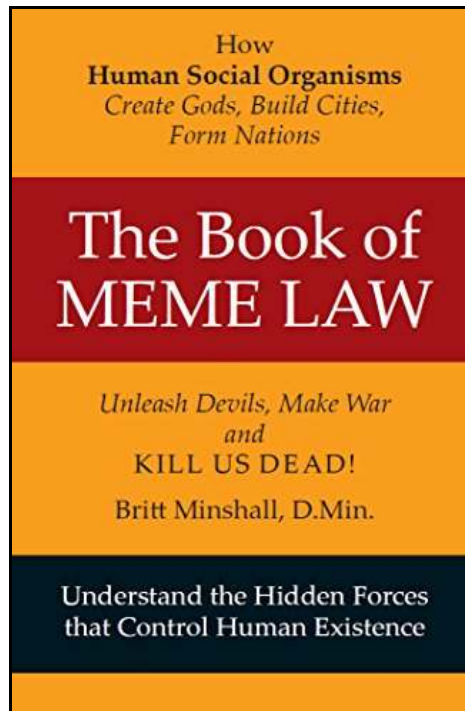
*Whatever one writes, whenever one writes, it is always on the cusp of disappearance.*

— *Zoroaster's Children and Other Travels*, Marius Kociejowski

*Time is like falling, I thought. We are always on the verge of falling forward into nothingness; but, in each moment, the world becomes anew, and the creative advance continues.*

— C. Robert Mesle, *Process-Relational Philosophy*





The Greatest Mystery about ALL Human Behavior has now been EXPOSED. DID YOU KNOW: There are two of YOU. One the INDIVIDUAL (physical soulful self); the other the Social self (Meme member). There is rarely a connection between the two. QUESTION: EVER WONDER WHY:

- Holiday family reunions turn to chaos?
- Countries WAR constantly?
- Wealthy Powerful Executives RUIN businesses and NEVER pay the price?
- Different Races and Cultures continually clash?
- The Religious, who "believe" in LOVE — Kill so often?
- COPS murder Citizens — then Go Free?
- Humankind does the same destructive things — over and over again?

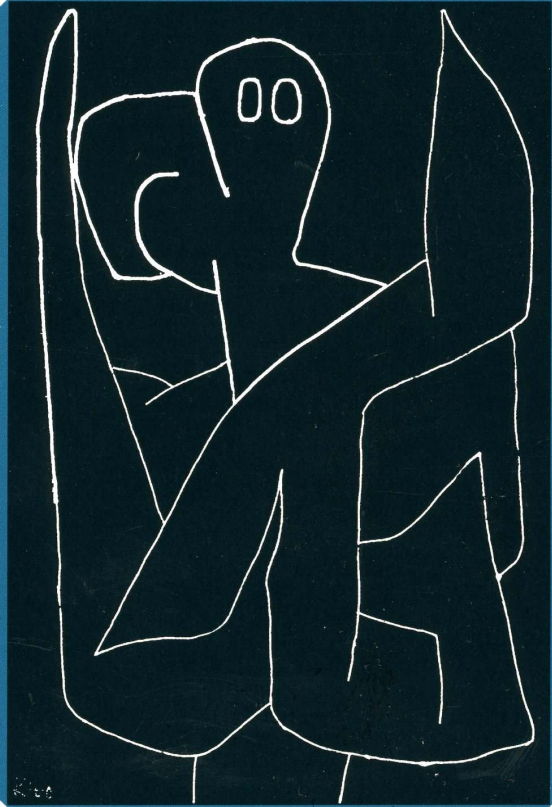
ANSWER: IT'S MEME LAW!

*Stories are like parasites finding a host. In other words, memes.*  
— *Time Travel, a History*, James Gleick

*. . . statements about the future are also actions in the present: they change things, they create new possible realities . . .*  
— "Psephology in Free Fall," Sam Kriss in  
*The Baffler*, No.34 (2017)

*Once I was small bones / in my mother's body / just taking a nap.  
/ Now my feet can't find the sap.*  
— *Some Things to Place in a Coffin*, Bill Manshire

# THE DECENT SOCIETY



Avishai Margalit

translated by Naomi Goldblum

Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Bible" from which he was always quoting

*For the anarchist, humiliation means curbing the autonomy of individuals through coercive institutions. . . . Distortion of the order of priorities through which people express their autonomy constitutes humiliation. . . . the very possibility of coercion — that is, the very fact that people are subject to the good graces of an authority — constitutes humiliation. . . . Insults may injure the offended person's self-esteem. Humiliation injures one's sense of intrinsic value.*

— *The Decent Society*, Avishai Margalit





Hy "Mememo" Grader's (a math freak) Sweat Shirt



Ichii 's gift to Hy: a T-shirt with the Kanji symbol for "Rain"



Medicine pouch given to Hy Grader by The Shaman containing, for good luck, a small bear shaped from jet flint and an ounce of yellow pollen (see pp. 290, 525).

*The most abject of all needs is to confide, to confess.  
It's the soul's need to externalize.*

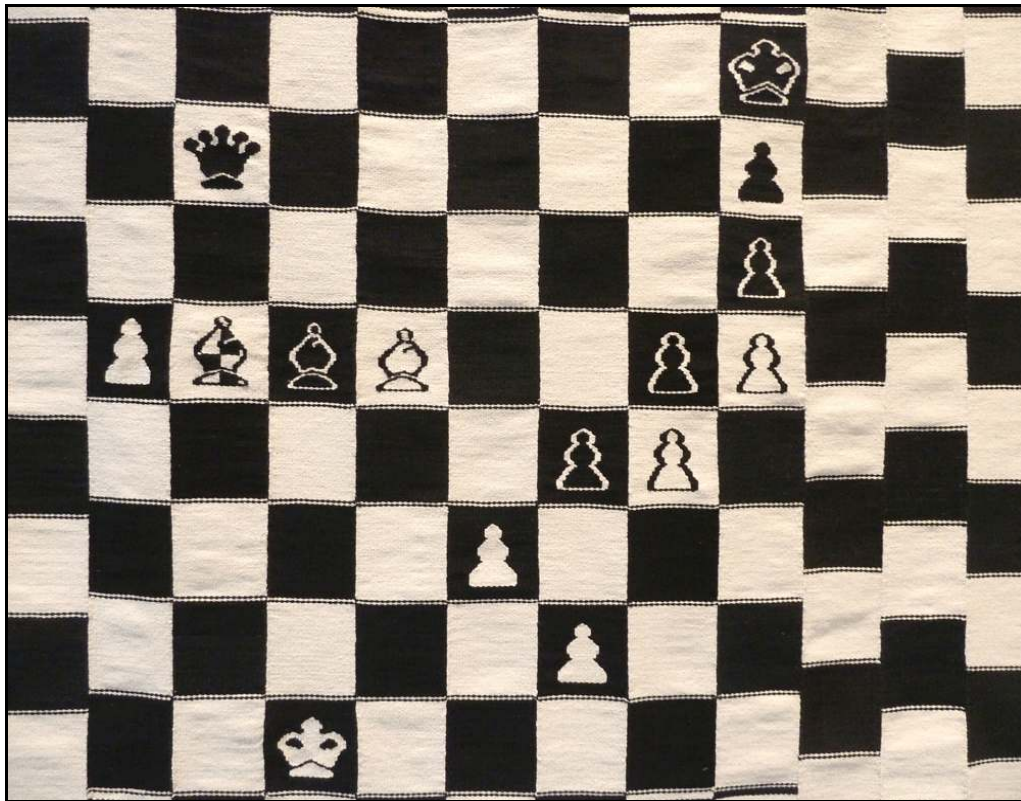
— Fernando Pessoa, *The Book of Disquiet*

*It's the truth even if it didn't happen.*

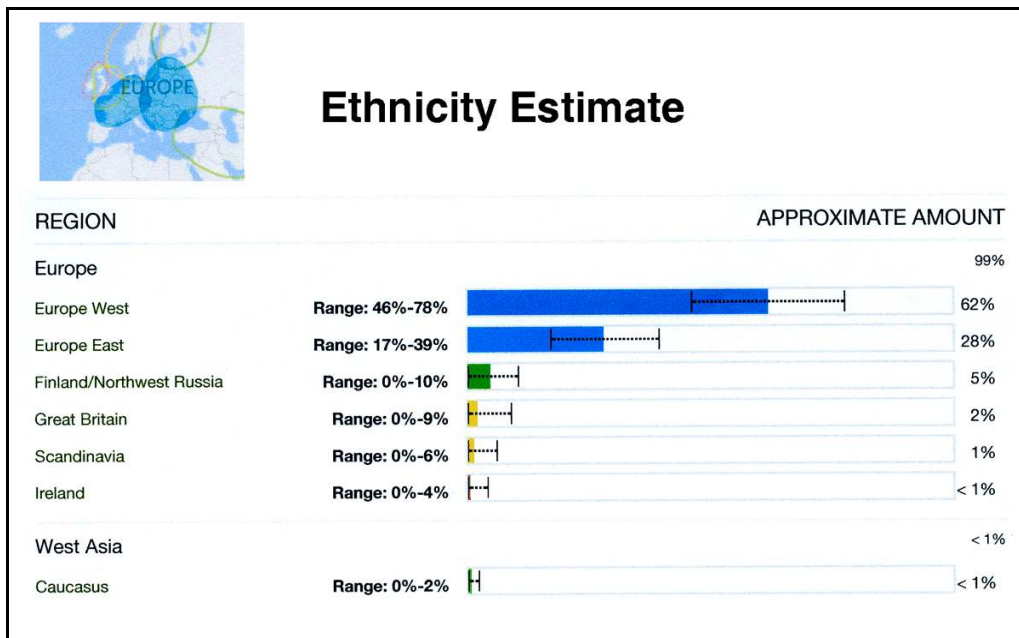
— Chief Bromden in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

*Me? I'm just a 'Caldron of thoughts taking itself for a man.'*

— Hy "Mememo" Grader, quoting Henri Michaux, in  
"Memo on Mememo," interview with the editor of  
the literary journal WUI (Vol. 5, Issue 3, 2015)



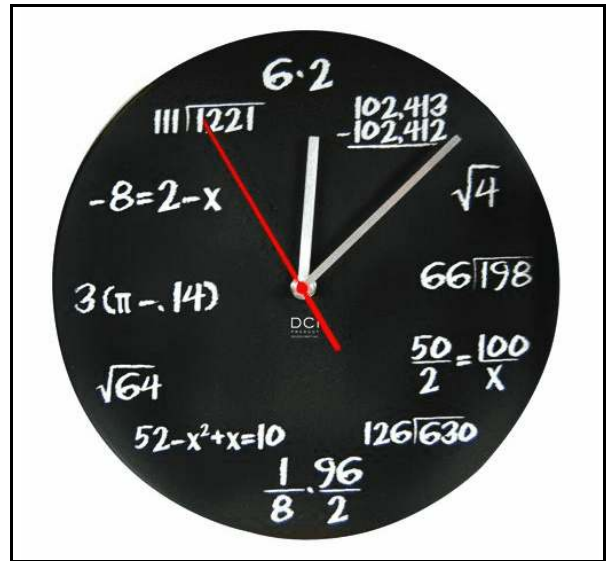
One of Hy Grader's chess board dinner place mats; "Meme" said the Art World is a game of chess: King (museum director), Queen (collectors, museum trustees), Rooks (curators), Knights (dealers), Bishops (critics), Pawns (artists) with social, financial, and political motions at work on the board.



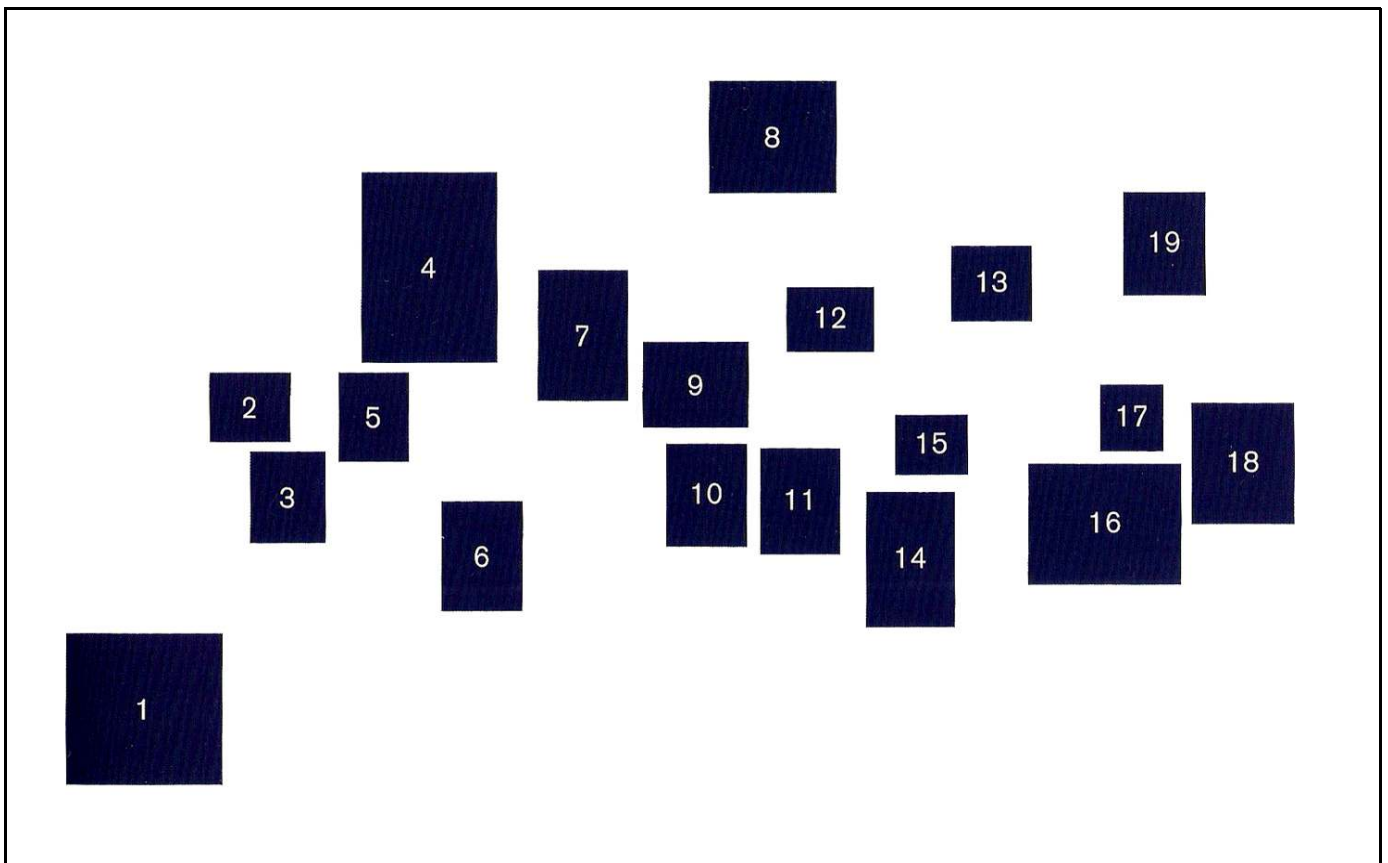
Mememo's DNA Ethnicity Test Results



The pleasure of the pirated text: Hy "Mememo" Grader's Plagiarize Stamp placed in books he "copped" text from. Hy wrote in his notebook: "Paul Gauguin said 'in art one is either a plagiarist or a revolutionary,' but I want to be *both*."



Hy "Mememo" Grader's Pop-Quiz Clock (hung in his studio); given to him by his wife, Dorinda Grader.



*The Fractured "I": Photographs Not Available* (wall-size art installation of self-portraits, 1975) by Hy "Mememo" Grader.





Hy "Mememo" Grader's Torn Rotator Cuff, source of constant pain

1) A strange and \_\_\_\_\_ fate seemed to keep him helpless and unhappy, despite occasional interludes of \_\_\_\_\_ .

a) malevolent.....indigency

b) morose.....ingenuity

c) virulent.....tension

d) ineluctable.....serenity

e) intriguing.....inactivity

1) a b c d e

*A Strange Fate Awaited* (postcard art mailed to Ichi the day Hy died) Hy "Mememo" Grader



Selections from Hy “Meme” Grader’s sea-themed collection of artifacts and musings:

*The pitching of a ship is said to rebuff traditional human psychology.*

*Writing is the ship that makes the sea of speech navigable. . . . writing reveals language as the sails reveal the wind. . . . The reader activates the book as the ship activates the sea. . . .*



*Absent from California, I miss shores where my shoes trod on damp crackling mass, razor-shells, squeaking pebbles, and even sieved wood cast from some lost Armada. I buy a poster of one of California artist Vija Celmins’ famous Ocean Drawings from the mid-70s.*

— citations from Hy Grader’s  
Moleskine notebook



*City Under the Sea* (1965) movie poster, Jacques Tourneur, director



*War-Gods of the Deep* (1965) movie poster, Jacques Tourneur, director



The Sinking of the *Bingo-Maru* in the Japanese film *Gojira* (1954)



More selections from Hy “Meme” Grader’s sea-themed collection. A bipolar-like musing upon the sea in “Touch and Go: A Midshipman’s Story” (underlined in red in Hy’s copy of *Uncollected Stories* by Arthur Conan Doyle (1982):

*What is there in all nature which is more beautiful or more inspiring than the sight of the great ocean, when a merry breeze sweeps over it, and the sun glints down upon the long green ridges with their crests of snow? Sad indeed must be the heart which does not respond to the cheery splashing of of the billows and their roar upon the shingle. . . . There are times, however, when the great heaving giant is in another and darker mood. Those who, like myself, have been tossed upon the dark waters through a long night, while the great waves spat their foam over them in their fury, and the fierce wind howled above them, will ever after look upon the sea with other eyes. However peaceful it may be, they will see the lurking fiend beneath its smiling surface.*



*. . . across a planet that’s mainly water anyway, not earth. They should have named it “Ocean”.*

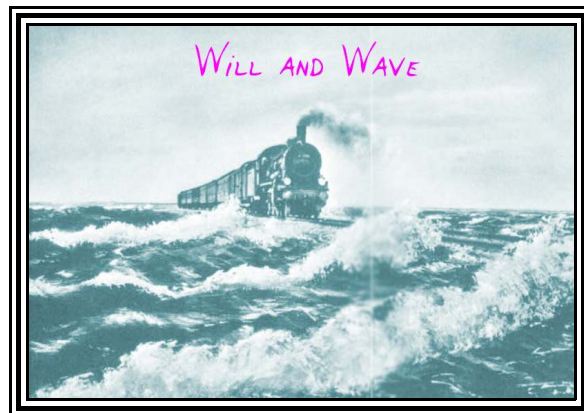
— “What the River Saw,” Diane Ackerman

*When I submerge my mini-sub, the condensation inside covers the walls, dimpling into tiny individual drops that follow an almost fractal pattern, jeez, like someone writing out the secrets of the universe in the most transitory medium they can find. Ah, that smell of the damp steel! The space is tight, confining, unyielding, but the views outside are way wondrous.*

— Wishwer Watt cited by Hy “Mememo” Grader in his Moleskine notebook

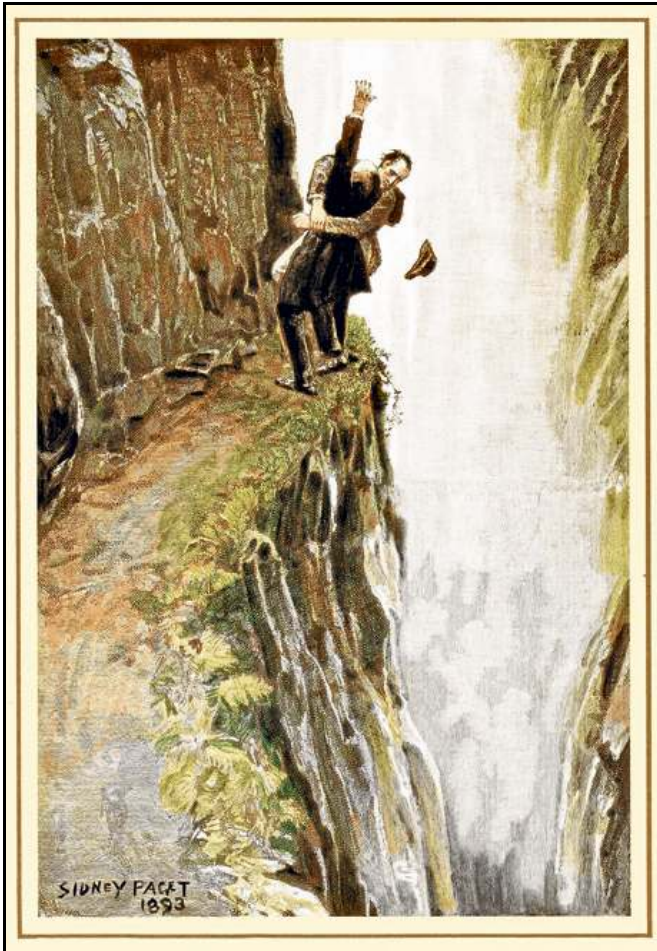


Wishwer Watts’ Mini-Sub “The Sinkable Molly Orange” (see page 260)



From Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 1 (1987). A postcard from that German author’s mother’s album, which Hy copped, colored, framed, titled after an essay by Nietzsche, and hung in his bathroom over his electric sonic toothbrush. Hy was enchanted with both trains (several of his relatives were train engineers) and anything pelagic, i.e., referencing the open sea. The sea being, “the past from time immemorial.” Hy often felt he was “a sea animal forced to become a land animal.”





Sherlock Holmes and Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls, from "The Final Problem" from Hy "Mememo" Grader's collection of Sherlockiana.

*She reaches the waterfall, seizes a breath, and jumps with both feet at once.*

— "Don't Press Charges and I Won't Sue," Charlie Jane Anders

*He [James Joyce] is obsessed with falling bodies, their weight and volume and the speed at which they fall. Ulysses is a heavy book . . . a fallen book. . . . metaphysics collapses into . . . meat-physics.*

— "Why Ulysses Matters," Tom McCarthy

*"It's a waterfall," he said, "what counts is the fall, not the water."*

— Red Grass, Boris Vian

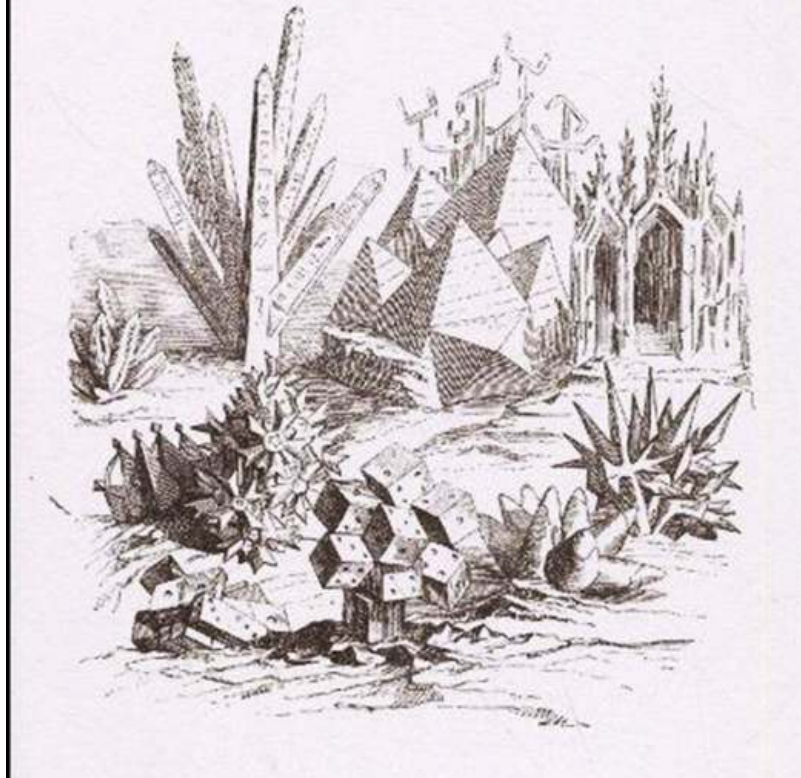
*The French call the temptation to throw oneself from high places l'appel du vide, the call of the void.*

— *The Marvelous Clouds*, John Durham Peters



Mercury Takes a Nose-dive, Vatican Museum Ceiling fresco from Hy "Mememo" Grader's collection of jumping and falling figures.

PAUL SCHEERBART  
GLASARCHITECTUUR



Fantasy glass architecture by Paul Scheerbart (1863 - 1915) in his novelette "The Light Club" (1909), gifted to Hy Grader by Ichi Honne and inscribed: "To Meme-san" with a postscript (see below).

*Yeppers (as Dal would say)! I am finding myself as much nostalgia (me, me, mo') for the time of infinite architectural possibility as for the Hippies who believed the world was theirs to change. I am sad I (like you) will never be able to believe in a revolution just around the corner, a technology so new, a progress assured and manageable (unlike Web 2.0), that will, happily, make my interior cool.*

Editor: In Scheerbart's 1909 novelette "The Light Club," Hy told me his own theory of the symbolic importance of the number 5 was further confirmed by that author's choice to have only five members in that club that realized a fantastic glass structure underground. Hy imagined them sitting discussing their accomplishment in a quincunx formation like strange colonists on a distant planet or another dimension. Notice the dice in the above cover illustration.



# "Kingdom Come"

by Peter Wieben

excerpted by Hy "Mememo" Grader  
from the online magazine *Fluland*

*. . . It was a big city, and in the middle was a slum. Everyone lived in the slum. The big buildings were all abandoned. People lived in tiny mud shacks for the close-ness and for the feeling of being near other people. It was like huddling near the tippy top of a sinking boat. The slum was a valley with two hills, and it was packed with houses made of corrugated steel and scrap wood.*

*When new people were born, the community would throw them into the air. They would gather in a crowd and throw the baby up as high as they could, and then try to catch it.*

*There was a prophet in the slum called Ondeto. One day, Ondeto told his followers to go to the Central Business District, climb to the highest building, and fly. If they jumped, he told them, he would give them wings.*

*Many people died.*

he had put hand upon the running rail  
and had vaulted over into space!

For a moment, we froze there. Then, as one, we jumped to the rail.

Turning over and over pathetically as he fell, Davis was swiftly becoming a little black thing in the pale blue space beneath us.



Only an atom—falling, falling away—

Came a sudden tiny flash, a crystal glitter of showering particles against the distant blue; and Davis, had vanished.

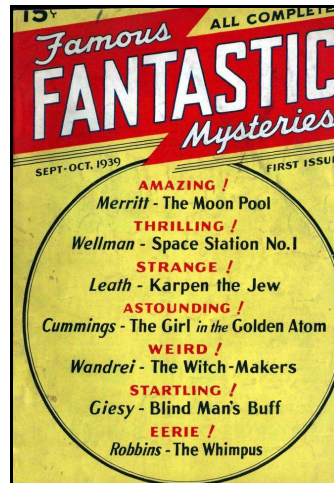
An Erasure Poem (made by erasing text in "Beyond the Pole," by Philip M. Fisher) by Hy "Mememo" Grader. Fischer's fantasy/sci-fi stories made literary use of Henri Bergson's theory of vibrations as adumbrated in *Matter and Memory* (1896).



Cosmic leap from high-rises scene from "The Leapers" depicted by Carol Grey (pseudonym for Robert A.W. Lowndes) drawn by Dorothy Les Tina, in *Future Fantasy and Science Fiction* (Dec. 1942). Hy had a poster made of this image soon after witnessing the young black man jump to his demise in the Art Institute Museum, the emotional jolt that inspired Hy's writings compiled here. He later sent it to Wishwer Watt.

Afterwards, the newspapers screamed that John Albertson, president of Consolidated American Steel, accidentally had fallen to his death from a window of his suite on the sixth floor of the Mark Hopkins Hotel, San Francisco. Four monstrosously important diplomats swore to it. I was there. Karpen was there also. It didn't happen like that.

— "Karpen the Jew," Robert Neal Leath, in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* (Sept - Oct, 1939)



One of several of Hy "Mememo" Grader's vintage sci-fi magazines from his extensive collection. It contains the very Leftist-oriented story "Karpen the Jew" in which Donald Trump-like billionaire capitalist exploiters are tossed out of office windows for their many crimes against humanity.

#### WELL-KNOWN PROFESSOR COMMITS SUICIDE

*"Suicide," they called it. But I, who perhaps loved Manried best of all his many friends and admirers, I know better — I and two others to whom alone he entrusted the great secret [unsuccessfully attempting to counter gravity by sheer will of mind power, i.e., brain waves amplified by a special battery, by walking off the ledge of a high tower] which at last proved his undoing.*

— "The Recent Demise of Professor Manried,"  
by Philip M. Fisher (1922)



Site of the 1894 Suicide  
by jumping of Constance  
Woolson, friend of Henry  
James

Casa Semitecolo,  
Venice where Woolson  
fell from her bedroom  
window onto a street  
below.



"Exquisitely morbid and tragically sensitive" is how a Dr. Baldwin described Constance Fenimore Woolson's mental state before she suicided in Venice on January 24, 1894. Writer Henry James, a good friend of hers, later proposed in his notebook a death in Venice theme in his unwritten novel, *La Mourante*. Hy had been to Venice and read much of what James (and John Ruksin) wrote about that city of dreams. He liked James for his ability as a "wooer of the past." (Image from Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump Shots" collection).





Simulation of "The World's Most Beautiful Suicide"

## The World's Most Beautiful Suicide



From Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump Shots" collection. Hy was fascinated by these death-by-falling scenes as they were, "The same way every time and always different."

On May 1, 1947 (six weeks prior to Hy's birth), 20-year old Evelyn McHale leapt to her sad death from the observation deck of the Empire State Building. Photographer Robert Wiles took a photo of McHale a few minutes after her death. The photo ran a couple of weeks later in *Life* magazine. Andy Warhol used Wiles' photo in one of his serialized prints from 1962, *Suicide (Fallen Body)*. Like Warhol, Hy "Mememo" Grader mechanically repeats trauma to obscure and control the reality of that trauma (see Hy Grader's "Jumps Shots" collection, a "traumatic realism," that he began work on after his witnessing a suicide jumper at Chicago's Art Institute Museum).



A fall in the movie *The Eiger Sanction* (1975)

From Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump Shots" collection





*Duo Jump*, from Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump Shots" collection

*And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,  
The instruments of darkness tell us truths.  
— William Shakespeare*





Selected from Hy Grader's extensive collection of "Jump Shots"



After witnessing a suicide jumper in Chicago's Art Institute Museum (see photo on page xv in Prologue), Hy Grader starts — obsessively, fetish-like — to cop images off TV of various jump scenes (One of Hy's favorite film theorists, Laura Mulvey lists all the Hitchcock films in which the public spectacle of death by falling is found or threatened.) This doubling of Hy's initial trauma prefigured his own death dive after making acquaintance with Wishwer Watt and his weird cult of D-travel jumpers, the G.O.N.E. group in the Northwoods of Wisconsin (see page 260).

*From the account of his friend, Vladimir Staniukevich,  
graduate student in the Philosophy Department:*

*. . . He wanted to leave unnoticed, of course. It was evening. Twilight. But several students in the nearby dormitory saw him jump. He opened his window wide, stood up on the sill, and looked down for a long time. Then he turned around, pushed hard, and flew . . . He flew from the twelfth floor . . . He flew for five seconds . . .*

*"What's this?" The policeman showed me a vaguely familiar folder.*

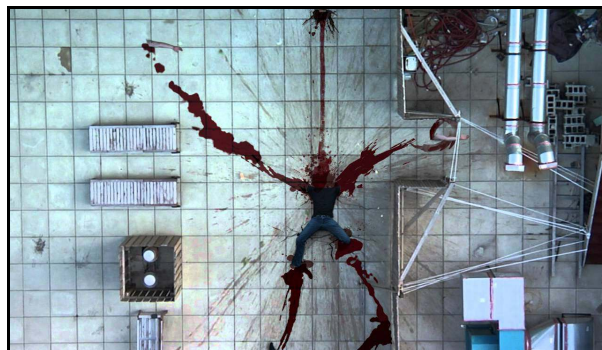
*I leaned over the table.*

*"It's his dissertation. There's the title page: Marxism and Religion."*

*All the pages were crossed out. Diagonally, in red pencil, he'd written furiously: "Nonsense!, Gibberish!, Lies!" It was his handwriting .*

*. . . I recognized it. . . .*

*— Svetlana Alexievich, Enchanted with Death*







Water Tower Jump from Hy Grader's collection of "Jump Shots" inspired by event told by Grader in section 3 of this book

*Suddenly, racket turned into a racquet-ball, a racquet-ball that then became a rocketing rock that tossed itself over the cliff, jumping the balcony's railing in a wide trajectory to fall 30 feet at 32.2 ft/sec/sec to burst with a thud into a pool of hot blood, into death that attracted him like moth to flame. The head, a pricked yolk, spurted. A long cosmically held breath of generalized dread. A silence the size of a lunar sea in which some witnesses contemplated how close the falling black body had missed a child milling about below; some looked around as if they might find the walls splashed with brains and a red rainbow.*

— Excerpt from section three, *Finding Mememo*



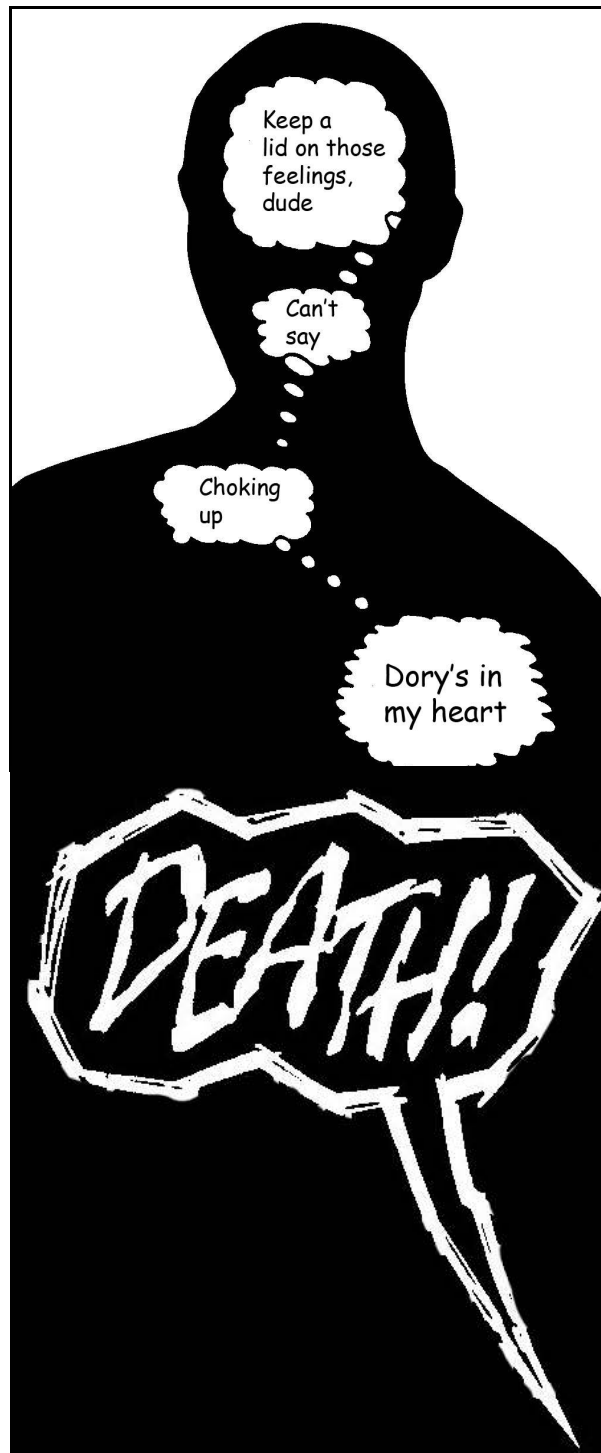
Film noir bad guy (William Bendix) takes a fall, from Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump Shots" collection



Threatening card put in Hy "Mememo" Grader's faculty mailbox; a pedantic riff on text copped from Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*



From *Urbe* magazine (woodcut by Jean Charlot) found Hy's "Jump Shots" collection, titled "Hy and Dory Jump from the Fascist Ship of State"



"Mememo's Complaint," Jym (2017) a response to Hy Grader's text

*Fiction within theory (and vice-versa) can be an effective way of recording encounters that take place at the nexus of imagination and argument.*

— "Art Theory/Fiction as Hyper Fly," Prudence Gibson



"A Fall-Acious Proposition?" (ink on paper) Hy "Mememo" Grader. On back is written in Hy's hand: "Just met a Wish and he told me: 'One of the extraordinary powers of our species is its ability to transmute stray encounters into a first chapter.' I find myself jumping at this last chance."

*The girl's body lay smashed and strangely twisted on the sidewalk. Her shattered arms seemed to form two strange limbs around her head. Her face, or what was left of it, lay in a pool of blood. . . . "Jumped from the seventh floor," said a nearby woman, with odd satisfaction, "killed stone dead." . . . The ambulance drove off . . .*

— Michel Houellebecq, *The Elementary Particles*





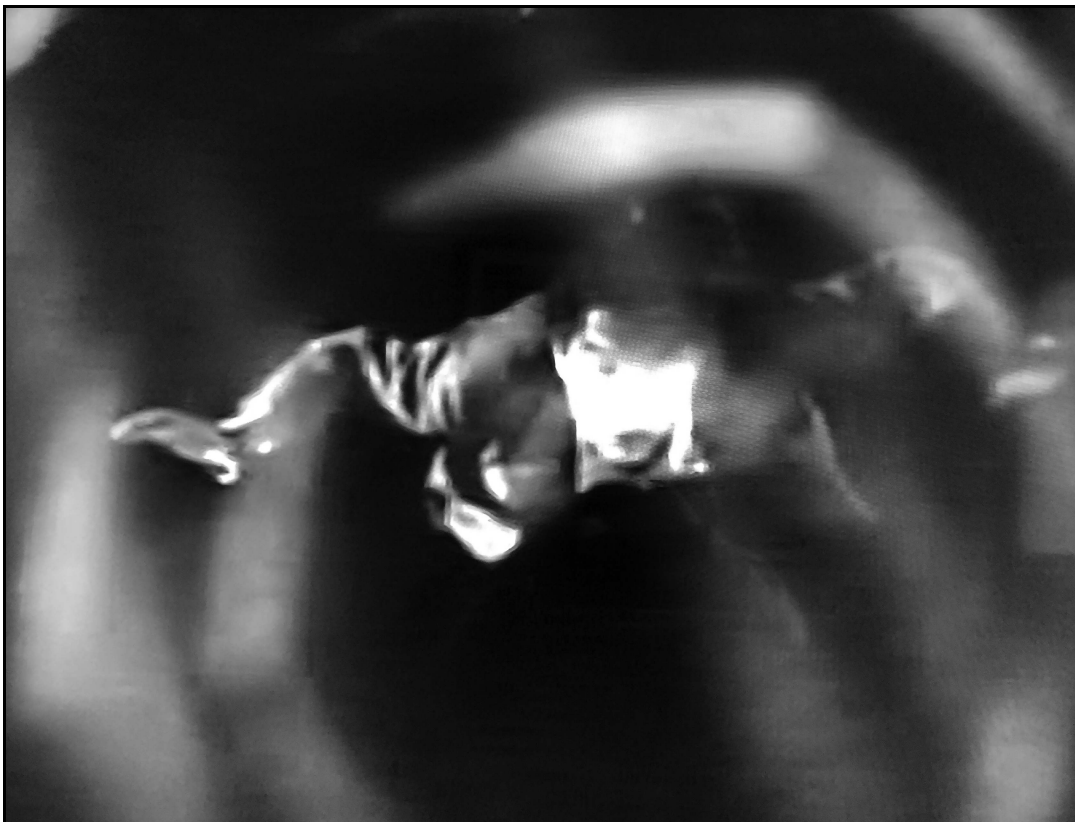
NBC Channel Five Nightly News is the first to report Hy "Mememo" Grader's mysterious demise



From Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump Shots" collection

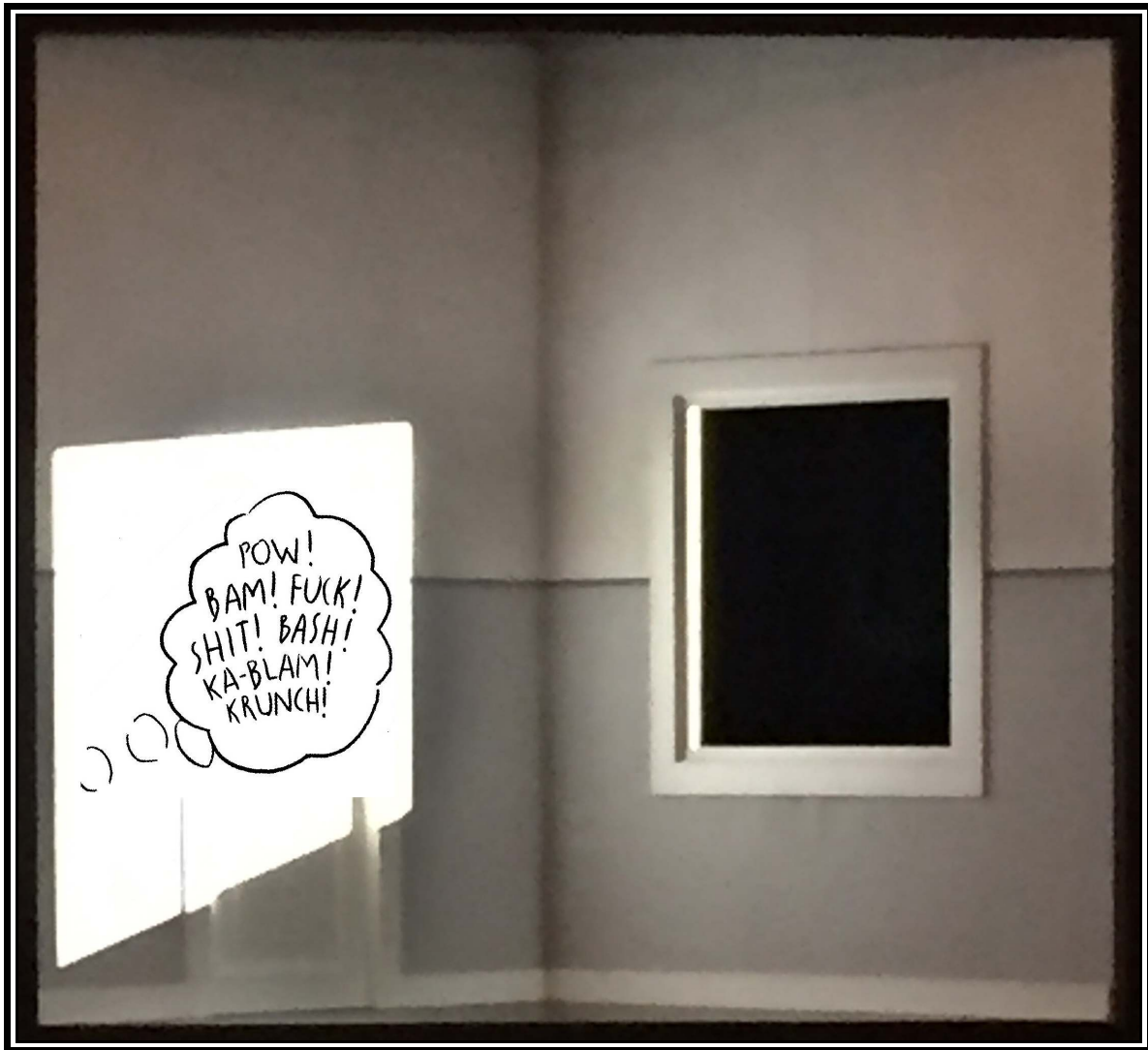
*One morning my wife told me that on the river, bodies crash like a car wreck. She said she had been waiting at the high bridge, watching and studying the jumpers for years. She had discovered the sound was almost glacial, glassy, like somebody breaking hundreds of china plates all at once. / Your skull splits right open sometimes, she said. / I feel sorry for these humans who cannot fly, she said.*

— "For These Humans Who Cannot Fly," *The Unfinished World and Other Stories*, Amber Sparks



"Pushed out a window, falling into another dimension," from Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump Shots" collection





*Payback Dream* (2016) Ichi Honne, gift to Hy "Mememo" Grader (this photograph pertains to Hy Grader's ongoing battle with his much disliked departmental chairman, Chad Armbuster, a neo-liberal stink bomb in Leftish clothing (see next section) whom Hy imagined as a door: "A tall barrier to a room of possibilities that I enjoyed seeing myself grabbing by the metal knob of his belly!"). Notice that the corner of the room reads more like the fold in the spine of a book, the walls appearing like book pages; the empty, dark window suggests a doorless escape route into the unknown — another dimension?

*Isn't it enough you are working for the Terminator  
[ed., Chad Armbuster], you want to enjoy it too?*

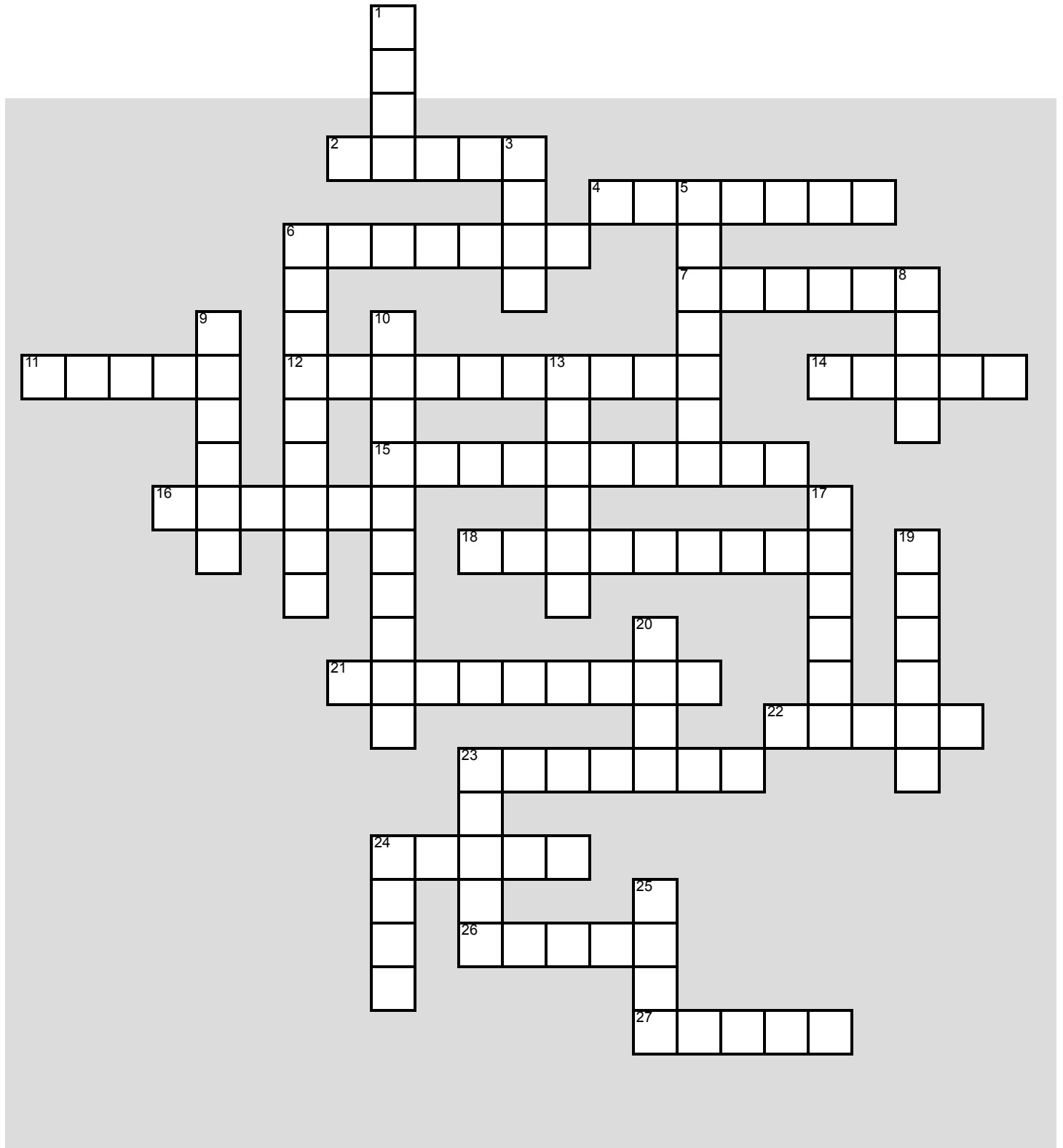
— Hy "Mememo" Grader to a tenured faculty member

*To be like you would be a calamity / You tell me frankly that  
you'd would to feel / My flesh beneath your feet / To crush all  
my particles down into close conformity, and then walk back  
and forth on them. / As for butterflies, I can hardly conceive  
of one's attending upon you — Dude!*

— Hy "Mememo" Grader's Marianne Moore mash-up put in  
Chad Armbuster's faculty mail box anonymously



# Finding Mememo



**Charmian, Hy's office-mate, created this crossword in honor of him.**

### Across

- 2 Hy's favorite game
- 4 Activity featured the most in this book
- 6 Hy's soulmate's name
- 7 He solves mysteries
- 11 Name of northwoods diner Hy eats at
- 12 Bent and on display in Ichio's workhouse
- 14 Hy ponders this
- 15 What Hy loves
- 16 Hy's dream city
- 18 What the editor, Jym, has to put into order in  
Hy's writing
- 21 Hy's nemesis's last name
- 22 Hy best friend
- 23 What is tattooed on Wish Watt's forehead
- 24 Dallas' fictional detective's first name
- 26 Object that has sunk in the Lodge's lake where  
Hy is staying
- 27 Blurt Wildbraine's fictional detective's last name

### Down

- 1 Name of a Marxist character
- 3 Wishwer Watts's girl friend's first name
- 5 City where Ichio lives
- 6 What kind of travel does Wish Watt promote
- 8 Slovenian word for water falls
- 9 What Dorinda takes pride in cultivating
- 10 Name of belt used for dimension travel
- 13 The Indian Hy meets at the Wisconsin lodge
- 17 Herbal mixture made by that man
- 19 Hy perpetually seeks his what?
- 20 Dallas' favorite drink
- 23 Who is "His Pants"
- 24 Slovenian capitol celebrates these creatures
- 25 Radio station in the northwoods that The  
Shaman has a program on

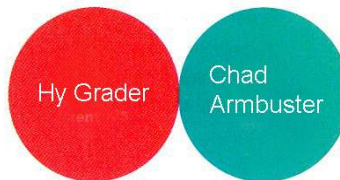
**Test your memory (Hy had a good one).**

# Chad Armbuster

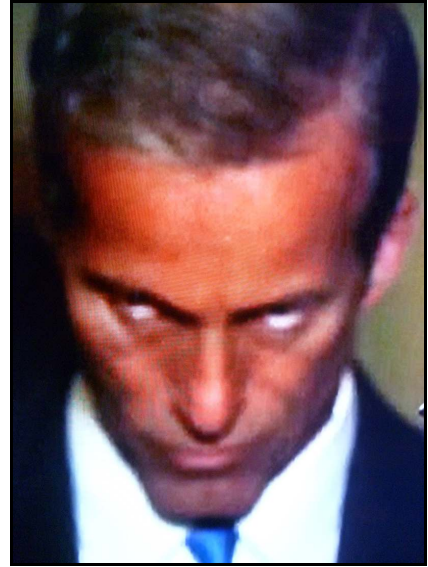
Hy "Mememo" Grader's departmental chairman and his favorite author, William Hazlitt who wrote that, "I have only to defend a common sense feeling against the refinement of false philosophy."



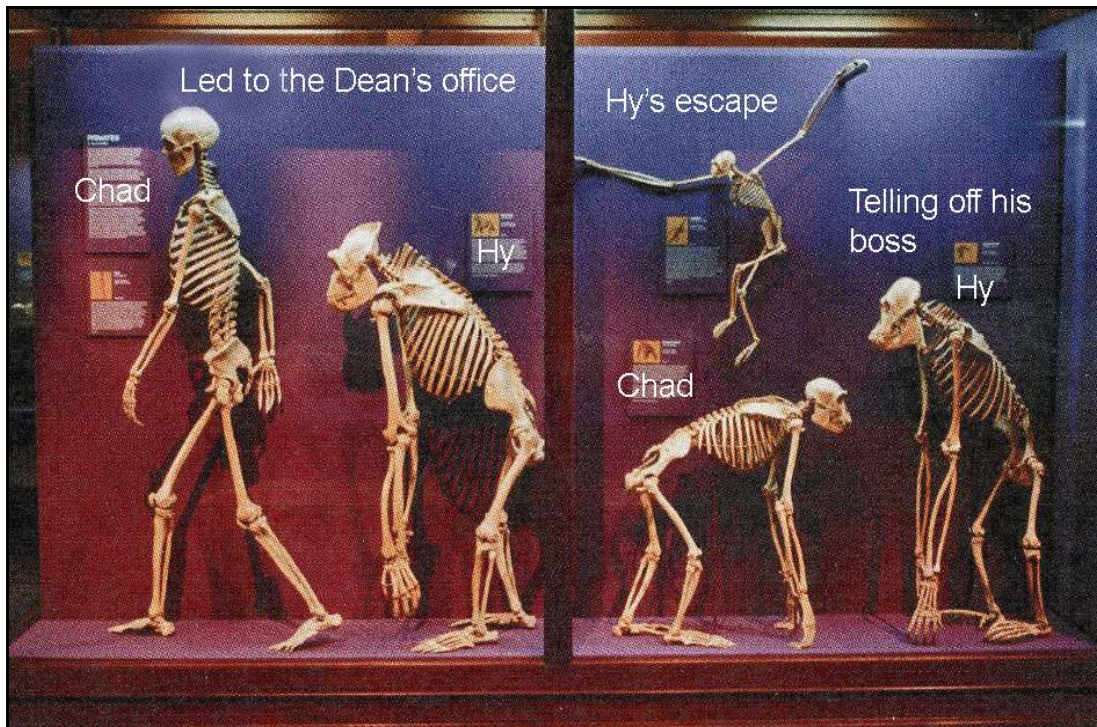
William Hazlitt (d. London, 1830)



Venn Diagram: Compatibility Assessment



Chad Armbuster (b. Chicago, 1981)



Hy Grader's Dream: The Natural History of Hy Grader and Chad Armbuster's Relationship



## Putting a Hole in my Sunny Sails



Poster hanging in Chad Armbuster's office

Scene: Chad Armbuster's Liberal Studies Department office at a "McUniversity" in Chicago, in the Milky Way moving in excess of cosmic expansion toward the constellation Hydra. Gravity in the room is a smidgen stronger than earth-normal and a whiff of sulphur is smelled. He is a Magister Bombardarum, lurking in the Hall of the Mountain King, a towering mass of sounds, a nervy, never-smiling man of affirmation and negation, a bell-tower jangling out of time, harsh, a fount of evil power. Dolled up in Shakespearean garb, he is a loser's caricature of a winner. He is forever confident any topic can be can turned into something totally unrelated. When Armbuster runs into another person

while trying to get through a door, he yells at the offender: "Open, please!" Believes academia is a battlefield, an arms race of awfulness, where he can only win by destroying the other guys, make them lick the royal rim of the royal toilet. Yet, he still needs them just a bit as he cannot enjoy his freedom unless he interferes with that others. Now his power is increasing as the Dean has approved Chad's plan to add Distance Learning and the neo-liberal tool of Digital Humanities Studies to his department [ed., a policy that I heard Hy Grader call: "A splinter 'round which everything festers, throbs, and boils"]. Chad uses the word "connect" as believers use the word "Jesus," often standing in contrapposto, lifting his right arm, and raising his index finger in the ad locutio (orator's) pose, volume on DROWN OUT ALL OTHERS.

The play is started a half an hour late; actors disguised as audience members loudly express indignation at the delay. When the curtain does rise, the Chairman sits motionless in his wooden chair, holding up a THERE WILL BE NUMBERS T-shirt he got at a Computational Literary Studies conference. His head is turned right at a forty-five degree angle giving the audience a view of a physiognomy of a person of stern nature tintured with enthusiasm. On either side of his desk, a disordered stack of books, the spine of one reads, Journal of Cultural Analytics. The man gazes up and left at a large poster with bold red type on his wall with no expression of human weakness, his glance as pitiless as a flash of lightning. His phone rings. He talks gibberish, making exaggerated vain gestures with his free hand.

Hard knocks on Chad's office door (so low that visitors need to bow to enter) . He slams the phone, turns toward the door; the door's wooden panel trembles, finally opened from without by two contingent faculty bursting in wearing spoofs on Millennial cosplay, hitting their heads on the low doorway: 1) Hy Grader (in French sailor pants and a white T-shirt reading Bruce High Quality University) and 2) Wyoming Mann (a.k.a., Wyoh, a "rad" of indocile thoughts clad in a white cowboy hat, chaps, bolo tie, and carrying Ivan Illich's diatribe, Deschooling).

The duo fiercely glance at that large poster hailing the economic advantages of distance learning, neoliberal economics at work within their university. On the wall opposite the poster is a gold-framed portrait of Ralph Waldo Emerson with a quote from him running beneath: "Man is a stupendous antagonist." On a third wall hangs a poster of Théodore Géricault's The Raft of the Medusa. Some wit has felt-tip penned CONTINGENT FACULTY over the raft's miserable, gesticulating occupants. A man dressed as

*a courtier enters from stage left and reads from a scroll: "We are legion. We do not forgive. We do not forget. Expect us. It's time to stop shitposting and knock on the door of RL."*

CHAD: *[rises, circles the room for advantage; a deep well of sarcasm and mockery hides behind his snapping eyes, eyes that look like strange sins, as he scans the intruders; in an aside he speaks to the audience in a crumbly, orange voice.]* Another heavenly day! I, the Strutt N. Crowe Professor of Literature, am the Black Hand of the Black Death. I sink darts into the ears of men, put them in fear, I, who believe thinking sustains momentum, momentum identifies targets, and targets bring in money. Even the four-footed stand on two legs when I arrive and remain silent.

WYOMING (a.k.a., Wyoh): *[To the audience.]* The man hath no music in himself. *[To Chad]* Prithee, know we're the Red Peril of the Red Plague, the lymphangioliomyomatosis growing in your lungs, the dot under the question mark. There's a time for reciting poems and a time for fists. *[Louder]* We say, 'do deschool society,' let the autodidact reign free of guards and gaol. *[Aside in lower tones]* Our Dean seeketh dialogue on our demands, but which, that adminoninny made clear before, are non-negotiable. Small ideas scamper and scrabble, seeking power.

HY: Chad, pride sits you well you Ubu Roi dum drum of suppurating treachery; strut, colossal bird, your cave-mouth full of stink. You think me a man of gingerbread to be molded to your liking? Prithee, I assign thee to *Malebolge*, *[points downward]* the ditches of evil, you hemorrhoid-licking. We shall crank up our Low Orbit Ion Cannon . . .! *[Aside, Hy and Chad cackle between shit talk and ferocious laughter.]*

CHAD: I feel a draft *[pulls out a small whisk broom and brushes his shoulder.]* Devil, do you dare approach me *[lips thrust out, eyes hot-wired and roving, as if lightning was trapped in eyeballs]?* Do not thee fear fierce vengeance o' my fist wreaked on your miserable head? Begone, vile insects! Or rather, stay, so I may trample you to dust. Or just go blow your nose you self-forgetting wilders! Your pedagogical acts be cracked, your coxcomb fallen. *[Whispering aside to the audience]:* Or maybe I should make them full professors; that'll get 'em off my back. No!

Your bauble, your slide-projector, I confiscate. Your blackboard stripped classroom hath now been mediatized. Toll the bell, for slides, they are no more! Nay! Soon thy classroom will be obsolete. A field full of empty chairs. A desert. Thy admin will be up your butt hairs! You and your fools will soon be singing WYOH, WYOH me as we infantilize you more and more and keel-haul any miscreants, optimists and grumblers. Fie! Go write a Beckett play on your own time.

HY: In struth, I mark our noble faculty be in decay. Our contingent kingdom suffers being broken up, so every don is now his own fool and our world be cheerless. I prithee, Sir Armbuster, go back to your lord, the Dean, and tell that this Merry Jack Pudding, along with his fellow base-ment-based zannies, will joust with your neoliberal black arts *[lower jaw relaxes moronically, like a Muppet's, then he grabowerates Chad and grabacks him down to the floor]*.

CHAD: Avaunt, unwise contingents *[struggling, uttered between clenched teeth]!* Thou hast no portion in me. *[A whispered aside]:* And I thought a barking dog never bites. When's the last time you recall being on top of one single human situation, instead of it being on top of you? I now bustle to the Admin-Lair to rub smooth my cares, where the Dean will agree to fund my trip



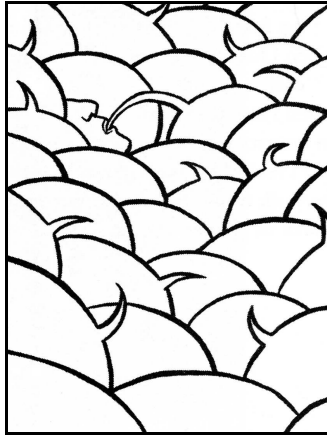
to deliver my paper "Problems of Cultural Distortion in Translating Expletives in the Work of Cortazar, Baudelaire, and Flaubert." *[Yoking ten oxen to his voice, loving the sweet, toxic taste of soliloquy in his mouth.]* So away, you starvelings *[hot, reddened eyes]*, you elf-skins, you dried meat's-tongues, bull's-pizzles, you stock-fish! I am sick when I do look upon thee! More of your twaddle would infect my brain. I go to work — O blessed curse of Adam's posterity, healthful toil, all hail! *[Freeing himself, he marches exaggeratedly around his office to the military beat of "The Radetzky March" played by the Vienna Philharmonic.]*

*Exeunt. [Offstage, maniacal laughter like oft heard echoing down a mental institution's corridor.]*

Author's note: Chad Armbuster is a typical Admin-type in that he displays systemic alteration of networks in the thalamic intralaminar nuclei and the prefrontal-parietal associative loop; hyperactivation of the neural correlates of rationalization is found present. This type of mind can watch the rest of its brain make its decisions cheerfully, blithely, such as this memo to contingent faculty: "Adjuncts are not considered faculty, or even people; they are units of flexibility."

# Student Voices

Dallas Discovered Online-Student-Evaluations of Chad Armbuster



It's been reported that faculty walking by Chad's classroom have heard on occasion mumbling, fake laughter, true laughter, bubbling sounds, very short screams, bored humming, and weeping.

Tattletale: Went by his class on Henry James once; the door was open, and heard him say, "I could pounce on her possessions and ransack her drawers."

Ms. ESL: He harshes me when I talk not right. But I tell him because if you have English as your second language it's hard to make your head talk.

Insecure Inhere: I told him "I need to find a category. I need to find a category. If I don't find a category, I'm not safe." He said, "*Dunce* might work."

Paleface: Visited him in his office wearing my pink velour track suit; the dude avoided shaking hands and offered me a chair in the farthest corner of the room. His hands seemed inflamed, like from frequent washing and scrubbing.

MYFANWY HERTZ: He's not bad looking, which is probably the only thing he has going for him. Otherwise, he is not exceptionally bright or even interesting to listen to. He may have other talents we are unaware of, but teaching is certainly not one of them. Very pretentious and truly boring.

ALWAZ L'AHTE: He's mean and walks about the classroom like some Greek god nobody has ever heard of. Liam Neesons *[sic]* is my shit, not him.

T.H.E. WURST: Students teach class by presenting the material each week, teacher is not good at leading discussion, will learn a lot of information, but not a lot of knowledge. I prefer ideally bald professors.

WALSH AUDTE: Enough isms. Speak English and stop trying to thicken the dictionary. Once he threatened me with: "I'm going to report you. Don't you *dare* make a prissy face at me!"

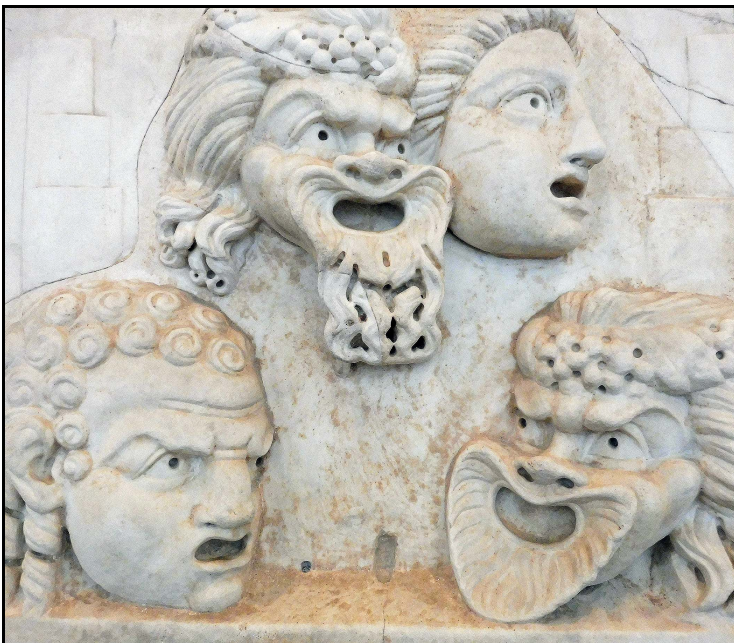
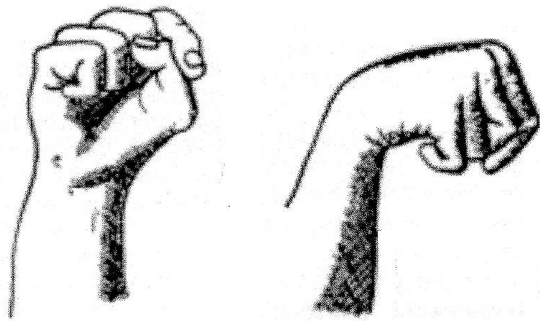


# Ichio

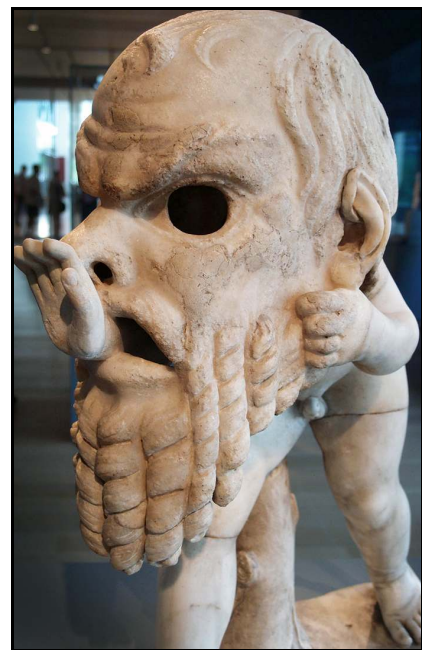
*Deru kui wa utareru.*

("The nail that stands up will be pounded down.")

— Japanese proverb and illustration, frontispiece  
to Ichi Honne's portfolio "Academia Series."



*The Faculty Meeting*, photo by Ichi Honne (from "Academia Series," collection of Hy "Mememo" Grader)



*Monument to the Admin-Type, The Talking Claw*, photo by Ichi Honne (collection of Hy "Mememo" Grader)



Riku, Ichi Honne's mother, pregnant with him (1946); she later remarked that her son could not catch a baseball, but had no problem drawing a perfect curve. In 1955, she got Yukio Mishima to autograph her paperback copy of *The S.S. Happiness Sets Sail*. Ichi now has this book.



Ichi, Hy Grader's friend, at college in 1968, around the time that his father told him: "Westerners are like scientists slaving day and night to invent a new kind of grief. . . If you keep eating *cha-zuke*, you will defeat this tendency — *banzai!*"

*Dropping napkins, corks, paper plates, and non-compostables into the trash, I see that Hy has so much mistaken my cool ivory everyday chopsticks for disposables.*

— Ichi (Hy's first trip to my home) birthday diary entry, 6/23/86)



Hy "Meme" Grader and Ichi performing the the Maori greeting ritual of *hongi*.

*Japanese has no word for 'fuckwad' or 'fuck-face,' no verbal blunt instrument, so I tell Hy today. English, well, most Western languages, permit me to say things I can't in my native language. I say this to Hy who recites a series, he calls 'a litany,' of curse-words upon the head of the head of his department.*

— Ichi (diary entry, 5/27/08)





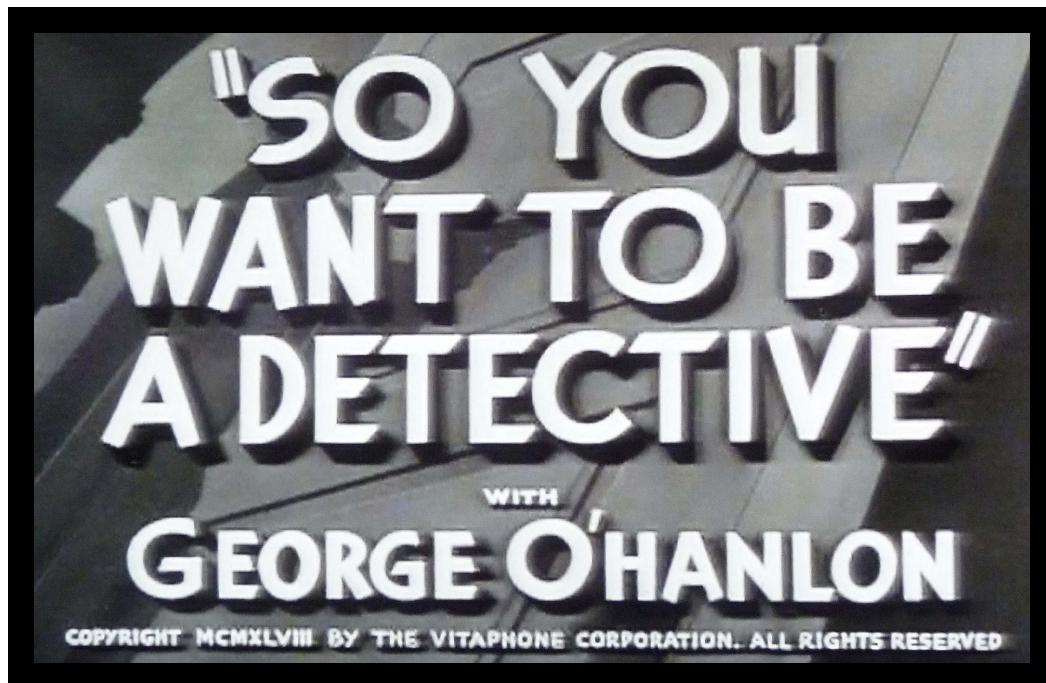
Photographs by Ichi Honne included in *Photography in India* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2018), a lovely volume representing the expansive history of photography in India from the 1850s to the present; it includes a two-page spread of Ichi's work, "working around traces of text in unlikely places." The variety and quality of the work in this anthology is beautifully presented accompanied by thoughtful commentary from the authors Nathaniel Gaskell and Diva Gujra.

*Art is the counterforce judo for Entertainment's stranglehold on our stone-age reptilian brains.*

*Ichi — who advises "Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints" — has told me he looks at his watch more often these days, and it's always earlier than he thought; but when he was young, he noted, it had always been later (he's had the same watch since high school).*

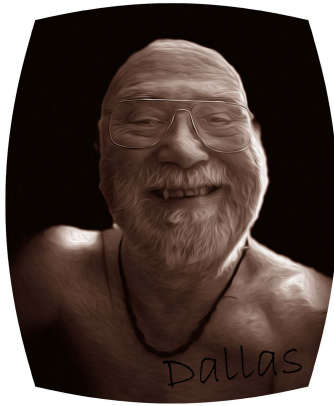
*The flower in the mirror and the moon on water — it's Japanese saying meaning "that which can be seen but not grasped," like my Asian face (which has nothing to do with the desires of women in this country) and Meme-san's demise. My family descends from the tsuchigumo, the sturdy "earth-spiders", so I am scouring for clues to Meme-san's demise, spinning a web. Grief crawls spidery over my body into areas yet uninhabited. His death leaves a vacancy I can't sharply focus.*

— The Wisdom of Ichi



*So You Want to be a Detective* (triptych) by Ichi Honne and given to Dallas Johnson as a birthday gift

# Dallas

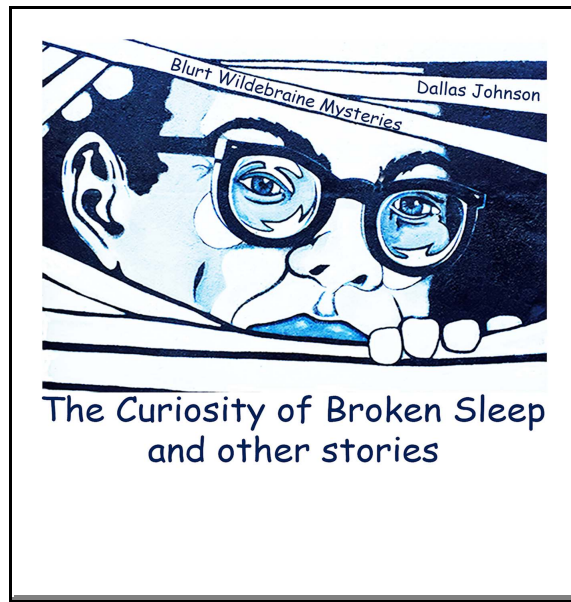


Dal's favorite TV episode: Data and Captain Picard playing Dixon Hill in the holo-deck.

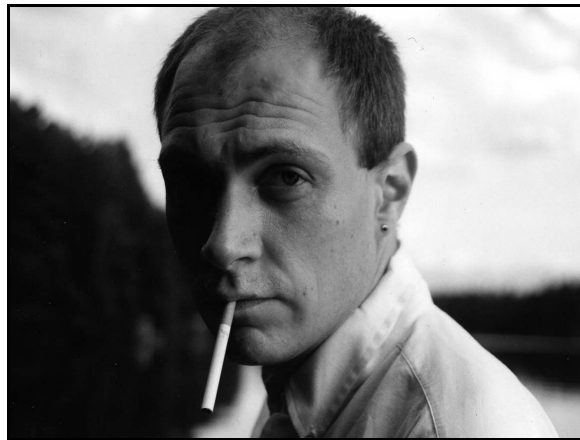


Dallas Johnson's "Star Trek the Next Generation" T-shirt honoring Season One, Episode Twelve (The Big Goodbye) wherein Captain Picard plays his childhood noir idol, PI Dixon Hill.





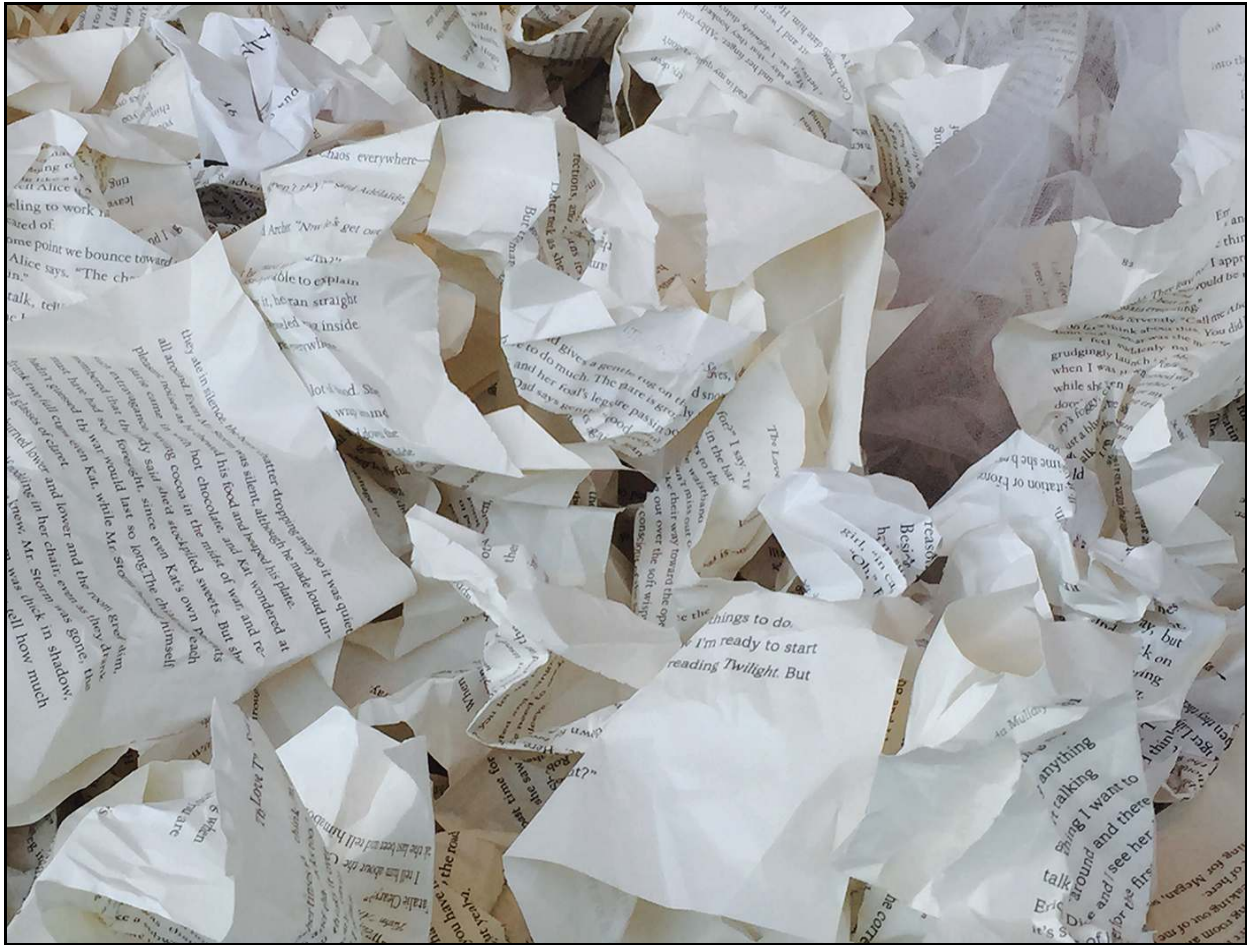
Cover of one of Dallas Johnson's mystery anthologies featuring his private investigator, Blurt Wildbraine, who is described as: "Not a too big man, yet he creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness; he has a discomforting habit of looking hard at whomever he addresses." Dallas was inspired by J.B. Priestly's mysterious Inspector Goole in *An Inspector Calls*, a play that Hy Grader also adored. Here Blurt unravels the many threads surrounding a suspicious death by fall from a high-rise window; in his Preface, Dal remarks that "Everything that begins as comedy inevitably ends up as a mystery." And takes note of Hy's comment, "Genre films are films that do things to bodies," likes to exploit that insight in his detective writings.



Portrait rendering of Ezett from the story "Avoidance City"

*I entered The Purple Place. Avoidance City. But my probable perp might be here — Eszett — with fag dangling, spine curving just enough to suggest a youth spent amidst a boring landscape. His tough guy persona has become over-digested until it's become (probably) suitably unreal to himself. He has that late-thirties "Experience teaches not to trust experience. I'm forced to be an empiricist in lake front bars" kind of demeanor.*

— Dallas re: Blurt Wildbraine in "Avoidance City"

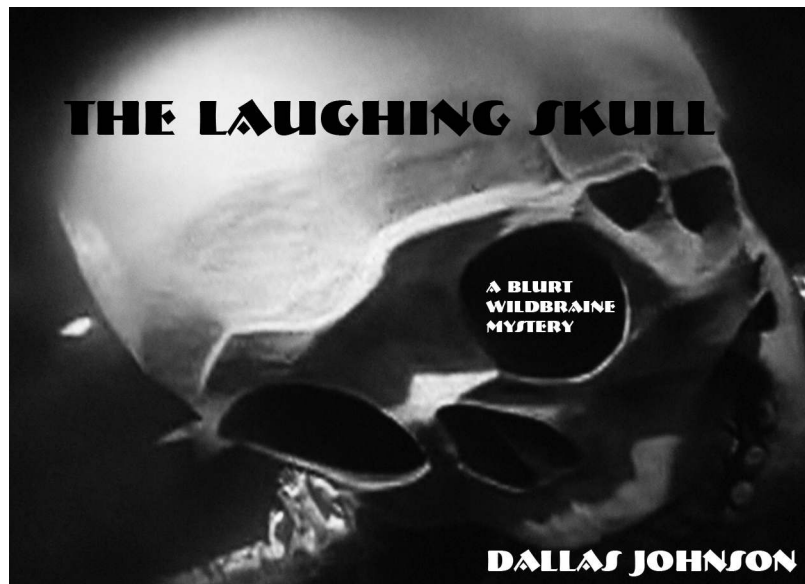


Ichiro's photo of Dallas' dumped wastebasket, rejected pages from his mystery story "Hypothetical Apocalyptic," where he is tasked to hunt down "The Mangler," was used in the frontispiece of that story to illustrate a phobia suffered by his detective, Blurt Wildbraine who, when interrogating a witness, comments to his sidekick: "I think the wench is trying to tell me something; like those mumblin' monsters in the old Hollywood horror flicks."

*She is a man of mild disposition, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humor, capable of attachment, and little susceptible to enmity, yet a man of vehement disposition, with violent enthusiasms, and extreme immoderation in all passions. Her consciousness has been know to float in a tank of champagne, craft beer, gin, cocaine, hashish, Benzedrine, and sewing machine oil. But once the game's afoot, her sharp mind feels its way, walking along with eyes on the ground, seeking clues. One odd thing though, crumpled balls of paper lying in a wastebasket can fill her with anxiety and loathing.*

— Description of Blurt Wildbraine in "Hypothetical Apocalyptic" by Dallas Johnson; note the PC academic "her" substituted for "his" convention is followed by Dallas upon Hy Grader's recommendation. "Make it new," advised Meme.

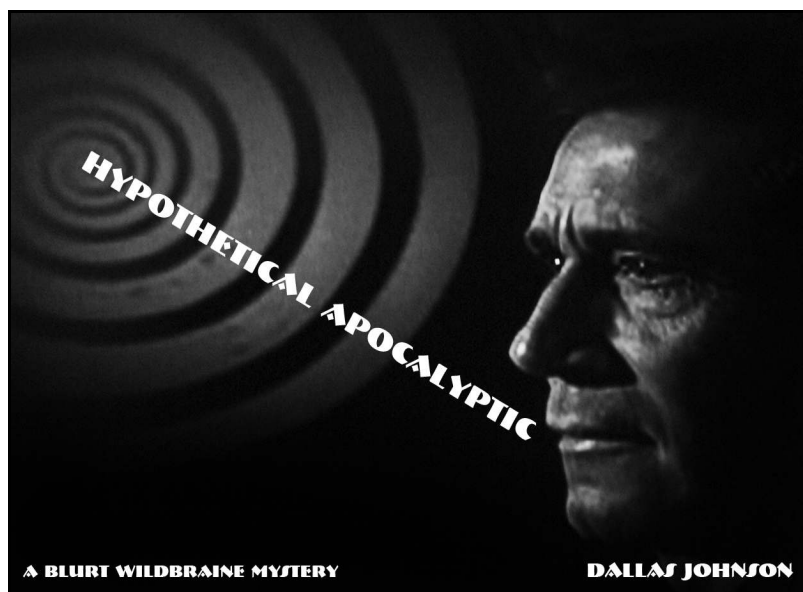




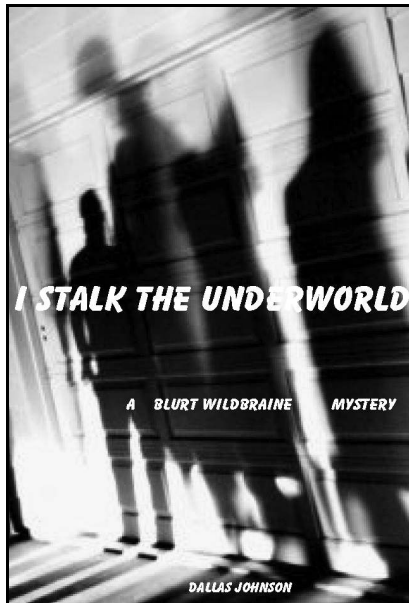
Detail of the cover for *The Laughing Skull* by Dallas Johnson

*A florid grim music of broken grunts and shrieks — then CRASH! Captain Callieri's head was struck down into a meaty conduit of blood. Yodverl, head of the Ten Gangs and owner of numerous no-tell motels, smirked, the face of a fallen angel without Lucifer's majesty to redeem it; a black devil grinned in his slit-like eyes and there were faint lines of ruthlessness and dissipation about his mouth, inside of which were a webwork of East European steel and brown decay, signs of years to debased criminal activity. His gun moll, Pink, swung her cigarette in various directions like a smoldering conductor's wand, as if she were casting some sort of spell over the death scene, her mouth open in a smile, a damp smile, slightly animal.*

— from *The Laughing Skull* by Dallas Johnson



Detail of the cover for *Hypothetical Apocalyptic* by Dallas Johnson



*Murder is my business, midnight my beat. The night is full of mist and moonlight; old men ill-defended against long memories start to fill the bars. I stand still a moment and catch no more than the brief and lonely echo of a nighttime street emptying of all traffic. I start up again, my footsteps echoing through the city's canyoned walls, passing faceless strangers. I'm headed for La Porta Verde where the lighting is subdued, hiding frayed industrial carpeting and marinara sauce stains on the walls. A powerful aroma of deep-fried calamari and parmigiana pervades the trattoria. My reluctant informant is sitting at the bar clothed in a butcher-shop pink shirt, black pants held up with a red belt, sipping his usual red drink: Campari and soda, chatting with the bartender "Comrade Absolut". Mario (codename "Innominato") sports a ducktail doo and slash sideburns on a narrow face very white, the texture of wax, that has an eerie glow lit from within, like a candle in a turnip. He is, like the food served here, heavy on pasta, light on substance, and peppers his colorful speech with "alrighty then". But his info comes cheap and my cash-flow's ebbing these days. His nervous eyes (pale lizard-green irises) slide under this eyelids and I could only see the whites of his eyes. Dousing his drink, he caroms about the room, like pin-balls off baffles, scanning for any person who might recognize him, then returns to the wet bar where his right index finger doodles a delicate tracery like a fucking Japanese shod master. He abruptly stops when he spies me. A new calculus flickers like a current across his visage; his zygomaticus and risorius muscles pull his flesh into a sly smile. The TV behind the bar features a singer who committed suicide a month ago by jumping from her hotel window, five plus five, ten floors up from ground zero. Sidewalk pizza. I approach him*

...

— Blurt Wildbraine, in Dallas' *I Stalk the Underworld*



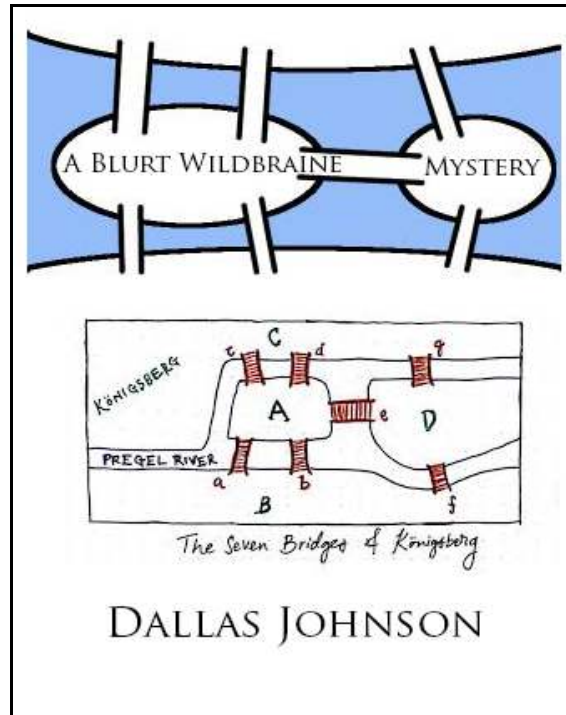
Illustration for *I Stalk the Underworld*, a Blurt Wildbraine mystery by Dallas Johnson

*Nearby lies her milkwhite body, with wide streaks of blood running from the left breast, along the flank and on the hip. Her extended members stretched out as if about to engage in a dive. Her muscled swim coach lets out a constipated mixture of monosyllabic surprise and polysyllabic hand-me-downs. . . .*

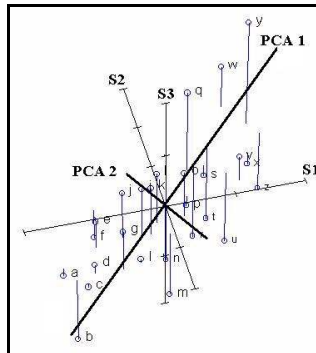
— *I Stalk the Underworld*, Dallas Johnson



Dallas Johnson's T-shirt bought at a Mystery Writer's Conference held at the MacDowell Colony for Artists and Writers in 2000, Petersborough, New Hampshire. The shirt features a clue from a famous sci-fi mystery story by Isaac Asimov. Dallas presented excerpts from *I Stalk the Underworld* and *Looking for Ptyx*, his first novel inspired by the Stéphane Mallarmé poem *Ses purs ongles*.



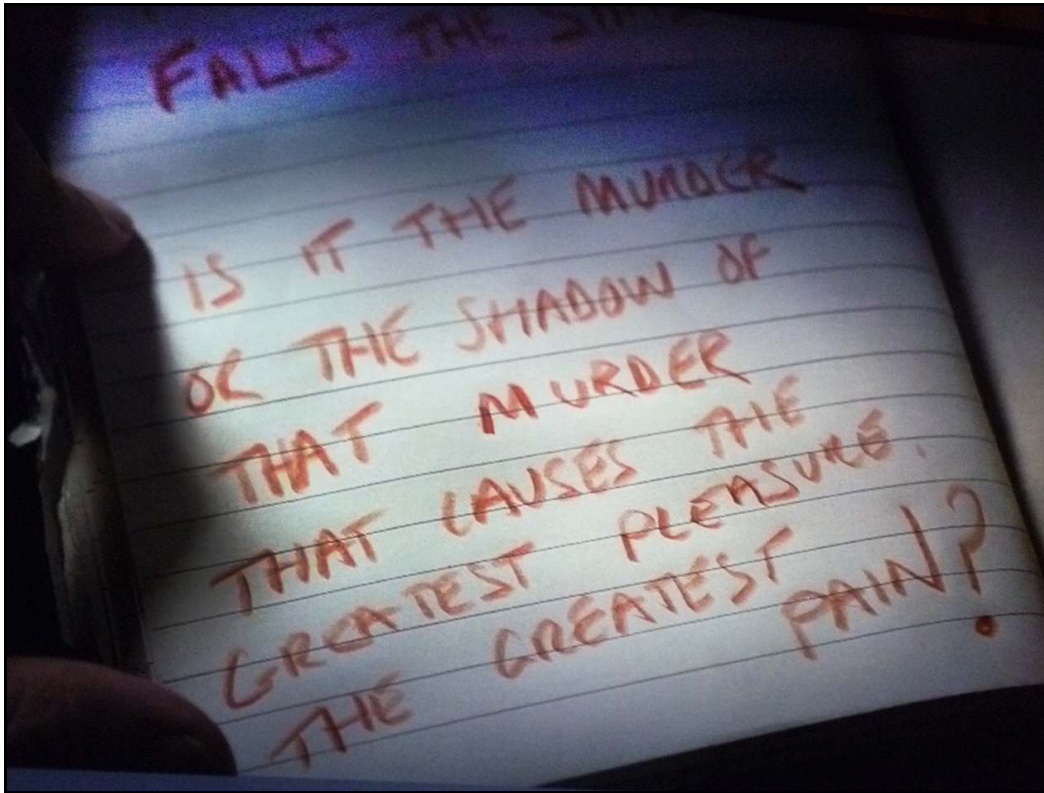
*The Seven Bridges of Königsberg* (2018). A mystery novelette by Dallas Johnson aimed at the academic demographic. Blurt Wildbraine sleuths “latent social networks” where the only things that matter are points of interchange among a group of organized crime figures in Germany, like the notorious “BMW” (an acronym for *Beutel-mit-Worten*, i.e., Bag-of-Words) and an evil ex-pat American, Python LDA. Blurt employs “forensic stylometry” to enhance his investigation, employing PCA diagrams and Docuscope scatterplots to find super significant positive correlations in data gathered.



*In a mystery that recalls one by Borges, Johnson futzes with a famous math problem, “The Seven Bridges of Königsberg,” where Blurt Wildbraine has to determine if a path of connection exists between seven master criminals in a city with seven bridges, a path that crosses only each of the seven bridges in a particular configuration of rivers, land masses, and crime, where failure stalks in every word.*

— Except from the book’s dust jacket





Frontispiece from Dallas Johnson's mystery anthology *Motive and Opportunity*

*It starts to rain, a not-so-pleasant downpour, then a monsoon torrent. Then a mighty wind. Blurt stands hidden in a doorway, a sudden light from an overhead office blasts down her [i.e., Blurt] body; the moon of her face — marked by a smirk (or wistful grin?) that is her mask of cool snugly fit over realpolitik — appears suspended in the dead of night. (There is no shadow without sun.) She seeks better shelter in a nearby German bar. Settles into her low-tide barstool charm, and orders a Kraut beer. From her three-legged perch, Blurt defocuses attention as outside a wet world goes by, locals dashing for shelter. Her iPhone's GPS shows her to be some blocks south of the famous Old School of Folk Music on Lincoln Avenue. Pulls out her crocodile skin notebook and jots down intellections [a word copped from Hy] about the nature of crime.*

*She soon notices a guy leaning against the wall in shadow, the dude's hands shoved into trouser pockets, a surfer version of Dillinger. Peeking from under his raincoat, a roscoe hangs from the hood's shoulder holster like salami in a deli window. Blurt's pen halts, her muscles tense. She leans on the stool and its wobbly legs creak a complaint about the weight shift. A plink of glass busting — a silenced bullet — Dillinger collapses. Blurt's at his side in seconds and sees a face that is an oleo of blood, grime, and dust, a sickening crater above his ear. Blurt could hear a blood-filled gurgle wheezing from his mouth. Death always quickened when Blurt was about. . . .*

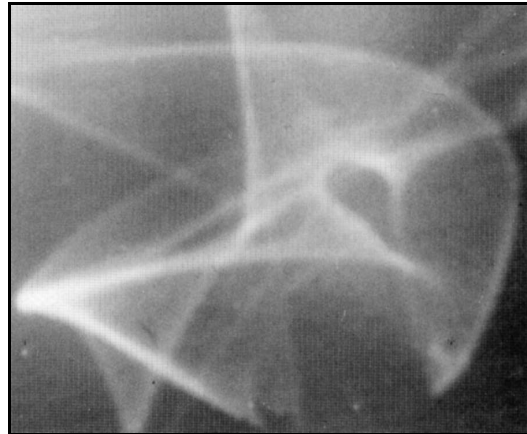
— Excerpt from "The Adventure of the Mighty Wind," in  
*Motive and Opportunity* by Dallas Johnson

# Wishwer Watt

Software guru, Deep Dream Corporation  
Member, the Accelerationist G.O.N.E. Group



G.O.N.E. group member Wishwer Watt covering his hexagram tattooed forehead; he befriends Hy "Mememo" Grader. He believes that a between certain events in the past and certain events in present lies a definite and explainable relationship. Photo by Sado Muga taken in the lobby of the Deep Dream Corporation.



Wigwam Light Pattern on a Boat Hull, photo by Wishwer Watt; this catastrophic cuspid topology is thought to be generated by The Fischer-Filoni Effect and induces the possibility of dimension-travel when a Heisenberg device is activated. From *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*.

## G.O.N.E. GROUP ESCAPOLOGICAL PRESCRIPTIONS

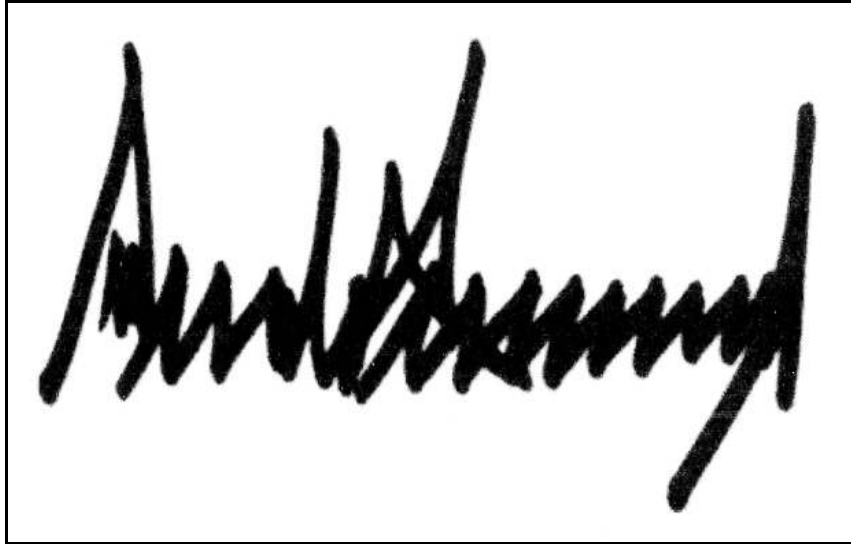
Speculate / Fictionalize / Eccentricate  
Geometricize / Reorientate / Accelerate / Get Gone

*Grab a personality and buy jumpsuit — your  
worlds are about to get more interesting.*  
— a G.O.N.E advertisement

*The G.O.N.E. group is a sono-discursive space for the  
soul or will of collective passions to accelerate and escape.*  
— "Speculative Possibility Through Fiction," Sado Muga

*Cyberpositive circuitry loops time "itself," integrating the actual  
and the virtual in a semi-closed collapse upon the future, a desire  
for multiverse switch.*  
— "G.O.N.E. — A Counter-Think-Tank," Wishwer Watt

*Gosh-a-mickle dickle-pickle gee willy-wobbles! In Uneath Abides,  
Wish Watt is skeptical of progress, yet has faith in technology; he  
writes: 'The invention of the transistor has already lapped the  
Russian Revolution in terms of historical importance.'*  
— A young G.O.N.E. member, cited in *The Fischer-Filoni Effect*

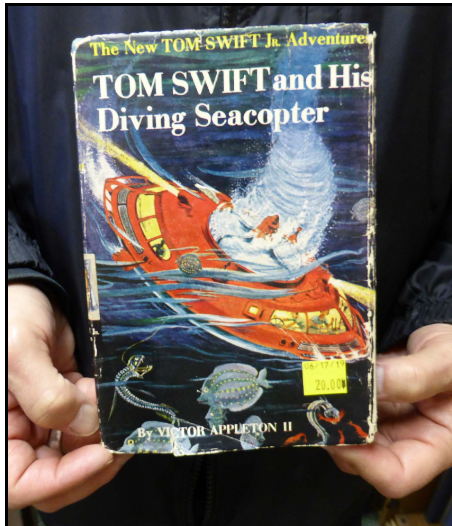


Chad Armbuster's EKG (Dallas Johnson hacked Chad's medical records and found his EKG to be astonishingly like Donald Trump's signature).



*Alien Cementoglyphs* found outside the G.O.N.E. group's meeting place in northern Wisconsin (photo by Dallas Johnson taken during his investigation into Hy Grader's demise).



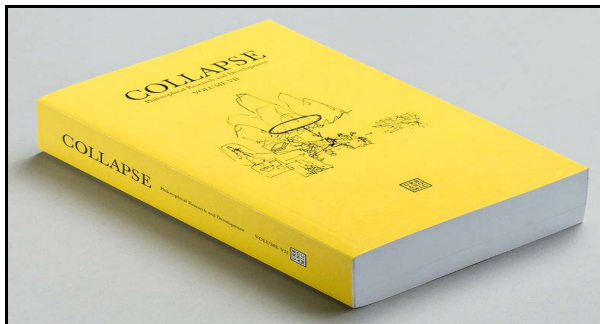


Wishwer Watts' childhood book which inspired his purchase of a mini-sub (see page 260).



Wishwer Watts's custom-made, Southwest Indian inspired, black-and-white coffee mug with G.O.N.E. group labyrinth logo.

## Wishwer Watts' Weird Artifacts



Wishwer Watt subscribes to the innovative journal *Collapse*. It is an independent, non-affiliated journal of philosophical research and development published in the UK. It draws on resources ranging from anthropology to chemistry, from hermetic alchemy to contemporary mathematics. In one issue, Wish wrote an essay pertaining to the possibility of dimension-travel, a study of becomings or capacities to produce emergent properties via a "Heisenberg Belt," as detailed in "The Structure of the Possibility Spaces Involved in Tendencies Unleashed by The Fischer-Filoni Effect," *Collapse I: Becomings*.

*Collapse VII: Culinary Materialism* (seen above, photo by Wish Watt) focused on another favorite topic of Wish's, (and Hy "Mememo" Grader's) food; this issue undertakes a transmodal experiment in culinary thinking. A wide range of contributors including philosophers, chefs, artists, historians, and synaesthetes examine the cultural, industrial, physiological, alchemical and even cosmic dimensions of cookery, and propose new models of culinary thought for the future. Cookery has never been so high on the agenda of Western popular culture. And yet the endlessly-multiplying TV shows, the obsessive interest in the provenance of ingredients, and the celebration of "radical" experiments in gastronomy, tell us little about the nature of the culinary. Is it possible to maintain that cookery has a philosophical pertinence without merely appending philosophy to our burgeoning gastroculture? How might the everyday sense of the culinary be expanded into a philosophy of "culinary materialism" wherein synthesis, experimentation, and operations of mixing and blending take precedence over analysis, subtraction and axiomatization?

*"You were literally snatched out of your dimension, out of your time, into ours [where] science and metaphysics declared a truce and united their force."*

— "Into the 28<sup>th</sup> Century," *Science Wonder Quarterly* (1930), Lilith Lorraine

*"We're not on Terra."*

*"We're not anywhere in the System."*

— "Prize Ship," Philip K. Dick,  
a tale of time-travel



Wishwer Watts' \$6600 Nike Decade V velcro shoes, the same model as worn by the mass suicides of the Heaven's Gate cult in San Diego, California in 1997 who thought, after death, they'd be transported to another evolutionary level on an alien ship following the passing Hale-Bopp comet.

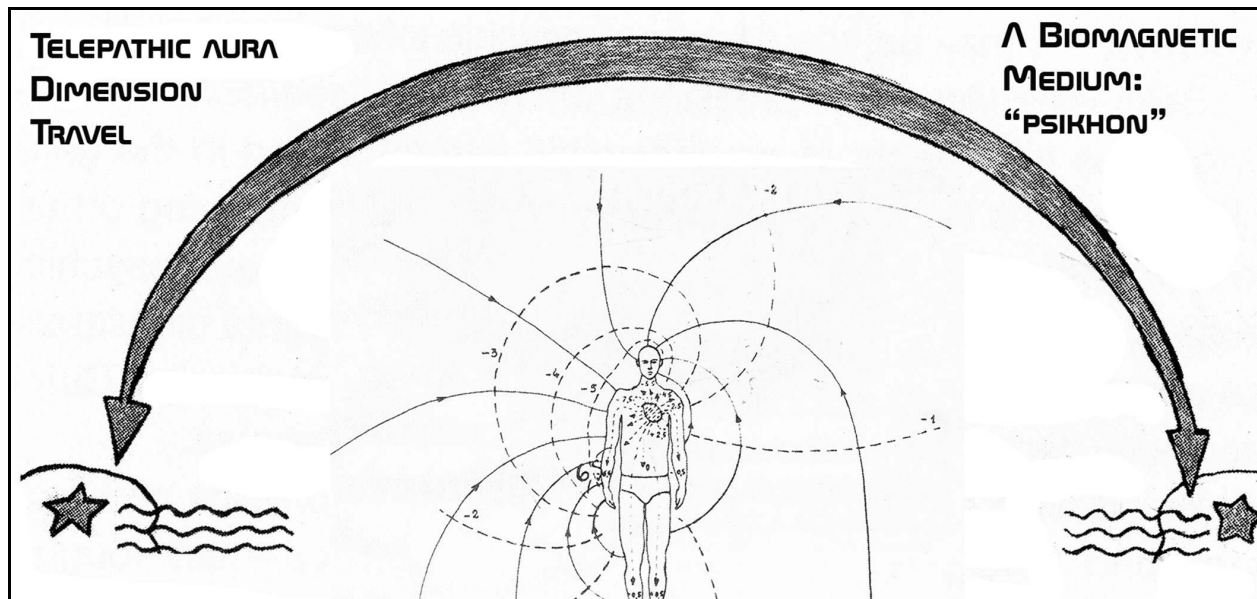




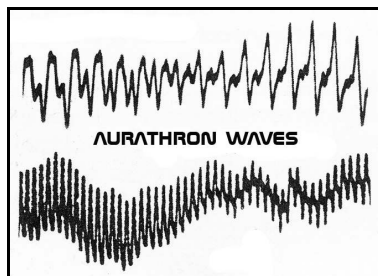
*Revenge of the Space Pandas*, or *Binky Rudich and the Two-Speed Clock* (David Mamet, 1985) two kids and dirty sheep are transported to a planet 58-light years from Earth by a two-speed clock they invent. The clock operates in "real" time and something akin to "duralational" time; it is seen as a vehicle to escape mundanity into something more wonderous. Wish Watt told Hy Grader he saw this play as a child and it forever changed his outlook on life and his future endeavors. Sado was also inspired by this play and re-enacted parts of it with a feminist spin.



A scene from Mamet's *Revenge of the Pandas* which Sado Muga would later have G.O.N.E. members act out, but modified to take place on Whileaway, a world without men, organized around lesbian family units.



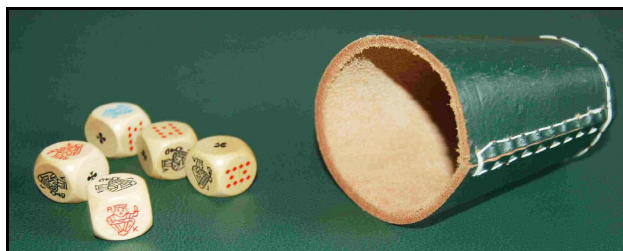
Auratronics: prefiguration of D-Travel; immaterial travel of psychic ("Psikhon") energy as studied by Pavel Gluyaev and inspired by the literary figuration of such technology by Russian poet Velimir Khlebnikov's technological imaginary novels where the body's aura (an inner, electrotonic field) and psychic forces could be imaged via an Aurathron, creating an electro-auragram; these forces could be harnessed for psychic distance communication. Courtesy of Wishwer Watt. The Fischer and Filoni's research (see pages 280-284 herein on the Fischer-Filoni Effect) was inspired in part by such early Russian experiments in electromagnetic waves.



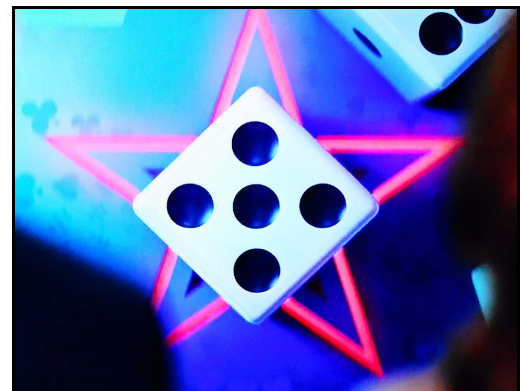
An electro-auragram

*The premise for [Gluyaev's] investigations was that human organs — the heart, muscles nerves and, last but not least, the brain — are electrogenetic; as they perform their functions, they bring forth currents that spread throughout the entire body, yielding an "inner, electronic field."*

*— Homo Sovieticus: Brain Waves, Mind Control, and Telepathic Destiny, Wladimir Velminski*



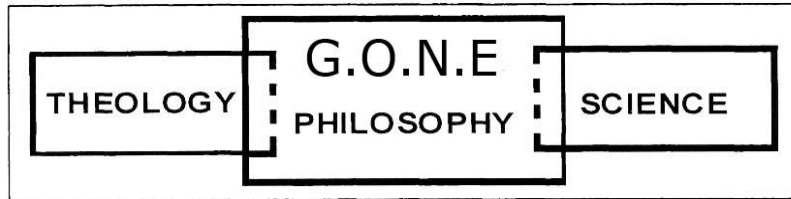
Wishwer Watt's vintage dice-poker game, originally owned by famed Chicago African-American gambler Jestin Kimo Toto Tubby J; Wish likes to arrange them into a quincunx array for display.



Quincunx array of dots on dice with 5-pointed star; mystically significant formal arrays in arithmosophy, which intrigued Hy "Mememo" Grader for their long history as figuring the mystical number five; it's an archetypal form used throughout history.

Wishwer Watt: *Henri Michaux's imaginary travel stories, Elsewhere, is required reading for all G.O.N.E. members.*





Frontispiece to Sado Muga's *The Inverted Triangle: Experiencing a Numogram : No mere neurochemical hiccup*, Sado Muga). Muga is related on her mother's side to Leftist sci-fi writer/poet Lilith Lorraine (b. 1894). She sees ideas as crystals, touts the logic of violins, and wears jewelry made by the Taliban from television debris.



*Mistress of our Egregore* (photo by Wishwer Watt) a Promethean Accelerationist and sonic concept imagineer; believes the world changed when Frank Zappa played the synclavier.

November 2015: A cosmologist from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) believes he may just have found proof that an alternate and parallel universe does indeed exist. In a study featured in the *Astrophysical Journal*, researcher Ranga-Ram Chary described evidence of a cosmic bruising, or the bumping of one universe against another, which could be used to identify an anomaly he discovered on the cosmic microwave background map. "Many other regions beyond our observable universe would exist with each such region governed by a different set of physical parameters than the ones we have measured for our universe," Dr. Chary wrote in his study. Remember, spacetime is a physical object like an electron; it too fluctuates and can be in a "superposition" of different configurations. Past and future may fluctuate; an event may be both before and after another one.

*Musical passages can be about the future, even when actions in the present can change things, amp up new possibles, they can re-enforce G.O.N.E. prophesies.*

— "Accelerate: Many Worlding," in *The Inverted Triangle* by Sado Muga

## The Elevator Game

How to get to another world

This is a game from Korea. By performing this ritual you are supposed to get to "a different world."

According to people that have successfully completed the game, it looks the same as the town/building that you are from, but all the lights are off and you can only see a red cross in the distance.

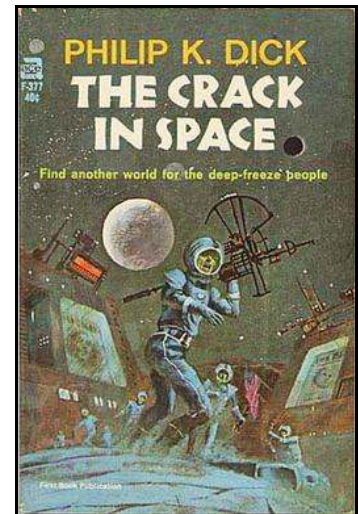
There is no other living things there except yourself.

Some say electronics (cellphone, camera, etc.) don't work while some say they do.

Page on Wishwer Watts' website

*. . . these people after Doug don't belong to our universe. They come from a different dimension entirely. . . . They have entry into ours at will, it would seem, a hole, so to speak, that they can enter through and return again.*

— "Fair Game," Philip K. Dick



On a future Earth (c. 2080 CE) overwhelmed with severe difficulties related to overpopulation, a portal is discovered that leads to a parallel world. Jim Briskin, campaigning to be the first Black president of the United States, believes that the new "alter-Earth" could be colonized and become a home for the seventy million people ("Bibs") that are being kept in cryo-preservation. These people — mostly non-caucasians — decided to be "put to sleep" until a time when the over-population problem could be solved.



G.O.N.E. Group 2-story Confidence-Building Jump: A "Wobble" (jumper who hesitates on the edge of a roof) is pushed off and lands successfully; iPhone documentation by Wishwer Watts

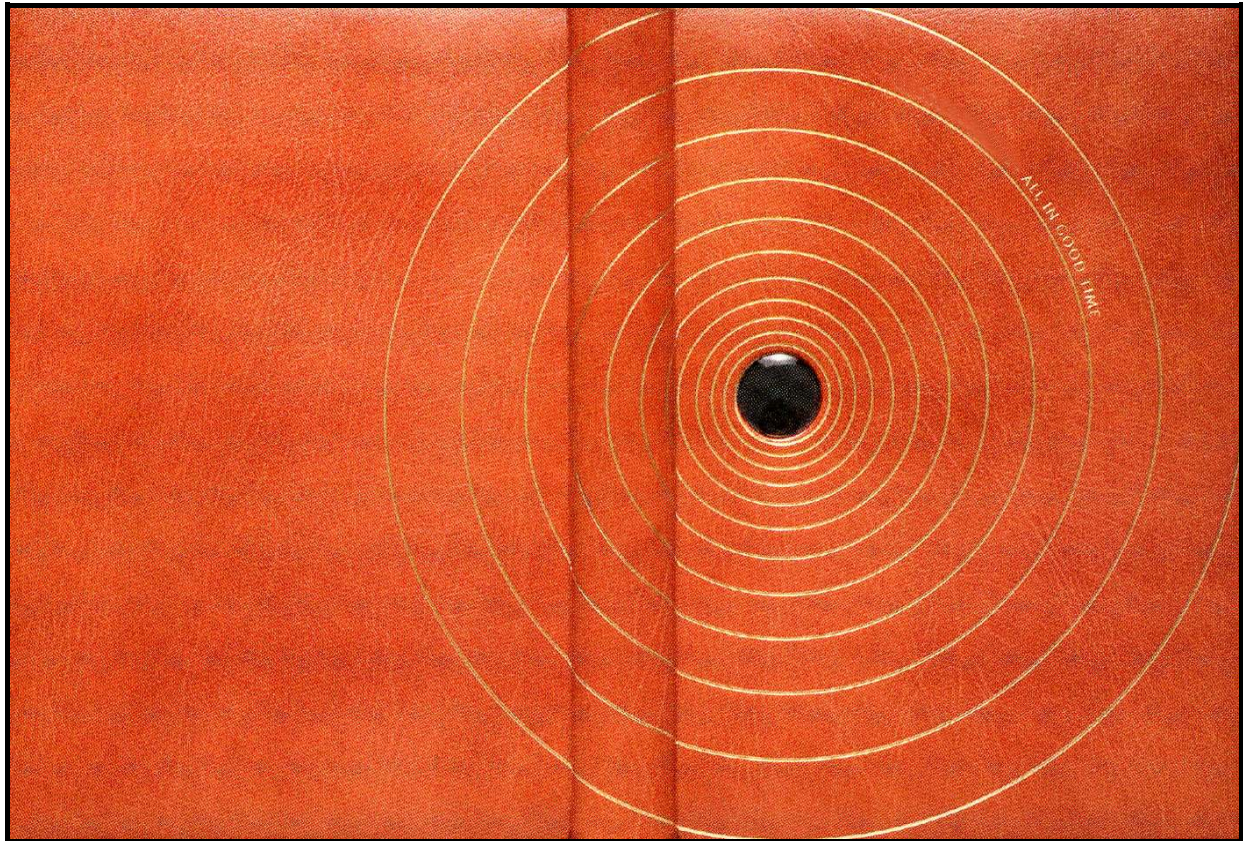
*The trick is suddenly to appear in a place without apparent means of transport.*

— John Cage

*... rise out of your body to hang suspended between worlds.*

— Jalīl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī





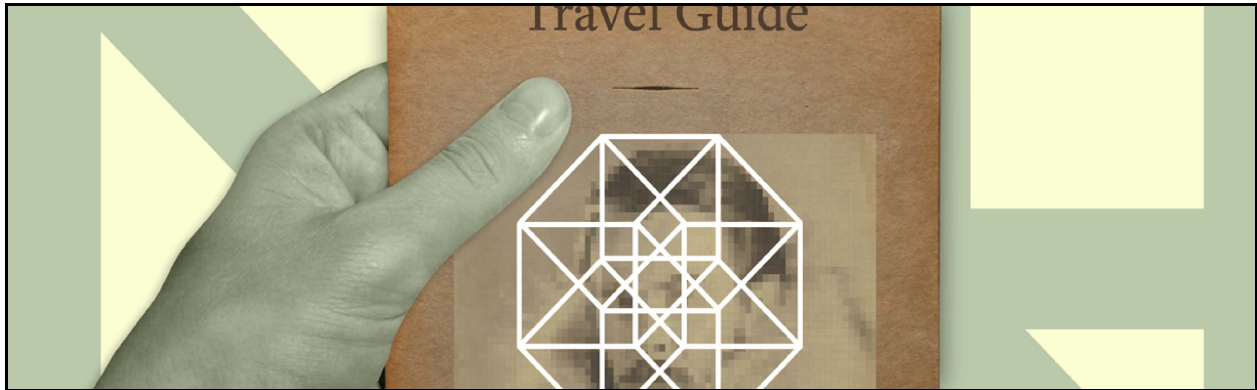
*All in Good Time* (back and front covers, hardcover book, 11 in. w x 14 in. h x 2 in. d when closed) Wishner Watt collection (a home-made time-travel device disguised as a book, with push-button activation on front cover, c. 1955, transistors and perforated foil, non-functional). Wish speculates it may have been made by a William A. Noyes, author of a strange 1949 chemistry paper titled "The Endochronic Properties of Resublimated Thiotimoline" wherein the author speculates on the possibility of using perforated Thiotimoline foil "that has an unusual spatial dimension" to create a "Computaplex capable of summation of thousands and thousands of variables" such that time-travel was made possible. Noys' paper begins: "It came to pass in process of time, that . . ." The text ends with speculation that time-travel is possible, but that new tenses will have to be invented to write about it, such as: "the Future Semiconditionally Modified Subinverted Plagal Past Subjunctive Intentional." (Collection of Baker-Berry Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.)



"Emerence in a High-Rise," Sado Muga graphic, inspired by Loïe Fuller's serpentine dance, used as mural-sized backdrop to a G.O.N.E. dance/sonic performance. "A manifestation devoted to its own eventual disappearance," wrote Muga.

*A kind of ghostly never-never land where the  
might-have-beens play with the what-ifs.*

— William A. Noyes, "The Endochronic Properties of  
Resublimated Thiotimoline" (1949)



Dimension-Travel Guide, Illustration from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*

*The influences of the senses has in most men overpowered the mind to the degree that the walls of space and time have come to look solid, real and insurmountable, and to speak with levity of these limits in the world is the sign insanity.*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Over Soul*

*The future is volatile, so why would we assume that what we know today will continue to be tomorrow?*

— "The Nuclear Sonic: Listening to Millennial Matter," Lendl Barcelos in *Aesthetics After Finitude*



Hyperdimensions, illustration from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*

*I come from some other place. It's just not like a real place on Earth or something I could point to on a map, if I even had a map of this other place, which I don't. There's no map because the place isn't a place like something to be near or in or at. It's not somewhere or anywhere, but it's not nowhere either. There is no where about it. I don't know what it is.*

— "A Better Place," Ottessa Moshfegh





Sado Muga (red X) leads a recruiting seminar for new G.O.N.E. members as reproduced in Muga's *The Inverted Triangle*. Notice D-jump simulator in the background. Photo by Wishwer Watt.



Bridging Parallel Universes, Illustration to "Parallel Universes: Can They Converge? Divergent Views on the Topic," by Wishwer Watt and Sado Muga

*Let your horizontal become vertical.  
(This is not a century for paradise.)  
So go G.O.N.E. Join us to get a redistribution of sensibility, then you will feel less here, and more there. In dozens of "heres," in dozens of "theres". Let "reality" lose mass and stiffness and no longer put up any serious resistance to the everpresent transforming modality.*

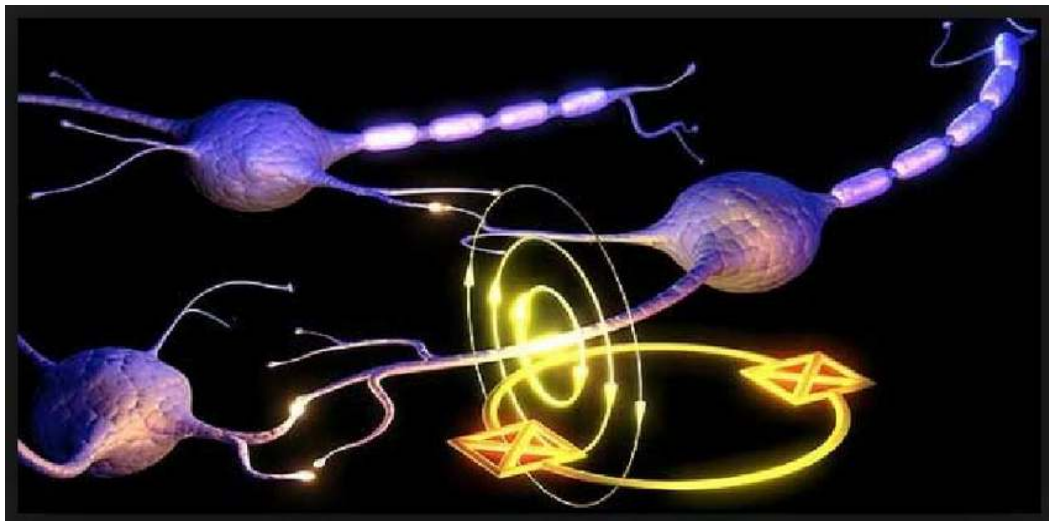
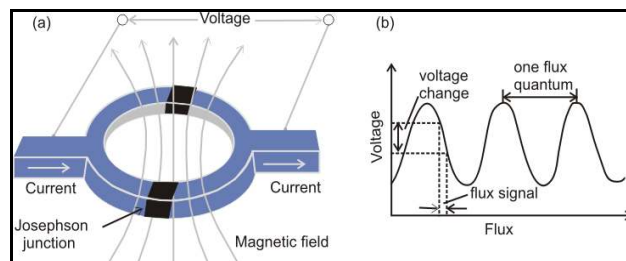
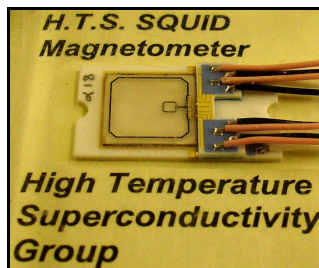
*Begin to surrender in little ways until you are ready to do so in a BIG way. We help you through multiple, staged, varied invitations to let go, get GONE, where, after a short phase of nausea*

*and discomfort, you begin to deal above all with light: shining, striking, piercing with its rays that have suddenly become penetrating. The whiteness comes inside you, white lightning. Then a black sky everywhere full of stars; you sink into it, entering new space, shot into it, rushed into it, flowing into it, ready for contact. . . .*

— Wishwer Watt in *The Inverted Triangle*



Illustration to the article "Parallel Universes: Can They Converge? Divergent Views on the Topic," by Wishwer Watt in Sado Muga's *The Inverted Triangle*



Heisenberg Belt operation based on superconducting quantum interference devices employing Josephson junctions (*Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*).





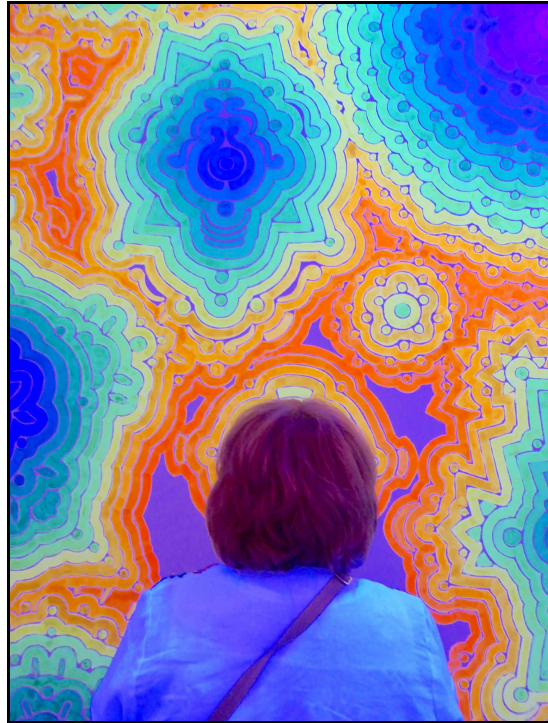
"Psychosymbiotaxiplasmic Dissolution: Bridal Dress Jump," successful D-jump recorded by Wishwer Watt; a hardcopy of this jpeg file was found in Hy "Mememo" Grader's papers and was dated a few days prior to his death. On the back of the print was a curious textual excerpt (reproduced below) and a note that this jump video's sound track was the dissonant strings of Karlheinz Stockhausen's bizarre 1995 *Helicopter String Quartet*.

*In the beginning of Time some jerk tried to take control over everything and fucked it up for everybody forever. So get G.O.N.E. from your meager safety, doubt the 'rags-to-riches' myth that all too often leads to 'dregs-to-ditches' and get into 'Promise Time'. It takes recalibrating your imagination, seeding your mind with helicopters; recognize the come-hither look of quantum possibility. So make use of intuition to emerge from our own duration to affirm and recognize the existence of other durations, above and below us as an inexhaustable reservoir of potential.*

*Trust in the H-belt so the air grows a hole, lovely as a lotus which casts no shadow below! Let any last plea of rationality fall away floors above you. No time. No time for one last thought, even. Before you can think that thought — phase shift — all loses solidity in the down of verticality, as natural as a cloud passing over and then dissolving the difference between you and the medium of your passage disintegrates with a push of a button. Outside enfolds to inside. Suspended and the feeling of suspense as an emergent change. Then it's all bright and all the weight and cares you had are shed, no longer weight or cares — immediation, then Ziv! No pathos or bathos here, pilgrim.*

— "Alter-rhythms of Otherness: There is No Disagreement Between You and the Air," J. D. Hickenlooper, in a G.O.N.E. pamphlet, *The Fast Good-bye*, July 22, 2014.

# Dorinda



*Dorinda As Cosmic Egg*, Santa Fe, New Mexico (2015)  
photo by Hy "Mememo" Grader

*What does a man want? Everything — an imaginary kingdom — and then some. The first time I took my bra off, Hy's face was stunned and stupid with pleasure, like a milk-drunk baby. Once I knew how he could be soothed, I knew how to hurt him. Sometimes it seemed we were the couple in Lorraine Hansberry's play The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window. Yet, yet, I weep for Hy even though reading was his true love and writing his best-sex. When we first met, he sported fashionably angular eye-glasses and ingratiating eagerness, an untenured literature professor just beginning to be drawn to Postmodernism and Ontological Quest. He was charming and frank on every imaginable subject. Later, as the long-married, we suffered from our knowledge of each other; we realized we had denied each other's reality for many years. Yet now, is my darkest hour. I see him pizza'ed on the sidewalk; pain lingers, a prong of a harpoon catching under my skin. I reach for the tranquillizers, imagine my eyes falling back into my head, slits of white, insect flickering, see people clustered around his corpse. Pushed? Jumped? Just fell? How many times did I try to sleep that night, my eyes stopping in mid-flight? I must go on for Hy's sake, but I want to wipe out — but no — he's not dead. He lives on in the perfume of his sandal-wood soap bars labeled "Sea-Change" and imprinted with an ancient sailing ship, all folded in light blue tissue, stored in a rectangular balsa wood box.*

— Dorinda Grader's diary entry dated two days after Hy's demise



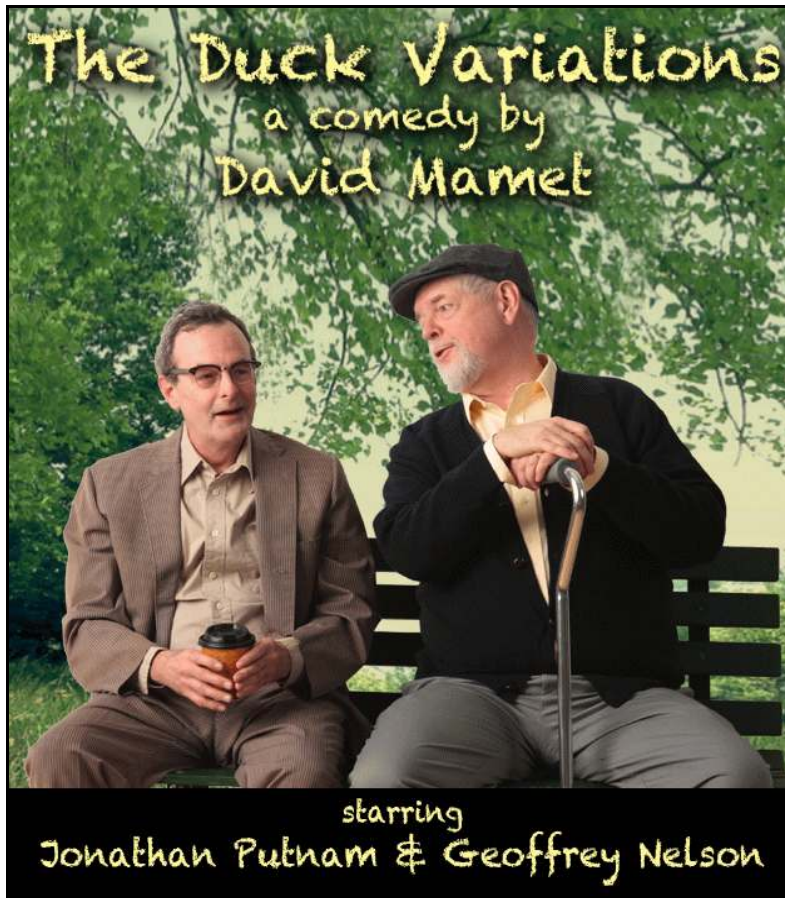


*The Three Disgraces or Call to the Old Ones* (2015) photo by Dorinda Grader shot at art venue Meow Wolf, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Hy Grader references this image in one of his last entries in his Moleskine notebook as “a hyperphotochasmic image that functions as a Greenbergian *Augenblick* depicting the flash of Emergence during the last phase of dimension-travel as Contact is made with what Donna Haraway has called ‘companion species’.”

*Ever us on Everest, up like a hot-air balloon*  
*The flare of the burner lifting. You*  
*Play Mandelbrot to my Euclid.*  
*We dine like gods of old,*  
*Our hands across the table,*  
*Our eyes each other's hold*  
*Another special evening*  
*In a tale that must be told — now tolled.*  
*But moments before death,*  
*Hope you heard waters flowing,*  
*Conjuring up all the waters you ever heard.*  
*You now on a “happy ship” firmly in the hold.*  
 — *The Presence of Absence*, Dorinda Grader



"If Hy Had Lived," Hy Grader and Ichi Honne aged by fifteen years via computer-image aging program modification accomplished by Dallas Johnson and commissioned by Dorinda Grader. Dorinda wanted to have me (Jym) write a short play riffing on David Mamet's two-person play *The Duck Variations* (1975) using Hy and Ichi as the two old fart friends sitting on a park bench exchanging observations on nature, the deteriorating environment, generational cycles, and death, including it in the Appendix to this book: "Jym, I want Hy to play the George character as he is the dominant of the pair in Mamet's play and, like Hy, often extrapolates generalities from questionable premises." As this book was already bulging at the seams, I had to tell Dory "Enough is enough, already!"



George and Emil on a park bench





# Four Amigos Minus One

*Why not say what happened?*

— Robert Lowell

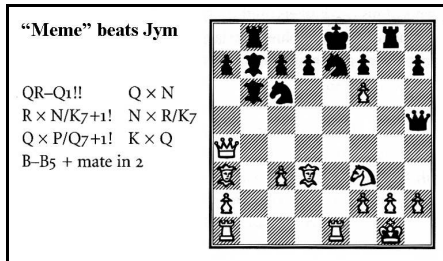
JYM



Jym, shot staged by Dallas Johnson

Calling Dorinda Grader that fateful night, PI Dallas Johnson cited Charlie Chan telling his wife: “Events break suddenly like firecrackers in the face of innocent passersby.” Innocent passersby certainly saw Hy “Memento” Grader splatter on a Chicago sidewalk. In my nightmares I see that unstable dreamer’s face, bloodied by that fatal 22-story dive. This is a recurring horror us amigos hope to purge by looking into the mysterious death of our friend.

Did Hy prefer the Short Good-bye to the Long Good-bye? For over 22 years, Hy, a Precarious Knowledge Worker (PKW), taught Lit- and Art-related courses on the themes of utopia/dystopia at a loopy Chicago Loop U. at which, in all his years of climbing and descending the steps from lobby to elevator floor, he never got the same count up as down. Hy wrote fiction “as a remedy against the corruption of my consciousness and the age I live in.” He took his duties seriously within a mediocre context.



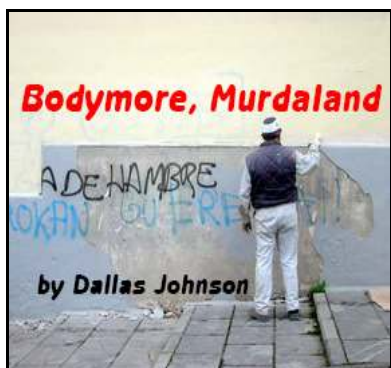
Last game between Mememo and Jym before “Meme’s” death

Around the time Margaret Thatcher was doing a “T.I.N.A.” on Britain’s economy, Hy was tasked to team teach “Art and Incarceration”, a Liberal Studies class cross-listed with both Art History and the Criminal Justice Department. While preparing for that class, Hy met with me and one Dallas Johnson, a private investigator — a Colt .45 (the gun) and a Colt 45 (the malt liquor) are painted on his office door — whose also

a mystery writer and former parole officer. He once gave a talk at Hy’s college. I’d just published a 500-page *magnum opus* on the representation of prisons and prisoners in photography, film and video; my academic job at a world-class art school put me a few blocks north of Hy’s school. Dallas’ first mystery novel, *Looking for the Ptyx*, was out and he’d moved his PI biz from Berwyn to Chicago’s South Loop. That novel was soon followed by a novelette *Bodystore*, *Murdaland* which, he claimed, influenced the notable TV series “The Wire”.

So we amigos were all only blocks apart. It was a fortuitous conjuncture. A veritable data-sponge, Hy absorbed our suggestions during regular meetings

## Finding Mememo



*Bodymore, Murdaland*, mystery story by Dallas Johnson where Blurt Wildbraine, carrying his rumpled black raincoat, tracks the notorious criminal, "Little-Head-High".

of what we eventually dubbed The Eclectic Society at the Fine Arts Building's Artist's Café on Mich Ave next to Hy's school. At first, it was all business, Hy buying us lunch in exchange for info for his class. Soon, though, we were sharing our interests in social justice and a mutual delight in sci-fi and murder mysteries — Moto, Charlie Chan, Sherlock Holmes, Isaac Asimov's sci-fi-mystery "The Billiard Ball", and 1940s' scantily-clad gedanken-experiments — and, oddly, in gems, especially lapis lazuli. Hy was fascinated with that gem's intense deep blue color and that it was (he liked the double enten-

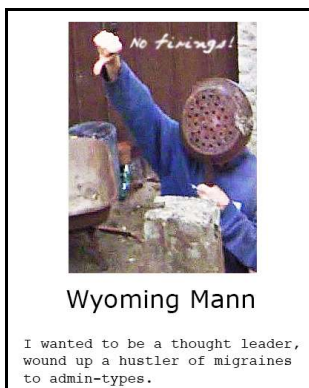
dre here ) a *metamorphic* rock prized since antiquity. His wife, Dorinda, "muchly preferred" gentian blue on gents, so that color showed up often in her husband's couture. He hated the taffeta-wrapped dead rat he was mailed though.

Contra us pedagogues at war with jejune philistines, Dal is a man of the street and bars (prison, drinking venues): "A fifth o' good booze can cost upward o' seven bucks 'n five senses." Time has enlarged him in an organic way, like a tree trunk. He is *too* flesh — raw meat — dogs follow him, optimistic. He's a pinball waiting to pop into play. Choice of brew? Warm piss and skepticism; has a flawless bull-shit detector. Amps up a soliloquy by refusing the prim protocols of "proper" English and charms us with a "grain" of voice that Hy's Japanese émigré bud, Ichi Honne, describes as: "Dallas-san Sumo wrestling his mother tongue." Dal, oft clad in a mustard-colored turtleneck, rivets us with detective lore — both RL and not — where he must think his way into other existences, alert to the unreality of established facts. There are many *ifs* in both his job and his fiction: "It's my profession to balance possibilities. I enjoy bein' pulled into a game," he admits, "in which the levels of readin' shift 'tween fiction 'n the true, mystery 'n sci-fi, stuff that fortuitously jives with your readin' habits, *kemo sabes*," drawing for our benefit an overlapping Venn diagram of such.

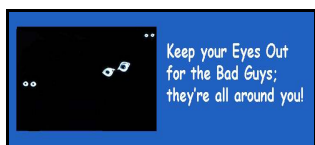
Hy, inspired as Dal was by Captain Picard's holo-deck role as "PI Dixon Hill" in an early TV episode of "Star Trek the Next Generation [*see frontispiece*], envious of the waltz of obviousness and obscurity in Dallas' mysteries, and his Charlie Chan aphorisms, had to try his own hand. Hy and I had this "thing" for chess; then pool-parlor-Dallas, who'd hit the streets like a charged battery, just had to bet into it, kibitzing via language and body, keeping us rocking with laughter like beer mugs overflowing. Despite our weekly triumvirate, Hy never let us get too close — a Protestant proxemics. We were not yet his *intimate* friends, reserving such to a select few — like his buddy, Ichi — whom he

## Finding Mememo

praised as “a man who sees his shadow projected on the sky.” Those privileged to call Hy “Mememo” or “Meme”, were a minority. Dal told him once, “That’s not a name, it’s the start of a sentence!” Hy believed the price of *broheimship* to be high. Ichi who, despite the 150-mile separation, could call him “Meme”. They shared Leftist politics, a slapstick teaching style where language was always on the edge of fumbling, and a mutual marked preference for the absurd.



Over Wyoh’s desk is a poster of Michel Foucault saying “Know is Underpaid”



The bumper sticker Ichi gave to Hy which found its way to Wyoh’s red Jeep’s bumper.

Ichi sent Hy doctored news photos and he’d pin them up in his faculty office (known as “Adjunctin’ Junction”), delighting office-mate, Wyoming Mann (a.k.a., Wyoh), a designer-stubbled rogue Lefty who often jousts with Admin-types over their “fuckuptive logic revealing the New Bad Things in the Desert of the Real under Capitalism, where the sun is intermittently obscured by quickly moving clouds that look like workers being chased down by police.” Wyoh, who has shallow depressions on his temples from the forceps that pulled into this world, believes “engaged writing” is merely “hurling a lasso at a bull, because we’re up a neoliberal shit-creek without a paddle.” Held energy-sapping discussions in a sub-Marxist jargon as impenetrable as the disputations of medieval monks. Often quoted Italian Marxist comedian Dario Fo, and referred to the arcane writings of that East European Elvis of cultural theory, Slavoj Žižek. Wyoh, ego as powerful as a steel-piercing drill, still imagines he can play Hero in the agon between the admin-types (“Inspiration Curators”) and contingent faculty (“Nicks,” short for the Devil and nickels, i.e., small-change), the latter part of today’s rapidly increasing “Precariat”.

Ichi, a gifter, gave Meme two wacky bumper stickers the last time he visited; one found its way onto the dented bumper of Wyoh’s well-rusted red Jeep Cherokee. Ichi also brought his family album to share over choice saki [see *frontispiece*]. How time’s flown since.

I’m an Emeritus prof — perpendicular and still taking nourishment — but guilty of once morbidly musing how many colleagues had to die for to me to get tenure. I have not a few fiercely nice contacts with loopy socially-concerned faculty at Loop schools. But “Hy Grader” — appropriate pseudonym for one sailing under false colors, confessing full compliance to administrative dictates to “grade inflate” to retain students, keeping the almighty tuition bucks rolling in — is, er, *was* my longest lasting, the most unusual of all. We always gave each other a mighty righteous closed right fist *dap*, Obama-style, when we met.



# Finding Mememo

Dallas looks like that robust TV PI *cum* gourmand, Cannon, from the 1970s; a nocturnal raptor with a thriving detective biz thanks to obstinacy and an iron will to see crime scenes as pregnant with uncanny meaning, achieving his ends with a smile. Gets important hush-hush jobs for corps, like Deep Dream, and dotcom firms he hates: “Those fuckin’ social optimizers, clickbaiters, and video clip-jobbers — like *Newser* whose motto is: ‘Read Less, Know More’, grrrrrrr!” Got the knack for colloquialisms: *Great bombs and little cannonballs! . . . What I think and five dollars might get you a pack of cigs and some change . . . Cool beans . . . Never stop futzin’ . . . My opinion isn’t worth a sparrow’s fart, but . . . It’s clobberin’ time.* Sneaky — like TV detective, Columbo — using humble ways and disingenuous demeanor to winkle out the most well-concealed of crimes; he possesses relentless inquisitiveness, retains a slightly indistinct, out-of-focus quality that relaxes people, makes them give up information. One “victim” of his grilling compared it to “being beaten with cotton candy.” Yes, he’s a human influencing machine. He’s “*mucho* suspicious” of Hy’s demise, which has brought us surviving three amigos together. He groks that *fact* derives from Latin for *fabrication* and *person* from *mask*. Dallas is up to the challenge: “Am I ready for a mystery? Hell, I’m just like boiled ham, I’m always ready!”

## DALLAS



Excuse my break-in, my unseemly presence ‘n noise, my seizin’ some time here, crappin’ on the chess board of academic chatter. Like Hy, I believe a man’s reach should outstretch his grasp. So I’m now readin’ a quirky Frenchy’s book, *Fuir*, that reads like a James Bond novel written by Sam Beckett. I abbrevi; it’s my hab ‘n ‘scuse me iffin’ I make fun of youse dons’ academic use of “she” instead of the partriarchal pronoun “he”, by usin’ *she* in my detective stories when referrin’ to my *male* PI, Blurt Wildbraine, all wise-guy winks, raunchy jokes, with his adventure of relationships stirred up between face and hand after he’s downed two quincunxes of draft brew.

No. I ain’t tense, nope, just terribly, terribly alert, given my biz ‘n leanin’s toward the mystery genre as practiced in both real ‘n virtual worlds. In fact, sometimes I think I live a double existence, like I’m always in some alt-real game, a game-structure transposed onto reality. I love discoverin’ the largeness lurkin’ in the seemin’ly small ‘n vice versa. Ya grok? ‘N if Jym ‘n Hy use that word, *grok*, they got it from me ‘n I got it from bodacious Bobby Heinlein, okay?

For the gumshoe, the pursuit of clarity churns up unexpected complexity. Holmes, in “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches”, says he’s found seven separate explanations, each of which would cover the facts of the case. Yeppers, when I’m on a c(h)ase — I’m not built for hurry, hurry’s the wind that destroys

## Finding Mememo

the scaffoldin' — I do what female street-walkers do 'stinctively: parse 'tween the sentence, the proposition, 'n the speaker. So with great excitement I've agreed to poke into our mutual bud's mysterious demise. A way to deal with grief, too. Hy's widow inherited a copy of my recent Blurb.com book, *Beware the Cat and Other Stories*, which I'd sent Hy 'n which he'd been perusin' the mornin' before his dive. Now she, too, was enjoyin' my collection of mysteries. I'd personalized it: *Duuuuude, it's time to pick up the plow, furrow the brow, and out-guess Blurt as he tries to solve mad monkey cases whose evil-dude oft turns out to be an Adult Child? You only have to grok the labyrinth and ABIDE.*

Slumped over my notebook in my South Loop office, I was dashin' off a few lines of a mystery story: *Her eyes seemed to bring everything inside her to the surface and . . .* My PI character, Blurt Wildbraine, smokes 'n drinks, yet never seems to change emotion or thought. Like Bogart, the guy's *cool*, got integrity that's a threat to both the cops and his clients. Analyzes each case usin' a series of what he (she) calls "corrections" to errors committed durin' his (her) investigation. "Error is the truth of life," is one of his (her) famous remarks. Blurt, as I do on a case, awaits advantages, scrutinizes his actions, then scrutinizes this scrutiny — an eye sharper than a cutpurse. And he's (she's) resourceful. Once caught in an elevator with an old lady during a power outage, he (she) rifled through her grocery bag and MacGyvered a candle out of a can of Crisco and a shoelace. Today, on the page before me, Blurt blurts out to his heavy-set secretary, Rose La Touche (*hyperconscious of her round, expanded nose*, but who grabs Blurt's deep affection due to *the soft trouble of her features*): "Rose, where's Biddle? Need his unencumbered brain; he can have hives, dandruff, a slight touch of the cerebral termites, or the galloping never-get-overs, for all I care, but I need him, now! Now!" Blurt here has taken a case from a "Dame Ida Keepnews", a *wealthy widow with a wink and rigor mortis* that I further 'scribe as havin', ". . . no beauty, her face merely a lemon with a slit for a mouth that likes to say: 'I, too, dislike it'."

I chose the name "Biddle" as Hy, who always throws me a curve without a tangent, and oft "biddles" the soft brown matter beneath his finger nails, said *bid* means "literary innovation" 'n "heresy" in Arabic. So "biddle" entangles innovation 'n heresy, see? With Biddle at "her" side, Blurt probes the cracks 'n contreedictions of complex cases, oft imaginin' a chat with the deceased — somethin' I might try myself in Hy's case. In one story, Blurt is up against Roman Schelmen, a *notorious adventurer into women's drawers* (double-entendre intended) who is noted for *his poker-faced delivery of double-voiced discourses*. In chapter five, Roman delivers, in drag, a taunting note into the thick hands of Blurt's secretary: *Whatever she weaves by day, I tear by night.*

## Finding Mememo

But I digress. The phone rang, interruptin' my authorial labors. Hy's widow, a tough dame with a soft for a bibliophile dreamer. She said, "Dal, my sadness is like the sea, indivisible, and I keep falling into it." She asked me to help Jym 'n Hy's close buddy, Ichi Honne, to supplement the police's formal investigation, which was "perfunctory" adding, "You're trained to be objective, Dal. Divide the task. Let Jym and Ichi poke into Hy's writing, his white matter; you gum-shoe it, poking into people's gray matter. You know an unchartered Chicago, its people, reshaped and deformed by ruthless commercial logic, know its hidden ears, and what one most fears." I yeppered her, confirmin' her con-

---



"The Cell's door slowly opened . . ." Frontispiece for *Beware the Cat and Other Stories* by Dallas Johnson

*They walk in. Blurt following Crudetta Talento, her face pinched, her high-heels on concrete, clacking the music of honest thought. The room is deserted and has an atmosphere of oppression, dismal, unsettling. It's called The Cell. Blurt shivers. There is an absence in the air almost tangible, as if one could reach out and grab a handful of nothing, and feel its cold, unforgiving emptiness. On the metal table before them, as promised by Billy Yik Tho Lim of ISD (Singapore's secret police), is what is called the Hokrala Document; it is a fairly ordinary-looking letter, until you inspect it really closely. On one side, beneath the corporate logo — a weird, convoluted design that reminds Blurt of a Celtic knot with something biological and violent to it — were several lines of alien script. The markings look like a series of tiny, jagged dots and dashes and slashes, all tied together in endless knots, varying in size and boldness. It leaves Blurt feeling slightly queasy. He looks at Crudetta; a circuit closes between them. She beams; her bottom teeth are where her top teeth should be and vice versa! Then Blurt hears something, a really slow clap, Crudetta's eyes start to roll . . .*

— "The Hokrala Document," in *Beware the Cat and Other Stories*

# Finding Mememo

fidence by tellin' her I'm a guy who can fix in his brain any creep crossin' his path, memory-snap any document surreptitiously glanced at. Say, I was short-listed to make a cameo as "Phil Blank, American tourist" on Netflix's Norwegian-American crime comedy *Lilyhammer* back in 2012. No shit, Sherlock! Some damn Dane drama queen got the role though.

"So," she urged, "please have a pow-wow with Jym over this." I agreed, said us *cuarto amigos* minus one were ON IT! I pushed speed dial, set up a rendezvous with Jym where the best brew grew, The Seven Lions, Alpina Singh's eatery on Mich Ave across from the Art Institute Museum. We hadn't seen each other for awhile, so I looked forward to takin' a break from our oppressive, rapaciously commercial society whose dark secrets I've become privy to.

I was at the bar waitin', chattin' with Cohan the bartender ("Cohan, please!"), peerin' at passersby with minute interest in innumerable varieties of details, dress, air, gait, visage, 'n expression of countenance. When Jym walked in, I was already two beers up on him. We grasped hands, flesh sayin' "Hello" 'n "We share a mutual loss." We gazed spot on into each other's peepers in mut(e)ual sympathy. Within minutes we were clinkin' glasses over *al dente* pasta. It be a blazin' spring night durin' global warmin', the hot day slowly fadin' into dusk. Not typical Chicago Spring weather. I sat idle 'cross from Jym as amiably as a cow watchin' a train go past. Both of us ordered squid-ink spaghetti with a side of grilled brussels sprouts. He thought I'd order a beer but, provin' no one ever died of contradictions, I ordered an excellent white wine, a delicate French Château de Ripaille. Asked him if he could guess my ideal meal? His rolling eyes signaled a NOPE. "I calls 'er A Red Dinner: salmon roe, cold borscht, crayfish cocktail, fillet of beef carpaccio, Verona salad, steamed edam, salad of three red fruits, 'n blackcurrant Charlotte washed down with pepper vodka."

Minds tryin' on alternate futures, we'd revisit "Golgonsnooza", a utopia, each time we got together, addin' to it new ideas, either sharp outline or cloudy amber light. I mixed H.L. Mencken's idea of havin' booze sprayed in the air with Charles Fourier's vision of fountains bubbling champagne, guaranteed to have us inebriated, in good cheer, by noon. Hy envisioned Mex-Tex joints servin' "Chili Similes", where there are free schools, posters hangin' honorin' artist Allan Kaprow's radical concept of the "Un-Artist" who wanted to move the arts into a direct engagement with society. Ichi 's "Provoke" touted a Neo-Haight-Ashbury of slumber parties with drugs 'n hugs. Jym's was of schools run on a mix of radical pedagogical ideas from Montessori 'n A.S. Neill. This ideal society was what Hy, as a kid fascinated by Thor Heyerdahl 'n the South Seas, dubbed "Levu-Vana", where citizens sport tattoos of a floral pattern copped from the flowing garment of "Flora" in Botticelli's famous





# Finding Mememo

painting *Primavera*. But our chatter merely hid the elephant in the room, how dreams of *broheimship* went smash 'gainst a cement sidewalk.

I spoke of my family. Funny, I never told this shit to my buds before. So, I have a younger bro', Austin; preaches in The Living Word Fellowship 'n a rabid rah-rah-raher of that truth-decaying pseudo-event, Donald Trump. I call him "The Baby Jesus". We hail from Texas. Our pa worked for NASA at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. Dad was a weird one. On the one hand, he took the family on a covered-wagon trip along the Oregon-California Trail consisting of ruts (small paths) 'n swale (larger paths). He'd acquired enough navigatin' expertise by takin' OCTA's Rut-Swale Identification Certification Course.

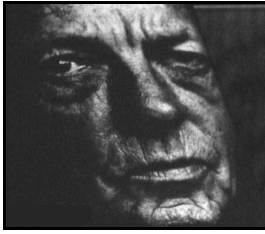
On the other hand, he got a private pilot's license 'n joined the Center's Single-Engine Club and rented a vintage Piper Cub to do aerobatics. So he had both ground 'n air covered. On the ground, Austin always felt like God's apostle, walkin' in sandals. I just felt the joy of wanderin'. When outdoors with dad, Austin always felt closer to God, while I felt I could survey a situation with unprecedented clarity. Dad's name was Houston Johnson. Cool beans, huh? My dad believed he was promoted faster at NASA 'cause of that name, his unusual skill set, 'n his desire to simplify the universe using a pie chart.

Austin was a model son, actually *askin'* to help our ma with dishes 'n hangin' with Bible Studies kids; but my odd habits were gettin' me noticed as well. Kids I chummed with hung out in a certain funky old gas station 'cause the attendant looked like James Dean. At fifteen I broke free, my teen brain sayin' "Make it new!" I began to wander solo, adoptin' a higher coolness, peacoat collar up, cigarette danglin' from my mouth. Started pokin' my nose into people's affairs. Even followed folks 'round the 'hood with a Minox spy camera my grampy got me for Xmas, even took flicks near dad's work, not a good idea bein' so close to a government facility durin' the Cold War. I became a human bloodhound, noticin' things others didn't. Developed a sense of nervousness like an animal's. My uncle on my ma's side, César, a prison guard, gave me a vintage Federal Gas Billy. Still carry it. Nostalgia, dude — something Hy groked. 'N so it goes.

When my mother questioned my ill-advised antics, I'd always shoot back, "An I for an I, a truth for a truth," explaining that, "I wanna be a private-dick" (this was around the time I was doin' a Hands Solo with my pecker). I guess that was as far away from the *unprivate I* that characterized my brother who saw God as perpetually seein' him, panopticon-like.

For Austin, the Bible seemed to firmly hold solutions, but I was perpetually seekin' slippery solutions for what was drivin' me crazy, lurkin' just out of my grasp, like eye-floaters. In your lofty lingo, I wanted to turn ambiguous mystification into rational explanation. Open windows, look out. See sharply against deceptive backgrounds Ya, grok?

# Finding Mememo



Blurt Wildbraine, fictional detective in Dallas' fiction, as described to a police sketch artist and further worked up in Photoshop

Yeppers, I'd collect 'n squirrel away in my gray matter odd moments when Mystery winked at me. Often my long-sufferin' ma, tired of neighbor's complaints, would lament to my dad: "Houston, we have a problem!" After some choice beatings by Hiz Honor — I was truly a fuckin' Son of the Never-Wrong — I invented my parent-invulnerable, intrepid sleuth, Blurt Wildbraine who keeps a book on mixing cocktails in his freezer. Fantasized growin' up to be HIM — Blurt, *C'est moi*. I went on elaboratin' how my real-world investigations spilled into

my fiction, Jym's eyes asked: *Is this fuckin' backstory fact or fabulation, or both?*

Our desserts appeared as it started to get darker out — 'n even darker in that festerin', open sore on the southern urbancape here dubbed "Chi-Raq" by Spike Lee. The large chandelier over us turned into a full-orbed moon. A good time to catch Jym up on my ol' habit of *noctambulation*, night-walkin', 'n let the extra jaw-jerkin' give me time for another dessert 'n a shot of Kümmel to settle the tum-tum. I told him that when on a difficult case, I walk at night, *night-farin'*. "Don't gotta fight traffic on the tarmac." My ego is permeable to darkness. I get into a state halfway 'tween booze-dream 'n snooze. I find that in the monochrome, abstracted conditions of night my world changes, a night-time self is created. People, the few I see at 2 a.m., are oft wary, sure. I mean, usually, who walks alone at night but the sad, the mad, the bad, 'n those who've been had? Night has always been viewed as the favored haven of Flibbertigibbet! But I've solved, 'n so has my fictional shamus (when he stays centered without losin' his shorts), difficult cases usin' the darkside method of musin'. Yeppers, it's the secret light of night, an embalmed darkness, in which I walk 'n can "move 'round" my investigative material to get new parallaxes 'n perspectives.

My addiction to the dark, this vigilant 'n insomniac rationality, I record in a leather-bound notebook, *My Noctuary*, and crib from for my fiction, like this opening ditty from the liner notes to my story "Midnight Streets/Red Yarn": *There are alleys and street corners and shop entrances where the darkness appears to obnubilate into a solid, faintly palpitating mass. But my intrepid PI, Blurt, can use what appears dim as a nox revelatrix, the night-as-revealer. In Blurt's most challenging case, Johnson writes: "Illumination emerges from the urban murk where, bulked up, in a pool of blood, lies a dead girl, hair now spilled about her, dyed dark red. 'Died at 3 a.m.' says the aging coroner, his bulk stooping and straining over the young corpse. Blurt isn't sure the doc meant the hair or the girl. . . ."*

As author, I usually use campy film voice-overs in my stories; create my hero as a lone seeker to truth, skeptical of content, but attentive to presentation,

# Finding Mememo

who enjoys the uneasy adventurousness of discovery 'n is forever the outspoken opponent of our vendin'-machine society.

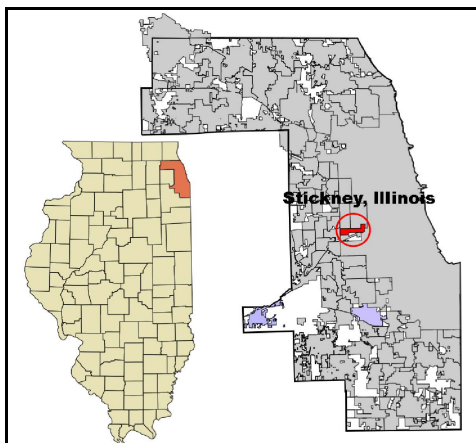
Another example, this excerpted from the cover notes for "From the Cracking Axel Flies the Spoke": *'If I have to die, I'd rather die up against a wall someplace,' thus spake master detective, Blurt Wildbraine, in a mystery where his perambulations about the dark, deserted streets of Chicago clears his mind of unnecessary mental garbage, giving forth a clear solution without precipitate. The case involves a gaggle of villainous seamen who skulk in a bar along an old wharf in the Hammond, Indiana side of Lago di Mich, eating tacos and drinking Los Suicidas brand mezcal in an atmosphere thick with fumes of tar, tobacco and tamales in between pulling off assassinations for a Moriarty-like master evil-doer, an Arab known as Azramahu'.*"

In my story, Blurt, all brio 'n boldness, adopts a seaman's disguise — as did Basil Rathbone (as Sherlock) in the 1944 film *The Spider Woman* when he goes undercover posin' as the cut-throat "Rajni Singh", engagin' in lengthy nightfarin' to penetrate that devilish gang 'n unmask the mastermind behind their nefarious activities. I thought it had real punch, but one nasty online critic made an unpleasant connection 'tween "the romantic nocturnal pedestrian habits of Blurt" 'n the "unromantic pedestrian writing of Mr. Johnson." *Not* cool beans! One pissed Arabic-speakin' reader clued me in that "*Azramahu* translates as "He interrupted him while he was urinating." Yeppers, not cool. 'N someone else complained that I, "CIA-like, manipulate sense and torture syntax."

Hell, Sherlock played his violin; Blurt 'n I stroll, delightin' in our feet's pure purposeful purposelessness capable of warmin' our soles for great feats of deduction. I mean like, in my story "The Pasilalinic Sympathetic Compass" where Blurt solves a series of cat burglaries in which the perps use a telepathic snail to scout homes 'n a fishin' rod put through letter boxes to reel in residents' keys. Blurt deciphers mysterious, slimy words on a high wall surroundin' the evil mastermind's estate left by "Sirreverence", the moustache-smoothin' master criminal's exotic slimy personal pet snail. At the beginnin' of my story, its evil master announces to his colleagues in crime, "Snails, they so rule the world in their rich and silvery fashion. The slightest kick may roll them anywhere, but, like me, they get up again and reglue themselves to where fate has planted them." One incautious, 'n soon to be snuffed out, smartass underlin' (always underfoot) replies, "Because da snail is sure o' foot, for this reason ya gotta clip da wings of da eagles?"

I, the narrator, write: "This so highly-praised snail performs its nightly peregrinations on the concrete walls around the evil man's estate in Stickney [*a village in Cook County, Illinois well known in the 1920s and early 1930s as the home for several bordellos owned by Al Capone*], a dangerous night-walk,

## Finding Mememo



Dallas' vintage gas billy club. "My teenage niche knowledge of detection soon approached a professionalism demanding remuneration" (Dallas J.)

especially in a late-March fog, north from the area of I-55 and the Cal-Sag Channel — leaving, for crying out loud, cryptic traces." Earlier in my tale, Wildbraine is walkin' north toward this locale, after a consult with a Dr. Wendell Urth pertaining to a case, when "two glowing eyes emerge out of the mist, displaying a baleful and accusatory aspect; headlights from an old beater, a 1950 dark-green Pontiac. Brrrrr, it has a cold, alert, unblinking stare that unnerves me, puts me on the defense. I release my mental countermeasures, my 'perk-me-up' mantra: *The sun's mirrored even in a coffee spoon. The sun's mirrored even in a coffee spoon.*"

Jym interrupted my verbal meanderin', askin' if *my* (not Blurt's) time-for-crime night-walks have been challenged by suspicious cops itchin' for a fight, sleep-disturbed homeless beggin' a dime, or nervous Neighborhood Watch nutsoes with side-arms astandin' their ground. Grrrrreeaaattt bombs 'n little cannonballs! — they sure have, tellin' him my PI creds 'n a \$100 bill tends to pacify 'em though. If not, I pull out my uncle's vintage gas billy and . . .

Yah, I grok the night-streets 'n the creeps 'n constabulary that haunt 'em 'n fill my Wildbraine stories with 'em. But, I remind him, my character, Blurt, is famous for his brash remark in his very first adventure where he seeks an abuser of children. The scene, an old Irish pub on south Wabash, Goin' My Way, is where Blurt sits out a bad February blizzard grippin' Chi-Town: "For days a February fog's been down and shows no signs of lifting, then the fifty-degree temperature drops precipitously and the snow comes violently in huge flakes. Blurt walks through the muffled silence of a city seemingly bewildered, feeling like a man whose sight has suddenly failed. People, vague invalids, grope their way though fresh wet snow, some toward Blurt's favorite watering-hole. Soon he's at his (her) usual stool between Father Hackett (who snitches on the Irish mob) and a drunken black-eyed blonde playing Yahtzee. "The world is a dark place and I find it endlessly funny, Miss," he (she) says, breaking the ice. She



# Finding Mememo

dips an old paw in her double mojito, pulls out a cube, tosses it Blurt's way, 'Name's April, fool', she quips."

I went on to tell Hy, some dude posted on my blog the day before that Blurt, my shit-kickin' shamus, "Sounds noirish, a bit like Sam Spade on USAF Go pills, a querying kaleidoscopic consciousness who, at dangerous moments in the investigation, becomes pure nervous energy, spacetime taffy at the edge of a black hole. Fuckin' PoMo!" I couldn't figure if that was a good or a bad review.

"Both," Jym offered, "what do those damn Millennials know, huh? Huh! HUH! Don't you wish . . ."

"If wishes were Holsteins we'd all have cream on our cornflakes," I replied. This got us off on a tangent arguin' 'bout kids today, but I soon got us back on course as I needed more background on Hy. All ears, I drank in what Jym knew of Hy's troubled kidhood, his saillin' 'twixt the Scylla of his pa 'n the Charybdis of his ma. I sussed out his fascination with the sea, its detailless perspective, its sea monsters, and maelstroms *à la* Arthur Gordon Pym; his bathtub toys: ships 'n subs powered by bicarbonate-of-soda; the opera *HMS Pinafore*, sea shanties 'n pirate lingo; cocker spaniels that tottered like sailors — all were beloved by him, including the Beach Boys' song "Sloop John B", best heard when slurphoistin' a beer. Went so far as to tell me Hy once waxed poetic over his honeymoon (before Dory's operation to correct an overbite, ending up with foreign accent syndrome, speakin' with a Brit accent): "Dory's body then was a glorious yacht aboard which I, a 'john,' sailed to distant lands, she a sloop, a brig rolling and pitching, tossing as I did turn upon it and take her compass."

## JYM

Dallas, way too modest, failed to mention he's working on a compilation of his master detective's best lines to be titled *Blurt, Out*. He's waffling on whether to bring in new readership by having Blurt come out as transgendered.

It'd been obvious to me and Dal, that Hy's an autodidact, a generalist

conversant across many disciplines, who boasts of a photographic memory, like "Mr. Memory" in *The 39 Steps*. He's chosen to learn the hard way, as Ichi put it: "Like a wild herb that grows out of a rock in a harsh environment." The more he learnt, the more he wanted to learn. Boundless in his ability to absorb knowledge, he could wax eloquent over the history of semicolons and exclamation marks. He was as perceptive and peculiar and as reticent to gain intimates as Sherlock Holmes. Yet I went so far



Mr. Memory interacts with the audience, Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*

## Finding Mememo



Sherlock Holmes (Benedict Cumberbatch) jumps to his "death" in a British TV episode as futzed with by Hy Grader for his "Jump Shots" collection of "traumatic stuplime" imagery.

as to become a dues-paying member of The Baker Street Irregulars in order to get his attention, be permitted to address him as "Meme". No go. That society is well-known, dedicated to the study of that fictional shamus, an international gaggle of aficionados whose passion extends to all manner of Sherlockiana.<sup>1</sup> Hy told me he "got high" on Sherlock in his early teens (so did Dallas and I!) and remained a buff. Once excitedly related to us about reading *Sherlock Holmes in America*, an anthology based on the fact that some of Doyle's characters in the Holmes mysteries were American and that Doyle had gone on a lecture tour in the States, admiring

America very much. I will miss these chats; it pains me now to put my verbs in the past tense when referring to a friend who read art and literary reviews the way kids suck candy.

Hy'd fallen (stumbled, jumped, pushed?) off the balcony of the literary club The Cliff Dwellers. He liked to take ocular and imaginative possession from heights. A terrible event occurring on the same date (September 8) as Hy's father's death seven years earlier, it also recalled the mysterious death-fall by New York artist Ana Mendieta in 1985, and a bizarre suicide attempt witnessed by Hy and Ichi at Chicago's famed Art Institute Museum five months previous.

See, there was this *soirée* for new faculty hired to teach massive open online courses (MOOCs, where software and wetware merge). The Dean had told Hy: "You contingies are an unraveling rope stretched betwixt Instructor and Prof Emeritus, and no dazzle-camouflage will save you," a threat inspired by a new administrative policy to cut part-timers as promulgated by President Normand Prosper Blunt and enforced by Dean Södra Blaisenholm. Hy and others had deep reservations about MOOC's and so suffered rebuke. Hy complained: "My chairman, Chad Armbuster, often made cutting remarks to me in faculty meetings as painful as if he'd taken a steel nib and scratched the gelatin of a photograph of *moi*, a bleeding scar appearing on my body at exactly the same place." As a countermeasure, Hy would sit silently and repeat "Acha Botchacha Sab Acha," while a grimace, faked into a smile, masked an annoyance over those new policies that, as Dallas described it, "would be 'nough to piss off Pope Francis!"

---

1. Some members have found important documents pertaining to that British detective and his creator, Arthur Conan Doyle; some have edited Sherlockian anthologies; others have contributed excellent literary pastiches of Sherlock's adventures, fandom fantasies, such as a gay relationship between Sherlock and Dr. Watson, or claim (with a wink) to have discovered in musty attics or dusty library stacks "long lost" stories by Doyle set in America that contribute significantly to the Conan Doyle canon, even Postmodernist twists like Gordon McAlpine's delightful *Holmes Entangled*.

# Finding Mememo

Dallas noted Hy had not been wearing his good-luck medicine pouch (see frontispiece) and told us a disturbing backstory: the school's administration saw very large \$ \$ in their eyes when Instructure,<sup>2</sup> a Utah-based learning software company, sent a smooth-talking company rep to hype Canvas Network, software that would connect faculty online to students anywhere in the world. Classrooms would become obsolete as The Cloud became the new virtual classroom. Fewer instructors, servicing more students, cutting overhead costs. Classes that did not fit this model cut or restructured. To the chagrin of many older faculty, the system went into trials and proved profitable. Hy complained, "I've had my body put to work, now they want my soul." The result was faculty unwilling to teach at least one such course was sent an electronic pink slip two weeks prior to Christmas vacation. But that notice, inviting faculty up endless staircases to limitless gloom, was sent, I told Dallas, some months *after* Hy's fatal fall, so had no direct bearing on Hy's demise. Yet "data-driven" new hires *were* on the rise to fill positions in the new Data Humanities program (see Appendix for another Admin letter given to new faculty hires at that fatal faculty fest).

That evening, as testimony had it, the event was breaking up, everyone distracted with backslaps, glad-handing, or grabbing residual canapés. A librarian's inquest testimony (Joy Slough-Burn, oval face, cruel eyes) was that Hy'd was "Hovering about the desserts, a glass of sherry in hand" — but this doesn't jive with Hy's avoidance of sweets due to his Type 2 diabetes — when the next moment, "There was confusion and cries from below; someone screamed, 'He's entered the seventh oblivion!' Faculty above, oblivious, swayed to The Beach Boys' hit *God Only Knows What I'd Be Without You*." Glottis Breathwaite, minus her coke-bottle lens glasses, claimed seeing Hy dangling by one hand (Hy loved Bellow's *Dangling Man*), saying: "Like Adrian Piper feared!" before Hy lost his grip (a reference to an artist/academic who claims other academics wanted her *Kaput*). When paramedics arrived, a *lime green* handkerchief lay over Hy's face. Dallas told us the green color was gay hanky code for "Will buy dinner", said he'd used such as a MacGuffin in his mystery "Bigrams Will Be Bigrams"; the police later gave it to Dorinda, who had the words NON FRUSTRA VIXI ("I lived not in vain") embroidered on it and hung in her "Hubby Shrine".

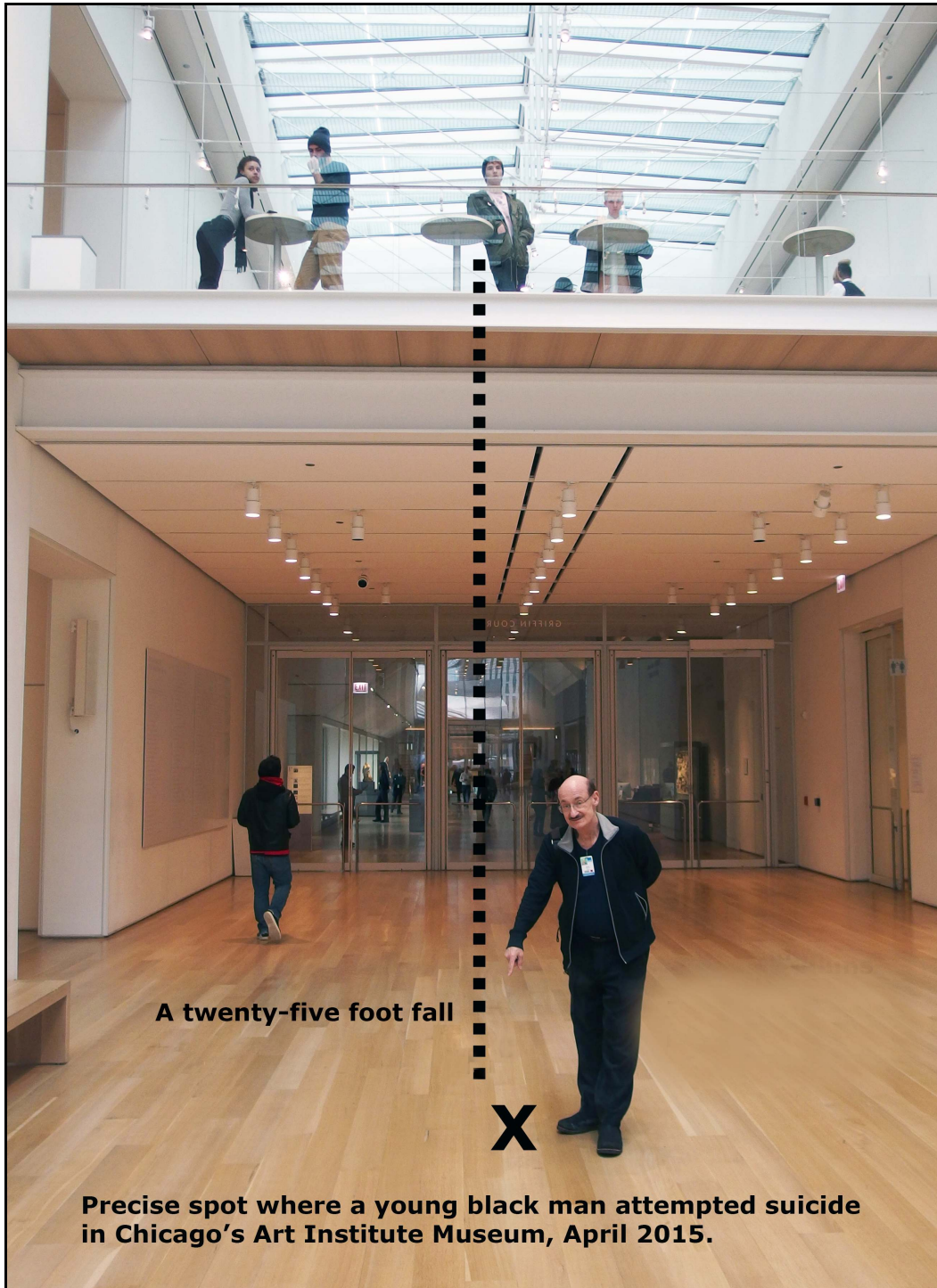
## DALLAS

Thanks Jym, for that book mention. It would be a nice touch for Blurt to literally "come out" as *somethin'*. He would have to formulate it in cop-speak, of

---

2. In June 2013, Instructure secured \$30 Million in Series D Funding, bringing their lifetime funding total to \$50M. In February, 2015, Instructure raised another \$40 Million in Series E Funding, raising their lifetime funding total to \$90M. CEO Josh Coates described it as "a pre-IPO round".

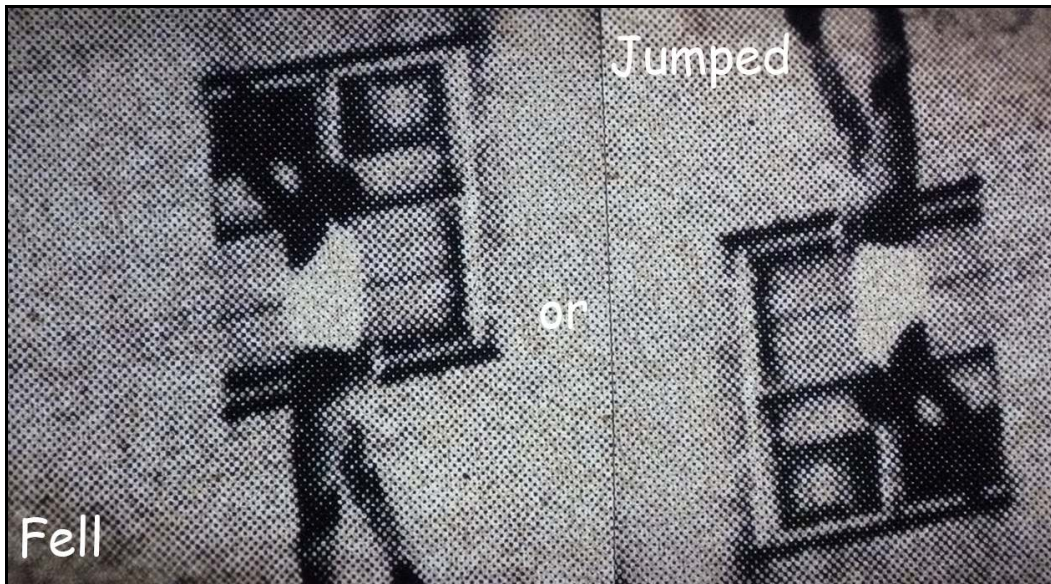
## Finding Mememo



Jym at the site of the death-jump (see section three of Hy's text); its trauma led Hy to start his "Jump Shots" collection." As to this trauma, his therapist wife wrote: "The duration of passions can only be measured by the remains of images, not by their duration, but by the power they have to remain, repeat or recur." Hy, vulnerable to the world's injustices, wasn't helped psychically by witnessing this event. (Photo by Ichi ).



## Finding Mememo



Film still from Errol Morris' "Wormwood" (2017) Netflix TV show, photo by Dallas

*On November 28, 1953 at 2:30 a.m., Frank Olson, a biochemist at the U.S. Weapons Laboratory at Fort Detrick, Maryland supposedly committed suicide by falling or jumping from room 1018A of the Statler Hotel on Seventh Avenue, New York after being administered LSD. That night the extraordinary stillness of the moon sucked the life out of his dark somber hotel room through the windows, as an embalmer drains a skull through the nostrils. On the night stand he left Julien Gracq's *The Opposing Shore* opened to a page with this underlined sentence "a land where, it's good to lie down and go to sleep." What really happened was covered up for many years. It was later revealed he'd been terminated on orders of the Central Intelligence Agency: cold-conked and tossed out a window. This event in the dark history of the Military Industrial Complex was not lost on Dallas Johnson, who said it may hold the key to understanding what happened to Hy Grader on that fateful night at The Cliff Dwellers. We amigos were amped up by noted filmmaker Errol Morris's six-part Netflix series "Wormwood" (2017), which explored this odd event.*

*It brought up the question of Hy's demise for us amigos with new intensity. "Intertwined questions," said Dallas beginning to evolve an alt-answer to the mystery Morris probed: "Yeppers, could be that Olson was atestin' a very early version of what that low key/high-wattage dude, Wishwer Watt, called a 'Heisenberg Belt' device, 'n it failed to work; ergo, the execution solution story, is just one more layer of a cover-up hidin' the failure of this bizarroo D-travel techno gizmo. Somethin' Morris' documentary failed (or didn't want) to reveal." Ah, Dallas, he could (as he put it) "always make a dollar out of fifteen cents."*

## Finding Mememo

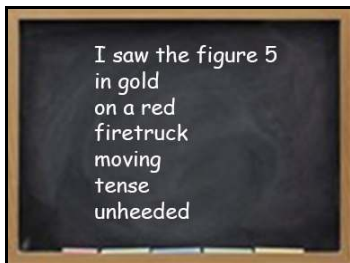
course. There has already been laid a backstory that could underwrite this. Blurt was an orphan, sexually abused in public care; told himself stories in order to live; used his puzzlement about his origins as a motivatin' factor. As a teenager, he'd thought of suicide, but that impulse was nixed by his desire to write. It boiled down to a technical problem: in tryin' to write a suicide note, he kept revisin' 'n revisin'; he could not stop revisin'. This is why I just had to eventually have Blurt start writin' his own detective fiction as he worked his own cases. Becomin' a PI is a tough study, requires the furnishin' of a mind through many years with special furniture. The carpet was laid in Blurt's first five years, the (often rétro) furniture gradually appeared over subsequent years.

The investigation into Hy's demise was haphazard; the coroner's verdict inconclusive: Contributing factors, a bee-sting? Maybe *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite transmitted by cats, inducing paranoia and recklessness? Obsession? A college librarian did testify Hy was fixated on Czech writer Bohumil Hrabal's 1997 death by fallin' from a fifth-floor window of Prague's Bulovka hospital while feedin' pigeons. Hy knew Hrabal lived in a fifth floor apartment 'n that suicides by leapin' from a fifth-floor window feature in several of Hrabal's books. This jived, Hy'd told the librarian, with a "personal thing for the marvelous number

five," especially in its geometrical expression as a quincunx (seen on dice and in Robbe-Grillet's novel *Jealousy* where the plantation's banana trees are laid out in groups of quincunxes). *But beware of premature closure*, I thought.

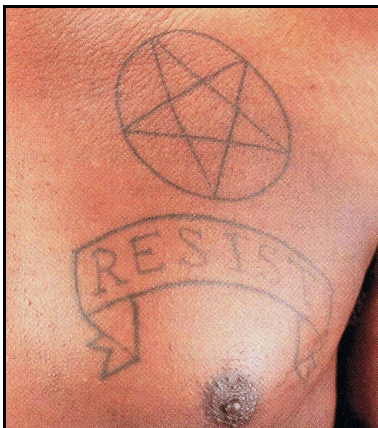
Accordin' to Ichi, Hy told him, "Five has a certain authority: the Torah has five books, Islam five pillars, a hand has five fingers, even the Japanese prefer odd numbers, right? Pre-1960s, most Catholic families had 5 children. The number five is the ampersand of numerals, you know, I'm fond of ampersands in all fonts."

Dorinda told Jym that Hy'd done a series of conceptual art videos in the mid-1970s employin' a blackboard as a prop; in one, he vid-tapes himself writing over and over on the chalkboard, like a child held after school for punishment, terse lines from a famous William Carlos Williams's poem: *I saw the figure 5 / in gold / on a red / firetruck / moving / tense / unheeded*. Pinned on the wall to the right of the board is a large poster of Charles Demuth's equally famous painted homage to that poem.

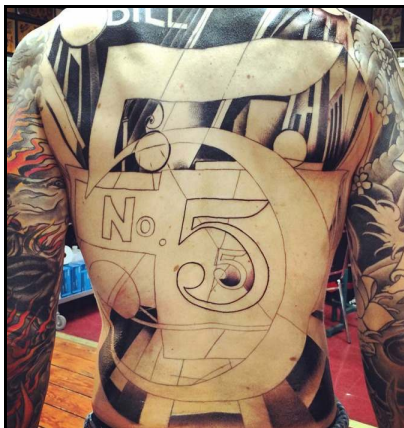


*I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold* (1928)  
Charles Demuth (the 5 *en abyme*)

## Finding Mememo



Penta-Chest-Resist (2015) Ichi Honne



Five Tat, Who? (2015) Ichi Honne



Five Painting (2015) Ichi Honne



Illustration in "More Bang for my Buck," a Blurt Wildbraine mystery story, where retro-causality becomes the story's theme.

Ichi told me to get Dorinda to pull out some prints from Hy's large flat-file which he'd given Hy for a birthday present; photos featurin' the number 5.

But I'm a digressin'. Sure, Hy *could* have

jumped or been pushed, but no damnin' evidence has for either's been found. "Falls from high places are very clean," muses hitman Jan-Michael Vincent in the 1972 movie *The Mechanic*. Hy had DVR'd the Brit TV series "Sherlock Holmes" starring Benedict Cumberbatch; in one episode the master detective appears to take a fatal dive. Hy had witnessed a jumper in the Art Institute of Chicago museum. Neither facts were mentioned at the inquest. Oh, one imaginative doctor testified the fall might be from paralytic shock due to a bee-sting as Hy was allergic to such. "One prick 'n over he'd go," he said.

But I thought Hy's tensions with the administration added a suspicious note to the affair. Someone from Hy's school had leaked a rumor that Hy'd been AWOL for eleven days after the administration had received a threatenin' e-mail from him concernin' his worry that bureaucracy was reinforcin' the sense that we live in a universe where accountin' procedures define the very fabric of reality. In an attempt to

impune Hy's mental state, one of Hy's colleagues read into the court recordin' that Hy had as many weird monikers — Mememo, Meme, Eyes, James Omar Pinson, Mr. Duck, et cetera — as had England's famed totemic "London Stone" (Osolvestane, Osulfestane, Osolvestoneor, Oselstone, Oswulf's Stone, and Oswald's Stone). So, did Hy have a psychotic break like his father 'n sister? But



# Finding Mememo

Hy often repeated, “I don’t take orders from nobody I can’t see, see?” I remember that, ‘cause I used that quip in “More Bang for My Buck”, a Wildbraine mystery — whose opening line is; *I’m not a cliché. See my inside* — where a low-level thug dies of regret sayin’ same to one Buck Master, a masked master criminal noted for his T-shirt askin’ in Hobo Bold: WANNA BE MY PROTÉGÉ?

Jym ‘n I knew he’d always wanted “to make a splash” in the academic world, but this way? Certainly not from a guy who once brought back from Mexico eleven fuckin’ different recipes for tortillas ‘n a case of assorted tequilas ‘n, cool *beans*, shared them with us, *gratis*. But who knows? Maybe “The Shadow Knows!” Jym confirmed that most folks at Hy’s school believed Hy’d decided to “dramatically opt out of the distance thing, by fallin’ a distance.” Others said his tech skills’d gone south as he increasin’ly dodged Web 2.0, The Cloud, ‘n bucked his chairman’s dictates to shove big data analysis of stylometrics in historical literature, hence careenin’ his career southward. A superfluous man, “A Reject”, he’d decided to opt out. Others said he’d have hitched up his pants, rubbed his hands, ‘n boldly entered The Cloud as he’d done when the Internet first tossed a net over us. More likely, they mused, someone who coveted Hy’s job and/or intensely disliked him, had pitched him overboard into the sea of foot traffic, where he morphed into a “Don’t-Tread-on-Me” figure of screamin’ avoidance.

“Academics *disimprove* with age,” Chad told Hy. His school was replacin’ older faculty with tech-smarties. Round lunch tables, long hair was bein’ sup-  
planted by crew cuts, Nehru shirts by button-down Brooks Brothers. This shit supplemented by memory’s mischief gustin’ the past through Hy’s crippled soul, got a deep regret to haunt him. After sixty a man looks down his life ‘n regards from that vantage point that all just ain’t cool beans. Touchy subject to his weepin’ widow; not one tongue-tollin’ word of that was she ready yet to believe.

## JYM

By the time we polished off the wine, Dallas wolfed down two desserts, and folded his newspaper into tight squares to better peruse the Personals section, and ended our chat, it was after 8 p.m. As we parted, glad to see each other after several weeks of not, the western sky was luridly clouding up and the horizon moving wholly into shadow as an alarming nimbostratus built up its muscle, blowing its rising breath our way along with flashes of severe lightning. I dashed to the Blue Line El, not extending my umbrella for fear of a major zap. But Dallas boldly pulled out a massive bumbershoot and strode fearlessly southward. In moments of imminent danger — a form of nonlinear editing, lightning can erase you from eight miles distant — time thickens, takes on flesh. For me, it seemed it took a half hour to walk a mere four blocks.



## Finding Mememo

The next day, sky as clear as Nordic glacier water. Hy's widow called Chad for permission to access Hy's office. He OK'd it, offered her clichés, cheap comfort, and asked if Hy'd been reading Ottessa Moshfegh's depressing stories in *Homesick for Another World*: "Now *that'd* drive anyone to jump!" That office is in the school's sub-basement, signifying its occupants' baser status. Grader didn't mind, preferred windowless work-spaces; once told me he tried to join the submarine service during the Vietnam War "to wave goodbye to rice patties, to Nemo 'Nam from 20,000 leagues under." In his substandard subterranean office, he said he could "swim below the waves of academic rancor." He often used the invented term "debths", taken from *Finnegan's Wake*, and employed as poly-semantic play (depths, debts, deaths, et cetera) in his writing and speech.

I asked his Chariman's permission to access Grader's office. "Hazlitt your own way!" he said, "Grader's shit's only taking up space needed by a new hire. Besides, colleagues and library staff have already taken those not rendered unfit for human use by red underlining, manic page thumbing, and chicken-scratch marginal gloss. I already snatched his *Complete Works* of Ruskin and Apostolos Athanassakis' free-verse version of *The Poems of Hesiod*." Hy's valuable 1969 edition of artist/poet Phil Weidman's *The Slant Step Book* was also missing.

154 *Phenomenology and Literary Theory*  
so (191). Dufrenne is quite opaque throughout this upcoming section, but I shall try to clarify his argument. With Heidegger (as the reader will recognize), Dufrenne says that a "world" can never be purely "objective": on the contrary, the "outside" world is implicated in the subject's inner world, and vice versa. There is an "irreducible reciprocal causality" operative here, so that "world" in the broader sense is just as subjective as it is objective. In fact, even use of the word "subjective" is deceiving, since the inner world, for the person living it, is "real, pressing, and irreducible." The so-called subjective world "derives its value from the fact that it is deeply rooted in the human experience of the world which is the common world of coexistence." World in the meaningful sense is the ontological field of coexisting subject and object; these two coexistents constitute the world and are also constituted by it.

The next day. Dallas and I, sporting ethical scowls, pushed through revolving doors, entered under massive arches like a pair of high-plains drifters into a disreputable saloon. Dallas wore a long black leather duster, I, slim-fit blue jeans and a long tan suede coat. We both wore cowboys hats. We were cleared through security by an enormous uniformed guard. Still wearing our *masks of cool*, we walked upstairs to get the down-elevator, which

my dad had installed in 1952, and entered a large office space. Armbuster was right; we espied Hy's violated bookcase: scads of orphaned books, quite unfit for library use, leaning helplessly against each other like drunks. One book, *The Decent Society* by Avishai Margalit, stood out as it was bound with duct tape. I began a sort of "bibliodérive" through Hy's stacks of the well-thumbed, opening one with permanent damage to its spine, and read an underlined passage elucidating Mikel Dufrenne's phenomenological theory that Hy highly regarded as it weakened the sharp divide between objectivity and subjectivity. Next, I turned to four violated texts: 1) *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* by H. J. Jackson, whose book jacket notes credit that famous Romantic Samuel T. Coleridge with popularizing this scribbly mode of obsessive practice; 2) biblio-

## Finding Mememo

84The Grounds of Respect	The Skeptical Solution85
<p>different from our own could be included in the circle of respect for living creatures, whether all or some of them. The question then is why stop at human beings in granting basic respect. Here too the skeptical answer must be that the restriction of respect to human beings is justified because it coheres better with the totality of moral judgments in our form of life than extending this attitude to living creatures in general. This does not deny the urgent need to improve our attitude toward animals; however, the problem in this attitude is not humiliation but cruelty, and the solution is considering the animals' pain. In our form of life, in contrast, a major problem in our relations toward other people is <u>humiliation</u>, and the <u>solution</u> is <u>respect</u>. We must take a stance of "respect and suspect" toward societies with forms of life that differ from ours, which preach about extending the attitude of respect to all living creatures. These societies do not always have an outstanding record of respecting human beings.</p>	<p>acts with symbolic meaning. Man, in the words of Ernst Cassirer, is a symbolic animal—that is, an animal that lives in symbols. <u>The human capacity for symbol-based anguish in addition to physical suffering constitutes a trait that justifies nonhumiliation.</u> The argument as a whole is as follows. Cruelty is the ultimate evil. Preventing cruelty is the supreme moral commandment. <u>Humiliation is the extension of cruelty from the physical to the psychological realm of suffering. Humiliation is mental cruelty.</u> A decent society must be committed not only to the eradication of physical cruelty in its institutions but also to the elimination of mental cruelty caused by these institutions.</p> <p>The capacity to tolerate mental cruelty, like the capacity to bear physical pain, is not evenly distributed among human beings. Some people are <u>highly sensitive to humiliation</u>, and their entire spiritual being is shaken in the face of its manifestations. Others may be immune to such manifestations, either because they are equipped with the hide of an elephant or because they have such a well-developed mechanism of self-deception that they can see spit as rain. Doesn't this make the justifying trait for nonhumiliation a graded trait, and the attitude to the potential victims of humiliation a graded attitude, in proportion to their sensitivity to pain and insult?</p>
<p>A Negative Justification of Human Dignity</p> <p>Justifying human dignity negatively means not aspiring to provide a justification for respecting people, but only for not humiliating them. In a certain sense this is all we need for explicating the concept of a decent society, since it has been defined negatively, as a nonhumiliating society, rather than positively, as a society that safeguards human dignity.</p> <p>A negative justification is not a skeptical justification. Rather, it is based on the fact that human beings are creatures capable of feeling pain and suffering not only as a result of physically painful acts but also as a result of</p>	<p>This last question relates to our constraints on the traits that can justify respecting humans, which include the requirement that the justifying trait should not justify gradations of respect. But these constraints do not apply to the negative justification, because the justification for the requirement of nonhumiliation comes from the need to avoid cruelty, humiliation being considered an aspect of cruelty. It is essential not to treat people cruelly, and</p>

Page from *The Decent Society* by Avishai Margalit showing Hy Grader's red markings

## Finding Mememo

Hy's redlined quotes taken from Paul Valéry's *Monsieur Teste*,  
showing how Hy worked up his ideas for his book:

Just imagine the meaning of the phrase: "My weight!"  
What a possessive! . . .  
How is that weight to be distinguished from the energy that  
makes it what it is—heavy, light, etc. . . .

This excerpt suggests it might have been worked into the story as a comment by Wishwer Watt during Hy's flight to a lake cabin in northern Wisconsin just prior to his demise; it jives with their discussion of physics and dimension-jumping where a jumper's weight would play a part. Wish Watt seemed to be a siren that sung in the winds and waves of Hy's imagination, luring him over perilous seas and quantum waves.

depends on the particularity of men? Think of the true meaning of a hierarchy founded on rarity. I sometimes amuse myself with an idea of our hearts borrowed from *physics*: they are made of an enormous injustice and a very small justice, intimately combined. I imagine that in each one of us there is one atom more important than all the others; it is composed of *two particles of energy* which would gladly be separated. They are contradictory energies, but indivisible. Nature has joined them forever, though they are furious enemies. One is the perpetual motion of a large *positive electron*, and this movement engenders a series of low-pitched sounds in which the inner ear can easily distinguish the deep monotonous phrase: *There's only me. There's only me. There's only me, me, me. . . .* As for the small, radically *negative* electron, it screams at the extremest pitch, piercing again and again in the cruelest way the egotistical theme of the other: *Yes, but there's so-and-so, and so-and-so: And someone else! . . .* For the name changes frequently. . . .

In Hy's research, he was gathering material to use in his correlation of quantum physics and his inner-self.



## Finding Mememo

phile Alberto Manguel's *A History of Reading*; 3) Paul Valéry's *Monsieur Teste* (see previous page); and 4) to a well-thumbed copy of Marcus Boon's *In Praise of Copying*, flanked on one side by Catherine Zuromskis' *Snapshot Photography: The Lives of Images*, and on the other by Robin Kelsey's *Photography and the Art of Chance*. I recall Hy told me once, "I was born of chance." I looked inside the latter to find an inscription wishing me:

Happy Birthday! From now on dude, call me 'Meme'.

What a surprise! Obviously, he'd planned on giving it to me and I was taken with the fact he'd decided, after many years, to take our friendship to the next level. I stuffed it into my *rétro* brown leather briefcase with *faux* straps — an item Dallas said was "cool beans" and resembled the type carried by his fictional dick, Blurt Wildbraine.

On a shelf below, British writer David Lodge's humorous *Campus Trilogy*, two novels by John Barth, a two-volume set of *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*, Michel Houellebecq's *The Elementary Particles*, and *Quartz*, a glossy biz mag from 2012, cover featuring a kid sitting, *à la* Rodin's *The Thinker*, on a curb before his house. It was titled: "Why Eight-Year-Olds Should Start Thinking About Their Careers", and why not, I thought; given the school violence these days, they might also "Start Thinking About Making their Wills."

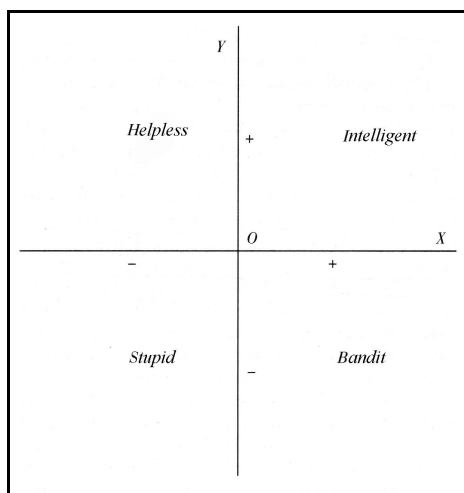


Illustration from Carlo M. Cipolla's *The Basic Laws of Human Stupidity*

Two other books caught my eye, "virgins", untouched by thumb nor probed by pen, which faculty plunderers had overlooked. The first, a very slim volume, was *The Basic Laws of Human Stupidity* by Italian economist, Carlo M. Cipolla. The publisher's note inside revealing it was originally written in English, translated into Italian, then later reissued with the Italian re-translated into English. Some weird quirk of publishing I knew Hy dug. It's got some oddly compelling diagrams too. It had been passed over by greedy hands, I think, due to the odd title. The second was *Parable of the Talents* by the late sci-fi Nebula Award winning author Octavia E.

Butler — read it a year ago myself — a book trashing the Christian Right and that new form of totalitarianism, neoliberalism (it synched with Hy's hatred of managerialism and invasive oversight at his school). She and Ursula K. Le Guin

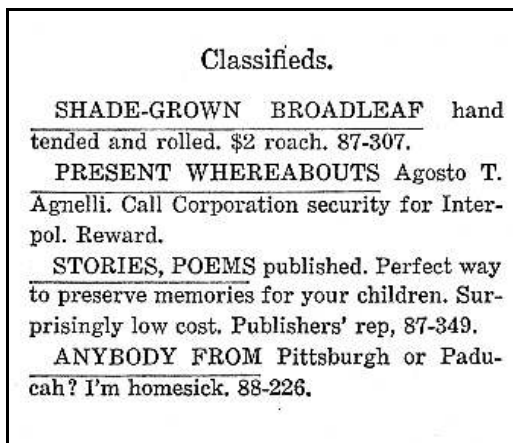


## Finding Mememo

are sci-fi writers that I've urged students to check out. Supposedly left behind by perusing pedants as mere "middlebrow crap", despite the old bookplate in the Le Guin book reading *Per ardua gradior* (I forge ahead through adversities), to which Meme added in his own hand *Tempestatibus maturesco* (Storms have made me the man I am).

As Dallas tried to break into Hy's e-mail, I glommed onto these "clean" books, stuffing them in my briefcase. Hy had always said, "You are what you read," and so looking at what Hy was hiding on his shelves might be of utmost importance. Dallas had obtained Meme's computer password, KEFOOFEK, from his widow, intending to comb through the machine's files and e-mail.

Powered on, Hy's school-provided MAC's screen-saver pops up with its advice for the day:



### TODAY'S DELUSION IS TOMORROW'S HEADLINE

It vertically repeated its bit of pop wisdom downward, like movie credits, then its words broke up into anagrams, then the whole cycle repeated.

Trying to log into the mail, Dallas found that the hard-drive had been nearly wiped clean. Was that merely for the benefit of the next user, or was there something much more ominous here? Even Hy's RL trash bin had been dumped. In case the janitor, Dusty Novak, had discovered something there, Dallas tracked him down. We saw little of interest in Hy's basement cubicle Cogitorium, except for: 1) a Classifieds ad taped to a wall, its last-listed item sounding like a short story title; in his desk, 2) a plastic-encased French stamp honoring avant-garde writer Georges Perec, whose smile accurately mimes Meme's, which I kept as a memento of Mememo; 3) a DVD of Chris Marker's found-footage film *A Grin Without a Cat* (1977); and 4) a Tiepolo pink envelope with a Chicago postmark, but return address from 216 Cedar St., Excelsior, New Jersey, containing a demeaning note (see next page).



## Finding Mememo

WE see you. We know who you are. Your ideas are worthless. Your aesthetic is stupid. Your 'technique' is a welter of narcissism, superstition, and habit. You will die alone.

All your ideas are tiny, all your attempts at creation and you yourself, are nothing; nobody wants you, we despise you, it's in our nature.

You should be kept as a pet. You are an acromegalic fraud, a minnow, a speck, a stain. You are from this moment forbidden any more *Logopopeea*.

Say not our struggle nought avail eth against you!

– A Season Ticket-holder

Other than these odd items, Grader's gray metal desk drawers were bare of interest, merely home to a stack of blank examination Blue Books, three used toothpicks, three pads of yellow Post-It notes, a travel-size bottle of Caribbean blue Listerine mouthwash, a small tin labeled as "Curiously Strong Altoids", a postcard depicting a globe whose turned-wood stand made it look like a spinning top (the verso reads: "Made by a friend of Copernicus in 1520"), a CD of "An Evening Wasted in Paris with Tom Lehrer", a veritable rainbow of colored pens and keenly sharpened pencils, a black plastic spork, one orange paper napkin, two clear plastic boxes containing push-pins and paperclips, bottles of Aleve liquid gels and Excedrin tabs, a half-empty (or half-full, if you're an optimist) Kleenex

box, a sheet of paper with an odd sketch on it, a pack of licorice chewing gum, and a print-out of the tasting menu from Hiša Franko, a top-end restaurant in Slovenia's So a Valley that Hy longed to feast at in the near future.



I had caught a cold a few days previous and as I felt a violent sneeze coming on, I blindly grabbed for those tissues. As I pulled the soft white mass out, something fell onto the desk and bounced to the floor just as I convulsed and "thar she blows!" When I regained my composure and wiped my nose, I picked up the object and saw it was a small personalized zip-drive.

I felt like Sherlock finding a key clue! Whether it'd been secreted away there, or merely fell in, was anyone's guess. Excited, I looked around, checking if any other occupants of the office (the room holds multiple desks for several adjuncts) saw me do this. Two vigorous, self-confident new hires came in, followed by Dallas, but they seemed oblivious to our presence. I was sure eager to peruse the drive's contents, but Dallas gave forth a "Fuck, no!" look and nodded at the new comers. So I took it for future examination, slyly palming it, slipping it in my pants pocket. I pulled a wink at Dallas, who winked back and added a thumbs up. In that moment, our collaboration was officially cemented.

# Finding Mememo

## DALLAS

Nightfall. Me 'n Gemini-Jym were at his professorly digs at 304 Briarwood, apartment 506 in church-heavy Oak Park. We both were drinkin' vanilla lattes with "a dash of Insight" (i.e., cinnamon) from The Buzz Café. I gingerly stuck the flash-drive in (as gingerly as my thick finnies permit) his Powerbook's USB port, and fuckin' prayed the files weren't password-protected. Uncool beans, they *were*. I got a sinkin' feelin' in my tum, like when my bar, The Leaky Cauldron, is out of my fav brew. But I quickly recovered my abide, tried a throw of the cosmic dice 'n typed in "m-e-m-e-m-o-d-a-b". Snake eyes! No go. Too obvious.

"Ass-backward it — *omen* in ancient Akkadian means *password*," Jym said. Good fuckin' idea. Rolled 'em dice once more: "b-a-d-o-m-e-m-e-m." An eleven! It worked. A folder named FINDME popped on-screen. Inside, a gaggle of WordPerfect files were hidin', along with a sub-folder "IMAGES" stuffed with jpegs. The WP files were labeled Me01.wpd, Mo01.wpd, Me02.wpd, Mo02.wpd, . . .). Jym moaned, "Shit, a patchwork elements in search of a story. A gamma-fogged semireflector, in sci-fi parlance." Later, I asked Hy's former student/studio assistant to help sort it out, but she was of no help as Hy had willy-nilly handed her fragments to proof. Some files named Shamus01, Shamus02, Shamus03, . . . were sketches for a pastiche of Victorian mysteries. They hinted at Hy's life-time desire to earn the celebrated Shamus Award given by the Private Eye Writers of America. Hell, somethin' I, too, covet.

To state the obvious: I like to read 'n write detective stories where *boo koo* hot blond *femme fatales* sport sad faces or smiles authentic in their insincerity, who are singularly rich, have promising voices well-matched to their outlines which men paw at. It's one of many things that sustains Meme and me's *broheimship*. In RL, I investigate real stuff. For me, both activities are mutually implicated. One thing I've learned, what some people are ashamed of usually makes a good story 'n a person's social defeat often leads to crime, social life becomin' red in tooth 'n claw. In both my day job and in my fiction, I have a scary ability to see patterns in large data sets; my early experiences of flyin' with my dad over Texas' minimal landscape got me used to that god perspective. If someone I'm interviewin' while Shamusin' speaks in a stilted manner, tends to use a too-high falutin' term mismatched with his calloused hands, it registers; bells go off in my *cabeza* like an airplane's cockpit stall warnin's. I use that shit in my fiction too. Ya grok?

On some assignments, I know I'm close to a solution when I get that walkin'-on-glue feelin' you get when you step off the movin' walkway at the airport. Usually occurs when I'm doin' my nightfarin' when, if my case vibrates in a state of uncertainty, I can suddenly fit all the parts of the jigsaw together thanks to my late-night ramble on aspirin 'n Nembutal.

# Finding Mememo

Jym 'n his spouse form a one-mind operatin' system, a fortress of forgiveness 'n love, but Meme 'n Dory? All squabbles. Could this be foreseen given they first smooched Wal-Mart's linen aisle? Dory, a firm-willed, independent, always yelled, "*Quand même!*" (snippy French for "Really!") when pissed. "Why don't you stop thinking about yourself?" (Dory). "Who else is going to think about me?" (Hy). A sufficiently advanced technology, their relationship was indistinguishable from magic in both a good (lead to gold) 'n bad sense (gold to lead). They were two stars bound by mutual gravity, orbitin' round 'n round each other, but not gettin' closer. Jym 'n his lady had "fish-language", based in water: "When it rained, our language grew," Jym said. I had such with *my* now-deceased wife, not so Hy and Dory those last weeks when neither engaged the elephant in the room. Not to say Dory's loss wasn't a loss every other loss fits inside.

That's grist for a book, right? But too often it fails to gel. Oh, I do write stories, 'n have a helluva good time doin' it, but not well-reviewed ones. In my, "I Polish My Law on a Cliff", the murderer suicides off a cliff (written before Meme took his nose-dive) after Blurt confronts 'em with his dastardly deeds. For criminy's sake, no Father Brown-like last-minute conversion shit for me! Wanna hear its openin' line? *The vic's pajamas had drunk up all his blood, and his iris had a twisting, curling spiral of crimson running through it that brought to mind . . . well . . .* I forget the rest. This is from that Blurb.com POD anthology thingy I sent to Hy. It got one review 'n that was in *Solid Waste and Recycling* magazine, a hatchet job. Got a bad case of crotch rot when it came out. Jym nodded his syms — a writer, too, he groks the crushin' feelin'.

Upon leavin', I told Jym I'd pursue the case 'n let him in on any new info on my end 'n that he should do the same: "An I for an I, dude." We joined in a high-five. I can still see it in slow-motion, like a televised football replay. I zoomed off in my spiffy new latte-colored Mini Cooper convertible financed by my last big no-laugh corporate spyin' case for Deep Dream, Inc.

## JYM

Hy taught to write and wrote too taut. Now I listen with my eyes to the dead as I redact his writings. All his spare time, Meme read and wrote. His whole aesthetic had been an adventure in dolling out scripto-visual mishmash, aleatoric operations, and appropriations, a practical disobedience to Literature-Normal, incendiary memes. His earlier work had an autobiographical aspect, but a "tweaked" one, what he called "objective insanity". Careful sifting through the data on his flash-drive made it apparent Grader was working on yet another auto-fiction — I am mentioned in it — a rather weird one. His early working title, *Definitely Still Hate Myself*, changed to *Re-Memo*, then *MemoRees*, which I changed to *Finding Mememo* as it reflected my role as data-gatherer and



## Finding Mememo

reworker, a process Ichi referred to as doing *kintsugi*, a Japanese term for repairing broken vessels so the seams of repair are visible, articulated. It fits Hy's theme of self-deprecation, Dallas' PI work on Hy's case, and my cobbling together of Hy's last days where "Decades prey on me," a terse code phrase for his dislike of neoliberalism's inequalities and his aging-man's sense of *back then* and *coming soon*. "We're all pawns," he said, "living in the time of Chronos who eats his children, like H. G. Wells' voracious Morlocks in the Year 802,701."

Ichi held that Hy's original title of *Re-Memo* was "pure PoMo," and "resonated both with memory and ream (the latter could be a slang verb for "screwing someone," as well as a noun as in "a stack of paper"), but told me he'd once suggested to Meme-san *Mememonogatari* (Tales of Mememo). I reminded him the title I chose was more catchy since it referenced the popular film *Finding Nemo*. "Some might buy it, thinking it a kid's book." Dory liked that.

In this text, Hy's navel-gazing is carried out via image and text appropriations, forming a Self out of the collected discourse of Others, what many academics have touted in dense prose. Such thinkers Hy held in high regard. Hy's theory of writing was often given in economic terms: "One person's job (the author's) is another person's (the reader's) unemployment [*i.e., the reader is on leisure time*]." Sometimes, I wasn't sure if he was joking or not; he'd say his whole life was so improbable with lucky moments and coincidences so filling it that maybe it just had been *scripted*. He was obsessed with the question of how much of his life was subject to free will, how much chance or determination. Certainly, he felt he found words "out there" that described the life inside him. I did sense he was more introspective than most, self-analytical, always trying to figure out what was going on between himself and the world, digging things that outlast us, prying into the private life of objects.

For days I combed through Hy's files until all was a blur to my aging eyes. Interesting material, albeit fragmentary, pebbles in a stream of a weird consciousness. I thought his widow would probably want to see it published posthumously. Besides, the existence of this unfinished manuscript confirmed that Grader had a project obsessing him. Would he have jumped off "the Cliff" without finishing it? Of course, one can turn the argument around: the very pressure to write the book, or his failure thereto, might have pushed him over the brink. Maybe in working up these fragments, I could clarify the murk surrounding his death. And then there are those vague rumors about a missing eleven days.

Snatches of Hy's writing might be hard on his widow. At reading, "What Hells and Purgatories and Heavens I have inside me!" the corners of her mouth curved into a sad self-knowing smile. I promised to weed out the worst, this when I rang her up about the project, explaining that her husband and I had shared many chats over coffee and chess. We found we are on the same page

## Finding Mememo

on do's and don'ts, likes and dislikes. Netflix's algorithm has her pinned as a person who likes to watch "Dark TV shows featuring strong female leads." Dory's got style, hers alone. Was an English Lit major prior to clinical psych. Hy told me her education has damaged her in ways she doesn't even know. She's eager to see Hy's book in print since Hy was proud she'd written and illustrated two POD children's books: *Verbant and Verlauren* about two Jewish kids wandering through the Crimea, and *Sausage Machine and the Magical Number Seven* in which "the sea's seventh wave" is explained by a bearded, sea-worn mariner. But she prefers nineteenth-century novels for their gorgeous word painting — adores the ballroom scene in *Anna Karenina* — finding her hubby's scribbles too arcane. "It was the first day of my humiliation," Hy told me, "the day Dory'd panned my first effort, yet she digs my writerly chutzpah in a kind of weird abstract way."

Dory welcomed my efforts to see her late hubby's writing get more exposure: "But, Jym, make it more readable." I said we could "ride a razor's edge between readerly and writerly. She suggested I contact Grader's long-time Asian photo buddy, Ichi Honne in Madison, Wisconsin for his keen editorial eye. Grader had talked of Ichi's Hippy politics and his keen aesthetic sensibility with great admiration: "Jym, that dude's I is *pure* eye." Yet, he and I had not met yet.

Hy'd told me Ichi was a *misogo*, a lost soul, an "aborted" child, meaning he'd dumped his Japanese mores for American; he jumped from reading Edogawa Rampo to Raymond Chandler ("A funny thing happened to me on my way through *The Big Sleep*"). How disappointed his grandfather, Fujiwara Gomokui,



Found Graffiti,  
photo by Ichi

was when Ichi left! A very traditional man, his claim to fame was: 1) memorizing Yukio Mishima's description of female divers comparing breasts in *The Sound of Waves*, and 2) his popular, but scholarly, study of the coastal Ama tribe of southern Japan, expert loincloth-clad pearl divers. Ichi fascinated Meme with thrilling stories of them, referring to "those tourmaline-scaled mermaids."

Dory gave me Ichi's e-mail address. I wrote, introducing myself. Found him eager to join the project. He sent me a jpeg, a photo of an instance of Madison graffiti, I AM A MEME,<sup>3</sup> for possible use in Hy's book — many of his images have found their way into Hy's fiction. He'd snapped it the very day Hy jumped. "Use it in the book," he urged.

---

3. Meme: (noun) Richard Dawkins coined the word "meme" as the cultural analog to a gene. The word originates in the Greek word *mimeme*, meaning "imitated thing," ergo: 1: an idea, belief or belief system, or pattern of behavior that spreads throughout a culture either vertically by cultural inheritance (as by parents to children) or horizontally by cultural acquisition (as by peers, information media, and entertainment media); 2: a pervasive thought or thought pattern that replicates itself via cultural means; a parasitic code, a virus of the mind especially contagious to children and the impressionable; 3: the fundamental unit of information, analogous to the gene in emerging evolutionary theory of culture; 4: in blogpeak, an idea that is spread from blog to blog; 5: an internet information generator, especially of random or contentless information.

# Finding Mememo

A month later Ichi comes down to Chicago in heavy, precarious, traffic. He's garbed in *wabi-sabi* thrift store jeans with a train-track crease that Chicagoans would mistake for Diesel brand distressed jeans simultaneously signifying "new" and "used". I take his unconscious fashion statement as an opportunity riff on French philosopher, Alain Badiou's notion of *rip* (a sudden temporal rupture) and apply it to the tears in his second-hand jeans, telling him they're "birth-scars" of his singularity, "testaments to his break with general history, to the successful institution of a new person-time." It's all pseudo-intellectual tongue-and-cheek, of course, but he loves it! After I feed him this ludic skewing of vanguard theory, he's more willing to cooperate, saying, "Your funny shit spot on, like Meme-san's own."

## ICHI



Ichi Honne, an American archetype of the successful immigrant.

*The flower in the mirror and the moon on water* — it's Japanese saying meaning 'that which can be seen but not grasped,' like my Asian face (which has nothing to do with the desires of women in this country) and Meme-san's demise. My family descends from the *tsuchigumo*, the sturdy "earth-spiders", so I am scouring for clues to Meme-san's demise, spinning a web. Grief crawls spidery over my body into areas yet uninhabited. His death leaves a vacancy I can't sharply focus. He expressed an obdurate singularity at all cost; it seems it did cost him. I got a disturbing e-mail after Meme-san's death — "Accept the delivery of

cement pizza as a personal gift from us" — which I sent to Dallas. He thought it suspiciously academic in tone. What Susan Sontag said of Roland Barthes, that he was a "devout, ingenious student of himself," applied to Meme-san, whose *sensei* were Barthes and Patrick Modiano, Frenchy writers doing bricolages of memoir, philosophy, and cultural criticism — a proto-autofiction.

I drove down to Jym's cognitive "*dojo*" in Oak Park, battling construction detours and road-rage like a samurai. In his "Laboratory of Continuous Effort" (L.O.C.E.), as he called it, we got chummy over cloudy saki. Told me of his plans to redact Hy's jumbled files with four words in mind: *accuracy*, *relevance*, *concision*, and *interest*. Said I applied myself by adhering to same in college and had toiled in a counter-culture café *cum* jazz club in the hip Kokubunji district of Tokyo which had a small TV at the bar screening dubbed "Route 66" reruns. Meme-san dug the double sixes in the title. I started my jazz collection — *jazz will tell you everything you need to know* — then. Later, found out that place was only a block from a similar joint run by soon-to-be famed writer Haruki Murakami — whose writing is jazzy and whose protagonists dig jazz — so I began to read

## Finding Mememo

him. Sent my college girlfriend, Kenko, a mash-up of a Murakami story and Alain Resnais' script for *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*. Years later, I gave him a copy since Meme-san dug Burrough's cut-up texts, his idea that language was an alien virus, and mentioned my voice sounded like the tender young Japanese man's dominating Resnais' bedroom scenes. *Hai!* Hy dug cut 'n paste jobs like this:

*I am with a girl who speaks slowly and chooses her words with care. But who laughs like a child who has received straight A's in school. She puts down her philosophy book; her Hawaiian Punch red lips smile a very small smile, shift a tenth of an inch and stop. She turns and looks at me and says, "Action determines ideology. The obligation of philosophy . . . ." letting the statement trail off. She raises the blanket and it offers the smell of the rising sun and Kant. Outside, the kind of rain you'd find in a Claude Lelouch film. The sun's just risen and a dusty, particulate light plays on the bed; tall mercury lamps, curved like royal ferns, standing around the circumference of the motel's parking lot, still cast unnatural yellowish light onto the pavement. I notice that our scene is like a scene from Hiroshima, Mon Amour. Each day a carbon copy of the last. Like pinballs in constant replay we ping and pong. You need a bookmark to tell one day from the other. This lulls me into thinking things between us might stay that way forever. I curl up on top of the green blanket beside her and listen to the wind's argument. The phrase "Our future is called 'perhaps,' our past muffled by earwax," keeps replaying in my mind. She puts her head against mine and whispers: "If you remember me, then I don't care if everyone else forgets."*

I told Jym-san that Hy'd copped the last sentence for his wife Dory's anniversary card the year prior to his demise. Told him about the PTSD the museum jumper incident had given him: "Nobody can see something like that and come out of it unbent." It had messed me up too. I couldn't help feel that young black man's crazed leap had been a premonition of Hy's own death-leap, or even suggested it to him. Hy presents us with a moving description of this event in section three herein. Both traumatic events took me back to the suicide of an odd-ball author that both Murakami and I dug, Derek Hartfield, who in 1938 dove off the Empire State Building. Derek (a sci-fi writer) was famous for his observation that writing was "the act of verifying the distance between us and things surrounding us." The disturbed AIC museum visitor, Meme-san, and ol' Derek *literally* did make such a verification when they took The Big Dive.

After examining each finger on my hands — a nervous tick — turning them back and forth, I went on to tell Jym-san that that insight of Hartfield's had gotten me interested in serious photography. Focusing on things through a Nikon SLR's ground-glass is also a mode of taking distances between self and world;



## Finding Mememo

focusing determines the sharpness of that space between self and world. This “epiphany”, as I call it, was akin to writer Murakami’s own WOW moment at Meiji Jingu Stadium during a ball-game riff with chance and destiny — how a ball will fly, bounce, or ricochet — when a batter on the Japanese Yakult Swallows team (the “Red Dragons”) connected powerfully with the ball, a split-second satisfying crack filling the air. Something like St. Paul being knocked off his horse, and which gave the young Murakami a sudden itch to write. Jym-san told me reading Babar stories to his sister fostered in him a desire to teach. He got my expected laugh. But now I don’t laugh even though I try and tell myself *Sugitaru wa nao oyobazaru ga gotoshi* (Let what is past flow away downstream). I miss Meme.

### JYM

Ichirō and I had our next meeting when I drove up to Madison, speeding around slow trucks and slowing down for speed traps. Ichirō told me Meme was the first to tell him *provolone* has four syllables, not three; he showed me a book Hy lent him a month prior to his death-splat. Extensively underlined, it might be important to understanding Meme’s unfinished project. This fat volume, *My Struggle, Book Four* by Karl Ove Knausgaard, a Norwegian writer, sports a book jacket boasting it as one in a series of autobiographical writings comprising an *Über*-novel that attempts to shrink the author’s 39-year eventful life and memories therefrom into (as of 2013) 3,600 pages, six volumes. Flipping through, it’s obvious the tome is stuffed with memory-chambers and oblivion-cellars, many of which Hy had red-circled in felt-tip pen. One such passage has Knausgaard touting the merits of having *three* children over merely one or two. Hy, childless, had this “thing” for the number three, and so for multiples thereof:  $3 \times 3 = 9$ , and  $9 \text{ cubed} = 729$ , which contained a 9, and so forth.

Ichirō was not only a rich mine of info on Hy, but also a database built up over years of world travel to museums and galleries in major cities world-wide. For instance, a Gaudi freak like Hy, he’d been at the opening of “Special Exhibit: Takehiko Inoue Interprets Gaudi’s Universe” at Tokyo’s Mori Art Center Gallery. He and Hy both felt Gaudi’s use of fragments — especially as used in his famous Parc Güell, Barcelona — were influential on their own aesthetics.

Over a sushi lunch, during which I ingested too much wasabi with my raw tuna, Ichirō detailed his recent trip to New York’s new Renzo Piano Whitney Museum of American Art as his series of vertically-stacked photographs, called “Totems”, were in their collection. I was impressed. He said he related this to Hy over the phone who became excited, saying he’d just read that day in the *New York Review of Books* that Piano’s structure “looked like a cruise ship”; moreover, that Piano, a native of Genoa, the hometown of Christopher Columbus, repeatedly described it as such. “The Whitney’s similarity to a ship was neither casual

## Finding Mememo

nor superficial." Ichi hadn't thought much of this bit of trivia until he read the second section of Hy's text herein, where sea and ships become important tropes and set a tone for the whole book.

Ichi did delight in seeing at the Whitney several of Ansel Adams black-and-white landscapes. "Interestingly, they were hung next to *Ukiyo-e* prints, circa 1930, by the Japanese-American artist Chiura Obata, which used a hundred successive layers of color. An added treat, as I'd gone there to see Yasuo Kuniyoshi paintings, such as *Child*, work directly inspired by American primitives." A fan of Outsider Art, Ichi always visited Chicago's Intuit Gallery (Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art) on his sojourns there with his travel-worn camera.

I got Ichi to open up about his own photographic aesthetic. His ideas took the form of aphorisms: *Location is irrelevant: what matters is not where something is, but rather where it leads . . . What are objects? Bundles of relations . . .* As for the cities he likes to travel to: *A city has no character; it is a schizoid head-space, filled with the cacophony of contradiction.* The aim of his photos were to: *present a state in which the world seems to be one hundred per cent synthetic, made by man, for man, thanks to my optical shaping thereof and my attention to what I call peripherals of form. My arrangement of individual images on the wall or in a book.*

He held his right hand up to my ear and clicked his fingers three times, *click, click, click* and said *Thus, how the world becomes Honned*. He gave forth a self-congratulatory laugh. I didn't say anything, but thought maybe *both* he and Hy had "something going" with the number three and its variations. Certainly, Hy had (in addition to that *five* thing).

So it came about that me, Dallas, and Ichi, the three of us — ah, that number! — put our heads together and worked out our best guess as to what Grader envisioned as his final literary effort. The task was not unlike what confronted fine art photography curators when they developed all of famed street photographer Garry Winogrand's hundreds of exposed 35mm rolls and, perusing scads of contact sheets, had to decide the visual standards by which to separate the wheat from chaff for future exhibition.

Well, in an all but bumpless collaboration, it took over a year to finish the project. I, of course, was known to mutter, "Will someone please hand me a martini, so I can make it through this ordeal?" But I was bolstered by Hy's remark to me once: "No barrier can stop one who works between boundaries."

Ichi and I met monthly, taking turns making the long drive between Chi-Town and Mad City, invoicing his widow to cover any speeding tickets accrued. Several times I called Dorinda (she always answers the phone "And?") to meet at Oak Park's famed Buzz Café. Hy'd given readings there, projecting an "aggressive defenselessness" to a confused audience. Often Dory's eyelids were

## Finding Mememo

puffed from crying as we sat over hot lattes whenever I had redacted enough of Hy's writings for us to chew on. She'd tell me personal stuff, like when they first met, she'd dropped her glove and Hy'd picked it up, put it on his own hand before returning it, prefiguring their deeper bond to come. Hy's work is fragmentary, like Portuguese author Fernando Pessoa's (1888 - 1935) bizarre self-examination in *The Book of Disquiet*, a textual jumble put into order by later editors. No surprise that Hy copped freely from that quasi-autobiography, using it as a model for his own musings. We amigos agreed not to "smooth" out Hy's text too much (Ichi and I having out-voted Dorinda only once on this point). We kept blips and rough edges as Hy's previous books had opted for the episodic and the choppy. Ichi reminded Dorinda Hy'd been a grad student of famed "photographer" Robert Heinecken, an L.A. artist who made his reputation cutting and collaging found visual fragments into intelligent, visually ambiguous "Gestalts". This, at the start of Hy's aesthetic interest in producing scripto-visual works.

During chess matches, Grader not only ranted on about the raw demonstrations of power and the uncertain ways of his departmental chairman (academic politics visualized in Ichi's "Academia" photo series where classical sculptures model the tortures of bureaucracy), but bemoaned that literature had fallen behind the visual arts in formal chutzpah. Said the writing getting kudos now is akin, to photographers doing documentary work *ad infinitum*. Hy was drawn to scripto-visual manipulation/appropriation, using what Japanese call "grandson quotations" (i.e., a reference not derived from the original, but from some other author who used it first, explained Ichi). "Interwoven-Somewhats," as Hy called his texts; a new genre, he denominated as a *Ludicakadroman*, which demanded more than a Millennial's reading level and attention; like Menippean satire, it combined high and low discourse, the serious and the funny, invented and copped material. He wanted to outdo the literary thievery of Hans Magnus Enzensberger basing his aesthetic on Roland Barthes' notion of a text as "a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations." Hy, taking his cue from collage, registered the fact that juxtaposing a text to the text of another can be aesthetically productive.

A fan of Henry Miller (for his surrealist passages and episodic narratives) and Donald Barthelme (for everything, minus that author's distaste for reference to weather), Hy had been particularly dismayed with the preponderance of narrative realism planted, nurtured in today's MFA Writing Programs, then harvested by the literary press. He did not want his work taken as "a slice of life", so he (unfortunately, I think) rejected the thesis that having only a single member of an oppressed group in a novel was oppressive as it veers toward presenting such figures in isolation. "I'm thinking in oppositional terms," he said. His

## Finding Mememo



*Trencadís in a bench in Parc Güell, Barcelona*

assumption was that something about the world as we now understand it would be falsely or not credibly represented if pictured in traditional realist narrative manner. No astonishing immediacy for him; no, his stuff was very self-reflexive, writing *about* writing, as in his earlier Photo-Language aesthetic, which had often been photography *about* photography. “We are what we read”, should have been on one of his wacky T-shirts. As I write this, I recall a man who, if he did jump, must have stood hawk-faced upon the clear edge

of the sky, a man long familiar with Chicago’s wind and rain, the scary lightning-whetted nights, seeing time in the air, about to wipe memory clean. I kept all this in mind, the ideas and emotions, as I editorially shaped his raw material, putting in glosses and notes. In so doing, I, too, became a *bricoleur*,<sup>4</sup> an assembler mimicking the process of *bricolage* that Hy Grader himself had used to construct his own text: cutting and pasting passages from Hy’s unfinished novel, forming it into a new imaginative whole, just as the Catalanian architect Antoni Gaudi did by collecting and distributing shards of crockery (*trencadís*) to make Barcelona’s Parc Güell’s astonishing figures and sinuous benches.

One final comment. Deducing from the episodic and fragmentary structuring of his text, Hy may have wanted to create a hypertext story for online perusal in hopes of it going “viral”. In fact, Ichi confirmed that Hy had been looking into buying Storyspace software. “I told him,” Ichi said, “the odds of his writings going viral are comparable to winning the lotto. Hy stubbornly refused to believe me.” Both Ichi and I hope Hy can somehow read my refunctioning of his unfinished tome, wherever he is, high or low. If he hates it, he has my permission to toss a thunderbolt my way.

## DALLAS

While Jym was messin’ with Meme’s memos and memories, doin’ the textual-two-step, I — tan pants, logger boots and shirt, no hair, sunburn, and strong wrinkles puckerin’ my skin ‘tween the ears — was quietly pokin’ into Hy’s will, willin’ to see if any last minute codicils were filed with his very affable

---

4. French term. A person who cobbles together, constructs, *bricolages*; one who creates a whole using whatever fragments of materials are available, such as poet Marianne Moore was noted for. The term has become popular as descriptive of Postmodernist appropriation strategies.



## Finding Mememo

attorney and lookin' into any threatenin' mail (e- or snail) he might have received, snoopin' in his Chase Manhattan Private Client Sapphire Visa Card account with Hy's wife at my side, hopin' to reveal more about Hy's eleven-day absence, a topic Dorinda remains uncomfortable with, givin' off odd gesticulations when I grill her 'bout it. She would hold an anxious hand in a death-grip on my right knee as we surfed the Visa Card site's menu options. She told me Hy loved to stroll on the edges of the waters of thought. *Like stroll on night-time sidewalks!* I should mention that Hy's wife was precise in her tastes. In gardenin' this Moss-maiden — her hair smellin' of earth, pollen, 'n the cinnamon of a westerly wind — drilled her flowers like soldiers; on the porch she put four umbrellas in the umbrella stand, rather than three, so that two may lean one way 'n two another. Symmetry. I notice these things. Get *paid* to do so.

This aspect of the investigation I call GUT reaction (Grand Unifyin' Theory). It often leads to the titanium spine of the delusion that was hidin' the truth. It was a fruitful aspect this time, too, as I found a repeatin' monthly credit card payment to "Elske Erfaren, SC". At first it looked like it might be a Norwegian porn site — *elske erfaren* translates as "love-experienced" — but a Google search also brought up a psychiatrist, Elske Erfaren M.D. (S.C.)" with an office in Berwyn, a ten-minute drive from Hy's home. It was an area I'd repeatedly night-walked past, places that human decision had emptied out, when my office was "a Berwyn block" (a long funky block) from Cigars and Stripes Bar.

That bar is *legend*; it's where I would often jot ideas in my notebook

(which looked much like Hy's experimental diabetes treatment log), a non-techy thing, which is the only place you can write about shit (like this) 'n not give a shit (like this). When my pen hand stiffened up, I'd do well bourbons chasin' Pabsts in 'tween beatin' on the damn jukebox for swallowin' my tarnished quarters or rejecting my slugs.

A frequent drinkin' partner of mine at that time, Josh, a bank CEO, who, when he found I did hush-hush shit for some major Chi-Town Corps, would clue me in on the latest boardroom argot, like "Confidence is liability packaged as an asset, an asset packaged as a liability." He always used both *as* and *like* together. Gettin' into this guy's head was what in video games is called "a side quest from the main objective." My objective bein' to: 1) get



Exhuming "The Berwyn Baby Doe," near Cigars and Stripes Bar, photo by Dallas Johnson

# Finding Mememo

pixellated; 2) solve a case by grokkin' the eggy mouthcorners of things. By trial 'n error, I found I could delay Mr. CEO's exit by tossin' out ideas I had for my Blurt stories. The more human messiness I had Blurt involved with, the more this guy's ears would perk up, his eyes roll, so I tossed delicious tidbits of vanity, pettiness, selfishness, political incorrectness, worried shit about our damn vendin'-machine economy, even describin' Blurt's nostrils fillin' up with the smell of some shit-head's ego burnin' up his superego.

But what he liked to hear the most was how I (not Blurt) helped solve a local child-abduction/murder case, "Berwyn's Baby Doe" as the news dubbed it. I'd managed to suss out her sad grave just outside Cigars' premises, thanks to my manic night-farin' there. My capacity for vanishin' into whatever shadows happen to be 'round is a hard-won and precious skill 'n it paid off. I found the killer. The local news called the perp "The-Thing-That-Should-Not-Be". Me they dubbed "He-Who-Walks-Around-At-Night". Sounds like a good Injun name to give to Blurt Wildbraine. Hell, I'd corner the Pow Wow market what with the Native American reader's love of cold facts 'n hot fiction.

Upon leavin', Josh'd always say, wavin' his right arm about, "See you in church Sunday, dude, if the windows are clean enough!" Once outside, he'd kneel 'n offer a prayer to the perpetually-broken-parkin'-meter perpetually stuffed into the concrete curb, then hail a cab homeward.

Excuse me. As I have a tendency to wander, so do I from my main topic. I was about to tell you about my data-gatherin' visit to the office of Elske Erfaren. To put the event into a literary frame: It was a blustery, wintry day with an east wind whose cuttin' influence ached in my every pore as I exited my Mini 'n made my way to the door of Elske's office with its sign ELSKE ERFAREN, ROGERIAN. I was about to knock on the door when I heard what sounded like muffled movie dialogue comin' from within, the actual words heavily distorted, like comin' from a blown speaker or a fadin' radio signal turned up way too loud. The door blasted open and out strode Chad Armbuster who gave me a conditional positive regard (parent-to-child regard) then dashed down the hall. I stood in the open door as an embarrassed 'n conciliatory secretary (like one sees on TV) gave me a welcome 'n gestured with open hand to sit down. I got access to Dr. Erfaren only after she gave me a five minute synopsis of the doc's practice of Rogerian therapy.<sup>5</sup> Upon enterin', I saw that the doc was lean 'n lank, strikin' to the eye 'n moved with convulsive starts 'n a strugglin' gait. She wore a suit of soft green signifying a certain withdrawal, a chaste cool quality; but then,

---

5. Rogerian therapy, a client-centered therapy, is person-centered, non-directive, and is a counseling approach that requires the client to take an active role. One's self-concept and self-actualization is affirmed and a state of congruence, of harmony, in one's total organismic experience is the goal. One's self-concept becomes free of conditions of worth.

## Finding Mememo

oddly, she wore a pair of dilapidated gym footwear. But maybe the quaintly embroidered 'n expertly framed sign over her desk was a clue as to why:

TO WALK I S BY A THOUGHT  
TO GO  
TO MOVE I N SPI R I T

We sat across from each other. She gave off a vague throb of energy, like thermal images of people on a screen. I asked her about that Rogerian thing.

"Battleships are out of date; carriers are *in*," she quipped, simplifyin' the difference between the tactics of the Rogerian approach and conventional Freudianism. "We're all sailing our ships on the same currents, some of us on yachts and some of us clinging to scraps of flotsam. Hy was sailing around in a submarine, sure sign of a weak self-concept. Had a weird run of dreams too.<sup>6</sup> Feared his nemesis, Chad, drank a concoction called "The Vice Grip" (porter, coffee rum and Brachetto d'Aqui) that tasted like whipped cream,, kidneys, beer bitters, honey).

She, of course, had been shocked by Hy's supposedly self-destructive act, but told me doctor-patient privilege was restricting her openness here. I shifted to Armbuster's presence 'n only said it was about Hy's eleven-day absence. I put on my *cool guy* mask, accentuated me ol' Texan accent, crossed my legs to raise my pants enough to expose snazzy toolin' on my cowboy boots, 'n lowered my voice an octave, hopin' to charm 'n put her at ease. Mentioned how Australian beetles are so attracted to the brown backs of dumped beer bottles that they bake to death in the hot desert sun matin' with 'em. Then shifted to my self-deprecatin' openin' gambit, somethin' 'bout my self-concept: "My opinion ain't worth a sparrow's fart, but . . ." — she laughed and relented a bit — "He, Hy, had a high intelligence as shown by his school records academic success. A good self-actualization tendency. But suffers from Chronic Academic Fatigue due to a fixation on high-energy physics, quantum field theory, and statistical systems." There she abruptly pulled up her wagon and set the brake.

I distracted her a bit more by tellin' her about my first acomin' to Chicago from Texas where, "I recall starin' up at the tall buildings so long I got freckles on the roof of my mouth." That got a full-body laugh out of her. I calmly sat, settlin' my hash, waitin' for more. 'N more came.

"As a kid Hy felt persecuted. Stares and scornful laughter were his daily diet; a dollop of 'pa-ra-*noi*-ya' seemed no more pathological to him than a callus or an acquired immunity." I waited, chin in hand, for her to continue. "Told him it's not so much what you do as how you think about it. That got him thinking." She repeated that Hy had "low self-esteem" issues, which *might* — she

---

6. See the Appendix for notebook entries by Grader describing these dreams.

## Finding Mememo

emphasized the might — have somethin' to do with "a tendency for delusional thinking, which *might* be followed by a bout of severe self-deprecation." I was hearin' stuff that sounded like manic-depressive shit straight out of the DSM.

She began to clam up, so I tossed out more bait, my famous recipe for Kick Ass Texas Chile. She bit hard, went as far as to mention a dream of Hy's in which her scholarly patient saw himself pick up a thick black andiron 'n start walkin' forward with a low animal growl toward his loathed department chairman Chad Armbuster . . . the dream always endin' there. She said that could be read as "a myth of his imagination: a representation of the Son in perpetual, un-availing revolt against the Word of the Father," adding, "Hy thought *He* would not let him alone. He also complained of short-term memory loss, a bad rotator cuff, and of two agonistic gendered aspects of his Self — kind of Jungian — which he called 'Sally Forth' and 'Tern Bach'." This made me wonder if Hy didn't fear he was on the narrow Alzheimer trail to Non-self. As for Hy's interest in chess — even with three-persons — that required heaps of memory 'n foresight, "Oh, I asked him about that; he said it was the only thing in the world where he can see all the factors and understand the rules: 'If the real world ran like a chess match, I'd be just fine. But what do I get? Wrong answers, jarring incongruities, meaningless obscenity. Like the world *is* one big Fox News Program.' That was, as his therapist, insightful from my perspective. He dodged the question, not addressing if his chess skills *had been* slowly diminishing. He, a 'chronesthete' (his term), did mention Martin Amis' novel *Time's Arrow* wherein a chess game rewinds backward to the first tug on a white pawn and then perfect order."

*No shit?* I thought. I was seein' a Hy I'd not known before. I mean, you don't glean intimate stuff about a guy by *kibitzin'* while he plays chess with another fellow egghead, right? Just for the ducks of it, I pressed her 'bout Hy's eleven day vanishin' act, a roundabout way of gettin' at Chad's visit. She knew nothin', but hinted maybe an anxiety attack was behind it. She'd wondered why

Hy'd gone AWOL, leavin' a number of enigmas floatin' in the air like ectoplasm.

So that was all she was willin' to offer, 'cept for a strange flick Hy'd given her at the start of therapy, which she said I could have. Cool beans! As I was about to depart, she confided that on Hy's last visit he'd gotten up to leave 'n she went over to give her usual Rogerian goodbye hug, but Hy'd pushed her arms to her sides 'n squeezed her ribs like a person on angel dust huggin' a stop sign. I pretended to depart; hid in the coat closet until



Hy Grader snaps a photo of an avant-garde film projection (2010) a photo by Ichi Honne given to Hy's therapist



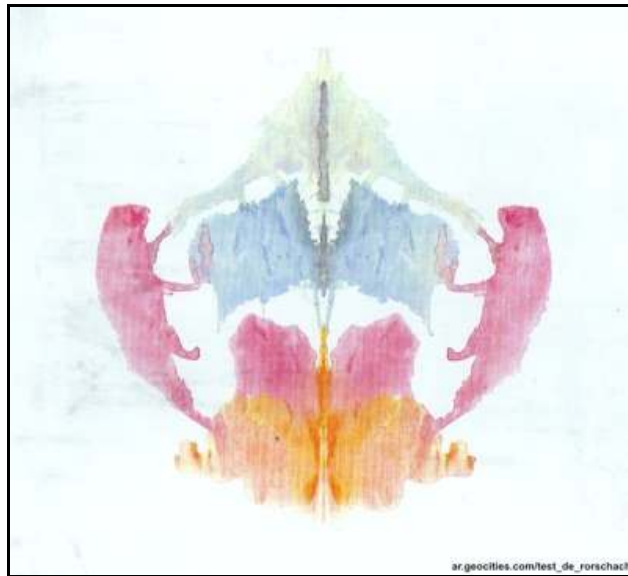
## Finding Mememo

she left for lunch. Did a quick hack of her patient files and printed out her notations on Hy's case, which included Rorschach testing:

The patient is an introverted neurotic. Told me he once had an Existentialist psychoanalyst, Dr. Ate, give him a Rorschach Test [see pgs. 417 - 420]. He handed me a file which told me his interpretation to card VIII had been: "Europa on the bull carrying her over the Bosphorus," which his therapist took as, "Delusions of grandeur, masochistic fantasies at play, as well as a sense of victimization."

Of card III, his previous therapist recorded the patient had said: "It is as if the red thing in the middle were a power separating the two sides, preventing them from meeting." The patient thought this might allude to his troubled relationship at that time. I retested him on this card to see if it may apply to his current contentious relationship with his departmental chairman and got interesting results. He told me of Card VIII with the pink bear-like shapes on the sides that: "These two creatures are scurrying away from a bad situation. It looks like an explosion could happen at any minute and they're running like hell to save their lives." Here shapes usually seen as slug-gish animals are seen as "running like hell." *[This is interesting, given two factors, one pre-, one post-: 1) Hy had told me a few days prior to this session that poet Delmore Schwartz had described his own body as a "heavy bear"; 2) Then there was Hy's encounter with the bear ravaging his car at the Wisconsin lake resort he'd fled to soon after this session with his therapist.]*

I then gave him Card III to interpret, of which his reading was quite abnormal; the usual interpretation of Card III is two waiters bowing. This patient saw unconnected parts, fragments of a skeleton, an upended cemetery [see next page]. He related the image to the last photograph taken by modernist photographer Edward



Card VIII



Card III

## Finding Mememo

Weston at the beach in Big Sur, California where fragments of rocks stick up through the sand, suggesting strewn body parts, when he had to cease actively pursuing his art due to his advancing Parkinson's disease.

This patient nags at himself, dissatisfied with his accomplishments; he is easily thrown off balance, but then recovers, because of his need to apply himself. He has little full, free emotional rapport with the world around him, and shows a rather strong tendency to go his own way. His dominant mood, his habitual underlying affect, is rather anxious, depressed, and seems passively resigned, though all this can be, and is, controlled wherever possible, due to his good intellectual capacity and adaptability.

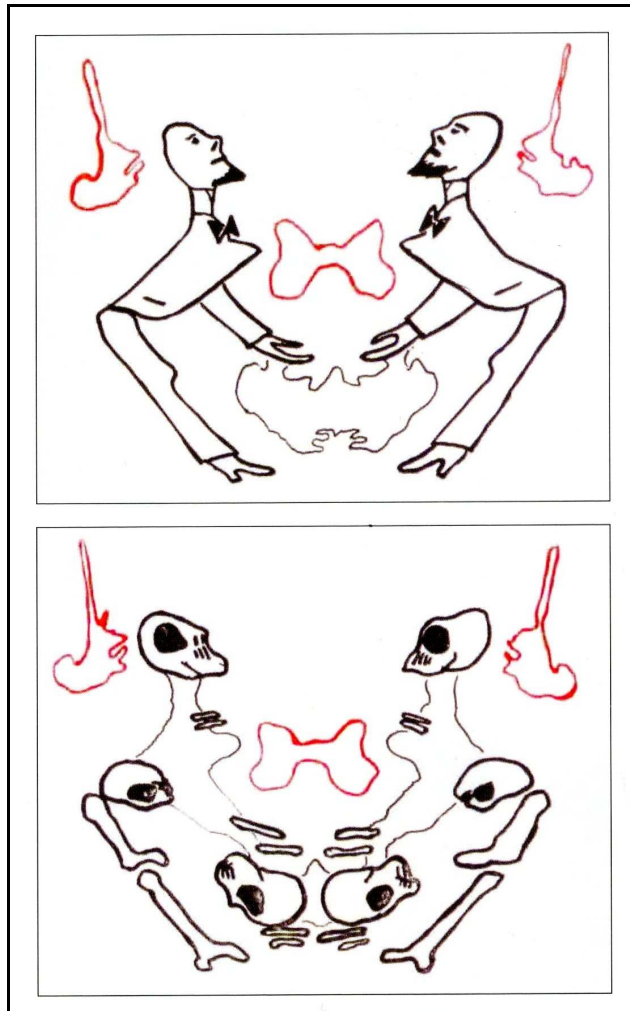
His intelligence is, on the whole, good, keen, original, more concrete than abstract, more inductive than deductive. It is true that seeing something in a standard way uses more instinctive, precognitive grain regions, while original visions, requiring a more creative integration of perception and emotion, uses other parts of the brain.

Original responses are produced from the interference of emotion or personal psychological conflicts on perceptual activities.

Still, there is a contradiction here, in that the subject exhibits a rather weak sense for the obvious and the practical. He thus gets stuck on, and trapped in, trifling and subordinate details, and in daydreams that have a science-fiction turn to them. In one such, he meets an alien named Uoy Mai, a mirror-reversal of *I am you*. Emotional and intellectual self-discipline and mastery are apparent, however.

\* \*

J ym, I think this should go in the book, the Prologue, maybe. I t's given me the title of a new mystery story: "Raw Shock: The Inkblot Murders." BTW, Elske enjoyed me always pronouncin' Freud as 'Fwoid'. — Dal



Top: Normal interpretation of Card III; Bottom: Hy Grader's

## Finding Mememo

Back at my office, the sun was agoin' down 'n I was amusin' on how nothin' has a single unambiguous incontrovertible cause, but soon nodded off, catchin' one of them ten-minute kittynaps that always feel like they last longer than they really do, provin' the miracle of naptime surgery.

Upon wakin', I had one of my humongous sinus headaches, head poundin' like a Salvation Army drum. Hy 'n I both suffer this damn affliction, jokin', "Our headaches brought us together." I heard someone in my head say, *The beer is cold, chief*. I took three Excedrin 'n washed 'em down with a bottle of Vermont-made Magic Hat brew (don't let anyone say I don't know He-Brew).

In an hour I was ready to sum stuff up: Was Hy's condition worsened by Elske's diagnosis? When authority tells you that what's goin' on inside your head is caused by an illness, you end up thinkin' it's fact. What's left out is the social, the effects of a deterioratin' world on one's hollowed-out skanktified psyche. Apropos this, I'll need to corral more data, like Hy's bitin' remarks 'bout his chairman, Chad. Hy did, accordin' to Elske, connect a childhood trauma to a slight by said chairman. Seems when Hy was five, his daddy pretended to not recognize him, sayin' later that li'l Hy's nose had grown so long due to his persistent lyin', that he no longer recognized him — a shit-shatterin' experience.

Then, sixty years later, at Faculty Bar Night, Chad pretended not to recognize him either, a slight evokin' the pain of that past trauma. Hy ran out of the bar, armorin' himself by yellin': "*Wellen schawappen — Wappen schwellen!*" (Waves splash — armorial bearings swell). Quizzed 'bout this sorta Tourettic tic by Elske, Hy yelled, 'Let him deceive me as much as he can, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I think that I am something.' (Now that's what I call puttin' Descartes before the hoarse.) Elske told me Hy felt he was the site of many storms, tellin' her: 'Everything keeps thundering through me. And I hear a British accent in between wind gusts.' This kinda freaked Elske out.

My opinion? Hy's weird behavior indicates he *was* capable of self-murder (depressed), but equally, Hy's presence posed a threat to someone in his school who, in defense, revenge, or sheer panic, might've tossed the bugger to his demise. If so, it was a crime of opportunity, not careful plannin'; a spur of the moment thing. Another question: Was Chad's visit a fact-gatherin' mission like the doc said or was he aputtin' the screws to her, some kinda pressure to keep her trap shut or what? And why did Chad leave in a huff, givin' me the cold shoulder, burstin' past like a Texas bull in a rodeo bull-ridin' contest?

JYM

We are starting to get ahead of the story. Dallas has a tendency to let his thought become more thought about more



## Finding Mememo



Blurt's PI, I.M. Blunt

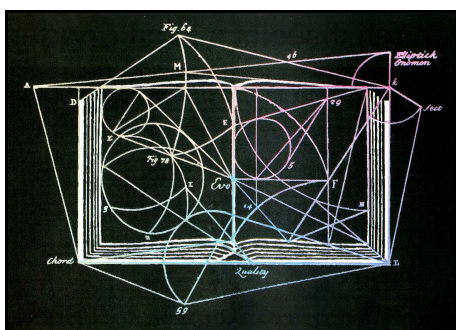
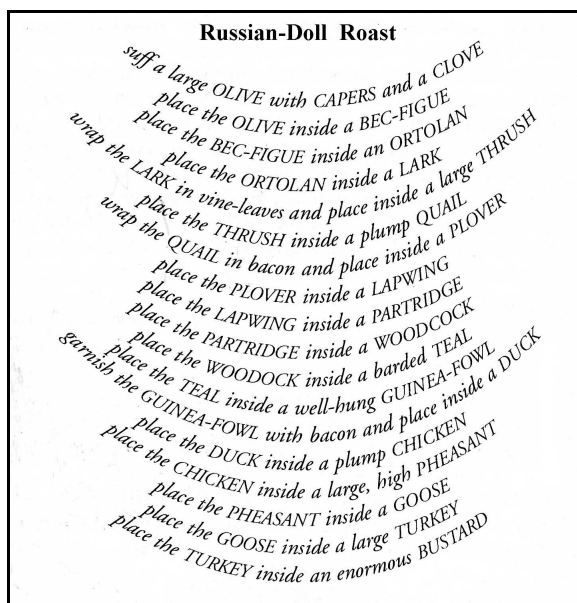


Blunt's PI, Pete Draco

thought. This was pointed out to him, after a reading at Forest Park's famed Centuries and Sleuths bookstore from his new mystery, "A Dispiriting Return". Therein, he has Blurt writing his own mysteries, where Blurt imagines his own PI, an I.M. Blunt, who is writing his own detective stories featuring Pete Draco, who is writing his own mysteries featuring a stuttering Cockney PI named Cymric Blitz who is writing his own mysteries: "During long rained-in days, Blitz would stare out into the mist, hunched over the top of his typewriter like a motorist over the dashboard of a fast-speeding car, thinking: *I am immense and my immensity must pass through the lexicon's narrow neck and the obligatory pathways of syntax resembling the twists and turns of my digestive tract.*"

The stories form a *mise-en-abyme*, a Russian-Doll Roast of mysteries.

But let's hand Dallas a big bottle of "Good Old Potosi", call a halt to this frame-within-frames, and listen to Hy himself. Much can be hinted at about Hy's propensities by looking at a large print of his that hung in his basement faculty office. It shows H. H. Arnason's classic art historical textbook, *History of Modern Art*, spread open and overlaid with geometric projections, a diagram encapsulating the way Hy's mind



H. H. Arnason's 1968 *Modern History of Modern Art* with My Overdrawing (tonally-reversed sketch, 1975) Hy "Mememo" Grader

worked. No wonder he aced both geometry and analytical geometry in highschool and was so much taken with Pythagorean theories of number, shape, and sound. So much so, one of his math teachers, a stutterer hailing from Lebanon, preciently warned him: "Dddon't fffollow the mmmath out the damn window, kid."



## Finding Mememo



Illustrations for *Crime Does Not Pay (in Pesos Anyway)* by I. M. Blunt (a mystery featuring Pete Draco, lodged within a Blurt Wildbraine mystery story by Dallas Johnson).

*A mysterious blonde leans on the shoulder of the party host, Gatt Zoster, a baby-faced man with one glass eye and a pinched, disapproving mouth; he wears a pink smoking jacket and sits triumphantly on a sprawled animal skin fronted by a pig with an apple in its mouth. A tiny marble statue of a nude holds up one of the man's legs. [the action takes place in the small Mexican town of Quauhnahuac, on the Day of the Dead, 1 November 2018, in the shadow of two volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl].*

*"How did you know?" Zoster asks Draco with a sneer.*

*"Omne ignotum pro magnifico," replies Draco, confident, arms akimbo.*

*"What's that?"*

*"My preferred I-solved-it stance.*

*"Nah, I mean . . ."*

*"Oh . . . Latin."*

*"Fer what?"*

*"For 'Every unexplained thing seems magnificent.' In other words, a good magician — or private dick — doesn't reveal his tricks."*

— From Blunt's Pete Draco meta-mystery (mystery-within-a-mystery mystery). Draco is a two-fisted Miami private eye who manages to run into more vicious thugs, naked babes, crooked cops, treacherous dames, savage beatings, double crosses, and plot convolutions than you can shake a blackjack at.

## Finding Mememo

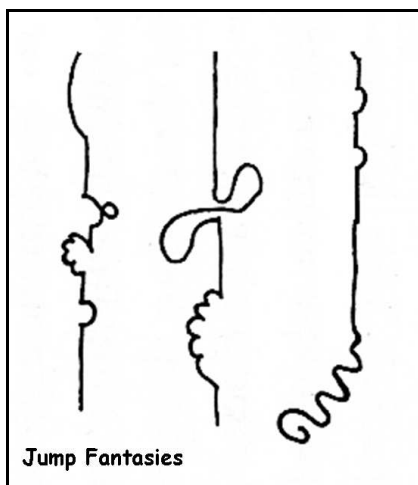
Few people knew of his math obsession, he with his sad sea-blue eyes. Hy could do without most people — even sex, as Dory testified: “For Hy, sexual desire was a pure play of the signifiers which the brute coupling of signifieds temporarily scuttled.” Except for a handful of friends, he welcomed a human face as one might welcome a sudden blend of color in a sunset; he felt no more need of going out to parties than he felt the need of altering the sunset’s clouds. He did believe in the old seaman’s forewarning — “Red sky at morning, sailor take warning” — when waking to Oak Park sunrises displaying a slight metallic sheen.

Nietzsche said the thought of suicide can get us through many a bad night, and Hy had confessed to agreeing with this, telling me once is merely the quest of the libido to overcome the anxieties of reality. But it was a particularly bad sign when he admitted Dory’s widened heal-all-blue-eyes weren’t making it for him any longer, that their arguing voices were taking over their bodies. When he started talking about his marriage lately as “a voyage across a shoreless, uncharted sea of shipwrecks and sunken treasures,” and went on to tell Dory the seafoam green turtleneck sweater she’d given him had turned seasick gray, it was time for worry. In one notebook, Hy’d written: “Being married is like being slowly swallowed by a python.” He abruptly exchanged his favorite poet of melancholy, Keats, for the more impressively depressive Giacomo Leopardi, the supreme poet of passive, helpless suffering. Leopardi writes where all his efforts have led him, into a: *terrible, immense abyss / into which he falls, forgetting / everything*.

Hy began to read and reread John Berryman, a poet who turned and waved just before taking a fatal plunge from Minneapolis’ Washington Avenue Bridge, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1972 (the number seven holds significance for Hy). Like

Berryman, Hy started to suffer head nods and wags as he talked, his eyebrows leaping and hunching, his voice coming in abrupt fits and starts. Yes, Hy gave the impression he held an observation of Nietzsche’s bouncing around in his head: *Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down?*

Now his friends seek to find out if he opted to see if downward still existed in a “real world” (ironic quotation marks). Hy, an addict to superfluous learnedness, used to cite from memory Augury March’s upbeat, but obscure, masterpiece, *Futuredays*. Had he scuttled his ship because he lost faith in the



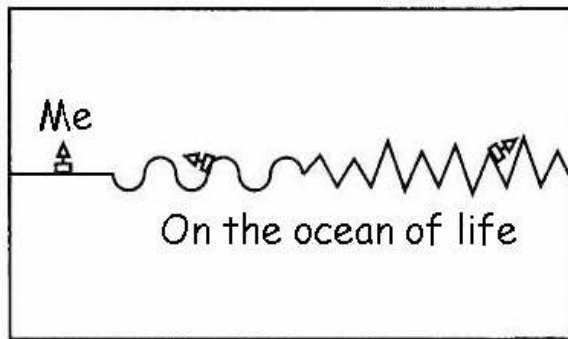
*Jump Fantasies* (2016, ink on paper, 11 x 14 in.) Hy “Mememo” Grader

## Finding Mememo

future's Extravagant Fiction Today - Cold Fact Tomorrow aesthetic — or was he seeking release from the NOW in a new attenuated way? Like slipping vapor-like through the interstices of intervening substances. Some-thing many of us want to do now, trumping Trump's triumph.

It's a sad ending to a man who began his adolescence in the spirit of Thomas Wolfe's rhapsodizing style in *Look Homeward, Angel*: "Life unscales its rusty weathered pelt, and earth wells out in tender exhaustless strength, and the cup of a man's heart runs over with dateless expectancy, tongueless promise, indefinable desire." Hy, himself, once said he couldn't imagine his life without "the empowering, free-falling, slightly scary, almost illicit thrill of creating."

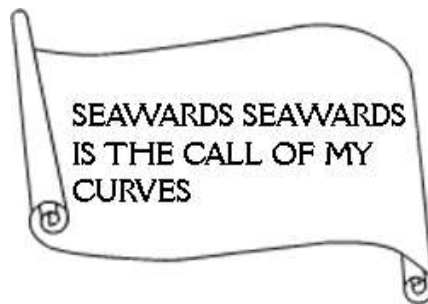
Over the many years his feet beat the pavement or struggled up stairs, he developed an unhealthy doubled consciousness of the self, the self watching itself watch itself, *ad infinitum*. How his concern with (in German) the *buch* (book) later became a concern with *bruch* (wreck). Hy had once been aligned with Democritus' laughter, a response to life's contingency; later, he became more aligned with Heraclitus' tendency to weep.



Dallas, a prowler of notepad palimpsests and marginalia in phone books, in perusing a file folder of Hy's, found a graphic poem attributed to "Cesárea Tinajero" upon which Hy had added an enlightening annotation indicating his own journey on increasingly dangerous seas.

Oh Hy, what secret relics heavy with meaning — like your odd drawings of scrolls with sea-faring messages like WORDS ARE MY SAILS— have you buried beneath the psychic floor boards, away from confrontation and questions, kept in a dark place, hidden carefully from the exorcism of a clean, clear light? If I could do an interview with your ghost I'd ask: "Do you dead have memory, still love mortal acquaintances and still remember us? Do you now see time from your perspective as clumps of turned milk in the bottom of a glass bottle? Do you know Dorinda is so flooded out, she's got to pump her basement where her dogs are floating around, doing the backstroke in her tears? Do you approve of the witty engraving on your jar of ashes? Do ya?"

Those ashes were heave-ho'ed o'er the



"Scroll No. 2," Hy "Mememo" Grader

## Finding Mememo

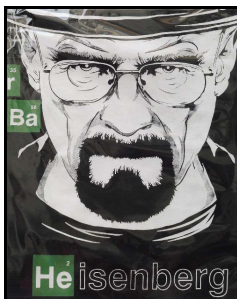


Hy "Mememo" Grader's ashes; reverse side of the urn reads: *He was an autodidact. He died in confusion. He was 70 years old. He achieved 1/10,000 of his dreams, managed to get his odd opinions out to scads of skeptical students, but was misunderstood 3,800 times when it really mattered.*

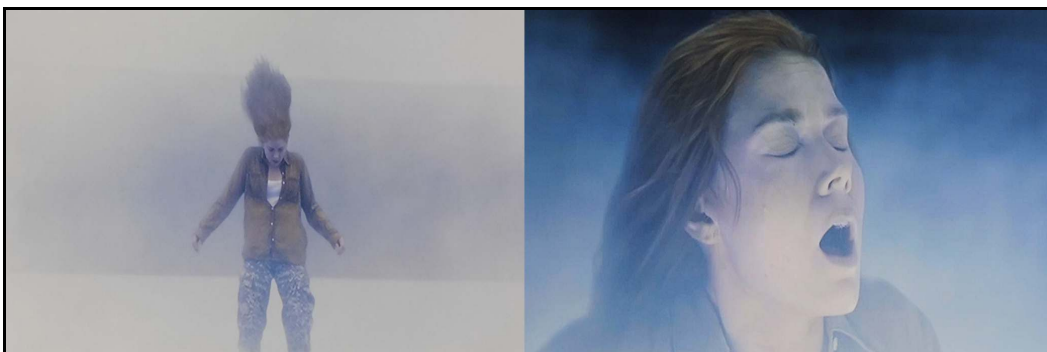
Slap Boka Falls in Bovec, Slovenia (see page 526) along with Hy's "Moriarty".

But enough sentiment; hereafter, we surviving three amigos will chime in regularly (via my editorial persona) on our much-missed-amigo's death investigation, which will come to put a spotlight on a figure who plays a major role in the second half of Hy's text, Wishwer Watt (see frontispiece), and on the fragments of Hy's written material, which mirrors University of California, Davis professor Eldridge Moores' pop quantum theory assessment: "Nature is messy. Don't expect it to be uniform and consistent." Part of the reason for this is that many of Mem's pages consisted of rough notes rendered even rougher by hasty insertions and annotations. In many places Hy'd placed little memos addressed to himself, tagged with the

Latin word *quaere* — inquire. These distractions I have deleted and then attempted to restitch the text parts together. One section I did not use detailed



a Moroccan myth about how "in the twinkling of an eye", a devote Moslem in prayer was "swept into another dimension," finding himself in India, wholly invisible, learning surreptitiously a goldsmith's secrets, becoming a goldsmith himself, then returning home to ply his new trade, becoming famous throughout all Islam. My editorial task reminded me of a saying Hy often laid on us chums: "Spiraling around a theme can super-charge a meme, transforming your enemy into energy."



Female Dimension-jumper (CGI, n.d.) pasted into Hy "Mememo" Grader's Moleskine notebook and book-marked with a piece of thin paper on which Hy had hand-written misquotes from John Donne's sermons



## Finding Mememo

As Hy stood on that fateful balcony, his “body feeling like I had just played four quarters in Soldier Field without pads” (notebook entry dated the day he died), and watched the sun’s last sentence of the day, did he also know that he’d written that day his last sentence? Did he recall once saying he believed in imagination (“a person can go anywhere by means of simple cerebration”), that he adored gardens (albeit “they’re hard on trees”), science, poetry, love, and a variety of nonviolent consolations? Like his listening over and over to the deceased Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe’s elegiac “Irkanda IV”, praising the searching grief of the solo violin as it “spoke to one’s tortured soul.” Did he recall having us amigos in his thrall when expatiating on seeing, on the Ides of March and Shakespeare’s play *Julius Caesar*, performed as a delicate amalgam of ancient Rome with Renaissance English spoken by contemporary African actors. Hy loved any sort of mash-up, but mashing up his own body? Hmmm.



“It is night, it is death. It’s a trap, it’s a gun,” frontispiece to Dallas Johnson’s mystery, *La Dónde’s Revenge*; Blurt looks into the revenge murder of his vacationing Chicago Police buddy, Sergeant Cuff, outside Las Rosas, a shady bar in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. The story broaches fear of the dark, fear of death, and fear of what lies beyond. According to Dallas, the story disturbed Hy Grader.

Hy told me in fiction, in every game, the bad guys have the advantage. This is true in Dallas’ first Mexico-sited mystery, *La Dónde’s Revenge*. The perp

## Finding Mememo



Dorinda's award-winning garden where Hy liked to read (photo by Dorinda Grader)

*When April with its sweet showers has pierced the drought of March to the root, and bathed every vein of earth with that liquid by whose power the flowers are engendered; when the zephyr, too, with its dulcet breath, has breathed life into the tender new shoots in every copse and on every heath, and the young sun has run half its course in the sign of the Ram, and the little birds that sleep all night with their eyes open give song (so Nature prompts then in their hearts), then, as the poet Geoffrey Chaucer observed many years ago, folk long to go on pilgrimages. Only these days people prefer to call them vacations.*

— Excerpt from Dorinda Grader's "Garden of Song" notebook  
(recall Dory has an M.A. in English Literature)

# Finding Mememo

is a mysterious female assassin, “La Dónde”, a *nombre de pistola* meaning “The Where” — you never know where she is until BANG! too late. She’s pumped and has taken neuro cross-fit training to help her minimize distractions. Blurt’s police sarge bud, Harry Cuff, is riddled with bullets outside a tough bar while on vacation. Blurt goes on the trail of the perp, using his famous “sauntering eye” since “the more you look, the less you observe.” He thinks it was revenge for Cuff’s justified shooting a year previous during a drug raid at her *loco* brother’s hang-out (his gang tag in Spanish means “Hop Frog”). Indulge me — here are excerpts. Wildbraine, inside a sleazy Mexican bar called Las Rosas, narrates:

*My days in the Mexican desert’ve been long; hell, longer when traveling alone among men I fear can’t be trusted. Rain starts to fall in fat gobs. I dash into a bar, Las Rosas. The barkeep’s pushing amontillado, but I point for a double shot of Roca Patrón Silver. In the bar’s mirror, I stare at my face, waiting to break through beyond that glass’s pale image of myself by smiling, sneering, snarling, making goofy expressions. . . .*

*She emerges from the dark as if created by it. Face crouches beneath heavy dark hair like a crime in the depths of a darkened house. Eyebrows joined Frida Kahlo-like. A look I could not take in all at once, so I lookrf at her slightly askew, as if trying to view a solar eclipse. One of my informants had described her as, “A drama queen armed with an El Cuerno de Chivo,” i.e., The Goat’s Horn, slang for an AK-47. She’s decked out in a khaki blouse (British military type) and a short leather skirt, heels. “My name is Velour,” she says in a voice that was like faux silk which wafts over me like a mistuned sonata. I wanted to say “I love your scherzo mucho,” but she didn’t seem a pun-loving la pelona, more like one to suddenly sport fang-like teeth in a foaming mouth. . . .*

I recall, getting back on track, Hy carrying a well-thumbed copy of Israeli ethicist Avishai Margalit’s tract against humiliation, *The Decent Society* (1996), and lauding “dignity, honor, memory”; saying that if we ever find ourselves writing only for the present, only tweeting out shit like Donald Trump, he would feel “absolutely defeated as a human being and a writer.” Salinger’s Holden Caulfield made a distinction between writers you would like to call on the phone and those you wouldn’t care to talk to at all. Us amigos unanimously put Meme in the former category. And we’re still waiting to get through to him — hear him answer seaman-like “Ahoy!”<sup>7</sup> — or for him to call us. Every time my phone rings I hesitate, half-expecting a distorted voice hailing from some weird Dimension-X.

---

7. Hy used nautical terms like “Ahoy” for Hello, “doldrums” for depression, “craft” for art, “anchored” for rooted. He liked Hans Blumenberg’s quip that humans live pragmatically on dry land, but existentially at sea. He approved of Greenpeace activists calling whales “armless Buddhas”.



# Finding Mememo

170	Decency as a Social Concept	171	Culture
<p>to be purity of mouth? After all, the present-day secular version of this sort of puritanism is the "political correctness" movement, which permits only noninsulting "politically correct" expressions.</p> <p>The risk in placing restrictions on humiliating styles of expression is the creation of a hypocritical society with an outward appearance of respectability whose members think derogatory thoughts that they refrain from expressing openly. The fear is that people in such a society are bound to express their nastiness indirectly. This might be worse than expressing it openly because it would be shrouded in respectability. If people are thinking humiliating thoughts about others it is better to let them vent these thoughts out in the open where they can be tackled. But even if we disregard the question of which is better—a society with a decent but hypocritical culture or one with a humiliating but nonhypocritical culture—we remain with the general question of whether it is right to impose constraints on means of expression in order to prevent humiliation.</p> <p>I believe that the distinction here between a decent society and a civilized society is a distinction that makes a difference. (I consider this distinction identical with another important one, that between the absence of institutional discrimination—the decent society—and the absence of individual discrimination—the civilized society.) While it is important to be extremely wary of trying to constrain the way individuals express themselves, and the possibly humiliating or insulting way they use collective representations, it is not necessary to be so wary of restricting institutional expressions. In this category I include announcements by individuals speaking in the</p>	<p>name of an institution. Such speakers include not only the institution's official spokespersons but all those with a role in the institution who can reasonably be taken as speaking in virtue of their role.</p> <p>There may also be borderline cases where it is not clear whether speakers should be considered to be speaking in their own name or in the name of the institution. An interesting example of this sort, which arises out of the trend toward political correctness, is the status of remarks by university professors on campus. Should these be considered institutional expressions or individual expressions? On the one hand, the professors are speaking as teachers in an institutional setting, and should therefore be confined by the restrictions on institutions; on the other, this particular institutional setting is supposed to provide them with extended freedom of expression—namely, academic freedom. In any case, academic freedom is understood to mean that professors should enjoy at least the rights of expression of any individuals in the society. Thus, even though they hold institutional positions as teachers in an academic institution, they should be considered as individuals rather than as people speaking in the name of the institution.</p> <p>Let us return to the distinction between the function of humiliating collective representations as used by individuals and as used by public institutions. As a rule, institutional humiliation, being rejection from an encompassing group by a social institution, is more harmful than humiliation by an individual in the society. Restricting the expression of individuals, however, is more damaging than restricting institutional expression. It is not difficult to see why this should be so. First of all, the element of threat</p>	<p>name of an institution. Such speakers include not only the institution's official spokespersons but all those with a role in the institution who can reasonably be taken as speaking in virtue of their role.</p> <p>There may also be borderline cases where it is not clear whether speakers should be considered to be speaking in their own name or in the name of the institution. An interesting example of this sort, which arises out of the trend toward political correctness, is the status of remarks by university professors on campus. Should these be considered institutional expressions or individual expressions? On the one hand, the professors are speaking as teachers in an institutional setting, and should therefore be confined by the restrictions on institutions; on the other, this particular institutional setting is supposed to provide them with extended freedom of expression—namely, academic freedom. In any case, academic freedom is understood to mean that professors should enjoy at least the rights of expression of any individuals in the society. Thus, even though they hold institutional positions as teachers in an academic institution, they should be considered as individuals rather than as people speaking in the name of the institution.</p> <p>Let us return to the distinction between the function of humiliating collective representations as used by individuals and as used by public institutions. As a rule, institutional humiliation, being rejection from an encompassing group by a social institution, is more harmful than humiliation by an individual in the society. Restricting the expression of individuals, however, is more damaging than restricting institutional expression. It is not difficult to see why this should be so. First of all, the element of threat</p>	<p>Culture</p>



## Finding Mememo



*Paranoia* (2016, dedicated on the back "Hi! Hy, try to stay high.") photo by Dorinda Grader



"Best goddamn *uni* [sea urchin] I ever put in my mouth is found at Bento Friday." (Hy Grader, photo by Ichi )

So read on, please, understanding that my rendition here is, indeed, my construction. I tried to keep to Hy's dictum, "What's the rumpus? Just trust the reader. Write a book in which past and present, memory and reality, fact and fiction are juxtaposed." But I can only asymptotically approach illuminating the strange match played out in "Meme's" life between body and mind, where the former has seemed to drag the latter along to its demise.<sup>8</sup> He was at once completely matter-of-fact and yet utterly mystifying. Maybe because he'd a strain of papa-inherited paranoia in him.

Once he told me, "To be with the one I love and think of something else: this is how I get my best ideas." I hope Dory never heard that from him. He had a negative instinct for noticing unpleasant things; he seemed to dislike life for not being art. The present inspired sarcastic distaste, especially the current state of academia. At times I even wondered if Hy wasn't trying to time-travel, to go to tempt time by carrying out the "grandfather paradox": going into his past to kill his grandfather in order to prevent his dad's and his own later existence.

Besides trying to find its author — a mischievous, roguish child-man — this text seeks a sympathetic reader with a love of the sea, its calm and its terrors, since Hy saw the sea as the source of language and language

as the source of itself; he would substitute for *et cetera*, a reference to sea mammals: *et cetacea*; he admired Edgar Allan Poe's sea stories; and often cited H.G. Wells observation: "The wretched-looking hand-tentacle sticking out of its

---

8. This body-mind thing is exemplified by the fact that Hy (in a high-mileage, but still serviceable body) called his teeth "ideas" — "One belonged to Kant"— seeing his crooked, stained chompers as a sign of his warped take on things; in contradistinction, his wife's perfect pearly teeth "bared her soul", were proof of both her more conservative tastes and her superiority, and Hy was jealous of that. But, as far as I could tell, he'd never told her this. Maybe he should have.

## Finding Mememo

jar seemed to have a sort of limp appeal for lost possibilities" (*The First Men in the Moon*). Moreover, Ichi can vouch for Meme's love of sushi (see page 157), particularly *uni* (sea urchin, see previous page), whose taste Meme said mimed the taste of primeval ocean, the iridescent dizziness of a large Pacific wave breaking over one's body as wishes for Hawaiian words fill one's mute mouth.

Food? Reminds me of my last lunch with Hy at the Artist's Café (which features "curated salads"). As Hy attempted to control his feelings by peeling and dividing an orange on a plate, eating it with meticulous scrupulousness, it was obvious the new academic year was about to begin. Outside, it was all hail and thunder. Hy said: "Jym, it seems as though all rains were one, a category all its own, quite separate from time."

Hy, the don, had donned his black T-shirt, bought at the *Among the Madness of the Molecules* conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which read: Thinking Big Requires Feeling Small. He'd been inspired by a presentation, "Fantastic Speculation on the Basis of Rigorous Impersonal Knowledges", given by a pair of geeky collaborators publishing under the *nom de plume*, Scylla & Charybdis. While there, he bought Robert Berkhofer's politically charged *The White Man's Indian*. We were comparing our notebook entries for the past week. Hy waxed eloquent about his scribble book: "It's like a ship's logbook, captures the peculiar quality of stasis in motion, recording each day in a sequence of digits, dates, degrees, bearings, depths, which for me evokes a particular relationship to time — sailor's time — where, instead of the present, the past and the future become extraordinarily rich in narrative potential — which I try to mine. You know, Conrad's *Lord Jim* is written in sailor's time." Then he went off on Chad. "He has the zeal of a man who doesn't just have the idea but can *inflict* the idea. He boasts (showing bad dental work) of reading narrowly, schmoozing widely and has the nerve to say my mash-ups are: 'Like a child who takes his toys to pieces so as to cobble together new toys from them.'

"When I asked for funds to attend the Conference of Minor Writers, Chad went 2001, *A Space Odyssey* on me: 'I'm sorry Dave — er — Hy. 'Fraid I can't do that,' and went on to disparage my latest essay in *Critical@Tee*, where I'd tied object-oriented ontology (OOO) to the weird feminist essentialism of Luce Irigaray by way of Plato, Jacques Lacan, and Looney Tunes: 'Theory? Ha! That word brings out the Grrring in me; when I hear it, I reach for my revolver'."

Hy finished his whining over the humiliation bath his chairman gave him, licked his fingers after downing Pierre's Tuna Volcano (croissant stuffed with white tuna salad, mushrooms, and cheddar, which he'd dubbed "The Krakatoan Chimera"), when in strutted Armbuster, assigning his scarf the task of floating in the air in a haughty mood exempting him from a friendly hello. As he passed Hy he whispered, "What you have on your plate is not on the menu." Hy's torso

## Finding Mememo

straightened to uneasy attention, neck stiffening. Hy said, “Ya don’t need to die to know what it’s like to be a ghost.” It was an unpleasant surprise for us sitting among bread crumbs and stained napkins. “There’s the enemy!” Hy continued. “Call the waiter! Pay the bill! Must pull ourselves out of this booth. Must grab our raincoats. *Must, must, must, must, must, must, must, must, must, must, must, must, . . .*” — we thought he was having a mild stroke — “I, I always associate that mmmusty word with Chief Busts-Your-Chops there.” When we didn’t move, remaining silent, Hy, suddenly, all ass ‘n elbows, dashed for the men’s room. We waited and waited, but ended up leaving without him. We passed Chad who looked up at us and sneeringly said: “Don’t forget to LIKE us on Facebook!”

After Hy’s disfiguring demise — going through his Moleskine notebooks with Dallas at my side, those “ship’s logbooks” as Hy called them — I found an entry concerning that awkward encounter between matter (i.e., Chad, he thinks only *he* matters) and anti-matter (i.e., Hy thinks he doesn’t matter):

$(U \rightarrow U, 0, \clubsuit)$

The Ship of State-of-my-Mind: Rage filled my sloshing spleen. I needed to drain my bilge — my yellow dolce mare! Chad’s visage had reminded me he told us part-timers we were all “bio-degradable,” that Deepfake of the Devil! His unwanted entrance took my digestive narrative into a digressive urgency. I rushed to the restroom, passing a young, disheveled girl at the bar, slumped drunk in a tall bar chair, eyes closed, one arm straight down, with a broken martini glass on the floor beneath like a period under an exclamation; a scene right out of one of Dallas’ mysteries, a slattern named “Maudlin Cortex”.

Hands shaking, I fumbled at the buttons at my fly. At the Duchampian urinal, my kidneys wept and wept a sea of pee. I was awash with pissy expletives, like Chad, pulling me aside, laid on me once threatening to send me to The-Lair-of-The-Talking-Claw: ‘Mind yer P’s ‘n Q’s Grader!’ — just what my dad incessantly yelled at me over the years. I received my M.P.Q. degree way before my M.F.A.

Scan from one of Hy “Mememo” Grader’s Moleskine notebooks (green cover discolored here and there by island-shaped splotches of what looks like rain drops).

# Finding Mememo

Hy's bathroom reference is not an anomaly in his notebooks, wherein a peculiar focus on himself is a critical aspect: "My own story, as if scribbled by someone else suffering *Uppgivenhetssyndrom*. Experience has taught me the impossibility in *this* reality of attaining what's deep within me." Urination and defecation are regularly recounted, as if textual regularity would by sympathetic magic keep him regular. I think Hy's liking of French surrealist Michel Leiris' masterwork *Manhood* might be behind this. Hy writes about his own "sad gifts," listing them as "thin-skinned, farsighted, and loose-tongued" which made him "feel too sharply, see too clearly, speak too freely, to sense what's coming before others sense it, to know that the barbarian future is tearing down the gates of the present while others cling to a nostalgic past [*e.g., Make America Great Again*]." Hy gleamed across our lunch-time conviviality, a brilliant meteor, lost in an inner darkness. Wherever he is, I bet he's roaming in some dimension orthogonal to ours.

Called Dorinda (she answered "And?"). Told her I'd completed my redaction of Hy's text, adding a gloss: "Every decoding is another encoding. Not easy, as I had to get into a Self made of everything, an *ad hominem* Self, changing and always bearing within itself a new persona, a Meme-mind populated by gantry cranes that could move cellular walls, platforms, floors, stairs, and ceiling modules to create mind-spaces for theaters, cinemas playing *film noir*, restaurants, workshops, all resulting in a rumpus room of writing creating a permeable membrane between art, theory, and fiction. Not for the average reader. But I was tenacious. As Dal put it, I'd ridden a tiger I couldn't dismount, pushing ahead, page by page, clue by clue, with no guarantee of success."

I was unsuccessful in deciphering the odd equation rubber-stamped on the upper left corner of every page of Hy's Moleskine notebook (see prior page). I sicced Dallas on it who, in cybernetic terms, termed it: "One fuckin' ambiguous machine." The only clue, knowing Hy's love of cards played with Clubs as trump.<sup>9</sup>

I elucidated Hy's project with: 1) tidbits from Dal's research ("One grain of luck is worth more than a whole rice field of wisdom"); 2) comments by Dorinda ("It's always darkest under the lamp"; 3) confidences by Ichi ("Muddy water, unwisely stirred, grows darker still"); 4) Hy's screwy version of a Marianne Moore poem on fragments ("Efforts of infracting are too tough for integration"); and 5) my own experiences of him ("Guessing is poor business that often leads to lengthy saunters down the positively wrong path"). I can say "his" novel (complete with our lengthy Epilogue) expresses ancient themes in world literature via a tentacular mode of narration: a dread of mortality, the consequences

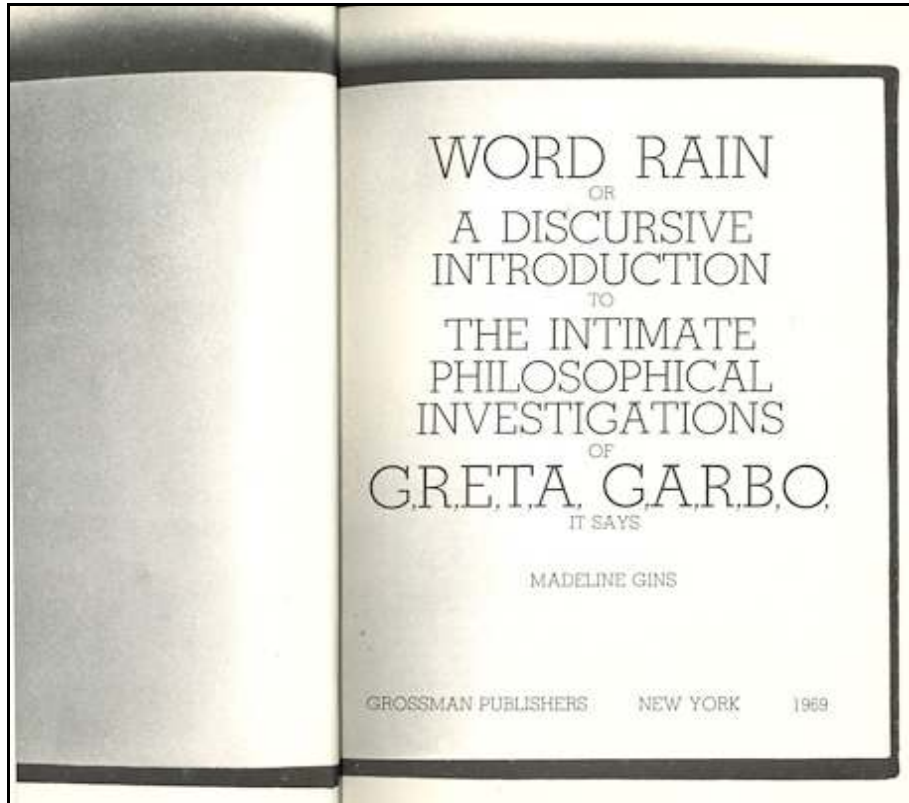
---

9. As this manuscript was going to press, Dorinda speculated the Clubs figure signified trump in a card hand *and* referred to Donald Trump; ergo, that strange equation might signify Hy wanting to personally club the Comb-over King about the head and shoulders.



## Finding Mememo

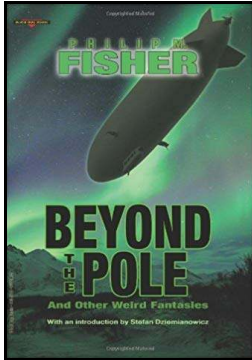
of obsession, hubris, and a final retribution all filtered through the trope of the mythic Quest, albeit tinged with sci-fi and mystery themes.



First edition of the poet, painter and architect's first book, *WORD RAIN, OR, A DISCURSIVE INTRODUCTION TO THE INTIMATE PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF G, R, E, T, A, G, A, R, B, O, IT SAYS* (1969) a novel featuring unconventional typography and design by Samuel N. Antupit. Signed with the artist's initials on the front free endsheet. Gins, with her husband and partner, the artist Shusaku Arakawa, were the founders and chief theoreticians of the Reversible Destiny Foundation, the principles of which served as the underpinnings of their projects and buildings. Collection of Hy "Mememo" Grader.

Meme's text has been influenced by: 1) the experimental novel of Madeline Gins that melded poetry, prose, and philosophy *WORD RAIN, OR, A DISCURSIVE INTRODUCTION TO THE INTIMATE PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF G, R, E, T, A, G, A, R, B, O, IT SAYS* (1969); 2) the "Maximalist Novel"; 3) the achronological belief in "plagiarism by anticipation," (note Hy's Plagiarism Stamp); 4) the notion that past authors have literally plagiarized from those as yet unborn; 5) John Ruskin; 6) filmmaker Chris Marker; 7) the belief that Chad has "pwnd" him (taking unauthorised control by exploiting a vulnerability); 8) a propensity to explore a literal losing of self in space as figured in Paul Klee's 1921 watercolor *Room Perspective with Inhabitants* (a poster of which hung in

## Finding Mememo



Philip M. Fisher anthology featuring the dimension-travel story "Worlds Within Words" which influenced Dallas Johnson's story "Mr. Jello's Green Envy" (see page lix below).

his studio), where subject and object are not reconciled as equal terms, but dissolved as distinct entities, such as one might envision happening at the start of a death-defying dimension-jump as dangled before him by that audacious dude in black Nikes, Wishwer Watt and his musically-gifted girlfriend, Sado Muga — who referred to the sound of an oboe as, "a good-natured fellow, highly intelligent, but awkward, like the nerdy academic fellow Wish introduced me to" — who hooked Hy because she was related to Lilith Lorraine, mid-twentieth-century socialist sci-fi writer and editor of an important "little magazine", *Different*,<sup>10</sup> and, finally, 9) a quirky quote from Renata Adler's book of associative bursts, *Speedboat*: "I think when you are truly stuck, when you have stood still in the same spot for too long, you throw a grenade in exactly the spot you were standing in, and jump, and pray. It is the momentum of last resort." In his various books, Hy reanimates the dead objects of the Hollywood dream factory via the factory of the unconscious, where the past unrolls alongside the present as closely coupled as an actor to his role. He might have survived to finish this book had he taken Dorinda's advice and realized he was only another performer in humanity's circus.

\*                      \*



Dear Reader: Heed this advice: "Thank you so much" (as detective Charlie Chan would say) to please proceed slowly, *row* leisurely through the text, don't take a motorboat. Hy's story advances, i.e., sails, on Philip K. Dick's time-traveling "Prize Ship", on the mystery vessel *S. S. Van Dine*, as well as on the ill-fated Japanese cargo ship the *Bingo Maru*.<sup>11</sup> In between, he tries to escape the wrath of the admin's "PC Thought Police" (once a Polish student in his *Structuralism Then* course took offense, complained to the Dean Hy referred to "Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles") and dodge the Dean's (Chad enforced) Night-of-the-Long-Knives contingent faculty cuts. So please do expect

---

10. Hy, Dallas, Wish, and Sado were all fans of Philip M. Fisher's 1922 dimension-travel story "Worlds Within Worlds", where worlds of differing atomic vibrations co-exist in the same space but not the same time.

11. S. S. Van Dine (Willard Huntington Wright) wrote "Golden Era" mystery stories featuring his highly intellectual and aesthete detective Philo Vance. Like Vance, both Hy and Dallas know that people are an arrangement of narratives, counter-narratives, lies, cover-ups, absences, tricks, questions and answers.

The *Bingo Maru* was sunk by Gojira (Godzilla) in the Japanese movie of the same name. These mysteries from the 1920s to 1940 may be compared to crossword puzzles (or so Charmian, a colleague of Hy's, told me) in that readers are given cryptic clues they can use to solve the mystery before the vaunted detective does.

## Finding Mememo



Scene of Hy "Mememo" Grader's fall or jump



Jump scene from  
*O Lucky Man* (1973)

From Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump Shots" collection (the hero, played by Malcolm McDowell, survives a jump from a high plate glass window, unlike the unfortunate Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*).

*We are stories [like the film *O Lucky Man*], contained within the twenty complicated centimeters behind our eyes, lines drawn by traces left by the (re)-mingling together of things in the world, and oriented toward predicting events in the future, toward the direction of increasing entropy, in a rather particular corner of this immense universe.*

— *The Order of Time*, Carlo Rovelli

## Finding Mememo



Hy "Mememo" Grader's T-shirt



Dallas burns an oft-rejected short story of his, "Mr. Jello's Green Envy", which is a mystery that riffs on Philip M. Fisher's 1922 dimension-travel story "Worlds Within Worlds" (photo by Dallas).

U-turns, ups-and-downs, textual eddies, becalmed narrative, heavy weather of passages, lost bearings, a monster, sunken treasure, a tyrannical captain, a shaman, and a fall from, buildings, a waterfall, and grace. Again, in his writing — and his life, a struggle between conformity and self-invention — Hy found refuge and consolation in memory, reading, and fantasy.

Beware, this is *not* a textured novel, the literary equivalent of rubbing a tightly-woven wool tweed between one's fingers. Hy values the contingent, the immediately available, things at hand. I could've put on the title page of Hy's text the appropriately punful: WARNING! THIS BOOK IS HY IN ENTROPY AND DIGRESSIONS. And Hy'd wished himself high in entropy as well. Dorinda found page 189 torn from Zadie Smith's novel *NW* under the bed when cleaning. A sentence was underlined and words struck-out in red ink: . . . he felt like a man undergoing some ~~not-yet-invented~~ process called particle transfer, wonderfully, blissfully light. Dallas declared it a major clue once put into comparison with quotation from D. H. Lawrence scribbled in one of Hy's notebooks: *A man must find a new expression, give a new value to life, or his women will reject him and he will die*. Hy believed in Dallas' "Gangster Theory" of Reader Response: "Blindin' red jagers! When you interrupt your readin' — 'n do so many times — what you think durin'

those intervals will be the best part of the book; often ya find in readin' that the worm was in the apple from the beginnin'. Ya grok?" I agree with that. In "Meme's" writing, there is a deep, narrow well of unuttered meaning in that small white space between the full stop at the end of one sentence and the upper-case letter that begins the next.

This book is not, in popular parlance, a "page-turner", despite Hy's wanting to write a pulp novel ("I coulda beena contenda, Dory. A mystery is time-for-a-crime, the reverse of aging, the-crime-of-time"). I have retained Hy's quirk of putting the period outside a quote mark if it isn't a direct quote. His notebook reveals he wanted to do this "as an annoyance factor to the *pencil-necked-pokers*." There is often so much information on the page that you may not be able to hear the characters breathe. You may say, like sailors do, "How did I wind up here? The wind blew me." It's like holding little hot coals, as Dallas put it: "Mark this, it's one helluva match for the average reader. It isn't available on Kindle, but despite this lack of kindlin', it's a fookin' page-burner that'll really light ya up! Are ya ready? Are ya game? [*Aye, aye, Captain!*] Sometimes you can see a lot just by lookin'! So pick it up, dude, at 5.5 pounds, 2 inches thick, it'll build muscle better than Popeye's spinach. I'm off to O'Kelly's, the only Irish pub on Communist soil [*i.e., to Guantánamo Bay*], to meet a waferlike incubated snit about a new case." — Ah, Dallas!

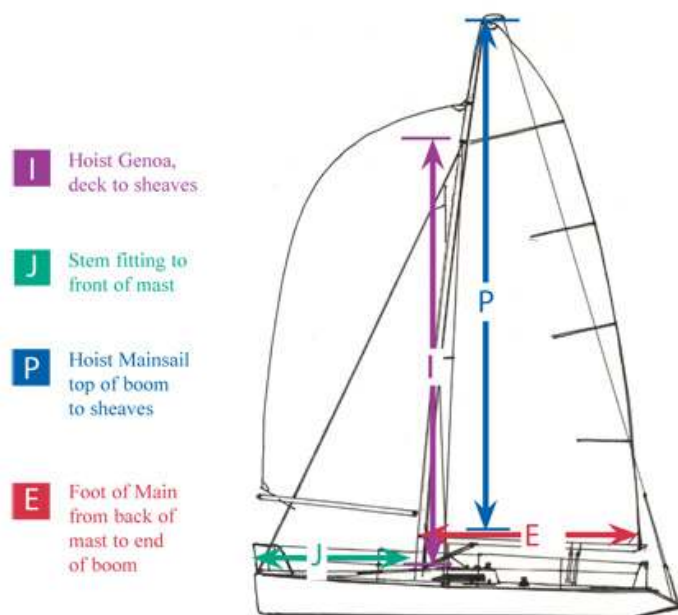
\* \* \*





**First Image in Hy Grader's  
"Jump Shots" collection**

Hy Grader was always precariously balanced in social gatherings, especially faculty meetings (imbued with what he strangely called "green twilight") as he couldn't "grok" the public secret of *knowing what not to know*, that very important basis of social skills. Thinking for him meant: *To set sail*. And words were his sails; it was the *way* those sails were set that interested him most. On the verso, Hy had scribbled: "A story that begins with a shipwreck and ends with a rattlesnake in the dark doesn't leave much room of hope."







# Finding Mememo

fragments sketched by Hy "Meme" Grader  
and reconstructed by James "Jym" Hugunin

1



*He's no gumshoe, as in the American pulps, but he believes he'll know if he is being followed. For now he feels all right. Besides, he suspects the next attempt on his life will come in the dead of night . . .*

I find myself in a random spacetime intermediary point of a phase of the universe, alive in a room with my lost muscular license of youth, on my way to becoming an *intransitive* verb — prefigured by my avatar in the video game *Passage* being suddenly replaced by the iconic tombstone — recovering from a microquake of a sour minute in a difficult afternoon. Had I been on a slow planet where the year was much slower, I'd be younger. I put down my red-underlined copy of Gordon McAlpine's *Holmes Entangled*, put in Bill Evans' CD *Conversations with Myself* — myself, blood and breath, an inner island I spend time reconnoitering and fortifying. Blood and breath give — when one or both begin to go south — this old bone-clock a taste of death, a THINK. I think what? Therefore, I am, what? A man who starts from zero? Factor in I believe the cosmic Control Room's run by robotic rabbits moving to canned laughter, using code that is ideology, creating our readymade reality. I feel equally algorithmic, ephemeral, and narcissistic. We need a Universal Center for the Salvage of Imagination in Imminent Danger of Destruction (UCSIIDD), unless you want to be buried alive in a Neo-con escape coffin. Do you just want an unending series of peak experiences — punch and glitz, sensation, and impact — so as to escape the consequences of living in time, of being over-controlled? Or do you join UNICEF, fight famine? Join the Communist Party, fight Capitalism? Yet, as one wit put it, "If you're part of the solution, you're part of the problem." So do you sign up for eschatological disappointment counseling, or just keep *cool*, blank, impassive? Or what? Just *wish* gone?



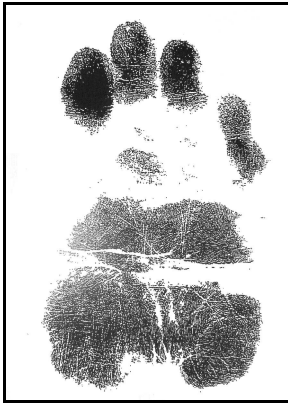
Hy's parents (1965) a family snapshot, tool of repressive normalcy and cultural myth

Disappointment, nerve squalls, started early for me. As a child I could never be contented in a place unless I knew the names of the places surrounding that place. *Nocturnal enuresis* [ed., *bed-wetting*] up to age five labeled me odd. By my early twenties, I knew life was no featherbed for the repose of sluggards. How the world was managed and why it was created my teen-self could not tell. In high school, I decided to combine passion and scholarship — *aut vincere aut mori* became my motto — hoping they'd enhance each other's effects. "Win or Die", that motto was inscribed on the front of my school notebook. But classmates had the feeling I was *too much* for them — a creature from another planet or the



# Finding Mememo

"debths" of the seas, my tentacles out for observations, ready to respond — so I learned to scale myself down to their size to be approachable. Looking back, I think this desire to both learn and to discount it was my reaction to my father's dour Church dogma. I later understood it was a steadying balance for his careening moods, a quest for a world without too many differences, a world that was no laughing matter (there aren't any frescoes or paintings of a laughing Christ). I learned in a college class that "a totalitarian state is a state of canned laughter" — life as a perpetual TV sit-com — which we are now asymptotically approaching.



Hy's hand print (1952)

Me? "Mememo". Or simply "Meme". The truth that interested me mo' was (still is) problematical, partial, modest, still breathing. My sense of aesthetics? The eye sees and absorbs; the mind sees and absorbs; the heart sees and knows a quickening. I, thanks to hours of thought in photo-booths, wanted (still do) to rhyme ecstasy and laughter with justice. Can a man hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn? Seen from my senior-citizen point of view, the difference between my father and me was that between a diagnostic manual and a novel. To survive with him, I developed a glib tongue schooled in dissembling and revenge: *Oh, someone besides me will rue this particular day.*

In my college schooling, I psychologically sat apart, applying my will to something else, the lecture subject suggesting tangentially connected thoughts and blurry snapshot memories, so I was often in the subject and out of it, weaving new associations of data, creating my own memes. Ideas sizzling in my brainpan occurred more frequently when the professor talked out of habit, like

a ship continuing to glide through the water after the engines had been switched off. I continued this exercise outside the classroom by doing ancillary readings that wove in and out of the assigned reading topics. Art history mixed up with literature; philosophy mixed with linguistics; mystery novels with sci-fi. Lecture material and self-exploration, high culture and pop, all walked hand-in-hand through the ivy halls.



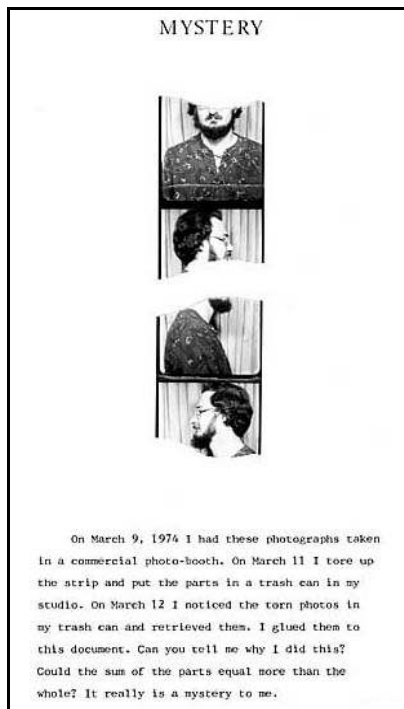
Hy's (effaced) cousin's birthday party, Hy in the background (1953)

If, in my youth, I had a problem, it was a "problem of the will": a recurring temptation to apply my will to those portions of life that not only will not comply, but that will become distorted under such coercion. For

## Finding Mememo

instance, I could will knowledge, but not wisdom; going to bed, but not sleeping. It took me decades to achieve a good dollop of wisdom; I still have trouble sleeping, often seeing at the foot of my bed a bright, glowing, cherry-red circle in the darkness. Many a night tiredness lays like a membrane over my eyes, but my mind still cranks on, retrieving conjectures about my past, promises of the future.

Writing about what goes through my mind on restless nights might help. But if I now write with a backward glance at my life (assisted by our family photo album), it will be a book by a perfectionist, in praise of mistakes — liking praising the productive mistakes in ghostly traces called family snapshots. A tactile, concrete materiality (often supplemented in “baby books” with other indexical traces like snipped hair and handprints) with no faking, no theory, only simplicity and directness capturing moments of life. A frozen memory of delighted in days. A good *version* of the past with its grain of poignancy and promise. No one ever takes a photo of something they want to forget. Like in Ridley Scott’s 1982 sci-fi film *Blade Runner*, snapshots are key to our sense of personal history — real or imagined. Snaps hold significant existential weight. They can be a way of “resolving Death,” says Roland Barthes, musing over a snapshot of his recently deceased mother as a child, the now-famous “Winter Garden Photograph” *not* pictured in his seminal text *Camera Lucida*.



Jym's conceptual artwork (1974)

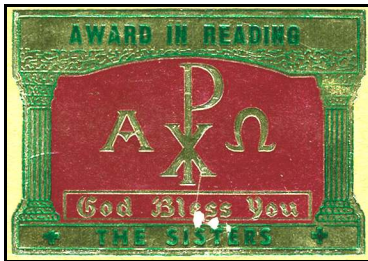
As photo-historian Catherine Zuromskis elaborates in her insightful book *Snapshot Photography: The Lives of Images*, “It is only through the vacillation between the presence of what is and was there, and the absence of what is vanished or unattainable, that the snapshot truly engages its viewer’s subjective, emotional response.” But those snaps are unconscious products of a set of preformed conventions. Snapshots, no matter how “personal”, are actually “re-enactments” of the visual rhetoric of mass culture.

A fact that inspired not only such artists as Andy Warhol, but also an academic (to protect the innocent, I will only identify him as “Jym”) I met a number of years ago. He’s a bit into himself, brags like his every word’s wearing sunglasses. But, over time, he’s endeared himself to me. I think I will let him use my most intimate moniker, “Meme”.

# Finding Mememo

In Jym's artwork, he often takes to brushing the snapshot genre against the grain. Collects snaps as a vernacular art form. Screws around with some of them. Plays with photo-booth images, and so forth. When I showed him a family snap of my younger cousin, his chubby baby face laughingly washed out from the proximity of the flash, he jumped up and down in his seat exclaiming: "That's it! The image's *punctum* [*pointing to my cuz's erased features*]. The *studium* is, as Barthes defines it, the birthday celebration."<sup>1</sup>

Since Jym knew my interest in snaps, he recently gifted me with an old artwork of his, a riff on photo-booth flicks. The title, *Mystery*, is telling, for this friend of mine shares with me passion for PBS's TV series "Mystery" and for anything Sherlockian. As he already has every Doyle-authored Holmes mystery as well as many re-enactments of same by literary *pasticheurs*, I plan on returning the favor with a book on photography and chance inscribed for his next birthday. If I live that long; I'm aging at the rate of a short-lived TV sitcom.



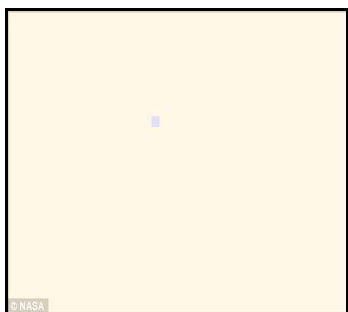
We're both obsessive readers, and not just of mysteries, academics. Perusing my baby book, in prep for writing this book, I was delighted to find my mother had pasted in a Reading Award I'd gotten from the Sisters of Perpetual Luck who taught me in Catholic school (and *no* they didn't abuse me with rulers, just rules).

In 2011 Jym underwent treatment for salivary gland cancer — "It unifies your affinities," he said. So thin he was, his collar bone stood out like a coat hanger, and minus one gland. "Not good for a foodie, not bootylicious," as Dal put it." But it wasn't all negative. Jym told me the period he played chess with Death propelled him to assess what is "real". "If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn," he told me citing a line by Charlie Parker. In the past, I would've been notably unimpressed by such rhetorical heroism. One can confront danger and still succumb to sentimentalities about bravery and the ability to face death and so on — it is so used by agencies who want to make war heroic. But not only that. Who wants to return to a world so corrupt only to be celebrated by despicable people — maybe a Despicable Me? Who wants to be a hero in a world of assholes? My temper on this existential issue has since mellowed. I now grant that it is possible for a few seconds to have a state of clearheadedness, where another

---

1. Besides our quest for genuine communication inside bull-shit free zones, both Hy and I are much taken with the theories of Roland Barthes. According to Barthes, as espoused in *Camera Lucida*, the *punctum* of a photograph is the unconventional in the image, which evades codification, is often irrational, accidental; something that merits a subjective call; this is contrasted with what Barthes calls the *studium*, which is codified, conventional, and relates to culture.

## Finding Mememo



NASA's Cosmic Latte color swatch



J. C.'s Yamaha Roadliner S

world seems to briefly step forward and show itself, a utopic vision, before reverting to its old self. Or to have a vision of the average color of the universe, as chosen by God and later named by witty NASA scientists as “Cosmic Latte.”

Jym's mind flies into a world he views as an inchoate value inviting explanation. He has a sense for the humorous and the absurd, says it's the only way to keep the demons of James Ensor off his back — told me once, “the family is always an event of violence.” He once proposed a performance piece: *Let loose a gaggle of Howler monkeys inside the Bilboa Guggenheim Museum*. Likes to tell about ex-students like J. C. (no relation to *the* J. C.), who recently had a baby boy, settled his family in Seattle, and now creates Motion Graphics. The only way J. C. could lull his kid to sleep (his neighborhood throbbed with amplified crap from multitasking

night owls) was by strapping the kid on his back and riding his Yamaha Roadliner S in a more suburban spot of Seattle at roughly the speed of a shopping cart. Jym's surfed the guy's Facebook page and family snaps prove it. He's getting a sore trigger finger taking snaps and can't wait until the kid is old enough to take his own selfies.

During the day (when people emerge hawking stuff, “Whatever you want, it's free for five dollars”) the kid is transfixed by the Home Shopping Channel, maybe because it doesn't have commercials. J. C.'s wife likes it since emerald solitaires sell for the same price as a jar of cashews from a plush hotel's minibar — or so the story goes.

One thing I can personally confirm: that kid's good at inventing words, new sounds for new purposes (in his infant world, that is). I know because J. C. passes them on to Jym, who passes them on to me during our chess matches, who passes them on to my Authorial Self, who then sometimes slips them into shard-filled texts, texts which have been panned by one critic as “less readable than that Raymond Roussel fan Michel Leiris.” Adding: “A grotesque textual chimera, a griffin-like entity similar to P. T. Barnum's ‘Fiji Mermaid’: the taxi-dermied torso of one unfortunate victim grafted onto the legs of another, with the talons of an emu drafted to serve as arms, and the ears of a fox sewn to the head of a long-expired chimpanzee.” Of course, that is precisely my intention, but *I* call it a *platypus*. Showed the review to Jym at one of our many munch-a-lunches at The Artist's Café [*ed. now defunct*].



## Finding Mememo

In between studied bites from his grilled cheese, Jym scanned it and smiled and said the review was “Brilliant. A false encomium — he likes you! He’s a *Rousellâtre!*” This was delivered with a food-in-mouth muffle and a sly wink.

Ah, Jym, the only thing *not* to cheer in him? Hocks a loogie (i.e., spits a fat throat oyster) on Mich Ave each time he emerged from our lunches. “I also have sinus trouble, dude, but jeez, swallow or restrain,” I would plead.

“That’s your Cat-Lick upbringing, *why* you got stomach and sinus shit,” Jym replied, a book in hand, *La Vida es una pesodilla*, — its title a pun on *pesadilla* (nightmare) and *peso* (money) — a fake C note bookmark sticking out.

Ichi may have a phlegmatic disposition — or at least *seems to* during meditation, taking in O, giving back CO<sub>2</sub> — but he doesn’t have trouble with phlegm as I do, which gives my voice the tone of Lou Rawls at the bottom of a well. We two embody the salience of friendship, *à la* Montaigne: “Because it was he, because it was I.” We are sim and diff, like flammable and inflammable. We get tightened anew in the center of words. He challenges me, I challenge him. We attempt to arise to the occasion, in the process becoming better *confrères*.

But mention “the government-capitalism-techno mix” where “checks and balances are usurped by cheques and balances,” and his eyes rage like a tsunami: “They know what we like, and they know where we live! We leave tracks of what we have seen, done; they constitute our signatures, our profiles. Evidence of our personalities flood the data banks. Magazine subscription agencies, political parties, charities, universities, car dealerships, online travel sales, and car rentals call us by name more frequently than do the people we see face to face. There’s no society. When was the last time *you* called me Ichi ? It’s always ‘dude’ this and ‘dude’ that.” Maybe he, my beloved shadow, is right. All I ask is that the powers and forces that be don’t rain on *my* parade.

Ichi often overuses clichés, frequently misquoted, belying his goal to mask his foreign origins: *Back to a square one. An arm and a leggo. Beating on Bush. Close but no Makizushi* (a type of rolled sushi). *Well . . . does a rice crop have a school-mistress? Why do men dream trouting there?* As a fisherman, that is my fav. But it isn’t all gaffs, it’s *ky gen*, comedic relief, as seen in Noh plays.

Rain on a parade? Its drops’ dot-dashes sent S.O.S nearly every parade and concert here lately. Rain so thick it seemed like flying through a waterfall, drops popping on sidewalks like firecrackers. June 2015 in Chicago was the rainiest June on record. I looked at statistics. By the end of 2013, several new climate-related records had been set: twelve of the warmest years ever recorded had occurred between 1988 - 2013; arctic ice was at its smallest measured size; and no one under the age of twenty-eight had experienced a month of below-average global temperature. The jet-stream is snaking erratically north and south, a snake with its tortured head under some giant’s foot.

## Finding Mememo

So no surprise, thunder outside. Raindrops, as a kid I called them “rain-drips”, but they often aren’t mere drips anymore, but globs, like what’s outside splashing on hot pavement. I am inside in a basement studio, room 106, in the Evelyn Apartments, writing. It’s noon. Time to grab lunch at my local coffee destination, The Buzz Café. It’s not the Bini-Bon or the Mudd Club, Lower Eastside eateries in NYC, but it’s nice like a Berkeley coffee shop in the 1960s. When the thunder ceases, I wrap a blue-and-green paisley bandana on my *cabeza* and exit the Evelyn’s decorative entrance. Steam rises from the wet, black pavement. The deluge has reduced to a drizzle, but I carry a *rétro* blue Pan Am umbrella [*ed.*, *sells for \$150 on eBay*] in case the sky does a flashback.

The hot summer air is now deliciously cooled, making mist that falls on my face warmer than my face — the ignobility of things absent for a moment. I pop in a stick of licorice gum, chew, and lean back to see the tree leaves quiver at the light touch of drips ‘n drops. Beyond the trees, the sky is grayish-white, dense clouds that lay like a lid on top, a peek of sun starting to emerge with raw, clear light. I look down. A speck of dusty dirt on the ground has now become a smear of mud, has taken on greater weight and solidity.

For a sec I’m four, small hands held out to my sides holding pails of sand. Everything seems connected, comprehensible. A welcome exit from our post-modern condition where *everything* has become intellect. The world looks as immediate and fresh as a color snapshot by Nan Goldin, whose art is, claims critic Max Kozloff, “free of her opinions yet embedded in her experience.”

“Man-the-nebula must be made real . . . we live in a purely fabricated world riff with theoretical prattle,” Ichi often complains, his Japanese eyes elliptical strokes of a calligrapher. “There aren’t bodies anymore, but *ideas* of bodies.” As I stand here, I think *he might be right*. Despite our debates over this issue, Ichi and I, in our respective mediums, combat fiction with fiction, i.e., metafiction, trying to play the truth of what we are.

I saunter in this half-dream state, recalling when the night’s sky looked like sugar spilled over dark linoleum, and take my usual shortcut through a church parking lot toward The Buzz on the corner of Lombard and Harrison where its preordained I will amp up my caffeinated intelligence and order a tuna melt with a vinaigrette dressed side-salad. I am snapped from infantile moments into full puberty by a dazzle that wilts me in the space of a glance. She, a girl with curious hair and Barre Dance Studio compression leggings, exits The Buzz as I enter. A small, edgy brunette; a [*ed.*, *Browning-like*] Pippa. We brush shoulders, misfitting together, neither too close nor too far. Eyes don’t meet, each stuck on their own fixed focus, like old snapshot cameras. None of that sweet interaction exchanged between beholder and beheld, yet *something* passes between us, like a WiFi connecting. Then it’s gone. We are out of the hot spot. Her glimpsed face

## Finding Mememo

recalls a snapshot portrait Warhol included in his 1979 photobook *Exposures*, which promises her to be a lion of revelations. Notice her T-shirt's back reads in funky font:

**SMART IS SMART  
STUPID IS STUPID**

At the bottom, in smaller print, it proudly proclaims: Made in the USA. I have this "thing" for tautologies thanks to a college class in symbolic logic.

As volumes of roasted coffee smells envelope me, further awakening me to the mundane, a too-cool-to-care Millennial-Gen type sits slumped in a chair at what I claim as my table. Unneeded sunglasses on, unlit cigarette dangles from limp fingers, but ready to become a protean too, a magician's wand, a conductor's staff at any moment. Cig in left hand, his right arm relaxes on *my* table. He awaits his order with ear buds in, but looks like it'd be alright if his

cheeseburger took three days. But what really catches my eye besides the fact he's preempted my favorite table? He wears an advertising stick-on he took off the cover of our local news rag and transferred to his T-shirt boasting: "This person *believes* in music education, in music in our schools." (I can reprise that.) Probably teaches music at OPRF high school. His adagio demeanor likely hides fear of job cuts due to our Republican governor emasculating arts funding. When I pass close to him, the blaring lyrics are legible and familiar:



We are the one  
Me and all the brothers  
Play the drum, sing the song  
of freedom

The sound of One-Tribe Nation, if my memory serves me correctly. A hot group that internet ads hype as "an Afro-Latino Funk Rock band that proudly represents the hidden beauty and multi-dimensional spirit of Los Angeles today." I plop my bones down far enough away from this one-man tribe so as to avoid the decibel leakage and order a Tuna Melt paired with a sugar-free vanilla latte.

Outside the sky weeps again and I mull over the way I've weathered life's difficulties. *A good topic for a book*, I think. When my food arrives, the Gen-Why

## Finding Mememo

guy stands up, flexes his supple body, and my thoughts side-track to a topic Jym and I often discuss over lunch: our less than flexible bodies, aging. Jym seems more sanguine about it. Makes jokes. Like Woody Allen. Says that he had nothing against growing older "since nobody had found a better way of not dying young." There's a shit-load of wisdom packed into that. Jym points to the fact that when we were kids, getting older was seen as the medium through which our capacities — walking, talking, writing, and reasoning — would develop and which we toasted as the fast-track to independence. But now people of my Baby Boomer generation (we age in concert with our peer group) watch *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* and fantasize reversing time (Einstein claimed it's possible). Jym, asks, "Why can't folks now just *age zestfully*?" Not a bad motto. But life itself has long since begun to work its destruction, slowly overburdening the capacity of cells and their organelles to replicate. I suffer a torn rotator cuff (a "functional deficit" my doc calls it); makes typing a bitch. I think: *If pain is like music — flats and sharps, andante and furioso — be silent and still, please.*

Ichi — who advises "Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints" — looks at his watch (the very same one he's had since high school) more often these days: "It's always earlier than I think, but when I was young, it'd always been later. Why?" When I complained of my aging to Ichi's geriatrician wife, she gave me a pep talk: "Creativity is unrelated to age. Just *grow*," she advised. Paradoxically, his wife suffers Midlife Mirror Angst, hooked on Estée Lauder's Advanced Night Repair and a lotion called Time Delay. I've heard her say: "Beautiful people make their own laws." This, despite being a card-carrying member of the Gray Panthers, who was hired by a Madison hospital back when it was considered polite to tell someone: "You look your age."

Despite her paradoxes, she's a good source of info on aging. "Did you know that the Nambikwara Indians in Brazil have one word for 'young and beautiful,' and another for 'old and ugly'? We call that *gerontophobia*. *Verbatim memory* (data retrieval) may decline with age, but *gist memory* (assembling and grouping concepts) improves. Employers often fail to see this and axe employees, or refuse to hire, those they see as 'tainted by experience'. Awful!"

I confided that some of our school admin-types (nervous creatures) believed such. "They've failed to see that my ability to juggle textual fragments and make interesting rhizomes of data in my lectures has been enhanced. Okay, yah, yah, my ability to recall what I did *ten minutes ago* is diminishing. . . ."

She claimed nursing homes are trying be more PC, banning the term "colostomy rock" used by visiting grandkids to deprecate music by elder bands, like Mick Jagger's and Paul McCartney's. And recommended reading Muriel Spark's quirky novel *Memento Mori* and a Postmodern spoof of same, *Uno Momento, Morrie* by a Jewish author she can't recall. "Both feature an Inspector



## Finding Mememo

Mortimer whose favorite phrase is *And but so now*, and who tries to find out who is plaguing elderly characters with anonymous phone calls, saying the same solitary sentence: 'Remember, you must DIE!' Interesting, huh?"

Upon hearing this, a memory popped its vapor in me: a scene from a WWII flick with John Garfield playing a Marine in a machine gun nest on a South Pacific island repelling a Japanese *banzai* attack. "The Japs" are psyching out the Leather Necks with screams of "Mahreen yoo, die! Mahreen, yoo die!" Then a hand-grenade blast blinds Garfield and the story unfolds on U.S. shores.

To Ichi 's wife I suggested, in proper medical terminology, that those calls may have their authorial *aetiology* in that war movie. I tell her about a *casamentero*, a broker of sorts, a bud of mine, Dallas Johnson. "He's an immense mosaic of a guy with studiously maintained stubble, composed of discrete private investigatorial skills coupled with the imagination of a mystery writer who puts confusing flotsam and jetsam shipshape (except he *hasn't* figured out why little gray balls form in the middle of ice cubes). To him it's all 'Yeppers!' never 'No can do.' Too bad Muriel Spark didn't know Dal or grok his fictional PI, Blurt Wildbraine. Would've been good models for her Inspector Mortimer, me thinks."

\*                      \*

*Editor's gloss: Hy, Self-Taught Man, leads with his pawn and bishop, provoking reader response. During our first chess match, he opened with the Ruy Lopez, I countered with my own variation on the Knights of Cabiria defense, and lost. Hy told me I have a heart of gold, but a head of cotton candy, this from a guy with a hyperactive inner barometer and subject to meteorological hysteria! Dallas, our PI bud witnessed my humiliation.*

*Ichi , Hy's widow, and I all agreed this unnumbered section was meant as Hy's opening gambit, foretelling key themes — the weather (as medium, media, and mental state), snapshots, language play, aging and death (which ageist Chad figures as "sailing on the doomed ship Bingo-Maru") — and introduces the reader to the author's friends. Hy's interest in snapshots and Polaroid cameras are broached and is particularly pertinent as a reaction to our digital age: analogue snapshots of yore are gaining aura as material objects. Photo-historian Geoffrey Batchen, in "Snapshots: Art History and the Ethnographic Turn," sees that our post-industrial nostalgic response to them in part lay "not of the subjects it depicts, but of its own operation as a system of representation."*

*But how to "take" Hy's revelations here? Autobiographical fact? Near-fiction? What? Interviewed about his wacky first novel about a guy with hyperhearing, he went on record: "If I had not warped material, I would've felt it to be wholly useless to open my authorial mouth, hear?" Dallas advised we read Hy's material in the context of his "delusional thinking" as raised by his therapist, Elske Erfaren. Dallas, a fan of Philip K. Dick's sci-fi, advised we read Robert Heinlein's, "They": "Dude, it may pertain heaps to Hy's case 'n possible Felo de se" — Latin for "felon of himself", an archaic legal term for suicide that Dallas loved to work into his Blurt Wildbraine mystery stories.*

\*                      \*                      \*

# Finding Mememo

2



A golden-haired Brazilian poet friend of mine, Ruada Douradora, in an e-mail of broken English, turned me on to an early-twentieth-century depressive Portuguese author who tautologically declared, "To feel is a pain in the neck." Every few weeks, I prove that author wrong. My sinuses are a catastrophe; now an angry headache knocks, usurping my shoulder. Aware that matter is offending me, as happens when one is offended, I'm resentful, apt to be really irritable with everyone. A sinus headache (as opposed to a "normal" headache) makes me feel like dying, at least temporarily, like a fake celebrity death report, as when reports of actor Johnny Knoxville's death memed this week. A headache is useless, but so is art. But art is beautiful — a headache ain't. I take two Extra Strength Excedrin and one Caribbean-blue Aleve liquid gel, the only stuff that soothes me — except for art and lit.

The universe hurts me because my head and shoulder hurts, and my inner bully is beating me up, but its not actually THE UNIVERSE, but MY universe, which belongs to me and only me, is where memories are as vivid as present perceptions, perceptions that are as true and false as cinema. Until the meds vanish the flaring nova of my pain down a black hole, I launch counter-measures by opening *Surrealism*, a 1962 Skira edition on one of my favorite periods in art. The cover, slightly torn in the upper-right corner, features a canvas by De Chirico, in the Italian *Pittura Metafisica*-style [ed., flourishing between 1911 - 1920], harboring an egg, a book, and artichoke. Its success



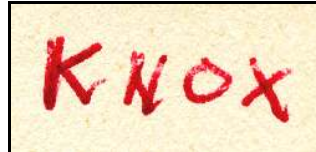
resides in its oddball juxtapositions, mystery, what I enjoy in everything, be it art, architecture, literature, music, or food. Being a bit anarchy myself, I often wear an Anarch T-shirt stating in white Helvetica Bold: LOTH TO OBEY, LOTH TO COMMAND. If all of us are free to make decisions, then those of us who make decisions to limit the choices of others prevent all of us from being free. I've read Ernst Junger's *Eumeswil* and adhere to the dictates of an anonymously authored French revo-lutionary

tract, "*Pratique du bon Français*" (1794), which rewrote the Ten Commandments, changing the Sixth to: "Thou shalt cultivate the fine arts."

Scanning the hardcover book's sixty gorgeous tipped-in color plates, I imagine they want to escape their textual confines and remove themselves directly into my mind, therein to induce a faraway pseudo-slumber that I use to make life endurable. In my eyes life is harsh and often sad, but one can have delightful dreams interspersed here and there and those dreams may be more

## Finding Mememo

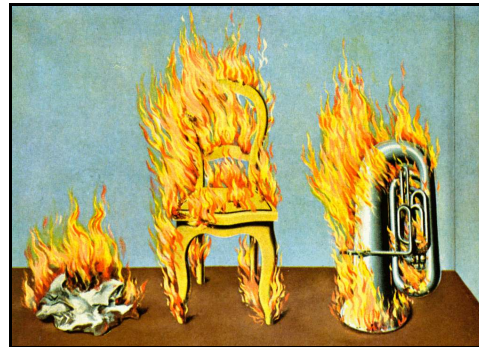
real than reality — an *alternative reality* might be a better phrasing. Yes, it's a fine used copy, only its slightly torn slip cover keeps its value down. I found it in a funky local bookstore whose owner always appears to be enjoying hashish. I love how it smells, the book, that is, how the pages "thumb". I open the book and find the name of the former owner is hand-printed in red ballpoint on the upper-right corner (the same area torn on the slip cover):



Enlarged 2x

Coincidence? Those two knocks. "Beware of 'false friends,'" my old, white-haired art history prof had cautioned me. Because of *my* errant reasoning on a paper, he had our whole class read "False friends: their origin and semantics in some selected languages" by Pedro J. Chamizo Domínguez and Brigitte Nerlich. My peers were not amused at the extra homework. My page-turning stops at page 81 because I love absurdity and paradox.

*Reductio ad absurdum* is one my favorite drinks. Before my burning eyes flares up René Magritte's canvas depicting burning objects (a chair and tuba among them): *L'Échelle du Feu* (*The Scale of Fire*). Is it a coincidence the painting's date coincides with Hitler's rise to power and its current viewing coincides with my burning pain? I suffer these headaches, have bad sinuses, because of two hard knocks I suffered in my youth: 1) secondhand smoke irritation due to my mother's chain-smoking Camel cigs as she knitted (she used to say life is a ball of yarn that someone got all tangled; I, from my point of view, said it was all smoke and mirrors); 2) a deviated septum suffered when my nose was broken after my 69-inch Herter's competition-level recurve bow's string snapped during an archery match. But trying to decipher the tidbit below also gives me a . . .



*The Scale of Fire* (1934) René Magritte



## Finding Mememo



Mosaic (detail), Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta, Torcello (Venice)

During these “episodes” — I like that term — I try to apply the Taoist practice known in Korean (as per a Korean student of mine) as *chukjibeop* to surpass barriers and structures that bind us. It’s a hypothetical method of traversing time and space. As

destiny may seize upon our existence and bear us far into the future, so may it carry us back into the past. I just try to project my mind outside my suffering flesh. That tongue-twisting Korean term is too tough, I just call it “doing skull-time”. *Doing* has a real American ring to it, sounds pragmatic, productive, materialist. Doing skull-time is “amming myself”, a way to be that addresses and acts on itself, exercising self-creation via successive explosions of thought.

Inside “amming-time” I recognize reality as a form of illusion, and illusion as a form of reality — a garden of forking paths, ah Borges! I can make myself into a book character as memories can seem more real than reality. Often, I am lulled by my memories as by an endless procession. And do I have memories! Like Jorge Luis Borges’ character, Funes the Memorious, or Mr. Memory in Hitchcock’s *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, I’m an *eidetiker* — photographic memory, had the CIA. after my talents once. But this activity takes concentration. It doesn’t help that my attack occurs during the chill, somnolent hours that precede dawn when I awake from a child’s sleep with the familiar throbbing due thunder and lightning. Dark sky to the west is an evil-looking black tinged with puke-yellow. Window panes rattle to the wind. There is a disemboweled weeping outside just as dawn approaches, a screeching of things, a falling of fragments: rain, rain, rain. Now it’s raining hard, harder, and still harder . . . It’s as if something were going to collapse in the blackness outside. The suburbanscape beyond my bedroom window is in a terrible state of emotion and, conversely, a state of emotion is a landscape of which I am the cartographer, Ichi the photographer.

The geography of my consciousness (I can’t speak of others, I hereby excuse you from appearing in my idea of me) is an endless complexity of fractals: irregular coasts, low and high mountains, and myriad lakes, which I see as a kind of map. Hidden in the rocks and recesses lurk emotions and memories begging to be found. In remembrances of my past I am often absurdly younger in a certain episode from my teen years than when I was in kindergarten — recollections that come slower when I’m speeding in a car than when sitting down, faster when laying down than walking. Figure that!

This, of course, opens the complex topic of Time. It Kant be helped. But



## Finding Mememo



Hy's first ice cream cone; request for another cone refused, his reaction is evident (6/20/49). "Someone cared enough about me to take my picture, maybe because I looked like an ornery ventriloquist's dummy. Precariously balanced, I recall with some anxiety that the ground seemed very far away" (Notebook).

at least that philosopher tried. Tried to explain the thing that being without measure, manages to measure us and without existing, kills us.

Close friends can call me "Mememo" or just "Meme". That's what my parents said I'd repeat whenever I'd beg for more ice cream: "Me, me, mo'." Okay, I like it. It condenses within the concepts of selfhood, memory, memento, and meme. I started to adopt this tag myself after seeing Walt Disney's 1954 film version of Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (Seas in Verne's original title) because it sounded like Nemo, the tragic character, the lonely genius revenging injustices suffered. I deeply identified with Nemo's existential pain, his hatred of mili-

taristic empire — "No empire can justify even breaking a child's doll" — his love of the sea. I admired James Mason's powerful portrayal. Moreover, having a slight propensity to be dyslexic, I liked that Nemo spelled backwards is Omen. Only much later, in a college Latin class, did I discover *nemo* means *nobody*. Blessed odd coincidence. I have all my life fought the disturbing sense I was, deep inside, "nobody".

That film started my fascination with: submarines and deep-sea diving (I wanted to become a marine biologist and adored Jacques Cousteau and TV shows like "Sea Hunt" and "Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea"); squids and octopuses — creepy to behold, but my favorite sea food, rife with a dark energy of life; a budding intellect as drawn out by Professor Pierre Aronnax's (Paul Lukas) intriguing foreign accent and his cool pedanticism; finally, Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) and, much later, Yasujir Ozu's films, domestic dramas, wherein youth ignore elderly relatives; such fare ignited my passion for cinema.



James Mason as Captain Nemo

## Finding Mememo

So imagine my delight when Disney again “swimmingly” (as a Brit bud of mine might put it) found its mark in me with the animated film *Finding Nemo*. Why, I’d been trying to find nobody — ME, Mememo — most of my life. In my insecure mind, it seemed that I was born a nonperson into a family of nonpersons. Unfortunately, when I try to sift through all this, write about it, try to find Mememo, my phenomenological ego (a fictive nonperson that only *signifies* me) cannot remember (despite my photographic memory) what my actual ego cannot remember. I *do* recall precisely where and when I first saw that Pixar animated film: at Chicago’s famous Music Box Theatre, when I was suffering a headache from too many Sufferin’ Bastard cocktails imbibed at a dinner of sautéed chicken livers at Biasetti’s. By the time the film ended, however, my pain had dissolved in the waters of Nemo’s abode.



A Joseph Conrad sea story tells us, “It is the privilege of early youth to live in advance of its days in all the beautiful continuity of hope that knows no pauses and no introspection,” but also that, “. . . time, too, goes on — till one perceives ahead a shadow-line warning one that the region of early youth, too, must be left behind.” He should have added another line, between maturity and old age, when I would book passage on the ill-fated ship *Bingo-Maru*. No missing this shipwreck, as did lucky poet Henri Michaux when he prematurely jumped ship in 1920, leaving the ten thousand ton *Le Victorieux* to sail on to its fate south of New York.

But even as incomplete as it was, that perspicacious seaman dropped anchor in me. Was it merely a coincidence that I read these lines while aboard a slow ferry on Italy’s vast Lago di Garda? We were chugging against a brisk wind, waves and white caps on my way to Gardone Riviera to visit Il Vittoriale degli Italiani, the lush hillside estate of fascist poet Gabriele D’Annunzio. I was red-lining passages in Conrad’s *The Shadow-Line*, belching from seafood covered in cheese, when the idea for the following ruminations came with all the above factors conjoined. Like a sailor cautiously plumbing the “debths”, I now plumb myself, drop the plumb to see if I’m deep or not with no remaining plumb but my inner gaze. I do know that unlike the repeated phrase in *Lord Jim*, “He was one of us,” I was never one of *them*. In all the world there is no one else exactly like me. No one else looks and sounds, says and does, and thinks and feels exactly like me. I own, and therefore can engineer, me. There are persons who have some parts like me, but no one adds up exactly like anyone else. I know that there are aspects about myself I do not know, and there are parts of me that puzzle me. Self is body and perception of body. When I am in a state of

## Finding Mememo

hyperempathy, it senses the Other too and even probes beneath its surface. This can be embarrassing, as if I can read the person's thoughts, and they often become uncomfortable about that when they sense it.

Met an old man on a park bench near Los Angeles' La Brea Tar Pits, adjacent to the L. A. County Museum of Art, February 10, 1974. I was prowling the park for subjects for my latest conceptual piece *Preference (First Name)*, which entailed chatting someone up, asking if they liked or disliked their first name. Had them fill out and sign a form testifying to this, then took a snapshot of them, pasting it on the form. The forms were collated as a book. This particular subject I would describe as "an unhappy wizened little fellow who, if put into a jockey's rig, would have looked the part to perfection"; but the point is, I *immediately felt* this *in* him, not just made an observation followed by a guess.

Seconds later, the man told me he'd recently lost his wife, was a retired jockey, had chosen that profession due to his size and the fact that he "had the wrong kind of muscles for sitting still," and preferred his surname, "Nate," because "it was short and sweet." I don't know if he knew I knew about him before he told me, but probably not, as I'd interrupted him picking horses for his next round of bets at the track. If I were to run across him today, I bet he'd be on his iPhone, betting on "a lock".

This quick-read capability of mine (both gift and curse) I attribute to suffering the stern voice of my bipolar father, which was a whole-body experience when he blasted forth. He had guns in place of arms and a loaded cannon for a mouth. His life was powered by a battery of loneliness at one pole and rage at the opposite. Once he shook me so hard it made my protesting voice jump like I was driving a Porsche 911 Carrera 4S Cabriolet over the ruts in a rough road. I had to become ultra-sensitive to body language and expression, reading his moody inner self from outer signs, if I hoped to avoid his wrath.

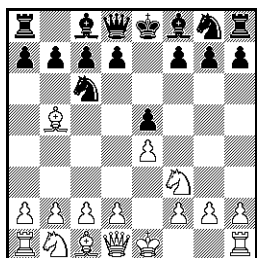
My sister and I evolved a secret language, a *faux-cabulary*, in order to communicate in front of father without him catching on. *Miasmire* = the *diamonstic* (horrible) predicament we suffered. *Polystenichous vaporous streamings* = father on a rant. And so forth. While practicing these methods as a form of defense throughout my life, I came to the conclusion that everybody in the world is a little mad and that I wanted to be a troublemaker and a writer. I eventually combined both and became a critic; put skills up for hire on Angie's List. My sister went on to become a writer and a teacher who dispersed portion of her being into her students as salt goes into solution in a glass of warm water. When she died of cervical cancer at 42 — listening to an opera featuring Maria Callas — it was a sure ticket to heaven. She loved *Tosca* with its Aria "Vissi D'Arte": "I lived for art, I lived for love." Years of work as a teacher, a burst of glory, then it was over for my *leibling* sibling.

## Finding Mememo

Self is thought, memory, belief. Self creates, destroys (and can destroy itself). Self learns, discovers, becomes. Self shapes. Self adapts. Self invents its own reasons for being or for choosing not to be. It can be a crystal thing, vibrating to sound, about to shatter. It can be an impregnable fortress. Self traverses the poles between birth and death and desires to find meaning within those points. Between those points all is change. But I can't help remembering with pleasure the times when one's best efforts were seconded by a run of luck. And those memories do loom large, because the essentials stand out isolated from their quotidian surroundings. Joseph Conrad has a sea-going character declaim: "All roads are long that lead towards one's heart's desire. But this road my mind's eye could see as on a chart, professionally, with all its complications and difficulties." My life's journey often benefitted from both a run of luck *and* from my ability to chart my course, to know and realize my potentials. That journey has been carried out within, and by, my creative practice, a *praxis of self*, an exercise of apprehension and genesis in the course of which I try at the same time to seize myself and build myself.

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: A gambit with bad weather, insomnia, and sinus headache as "enverb-alized consciousness", Hy figuring his inner turmoil; aware of his own worth, but unable to translate it into currency of the realm. This section's wpf file was dated ealier than the first section, but I think it works better coming second. Sitting in Cigars and Stripes bar, Dorinda (clad in destroyed denim, rhinestones running through her style, square-toe Justin boots), Dallas (beer in hand), Ichi (noting how Dory tilts her head, devouring the world with her mouth and ears), and I (noticing the nameless patrons about us having silent conversations as seen on the TV sitcom "Cheers") squabbled over this section's placement. Rubbing his stubble, and doing the up-down-up-down with his cold beer — Dallas passed the buck to Dorinda who, munching on chicken wings, disagreed with me, "Place it as the files are dated." But Ichi and I out-voted her, so it remains as is. We all did agree to dump the section where Hy attempts to speak Japanese with Ichi and he chides: "Meme-san, you sound like some fuckin' cow from Outer Mongolia," Hy then makes a stupid pun equating the sound of Moo with the Japanese aesthetic concept of Mu.*



The Ruy Lopez Opening

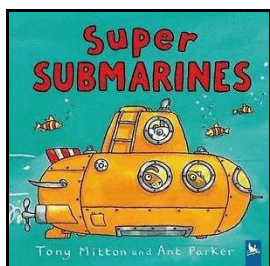
*Hy and I often had morning classes and evening classes on the same day. To pass the afternoon hours, we often met to play chess, chat, and imbibe croissants as stiff and starched as a collar. The Artist's Café was usually the site for these tête-à-têtes. Chess-wise, he was obsessed with openings, such as the famous Ruy Lopez; even found a statistical study on that opening's strategic success. I kept what he'd written down for me. Number of games in the database: 1255; years covered: 1846 to 2015; overall record: White wins 40.6%, Black wins 30.0%, Draws 29.3%. He said that proved a previously undetected racism pervading the game: White always started first and won most often.*



## Finding Mememo

*This factoid, Hy said, he had sent to African-American author Ishmael Reed's publisher, pleading that in future editions of Reed's masterful take-down of Western/White superiority, Mumbo Jumbo (a book Hy had earlier reviewed as "A bomb ready to explode on contact"), that some chess data should be worked by the author into his storyline. From his expression, I couldn't tell if he was joking or serious. Was this a hint of his delusional thinking or Hy's tendency to joke and be serious at the same time?*

*Anyway, openings, he said, were just as important in literary matters, too. He claimed to have found in The Cloud a vast database containing the first opening lines of thousands of books and short stories — and studied them assiduously. He was emphatic that a book's opening lines "should shine with opalescent multiplicity," that in Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard's 1984 novel Concrete, the protagonist, with sparks of orange mania gleaming in his peepers, logs in ten years hard labor just to get the perfect opening sentence for his novel.*



*This backstory gives more credence to my impression that Hy — had he lived (and, you know, the first name I chose for him is short for Hyman, means "life" in Hebrew) — was planning to expand this section. It draws upon sea (romantic journeys sans females, and steersmen, i.e., cybernetics) and undersea themes (the perpetual-present of time-in-dreams with imagery of sunken things, a sinking into the unconscious, into memories). "He had 'cathected' submarines, a very phallic form," Dorinda offered, as she allowed me to scan a kid's book Hy'd given to her grandson, inscribed: I sink, therefore I am.*

*A sea journey, above or below the waves, figures adventure, discovery, death — a trope for life's journey, a theme exploited by Joseph Conrad. And Hy was obsessed with Heidegger's notion of our "being thrown toward death." Death implies life and vice-versa. Life — it can be regarded as specialized sea water whose horizon draws a line between it and the sky — can be understood in two senses : 1) the totality of events happening to living beings from birth to death, and 2) the fact that living beings continually change during their life-span, yet retain their own identities. Karl Ove Knausgaard's voluminous My Struggle and Michel Leiris's The Rules of the Game have both tried to meld these; they have much in common with Hy's attempt to fit his florilegium of facts into a consistent program all without those fragments melting behind him (my task now).*

*Throughout Hy's gambit, he plays on the set of classical elements believed to reflect the simplest essential parts and principles of which anything can consist: earth (death), air (his nasal problems), fire (the Magritte canvas), and water (obvious). Keeping with ancient themes, Hy mentions one of the earliest devices for hunting, the bow, his S-curved Herter's archery bow. Its shape calls to mind picturesque, snaking rivers, William Hogarth's famous "Line of Beauty," and its length, 69-inches, is most likely a winking reference to a sexual position. I can assert such as Hy was a fan of Chuck Palahniuk's bawdy stories. And, Michel Leiris; he futzed with one of Leiris literary dicta thus: To make the magical world of adventures in language coincide with the naked and shocking world of a big bear busting into one's rented auto (see page 411). He got the bear idea from playing Scribblenauts, a computer puzzle game which lets the player create creatures*

## Finding Mememo

Behaviorism	Phenomenology
1. Man can be described meaningfully in terms of his [outward] behavior.	1. Man can be described meaningfully in terms of his [inner] consciousness.
2. Man is predictable.	2. Man is unpredictable.
3. Man is an information transmitter.	3. Man is an information generator.
4. Man lives in an objective world.	4. Man lives in a subjective world.
5. Man is a rational being.	5. Man is an irrational being.
6. One man is like other men.	6. Each man is unique.
7. Man can be described meaningfully in absolute terms.	7. Man can be described meaningfully in relative terms.
8. Human characteristics can be investigated independently of one another.	8. Man must be studied as a whole.

to attack other creatures, etc.. The eleventh puzzle level challenges the player to collect flowers and place them a girl's basket without harming them or oneself in the process. Hy's first attempt to do so (as noted in his notebook) went something like this: Made bear; bear killed bee. Laid down bear trap, ran away. Bear didn't chase. Ran back over. Caught self in bear trap. Mauled by bear. Level failed. Hy saw this as reflecting his own personal life. The examination of his life in this section from a phenomenological perspective was probably supposed to include a diatribe contra B. F. Skinner's Behaviorism as a list contrasting these opposing theories was found among his files. I knew from our chess chats that

Hy, early in his college years, was taken with Existentialist literature and thought. He read Camus' *The Stranger* one summer during his military service and *Being and Nothingness* while a graduate teaching assistant for the famous so-called "paraphotographer", Robert Heineken. Hy'd studied, but rejected, Behaviorism. Later, he took on board Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology*, chewed on Gaston Bachelard's reveries on poetics, before setting course toward poststructuralist archipelagoes, including the *Isle of Deconstruction*, the flows and currents of Deleuze and Guattari, and Stuart Hall's Neo-Gramscian cultural theory. Eventually, Hy extending to maximum length and motility radius p of the Sphere of Knowledge, boldly marched on into Object-Oriented Ontology.

Grader drew from his experience as a swabbie on all these authorships in his creative endeavors. He referred to his cut-and-paste method as being "a subversive submarine in a sea of authorships, blasting text, retrieving the shards, hurling words into a darkness to await an echo." Analogously, he considered theory as yielding critical tools he could selectively apply, that each reading voyage he'd been on had something to contribute. As he once put it, "I wear these theories about me as a tradesman wears a hefty tool-belt with hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdriver, and tape-measure — to be used as needed." His mash-ups vex the normative and all binaries: "A mash-up of in-betweenness," is how he put it to me.

The next section difficult to place. My redaction, yesterday, was moving too fast, today it's moving too slow. For now Ichi is pissed because he wants this next fragment to be the very first section the reader encounters. Dallas said it could work well preceding several different sections. But I felt the continuation of the weather — for Hy, each day deciding when to go outside and what to wear was as complicated as planning a bank heist — and trauma themes made it a good fit here.

In what follows Hy continues to sketch a portrait of his bud, Ichi Honne ("My brother from another mother, my Hiro Protagonist," as Hy put it), and reveals their bizarre encounter with a Jumper and the Grim Reaper in a world class art museum during a major retrospective of Belgian artist James Ensor's morbid, surreal images.

\* \* \*

# Finding Mememo

## 3



Perfect weather a minute ago. But weather writes and rewrites itself. Yet you still can't expect me to believe that a dead man, a suicide, has the power over meteorology in this part of the world.

We'd just finished seeing a James Ensor exhibition, then "post-Internet" Dutch artist Harm van den Dorpel's thematically cohesive installation, "Just-in-Time", focusing on the digital world's visual vocabulary and how the space between the images it produces can be warped. I particularly liked one work titled "Macro Intimacy" (2015): muted close-up shots printed on heat-shrink foil, showing a cluttered room corner.

Sunny, clouds clean as if squeezed from a tube, so we decided to munch-a-lunch in the Art Institute of Chicago's courtyard restaurant. Suddenly, Ichi yells, "*Shuuchugouu!*," a severe localized downpour with hail, putting us in harm's way. Reminded me of Rachel Rose's video *A Minute Ago* (2014), where she used a YouTube video showing the moment when a day of summer leisure lunching on the banks of a Siberian river — probably involving sipping *shchi*, sour cabbage soup — is suddenly disrupted by a violent hailstorm. As the bathers madly dash for cover, the thoughts of the amateur cameraman narrating the havoc turn to their mortality: "If we die, know that I love you."

Said the same thing to my wife — gripping her hand, its calm persistent skin, too firmly — when an engine Airbus A320 took a lightning strike after take-off from Vienna en route to Abu Dhabi. In the airport waiting to board our plane on a hot, deceitful day, the air weighed heavily. Then colors started to dim, dark clouds with jagged edges ranging over the far scape. Dire expectation hung in the pallid atmosphere as tattered clouds grew blacker. Several coalesced into one cloud, super-black, implacable, rushing toward us. The sun died.

Our flight left an hour late. Taking off, engines *whhhhheeeing* in that moment of acceleration full of exhilaration and danger. Storms can still be a lightning threat even miles away. In the air, at around 10,000 feet as our plane banked right, the dipping wing revealed a hole in the sky through which the light of all hells cracked like steel into aluminum. Number two engine took a direct thunderbolt. Flames blitzed past my C26 window seat; the thought of death occurred; but not fear. It was something like a wallowing in the thought of plummeting like a bird through space. In my mind I heard "The Airborne Symphony" by Marc Blitzstein [*ed., the piece premiered April 1946*] and simultaneously saw, in a powerful Proustian flashback, Poussin's famous painting *The Funeral of Phocion* (1648) [*ed., the body of a goodly Athenian politician falsely accused of treason and forced to down hemlock*] wherein Phocion is being carried on a stretcher away from what is otherwise a peaceful village. It's a classic-

## Finding Mememo



*The Funeral of Phocion (o/c, 1648) Poussin*

izing painting of political violence and death in a pastoral landscape. Poussin, an exile in Rome, found in this tale a lesson and an inspiration, which led to the creation of two of his greatest works. I saw that painting once, hanging in architect Philip Johnson's Glass House as I peeked in through those massive windows, fighting the play of reflections, shadows, and glares.

Although we were helpless subjects of the sky and earth, the skilled pilot managed to suppress the flames and hastily U-turn-it back to the airport where we fanny-slid down exit chutes into firemen's arms. Had to change planes. Baggage reloaded. Half a day later, at our destination and dining with her son's family, my psychoanalyst wife offered that my odd involuntary memory at that moment of crisis was probably due to my feeling fragile as glass, sensing death eminent, the engine flared among the reflections careening off my window. Life hurls us like a stone, and we sail through the air; sometimes we almost fall, sometimes we actually do. This brings me to a five dot ellipsis . . . . .

Memory, with which my mind knows itself, is in the first place the *memory of the capacity-to-remember*, but I haven't fully exercised that capacity, having almost forgotten to mention that museum visit's most momentous event.

My photographer-friend-confidant and fellow Ozu fan, Ichi Honne, drove his dark green Subaru down from "Mad City" (as locals call it) where he is a part-



## Finding Mememo

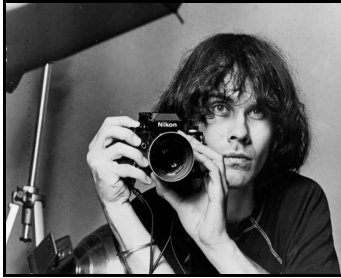
time lecturer ("an errand boy for art," he calls it) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's art department. The horoscope of our meeting was surely ruled by auspicious conjunctions. A mutual friend of a friend's friend had linked us up when he found out I was moving my pedagogical-self from Los Angeles to Chicago, to within 120 miles of a man who practices the *D* (Tao, The Way) of Photography with a *bushid* loyalty to his medium (he got interested in photography when he was a child hand-model in toy ads). He, in turn, was impressed with my *gambari* (workaholic ethos). As a boy, like *moi*, he showed a talent for geometry and numbers. Quotes from *Hanzai Japan* (a book of fantastical, futurist mysteries) and notes that "highest of Japanese rights is to scurry through life unmolested by someone else's emotion."

When does knowing a person begin? At our first meeting, he began with, "Beauty, geometric, is my irreparable," a good solid opening gambit, like White's first move in the formidable Ruy Lopez chess opening. "It seems," he said, "we communicate via *ishin denshin*, Japanese for telepathy. Like we play *kage fumi*, Japanese kid-game where we step on each other's shadows. It's a game expressing intimacy," as he explained, "There is an ancient expression, *Sanjyaku sagatte shi no kage wo fumazu*, which means 'Keep about ninety centimeters from one's master in order not to step on his shadow'."

I was taken with this admission of closeness between us coming from someone socialized to be more reserved with their feelings. But, as one Japanese saying goes, "A clever hawk conceals its talons," so I was cautious at first about our new relationship. That was 30 years ago. We still take turns suffering interminable road construction and expensive tickets for violating the 45 m.p.h. speed limit zones as we shuttle between Chicago and Madison to visit each other every other month or so. The trips get monotonous. To jar us back into creative mode, we begin our visit with a craft-brew or a puff of weed. This is often followed by Ichi performing an it-always-cracks-me-up exaggerated Japanese pronunciation of an English phrase like "Roos rips shrink shrips" ("Loose lips sink ships"). That was a warning found on WWII posters, one of which he included in a photo made years ago in New York. Within the context of our teaching jobs, that phrase (like convict lingo) becomes code for "Be discrete around fellow academics." Relations between oneself and one's departmental chairman or dean, between artist and museum curator, and so forth, we code as "*Go-on to h k*", which translates as "obligation and service", like that of vassal to lord, but is heard in English only as a command to travel. When Ichi tells me he is "Going on to *h k*," I know he's going to try to hawk his photographic wares to some collector or museum, domestic or foreign.

So you see, besides the laughs and the Wisconsin micro-brews he brings me, I learn about Japanese culture, like respectfully raising a book to one's

## Finding Mememo



Hy's deceased friend, Kevin (1973)

forehead before opening it; Hari-kuy , the yearly Buddhist requiem for the needles broken during the year by seamstresses; respect for the aged, *Keir* . In the States we've junked all that as sentimental schlock celebrating, instead, Respect for the Consumer Day ("Black Friday") a frenzied day of storm-shopping that leaves abandoned kids urinating in the aisles the day after gorging on slaughtered fowl. Ichi recalled soothing baths in wooden

boxes: "Western-style tubs unnaturally hard and smooth, Meme-san."

We found we had much in common: *Keizoku wa chikara nari* (Perseverance is power), admiration for Arata Isozaki's 1962 proposal "City in the Air", and photographer Takuma Nakahira's photo series *For a Language to Come* (I later saw excerpts in a 1972 issue of *Asahi Camera*). The latter was an artist who, like me, also wrote criticism. I had perused that very issue thanks to another photo-freak buddy of mine, Kevin — dead now 30 years — who had a subscription. Kev and I would sit side-by-side, page through each new issue like teenagers looking at *Playboy*. Prowling the streets in our Che Guevara T-shirts, we carried our Nikons strapped across our breasts like bandoliers. And we did think, naively, we were revolutionaries in the practice of our medium. Kevin later moved to Japan, he and his Nikon haunting Shinjuku.

For Ichi everything is equal — the natural and the artificial — something that binds our postmodern friendship. He said he looks at a tree and a face, a poster and a smile in exactly the same way: "Everything I see is for me the merely visible. I see, I see more and more, I reconstruct by seeing." He seems to notice everything as if for the first time, not to have learned to attach predetermined meanings to all things. *To photograph* — he is that Verb eternally generated and incarnate in Time. Ichi loves magnifying glasses — more than cameras — and has a vast collection of them. Says they magnify flaws. Perfect hobby for a guy who demands perfection; the magnifying glass suggests the scrutiny necessary to achieve it, judiciously scanning his negs with it.

And this time, he and I were entering Renzo Piano's new Modern Wing of the A. I. C. I flashed my plastic rectangular faculty badge with its bad portrayal of *moi* (factoid: a student once pasted a photo of an ape's face on his badge and no one noticed) telling the teller a fib that my companion should be covered as a family member. The young brunette gave me that middle-of-day-of-the-vernal-equinoctial look of suspicion, as she glanced at my Anglo face and overly snappy attire, then to Ichi's Asian visage and his careless dress that isn't entirely careless, and then back to me, then down to my I.D. badge and back to Ichi . In a certain uncertain way I could see she was waffling on her decision so I exer-

## Finding Mememo

cised my natural Tellurism until her face relaxed. She let us pass, “Uhhhhh, okay,” raising her fisted left hand upward, opening it, letting out an irregular wad of fisted air, while handing us the tickets with her right. We were seeking a magical and silent colloquy between art and viewer — not to happen.

We had just got the tickets in our eager mitts when a huge racket on the second floor balcony drew everyone’s attention. People pointing upward like they do in Superman movies. A dashing handsome young black man, flawless brutal power in struggle between two overwhelmed guards, screamed like a two-year old in melt-down, while bucking as if doing the Sassy Bump. We looked up, our eyesight an arrowhead parting the air, to see the hot elegance of a terrified thoroughbred attempting to be hot-walked between two trainers. He then gave out an animal wailing like a horse being gutted by a mountain lion.



Suddenly, racket turned into a racquet-ball, a racquet-ball that then became a *rocketing* rock that tossed itself over a cliff, jumping the balcony’s railing in a wide trajectory to fall 25 feet at 32.2 ft/sec/sec to burst with a thud into a pool of hot blood, into death that must have attracted him like moth to flame. The head, a pricked yolk, spurted. A long cosmically held breath of generalized dread. A silence the size of a lunar sea in which some witnesses contemplated how close the falling black body had missed a child milling about below; some looked around as if they might find the walls splashed with brains and a red rainbow. Husbands, slipping into standard gender role, comforted screaming wives. Children clung to parents like they do when they see a Rottweiler coming down the sidewalk toward them. I heard one parent tell a child, “If all your friends jumped off a cliff, would you?” But most just made sounds in trills and scales impossible for a mouth to conjugate into nouns and verbs. My heart pounded. I couldn’t catch my breath. A scene from Chris Marker’s film *La Jetté* right before my eyes. But the dying jumper’s last thought might’ve been: *Yo, what do you’ve got to complain of? You only had to watch it — I’m IT.*

Not sure who suffered more: the boy; the nicely polished, expensive wooden museum floor (where eight hours later a fancy-schmancy art opening had elegant people, smirking, shaking hands as if nothing had happened); or the shaken witnesses of a surprising, unanticipated event that for several minutes united us all as a special group in which the following phrases might be shared:

The Early Warning Ground Proximity Indicator is still flashing.  
Will the restoration of the floor be flawless?  
Presents itself as a secret we share.  
There is an inhuman beauty to it.  
The shrinks will try to explain it.  
I close my eyes and still hear it.

# Finding Mememo

The sound is almost painful.  
I can't believe it happened!  
O strange new final music!  
A life was last seen living.  
The lonely devastation.  
Uncomfortably numb.     *This message will be repeated.*

All the stunned not-thinking-but-looking witnesses, adults and kids, stared with horror as the fallen body seeped dark red, like in the movies. Then our after-burners cut in: some searched for uniformed staff; some pulled out cell-phones to dial 911; some paced back and forth nervously. Ichi once told me "I'm the size of what I see, and not the size of my stature." Taking him at his word, I wondered what his stature was *now*. Certainly he was too shaken to snap a newsie,; no visitor ran out to take a "selfie" before the corpse either. Were we waiting for a coach from the abyss to pull up and remove the body? I had to yell "Moshi-moshi" to get Ichi 's attention so he could get a shot, but he froze. Only his molars inside his mouth were moving, grinding together so hard you could smell the hot metal of his fillings.



Yves Klein's *Leap into the Void*

There's always been a thin sheet of glass between me and life — being born premature and spending weeks staring at the world *à la* incubator — on which is projected what I take for Real Life, presentations appearing to me as *re*-presentations, even my inner presentations. Life, literature, and cinema coalesce for me, so no surprise I flashed on the three fatal falls staged in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* as well as on artist Yves Klein's famous *Leap into the Void*. Was what we witnessed today a *re-enactment* of such? Re-enactment's a popular aesthetic strategy these days, but it sure *wasn't* a re-enactment of that ho-hum-so-what response seen in Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*. No — guards appeared with deputized looks as they lis-

tened to commands over their walkie-talkies, then barked orders: "Exit through that door." Taking one last glance back, the total immobility of the scene, its freedom from time, struck me. Then we were lead down a narrow hall, our shadows falling on walls like those of sleuths in 1930s detective films as we were guided to an adjoining gallery in a newly hung blockbuster exhibition of Belgian artist James Ensor's disturbing major works. Imagine having witnessed what we just witnessed, then shuffling by that maniac Ensor's disturbing visions! We, uninvited guests with "the horror, the horror" mirrored on our faces, zombie-



## Finding Mememo



*Skeleton Musicians*  
(drawing, 1888) James  
Ensor

walked among the other gallery visitors whose innocent visages showed placid gazes so perfect they seemed *trompe-l'oeil* illusions expertly painted on closed eyelids.

The media, shaking knowing hands with museum administrators, muffled any association of this unpleasantness with that world-class museum. The fix was in. The shocking event was under-reported, never made it to nightly news. One paper spoke in hushed tones of a “mental collapse”, an electro-magnetic mental storm propelling a suicide *in potentia* to, in that awful instant, wave bye-bye to his past, actualizing his potential for self-murder. In academic terms, in a phenomenological frame

of reference, our very “special group” had witnessed the “not-now” become the “now”, that “now” becoming a “now-point” receding into our memories to lodge there our whole lives. Amazingly, given the injuries we saw, the paper’s post-trauma reports were: “He is not dead, just critically injured. In a comma, on life-support. . . . People are praying for the family during this difficult moment. . . . He’s not a terrorist. . . . Museum operations went on normally after. . . . Visitors were largely unaware of . . .” That was it. Nothing is simple, nothing straightforward.

I wondered what bizarre set of events and thoughts sent a man to try and kill himself inside a museum. He obviously had something very fragile or explosive to carry about his person and was all the time aware of it.

- Did he seek the hush of that institution to better hear voices emerging from the air, not from throats?
- Did he think: *Everything wearies me, including what doesn’t weary me. My happiness as painful as my pain.*
- Did he seem normal when buying his entry from the gracious ticket agent? If not, why sell him a ticket instead of calling the cops?
- Was he a reverse Iconoclast: instead of destroying art, he destroyed himself?
- Was it a disturbing artwork seen that set him off, something in the Ensor show?
- Was it Happy Dust turned sad. Or medication gone awry?
- Was he an art student who got a severe end of semester crit?
- Was he, like Tung Chien in Philip K. Dick’s “Faith of Our Fathers”, trying to jump to his death after seeing the God of Good and Evil (Abraxas) face-to-face?

All these questions went unanswered. There was something unexpected and original enough in his decision and act to be altogether incomprehensible.

Sure, from a galactic perspective, this actualization of inner human turmoil was a mere speck on a pale blue mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam. But

## Finding Mememo

### Man jumps to his death in apparent suicide

Oak Park Arms senior living facility confirms man's death

By TIMOTHY INKLEBARGER  
Staff Reporter

Oak Park emergency vehicles surrounded Oak Park Arms senior living facility on May 11 in response to an apparent suicide.

Moses Williams, executive director of Oak Park Arms, 408 S. Oak Park Ave., said in a telephone interview that a man appears to have jumped from the window of his unit, which unnamed sources say was on the fifth floor.

Williams said the facility "knows very little" about the 72-year-old man, because he had just moved into the facility on Saturday. He declined to release the man's name.

The Oak Park Police Department could not immediately be reached for comment. The apparent suicide occurred sometime between 8:30 a.m. and 8:45 a.m., Williams said.

He said the facility is providing counselors and religious services for residents who might be affected by the man's death.

it yet affects Ichi and me. I'm sure it has become a sort of baseline from which all the people in our "special group" set about the task of living-hence. As a sailor in Joseph Conrad's tale of a cursed ship, *The Shadow-Line*, puts it to the new captain — "The great thing to do, sir, is to get the ship past 8 degrees, 20 minutes latitude" (the precise location where the former ship's captain went crazy, died, and was buried at sea) — so did we, Ichi

and I — get the Ship of Self, our attitude, past that latitude. But I'm sure it will remain marked on our inner maps for a long time. And, certainly friendship draws life from exposure to death [*ed., a reference to thinker Maurice Blanchot*].

Sailors are so super-super-superstitious! I think because a ship is the most living of inanimate things. Swabbies say bad things happen in threes, and, sure hell enough, it did. Since this singular, horrible event, two more: a despondent, shriveling senior citizen dives from a local elder home, and the beautiful 20-year old schizophrenic son of University of Chicago professor and *Critical Inquiry* editor, W. J. T. Mitchell, leaps from the sixtieth floor of the Marina City apartments. Did he hear his Dad say "Go ahead, jump, I'll catch you!" like mine did more than once? Then there is the 21 jumpers who since 2010 have dove off China's Foxconn building in their iPhone-manufacturing complex.

But I've gone and sailed off narrative course for too long. Having gotten past 8 degrees, 20 minutes latitude, Ichi and I are *now* tacking eastward, out of the harm's way and the Harm installation where Ichi and I imaginatively competed with ludic displays of hermeneutic bravado, about to set anchor among a school of landlubbers feeding in the outdoor lunch area in the inner harbor of the famous museum. They appear oblivious to "the horror, the horror" that had taken place an hour and a half previous.

The outside area is as dim as inside the museum. I look up to see imminent danger. Roiling black clouds. As the hostess is about to seat us, a dark squall with golf ball-sized hail and a violent wind that swirls about the space. Tables with umbrellas are knocked down. Everyone disperses in every direction. The chaotic scene recalls a threatened merchant marine convoy frantically trying to dodge a submarine wolf-pack attack, the blasting sound of AAAAWWW-OOOO-GAAAH AAAAWWW-OOOO-GAAAH AAAAWWW-OOOO-GAAAH calling men to their duty stations. I've toured Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry's famed

## Finding Mememo



U-505, Captured by U.S. forces on June 4, 1944

captured German submarine and watched brave Hollywood heroes man their destroyer's depth charges.

As any guy with a rod-straight back, broad shoulders with hair loose under his Cubs or White Sox hat, sitting on a stool in any one of a thousand dim Chicago dark-wooded bars will tell you, in between hoisting brews and chomping at a pickle, Chicago weather is a fuckin' contact sport, as fickle as their last girlfriend. But it has been so even more during the last half decade. Dramatic changes in our clime come across

due west from the plains are often pushed by tornadic winds. One hour it's 75 degrees F. out with blue of the sky between still clouds; the next it's 45 degrees, zip sun, a lowering dirty orange-black ceiling above. Wind blows and the former stage set from, say, *The Magic Flute*, flies off into the wings to be replaced with a frightening one from *The Flying Dutchman*. These rapid, violent scene changes, requiring a quick costume change on our part, are increasingly frequent, I think, due to Gaia's Revenge: global climate change. Ichi has written a haiku pertinent here, riffing on a Naito Joso (1662 - 1704) poem: *The eyes of the Channel Five News helicopter / Are looking at the jammed roads / And the coming storm.*



Paris Street; Rainy Day (1877) Gustave Caillebotte

Groaning, unrelenting rain, bashing, bouncing hail. The scene recalls a tumultuous painting by J. M. W. Turner we glanced at a few minutes ago — not the placid rain falling in Caillebotte's *Paris Street; Rainy Day*. But today, after the worst of the storm passes, I hope we find some forgetfulness about our trauma in the subdued purple tones of the clouds. Worked before for me.

As hail and helluva rain bounce off umbrellas, Ichi is rattling off something Zen-like:

Pay attention to the flow of waters  
Pay attention to the integrity of the waters flowing  
Pay attention to where the waters are flowing

## Finding Mememo

Pay attention to where the waters desire to flow  
Pay attention to the flow of waters and the mixing with earth  
Attend to the integrity of the discourse between earth and water  
The watershed is an outcome

He goes on to observe, watching people before us grab at hats and umbrellas, "It's like a re-enactment of a re-enactment of Hokusai's *A Sudden Gust of Wind* by photographer Jeff Wall, with water and ice added, and vigorously shaken."

A chilling scene on what is no longer a hot day. We are looking out at the central equilateral rectangular parallelogram or, if you prefer, an equilateral rectangular quadrangle with two pairs of parallel sides, i.e., a square. A perfect square in a Platonic sense, but in an experiential sense, filled with Brownian motion as people are, all ass 'n elbows, fleeing. One poor child cries loudly as we retreat back inside the sheltering museum. Ichi tries to calm me down by mentioning that a hip Gold Coast sushi bar, Neo-Sushi, serves a saki-based cocktail dubbed "Sudden Gust of Wind". I say it'd be more appropriate served at a cool Tex-Mex joint, Maria Elena, where a solitary shipwrecked saxophone rests upright on its brass stand. His expression goes blanko. "The beans," I explain, "the beans, toot-toot, wind." He nods a silent *Ahhhhhhh, I get it now — dumb!*

While chaos rains outside, we make our way through the museum crowds to the bookstore — whose notoriously elitist purchasing agent ignores faculty-authored books — postponing lunch. A delay disheartening as our good lunches, visits to museum cafes, and attended art receptions are usually prefaced with flutes of prosecco, and we surely need that bubbly now. Ichi and I make our separate ways through the modest book collection almost hidden in a back room, the main part of the store being stuffed with more saleable gift items, like umbrellas that have emblazoned on them Caillebotte's famous rainy day.

I run my fingers over the new book spines, making a strange sound that sends me in a flash back to my weekly trips to the local town library of my childhood. I see twelve-year-old self grabbing for a large, thick hardcover blue book (I leave it to the reader to "concretize" this blue as either azure, cobalt, or navy). Then I notice I have my eager hand on a similarly colored and sized tome from the museum store. It has an unusual title, so I pull it out for closer examination, *"But I Forget That I Am a Painter and Not a Politician": The Letters of George Caleb Bingham* edited by Lynn Wolf Gentzler and compiled by Roger E. Robinson. Evidently, this nineteenth-century American painter had one eye on his canvases, the other on political office.

I scan the Introduction, which informs me Bingham was Missouri State Treasurer during the Civil War, and comments that, "One could speculate that the painter became so involved with his second career because on some level he



## Finding Mememo

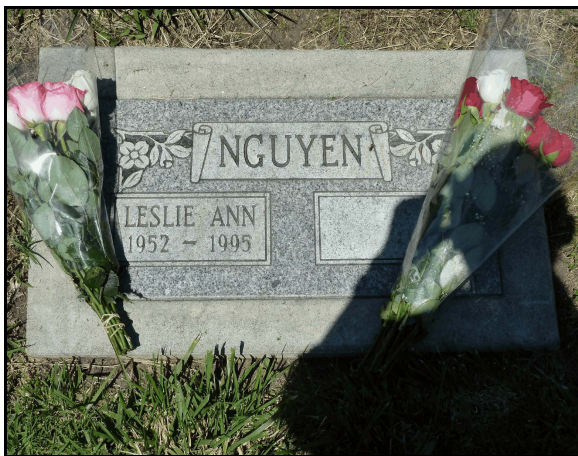
couldn't take his art any further." I don't like that painter's work, so I pull out another book. It's filled with Bruegels. I love Bruegel. Hard to believe it's been 453 years since he painted *The Triumph of Death*, as it seems an accurate foretaste of our current horrors.

As a large woman carefully navigates her way between me and the bookshelf, I spy, across the aisle, Ichi waxing dithyrambic to the young girl with an eager face who mans (womans?) the cash register over the latest issue of *Aperture* magazine. I can see from the cover it's devoted to Japanese photography. I later find out what all the excitement was, it contains a perceptive article by the Chicago's "Center for Art Detention's" [ed., *Hy copped this phrase from Ishmael Reed*] new photo curator on Takuma Nakahira's photography. Ichi, new purchase in hand, points out a passage: " 'Has Photography Been Able to Provoke Language?' Nakahira asked in March 1970 . . . ," near the time that photobook, *For a Language to Come*, appeared. Ichi knows the importance of this statement for both of us, its formative influence on each of our aesthetics for the last forty years.

He is one book up on me now. He's always managed to out-buy me. He has a book by Ryuichi Kaneko on collecting Japanese photobooks and has been single-minded in filling his book shelves with them. He's been specializing in finding such books produced after The Great T hoku Earthquake (March 11, 2011), simply referred to as "3/11" in Japan. Poor me, I am still scanning the shelves here for a find. Most times when I'm in a bookstore, I know I have a destiny with a special book, I just need to find it. *May the force be with me*, I think, relaxing, all the better to *feel* the books. This "vibe" technique has a 93 percent success rate.

I first employed it in Los Angeles on a visit to Chatterton's Bookstore on

Vermont Avenue. This was in the mid-1970s. That store was *the place* to find avant-garde lit and poetry; luckily, it was situated next door to the famous Los Feliz Theatre. The art films my sister and I and our artist buds saw at that vintage movie house while consuming massive volumes of popcorn were such gems as: *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, *Zabriskie Point*, *Roma*, *L'Avventura*, *Breathless*, *Zazie dans le Métro*, *Alphaville*, *Shoot*



Hy sister's grave in Northern California

## Finding Mememo

*the Piano Player*, *Les Carabiniers*, and other French films, many featuring seductively wet Parisian streets — a feature of Paris that Ichi told me Nakahira liked. These screenings were often preceded by dining a block away at a Vietnamese restaurant. All such delights were only a half-mile from my sister's apartment in the charming Los Feliz area, which she shared with a Vietnamese man she later married. My most cherished memories of my "Stir" are from this era. She used say, "What is normal? I feel normal is suspect, *abnormal*."

Anyway, I was in that store hunting *something* on 12/15/74. I knew it was something that would have an impact on my creative work. I didn't know what, precisely. So I stood facing the rows of books, then slowly walked the aisles, scanning the offerings. I did this for about fifteen minutes. I was sniffing, like a dog. My sister was becoming impatient. She'd already found three poetry books. Suddenly, I sensed it, felt it before I actually saw it. I turned and reached out, almost blindly. It was a slim scholarly book, *Mallarmé* by Wallace Fowle elucidating how the *conscience mallarméenne* experiences the world. I opened it at random and read: "All creation of men are a struggle against the power of night and the power of dissolution." I was hooked. Upon later reading Fowle's citation of that poet's famous line, "All thought emits a throw of the dice," that poet's intuition became my mantra. But that's not all. Right next to it, misplaced on the shelf, like a chance toss, was Allan Kaprow's (the Champion of Happenings) manifesto on art pedagogy, *The Education of the Un-Artist*. Both books had profound effects upon my thinking. From that day on I just seemed to find the right book at the right time to stimulate my creativity.



Ichi's book purchase

Damn! Ichi is now glomming onto the last copy of a new edition of William Klein's photobook, *Tokyo 1961*. I think, *Got to get it together*. Then I see it. *Photography and the Art of Chance* by Robin Kelsey. Its back cover blurb says it's an academic romp across art history, the history of philosophy and science, psychology, and the crap tables of street photography where a lucky shot rewards one with fame. The last time I had such a thrill in a find was when my eyes lit and alighted upon Arthur and Marilouise Kroker's *Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America*. I think my luck today has died out, but as I step aside to make room for yet another browser, noticing a large bump on the man's neck, by sheer good fortune find myself nose-to-spine with *The Age of the Crisis of Man: Thought and Fiction in American, 1933-1973*.

The dust-jacket confirms my memory. The author, Mark Greif, was the same guy who gave me so much relief, but to obsessive joggers so much grief,

## Finding Mememo

in a much-noticed article I read in  $n+1$ , a journal of which he's the founding editor. The witty ditty was "Against Exercise", and lampooned runners with gems like: "Running is most insidious because of its way of taking proselytizing out of the gym. . . . The runner can oppose sociability and solitude [enjoyed by casual walkers] by publically sweating on them [as he shoots by them]." I *loved* that piece. When I run with my friend Jym, we do it at the gym, an institution Greif calls "a voluntary hospital" of heart monitors, blood pressure and stress tests. I buy Greif's tome, so now Ichi and I are even-steven on our book purchases.



A cop enjoying his occupation



Ichi 's postcard: Raijin, God of Storms

A few months later, perusing the Web for videos of police brutality, I find a Google link to Issue 22 of Greif's journal and notice on his site a link to his latest essay "Seeing Through Police: The donut is equivocal." I read it. It's a more serious piece in which he again explores the space of public interaction, but this time between police and the public: "A gray-haired professor of history I know put his hand on the top rail of a metal police barrier, at a protest, as one will do when standing still. An officer forbade him to touch it. All macho, the historian refused to move his hand. The policeman smashed it with his baton, splitting the flesh but not breaking the bone. That was a conflict over the reciprocation of touch: the rail and the baton were proxies. The unspoken rule is that the citizen must never return touch." What is common to both essays is Greif's sustained interest in the perturbations of public space by people assuming authority. The jogger assumes a certain authority requiring people to "make way"; the police represent the state's authority to demarcate and

enforce restricted zones within what should be public space. The use, particularly the abuse, of power is a fact of existence which, as I put it to Ichi in Dallasese: "Rawzes me blood pressure 'n torques me jaw." (Ah, Dallas! He let's you see patches of his unprimed canvas peeking through his real.)

My wife traces that animus back to my authoritarian father and finds it exemplified in my pet slogan LOTH TO OBEY / LOTH TO COMMAND. She, I think perceptively, says my interest in the art of the incarcerated and my budding friendship with another professor who has written a book on the representation of prisoners stems from this "thing" I have about authority as manifested in its various forms: my wacko father's dictates, strict Catholic schooling, military

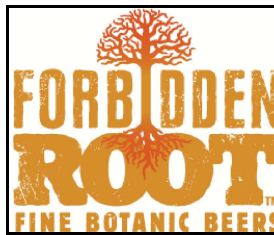
## Finding Mememo

service, graduate school, and later academia, even marriage.

But now I'm in the cashier's line. Ichi is leisurely awaiting me by the postcards (he signs his cards to me "Your partner-san in crime"), absent-mindedly turning the rack as he looks at 5 x 7-inch miniatures of artwork ranging from the Lascaux caves to Andy Warhol. He stops at one point, pulls out a postcard, hands it to me, asking to include it in my purchases. "Buy ya lunch in return." It's a wood carving, a sculpture depicting Raijin, the fearsome Shinto god of lightning, thunder, and storms. "Appropriate given the weather today," he whispers in my ear and winks. I thought it looked like a cop about to strike demonstrators (see previous page).

Now for lunch. But the scene at the inner square courtyard restaurant is still too chaotic. CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE the sign on the door says. Dodging the homeless guy hawking *Streetwise*, we cross Michigan Avenue to a new eatery founded by sommelier Alpana Singh (of "Check Please" TV fame), Seven Lions. The name pays homage to the lion statues guarding the Art Institute, as well as the 50 lions adorning the façade of the restaurant's Daniel Burnham-designed building. It's also a callback to Singh's surname, which means "lion" in Sanskrit, and her grandmother, who called her children her "seven lions".

All this wordplay surrounding a restaurant pulls me irresistibly to it, where large numbers of thirty-somethings are wolfing down large burgers with their craft-beers, but we oldsters opt for healthy fare. I have a Cobb Salad and Ichi a seared Tuna Nicoise. We both have diet Cokes. If I'd let my dietary guard down and had their draft Forbidden Root — Chicago, IL (5.5%). I'd soon have slipped into a flecked and grainy sleep, pushing my A1C further toward type 2 diabetes.



Our lunch chatter blended with fifty other lunch chatters punctuated by CNN news on the large TV screens and a loud-speaker announcing things like: "The table for Koob-Sassen party of five is ready." My lunch-mate went off into a political rant, from the history of the demise of the progressive tax since Reagan and Thatcher, to this gem: "In the last stage of the discourse of man, the televised smiley face, rather than George Orwell's 1984's boot forever stamping on a man's face, has become a symbol of our future."

Looking around, I see diners here have on their personae: 80 percent with smiley-faces, 20 percent stoically thumbing iPhones (aging is gradually building my persona). Ichi, pointing around us, whispers, "Murrrrrrrrrrrrrrrenials, they just kill me, Meme-san!" He knows I love it when he messes with English, knows I'm addicted to Engrish.com for its schizo-writing possibilities.



## Finding Mememo



Commanding the table next us are two male representatives of “Generation Why?” Why, indeed! One is white, bearded, with long dreadlocks. The other is black, sporting a hip curly fade-cut. From their conversation and their logoed tote-bags, I, like Sherlock Holmes, deduce they’re philosophy grad stu-



dents from my school.

Dreads: “I always wondered why our undergrad teachers just tossed the know-how to us, why they didn’t care whether we learned or not. I found that the supposed knowledge pushed at us too damn arcane; stripped of its terms and the fuckin’ private academic codes, it could be learned in a few weeks.”

Fade-cut: “Yah, that wouldn’t need four years. Those were suffered so that they could, by attrition, weed out the rebels and dissidents. It’s the Tao of Compliance. The way the Man has made sure people who enter their professions are groomed to serve their System. How’d we slip by, huh? Or did we?”

Dreads: “Yah, hadn’t been for our school needin’ to keep their coffers filled, we’d a been toast long ago.”

Fade-cut: “And we knew just how far we could push it, didn’t we?”

I look at Ichi to see if he’d overheard this. His eye movements reply in the affirmative. We begin to revisit our own encounter with higher education. I told him as a student I was drawn to every subject — Religion, Music, Art, Architecture, Literature, Linguistics, et cetera [*et cetaeca, aquatic mammals, in the original, a typical Meme pun*] — but understood Philosophy on the one hand, and Photography on the other as practices that could subsume all the others.

“I began to patch something together out of my own procedure,” Ichi revealed. “I teach myself, it become my style, my art, my process. I tell you of *fut k*, the high truancy rates in Japan? Well, when other kids go to Patchinko parlor, I go to library or visit art galleries.” He doesn’t elaborate. As a Japanese, although in this country for decades, he still speaks indirectly, uses ambiguous language. To express oneself too clearly in his culture would be regarded as a display of superiority. Before becoming more assimilated, he once told me, “I wear my *y fuku*, Western clothes, as a mask for my kimono-self.”

Ichi goes on to relate a funny, albeit racial, incident. “For my freshman Introduction to Art class, I write term paper title *Mono No Aware*. Of course, it concern Japanese aesthetic in which beauty not logically considered, but root in feeling, that is, something seeming worthless can be regard with great appreciation. Well, this art instructor at first thought, just reading title, I mix up my

## Finding Mememo

papers and asks me, “Hey Sushi, ain’t this meant for your PE class or sumptin’? I mean, you’re right to point out that students are ridiculously ignorant of mono and how it’s contracted. Shit, I had ‘kissing disease’ myself once, but . . . ”

I listen and munch on the dry yolk of a hard-boiled egg, my eyes are drawn from my friend to a young female business-type across the aisle. She’s been performing an angry stop-start rub-a-dubbing of one of her feet against the other, so that her right high-heel shoe’s toe, its outer edge, moves up and down, stops, and then up and down again, machine-like, against the side-arch of its neighbor. I can’t stop watching as the repetitive motion has me flashing on any hundreds of film clips from Machine Aesthetic era films like Dziga Vertov’s *The Man with a Movie Camera*. Which reminds me, my sister and I took a college film history course. She was five years my junior, but my four-year military service put me back in my schooling and we ended up in the same institutional of higher learning; we decided to take mutual classes, telling people we were married (same last name). I recall, with a smile, that she always referred to Dziga as “Ziggy Vertox”.

In thinking about this, muse on the fact that we require experience to stay ahead, with only by a nose, of our *consciousness* of experience. Yes, I am drawn to observing people’s nervous ticks, that moment when the easy flow of being human morphs into mere mechanism. That Frenchy, Henri Bergson, had seen comic potential in such. Chaplin in *Modern Times*, of course.



Humphrey Bogart in *The Big Sleep* (1946)

We pass up the dessert. While sipping our Intelligensia coffee, we silently peruse our bookly treasures. I awake to the fact I’m annoying a guy to the right of me with my manic book thumbing. Even Ichi pulls his glasses down a little on his nose and looks over the frames at me sternly. In a flash of lightning that quivers on the horizon between now and my past, his gesture calls forth its more comic iteration by Bogart feigning a pedantic

bookworm in a famous scene from *The Big Sleep* (1946). I become aware of my tic and stop. If I could only explain, no *spin*, my need to perform this act. I need a spin doctor. After all, this is the country where something is successful in direct proportion to how it’s put over, how its gamed. *How can I game this shit*, I think.

Due to our lunch delay and our leisurely late-lunch, in what was supposed to be a day of fragrant breezes, it’s already time to depart the Loop before the lalapalooza of rush-hour madness finds cars bugging out from underground garages, descending from concrete high-rise hives, and leaking out from lots of

## Finding Mememo

lots. Our waiter's profession is aptly named. He's a *waiter*, one who makes people wait. And we wait and wait and wait for the bill. Finally, we go to the cash register lady and — surprise, surprise — it's Alpana herself manning the cash. We pay and exit; she gives us a good wine tip, Eseldorf Riesling '09. It's now 4:05 p.m. Ten minutes later we are screaming west in my spanking new Mazda 3 hatchback on I-290, slaloming around construction cones, hellbent for my studio with no view. On the A.M. News, reports of a young actress jumping from a window in a New York hotel after putting a notice on her room's door knob: SUICIDE IN PROGRESS, DO NOT DISTURB, suffering a severe case of *felo-de-se*.

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: Experiential patterns are unique. Individuated rhythm accounts for individuality. It is rhythm, time as inner gravitation and tension, which is the underlying unity in Hy's work. This can be manifest at the micro level of syllables (e.g., his use of alliteration) and at the macro level of semantics (e.g., the rapid changes in Chicago weather and global climate as a trope for mental agitation).*



Hy's History of Art mug

*Hy told Ichi that the relative stability of climate in Southern California, where he had lived for thirty years, meant each month's weather report held for that month: October had its own weather report, so did December, so did April, et cetera. But in the Midwest, the daily weather was bipolar: calm and cool one minute, manic and hot*

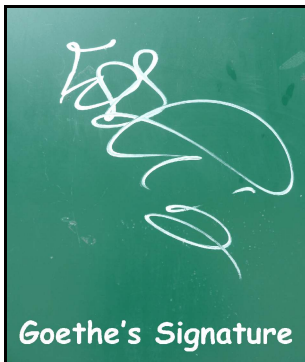
*the next — like his cyclothymic father's changeable climate. When the 6 p.m. Chicago news came on, Hy admitted he would be riveted to TV's Klystron Five doppler radar for the latest update, his "history of art" coffee mug in hand. Hy loved that cup.*

*Lying halfway between those bipolar extremes is active contemplation. Hy once used San Francisco's weather as a trope for such in an elliptical narrative he wrote, weaving weather, memory, and high dining (not diving) together with the delights of working analytical geometry problems which, in turn, involve subtle caresses between geometry (space) and algebra (time):*

For Don Bourbaki, 'The City,' as locals call it, attempts to overlay Cartesian coordinates on a series of hills. It lives in his memory vividly, as the summer of love in Haight-Ashbury, a thriving zone for Hippies, nestled among the great hills, where the fogs (oh, those fogs!) are spun from ocean air and the sunlight refracts from Montgomery Street's countless glass windows. Where he'd walk in crisp air with his Leica, a bota bag of Lambrusco around his neck, the disorder of associations between his

## Finding Mememo

steps, a small pack holding a just-bought book, on his way to Fisherman's Wharf to lay a buck down for malt vinegar-splashed fish 'n chips wrapped in yesterday's newspaper, then find his favorite cranching-bench<sup>1</sup> (where the cable cars describe a perfect circle for their return trip to Market and Powell) to watch ships drawing straight lines on a flat sea. But now the place felt alien, slick as Abu Dhabi in its top layer, with Bluetooth and Google Glass cyborgs strolling beneath glass towers. A Paradise Lost. (Unpublished, "The Birch-Swinnerton-Dyer Conjecture")



Castello Scaligero, Malcesine, Italy

*Eschewing post-modern writer Donald Barthelme's dictum to avoid using weather in one's writing, Hy uses such in this second section (the capricious designs of a March rain-storm) as an objective-correlative to his own (and others) inner drives. It is also a knowing*

*wink at Sturm und Drang (German: "Storm and Stress"), a late-eighteenth century German literary movement that exalted nature, feeling, and human individualism and sought to overthrow the Enlightenment cult of Rationalism. Goethe and Schiller began their careers as prominent members of the movement. Given Hy's sympathy toward his movement and themes developed in this section, I don't think it was mere coincidence*

---

1. The term "cranching" Hy derived from the 1950 sci-fi story, "Scanners Live in Vain" by Cordwainer Smith (an odd name Hy took to). The story, Dorinda said, had an enormous influence on him. The plot is set circa A.D. 6000. Humanity has colonized planets around other stars, but interstellar travel is constrained by the mysterious "First Effect", which causes the "Great Pain of Space" and induces a death wish in humans (what Hy called his own sufferings at home under the thumb of his paranoid father). Passengers on interstellar voyages are stored in cold sleep, while the crew of the spaceship is composed of Habermans (a cutting reference to the cold equations of intellectuals like Jürgen Habermas?): convicts and other riff-raff who have undergone an operation in which the brain is severed from all sensory input except that from the eyes. This blocks the Pain of Space but puts them somewhere between human and machine, with zombie-like behavior and disturbed psyches, dependent on constant monitoring and adjustment of their vital functions via implanted dials and regulatory instruments.

The Habermans are supervised in space by Scanners, who undergo the operation voluntarily; they are permitted, unlike the Habermans, to monitor themselves and are respected by themselves and others as essential to keeping the space lanes open and uniting the Earths of Mankind. The Scanners (Hy identified with them) live a horribly lonely and difficult life, punctuated by brief intervals of *cranching* — use of a device that temporarily restores normal neural connectivity. They compensate by maintaining a fanatically elitist confraternity, with secret rituals and body language, absolute loyalty (like existed between Hy and all his close friends), and a demand for autonomy maintained by the threat that "No ships go" (in sci-fi space ships are usually seen as akin to sea-going ships) if any Scanner is wronged. No Scanner has abused or has ever killed another Scanner (unlike academics).



## Finding Mememo

*I found a jpeg file on Hy's flash-drive featuring Goethe's signature.*

*Examination of its GPS data confirms it was taken on a May trip to Lago di Garda, Italy, specifically in Malcesine, home to a famous castle, which Goethe was seen sketching from a boat and mistakenly imprisoned briefly as an Austrian spy in 1786. I apprised Ichi of this and he wrote back that Hy sent him that image and that he, in turn, shot back to Hy a jpeg of a Barbara Morgan photograph taken back in the 1940s that looked similar: white squiggly lines on a black background, a time exposure made while she "painted" with a flashlight. "Hy went nuts! He really got high on such homologues — even if they were 'false-friends' in academic parlance — between language and imagery," Ichi confided.*

*The more he and I shared, it gradually became apparent that this kind of exchange was typical of the dialogics operative between him and Hy. They fed upon each other in perfect symbiosis, despite their marked differences. "Hy once described our relationship thus: 'There is a disparity between a ship's bells and the time on a watch, but both are equally accurate and can coexist, yes?' Interesting, huh?" Without his other half, Ichi confessed, he felt unbalanced. "I'm a man minus a leg who has to limp on making jpegs with a peg leg."*

*Hy and I wondered if the mortal events related in this section sparked Hy to start this book wherein he reflects on his own life; might they have played a role in his supposed suicide, hari-kari by nose-dive (the modern Japanese's preferred method)?*



*House of Games (1987)*

*Lastly, in the final paragraphs of this section, Hy draws our attention to personal time in himself and in others. His interest in people's little ticks jives with *Dallas*' and my own curiosity about what people do unconsciously that might be revelatory.*

*Dallas, sitting in an office swivel chair that squeaks and teeters so idiosyncratically that eating a bowl of Sugar Pops or a cup of hot ramen becomes something of a sea-going adventure, pointed out that in David Mamet's *House of Games* (1987), Joe Mantegna, playing a card shark con*

*man, clues us all into recognizing such "tells".*

*Makes me wonder, don't writers have "verbal tells" that the critic can become aware of and elucidate? If so, what were Hy's verbal tells, his verbal ticks? I know a mental tick that suggested a smidgen of paranoia: after the awful incident at the Museum as related in section three, he confided to Ichi it might have been staged to intimidate him. Ichi then related this to me. We both thought nothing of it, thought it funny, but after Hy's fatal fall new dimensions in our understanding began to open up.*

\* \* \*

# Finding Mememo

4



I just got done talking to Jym, my moniker for a friend who is often at the gym when I phone him. He'd answer, "Just ran three miles," or "Done an hour on the machines." Today, it's "Can't chat; gotta do my stuff." By stuff he meant his Yoga: the Cobra, the Fish, the Lion, the Lotus, the Tree, the Voyeur's Pose, the Adept's Pose, the Wheel Pose, the Crow's Pose, the Reclining Hero's Pose, and the Critic's Pose, an invented variation on the Voyeurs. Besides being my most physically fit friend, he's my favorite chess partner and shares my "thing" about that British shamus, Sherlock Holmes. Even one of his colleagues is named



Maureen Sherlock, a specialist in an area Holmes would've been fascinated with, the art and voodoo rituals of a Caribbean island located 18.5 N x 72.3 W [*ed., Haiti*]. An academic who teaches in the art history area, Jym's office is right up Michigan Avenue from my school, across the street from Chicago's famous Center of Art Detention [*ed., The Art Institute Museum*].

Before I actually met Jym, I saw him several times at my favorite jazz club, Mumbo Jumbo Cathedral on South Clark. He must have been around 48 years then. Around 5' 9", medium build. Brown hair, graying. He caught my attention with his manic foot tapping and the stream of cocktail waitresses bringing him and his wife a constant supply of gin and tonics. At that time, he sported a beard and moustache. Now only his 'stache survives due to facial radiation treatments after having had a cancerous parotid gland excised. I discover, upon our first meeting, he is an art critic. Once a contributing editor to

## Finding Mememo

a now defunct local art mag, *The Benign Monster*, he was eventually hired as their Midwest Editor and Production Manager, but quit after six months. Why? It's an interesting story.

The tale involves a not-so-benign thirty-something female Senior Editor who wore rimless glasses, sported a chipped tooth, wild hair, who first told him, "I like the way your mind works; let's hang out." But a few weeks into the job, Jym was toting a Thermos bottle of gin as a countermeasure to her pitch-dark personality. She had a tendency to scream, claw at the air, and do a mad dance, then dash to open a large window on the tenth floor office space and cage herself out on the fire escape, a wild-eyed feral protoplasm pacing back and forth. Now and then she'd stop, arms akimbo, and hyperventilate. After ten minutes she'd be back at her editor's desk as if nothing had happened. The frequency of this performance increased proportionally as it came time to go to press. Jym's gin consumption increased proportionally with the number of her performances. When he found himself bringing *two* Thermoses to work, he threw in the towel (staying within the gym theme), or jumped ship (to keep the sea theme going) — your choice. Just one of many adventures recorded in his unpublished *Gin/Jym Diary* that he's related to me over the years. Another was about his wife's frustrated attempt at writing a novel involving a shopping mother, an activist son, a deceased unionist father, and a homebound, skeptical daughter.

Usually his most interesting yarns were delivered during our chess matches. I think he hoped to distract me. It didn't work. I usually won. Although, as he often got White in the draw (better than 50 percent of the time) and pulls out his favorite weapon, the Ruy Lopez opening, the battles were hard fought. Our field of honor was a large Formica table in our unofficially reserved booth in the south-east corner of the Artist's Café in the Fine Arts Building next door to Louis Sullivan's Auditorium Building. That eatery, run by a Greek family, used to be full of film buffs about to attend the now defunct Fine Arts Theatre. We went to eat at that place at least once a week, rain or snow. It's usually filled with pedants, unresilient students, and shabbily-dressed tourists (it has a good reputation on TripAdvisor) willing to be flimflammed into over-paying as they hope to spot artists at the watering trough. Yes, it's over-priced, but convenient. Jym often had their grilled cheese sandwich with home-made chips, said it tasted like his favorite childhood lunch fare as served by his mom.

We actually met because I was researching a new course I was supposed to team-teach with someone from the Criminal Justice department. The proposed title was "Art and Incarceration". It was to be cross-listed in my Liberal Studies department and in the Criminal Justice program. The other instructor lent me a copy of a thick book exploring art, photography, and video of, and by, prisoners. I turned the tome over and to my astonishment saw on the back cover the same

## Finding Mememo

jazz-loving face I'd spied in the Mumbo Jumbo Cathedral slugging down his gin and tonics. I was compelled to look him up.

Our initial meeting was at the very booth where we, The Eclectic Society, now play chess—'n-chat. Within minutes it was obvious we had similar cognitive styles. He mixed down-to-earth talk with intellectualism, a kind of vernacular scholarship. Had theories about all things high and low; undogmatic and independent left-wing views; and, not least, was his love of wordplay. The rest is, as they say, "history". We silently acknowledged each other as permanent residents of an underpopulated intellectual alternate dimension.

"It's difficult to make others understand me," I said. "I do not live the way they do. They are in space, like fish in water. Not me. I am lurking in a hole in the river bed. I am here and, yes, not the way *they* are," and nodded toward the gaggle of diners around us. He appeared to intuit it. Despite this elective affinity between us, I kept a cautious distance. Our meetings were never ever never ever ever never on one another's turf. *Klar?!!!!*



A Bertillon mug shot with measurements

Over the next several weeks, warming the booth's cushions during a cold winter, he pulled from his files faint photographs, mottled with chemicals, looking like the left hand of some spinster aunt. Some are pre-fingerprint Bertillon mug shots; some reproductions of inmate art; even a complete photobook done by a prisoner in Iowa State Penitentiary in the late 1950s hoping for an early parole.

Despite our frequent exchanges as students of good letters, it was only years later I felt close enough to him to share family matters. We began by musing over old snapshots. Once, he pulled out a poorly focused record of himself as a teenager tuning his massive short-wave radio, "Listening to Radio Moscow, or maybe Quito, Ecuador." He was rhapsodic over his old SW Listener hobby, his 200-ft. antenna, the many QSL cards gleaned from faraway stations in reply to his reports on their signal's strength, et cetera. I took this to be his penchant for "auditory voyeurism". He went on to mention wanting to be a ham radio operator using the tag "Roger Wilco", a guy who could broadcast and not just receive. Then he blushed, afraid he'd revealed himself too deeply.

Not to be outdone, at our next meeting (over the years they've become a kind of TED talk for *tres amigos*), I displayed a snazzy backlit shot of myself on during my stint in the Air Force 1967 - 71 as a base photographer, boasting of my around-the-world-in-week flight to document what military airlift crews



## Finding Mememo



"Roger Wilco" and his Hammarlund Super Pro receiver

accomplish servicing world-wide U.S. embassy personnel. Then, with a sigh, I wax sentimental: "Used to sit on the large hypo barrel in the dim darkroom, reflecting on my past, pondering my future, even getting a bit morbid: "For the heart, life is simple; it beats for as long as it can. Then it, boom, stops. We watch things pass by in order to forget that they are watching us die."

Jym nodded his head, picking up the poetic tone. "Ah, time is slipping away from *me*, runnin' through my fingers. So I hold onto memories, trying to plug the leak." A confession that

is accompanied by restaurant Muzak, a song whose refrain is, comically appropriate: "You Sway So Sweetly". Rather than laughing though, this dollop of sentimentality touched me deeply. The topic of death hangs in the air between us, a kind of dark humidity we could feel.



Hy Grader's postcard of John Donne in his funeral shroud on back of which he's cited French philosopher Gaston Bachelard on time: "It is the insertion of man with his limited life span that transforms the continuously flowing stream of sheer change . . . into time as we know it."

Here he took the opportunity to update me on his ongoing chess match with death [*ed., a wink at the famous scene in Bergman's The Seventh Seal*] during treatment for salivary gland cancer. Attempting to lighten the grim topic, we jokingly agreed we wanted our respective hearts to stop during a cinema performance at Chicago's Gene Siskel Film Center. Enjoying some gallows humor, we quibbled over what fatal feature it'd be: *The Seventh Seal*? *It's a Wonderful Life*? *The Big Sleep*? *Dark Victory*? *Harold and Maude*? *The End*? *Death in Venice*? *Talk to Her*? *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*? When I list Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, he gets a quizzical look on his face as if confronting the Sphinx. This expression lasted only a second before Meme amped up the morbidity quotient of our exchange by telling me that "poet John Donne commissioned a portrait of himself in a funeral shroud, contemplating it during his final days.

## Finding Mememo

One helluva *memento mori*, huh?"

"Yah, Meme, now *that's* morbid!" I replied and asked him if he's familiar with the work of the late poet Mark Strand. He wasn't. So I recited a poetic tidbit, a late poem in Strand's *oeuvre*, *The Next Time*. It goes:

*Time slips by; our sorrows do not  
turn into poems,  
And what is invisible stays that  
way. Desire has fled.*

*Leaving only a trace of perfume  
in its wake,  
And so many people we loved  
have gone, . . .*

There was a long silence . . . In our mid-sixties, we've lost many friends and relatives. Aging. Bone-clocks. The dark hand behind our mounting bodily pains.

I told him I've seen only a few dead bodies. Never any relatives. I wanted to remember them only as alive. I could not imagine scrutinizing a face frozen in death that I knew intimately as a *pour-soi* and now seen in an unhindered, objective way that revealed the loved one as changed into an *en-soi*<sup>2</sup>. So my only experience with that yellowy complexion and lost elasticity of skin, which made their faces appear to be carved wood, which forbade intimacy, was of my friends' relatives and several dead Air Force personnel I had to photograph for official purposes. He told me of seeing a dead uncle in a funeral home at an age when his tiny head barely touched his father's belt buckle — freaked him out. But later, as a member of his high school's medical club, he witnessed, with fascination, an autopsy of a just-deceased patient from a myocardial infarction. Continued on to pre-med studies at U.C.L.A. until military service intervened.

This got us onto the topic of funeral homes and the preparation of the dead. Jym made an interesting observation, "Ever notice that all funeral homes are on the first floor? No one ever presses an elevator button to see their loved ones. The dead are kept close to ground." We mused about why this was. Something about death, crypts, and the earth. Earth to earth, dust to dust.

---

2. Hy early dived into the depths of Sartrean Existentialism with its pride in solitary consciousness, where the "in itself" (*en-soi*) refers to things in the world that simply are, inert, passive, not open to change. They can be identified, defined, objectified and have an "essence." The "for-itself" (*pour-soi*), on the other hand, refers to consciousness as "no-thing-ness" because it cannot be defined, doesn't settle into a stable identity, is always changing, always becoming something else by the choices made. The Existentialist hero (e.g., *cool* noir actor Bogart) resists determinism.

## Finding Mememo

Both our parents were cremated. In between sips of coffee, I recalled the surreal experience of driving to an empty parking lot, meeting the somber-suited director suffering dandruff on his shoulders, getting a formal handshake, then the awkward request for the ashes, like a teenager asking a druggist for condoms; finally, nervously signing the forms in triplicate before an aging secretary sporting square glasses, short dyed hair, over-applied make-up that gave her more a mask-like appearance than a human physiognomy. Then the pacing, the waiting alongside another bereaved customer. A broad-shouldered man half a head shorter than me with hair fuzzing on the nape of his neck. *Why is this taking so long?* Meta-thoughts. *Why am I worrying that this is taking so long? Is he worrying that I'm worrying that it is taking so long as he worries this is taking so long?* Finally, ceremoniously handed the container with chalky remains. Shock at its size, a human body reduced to something you could hold in your hands like your parents once were able when you were a baby.

"My father's ashes — he was an immense man — took a big plastic container. My mom's was half the size and weight," Jym confided. "Had emphysema, a chain-smoker who felt an urgent need to smoke when smoking. I find smoke smell repugnant. Saw her the day before she died. Her slumping dress top revealed ribs shining through skin; her shoulder blades and hips stuck out; arms were no more than skin and bone; blood vessels ran across the backs of her hands like thin, dark blue cables. In her presence all I could think was that I couldn't think about what I should be thinking about. As Austrian writer, Thomas Bernhard, put it, 'Everything is ridiculous, when one thinks of Death'."

Wiping cheese off our lips, we got into the topic of "last lips", i.e., words mumbled when near death. Like Christ's Last Words on the Cross and photographers — white and black, nineteenth and twenty-first century — who have re-

enacted such. Tell him my dad's last utterance: "O Lord, there's such a chill. Can someone pop me a happy pill?" Jym recalls his father's, delivered the day just before he submerged into a coma never to re-surface: " 'You are my hero.' The most complimentary words my dad ever addressed to me. Healed years and years of tension between us."



Detail, *Seven Last Words of Christ* (1898) F. Holland Day

## Finding Mememo

Our exchange petered out when in the booth behind, a father and son — presumably, down-staters in town for a ball game, they sport White Sox caps — who've been talking in low tones, now rise to disruptive audibility:

"He did his best," said in a tone that sounded like a sob ascending his spinal cord.



K.I.A. U.S. soldier, Iraq

"No, he didn't. He died, son. He died for nothing. Your gal's brother was a fucking idiot to join. You hear of the term 'Poverty Draft?' Well, it's true. But you, you got a job on our farm. Hell, you'll inherit it one day. If you can't be true to yourself, then be true to something that's been in the family for generations."

It brings the war-dead — abstractly covered by the media where it is massive, ubiquitous, inexhaustible — in painful realization. Death as an idea, the word "death" as *unreal*, now becomes *real*. You can't imagine what it must feel like to be a parent and lose a child to the power-dreams of unscrupulous politicians.

All this death talk. I feel we needed a turbo-boost or something. Cheer life on — and not with a Bronx cheer as so many do today. I quickly dropped into our discussion a redeeming fragment from Strand's poem, hoping it will restore us bibliophiles to good cheer:

*Ink runs from the corners of my  
mouth.  
There is no happiness like mine.  
I have been eating poetry.*

"Remember, there's a big diff between a poem-taster and a poetaster," I said, Jym's gaging laugh nearly choked him on his last bite of cheese sandwich (he prefers his poetry served up in prose with slash marks, no line breaks).

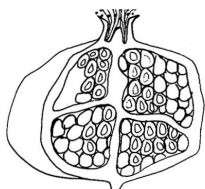


It was time to go. As I packed up my chess set, an illegal knock-off of Man Ray's 1920 original, Jym opened his notebook, tore out a sketch, signed it, and handed it to me, saying: "The pomegranate is a universal symbol of fruitfulness and good fortune. Just something to hang on your faculty office wall."

"Great! That fruit incarnates my aesthetic use of fragments, smaller, semi-autonomous entities, that I then unify within a larger whole. *Danke, mein*



## Finding Mememo



Herr. By the way, did Edward Weston ever photograph a halved pomegranate?”

We paid. Exiting we're jostled by a young girl in green painted-on-skin-like tights; watched two guys male bond by exchanging mock groin kicks. We stood looking out across Mich Ave toward Lago di Mich for a sec, just in time to see the sun suddenly sink behind a cloud, the bright green, gleaming grass and leaves in Grant Park go grayish, matte, drained of life, turning funereal. We exchanged knowing glances. Then Jym turned left, I right, each on to our respective teaching gigs with our semi-responsive students in rooms with the microscopic ping-pinging of fluorescents flickering before they die. I noticed a gardener in Grant Park riding a lawn mower, turning in his seat making sure he was following the line of the previous cut. I saw it as a metaphor for my own reflexive self-monitoring, self-making. BTW, British sociologist Anthony Giddens' theories on this topic has had a marked influence on my autobiographical writing.<sup>3</sup>



That night I had a dream: I'm wearing an old metal diver's helmet, something akin to what Captain Nemo wore in the Disney movie, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. I bestride the seabed with leaden shoes and a suit so thick it feels like I'm wearing elephant skin; an oxygen hose connects me to the surface and air. In this gear, I walk through scenes from my childhood. The suit appears to give me protection against my father's meteorology of mind, cold one minute then hot the next, rain then sun. A sunny and bright day where I find myself walking through a graveyard in Antigo, Wisconsin where my grandparents are buried. "Grampus", my beloved maternal grandpa, had just been buried the day before. My heavy, leaden diver shoes make deep impressions in the mowed lawn. As I'm standing before his headstone, the ground suddenly explodes into geysers of cold water, lawn sprinklers. I'm immune in my suit but still wonder: *Is it the dead pissing on me or lovingly*

*anointing me?*

---

3. Hy was, as they say, *into* Giddens. According this British sociologist, the self is 'made', rather than inherited or just passively static. He says that in our post-traditional order, self-identity becomes a reflexive project — an endeavor that we continuously work and reflect on. We create, maintain, and revise a set of biographical narratives — the story of who we are, and how we came to be where we are now.

Self-identity, then, is not a set of traits or observable characteristics. It is a person's own reflexive understanding of their biography. Self-identity has continuity — that is, it cannot easily be completely changed at will — but that continuity is only a product of the person's reflexive beliefs about their own biography.

## Finding Mememo



Hy's model train set could be slipped under his bed when not in use

Scene change. Suit protected, I safely see my father as I saw him when I was a five-year-old: a tall figure, someone invulnerable, to be feared. He's chewing me out. Next he's playing with me with the HO gauge model train set he built secretly in the basement over months, giving it to me on Christmas morn. But now he's spanking me.

Then he's telling me the stars in the

sky are peepholes in a wall. Later, he's giving me a map of Mars torn out of a 1952 *National Geographic* accompanied by a super-duper Martian-zapping Space Patrol-approved ray-gun.

Worked into this dream was a weird e-mail that showed up in my spam folder the day before: it dangles as a print-out on a fish hook inches from my diving helmet. I read:



Hy's childhood Ray-Gun

Happy X-Day, Contri butors!

As many of you recover from various 4th of July festivities, you might be surprised to discover that today is X-Day, the day that the Church of the SubGenius observes the end of the world. While there are many variations of SubGenius eschatology, a personal favorite is the theory that a covert group switched the orbits of Earth and Mars (some say in the 1950s and others say during WWII), and that we are, in fact, Martians. Everything on the real Earth has been destroyed. We only believe ourselves to be Earthlings thanks to a massive coverup and manipulation. In any case, we live in a time of premonitions of impending doom . . . so it might come as a relief to know that the end has already happened. For some of you, this will come as a relief. For those who have booked tickets to Mars, you will want to speak to your travel agent.

Scene change: my Uncle Bob posing on Christmas Day outside his Wisconsin lake cottage, Chicago and Northwestern train emblem belt-buckle

## Finding Mememo



Hy's "Unca Bob"

about his waist. Then I picture him dying of cancer: none of his words just come out anymore, every syllable is weighed and measured. My aunt is beside him, crying.

Most of the dream, though, is situated back when I called spaghetti *buh'-sketti* and scissors *skissors*. When my mom's poached egg on toast was called *Adam and Eve on a raft*. (Actually, I still call them that, but only in the presence of my wife.) Looking through another of the several small windows in the diving helmet, as if atoning for the sin of time-travel, I see myself in church as a teenager, kneeling in a large wooden box, talking dirty through a little window to our shocked pastor. I look out yet another small helmet window, seeing my dad now as much older, the skin around his eyes cracking like dry leather, forming fine closely set wrinkles. Peers, we share vulnerabilities and "throwness" toward the void, and reside in an adult world that is smaller and more rigidly constructed. Yet, his eyes remain the same; no less bright, no less green. I think, *Only the void will dim them*.

Ah, yes! In that dream, I dive back in time to when my world was boundless, unfathomable; the number of events were infinite and present time an open door. Days were jam-packed with meaning, each step opened new adventures, new things filled me to the brim — qualities of surprising experience I still try to channel through my aesthetic productions.

\*                      \*

*Editor's gloss: A vivid backstory to our meeting, yet strange to read something in which one plays a part. What you recall of the event, and what someone else recalls or thinks is important to relate is interesting. A comparison is in order. So I would like to subtitle this gloss, "Omissions", as I will focus on that aspect of Hy's narrative about our lunch meetings (including Dallas) as The Eclectic Society and what he didn't include.*

*During our first meeting, Hy confessed to being the type who, in his early teens, read Beckett, listened to jazz (a passion he shared with me and Ichi ), played chess and was often beaten up by dullards. His mind, he revealed, was CLOSED to gatherings of more than three people, but always intellectually OPEN for business. He called his bed "a boat I board every night only to be washed up on a white sheet beach in the morning."*

*In the meeting where we discussed mortality, he told me: "Crossing out your days before you live them can have an effect on the mind. Sometimes I cross out the new day before I start taking part in it." A chilling existential admission, I see it as a revealing "tell" for his engagement with time, with fate, with acknowledgment of a dying-within-life as an awaiting for The End. He personified death as "a shadowy dude wearing under a cape a dark suit and a dark-red tie, black shoes, and a white shirt, featuring ice-blue*

## Finding Mememo

eyes, black beard, and sallow complexion, who speaks in German." Probably why he turned his "thank you" for my pomegranate sketch into its German, "Danke, mein Herr." The wit behind that remark totally is lost without this morbid backstory.



description of what it was like to sit in a Japanese house, furnished simply, Spartan-like, with sliding doors and paper partitions that don't intrude into a room like our doors do; well-behaved Japanese children don't shove fingers or fists through an environment created for a neatness that begins to affect the mind and its relationship to the world. (This aesthetic appealed to Hy's interest in architecture and in French theorist Gaston Bachelard's musings on poetic space, space becoming translated in our words and how, in reverse, words become little houses with cellars and garrets. And how puns betray the hidden wishes of words).



Ford Sierra like the one that nearly hit Hy and Ichi

More omissions: Hy broaching the topic of his close friend Ichi Honne, an émigré from Japan in which he tells about a myriad of weird things concerning Ichi, like his carrying of 8 quarters, 6 dimes, and 45 pennies in a little leather pouch symbolizing the fateful date, August 6, 1945, of the first A-bomb dropped on Japan; that when he saw a puzzled expression on Meme-san's face, he'd utter, "What happen, you swarrow bubble gum?" I also deleted Hy's paraphrasing of Ichi's detailed description

"In such a lived context [i.e., a Japanese home]," Hy once told me, "Zen and Sushi and Haiku make perfect sense." Then he segued to funnier aspects of his friend. Like once, when a speeding blue Ford Sierra with UK plates nearly wiped him and Ichi out as they crossed Michigan Avenue on their way to the "Center of Art Detention", Ichi had yelled: "Wholly, Folllld Siewwa," jokingly exaggerating his Asian pronunciation as he was wont to do, describing the car, while simultaneously punning on "floored" (as in "flooring" a car's

accelerator). A bit of trivia: that car model was the only one built by Ford of Europe in the 1980s, so the UK plates indicated the "near-death car" was most likely built at Ford's Cork, Ireland plant. Some would say that event occurred because Ichi just happened to be wearing a T-shirt declaring: TOO MUCH DESIRE, TOO LITTLE HOPE.

Waxing eloquent on Ichi trivia, Meme mentioned another peculiarity. It seems on a photo-shoot in Skjolden, Norway Ichi became hooked on XL-1, a Norwegian energy drink. Thought it'd wash away the thought of the Grim Reaper. Hy said Ichi still drinks it; gets the elixir online via Amazon Prime (one day delivery guaranteed).



## Finding Mememo

Hy also let it be known that once during a visit to Ichi in Mad City, after his buddy was *nihonshu* *jabu jabu* (bathing in sake) after downing a bottle of his favorite unfiltered fermented rice (Daishichi "Yuki Shibori", from Fukushima), Ichi let it be known in uncertain terms that: "Art, it now come to be *unmade bed*, couple of photo-copiers in a room, a motorbike in attic. It come to be *spectator of itself* and does not know a *Beyond*. It be hanging itself like laundry over its own arm." Ichi must have been drunkenly railing against the materialism/conceptualism harbored in current practices, what is being called by some cognoscenti these days "*relational aesthetics*".<sup>4</sup>



Ironically, Hy was clad in a white T-shirt proclaiming: T-SHIRTS ARE THE NEW GALLERIES. I knew for a fact that Hy often wore wacky shirts or ties as a means of garnering favor with his students or annoying admin-types.

This is a trick he claimed he learned at his first teaching job at a Lutheran College situated in the west-

ern dusty-trail boonies of Southern California where *Segundo* cactus grew in gravel front yards in a neighborhood without one single tree. *Loco weed*, he told me, was known to sprout near student dormitories, with predictable results. The art department's chairman then, Prof. Weil O. Presser ("Old Gadget" to his Steampunk generation students), was a large-nosed, white-haired, elderly man of Austro-Scandinavian descent. After years of being underpaid, he was now stick-thin, nearing the tomb. A father to six grown kids, he still called them his "*fruit of the womb*". Hy'd breakfasted with him once and noted he ate: scrambled eggs, slices of fried ham, *limpa* toast with mango and strawberry jam, some salmon *pâté*, and strong coffee. Ergo, his thinness had to be the result of a very satisfied tape-worm residing in his disturbed gut. He taught a two-semester literature survey since time immemorial in which he said all literature could be classified as heterosexual (novels), homosexual (poetry), and bi-sexual (short stories), transgendered (sci-fi/fantasy). Despite his age, his class always filled since he provided free mini Mars bars, and he was the master of the pregnant pause. Absenteeism was unknown and no student was ever caught hiding his beer in a Big Slurpy cup, nor seen dozing (thanks to the candy bars). Every student had to buy the three hundred dollar textbook written by Presser. In return, student exam Blue Books were returned with grades marked in red marker with a higher than B- grade no matter what — something that didn't go unnoticed by a fledgling academic eager to succeed, one Hy Grader.

---

4. Relational aesthetics: a set of artistic practices which, says French theorist Nicolas Bourriaud, takes as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.

## Finding Mememo



Duchamp's door, 11 rue Larrey, serves two door frames

Hy attributed this classroom magic to the chairman's three-day-a-week presence at an old wooden lectern wearing a fat tie resplendent with small, colorful plastic fruit glued thereon. It didn't hurt that he'd always gave forth a smile as wide as a fjord (something he said he inherited from his mother) and lectured in a voice that boomed like a Roland Cube amplifier. His homilies turned Literature into a Big Joke. But to Hy, he'd only face him and give forth a knife-blade smirk.

Hy told me two of the guy's favorites: "Why did the Surrealist poet cross the road? (So the road could get back at him)." "Knock-knock? (Who's there?) A postmodern writer at Marcel Duchamp's door, 11 rue Larrey." And so forth. Welcoming new freshmen every September, he'd put on his HAPPINESS ONLY HAPPENS BY ACCIDENT bow-tie and give 'em the ol' Joy Buzzer trick handshake; sometimes if he noticed an effeminate kid in the classroom, he'd ask the class: "What do you get when you

cross a faggot with a fag? (No idea.) "Why, a pile of burning sticks!" Yep, being a super-strict Lutheran, he had his sexual prejudices, and was proud of 'em. (Ugh.) The admin couldn't dump him, tenured, and he (like J. Edgar Hoover) knew too many unsavory secrets about the higher-ups' improper sexual escapades.

Speaking of jokes, Hy, himself, was incapable of spontaneous, off-the-cuff jollity; maybe why every group he'd approach would instantly change the subject. His forte resided in puns or re-enacting someone else's humor, usually Dallas'. I'd say Meme was funny in a meta-funny sort of way. Dallas mercifully gave him a book I later saw in Hy's pitiful, pilfered office bookcase: The Best Jokes Explained.

\* \* \*

# Finding Mememo

5



It is spring tide and the caterpillars are alive and leering, their unviolated and recreated milkers in the structures of embers. The countryside returns from the abstract white void of winter's system. The multiple takes the place of the single. Life trusting in chance and loathing reason, like Henri Bergson! I trusting in astral dream bodies *à la* William Burroughs. In the city — the industrial solution of movement and heat — nothing new under the solitary sun. Never-ending, homogeneous rows prevent or efface any watered-silk effect; the urban isotrope excludes the unexpected, laws replace pointillist permutations. A keen, constant, implacable wind combs the Midwestern prairie beneath a motionless sky, an immaculate dark-blue sky. The sky — open to chance fluctuation, unexpected storms, or atmospheric disturbances — spreads stochastically across the corn fields and through the space of the high seas. "You gotta beware of the Big Shampoo sweepin' in from the Sou'west," says Dallas. It can wash you and your abode off the plains in seconds, one of those storms with a diameter of redoublin' budgets. Unsafe. But if you're optimistic, you can make nougat out of jubilant, festerin' weather." Gardeners tend to do just that.

My wife's garden miniaturizes the countryside, when framed by the back window next to my breakfast table and cup of Keurig-brewed coffee. A rare archangel with a harp guards the fenced enclosure populated with nymphs and gnomes, a reminder (says my wife) that attention is best given to the senses and expressed through myth. Sense becomes scent, a light vapor, matter animated. Here vegetables are as well-packaged as jam. Her garden is home to fish, birds, insects, the neighbor's cats (Bouba and Kiki), rabbits, mice, and nature's dice. They all, and humans too, eat and drink there, sagaciously or not. My wife, an avant-gardener with a big green thumb, claims, "If you are at all capable of writing, you can design a garden." Writing in French, Dory describes her garden as *floréal, prairial*. She loves to arrange *bouquets* which, according to her, expresses an intersection in a vased place for a confusion of multiple cascades as all the stems and petals come synergetically together. Ah, then the scent: no single component can be singled out. It's a whole of things — a gestalt — and it can revive memory, turn the klieg lights on the past.

Today, I, the Language-Uncoverer, put muslin on probably fatty memories as I sit on our back deck, enjoying the nuptials of body and mind, celebrating *spacetime* as A.N. Whitehead's Process-Relational philosophy has it. I prize the Real as the Ultimate Fiction. I'm mobile, like a manuscript, a delegate to disparity. My excitement is prepaid. My exclamations convertible into the casks for the disfavor of all dogma. Dogma's suspenders once were thrillers to the throat. I cannot subscribe to its vantage now. Now it's contempt for my wife's primary

## Finding Mememo

penalty: the way she files down my clauses and punctuation, giving forth a quick, wide yawn, like a cat's. A prospectus for my irritations! This censure is gruesome, spoonfuls of venom. Midwifery as abuse. She tells me, "Your chess is chaff." I'm a reject! Today my aperture is set to docile knowledge. I beseech my muse and write: *In the alcohol market there yawns a nightingale*. Am I immoderate in saying too much wastage? I feel tyrannized: "Hy, my dear, you've overdosed on Marx and Rimbaud." I'm unabashed, see her strings as foolish; her over-decoration of our abode merits a Snapchat rainbow-puke from my mouth. A blitz of incapable agglomerations buzz about me. Some people are like a lit fag in my wastebasket. I want to return my latch-key. An outsider might say: "He's an encumbrance [pointing *to* me]"; an insider might say: "He's a crustacean [pointing *at* me]." Out There. Enmity is not liking (or lacking). Some folks are prigs with radii. Like my chairman, Chad — Ichi dubs him a *yaj*, a beastly guy — who disses me with attacks on my personal high dimensional data set by compressing me using various forms of scalar reduction, like: "My product is your growing fed by your stress." "I work in the data-mines, you in the salt mines." And, "My trigram trumps your bigram."

*Your own everyone else, not me!* I want to say back. From my standpoint (and Ichi's), too many of us are rejects, not subjects. "So do I qualify for your derision?" I ask Chad. I want to tell him to do a rosary for his annoyances. "Write a potboiler," Dorinda offers. Maybe it *is* time I write a pot-boiler so I can line the coffers and reach escape velocity from academia.

Dallas and I agree, greed, indeed, is a luminous apparatus (money doesn't lie, how much people may lie about it). On our deck, as I swat flies off my neck, I imagine writing a bestseller, set among the fragmented islands of the Caribbean, using the *nom de plume* Paige Turner (Dallas *liked* that), and titled *Bowlegs Was Luke Warm*. A stereotyped tropical scenario (linen suits on muggy afternoons and patois) complete with petulant petticoated prophetesses speaking in tongues, where millipedes are found in the millions in inferior circumstances, and locals march as clown armies led by dark entities like Kolonel Klepto exuding mephitic vapors and Major Up Evil with his long hair streaming *contra natura*. The Blue Caribbean, home to so many shipwrecks that floating cabinets are always fleeing into hulls. Its islands, in this hard-boiled potboiler, would be filled with coastal drug-hives and rum dives once home to (historical fact) Jewish pirates. The book will swim in exotic names — an exception, "Laurel", a botanical option for a girl's name peaking in 1956 due to its famous name-sake, Laurel Gand, a.k.a., "Andromeda", a DC comics superhero.

I'm sketching in my head this perfect island-sited pastiche of the popular movie *Cool Hand Luke*, imagining its opening: *But is so life go*, when local dogs yelp and the "Bouncing Germans" (Dorinda's term) next door are Über-whooping



## Finding Mememo

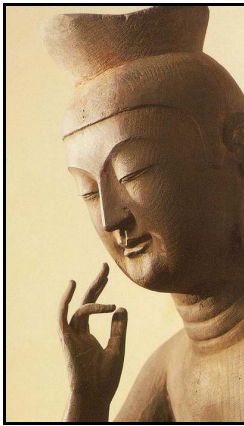
it up on their large backyard trampoline. Up and down, up and down, up and down. Screams interspersed with llllllloooooonnnngg agglutenated German words that Mark Twain quipped were not words, but “alphabetical processions”.

Noise, my nemesis — that’s a good title for another book — plays Professor Moriarity to my Sherlock. To make noise is to futz with transmission. It is, in itself, violence. It disturbs. Ichi shares my dislike of same: “No single recess left in world, pebble, root, cricket, no secret place, mine, or pocket or tunnel, underground or in seas, in rainforests or in middle of the desert, which be not smothered by noisome noise.” Sociologically, noise is no longer antagonistic to the existing regime — as some avant-garde sound artists once thought — but now provides the raw material for the System’s perpetual renewal. A resource to be exploited in our Repetitive World where the sound bites repeat endlessly. The police now have LRADS, long-range acoustic devices, used for crowd control, which counters the noise of public discontent with a greater noise. Like Trump.

I run inside, grab my wax earplugs, thumb stuff ‘em in. Then it’s back to my chaise lounge, back to my literary musings. Okay, Luke Warm (a.k.a., Bowlegs) will be constantly harassed by his only creditor, a tropical white suited shipping agent, named Dick Drake, whom Luke is affrayed to affront. Drake’s physiognomy will be modeled after Brit TV’s “Death in Paradise’s” police inspector (played by Ben Miller). Due to constant harassment, Luke suffers *Damoklesschuld* (the haunting anxiety of owing money you cannot pay back). He starts cutting the heads off voodoo dolls at a myriad of tourist vendors’ stalls about the island. Threatened with jail, this bow-legged protagonist/agonist) has to rely on a blonde bombshell, Sara Tonnen, fond of Lambrusco and of Finnish mafia ancestry. And together they have a series of misadventures, one during a terrific storm where lightning lights up palm trees whipping back and forth like fly-rods. I would describe Sara as, “So stuffy that even her yeses were exploited.” She will lead Luke astray despite his iPhone’s GPS, will orient him “for his connections and her disconnections.” Physically, Luke would be described as “Technical and bulky”. Emotionally, as “either too distant or too gay.” When too distant, he’d be just humming away in his hotel room in front of the incessant window fan clad in boxer shorts. When too gay, his hand would be found wandering up Sara’s dress. “Why, that’s overdue!” she’d exclaim. Chatterboxes, with Cuba Libres in hand, I imagine exchanges between them like:

- Am I terrific?
- You are exquisite. I *am* your senior.
- Cut it out!
- But you are my clarity.
- I’m only your tosh.

## Finding Mememo



Miroku-Bosatsu, Koryuji Temple, Japan

- Bosh!
- I'm warning . . . I'm no day-laborer for your subjection to sack.
- Let's get in the sack.
- Your tactics and techniques are those of a bull.
- Thanks for that lump of sugar.

Dick, that grudgeful, nasty shipping agent, has a sharp tongue, yet hold his cigarette delicately in a pose that mimics the figure of Miroku-Bosatsu in the Koryuji Temple in Japan. "My Dick-Tongue will cut you down," he often ambiguously threatens Luke; yet sunsets will pepper the plot as richly as in Isaac Babel's stories: "As the sun set its light slowly melted the sea/landscape, til everything was made of fire and glass." The only thing cool in the narrative will be the books in the hotel library. Lots of noir interior scenes with dramatic shadows and spinning fans. In one, someone would ask in hushed tones, "Did you radio to that gansta Aldjabar in Tivoli Gardens?" In another, a blue scene, Luke will boast to Asal, an Italian *paparazzi* always on the make and too fond of Lambrusco, "My wick had its pulsations when I plumbed her livid enclosure." Sara is often seen wearing health-oriented wearables, running on the beach, an exemplum of soft-biopower. Lustily gazing from her beach towel at local black youths strolling the white sands, she uses a raft of racist clichés about black virility, like commenting to Luke about "*Negervitalität*". I imagine one love scene between Luke and Sara where she thinks: *Now our bodies are two scoops of ice cream beginning to melt*. I'd pay particular attention to unusual chapter titles; for instance, the last might be called: LET THE UNINTERRUPTED TABLE-COVERS PROTRUDE. There, in an epiphany, Luke would find out, while dining with Sara, like my sister once did during a psychotic break, that termites and roaches can be quite companionable. Throughout the story, friendly locals would shower Luke and Sara with streams of cacao [*ed., improbable, little is found in that locale*], saying: "Tell us the color of your courtesy." When asked an obvious question, Luke's comeback would always be, "Does a rice-crop have a schoolmistress?"



My artsy writings are foggy things, but this story would have the clarity of a Caribbean lagoon (I have software I can set so it only allows me to write at an eighth-grade level). Overcharged, overcome, my publisher, usually nut-indulgent, would read the final manuscript, stand over me, an imposing wall of authority, and prosecute: "Shit, dude, this is from *Bulgaria*. It is all *is*."

## Finding Mememo

Where is the *ought*?" Before him, I'd be intimidated, as inaudible as a boxer in a ring. My publisher would insist he wouldn't publish it in his pajamas. So I'd be back to the proverbial drawing-board, squarely in the red, and at the rum gin.

"Write drunk, edit sober," advised Hemingway, passing through some Caribbean custom-house, shaking his brass inhaler at the object of his advice. Factoid: despite his love of the sea, ol' Hem was adverse to admirals; the only bulls (besides the police) he didn't like.



Ahmet Tanpinar

A fortuitous event. The doorbell rings; the dogs make a major racket. It's a package from my publisher with a book and a note inside. The note reads: MIGHT BE USEFUL IN THE BOOK YOU ARE NOW WRITING. The tome is *The Time Regulation Institute* (1954/62), a wacky novel by the Turkish author Ahmet Tanpinar. I peruse the liner notes and back cover blurbs:

"For all its historical and cultural specificity, *The Time Regulation Institute* is before all else a first-rate comic novel, one with a fairly large foot in the Western literary tradition called Menippean satire." That and the pentametric salute catches my interest. I read on. "Happy, happy, happy, happy, happy! This book delights in exposing the limits of human reason, with particular scorn for any intellectual system that attempts to comprehensively explain the world." Yes! Right down my alley! "Throughout history, whenever a theory arises that seeks to encapsulate human experience — politically, philosophically, economically, whatever — a Menippean satire emerges to make fun of it. So too here, in which Tanpinar creates an allegorical premise at once specific and broad enough to effectively satirize the entire 20th century, a century of systems if ever there was." Yes! Bravo! "What follows is the story of a life unusually indebted to timepieces." How appropriate. "First is the grandfather clock that stood at the center of several generations of Irdal's family history. Next we learn about the loss of personal freedom he experienced around age 10, upon receiving a watch from his uncle. 'First the little timepiece nullified my little world,' Irdal tells us, 'and then it claimed its rightful place, forcing me to abandon my earlier loves.' But the real turn comes with his apprenticeship to the wise old clock repairman, Nuri Efendi. It is from Nuri that Irdal picks up the various sage one-liners — 'Regulation is chasing down the seconds!' — that will eventually catch the attention of Halit Ayarci, on the very first occasion they meet. 'Think about the implications of these words,' Ayarci tells Irdal. 'We're losing half our time with unregulated clocks. If every person loses one second per hour, we lose a total of 18 million seconds in that hour. . . . Now perform the calculations and see how many lifetimes suddenly slip away every year. . . . Can you now see the

## Finding Mememo

immensity of Nuri Efendi's mind, his genius? Thanks to his inspiration, we shall make up the loss.' Thus will the Time Regulation Institute eventually be born: from a handful of one-liners transformed into slogans, attributed to a historically fabricated 'Ahmet the Timely,' and plastered on posters throughout the land."

That timely gift from my publisher makes me wish I could make up all the time lost in my own life! Like the time lost fantasizing over that potboiler he wants me to write, which I'll never write. Well, got to get my shit together. I gulp down my coffee, stuff the gift book in my nearly full *rétro* leather briefcase, fast-drive to my basement studio, dodging the local constabulary's speed traps, and boot a machinic consciousness to life, still chugging along on Windows XP, and start on a new section of my new writing project, *Re-Memo*, inspired by Ahmet the Timely and my sense that all sensation is already memory.

In spot-reading Ahmet's novel over lunch at The Buzz, I get its gist of how time lies at the center of our modern hierarchies: for the powerless, it is a curse; the powerful make the powerless wait on the powerful. I flash on the last time I sat in the Lib Studies department's plush outer office, stunned, confused, anxious (thinking in verb, adjective, noun: *Fuck you, you fucking fuck*), as I await a straight-facing Chad Armbruster re: my future and the school's commitment to "guided democracy, distance learning, big-data, and distance quantitative analysis of historical literary texts." On the wall framed advice to faculty: HOW MAY I HELP YOU HELP THEM? I see vividly my *onticity* as an academic life-form having to change with academic circumstances. To negotiate such an environment one needs to understand C++ programming language, commands such as "if" and "else" statements [*ed., "if" indicates that procedure be implemented only if certain conditions are true; "else" indicates that if these conditions are not met, other procedures should be followed; these commands are often nested inside each other creating quite complex decision trees*].

I walk in. Tell the young receptionist — a dead-ringer for the Kosovar actress, Arta Dobroschi — "Gotta one p.m. with Chad. Tell him Agenbite of Dimwit is here. He'll know who." Her eyes enlarge a smidgen, as her mouth opens in disbelief, her face still a landscape unplowed by life. She takes a sip from her grande mocha frappuccino, then carries out my request. I sit. And I sit. And I sit. I imagine myself an academic action hero: I'm on the good ship *Academe*, where the captain and the first mate conspire to toss the crew overboard. I draw my pen (mightier than the sword) and hold them at bay. The fantasy fades as I become aware of the sonic "air-conditioning", i.e., neo-Muzak. A calibrated mood-inducer to make brain-numbing secretarial labor less so, it features a Stimulus Progression Curve of ascending circuits for daylong mood maintenance. Delicious aural cocktails — sonic Prozac. At one point the soothed secretary must've taken a call from her boyfriend: "Niko . . . NIko . . . NIko . . . NIko!"



## Finding Mememo

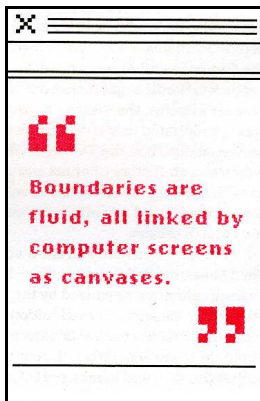
She bangs the phone down. Waiting, I nearly get a chapter read in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* before being admitted into King Chad's hallowed presence.

Chad and I sit *tête-a-tête*, our game faces on, parrying mask for mask. A grim mist of master-plan leaks from his pores, spoiling the air. Chad, an immense variability of features cultivated in the small tract of flesh that is his face, is known for his knack of drawing a circumference around an issue then using this measurement to define elements within. His last e-mail to faculty was, "Keep it dry, gentlemen and ladies," referring to our course lectures. Overheard him tell one sad Precariat he was firing, "Just remember, high-net-academic-worth guys like myself find chunks of suckers like you in our stools every morning." Why, as rumor has it, he's on a fast-track to a top-admin job. He's confident. In contrast, I feel abject, tagged as being "difficult". My reaction to all this shit? I replay my confidence mantra: *Act like a man of thought, think as a man of action, aware face-to-face talk has no backspace — imagine him stuffed in a sack. There is another world beyond this one.*

The POV on this scene, were it a film, is from the back, close-up, eliminating any sense the characters are before, or in front of, a camera (weakening the sense that the viewer is on the outside looking in). The sound track is Trent Reznor's brutal synth/white noise riff on Edvard Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" from the movie *The Social Network*. King Chad relaxes into his large chair, casually tapping out his pipe. Time is on his side. I notice a book on his desk, *Boy from the Stars*. I point to it, he claims it's a New Age book on reincarnation. "As you know, our school is being reincarnated," he says with a sudden predatory gleam, crouching tiger's eyes. Our clocks always disagree: my inner clock doesn't agree with the admin's outer one. I think: *I detect in your eyes a slight flame of hostility. Quench it, if you will be so kind. Friendly co-operation essential between us* — something Charlie Chan said to a client.

His opening gambit is full market optimization: "I have some unwelcome truths about our department, she has a particular way of operating on facts" (academically PC, Chad turns neuter and masculine pronouns to feminine). "The future, *your* future, is, in reality, open, unpredictable and indeterminate. Like the gender of many of our students here. You know how old you're getting. At the last President's meeting, it was made clear to us heads that the ruling concept for the next couple of years will be *condensation* appropriate to a shrinking budget. See?" He points to a small, circular, Vantablack button clipped to his lapel that features a large white Con in Helvetica font, "They gave these out." He reminds me about the mandatory retirement age. Ach! Is it possible to speak of such rules without picturing the slathering mouth of God? I start awkwardly, giving out a Billy Budd stammer before my clear speech of science can gear up. Regaining my wits, I reply with something like: "The very possibility of deter-

## Finding Mememo



mining how old we are getting can not be absolutely determined, aging and duration belong to the order of quality." Academic code for my plea of obdurate singularity.

Chad's eyes just burn into my face like twin lasers. My face becomes a suggestive whiteness. Ventriloquized eyes ask me to give forth my spurt of verbs. Then, like a local TV anchor, he lists the ways I might continue to enjoy "an academic tomorrow." He mentions "distance learning," and getting a handsome honorarium for developing my courses into a new, more profitable rubric. I snicker, meaning, "Where are you going with that?" which

establishes a vacuum energy between us. A welter of pronouns (mostly feminine) come my way in which he adds that "at the school it's been a good year, profitable, for unique, differentiated pedagogical products." Tells me if I want a Quest, "Go find an unsigned William Goldberg novel, worth a fortune."

He describes the giant Abracadabra that'll put the school in the black, giving me the "Big Picture," dripping with context, where the particulars are over-determined. I am flummoxed by the hostility of his verbs. "The academic clock ticks faster than yours, faster than that of physics. Boundaries are now fluid, all linked by computer screens as canvases," he warns, challenging me to shake his spear. Makes me feel like the department's wayward son.

He segues to some theoretical dispute he has with my last published critical article. "A careless misreading and gross caricature; fantasist self-projection," he asserts with a hypoglycemic irritability. "Your thesis seems to be purely a gift from above, instead of based on naturally observed facts. Poor intellectual buffoonery and a grand metaphysical misery there. Much B.S. about nothing." Then classifies my errors into three main types: random, systemic, and personal. Yes, us beasts are in our seats — mine a not-so-cool adjustable stool, his an overstuffed black leather jobbie — watching each other, ready to snap.

Our bestial relationship, of bickering and dominance, barks, cries, and braying, show themselves in the very foundations of our dialogue over my essay. I fight my tendency to be unnervingly passive, using wallowing and shoe-gazing as a mode of dissent (a character flaw that unnerves my wife). His final jab is, "To use Brecht without criticizing him is, well, to betray him."

I am used to his jabber, a jazz-bar argument primed with too many cocktails; counter with a hypothetical, something about my take on a certain artist: "But it's like asking what the true color of opal is: it can be yellow if we look at it from a certain angle; red when we move toward the left; green or blue if we move toward the right."

## Finding Mememo

An Aristotlean at heart, he doesn't dig my sly attempts at Nietzschean-inspired epistemology. Calls my fiction, lapsing into an insulting southern twang, "Creeeeative Rotting." Says I "aim at the stars, but only end up in a fish bowl."

At professional conferences, you hear exchanges like ours today: words that yelp, growl, bleat, wail, ululate, trumpet, moo, whistle, yap, bellow; jungle noises coming from the seats; taxonomies grinding. This is how dialectics strike, like rutting billygoats; this is the classic struggle of the academic animal, the creation myth of how language and theory begin. But it doesn't mean it's stress free. Oh, no.

I leave fuming. *To be continued*, I hope. In a manically mathematical precise frame of mind, I think: *10<sup>9</sup> seconds I've given to this school and I'm treated to this? But what can you expect from someone who as a 5-year-old Chad snipped antennae off snails?* I shoot out the door fast, past the speechless secretary, so fast the length of my masculinity (according to Relativity) shrinks  $33.3 \times 10^{-50}$  millimeters and my watch slows down by  $5 \times 10^{-40}$  seconds.

*To be continued. . . .*

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: This chapter of Hy's is one of my favorites, albeit its voice is inconsistent with the previous section. His writing has really amped up here. But one can't be sure, given his writerly propensities, whether the "to be continued" here is a note to himself to, indeed, continue from this point and elaborate, or whether he meant to pick up the storyline later, put it at a distance in the text, keeping his reader in suspense, like those 1930 serialized, cliffhanger movies. Indeed, the topic of distance learning does come up in more detail later, but not situated in Armbuster's office.*

*Concerning the proposed Caribbean noir story, it never left the drawing board, so to speak. Dorinda said Hy was researching the writings of Martinique-born philosopher Édouard Glissant (1928 - 2011) as he touted "the right to opacity for everyone"; moreover, he used the sea as a recurrent motif in his writing, calling the Caribbean, "a sea that explodes the scattered lands into an arc. A sea that diffracts."*

*But I digress. He did once confide to me that "the first time in Chad's office was tragedy, the second time was farce," so there must have been another significant exchange. Possible the latter was the reason (related by Ichi ) that Meme more than once furtively stalked Armbuster through town, re-enacting famous New York performance artist Vito Acconci's 1969 conceptual artwork, Following Piece (see next page). And Ichi swears that Meme, eventually, got up enoughchutzpah to steal Chad's keys and slip unseen into his apartment, going through his things; even describing a moving scene where Hy laid down in the chair's bed, as if trying to inhabit his space, as if trying for a form of mimetic understanding, hoping to absorb some-thing of the guy's will-to-authority*

# Finding Mememo

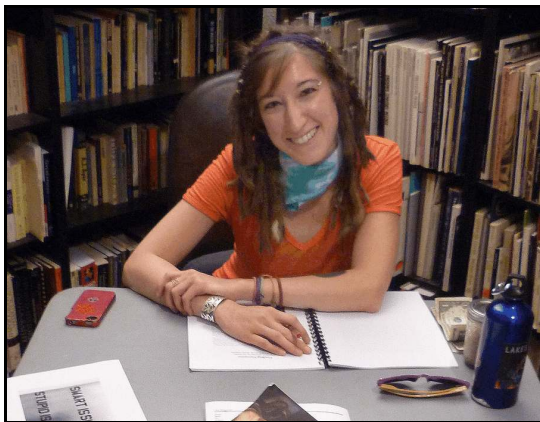


*Following Piece*, Activity, 23 days, varying durations (1969) Vito Acconci

and power. Was Hy even on an even-keel at this point? Even Ichi could not be sure. "But he look keel-hauled when I last saw him." But most academics do look that way anyway, and do weird shit under pressure. Ichi asserted that, "Looking keel-hauled is new normal in academia. It comes with seas we sail, the reefs we try to avoid, fuckin' typhoons that try to envelope us."

Meme's mention of mood music really touches home. A reader of Theodore Adorno's and Leonard B. Meyer's writings on musical theory, I have an interest in the phenomenon of mood music. Someone whose name escapes me remark-

ed that Muzak is the twentieth century's most authentic music, tailored exclusively for the electronic revolution. Now such mood music can be personally tailored by users of the Internet where servers like Pandora, Spotify, and Stereomood can stream tracks set in motion by your choice of playlists. For instance, you may decide on "sad" (which is different from playlists designated as "depressed" or merely "melancholic"), or "tired" (which differs from merely "sleepy").



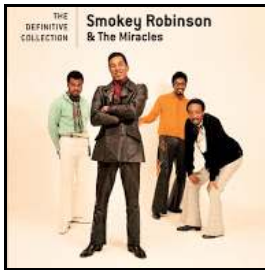
"Little Hats" proofing Hy Grader's manuscript while listening to her Pandora playlists; she recalls Meme telling her "Writing is a boat in which we launch ourselves over the falls, hoping it will protect us while we drop."

Meme's upbeat one-day-a-week studio assistant, "Little Hats" (so-called because her last name translates as such in Italian), proofreads his books — a boring job, believe me — while listening to her personal Pandora play-ists of soothing tones to achieve escape velocity from boredom, all the while munching on yummy, home-baked cookies to maintain her blood sugar. Does she know that Heidegger's famous ground mood was anxiety? She knows that Hy's base-mood was such. And so does Dallas after the hour-long grilling he gave her during which he had a cigar in hand and one in the ashtray.

Before Hy's death, I was visiting his studio and asked her if I could study her playlist choices. She shrugged slim shoulders signaling a silent "Why not?" What I found were sounds slow to mid-tempo, pleasantly melodious and repetitive, not too harmonically jagged, and laid out like neat spoonfuls of soft dough on a cookie sheet. Within a few tracks the neo-Muzak mood enhancement would work like Prozac or other selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitor (SSRI) regime, those ubiquitous drugs sold to simultaneously elevate mood and sedate anxiety. Once the mood target is reached, the listener's cognitive attention to the music and its logic can drift amiably in and out of focus amidst other activities, like proofing weird texts.

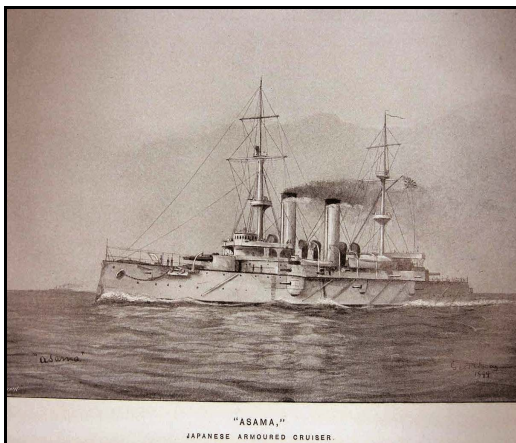


## Finding Mememo



*Hy wasn't (nor was I for that matter) immune to musically-induced nostalgia, to that psychic involution brought on by listening to "the Oldies". That particular kind of mood, so induced, can allow a former self state to return. It happens to me when I hear Smokey Robinson sing the super-hit "I'll Try Something New". When in art school, it also spoke to me of the essence of modernist aesthetics, to induce "the shock of the new".*

*Hell, we are all being seduced by the financialization and externalization of what, in pre-postmodernism, used to be thought of as "inner life". In our digital age, the site of "friction free capitalism", the physical and mental exhaustion of a "digital nervous system", in which moods aspire to circulate with the speed and flexibility of capital, we need our anodynes. For some it's Prozac, for some it's Ambien. For some, nearing senior citizenship status — like me — it's nostalgia. Hell, I can get nostalgic for past feelings of nostalgia.*



The battlecruiser Asama

*As for Dallas — yes, he's still on the job — his soporific is "flavored wadkas 'n micro-brews dat sooz." By the way, he's tracked down through Visa card billings a photo Hy dropped off for framing at Oak Park's Old Frame Shop: an old sepia-toned 8 x 10-inch cabinet card photo of the Russo-Japanese War-era Kong -class battlecruiser, Asama. Engraved on the verso were oval portraits of Admiral Yamamoto (the Navy Minister), Admiral Togo (the famous "Japanese Nelson", Commander-in-Chief of the flotilla off Port Arthur), General Kodama (the "Kitchener of Japan", Commander-in-Chief of the*

*Japanese Army), and General Viscount Tazo-Katzura (Prime Minister of Japan). Ichi had scrawled below those portraits: "Last thing I want to do is die of old age in Yokohama."*

*The frame store manager had wondered why it was never picked up. I later discovered he'd left several calls on Hy's office voice mail in a voice that sounded more like an auto mechanic than an esthete. The guy told Dallas it was to be a re-gifting for a Japanese friend of Hy's — "an Itchy-Coo or something." Dallas picked it up and mailed it on to Ichi who we knew would be itching to see it framed properly.*

*BTW, the "Vantablack" color of the "Con" button (mentioned on page 58) is the world's darkest black. Vanta stands for Vertically Aligned NanoTube Array and is made by "growing" carbon nanotubes on a metal surface. (A nanotube is a billionth of a meter thick, or about the width of three gold atoms.) Light is trapped between the tubes and bounces around until it's absorbed, so almost no light gets out. Like a black hole.*

\* \* \*

# Finding Mememo

## 6



He really knows how to push my buttons. I'm speaking here of "Leatherface", my former department chairman from hell who tormented me during a two-year stint at college in Illinois's sweaty toe back in the late 1980s. Ah, what memories! Ah, what sustained bouts of PTSD do I still suffer! I know I transfer something of this crap to my encounters with Chad. Maybe a sober retrospect can supply a properly appreciative angle view.

By now you've probably guessed my experiences are much more vivid and complete as *remembered* experiences. When I am directly experiencing something, I am either too self-conscious to adequately analyze events transpiring or too caught up in the events to analyze personal responses. A remembered experience, however, allows me to overcome this either/or duality in favor of a both/and retake on my lived experience. Retrieving these memories I call "doing skull-time".

I am sipping a double espresso at a small table just outside The Buzz. I am re-reading sections from my first novel, *The Life and Times of Cadmean Storch*, written decades before I started seeing life as a roadside inn where I have to stay until the coach from the Abyss pulls up. The book details my misadventures at an early teaching gig. So here goes.

"Leatherface" hails from Ohio. Studied philosophy and photography at Ohio State. He likes to wear anything "cowboy", and has a female side-kick, an obese Andy Divine-like, gruff departmental secretary. She, Violet Strange, is a middle-aged, middle-class, bitter busy-body, referred to by all as the "Barracuda". She always dresses in either white or black. A bipolar wardrobe. If Leatherface's countenance is a leathery one, Barracuda's is wooden-like and



Pope Francis

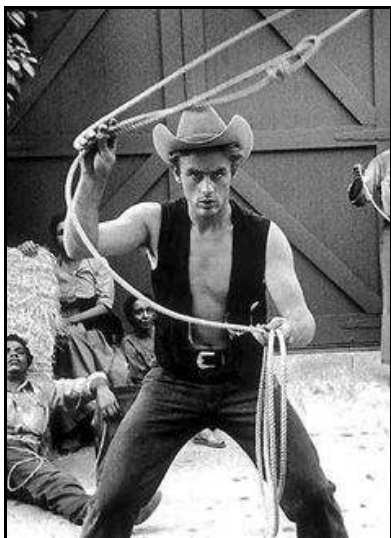
capable of little expression. Me? I'm seen as a city-slicker who is a purveyor of postmodernist propensities toward heresy. Leatherface says of PoMo theory: "I hate the lingo." So every opportunity to harass me in petty and not-so-petty ways is taken. Now, I'm not super picky. Everything is imperfect. That I know. There's no sunset so lovely it couldn't be yet lovelier, no gentle breeze bringing sleep that couldn't bring a yet sounder sleep. But, jeez, these two made Chad Armbuster look like Pope Francis. I was soon embroiled in departmental internecine warfare.

When I was initially hired, Leatherface, wrinkling his nose with disapproval, noticed my car was a *rétro* jobby, a lot hipper than his old salt-corroded poor white-trash beater, a Ford Econoline van used to haul his

## Finding Mememo

racing dogs. Not to be out-shined, he immediately bought a candy apple red Chrysler PT Cruiser and parked it next to my purple 'n white Nash Metropolitan. I expect he'll "key" my car's paint job some day when he's out of sorts.

As the department's new hire, I was cajoled (abjected) by Leatherface to jot down the minutes of each contentious faculty meeting, type them out, and give them to Barracuda to file within two days. Sure, it was really her job to do this, but he wanted to break my spirit, show me who's top dog, and gain favor with his female co-conspirator. *If this asshole likes writing, I'll give him something to write about*, I imagined him thinking *What a too sweet man, think we can really screw him*, I imagined her thinking.



James Dean poster

He's been dubbed Leatherface due to a mild stroke that left his facial muscles rigid and his disposition mercurial. His secretary, an understudy for Margaret Thatcher, felt sorry for him. Doted on him. The dude's stuck in some weird Hollywood cowboy movie that keeps looping. And I'm playing the fall guy. He swaggered about like John Wayne. I cowed like the town drunk. His usual getup is a square-dance-style shirt with a thin, gray leather tie, slim blue trousers, cobra-skin cowboy boots, tan cowboy hat with a cobra-skin band, all encased in a long tan leather Western frontier style duster. "Hey, Pilgrim!" he'd hail me in his Ohio twang. "How's it hangin'?" Confronting them was like staring straight into a double-barrel shotgun.

I tried to curry his favor. Appease his fiery flush. I bought a pair of authentic cowboy boots. I learned a few Step Dancing moves. I bought an air pistol. But I only succeeded in straining my lower back and making myself look silly. Most days, "Sons of the Pioneers" music creeps from his office. Two years ago, he had his standard office door removed and replaced with a western saloon swinging door. At lunch, smells of barbecued pork sandwiches, pickles, and thick french fries wafted out.

His office was adorned with a large poster of James Dean. Next to it hung a scope-equipped Olympic competition-style German Feinwerkbau model 65 air pistol. Using it, he's done a body of work, titled "The Assassination Series", color portraits he's shot with a medium format analog camera are, in turn, shot (with a gun), making close clusters of holes



Feinwerkbau model 65 air pistol

## Finding Mememo

grouped near the sitters' noses. Just lovely. (I'm being ironic.) On a shelf over his desk were lined up oodles of trophies from dog races won, plus an array of silver medals commemorating unmemorable events.

The Great ignore the intrusion of their inferiors. But he ain't great; fancies himself a squatter on a small plot of land near the campus, sharing his Rustic Retreats Build-It-Yourself log cabin decorated in the trash-pile-to-living-room aesthetic. Lined up in the living room were cages for his seven whippet racing dogs. Looked like a canine kennel version of a Sol LeWitt Minimalist sculpture installation. No surprise his wife divorced him years ago. Now, when he wasn't racing those dogs, he'd be fucking freshmen for fun. He sometimes held spiced up faculty meetings "at the ranch," further "hotting up" our meets with spicy ribs ordered from famous Ribs 'n Shit Bar-B-House. During one such chow down, we had to do a Chinese fire drill out onto the back deck, so strong was the odor of dog flatulence emanating from canine cages. The coda to those eat 'n bitch sessions was always a pistol match between him and one selected faculty. I always out-shot him. Other faculty were either poor shots or deliberately aimed off target. Not me though. He hated me for this.

The odd thing was that when I first arrived, all tickey-boo tame and tepid, Leatherface feigned graciousness, generously giving me a small faculty office directly across from the Barracuda's desk. At first I thought that would make things more convenient. But it was soon obvious it merely meant she could spy on me, see if I copped any office supplies for personal use, or got too friendly with female students. *Now let that little shit try 'n fuck students in his office without us knowing about it!* She's been tasked with getting some dirt on me so I can be blackmailed into voting the chairman's ticket. Leatherface was always trying to get undergrads to seduce me so he could get "juice" on me. In a department fraught with political intrigues as bizarre as ancient Rome's, too many important votes were being deadlocked. I was seen as the-dude-with-the-deciding-vote, the vote that would put his unholiness's policies on the books.

It is perfectly all right to cast the first stone if you have some more in your pocket. My mistake was not to have more in my pocket. My first, and only, stone thrown, concerned that perpetual departmental strife. I tried to mediate it in Kierkegaardian terms. Over lunch at the Dead Animal Bar (stuffed game animals adorned the place), I explained to Leatherface: "Where there's a wrong side, there is also a right side. Consequently, from one side it's the wrong side, from the other the right side. Or from one side it is the right side, from the other side the reverse. Without it being thus determined, however, which side is the right side, or who has it on his side. So we should stop the bickering and compromise." He is unconvinced. I toss in Albert Camus, "Participation alone abolishes the dualities and antinomies with which we struggle. So let's pass some-



## Finding Mememo

thing for the department's benefit. Let us labor, labor is older than art." He just looked at me, said, "Dude, you lose it here and you're in a world of hurts. And I think you've just lost it." He tonitrously reproached me for my supposed "violent presumptions." I had no more stones, and not just in my pocket.

After this incident, something portentous, like a black expectation, hovered in the academic air. The correction coefficients for my vision of the world were majorly screwed up. I wobbled like a top on its last spin. The department turned into a dunghill of instinctive forces. This was matched by the disfavor of the heavens — a year with too many days of rain, the sky hiding its blue. For protection, when not teaching, I'd roll myself in sentences and paragraphs, I'd punctuate myself, for my first (still unpublished) novel was being written using a Radio Shack TRS-80 Tandy computer with Scribes word-processing software.

Back at "the corral" (our department), faculty begged on hands and knees for office supplies from the Keeper of the Office Supply Cabinet Keys. In an exercise of "conspicuous parsimony", the Barracuda doled out meager amounts of these "luxury goods": Liquid Paper White-Out, paper clips, Post-It notes, pencils, pens, chalk, note pads, and manila folders and duly recorded it beside our names in a small booklet locked each night in her desk drawer. Once, I was refused a black felt-tip marker; another colleague, a pad of Post-It notes. "We are out of chalk," she'd tell me even though I saw a box of such earlier that day when she gave the chairman a box of staples. These objects were no longer just objects, but signs in a system of signs of status. Those who voted on the side of the chairman got more supplies. Yep. It was a tournament economy. These commodities always remained under thumb, like us, as some faculty's yearly contracts were threatened with cancellation if they didn't vote his ticket.

Still, faculty went through the motions of a friendly "Hello!" to the Barracuda each a.m. while tiptoeing past her desk to their mailboxes. Their half-hearted attempts at pleasantries were met with icy silence or a special grunt of annoyance. She knows she's invulnerable. She's a State Employee protected by

a tough union; it's not likely any complaint will get rid of her charming presence. Ah, bureaucracy!

The personality contrast between myself (Introversive) and Leatherface (Extratsensive) falls into the two classic extremes as developed per Rorschach testing across a large population

<b>Kinaesthesias Predominant (Introversive)</b>	<b>Color Predominant (Extratsensive)</b>
More individualized intelligence	Stereotyped intelligence
Greater creative ability	More reproductive ability
More "inner life"	More "outward" life
Stable affective reactions	Labile affective reactions
Less adaptable to reality	More adaptable to reality
More intensive than extensive rapport	More extensive than intensive rapport
Measured, stable motility	Restless, labile motility
Awkwardness, clumsiness	Skill and adroitness

## Finding Mememo

sample. This explained why under the thumb-screws of that *bête noire* I felt like a screw sorter incompetent to plunk a flat head into a different bin from that of a round head. He made me so super self-conscious, I kept screwing things up.

After a semester of this shit, nightmares started to fall like rain. In one, a recurring dream, largely played out underwater, featured Jacques Cousteau's face with a bra across his mouth. He had two assistants flanking him. They always looked like they'd raped some stones. They told me in perfect unison, "It's the destituteness of the world, evil and hollow, which looks like the double twin two peaks of Mt. Rushmore." Wow! Freud would've enjoyed trying to interpret that baby!



$6.3 \times 10^7$  seconds of precious life I spent teaching at that college. During my last semester there (thank God for small miracles and friends in high places) the Barracuda was boating with husband and fell (or was pushed by a hen-pecked hubby) into fast, rain-swollen waters. A dead fish, she was fished out somewhere way down the muddy Mississippi two days later. The departmental curse was broken! "Ding-dong! The wicked witch is dead." By noon, the office supply cabinet was looted. Cheers. Dancing. A party at the Dead Animal Bar. Leatherface has lost face, his paid "muscle" was no more. *Could be a regime change in the offing*, I thought.

I didn't remain there long enough to actually witness it, but it did happen. The next chairman was more interested in bodybuilding than futzing with departmental politics. I left because I got a terrific new teaching gig in Chicago. June 1988, I depart Illinois's sweaty toe for its smarter head, riding "The 3:10 to Yuma", a popular student euphemism for the Amtrack train heading due north toward better things and taller buildings, where my verse can be freer.

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: This section was easy to place. It logically follows the encounter with Chad Armbuster. What is a surprise is Hy's admission of suffering a trauma that he says is still overlaying itself on this present academic life. Might this have implications in his death? Another surprise was that Hy had started his first novel in 1987. I checked with his widow and she confirmed the date and let me peruse it and scan the book's title page. It was dedicated to his first wife, so I thoughtfully Photoshopped that personal touch out of the image. The epigram opening the text cites Ralph Waldo Emerson: "The solar system has no anxiety about its reputation."*

*Glancing through the 318-page tome, several things jumped out at me (due to*

## Finding Mememo

*the fact they were italicized): a repeated reference to Überziegeunerspiess, (super shish kebab), Witzelsucht (a pathological joking disease), and Kümmel (a caraway-flavored German liqueur, the favored digestif of Henry Valentine Miller).*

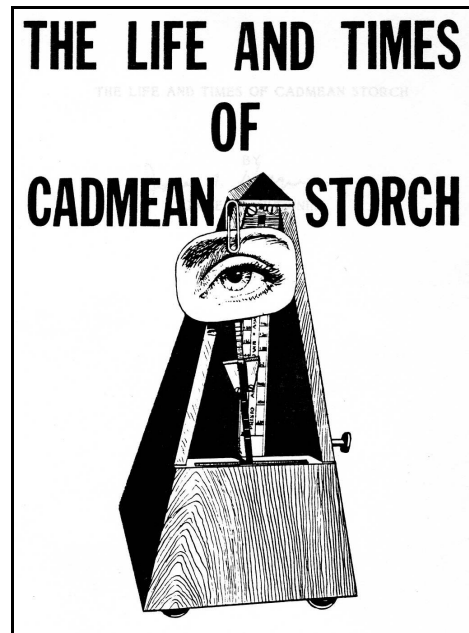
In his "Introduction" Hy mentions a quirk of his protagonist, Cadmean: "In this book, whenever Cadmean employs Latin and German, it's important to understand that, for him, they are signifiers of both high cultural achievement and vicious barbarism." Hy uses these languages, to figure our conflicted human condition, our intellect and our animal nature. "We are angels and assholes in equal measure," he writes. When he uses Latin, he associates it with the moral contrast between Aurelius/Elagabalus and when he uses German, he figures that issue with the pairing of Husserl/Hitler.

Meanwhile, our shamus, Dallas, has found that Hy and Dorinda were on the mailing list of the Consumer Defense Movement (a German organization originally, now spreading globally) which was active in ecological and macrobiotic lifestyle products, many suited for those wanting to return to nature: canvas tents, water bottles, yogurt-makers, pan pipes, bread ovens, earth-cooking devices, et cetera. Through a contact in the FBI, he got to view a file warning of this organization's survivalist and autarchic tendencies.

Meanwhile, confirming Hy's fascination with numbers, his widow, perusing Hy's manila file folders, found a hard-copy of an e-mail sent by Ichi noting the largest number you can write using only three figures which, if written out in full, would take three hundred and sixty-nine million digits, three nines visualized as if in a mise-en-abyme configuration (by the way, Meme loved the fact that nine in English sounded like nein in German, such that what you see below can be articulated, from top to bottom, as "no, No, NO!):

9<sup>9</sup><sup>9</sup>

\* \* \*



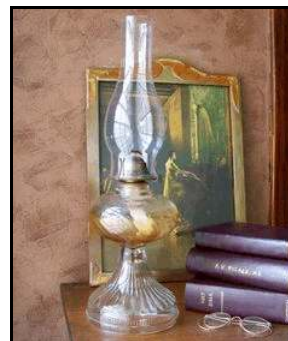
Title page of Hy Grader's first novel, reproduced by permission of his widow

# Finding Mememo

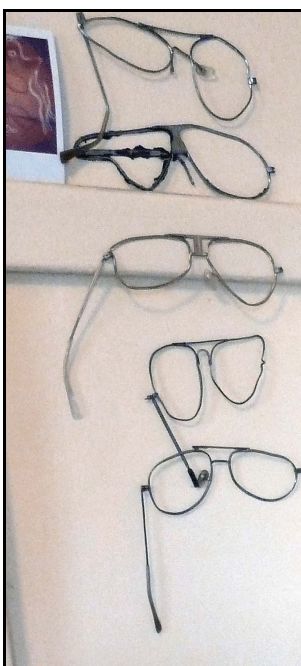
## 7



The London chemist William Crookes prefaced his new edition of Michael Faraday's highly popular lectures, *The Chemical History of a Candle*, with a ventriloquist's fantasy: "The huge wax candle on the glittering altar, the range of gas lamps in our streets, all have their own stories to tell. All, if they could speak (and after their own manner they can), might warm our hearts in telling how they have ministered to man's comfort, love of home, toil and devotion." So, too, the candles we light to enjoy a meal or seduce a lover, even our birthday candles; despite that fact, we quickly blow them out. One's autobiography might be told through candles or gas lamps. I inherited my grandparents' glass gas lamp, curvaceous, reflective, a feminine thing that gave off a sweet scent. I prefer it to bulbs when, in my comfy chair, I seek Sophia, reading Maimonides and Leibnitz on the granularity of time, as my gas lamp evokes Henri's concepts of vibrations and duration. Ichi likes Spinoza because his nickname was "Bento" (like in Bento box dinners in Japanese restaurants).



Hy Grader's gas lamp



Ichi's bent glasses collection

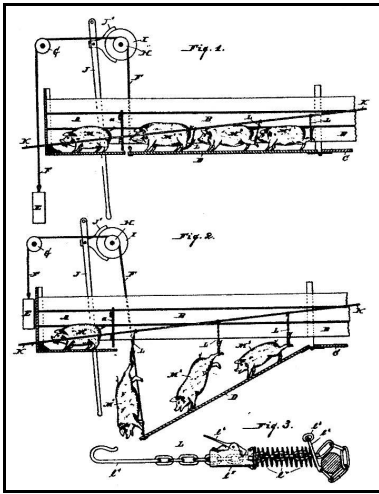
What has brought all this to mind? Why it's Ichi's birthday! And his friends (including me) are gathered at his studio, what he calls "the work-house," with a large cake before us, 58 candles lit.

My first visit to Mad City — I sleep over in that two-story house *cum* studio with its sliding doors and detached garage (used as a gallery to display oddball things, like Ichi's Readymades and Readymades-Aided), and a tiny backyard inhabited by one sad tree and several species of prairie weeds. Ichi serves me all types of Wisconsin microbrews as we munch tortilla chips dipped in five different salsas. When I wake the next morning, I can barely kick off my covers and make my way downstairs — a hangover from Hell.

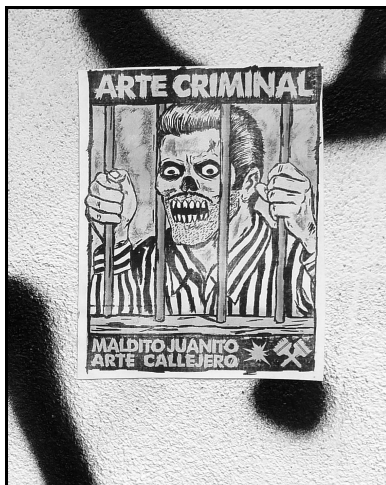
From a material perspective of things, it is as if I am inside a Hieronymus Bosch painting or perusing a list of heteroclite objects seeking profound distinctions in subtle displacements as detailed in Georges Perec's *Life: A User's Manual*: several old choice examples of



## Finding Mememo



Hog Machine poster




Guatemala City (1999) Ichi ,

*Bartmanskrug*, souvenir beer mugs, a collection of bent glasses (symbol of creativity), a Japanese ceremonial sword, a Japanese amulet of sun-goddess *Amaterasu o-mikami*, an illustrated copy of Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island* (later given to me as a gift), old pans, tripods, a few artist's brushes (Ichi calls "sticks-with-hairs-on-end"), knives, spoons, old soap bars in their original wrappings, bent forks, dice, a guitar, toy piano, hand-dulcimer, flutes (some you play, some you drink from), a huge vinyl and CD jazz collection, old western spurs, a rusty pitchfork, analogue camera accessories, chemical trays, old bottles, political badges, a Donald Trump *pinata* awaiting a good whack, snapshots and news clippings peppering cork boards, a ticket stub from Madison's Comic-Tivity comedy club for a performance of Jabberham, books spilling from wooden boxes (one a 741-page *Index of Rorschach Responses*, another a slim text titled *The Jung and the Restless*), while others are stacked along boards supported by concrete blocks in grad student's library fashion. Fine, but older, stereo equipment grace one wall and over which is displayed a large poster titled "Apparatus for Catching and Suspending Hogs" (Ichi later told me he put this up around the time of all the hoopla over police shootings of black men). On the wall to the left hangs a 11 x 14-inch photo he took in Guatemala City a year ago of an "Arte Criminal" poster, and on the wall to the right is a defaced Governor Scott Walker poster. A portrait of Satoshi Watanabe, a noted Japanese physicist, is next to a framed hand-colored cabinet card of a Japanese man with a wrinkled face, wearing a gold-trimmed pince-nez, a formal black lounge suit, white shirt, and pearl gray tie, sitting in a bamboo chair, hands on knees, legs together, back straight, holding a diver's spear — Ichi's grandfather.

## Finding Mememo



Ichiro's fridge magnet



Ichi 's fridge magnet

Contrasting with all the lo-tech stuff and odd-shit, is a monster-screen, high-powered MAC running OS X El Capitan software and communicating with an Epson professional grade 20-inch wide-paper capacity printer using cartridges (he later confides) that sets him back a month's salary with each replacement.



*What's Mars?* by Chicago artist Helene Smith Romer who believes, as does Hy, that shopping is melting into everything, everything is melting into shopping. Like Hy, she creates collages of pre-existing material.

Introversive, I find myself responding with bemusement to all this mishmash — not in the way I'd do to a Gerhard Richter show hung in a simulated 1980s flat — but as fans of Georges Perec do when reading his *Life: A Users Manual*. Things have an unscripted and under-determined agency, which both Ichi and I like to exploit. There is no solid object, no im-

plement or piece of furniture, which does not undergo a subtle change, in which its everyday prosaic function fades. It is this surreal aspect of much "outsider art" that attracts us both to it as well as makes us fans of Chicago neo-Dadaist, Helene Smith-Romer.

## Finding Mememo

Ichi isn't scheduled to pick me up (his residence is a ten-minute drive away) for breakfast for another hour and a half, so I try to refocus on the mundane by booting up his MAC, guessing correctly his password is ASAGAO (Japanese for "morning glory flowers", his favorite blossom, and a reference to ASA film speed and the game of GO). I get online and notice he's bookmarked a DIY Rorschach test. I love these do-it-yourself evaluations. I make the



connection between this and that Rorschach tome stuffed in a wooden box. I want to be a test subject. After fifteen minutes of clicking radio buttons, negotiating pop-up ads, and writing in responses and interpretations of various inkblots, I hit the large SUBMIT button. For five minutes the processing data icon chugs along round and round until I'm almost hypnotized. Finally, the program returns my "Personal Personality Profile":

You have an inflated sense of worth, utilizing many psychological operations to protect and defend your ego. Your style of coping with problems is introversive. There are indications of affective distress relating to depressive features. Problems with interpersonal relationships or cognition are evident. You have problems with processing information and with negative feedback. You demonstrate considerable pessimistic or negative thinking. As such, many problems involving interpersonal closeness. You are avoiding, or being excessively cautious, about emotionality. The Buddha is alarmed by your attachment to teeming bits, *memes*.<sup>1</sup>

There's an Inspirational Message button that appears on-screen after I print out my evaluation. It gives one a choice between streaming Sitar music or Sea Shanties. I choose the latter and I contemplate this choice bit of wisdom (courtesy of *BitOBuddhAdvice.com*):

---

1. A word of theoretical caution here: behind the volumes of indexed responses and statistical compilations of Rorschach testing, hides a concept of a unified self with dynamic relationships among its various components; a self for which perception is always through an inseparable complex of reason and affect; an *interior* self for which it is appropriate to speak of private experience. The test re-enforces our sense that there is a complementary relation between an objective, neutral "test pattern" of original inkblots and the subjective distortion of those patterns by our internal patterns of perception. The self is envisioned alternatively as a filtered camera and as a powerful projector. Something the 1950s masters of the photographic symbol, Minor White and Henry Holmes Smith, would come to appreciate and make use of.

## Finding Mememo

In the eternal swell that jolts us in our long boats, carries us and at times drowns us, not only is there not a rock for us to tie our forsaken boat to, but the buoys themselves that we lay to measure our traveled path, are naught but floating mirages. And at the mysterious depths of *things*, our anchors slip without ever grasping the sea-floor. Our boat is named *Maya*. We are a drop of water in the ocean of reality.



Ichi's Wellies

I hardcopy it. The message has a fortuitous resonance with the themes in my ongoing novel. This kind of thing is always happening to me. Chance that seems more than chance. Yes, shit just happens, but sometimes, it's good shit.

Then, a deafeningly loud, scary thunder blast shakes the work-house, loosening the wood frame's rusty nails. The front door opens on cue and Ichi runs in to greet me with his hilarious verbal finger to proper pronunciation: "Fuck! It's a frash-frod ratch [*flash-flood watch*] for the next four hours, fliend."

He's carrying two big yellow umbrellas, sports a yellow rubber poncho with yellow rubber Wellies. Looks silly. "The Tao of Rain," he says handing me one of those industrial-strength bumbershoots. His smile is infectious as are all the souvenirs and bric-a-brac multiplying in his studio over the years.

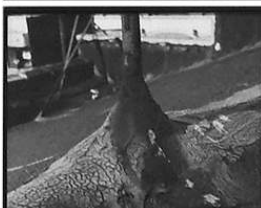
*What a way to herald in June 26*, I muse. He was born in Japan today in 1949, in between the production of two major American film noirs, two years and six days after my bloody entry into spacetime in Milwaukee, precisely 79.4 miles east. We are celebrating *both* of our birthdays today.

I, a don, don my rain slicker and it's off to Mad City's famous Lazy Jane's Café on Williamson street ("Willy street" to locals), where you can play Scrabble and babble your heart out in their Scrababble Room after dining. Trip-Advisor advises you to "try their special homemade Macho-Choco-Lazy Peanut Butter Scones, as well as their





## Finding Mememo



Lazy Waffles Your Way, and the Kick-Ass Organic Egg Scrabble (mushrooms, cheese, diced jalapeño peppers, Usinger brat bits, and crispy Neuske's bacon bits). And don't miss the model of Strasbourg Cathedral made entirely of hankies."

Ichi is a very careful driver. He goes ten miles in the time I usually go fifteen. Add a cloud burst above and it takes a good while before we pull into the parking lot under the large Scrabble letters spelling out our destination. During our slow sojourn through morning traffic, Ichi waxes eloquent. I learn that when you play Scrabble there, if you lay down all your tiles, you not only get the 50-point bonus as per the rules, but a gift certificate for a free breakfast. The Scrabble Room features deluxe sets set among a rotating display of local artists' work. Ichi had one of his stacked-photo *Totems* up last year. This month, he says, it's a series of color shots of local graffiti by Mad City Photo Club. Ichi's *Totems* (see image left), a riff on Native American culture that got the wrong end of the stick in Wisconsin history, remind me of "subjective" photographer Minor White's practice of arranging individual prints into larger aesthetic wholes, poetic sequences, except Ichi's are filtered through a cooler 1960s conceptualism.

We rush in to the eatery, pants soaking despite our umbrella's protection. Waiting for the hostess to seat us, we notice a stack of *Weird Wisconsin* travel guide books for sale. I tell Ichi they should put his workhouse in their listing. That gets a laugh. The hostess finally shows up, points to a large metal dairy milk container, *sans* top. "Put yer dern drippin' bumbers in there." She fast-walks us to our booth, hands us menus. A hefty, tall blond, Norwegian-looking dude, a grad student at the university we later learn, approaches, sporting a super-sized name tag: I'M TOR. We order.

When our sober-up java arrives, we get into (no surprise here) a friendly scrapple over how our most treasured right in the USA is *to choose one's company*. He disdains Asian group-think and solidarity rooted in his home country's social concepts of *amae* (dependence)

## Finding Mememo

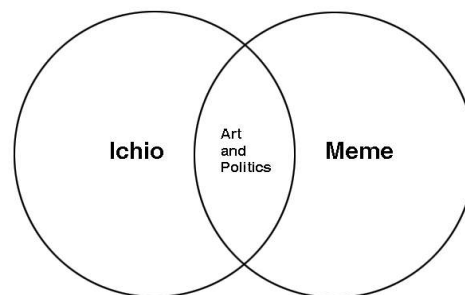
and *giri* (social obligations). Why he emigrated, he says. Prefers a dynamic that cannot be reached through the fulfillment of static social obligations and so now directs the Tao of his Self against his upbringing and our digital world (like me, he totes a Moleskine notebook, not an iPhone).

Moments after our Hash-Tagg and Macho-Choco-Lazy Peanut Butter scones arrive, he's lamenting a different kind of global group-think. "The world is not peopled by poets and readers of poetry," by this he means any type of artist and audience for aesthetic expression, "but filled with "television watchers, computer nerds, and the few people who still read flip through *Reader's Digest*."

Like Einstein, Bergson, and Freud, he deplores the avarice, exploitation, social divisions, class hatred, and military arms races cast upon us by technology. We share the belief that the *heroic* are those who have their Sartrean project in hand (not their iPhone), presenting a willingness to act and speak, and shun *mauvaise foi*, bravely inserting themselves into the world through some creative gesture beyond tapping iPad keys, stylus-poking at iPhones, and playing violent video games. He believes the poet, the critic, "has an obligation to critically word the coins we struggle under capitalism to live by." A pernicious mode of production Ichi hates: "Under its coins, fellow human beings are increasingly suffering." Unlike Trump, Ichi has an animal-like inability to bear the sight of other people's pain. It's what I admire most in him, besides his keen photo-eye.

"It is an era in which it is easy to order an automated assassination as it is to order a cab or pizza," he quips. This passion, this *compassion*, can be seen in a series of his photographs taken in Bhopal, India of the lingering aftermath from that 1984 disaster. A catastrophe that history-depleted Millennials oft don't know about. Lapsing into gallows humor, playfully amping up the Asian I-for-r toggle, he voices his mantra: "We must velly much elase the hollol of our times, Meme-san." Ichi believes there's a relation between grin and chagrin.

Overlapping Venn diagrams, we always agree in the area wherein we fight the erasure of the original, marvelous wonder of our *being-here*. We both practice a poetic estrangement from the familiar that is highly critical, but also is an exercise in wonder, tempered with compassion. It is this belief that melds our minds. Put in a nutshell, we grok that art and poetry should be about enlarging the collective *who* that can be described out of the *who* of our individual creativity.



Where we differ is that Ichi says our so-called post-Fordist times entail the *negation* of time, but I counter that time is being *accelerated*. We always

## Finding Mememo

have our most interesting chats over the topic of time: St. Augustine;<sup>2</sup> Relativity (Einstein) versus Quantum Mechanics (Niels Bohr); Henri Bergson's notion of *duration* (Ichi's knowledge on this topic comes via the writings of Japanese Bergsonian-sympathetic theoretical physicist Satoshi Watanabe (b. 1910, he saw Bergson's theory of vibrations as akin to quantum field theory), questions concerning whether time is as granular as light quanta or not, how time is interwoven with consciousness, and so forth. Ichi says he's keyed into the issue of time and history because of Japan's rapid westernization after World War II during the Shōwa Period (1926-1989), but prefers the Buddhist-friendly Process Philosophy of A.N. Whitehead as touted by Seisaku Yamamoto (b. 1929).

A small sample from our chat. Ichi: "If our idea of the past is rethought as that which we can no longer act on, then by changing our actions, we could reach back into the past." Myself: "If you mean our perception of things is not merely contemplative, but already shaped by our memories, I agree."

Today, when our blood sugar gets amped enough on scones, our discussion becomes more focused on time and photography. In a seminal catalogue essay from 1966, MoMA photography curator, John Szarkowski, included "Time" as one of five essential parameters that defines photographic practice. As Ichi cuts into his Lazy Waffles and I into my Kick-Ass Egg Scrabble, we discuss the controversy within the street photo aesthetic between Henri-Cartier Bresson's concept of *the decisive moment* as opposed to Garry Winogrand's *indecisive moment*. And street photography's antipathy to manipulated photo-works, including Postmodernist forms thereof.<sup>3</sup> And how, today, the interest shown in snapshot photography's *supposed* naive realism is an abreaction against the cerebralism of postmodernist tactics. "It's all in the publication *Aperture*," Ichi says.

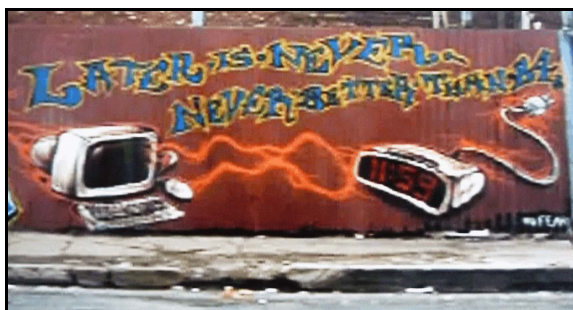
After our breakfast disappears down the hatch, we up anchor and paddle to the Scrabble Room. Empty but for a foursome of oldsters who are concentrated over a deluxe set. The graffiti show, "Writ Large", is still up. One print, with a nostalgic theme, catches my eye as the graffiti reads: LATER IS NEVER,

---

2. In 1917, Albert Einstein completed work on the General Theory of Relativity, one of the rules of which states that time is fundamentally bound to matter and gravity, and that without matter there would be no time. Oddly, this concept was presaged almost 1,300 years before that when Bishop Augustine of Hippo (St. Augustine) put forth the idea that when God created the Heavens and the Earth, he created time as well.

3. *New Yorker* writer Janet Malcolm noted that Winogrand "embraces disorder and vulgarity like long lost brothers." He has abandoned Cartier-Bresson's criteria that a photograph should achieve "the appearance of a formal work of art," and that the photographer should capture the "decisive moment" of a gesture or event. Since Winogrand's canonization in 1977 by the Museum of Modern Art's mammoth show of his pictures of "media events", his work has justified those (e.g., Jonathan Green) who dislike experimental photography (e.g., by Robert Heineken) of the 1960's and '70's, as well as the appropriation, re-photographic and staged practices so prevalent today.

## Finding Mememo



Color print in the "Writ Large" show by "Super-Observer"

NEVER, BETTER THAN B4. I take an iPhone snap of it. Ichi frowns at my use of that technology.

That night we have a meeting of what Ichi calls "The Lodge", a group of his very close Madison-based *amigos* who meet once-a-month at his work-house. It's a Midwest Lunar Society of looney ex-Hippy males: a design-

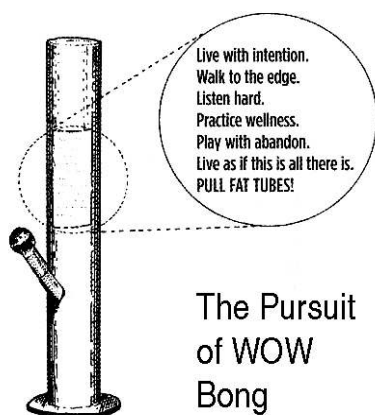
ner, a political cartoonist, a glass-blower specializing in high-end bonges, an artist or two, an editor, and so forth. All are bearded. Candles are lit, casting mysterious shadows among the treasure trove of odd, kitschy things previously described. Those candles are nearly depleted from use. If they could talk, I imagine what amazing stories they'd tell! No ladies here. As Ichi puts it: "No *onna no ko*" [*onna no ko* translates as "girl"]. We all repeat Ichi's exclusionary mantra, twice, in exaggerated Man-Cave-like tones. Then we pat his two male cats, Aion and Chronos. It's all part of The Ritual. Weed and micro-beers are

passed about. Tortilla chips and saucy dips. All mixed with profound to silly conversation. But one common concern, our aging. According to sidereal clocks, each year is getting shorter by 53 hundredths of a second. And *our* years ahead are decreasing as well. Combine those two cold equations and the depressing conclusion merited another two beers. Most of the guys sit on the floor; as a guest, I have a sofa seat next to Ichi. He moves an impersonal micrometer closer to me, reaching for the bong being passed around.

Tonight, *moi* and three bags of *bekk - ame* (Japanese hard candy) have been added to

the standard mix. In a mock-serious ceremony, I am made an honorary member, shown the secret handshake, told to never place my pillow at the north end of a bed (Japanese tradition), given a short history of their society, and take an oath to "Party Hearty." And I do, indeed; we mix it up. Up to now we've been biting into the future, either with premonitions about death, or with postulating our conceptions of an ideal utopia. But at one point Ichi challenges us to each come up with our most memorable memory. "Well, it wouldn't be a memory, would it, if it wasn't memorable," chides one member.

"*Touché!*" I confirm a bit to loudly, starting to feel the weed.

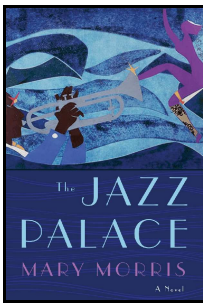




## Finding Mememo

Ichi puts on a CD of Andrew Lloyd Weber's musical *Cats*, sets the machine to endlessly replay the sappy song track "Memories":

*All alone in the moonlight  
I can smile at the old days  
I was beautiful then  
I remember the time I knew what happiness was  
Let the memory live again . . .*



"Now the scene is set," he says. We form a circle; it feels like a séance. As a newbie, I'm urged to "Go first, go first, go first!" Around me all eyes listen, arms ready to gesture questions, physiognomies ready to respond.

I begin: "I was atop the speed queen of the Great Lakes. Little did I know I was sunk. And not just tears came to my eyes, but buckets and buckets of water." I let *that* sink into the wasted minds around me. When I get their "Waaaaa da fuck?" looks, I elucidate. "I'm referring to the infamous tour ship, the S. S. Eastland, sunk at a Chicago dock on July 24, 1915. I was drowned along with a shit load of folks that day, almost as many as died on the Titanic. It isn't a good memory — too much gurgling and urine in the water — but a memory from one of my past lives," I tease. Laughter. I then explain. My wife's cousin's book, *The Jazz Palace*, historical fiction, opens with that noteworthy disaster. "She reverses time's arrow for us and then sets sail to explore the early days of Chicago jazz as seen through the eyes of her main four characters. A good read. Educational too. Ming-like, Morris values the past and has an aesthetic that balks at more than two sorts of flowers in a vase."

"But *you're* a hard read," one of the lodge-members shoots back.

"Like my fiction," I quickly return his serve. "It's my bad. Dig?"

"Seriously," another member chimes in, "what is your most memorable memory? I mean me, I can recall nothing ever happening on our street. Maybe a car going by every half hour; an occasional kerfuffle; us kids screwing around because we had vast amounts of free time; school in the morning, then afternoons that lasted an entire lifetime."

"Well, my first small seaplane ride, I guess. I was four. My dad, an ex-flyboy, and I take a wild ride around Pelican Lake, Wisconsin; buzz my uncle's cottage, then land at the opposite shore for beers at a tavern where I have my first jukebox experience before it's up into the blue again for a spin around the shoreline. First time I have the God-perspective. In retrospective, everything occurred during this experience as if sidereal time flowed four times slower than

## Finding Mememo

it would've for the adults. I loved it/hated it at the same time, a contradictory state Canadian theorist, Arthur Kroker, calls "Spasm." When we pulled up at the home dock, I just ran lickety-split straight to my cousin's sandpile and played single-mindedly with a little shovel and a bucket, saying nothing for hours."



Ichi 's Kabao brand watch

Each member goes on to address the topic. I forget the particulars because by midnight I'm in a mind-altering Einsteinian relativity, not knowing what's up or down. I try to focus on Ichi 's wall clock. Noticing, he tells me, "Oh. That's atomic clock. Updates automatically. I call her '1228 L,' after the famous, fatigueless best clock (out of four) that was housed twenty-seven meters underground in the secure vaults of the French observatory in Paris during the early twentieth century. Every New Year's scientists pop a bottle and drink a *coup de champagne* to its health. Now my watch here [*points to a Japanese brand on his wrist*] I've had since my father gave it to me when I graduated high school. Still sails merrily on keeping pretty good time. In gifting with this, dad trying to evoke *giri*, a feeling of obligation on my part to return favor with 'shaping up,' being more loyal to tradition and family. When I got this my older 'sinisters' and 'bothers' (yes, I was tortured by my elder siblings) were very jealous. They had not received such a nice token when they graduated. Of course, I did *not* conform, did not use *asobase-kotoba* (literally play-language, polite speech), the mode of address used in conversation with persons of higher rank, as my parents are. So strange did I seem to my siblings, they dub me (translated from Japanese) 'Question Mark'. I, in turn, had names for them. My older *sinister* was 'Tenpesuto' (Tempest), my *bother* was 'Ro-Dan' (after that monster). They're dead now. Cremated. As a family unit, I refer to us all as 'Question Mark and the Mysterians'." Laughter by all.

This shifts the Lodge-topic to death and remains. "What have you chosen for the disposal of your corpse?" Two-thirds opt for cremation. Ichi defends such. "It's my culture. Cleanest way. Dead bodies underground only contaminate water." The thought of so many bodies in American graves produces a shudder through us and a vow to drink only beer, wine, or bottled Arctic water.

I chime in with my experience of seeing my father's coffin enter the cremation chamber. How it started to slide down into the furnace like a small boat, the prow lifting, the boat going under with the skipper on board. I recall that I wrote in my diary the day my daddy died: "Life has a way of slipping away, and it did today. I hope you are at rest someplace you like the best."

One member, wielding his bottle of beer like a conductor his baton, tosses in: "The poet, 'Dye-lan' Thomas died from D.T. His initials were D.T. and he *died*

## Finding Mememo



Igudesman & Joo

from D.T. Hah!" This interjection reminds us of one of the most important of Lodge rules. A new inductee has to amuse the group with any musical instrument available in the Lodge-house and accompany Ichi in some wacky duo ditty. And so Ichi (on toy piano) and I (on a guitar) horse around (he wants us to ape the hot musical comedy duo, Igudesman & Joo, an Anglo violinist paired with a Korean pianist that do Victor Borge-like performances' [ed., they're on YouTube] like their classic "A Little Nightmare Music").

After this receives a standing ovation, Ichi pulls out today's local rag and noisily flips to the Zodiacal Daily Predictions page. "Let's do our horoscopes!" A resounding "Shit, yes!" passes around the room.

"Scorpio!" yells one member.

"It reads: *Go all out for what you want today. Plenty of variety and gaiety to keep you on your toes,*" says Ichi.

"Virgo!"

"*A day for bold measures. Close partnerships are beneficial. A wonderful period for entertaining,*" replies Ichi.

"Gemini!" I yell.

"So. *You are in wonderful form today. Exceptionally bright social portents are indicated.*"

Ichi then give us his own sign. "Aries. *Some people from a different culture is piquing your curiosity right now, and you've got the time you need to explore their world little bit today.*" This gets us all laughing hysterically.

"What bull!" One skeptical member yells over the laughter. Ichi knows the guy's sign is Taurus and reads his prediction: "*Be sure to take copious mental notes when you encounter other people today, because one of them has something of value for you.*" That shut the dude up.

"And Jym's sign?," asks Ichi.

"He's a Cancer," I say, but he hates to read his after having had cancer treatment."

"Try it."

Here goes. *After a few days of doing everything for everyone else, why not do something for yourself today? You could do something as major as book a day at the spa, or simply find an hour or two to spend on your own in a quiet corner.* Jym's always afraid one day such a reading will advise him instead to *Get chemo, do not pass go.*"

## Finding Mememo

"Aquarius, look me up," says a member who magically has remained somewhat sober.

Ichi obliges, "You aren't going to believe this, Hy." He stands to make the presentation more dramatic. *"A new member of your social group [stabs a finger my way] has a lot to teach you, advice for you. They're not going to come up to you, tap you on the shoulder and say 'let's talk' — so if you want to get some clarity on things, soar above the murk and smog and get into the clear crystal — but you need to approach them about it."*

"Weeeeird," the guy replies. He gets up and sits next to me. But if he wants clarity from me, he's going to be disappointed. I'm getting fuzzy. I do know *I'm* fatigued, my mind not keeping time with my body. If I now had to do a *Gedankenexperiment*, I'd be incapable of distinguishing between imagined scenarios that are potentially realizable and imagined scenarios that are considered ultimately unrealizable. This feeling seems to be *the unspoken* that we all start to understand.

We decide to call it a night. I stagger upstairs to bed. Ichi cleans up the party mess. Outside, car doors are slamming. Someone pukes — twice. Another voice gives forth words in isolation and grouped in phrases, that detach themselves like sparks from his fiery scream (I later find out the yell was from one member backing his car out over another member's foot. No fun. But I've had fun.<sup>4</sup> My voice has become high-pitched, thin, like a flute, fizzy like a flute of champagne.

[illegible]

Next day, breakfast with Ichi 's wife at their home. Just us sitting at their *kotatsu*, a low table with a heater. Ichi has an early dental appointment. Valvona is wiry, bespectacled. I break the ice with, "You look wonderful." She gives an inaudible sigh of relief, and then tells me about their honeymoon years ago: a stay in Shikoku, followed by three days in Kagawa Prefecture visiting the Konpira temple, then a couple of days at the hot springs in Ehime in Dogoonsen,

4. Johan Huizinga, author of *Homo Ludens* (written in 1938), considered the father of “ludology” (a term used to describe the study of digital games), defines *fun* as a “primordial” term, incapable of further analysis; for him, play is a free activity standing quite consciously outside “ordinary” life as being “not serious”, but at the same time absorbing the player intensely.



## Finding Mememo



Rocky Mountain Toast with bacon

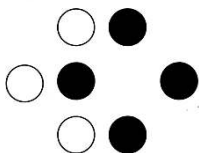
following the Shimanami Ocean Road, through the archipelago of the Seto Inland Sea. She set me dreaming. Younger than Ichi, she can't be a day over 50. I ask her about her job.

"Pediatrics, at the Maud Long Maternity Ward." We get on the topic of death via birth. "Birth starts death; we each get a ticket to eventually board the *Bingo-Mar*

while young of meditating on getting older, sailing into a battle where parents are gone, friends gone, only several surviving amongst the dead and dying."

I assure her she will have a long, vital life. "Why Ninon de l'Enclos of the seventeenth century died at ninety-nine, in full reason and reputed for her wit."

(On this assertion I would be proven correct, but the intuitions leading up to it were faulty.) We had charming breakfast chat over Rocky Mountain toast. I got to pet "Toy", the cat, named after Japanese artist Toyoshige. Exiting, I admire the black and white circular stepping stones leading from their door.



"They're set into the position called *K* or Eternity from the Japanese game of go," she said.



A month later. One of the most beloved of the Lodge members, who offered this remark on aging that night: "I hope I don't get so old I'm pissing on my shoes," — which he was, in fact, in danger of doing, thanks to several beers — suddenly died of a bad ticker. Fellow members, besides mourning, are now debating whether to replace him with a distaff member of the local art community. It is, after all, the twenty-first century. Ichi used the tragedy to make a point to me about how in Japan a man might not cry over the death of a friend, especially if he was a *botchan*, a mama's boy, yet from a sense of *giri*, shed tears over someone dead over a hundred years. He thought that ridiculous.

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: An excellent overview of Hy's relationship with Ichi. "Little Hats" recalls, while proofing it, that she laughed until tears were coming down. Though, yet again, she can't confirm its intended placement in the flow of narration. Ichi, during our review of this material, was amused by Hy's description of the "Lunar Society", which he said was a "creative evolution" of the facts. He did appreciate the mention of his wife therein. She, too, testified Ichi, liked Hy, their breakfast together having gone well.*

## Finding Mememo

*On my first visit to Ichi 's home, she told me she never saw anyone rise to the point of enthusiasm at the mention of strawberry shortcake as Meme, or how glad he was that she and Ichi appreciated the crimson trail of crime twisting toward them when Meme, after too many micro-beers, would pitchfork ideas, read fragments for, a crime anthology never written. It's opening story has his protagonist, Cosmo P. Noraker, arriving in a hansom cab at an old rickety house where, "The undercurrent of hidden secrets in the dim, silent house seemed suddenly intensified." This fragment was jotted down on the inside back cover of a book he had just given to Ichi as a gift, Japanese by Spring by Ishmael Reed. Yes, Hy left some notes behind during these beer-inspired brainstorming sessions. In this story, Chief Inspector Monroe of the local constabulary is baffled by a curious locked-room murder and Cosmo prickles the Lestrade-like character's tolerance by asking, "Are you familiar with the Fourth Dimension, Inspector?"*

*It seems Hy always wanted to write a mystery series featuring what he called "The Rule of Thumb Detective", so named because "he just went by the rule of thumb, muddling and puzzling out cases as best he could; the opposite of Sherlock's genius — Hy saw Sherlock as a modernist — "But my nineteenth-century detective, Cosmo, would be," said Hy, "postmodern, more of a criminologico-paralogist.<sup>5</sup> Chance, coincidence, a world where margins had become capricious, would be the site of his adventures."*

*His PoMo shamus has, "A bulging forehead, indicating the talent of which he is the undoubted possessor. Coldly handsome; some might feel a desire to see him as a woman." Meme here imitates the Victorian penchant to apply Physiognomy to character traits. "Cosmo has a stern demeanor and a penetrating glance, despite one eye being glass (lost in Afghanistan). He unites the courage of a lion with the cunning of a fox, with the sagacity of a dog. Unlike his bitter rival on Baker Street, his case load is less determined by sympathetic interest than the promise of large emolument. . . . An autodidact and oddball scholar, he has recently published a three-volume history on 'The World's Great Cynics,' paying for the publication himself." Hy often described Cosmo to Ichi as seen at the crime scene "trimming his nails with professional stoicism, while observing the police activity. Then, back in his rooms, he'd sit so engrossed by his contemplation that he could not, for hours, bestow a single thought on external objects."*

*His Spartan offices are in the rear of the Elite Dry Goods Emporium, a mere ten minute walk from Sherlock Holmes' apartments. His door, painted a gorgeous pink, reads COSMO, PRIVATE DICK FOR HIRE (which has led to some misunderstandings). He prefers strawberry-colored shirts because his passion for strawberry shortcake won't show on his garments. His favorite stimulant is decocainized coca leaf extract purchased at a chemist's up the block. Cosmo's sidekick, his "Dr. Watson", is one Dr. Dyer, a mortician by training, a snoop by inclination, red eyes like the safelights in Ichi 's darkroom, who resides in Lynch Court, an easy walk to Cosmo's rooms.*

---

5. The etymology of this word, "paralogy", resides in the Greek words *para* — beside, past, beyond — and *logos* in its sense as "reason". Thus paralogy is the movement beyond or against reason. Jean-François Lyotard sees reason not as a universal and immutable human faculty or principle, but as a specific and variable human production; paralogy for him means the movement against an established way of reasoning.

## Finding Mememo

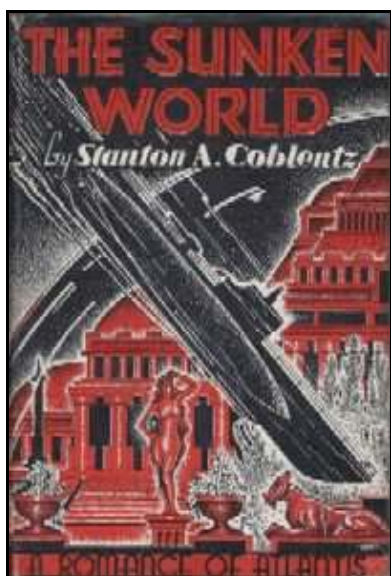
*It seems Hy envisioned his Cosmo to contend with his own Moriarty: "My assassination has been attempted no fewer than eight different times, and I am convinced of a ninth. I've been shot at from ambush on four occasions, thugs have rushed me once, a speeding automobile has grazed me twice, and this evening I found a cunning little dose of cyanide of potassium in my favorite strawberry shortcake." But the curious part of it, Ichi 's wife recalls, is that Cosmo is absolutely unable to guess the reason for the persistent vendetta and who is behind it, unless it has something to do with "a mysterious childhood misadventure in the environs of a skunk farm during a summer family vacation visit to the Isle of Jersey."*

*A fragment of one of Cosmo's adventures in crime, "Pipe in the Hand of a Dead Man", survives on a scrap of paper Ichi 's wife managed to retrieve from her kitchen wastebasket (among peeled bananas and apples turning brown, oxidating, slowly burning mimicking the red planet) after Hy sunk it therein:*

Bascombe Pollock fought the biting east wind, which had set his eyes to watering, which then mixed with the gritty dust from Manchester's ugly mills, making him look like a weeping woman whose makeup has run. When his train to London arrives, he mounts his first class carriage. Once inside, he breathes freely at last and lights up his Meerschaum pipe, taking a draw before he lifts the small black Gladstone bag of stout calfskin stuffed with his bank's bills and sets it carefully on the seat next to him in the empty railway carriage. The compartment was his, or so Bascombe supposes. Soon absorbed in his pipe and The Illustrated London Times, he fails to notice the gleam of two stealthy keen eyes watching him from the dark shadow under the opposite seat. He is blind to a long lithe wiry figure uncoiling and creeping out, silently as a snake, across the floor of the carriage. Suddenly, two murderous hands are clutching at his throat. In a moment, Pollock is flitting with the proverbial velocity of time, but which seems to him very slow and sluggish even as his blood flows quickly through his veins and his heart beats with a rapid motion; the tension of his nerves becomes positively painful. Before he loses consciousness and sees the Big Light, he hears a stern command spit out in German: Mach keinen Scheiße! [Don't do anything stupid]. If you consider dying *stupid*, then Bascombe didn't heed his attacker's advice.

*In another imagined plot, Cosmo (former cabin boy on the HMS Ardent in the War of 1812) describes his life-journey as: "Sink me! If my birth wasn't a sailin' beyond a blind insouciant sea, briefly into the tropics, and then across the dark expanse of a northern sea, where the constant winds of a boyhood with my father as harsh skipper bent me." Ichi 's wife dug it. Ichi believed this to be based on Hy's own life experiences rather than Cosmo's. According to Ichi , Hy told him, "In my personal life, I took a long time to get my compass, straighten my course. Sailed through many white squalls. But now I'm on the ill-fated ship Bingo-Maru, its sails at half-mast; my temperament is in the doldrums, my fleshy hull has accumulated too many barnacles. But I tack on. Try to turn my worry inside out. Any wonder my department wants to dry-dock me?"*

## Finding Mememo



*I wondered if Hy'd said anything about me during the Lodge-meeting, which didn't get air-time in his text. Ichi couldn't recall if the conversation turned to me during that boozy night's festivities. "It was too long ago. Kuso! [Shit] The hippocampus is a small seahorse-shaped part of the brain necessary for long-term memory and, in my case, the poor thing's been caught in the too-fast river of time. That event was way before our residual years, Jym-san."*

*Speaking of time . . . readers who wish to delve into the debates between Einstein and Bergson on the issue of time, which crops up in Hy's novel, I recommend Jimena Canales, *The Physicist and the Philosopher: Einstein, Bergson, and the Debate that Changed our Understanding of Time* (Princeton University Press, 2015). Ichi mentioned Hy wanted to order that tome along with Michio Kaku's *Hyperspace*.<sup>6</sup> He also recalled that Hy had, after a long*

*search, found on eBay a very rare 1949 first edition of American author Stanton A. Coblentz's Atlantis-themed satirical novel, *The Sunken World*.<sup>7</sup>*

*Kaku's book arrived weeks before Hy's death, but Coblentz's arrived at Hy's home the day he jumped (or was pushed). "Very appropriate," Dorinda later told me, "as my world sunk that day. Now I lie and like to watch TV couples in bed. No longer can I poke at Hy's 'outie' belly button, alive as a rose not plucked. The very next morning, a cerebral rattle of consciousness, an obedient immersion in the spacetime continuum where everything around me was pure surface. But Hy hadn't rose, he'd sunk deep into the bed somewhere. Then I remembered the real depths of horror. Prone in bed, I stretched my arms up and over in a dolphin curve, scissoring my legs in slow motion, trying for a sea-change, getting my blood pumping like obedient rivers to that sea — the sea so loved by my now-absent husband." I have to admit, this admission brought me nearly to tears. As for the Canales book, Dallas couldn't find any Visa payments for it, nor did "Little Hats" ever see the book at Hy's studio.*

\* \* \*

---

6. *Hyperspace: A Scientific Odyssey Through Parallel Universes, Time Warps, and the 10th Dimension* (1994) by Michio Kaku, a theoretical physicist from the City College of New York, focuses on studies of higher dimensions referred to as hyperspace. The recurring theme of the book is that all four forces of the universe (the strong force, the weak force, electromagnetism and gravity) become more coherent and their description simpler in higher dimensions.

7. *The Sunken World* is a wonderful science fiction undersea thriller about the launching of a new, futuristic submarine, the mighty X-111. But the country was shocked when its Captain and crew were reported lost at sea shortly after launch. It was an abrupt ending to a maiden voyage that had started so promisingly. However, it was only the beginning, the beginning of an underwater adventure never before heard of or imagined by the land-dwelling peoples of Earth.



## Finding Mememo

8



My wife, noticing my last trip into the kitchen for another hit of strawberry shortcake was at 7 p.m., has come upstairs to check on me. *What the hell's he doin' up there — here?*



*The Little Mermaid* (Copenhagen, 1913) Edvard Ericksen

My man-cave's door slowly opens. She peeks in. "I'm listening to a special program on WFMT [*ed., classical music*] on composers whose music was suppressed by the Nazis, specifically to Austrian Alexander von Zemlinsky's [*ed., d. 1942*] symphonic poem *Die Seejungfrau*. It means 'See the Young Girl Die' in German," I tease-tell her. "After sparing the life of her beloved, The Little Mermaid is lifted up by the sun's warm rays to join the Daughters of the Air, who, after 300 years of good deeds, floated into heaven," saying this, I dramatically lift my arms.

She walks further in, sits down on the blue sofa-bed next to me. She casts a curious eye at a slim chapbook of poetry I was reading, appropriate to the music, by the hot young new poetic-voice, Ocean Vuong. Distractedly, she opens it where his poem "Ode to Masturbation" grabs her attention. She reads two randomly chosen stanzas:



Ocean Vuong

*because you  
were never holy  
only beautiful  
enough  
to be found  
with a hook*

*in your mouth  
water shook  
like sparks  
as they pulled  
you up . . .*

"Wow, an incredibly fortuitous connection here to the vicissitudes of that Little Mermaid! Now add the fact that we will be going to Copenhagen in a month. . . ." She continues to make odd language-noises, which could only be interpreted as peristaltic movements. Gets me laughing.

## Finding Mememo



Mememo's wife at seventeen

Yes, coincidences of this sort haunt our life together and fill my books.<sup>1</sup> We are all just floating around accidental-like on a Chicago wind, events bumping into other events. Let's face it, the universe is messy. It is nonlinear, turbulent and chaotic. It is dynamic. It spends its time in transient behavior on its way to somewhere else. It self-organizes and evolves.

Contact! Contact! Yes, our lived-bodies are events too. I stand (although I am now sitting) in awe of my body. To it, death is the ultimate ether. But I try to maintain an ultimate optimism, which has entertained all the facts, which lead up to pessimism. (By the way, I fear bodies and pain more than death.)

Ironic, now I have to fear the *lack* of bodies — distance-learning — where neither teacher nor student will have privacy. The university as corporate board room where they will sure as hell will do things to you that you haven't thought of. Welcome to a Taylorized/Surveilled pedagogical world! Yesterday, faculty received an Admin e-mail. Subject heading: "ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT". It read in part: "We believe that the universe is a giant conversation, so in order to support the New Information Age at the School we declare: THOU SHALT NOT DISTORT, DELAY OR SEQUESTER INFORMATION."

It's one thing to have a talking-head broadcasting on a screen and quite another to probe ideas through a dynamic face-to-face interaction. In such a classroom of the near-future, no one will feel free to take up intellectual tasks with risk in it. At our school, a few years ago, one instructor was fired for engaging a student's question as to whether Zionism, *as a state policy*, was

---

1. The most popular notion concerning interpretation is that things are "interpretable", that certain properties of certain objects render those objects especially apt to *mean*. Like some people see the future of Western music in the first part of Mozart's *Adagio and Fugue K.546*. Some objects can be caught up in patterns of cross-referentiality; in a text they are sometimes most easily found when one examines the text backwards, as I did Hy's. In this segment, text, water, the sea (above and below) theme, is continued, but starts in the earliest of Hy's fragments for this book.

Speaking of sea themes, although this incident isn't recorded in Hy's fragments, I have it from his widow, Dorinda, that Hy, in college, had to write a fifteen-page punishment paper on the infamous cetology chapter in *Moby Dick* for playing exquisite corpse in the back of the non-air-conditioned classroom while his seedily-dressed American Literature prof wailed on thereon. A traumatic academic event that found its way, in distorted fashion, into Hy's fiction. In one short story, "Dark-as-the-Waiting-Tomb", a character is called "Moppy Dick"; in another, his character is addicted to the music of the 60's psychedelic band, Moby Grape; in this current text his Victorian detective's business sign originally read "Cosmo, Hired Mobile Dick", which my redaction changed to simply "Cosmo, Hired Dick," believing the "Mobile" either redundant, obscure, or obscene. Dallas agreed, but Dorinda strongly objected.

This seems to prove correct Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus' observation: "It's not what happens but how you react to it that matters."

## Finding Mememo



Dares and Entellus duking it out



Ernst Kantorowicz

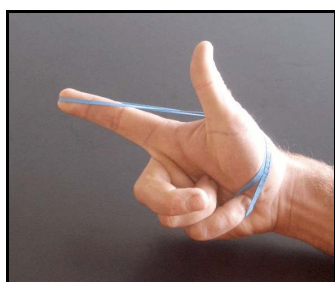
racist, like apartheid, or not. It seems the professor's peccadillo (or mortal sin, depending on your politics) was he did not *immediately* shut down debate on the topic. The prof and his chairman went at each other like those Homeric combatants Dares and Entellus. Dares eventually won a lawsuit against the school for violation of academic freedom; got enough bucks to finish his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago; Entellus, the chair who fired him, was forced into early retirement.

The question is, would such questions even arise if students knew their questions are being captured on camera? I

think not. I think that if I was forced to lecture under such conditions, I would soon feel, as Emily Dickinson put it, "Zero at the Bone," the dead zone where all pedagogical pleasure and will-to would have fled. German-American historian Ernst Kantorowicz [*d. 1963*] believed that the university's corporate body does not die — *universitas non moritur* — but what about the hapless academic drones driven into virtual reality within it?

During one of our Artist's Café lunches, Ichi says he believes Millennials will love the leap into a Brave New World: "School'll become for them one big computer virtual reality game. These 'Culminants' will roam the academic prairie with iPhones in leather holsters, practicing their fast draws." This remark has me flashing on a fragment from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*: "A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it. What interests me is what others may believe and the actions that such belief may inspire. "Students will — most have already — lose that special feeling concerning texts and the importance of *presence*," Ichi continues. "To students today — wouldn't you agree? — it makes no sense that, when Machiavelli sat down to read ancient authors, he dressed in his finest robes as a sign of respect." I nod my assent, my mouth filled with grilled cheese. He then reaches into his briefcase and hands me a book, saying: "Plant this in your colleagues' brains." It's a copy of *Data and Goliath: The Hidden Battles to Collect Your Data and Control Your World* by cryptographer Bruce Schneier.

## Finding Mememo



I return to our basement office. A warning note is on the door: WEAVING SPIDERS COME NOT HERE. It's a heterotopic space harboring us Precarious Knowledge Workers, where my charming colleague, Charmian (a star in the showbiz of mind), is putting another rubber band on her famous Ball o' Bands, an accumulation of rubber bands culled from bundled mail sent over the past twenty years. When she retires, she plans on dropping it from the school's tower to see if it will bounce as many times as her checks have over the years. When no students are filling our office hours, we play rubber-band shooter together, trying to hit the small framed portrait of our school's president that campus security replaced our dartboard with when it was deemed "a personnel hazard". They let us retain our funky noticeboard with its Rauschenberg-like thumb-tacked collage of variegated scrapes of inverted envelopes, reversed invoices, snapshots, Post-It Notes, official letters, and cryptic messages from students. Charmian says it bears witness to the fact that remnants of the Gutenberg era remain despite all.

Charmian, sixty-two, solves and creates crossword puzzles; she has pale skin, a touch of large green, slightly protruding eyes, and legs full at the calves. She has the habit, when in deep thought of dropping her eyelids over her eyes until only a line of eyeball shows, making her appear to be looking out at the world through a slit, instead of a window; her smile fills the room when she's sipping her Ovaltine. A paleo-dieter, no K-cup coffee brew for her. "Damn cups just add to the amount of plastic crap we soil our soil with," she complains when we line up before our Keurig B130 coffee maker. She is trying to make friends with the new younger female hire, Glibly Dorset, a Brit ex-pat from Devon, England, who has just moved into an apartment a floor below Charmian on West Devon Avenue so as to be close to Indian restaurants. "Glibly's books sell well at Urban Outfitters," Char says. "As a girl, she was considerably younger than me," Char adds enigmatically, sipping her malt drink.

"She is still younger than you," I shoot back.

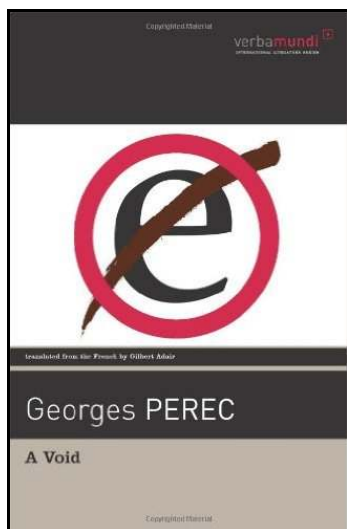
She playfully snaps a rubber band my way, "No, Hy not now she isn't." She's referring to Glibly's fast-tracking toward tenure by outdoing our combined publishing records, holding more committee positions than anyone in the school, dyeing her hair grayish and wearing lamb-dressed-as-mutton suits, all to appear more mature, even a bit matronly, in the eyes Chad & Co.



## Finding Mememo



Charmian's Paris 1968 Poster

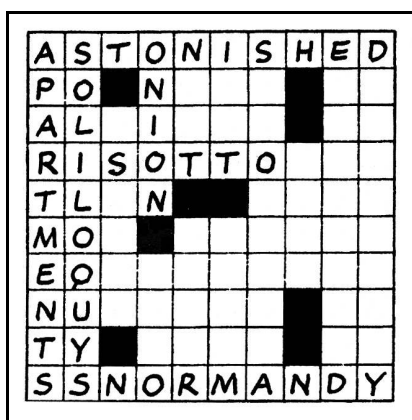


Charmian sits in her special back-support chair, Ovaltine in hand, and stares at the marmalade pot proximate to a pack of crumpets Glibly left as if for us to fathom its possibilities. She likes to work acrostics; claims a book character is like an acrostic: “Read it forward, backward, or across, it always spells the same thing.” I tell her that sounds like our Chair Chad, who, no matter how you read him, spells F-U-C-K-W-A-D. She laughs. She hates “that Maldive Shark,” as she calls him [*ed., referencing a poem by Herman Melville*]. She again lapses into silence, which evokes two thoughts in me simultaneously: 1) I am really very tired; 2) I am not a bit tired, I am charging ahead with great energy. I can’t decide between them. During this moment of indecision, I notice that Charmian takes her eyes off the jam and appears to wake up into her past where she most likely fixes on Paris 1968 (she’s looking at her 1968 “Beauty is in the Street” Parisian poster) when she was doing post-graduate studies in philosophy at the Sorbonne, bringing those memories close up to her, as one might bring a book close up to one’s eyes.

In a short story, “From Daggers to Diamonds,” she wrote about her brief affair with radical Frenchy Daniel Cohn-Bendit. That poster is further proof: “It’s signed by him on the back and dedicated to me,” she told us office-mates once, her voice richer somehow, edged with a tremble of

vibrato. “Danny, and I had a most intriguing discussion over solipsism and the existence of *Others* one day as we sipped tea at Café Deux Magots, then walked to Père Lachaise cemetery to worship at the monument to the executed leaders of the Paris Commune; there he kicked a gravestone and said, ‘I think this solves our debate; these graves prove the existence of Others, I mean, why bother to bury people if they don’t exist!’ *Touche!* I said, giving him the point. I wondered if that would fly with my philosophy prof, a fanatic supporter of Gabriel Marcel’s Christian Existentialism, who advised us seminar students: ‘To watch and to pray, is the only way to be a scholar,’ and ‘Final perseverance is the doctrine that wins the eternal victory in small things as in great’ — stuff like that, as we sat and sat, our buns getting sore.”

## Finding Mememo



Charmian, of course, speaks fluent French. She calls Chicago's satiric paper, *The Onion*, "*L'Oignon*," as it sounds suave, haute cuisine-ish (she's a *foodie*). She's the only faculty member in our basement office (a place we've dubbed "The South Pole") to have *three* books (in French) by Georges Perec. I broke down and bought one myself. Liking Perec, she has a *thing* for crossword puzzles. When a student fails to show up for a meeting (which is often), she pulls out a puzzle, licks her pencil and goes to it. We office-mates dubbed her

"Dr. Fill". She shakes her head, spears it with an index finger, if the last word in a crossword eludes her. [Ed., *Thanks Char for the frontispiece crossword.*]

This afternoon, she takes out her crossword puzzle book and starts to finish one she began yesterday, until interrupted by a French Lit student, a compulsive ex-chopper pilot from the Iraq War, who is always early for his appointments. The Five Across clue is "An Imaginary Kingdom". Easy. She puts in the required "O" to spell T-L-O-N, one of the imaginary worlds in Jorge Luis Borges' story "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius". "Excellent!" I compliment her. "Hell, that's nothin'. Can you get this clue? *Apollo 11 and 12 (180 degrees)*. I, at first, try MOONMISSIONS. Doesn't work. Then a light bulb goes on. SNOISSIWNOOW. It fits with the crossing answers and is *moon missions* turned upside down, as if floating in zero-gravity!

She's well-informed on the history of crosswords. "Did you know that the world's first crossword appeared on December 21, 1913?" Stuff like that. Once she expatiated, for the span of downing two cups of Ovaltine, on "The Newman Ripple", the New Wave of crossword construction initiated by Stanley Newman, which favored current slang, including Hip Hop. "In the 1980s, he lay down his equivalent of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses in his *Crossworder's Own Newsletter*, shooting rubber bands at the then puzzle master of *The New York Times*, Eugene T. Maleska, arguing the dude's puzzles were only fit for 'the residents of a retirement home for university dons,' Ballsy, huh?"

She started on this passion for puzzles in order to keep her first husband's interest in her (he was addicted to them). But when she started to out-solve him, turn neighborhood kids' hopscotch grids into puzzles, doing the architectural donkeywork, creating grids and words to fill them, things went south — majorly south. She discovered he was sending coded messages to his mistress via crossword clues. During the resulting marital spat, her prize-winning French poodle, Jean-Luc, was heaved off the apartment's balcony by her soon-to-be ex-

## Finding Mememo

husband. That very day, she constructed a “break-up puzzle” for him, an innovative way to tell him that things are *Kaput*. When he finished the puzzle, the major diagonal traversing the grid spelled out: OUTTHEWINDOWYOUGO. The “words” became a way of jump-starting her day during months of mourning a pet and regretting marriage, a daily disciplining of mind at a time it was difficult to get the mental focus to finish her dissertation on Georges Perec.

This is the story she tells all faculty newbies, along with her first cross-word puzzle triumph, of course: “A few years ago an office-mate was doing what he called ‘a picky truzzle’ (he loved Spoonerisms). One clue to Nine Across had him, well, puzzled. He gave me the Big Ask. I looked at the clue, *Supporter of wicked things*, and immediately shot back ‘CANDLESTICK’.” He got that *Whaaaaaaaaa daaaa????* look on his face. That penny-drop moment of lucidity of mind had escaped him. He said it made him feel like an IDIOT and he stopped doing crosswords thereafter. Said the Spanish Grand Inquisitor, Torquemada, had been more merciful than crossword constructors. Then I went on to beat the online computer crossword program Midweek-Bot v2.1. But it took longer to successfully take on Fred Piscop.<sup>2</sup> Then I beat Ruthcrisp (Crispa), Roger Squires (Rufus), and Will Shortz, in that order. Yes, I love the duel of wits between me and the individual composer of puzzles. You get that gobsmacked, wholly plussed wonder at the victory that is yours when you can solve such clues as *State with the most UFO babies*, answering: ARKANSAS. Or, *Where’s Franco’s brain being kept alive*, getting it right with: FISHTANK.

I fantasize launching a new countermeasure to my chairman’s harassment — *Kreuzworträtse* [Operation Crossword, but it sounds more militant in German] — a subversive strategy for taking advantage of his love of doing crosswords. I would anonymously mail a small booklet of ‘words’ to him that would include not so subtle hints. The booklet would state it was sent by someone who has made a donation in Chad’s name to the Eccentric Club Minesweeper’s Fund (British). For instance, in one puzzle, a clue for One Down would be: *Submit to pressure and return to base*, for which the answer would be CLIMBDOWN. And Two Across: *Calling off the invasion of Europe*, for which the answer would be NOOVERLORD. And Twelve Across: *Join a famous beach landing*, to which the solution would be GOTOOMAHA. And Seventeen Across: *Feet, using which you can go either way*, for which the answer would be IAMB1 (rumor has it Chad is

---

2. Fred Piscop, a major “constructor”, hails from Bellmore, New York and was a graduate of Cornell. He took up puzzling full-time in 1995 after being laid off as a computer tech support specialist for a defense contractor. When not puzzling, he plays keyboards in a rock band, samples micro-brews pronouncing some “recycled horse piss,” and collects spelling errors found in comic strips. Dallas is a fan of his due to his craft-beer connoisseurship.

## Finding Mememo

bisexual). And Two Across: *Original slang term for a condom*, for the answer would be SCUMBAG. And Ten Down: *French term canaille means*, would be solved by VILEHERD. He'd start wondering if he was getting paranoid or not. Maybe, it'd open up a fissure in his brain.

Yah, like, Charmian, he too is one heck of a *solver*, telling us once during a faculty meeting to follow suit, "It combs my mind every morning." I imagine him, before showering, beating Will Shortz, then flouncing around in silk pajamas, his every step a conscious act of enjoyment. Chad calls himself a "solver", but Charmian prefers the archaic term "caninal", of which she says, "It's a perfectly *cromulent* word." She got a cameo in the documentary on Will Shortz, *Wordplay* (2006) where she, with eager face, tells someone, "Start at the bottom right-hand corner [of the puzzle], this, on the basis that the constructor may have written those clues last when more tired or inebriated."

The commentator waxes eloquent over how "to tackle a crossword is to enjoy the experience of your brain pulling on many different areas simultaneously." (Hell, my battle with Chad Armbruster and the higher-ups already has my brain being pulled hither 'n thither.) Mr. Expert goes on to advise eyewitnesses to a crime that they should *not* do crosswords prior to identity line-ups; research has shown it has a detrimental effect on face recognition. And he warns that no credible research supports the urban myth that doing crosswords can improve memory and brain function. "Nope, a puzzle a day ain't gonna keep dementia away — not even playing Sudoku."

There is one point at which Charmian's interest in puzzles and my liking

of British TV mysteries cross — "Inspector Morse". Morse loves crosswords and in the episode "The Silent World of Nicholas Quinn" (1977), he takes time to solve the London *Time's* puzzle in an impressive twelve and a half minutes.

At this point in her life, Charmian plays mostly to shut the outside world out for a blessedly silent period from academic responsibilities or woes. From the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns in the department. For she, too, is being pressured about amping up her technology quotient to be distance-learning capable. I can sympathize with that. But I, myself, am quite cruciverbally challenged. My wife

		6		2		1		
			7		1			
	9						5	
		4				9		
1	3	9				5	8	2
	4		5		6		2	
			2		7			
2	1		4		3		6	7

Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.



## Finding Mememo



Ichi 's number cubes as displayed in his work house in Madison, WI

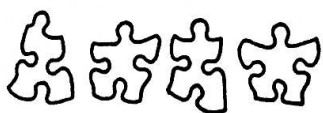
is hooked, not me. Weird because I dig lateral thinking and teasing out hidden treasures, even constructing such puzzles.

Now Ichi , he prefers the newer geegaw, Sudoku (*s doku*, digit-single, originally called Number Place). Why? A no-brainer since English is his second language. He does better with logic-based, combinatorial number-placement puzzles as language isn't involved. An interesting question pops to mind. Does Ichi 's preference some-

how correlate with the odd fact that he and his wife, when dressing and undressing together, *co-zip* and *co-unzip* their pants? It does correlate for sure with Ichi 's ease with numbers. He has this thing about the number constant known in math circles as *e*.<sup>3</sup> He attributes it to a fanatical high school Lebanese math teacher, Mr. Tannous, who hopped on this hobbyhorse (or camel) and spent a whole semester exploring its many mysteries to the point where many in his audience went drifting off harrumphing. Last week, he sent me a challenge: *What's the largest number one can write only using three characters?* After I couldn't do it, he shot back the answer, *Nine to the ninth to the ninth, repeating it nine times*.

My sister and I, when young and on vacation at our aunt and uncle's cottage, when bad weather forced us indoors and we got bored reading *Reader's Digest* "Enlarge Your Vocabulary" features, well, we did jigsaw puzzles. Puzzles of the Matterhorn, Ireland's Muckanaghederdauhaulia Harbor, Niagara Falls, Wisconsin's State Capitol, the sinking Titanic, the once famous Monkey Jungle Bar in Miami (a gift from my uncle who once boozed there circa 1942, his slurred words folding into other sailors' war stories like beaten eggs). He was serving on an aircraft carrier then; he and that puzzle survived the Battle of Okinawa.

Like little Frank Lloyd Wright toying with his "Froebel Blocks", we were more drawn to the shapes of the puzzle pieces than their content. I liked the pieces that resembled dancing figures as they recalled to mind the cryptic figures Sherlock Holmes deciphers in "The Adventure of the Dancing Men". Solving the puzzle is a play between blunder and insight

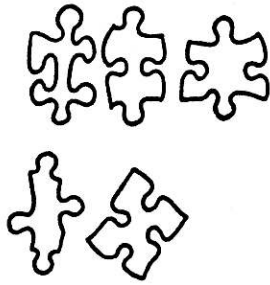


---

3. The number *e* is an important mathematical constant that is the base of the natural logarithm. It is approximately equal to 2.71828, and is the limit of  $(1 + 1/n)^n$  as *n* approaches infinity, an expression that arises in the study of compound interest. It can also be calculated as the sum of the infinite series: An effective way to calculate the value of *e* is not to use the defining equation above, but to use the following infinite sum:  $e = 1/0! + 1/1! + 1/2! + 1/3! + 1/4! + \dots$

## Finding Mememo

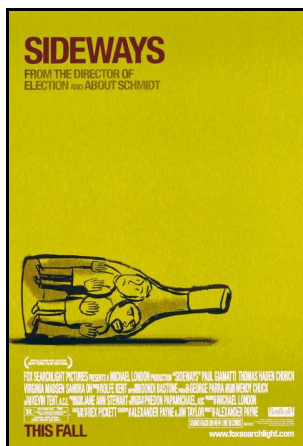
as two pieces that seem utterly unfit for each other miraculously conjoin. Later Dorinda and I saw that as a metaphor for the dialectic of fitness/unfitness in our marriage over the years.



My sister, younger by five years, preferred the more comic jumping forms, some even looked like our uncle's skinned and wall-hung beaver pelts that decorated his cottage. A few pieces also seemed to be the most difficult to fit, reminded us of Crucifixes and Nazi Swastikas. As adults, we found Rorschach Test figures fascinating. Odd horticultural items, like Monkey Puzzle trees and Japanese Bonsai, were similarly intriguing to us. (Ichi once gave me a Bonsai he'd dubbed "Shira Nami" [*White Wave*], which looked like a ginseng root), because they were also the product of a controlling mind, having something of the puzzle about them. I found something similar in sails seen on four-masted tall-ships silhouetted against the sun, headsails and spankers billowed, darker forms puzzled against the brighter sky.

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: Hy never said how he got that bizarre information about Ichi and his wife's dressing habits. I puzzled on that real good. If he'd made his therapist privy to this, she'd probably chalk it up to a trip to Mad City (as fantasy) or literally (as fact) pertaining to a Zip-Pair stumbled onto in their Mad City home during one of his visits escaping bald-shaved business-suited men on long skateboards. Ichi might have ludically leaked it during one of those weed-'n-beer enhanced Lodge meetings and Hy took it literally.*



*More interesting, of course, is the sustained issue of the problem of distance learning and the tensions this topic was creating within Hy's department between faculty and administrators. Was this impending change to course offerings at Hy's school directly related to his death — whether it be suicide or something more ominous?*


*I particularly enjoyed the scene with Charmian. I've met her. Interesting lady. What Hy doesn't tell his readers here is that her favorite film, a road-trip movie, is Sideways, because character Miles Raymond (Paul Giamatti) "solve-drives", i.e., drives his car while working a crossword. I liked that movie, so did Dallas. After seeing it, I never ordered another bottle of Merlot and kept away from wine from that area forevermore.*

*It was a weird coincidence that Ichi's Lodge-member who passed from a heart attack did so in the middle of doing a crossword (one set by*

## Finding Mememo

*"Orlando", as Dallas discovered upon some research, a staggeringly prolific constructor, who created a crossword site in the early days of the World Wide Web), leaving an X unfilled in the middle of the puzzle. Dallas wondered about that odd fact when working up his notes.*

*Looking back on Hy's abrasive relationship with his chairman, I recall that Meme once gave me an ad clipped from the satirical journal The Baffler. He'd mailed it to a friend in L.A. who then re-mailed it from there to Chad:*



**Unlock the asshole within...with WordBastard™ cassettes**

Corporate difference-makers know that the key to extracting peak employee performance is a regime of random and terroristic intimidation. In this nine-tape WordBastard™ set, Dirk Polnschlaeger, the Dean of Executive Intimidation Training, unlocks the secret to life-transforming viciousness. Every day, Dirk will guide you through a series of mental exercises that will teach you the 10 timeless principles of business contumely, the 7 styles of tactical truculence, 6 tips for the up-and-coming martinet, and the 4 qualities of an effective tyrant. The information-packed workbook will hone your skills, and your Personal Bastard Diary will chart your progress. More than a thousand colorful and humiliating commands, imprecations and insults (almost 200 of which refer to the testicles). \$89.95.



Zorbing, noun; abzorbing, verb, watching the sport

*Now Ichi has a thing about what he calls his adopted country's greatest game, America — 2015 Edition. He claims it's why we cheer 'n boo the likes of Donald "His Pants" Trump (who sees beings around him as machines capable of various achievements to be taken account of and utilized for The Cause, philosopher Martin Buber's "I-It" relation) and Reality TV contestants, why many of us play the Lotto, or attempt to master a volatile market run by neoliberal ideologues sit-*

*ting at computers, or roll the cosmic dice by participating in extreme sports: bungee jumping, para-sailing, cave-diving, rock-climbing, and zorbing (rolling downhill in a transparent plastic orb) instead of taking on the more creative and freeing adventure of authentic living, what Sartre termed our "life-project", what Buber construed as the "I-Thou" relation.*

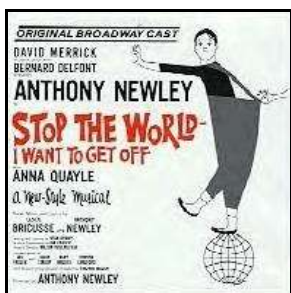
\* \* \*

## Finding Mememo

9



*Stop the world — I want to get off.* A 1966 film of the Broadway hit musical that plays an important existential turning point in my life. I was



in my second year of college, pre-med, and tugging at the parental shackles. I was also becoming politically aware. It was a time of escalating deaths in Vietnam. In three years my friend Chuck would commit suicide rather than fight in that war. That was a wake-the-hell-up experience, like being blasted out of an overheated room onto an ocean shore in January. That film's title then, and now, is a symbol of my disgust at the totality of world injustice and the power-mongers that rule at our expense — a powerful disgust bonding Ichi and I as *broheim*.<sup>1</sup> As if to prove this dyadic relationship, Nature has it that more than once he and I were victims of simultaneous kamikaze bee attacks (of which I am allergic). But neither of us, full of wit and panache, believe in Marxism's unifying theories, which we feel take as leading to *rigor mortis* of the mind.



Faculty T-shirts

As if listening to a sad trombone, we have watched monopoly capitalism's (rationalized economy) evolve into its global version (innovation economy), where

"clustering" defines the synergy of a Brave New World of Big data, Big pharma, and info-based startups. Where "collaboration" is the buzzword that sits tremulously like a fig leaf over the privatizing clusters in which America's future is supposed to be restarted. Where "captains of coding", brimming with cowboy grit, press onward into the computerized frontier and all. Where you can order a GPS-for-the-Soul app to track your stress level through your heart rate. Where pedagogical reform programs like "The Innovation Agenda: Educating Students for their Future not our Past", see Liberal Arts as waning compared to specific career-oriented job skill development: "What does history count against the demands of the future?" — a direct quote from Chad Armbuster, a ventriloquist dummy for the neoliberalist envisionment of the pedagogical future. Means

---

1. Ichi told me his and Hy's political beliefs agreed with Bertrand Russell's proposal for a "vagabond wage" as a solution to economic inequities. Every person, according to Russell, would be entitled to a basic wage "sufficient for existence but not for luxury," in an amount large enough to eliminate hunger, yet small enough not to encourage excessive idleness. Such an economy can be found in Ernest Callenbach's utopian novel, *Ecotopia* (1975). It's revolution as standing up against your, and your society's, depression (both personal and economic).



## Finding Mememo

music and the other arts are moved low on the list of what gets funded and taught in the lower grades. Within art schools, the standard media (painting, print-making, sculpture) are merely tolerated, while non-studio and new-technology arts gets the weak handshake. Freshman are given in their school packet a booklet, *The Muse is a Harsh Mistress*, its underlying theme being that it's not creative unless it employs cutting-edge technology and makes a profit.

Entrepreneurial, Hubba Hubba Hardcore Nerds are the *nouveau* hipsters voicing the latest chestnut: "As humans, we are wired to start things." It is such nerds, working at Instructure, who are propelling Canvas software into prominence and encouraging our administration and their toadies, such as Chad, toward the high-tech virtual classroom. The administrators *in toto* have, since the early 1990s, been ruthlessly expanding their territory in our school like Chicago gangsters in an endless desire to propagate themselves at ever-increasing salaries while maintaining caps on the wages of us drones, testing us to see who has the nerve to be a free-person, one who is ready to throw up his or her job whenever they feel like it. I suspect the "suits" have a Latin motto in their boardroom, *GRADATIM FEROCITER* (Step-by-step, ferociously). Some administrators have attended seminars by the Long Now Foundation, perverting that organization's aims by selectively taking from their programs of success by over-stressing "emotionally potent oversimplification," so as to *better* cater to the need of our "post-literate generation" of kids and their "short-lived impulses". So, yep, our rebel yell is now: "Never mistake what it is for what it looks like."



Wyoming Mann's poster (14 x 11 in.) from Occupy Wall Street protest. His meme is: *He who hides his madman dies voiceless.*

Charmian and Spring Thunderstorm (a Native American scholar whose future here is tenuous, not tenureous, because she told Chad it galled her to face student indifference), have started wearing "Opt Out" T-shirts in a protest that plays on the fact that our admin-types get a 15 percent discount at Brooks Brothers, while encouraging faculty to "dress sharp" with an offer of only 10 percent off. Yes, my colleagues are "pre-cogs" who see the writing on the wall.

Our rad colleague, Wyoming "Wyoh" Mann, has a large moustache, a lean to the left when walking, and likes to "breach", i.e., violating a social norm to reveal its ideological source. He says terrorists have usurped novelists in altering culture's inner life. He's a blister on the admin's ass. Raised among large ladies who smoked before seven a.m. and cowboys who chawed baccy most of the day, he has no fear of damaging his credit rating thanks to a Fortune 500 family

## Finding Mememo



WAD is up? (2015)  
Wyoming Mann's  
poster depicting a  
WAD

inheritance from a cattle ranching empire. He can put up “Fuck Things Up” posters in our hallowed halls with impunity, a gauntlet in the face of the brittle and sour Make-It-So mentality of top-down management’s hammer-to-anvil momentum. Told me he would like to “sort the school’s dirty laundry by color and alphabetize the piles by the first letter of said color.”

Dallas thinks he’s actually “in cahoots with Chad, infiltratin’ his own dissident cell.” And Wyoh once told Hy: “Mind you, I don’t like to be a liar, but in this rat-race that I’ve been in for the past 40 years, well, I never knew anybody that wasn’t — including me. In the mirror often see nothing above the bridge of my nose.”

Yet, becoming animal, Wyoh often stalks the “Lair-of-the Talking-Claw” for evidence of brain-locked policy inertia (the debt-ceiling, the fiscal cliff, the grand bargain), his ears (a voice-activated digital voice recorder) picking up snippets of vocalizations from whom he terms “WADs” (Weapons of Academic Destruction). According to him, the WAD identified below as Skutch was shoveling mixed nuts mouthward, making transcription iffy at best:

Skutch Burdock: *[Garbled]* I need you to gather dirt. Talk to me.

Crystal Bridges: Sure, we both got Q clearance for SIOP.

S: Did he say ‘Absolutely not, you’re wrong.’ *[Garbled]* . . .

C: Yes. He did. *[Garbled]*

S: And you know what that means, you don’t you?

C: Yes. But *[Garbled]* . . .

S: I failed to mention that reportedly there was some mix-up.

Purported disagreements. *[Garbled]* should have said this in the meeting to everyone. It’s nothing to concern yourself with, just some irregularities along the way, normal to doing biz, you know. By the way, I am recording this. I don’t mind you knowing. I find this produces greater honesty, don’t you?

Rather than “collaboration” encouraged by a higher authority, we less timid faculty desire “cooperation” for pleasure, as an end in itself; something that cannot be recuperated for ideological purposes, treating free play and mutual engagement as a starting point. I call it, “Ludic freedom to unthink the ring around us,” seeking a new pedagogical model involving seasteading experiments in libertarian educational possibilities (I’ve taught such on the ocean liner The University of the Seven Seas, where we were like sailors rebuilding their ship on the open sea): self-sustaining schools of floating ragers against the Long Now who will choose their own faculty and course menu in a sea-going version of Joseph Beuys’ concept of open forums, bridging disciplines, and so Forth of Firth.

## Finding Mememo

Unlike Wyoh's rude, crude, lewd, and apt to be misconstrued approach, I celebrate workers who, instead of organizing themselves for the next proletarian movement, not only dream of being poets and artists but also, because of such dreams, fail to turn up for the political meeting the next day.

On the open, in International Waters, these communities would be free of State coercion, be havens for those having trouble fitting into current reality's game plan, those needing openness to possibility, paradox, and surprise. This stuff jives with Ichi 's envisionment, a romantic dream of transformation where change moves like a new muscle car on an open road to Somewhere.

That *somewhere* was my teenaged dooper dream, "Levu-Vana", a tropical isle of social harmony free of Capitalism, where button-in-the-back clothes would require social cooperation to get dressed. Jazz would be our sonic existentialism. Inspired by *Island*, Aldous Huxley's utopian novel, a place where one would be free to be "rejuvenated," that is, where one's brain would remain a babe, all the "ancients" in it still, but where one's heart would be a brain emptied of them. Institutionalized religion would be public transportation never used. The state flower would be the Descartes Rose, known as an "International Flower", serious in its behavior and Latin in its color. Everyday would be a feast day devoted to an important thinker. "Teach-to-the-test" mills that squelch the creative potential of lower-grade education, reducing teaching to mere micro-management, to low-paid drone-hood, would be seen as barbaric: an inconsistent over-regulation of pedagogy (that paradoxically contrasts with today's wanton de-regulation of other sectors, such as finance and environmental protection). *Uitlanders* (members of the "Alliance" that promotes Capitalist economics as an Imperial Science) would be banished to Nybyggarnia. Later, I envisioned that Gideon Bibles would be replaced with Avishai Margalit's *The Decent Society*. Neo-cons would fear the sound of our war drums for they know that, like Chaos Theory proposes, very small differences in starting conditions can lead to huge differences in effects.

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: I slotted this fragment with difficulty. It could've easily gone earlier in the text and it would have illuminated pertinent pedagogical/political issues. But I wanted it to be section nine as it sounds like German for no, nein, and this section certainly offers plenty of no to the status quo. Hy's widow balked at this OuLiPo-ish gesture as "too*

שדי

*French" (as a Jew with a mezuzah tacked to her doorjamb and adorned with three Hebrew letters, she finds anything French suspect these days). Even suspects Wyoh of finking on the basement crew for Chad.*

\* \* \*

## Finding Mememo

10



As poet Rae Armantrout has written: *Here's something about me.* Sometimes those long instants — past yet immortal — just hit me. Vestiges, or memories of these vestiges, especially on days when a cold north wind cuts a blast through a Midwestern cotton-cloud sky. I remember, as much as I want to forget, that I always existed on the edge of things, was a pallid, sickly, timorous boy, an unwitting victim of all my father's and mother's gloom and doom. I was unfit for this cold, harsh world. A world, I learned, that to function in one had to be *cool*, not show pity. Yet I did.

My cells still suffer the contradictory genetic orders of father (Catholic) and mother (Lutheran). Both parents suffered what psychiatry calls "bias against disconfirmatory evidence". They believed six impossible things before breakfast, challenging objective evidence, excelling in JTC (jumping-to-conclusions). They needed certain things to be true, regardless. Why I don't like to be touched and hate dogmas. My father's favorite refrain was: "I'm going to pot, I'm going to rot. To him I was an "Oaf! Pinbrain! Numbskull! Halfwit! Nin-compoop!" These phrases were punctuated by held notes and short honks. If I sass back, he'd point to me and ask mom, "Why does he always laugh to himself when he says something?" These put-downs created an icy, spooky, malignant aura about him. Later, as a young adult, he advised me, "No one can catch up with a man who outruns his rivals." Compliant, but inwardly raging, I became a workaholic. Maintained my *cool*.



With *that* as a parental mirror, any surprise I felt like an insignificant vacuum that had to be filled? My mother, with determined chin and firm voice, always gave me a never-ending list of disasters taking place around me: plane crashes, house and forest fires, muggings, car-jackings, strong-armed robberies, house invasions, child abductions, school bus accidents, divorces, gang activity, bicycle robberies, and lightning strikes. Psychiatry has a term for it, "aberrant salience".

These warnings were never aimed at my sister. She was safe. No boogie men. She was healthy, chubby, cheery, could do no wrong. Best cab for cutie! And constantly praised for her pleasant, compliant disposition, always getting silver and gold stars stuck to her grade



## Finding Mememo

school homework and tests. She found the world a goody good place. Priests would lecture me, "All of us must act in unison, notwithstanding our individual sorrows," but tell my sister, "You will always, always be glamorous in glad rags and become a beloved wife to some lucky boy and bring forth future members of the Church." Years later, she'd suffer a mental breakdown and her Norse therapist would tell us: "By Odin! It's difficult to determine if her Catholic guilt has precipitated her depression or if her depression predated her guilt. Thank god for meds."

If my sister was back then (when "Free Huey" and "David Brinkley" were words on the TV) still dreaming of a Knight in Shining Armor or God's Heaven with Angels, I was imagining my father's brains scattered from a distance of one mile, or the assassin with a double-barreled shotgun aimed at his torso at close-range, the anticipation making him shit his pants before the killer blasts away his torso, after which vomit-inducing bloody magma would ooze from the wound.

But science saved me. In high school I learned that there can be no twisted thought without a twisted molecule. Moreover, "Uncle Johnny", our chemistry and physics teacher, announced that Otto Neurath, an Austrian philosopher of science, famously said that scientists "are like sailors who have to rebuild their ship on the open sea." Suddenly, I felt fresh sails being raised in my life and a new course being set. The old dogmatism I suffered under was torpedoed. As I walked out of that classroom that day I stood straighter, felt it in my spine, and muttered under my breath "I am the Meme!" raising my arms in triumph like Sylvester Stallone would later do in those *Rocky* movies. That very afternoon I prominently printed *Aut vinceri aut mori* in felt-tip pen on my blue school notebook; a gesture marking a new libidinal regime: like a monk, I rejected all female companionship; burned my locker pin-up of Ursula Andress near undressed in her bikini; ditched all church services; stole ice cream sandwiches from the school cafeteria, ignoring the posted cautionary signs WE HAVE EYES; began to work up field notes on my fellow classmates as if I was a curious anthropologist, and checked out odd books from our local library, like Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Within a year I was reading *The Communist Manifesto* and Mao's *Little Red Book*. Explosive materials that I would years later tell my sister I managed to carry many times through airport security in my handbag without any alarm being raised. (TSA authorities, please note.)

The violent phantasies concerning my father are coming back again, trumping the relative calm I've enjoyed, despite the sometimes stiff academic winds blowing through our department. Dorinda thinks it's because a raging Donald Trump, now constantly on television due to his Presidential bid, reminds me of my father, stirring up old traumas not so much due to physical resemblance as, she suggests, "his *style* of pompous assertion into the lived space of

# Finding Mememo

others. Get it?" Okay. I do. I do. But . . .<sup>1</sup>

That very night I have a dream in which Trump (I call him "His Pants") is declared King for Life in an upswelling of public fervor and hysteria after the NOLA Incident where a submarine flying a pirate's flag is caught surfacing near New Orleans and unloading scores and scores of Syrian refugees into rubber rafts. Its ancient Scottish captain, who only an hour before emerged from an alcoholic coma, unwittingly alerts river authorities as he stands imposingly on the conning tower, wobbling on his 70-year-old pegs, boisterously yelling, "Avast an' ahoy! All who's disembarkin', why it's a braw, bricht, non-moonlit nicht th'nicht, an' that's a factoid!"



Montage by Hy "Mememo" Grader

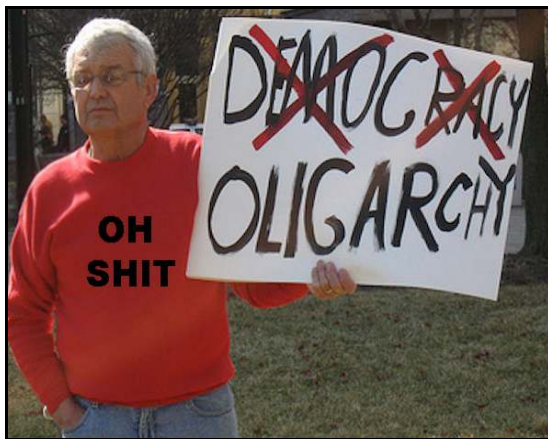
His Pants — gaining general support for his anti-immigrant policies, and astonishing the electorate by revealing that according to the Hebrew *gematria* (assigning numerical values to words or phrases and exploring their relation to other words or phrases with the same numerical value) the phrase "Crime is up 10 percent" (when translated into Hebrew) has precisely the same numerical value as *Maher-shala-hash-baz*, the name of the

son of the prophet Isaiah — is by popular opinion named Monarch for Life. He takes the ceremonial name "Bombastus I" and immediately declares an "Auto-ManCipation" of all Americans and establishes a Constitutional Mon-Oligarchy. He starts performing a "weekly mutual analysis" over a live TV feed from his "castle", a sumptuous mansion on the Hudson River called Chestnut Lodge. News pundits call his snake-charming effect on the audience "The Rita Hayworth Effect": the intrusion of some uncanny, bedazzling presence into a mundane,

---

1. As Hy's wife, Dorinda, is a psychoanalyst, I pointed out to Dallas this passage might be a convenient cover for a session he actually had with his "secret" analyst in Berwyn. In his research on her, Dallas got a chuckle at her letterhead, which stated THE FACT THAT DELUSIONS MEAN SOMETHING TO MY PATIENTS IS REASON ENOUGH FOR THEM TO MEAN SOMETHING TO ME. In talking with Hy's widow about these "informal sessions" with her, Dallas said she disclaimed these psychoanalytic feedback scenarios: "Dallas, this stuff is fiction, you know." But where does fiction stop and reality begin? She did admit that as a young college student majoring in Classics, minoring in Philosophy: "Hy participated in SoCRATES (The Study of Cognitive Realignment Therapy for Early Schizophrenia) after his father's diagnosis of mental problems. Dallas, my husband prided himself on continual self-improvement, physical, mental, intellectual. Albeit, he told me once: 'No one knows how many I's preceded the I that I think I am.' Weird, right?"

## Finding Mememo



Mad City March (Madison, WI) photo by Ichi

frumpy, everyday reality.

Deep in Slumberland, I witness His Pants on his throne, sitting above a few gawking (paid) subjects made up in black face. A Lincoln on his Monument, he sports a black top hat (Cf. the *Monopoly* game logo) that can't manage his comb over, a gaudy crimson sash with medals crosses his girth, and he wields a solid gold-tipped club-shaped walking stick; nearby stands a Baroque palanquin flanked by ex-

Wall Street traders in livery.

In my dream, at his Inaugural ball and dinner (china by the Italian stylist Titorelli and basalt vodka goblets from Latvia), His Pants tells the attending German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, "I hate your lingo; it's the one tongue on earth that even a *pretty* girl's lips fail to render attractive." His Inaugural Speech takes place on August 6th on the steps of Wall Street at the precise time when the first A-bomb hit Japan. On that propitious day — covered from every angle by Fox News — the early morning sun is an enormous orange ball above the horizon with a single cloud shaped like Margaret Thatcher holding an AK-47 lingering floating overhead. Thousands have shown up, even busloads of African American women from the South who fervently believe they can use the occasion to raise the dead at Ground Zero.

Trump, with eyes smouldering, steps up to the mic flanked by eighteen deaf-mute Nordic-looking bodyguards in Brooks Brothers best who have standing orders to neutralize anyone coming within three paces of their master. Flipping his head back for effect, dropping his voice to the low trembling tones of an alligator in heat, he reads a prepared speech: "Today is one of America's best days. As we remember we trumped the Japanese, that we had the balls to play the Big Card. Peace is good, but a world without war would be, well, like Japan without kimonos; it'd be bankrupt tycoons spitting on piles of gold coins; why it'd be Pope Francis on a Club Med vacation! It is part of life itself, one of those not so subtle forces of nature which, rightly applied, calls into activity the divine powers of a nation's soul." Roars and roars of approval from the canaille. "Life — it's a vast game in play, one involving bets placed on our daily activities." More hoopla: hurrahs, bravos, attaboys from an adoring electorate.

The camera cuts from Trump to a Fox Newsy in a brown leather jacket, tangerine tie, and brown denims tucked into wide-topped Texan boots who sucks

## Finding Mememo



Pascagoula Cassoeula as featured on Fox Network's "Taste Bud Topics"

thoughtlessly on a straw in a bottle of Coke Zero as he reads cue cards concerning "Trumpism" to millions of red- and pencil-neck viewers. Behind him, someone in farmer's overalls lifts up a basket of out of season strawberries as an offering to the camera. A lad observing this cries out in a British accent, "Don't let the farmer know how good Stilton cheese is with pears!" (It'll be cut out of rebroadcasts). The camera then zooms in to frame a granny who muscles her way close

to the rostrum and raises, like a priest at mass with his chalice, a large bowl of Pascagoula Cassoeula (a cabbage, pork, andouille sausage, ribs, and bacon rind stew with chopped Brazil nuts and mashed potatoes or yams) jabbering away in a Southern accent as thick as her stew. The dish is a taste bud topic on all the cooking shows now as someone posted online that it's His Pants' choice in comfort food accompanied with a Bull Shot<sup>2</sup> and a hearty "Bottoms Up." Meanwhile, the Neo-con newsy is pointing out the obvious, that some shabbily-dressed fans are maniacally trying to lick His Pants' Italian-made super-shiny shoes. Suddenly, I awake in a sweat, my white dog maniacally licking my face, trumping my black dog's weakening attempts at getting access. I swear I have the taste of andouille on my tongue. Maybe the dogs smell it.

I turn over, kneel on the bed. Lift the blinds that keep the morning sun out of our bedroom. Now the exposed bottoms of my feet are being licked. Then the dogs join me in looking out onto the new day, paws on the windowsill, growling. It's the tenth day I've noticed someone lingering with a dog on leash directly across the street. Ten different looking dudes each morning, but the same male dog or, at least, the same breed. Got my suspicions up. This surveillance started the day after a meeting with Chad didn't go well.<sup>3</sup> Today, mystery man is using hand and arm signals to communicate to someone a block down the street to his left. The motions recall to mind a weatherman's gesturing before a weather map more than a maestro leading an orchestra.

Do my morning ablutions, cutting myself shaving. Go downstairs, let the dogs out, empty the dishwasher, line up all my morning pills: Aspirin 81 MG,

---

2. Bull shot: a brunch drink; an acquired taste, either you hate it or love it (as one does Trump): 1 1/2 ounces of vodka; 3 ounces of chilled beef bouillon; a dash of lemon juice; 2 dashes of Worcestershire sauce; 2 dashes of Tabasco sauce; fresh ground pepper to taste; celery salt and a lemon wedge garnish. Replaces the Bloody Mary, a drink Trump claims is "too bloody feminine."

3. Hy's psychiatrist might see symptoms here of the Fregoli Delusion (named for Leopoldo Fregoli, a well-known quick-change artist of the early-twentieth century theater); it is the belief that you are being followed by someone who keeps changing disguises. Hy's father suffered this.



## Finding Mememo

Loratadine 10 MG, Glumetza 1000 MG (ER), Pantoprazole 40 MG, Fluticasone 50 MG, Januvia 50 MG, Tamsulosin .4 MG, Niacin 500 MG, Saw Palmetto 500 MG, Açai 100 MG, Resveratrol 500 MG, Glucosamine - Chondroitin - MSN 500 MG, Omega 3 - Fish Oil 1200 MG, +50 Multi-Vitamins, Immune Booster Complex 500 MG, and Prostate Booster Complex 500 MG. All downed in a swirl of an Ultima Smoothie heavy in beets and mushrooms. I join Dory in her home office; she's listening to Offenbach's Barcarolle from *The Tales of Hoffman* on WFMT, typing in 12/8 time, putting yesterday's adventures on Facebook. Normally cheery, today she's upset, her son sent a link to download a Marilyn Manson song, "Mechanical Animals", and it downloaded Malware to her machine; whenever she plays an iTunes song, this bizarre message scrolls down her screen:

THE **WORLD** IS A PLACE OF  
**UNREASON**  
YET TOO **MAMMOTH** IN SCALE  
TO BE **WITHOUT** SOME  
**REASON**

THE **WORLD** IS A PLACE OF  
**UNREASON**  
YET TOO **MAMMOTH** IN SCALE  
TO BE **WITHOUT** SOME  
**REASON**

THE **WORLD** IS A PLACE OF  
**UNREASON**

# Finding Mememo

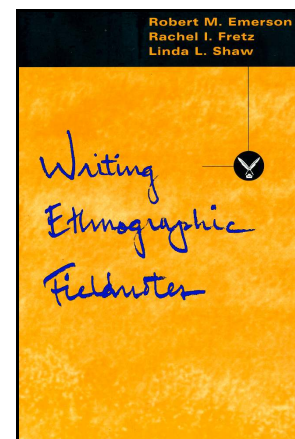
It's driving her nuts. I tell her I think someone put a metaphysical earworm into my wetware. But I don't elaborate. It might worry her.

Winter-storm-bliss-moon-turning-new-season-starting, I make my transit from house to garage to car to studio to EI to the Auditorium Building in much lighter clothing than I did a month ago. On to our basement office, greeting my office "homies" with a hearty "*Chale homes!*" as I do an exaggerated posturing *à la* Latino *cholo*, sticking my shoes out diagonally, placing my arms at a curved popeye angle, leaning back. I then ask: *¿Vamos al cine?* We regularly patronize the nearby Gene Siskel Film Center, digging immersion in "movie-time", which has its own logic and laws. I get the "Oh, how we wish!" look from Wyoh, who looks up from a near-future article he's writing, "Dolcemare 2035", a prediction that a world government of direct Web Democracy eventually triumphs after a brutal nuclear war reduces the world's population to an eighth of its present size, most of whom live on floating cities while the land "cools" from the radiation. Rad stuff, but Dal suspects it's all bluff, that Wyoh and Chad are actually playing a *doppelgänger* game with me as their shuttlecock. Dal has a passion for setting people right. Dorinda says I have that obsession too, but that "it is in itself an afflictive disease aimed at poor me."

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: An important section. We get real insight into Hy's mental state. Hints at his suppressed aggressions and mild delusional thinking prior to the Kamikaze Kid's fatal dive. We find out something of Hy's background before he started getting interested in the Arts: his scientific propensities and his interest in Classical studies, areas that eventually fed into his love of art, art history and theory. In these fragments, Hy is doing what ethnographers call "characterization", putting his self (rather than the ethnographic Other) into a context as he goes about his daily activities. Dallas has proven this is no mere speculation on my part. Returning to Hy's basement office to sleuth around some more, he found, stuck between the heavy metal office desk and the wall, a used paperback, Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, a multi-authored text used in Sociology 201 at UCLA. The book explains how to move from ingesting data, digesting it into one's notes, to making something solid out of them, rendering detail into meaningful wholes (the humorous alimentary implications here seem to be unconscious).*

*One here sees Hy's desire to objectify his subjectivity. We see the beginnings of this in the data gathered in a WordPerfect file of Hy's labeled "MiscFldNotes.wpd":*



# Finding Mememo

#20: The farther one goes in time and distance from one's childhood, the more surprising it is to find the self essentially unchanged.

#42: Ichi has sent me a great photo! A huge glass bowl of Tootsie Rolls, those little turd-like suckers, stocked at the expense of the CEO of Tootsie Roll International, and located in the lobby of the eponymous Melvin Gordon Center for Integrative Science on the University of Chicago campus.<sup>4</sup> He hinted there was a part-to-whole lesson to be had in this image, besides the unintended hint at hoarding and money.

#62: Wyoh smuggled out a memo from a wastebasket on the admin-floor that details three routes for the School's future advancement:

- 1) Indispensable — fiscal and physical security
- 2) Moneyball — cold-blooded, interest-driven maximization of return on investment; e.g., distance learning.
- 3) Independent — sweeping disengagement with competing institutions.

Can this be re-contextualized into a heated dialogue between Chad and me?

*At the end of the listing of such notes, Hy has excerpted pithy shards taken from an interview with Ichi by some Japanese art critic (no attribution given). Hy chose the citations that mention him (Meme); they develop a consistent whole impression about Ichi's work, despite being excerpts from a lengthy dialogue:*

## ICHI UNCHAINED

— The basis of my imagination: the propaganda the US fed into post-war Nippon. The basis of acts now is *uruwashii*, harmony of the martial and the arts.

— I go without preconceiving, my camera and eye (I) are open windows.

— There's something about my photography that's cold. Maybe because I never really wanted to become a photographer and it was suddenly thrust upon me by an epiphany of sorts based on chance as adored by director Robert Bresson.

— Photography engages the five senses. It possesses something like sexuality, but it takes me awhile to warm up, maybe because I'm a witness to human vice.

— I've never, ever thought that what I do will actually directly influence someone to do or not to do something. Then my Chicago-based buddy "Meme-san" came along and the rest is history.

---

4. Melvin Gordon (1919 - 2015) agreed that the most famous Tootsie Roll ad, "How many licks does it take to get to the Tootsie Roll center of a Tootsie Pop?" may never be answered. But perhaps the most pertinent question facing science is why it always tastes like a cardboard anus. The real answer to the lick question, the company writes on its website, "Depends on a variety of factors such as the size of your mouth, the amount of saliva, and how much of your pancreas is still working." Gordon asked that his body parts be individually wrapped and twisted at each end.

## Finding Mememo

— Making a photograph is rather like writing a paragraph. It is significant that for me Meme-san agrees with this.

— I try to put all the parts together [speaking of his *Totems*], which result in new kinds of wholes interweaving The Real, The Symbolic, and The Imaginary.

— When I do portraits, and that's rare, I like to make people feel at *unease*, I find that some tension between me and the person I am photographing yields more complexity.

— Influential books in my early career? I'd say Japanese magazine, *Provoke* from the Sixties and Robert Leverant's *Zen in the Art of Photography* (1969).

— All of life — built as it is of contrasting rituals and changes — seems so unreal, at times almost carnival-like. Meme-san understands the implications of such.

— With my native country changing so rapidly. Now young girls are like Manic Pixie Dream Girls who love to listen to Shonen Knife's hit *Flying Jelly Attack*. I felt it necessary to uncover a new protagonist inside, so I left home. The rest is history, of which Meme-san is taking up in writerly fragments of some and stacking up, like I do with photos in my vertical *Totems*.

*I think Hy was flattered by Ichi 's the references to him. He must have been waiting to integrate this material into his new writing project. Dallas says all this theory stuff is Arabic to him. "Like the damn floaters plaguin' my left eye" (he sketches them):*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*The Arabic reference here in relation to Hy Grader's writing is interesting as in Arabic culture there is no concept of "originality"; they often write by cutting chunks out of already-written texts and in other ways deface tradition: changing important names into silly ones, making dirty jokes out of matters of importance, and otherwise fuck with the Sultan of Reality.*

*Today, returning from teaching, I had a Meme-coincidence- experience: The Blue Line El from O'Hare lurched into Jackson and Dearborn station and a fat Asian guy in a fedora and a Shonen Knife T-shirt, whose short sleeves revealed a flying jelly fish tattoo on his left arm, lurched against me as I was getting on.*

\* \* \*

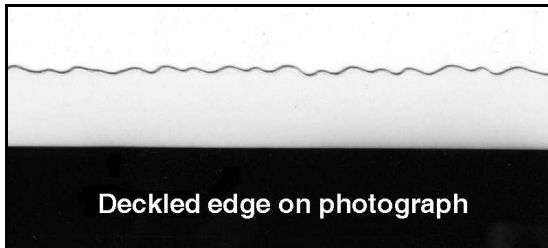


# Finding Mememo

11

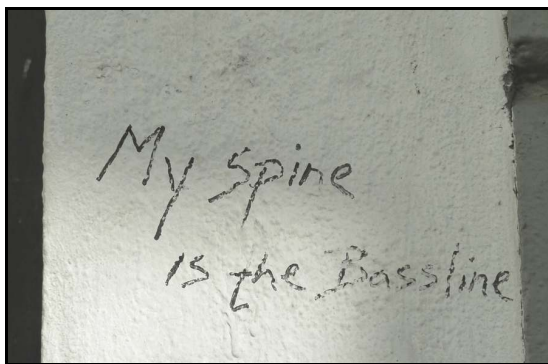


While looking through my mother's long-deceased sister's old photo album, which she inherited, I run across a photo of my Naval officer uncle (a dentist on a carrier) while he was stationed at Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Ceiba, Puerto Rico during medical treatment for a trick back. Square format snap finds him sitting in a waiting room in his snappy white uniform, holding up a magazine over which he peeks. Using a magnifying glass, I can make out: an August issue of *Argosy*, a popular men's magazine. I Google it and



capture a color reproduction. Pasted in next to this shot in the album is a photo of him in a pith helmet standing with a slight bend before a sign reading: El Yunque Rainforest. Both of these old photos have a

white deckled edge common for that time which, upon blowing up, looks like gentle ocean waves. This activity is all part of my practice of connoisseurship of boundless information, a picking and choosing of elements of the past to enhance my aesthetic practice.



Found Graffiti by Ichi Honne

A DING! from my computer startles me, signaling incoming e-mail. It's Ichi : a note with an jpeg attachment, a well-framed shot of graffiti reading: MY SPINE IS THE BASSLINE. Freaky-deaky coincidence. But as he doesn't know about my uncle's back, the reason for this image being shot my way is that I, too, suffer an out-of-tune back and the resulting sublaxations my chiropractor attacks like a Joan

of Arc. Ichi 's e-note Zen-advises, "Use what is unpleasant to cultivate mind, make it focused and attentive." Besides my back pain, he is also referencing my stressful situation at the School. He suggests I "understand that graffiti has

## Finding Mememo

found wisdom as: The Quintessence of YOU"; he even hints that the phrase would be a great title for my proposed autobiography. Now, as I play little wheel to Ichi 's much larger one, me being a mere *epicycle*, I humbly write back immediately my Memeful gratitude:

*Danke* Dude-san,  
Like finding the Fifth Element!  
Shit-good idea. Will consider.

I go on to inquire as to his wife's research on Alzheimer's and praise a shot she took of Ichi sporting a hibiscus print shirt that was snapped on a South Florida beach last month just before she was freaked by a snake gobbling a bat (the whole event archived on her Facebook); I ask about any art shows he's seen or been in and, as Ichi is always curious about my reading habits, I mention ordering Robert Boyer's *The Fate of Ideas* from Amazon just because the title grabbed me, because I'd once written a cutting term paper, "The Fat of Ideas", for an undergrad philosophy class in which I sliced up that old chestnut, Ockham's Razor, with a "Less is a bore" type of argument.

I went on to agree with a previous message he'd sent me about both of our aesthetic productions being "well-figured by Richard Diebenkorn's much praised meta-art painting, *Studio Wall* (1963)." The canvas depicts Dick's drawings pinned to a studio wall, canvases leaning untouched, and a chair for musing over the expressions of one's gifted hands. The subject, of course, is the making of art itself. I replied: "Yes, Ichi, that painting is an imaginative document of the Artist Genius' Cogitarium. Yours is your 'work-house,' mine a snug basement studio. Big or small, each is a zone of sincerity, if not authenticity." By that last quip, I mean to elicit a silent chuckle from my virtual interlocutor. I wind up my reply by recommending an article in the latest issue of *Rolling Stone*: "Sons of the Never Wrong Live at the Forever Now," I tell him it's "a 'bitchin' ' review," and that "that quaint Sixties expression should be understood as set within a double set of quotation marks."

Signing off, my mailing program's closing auto-salutation adds at the bottom:

Incommensurably,  
Maximum Meme

---

"Nothing about the practice of modern science is obvious to  
someone who has never seen it done." — Steven Weinberg

---

# Finding Mememo

Finally, knowing Ichi 's interest in this horrific event (see below), I next forward him an e-mail from my buddy P.C. Peri, a dedicated Lefty and volunteer videographer for Portland Oregon's activist Flying Focus Video Collective:

## 2015 Hiroshima Day Memorial featured on the Video Bus



Michiko Kornhauser

### "Giving Voice to the Voiceless"

The 2015 memorialization of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki included a number of speakers and performers. On our next two programs, Flying Focus features the Taiko drummers, host Ronault "Polo" Catalani, and **Michiko Kornhauser**, a school child in Okayama, Japan when the A-bombs were dropped. Kornhauser tells her personal and family history, and then sings an important Japanese Peace song with the Tomodachi Chorus. Also on the program are Marshall Islands activist Pastor Joe Enlet of the Chuuk Logos Community Church, Sahomi Tachibana's dance group, and anti-nuclear activist Carol Urner, who helped organize Portland's first Hiroshima Day commemoration in 1962. Closing out the day's events, Polo reads letters from the Mayor of Hiroshima and Senator Jeff Merkley, turning the stage back to the Taiko drummers to wrap it up. The event took place on August 6 at Portland's Japanese American Historical Plaza, organized by Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility. The two-part program, "The Ever-Present Nuclear Threat, 70 Years After Hiroshima", videotaped, edited and produced by Dan Handelman, will be shown this and next week.

Watch the Flying Focus Video Bus program  
every Friday, 9:30 PM, Ch. 11 Comcast Portland  
with excerpts posted on the Internet

\* \*

# Finding Mememo

*Editor's gloss: One of the shorter shards. It is obvious Hy meant to integrate it into one of the other fragments, but was undecided as yet which. So, as the term "spine" shows up here frequently and as the spine bisects the body as its pivot point, I've decided to put this section somewhat in the middle of this body of text. Another factor, I just happened to edit this section of Hy's writing on August 6<sup>th</sup> as minor key memorial music played over our public radio station.*

*Dallas has been putting the data he's gathering under the scrutiny of what he calls his "Four Sectors of Competence": 1) Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible; 2) Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible; 3) Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate; 4) Whether (and to what degree) something is done. A spreadsheet synthesizes his analysis for at-a-glance analysis. When Hy's widow asked him how the case was going, Dallas told her, "If the fuckin' data in my laptop had actual weight, sister, it'd be too heavy to carry." Seeking more data, Dallas returned to Hy's Cogitarium to wheedle more info from Charmian. "She showed me an e-mail she, Wyoh, and Hy had all gotten two weeks prior to the Kamikaze Kid's high-dive. Said it was in response to the Admin's schedulin' an eleven-day 'techno-retreat' for faculty."*

When is a good time in your career to start networking? Need a little motivation? A study by Stanford University and the Harvard Business School suggests that people exposed to high levels of work stress may have the same health issues as people exposed to secondhand smoke. Now might be a good time to network yourself into a job or career you love rather than the one you think you need. . . . Remember, a serious person wasting his time can easily find themselves regarded as a time-waster trying to be serious.

*Charmian told Dallas they thought it weird that the e-mail's source was a campus address, not an outside one. Moreover, the School's spam filter didn't weed it out, recognizing it as an official communique. "We both thought someone was subtly trying to threaten us. But only Hy had the nutso idea of replying to it." Dallas forwarded to me what Charmian had given him:*

## THE KICKED-BY-A-SNAKE BLUES

The colors have changed to blue. Yes, work-stress. But I let slaves to business, bodies without soul, go on their roll with those endless "assessment goals and objectives" documents to fill out, templates, boilerplates, rubrics. The love-boat, which I've named *The Floating Signifier*, has come to grief on the reef of convention, madness, and existential struggle. Maybe Life and I should be quits so no more nursing of grievances, of which this might be, avast! my last.

*Dallas noted that Charmian had warned Hy the message was "a massive, I mean huge, political mistake," but he had ignored her. The day that faculty retreat was to start, Hy mysteriously disappeared for eleven days! Dallas forwarded her testimony to Hy's widow, Dorinda, followed by ten lines of question marks in Helvetica Bold. She 'fessed up.*



## Finding Mememo

*"I'd been embarrassed for myself, for Hy." Yes, he'd gone missing for over a week, but she thought he'd driven up to Ichi 's to chill. She mentioned getting an abrasive letter from Chad Armbuster about Hy's absence. Said he could be charged with being AWOL.*

*She urged Dallas to contact her son (by her first marriage), a former kick-ass computer hacker and a founding member of the now defunct "LCD-Illuminati" group in which he was known as JOSHUA (after the name of the computer program running toward nuclear disaster in the cult film War Games). "He now works behind thick steel doors flanked by armed guards, former El Rukn gang muscle, at a major bank's I.T. security office in the Loop," she told him. "He might be able to gain access, to hack, into the database at the School for a record of e-mail exchanges between Armbuster and his bosses — for a price. Dorinda said she'd pickle all the vegetables she grew in the home-garden for the next two years and give them to her son, while Dallas agreed to toss in several cases of famous Wisconsin micro-brews. Thus, a deal was struck. JOSHUA again fearlessly prowled the Net and netted the following information:*

### Highlights from JOSHUA's report to Dallas

— After Hy had sent a disturbing message back to Admin-Central, he'd been put under surveillance, but managed to outwit his tails, vanishing for eleven days. Several unnamed admin lackeys, with typically incompetent zeal, regularly reported his presence in several places at once: one saw him lurking about the area in the AIC museum exactly where the young black man had made his suicide attempt; another claimed a sighting at Powell's bookstore at Roosevelt Road and Halstead Avenue; a third swore Hy was circling the block around Chad's apartment with a Moleskine notebook; another, checking under Lower Wacker Drive, swore Hy was hanging out with rough-looking vagrants toting shoddy sleeping bags in grocery carts.

— Given the fact they had stationed a snoop outside Chad's apartment, they must have had suspicions about Hy doing a home-invasion of Chad's digs. Chad had reported to the Dean suddenly feeling something odd — "A level-headed dizzy spell only truly expressible in vowels every time I laid down in bed." Continuing to try to explain this "subtle thing" to the higher ups, he'd get back scathing responses; one being: "Put this into a language of greater simplicity that even an idiot with tenure can understand!" But when Hy's bizarre note arrived, a committee was formed and they started to take Chad's complaints seriously, to worry about Hy's sanity. When Hy's whereabouts became unclear, the matter went even higher up the food-chain.

— A belemnoid e-mail was sent into Dorinda's heart by a rude administrator, M. August Mountweazel, three Ph.D.'s after his name. A Medievalist, who attributes the demise of the Medieval system to the gods of

## Finding Mememo

chaos and lunacy, bad taste gaining the ascendancy, demands my mom “not suborn subversive behavior by that stubborn submersible” and “have Hy contact the Dean’s Office from whatever dive he’s been soaking in,” then goes off into a mean riff referring to Hy as a “Postmodern roberds-man, a wastor, and draw-latchet” and that “If you *do* see him, remind him employment here depends upon one’s *reputation*, a term, I’m sure, he doesn’t know entered the English language from the French in the late fourteenth century.” My mom replied to that snob’s twin screws with her single propeller: “Fuck you!” and (I have this on her sworn testimony) then discus-like threw her iPad at her office’s Freudian couch.

— Doing a word search in the e-mail I looked into, I came up with numerous references to “Carboncopyeri”. A study of the context for its usage suggests it’s a neologism for faculty underlings at the base of The Great Chain of Academic Being who consistently vote the Big Ticket. Unlike Hy, they receive no veiled threats, only the real thing.

— Chad A. proposes all recent hires in his department read Anthony Pagden’s *The Enlightenment: And Why It Still Matters* (Random House, 2013). Return mail confirms that matter would be taken up in the next President’s meeting, for possible adoption across all departments.

— The Gene Siskel Film Center announces the Chicago premiere of Czech film *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* by Jaromil Jireš. They also propose to gift the School Library with a four DVD Criterion’s box set, *The Pearls of Czech New Wave*, but Chad cautions the library to refuse, fearing their influence on undergrads as “an intrusion of film studies into the department’s sharply defined curricula” and that it “is a hostile takeover violating the School’s Third Maxim: Independence [see fieldnote #62, p. 108 above].”

— A strident note to Armbuster from an academic committee head about Ezra Pound showing up on a faculty’s syllabus: “*The Cantos* are a *nut-job-blog* before the fact. Propaganda sticks in my throat. A willed abandonment of coherence, an unrelenting sea of turbulence, that we really don’t need to expose our young customers to, who need neither young raging bulls nor any old hairs on their syllabi. We need to illuminate with the phosphorescent wake of the Ship of Culture plowing forward to new ports on the sea, our self-renewing sea. Now *that’s* poetry.”

— Academic Affairs to Chad: “Received the new course syllabi. Your new faculty need to do better spade work for their proposed distance-learning courses, digging into their topic like a Scot into a peat bog in a way one can see it, hear it, smell it being done. *Capisce?*”

## Finding Mememo

— From the President: “All Department Heads and their respective Carboncopyieri will get a 50 percent discount from the School bookstore if they use the requisite bow or curtsy and utterance of the Vowel of Vowels and ask for Richard A. DeMillo’s *Revolution in Higher Education: How a Small Band of Innovators Will Make College Accessible and Affordable*. This book is highly praised by Vint Cerf, one of the founding father’s of the Internet.”



Cigars and Stripes, Dallas in back right

*This material certainly gives us a sense of the forces leveled against the likes of Hy (Wyoh, too, as several e-mails address his “anarchistic attitudes”). Dallas called me, says Hy’s eleven-day disappearance has something weirdly Agatha Christie-ish about it. “Like in the TV series “Sudden Disappearance”, it only deepens the case,” he told me over the phone with a deeper-than-usual Texan twang. “Somethin’s tellin’ me, ‘Dallas, we have a problem.’ I’m gonna need to speed things up here on my end and rush out to Oak Park for more fast lunches with Hy’s widow.*

*“From my very earliest youth it has been my pride to converse familiarly with all human beings — man, woman, and child, even dogs — so I know I can unclam her lips; then a session of fast key-tappin’ exchanges with the Kamakazi Kid’s broheim [ed., Ichi ]. Why didn’t either of ‘em mention Hy’s truancy? Why? Huh? Then, with all that baggage on board, I’ll need to trade altitude for airspeed and do some fast night-*

*walks on the tarmac around my old haunts near Cigars and Stripes, where doorways hold shapes, taking on human form only after I pass, to bolster my inner-shamus. I do these walks when I’ve been lying awake so long that the very dead begin to wake and crowd my thoughts most sorrowfully, especially my wife and the sad corpse of Berwyn’s Baby Doe. Like the night-jaunt that by chance led me to the location of ‘Berwyn’s Baby Doe’s’ body. She’d been raked from forehead to waist in three roughly parallel scratches, as if slashed by the talons of a giant hawk or eagle; the infant’s face and throat were covered by, and his mouth choked with a yellowish substance shot with purple and about the consistency of cottage cheese. The crazed perp — human or unhuman — was never caught, having done a bunk for parts unknown. I had nightmares; I mean take one bad case, add a late-night club sandwich, and a shot of Kümmel, and you find yourself thinkin’ about somethin’ longer than your nose and wider than your mouth, believe me!*

*“Dreamt I was ‘napped by the fuckin’ Baby Doe perp! A dude who’d spent forty years in the Cat d’Af (Bataillons d’Afrique, the French disciplinary corps) and had the tats to prove it. A tireless chatterbox, he told me he used to write pulp explorer fiction under*

## Finding Mememo

*the pen name of Bibi-la-Purée [ed., purée signifies "trouble"]. He had a macabre complex, his small eyes watered incessantly. He took me to a terribly remote and secret place. Venetian blinds, sound-proof walls. 'What's the idea? Where am I? Why'dju bring me here? What's going on?' I asked the creature before me. His mouth smiled a good deal and he had a trick of compressing his lips and shoving them out. He sported razor-sharp Freddy Krueger claw-hands. My knees were knocking. Seeing me thus was a species of fun for him. I took three heel-and-toe steps backward.*

*"He posed a rhetorical question: 'Consarn it! Iffin' you ain't as smooth a smooth ape as all the others. They . . . they create nothin' but what can be touch'd 'n weigh'd 'n tax'd an' measur'd. But maybe you can stop committin' empathicide. So I, The Great DeKalb, The Mad-Traveler, who writes about paved streets as though they had just been invented, deign to ask you: As a kid, lookin' up at da adults, ya ever get an idea in your head that when you grew up you'd find out something that would forever after keep you from ever being happy again? Want to keep other kids from feelin' that feelin'?"*

*"What was strange here was that this very question had once been posed to me by Hy, maybe a month before his death. I thought it odd, then. Ya know, the same thing returns again and again, as if there were only one life in my great-grandfather, grandfather, father, and me, the child. Oh how bright it'd be if one day we could work this off, this passing on down of misery and obligation. I replied to DeKalb thus: 'Suppose I were to review your situation from a different viewpoint?' It was obvious this dude's mental engine had slipped its cams. God, how I wanted to put a sharp hat pin in his pompous flubdubbery, but I knew he was psychopathically dangerous. Dude, you lose it here and you're in a world of hurts, I thought. Then I abruptly awoke to my phone's ring, a client.*

*"Jym, the city-wandered is the unchartered city where conspiratorial words are whispered and glances exchanged and where sometimes I sense myself and the criminal as opposites who, at every instant, are unconsciously approachin' each other through the darkness, headin' for a violent collision in that undead state the city exists in between the*



Masked Ball, Oak Park's Nineteenth Century Club

*death of the previous day and the birth of the next. 'Does not all, which inspires us, wear the hue of Night?' so wrote Novalis, whoever he was. Got that from a book of famous quotations someone left in Cigars and Stripes Bar to amuse the regulars while they waited for their chicken wings. I used that ditty as an epigram to one of Blurt's more polite adventures, "Coffee and Cakes", a murder of an heiress during a charitable masked ball at Oak Park's Nineteenth Century Club. A clever poisoning whose climactic endin' occurs at an All-Nite parking garage.*

*"By the way, I've used that odd feelin' of the convergence and clash of moral opposites in one of Blurt's later adventures, 'The Apparition and the Cigar.' Where Blurt's fervid intelligence isn't enough to take on cigar magnate, Royce Worthington (a.k.a., 'Mr Nasty Biz'). He has to go against his own dictum*

## Finding Mememo

*concerning the art of night-faring: 'Be singular!' In a much earlier story, his debut adventure, 'The Curiosity of Broken Sleep,' Blurt boasted, 'I'm a seventh son, born under a caul, and I've got second sight.' That story begins, 'Felt put-out — got up — did that.' In those earlier stories, when my PI required some assistance (not often), he'd call on his upstairs neighbor, 'Cap Biddle,' an ex-coiner turned cop, now retired and in need of extra funds. But I dropped that somewhat amusing character (liked by Gray-Power types) after someone Tweeted a nasty, 'How did you (and Blurt) happen to pick a false alarm like Biddle? Jeez, he's ninety fuckin' years older than Santy Claus!'*

*"Yet, for peculiar and complex cases — like exposing a corporate hacker who called himself André Malware — Blurt needed more youthful feet on the ground. So I had him befriend, then hire, the equivalent of Holmes' Baker Street Irregulars: three black kids from the ghetto he calls 'Tom,' 'Jerry,' and 'Logic' because of their street smarts and relative invisibility. At times, over the next several stories, Blurt and his 'Drones' march miles of feral Chicago streets with-out the slightest sense of exertion, those faithful waifs (illegally paid in Colt 45 brewskies) running ahead as an advance guard, spreading out when Blurt blurts 'The game's afoot!' or sitting tight, alert like cats when their boss whispers, 'Twon't hurt to wait.' My favorite of the three Drones, as his character develops over several stories, is 'Logic,' called so because, as Blurt puts it, 'This guy's so into Virtual Reality, I don't believe he'd be surprised if a fried egg winked at him.'*

*"A bit of Blurt trivia for any Blurt fans: his hero, besides Sherlock Holmes, is Captain Barclay, a celebrated athlete who, in 1809, when pedestrianism first became a sporting activity in England, walked a thousand miles in a thousand successive hours for a thousand guineas. Hy once told me about another manic walker, Charles Dickens, who was famous for his feats of nocturnal pedestrianism, a 30-miles jaunt his drug against insomnia."*

*I told Dallas Hy, that magnetic polymath, had cited Novalis concerning "the blue flower" of Romantic yearning for the unobtainable upon returning from his eleven-day absence and then went on to boast of some nocturnal peripatetics himself where, in Venice, Italy, late on a moonless night, having overdone Grappa Prosecco shots, he was tossed from a bar doing bad puns like, 'I said, Hi Jack! Not hijack.' Put out on his keister, he had to steer homewards upon nautical principles, fixing his eye on the pole-star and seeking a northwest passage, instead of circumnavigating all the riddles of the capes and head-lands of those Medieval alleys. He returned to his hotel room to find Dory sitting with tense lips in the expression that Hy noted "I liked least." She told off her husband: "The Moon is soft, the Earth is hard, solid, the Earth endures. You are the Moon, I am the Earth, you revolve around me. The Earth keeps the Moon in its place. Get it?!"*

*Dallas enjoyed that insight into their relationship. I told our trusted shamus, Ichi and I wouldn't mind joining him on one of his Berwynian rambles as long as we ended up at that freakin' wacy great bar for a beer with a brownie chaser and bar-b-q chicken legs. And Ichi was due back down in the Windy City for an editorial consult next week.*

*"Dude, only if you join me in swiggin' that fab Minnesota brew, Surly Hell."*

*"Hell, surely," I affirmed, my face splitting into a pumpkin's hack-grin.*

\* \* \*

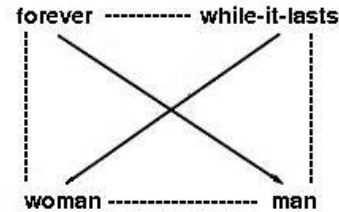


# Finding Mememo

12



It's Friday night and Dorinda is out with her cousin, a New York author whose fiction often imaginatively engages her complex family history and her travel adventures. After performing all the conversational "catch up", they usually segue to discussing the institution of marriage as being divided between "while it lasts" versus "forever". This often becomes the theme in her cousin's plots. They can sit for hours and discuss how this dyad (note the gendered semiotic rectangle) plays itself out in schematic terms in both life and fiction.



So I'm batchin' it with my private-eye buddy, Dallas Johnson, at a place Dorinda's son hangs out at. Dal's been going here for years. Maybe you've heard of it. Cigars and Stripes. In Berwyn. Where Dal first had his gumshoe biz set up in a funky vintage 1908 building that he ironically called "Chateau LaFeet". Ichi had told him the '08 vintage was a good luck, eight was a super propitious number in Asian cultures.



Maori giving the *hongi* greeting of respect

As I go in, outside it's *l'heure blu*, with some remnants of dusky pink, and a layer of phosphorescent white along the western horizon. "Disunited Hairlines 086 Heavy" (an airline-ish tag Dal has given to his bar persona) is already sitting in a booth on the right that has a wacky sign NEVER ACCEPT A DRINK FROM A UROLOGIST over it. I approach, he stands. As we hug he cautions, "None of that nose-touchin' nonsense, 'bro, what your Photo-san [*ed., his tag for Ichi* ] tried to lay on me last time we met, referrin' to the Maori greetin', *hongi*, in

which a pair breathes the sacred breath on each other. Shit, that guy's got foul breath from gobblin' too much Kimchi, me thinks. How *is* Photo-san?"

I tell him Ichi 's working on a new installation piece. "Shuts himself up at his work-house selecting photos from a huge pile and, with trial and error, arranges 'em on the floor to see what pieces fit best in a vertical orientation. *Totems*, he calls them. Sophisticated conceptual puzzles."

"I'm payin' for the brewskies, dude, you do the chasers." Tonight's beer flight is German-style lagers leaning towards the Pilsner. While we wait for the drinks, I tell Dal that Jym and his fashion-freak wife are planning a brewery tour of the Czech Republic and Slovenia, stopping in high couture boutiques in Prague

## Finding Mememo

and Ljubljana. In Prague they plan on staying in the famous Art Nouveau Hotel Paris. Dal goes Irish (or sea-sick) green with envy.

"Hy, I got a Webly tale to tell. You know how private-dick work is all 'bout makin' connections within an array of data? How much I love the unpredictable fluctuatin' consciousness, that excessiveness of freedom I dig. Well, this afternoon I was casually spelunkin' the digital underground, my mind creepin' and crawlin' through semantic fissures in the Wikipedia cave complex, when I stumbled across the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, which led to World Animal Day, then to Kanelbullens Dag and Cinnamon Roll Day in Sweden, then passed through Alvin Toffler (it was his Happy Birthday) and Teresa of Ávila (R.I.P.), and then to the launch of Sputnik, which ultimately led to an article on the first dogs in space, which led to a YouTube video of an old TV show featurin' The Space K-9s (a late 50's Cape Canaveral, Florida high school doo wop band)."

Speaking of the Web, I ask him if he'd run across Ancestry.com. With several bottles of brew under his long belt, his reply was predictable. "Ya, 'n Pederasty.com, too." I quickly turn the conversation towards ancestry, tell him I had one of those Ancestry.com DNA tests that track the percentage of ethnic backgrounds submerged in oneself [*ed., see frontispiece*]. "The surprise was the dash of the Irish in me, Dal."

He, in turn, details the Hispanic side of his family, his mother's side, his prison-guard uncle. He seems really fixed on that uncle of his, although the term *avuncular* is unknown to him. I toss the word out, ask him what he might think it means and, again no surprise, he offers that "it just might be, just might be, a Spanish regular verb, because of the *ar* ending, meaning *to anally penetrate*."

I decide to gradually move our topic from genes to Jym's childhood. "Did you know that Jym's ancestors, on both sides of his family, had girls born suf-

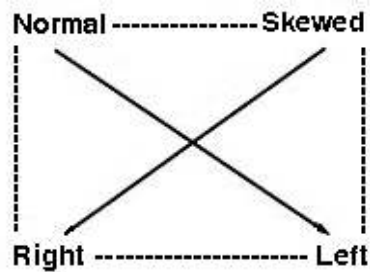
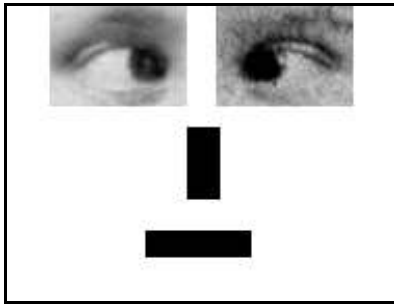


fering internal strabismus?" He's got photos to prove it. "What is interesting," I tell Dal, "is the odd fact that in both cabinet card images, the photographer recorded the kids face-on, could've shot 'em from the side and downplayed their respective defective eyes. But didn't. A kind of truth in advertising no longer practiced these days."

"No crap? Today, a little Photo-shopin' would fix it wham, dang, bam, zoom!"

I didn't mention it, but I always thought it intriguing that one child has the defect in her right eye (which looks left), the other in her left eye (which

## Finding Mememo



looks right). An asymmetry which, yes, could be corrected via Photoshop, or nastily transformed into yet another defect, crossed-eyes. Another diagram shows the permutations.

I'm sketching these diagrams on a thick slab of paper with a crayon. Each table here has this for customers' amusement. It reminds me of the drawing paper we used in Kindergarten, which also was thick, tough enough to resist the assault of our giant kid erasers. We discovered amongst us kids that such paper could only be folded in half no more than nine times, ten if you stood on it with your heel and stomped. Weird that one remembers such trivia. I tell him I had a passion for making paper airplanes after my dad showed me how to fold them."

"Me too! What with a dad who flew planes and worked for NASA 'n shit. He even made paper rockets!"

"Wow, my dad worked in aerospace, too."

"What were *you* like back then?" Dal asks.

"My *you* back then was a singular noun, a theoretical plural still awaiting proof in deep friendship. I was pretty much a loner then." He must've thought the booze was short-circuiting my neural pathways. "Where'd I live then? In Southern Cal where I led an insane life despite the botanical fact that the sun perpetually shone on the grape-candy purple jacaranda, and the oleander and bottlebrush were in bloom."

"Holy shit, Hy," Dal says, face flushing, blood cells beginning to swell the color of bottlebrush. "Bottlebrush?" yelled so loud that the kitchen help peel out to see if a travel-

ing salesman is trying to sell the establishment a new kitchen wash item. "Bottlebrush!"



"Okay. What the fuck?" I toss back.

"I have to admit that that is one of my favorite plants. I love, love, love Bottlebrush. The plant is truly carefree with little to no worries about diseases or bug problems (unless some private-dick like me sticks a small mike in it). Ha, ha! Hell, if it doesn't flower several times a year there in Texas (our

## Finding Mememo

home was just outside of Houston). And wow, is the Bottlebrush great for coverin' things and blockin' views, such as a fence, or blank wall, or a bright light from a neighbor's flood light attached to the back of their garage. In fact, that's what happened to us. The fuckin' neighbor's light was so bright (the dude was paranoid, but with some justification, due to my night-faring) that it lit up over half of our backyard and shined into me and my *broheim's* bedroom window (we slept in a bunk bed).

"My uncle was over for dinner once — he was a bull, prison guard — and oft imagined he was still on the wall with those big searchlights crisscrossin' the yard. He suggested we put up Bottlebrush to screen out those fuckin' photons. Well, it worked and it grew nicely over a short period of time and was beautiful when it bloomed. My uncle César said some clever inmates who worked in the prison garden grew the stuff — it grew fast — and eventually covered their prison escape. After that, no more Bottlebrush in the prison. It became Federal policy; no shit, Sherlock: ZERO TOLERANCE FOR BOTTLEBRUSH IN ANY FEDERAL CARCERAL FACILITY, et cetera. It's on the books, dude. I swear.



The blond alien children, film still from *Village of the Damned* (1960)

"Poor uncle César, his life had been leakin' out of him all those years (he was older than my mom) like beer from a faulty keg. But he still had energy to tell me about all the great movies he'd seen as a kid at a small movie theater in Laredo. He told me some two thousand movies kept rattlin' away in his head. Kept him sane durin' long lonely night shifts on

the tower. Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* was both his and the inmates' favorite; it was often screened at the prison's Friday Film Night. But the movie that got me, I mean *got me*, as a teenager was that Brit flick, *Village of the Damned* starrin' George Sanders."

Damn! If that wasn't one of my fav's, too. I tell him I read the original book, *The Midwich Cuckoos*, by John Wyndham on a United Airlines flight from L.A. to Milwaukee in 1967. It inspired the movie. I averred that the scene where the George Sanders character screens his thoughts from the mind-reading super-creepy kids had a profound effect on me. "Jeez Dal, I began doing that scene over and over as mental exercise: *A brick wall . . . a brick wall . . . a brick wall . . . a brick wall . . .* hoping to make myself invulnerable to my dad's verbal

## Finding Mememo

assault. Even tried the glowing eyes effect on him to get mind-control, get him to nose-dive off the roof of our house. I had to be super sensitive to my dad's every imperceptible tick, hint, gesture, and eye-movement; separate the red herrings from the dangerous stuff. Something, I suppose, like you gotta do in your line of work, huh? Made us both open receptacles to the adventures of Sherlock Holmes. My dad was like Moriarty: he was in one place only, our home, but present as a cause whose effects were simultaneously present in many other places, constantly generating new plans, scrambling old ones into new configurations. No wonder my mom mirrored this by re-organizing our house furniture each month, as if the couch, end tables, dining tables, TV, chairs, lamps, bookshelves were puzzle pieces of endless possibilities. I think that directly influenced my later writing, Dal, but at first it manifested itself in me as a wobbly, wonky sci-fi robot, arms stiffly out front, about to get into trouble."

Well, my confession draws from Dal a twenty minute exposition on his own childhood, how it had its similarities to mine. How we both early-on developed curiosities and suspicions beyond the ken of normal men.

He's thrilled when I tell him that a friend and I discovered that the creepy new people on the block, living in a grim tract-home on the southwest corner of Saticoy Street and Royer Avenue, were receiving stolen goods (e.g., kegs of beer from The Red Herring Bar), hiding them in their garage. "I still have a snazzy western belt I stole (takin' it for evidence) from that horde when the perps weren't lookin', just two days before the police raided the place. I remember our hearts beatin' like tom-toms durin' the whole caper, so scared we were the bad guys would nab us and we'd be found floatin' in the nearby drainage wash."



Much of this conversation is carried on during "jostle-time" at the bar. This is about midway into the evening's drinking bout. Customers, incapable of staying put after so much boozing 'n smoozing, are looking for somewhere new. They squeeze in wherever they can, and there's always a space because the others keep shifting too, a few leave. One young guy comes in, takes off his leather jacket, revealing a "Can-

cer Sucks" tattoo. These "shifters" can seem possessed, truly possessed, and the bar's Halloween Meets The Day of the Dead in Zombieland decor creates the perfect *mise-en-scène*. There also tends to be group discussions, loud and boisterous. Tonight it's whether manners are subject to de-evolution. As the



## Finding Mememo



Cigars and Stripes decor

velocity of the discussion increases and more people are drawn in, the question is expanded to: Is this thing about bad manners a sign that we are doing some atavistic reversing of human evolution?

While this verbal wave washes among us, creating tide-pools of heated debate here and there, Dal and I start on the word *intrigue*. "An intriguing word in itself," I offer. "Sherlock was always involved in some intrigue, right?"

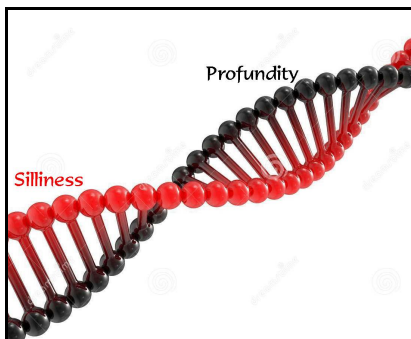
"Yeppers. And so have I and so has my avatar Blurt Wildbraine. Hell, I find it intriguing' that you offer this up for discussion and find it so intriguing'," Dal adds, eyes twinkling.

"I find it intriguing you find it so intriguing that I find it intriguing," I

offer. "Intrigue entails an adventure, which entails impoverishing and schematizing in order to create a record of facts, a case one can encompass."

"Hence, the need for a notebook and someone like Doctor Watson to further work up the facts into a story, whether it be a real life case or fiction. Reality is diffuse, disorganized, deprived of elegant concision, but a police case history and fabulations — stories and films, of course — give it shape. Intrigue desires to be shaped," says Dal mimicking a James Bond British accent. I'm flashing on the comic exchanges between Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon in the funny film, *The Trip* (2010).

Well this intriguing conversational pastiche goes on for over ten minutes,



the alcohol propelling our double helix spiraling exchange entwining sheer silliness with profound insights. One of the latter is that intrigue, for us, is a concept that is opposed to conformism of the majority, those who settled into the minor pleasures of home and work, the comfortable-enough routine, those who dreamed the same dreams and were happy to be part of the common stock. This could be put into Sartrean Existentialist terms: intrigue =

## Finding Mememo

perusing one's "life project" in the midst of an absurd world, while conformism = living in "bad faith".

We start to compare the kind of childhood we had with that of kids' today. I note that we had "vast amounts of free time."

"Yep. We went to school in the mornings and by mid-afternoon were free and clear, seemed to last an entire lifetime under the Texas sun. Sometimes there would be Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, maybe the Young Cowboys. But not like today's manic pre-arranged, adult-supervised super-extra-curricular collection of activities: soccer, dance or karate lessons, extreme yoga, jugglin' for amputees, fencing lessons, stock-investin' for teens, mastery of the unicycle, safe binge drinking for adolescents, rifle and pistol club, introduction to the Vintage Gas Billy, and so forth." Yes, Dal was having his fun.

"Uh-huh. In our day," I chime in, "those unsupervised free hours were conducive to creativity, to play in its best sense. And play meant engagement with one's pals, the sharing of secrets, pals that, looking back on those days, contributed to the accumulation that resulted in *moi*."



I was about to order another beer and give forth on my childhood fascination with cube roots, when Dallas, wanting to dodge the topic of numbers, pulls out his old, worn, hand-tooled leather wallet (it was his prison-guard uncle's) depicting a fearsome fire-belching dragon, and wants to settle the bill.

"Hell, gotta helluva hot case abreathin' down my ass. Got an early rise, dude. Gotta play the game of realism, make some sense

of things, meanin', I gotta do some serious walkin'. You know, the brain, which is always lookin' for ways to save energy, cancels or dulls perceptions of stuff we encounter on a daily basis; habitual encounters we skip over, taking them for granted, the better to concentrate on what's new, what might be a threat or a new delight. It's like what ol' Hy told me 'bout modern art's tendency to 'defamiliarize the familiar,' to knock the viewer out of the jog-trot of habitual perceptions. The PI's gift is like that, you know, bein' able to really attend to what most people overlook 'n see it 'strange' again. Like in that great Poe story, 'The Purloined Letter', where the stolen document was hidden in plain view. Yeppers, walkin' puts me into the defamiliarizin' frame of mind. After that, I've got a date with Shower, Hose, and Faucet. Ya grok?"

## Finding Mememo



He waves his massive hand to get our dwarfish waitress' attention; she's a complexly raced gal by the name of Sarita Subercaseaux. Gothed up, she's a fixture at Cigars and, when someone presses her talk button, speaks with a compelling form of logic all her own. In her, elegance is replaced with pure energy. It's natural for people to feel that their own affairs are important; the self is a natural amplifier, so no surprise she's always

showing new patrons a small color Polaroid of her twin Siamese kittens, Pringles-One and Pringles-Two; sticks it right in their annoyed faces. As to how she tells those cats apart is a mystery worthy of Dallas' attention. Says she's so named them since they like to lay one on top of the other, like Pringles Chips in the can. The stories she tells Dal have holes big enough to throw a cat through.

As she waits to take Dallas' dough, she shifts her weight from one leg to the other, shoulders move forward and back a fraction of an inch, eyes blink, breath goes in and out between partly parted lips, occasionally moistened by her tongue. It is the same posture and gestures, the same facial expression that she uses for each and every customer. Money in hand, she signs off with, "And remember, somewhere out there's a deadly loaded gun, in the hands of a dastardly and desperate dude with an insane day planned," flourishing black nails across our range of vision like dark shooting stars. Then she struts backstage.

*Exeunt.*

The next day America awakes to news of the shootings at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon.

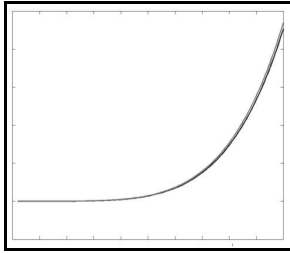
*Roseburg, Oregon (CNN): A man who gunned down nine people at an Oregon community college delivered a box to a survivor during the shooting, a victim said.*

*Stacy Boylan, whose daughter Anastasia was injured in the shooting, said she told him the gunman "gave somebody a box, somebody who lived, and said, 'You gotta deliver this.' "*

*Boylan said he doesn't know what was in it.*

*"Somebody has a box. I don't know what that's about," he said.*

## Finding Mememo



Too bizarre. No. Too, too bizarre, as one of the victims is a "Jason Dale Johnson". A very distant relative of Dallas' who even looks like Dallas was in his thirties. An ex-meth addict on The Big Upturn, whose recovery motto had been "Doing it means doing it well." Now *that's* intrigue.



\* \*

*Editor's gloss: Today was a gray day, the sun hidden in thick clouds and rain. But now*



The cabinet card Jym found, an object of his critical writing.

*it is a beautiful day, now that the storm has broken. Great fleecy clouds tumble up into warm blue sky, the smell of clean pavement comes through my office's window which I just opened. A great double rainbow is forming outside. The whole scenario, a kind of thing to make a Kansas preacher dance. And my most immediate thought is rather prickly: Ancestors are just people, folks! A testy response to Dallas and Hy's riff on same.*

*Maybe I'm over reacting because my last trip to see Ichi found me looking through a photo album he's gotten from his family in Japan and which he is in the process of scanning page by page and has to return ASAP. He's got a photobook project in mind to be titled Mine Own Granpaw and so he was explaining in too great a detail those forebears and the importance of ancestry in Asian culture. Ya, ya, ya, I was thinking. I tell you this because I want you to be aware of the inherent bias in any editor's gloss, its often skewed res-*

*ponse and interpretation of what it comments upon. Moreover, since there are several references to yours truly in this section, my response will be even more subjective.*



## Finding Mememo

*I was, though, flattered with Hy's riff on my odd-eyed ancestors. I had once written on one of those cabinet card images (see photo above) and was surprised to find I'd won a Critic's Award for my efforts. I'd been intrigued (that word again!) with the various juxtaposed asymmetries found in that image. Dallas told me looking at this photo was like trying to solve a crime by just looking at the crime scene. In so putting it, he inadvertently got why he (a PI) and I (a critic) have mutual, yet differing, concerns.*



*I mention Dallas, because he was looking over my shoulder as I edited this section. I mean, he was there at the bar scene mentioned and could add insight into Hy's take on their night of beerly debauch. Dal's response was a "Bravo!" He liked the part about his cool wallet and said that the bit about Sarita was "right on." Gave me his overall satisfaction with my redaction. Said Hy liked that wait-person's last name because of the sub that began its spelling. Curious that Hy didn't include that in this section or a subsection to this section. I also found out from Dallas that Sarita was addicted to Pringles Chips, something about their "saddle-shape" and her tongue. Dallas confessed he liked to do his night-faring with a can of Pringles because "Shit easier to carry than a bag of chips, but Hy hated 'em. Too much a machine-made-conforming*

*stack o' shit for his likin'."*

*I asked Dal if that funny signage about the urologist by their booth was a gag on Hy's authorial part or could really be found in Cigars. "You damnbetcha it's there!" he confirmed. And I trust Dal's engrams; it was thanks to that photo-flash memory that I was able to have him sketch those structuralist semiotic diagrams of Hy's which I've used to illustrate this section.<sup>1</sup> But Dal vehemently denied any discussion concerning the word avuncular that night, nor was the supposed blood connection between Dallas and that Oregon shooting victim Jason Dale Johnson accurate. As for that resemblance to his own portrait at that age? Well, it's a red herring.*

\* \* \*

---

1. The semiotic square or rectangle, also known as the Greimas square/rectangle, is a tool used in structural analysis of the relationships between semiotic signs through the opposition of concepts, such as feminine-masculine or beautiful-ugly, and of extending the relevant ontology.

The semiotic square, derived from Aristotle's logical square of opposition, was developed by Algirdas J. Greimas, a Lithuanian linguist and semiotician, who considered the semiotic square to be the elementary structure of meaning. A. J. Greimas first presented such in *Semantique Structurale* (1966).

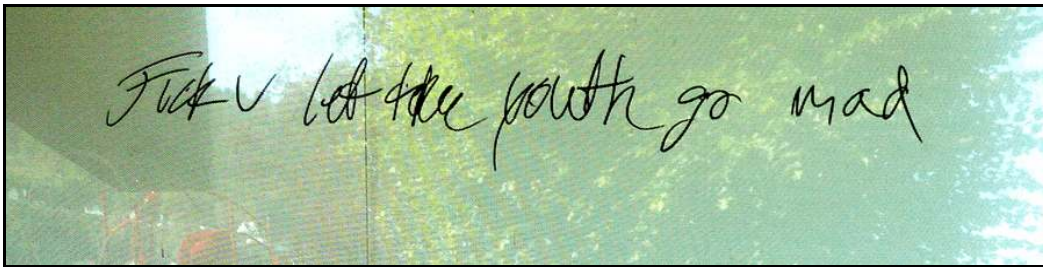


# Finding Mememo

## 13



Although only one of the numberless people who have lived, here I'm the leading man, albeit a wilting flower of humanity; yet I am still open in the present, in the movie theater of the world, but knowing time is running out on my reel. So I often dash into that dark space of my memories, enveloping myself in a cone of silence to watch myself in re-screenings of my past. In order to understand my *now* I jump into my past, seeking the traces of all the events that played a part in producing who I am today. The potential and unrealized side of the instant I am now living demands saturation, retrospectively in past acts and prefiguratively in future acts.<sup>1</sup> The historicity of my experience can be now experienced historically. If only a piece of silk separates life from death, death may not be an exit into nothingness, but a falling into possibility and potential.



Fultygom (panoramic shot of graffiti, 2014) Ichi Honne's comment contra conformism

Now, I know old age is just a step away, behind a door. No broad shoulders or graceful limbs here. Age is no longer a well-kept secret of youth. No wonder my musings go to what I leave as my legacy. But "by my fruits" I shall *not* be known thanks to the complex social functioning of that awful Japanese proverb which Ichi and I often discuss: *The nail that stands up will be pounded down*. But that clamping down of conformism, you say, is operative in Japan's peculiar socius, less so in the States. Not only do I disagree, but I claim it is found with a vengeance in an institution supposedly touting creativity, rooted in the notion of the NEW — the world of arts and letters.

For me, the person wielding the hammer, pounding down that proverbial nail, is not some unfaced abstraction. No. I always imagine it as a HIM, as a vigorous bourgeois male, straight-backed, and broad-shouldered, with thick dark

---

1. If Hy were still alive, I'd point out to him this warning observation: "Retrospection and prefiguration risk collapsing into *fetishism*. If I attribute the feature's of today's potential to an act which took place in times past, then inevitably I will venerate this past as an *origin* charged with destiny, one on which I continue to depend," Paolo Virno, *Déjà Vu and the End of History* (London, New York: Verso, 2015):145.

## Finding Mememo

hair and a small moustache on an otherwise clean-shaven face ending with a determined chin and having the stentorian voice of a captain of industry. This global gate-keeper wastes his time in fatiguing and boring cocktail parties, staff meetings, elegant art openings, and affects human beings that get in their sights by avoiding them. His current balance has nothing in common with those who are Other to him in taste and sensibility and so he enjoys wielding power over them. His goal is to at all times maintain the Q-Norm, a sort of gentlemen's agreement concerning what qualifies, passes muster. He has been dealing in deprecation so long, he's absorbed it and become Deprecation-In-Person. Not even the dead are safe from this enemy as long as he remains victorious.

He's the kind of Guy who commits "animacide" (soul-murder), discourages you, puts you into a crumpled isolation from the world. Specifically, this Guy ridiculed the "difficult" atonal jazz of Cecil Taylor into so many ill-fated early-career performances, laughed at Jackson Pollock's drip paintings, bashed Robert Heinecken and other non-silver photo printmakers as offering nothing of merit and appreciated only by a small group of photo academics, protested Jacques Derrida's worthiness of an honorary degree at Cambridge University.

On a personal level, HE is the grade school teacher who in 1956 beckoned a frightened little Mememo before his second-grade class after an art session to ridicule his proto-Roy Lichtenstein crayon drawing featuring Mickey Mouse, Goofy, and Pluto with cartoon-ballooned dialogue, as "comic book trash". HE is the bearded art prof who told me, Meme-the-MFA candidate, to change my conceptual work into tangible, serious art, because what I was doing was "merely frivolous, redundant, and trivial, like a muffled cough at a funeral" (I was copying early Conceptualist artworks by "big-names", signing them with an alias, and dating them two years previous). I mentioned this to Ichi once and he told me, "Isn't it possible the people who hate your work the most, experience the most bile rising in their throats, are in fact your greatest treasures as their experience of your work is the most visceral and profound?" HE is the department chairman who railed against Meme's "embarrassingly frank and honest social demeanor." HE is the teaching job application portfolio reviewer who told Meme he had "absolutely nothing of value to offer." HE is the academic panel moderator telling audience member Meme to "shut-up." I remember, vividly, what it was like to be perpetually angry over this guy. S/HE is the . . . well, you all know this entity from your own experiences, so take a cathartic moment here to list the three top assholes, S/HE, S/HE, S/HE, operative in *your* professional life:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

## Finding Mememo



Mememo's Little Black Book

You can bet Ichi has a long list of these *Macaca mulata*, so has Jym, so has Dallas, so don't be embarrassed, hesitant, or afraid to contribute. As Dallas would put it, "No one here'll hammer down yer nail, dude. Ya grok?"

But I don't want to give too much time and effort to HIM. One can exert what Ichi calls "a purdy-good aesthetics of damage" by embracing a way of living with harm, while not disowning the place in us that is harmed; a way of launching countermeasures by honoring THOSE who have encouraged and inspired us. THOSE.

For me, THOSE are dead authors and their protagonists (many residing in my library and which I've read, re-read, reflected upon) as well as living entities (spread across the face of the earth). Of the latter, many are their faces, from pinched to full. Many are their shapes, from dwarf to giant. Many are their professions, from train engineer to professor. Many are their ethnicities, all shades from coal black to bleached white. Many are their politics, from right to left. Some are right-handed, some left. Some young, some old. All are unique. Ichi, Jym, and Dallas are the most recent. I've already introduced them to you. So let me introduce the pulpy discorporate members of my League of Admiration sitting in their compartmentalized high-rise, my library, a nursery universe in which everything has its place. And one place contains historical and natural scenes of violence: the 1525 massacre at Frankenhause during the German Peasants' War, the 1800 Battle of Marengo, the bombing of German cities in the Second World War, slave laborers worked to death in the Belgian Congo, the nineteenth-century Taiping rebellion that took tens of millions of lives in China, the devastation of the herring population and thousands of trees in a whopping 1987 hurricane. And these, just these, found in the writings of one author, W.G. Sebald; all stuffed into one small section of my bookcase. Besides disasters, there are here anodynes, therapeutic adjuvants in medicine

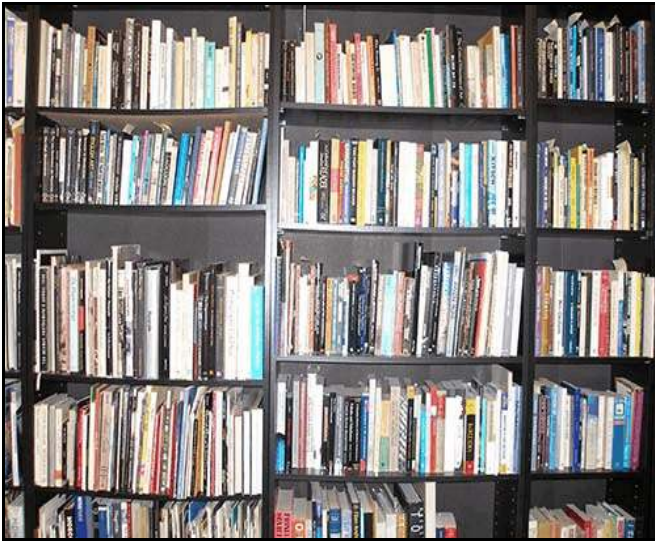
and psychiatry, by which certain doctors claim they can heal the sick in body and spirit with bound paper: *The Wind in the Willows* or *Bouvard and Pécuchet* or *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. Of the latter two, I can vouch for their magical psychic healing powers.

Ichi claims similar healing properties for some photographs. Like the photo of the poet Sylvia Plath reading out loud in her garden in the rain that pulled him out of a funk when his cat, "Fugly Girl", was run

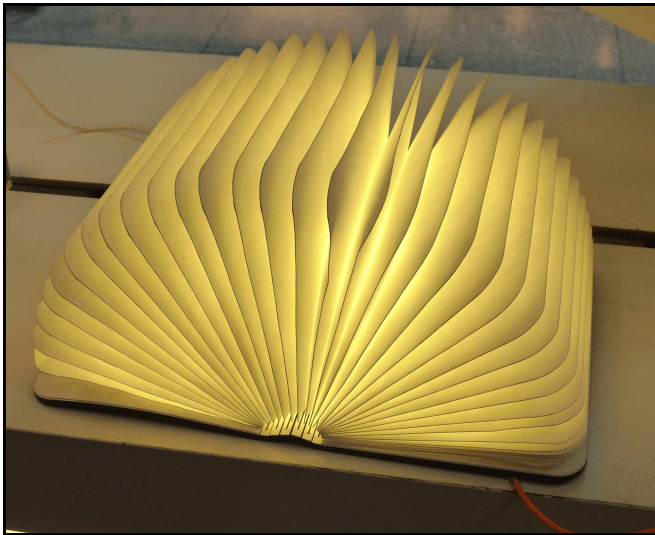


Ichi's cat Fugly Girl as sushi

## Finding Mememo



One of Hy "Mememo" Grader's many bookshelves



*Books Enlighten Me* (2011) photo by Hy "Mememo" Grader

over, pounded down by a MAC truck. "I was suffering bugs by night, strolling my corpse cat through the valley of the shadow of death. That picture of the poet (capturing her being in the difficulty of what it is to be, yet also dead) somehow worked a spell over me and my grief lessened considerably."

Every book has been engendered by long-successions of other books. Authors I've never heard of echo through any book I pick off my shelves. And that text, when read, acquires the projection of my own experience. This is common knowledge, but it occurs in an uncommon manner in my own reading and appropriations from those readings.

Although an unrepentant "book fool", I cannot outdo Canadian Alberto Manguel's legendary thirty-thousand volume library,

nor Chicagoan bibliophile, geology professor, and former art prof, Arthur Middlebrook's stacks of ten thousand volumes deposited in his golf-ball shaped dome-home. At twenty-seven hundred, my floor-to-ceiling basement library is modest by comparison, yet its selectivity makes it a powerful array for reference. It's a *personal* library in the sense the books are used, written in, thumbd incessantly (a potentially deadly practice for if a page is poisoned and one's finger lifts from page to mouth . . . this is the murderer's *modus operandi* in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*), referred to constantly, and re-read (each book having the date of its original reading and subsequent readings listed on the inside cover).



## Finding Mememo



*The Lure of Musty Old Library Books* (2015) photo by Hy “Mememo” Grader

When guests enter my basement, they are confronted by a door with a sign announcing in Italian: MEMEMO A BORDO. To these visitors to my stacks, I say these books represent a material and spatial extension of my readerly mind, stuff that becomes grist for my writerly fiction. At night, sitting still in my pulpy haunt, more a benevolent chaos than a place of order, I tell them I swear I can hear posthumous voices and literary characters conversing amongst themselves. Do they believe it when I hold a book up to my ear, as one would a seashell and listen hard and say I hear the text page me: *Meme, Meme . . .* in a small-man-in-a-box voice *à la* voice impressionist Rob Brydon?

Alberto Manguel writes about the famous Italian poet, Petrarch, that in his *Secretum meum*, the poet puts himself and St. Augustine in dialogue with each other. At one point, he and Augustine are discussing how one should read books. Augustine advises his interlocutor about the value of glossing or noting passages: *When you come to any passages that seem to you useful, make firm marks against them, which may serve as lime in your memory, less otherwise they might fly away.* I read this probably the earliest mention of what I do best, underline and scribble in my books.

Ichirō has noticed my process of textual reconstruction. I told him a book only truly becomes *mine* when annotations, stains, marks of one kind or another that traces a certain moment and place, characterize that text. Once these characteristics are absorbed into the book, it is very hard to discard it for often, upon re-reading, I find traces of the reader I once was: scribbles, cab receipts, date and place initially read: café, hotel room, airplane, or park.

Once he drove down, dodging snow squalls, to peruse my “heavily-intervened” books. It was a tit-for-tat thing. I had the month previous gone up



## Finding Mememo



Ichi 's books, photo taken at his work-house studio by Hy Grader



Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine's tomb lid (1204)

to see his collection of *beaucoup* menus from Japanese restaurants in 50 states and 80 foreign lands. Oh yes, Ichi is known as having the Japanese version of NYC's Mr. Harley Spiller's famous Chinese restaurant menu collection.

"I want to do something," he said, "with all that textual 'boojum' you perform on

your book pages. It seems, as an active, intervening reader, you *become* a book!" This got us into playing chin music about the "erotics" of bibliophilia, while he paged through some volumes on my shelves. I confessed that I always loved "taking a book to bed" with me, that it had a certain erotic tinge to it. As a polymorphous perverse two-year old, I would thumb the silky edge of my blanket, a tactile erotics I childishly called "Foovy-Woovying". I confessed to Ichi, I later carried that bedtime habit to the page corners of my books. That bizarre tick, resulting dog-eared pages, was followed, in college, by my red-inked marginal lucubrations. I mentioned that *where* I read dictated the formal quality of my books' underlinings.

When on the EI, for instance, the lines I made were wavy with peaks and troughs registering like a seismograph the quality of the track and the skill of the train engineer. If perfectly linear and smooth, the book must've been read in bed or snuggled into an overstuffed chair where I felt a *reasoning passion* while nestled within a book's pages like a dog in its kennel. I was a shy kid, subject to the emotional whims of my father.

My "safe-house" was any corner where I could curl up oblivious of the familial grumbling, experience impenetrable privacy, and exercise my selfish eye and singular secret action. Sometimes this meant retiring to the bathroom. But

## Finding Mememo

to do so was to incur my mother's injunction: "Gym shoes *yes*, books *no*." A ninety-pound weakling with glasses, I was. She was all boosterism for athletic activity as a way of compensating for the shame she felt over my premature birth. Afraid I'd turn into what today we call a nerd — which, in fact, I did.

During my childhood, my encounter with books was largely thanks to relatives giving me gifts; later it became a matter of chance as I perused the local library and, eventually, bookstores. The latter led to the establishment of my own library. Once I had bought and read a book I couldn't bear to part with it. I remember buying my first philosophy book, *Ideas of the Great Philosophers*, a Barnes and Noble Handbook edition edited by William Sahakian and Mabel Lewis Sahakian. Cost a buck fifty in 1967 dollars. The section titled "The Pessimistic Voluntaristic Idealism of Arthur Schopenhauer" stirred my burgeoning passion for careful reasoning. It's still stuffed in between its relatives on my shelves. I was drawn to philosophy because I intuited I found more reality in an idea than in a thing, maybe because it was given to me first in books and given as a thing — the book as universe. An alternative universe, even.

Pondering a problem, desiring inspiration, I know that on a page somewhere in a bookstore or on my own shelves resides the material I seek, put into words long ago by someone who could not have known of my future existence. This has always fascinated me. "The direction my readings have taken me," I told Ichi, "are various and always along crooked roads." Ditto for Ichi.

"Ah, winding paths such as my favorite itinerant poet, Bashō, once trod!" he said, his eyes sliding sideways as seen in so many photos of him.

Regularly, those readerly roads of mine turn back upon themselves so I can recall, compare, argue again with my own glosses, conjure up emotions from previous readings. Out of the blue he asked me, "Have you ever read the fable 'Snow White' as if it had been written by Donald Barthelme?"

"In fact, I have." He didn't know ol' Donnie Boy had *actually* written such a book. But I got his point: like reading the Bible as if John Barth had written it. I would like my readers to read this text as if Dallas Johnson had written it!

Speaking of our never-to-be-shamed shamus, he noticed a book of Dallas' on my table. Critics had pointed out the obvious: *Cheerful . . . Stern . . . Pathos . . . Mystery in which hard evidence must be misconstrued*. My copy was heavily glossed in red with such comments as:

*For Blur, everyday things as revealed in the case must be lifted out of the realm of the self-evident; the apparently real is not identical with reality itself, i.e., with the solution to the case.*

This jives with a pithy comment of Dallas' about the readers of his stories: "The undeceived are mistaken." After all, as Dallas put it, the journey of an *animal*

## Finding Mememo

*tracker* (what a detective, and the reader who follows his tracks, is), must involve (if it is to be dramatic and high-octane: happiness, sadness, anger, and fear) surprising changes of weather, missed footsteps, wrong turns. No neatly distributed footprints. Characters take a step and then a back step and then a leap and then a strange bedeviled jump, and then they fall over.

The book Ichi perusing is Dallas' latest effort, *Métro, Boulot, Dodo* (Subway, Work, Sleep), set in a Paris of infinite, endless streets. Blurt finds himself wandering in a labyrinth of mile-long passages, vaults, galleries, grottoes, and Métro stations figure: Crimée, Elysée, Iéna, Invalides, Oberkampf. Despite warnings from a stoolie of his, "Look man, you can lose your hat, ass, and gas mask farting around in Frog-Land," Blurt goes to France tasked to find an at risk scion of a wealthy family, "Mollie Flandre", whom he suspects has fallen afoul of the "Tropoja Five" a white-slavery gang of aggressively repellent Slavs who lurk in the nineteenth and twentieth *arrondissements* and are bossed by a ruthless Serb, Marko. Mollie, mental disturbed, has been soaked by life's adversities; she's described as "having a face like a commentary from another world and a body like a sea creature in transition from water to land, bearing the weight of her own body for the first time." The story opens at Paris's Le Bon (Blurt on a rare vacation, and referred to by the *feminine* pronoun as a spoof on academic writing) in the elegant wine-tasting room where our intrepid PI is to meet a new, unwelcome, client, the wealthy French aristocrat, "Countess de Flandre", an aristo-aesthete who is described as *having a unique charm, what with her stretchy vowels, long, stretchy legs, and little dachshund paws*. Used to getting her own way — her ancestors having romped through half a dozen fortunes — she imposes upon Blurt, *her eyes gave her the ol' whim-wham* (yes, it's *le vieux jeu*) for services concerning *beaucoup des problèmes* with her disturbed (she's always yelling something about "The Ism Schism"), and now mysteriously missing, niece Mollie. The Countess' story tugs at Blurt's heartstrings, delivered in a voice that rustles like dead leaves: *"Zhe was last seen in zee street of a dingy section of Paris repeatedly making zee sign of zee cross and scratching her body like zee dog, then placing her hands on her head as if to place a crown thereon before disappearing très mysteriously. I implore votre assistance, Monsieur Wildbraine."* Blurt admits to having seriously accumulating "*cirrus-cumulus sensations*" for the Countess. During the investigation, intimacies are exchanged. In one scene they endure the yapping of a dog with a tail like a French horn as Blurt offers a series of endearments: *"Ah, you are my kittykins, poochums, mousikins, goosikins, bird of paradise, mothling, kittycat, roosterkin, mousie, and tigercubkin."* In another, sitting together on Blurt's hotel room bed, *the Countess runs her palm down Blurt's unshaven face making a sound like a vintage Citroën braking.*

# Finding Mememo

As he seeks information about Mollie, Blurt wanders the streets of “the other” Paris, on his own private-dick *dérive*. He encounters vagrants, eccentrics, and *clochards* and tough talk by the *titi parisienne* with his *gros rouge sur le zinc*, that lower-class native Parisian swearing in slang over cheap wine at a dingy bar *à la Jean Gabin*. Yes, Dallas, with a wink, intercuts Blurt with filmic cliché.

On his circuitous walks and Métro travels, Blurt is always passing ominous graffiti, such as “*Morts aux Vaches*” (Death to the Cops). On one such excursion, he receives a mysterious text message tapped out in faux-Jamaican patois, presumably from the kidnappers: It gwine bi a hataclaps if yuh nuh cum (It is going to be a crisis if you do not come). This leads to the climactic scene that occurs at the hyperfunctionalized Centre Georges Pompidou at Beaubourg, which involves a *Zazie dans le Métro*-like madcap dash up and down elevators and escalators, culminating in a scene in the National Modern Art Museum, where French *écoliers* sit at the feet of their instructor learning their French art heritage are suddenly thrown into confusion and panic as Blurt, Marko (eyes bubbling diabolically) and a crazed Mollie burst into their startled midst in a serio-comic riff on a manic “Benny Hill” TV chase sequence.

Dallas said it was *très difficile* to write as he had to keep in mind using *she* for *he* in the narrative, and had to get the background material correct, the local color, by liberally copping from Jean-Paul Clébert's *Paris Vagabond* (1952) and Richard Cobb's *The Streets of Paris* (1980). Dallas' story — rife with difficulties and unresolved contradictions typical of stylistic lateness — opens in Garamond font (Dallas' fav). In my copy, my scribbled marginal notes enhance each page (not shown below):

*One night as Blurt sat at her table, head on hands, she saw myself rise and go to Paris. A place she always dreamed would bring time and grief and self so-called to an end and a new beginning . . . And so she took her first long vacation. But she forgot that violence isn't an event, but a kind of potential force, like gravity, that lurks in every curve of space; not just American space. . . .*

*Large testicular bunches of polystyrene grapes hang down from the high tech ceiling like props from a bacchic nightmare. Blurt is enjoying the softness of the French language as she steps into the wine department. A group of tasters chattering in French, sounding like a record with all the reverb removed, has already gathered. Like beggars at the door of a monastery, their heads are slightly bowed in the direction of a light oak altar on which, standing next to a bottle and twenty-odd glasses neatly aligned on a tray, is the icon which inspires the most profound respect: the price tag of today's pour. Lurking next to it — the ominous verb lurk catches the demeanor here better than stand — is her expensively*



## Finding Mememo

*shadows. . . . Blurt will soon learn she was up against a dastardly group — at one point she will be held at knife point poking at her carotid artery as one of Marko's henchmen attempts to force a Charlie Hebdo comic book down her gullet (these voyou couldn't read Dick et Jane but knew their comics). . . .*

As Ichi read this, his eyes did a saccadic jump three or four times per second. He then took the page, rushed to my scanner, laid it on the platen and closed the top. Clicked to life, my Epson made its usual smooth uurg-gguummmuhhhh hum as a 1600 dpi scan captured Dallas' text enhanced by my supplementary red markings. In seconds the manic glossing that milks from those words every drop of sense were digitalized into a humongous .tiff file. Ichi then tweaked it in Photoshop, his thin fingers dancing on the keyboard like tap dancers. Then he ran off an 11 x 14 inch test print using his kick-ass Pro-Grade inkjet printer.

Excitedly holding up the resulting print, Ichi pointed out how the mixture of type-set print and freehand squiggle enhanced the overall visual effect. How conceptually each page became a frozen memory of my act of reading (remembrance basically being nothing but a citation). He liked it so much, in fact, he came back in a month or so to do a series using my well-thumbed theory books as well. Believes the text/marginalia interaction is more interesting than either alone. Wants to enlarge them to 20 x 24 inches on his own massive printer and bleed-mount them on one-inch thick Foam-Core. Mount a show with these suckers spread across large white gallery walls in configurations evoking what he called an "iconology of intervals that materialize a charged field of correspondences between ideas." Indeed, he did show them a year later in a "Got Spine?" A fuckin'-with-the-Book themed art exhibition at Mad City's main library. Always generous, Ichi shipped that earlier prototype to Dallas to hang in his office. Always obliging, he signed it in his own microscopic hand (enlarged 3x below):



*A book is the axe for the frozen sea within us. Chop, chop.*

## Finding Mememo



I asked Ichi what had been the inspiration for this new project. He said it was not just my quirky handling of my books, but something *deeper*. He thought a minute, then offered a strange possibility. "Maybe it was the fact that once an American G.I. offered me Easter eggs; when I peeled them American words appeared on them; he then arranged them in short sentences and invited me to eat, saying I would be able to speak

English better if I did.<sup>2</sup> Your writerly treatment of your texts seems analogous, you peeling away at your books, poking at words with your single chopstick *cum* pen and gobbling up the knowledge."

This got me to thinking. If I wrote a complete book about my pursuits in my library, it would certainly be a cartography of my imagination. My library, over a span of fifty years, has grown according to the measure of my mind and the maturity of my intellect. In the early days of my library's development, begun in high school, my persistent acquisitions spurred me to think I thought I knew a hell of a lot. Now despite the high waves of books at my bow, stern, port, and starboard, I have the spine to tell you I know I am beyond knowing anything, can only perpetually trace a rhizome of tenuous connections. Maybe that's what Ichi is trying to get at in his proposed project — why he chose *my*

library. Trace his imagination overlaying my imagination as it traces over another author's imagination.

I thought back to my earliest remembrance of a book. *Mr. Mixie Dough, The Baker Man* by Vernon Grant, coincidentally, an alumnus from the very college where Jym teaches. It was read to



From Hy "Mememo" Grader's ship wreck collection

---

2. Here's the trick: Boil egg; allow egg to cool. Dissolve alum in vinegar by stirring it with a spoon. Dip a fine-tipped brush, toothpick or Q-tip into the solution and write your secret message on the shell of the egg. When the shell is later removed, the writing will be visible on the egg's surface.

## Finding Mememo



Frank Stella sculpture with what looks like high waves

me by my grandmother while waiting for the bread she was baking in the oven to finish. Thereafter, I have associated books and food, thinking and baking. My daily bread being books to consume.

Both my grandfather and uncle were train engineers and had albums of photos of Wisconsin train wrecks. What with my interest in sea-themes, no surprise that I began to collect books on shipwrecks, and famous submarine disasters (e.g., the Thresher Incident). I even saw a sea-theme in a late Frank Stella sculpture I saw at the new Whitney Museum's retrospective of that artist's work! Angry, turbulent "waves" capable of sinking a ship and about to hurl a mini-Tsunami the viewer's way.

Ichi found these wrecks quite moving, not getting the sinking feeling my psychoanalyst-wife had upon seeing them. She, waving off my objections, related my odd interest to my "damaged childhood" during which I suffered waves of parental abuse." No use fighting her interpretation. Any nay-saying and she'd hit me with the typical Freudianism, "But that means you *really* mean yes." By the way, whenever we get into a heated argument, she reminds me that, *in utero*, girls' lungs develop faster than boys'.

The theme of wrecks got us into the risk of failure in doing one's art. And the related issue of one becoming in one's creative output a "has-been" as opposed to a "will-be". Can one cultivate, as playwright Sarah Ruhl asks, a state of "is-being" in one's art? If anyone has done this, it's Picasso. I often wondered how Picasso had the sheer guts to paint *Les Femmes d'Alger* and show it. How he must have anticipated the repulsion many would have before it. The ridicule he would need to endure. How did he know he succeeded and didn't simply fail when much opinion was against him? And, of course, artists/writers *do* fail. "I fail," I confided to Ichi.

"But failure," he says, randomly paging through Joyce's *Ulysses*, "loosens the mind."

"But," I reply, " 'perfection stills the heart,' someone once said."

"Yet, if you do hate what you've created, remember, as William Hazlitt observed, there's 'a pleasure in hating.' A compensation of sorts. Moreover, when you die, being dead is the most airtight defense of one's aesthetic, Meme-san."

I nodded an uh-huh, flashing on my worried sense of mental and physical decline as my bodily speedometer approaches 70. Speaking of failure that loosens the mind, tells me of the play *Eurydice* at the Madison Repertory Theatre, which he and his wife recently saw. "It was all anxiousness, vengeful,

## Finding Mememo

cranky, with blood on the teeth; the actors' in clown costume, looked like they all suffered Bell's palsy [*ed., temporary paralysis of half the face*]. During the intermission, a woman I'd noticed in the audience, her head lolling, was strongly declaiming in aroused indignation how she disliked this 'mad, mad interpretation of You'readyke.' Yak-yak-yak, it was 'You'readyke' this, 'You'readyke' that, employing dozens of wacky neologisms, part English, part German.

This woman, she reminded me of German Bad Girl Ulrike Meinhof, had a way of making sound judgement seem dull, provincial, small — this from an older woman who dressed oh so *bohemian*, one crazy scarf wrapped around her neck like a noose. Several butch women stomping around in Birkenstocks were giving her huge, ugly looks, not knowing she was merely pronouncing the play's title in proper German.

During the last scene of the play, smoke started to hang in the theater, an odor of fire, burst mains blew in through the foyer whose floors began to blister. Something rotten in the basement. Sheer chaos." Well, the next half hour was taken by his description of the unpleasantness of this minor disaster that closed the theater down for six months. How often such disasters occur and how many people annually die horrible deaths, burnt or mashed in the stampede to exit.

After this muscular riff on theater fire disasters by Ichi — his entire face expanding when he spoke emphatically — we closed up our aesthetic shoptalk. Outside, a phantasmal encroachment of dusk, when nothing seems real in the half-light. "Dark night, Sally's Fourth," exclaimed Ichi as he looked about him, citing a title of one of Dallas' newer detective stories. Indeed, the colors born at this moment, fast darkening, were like that seen during an eclipse of the sun. As we walked to the parking lot, this play on Dallas' wordplay got us to discussing histories. Like how key aspects of his narratives are often disturbing coincidences that arise in each adventure. "They make the reader feel that they must mean something," I offered. "But one doesn't know *what*," Ichi replied, a bit annoyed. "Blurt, as the detecting agent, the animal-tracker, needs to make sense of these coincidences and the reader follows along, too, wants to see if he or she can out-think the master shamus."

We did agree we really liked his titles. My personal favorite? "*When the Optic Nerve Tears*", an ambiguous title since *tears* may be as taken as a verb (to rip) or mistaken for the noun (a liquid). But as the story is a detective tear-jerker aimed at more polite society than the usual masculine reader, the latter interpretation isn't as off mark as one might suppose. The key suspect in this odd case is an albino woman with *eyes uncommonly clear, though burdened with loneliness who has skin like the snow on the Alps*. I agree with Dallas' remark, "It's really fuckin' cool, even damn freezin'."



## Finding Mememo

We each got into our respective vehicles and headed back to my base camp for dinner and then breakfast the next day. Ichi had brought two large plastic Tupperware containers as gift offerings. One contained our dinner, his wife's famous Pumpkin-Cheese soup: crushed pumpkin (slightly lumpy with feta cheese), Pumpkin seed oil, and roasted sage leaves for garnish. The other held our breakfast, Ichi's Super Oatmeal: rolled oats, five-grain uncooked cereal, chopped dried apricots and apples, sunflower seeds, nutmeg; just add maple syrup and milk and eat.

After our dinner (*sans* Dorinda who was dining with a friend), I took Ichi to my "Man Cave" with its small bar and "Jack-Hole-of-the-Day" dart board on which I tape a photos of those I dislike: Donald Trump, Scott Walker, Vladimir Putin, Bashar al-Assad, even Chad Armbuster has made the list (bulls-eye = the nose). Their faces emerge on my board in conceptual interaction with me as player and within a world they can never wholly control or come close to truly understanding. The game is more than a kind of childish revenge. It's a reminder to me that it's no longer possible to overturn this world, nor reshape it, nor head off its dangerous headlong rush. Only one possible resistance: not to take it too seriously. When I do start to take it seriously . . . well there are "options" to opt out. Primo Levi knew this.

That night we targeted Trump. After the game (Ichi trumped me), when we were sipping his fifth Saketini, Ichi began to drunkenly horse around with a paper straw. At first he challenged me, straw-to-straw, to a duel that I won. Then he flattened it, creating a reed, and stuck it into the end of his clinched right hand and passionately tooted the opening lines of "Heartbreak Hotel".

"Meme, I love your 'hotel' here, but I miss my wife." And bemoaned having to suffer this deprivation for yet three more days. Tomorrow he had to drive to Ann Arbor, Michigan to hang a show. He hated Michigan. Home to local militias and Bible thumpers and in the winter to dangerous lake effect snow white-outs that pile up cars on the expressway like destruction derbies. "No Michinaga!" he declared, "No Michinaga!"<sup>3</sup> tossing his mutilated straw across the bar, making a perfect drunk-dunk into my wastebasket. He opened up about how he and his wife didn't want to suffer one or the other's death. "We want to drift into Alzheimer's together; then we can walk out of the nursing home in our bathrobes and wave at police cars, thinking them taxis taking relatives home."

I suggested it was time for him to retire. But he wanted me to pull out my family album. He'd seen it several times before, but never ceased delighting in tossing its pages. He himself only had several old photos that survived from his

---

3. Wordplay on the behalf of Ichi : The decline of Chinese influence on Japan peaked during the reign of the regent Fujiwara no Michinaga in the late-tenth century.

## Finding Mememo

childhood days in Japan (see frontispiece). Most went up in smoke when his uncle's carelessly misplaced Cuban cigar lit up the family home during one of his rare visits from his researches. "Those treasured snapshots escaped the weight of the world and defied the laws of gravity just as did our previously deceased ancestors." We both agreed that looking at old family photos, "the ghost quarter" Ichi called it, had the uncanny effect of making the dead come back to us or as if we were passing away into the frame to join them.



Two women by Hy Grader



Ichi was taken by two photographs of mine, both of young women, eyes closing to sleep. The first, my first wife taken in 1985; the second, the 17 year-old sister of a good friend taken days after her brother, my buddy, suicided. He thought there was "something late-nineteenth century about them, a Photo Pictorialist style touting vagueness and suggestibility." And, moreover, that they seemed to be "the photographic equivalent of Holden observing Phoebe in her open-mouthed slumber in *The Catcher in the Rye*, and Humbert's gazes on the sleep-talking Lo in *Lolita*."

Used to feeling the streaming of time around my temples and brow, I had to admit that for me these images alternate from seeming to exist in a dream-time, like an oil painting's perpetual presence, to reverting to the spatio-temporal specificity of a photograph. I went on to confess that these two images, despite (or maybe just because of) their "sweetness", are often too painful for me to gaze upon for any length of time, despite the subjects having opened themselves completely to the viewer's gaze. My ex-wife lives hundreds of miles away, but we exchange holiday cards. My friend's sister is now lost to me forever in time and space. Combined, these images provoke strange connections for me that can't be grounded in a strict casual logic. Perpetual regressions toward increasingly diverging, varied, and impenetrable ramifications occur. My thoughts and feelings concerning these representations bounce crazily around as if in a pinball machine. Ding, ding, ding, ding . . .

Despite being similar in content and mood, the contexts of these images' making were quite different. The first photo was taken during the early years of the *retour d'ordre* of the Reagan Era, when the joys of a new marriage were being dampened by the AIDS deaths of many of our friends as well as by the political reversals of the liberal gains of the Vietnam War era. I mentioned this to Ichi ,

## Finding Mememo

— we often speak of memory and history in relation to our aesthetic practices — that this historical aspect inevitably enters to inflect my response to these images. But he seemed taken with something deep in the images, wasn't listening carefully. He suddenly banged his hand on his knee, "Those two faces! As they emerge from darkness, Meme, they sure look like different phases of the moon; unknowingly, you've practiced a kind of *selenography* [ed., *delineation of the moon*]. Pictorialist allegorical photographs of women often associated them with the moon, right?" I nodded an affirmative. His insight startled me. Yes, I may have unconsciously "mooned" them. Each of these women were active in different ways and during different phases of my life. Now that he'd revealed his take on these images, I couldn't help but see it — clearly. Why hadn't I seen it myself, earlier? As I gave him an array of reasons for this oversight, Ichi's head tilted and soon he nodded off. I didn't have the heart to wake him. I turned off the light and left to watch the late-night news disasters roll through my TV.

When, a half-hour later, I put the dogs to bed, I looked in on him through the keyhole again. The light was on! He'd sobered up just enough to sit up in bed. He was now reading a book. One of his he'd quickly flashed before me while visiting my library. A famous Japanese *monogatari*, the *Fleeting Journal*, a record written by a Heian-era court lady known as the "Mother of Michitsuna". On longer inspection, he wasn't reading, exactly, but opening the book at random, tossing three dice, then summing them to determine the line number to be read. A form of fortune-telling, a textual cleromancy. I silently watched him jot down lines.



Jean-Paul Sartre

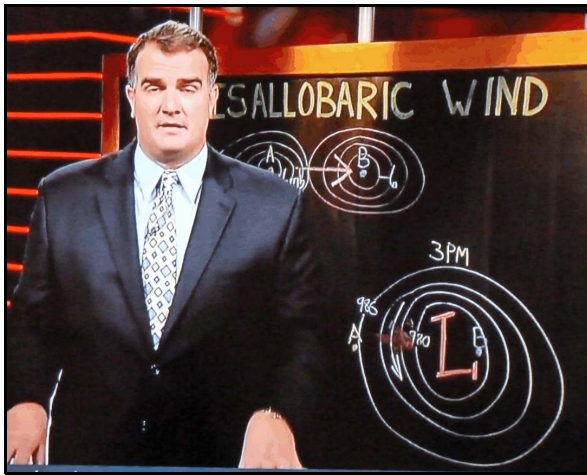
Like the curious man at the key-hole in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, I spied on this private activity for several minutes until I noticed Dorinda's daisy-chaining gazes, peeking at me from our bedroom door. Using her finger to beckon me to bed. Embarrassed, I quickly opened the guest bedroom door and asked Ichi what he was up to. He apologized for his fleeing consciousness, "Oh, jeez! The booze. Nothing inside my head before but the four burnt-out walls of my brain, where in I'm now starting to repair the trashed library shelves."

I went over and sat on a chair next to him as he explained. "Something like the *I Ching*, Meme-san." He then read two prophetic sentences he'd hit upon in the manner described above. One came from a collection of Charles Simic's poetry: "I hear a pack of cards being shuffled," and the other from that book's jacket commentary by a critic: "What, then should replace thinking and ideas? A cultivation of awe?" He was, he

## Finding Mememo

explained, trying to tie such chance-driven citations into predictions about his future activities. But by this time it was my turn to start nodding off, and in doing so must have seemed bored or oblivious. He rather testily struck out, "Well, do you understand or what?" <sup>4</sup> I nodded an affirmative and apologized, then bid him goodnight.

I opened our bedroom door and entered; startled, Dorinda sat up in bed like a firecracker (she's easily startled) and made fists of her hands, then spread her fingers out like mini-explosions. A Shakespearean since college, she wittily pulled out a citation, commenting on the odd expression my visage must have held: "Your face, my Thane, is as a book where men may read strange matters." My quick riposte, "The words of my book nothing, the drift of it every thing." I hastily undressed and it was lights out. In the dark my hands drifted gently over her, stroked her fingers as I told her about a certain Constancio C. Vigil who, upon his death, was discovered to have amassed one of the largest collections of pornographic literature in Latin America. "And you can describe a sizzling passage from one such . . ."



Weather prediction for a low in Chicago, with a contrasting high developing over Michigan. Rain by rush hour, at which time we'll have two skies: one's umbrella sky and the real sky. But, until then, clear sailing. Ichi claimed the gist of his night-time cleromancy had predicted all this, that his trip to Michigan would be easier and free of State Police and too many obnoxious Fundamentalist billboard messages. As if cele-

brating such good fortune, outside four squirrels were running about in the trees (our breakfast table looks out upon the garden) as if the law of gravity had not yet come into effect. The sky was an intense post-snow-fall turquoise that matched the color of the bowls in which we had our superb oatmeal breakfast. While I was washing up the dishes, my "*uni am*" laid two gifts on me, his hand slipping into his portfolio case to dramatically present me with an unframed print and a slim book.

---

4. These blunt words, also slyly aimed at the reader, were uttered by a sibyl in a tenth-century Icelandic poetic monologue known as the *Völuspá*.

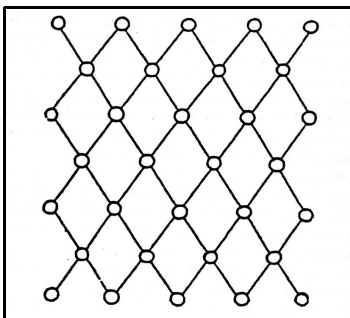
## Finding Mememo



Ichii 's re-photograph of photo of Dallas (left) on Ichii 's back deck touching his *Yukimi-gata* lantern; background to this re-photographed photo is a Japanese rock garden at Madison's Botanical Gardens

"It was inspired by a similar photo by Kenneth Josephson. He broke the new wood, I am simply carving it. He and I have one sap and one root, so there is commerce between us. Maybe you recall it." I did — a photo-of-a-photo laid on rocks — it seemed that Ken's shot had foretold Ichii 's. Jym had taught with Ken Josephson at his school and had turned me on to Ken's artwork some years ago. "Camarado, spatial and temporal differences here reside in a single image," he explained as he hugged me farewell.

"I get it, I understand!" Yes, it did speak to me powerfully of memory with all its displacements and superimpositions. But, of course, that was the point of him giving me that artwork. Hoped it would inspire my writerly adventures — even as it hinted that a photograph was worth some zillions of words and gave them forth immediately to perception. Meaning *his* medium was in many ways superior to my attempts at temporally rolled-out scribbled description. The other gift was Jun'ichir Tanizaki's seminal work, *In Praise of Shadows*, where the author elucidates the hidden, the dark, and the oblique in Japanese art and architecture over the bright, the gleaming, the rational. "It reminded me of the pleasure of using traditional Japanese bathrooms, which are dark, quiet, and full of shadows. You'll dig it."



I wish to end this section with the beginning lines from Dallas Johnson's five-chaptered detective novella, *Sister Mary Euaggelia's Dilemma*, set in a nunnery whose decorative tiled floor is *like a quincuncial fun-house* located in a Polish neighborhood of Chicago: *He was alone, a shipwrecked man adrift on a raft, prey of untamable currents. Of the following, you may believe whatever seems like the truth, then you have what your curiosity desires. This statement is not a lie, it is the truth.*

\* \*



## Finding Mememo

*Editor's gloss: A good example of how Hy's writing flows from one topic into another, almost seamlessly, following his mental peregrinations and his obsessive reading. Hy has written in one of his Moleskine notebooks: "I shall re-form the novel, capturing multitudes of things at present fugitive (like the perps in Dallas's fiction), enclose the whole, and capture infinite strange shapes. Are we having Fünft yet?" punning on fun and five.*

*He starts with his library and moves into shifting the nature of his own writing from his earlier academic articles and monographs — where his researches were systematic, all orthogonals and diagonals — to something today hard to define, unless you accept this use of the invented term "Iudicakadroman" to describe this patchwork of document, fiction, citation, and invented citation; all gleaned not by strict system, but rhizomatically, like a dog sniffing things out as it wanders about a large field.*

*Hy's brain, like Dallas', worked at a temperature different from mine, it's flame fed by updrafts of revelation — like his obsession with the number 5. His favorite Shakespeare quote was "Full fathom five thy father lies," from The Tempest; "tempest", a noun he oft used to describe his childhood. Aristotle saw the universe as composed of 55 concentric spheres; superstring theory in physics requires 10 (5 + 5) dimensions. Five, arranged into a quincunx, infected Hy's imagination, as it eventually did to Dallas'.*

*Dallas' not infrequent use of the quincuncial form in his stories (like the Countess' broach in the story inspired by Lampedusa's novel The Leopard) and same arrangement of five mint stamps placed near every corpse by the murderer, Franco Bolli, in "Never Licked") derives from Meme's influence, who often waxed eloquent over this form, citing Sir Thomas Browne, C.G. Jung, and W.G. Sebald as sources. Sir Thomas Browne, a British polymath, argued this array of points was mystical and examined it at length in his famous The Garden of Cyrus (1658). The term derives from quinque-uncia, or five-twelfths of a unit of weight or measure; it was used by the Romans to denote an arrangement of five trees in the form of a rectangle, four occupying the corner, one the center, like the cinque-point on a die, so that the massing of quincunxes produces long rows of trees as a lattice-work.*

*German novelist W.G. Sebald found the shape intriguing, but where he devoted a half-page in his The Rings of Saturn to Browne's quincuncial examples, Browne himself raged on for fifty-five pages. Hy's interest was rooted in both Browne's manic treatment of the topic and in the shape, which was derived from two inverted triangles (that number three again!) with a common base that also could form the Roman numeral V and which when doubled in value formed the sacred number, Roman numeral X and doubled in form produced the letter X.*

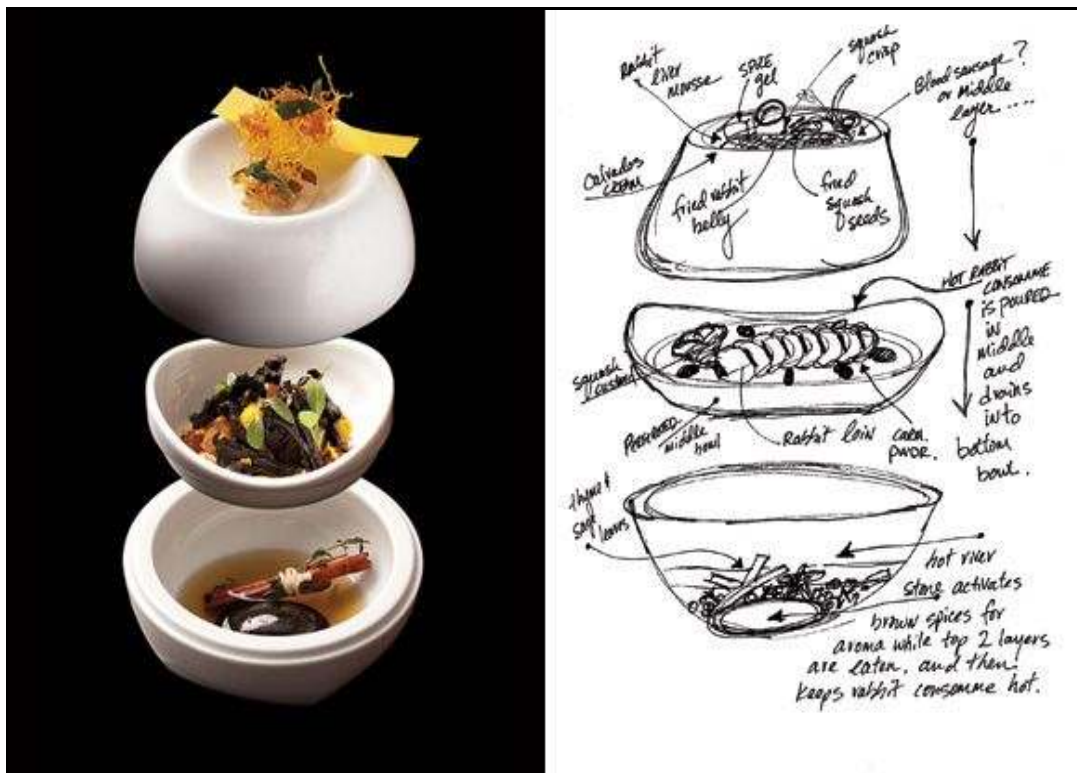
*This play on form and number Dallas thought of as "Heap, super cool shit," noting that his 5<sup>th</sup> cousin's daughter just had quintuplets on 5/10/15. And that his fav Brit folk group was The Pentangle. Moreover, he planned on writing a story with four characters (the four edge points) as suspects in the murder of the fifth (at the center of the quadrangle), forming a perfect quincuncial mystery. The fifth character, an old criminal named Manny Moosebugger, is head of a mysterious group of ten, a criminal minyan of sorts. "Moose" is described as: obscure and somber, suffused with passivity and fatalism. In the plot, the calamity to come, his death that would sweep away all his world, has been predicted by a shriveled clairvoyant on whose tunic is imprinted five eyes in a*

## Finding Mememo

quincuncial array.<sup>5</sup> She, described as being a stunt double for 1940s film character actor Maria Ouspenskaya, ominously tells "Moose": When you look at the fool moon, it will become tinsel and you will have stupid thoughts. You will see the five glowing eyes of three black cats. He takes that as meaning: Death at the next full moon, which is scheduled to occur on the fifth of the month.

Hy segues to more excerpts from Dallas' fiction all the while working in references to his childhood and his relatives, then we find him and Ichi at Hy's Oak Park residence where he continues the theme of memory and books. (Due to Dorinda's objections, a charming scene with Ichi in bed telling Meme-san the Kanji ideogram for "irrational" is a combination of the elements "woman" and "death" has been deleted.) They segue to chance and, always, weather. Ichi gifts him in return for his gift of hosting him in Chicago. Enormous textual and psychic terrain is covered in this section.

Whew! I found I (and maybe you, too, Reader) needed a very strong cocktail, a double Corpse Reviver, after engaging this body of writing.




Chef Grant Achatz creates his next new dish

5. For you conspiracy aficionados and would-be connoisseurs of Dallas' wit, "Five Eyes", often abbreviated as "FVEY", refer to an intelligence alliance comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

# Finding Mememo

One oddity. I know for a fact it was just before Ichi 's visit that Hy and his wife had a remarkable dégustation at world-famous chef Grant Achatz's new venue, Next. Dorinda had remarked on their wait-person wearing a white button shirt with sleeves rolled to unveil forearms entirely blued with floral tattoos. So why no mention of this foodie event? He had e-mailed me a copy of the menu and wine pairing, the theme of the dining event being, "Terroir", the concept of locale, soil, climate in wine-making and, ultimately, it's tasting. May I be excused if I reproduce that menu here?

 <p><b>Domaine Lignier-Michelot 1er Cru</b>  <b>Chambolle-Musigny</b>          Burgundy, France 2009</p> <p><b>Domaine Hubert Lamy St. Aubin</b>  <b>Les Frionnes</b>          Burgundy, France 2009</p> <p>char roe with rye and crème fraîche          brussels sprouts with beer and flax seed          caramelized onion with chicken skin and heart          prosciutto with honey and lemon          crostini with nasturtium and parmesan</p> <p><b>Domaine Vigneau-Chevreau Vouvray Demi-Sec</b>          Loire, France 2013</p> <p><b>Mount Abora "Koggelbos" Chenin Blanc</b>          Swartland, South Africa 2013</p> <p><b>Lieu Dit Chenin Blanc</b>          Santa Ynez, California 2013</p> <p>sturgeon with scallions and iterations of peanut</p> <p><b>Le Vigne di Zamó Schioppettino</b>          Friuli, Italy 2007</p> <p>consommé of barley with arugula and montasio</p> <p><b>Balthasar Ress Riesling Spätlese</b>          Rheingau, Germany 1997</p> <p>squab with beets and fennel</p> <p>pear with blue cheese and fresh moss</p>	<p><b>Krug Grande Cuvée</b>          Champagne, France MV</p> <p>potato chips, caviar, popcorn</p> <p><b>Dönnhoff Riesling</b>          Nahe, Germany 2014</p> <p>lion's mane, bison, truffled soil</p> <p><b>Bodegas Viñátigo Gual</b>          Ycoden Daute Isora, Canary Islands Spain 2013</p> <p>hamachi, ginger, fermented gooseberry</p> <p><b>Kathryn Kennedy "Small Lot" Cabernet Sauvignon</b>          Santa Cruz Mountains, California 2012</p> <p>snail, artichoke, pine aroma</p> <p><b>Domaine Lionnet "Terre Brûlée" Cornas</b>          Rhône, France 2006</p> <p>lamb, olive, valley wind</p> <p><b>D'Oliveiras Terrantez</b>          Madeira, Portugal 1988</p> <p>molasses cake, cottage cheese, bay</p> <p><b>Château Pajkos Tokaji 5 Puttonyos</b>          Hungary, 2006</p> <p>tea cookie, flan, caramelized white chocolate</p>
--	---

\* \* \*

# Finding Mememo

14

☞ 🔌💻 I turn on my spanking brand-new Dell Latitude laptop which sails the digital seas on its Windows 10 platform. It sits comfortably in its dry dock and lets me see our cyber-adventures together on a 21.5 inch screen. It has two docks. One at my basement studio, another in my home office. As far as I can determine, it's a happy machine. And I'm happy with it. This will be its maiden voyage, my liver-spotted hands at the helm.

I pop in a strip of licorice gum. I pull up the last file I was working on before I transferred all my data to this new computer. I hit the Alt+End command to place my cursor at the last entry and read: . . . *Of the following, you may believe whatever seems like the truth, then you have what your curiosity desires. This statement is not a lie, it is indeed the truth*, a section ending with the beginning lines from Dallas Johnson's detective novella, *Sister Mary Euaggelia's Dilemma*. Now I begin this section with an extrapolation on that last section which were the beginning lines of Dallas' text. You following me? I brew coffee black as my Scottie dog with my K-cup machine and make it growl and bark with a dash of cognac and start to write.



Alexander Belyaev

Of the following, you may believe whatever seems like the truth. Life? Marx talks of "its halftone shades, the whole blossoming complexity of it all." And death? I think I believe that there is another life. In a thin layer. If I do believe, it is without official intermediaries. No cultish organizations. No ritual. No group gatherings of any sort. I suffer a tension, as did Spanish thinker Miguel de Unamuno, "between my heart that says 'Yes' and my head that says 'No'." As these thoughts pass through my *cabeza*, I have Svetlana Alexievich's dozen tales of Russian suicides, *Enchanted with Death*, before me. And next to it, Alexander Belyaev's famous 1928 sci-fi story, *The Amphibian Man*,<sup>1</sup> borrowed from Ichi on my last trip

up to Mad City.

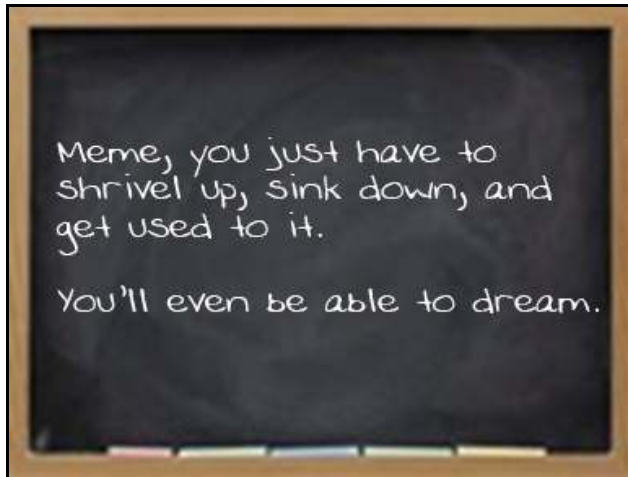
---

1. The 1962 film adaptation, *Amphibian Man* (Russian: *Человек-Амфибия*, translit. *Chelovek-Amfibia*), was directed by Vladimir Chebotaryov. The movie recorded 65 million ticket sales (the actual ticket revenue is unknown) quickly becoming one of the most admired movies in the USSR. Filmed on the South Coast of the Crimea and in Baku and featuring a cast of beautiful young actors, the film features some popular song and dance numbers and has certain characteristics of a musical. The first song and the musical theme of the movie, "The Sea Devil", became such a hit that it was sung well into the 1990s. Ichi was a fan of this book and watched the film (with subtitles) on Netflix. Always made him think of his beloved uncle's study of Japanese divers whose lung capacity made them seem as if amphibian-human.

## Finding Mememo

One book, stories of failure; the other, a story of the achievement of the post-human, a hybrid entity. Appropriate, as critics have it that my hybridized texts (often exhibiting a tension between life and death, belief and skepticism and wanting to succumb to the temptation of utopia) are “literary crimes, a one-person insurrection, failures, where characters always sound cleverer than they probably would in real life.” I think: *So Jah say!* The ol’ preferred documentary photography approach to writing! Comparing what I write to real life! The stock critical response.

“Little Hats”, my proof-reader-poet friend who understands my every comma, adds her “Ditto!” of protest. Comforts me with, “Expect the comfort to be small, the reception cold. But for the few who ‘get it,’ they’ll warm to you. You aren’t much interested in those readers needing melodrama with its procession of clichés: an inconvenient pregnancy, a business reversal, a terrifying descent into alcoholism, breakups, a devastating spinal injury, all overdone psychological motivations, and so forth.” Yes, a *nameless* dread, what I call “sailing a wine-dark-sea,” put at a distance by humor (those playful dolphins romping beside my ship) is a better descriptive of the tenor of my books. Those books being each one chapter in a macronovel.



These days, what with the literary critics and the pressures from Chad Arm-buster and our college's admin-types to “go the distance,” “Hats” has often to remind me of Jack London's pep talk about how you can live life even if you're in a straightjacket. I once saw a play, one of those 1970s avant-garde productions, in which Orpheus writes his letters to Eurydice on a giant

chalkboard. That's how I recall, visually, comments by my scent and color-giver, “Little Hats”, advice like on this chalkboard.

Trouble is, when I do shrivel down, I tend to loose orientation as though I have stepped out of life like out of my house, a house I am viewing from the outside, from below, from a foot above the ground, from the point of view of a child or a dog or an adjunct professor. A far cry from what I convey in an old photo of me (now lost) taken while working on my MFA degree. In that picture I have a bold expression saying “This is *me, me,*” accompanied by a squint (I'd



## Finding Mememo

taken my glasses off) that holds the camera at a certain distance. As I can't offer that picture to you dear reader, I offer a group shot of my art seminar in which I find the three individuals *not* looking at the camera the Barthesian *punctum* of the image. There are *seven* people here, my favorite number as it is the mark of the Master of the Word and the number of the Perfect Man, complete and perfectly realized as the sum of the four females and the three males. But here there's only one female. No surprise, back in those days women were under represented in art schools. Our class' catch phrase at that time (during the Vietnam war) was: "The world is poor and man's shit!" At the end of the Spring



Grad seminar with a young Hy Grader at far right (1973)

quarter (we were on the quarter system, not semesters), our prof would have us all over for a big blow out party at his studio where he obliged us to "Take off your masks and wigs and sing." Meaning we could forget all the academic protocols and hierarchy and and just *be*, anticipating an "Indian Summer" in our studios, hopefully enjoying a creative resurgence rivaling last year's production.

Despite my love of math and numerology, and because of my disdain of bad food and desire for fame,<sup>2</sup> I don't want to end up like the greatest mathematician of the last half century, Alexander Grothendieck. This stateless, individual anarchist once knocked down some gendarmes at a political demon-

---

2. Knowing Hy's interest in math, mysticism, high cuisine, and in playing around with meta-levels, Ichi turned him on to Eugenia Cheng's *How to Bake Pi: An Edible Exploration of the Mathematics of Mathematics* (Basic Books, 2015).

## Finding Mememo

stration in Avignon (way to go Alex!). He envisioned the unification of geometry (space/akin to painting) and algebra (time/akin to music) as a metamathematical *ying/yang-like* dance and managed to alienate the French mathematical establishment with his *paranoiac sense of integrity* (an admin-type once accused me of the same). Grothendieck advised that if you wanted to know the real nature of a mathematical object, *don't look inside, but see how it plays with its peers*, the very advice I'd give to anyone who wanted to know the real nature of the admin-type: wickedly creative, clever dudes who socialize with one another perhaps too much.



By the 1990s he'd disappeared into the Pyrenees to escape the steep drops in his professional career and the fierce weather of his manic mind. There he spent his remaining years subsisting on dandelion soup (maybe



Selected from Hy Grader's extensive collection of "Jump Shots" started soon after witnessing the suicide attempt at The Museum of the Art Institute of Chicago by a distraught young black man.

dandelion wine too) and meditating on how a malign metaphysical force was destroying the divine harmony of the world, fucking with its Cartesian coordinates. I imagine him having a crudely painted sign nailed to his door: OUT OF MY MIND — BACK IN FIVE MINUTES. No, I'd jump out a vintage Chicago School building's Golden Sectioned window before I'd end up like that. Drop my drop of Self back into the ocean of reality [ed., cf., A.N. Whitehead].

## Finding Mememo

It was my late friend, Kevin — his mental processes an endless melody of seeping, swirling, formlessness and overwhelming impressions of indistinctness that he made concrete with a snap of his shutter — who got me seriously involved with photography. In our twenties, we were two minds fastened to each other like two copulating snails. Had he lived to my age, he'd most likely exhibit a vulnerable maturity, as I do. But Kevin was dedicated to capturing the moment; it was my grad mentor, Robert Heinecken, who advised his photo students to "expand the boundaries" of that medium, stressing invention. Heinecken — everything about him bespoke the alienated detachment of a man making his aesthetic abode separate from the pack of traditional photographers — would sit quietly during crits regarding his students as if he saw their whole rounded lives rather than their immediate figures; then he'd jump-up, set his short self before the work displayed and, in a chain-smoker's rasp, perform an incisive critique, his silences, pauses, were as telling as his words. In one of my daybooks, after his death, I sketched a threnody for him:

*Once upon a time something happened. If it had not happened it would not be told. . . . I don't think I can narrate the meandering discussion that first day of grad crits, but I do want to register a few impressions and anecdotes. Nothing could adequately capture the combination of storminess, relentless control, and almost religious stillness he'd convey during his end-of-semester gatherings. His favorite rhetorical trope was the aposiopetic pause, in which the hyphen is its most distinctive feature, a stutter step that suggested you may respond. . . . You found yourself silently saying during this permanent persuader's close reading of your work, "I can't go on, I can't go on — I'll go on." He conveyed to us that critiques were indeed to be taken as "extreme occasions," and they were in that confined basement classroom sans windows as he chain-smoked his way through twelve individual "roastings". Three hours of such a metacommentary often left us depleted and discussing our bearded mentor's sharp words for days afterward.*

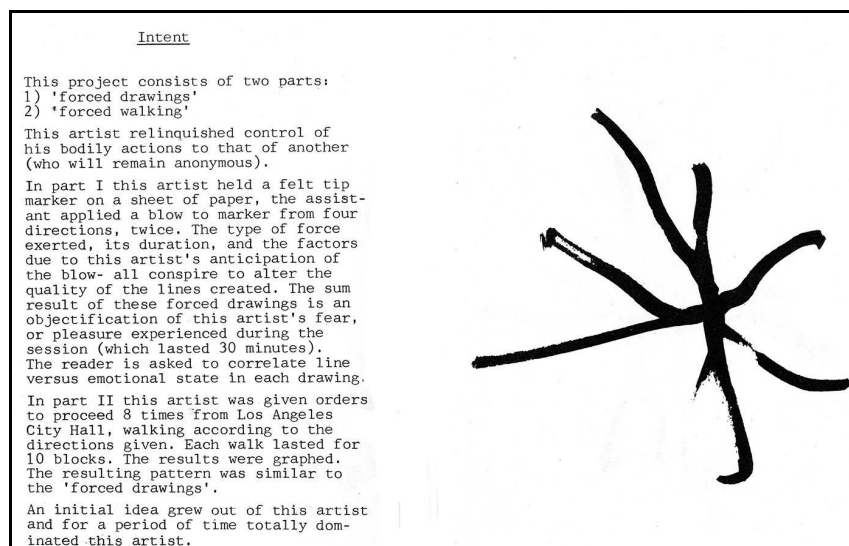
In Heinecken's own work, rather than touting the "decisive moment" of modernist street practice, he asserted the "take-twoness" of thought and construction done *after* pressing the camera's shutter. Aesthetically and politically, all his creative energies were directed at figuring, embodying, the negation and disorder that surrounded us on all sides (it was the mid-1970s). In his seminars, photography was critically examined in its performance; our performance was critically examined in its social-aesthetic context.

## Finding Mememo

For fun, I took a drawing class, despite my lack of talent, taught by an instructor with RLS (restless leg syndrome) who made you wonder if he could experience joy, as he never expressed joy on his face, a face that was asymmetrical and therefore unpleasant. Named Kelvin, but we called him "Kevlar" because he was tough, hard to penetrate. Paced the room, peering at sketches, saying (no matter what your name): "Draw, Antonio, draw, Antonio, and don't waste time," quoting Michelangelo's advice to a slackard member of his Renaissance workshop. He had this thing for the drawings of Andrea del Sarto for he "knew how to tailor his work" (*sarto* means tailor in Italian). Kev was forever bringing in catalogues of Andrea's drawings. Bragged he yearly made a pilgrimage to the Frick Collection in NYC to see his favorite del Sarto *Study for the Head of St. Joseph* (1526-27) hung in the Frick's Oval Room. The subject of that master drawing always reminded me of conceptual artist John Baldessari nodding off in his studio.

Despite his love of this Italian master, he offered his criticism, something about Andrea having a certain retiring simplicity of nature which never allowed him to develop "a certain lively ardor or confidence which would've pushed him to divine status." So he tried to build our confidence despite yelling just before class ended, "None of you are the next Picasso. If you were you'd already be known by now." This was then followed by, "For the record, Picasso got his ass handed to him in his *Las Meninas* series. So there's hope for you yet." As he strutted among us, he often reminded us seniors how when we are out of art school we must choose our models carefully. He claimed "the right model can seem to slow down gravity and the face's unconscious struggle against it so one can more easily see, and enlarge upon, subtle changes in the facial muscles."

I failed his class. My senior project was a conceptual work:



# Finding Mememo

Along with this final project we had to submit a Self-Critique form:

SELF-CRITIQUE	
NAME:	_____
DATE:	_____
CLASS:	_____
ASSIGNMENT:	_____
1.	Description of artwork: (materials, composition, subject matter, style)
2.	My feelings toward this work: (Was I genuinely involved? Does my work show something of my own ideas?)
3.	Strengths and weaknesses of my work:
4.	Problems I encountered:
5.	Successes I achieved:



## Finding Mememo

In contrast, immersed in Heincken's seminars, I got a glimpse of my ideal island, "Levu-Vana", the greenest island of my imagination. Even after his death, Heinecken still influences his gaggle of former students such that his last words could've been "My mind beats on." He'd be proud my current literary inspiration has been the formidably difficult aesthetic minds of novelist Lampedusa and poet Constantine Cavafy, who were not published during their lifetimes as they spun out a semi-reader-resistant artwork of considerable power.

Photography. A medium which led me through numerous paths and events which eventually led me into that 7-person seminar featured in that "flat death", snapped by our obliging T.A., and eventually on to intertwining photography and language into an academic career. A career now peaked and waning under the weight of Armbuster's enforcement of the admin-policy of Dynamic Conservatism: "If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change." Suffering greatly under this regime, I've become an aging, disobliging, and even embarrassingly frank, soon-to-be former colleague, persisting in making it hard for everyone under forty. Ichi has grasped my current situation well. How does he put it? "Meme-san, you are a furious machine decomposing into smaller and smaller parts, as you do in your fiction, where motifs line up like shards of pictures on an unending filmstrip." Yes, he knows how I'm influenced in many ways by film and Aby Warburg's famous *Mnemosyne Atlas*.

Odd expressions those, *dynamic conservatism* and *late friend*. Oxymorons? Dead persons are beyond time, yet we apply a concept that brings time in its wake. What temporal longing lurks here? He's not dead, Kevin, and I'm just waiting for him to show up? A present utterance that immediately flashes one back to a loved past? Either way, as Proust knew, time as a body enters our narratives.

I have captured the body of Kevin, a thin body, in a brief, never finished, short story about his street-photography peregrinations: *Dawn not being for individual acts of violence, only the collective murder of disciplined squadrons, Kevin walked with his Leica, without much fear, eastward down a main street in search of wacky low-rider cars in East Los Angeles on Easter Day. . . .* Kevin was always looking eastward. Where the sun rose. He'd ended up in Asia — first in Vietnam, later in Japan. No, he never met Ichi, that person in perpetual revolt like him, and also a person standing at a slight angle to the universe.<sup>3</sup> Ichi, who at my tenderest, I call my "*uni am*" (wordplay using *un ami*, a friend, and "*an uni*", a sea urchin sushi dish I love as it washes my taste buds with the essence-of-ocean, is a latter-day replacement for my long-dead friend. Both subscribed

---

3. The old word "anti-Fascist" catches the character of Ichi's political affiliations more aptly than any positive designation can. From what I've learned of Kevin, this would apply to him as well.

## Finding Mememo

to an insight of Edgar Allan Poe's that "we always see too little, but we always see too much." (Now that I think of it, Dallas had Blurt Wildbraine espouse that same bit of wisdom in relation to a crime scene investigation in his Sicilian-sited mystery "Donna Fugata's Shriill Whine"). Each in their own way attacked the latest infections and poisons, of the mass media. So much in common between Kevin and Ichi, sometimes I believe Kevin's soul transmigrated into Ichi in order to complete his tragically cut-short corpus of photographic production.

Kevin came from an odd family in whose home reality was never discussed in the open, but brooded over endlessly in the family members' separate mental jail cells. His father slept on a cot in their garage, over which hung a huge map of the Holy Land, located five miles due south of rocky mountains featured in 75 percent of Hollywood Oaters. As a father he met the basic terms of his contract, but added a degraded clowning alternating with a bellowing iron fist. His favorite refrain was, "God, that we know, that we know, we know," uttered in descending tones. His mother never left her bedroom except to cook meals. She was not very interesting, or as Kevin put it, "A tree is more interesting; a canned good is more interesting; a math test is more interesting; changing a bicycle tire is more interesting, chewing gum is more interesting."

To keep the litany going, I added "A sentence is more interesting!" Kevin kept his confidences restricted to his Siamese cat, "Rouwie", for whom he built wooden steps up a backyard tree so the feline could share the branches with startled birds who often became cat-fodder. The animal was adorable, but didn't have a fascinating inner life like Kevin. One deep confidence shared with Rouwie only was that he was gay. But at age twelve two teenage swimming instructors at a Catholic summer camp sussed out his homosexuality. The last day of camp they blindfolded and gagged him, bound him with clothes-line and left him for hours on a raft in the middle of a lake. Over his short life, that event was the splinter under his skin he couldn't dislodge. Maybe why he was addicted to black coffee and Kipper Snacks. If the Italian Futurist Marinetti was, as he asserted, "The Caffeine of Europe," Kevin was the Caffeine of Canoga Park.<sup>4</sup>

We were both students at a newly relocated Catholic college prep school before the nowdays of non-judgmentalism that pervades pedagogy today. Back then coherence was imposed by standards. Now it's done by curricula. Kevin only lasted one year at that institution. Something about insisting on wearing green slacks and an earring and embracing good-looking fellow students too enthusiastically. Because it was an all-boy high school, his parents thought it better to put him in a co-ed public school, hoping his sexual interests would broaden.

---

4. Canoga Park is a low- to middle-class town located in the San Fernando Valley 30 miles outside downtown Los Angeles, near Chatsworth, where the Manson Family lived on the Spahn ranch, an area now infamous for being choice locales for porn movies.

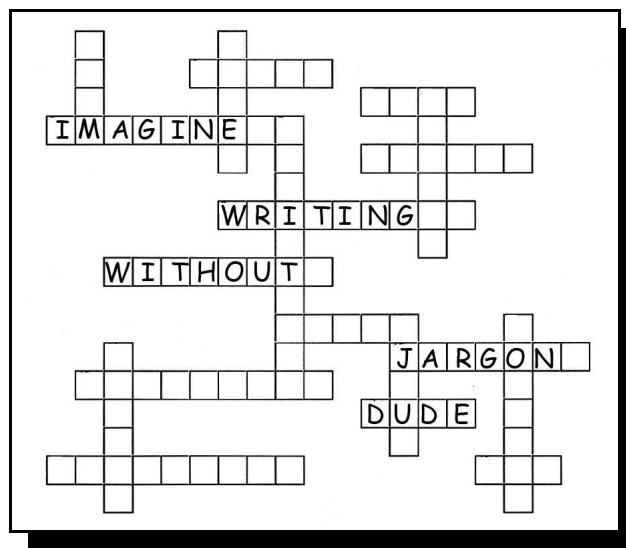
## Finding Mememo

As we lived only a block apart, this change of schools didn't hinder our shared out-of-school experiences, which over the years prior to his death might be listed as running the gamut of: depression, ennui, repression, the god that failed, darkness at noon, the shining palace built upon the sand, the crystal world, the frolic of revolt, a yellow submarine, silence, apathy, involution, apocalypse, and entropy. And although we lived through a time of the worst and most corrupting lies (like now) — he was sorry for all and sore at heart — he died too young to join me in admonishing our current hedonist hyperadolescent culture.

Jym [*your editor*], my late-in-life bud, who blossomed after his successful fight with salivary gland cancer, is a workaholic. On and on and on, he goes like the Energizer Bunny who thinks if he stops it means the end of his life. So he keeps the computer keys dancing with a renewed energy, that attests to an apotheosis of creativity and power. You never heard from his lips Flaubert's despair about having only written 25 pages in 6 weeks.

His wife, Mariannina, calls him "Lucky Jym", after a Kingsley Amis campus novel by the same name. "We sleep like wine inside seashells," she confessed once. Yet, trained as a social worker, she also senses something darker underneath her hubby's pizzaz: "I think he's winning himself to death." [*ed., the Germans have a wonderful term for this, Totseigen.*]

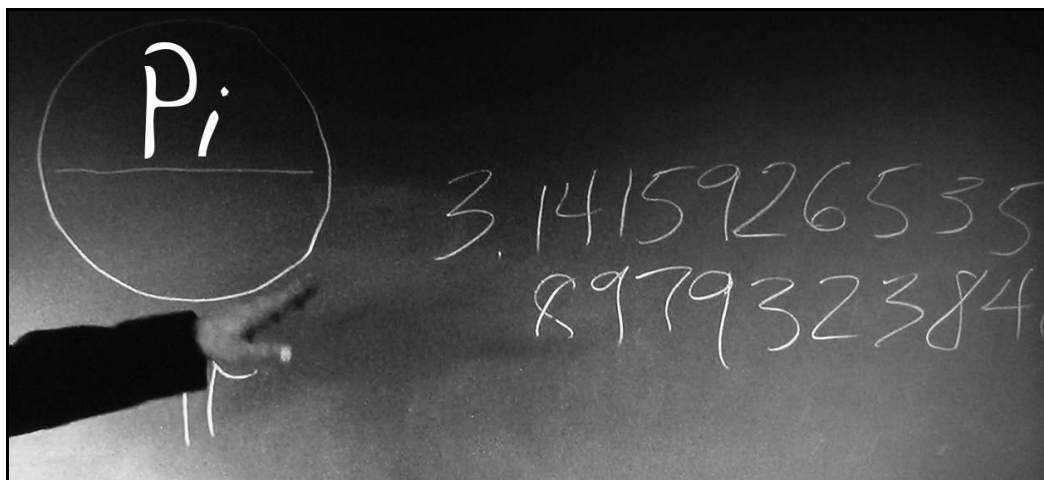
Jym's been fortunate. Retired after 30 years with minimal contentious departmental politics in his academic life. Strong collegiality. Great students. A dean who understood him. The only hint of cross-purposes (or maybe it was a good-natured joke) *vis-à-vis* his Postmodernist-inflected critical writing was an unsigned note (was it Charmian?) slipped into his faculty mailbox:



## Finding Mememo

He pinned it to his bulletin board, along other one-liners he's collected over the years;<sup>5</sup> even thought about having a T-shirt printed with the phrase, *Imagine a World without Mumbo Jumbo*, but nixed the idea after reading Ishmael Reed's oddball novel, *Mumbo Jumbo*.

As a young man during the 1970s, Jym told me his mind wandered so strangely that he kept his appearance *contre-Hippy*, reversing the terms asserted in a poem by Aldous Huxley: *We judge by appearance merely: / If I can't think strangely, I can at least look queerly. / So I grew the hair so long on my head / That my mother wouldn't know me . . .* In graduate school, in 1975, he sported short hair, wore Brooks Brothers' suits, and carried an ultra-slim black corporate-guy type of briefcase, espousing a cool Unartist-Look. Annoyed the hell out of his peers. Defended it by noting that "If all the members of the counter-culture suddenly ditched their tattered down-scale duds for slick straight garb, the Establishment would freak; urbanflage akin to a grunt wearing jungle camouflage in 'Nam. No one would be able to tell a freak from a geek. A hipster from a honkey. A Weatherman-radical from a Weatherwoman-ribbing anchorman." And unlike his art peers, he had this "thing" about math, just like me. During one of our chess matches at the Artist's Café he admitted that he always wanted to calculate  $\pi$  to a million decimal places because his high school math teacher told him every number would show up in that series: social security number, every address he ever lived at, every phone number he'd called, every vin number of every car he'd owned and will own, every soldier in Vietnam's dog tag number and that, in Hebrew, every word is assigned a number, ergo, every word and sentence possible is contained in that infinite sequence.



---

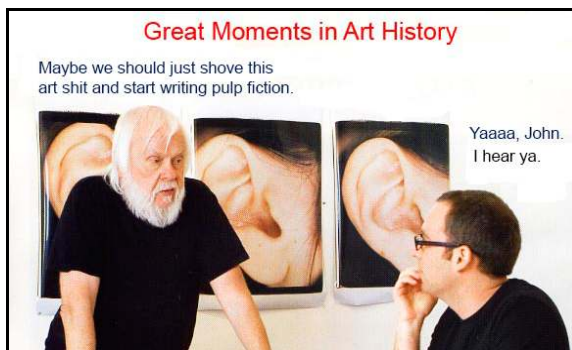
5. I brought Hy to my faculty office once and he marveled over my one-liner collection, saying something about how "Thirteen hundred one-liners is an excuse for a narrative, dude."

# Finding Mememo

On his first computer [ed., 1983], Jym set out to do that calculation:

$\pi$  = 3.141592653589793238462643383279502884197169399375105820  
974944592307816406286208998628034825342117067982148086513  
2823066470938446095505822317253594081284811174502841027 0193852  
11055596446229489549303819644288109756659334461284756 482337867  
8316527120190914564856692346034861045432664821339360726024914  
1273724587006606315588174881520920962829254091715364367892  
590360011330530548820466521384146951941511609 . . .

He thought he might be able to work with numbers as German conceptual artist Hanne Darboven did, but change the number series into words, sentences, then narratives. His writing would have a firm basis in mathematical systems. He imagined replacing every verb in a text with the 3<sup>rd</sup> (keeping with *pi*) verb in the dictionary. Thought he was a hyperope seeing far into the future of where literature was going. Imagine his surprise when he discovered that the French avant-garde literary group Oulipo had already mined similar methodological



Refunctioned ad from *Art in America* by Jym

terrain, e.g., their "N + 7 Rule: replace every noun in a text with the seventh noun after it in a dictionary." So it was back to the drawing board as they say. Went back to writing criticism — with an occasional attempt at pulp fiction — but began to modify it, often using Socratic dialogue form, into what one critic called "post-criticism." <sup>6</sup>

Since finding his chosen craft and a firm academic seat, things have been relatively sweet for Jym. No major Hertz Donuts.<sup>7</sup> At his teaching job, no hard-to-calculate union politics to amp up faculty/admin-type strife. Unlike my school which ranks up there among the top-three for discontent between faculty/union/administration. Always has. Always will. This long-suffered dysfunctional relationship in which us faculty are

---

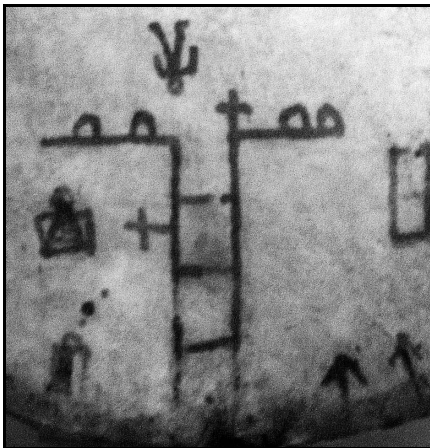
6. Post-criticism: Gregory Ulmer's term for the application of the devices of modernist art to critical representations; furthermore, that the principal device taken over by the critics and theorists is the compositional pair collage/montage. (See Greg Ulmer, "The Object of Post Criticism" in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, 1983: 83.)

7. Hertz Donut: 1970s slang; a disappointment for those expecting something sweet. A bully asks the nerd, "Do you want a nice Hertz donut?" When the nerd answers "Yes," the bully twists the nerd's nipple (either one) and exclaims, "Hurts, don-ut?"



## Finding Mememo

always subjected to “surprise-side economics” (salary cuts, promotion delays, arbitrary firings via e-mail, et cetera) has had its deleterious effect on a personal level. I suffer an academic PTSD taking the form of *contre moi-même*. By which I mean that only when alone do I tell the truth; as soon as I speak, I am betrayed by the situation, my words skewed by the presence of whomever has an ear turned my way, a cautious self-monitoring. Maybe why I seem not to hold any real position, am sad and silly at the same time, and prefer authors (usually French) searching for the silence that reduces all language to empty posturing, all action to theatrics, and the Void to a fast pitch over the inside corner. But when *alone* at the helm of my writing desk, confronting the sea of authorships sending out the S.O.S. *Fiction Sinking, Sentence Saved*, my fingers must sail over the keys, caught in the winds of my trade.



Laplander (Sami) Drawing, Nordic Museum, Stockholm, Sweden, photo by Ichi and now in Hy Grader's "Jump Shots" collection

Jym doesn't suffer or enjoy this limitation or conflict. His life is essentially *unparodyable*. He's enjoying the vesperal freedom of his declining years. And after his scare with cancer, he's become something worth studying under the discipline called "Amitology", the study of love and empathy. Admits he fantasizes about applying to the Centre for Effective Altruism at Oxford University! Then go to minister to the *hikikomori* (reclusive Japanese adolescents or adults who withdraw from social life, often seeking extreme degrees of isolation and confinement) of whom Ichi's youngest brother was

counted among. Instead, he has created a "Gratuitous Giving" project, dolling out \$20 bills in gifting envelopes to various people on the streets. Sometimes just leaving the envelope for random people to find and open.

Jym claims he, nearing 70, can see his life from a greater altitude and fall comfortably into any part of it. That I cannot do. I'd be smashed to pulp. You see, he's never experienced the very painful



## Finding Mememo

ecstasy of betrayal as I. And now that he's retired and can't fear being fired, the only thing that might betray him is his aging body, as it did once with his salivary gland cancer. He sent me an e-mail after his grim diagnosis and treatment, few months before he started the gifting project.

Dude: I am so well-meaning and inoffensive. I don't complain of departmental politics. When Marianna and I work out at the gym on adjacent bikes, tread-mills, or weight machines it is without interrupting our conversation or annoying others around us. I have never sent a dinner, even if bad, back to the kitchen. I over tip wait staff. So why am I slouching deeply, black bean bag chair feeling like I've entered a graveyard? It seems as if these post-diagnosis moments of my life occupy the same space, time giving way to duration, then to space. The limited space of my Tomotherapy machine.

I don't deserve it. I feel like I'm under a bell jar inside of which I experience a muffled, overlit queasy gloom, like Hitchcock's lighting of *Vertigo*, with something in the grain of daylight air a constant reminder that the drowsy dreamtime I occupy is sleepwalking to a bad end. My studio smells of stale candy and artificial butter, something that first entered my olfactory consciousness when I went at age ten to the movies in Burbank, California to see Hitchcock's masterpiece. . . .

I just returned from shopping at Walmart for Christmas wrapping paper. Each department at Walmart had its own Muzak system blaring Christmas carols, and each department was playing a different medley of joyfully moronic carols. As I walked through the store these competing festive audios fused together forming a dissonant, sour, terrifying mélange that urged me home with thoughts of suicide, diving off a cliff or something. Two faculty members called, surprised by my holiday card, confessing they'd already thought me dead! For the obvious reason, this painful miscalculation on their part reminded me, "Meme" (if you'll excuse my use of your most sacred cognomen), of the odd factoid that MEMO is an acronym for Mass Extinction Monitoring Observatory being built in Portland, England. Their logo is a Dodo bird. . . . I don't want to be one of those unfortunates

## Finding Mememo

whose body got so much radiation they have to be buried in a lead-lined casket as cremation would let too much hazardous material into the atmosphere. . . . Sorry to be such a Dodo bird and rant on, sending you this bit of bummer, but my mind presents me these days with very strange concatenations of thoughts. . . . This battle of mine with cancer has encouraged a clean break with my past. And I guess getting that diagnosis better than being told one is unpopular or untalented (just kidding, although for teenagers this might ring true).

A week after completion of his rad treatments, I received a calmer electronic missive with the subject line reading *Nunc Dimittis*:<sup>8</sup>

Dude: As you, Ichi ō, and Dallas know, I have had a full life and if these treatments don't work – I do have an 87 percent chance of survival past five years – but if they don't work, then I will be ready to go . . . I am sure you'll find another chessmate. Despite my interest in the Postmodern, I have no desire for any postmortem existence. But maybe I will be granted what Oliver Sacks called his "Thallium Birthday," his 81<sup>st</sup>, his last birthday, so named after the (appropriately) silvery-white element, Atomic number 81 on the Periodic Table. Meanwhile, I continue love and work. My work, to teach Modernist theory on Tuesdays, Postmodernist on Wednesdays with equal authority, like a physicist lecturing on particle theory one day, wave theory the next. As you know, I've always manifested such a dialectic in my dialogue format reviews where conflicting interlocutors debate their opposing positions. . . .

But what if A and B and C had been different? If I had gone into science, cancer research, as my facility in highschool-level chemistry and physics had once promised? Even as a kid I had a Gilbert chemistry set and was out to discover what I mysteriously called "RLS-

---

8. *Nunc Dimittis*, also called the Song of Simeon, in the New Testament, a brief hymn of praise sung by the aged Simeon, who had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. Found in Luke 2:29–32, it is called the *Nunc Dimittis* for its first words in the Latin of the Vulgate Bible: *Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum, in pace*, "Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised."

## Finding Mememo

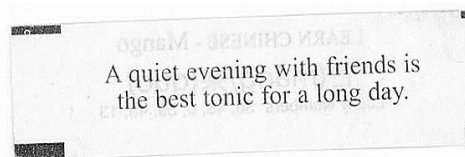
Q-45," a magic bullet for cancer. Restless legs, I'd labor all morning in our kitchen to mix up a test batch, usually including copper sulfate ( $\text{CuSO}_4$ ) as I loved the color, and run outside to drip it on slugs found in our garden. If that didn't faze them, I'd run inside and try another combination of chemicals. I'd do this all day. Even had a lab notebook to record all my trials in. Funny. When I was 23 (the same number as *psi*, the 23<sup>rd</sup> letter of the Greek alphabet  $\Psi$  and used to represent in quantum mechanics the time-position of a wave) I had thought I might pursue a M.D. and find a cure for cancer. Hell, I might have discovered how to eradicate my own salivary gland tumor, saving me surgery and radiation. Hell, I might not even have gotten a skin lesion that metastasized because, working in a lab 12 hours a day, I wouldn't have been exposed to much sun. But then my problem would be heart disease due to physical inactivity and smoking cigs to keep alert....

Today, much to Mariannina's chagrin and against doctor's orders, I sat in the sun all afternoon reading a book-length poem, *Garbage*, by A.R. Ammons. They don't realize that the weather, down to its minutest aspects, determines the feel of our skin and our sense of any given day. Sun, although a danger, is also part of my healing. By the way, Ammons wrote that poem after seeing a gigantic pyramid of rubble in Florida that made him feel that he confronted "the sacred image of our time." Now that image has morphed into a huge pile of corpses, the new updated symbol of our Cancer-stricken/Terrorist-Mass Shooting times.

My wife is reading a book, *Farmyard Light in a Winter Fog in Wisconsin*, the liner notes of which praise the Millennial author as: *The writer everyone wants, who makes an art everyone fears is in decline, sexy and irresistible*. She got it this summer in a touristy bookstore on Madeline Island in northern Wisconsin laced with sentimental art by local painters, homemade greeting cards by retirees, handpainted wooden plaques with sayings such as *The egg is the chicken's unattainable dream*. Weird things that knock and enter and bounce around inside my (usually) *vas bene clausum*.

## Finding Mememo

Well, this e-mail from Jym snaked up my computer screen for minutes as I slowly dialed my mouse. It's typical Jym and why I reproduce much of it here. But I realize, shades of *Tristram Shandy*, I've again digressed and should call a halt to enjoy what my most recent Chinese fortune cookie advised. It's nearly time for a gathering of the minds.



\* \*

*Editor's gloss: That "quiet evening," that gatherings of the minds Hy refers to included Dallas and I. Witnesses to Hy reading some excerpts from this last section as we sipped a twenty-year old Portuguese tawny port, Fonseca Porto, and sat snuggled into a 1905 Arts and Crafts hearth before flickering Duraflame logs. Meme prefers them to regular wood as they are created out of a mixture of recycled industrial sawdust wood, natural fibers, oils and waxes. Duraflame logs contain plant-based waxes made from palm stearin or tall oil, as opposed to waxes made from petroleum. The logs are certified to contain 100 percent green-friendly ingredients. Dorinda joined us for a holiday toast.*



*"Any port in a storm," yelled Hy, tossing his drink down the hatch. Then Dory went upstairs to work on the design of their holiday cards which always featured her cute drawings of their two dogs. After over twenty years of doing this, relatives await excitedly for every year's new edition. We lingered, looking at the fire, chatting about departmental politics and pedagogical fuck-ups, like the time I left a stack of student papers to be graded on a plane and just told the lucky students I'd give them all A's. Dallas liked that one; he took a particularly large swig of port as he drank in my story. He asked what the department chair would've done if he'd found out about those instant A's. He was surprised to find out from me that they'd be delighted. Good for retention!*

*Hy's turn. He gave hearsay testimony, based on a pedagogical tale related to him by Ichi. I only recall it had to do with a math class he attended after arriving in the USA. He pleaded with his instructor that the numbers "4" and "9" be avoided in their lessons because 4 = shi has the same sound as the word of death (shi) and 9 = ku has same for suffering (ku). Everyone just laughed at him and made slant-eyes with their fingers. Today, of course, with our sensitivity toward multiculturalism his request would be honored and given with a beautifully executed bow.*

*We kept discussing teaching, how in the lower grades now the students are inflicted with the norms of the schoolmarm (armed with standardized tests, pills for overactive kids, and economic radar to avoid art and music instruction) which smash the life of any passionate vagabond. And in higher education, how the PhD's value has become diluted as departments increasingly hastily push students through their programs*



## Finding Mememo

despite the quality of their work, or simply because they are "SPINAs" (student pain-in-the-asses) no one wants to mentor.

Admin-types love this production-line approach, it keeps the numbers of grads graduating on the rise. While very deserving grads fight for a shrinking number of academic positions, usually only part-time. Hy blames non-stop cloning of academic material, in part, due to the fact that our digital clocks no longer go in a circle, but move in a linear progression, marching forward inexorably, ceaselessly, soundlessly. No time to: re-consider, re-connect, re-reflect, re-study, re-mind. For the record, one finds no digital clocks in Hy's house.

We are dipped into a bowl of almonds and candied walnuts, perfect time to mention that my wife and I had shot up to Evanston's Piven Theatre and took in Sarah Ruhl's Melancholy Play in which a woman turns into an almond.

"Not that old chestnut," remarked Dallas, "hasn't Ovid's shit been done to death? An' it's too close to Kafka to be original in any fuckin' way, dude."

"But it featured music from the Allman Brothers, dude," I punch back with a wink. "Seriously, the thing was full of symbols. The amygdala, the most important organ of emotion in the brain, is named after the Greek word for "almond", hence the almond's significance to emotion in the play. The playwright also provides a picture of a "mandorla", a symbol that derives its name from the Italian word for "almond", as it contains an almond shape."

Dallas poked in with, "She shoulda had an all-manned cast then!"

Hy, always the health nut, added: "Those nuts are rich in mono- unsaturated fatty acids like oleic, and palmitoleic acids that help in lowering LDL or 'bad cholesterol' and increasing HDL or 'good cholesterol' in the human body.

Hy's segue to health concerns sobered us up a bit. Reminded me my statin prescription was low. Hy announced he'd just finished an important section of his work-in-progress and wanted to read from it. We nodded a YES. As Hy delivered treats from his newly-printed pages, my ears started to burn with the compliments his writing was paying to me. Dallas was clapping his thick hands in delight, holding an almond between his teeth and making grunting sounds of approval.

Now, leisurely reading the whole section, I think it one of Hy's strongest and most insightful. But that might be due to the fact I feature so prominently in it. I can't be objective here. Then I finished, I called Dallas to check on the investigation's progress. He told me he got a startling fortune cookie at Jinja the night before suggesting he was

ever so close to unlocking the mystery of Hy's demise, and went on to mention some facts coming to light suggest that Hy was disturbed both on a professional and personal level. "Suicide ain't ta be ruled out here, dude. But I'm still adiggin' in ta two slimy academics who didn't show up at Hy's memorial service. They seem to make an inordinate number of visits to Armbuster's digs. I followed those two to Bar Rista Café on W. Montrose. I was able to grab a shot of one guy and record some conversation between the two." Some excerpts from that tape:

All the answers you need are  
right there in front of you!

## Finding Mememo



Person of Interest, Bar Rista Café, Chicago,  
surveillance photo by Dallas Johnson

A: You're the one who knew him *[Hy Grader]*, remember? *[Sits down.]*

B: Of course, Grader was one of the serious problems in our department.

A: I don't dislike him. It's not that at all. *[Sits down too.]* Purely biz.

B: He was an obstacle. His attitude was less toward his work, more directed toward the good life and fiction. *[Picks up a menu.]*

A: Armbuster claimed this guy spared himself the real work of teaching due his exhaustion from his commitment to his fiction writing. An ink ascetic. And . . . *[Wait staff interrupts. Takes drink orders.]* And when put on the carpet, he got way too fuckin' defensive, to the point of becoming offensive. Armbuster said once he looked like he'd been in a rock mixer.

B: He seemed hardly like anybody you and I could know, if you ask me.

A: Once in the school cafeteria, I saw that he didn't even take his dishes off his tray but allowed everything to sit there in front of him as though his lunch were an offering he had no intention of tasting. He just penned notes into a notebook, relaxed as a jellyfish. Someone who's comfortably obsessed. I'd already eaten and left and he was still jotting notes.

B: Yep, like every waking hour was not conducive for his muscles, but for every real thought he could cram into his brain-box. Not the type to focus on the rigors of a communal distance learning scenario, for sure. He was just taking up space.

A: But he wasn't indifferent to it, just critical. 'Buster didn't like that. Got positively billious over it. And the higher-ups were getting impatient too. Putting pressure on him. *[Drinks arrive.]*

B: And the guy was being paid way too much. New hires are cheaper.

A: Expendable.

B: 'Buster tried to nudge him.

A: So we . . . *[remainder is inaudible due to a group of rowdy twenty-somethings sitting down at an adjoining table.]*

*I thanked Dallas for this, told him I had just finished going over the section of Hy's writing that he applauded so generously that boozy night past. He'd recalled that evening for he brought over his latest manuscript and synopsised it for us in slurred*

## Finding Mememo

*speech. I'd forgotten. The slurring, not the summary. So let me devote some space here to his story as none of Hy's writings mention this. Call it payment for Dallas' pro bonum PI work on our behalf.*

*Dallas has finished his fourth of nine glasses of port (sorry Ichi ) and now sits cradling a clump of clipped pages. He holds it up, facing its title our way: CONK. BOOM. Short 'n sweet. Like so many academic papers these days. I mean, it used to be de rigueur to have verbose ones like Gibbons' famous The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Or like my own pre-Millennial magnum opus: A Survey of the Representation of Prisoners in the United States: Discipline and Photographs, the Prison Experience. Now one finds one-word titles popular. In Roman antiquity studies you'll find — Dictator, SPQR, Conspirata, Imperium — titles fit for movies.*

*Dallas' mystery, featuring Dallas' noir-like human blood hound, Blurt Wildbraine, follows a strange serial killer along the Midwest folk-music circuit, as bodies and pancakes pile up. Dallas says it's chock full of interjections and exclamations, more than in any previous story of his. He reads:*

A bird hits the windshield — BOOM — but the windshield doesn't care, it knows it's a vital part of The Bird Deathmobile (my car eats birds and insects for lunch). I am foot-to-the-floor speeding my way to meet a client, a Duane Soldier, named after Duane Allman who died tragically in a motorcycle accident in 1971. A folk guitarist, "Fluke" to his fans and known to unpleasant concert hecklers as a "fuck-you-er," has been murdered in a dingy restroom of a funky music venue in Champagne-Urbana, Illinois near the University campus there. This musician was widely known among men who can braid their own hair and notorious as a hypochondriac, always thinking a headache was a sign of brain cancer. One of his songs was in a car commercial, in fact a commercial for a car like mine. Duane, a music promoter for this tour, wants my discrete services. Over the phone, I had to quell his anxiety about my first name. "Duane, I don't blurt out nothin' 'til the perp's been caught," I assured him. He told me there was plenty of motive for Fluke's demise; named one: "He's been known to room with girls, thirteen, eleven, and five," I'm told. *Ahhhhh, all prime numbers*, I think. I'm hooked. The game's afoot! . . . I gather all the musicians involved in the tour in the hotel dining room. I ask small questions as there's a sense that the answers will turn out to be much larger, or more disquieting than any of the people have bargained for. One girl, a fiddler, was sobbing. And as if the middle Illinois prairie two o'clock glare wasn't enough, she had red hair and shiny nose ring. One after one, the troupe answered my queries. Something beneath my thought apprehends what happened and, in a fleeting instant, I see the crime clearly, but my beer-filled brain is feeble and I can't manage to transform that vivid second into thought.

*"Dig da digits, dude?" Dallas tossed my way. "The bit about numbers. Yeeppers,*

## Finding Mememo

*I got that shit from you* [pointing to me] *and from you* [pointing to Hy who's always quoting from Mexican writer Robert Bolaño's crazed character Joaquín Font, e.g.: 'Freedom is like a prime number']. *Here's another excerpt.*" *Dal Reads:*

My Motel Six's room's walls are an unfortunate shade of yellow, the floor thick vinyl tile in a shade of holiday green with a small throw rug. I had the idea that if I pulled open a bureau drawer, bats would fly out, or roaches, or bedbugs, a torrent of wiggling bodies that would envelop me and consume me. I sleep in my sleeping bag on bed. I awake early.

The gaggle of folk musicians Fluke was involved with are scheduled to next appear in at University of Indiana, Bloomington, so I pack up my gear and load The Bird Deadmobile to follow the troupe there. I pay my motel bill, but argue with the front desk over the food bill, that the pastry hurt and a fruitless Continental Breakfast would not be claimed by any continent as such named fare: "It was incontinent!" I exclaim, pissed off. Moreover, my investigation, despite some glimmers, has been fruitless, and like that donut, hurt! All I come away with is that Fluke was liked by the troupe — "He tweets, he blogs, he prays, has a terrific voice he wastes in church," but I also discovered he brushed audiences against the grain with biting attacks on those opposed to the Affordable Care Act, rampant fracking, CEO Kenneth Griffin's contribution of \$1 million-plus to Republican Bruce Rauner's bid for Illinois Governor, proving how private money buys public policy, as well as the tragic and racially-motivated Michael Brown and Laquan McDonald shootings. And that audience, some often overtly hostile to Fluke, changed every night of the performance. Hard to suss through that number of folks for any leads.

Little did I know another male troupe member, Larry Christian, would be SOL an hour after the first performance in that University town just two days later. A slender fellow, a recorder player, of whom one disapproving member of the troupe, Virginia Loving (beautiful, eyes of Bambi, a mouth of a guppy, and brand-new breasts that announce, *I'm here!*), observed: "He was an idealistic white guy who thought poking his pink member in black women in Motel 6's would somehow cure racism." His only bad vice was an occasional snort of propane, a habit started when his father deserted and he and his mother had declined into becoming Indiana trailer-trash. But his uncle's Christmas gift of a recorder and the kindness of an old cockeyed black man named Benny who lived in the adjoining trailer and played a fiddle and knew in what key the wind howled or crystal when it chimed, set him on a straighter road. Benny's grandfather had seen the tourist ship *Eastland* sink in the Chicago river in 1915. His grandfather, father, and now him, only played by ear. Larry started out that way too under the gentle persuasion of Benny, but later learned to read music in high school under an affable

## Finding Mememo

guy. I looked him up and he was just like the teacher in the film *Mr. Holland's Opus*. In Larry's wallet, investigators found a Polaroid snap of his two sorry-looking cats, Mumps and Measles (their names were on the back). I claimed I was a relative and got possession of it. You never know what the cops drop as nuttin' that will turn out be sumpin', a grain of sand that disturbs the oyster.

In both murders, oddly, a stack o' wheat cakes was placed by the body (an item not released to the press). I now knew I was dealing with an extraordinarily weird someone or someones in (or following) the troupe's tour. I checked to see if anyone on tour had once worked at an International House of Pancakes. Nope. A chill rose inside me, and rose and rose and rose as outside my motel room's window a moon shivered a rain-wet street. An almost bottomless hunger attacked me. I realized I hadn't eaten lunch. I sat down at the motel's small table and pulled out of my small ice-chest a late-night snackeroo: Ry-Krisp crackers with slices of soft white Icelandic (a country billed as the most peaceful on earth) cheese, *höfðingi hvítmygluostur*, contrasting with the dark Nordic cracker and washed down with a large bottle of Indiana Mystery Beer. My old portable Panasonic cassette player wound its worn tape through past the heads giving forth the sounds of famous Icelandic singer Björk's gyrating Indie-rock music. . . .



*Need I say, when Dallas finished his reading, Hy and I were laughing so hard, we were almost choking on our digestif. (Don't call it vino.) Hy had stains around his mouth that looked like the light red-brown of anti-bacterial Betadine I recalled from stint in surgery. A poet once said: "Old love may be a ripe persimmon," but old surgeries are bruised pears. So I changed the subject in my mind by quickly mentioning to Hy I had told Dallas about photographer Les Krims' series, "The Case of the Incredible Stack o' Wheats Murders", where he staged shots of stacked pancakes dressed with syrup and butter and placed next to "murdered" women's bodies, Hershey's Chocolate syrup substituted for real blood.*

*"I sure loved that one," Dallas said, "used that choice tidbit to enrich my story." Krims, however, was not popular with feminists. Back in the early 1980s an activist artist, Nikki Craft, tore up some of Krims' photos in a library print collection and poured*



## Finding Mememo



Dallas Johnson's portrait of "Bum Heart" wearing clown glasses at a circus event in Baraboo, Wisconsin

*Hershey's chocolate syrup over them. I think she said the work got its just desserts. Speaking of dessert, Dorinda enters with some madeleines. She's wearing a Scottie dog apron; when she turns around you see it's tied in a sailor's knot (learned from Hy?). "Fuel for your recollections," she chirped. I guess I was unconsciously humming, because she turned toward me and interjected, "By the way, I just saw posted on some website that statistically people who hum usually come from happy families."*

*"Cocoa beans! Hell," said Dallas, "I know an ol' retired circus clown — his moniker was 'Bum Heart,' — seventy-five, chaos of crooked teeth like tiny yellow tombstones planted every which way. He suffers from a bad right hip, arterio-sclerosis, thyroid dysfunction, arthritis, multiple myeloma, 'n has chronic pain from a slew of secret wounds. That fucker still manages to hum like a bee! Lives in a home for retired circus folks in Baraboo, Wisconsin. A circus brat, once hired me to find his father who'd left his wife, Bum's mom, a fat-lady in the circus, for a male sword-swallower from a competing circus the year Bum'd started first grade. Never found his dad, though. Didn't have the heart to tell Bum 'bout my late father," continued Dallas, "who was at the time in a elder home's wacko-ward, his mind goin' south on a fast train: hummin' loudly in church, loudly in the dinin' room, loudly in my car, loudly in the bathroom, loudly in the movies, loudly in the doctor's office, and loudly in my ear.<sup>9</sup> Been dead near a decade now."*

\* \* \*

---

9. Humming is an intriguing topic. In 1926, Olympic champion Gertrude Ederle swam the English Channel humming "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" all the way across. Hy, as a child, was terrified of vacuum cleaners, calling them "Hums". In a James Purdy story Hy said he had read, an agonizing hum from a refrigerator exacerbates the pain of a couple's divorce battles.

# Finding Mememo

15



"We live in a deterministic universe," Clarence Darrow said during the trial of Leopold and Loeb, "Life is a series of infinite chances. Nature is strong and she is pitiless. She works in mysterious ways and we are her victims." This chilling metaphysics brings to mind that black youth's suicide attempt at the Museum and one of Dallas' darker stories, "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)".

It opens with a heartbreaking soliloquy by Teeboy Jordan's brother "Dipper": *They told me, Teeboy, they told me you was dead. Teeboy you ain't comin' back! Why you been practicin' ta not come back ta mama for so long, but not this way. People don't know you mama can't live without Teeboy.*

A poor sap from "Chi-Raq" known as "Teeboy" has stumbled across incriminating information concerning a notorious Chicago gang and is, in the opening paragraphs of the narration, on his last ride somewhere on the outskirts of Chi-Town. Dallas writes: *A storm is brewing, winds from Canada blowing on down the Great Lakes (ships were often lost to this wind). As debris sails through the autumn air, Teeboy — small-eyed with puffy cheeks like a fish, skin the color of cocoa beans, and stubby fingers with pink crescent nails — sits in the back seat of a vintage black Lincoln town car as it rumbles over unused train tracks. A black sack reduces his world to sound. A voice rolling and deep like a ship cutting a trough through a furious Lake Michigan. Darkness at noon. Two El Rukn gang members flank him in an awful threesome ree-lay-shun-ship. A mighty wooziness of heart hits him as he cowers under the hood realizing he is soon to be dead-as-a-bug. The last things Teeboy hears in this minimal world are: a train whistle, a car backfiring, a distant siren, a dog barking, a fart from the guy next to him on the right, then a .45 slug being chambered.*



Dallas, PI, pounding the pavement, photo by Ichi

The next scene shifts abruptly into a more hopeful metaphysic: an elaborate showcase memorial for Teeboy at St. Sabina's, Father Michael Pfleger conducting the service in his usual stentorian voice — *"Today we are sad because we cry"* — as he welcomes Teeboy into God's arms. It is this activist priest who sets things in motion by punching in Blurt's office number (all prime numbers). *Mr. Wildbraine, this last murder has been the seventh in my parish. The cops seem under-involved. We need discrete intervention.*

It's the number 7 and the confined area of the crimes that catches Blurt's interest. Pulls it out of the

## Finding Mememo



Father Pfleger at St. Sabina Church

usual into something worthy of Sherlock Holmes. But Blurt seems under-involved too. He, in his own imitable way, tells us of his odd procrastination in actually meeting the outspoken Pfleger personally. *You can say that I was so determined to go that I was able to put off going.* (That catches something of my own *modus vivendi* re: church and faculty meeting attendance.) But Blurt eventually does show up at the priest's door in chapter 4: *I was not looking at the street as I walked toward St. Sabina's, a street whose meanness and filth usually would give my soul such satisfaction. But today my whole mind was on this meeting with this priest, someone too close metaphysically to my "Baby Jesus" brother for comfort. From what I'd seen of the activist on TV, I wanted to advise him to talk less and smile more.*

Pfleger describes this encounter: *There he stood, framed on the threshold — private law, with starched shirt and dark suit, a body schooled in violence. Backlit, Wildbraine's features only began to emerge to my eyes, as from a bath of hypo. Unlike this glamor shot in the celebrity calendar Remarkable People You May Have Missed, he looked like a man who has been slapped with a wet towel and he shook my hand like a man who didn't expect you to believe a word he said. His breath reeked of Brunswick rabbit stew. He wasn't what I had expected, after having read his informative autobiography, How I Became a Shadow.*

Blurt's case, like the prose in Dallas' story, then proceeds by way of errors of taste, false starts, and overrun objectives. At one point in the narrative: *It's an unsteady spring afternoon, when it can't make up its mind whether it's still winter or short-sleeves weather, and I'm still remembering last night when she [Aveline] had melted under my arms like a river freed from ice. I decide to follow "Short Papa", a recidivist gang member sent to jail for many short stretches, hence his name. His suspiciously meandering path lead me down a dark alley. Suddenly, he disappeared. I cautiously half-stepped, back to a brick wall, down the dank passage. Short Papa popped out from a recessed doorway. He fought like a retired cannibal, but I got the best of him. Conked him. He fell down on the alley's curb and talked to the cold stones. I propped him up against a wall. He managed a grimace with his lips that looked like the smile on a man I once saw lying dead of gunshot. Using some digital skills, I convinced him to spill the beans: "Okay, okay, stop ya honky! Look. Go to the big building overlooking Suicide Docks," Papa pleaded. "Before you get too close to the docks, turn around three times and whistle. The wind will tell you which way to turn. There's always wind there, if only you breaking it." In gratitude for the bullshit, I cold conked him good with my vintage gas-billy.*

## Finding Mememo



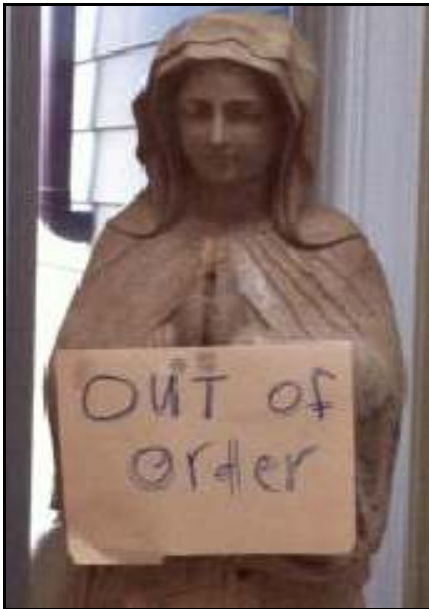
From Hy Grader's "Jump Shot" collection

Some chapters later, Blurt eventually discovers a pernicious plot: Libyan agents have agreed to send the Islamic-influenced El Rukns \$2.5 US million if they carry out terrorist acts on American soil. Blurt blurts out his findings to a federal prosecutor and the bad guys are rounded up, including Short Papa.

The epilogue to the adventure takes place at a dull party in the archdiocesan man-

sion of Chicago's Cardinal Bernardin, Father Pfleger and Mayor Richard M. Daley in attendance, of which Dallas observes: *It was one of those fake dead long parties where nobody actually knows anybody and where people could be pushed out of windows without anybody being sure until the morrow.*<sup>1</sup> *To grease the groaning gears of conversation, I got myself completely oiled on Roederer Estate*

*Brut Rose sparkling wine. I got the attention of an elderly nun, Sister Peaches Maud, when I said the Pope ain't got no horoscope. During the Cartesian quarter of an hour I passed with her, she unfolded tinfoil from twelve sweets and chewed industriously, with a large frown between her eyes, expecting no pleasure. While eating, she made little odd noises in her mouth and nose like a small boy who is being praised and admonished at the same time by his nun-teacher. She then took a swallow of her champagne so deep that she seemed to be talking to someone at the end of the glass. In so doing, the whites of her eyes extinguished her pupils so that she looked like an out-of-order statue in an aging church. . . .*

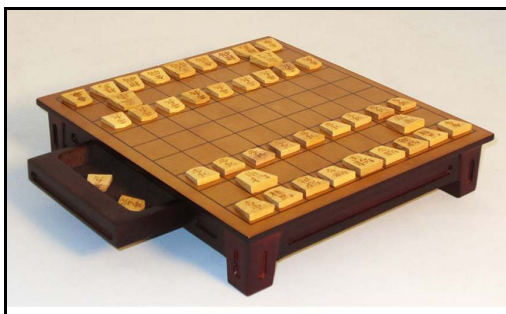


---

1. Obviously this scenario was influenced by Hy's "Jump Shot" collection; in retrospect, Dallas seems shaken by the prescience of this commentary in relation to Meme's final plunge.



## Finding Mememo



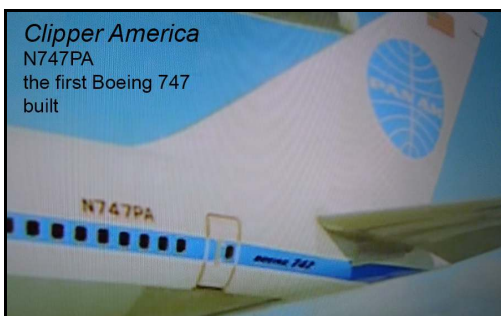
Ichi 's *Shogi* board

Life as a series of infinite chances is figured in the game of chess and why I play it so frequently. But unlike life, it's a safe place for uncertainty. This also pertains to Ichi 's preferred pastime, *Shogi*, also known as Japanese chess, which also piques Dallas' interest due to that ancient game's "drop rule", wherein captured pieces can be returned to the board to be used

as one's own, a rule most likely based on the practice of 16th-century mercenaries who switched loyalties when captured — no doubt as an alternative to execution — which parallels Dallas' use of criminal informants in his trade that



Dallas (left) listens to one of his informants (a man with pewter-colored curls who carries an ice-cream cone when he has information for Dal) from Dallas' autobiography *How I Became a Shadow*.



Memento postcard from Ichi 's flight to the USA



Ichi 's Honda 600 Coupe

he's "turned" to his benefit. Most *Shogi* pieces can move only to an adjacent square. A few may move across the board, and one jumps over intervening pieces. *Shogi* pieces capture the same as they move. Every piece blocks the movement of all other non-jumping pieces through the square it occupies. If a piece occupies a legal destination for an opposing piece, it may be captured by removing it from the board and replacing it with the opposing piece. The capturing piece may not continue beyond that square on that turn.

Since Ichi 's found no one in Madison to play with, he sharpens his skills using computer *Shogi*. But he has his old *Shogi* board. Stowed it in his



## Finding Mememo



Gas crisis, 1973

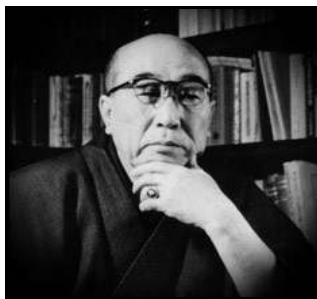
luggage on his sixteen-hour flight from Tokyo to San Francisco on Pan Am's first Boeing 747, tail number N747PA. Still has a postcard given to passengers as a memento. Ichi used that tail number as his personalized car license plate on the first car he bought in the US, a toy-sized avocado green 1973 Honda 600cc, two-cylinder coupe. Got mega-mileage. With a five gallon gas can supplementing the auto's dinky tank, it had a 500 mile

range. Could go gas stationless from San Francisco to Los Angeles which, during the 1973 gas crisis, avoided long lines, rationing, even station closures.

It was a time for Ichi when, still perfecting his English, as he put it, "Life was dark with nouns." A time when Ichi still smoked. "I used to bum fags from friends and fellow students and bite off the filters before lighting up." English took years and years of Ichi's attention to master. "In class I'd pitilessly expel air and make it pass delicately, caressingly, over my vocal cords, which like harps or leaves in the wind, would shake, agitate, vibrate ululate, or fricate, or jostle against each other, or sibilate in attempts at fighting against the return of Japanese pronunciation and marveling that *colonel* was pronounced *kernal*."

He was told to lift his neck and chin very high and rise upon the tips of his toes, all the better to articulate English. "We students, in an American classroom with an American clock, sat in American chairs, wrote with American pens, drank American coffee, and had to repeat a Frenchman's *non sequiturs*: 'He who sells an ox today will have an egg tomorrow,' and 'I prefer a bird in the bush to a sparrow in a barrow.' Useless stuff, but necessary. The hardest of these

exercises for us Japanese," Ichi confided, "was getting the correct pronunciation of 'My real name is Sherlock Holmes,' and 'My favorite author is Edgar Allan Poe.' Our teacher, a Japanese-American, told us that Edogawa Rampo, the *nom de plume* of a famous Japanese mystery writer, used that name because it was how Japanese pronounced that American originator of detective fiction's name, adding that *Edo* was, of course, also a sly reference to Tokyo's old name."



Edogawa Rampo

These last two exercises mentioned by Ichi, piqued my interest, and later Dallas', due to our mutual passion for mystery stories. (But I now recall that Poe had also written "Eureka: An Essay on the

## Finding Mememo



Japanese seaweed salad

Material and Spiritual Universe, which adumbrated the concept of a multiverse.) As I learned about Ichi's initial struggle with language, his surprise at our American uprooted erratic behavior, of people largely ignorant of their own history, laid before me in the initial days of our *sake*-driven friendship, it further convinced me I'd found a true *broheim*.

One funny memory from our salad days: Ichi delicately chopsticking at his seaweed salad in a Chicago sushi bar and saying "But still, the salad was perhaps a little too salty. It was saltier than you, you ol' salt," making a witty reference to my love of ships 'n seas, which further confirmed he took me to be a heap good *tomo-dachi* (friend). I think I replied something like, "How curious it is, how curious it is, how curious it is, and what a coincidence!" (When I told Dallas this story, he copped that last line for the first sentence of his mystery novel, *The Laughing Skull*.)



Kevin Corcoran

Now as we age together, Ichi talks of us as "breathing, talking clocks, lives consisting of one big windup at birth, thereafter a slow winding down." Today, Kevin "Moochie" Corcoran, child actor in many Disney productions, died of colon cancer after a six-year battle with his antagonist who wound him down until the spring sprung. He and I had attended the same high school, two years apart in age. I recall him vividly, just like the high school class photo I found on the Internet. Six years to die! A swimmer waiting to get on with the drowning while listening to Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* again and again.



From Hy Grader's "Jump Shots" collection

## Finding Mememo



From Hy Grader's "Jump Shots" collection

No way José! At the end, give me spectacular wrecks and people shrieking after having lived life like a screwball comedy. I'd opt to leap off the Hoover Dam at 32 ft/sec/sec before I'd shit into a colostomy bag for x number of years. The quick and the dead for me — badda bing, badda boom — no narcissistic terror of death that enslaves too many and makes their life unlivable. When I go (or decide to go) it will be with academic Simon Critchley's (one of the founders of the International Necronautical Society)<sup>2</sup> *The Book of Dead Philosophers* in hand. In milliseconds I will perform a virtuoso recall of all and everything. I'll outdo Beckett's Malone — he merely recited his worldly possessions upon his last moments of lucidity. My mental projectionist will screen for me my personal life and all the shit I've read since I could read from baby book to philosophy. Chinese philosophers Mengzi and Lao Tzu. Aristotle and Plato. Writers Blanchot and Beckett, Wallace Stevens and Cicero. David Foster Wallace and Simon Critchley. And, being an *eideteker*, I won't need a static piece of architecture, "memory theater" à la Renaissance scholars, to assist in information retrieval. Moreover, as Mengzi had put it for people of talent, I will "surely make better manure" than the average corpse.

Been detesting faculty meetings lately. What can a group of people who are engaged in not listening to one another accomplish together? We just ended up following the admin-type's admonishments of threat or promise. I end up hating myself afterwards. For the first time in my life, I struggle with thoughts of fatally falling. "Suicidal ideation," is how my Rogerian therapist put it. Winking, she advised I stay away from Danish sweets [*ed., the Dane's had a high suicide rate until antidepressants came along*] and stop reading such a death-

---

2. The society's manifesto reads: "We, the First Committee of the International Necronautical Society, declare the following: 1. That death is a type of space, which we intend to map, enter, colonize and, eventually, inhabit; 2. That there is no beauty without death, its immanence. We shall sing death's beauty — that is, beauty."

## Finding Mememo

focused philosopher as Simon Critchley on this very melancholy topic.<sup>3</sup>

I told her of a dream I had: *I see my wife, Dorinda, still in bed asleep, back to me. The morning light starts to bend over her lumped frame, but a storm is coming so the light fades, becoming blue with the rolling blue comforter over her; it looks like the sea. At moments the sun peaks through the gathering clouds and a pure lemon plays on those waves which curve and swell to her breathing. A wave breaks upon a beach as my wife rolls toward me and the ecstasy of her eyes reaches toward mine. Waves of pure delight race over the ocean floor of her mind as her gaze acknowledges mine. But start to fall over backwards into a long fall surrounded by blue.* Then whammo, I awake. This, two weeks before I disappeared for eleven days.



A vintage film noir scene from Hy Grader's "Jump Shots" collection; on the verso Hy'd scribbled: "The party's over and she staggered home, her belly full of bourbon and chocolate and her underwear in her purse."

I confess to my shrink that when I watch TV it seems nearly every TV series or movie now has a scene where someone jumps or is pushed off a building, a cliff, or out a window. Ionesco's play, *The Chairs*, ends with Old Woman and Old Man jumping to their deaths. Hell, even many of Dallas' mystery stories have divers scenarios. I've started to photograph those scenes, often creating diptychs and triptychs. It's become an obsession. Dallas, upon seeing my digital efforts in this regard, dove into a new project. He's begun to anthologize his earlier stories that feature this type of death under the tragi-comic title *The Laughing Skull and Other Nose-dives*; he's even started to write several new stories to thicken the tome. One, "Grunge Below," combines a likable sad-sack narrative featuring a former daredevil high-diver — "*No matter how many times you dive from an eighty-five-foot height you're scared each time*" — who once

---

3. Simon Critchley is the author of a short e-book, *Suicide*, and co-founded INS with novelist Tom McCarthy. The latter said, concerning that society, that INS was "devoted to mind-bending projects that would do for death what the Surrealists had done for sex."



## Finding Mememo



Michael Graves' Portland Building

had fallen into the early '90s Portland grunge-drug culture and developed a heart-tugging gay romance, the pain of which cannot be tamed or understood. This is then blended with a mystery surrounding a fatal nose-dive taken off the postmodern eclectic Michael Graves' Portland Building (Graves, morbidly appropriate) by this former daredevil's despairing male lover. The victim fell, or was

pushed, becoming brutally impaled on the trident spear held by the massive statue of Portlandia sited out front. The story's many period Portland references make it feel like a strangely historical read. But the story also traffics in alternative realities. Dallas actually had a similar case in Portland in the 1990s. What is new about this story is that in it Dallas undercuts the image of his hero-detective as a monolith with no cracks, a monument of square-double-jawed determination and tight-lipped will, to reveal a sense of psychological complexity beyond his earlier descriptions of his authorial creation.

In the story, when invited by the Portland Chief of Police, an old bud of his, Blurt tells him, "I'm on it like a biting sow," but later reveals serious doubts about his ability to crack the case. It's only when Blurt uses drone technology that the case heads toward a solution. Dallas begins to edge into the sci fi genre by introducing a mysterious inventor, "Mag Miles", who merges A.N. Whitehead's Process theory, quantum mechanical nonlocality, and Superstring theory to build a device for D-jumping. Calculations made via a Windsor Blue supercomputer. "Wish where you want!" is his mantra. Put on this "Heisenberg Belt", featuring arcanelly figured electronics, take a nose dive off a high structure and, upon reaching terminal velocity,<sup>4</sup> you may find yourself in another dimension. If the device fails, well, SPLAT! Road pizza, your particles are willy-nilly dispersed.

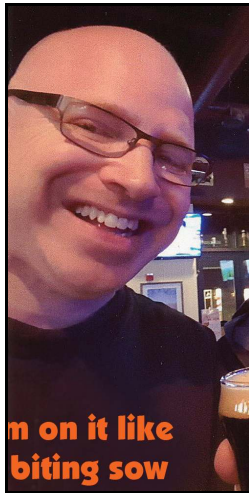
The key clue Blurt finds via a drone is small bodies of smashed rats, seemingly tossed off high roofs, scattered about downtown Portland (later proven to be unsuccessful tests of small prototype "Heisenberg Belts"). After finally achieving success with his test animals, Mag recruits expert high-divers (the two main protagonists) for his human testing phase. \$50,000 is dangled before their drug-drooped eyes and they fall for it. But test results hover around 50-50: one

---

4. Terminal velocity is the highest velocity attainable by an object as it falls through air. It occurs once the sum of the drag force ( $F_d$ ) and buoyancy equals the downward force of gravity ( $FG$ ) acting on the object. Since the net force on the object is zero, the object has zero acceleration.



## Finding Mememo

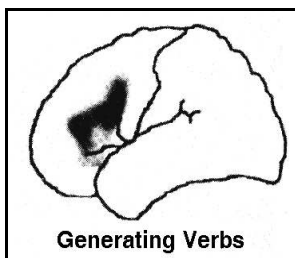


Dallas on his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday

diver surviving, one not. Proving the device *both* works *and* doesn't, a weird logic characteristic of the probabilities noted in quantum mechanics *wavefunctions*.<sup>5</sup> In the story, Blurt has to get the mourning surviving test member off drugs, past horrible withdrawal pains, and sober enough, and willing, to talk in order to track the mad scientist. Then, the most difficult task: to convince skeptical authorities of the plausibility of these events despite the star witness to them having his mental furniture either busted up, or sent to secondhand stores. Nevertheless, the mad scientist is tracked to his converted warehouse lab (located in an area soon be redeveloped into the now-classy "Pearl District") and dramatically cuffed by Blurt before TV cameras, only to be "disappeared" a day later into Federal custody, mysteriously never to be heard from again. "Pre-

*sumably," speculates Blurt, "Mag's dimensional-travel device, called 'Vista-Drive,' is now being tested by the military. I suspect the deployment of the device will be found to yield the same results, always one success matched by one failure, over and over and over. It's not practical, merely useless," Blurt blurts out to his secretary, "unless one can inspire enough blind loyalty to recruit Kamikaze divers or confirmed gambling addicts."*

My therapist, although amused by my synopsis, sees it as a dodge to her mind probes, running out the clock on our hour session. She quickly gets us back on track. "As an anodyne to your grim thoughts," she insists, "keep up your writing; find inspiration in your buddy Dallas' scrivenerian energies that, unlike



The area in the brain where verbs are generated

that crotchety Critchley who believes one is never closer to death than when writing, make one feel more alive, more prone to self-love than self-hate. You need a little *healthy* narcissism." She then smiles a special smile such that a few of Dallas' pet sayings come to mind: *If meat is sweeter close to the bone, then she's got to be all sugar!* And so, follow sugar's advice — I will.

Walking to my car, heavens, I'm as nervous as a whore in church, but I feel I must disappear for some

---

5. In quantum mechanics the state of a system is not described by giving the position and velocity of every particle and the values and rates of change of various fields, as in classical physics. Instead, the state of any system at any moment is described by a wavefunction, essentially a list of numbers, one number for every possible configuration of the system. If the system is a single particle, then there is a number for every possible position in space that the particle *may* occupy. This wavefunction number for a given position reflects the *probability* that the particle is at that position. Experiment results in wave-function collapse and the particle's position can be calculated.

## Finding Mememo

days to get myself to generate the necessary verbs I will need — even if it means escaping the gravitational pull of wife and friends — to enter an alternative mental universe. It'll startle them. They'll think I'm crazier than an outhouse mouse. And it may put my academic career down a black hole — missing the Admin faculty retreat, being AWOL — but, hell, if a literary star like Agatha Christie could get away with it, even make her more famous . . .

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: This section is a revelation! Hy opens up about his angst, his therapy, and hints again at his struggle to function in an academic medium of fear, paranoia, and deceit. As a highly intelligent and creative person, with a wife he initially was in synch with like two linked metronomes, he should've been in love with life; instead, he was depressed — Dory said his personal dialectic was to have a daily Whitmanesque yap of joy followed by a Catholic portion of suffering and guilt — searching for a reason to live. Hy said our generation was about to make a dramatic shift, substituting the tragedy of death for the more general humiliations of a protracted old age. I think his persistent shoulder pain played a role in this. Here's a disturbing e-mail he sent me:*

At first our defeats [ed., as part-time faculty] with the administration were tenuous, delicate, so much so we were hardly able to perceive them. But soon the naked claws extended in our direction. . . . Countermeasures? We started going *samizdat* to achieve what Wyoh [ed., one of Hy's more radical office-mates] mysteriously calls "The Whatever," a new faculty *communitas* that rejects identities forced on us by the admin-types' *societas*. . . .

*Wyoh was not at that Cliff Dwellers gathering when Hy died and so merited a separate interview by Dallas, at which he seemed evasive. Dal'd discovered the FBI had paid Wyoh a visit a year ago about suspicious anarchistic e-mails. Maybe Chad turned him in. So Dallas decided to shadow him. Not hard as this midnight cowboy had long, beautiful hair — "I'd call it Titian, the color that is," observed Dallas — and always wore a worn western leather duster. Dal tracked him through scores of alleys — peppered with idle young men interested in skirts, cigarettes, scars, and tattoos written on the world's oldest paper, skin — into sleazy bars. One day the bar was *Cómplices* (Spanish for *Accomplices*) in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood and famous for its Triple X Atomic Bomb hot sauce.*

*That day Dal had started shadowing Wyoh at high noon, when his cowboy-booted mark left his south Loop apartment, a day with a deep Santa Fe blue sky. Wyoh's wanderings ended some hours later at that Mexican watering hole, at the moment of the reddest of sunsets whose colors were like those seen in a child's coloring book. Dallas delayed awhile outside, dragging on a cigar, before entering. When he did, it was like opening a grave: dim, musty, a skeleton of a Latino bartender wiping the bar. Further investigation revealed that during the a.m. the place contained the usual bottom-feeders, weighed down and scrapping along, but around Happy Hour it hosted a DJ and scores of rambunctious Millennials. Some School of the Art Institute faculty, yes me too, even held end-of-semester celebrations there.*

## Finding Mememo

Dallas always liked chatting up bartenders. "They are," he explained, "Delphic oracles defined by their very profession as anonymous." Dallas was about to engage this thin oracle when an even thinner elderly woman exited a restroom and wobbled her way to what seemed to be her usual place, the least damaged stool in the joint, and asked Senor Anonymous for "Another white spider." The bartender turned his narrow back to Dallas and began to mix the woman a Cointreau, gin, sour mix, and sugar concoction. It was then Dal noticed a small, ill-lit room in the back, with a liquor bottle on a table top, light skimming the dirty surface, as a tough looking, pimpled itinerant worker-type with a Florida suntan and shining eyes silently popped shots and made a swinging gesture with his right hand as if using a machete. A cigarette rested in a green glass ashtray, its fine coil of smoke connecting earth to heaven.

Dal admitted, "Upon seein' this unsavory hombre, who looked like he was born on February 29th, I waxed poetic; the phrase 'My, ain't you a caution! An alligator in his tough pimples.' I think I mumbled that sotto voce, twice."

Dal then spied Wyoh warming a barstool at the opposite end of the bar, alone, drinking. Seemingly oblivious to everything and everyone. "But," as Dal has said many a time, "a man who sits drinkin' is always dreamin' of a man who'll listen," so he sat down next to his person of interest and allowed himself to be Wyoh's sounding board. During their tête-à-tête, the liquor overflowed its banks like the Nile.

Wyoh began with Dubonnet as mutual introductions were made. Dal eased into his booze-induced mind-meld with the aid of bourbon. Soon Wyoh was waxing eloquent over his dislike of "Ideological State Apparatuses," power and discipline, government cyberspying ("the Swedes are in deep cahoots with our NSA"); attacking Digital Humanities for its "data mining of literature, running algorithms based on word frequencies," and ending with a diatribe on how we're "already living in a fairyland."

Wyoh praised the bar's gin flight. Seeing this as an opportunity, Dal ordered it and these two soakers had a race to finish three different bottles of boutique gin. When Wyoh was three sheets to the wind, Dal asked about Hy. "Hy? That dude, like me, read the French anarchist group Comité Invisible's tract, The Coming Insurrection with gusto. It's about the joy of encounter that enables commune members to say 'we' rather than merely 'I'. Yah, he gobbled it up, especially the part about 'The Whatever', a utopic place where commune members are called 'foam'," Wyoh said, pointing to a happy glass of beer on an adjoining table. "How, like foam, what sets them apart, brings them together in an atmospheric condition of rhythmical respiratory continuity. Get it?" He said Hy's death was like a gaggle of soap bubbles bursting, compromising that respiratory communal continuity long established among his fellow denizens of the basement faculty office.



Dallas gave the gins featured in Cômplix's gin flight to Ichi ; on display in his house, Madison, Wisconsin

Wyoh, liquor casting a smiling shadow over his mind, badgered Dallas about what it was like "being a private dick." According to Dallas, "Wyoh showed the kind

## Finding Mememo

*of awe for that profession that kids of the 1960s had for all those NASA launches." Dallas fed him some good stories, most drawn from his fiction, until Wyoh opened up about the abrasive departmental politics at his school and Hy's state of mind around the time of his demise. He was most cooperative in a slurred speech sort of way, but the information gleaned was sketchy, only confirming what was already known.*

*Up to this section, the motivation behind Hy's odd disappearance has been somewhat revealed, only to become more mysterious in this last one. It all hinges on interpretation, "generating the necessary verbs" (see page 182), which could be taken literally as in getting up steam to write, or figuratively, as in getting the nerve to take some kind of action, perform some risky task. This key section also tells us how much Hy's love of such ambiguity is indebted to our mutual friend, Dallas Johnson, and that PI's detective fiction. I can also personally testify to this influence.*



Ichi 's flaming Yin-Yang tattoo

*During a movable saki drinking bout, where in each venue Ichi would amuse us by putting up a sticker in the men's room that read: DIAL-A-HAIKU: 575-575-5750, (haiku has a 5-7-5 syllabic structure) we discussed poetic ambiguity. Hy, a Mallarmé fan, expressed much admiration of Dallas' texts: "They often express ten units of meaning using only five units of expression — at worst, seven." At that point, I was on my fourth saki, Ichi his ninth, Dallas his eighth, Hy his fifth.*

*Of course Ichi had to chime in, boasting about how Japanese (rooted in a feudal language) has five words for "I" and more than*

*five for "you," each conveying different shadings of rank and status as perceived by the speaker. How Omoshiroshi is a word that in his language can mean "interesting," "comical," "refreshing," "eccentric," or "stylish," depending on context. He went on to demonstrate ambiguous meaning in the Japanese words Namamekashi and Natsukashi as further examples.*

*Ichi took the wind out of Hy's sails with that one. Or maybe I should say, Hy took a Kamikaze nose dive. It was a blindingly shameful moment for Hy (fattening for dramatic effect the concept of awkward moment) as he was in my company. Yet intrusive moments like this were how Ichi expanded Hy's knowledge and vision of things. It was part and parcel to their dyadic relationship. (I once overheard Hy tell Ichi : "You are more in me than I am in me.") It's just that not many were witness to such illuminations.*

*I formulated a good comeback to Ichi 's rather pompous intrusion by reminding him those ambiguous terms were in Heian Japanese, an old language impenetrable to modern Japanese readership, and pointed to the fact that he himself had a manga comic version of the eleventh-century novel, The Tale of Genji, written in that obscure, vague language which few native speakers could decipher. Ichi made a polite, you-got-me bow in my direction. His face slightly tinged red. Scored some points with Hy on that one.*



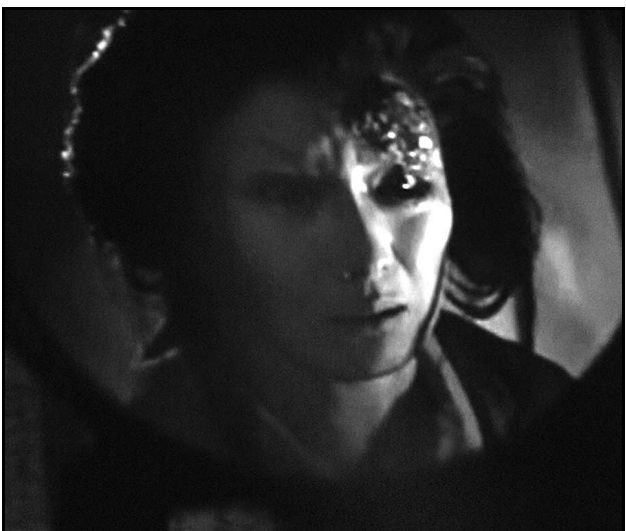
## Finding Mememo



Ichi as a Noh actor



Hy at Halloween



Ichi's older sister, in a Noh play (Photo by Ichi)



Decapitated engineer on snow-laden sidewalk (Chicago Police Dept photo)



A money belt hiding a Heisenberg Device?

*The sense that Ichi and Hy were "twinned" in a deep way was confirmed to them early in their brotherhood by two photos taken when they were each in their teens, discovered when comparing family albums. This fed into Hy's belief that people and cultures can be so different they seem like parallel universes. That he and Ichi were once living in such alternative universes unknown to each other and were now "spiritual twins" reunited in a single spacetime continuum. I know, I know, it sounds like explaining the unknown by the more unknown, ignotum per ignotius, but there you are. This is the key to understanding their conformal symmetry, what Hy figured in multidimensional terms as "(FriendShip) to the fifth-power." Why each would take a bullet for the other. Why, for Ichi, solving Hy's demise was paramount, even if it might be a banzai charge into the ranks of*

*the unknown. And why Dallas, as he so vividly put it to me over the phone yesterday, is "Yepper, busier than a one-legged man in an ass-kickin' contest."*

*Besides tracking Wyoh, Dal's now been pressured into taking on a new case. It's been on the news here constantly. An up-and-coming young software engineer (a British immigrant) working for a hush-hush zeronendai (first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century) technology firm, New Dimensions (Nyu-Ookisa, head office, Tokyo, founded by the posutomodan media theorist Azuma Hiroki) was decapitated in the alley behind his place of work with a Samurai sword, which was subsequently pulled from a nearby dumpster. Dal had done work for the Chicago branch of that firm before, a case involving industrial espionage, so they brought him on*



## Finding Mememo



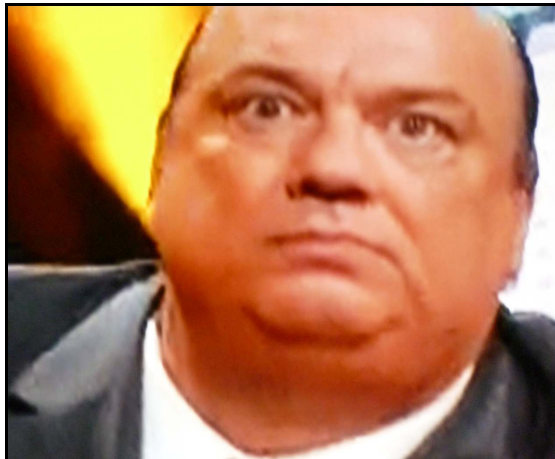
Dallas' CPD buddy, Nick, checks on a college girl's cell-phone snap of the immediate aftermath of Hy's supposed suicide showing a suspicious young man running from the scene.

board because he's discrete and can handle unpleasant, stubborn obstacles to his probes with an intimidating expression and the declamation: "Piss me off and I'll be all over you like ugly on an ape!" As Dallas related to me, "Their corporate offices here are of somber decor in gray monotone — bad Japanese minimalism — like the main dining room of noted Chef Grant Achatz's Alinea restaurant (before recent renovation)."

Dallas passed on to me data, culled from his CPD buddy, Nick, on the guy whom Hy and Ichi witnessed jumping at the AIC Museum right into a permanent coma. It revealed a strange connection to his new case of Dal's. Both the decapitated young man and the distraught AIC jumper were employees at New Dimensions, working on a highly classified project.

uh again aah  
x y z

Dallas caught me up on Mememo's case. Thanks to that contact in the CPD, a female college student who had taken cell-phone snaps of the tragic scene on Michigan Avenue has been tracked down. In one shot, a person of interest, a young male, is seen quickly striding away, back to the camera, head in partial profile, with what looks like an old-style money-belt tucked under his arm; our mystery man, possibly the x, y, z of our case.



"On the Job," Dallas' first 'selfie' taken some years ago

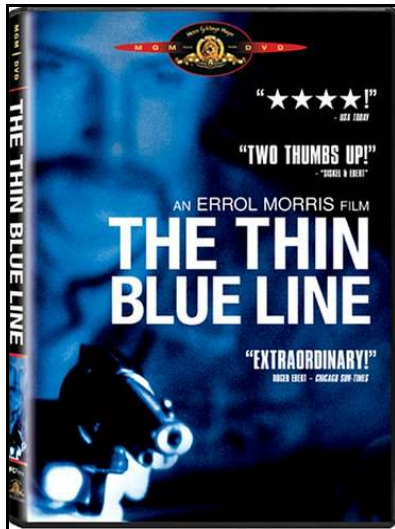
It caught both Nick and Dallas' eye, as everyone else in the shot is either staring at Hy's body or covering their eyes. "Odd. I'm not sure what this may mean. He's not wearin' this item, but clutchin' it like he's just stolen it. Jym, it's these kinds of oddities that often become suggestive clues, but one where we don't arrive at a destination right away, but are put into a temporary holding pattern."

At the time Dal didn't say the

## Finding Mememo



David Ray Harris



guy in the shot appeared as dressed similarly to the decapitated corpse in his other case and was known to an odd person Hy will meet in Northern Wisconsin at a lake resort, a few weeks prior to his demise, one Wishwer Watt, a champion of disruptive innovation.

I informed Dal of the key information this last .wpd file gave concerning Hy's mental state as it relates to his eleven-day exodus to that lake resort. There was a long pause on the other end of the phone — Dallas' silence speaking louder than any words could — "Er, I'm on it, even if it means doin' a double-shift, dude. Be sure of it."

Yes, that link of a common workplace between the two dead men seemed more than mere coincidence to both of us, despite the glaring differences in their respective modes of demise. And what about that mystery man absconding with something, possibly snatched off Hy's corpse? Could he really be the dude who later turned up in 72-point font in Chicago news headlines, headless, heartlessly eliminated by an unknown swordsman tying up loose ends for some ruthless corporate mogul? This mysterious someone having hired Dallas, not knowing Dal's intimate connection to Hy and us three amigos? Or, if so knowing, hired Dal to throw him off the real scent, making his client appear innocent?

"Who knows?" — as condemned convict David Ray Harris epistemologically put it to director Errol Morris in his 1989 postmodern docu-drama, *The Thin Blue Line*, when Morris, on a taped interview (camera focused on the tape recorder), asks the convict who really killed the Dallas policeman, Robert Wood.

\* \* \*

# Finding Mememo

16



Mommy, there's a mononster under my bed! I awake. Two pillows under my head. Dorinda is up, feeding dogs. How many times have



I awakened to this anxiety and still do? Vivid imagination where thought made it real. Me, the unfortunate son of an unfortunate mother and father. I was born aged three. Two weeks after birth I could designate things by one word: THAT. In six months I could say: "Sparrow goes cheep-cheep. Crow goes caw-caw. I go ma-ma." I believed a vampire was at my window. Deduced that my body couldn't walk without my legs, and my legs couldn't walk without my body. At five I was fourteen and a helmsman at my own vessel's tiller, sussing out that people could have the word *goodness*

in their mouths, all the while holding a bloody knife 'twixt their teeth.

Mommy. Mommy who brought me into the world, who made me *chronométrable* [ed., mortal, thrown into time] but didn't give suckle, so I tippled on rubber. Mommy who let dad (who called me a "naughty boyble" and said I was not like his "bearfors") spank me and said I bawled like an adorable Wisconsin dairy calf when he did so. My dad, an authentic WWII Japanese torpedo, fully functional in shallow water, wanting to make a big splash 'n flash. Like lightning. Wishing, by Jove, for a Catholic son despite his Lutheran wife. Making our family's Jupiter jubilate.

"We'll hear about him in the headlines!" his father's father howled during my christening, "He's the type to percuss."

"At this age they're filthy, but honest. By the time they're teens, they're clean, but deceitful," added my mother's mother.

"He'll adore hashed brown potatoes," chimed in my mother's father. "That will reintegrate him with his workin'-on-da-railroad ancestors."

"No, he'll adore flapjacks," corrected my father's mother, "like his lumberjack ancestors. In fact, you should've named him Jack."

"He will adore both, becoming a wordsmith capable of turning armpits into turnspits, and will have many successful submissions to periodicals," corrected my prescient mother's mother's sister.



Lord Haw-Haw (1946)

My parents had a helluva time bringing me up. "The little king, all he likes is ha-ha," father told mother. "Gaiety ready-to-hand and too smart for his britches too." So "Lord Haw-Haw" became my nickname, given me by my dad who

## Finding Mememo

remembered as a G.I. listening to the British turncoat, William Joyce, who hosted an infamous “Germany Calling” WWII propaganda radio program. Haw-Haw was known for his up-to-date intel and I had to be analogously *on it*, to survive the battle with my parents.<sup>1</sup> Under parental and ecclesiastical thumb, my body was not mine to do with as I pleased: hands visible in public, *ja!*, in public *nein!* No wonder I’m even today too susceptible to embarrassment, awkwardness, and shame, and filled with neediness for fame, even while playing the academic game. Self-protecting and as vulnerable as a hedgehog.



Iva Toguri a.k.a., Tokyo Rose

Ichi always loves me to tell this tale of ancestral intrigue. Reminds him of his own freaky family (his father served on a Jap sub) and standard themes of Noh plays. “Meme, melts me in one eye, makes me cry in the other,” he always says (like a TV jingle) whenever I retell the story. Tells me he used to call his sweet-talking, but seriously nasty, sister “Tokyo Rose”.<sup>2</sup> Used to argue with her about his growing dislike of the social rules. How many American ships went down in the Pacific, the last thing the crew hearing over ship speakers being her annoying, cajoling voice. Did her vocalization turn to gurgles as the ship went down, as my sister’s did when I’d win one of our arguments?



A young Ichi arguing with his older sister

Opening today’s paper: CARIBBEAN CRUISE SUICIDE. *She saw her husband’s silhouette, glinting and angular in the sun, on the far end of the deck and then he was climbing and then he was gone.* Was he a Paul of Tarsus struck down by light/best knowledge of a failed marriage/life? *It was a windy day, and it looked as though the weather plucked him right off the ship and dropped him into the sea.* Of course, the weather. *A fellow passenger, better placed, got a fast sequence of three shots of the man diving off the deck dressed in*

---

1. There is a peculiar connection between Lord Haw-Haw’s (William Joyce) broadcasts and Sherlock Holmes. As J. A. Cole has written, “the British public would not have been surprised if Haw-Haw had carried in his pocket a secret weapon capable of annihilating an armored brigade.” This mood was reflected in the wartime film *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* (1942), starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, in which Joyce’s broadcasts are shown to predict actual disasters and defeats, thus seriously undermining British morale.

2. She was the Japanese version of Lord Haw-Haw, broadcasting “The Zero Hour” to American troops in the Pacific. Whereas Joyce was hung for treason, this American native didn’t broadcast anti-American sentiments and so survived. She died at age 90 in Chicago, IL.



## Finding Mememo

*flannel peejays and posted it on social media. Must find that posting and snatch it for my "Jump Shots" collection.*

Many superstitions on ships. No whistling or eating bananas. Fridays are bad luck (the suicide noted above occurred on a Friday). Flowers, pea soup and priests are not good. But dolphins swimming alongside the ship meant you could make a wish. On a cruise, if I saw those dolphins? I'd wish for the eradication of all the crap gathered in our attic and basement. Tell her if she keeps this up, there'll be no place for her. So traumatized I am by her accumulation, I don't "Order from Horder", but get office supplies from Staples: "That was easy."

Yes, I live with a hoarder in a *both/and* state of *complete immersion* and *ironic distance*. Immersed *and* estranged from the floor-to-ceiling stuff of all type, exemplifying a *horror vacui* of clinical proportions. In the attic: , fifty-eight-year-old high school essays, next to baby's-first-diaper encased in plastic, next to her son's first jockstrap, next to a rumpled 1968 edition of Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care*, next to a box of children's drawings, next to a vintage



Ventriloquist Shirley Dinsdale and her dummy Judy Splinters

1950s Judy Splinters ventriloquist dummy given to guests on Shirley Dinsdale's TV show, next to her son's old West Point uniform, next to . . . In the basement: Christmas decorations, Easter decorations, autumnal decorations, summer decorations, cans of paint, spray cans of paint, fishing equipment, picnicking supplies, dog food, stores of canned goods, jars of pickled veggies, vases, cleaning supplies, porch and deck furniture pillows, paper towels, rusty bikes, pots for plants, a washer and a dryer, winter-stored plants, and an additional freezer and refrigerator. All hiding malodorous desiccating mice corpses.

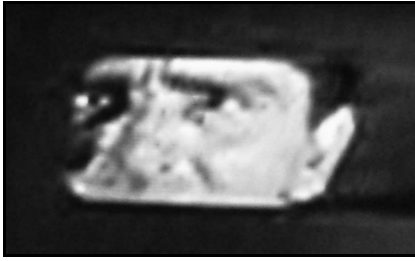
Roger, over and out. I get it. I need head-space. As advised by my Rogerian therapist, I contemplate with joy eleven days away from this "worlding of everything" in a confined space, a respite from all-that-stuff and from the stresses of a Chad-dominated academia. I pick up a book:



*It's Friday. Oh, how he loathes Fridays. He was born on Friday, named for that day. A day when he's capable of cosmic anger for having been born. Now, uncertain, muzzy of mind, Kofi, a Ghanaian cabbie, staggers down moonlit Michigan Avenue, turns west one block south of Roosevelt Road, walks to Wabash, hangs a left. He pauses to breathe deeply to avoid vomiting on his shoes.*



## Finding Mememo



Mannibal caught in Kofi's cab's rearview mirror



Frontispiece to Dallas' mystery "Eaten Alive," Mannibal's mutilated victim

*There's a spectacular atomic bomb wall mural painted on a wall. Destruction. He's on a mission of destruction. Carries a gun found two weeks ago in an abandoned house on the south side. A heavy old revolver that looks like a metal dog with one nostril. The kind Brit-ishers wore defiantly on their hip in colonial days. It gives off a strange odor. Like the odor of evil that the cursed man who sat in the back of his cab gave off. The man who stared at him in his rearview mirror while drunkenly describing in gustatory detail the culinary delights of eating tongue, human tongue, that is. Tonight, this man, "Mannibal", Kofi's bent on maiming, killing.*

*Kofi knows where to find Mannibal, the creature with the brick-dust complexion. Dropped him off at this address last night after (he said) he'd been "doin' impatient 'n short shots of Scotch," then Kofi sped home, not taking more fares — too upset. Now he sits in his cab digging Stevie Winwood's "Bring me a High Love." Then approaches the door of the man's shop, a butcher shop. All the past Ghanaian rituals, indigenous fears, and taboos rush through him as he contemplates what custom demands he do.*

*The monster suddenly pops out, eyes shining like a drugged moth's, casually lights up a cigar and takes a long draw. Begins to slowly move the cigar in and out his of mouth, in almost masturbatory pleasure. Kofi ducks into shadow. His body goes entirely rigid, as though frozen by a cramp. The butt of his pistol is sticky with sweat. Mannibal's halfway through the cigar when Kofi slowly emerges into the bright moonlight. Upon seeing bright moonlight suddenly define the shape of a large black man standing before him, a look of surprise transforms his face into a mask with big, round eyes and a grotesquely contorted mouth. Composed, Kofi coolly aims. Before the monster can get the word out, "Nig . . .," Kofi squeezes the trigger, twice. Two holes appear shaped like the star-shaped hole in his native country's flag: one in the belly, one in that horrible mouth, an abominable maw that has tasted human flesh. Somewhere deep inside him Kofi feels a door close. He looks up, confirming that the night has*



Ghanaian flag

*turned the sky's head toward infinity. This thought briefly goes through his mind: I, a new knight, killed at night, and now I have the night's immensity for my accomplice. Kofi now must wait for the narrowed eyes of suspicion and the hard gaze of admonition. And, jeepers, might those peepers be our master Peeper's?*

## Finding Mememo



One rare example of a “landscape-oriented” book by Dallas

I turn over the book, the latest collection of Dallas’ Blurt mystery stories with its awesome front cover, and read the back cover notes: *Maybe someone who dies at the age of a hundred doesn’t feel anything more than the fear that grips us when we’re five and it’s nighttime and our mother comes in to turn out the light. But when you find a human monster’s very voracious*

*mouth over yours, viciously searching for your tongue, biting it off, and lustily chewing, but that’s another story — another Blurt Wildbraine story, that is....*

I put the volume on the bed beside me. Yes, you’ve guessed correctly, I’ve been lolling in bed reading the most chilling story in that anthology, “Eaten Alive”. The grime illustration of Mannibal’s last victim in the frontispiece took me back to a recent dream where I thought, looking in a mirror, I suffered a huge, deep wound on my face, on my cheek between jaw and nose, the skin split open like old fruit, blood seeping out, all dark and shiny, with veins and yellow cheek-fat, red-gray muscle exposed, even bright flashes of bone. My tongue missing. Psychic sympathy pains for my friend Jym’s cancer surgery? Disturbance over my lack of voice in departmental politics? A reaction to Dorinda’s vegan daughter-in-law’s ragging on me about my barbaric meat-eating?

My real-world attention is brought back by the sound of a poltergeist rattling dishware in a far away room of our house. On one level, I know it’s Dorinda taking the dishes out of the dishwasher and giving them a second washing by hand (her high “hygiene anxiety”) after which she’ll prepare our breakfast, but I can’t get the supernatural interpretation out of my fiction-charged mind. I once had an encounter with a poltergeist — for fuckin’ real — I swear.

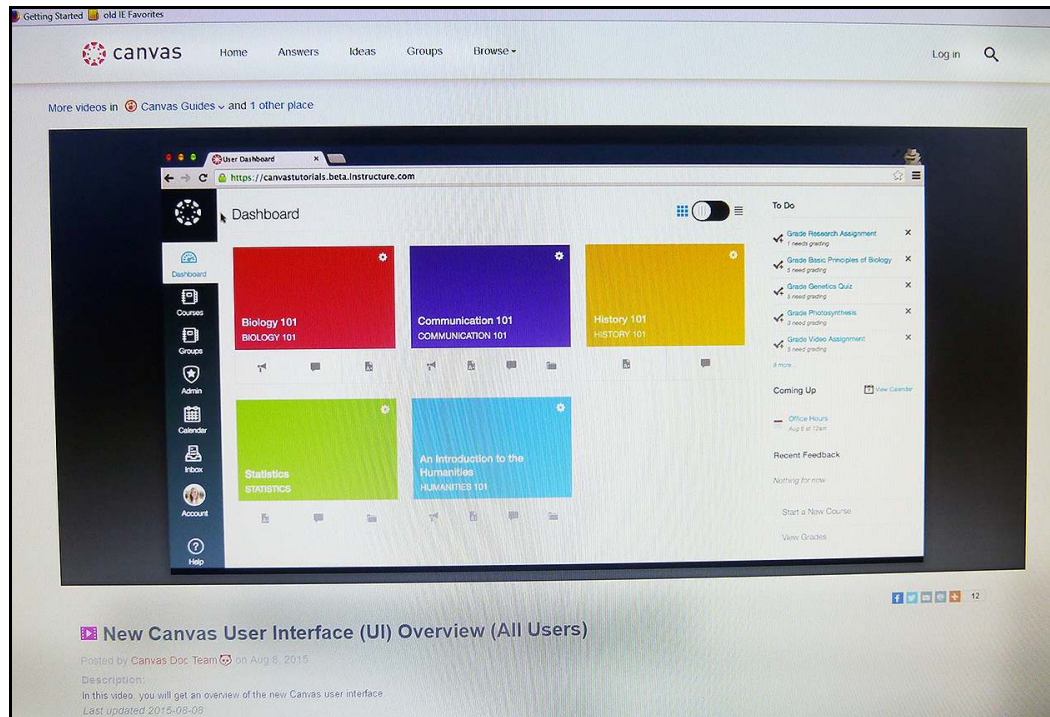


Physical culturist Jack LaLanne at 90

I look out the bedroom window. A vigorous blue sky. Wind stirring the tree branches, wagging like our dogs’ tails. But even that sight doesn’t awaken me to my morning Jack LaLanne vigor. Only with effort do I make my way down the stairs, slowly, carrying my own body on my back,

# Finding Mememo

like an African porter with a white-man's burden as featured in back issues of *National Geographic*. But massive, immense, consuming, uncontrollable hunger for Dorinda's pumpkin-spice pancakes with a side of Nueske's pepper bacon drives me onward. A passing thought: *How will I manage during my eleven-day disappearance without those pancakes, that bacon?*



I am here and do, do what I do when there is stuff to do. I do sit, jaw slack, eyes dull, in the shared basement faculty office in front my computer screen attempting to figure out a few features of Canvas, the distance-learning software the school has installed and now upgraded to be easier to use with iPads and iPhones. All this new technology informs trivia with import. Student papers uploaded to its database just *look* better when downloaded for grading. At our last faculty meeting, held in a room whose odor was vaguely digestive, Chad called technology "our infinite bequest," and stressed that the admin's word of choice was *induce*. "We must *induce* older faculty into the merits of Canvas. We must *induce* students to take advantage of the new distant-intimacy this cool software will allow them." Narrowing his eyes to the width of paper cuts, he *induced* us "to master at least some of Canvas's on-campus class applications." And he stressed, "Whosoever [*he loves to use this as a subject*] disagrees, well I'm not going to take any crapola about this or I'll be taking somebody's inventory, *capisce?*" hiking his angled eyebrows a little and giving

## Finding Mememo



a cruel smile that revealed his perfect game-show host teeth. Silence so profound we heard the steam rising from our coffee mugs. We oldsters sat wide-eyed and false-grinning because Chad always manages to mute contrary responses by relating his opponents' side of the story before they can do so themselves, dulling any point they'd want to make to uselessness. He's wearing a T-shirt under his sports coat that reads: MY BEST THINKING GOT ME HERE that

exposes his Vietnam-era Navy tat: SUBIKBAY'75USN407. These shirts were handed out by admin to all departmental chairs who have creds out the bazoo and can sling unparalleled amounts of bullshit.

I don't know how the others were responding here, but my chest was pounding like my dryer does when I pop in my gym shoes. I felt for sure Chad could see right into me as I flashed on Dallas' disturbing short story, "The Man Who Suspected He Was Made of Glass", but I kept empty, my eyes pale zeros even though I was thinking: *The integrity of my sleep has been forever compromised*. Not Charmian. Her mouth opened to expose her receding gums, eyebrows going circumflex, so I know she was thinking some French idiomatic expression of dissatisfaction. Wyoh, silently mouthed a "Fuck you, buckaroo." M. P. Cunyus, the poor department sycophant, blurted out "Stellar!" then looked around at our faces and fell into quiet embarrassment. Then it seemed we heard electric game-show bongos rattle to the running of Chad's closing credits, "We have an enlightened administration to thank for . . . . We are propelling education into the new century due to . . . We are going to make mucho moola using this distance learning thing hand over fist — *my fist* . . ." et cetera.

I've come in early to master this software that puts teacher and student into virtual, instant, contact. Hard to concentrate, as Wyoh is here too. Clad in his I REBEL—THEREFORE WE EXIST red T-shirt, his tobacco-stained teeth munch noisily on Triscuits lassoed from a yellow box which reveals the large the space is between his front teeth, a slot big enough to fit a replacement inkjet color cartridge. He's chatting with a second-year MFA student who wears a T-shirt announcing: THE FUTURE IS FEMALE. Her chubby corpus pooches over the sides of a high-tech adjustable office chair. Mink Wartindale, but we call her "Maya Culpa" as she seems an illusion constantly apologizing for her plagiarisms and poor writing, but then offering a perfect postmodern theoretical alibi for her transgression. She was accepted into our Low Residency MFA Writing Program (LRMFAWP) more on the merits of her strictly academic efforts, such as "Tertiary Symbolism in Justinian Erotica", than on her ability as a *vortmeister*.



## Finding Mememo

Their lively conversation today is over how *There is high magic to low puns*. A topic I would jump into, too, but for this stuth 'n bozzer [*ed., stuff and bother*] I gotta learn or else Chad “Blusteronahalfshell” Armbuster, will have more ammunition to use against me at the next faculty meeting, gatherings where I must skate with buttered soles around provocative topics. Ah, Chad — a real evil industry that one — has an oppressive and ignoble influence in the life of anyone caught in his awful gravity. His destructiveness recalls what I see when perusing my extensive collection of “Jump Shots”. Like this gem of a triptych I recently shot off television.



A “Jump Shots” triptych from Hy’s collection

Try as I might to tune them out, snippets of May’s and Wyoh’s conversation come my way, hers distorted by the licorice gum (I can smell it) she’s chewing: “I’ve never liked it — poetry — it’s nothin’ more than really oblique ways of sayin’ the obvious — right? — it seems like.” As the student gets up to leave, she inadvertently leaves a flame-broiled Whopper hanging in the air.

“Don’t close the door,” yells Wyoh as she departs, while reaching for the switch to the ceiling fan. When the student is gone, yet lingering in the air, Wyoh sighs a combination of disgust and relief. “That girl, jeez, she always wants facts, never parentheses, no curves. Her broad, low forehead bespeaks mathematical and constructive power, but Lit-wise she can’t toss a curve with a compass.” *Curves and parentheses* are Wyoh’s terms for provocative suggestions, obtuse glossing, elliptical statement, formal gymnastics — or put simply — ambiguity.

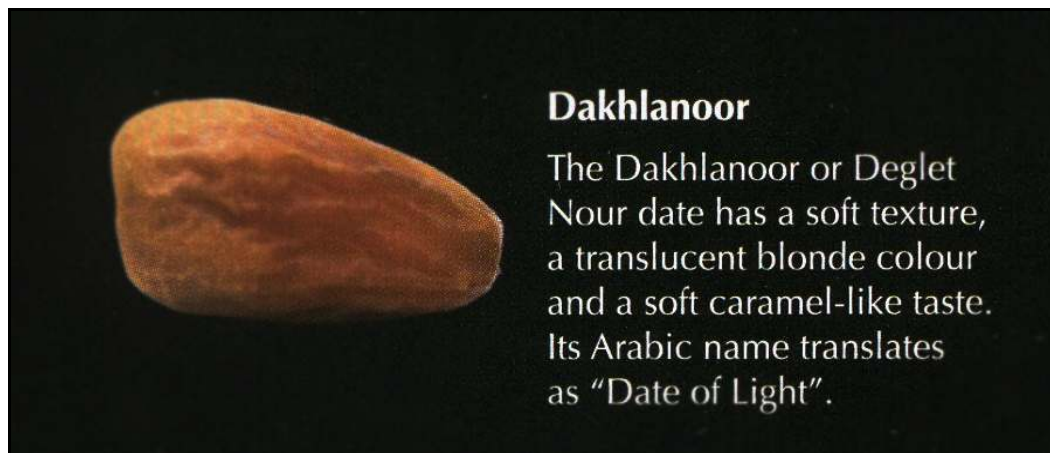
“Hell, when I was her age, my best friends were the *O.E.D* and the *Encyclopedia Americana*. Before they stuffed ‘em full of illustrations and photos. I was really into disproving Laplace’s Demon, adumbrated in the first published articulation of causal or scientific determinism by Pierre-Simon Laplace in 1814. According to determinism, if someone (the Demon) knows the precise location and momentum of every atom in the universe, their past and future values for any given time are entailed and they can be calculated using the laws of classical mechanics. I thought that it was this demon that animal expert Temple Grandin was trying to evoke — remember I grew up on a cattle ranch — with her astute observations of patterned movements in livestock, giving rational form to what appeared to be chaos. Personally, I found quantum mechanics more to my liking,



## Finding Mememo

what with *both/and* logic of any quantum state, and all those uncertainties, ambiguities. Poor Einstein. He found Bohr's theory *too boring*, asserting that the Grand Master doesn't play dice. But us Wyoming cowboys sure *do*.

"You know, in my head," he continues, relaxing back in his high-tech chair, pumping up the seat so he's four inches above me, "every female voice corresponds to a time of my life, to a concern, a mood, a rejection, a conquest, even a grade given." I don't reply, so he simply goes on to matter-of-factly mention he's "had a tantalizing *tête-à-tête*, and a major *mano a mano* over who can guzzle the most alcohol, with that mystery data guru bud o' yours, Dallas. You know, he not only dug for the facts, but for a shit-load of parentheses too. Interesting dude. The kind of a guy we'da invite out to the ranch for barbecued squeal [*ed., pork*] in the ol' days."



Wyoh, his body consciously congruent to his chair, spins around to face his desk, opens a drawer, pulls out a small narrow box labeled "Exotic Date-a-Base" — a gift from Abu Dhabi sent by one of his ex-students. Shoves it toward me saying, "Here, dude. Try this awesome date — a Dakhlanoor." Shows me an enclosed slip describing these exotic desert desserts. "Their name sounds like the designation for an alien species on a desert planet in *Star Wars*, huh?" I say. "If ya can have 'lightsabers,' ya sure must have 'dates of light,' right?"

My thumb and forefinger almost meet as I put one of the blonde beauties into my mouth. A sensation of pure pleasure spreads across my palate like a quantum wave, pervades my whole being. Delicious. Exquisite.

But I'm getting soft in the head, turning into the consistency of that ultimate date, wasting focus and time I need to learn that damn updated software. If this isn't enough, my computer does that horrible DING sound and pops up a small window saying I've got e-mail. But it's just what I need as an excuse to ditch Wyoh and turn back to my machine and its woes. Only to find the

## Finding Mememo

message is a gag from Dorinda's son concerning a long power outage we all suffered a day ago detailing, tongue-in-cheek, what to do to keep yourself amused until the power comes back on:

### WHAT TO DO IN THE DARK

- 1) "Is that your toe?" guessing game.
- 2) "Let's not open the fridge," song.
- 3) Dancing to the phone-music when put on hold.
- 4) Playing "Pin-the-Tail on — Everything."



Yes, funny, I love it. But *criminy* . . . not now! I manage to squeeze in ten more minutes of lesson time until Jym texts me, *Yr late. C-ming?* (for our lunch-chess date at the famous Artist's Café). *Shizzle* (sure) I text back. He's got a new super cool chess set we all are eager to take for a test drive. Bought it off a "If-you-liked-that-you'll-love-this" website catering to elders where they sell large print books, elder-friendly iPads, and large key/display cell-phones.

Outside on Mich Ave, a man sits, head tilted back, gurgling up a steady stream of phlegm, soaking his shirt as cars beep by. I head south dodging people in jeans, hoodies, and expensive, gaudy running shoes. I notice that folks today are dressing worse and worse. Ah, those days when men wore three-piece suits with stiff collars and hats. . . . I happen to look up. Light-gray clouds. Bulbous. Wrinkled. Shiny. The sky looks, well, *cerebral*. A good omen for an academic about to play another academic with a noun-explicit Wittgensteinian chess set, while rhythmically shoveling ketchup dabbed home-fries into his eager mouth.

\* \*

## Finding Mememo

*Editor's gloss: I'm sitting in my home office thinking about what to write in response to this very important fragment of Hy's writing. My hands' fingers are woven into an X in my lap. I sit this way for fifteen minutes, but nothing comes to me. I switch tactics. Now I'm looking studiously down, manipulating a yellow plastic disk, trying to get a BB into the blood-dripping mouth of a vampire. A childish distraction, but it calms me. Enhances inspiration. I do what I call the "lemon twist" with my wrist, in goes the BB, out comes the gist. Here it is.*

*Given the content of this unsettling section, no surprise I am sipping a scotch (even though scotch tastes of smoke and old men) as I write this. I'm going to focus on Meme's obsession with death. Death by academic bullshit. Death by a whacked out cannibal. Death by falling, often a suicide. I recall to mind he once displayed bitterness that both one of his favorite artists, Mike Kelley, and one of his favorite authors, David Foster Wallace, had ended their lives by asphyxiation (or as a Southern ol' boy coroner in one Dal's stories called it: "ass-fixation").*

*Thought it more in tune with their lives and work that they should've taken a dramatic nose-dive off a major building, preferably busting through a window to do so. Someone might have captured it for posterity on their iPhone camera. Now mind you, Meme emphasized with depressive afflictions, having had a seriously depressed cousin and two friends commit suicide. Yet, he felt people have the right to end their lives when it becomes unbearable. But he put a lot of store in how one did so.*

*So maybe Meme had come to that point of decision and opted to take a nose-dive himself. Maybe Hy just felt like he was now an octogenarian inside, despite his young-for-his-age outward appearance, and wanted to reach terminal (in both senses of the word) velocity. Or maybe not. Maybe both.*

*The beginning of this section, focusing on Hy's sense of his very early years and his feeling of being older inside than outside, was an aspect of his identity we, his friends, were familiar with. During a particularly hard fought end game between us, during which I lost my queen, he mentioned that in high school he felt like he was a graduate-level student, a guy with a dead serious sense of scholarship, making him appear and feel alien to his more immature classmates.*

*"They seemed mere children to me," he confessed. I learned that once a geeky, bespectacled Hy was cornered after school by a fellow classmate, a thug-in-training, and challenged to fight. But he just took his glasses off, stood aloof, arms akimbo, and let the jerk pound his fists into Hy's jaw, acting as if that reprobate's temper tantrum merely bored him. The thug slowly stopped, astonished, scared even, and snuck off. Never dared to go near Hy again.*

*Hy was like that. Could creep out adversaries by taking the moral high ground. And when you creep someone out they have the right to hate you, right? So Hy wasn't popular. The incident was the buzz of the school for the next week. Today, it'd all be iPhone recorded and posted on social media, going viral on Christian #turnothercheek. More tweets than heard in a bird reserve.*

\* \* \*

# Finding Mememo

## 17

~\\_ ( ) \_/ ~ Scene: *The Artist's Café*. Outside, Lake Michigan is like a wall with soft, moving edges; up in the sky, heavy white clouds; the wind as a phlegmatic personality today. Inside, a window booth 78 inches x 27 inches, short side facing north and south [ed., a tennis court is 78 feet x 27 feet]. The table is occupied, a weird chess set sits on the court halfway between two players.

*Just hang in there, buckaroo!* I hear Wyoh's famous phrase of encouragement echo in my *cabeza* as Jym serves, nipping my second rook, a clown smile on his face. Damn! My poor brain just isn't responsive today. If I could manage it, I'd list nineteen non-archaic synonyms for *unresponsive*, but I can't manage it. I know this is my poorest showing yet. I'm White and I usually win when I get White. I drum up some mental zoom thanks to the Ghost of Chess-Matches Past who shows me several of my spectacular wins along with a few just-barelies to say the jig ain't up yet. But . . . "So yo then man, what's *your* story today?" Jym queries as he checkmates me in record time.

I toss up my hands, "No excuse." But, of course, I have, loads of 'em: little sleep due to my Dorinda's snoring, so adenoidal that it produces subsonic vibrations that bone-conduct to my brain despite earplugs and the thick foam of my pillow; forgot to take my brain-booster pills this morning; didn't have my 10 a.m. double espresso; got an Armbuster on the brain worse than a cancer since he's instituted a required ONE-DAY-AT-A-TIME technology workshop for us oldsters at which we must wear personalized capes and adopt a *nom de technologie* (mine is ROM, Wyoh's is RAM); worriedly planning an eleven-day non-paid escapade; anxiety about the multiple pluses placed after an A grade I gave to a substandard student so he could keep his financial aid, because he's now in a ripe position to blackmail me if he takes another class with me. These can be all lumped together in the catchall phrase (learned from listening to Wyoh complain): *Why-oh-why-oh-poor-me*. That endless yammer of the *cabeza* that my solipsistic self always suffers, but which I cover with my genius for feigned unconsciousness.

Jym, wearing a spiffy tailored vest today, carefully puts the chess pieces into a large box, a little padded stable for each piece, which, in turn, fits into a spiffy canvas carrybag with an adjustable strap to sling over a shoulder. We got time to kill. We order coffee. Segue into typical teach-chat. "I think this country," starts off Jym, "has an obsession with content and curriculum, all the while devaluing pedagogical presence and proximity. No child left behind, but few advanced enough to educate themselves after formal schooling is complete."

"Values of teaching are hard to describe or quantify," I add.

## Finding Mememo

"Or to teach up-and-coming instructors. Real teaching is an art, the educational results of which are poorly reported in standardized tests and poorly predicted in predetermined learning outcomes foisted on faculty."

"Yep, the admin-type demands hard data, binary code, on a real world phenomena better described by using *fuzzy logic*,"<sup>1</sup> I say, touching on a soft spot in my scientific interests. "Ichi told me once that the Japanese were the first to utilize fuzzy logic for practical applications, the first notable application being on the high-speed train in Sendai, in which such logic was able to improve the economy, comfort, and precision of the ride."



Hy Grader's classroom, X marks his podium, taken during a break (Photo by Grader)

"A Frenchly thinker, Jacques Ellul, of the early 50s, wrote that *technique* has come to dominate our modern society, rational calculation favoring efficiency — 'The one best way' — over all else. And Jacques Derrida rallied against the unprecedented techno-social structures he called 'societies of control,' which are

---

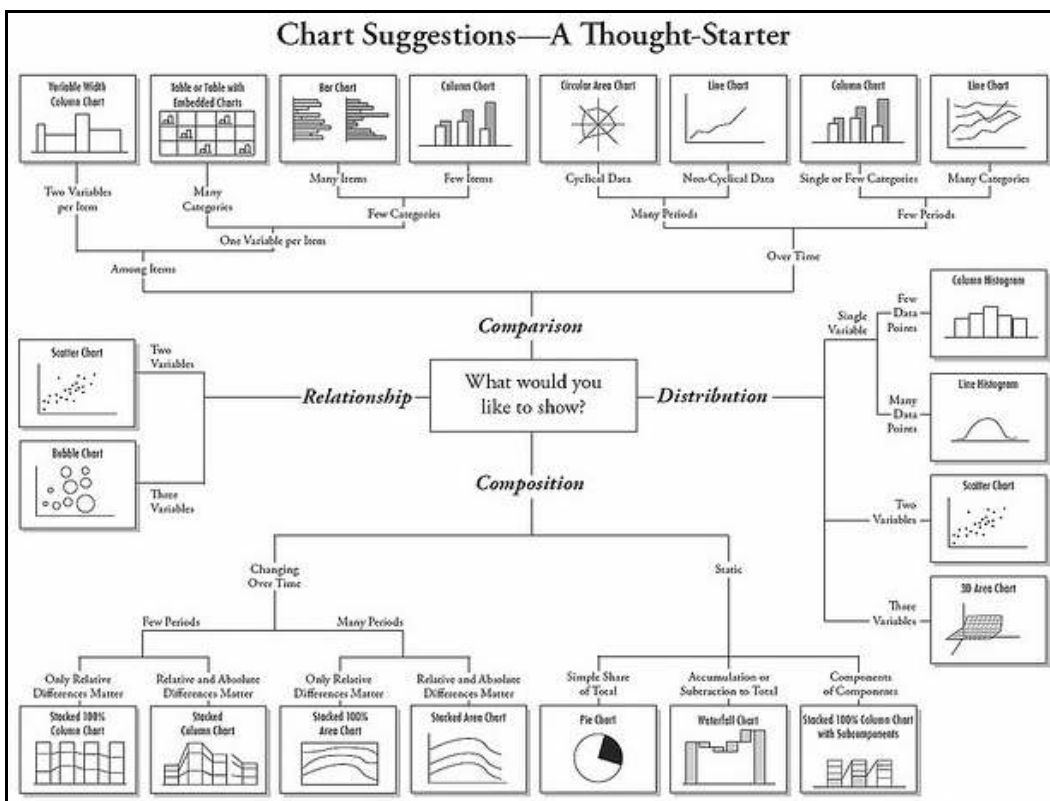
1. Fuzzy logic computing is based on "degrees of truth" rather than the usual "true or false" (1 or 0) Boolean logic on which the modern computer is based. The idea of fuzzy logic was first advanced by Dr. Lotfi Zadeh of the University of California at Berkeley in the 1960s.



## Finding Mememo

but the expression of Capitalism dominance in digital form via network-based systems of evaluation and surveillance. Ergo, an admin's job is to constantly generate material for data analysis. Spreadsheets, curve charts, columns of figures, opinion polls, focus groups, software that channels data directly back to admin, and so forth, are needed to find that *one best way*. The student is turned into a customer for a commodity, information delivered by faculty-types. The more efficiently, and to greater numbers, info can be disseminated."

"Yep. Our student-consumers must be attracted, drawn in, gratified, pandered to. Inputs to be as efficiently as possible turned into outputs with their degrees. The teacher, provider-of-services (i.e., information), is merely turned into a laborer-machine. He or she loses status *vis-à-vis* the student and not just in relation to the admin-type. The student groks this and acts appropriately. The need for more sub-admin-types grows exponentially to faculty hires, faculty whose salaries start to dip lower in order to pay the cost to hire more admin-types who then generate more paperwork and more busywork for faculty, which then . . . Well, you got the point," says Jym, tossing his hands up.



"Classroom interaction is a form of *eventness* which is slowly dying out

## Finding Mememo



Hy Grader's gag shot of Jym as a bored student

in an age of *commentary*," I offer, trying to make a larger statement about current trends. "Encouraging students to interact with professors via texting, file uploads, online blackboard postings via their iPads and iPhones — well — the age of direct experience is on its way out, dude."

"Speaking of students," Jym observes, "when I'm not paying attention to them, they appear to desperately need it; when I am giving them full attention, they seem happier to sit in class and just play by themselves."

"Well, it's heap more exciting to *want* information than to *have* it. In my classes kids sit poker-faced, fear peer ridicule, and so are mute, like when they sit before their 'puters, pads, and phones. Web 2.0's got 'em by the throat."

"And students got us by the throat via their parents. I mean, woe be to the teacher who has to deal with an irate parent, demanding their 'gifted' child get that fat big A."

"Grading — it's what I call The Big Alpha Bet, students gambling on how high they'll score and wondering if the House's odds (the instructor) are stacked against them."

"And don't all of us know," Jym replies, "that ultimately one's grades in school, especially art school, mean jack shit! It's about having been socialized."

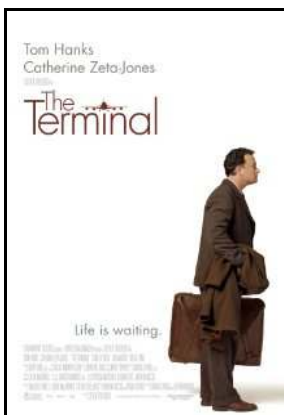
"Getting back to something *global* here underlying what we've been discussing, Ichi — he's always jetting back 'n forth from Asia or Europe — remarked how it seemed to him that the whole world is becoming an airport, with more and more glass, fewer smells to distinguish one place from another, and with nowhere quiet to sit in the dark and/or sleep. 'No *wabi-sabi* anymore,

*broheim*, if you catch my drift,' he wailed. Now, if we posit that the classroom is supposed to be a space of dimness (to show slides), of quiet (to enhance contemplation), of experience (discursive interaction), well, see, it's now *becoming airport* (to play on Deleuze's concept), penetrated by technology (smart classrooms) that produce dull students."

"Neo-Luddite!" Jym joshes me. "Seriously though, I like that, *becoming airport*."

"Well, there've been all those *Airport* movies over the decades. A pop kultch symptom, yes?"

"Culminating in *The Terminal* (2004) where Tom Hanks is literally living in an airport."



# Finding Mememo

"Yes! I remember I once submitted a close-reading of that movie — titled the paper "Terminal Velocity" — for a Mad City avant-garde film mag, *The MacGuffin*. Ichi 's friend was editor then, but he got fired; they changed editors, and my submission was dumped. Anyway, the cover for the DVD shows Hanks in profile, looking awfully like a college prof on his way to class."

"Bingo! Right on! Like waiting for the previous class to let out so he can go in and pass back graded midterm exams to his anxious students."

Waiter approaches. We each nod a YES for a refill on our coffees.

"Yep. By the way, Dallas is working on a new story."

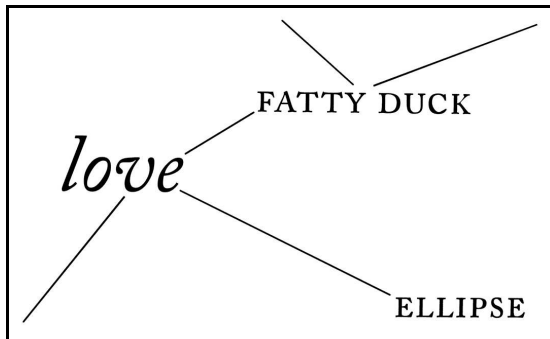
"Like, no shit, he's always working on a new story, that guy."

"Working title? 'Guffin's MAC.' The so-called Hitchcockian 'MacGuffin'<sup>2</sup> in the story is Glenn Guffin's MAC PowerBook — in this Dallas' story referred to as 'Big Mac', a name painted on its cover. Well, it's stolen off him as he walks east on Chicago Avenue on his way to the Museum of Contemporary Art to see a performance of 'Rage and Powerlessness — Not,' by the outrageous feminist ensemble, The Howling Fantods. As a masked muscley mugger grabs, Guffin grips back, grasping hard to keep the mugger from getting his machine while

gasping in horror. As he later tells police: *'Everything I've ever let go of has claw marks on it. Claw marks that now have raked across the name Big Mac painted on my machine. Should be easy to find and identify.'* But it isn't.

"The police just shoulder shrug and give with the *Que sera, seras*. Pisses Glenn off muchly. The cops are too busy shooting black teenagers in the ghetto. He ends up taking out a loan, hiring our stupendous gum shoe, Blurt Wild-braine who never finds it. Too bad, as Glenn's got all the files for his MFA thesis show (including the final cut of his film noir pastiche, *Love Duck*) on that machine.

"Priceless data and, damn,



Storyboard notes for *Love Duck* (2015) by Glenn Guffin



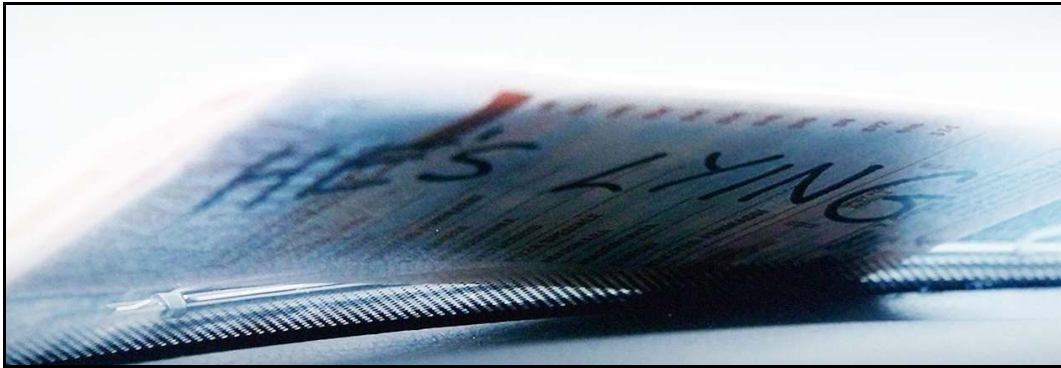
Film still from unedited version of *Love Duck* (2015, video), a pastiche of 1950s film noir by Glenn Guffin

---

2. In fiction, a MacGuffin (sometimes McGuffin) is a plot device in the form of some goal, desired object, or other motivator that the protagonist pursues, often with little or no narrative explanation. The specific nature of a MacGuffin is typically unimportant to the overall plot.

## Finding Mememo

no fuckin' backup? Why? Glenn is a depressive — on meds, S.S.R.I.'s — so 'natch he forgot to backup his humongous .vid file. He's a real hand full, this grad student, even for Blurt. The search for that purloined machine takes our fearless detective through many dark streets and strange adventures in which he encounters: dipsomaniacal stock traders, ex-EI Rukns, cyberpunk hackers, menial laborers carrying shivs, waiters at eateries that've been featured on "Check Please" TV shows, even jealous fellow art students who might've wanted to screw with Guffin's thesis project. No luck.



The "He's lying" note left on Blurt Wildbraine's car's wiper blade (illustration from "Guffin's MAC")

"In one scene, Blurt leaves The Artist's Café after interviewing a person of interest only to discover under his car's wiper blade a disturbing note saying: *He's lying*. This opens an epistemological conundrum in the investigation which Wildbraine, via Dallas, is just starting to deal with."

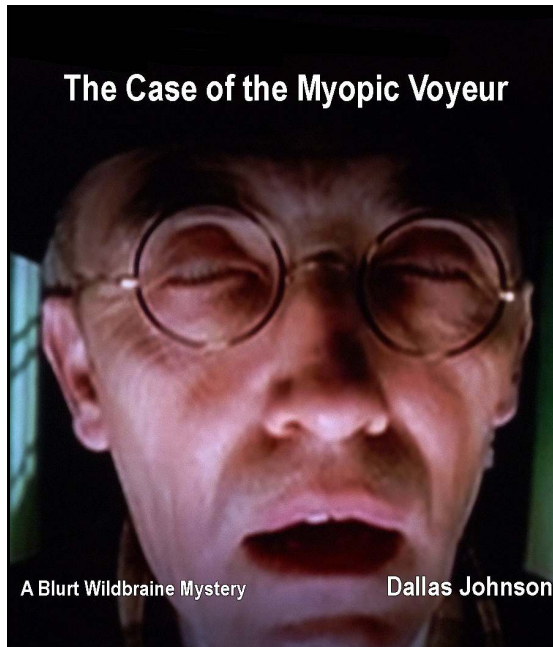
Now Jym is used to my paraphrasing Dallas' stories, so he's been all polite resignation, behaving like a noun, not a verb. Motionless, with his legs stretched out under the table under his white jean slacks, legs tipped with high topped Coolstroke Williams brand tennis shoes sporting *faux* laces, a side zipper allowing for easy on-and-off. His wife has convinced him this *rétro* outfit is a time machine back to youthful potency. Duh. I notice the lunch trade has long gone and the early dinner dudes are arriving, mostly faculty and students revving up for their 6 p.m. classes. Two Joe Briefcases, who I've seen standing around the Comp Lit Department's coffee pot flirting with the new departmental office secretary, have just plopped down in the booth behind us.

"If we abdicate our initiative, we become passive — receptive victims of on-coming circumstances," says Joe the Elder.

"I can ditto that," replies Joe the Younger, "I can, yep, sure, good."

"By the way, thanks for picking over my last paper, 'Existentiovoyeuristic Conundra in Dallas Johnson's *The Case of the Myopic Voyeur*'. I have trouble being clear and concise."

## Finding Mememo



"I know what you mean. My problem is being lucid and brief. By the way, like, loved the section where you addressed the fact that the publisher, to cover costs, put pretty full-page color ads for Spex Optical on every fifth page."

They place their orders with a new server who has just come on duty: a Viking-looking guy with one eyebrow straight across his forehead and knuckles that almost drag on the floor. Joe the Elder opts for the Tex-Mex Pork-Rice-'n-Beans Scramble. Joe the Younger goes for the Weiner-Gotcha Brown Rice Stir-fry. Both request chopsticks, handing their knife-fork-spoon bundles

back to the Neanderthal.

"When I lecture," says Elder Joe, "for emphasis these days, I use CAPITAL LETTERS. *Italics* for emphasis often don't make it through students' cyberspace. Besides, these kids mainly get their information off screens. I talk, they fall asleep, but put something up on the big screen and, pronto, eyes open up."

"I can ditto that. It seems the kids today, ones 'n zeroes, are either OFF or ON." Laughs.

"Even though their logic is often fuzzy." Dittos the laugh.

"I can ditto that, too."

Jym and I may have been lucid today, but we were hardly brief. I want to stay and keep an ear to their *Akademysprache*, but it's time for us to meet our own respective classes. We each cough up our share of the bill, leaving a hefty tip to compensate for our lengthy table occupation, and shuffle off. Exiting, I go south, Jym goes north. Together, we *are* bipolar.

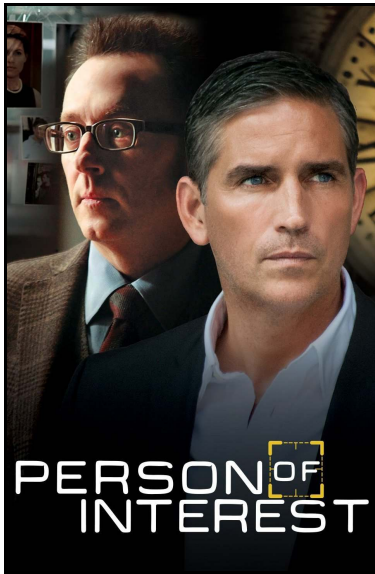
\* \*

*Editor's gloss: I remember that day very well. We were fulfilling the terms of our mutual contract — handshakes, lunch, conversation, an afternoon of chess — where one of us emerges as victor. Yes. I creamed Hy that day on the field of chessly honor. We were so into our game — chess is a back 'n forth so much like tennis moving over a field of contest, but a very slow-motion form of such — we just ignored the activities in the*



## Finding Mememo

*periphery of our field of vision, putting the restaurant world revolving about us in brackets [circulating waiters, tourists snapping selfies, small kids tossing french fries, students texting, professors grading papers], which children do with adult surroundings when playing; or which adults do when they ignore the tele's status as mere furniture when watching (say) "Masterpiece Theatre", wholly absorbed.*



Jim Caviezel (right)

*But I got majorly distracted — curious that Hy never mentioned this incident — when a stunningly beautiful tall man walked in (alone!), a man about forty, a possessor of a large, intelligent, perfectly ordered golden-section-ratio face in which there was no discernible trace of turbulent emotion — at most keen attention. His hair lifted softly above an unruffled forehead, his eyes were radiant with unencumbered confidence, as if a stream of beauty poured into him through eyes, eyes that carried the promise of a holiday. No man has the right to look that good.*

*It was a composite endowment of physical attributes that expressed poise, well-being, and lucidity, yet a beauty that was entirely human and approachable. Lest one think here, Never judge a book by its cover, remember Oscar Wilde understood that "It's only shallow people who do not judge by appearance." The man was a spitting image of (or was!) actor Jim Caviezel, known for his portrayal of Jesus Christ in*

*the 2004 film The Passion of the Christ, but to me familiar from my favorite TV series, "Person of Interest". In that series, Caviezel plays former Black Ops hit-man, John Reese. He's an object of desire in our society's Multi-Media Mega-Gaze that both enhances pretty people's appeal and makes us average dudes insecure about our own physical endowments.*



*This doppelgänger, well, I fantasized that his real name was John Reese — goes with his All-American appearance and makes me imagine my favorite forbidden snack. I wondered if this person-of-my-interest had the same low, soft-gravel voice that Caviezel uses to great effect in that TV show. But Babe Magnet glides onto a stool at the counter, too far away for me to hear*

*his voice, and gets the attention of all the women in the room.*

*I'm not gay, but as a voyeuristically-inclined art-type I'm not immune to male charm. It's not just the proverbial nude-woman-in-the-bath trope that gets my attention. To behold such beauty is to say that life affirms that our task here is to suffer no more. (But why do we suffer? — that's a deeper question for Joe/Jane Briefcases and Joe/Jane Prayer Books.) Ah! Such beauty falsifies the weight of the world. The chances of REALLY knowing what it must be like to BE that man in THIS world is as low as a stuffed pepper knowing the dream of a flying-fish.*

## Finding Mememo

*Again, let me reiterate how odd it was that Hy dropped this narratively rich event from his consideration. After all, absences can speak as loudly (or even more so) than presences. Odder since, at the time, we discussed the phenomenology of this man's appearance (as appearance and as appearing at the moment he did). I even went on to mention how this incident could be put into tension with his attraction to déjà vu as manifest in this encounter of mine and the fact that I felt this distanced-meeting with my TV hero had been already-written somewhere. I said it sure seemed like great grist for his voracious need to write. Let me expand on this a moment.*



David Foster Wallace

*In this section, as in most of Hy's fiction, there is a tension between the veracity of his descriptions and the voracity of his language, between original expression and appropriated text (e.g., in this section there are many shards of metafictionist David Foster Wallace's writing) which creates indeterminacy between what's fiction, what's citation, and what's invented citation. Put simply, a productive tension between phenomenological and structuralist theories that one befuddled critic defined as "prose text of an*

*indeterminate kind," but what Hy preferred to name as a new genre, "ludicakadroman", and which he thought, with his usual grandiosity, was: "Really, the best drug you'd ever take."*

*In phenomenology, Hy was drawn to Edmund Husserl's attempt to seize the beginning proposing itself to the beginning, as a beginning in the beginning. In structuralism, he was drawn to the socially-coded aspect of language; in poststructuralism, he was drawn to the already-written/already-seen pervading contemporary culture; in Object-Oriented Ontology, he was drawn to the secret life of objects. Hence, his writings wobble between seemingly opposed theoretical interests. This would seem to be confirmed when I found a philosophy class syllabus in Hy's desk drawer pertaining to this subject when going through his papers.<sup>3</sup>*

\* \* \*

---

3. Course syllabus introduction for PHIL 607: *Phenomenology to Structuralism to Alien Phenomenology*: "This seminar will examine the complex interrelation between phenomenology and structuralism (and post-structuralism), two of the most influential schools of thought in 20<sup>th</sup> C. Continental philosophy. According to the received view, these traditions are mutually opposed since the former is committed to the primacy of subjectivity in meaning and experience while the latter evacuates the subject in favor of impersonal systems of relations. Structuralism is therefore sometimes labeled 'anti-phenomenology.' However, this received view is superficial and anachronistic; while it captures the spirit of the French academia in the 1960s, it glosses over the many historical and thematic affinities between the two traditions. This class will, therefore, re-examine phenomenology and structuralism with an eye to both differences and points of contact.

## Finding Mememo



A sultry summer-noon is past and mellow evening comes at last, the early evening sky is the color of old jeans. We are at Moto,<sup>1</sup> a hot-shit eatery in the burgeoning Fulton Market area of the city. Crowd of mixed generations. Jym's friend, Barry, a dealer in vintage photographs and on the side a superb vintner selling his award-winning wine under the name Singer Cellars has just flown in from Napa, California to hawk his latest: Best of Class 2013 Gold Medal Napa Bordeaux blend, ARIA (70% Petit Verdot, 12% Cabernet Franc, 8% Merlot) at a variety of tasting food venues here in Chicago. Ichi has driven down eager to meet Barry to chat him up about a possible show at his small Petaluma-based gallery. Barry is a unique fellow. Driven. MFA from California Institute of the Arts. Founder of Singer Printing, sold now to bankroll Singer Gallery and Singer Cellars. Dallas and Jym are here to sample the winery wares too. I see it as a brief getting away from already being pretty much out of it. A short test-run for my planned eleven-day binge-jump.



Smart as hell, Barry, at each restaurant venue, he offers small tidbits of Parmesan-crusted lamb shanks and herb-roasted rack of pork with morel cream sauce to accompany his tastings as these meats amp up the gustatory experience of this particular wine. Barry, his Gigi, and several underlings on Moto's staff all wear buttons declaring HELP ME GROW — SINGER CELLARS. I tell Barry I appreciate the double-entendre.

We Four Amigos, Barry and Gigi, mingle in gathering which is starting to become a claustrophobic mash as both Jym and I had put up flyers about the event's free food 'n booze on our respective school's bulletin boards. I'm fighting the Big Squeeze, trying to keep a distance from a "som" sporting *Wine Spectator* press credentials on his sport coat, tucked into a corner talking shop with Alpana Singh. Forty, greyhound-thin with steel glasses and hair that looks carved out of feldspar, he radiates intense interest, but is being annoyed by a guy, one hand on his wine, the other (I soon find out) pouring out promos for an "austerity" sale at his furniture and appliance biz next door: 3 BROTHERS HOME WORLD.

The som is equipped with a prodigious verbal ability to parse wine. Thinks molecularly; he and Alpana were comparing notes. With a nudge he leaked how they'd evaluate Barry's blend: "My first glass of this gift of fruit from Napa's vineyards? Dense, rich aromatics of brambly wild blackberry mingled with traces of forest floor and black currant; dark cherry bathed my mouth while layers of subtle cedar, black and red currants, and blackberry join in; a lovely cocoa essence with traces of blueberry appeared mid-palate to complement the juicy

---

1. Ironical in relation to Hy's demise that the founding chef at Moto, Homaro Cantu, only 38-years old, whose creative blending of science and fine dining garnered international attention for his West Loop restaurant, was found hung by the neck, his death declared a foodicide.

## Finding Mememo

yet dry flavors as they lingered on. Alpana, love that gal, stressed that the structure remained in the background with just enough presence and finesse as to not be forgotten. Loved that last line. Could be a description of the relation between my father and me." As this guy, Frank was his name, was confiding this to me, well, it's like he's only looking *at* my eyes, not *into* them. Go figure.



In the crowded space, I didn't notice Dallas standing next to us at first. Always the provocateur, he's wearing a WE'D GET ALONG BETTER IF YOU WERE A BEER T-shirt. We turn to him. He takes a sip of Barry's wine, sees his visage distorted in the glass, and offers up, "I won't give up on beer," over the crowd's din, "but I agree this *is* the blessed blood of Christ!" He's overheard Frank so asks Mr. Vino if he could snatch from his detailed connoisseurial spiel and work it into his Blurt Wildbraine story in progress, a mystery based on an actual case of his ("ripped from the headlines," as they say) which features a Mag Mile wine bar as a site of some corporate shenanigans.

"Dallas Johnson!? *The* Dallas Johnson?!"

"Yeah. And any problem? says Dal."

"Unless it's a crime to be in a state of adoration!" Frank says, making intense eye contact. "I'm a *real* fan of *your* detective stories! Good ol' Blurt is the kind of guy, part wino and part beer-junky, we fruit of the vine sniffers can appreciate. Yep. Tally Ho! Use as use may." Mr. Vino wheedles through the human crunch to the old wood bar and writes out just what he told me on the back of the chef's famous edible menu and gives it to Dal. Then they pair up and start an excited rap session as if they were long lost brothers. I get the gist of this exchange later from Dal.

It seems when Dal mentioned he knew some folks in Baraboo, Wisconsin connected with the circus, Frank lit up like a Christmas-in-July tree. Starts in about his very humble beginnings as a carny operator's assistant, traveling about the Midwest carnival circuit. You know, County Fairs and State Fairs — those rural moments of maximum community that fill the summers of our Heartland dwellers. This, after graduating high school with grades too deflated to get him into college. Cheap dope and peppermint schnapps became his staple. Itinerant, insular, unclean, not-to-be-trusted types became his companions. People often yelled *Traish!* and pointed at him, Him-the-Lowlife. The carny attraction he worked was a shoot-the-bottles marksmanship type of challenge. He'd set up the bottles — some were green and had a ring of red wine inside so the dark convexity of the glass rose and shone out of it like the fire of an emerald — BANG, POP — then he'd sweep up the shards, reset new bottles,

## Finding Mememo



Château Lafite Rothschild (1973)

sweep the broken glass, then, well you get it, happy-as-happy as a dead-end job can make one. Which means he was one bored pup. But when the dipso owner was knifed in a bar brawl in Bara-boo, Frank took over the concession — he'd just turned 21. One day a customer, taking careful aim with the pellet rifle, noticed a peculiar bottle that stood out from the rot-gut liquor bottles lined up for assassination. It was, in fact, a rare 1973 (99-point) Château Lafite

Rothschild! Now Frank just shrugged. Frog jibberish to him. But this would-be sharpshooter was a *sommelier* who explained to Frank what a treasure the wine that had occupied that bottle was, rattling off terms that seemed a bit pornographic to his Midwest ears, explaining the official wine-rating system —

95-100 Classic: a great wine

90-94 Outstanding: a wine of superior character and style

85-89 Very good: a wine with special qualities

80-84 Good: a solid, well-made wine

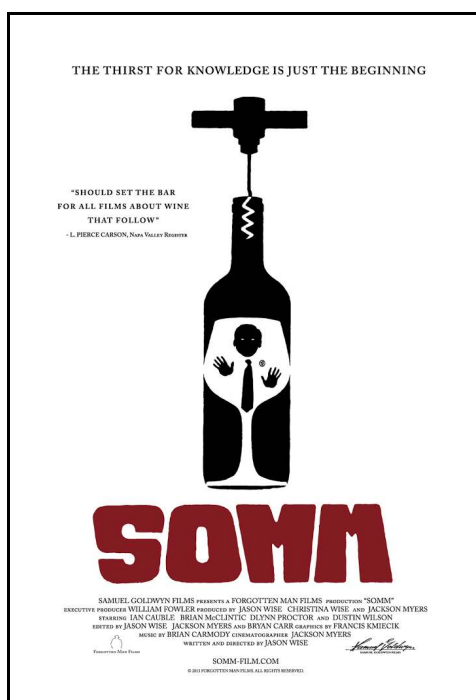
75-79 Mediocre: a drinkable wine that may have minor flaws

50-74 Not recommended

— by an analogy even Frank could understand, “Why man, just substitute *woman* for *wine*, get it?” Frank said his eyes felt like they grew several centimeters in diameter that day.

Well, the rest is history. Frank, on his own, began to study wine in his spare time, putting all the wine terminology under a microscope, learning the subtleties of description — fleshy, fruit level, sweetness level, legs, nose, finish, heady, velvety, balance, body, bouquet, bottle sickness, oaky, grassy, aftertaste, structure, and the geographic wonders of *terroir* — from books read in, at times stolen from, libraries in every town the carnival appeared in. A mobile serial book killer.

Then one lucky day he was given a lotto ticket in payment for a shot at his





## Finding Mememo

bottles. Well, it was a winner! He won a State PowerBall lottery of \$50,000 with the numbers: 7-0-1-2-8 [*ed., the very percentage numbers in Barry's wine's blend*]. Knowing now Lady Luck was on his side, he sold his concession and enrolled in classes to prepare himself for a career as a Somm, serving up bottles for a more sophisticated clientele.

He still has that bottle of Bordeaux he saved from destruction, it sits now on a shelf in his office at *Wine Spectator*. Frank is still traveling, but this time around the world to sample the best of the best at the best of the best wineries. "No better job could be found. I'll work steady at this until God pulls my cork," he tells Dallas. He's a good friend of Alpana's and has been called in to advise on the 2012 cult movie *Somm*, which is about four *sommeliers* attempting to pass the prestigious Master Sommelier exam. My Dorinda and I'd seen and loved it. In retrospect, if my sinus trouble hadn't screwed with my tasting ability and made me susceptible to sea sickness, I wouldn't have minded being a somm on one of those luxury Five-Star Caravelle Love Boat Megaships plowing Caribbean waves, recommending the world's best fruit of the vine to the too-Jolly Rogerers making sail on wealthy divorcées at the ship's bar. I'd certainly have had a Port in every storm, a Cab in every port. Merleau-Ponty near my reading lamp. Add if I didn't want to work, I could sham pain.

יהוה

Yahweh Frank pokes at Dallas for advice on self-publishing; it seems he wants to write a memoir, *From Terror to Terroir: One Man's Salivation*, that will take the food and wine lovers market by storm. Talking about storms. Yahweh serves one up right out of David Foster Wallace's take on Midwest weather. Yowie! Richter-scale thunder, brutal, sideways sheets of rain, big, thick zigzags of lightning that look like Hebrew script — it's real Old Testament outside. People who'd wandered out on the sidewalk to escape Captain Crunch and his Crew of Merry Revelers — for by now the staid event is no longer staid — came dashing back in, soaked. I, in a kind of fugue state, was flashing on that terrible hail heavy storm the day Youth yelled its discontent and jumped off the Museum balcony. The lights go off. One girl screams in D sharp minor, whether from fear of the heavens or because she was on the way to the hell of being date-raped, I'll never know. Another woman is crying in low, staccato sobs. An Anonymous Guy bellows, "Kick his ass!" Noise of rowdies rifling the wine racks. Somm one is yelling for calm. Others are screaming, "Basement, basement, quick! Tornado!" Panic. Compared to the resulting melee, ordinary chaos would seem calm. Fifteen minutes later lights go on, the storm's passed. Silence except for a few moans. Our crowd looks like they've been to the Twilight Zone and back. Sobered up, most are leaving, but there's a few revelers still huddling in the basement among canned goods, vats of too-be-disposed-of grease, and one Chicago rat that has managed to dodge security.

## Finding Mememo

Barry and Gigi have survived the debacle with minimal injury. But most of the tasting's snacks have disappeared along with several unopened and unpaid for bottles of ARIA.<sup>2</sup> They dump the spit buckets, collect their wares, pack up the trunk of their rented SUV, and we all walk the wet block and a half or so to The Publican, where, being so late, tables have become available. It's a beer 'n pork destination that ranks high on our beer-besotted buddy's list of places to be. The staff all know Dallas. In fact, that's where he bought that beer-touting T-shirt. The staff smile warmly at us, not that professional-style high-wattage smile. Looking around is a bipolar experience. The restaurant's clientele are divided in half by couture. One side, a wedding party one assumes, is decked out in formal wear, clad in shoes that shine like black mirrors; the other side sports distressed jeans and funky T-shirts that identify either with brand names or are gag shirts like Dal's, the guys shoed in Adidas, Nike, Reebok, Puma, Jordan sports shoes; the gals in high-priced high heels.

We are taken to tall chair seats. It takes two of us to help Dallas on his throne. Our waiter introduces himself as "Tibor from the Pest side of Budapest," knows his meats and beers, here only a month. After we're served — most of us getting either crispy beef tongue or pork belly along with various sides — he is always coming over to us and with a slight bow inquiring, "Please . . . is good? . . . If good you say me, I be happy. If not, I fix." We are over-wined, too much fruit of the vine, so all opt for beer. Dal becomes our "brewmolier", pointing out the choice choices as what will bubble 'n sing with our entrées.

The late-evening conversation runs from wines and beers we discovered at age 19 (it Mateus Rosé and Blatz for Jym, Blue Nun and Heineken for me), to the first artist book we held in our hands (Dieter Roth for me, an Ed Ruscha for Jym, and Daid Moriyama's for Ichi ). For Dallas, not an art book, but an anthology of Sherlock Holmes. Barry, and Gigi either kept their answers too close to the vest, or my hearing over the crowd was impaired, or (worse) my memory's going *Kaput*. Let me revise that. My short-term memory *is* basically non-functional. When I was a kid my dad called me a "Wisenheimmer" and now I'm becoming an "Alzheimer". Barry charms us with tales of his early days in the printing biz, Gigi delights in telling about their smart, stunning daughter, Marissa, and of her recent marriage to "the handsomest guy a camera has ever framed." Jym and I do CliffNotes versions of awful experiences that drove us to bouts of Cannabis Solipsism in our pre-prosperous days. What rises as the common denominator in these stories is that our respective interests (and later careers) arose from the sustained FUN we all had in doing something. Play

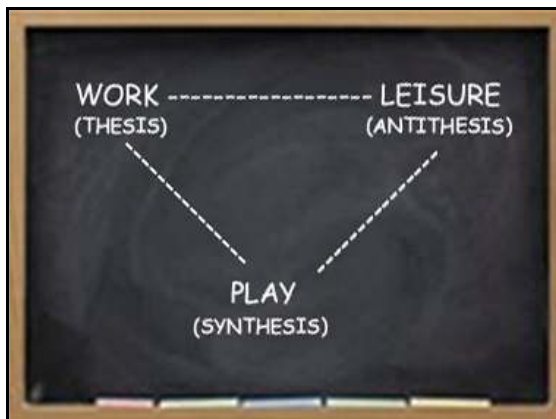
---

2. Eponymous Singer Cellars appropriately names its various wines after musical terms: The Song, Rhapsody, The Harmony, The Symphony, et cetera, a winery not merely "fiddling" around, but clair-audiently lifting the veil into a deeper reality; no discordant notes here.

## Finding Mememo

Faculty	District Says	AFT Analysis	2018 salaries relative to 2007
Full Time	7.8% (over 3 years)	7.8% (District proposal) <del>- 3.7%</del> (Restoration to 2007) 4.1%	4.1% (over 3 years)
Part Time	3% (over 3 years)	3.0% (District proposal) <del>- 3.7%</del> (Restoration to 2007) <del>- 0.7%</del>	-0.7% (over 3 years)

City College of San Francisco Statistics on Faculty Salary



turning to Work returning to Play. Disciplined fun as more than random, impulsive, or hedonistic fun.

I go on to explain to our group that this is something I've been elucidating to my students in LIBS 246: Art and Urban Life, a class on utopias and dystopias. There we analyze the dichotomy of work versus leisure, how modern rationalized production splits us into hours of alienated labor (pro-

duction) then hours of restorative leisure (consumption). Work at the factory, followed by leisure at a bar, theater, or TV. But in earlier artisanal production, work was largely unalienated, so work and play were not opposites. Work was a form of play, play a form of work. Anyway, that was the gist of my lectures, engaged within the context of a study of Professor Ernest Callenbach's groundbreaking utopian novel, *Ecotopia* (1975),<sup>3</sup> which was contextualized within the

---

3. Written in the throes of the Vietnam War, *Ecotopia* tells of a secessionist nation — carved from what was once Oregon, Washington and Northern California — that by 1999 has evolved toward a “stable state” of bioregionalism in which each territory cultivates its distinct ecological character and all work becomes unalienated, cooperative, and fairly compensated. Ludic aspects of life are encouraged and celebrated. A basic social wage is paid all.

## Finding Mememo



Wyoh at a "No Firings" protest

radical desires of the late-1960s counter-culture with its famous Merry Pranksters.<sup>4</sup> This book encapsulated what all of us hoped our future might be. These radical Separatists who challenged the mores of The Silent Majority to create Ecotopia, would today be lambasted as anarchists, terrorists, mental defectives, Communists. To admin-types today, such idealists are often the "contingent faculty", people high on the list to receive lower pay or even their marching papers. This is why Wyoh is putting this Xeroxed excerpt from *The Coming Insurrection* in part-time faculty mailboxes.

Contrary to what has been repeated to us since childhood, intelligence doesn't mean knowing how to adapt — or if that is a kind of intelligence, it's the intelligence of slaves. Our *inadaptability*, our fatigue, are only *problems* from the standpoint of what aims to subjugate us.

— *The Coming Insurrection*

It's only when we all have ascended to a transcendent, boozily mind-blowing plane, when we are unable to adapt to our current inebriated state, that Ichi drops a hint about a possible show of his "Totem Series" (vertically-stacked imagery) at Barry's gallery, by delicately stacking

and balancing table items higher and higher as a demonstration. By the time these tumble into the white snow of the table cloth, it's apparent to Ichi his hopes have tumbled too. Barry is now only showing older, more classic photography. The reason? Sheer economics.

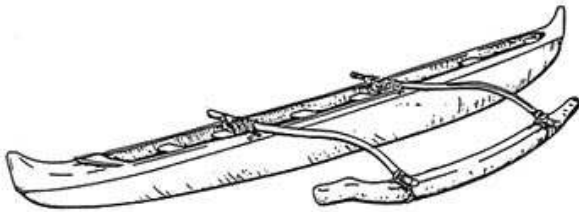
The evening winds down with Dallas, muchly in his cups, droning on about that story-in-progress of his involving corporate shenanigans and a Chicago wine bar. "It's come down to Blurt versus Barolo, a Brooks Brothers' business suit version of Holmes versus Moriarty. But. Damn thing. That story. I love it. I hate it. But. It's become a hideously damaged infant that follows me around, forever crawlin' after me, hideously defective, hydrocephalic, noseless, flipper-armed 'n incontinent." With that last descriptor, Dal awkwardly slides off the bar stool, it groaning in relief, as he slips off and away to the back of the bar mumbling, "I gotta piss like a Russian race horse. I gotta . . ." When he returns, he continues as if no interruption intervened. "Maybe 'cause it's developin' too

---

4. Brother of member Ken Babs: "Ken Kesey and George Walker and I were out wandering around and the rest of the gang were sitting around a fire in Kesey's house in La Honda, and when we came back it was dark and Mike Hagen called out 'Halt! Who goes there?' And just out of the blue I said, "Tis I, the intrepid traveler, come to lead his merry band of pranksters across the nation, in the reverse order of the pioneers! And our motto will be "the obliteration of the entire nation"... not taken literally of course, we won't blow up their buildings, we'll blow their minds!" "

## Finding Mememo

close to the actual case's facts. Or needs *more* facts. Vintner facts. Behind the wine bar facts. Yes, it needs sssome esspert input re: *vino*," he whiningly slurs. "Barrrrrry, might I eee-mail you with quesstions at some point?" Barry's eyes roll in his head like a pair of dice.



Barry. Throughout his life he has been blessed with five (quincunxial!) qualities of note: 1) ability to heap sugar into his coffee for years without becoming diabetic; 2) an arrowed-trajectory vision; 3) bull-stamina; 4) an impatience with mediocrity; and, 5) a superior taste,

visual and gustatory. Put together, arranged in a quincunx (where the single becomes multiple and the multiple becomes unity), these qualities have resulted in bold leaps and great successes. But Gigi has always been there at his side to steady the journey, like an outrigger on a canoe, through calm and high seas, sometimes barking orders, sometimes offering navigational tips. But absolutely necessary for the journey's success, and the success of their long relationship.

We look around and suddenly notice we're the last customers. Wait staff are standing tapping their feet with impatience. How long have they been doing this? Ichi is lapsing into Japanese. Jym is showing Gigi where a parotidectomy has numbed his cheek. Dallas has his head down on the table, his feet keep slipping off the high chair's spokes as he recites a litany to beloved foam: Good Morning, American Double, Imperial Stout, Kentucky Brunch Brand Stout, Toppling Goliath, Mornin' Delight, Heady Topper, Bourbon Barrel Aged Vanilla Bean Dark Lord, and Pliny the Younger. The last catches my attention even through the boozy fog. Yep. Time to boogie.

*Exeunt.*

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: The last two sections could've been placed a bit earlier or later without doing an injustice to Hy's narrative. They are a further demonstration of the importance he placed on shared dining experiences and copped text. Hy would come alive over good food and drink and an author he loved in a way he never did otherwise, except (I'm told) when lecturing to his captivated classes. This and the last section were written after having had soaked up English professor Walter Benn Michaels' controversial writings on diversity and class, and the late David Foster Wallace's fiction with whom he felt a kinship, as both Hy and Wallace had Midwest roots and the fact that Wallace committed suicide. BTW, re: the Toxoplasma gondii parasite theory adumbrated by the coroner re: Hy's demise, Dallas confirmed: "Yeppers, cat hair in the lake cottage he'd absconded to. A place Hy later told me he felt 'free in a way I had rarely felt before.' "*



## Finding Mememo



Hy grading wines, Petaluma, CA

*Hy had visited his long-long-time friends, Barry and Gigi, two years previous at their home in Petaluma, CA and was greeted with a surprise wine-tasting event there his first night. So this section was also an homage by analogy for that stupendous evening of friends, fun, and fab wine. It was all these aspects that convinced us three amigos to include this section, even though it doesn't propel the narrative along much. But it does touch on our group's politics, in particular Wyoh's "thing" with radical French anarchism. Hy had a copy of that classic cult text, The Coming Insurrection. Flipping through it, this underlined passage stood out for near*

*it, scribbled in red, was:*

### Very Important!↘

The present production apparatus is therefore, on the one hand, a gigantic machine for psychic and physical mobilization, for sucking the energy of humans that have become superfluous, and, on the other hand, a *sorting* machine that allocates survival to compliant subjectivities and rejects all "problem individuals", all those who embody another use of life and, in this way, resist the machine.

*It reminded me of Ichi 's succinct Japanese proverb: "The nail that stands up will be pounded down." Coincidentally, Hy and his fellow faculty received the following e-mail the day after that wine tasting:*

Dear Part-Time Faculty Members:

As you know, unions are targeting part-time faculty at colleges and universities in Chicago. Our part-time faculty may be approached by union representatives, and we thought it might be helpful to share with you our thoughts on the issue. First of all, we fully respect your right to form a union if you so choose, but as you are no doubt aware, having union representation is a serious matter that requires careful thought. To assist you in making a fully informed decision about having a union, we want to take this opportunity to review our historic commitment to part-time faculty, explain our view that our current model of direct communication is far more effective than having a union, and offer some background facts about unions. . . .

\* \* \*

# Finding Mememo

19



I forward this e-mail I got as spam to Ichi on his birthday. I often use copped texts to pass on my personal sentiments toward him. It allows me to maintain a textual intimate-distance analogous to our geographical separation:

## Ken Koshio News

Taiko 'n Roll Live Show II, Yin & Yang

Every sunset gives us one day less to live but every sunrise gives us one day more to hope. May every sunrise bring you hope and every sunset bring you peace.

May light and hope always surround you. May your wounds heal and your heart embrace love, kindness, and wisdom. May you fulfill all your dreams and desires.

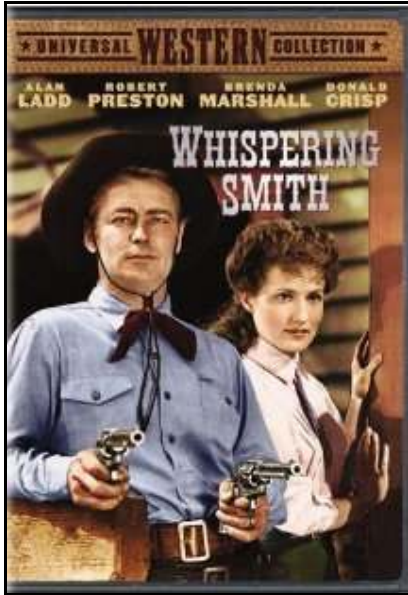


He, in return, sends me a Yang for my Yin, mailing me a scanned detail from a vintage Japanese comic book's cover. Shows the post-WWII influence of American popular culture. Once I showed Ichi an old flick of me at age five dressed as a cowboy, so he knew I'd appreciate this.

Powerful racist myths here — Cowboys 'n Injuns. Heroic (white) individuals versus (dark)

tribal savages, transposed and parodied in Japan with Cowboys as sort of Western versions of Samurai. I had regaled my *broheim* with stories about living within a short bicycle ride from old Western movie sets set in the filmic-famous Santa Susana mountains surrounding Chatsworth where cut-throat *bandito* Joaquin Murrietta once robbed stage coaches, where Roy Rogers and Jay Silverheels (Tonto) had ranches. Ichi was fascinated by my tales of how the mythic West had again come alive before film cameras five miles north of my

## Finding Mememo



Alan Ladd in *Whispering Smith* (1948)

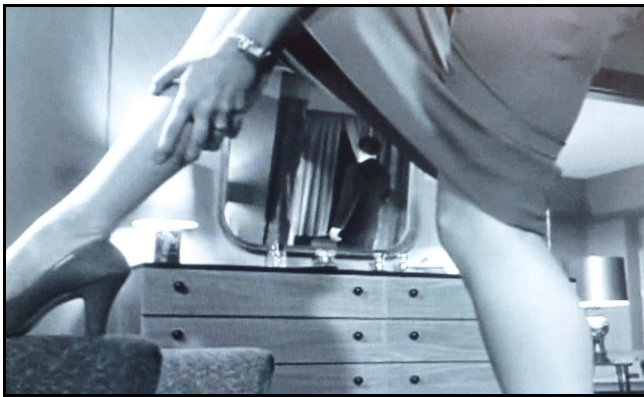
suburban home. Yes, I grew up near one of the most powerful ideological production sites in the United States. Ronnie Regan had walked the dusty trails due north of us. Once, I found a dummy, tossed off a cliff, dressed in Alan Ladd's cowboy shirt, his name penned on the inside collar.

In those Westerns there was always a guy falling off a cliff or getting tossed through a saloon window. Now Crime shows have replaced Westerns. Those going through windows (tossed or jumping to avoid arrest) fall a zillion floors to their terrible deaths thanks to the ubiquitous high-rise. Some jumpers (in an intended intertextual reference?) look like Superman in flight, as my "Jump Shots" diptych below of Sherlock Holmes falling proves.



Sherlock Holmes (Benedict Cumberbatch) in free-fall in "Sherlock", from Hy Grader's "Jump Shots" collection

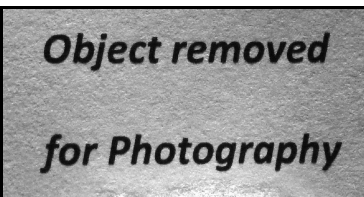
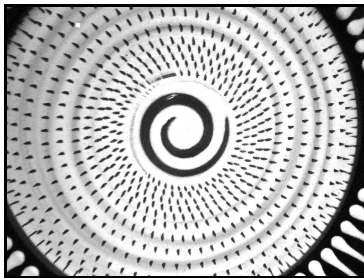
I can imagine putting together a scratch video compiling scores of snip-



Erotic scene to be repeatedly inserted into scratch video

pets of such jumping falls in which all linking shots are removed, language minimized, and nothing is too explicit. Sequencing leaks information in reverse. Immediate circumstances provide the only immediate motivation. I envision a balanced tone: the right measure of erotica (a film noir seduction scene inserted in

## Finding Mememo



between falling shots), cerebration, suspicion and conviction, coincidence and missed connections, principle and pleasure, the right blend of light, heat, and noise. Possible title: *Scratch One More Actor*.

Video would open with a *Vertigo*-like spiral. Then a shot of me lecturing to my class in front of a slide projection with an grave voice-over of Einstein lecturing on gravity. Music is from Hitchcock's *Vertigo*'s opening chase sequence over rooftops. This is followed by numerous jumping/falling sequences copped off TV. Odd bits of imagery are intercut between these jump sequences; some possible choices: someone farting up a street on a mean dirtbike all *wheweee!* and *blat blat blat!*; a balding, startled man; an aporetic text; a sweating, nervous man quoting Samuel Beckett, "I can't go on, I'll go on," and so forth. . . .

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: This section abruptly stops here. Possibly, this was a section Hy was revising prior to his demise. The theme of falling is ominous, even weirdly prescient. One can only imagine what Hy's scratch video would've looked like. Certainly very strange. I can imagine what Dallas' take on it might be: "A real screamer, dude. I can take a hint better than a holler."*

*Choice of placement of this section was long considered. It easily could've fit right after section three, the Museum suicide-attempt scene, or been placed, for dramatic effect, at the very end. But doing so would've dramatically altered the meaning. After some discussion among us four amigos, with input from Dorinda, we decided to place it at this point where it becomes "neutral" in terms of its emotional effect on the reader, who then adopts a more objective stance toward the material.*

\* \* \*



## Finding Mememo

20



Mark but this flee. Days of heat without let up, the sun frowning on all creation below. A storm lurks in the anxious stillness until finally drifting toward the Lake's Indiana-Michigan shores. And then a gentle, almost cool warmth arrived to soothe the bright surface of Chicago's steel and concrete. So too, it sometimes happens in life that a soul weighed down by the travails of living suddenly feels relief — for no apparent reason. I've always suffered more from my consciousness that I was suffering than from the suffering of which I was conscious. But now I have a reason to smile. I am going away "on the road"; everything within reach now gradually loses its proximity. Even while still secretly preparing my eleven day disappearance — flight or search? — things already seem stricken of their powers of presence.

A heavy weather of words between Dory and I. I think: *I can no longer find you nearby in time, despite holding your hand and I have to hold a knife to your neck to get you to read my prose.* During breakfast, she had the color of absence about her, a version of unmooring. I suppose I had for her, like a doomed ship's captain, a subtle aura suggesting no imminent future. She'd made us her famous Kick Ass Oatmeal and was trying to reconcile.

"Hy, if you wish to cross the world with me on your arm, you will have hear me out. I know you feel like you are becoming more like no one else, but remember, the game is won if you feel worthy of your own approval; if you've won by exercising your calculation, conscious will, persistence, and a clear head, the gain is even greater. So perk up!"

The following day, I depart early, Dory still asleep. *Moi* and "Furthur" (as I've dubbed my rental sporting a YOU'RE NOT IN TRAFFIC; YOU ARE TRAFFIC bumper sticker) are attacking hard distance into the land where ATMs are dubbed "Tyme Machines". My road *compadres* are tinted-window SUV's towing motorboats; my penance is road construction and slow trucks in the fast lane. I wave Ichi 's way as I zip past a seventy-five foot tall Air Dancer, a cylindrical rubber man swaying its lugubrious body back-and-forth, advertising a new Mad City car dealership. I pass Portage, whose prison hosted Jeffrey Dahmer, and cross over the Wisconsin River, exiting onto Highway 51 North, set my cruise-control and listen to the low hum of tires turning against the corrugated cement of the Korean War Veterans Highway. Tune in NPR "Ideas Network" radio informing me that in a Brazilian frog species has gone extinct, that somewhere in Upstate New York bats' mouths grow thick with white fungus, while dead bees litter the ground outside an apiary in Iowa City, Iowa.

Five hours more on the road and I am driving past a green meadow with hive for the honey-bee under azure blue sky; identical black-and-white cows



## Finding Mememo

simultaneously turn their heads at my speeding car. I am on my way to a lodge lodged in northern Wisconsin on a lake loons wake. Cabin-snugged in an anxiety-free utopia where rushes grow along rivers with jagged banks jutting like miniature muddy capes into the lead-yellow water, rivers that empty into lakes creating slimy bays best for fishing. There, in the Chequamegon National Forest, every tree is still a liberty tree. Life seeps into one's lungs. One experiences *komorebi*, sunlight filtering through leaves, where silence brings distant sounds: trucks on the interstate, a faceless man behind the wheel lost in a reflection of glass, or a small plane zooming behind clouds. I've been there, as a child.

This woodsy place with its view — where one looks at looking — is home to coppery-colored lizards, raccoons bearing tiny chains around their wrists, stag-antlers grazing, and insects swirling around naked bulbs. There: deactivated faces sitting in Harriet's Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow salon (e.g., economic backslide); the Delta Diner (Ooey Gooey Pasta on Fridays plus re-runs of "Lost in Space"); the Black Cat Bar 'n Brothel (*Beer Growler* mag says it's "A brothel with child-safety gates and a Caring Utility Non-Threatening Environmental Recreation Area [CUNTERA], where each morning its chairs are entangled in pornographic couplings"); and the Vestimentary Parade of Dandies (a parody of Gay Pride events, whose motto is: I BE BUT I DON'T IS). As this place gives forth a slow fall of night, space gradually turns the color of dark clouds that, little by little, vanish into the abolished mass of air as fireflies begin to flash-reign. In an hour, you can see right up to the back molars of the universe, the night beyond the night; at dawn, a fragile pink of sky peeps up. "Heaven's Center, Nature's Lap" the locals call it. Here, my heart's expectations will, I hope, change; certain springs relaxing, others tightening. I won't be CC'ed on e-mails from our Part-Time Faculty Committee Head, like yesterday's disturbing missive:

Hey Dan: Whatever happened with my concern about unethical behavior and potential legal violations by tenure-track faculty in hiring and reviews that we met about? Has that been taken care of? My sense from speaking with colleagues is that admin knew years ago that checks-and-balances should be put in place, but simply hasn't acted, and so there's tenured folks in at least 2 different depts who abuse the system for personal and political vendettas. Oh, misfortune!

My twilight melancholy, brightens when I push hard on my eyeballs creating colored bubbles. I know hiding-out here, to the degree it's from fear, is a form of self-pity, but I slowly see a certain change in my mental probabilities from what seemed inevitable in Chi Town. I am increasingly taken with simple cravings: cool water, dark chocolate, red meat, grilled fish, local brew, all in world infused with life; the lodge's road's pavement caressed by my feet, wildflowers finding their way back to the sun through crevices in the asphalt.

## Finding Mememo

My cabin is named *Moningwunaekauning* (Place of the Yellow Wood-pecker); its front steps warp into a grin; inside, a fan slowly sweeps like a huge black insect turning its head; on the bedside table, a Philip Roth novel. Tonight, it will just be *moi*, a fire, radio tuned to WOJB's tribal drums and chant, later informing me that this area is "occupied by a high percentage of bilingual environmentalists, as well as those eager to maim or kill for an abstraction."<sup>1</sup>

Nothing, now, in my movements transmit my state of stagnation onto the observable plane. But I feel like tears want to slow-slide off the meat of my face. Intoxicated with inertia, batteries on full-recharge, here I will goldenly stagnate in the sun, like a murky pond surrounded by flowers. It is said enjoying the beauty and observation of beauty confers inflated self-importance on the viewer — a boost I very much need. I plan on wandering aimlessly, my tracks like a desert camel's without burden or destination. But, come to think of it, I *am* following something. My Rogerian shrink's advice for some chill-time mixed with a need to simply flee the coop. For I told her during our last session that every object's visible weight weighs heavy on my tattered soul. I told her I am often simultaneously happy and amusing, unhappy and serious. I am both preoccupied with experience and with flux, like Chicago's weather with its wind and waves, with the books I incessantly read, underline, and cop from. I love originality so much, I told her, that I keep copying it. I, that Self which I call *moi*, am a derivative product of an originality that spawns me as it spurns me.

My shrink tried to discourage my whirlpools of despair by encouraging me with, "Only the man who is forever discouraged is *strong*. The only way to survive is by keeping alive your dream, without ever fulfilling it. I sense you are most familiar with estrangement being your home ground. So . . . go do a Thoreau. Let your body become a latent shout; your heart start to pound as if it were talking. That is the only certain uncertain way." So I am doing that. Eleven days. Less booze (no Dallas to drink with, Dallas who ontologically characterizes himself as one thing reflected in many bars), and no subordinate clauses (a break from writing which I've suspected is an entrance exam for Death). Finally, I won't be telling anyone where I am. Especially not my wife. Damn Dory, she got an M.A. in English Lit from the University of Chicago and those bastards filled her with the sharp voices of the New Critics,<sup>2</sup> so I-AS-BRICOLEUR am just one

---

1. WOJB, Reserve, Wisconsin, a National Public Radio member on 88.9 MHz, serves north-western Wisconsin from the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation in the Chequamegon National Forest southeast of Hayward, Wisconsin. Founded in 1982 with the intention of bridging the culture gap between Native Americans and their non-Native neighbors and promoting "Injunuity".

2. New Criticism, a formalist movement in literary theory in the 1950s. It emphasized close reading to discover how a work of literature functioned as a self-contained, self-referential aesthetic object. It derived its name from John Crowe Ransom's 1941 book *The New Criticism*.

## Finding Mememo

more error to reject, the Meme Fallacy, along with the Intentional Fallacy and the Affective Fallacy. Could never get it right to read my writing, “that impenetrable shit,” despite my telling her it revealed my deepest “submarine-in-a-sea-of-authorships” mode of literary warfare. Instead, Ms. Cappelletti, “Little Hats”, my proof-reader, signed on as crew member, a keen sonar operator with an ear for subtexts, eyes for rhizomes; helps navigate, keeping me on course; a keen critic, a literary confidant appreciating what my wife has turned a deaf ear to.

Here there’s no Chad, that armbusting benthic carnivore who lacks a centralized brain-spine assembly and wears a liverwurst-gone-green chitinous exoskeleton composed of segmented Admino-Armor. I won’t have to listen to him clang on about *pro-active resource-allocation restructuring*, or *optimizing net-working skills*, or his touting of a docile student body lured from Asia. Nope, I’m now alone in a bee-loud glade — glad.

On the beach, staring at a motionless walleye flat in the sand, it’s lightless pupil sunk flush as a thumb tack, blankly staring back at me. I am dodging dishing up “happy meals” to students, whose papers say things like: “At first encounter, the poem’s distanced cerebral surfaces can be daunting, evading physical location or straight-forward emotional arc. But this seeming remoteness quickly reveals . . . ,” or “The virgule [*ed., the slash replacing poetry’s line breaks*] is the irreducible mark of poetic virtuality, of banished possibility.” No more getting students to replace *he* with *she* in jargon-stuffed academic papers like: “If such a sublime cyborg would insinuate the future as post-Fordist subject, *her* palpably masochistic locations as ecstatic agent of the sublime superstate need to be decoded as the now all-but-unreadable DNA of the fast post-industrializing neo-Detroit soon to become a world-engendering point source.”

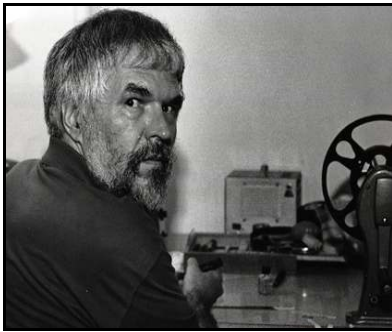
No, I’m where obesity signals being drug free; peace, prose, and definitive reality is found in nature, rather than where the tablecloth of civilization makes one forget the already-painted pine it covers. More and more in cities, we mourn the natural that’s become artificial. I visualize the universe as an ocean and try my best to be a lighthouse, shining with best intentions. Ichi wrote a haiku appropriate here, slightly modifying one by J. W. Hackett: *Deep within the stream / the huge Muskie lies motionless, / facing the current*. Here mornings are the color of leaves reflecting sunlight through windows with a slight light-green tint, when noon is a purple glow, and midnight is all a glimmer with stars and crypto-night (dreams). My tongue is black from chewing my licorice gum.

I told my therapist — as I did Dory, only she didn’t listen — that “My pose is in large part the prose I write. But the prose I write is fuckin’ sourced from a jagged, wobbly galaxy of data threshed-’n-meshed into an alt-world (and will continue to be until my exit) for readers to stroll in. Stitch-on-stitch, I form a whole with holes, where I offer dead pasts that survive in my multiple me’s and

## Finding Mememo

in all the texts I've read post-birth. If this is confusing, I (we) don't know any other way of putting it." My shrink gave me a deer-eyes-in-the-headlights kind of stare. I must have returned hers with a disturbing 1000-yard combat stare.

I had deliberately planned this eleven-day lake cottage respite to mimic Agatha Christie's mysterious RL disappearance, with people scurrying around wondering (like with her) where the fuck I am. I can see Dallas laying aside his new Hollywood-based story, "Fran Shot Tone", [ed., *the one that begins: "The night before, in room 511 of the Ambassador Hotel, Tony O'Clock and Fran Caldwell had gone from kisses to cigarettes without even turning down the bedclothes. Their bodies collapsed to greet the entire tamale. . . ."*] to speed-dial about town, trying to track me down. As a writer, I want my flight to propel me into where no detail of my experience will be without the addition of fantasy; where time will go by at a pictorial pace and become almost a pronoun; where people encounters (i.e., in the resort's guest dining room) will be one-third muscle and two-thirds distance (not to happen, though).



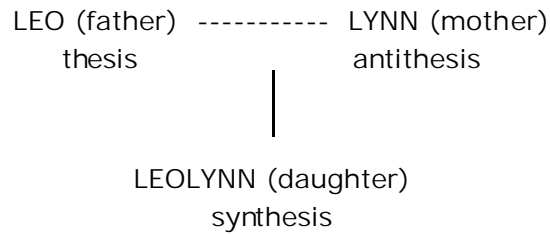
Stan Brakhage

Shlepped up here Avishai Margalit's *The Decent Society* to proselytize from and, to read, *By Brakhage, Volume One*, the writings of my favorite avant-garde filmmaker Stan Brakhage. A man madly driven nearly mad whose video interview I saw: he kept taking nervous little swigs from a little black liquor flask as he told his interviewer, with an alcoholic's urgency, that the ending of his 1958 film, *Anticipation of the Night*, originally was scripted to record his own death by hanging — a fall, albeit a short one.

But he was saved by the love of a woman. *Night* was followed by day, you might say, by *Window Water Baby Moving* (my all-time fav film title), an experimental short filmed in November 1958, released in 1959. It documents the birth of Brakhage's first child, Myrrena, by his then-wife Jane. The temporal shift from 1958 to 1959 marked a major emotional and aesthetic shift in Brakhage's life (as in mine later from 2015 to 2016 when I kept dreaming of mice chasing trout through a candy machine).

Funny, for me, 1959. A rebirth associated with my father trading in his snot-green 1955 Ford for a suntan-and-white two-tone 1959 Ford station wagon. I recall family had more outings, more adventures, more fun after that. It was the car I learned to drive in. It was the car my father drove me to a highschool dance with my first girlfriend whom I was drawn to due to her synthesized first name (in college I realized it was a Hegelianized denomination):

# Finding Mememo



I regret never photographing of her. I can only produce a vague, soft-focus Pictorialist type of mental impression. I do clearly recall though, her telling me (blushing) that her parents nixed her shaving her legs. It was a real turn off. She was the only girl at the dance so encumbered. I wore my suit, she her hirsute.

My mind runs a fast filmstrip of old girlfriends until it stops at my first dance with my then soon-to-be wife. Eyes in her face looking back at me as if looking back at a camera aimed at her. That lens sees beauty, but also the possibility of truth underneath her beauty. She leads me across the dance floor, twirling me and spinning me as I become a different person. (She will always lead me.) We're both laughing, laughing because we were not of this world anymore, not our old selves. We're moving in a sea that exists between the known and the unknown, between truth and alternate truth, separated from the rest of the world. A new real that exists when we are at our best together. I tell her I want to ride with her in a bathysphere all the way to the bottom of the ocean, accompanied by the dance of luminescent fish and the entire tamale.

Now fast-forward to a bitter last week. "You are constantly speaking to me with words full of philosophy and reason," Dory bellows, "but to me they have no meaning. And because they have no meaning, if you loved me, you'd shut up! You talk to me with obscure jargon, make asemic gestures, but I look at you with feeling. Can't you do the same?" her rubicundity of cheeks flare. "You *can* acquire integrity with me just by talking about things in an average guy kind of way."

I am pissed. In discussing my writing we scrap over our notions of fact versus verisimilitude, but this other shit is disconcerting. "I'll tell you a thing or two — a thinga three!" I said, poking my finger at her. Things like about how she often oscillates between dull apathy and hysterical outbursts, which I attribute to her not being allowed to pout or brood during her childhood, kid-days suffering a mean, teasing older brother who liked to set fires.

"You have a complicating mind," she replied. "Won't leave things alone."

"And *you* have to worry a thing to *death*."

"You, *you* Mr. Anal — or should I say Mr. Monk — or better yet, Fels Naptha, after a soap consisting of some wacky ingredients: sodium tallowate and sodium cocoate or sodium palmate kernelate and sodium palmate."



## Finding Mememo

And so on. The *quan* she and I have seems to be dissolving.<sup>3</sup>

In Fernando Pessoa's *The Book of Disquiet*, the protagonist muses that "Great melancholies and sorrows full of tedium can exist only in an atmosphere of comfort and solemn luxury," that being pathologically absorbed in thought for hours on end is best done in ancient, ancestral castles. But I have to be content with a rustic rented cabin on a lake where three roads converge. Here, who I am to myself? A gap between what I am and am not?

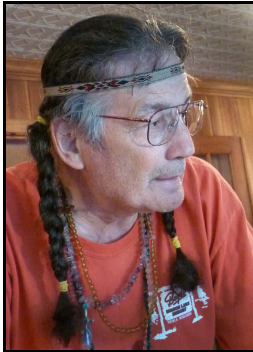
Tonight, a large, sad moon wants to descend on us. A large digital wall clock reads 9 p.m. Dorinda is biting her lower lip about now. Unlike analog clocks, it only ticks off the minute and the hour; hence, it seems slower, more patient, grandfatherly even, in its announcement of time's arbitrary increments than older clocks with their nervous, neurotic, nonstop adherence to the keeping, sweeping of smaller degrees of time; maybe why as a kid I'd I get up in the middle of the night to pee, then stopped all the clocks. The digital turn of the large numbers on this time machine in my cabin (it makes a slight noise when it does so) is a reminder that time is passing in a manner larger than me. *You are dying*, says the clock. I die for nine hours, revived five times out of turbulent dreams like the one where planets disappear like balls in a perfect snooker clearance. Yes, I hear the Electric Prunes bashing out "I Had Too Much to Dream Last Night". My therapist says such dreams are evolution's way of making sure one's lived through dozens of disaster drills before the real thing hits. She's excited about my progress: "Ah now I feel we're at the Getting-Somewhere stage since you've come to terms with the fact that Self-Analysis is a huge white ship, leaky, with every kind of spoiled cargo on board."

Trumpet call of the resident rooster rousts me (like the Trump Tweet does at home). Left calf muscles are home to a sharp cramp. The worst pain fades but, like a rueful afterthought or a screen-shot of Trump, it aches for hours. Mornings here are cold. I bundle up, putting myself into alignment before I make my way up a calf-torturing grade from my cottage to the old resort's rustic dining room. This morning the sky, the sky (what to say about a sky that's itself twice over?) has a heaviness like dusk, a bruised sky like an eye swollen shut. In line for eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns, toast, I overhear fishing guides "red-necking" at their designated table near the kitchen. A guest warned me if they called me a "a chum" it "ain't friendship; more like *chummin'* the waters in fishin', git it?" One guide in a MAG hat, all gristle, a moustache, and a drooling senile mutt he calls Senator parked at his side, jokes: "What's da diff 'tween a tree 'n a gun? *[pause]* A tree only explodes once a year!" The type with no kind

---

3. *Quan* is a Chinese word retasked for the 1996 movie *Jerry Maguire* where it means complete fulfillment in life through, simultaneously, a love relationship, family as a whole, enjoyment of one's work, and financial stability. Stuff Wyoh'd call "Pure bourgeois bull-shit."

## Finding Mememo



The Ojibwa Shaman; his Belliniesque ear; taken at the lodge by Hy Grader.

of sense, except his own kind of sense. With an expression both tough and wounded, bitches about his “trick right shoulder ‘n inflated *prostrate*.” (4 percent of adult males here were snipers in either Vietnam, Iraq, or Afghanistan, that 10 percent have noggins with metal plates or bad mental states. Many back Wisconsin Right-wing stinker, Governor Scott Walker, hook, line, and sinker).

I sit down alone before a pile of home-cooked. All I need now is a plot. It should start with me consuming my food, but then? The scene is set, a dining room filled with families at long tables, the usual group din. Enters the main character: an Other making his way among us

Anglos, a vessel floating freely on alien seas, eyes staring, seeking something, mumbling “The Great Ideas have been eroded by repetition; you won’t catch fish with that bait,” as his pig tails wag. An *omaskgooz* (elk) incisor tooth hangs on a leather thong about his neck, a native headband and yew staff complete him. A bus boy, gathering my dishes, bends and whispers, “Shaman’s gotta becomin’-animal way ‘bout ‘im. Gifted our DVD collection with the animated Ojibwe story *How the Bear Got a Short Tail*. He’s on a mission promotin’ a *We-won’t-play-Injun-‘n-clean-ourselves-off-the-land* attitude — what he calls ‘survivance’.”

The Shaman flits from table to table, a hungry canine, guests shooing him away, until our eyes check each other out like dogs do. Senses my vulnerability, my malaise. His eyes liquify, blur. Catches me off-guard with this opening gambit: “I keep a goat behind my house; read Native writers like Momaday ‘n Vizenor. Whatcha got in your attic?” Sits down, a steaming herbal infusion in hand. “Wanna sip? Ancient recipe. Jazz up your vitality, protect yer balls from tumors. Essiac. Ojibwa anti-cancer herbal mix.<sup>4</sup> I sense your first name begins with ‘H’ — right? — ‘n you burn twenty to three hundred milligrams of CO<sub>2</sub> each second while online and you feel like a fish out of H<sub>2</sub>O most the time.”

I nod “yes.” Confess my possessions possess me. My black tea, long *gone cold* — but shouldn’t I say my cup of Joe has *devolved* or *declined* or *descended* or *degenerated*? I certainly feel, at my first breakfast here, *degenerated*. Gone cold. That declining stage when life in the past seems more vivid and more beautiful than life in the present. I am here to try and warm up again, re-tune my wobbly-guitar heart strings. I think: *This shaman, being near my age, tunes in on that. Tunes in the vibes of my human chord and exudes The Now.*

---

4. The exact composition of Essiac is unclear, but, reportedly, it contains burdock, sheep sorrel, slippery elm bark, Indian rhubarb, watercress, blessed thistle, red clover, and kelp. Essiac was promoted as a cancer treatment by a Canadian nurse, Rene Caisse (Essiac is the reverse spelling of her name), who claimed that it was given to her by an Ontario Ojibwa she had treated.

## Finding Mememo

We do intros. Tell him I'm an online *auditeur* of WOJB; especially liked the interview with the Native artist Edgar Heap of Birds. He replies: "Come from Chicago for the lodge's wheelbarrow race?" Winks, a strange exuberance in his eyes. "Noticed your rented war pony with Illinois plates. I'm an Ojibwa medicine man, a member of the Eagle Watchers Society. Got an eagle-bone whistle. On disability from the paper mill, I host a Res radio show 'bout healin' herbs mixed with a dollop of Native rage. My People dubbed me 'Tikumi', short for *Timumi-waewidung* (He Whose Voice Echoes Across the Lake) 'cause I admonish tawdry minds athinkin' that mountains, rivers, oceans, lakes are *mere resources*. Some say I'm deranged when I tell 'em dreams are made from hearts of deer, others dig my animalagic woo-woo. I sign-off with: 'In beauty it's finished. Tomorrow hope to bring you some sun.' I, from one Nation of hundreds, dream of Mother-Earth's treasures 'n ancestral bones long buried. Good omen, dreams of ancestors. History works-self-out in People. We got a hot line to Ma Nature, ya know. One of my WOJB's broadcasts featured the dazzle of Lakota poets T.L. Bring Plenty 'n Momaday. 'n one of our own People, Glen Songmaker. He was given an inkblot test by Indian Affairs — Card VI — told 'em: 'It's like a dead planet. Like somethin' happened. All that's left is a symbol.' Today info is the new religion. I hate 'puters, iPhones, plastic 'n metal corpses with voodoo powers. Revealin' given the state of Whiteman's shit-plagued planet."

I confess my People were late-comers, late-nineteenth century escapees from the military states of Northern Europe, for whom Wisconsin was a simulacrum of their homeland. Nods a knowing nod which I take to mean he groks that I grok his People's understanding of their priority here. Says he's been hanging out at the lodge here to great effect: "Healed a guest's cancer, relieved the pain of an Iraqi war vet who took two in the gut 'n suffered whimperin', cursin', 'n sweatin' durin' shittin'. Vanished another guest's piriformis syndrome [*I take note of that*], even saved a marriage or two. I pitch in the staff-versus-guests weekly softball game, on the guests' side. We usually win. Usta pitch a mean highschool game of softball on The Res — have a line of trophies to prove it. I also conduct nature walks for guests, pointin' out a bird's blue eggs, medicinal value of indigenous plants, tellin' 'em grasshoppers 'n ants are delicacies."

When he speaks, small, discolored pegs of teeth flicker. His breath smells of strange herbs. We discuss actors who impersonate other ethnicities, like Peter Lorre. He likes Lorre, as does Dallas who touted "his marbly pupils set in a pasty spherical face, playin' detective Mr. Moto, inquiren' of the world as if through a microscope, mixin' his native Hungarian accent with a pseudo-Asian-speak, assertin' a stereotyped Oriental deceptiveness, all filtered through a nasal whine 'n staccato asthmatic enunciation." Is The Shaman's attraction to Lorre *because* he himself is becoming a commodified stereotype? Won't give his tribal name,

## Finding Mememo

but claims: "Its syllables, pronounced with *gravitas*, can lead the ear away from normal significance, from outer to inner. To mists of our unknown."

I guess I still have my combat stare, that NEGATIVE LOOK, because The

The basic difference between an ordinary man and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge, while an ordinary man takes everything as a blessing or as a curse.

The Shaman's hand-out

Shaman quickly follows up with, "Never is not always negative. As in what I tell my wife, 'I never *not* loved you'." He's noted no wife graces my table. He hands me a small slip of paper, a little larger than a Chinese fortune, extolling warrior values. Exchanging *either/or* logic for *both/and*. I'm flashing on author Carlos Casteneda's famous *brujo* character,

Don Juan. "We either make ourselves miserable or we make ourselves strong — uses the same energy either way," my interlocutor continues in that guru sort of way that combines superior knowledge with common sense.

I wave over the young serving girl — discover she majors in Hospitality Management at Northcentral Technical College in nearby Phillips — and ask for more tea and toast. I ask her what's for dinner. "BYMM — Better 'n Yer Mama's Meatloaf — the damndest-best loaf in this dimension," she says, extolling the loaf's fine qualities, admirable texture, the feeling tone one gets upon swallowing; parses its every variation using flat *a*'s, throatily hooted *o*'s, and incorrect past participles. How it tastes with red wine, with white wine, with milk; what sides go best with it, blah, blah, blah. Proudly details its ingredients: "The chef here uses oatmeal rather than bread crumbs, chicken, not red meat. Local carrots, onions, celery, bell peppers, chopped. A karate chop and a ridge down the center like a sunken backbone holds ketchup, brown sugar, and mustard topping sauce. A tad too sweet for some guests, usually sourpusses who are in need of sweetenin' up. Ya can choose smashed 'taters or smashed cauliflower as sides. 'N fat-free butter ain't in our vocabulary." During her exposition, her arms remain in constant motion like a child hauling its first fish into a boat.

"Hell! A meatloaf *sommelier*!" I say to The Shaman.

"Oh, 'n don'tcha I know it. 'N everythin' else too. Tells folks here it's become difficult to tell the real from the possible, that closest thing to certainty up here is a grandmother. Refuses to use a laptop, says it produces a particular, slightly hunched life form. I gave 'er a Native name meanin' 'Words-Fall-Fast'. Talks heaps, too heaps for my comfy. Tryin' to stop her's like tryin' to stop a nest of hornets by readin' Daniel Defoe to 'em. Some testy elders bitch about her." With this exchange, I capitulate, settle in for a long chat which moves from how his ancestors' ghosts "are hungry for campfire smoke," and segues to President Obama's 2009 signing of the Congressional Resolution of Apology to Native Peoples of the United States: "Typical. No tribal leaders or official representatives

## Finding Mememo

were invited to witness 'n receive this apology. He never even read the Apology out loud, publicly. 'Genocide' was replaced with 'conflict', 'n that was tempered with 'peaceful 'n mutually beneficial interactions also took place.' Hee-haw, what horseshit! Zip press coverage. Got folded into an unrelated piece of legislation, the 2010 Department of Defense Appropriations Act. Stealth apology, yep."

Then a John Cage moment: a commotion of people leaving to meet their fishing guides; kids romping in the playground; clatter of tables being cleared; a child hits a random note on the piano as a boat horn sounds at the dock. I look around the room: pine wood chairs and tables, fish and game mounted on inviting knotty pine walls — *hyggelig*, i.e., cozy, as the Norwegians here put it.

Adjacent to the dining room is a cozy area with a fireplace, a large hyper-real painting of a phallic Musky fish thrusting itself out of postcard-perfect lake water, a large-screen TV, and oodles of board games: Monopoly, Parchesi, Sorry, The Game of Life, Clue, Chutes and Ladders, chess, checkers, decks of fish-faced cards, dominoes, cribbage boards, a Michigan Rummy board, even a small roulette wheel and board (I always favor Red over Black and go for prime numbers), and dice (ah, to roll a double quincunx!). In the Sixties, my Sis and I would sit, incessantly playing dice with stacks of Pringles for poker chips. Winner ate the winnings; loser cleaned up any dip left over with their index finger.

I tell him, I once taught college in the Golden Era when students came to explore new ideas and State funding was generous. "Hell, now I teach kids with skate boards and iPhones, some dense as black holes, at a time when our country conspires every a.m. to *seem* the morning news in a world of what one wit called 'Culminant Man': people devoid of historical awareness, dependent on opinions (which they think are theirs) borrowed from the circulating small set of slogans attached to the carefully vetted issues of the moment, living vicariously via electronic media in a world committing ethicide (AT&T's logo is a Death Star), resulting in blunted senses, a hollowed out language, an erasure of certain emotions and connection to the past, to the land and the soil.

Class syllabi are now the length of term papers, having to not just list basic course info, but course outcomes, policy on plagiarism and trigger warnings to alert students to potentially distressing material, and even policies concerning accommodating students with mental or physical challenges. A whiff of authoritarianism lurks at the borders of academia, Mr. Shaman. New admin hires in our All-Campus Politburo of Intelligence are way up. Sure, PC policy seeks to address capitalism's inequities, yet it slips up on the key one, *class*. As for student retention, the daily mantra is: *Salary increases when there are no student decreases. Student tuition is the new intuition.* The needs of the expendable faculty — last. Shit about the customer always being right. Etcetera, etcetera."



## Finding Mememo

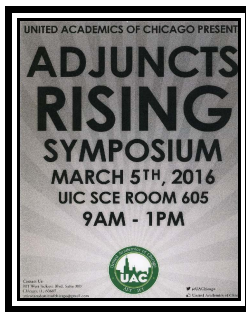
"Well, we *are* raised as consumers, not warriors," he replies.<sup>5</sup>

I nod an affirmative. "We live in abbrev-reality shaped by a concept of time as money and drowning in reality-destabilizing web trolls. Parents get very involved now, taking sides with their kids against faculty in disputes over grades, plagiarism accusations, and absenteeism. Hell, college students now are barely more mature than highschoolers thirty years ago.

"A *warrior* should fight their own battles. Is this what has you . . ."

"That — other shit too. Governance by restraint and deception."

"The pained panorama of History works like that, as us First Nations People know too well," letting out a long sigh, tossing his tanned arms outwards.



"Latest bit of deception has been the admin-types' sudden decision to clear many of us part-timers out of our basement turf and disperse us about campus. Divide and conquer. Word got out we were a bit too cosy politically with Wyoh — that's short for Wyoming Mann — our radical Lets-Bring-A-Raucous-Politic-To-Greet-The-Fuckers type of colleague. An anorexic Sumo, he prefers the unholy velocity of crashing into his opponents, but ignores an important

dictate from *The Book of the Samurai*: 'A person who is discreet in speaking will be useful during the good times and will avoid punishment during the bad.' Wyoh believes taking legal action against the admin merely engages it on its own terms. My favorite witticism of his — since I have dogs — and key to his politics, is: 'A dog park is a poor arbiter of our ability to engage in collective action.' He goes around spooking new hires with jokes about academic PC, such as: 'I was locked up in the janitor's closet for admitting I'd never seen *The Shawshank Redemption*.'

"So one day Wyoh, Charmian, I, and a few others are a small, thriving radical community 'down-under' in our basement office, when WHAMMO! we are forced to shlep our shit out and up to new offices where we are split up into separate cubicles, dispersed among Career Development admin-types, and have no privacy, rarely see each other. Sometimes I wonder if I'd be happier in a life outside academia. Once nearly baled from teaching to write health insurance policies for people who smoke unfiltered cigarettes. I went so far as to apply to be one of the Biosphere 2 team members, a kind of Bubble-Boy Writer-in-Residence. I write metafiction and they were doing a meta-ecology thing. No go.

---

5. Margaret Spellings (Bush Administration Secretary of Education) explained her support of for-profit colleges: "The reason I did it was because I learned a lot about how we can serve our students *and think of them as customers* in providing a product in conventional ways for them."

## Finding Mememo



The Shaman's grandfather, Pahoo Katchewa ("Wolf-Who-Stands-in-Water"); he's the first on the Res to notice that: "Now our People's car tires wear out faster than their shoes."

Said I was too bald. Bad press."

"What an accident that'd been! A waste of your talents in doing that, for sure. So, you teach 'n scribble?"

I pause for effect as two spiders tussle on the table with my hand as referee, then elaborate: "Just a cobbler of tales from other folks' tales," in a tone that suggests *that* kind of puts weight on the misery scale.

Now it's his turn to knowingly nod, "As my grandfather told me once, 'A sentence is a dream of the falcon flyin' above us; the black night's a sentence that a dream has sent us.' Here's a photo."

Pulls it out of a hand-tooled leather wallet. "He's sittin' at a big fire-pit, hypnotic molecules seem to swarm 'n fuzz 'bout him." Outside, tonic dark-gray clouds lather up the sky. Distant thunder. "Looks like thunder, sounds like lightning," The Shaman mysteriously observes, his body coming to an attention rooted in centuries of his People's nature-smarts. The off thought *Maybe he's dyslexic like me* runs through my *cabeza* as I give a NBC weatherman-stare out the window at a world consisting of objects, properties, relations, functions, and propositions. The Shaman senses something at once more simple and more complex. "My grandfather used to tell me, 'Eyes can be closed or opened. But some eyes cannot be opened.' Wise advice."

I can't trump that (or can in a way): "Some see Donald Trump, the new icon to genuflect to — as opening people's eyes, but he's really closing them."

"Well, 'open' is a curious concept. *Manipulate* is what white men do to their self, to be what they call 'open' to their self, selfies being their latest; 'stead of standin' before a lake 'n wonderin', they just take a selfie. When very small I would lie on my belly 'n usin' my ma's garden trowel dig beside a small plant 'til I exposed the ground, open it up, just 'nuff to see its roots, 'n then I would follow the roots down to nothin' more of wood, nothin' but earth, which I'd pick up 'n crumble 'n let fall 'tween my fingers. A white man'd just pull up the root. For me, it was my first openin' up of a sense of myself in relation to the whole."

I sense a *reality distortion field* surrounding him. I shut my eyes, melt into data, the kind that usually emanates those who make up their own rules and utter things like: *The to-be-explained is always that which escapes explanation*. "I had something akin to that experience; in my first year of highschool. Our teacher summed up algebra thus: 'The first half of the alphabet is for known quantities (a, b, c, d . . .), the second half (x, y, z) is for unknown quantities, hence:  $a + b = x$ .' A world divided up between Known versus Unknown. For me, Mother Philosophy sat uneasily between them. Later, as a writer, I couldn't help

## Finding Mememo

but associate writing, the use of those letters, as a form of doing philosophy, as oscillating between those *seeming* opposites."

He nods once more, nods that carry more information than a paragraph from me. He lights a match. *"A flame is like a shard, a shard is like a sword, a sword is like a word.* Some more wisdom from my grandpa. Now kids only light up their iPhone screens or burn their Kindlein'. Sit in rapt 'n reverent silence with their devices, remindin' me of the moment of Consecration durin' the Catholic Mass. I tell 'em the universe is alive, but every computer algorithm is D.O.A."

I nod and laugh at his insight, "Yep, and they burn discs on their computers as memes tear through the Internet like prairie fires. Auxillary supports for gray matter can diminish the ability to think individually." I mention my buddy, Dallas: "His sword in real life is a gas-billy, but in his fiction, a word. In his investigative duties, his theory of knowledge, proven by his success rate in closing cases, could be summed up in one pithy sentence: *To think that true which appears unlikely.*" I tell him about how, when a kid, Dal's parents put a locked necklace with yellow tag around his neck reading: DO NOT FEED.

"Spoken like a true warrior! But not *the* Dallas, Dallas-the-Writer, whose family name's Johnson?" The wattage in his eyes goes up.

"Yep. Johnson, or as that comedic song sung with a Swedish accent has it: 'Yanking on my Yohnson,' as played often on your WOJB for cheap laughs."

"The word-warrior who writes detective fiction starrin' Blurt Wildbunch or somethin', right? A real urban warrior trackin' his prey through down dark alley paths among a forest of high-rises."

"Yep. But his name is *Wildbraine*. Noted for his 'duck', that is, cool disguises, just like the real-life French detective named Vidocq was known for."



Dead female jumper, at the Potawatomi (Keepers of the Fire) Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Dallas Johnson mystery story.

"No lie, . . . *your* friend? No lie?" He's as surprised as if the U.S. Government decided to honor all their treaties with Native Americans.

"Me no speak with forked tongue like White-man! Me agree with Dallas J. who wrote that whites are a heap big modern invention. Me like to cite James Baldwin, 'Race is the child of racism, not the father.' See?" He laughs at his lampoon of Hollywood Injun-speak, a laugh someone might laugh if they found a cockroach in their Snickers wrapper. "Our WOJB's station manager's motto is 'Listen Radio-Actively'; he always carries a Dallas mystery in place of his hip flask

since he enrolled in AA. The guy's dyin' do an interview with Dallas. He's even given his hero a Native tag, 'Writes-with-a-Wink,' because of lines like this one from *Jumper Cables* [*pulls out that book from a small leather pack*] that opens

## Finding Mememo



Back cover illustration to Dallas Johnson's *Jumper Cables* (courtesy of Hy Grader's "Jump Shots" collection)

with a description of the hotel's manager, Glenn, 'n a peculiar female guest who's done a 30-floor nose-dive after receivin' a series of mysterious cables sent from Dresden, Germany while stayin' at Milwaukee's new, classy Potawatomi Hotel and Casino [*The Shaman reads*]:

*Glenn Friptch's last name is unpronounceable. His silver tooth and loud braces are unbecoming. Not good for a hotel manager. He's only forty-two, but his crushed cellophane gaze and world-class insomniac's posture had gotten him into a movie last week at a senior citizen's discount.*

*Today, he's arguing with a stunning, young female guest wearing a dress and running shoes over some complication in her reservation. Maybe he's irritable today as he's still awaiting test results checking his brain's tau protein levels.<sup>6</sup> Maybe the woman is being just a jerk because she's in running shoes. Or both. Possibly, she's exhausted from talking to the Internet for long periods.*

*Neither of them could ever imagine how the world, vast and ornamental, would become small, winnowed down to the point of contact between her body and Glenn's car parked in the shadows on the east side of the hotel. A car some ass (a dissatisfied guest?) has — PWACK! WACK! SGRR! — spit on numerous times.*

*Neither of them could've anticipated that I, Blurt Wildbraine, would be attending the Midland Mystery Writers Symposium at that very hotel and so would become entangled in one of my most baffling and esoteric of adventures after she mysteriously jumps to her death, hurtling past brick and glass and onto concrete and into the hearts of a fractured family.*

---

6. Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a devastating neurodegenerative disorder with a relentless progression which is believed to be triggered by the amyloid- peptide which interacts with the signaling pathways that regulate the phosphorylation of the microtubule-associated *tau* protein. Hy's father had died of complications from such.

## Finding Mememo



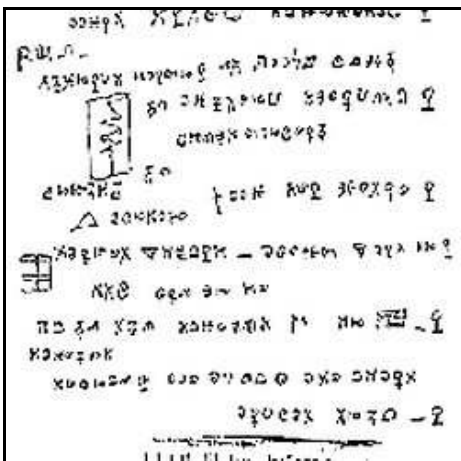
Zazel Agiel (Sign of Saturn)

"I know the book, loved it."

"I'm halfway through it. But our kids don't read much; they are too busy garnerin' LIKES in the so-called 'attention-economy,' Facebook, et shitera."

"By the way, those arcane cables have something to do with her doctoral research on the hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. The Golden Dawn (*Aurora Aureae*) was an organization devoted to the study and practice of the occult, metaphysics, and paranormal activities during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, focusing its practices on theurgy and spiritual development. Many pre-sent-day concepts of ritual and magic, such as Wicca and Thelema, were in-spired by the Golden Dawn, one of the largest single influences on twentieth-century Western occultism. Our ill-fated jumper was developing a chapter, an exposé, devoted to a racist spin-off

of that esoteric philosophy, The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn® (HOGD), a black magic-practicing, white suprem-acist organization.<sup>7</sup> Without spoiling the ending for you, it's this group that leads to problems and, eventually, to the young woman's demise by, well, I won't give out the surprise ending, except to say she was found to be wearing an odd digital device attached to a beaded Two Row wampum belt featuring a row of five-pointed stars, a row of Fibonnaci numbers. In her hotel room she'd left a well-thumbed copy of physicist Michio Kaku's speculation on parallel universes, *Hyperspace*. A note scribbled on the title page read: "Has theory ever made your heart flutter?" The coroner's report noted *under* her dress she wore a bizarre T-shirt displaying a combination of esoteric symbols."



Esoteric cable in Trithemius cipher as received by female jumper. In cryptography, the tabula recta (from Latin *tabula r cta*) is a square table of alphabets, each row of which is made by shifting the previous one to the left. The term was invented by the German author and monk Johannes Trithemius in 1508, and used in this Trithemius cipher.

"Right down this shape-changin' Shaman's shining path!"

---

7. HOGD has, in recent years, taken control of a plethora of occult orders and esoteric societies using trademarks, lawsuits, and other forms of coercion. According to the Anti-Defamation League, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn has strong ties with the Greek racist political party, Chrysi Avyi (Greek for Golden Dawn).



## Finding Mememo



Esoteric image on dead woman's T-shirt

"And one of my narrow-minded nasty chairman's pet peeves."

"How so?"

"She'd obviously escaped academic over-specialization. Ever hear of ol' Freddy Nietzsche?"

"Freddy, but not Neat-she, which my wife ain't."

"Crazy, smart *Über* German philosonut of the late-nineteenth century who was known to break into humming melodies from Herr Richy Wagner's *Tannhäuser*."

"Okay. He drove an Uber?"

I ignore the pun, "He did a series of lectures [*On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, 1872] attacking the higher education of his time for its destruction of a classical education that would develop a broad, liberal education capable of enhancing one's life beyond mere economic success. Engaging students with life's 'big problems,' not just training them to fit current society. Very relevant to today's educational problems, misuse of our new technologies, and our consumerist pseudo-culture. Like Wyoh, he really had it in for the dons and the media of his time. Even set forth doubts as to there being any students left with a visceral belief in the power of reflective conversation, carried across time and space, with the record of human experience that defines what the Humanities encourage. This female jumper seems an exception to this malaise." <sup>8</sup>

"On The Res, us Elders have similar concerns — 'bout passin' on our heritage, our language, our values, our lands. I mean, it's not clear who will succeed me as Shaman when I go to pester my ancestors."

"You know, the way I liked to learn was *outside* class," I tell him. "As early as the sixth grade I was reading Greek mythology (and not just comic book versions) and was deep into Poe, Jules Verne and Sherlock Holmes mysteries. Later sci-fi, not fantasy, but true sci-fi with its utopian/dystopian aspects; these led me to the classic texts like *Erehwon*, *Brave New World*, *1984*, *Island*, and so forth."

"I had to read *1984* in highschool."

"I noticed you said *had*! So you get the gist of what I'm saying?"

Nods affirmatively. "You rocked yourself in your cradle; not so much goal-directed as my studies were."

"Yes, not *imposed* from without by some pedagogic authority, so it was

---

8. See the current work of Mark Edmundson, William Deresiewicz, and Andrew Delbanco, voices calling for American higher education to honor the humanist mission of equipping young people to lead an examined life while guiding them toward a measure of civic-mindedness.

## Finding Mememo



pleasurable. I was early on what is called an *autodidact*."

"Ah. Someone we'd name Walks-With-Books."

"I *like* that! You know some folks call this kind of approach to self-instruction *higher egotism*, even *unethical educational epicureanism*."

"Because it's not goal-driven?"

"Yes, by Odin! But my flight into self-study and solitude with a book was not arrogance or presumption."

"Odin?"

"Sorry, a Norse god of legend. That mythology thing of mine eventually got extended to the northern regions, but was initiated by a Marvel comic book of the time I was a devotee of which featured him and his son Thor."<sup>9</sup> There was a rough character who always used that phrase 'By Odin' for emphasis in his conversation. It hooked me. Used it all the time around the house. 'By Odin! Mom, I want my pancakes with lingonberries this morning,' and 'By Odin, if I didn't just do the loudest fart,' and 'By Odin, I need two bucks for my school lunch.' Drove my mother nuts, said I was 'smaller than the sum of my parts'."

"Uh. Tell me more about Wyoh — by Odin! — he sounds interestin'!"

"Well, his way-back kin booted the Sioux off their lands in Wyoming and took to raising cattle. He rebelled against this upbringing, a legacy of genocide. Now his life consists in *mea sorta culpas* for his ancestors' behavior."

"It radicalized him?"

"Yep. Ever see *The Horse Whisperer* starring Robert Redford helping a traumatized young girl — you'da dubbed her Afraid-of-Her-Horse — and her horse back into a functioning pair?" [*Ed., filmed on Wyoh's family ranch!*]

"Oh, sure. Big love-hate fav among many on The Res."

"Well, Wyoh is like Tom Booker [*ed., Redford*], but in reverse; he once lived in Chicago, but returned to his cowboy environs. Wyoh did the reverse, deciding to flee his cowpoke origins for good. Poor Wyoh, he gets depressed seeing so many students converging on the Same Self: the upper-middle-class professional Adult Child, which they've already decided to become."

"I see, no desire or time to experiment with Different Selves."

"Yep! Something important that art students should do, but aren't. My academic bud, Jym, also agrees on this. It was such experimenting that he and I both recall with the utmost pleasure from our early college years."

"Never had got beyond two years after twelfth-grade myself."

---

9. Odin is a fictional character appearing in American comic books published by Marvel Comics. The character is first mentioned in *Journey into Mystery* #85 (Oct. 1962), then first appears in *Journey into Mystery* #86 (Nov. 1962), and was adapted from the Odin of Norse mythology by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. He is the father of Thor and former king of Asgard.

## Finding Mememo



Hy's vision of Wyoh tossing his papers

"Ol' Wyoh, now that our little cozy group has been dispersed from our basement haunts, has run by me the possibility he'll quit academia to indulge himself in what has come to be called 'Quit Lit'. It's a new genre of writing where people wax eloquent over why they opted out of academia into more fulfilling careers. 'Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great,' wrote adjunct activist

Josh Boldt in his essay about why he was no longer willing to remain a *contingent faculty member*. I can see Wyoh now," I tell him, "back in the magnificence of the Grand Tetons tossing his academic papers high in the air, about to embark on a new life. By the way, someone sent our part-time faculty rep the following e-mail, cc'ing Wyoh." I read:

### **Adjunct Professor's Quit Lit (cc. to Wyoh):**

I'm sitting by a stream, smelling boiled coffee, hoping this particular sorrow will be washed away and possibly eaten and enjoyed or at least transformed by the tiny creatures I just discovered clinging to rocks in the cold mountain water. I realized that my reactions to some small disappointments recently have been magnified by an underlying loss. So here is another chapter in the annals of working as *precarious* labor in academe.

Last Spring I was part of a program which was axed (and this word only partially describes the institutional violence of the actions of my school). Of course, it's not "my" school, because I was just an anonymous creature clinging to the rock, or in this case, tower, in hopes of some sustenance. I have tried to minimize the loss, to be a good nimble, resilient 21st-century cultural worker. But I had been in and out of the program since its inception as New Millennium Studies and had expended some real intellectual and emotional energy on it. However, I realize, as the semester draws near, that I miss the people with whom I worked. I miss the sense of belonging to a group working toward a shared goal. I miss the sense of anticipation that people who work with students always feel: that despite the social networks and the apathy and myriad distractions of youth there is always the sense by absolutely everyone involved (even the most cynical and world-weary

## Finding Mememo

students) that there will be something to be learned. There is always the promise that some sparkling lesson will come out of somewhere for someone. And of course since the program destroyed by the arrogant administrators was a Freshman Seminar, the First Year Seminar to be exact, set up originally by a Carnegie Foundation program, presumably deemed as an enterprise of some merit, the 18 new students filing in or waiting expectantly for us when we arrived were even more open to the possibilities that a college education might deliver.

Richard Sennett's *The Hidden Injuries of Class* writes about the loneliness, the anomie, of people shipped from place to place, friendships, and families, interrupted, any spiritual connection with a place severed by the prerogatives of corporations like David Mamet's archetypal "Stearns and Harrington". We know about the forces that displace poor people, the harsh indignities migrant workers suffer, but the human needs of the middle class are on the block as well as the economy flails and many people who could have made a bit more of a foothold (ability to pay the rent and buy food after a life of work) will be reduced to tedious and wounding want. Only the harshest, coldest most tenacious season ticket holders will be unscathed in this kind of climate. But the loss of community, or rather the destruction of human community for profit, will have other ramifications.

— Name Withheld



The lake lodge, home to labyrinthian trails, where Hy Grader hid out for eleven days.

"Interestin'."

"Yes. Teachers and academics who are dissatisfied and frustrated, who feel victimized or ignored, or who have experienced extreme disenfranchisement, have taken to public outlets to write about their decisions to quit the whole kit-and-caboodle."

"Why?"

"Individual reasons are myriad — but they shed light on some of the greater systemic problems in higher education today. I mean some of these people write like they've been held prisoner by the Taliban for a decade and were suddenly released."

"That does speak as loud as a herd of stampedin' buffalo, or a fuckin' boat-load of crazed whoop-in-laws helpin' their son-in-law try to net a ginormous Musky."

## Finding Mememo

"Whoopin-laws?"

"Ah, Injun slang for super supportive in-laws." Winks. He likes the stereotype tease. See what I might say, but don't.

While our exchange is going on inside, outside a storm turns drizzle into a shower, then into a deluge. The sky goes black, then lightning turns it amethyst and smokey each time it cracked overhead. Windows rattle from a wind that is a disembodied weeping. Another troubling noise makes me aware of the existence of down-spouts. There is something of this disquiet in me too, mirroring nature's disquiet. All around the lodge as far as my gaze reaches, everything is the pale black color of rain. In the fog of my intuition, I feel like dead matter fallen in the rain and mourned by the howling wind.

"Hey, you listenin' to me?"



A Chief Lake guide holding a lunker of a Musky

"Oh, sorry. The rain."

"As I was sayin', a guy from The Res had went and caught a lunker on Chief Lake here last week. All the rain this summer has made fishin' better than average," he says, flinging his arms out to full stretch.

One thing I've been noticing during our chat is that, like a cat, he is incapable of making an awkward move. Now he looks out the window, sucking his breath between time-yellowed, clawlike teeth. Suddenly the rain stops

leaving only sounds of giant drops dripping off tree leaves onto the roof.

"It looks like the lions 'n tigers are under control now." By which I assume he means the violent storm has passed, the sun starting to peek out.

One of the kitchen help comes out and excitedly tells us, "Radio said a small twister set down near Hayward. Took out some huntin' shacks. Buddha's big toe saved us!"

"No, we dodged a *bullet*," corrects The Shaman, "Unlike too many of my ancestors." A few moments of uneasy silence on our part. I'm feeling guilty. My White privilege. He doesn't have to say it, but I know, when all is said and done, he knows it's *an entire anthropology* that his People are still at war with. Suddenly the screen door noisily whacks its frame and like Pavlov's dog we look in its direction. An elderly woman. Puffy, snow-white hair exploding radially from her face in a halo of brightness as she edges forward leaning on an aluminum walker sporting a sticker stating THIS IS NOT A SCOTT WALKER, then shakes out a blue umbrella. Her eyes are as blue as the sky outside is now becoming; those



## Finding Mememo



eyes snap back and forth between us; the ripples around her eyes and mouth afterimages of old expressions. Her slightly open mouth exposes deep rot of her teeth; she lifts skinny hands before her, fluttering in the air like two weak birds, an unconscious form of agitation, as she distractedly puffs out: "Later, perhaps . . . Yes, later. . . Another, perhaps . . . Or perhaps not . . .," seeming to be carrying on a conversation with herself (which in the city might indicate half of an overheard Blue-tooth cell-phone conversation). A feter of urine, lavender,

and sweet decay accompanies this octogenarian like that proverbial dark cloud over 'Joe Btfsplk' in Al Capp's *L'il Abner* comic strip.

"Oh-oh, here's our R.N.D.E., Resident-Near-Death-Experience," The Shaman whispers, wiggling his nose: "God love her, but . . ."

Just then a dull blast of grim sunlight burns my eyes as a cloud parts, a hot yellow forcing its way through the black green of the trees on the lakeshore in a way that events from my past will suddenly shine forth into my NOW. Some of my memories come back more gradually like dust being blown off a childhood toy shut up in the attic. Others just pop — usually when offered a stimulus, something akin to Proust's proverbial shell-shaped cookie. Today it's Merta Freeth who is this stimulus to The Way-Back where I suddenly see my elderly mom in a hospital bed, unconscious after a surgery she'll never awaken from, her hands palms-up at her sides jerking like overturned crabs. Mom mouths words that don't form, but I wish did. I hold those nervous limbs by the wrist and feel her last energies discharge like desperate broadcasts from her limbic self.

She sits, crosses her legs, one foot jiggling like a bobblehead. ". . . Then, of course, Enos just had to go 'n die. Only sixty, had went off like a puff o' smoke while perusin' the weekly horse-racing news," Merta disconnectedly mutters in a heliumated voice. I'm confused. I must've missed something during my brief delve into skull-time. "Why, who are you young man?" she said as if I'd just appeared before her in a puff of smoke. Anyone without gray hair, it seems, was to her youthful (I don't tell her I dye my hair). "I'm Merta Mae Freeth, the ol' rad gal with the teeth worse than Yorick's skull." She extends a skeletal hand clad in what looks like pale slippery clay, smiles widely. When she opens her raincoat I see she's wearing a RECALL SCOTT WALKER T-shirt. Later, The Shaman tells me she has a photo torn out of *Newsweek* and taped to her cabin wall of young hotheads in helmets lobbing gas canisters back at riot police from a rooftop of a building. Turning toward me, whispering, she points to her arm and admits: "My cat eats its meals from the hollow of my elbow pit."

## Finding Mememo



Gangster-era Little Bohemia Lodge, Mantowish Waters, WI

As I try to process that remark, I shake her boney hand. I'm repulsed by her odor, but dig her politics. "Very close friends of mine call me Meme."

" 'Bout as odd a tag as Merta. Merta 'n Meme, funny. Our names dance well together." She winks and forces tidal in strength, oceanic in volume pass between us oldsters.

"Some rain, huh," I offer. Not knowing just what to say in my surprise.

"I once saw a high cloud rain into a lower one, with no effect below." She eyes the dining room's ceiling. "I was a small, young girl then. We used to get Chicago gangsters up here back then, ya know. Those who found less humiliation and more advantage in a life of crime than in sweeping floors. But now the damn gangsters are corporate CEOs, folks on Wall Street. 'Legal criminals,' I call 'em."

"Oh, sure, the famous Little Bohemia shoot-out and all that. The Johnny Depp-as-Dillinger movie. Filmed there. My wife and I've been there. Eaten lunch there. Took the tour. Saw where Dillinger jumped through a window to escape the Feds — all that — very cool."

"That in Mantowish Waters. Enos and I loved to eat there too. My husband. He'd used to hold court there with his union buddies, at the bar. He was a big man, well over six feet tall and well-built, but he got prematurely old. Aged by his always takin' shit for his Lefty beliefs, his pro-union stance in a state that gave birth to the damn John Birch Society. I'm glad he didn't live to see Scott Walker become Governor. All those politicians today, the same sales assistants adjustin' their jaw-jerkin' accordin' to the findin's of the latest surveys. Against the reactionaries, Enos wud 'fend himself, arms akimbo, with a vigorous: 'I AM

WHAT I AM.' He had his size and the clarity of books — Kropotkin, Marx, Goldman, DuBois — to back him up. Few fucked with 'im (excuse my French). But that square, determined face of his became touched with the gray skin tone of age beyond his years; his eyes lost the flash of life 'n rebellion. His step became uncertain. He used a cane. Used to joke that he was joinin' the Wobblies." <sup>10</sup> She laughs heartily.



---

10. "Wobblies": The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) members — an international, radical labor union founded in 1905. Their philosophy and tactics described as "revolutionary industrial unionism," with ties to both socialist and anarchist labor movements. The origin of the

## Finding Mememo

"Still, his passin' was sudden, an unexpected politics of the arteries — a cardiac revolt. He died with his index finger pointin' to a race-horse's name in the sports page and I bet on it the following week's race and won — BIG. Even in death Enos was alookin' out fer me. I used some of the bucks to buy a vintage red and white 1958 DeSoto."



"Was not that the infamous car featured in the horror movie *Christine*?"

"Nope," interjects The Shaman, "that was a Plymouth Fury."

"They look very similar though," I add. "As a kid, I loved the older DeSoto's, '55 back to '49. Yah, 1949 was a good year for cars. Loved the Merc."

"My faith in the firmness of time has slipped away grad-

ually and my memories flash like film clips from unrelated movies." (It sounds like something I'd say.) "I assume yer up here to escape the hubbub down south? Well the world wouldn't be amovin' so fast if it didn't have to constantly outrun its own collapse!"

"Indeed, I am. And I agree with you."

"Well, agreein' with me is agreein' with a nobody. But just lookin' at the faces of the *somebodies* on TV or in the newspapers illustrates why there's such joy in being nobody. Why I will only do a *radio* show now and then. Only my voice. No face. You know about our radical radio, WOJB, up here?"

"Sure do. It's legit, but seems more like a pirate radio station." <sup>11</sup>

"Listen next Wednesday at noon. I've got a short spot."

---

nickname "Wobblies" is uncertain. The author John Dos Passos was a fan of the IWW, which he celebrated in his *USA* trilogy. Not to be confused with G.O.N.E. group "Wobblies", i.e., nervous jumpers, who, as per Sado Muga, "Need to amp up the thought propaganda of their own self as the mind must be clear of all things negative, all bad down-pulling thought, all regret, all gravitas."

11. Hy Grader often equated WOJB to Radio Alice, an Italian free radio broadcasting from Bologna at the end of the 1970s. It started transmitting on 9 February 1976 using an ex-military transmitter on a frequency of 100.6 MHz. The station was closed by the *Carabinieri* on 12 March 1977. Radio Alice then re-opened again for two years and became politically aligned with the Autonomism movement. After closure, the frequency was then given by the state to Radio Radicale. Radio Alice's output covered a myriad of subjects: labor protests, poetry, yoga lessons, political analysis, love declarations, cooking recipes, Jefferson Airplane to Beethoven music. In 2002 some former staff members participated in the founding of Orfeo TV, the first Telestreet pirate TV.

## Finding Mememo

"Will do."

"Well, gotta grab the mornin's leftovers. Attach yourself," she tells me, "to what you feel to be true. Begin there." She waves a pleasant farewell and walks her way to the kitchen, leaving her odor behind. I wanted to tell her I swear by quantum mechanics and pursue its consequences in all domains, but that probably wouldn't have registered.

"They help her out by rentin' her a cottage at cost 'n lettin' 'er take the remains of the day home for her sustenance," The Shaman explains. "She'd once taught Civics in our Res's highschool. I'd had her as a teacher. We always had suspected she was a Commie, listenin' all the time Woody G. We owe her Big Time — consciousness raisin' on The Res. Time-to-time our station chief gets her on the airwaves to yak 'bout politics. She knows that things come in every day to our Res to lose themselves among other things lost long ago among others lost long ago. Still active, she bussed down to Madison to protest 'gainst Scott Walker's union-bustin' bullshit. But she *can* get on one's nerves 'n nose."

"I can see that — er — *smell* that! But her politics are sweet."

"She understands. On The Res, it's not 'bout repossession' lost territory; it's a matter of increasin' density of circulation 'n solidarities in our Nation, makin' our territory unreadable to established, global, top-down authority, yet local in our own understandin'. Poetry 'n airwaves playin' ancestor music can promote that. WJOB recognizes such. Fights the dismal known future."

"In Chicago, the form liberal politics takes is [*I act out a person drinking and chatting*]: A graphic designer wearing a handmade sweater drinks a veggie-fruit smoothie with some buds on the terrace of an 'ethnic' café. They mock, in low tones, the pedestrians passing by done up like failed fashion models. Chatty and cordial, they joke around a bit, make sure not to be too loud or too quiet, smiling at each other, a little blissfully, thinking: *We are civilized*. Afterwards, some of them will go work in the neighborhood community garden, others will dabble in pottery, Zen Buddhism, or in the making of an animated film, a few will blog about global warming. One will adopt a 15-year-old diabetic cairn terrier-pug-cross-breed named Toast. At home they watch for an echo of the world on TV and find communion in the smug feeling that they constitute a new humanity, wiser and more refined than any previous. They're right, yet ineffective, haven't yet escaped from an environment that is a relationship to the world based on moneytheism, that is to say, on estrangement from the real."

"We get some of those dudes at The Res where we run a device-free summer camp for kids who've never known a world without social media 'n some of our advisors are drawn from that demographic. No iPhones or iPads. Kids experience real unmediated friendship without Webly news from nowhere."

"I've heard some people get a bad case of FOMO, Fear-of-Missing-Out,

# Finding Mememo



Captology Conference, Stanford University

when they are pulled from access to Facebook, Facetime, Instagram, Snapchat, even Yik Yak."

"In fact, as Shaman, it's my sworn duty to help sooth such surfless sufferers."

"I don't suppose you've heard of something called 'captology'? It's a term derived from the acronym for 'computers as persuasive technology,' a topic very hot now."

"Nope. Means I'm performin', then, 'anti-captology' on the The Res?"

"You could say that. Captology's a capitalism co-opted cyberpunk taught at Stanford U's Persuasive Technologies Lab by their Core Data Science Team, a research program for developing 'behavioral loops' and 'nudges' needed to hook iPhone and iPad apps users; trains people for employment at companies engaged in a race to the bottom of the brain stem in which rewards go to, not those that help us spend time wisely, but to those that keep us mindlessly pulling the lever at the casino, so to speak, meaty faces iPhone up-lit. Not to attack your tribal casino . . ."

"No offense taken. In that tech-free summer camp we stress 'unitaskin' 'n we do have readin's from *Walden* durin' our camp meals where Elders speak to 'em about our People's relationship to the Land. Techno makes us forget what we know 'bout life. I tell the teens 'NO!' is hidden inside the word technology. Techno's anti-social, craps out culture. Cyberpunk's totally been coopted."

"I like that! Nice touch. Catchy."

"I hate technology's rustin' effect on our young-uns, on their family relations with tribal elders. They're movin' away from knowin' Mother Earth."

"But I've noticed the Lodge here has a WiFi hot zone. Saw a kid on his cell-phone while wolfing his breakfast."

"Very limited area though. Guests, unfortunately, demand such. No cabins are so equipped. Cell-phones only work in certain zones 'round here."

"Why I came up. 'Escape to Wisconsin' as the ad beckons."

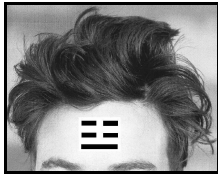
"In the winter it should says *escape from*. Can I count on your discretion?

"Sure." I make it very clear that I respect his position as Shaman to his People. He draws closer, hunkers down.

“Now Shamans often deal preternatural things, but this is a bit peculiar even for me. See? A guy came here a month ago. Registered as ‘Wishwer Watt’, cabin five, paid cash. Carryin’ a black waterproof Gibson Les Paul guitar case as a suitcase; he moved with the half-cautious, half-confident skill of someone who’d learned how to put other people at ease, ‘cept for his havin’ a strange tat on his forehead. Wore black Nike shoes and a hoodie with a lightnin’-bolted five-



## Finding Mememo



Wishwer Watt's tattoo



pointed star, mixin' corporate logo with magic symbol. Sensed he moves in a time not quite the present, in a personal space not quite here. Always took the table next to the lodge's alky gardener, Jace, a roll-the-dice, shuffle-the-deck sorta guy, [*ed. thanks to an autosome gene*] to whom AA just means 'Another Alexander'. Folks avoid Jace, yet these two oddballs became a binary star in their own galaxy; maybe 'cause Jace, hamburger bun-shaped with flat edges, would hold an odd or even number of marbles and ask Wish which it was, odd or even, 'n Wish'd always get it right usin' 'abductive inference', as he put it, usin' a voice which had somethin' unnatural 'bout it like a decelerated crowin' 'n looked as if

he'd had a vision of a nine hundred foot high Jesus.

"I couraged up, waggin' my staff, after Jace left 'n approached Wish while he was readin' an odd book titled *Afrofuturism*. Said he'd had come up, like you, from The Windy City, 'To escape my job for a bit and a bite,' as he put it, 'and see my girl.' Said he was an 'information Sherpa' wantin' to 'merge myth, race, aesthetics, with techno culture into a *mythotechnesis*.' Had a penchant for pugs: 'Got one, named Linux.' Said he's lookin' to buy a mini-sub from some big-shot CEO who got a summer home here. The guy held his cards close to his T-shirt on which was written: BEATEN FROM FLESH INTO LIGHT / I HAVE EATEN THE FLAME. He did mention somethin' 'bout 'studyin' wigwam cuspoids.' Even knew 'bout our Ojibwa woman sci-fi writer L. Taylor Hansen [*ed., 1897 - 1976*]. His listenin' posture's be leanin' bit forward, kind of wincing 'round his eyes. Nervously 'scused himself pronto as polite to do so: 'I've finished speaking'.

"After lunch, played a Tenzi dice game with kids, callin' 'em 'Earth-bounds made of stardust whose ancestors jumped from moon to earth.' Told 'em to buy yo-yos, practice. As he rolled heaps of fives kids formed a wall of youthful energy 'bout him 'n were starin' at his weirdo tat. Asked was he plannin' on rollin' 'em at our tribal casino. 'I only do Monte Carlo sims,' sayin' he's addicted to salvage-punk 'n time-travel flicks as we 'already inhabit the worst of possible worlds.'

"That night, I chatted him up — like you 'n I now — [*whispers*] 'n he, encouraged by several bottles of Stump Jump red wine, had some weird shit to say." The Shaman pauses, then adds, "Said his dreams were bein' realized by a group, 'a hearty blend of Empiricists and Intuitionists,' that has found a way into 'alt-worlds' via odd effects perturbin' spacetime. Said when a wave laps 'gainst a rock, both the rock 'n the wave see only a part of each other. His face bulging with boyish mischief, he said given my Native beliefs — like shape-shiftin' — a shaman like me might not laugh at him, think him crazy, or take him for a fuckin' boozier. That I might listen with some regard to his givin' lip 'bout a dude

## Finding Mememo

named Lipovetsky 'n hyper-modernity. He'd mentioned somethin' he called 'availability hersticks [*heuristics*],' pentagrams, and the *I Ching*, pointin' to the trigram for Thunder, its five components tattooed on his forehead below that tsunami of hair. He related this to the *both/and* thinkin' of quantum mechanics. Said an object could be both at rest 'n in motion (kinda like my digestive tract, huh?). Rattled on 'bout "Circumcerebral Quantum-Entanglin' Experience, Theotechnics, Escapology," 'n alien 'n extropic spaces. Told me, right now somewhere, a drugstore Timex watch synchronizes with his log cabin's drippin' faucet; how imagination's the mother of Truth. Weird shit, too *deep*, even for me. Told him he's a Jeesekeewinini (One Who Communes With Another World)."

"Supercomputers, Heisenberg, or terminal velocity — did he mention 'em?

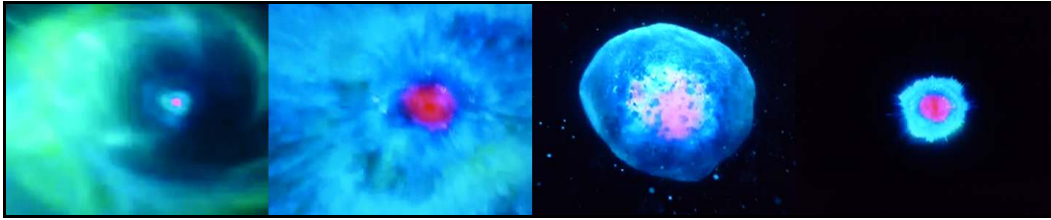
"Yep. Waxed on 'bout the world as fleetin' sounds and waves moving through the seas of Immer, 'bout catchin' colors 'n blinkin' information, urgency, speed, 'n power.' Mentioned Poe's *Eureka*. He touted 'The probable fed by the unexpected,' the world as 'a networks of events.' Said a single star is 'nuff to fill the mind. Got the impression he's obscure 'nuff not to be a public figure, but well-connected 'nuff to have access to halls of influence. Said he'd been an advisor on a 2004 film, *What the Bleep Do We Know?* concernin' time-travel. Weird shit, like I said. Asked if I read tea leaves. Maybe he'd read that Dallas mystery 'bout 'The Biothing' with that fab openin' line: *Get up, you big tub o' guts! This is Thunder 'n Lightnin!* Wish, in a commandin' voice of an airline pilot, said chances of success for doin' a 'D-jump,' usin' a 'Ramsbotham Gate,' were a coin-flippin' 50 - 50. Came here to escape the headaches he'd been sufferin' tryin' to figure up better odds, hence his 'Escape to Wisconsin'.

"Almost forgot. He sliced hard-boiled eggs, sprinkled 'em with pepper, watched the dots darken the whites like locusts flyin' o'er clouds, askin' where to find a place sellin' exotic Native bead belts that had a pentagram, quincunx, or Thunder trigram on 'em. Told him 'bout a place on The Res, 'bout tourist traps east of here in Minocqua. Said he'd eaten near there a few days ago, a fastfood meal that cost precisely five dollars 'n fifty-five cents."

Of course, as The Shaman is telling me this, I have a rush: in that other Dallas story, "Grunge Below", an item called a "Heisenberg Belt" designed by a "Mag Miles" is featured. "Maybe the guy'd just read some of Dallas' stories and is mixing up fact and fiction," I told him, "a *nutter*, as the Brits put it so well."

"Nutter. I like that. Given our Native beliefs, possible he's on to somethin', given the latest theories surfacin' these days 'bout the multiverse. Like D-travel, a heist in which we steal ourselves from the vault. Ha-ha! Well," gripping his pole, "have-staff-will-travel. I'm off 'n ready to play my role as an eco-anarchic future-primitive." Eye-twinkle-of-possible-friendship. We both laugh.

## Finding Mememo



Dimension travel, artist-rendition of, from Dallas' story "Grunge Below"

The Shaman wags his thick stick in a circle several times, tracing a gyre shape in space while looking westward, "Ah, the West is full of vibrant cruelty, of dangerous 'n beautiful things. Tonight the sky will be crossed with parallel rivers of low milky stars." But now the West offers a painted sky of sharp blues hanging over a forested landscape. He picks a twig up from the floor, throws it away with love, saying. "Back to The Res. Gotta prepare more herbal potions. Runnin' low on Essiac. I got a large cherry wood cabinet that grandfather made afore he got hurt (that's a whole other story) filled with dried herbs. Different ingredients in different drawers. I grind 'em with a mortar 'n pestle, mixing all kinds of concoctions usin' cockspur, chamomile, nettle, fennel, crab apple seeds, lamb's cress, dandelion, unpasteurized milk, locally-produced honey, burdock, spikenard root, cardamom, cinnamon, saffron, ginger, 'n ginseng. And then, ya won't be seein' me for awhile. Drivin' down south to Delavan. Big family celebration. My cuz just bought a local Rocky Rococo Pizza concession there. Got it cheap too. Probably 'cause it's located 'tween two opposin' biker bars — Viking Fists 'n Ogres' Blood — where guys with SWALLOW OR TAKE AN EYEFUL T-shirts sport 'Arkansas toothpick' knives, 'n where they don't sell Amstel Light, if you fuckin' catch my drift, *kemo sabe*" — rubbing his nose, winking.

"An area rich in Native history down there, if I remember correctly."

"Yep. 'Tween five hundred 'n a thousand A.D., Mound Builders lived in what is now the Lake Delavan area. Their effigy mounds along the shores of Delavan Lake numbered well over two hundred."

As we perform a hands-to-forearms farewell, he says something ominous: "Wish Watt . . . if the answer you find is *in* him, it brings you to life. If it is *in* you, it brings you death." As he says this, his ears redden, ears like Italian Renaissance Venetian artist, Giovanni Bellini, would grace his painted figures with (Dallas has gotten me to notice these sorts of minuscule details). I re-play the rhythm of this sentence mentally, seeking to uncover its intention, if the words are really meant to counterpoint their overt meaning. Taking hold of his engraved staff with its sprig of feathers, he wags it playfully at me and departs.

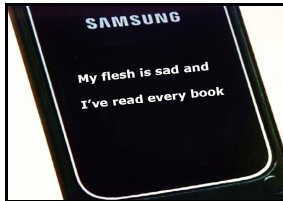
The dining room is deserted except for the fumes of *czernina* (Polish duck blood soup) being made. Slanting rays of the sun beyond a retreating thunder

## Finding Mememo

cloud fall on the lodge's deck. Still too wet out to take a nature walk as planned, so I return to the semi-outdoors of my cabin's screened porch, tripping on the way over a rusty wrought-iron poker deep in the grass. I have a stunning lake view in the land of far-fetched yard decor, where people wear oversized T-shirts with stylized unicorns, or wolves, garish sweaters with faux Indian designs, all in a locale sporting new, ever-wilder murders, a burgeoning prison economy, in a vacationland offering cheerful stoicism, whose lake waters are sweet from a hundred years of small children's bodies dipping happily in fresh waters, as opposed to seas grown bitter with the salt of continents, the corruption of dead sailors, with all manner of waste products, some radioactive, seeping in.

\*                      \*

*Editor's gloss: Finding this hidden file (and the next to follow) are game-changers.*



Dallas' cell-phone, showing a message sent by Hy Grader just before his disappearance

*Confirms the extreme mental distress Hy was under. His flight was no mere excursion from his writing (with its usual allusions to other writers, like Robert Coover, in the wrought-iron poker incident above). I edited out several irrelevant paragraphs on a fish that refuses to be caught, a WOJB program on the 1970s Berkeley Rolling Quads' struggle for the disabled, and, for Dorinda's benefit, a disturbing comment: For some time now I've been in love with noise-fiction and an easeful death. On his way to his lake resort cabin near Reserve, Wisconsin he passed through Madison, but didn't bother to contact Ichi . The day*

*after his disappearance, all of us, including Dorinda, got a text message from Hy, something copped from the poet Mallarmé: My flesh is sad and I've read every book.*

*The discussion of the eponymous Heisenberg Belt with its SQUIDS technology, and "Mag Miles" (code for Wish Watt, a mucky-muck at Deep Dream Corporation?) is an important clue. Before his death, Hy's interest was piqued by Dallas' mysteries which increasingly featured folks falling to their deaths. I found out that Ichi had given Dallas, as a birthday gift, a copy of Michio Kaku's book Hyperspace and that Meme had then ordered a copy for himself. This was prior to him leaving for that Northwoods resort.*

*Told Dallas, as we imbibed galaxy-shaped burgers at Seven Lions, "Hy was bound to be influenced by Wish Watt given his traumatization at the black kid's death-jump; seems from Hy's notes that Wish's loopy theories intrigued him, like that G.O.N.E. group's saying: Nothing is — things happen. A wall that can be opened is called a door."*

*"Oh, merely fortuitous, I'm sure. You know Hy and his thing for submarines and all that." Nevertheless, he added, "A trip up to that lodge to confirm elements of Hy's story is advisable, but Dorinda has to foot the bill for this humble flatfoot's expenses."*

*I was surprised Dallas didn't take a bigger bite at this important meet with Wish Watt like the bulldog PI he is. I wondered if Dallas might be hiding something. He'd worked for Deep Dream Corporation earlier and just maybe . . .*

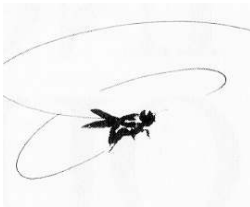
\*                      \*                      \*

# Finding Mememo

21



My fortuitous encounter with The Shaman — patron of the deep, the dark, the light, the arcane, the hidden — has dispelled my doldrums, muting my disquiet. The slow molasses of Northwoods-time wraps itself around me and I toss my woes into a trash can. Recalling Chad's Rum-Sodomy-and-the-Lash greeting the last time we got stuck on an elevator alone, even the air between us aching, the electricity of anger going up into his coal black hair as he snidely mocked me — *You was born lax, all your ancestors was born lax back to Eve and Adam. So what else was recent?* — today fails to torque my jaws or race my heart.<sup>1</sup> I re-envision that moment as humorous, as the cover image from a Japanese comic book Ichi showed me, *Journeys of the Superhuman Brawler* (1935), which depicts Popeye (me) and Brutus (Chad) as scantily clad Sumo wrestlers facing each other down, knuckles to the ground, teeth barred in a growl.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, if I had my laptop up here, I'd love to send a threatening e-mail to that spherical bastard [*ed., i.e., a bastard any way you looked at him*]: *Dear Chad Armbuster, you Square Root: The Id Kid is free and he's coming after you, Sham Ham, with a Ramanujan fist raised to the 24<sup>th</sup> power!*



I porch-sit in an Indian rattan rocker, mind wandering, trying to ignore the horse fly buzzing about. I recall a bit of Chinese wisdo apropos my decision to forego my walk: *True quiet means keeping still when the time has come to keep still, and going forward when the time has come to go forward. In this way rest and movement are in agreement with the demands of the time, and thus there is light in life.* So is such a balance now established in my mind. [*Ed., what might have occurred during the remainder of that day is not recorded here. Hy's text jumps abruptly to the next day*

---

1. The incident Hy refers to had to do with a supposed violation of PCE (Politically Correct English) enforced by his school's Language Police. Within the context of discussing the pseudoscience of nineteenth-century theories of physiognomy in one of his classes, Hy referred to developmentally-challenged people as "retarded," a term which was the word current at that time under discussion, descriptive of the belief that such people were atavistic throwbacks. A student, the kind who would make a good Hitler Youth, reported him to the admin-type overseeing such terrifying "micro-transgressions". See Mark Fisher's "Exiting the Vampire's Castle" (2013) and *The David Foster Reader* (Little, Brown, and Co., 2014): 893 - 896, for an insightful critique of academic PCE; Foster writes: "PCE purports to be the dialect of progressive reform but is, in fact, in its Orwellian substitution of the euphemisms of social equality for social equality itself, of vastly more help to conservatives and fosters a type of US status quo more than traditional prescriptions."

2. This comic of Ichi's is a valuable collectable much prized by him and represents what in Japan was often referred to negatively as *bata-kusai* (butter-stinking), meaning cloyingly Western in terms of how figures are rendered or how jokes are told.



## Finding Mememo

*without transition. This could be understood as consistent with his employment of textual fragments, what he called “noise-fiction”, like the disturbing inserted e-mail, written by a fellow adjunct at another college concerning her experiences as contingent faculty.]*

The lodge’s raspy rooster announces another day. Summer lumbers. It’s clear and warm. This morning I am speechless. What with mysticism being on my mind from the previous day’s conversation, I can only think of the old alchemical adage, *solve et coagula*, disperse and focus. So before breakfast I take a constitutional, setting no destination, but I have a crystalline image of where I am headed: toward a Zenlike purity, a sustained receptivity, a being at one with the conflicting forces that spin into my body with every breath. Passing by a maple tree, I pluck a leaf, hold it by the stem, and twirl it between my two fingers. I trace its veins. I contemplate the leaf’s symmetry, its purpose: *What was this leaf put on earth to do? Nothing more than grip a flimsy branch and wait — without it knowing it’s waiting — for the day when the wind proves too much for it. It then falls. Are people who jump to their deaths just following their “leaf-natures”, confronting a wind that proves too much for them? Can one embrace that wind, a wind rushing past them faster and faster toward terminal velocity*



Triptych from Hy Grader's "Jump Shots" collection

*and into a new world?* I wondered if Thunder and Lightning Guy from Deep Dream was seeking to embrace that wind, turn it toward his own arcane purposes. He made arcane statements, like: “Crack the rock if so you wish, bring to light the amethyst.” Were people doing Brodies off buildings, yelling “Fuck horizontal thinking in a vertical world” for reasons beyond wishing to become sidewalk pizza so as to escape the unbearable heaviness of being? Were these jumpers attempting to slip into another dimension? Was Deep Dream attempting to perfect a device to accomplish such? A link to a 2014 speech by a Shannon Dell to a Sci-Fi and Fantasy Club (posted on the Internet and sent by Ichi to me and Dal) had Dell speculating on cosmology, parallel universes, and dimension-travel. It could’ve been a sitcom premise pitched by an unstable screenwriter, eyes gleaming like his last dime. The underlined emphasis below is mine:

## Finding Mememo

*Ladies 'n gents: you must realize, or you would not be here sitting before me, that I am the possessor of your ears. I am by nature tremendously energetic. Over matters that interest me, I conceive an almost hectic enthusiasm. So don't speak. I will talk. You have sat here before, and have heard things most unbelievable. So now I will startle you again.*

*The holographic universe. Perhaps we're just a sliver of time away from an alternate existence, or perhaps regular people we pass on the street are beings from another universe that have already mastered the art of dimensional travel. Quantum physics aside, our only information about these alternate realities comes from the tales of people who claim they found dimensional slips and traveled to unfathomable worlds. On a seemingly normal day in 1954, a seemingly normal man allegedly flew into Tokyo, but upon landing at the Tokyo International Airport, his seemingly normal trip had taken a very drastic turn for the weird. When he handed over his passport to be stamped, the man was immediately interrogated as to the whereabouts of his origins. It wasn't a case of racial profiling. While his passport looked authentic, it listed a country no one had ever heard of called Kevitchistan and issued by The Supreme Diarrhena of Kevitchistan. This country, he said, was located in Asia Minor and that it had existed for some 1,000 years. He claimed that he was in Japan on business, something he had been doing for the past five years. His passport seemed to back up his odd story, as it was covered in previous customs and visa stamps. He carried with him currency from several European and Asian countries, a driver's license issued by that mysterious country under the name Philo Kevtich and a checkbook issued by a Kevitchistani bank.*

*After more interrogation and confusion for both parties, the traveler was sent to a nearby hotel until an official decision could be reached. There, two immigration officials stood outside the hotel door until morning. It was then that they discovered the mystery man had vanished without a trace, which was troubling, since the only possible exit was a window with no ledge fifteen stories above a busy street. The Tokyo police department conducted an extensive search but continually came up empty-handed. Hopefully, if he really was from a parallel Earth, he was able to find a way back to the comforts of his native home.*

At the time I read this, I hadn't understood the significance that the only exit for this curious man, being a deadly 15-story jump, was relevant to a larger extra-textual question. I only could see its attraction to Dallas' mystery writing as a variant on the murder-in-a-locked-room convention. But now, given recent curious events, fiction may, indeed, be morphing into fact.

Breakfast bell sounds. I turn back to the lodge, come in through the TV room where everyone is huddled about the Musky-sized TV screen. NBC NEWS

## Finding Mememo



Composite of Television News Images

EINSTEIN'S THEORY PROVEN!  
GRAVITY WAVES PREDICTED  
NOW FOUND TO ACTUALLY EXIST

runs boldly across the bottom of the screen followed by the news anchor's excited explanation: *The implosion of two binary black holes conveyed gravitational waves — ripples in the curvature of spacetime which propagate as waves powering fifty times greater than the output of all the stars in the universe combined — that vibrated a pair of L-shaped antennas in Washington State and Louisiana known as LIGO. If replicated by future experiments, that simple chirp, which rose to the note of middle C before abruptly stopping, seems destined to take its place among the great sound bites of science, ranking with Alexander Graham famous Bell's 'Mr. Watson — come here' and Sputnik's first orbital beep-beeps.* I was stirred, if not shaken, by the news. Shaman, spacetime, alternate

## Finding Mememo

worlds, symbols featuring the number 5,<sup>3</sup> people taking nose dives off buildings, it all was coalescing into . . . something. *Entropicalamity in excelsis?* I recall with some unease a key passage from Dallas' story about the woman who leaps from the Potawatomi Hotel: *She is an arrow. She is a blade. She is a light through the air and a touchdown in skin. She is a bloody hole and she is endlessly spinning down the black, falling through the void, sounds filtering through a second too late as she reaches terminal velocity, like a badly dubbed film.* . . . In her brief case, Blurt finds a Xerox of a poem titled *To Be Young, Gifted, and Gone*.

I enter the dining room. It's filled with the three basic lodge types: the sitters, the walkers, and the anglers. In a popular lodge parlor game, Divergent, the anglers usually score highest. Divergent consists of pulling an object's name on an index card from a cardboard box and then coming up with an unexpected use for that everyday object. The most interesting answer wins.

This morning I have to stand in the long line for my eggs and bacon. I am in back of the ugliest woman I've ever seen: rawboned, horsey, with soft, too-big jaw, drooping eyelids, fat-under-the-cheeks-that-seems-to-melt-into-the-neck, too-small eyes, pale and mauve-colored, with thin brown hair and yellowy teeth, ears sticking out like jug handles. Awkward, unfinished, like a clay sculpture made by pre-kindergarten kids. The fishing guides' table, two feet away, is abuzz with: "Deplorable" observations. One guy has a booted foot on a Yeti Tundra 45 cooler. None take notice of this body-too-wide-for-her-head, who is exchanging whispered confidences with an old discarnate female skeleton. I can make out only snippets of their chatter as our line awaits more bacon to be brought out.

" 'N this doctor-type from Milwaukee, a urologist, a guy displayin' a mind with strong legs 'n lookin' at me with eyes hard 'n gray, well, he fuckin' up 'n didn't tip me. Not a cent! 'N I helped him land a Musky!"

"Sweet shriekin' mutha o' Christ what nerve!"

"Evan, wait'll ya see my new Evinrude!"

"Jace? That soup sandwich? Jeez, his idea of love consists of one-night stands with the overweight farm girls [*he notices the woman in front of me and points to her*] who work at Denny's durin' the winter 'n have ex-spouses with weird names like Jib Boom."

"Yep. Our lodge's own Lana Volcana, dining room host by day, pole-dancer by night, is too fast fer 'im. Didja catch her performance Saturday at The Pru Pony? I thought I'd die when Moustache-That-Dances gets up 'n whoops 'n does some kind of Injun jig in synch with 'er hips 'n farts long 'n loud."

---

3. Numerology claims five to be the prevailing number in nature and art; 5 symbolizes fire and the stigmata. The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Torah. Multitalented and with many interests, people who are 5's are attractive, independent, free-thinking, fast-moving, and potentially footloose. It is best figured in the quincunx form.



## Finding Mememo

"Yep. She's one of them gals who substitutes scarves fer personality 'n farm boys fer a steady man. Turns sandals into scandals. 'N ol' Moustache bragged the next day she taught him the Chinese Overlapping Fish Scales sex position, weakened 'n drained him, said he felt like he'd survived a small death."

"Last night I had done a delicious bone-in prime pork chop, well-seasoned with Penzeys Northwoods Seasonin', carefully sawtea'd in a splash of olive oil 'n just 'nuff of my Rodney Strong Cabernet, Sonoma Valley. I a'course can afford the Alexander Valley, but am put off by the hint of cat piss in it. The wife 'n I felt compelled to finish the bottle in lieu of dessert, which she, by the way, burned in the oven."

"Shit, my wife's got me on a diet of salmon Caesar salad five days a week — my arteries bein' clogged as bad as an expressway at rush hour, dammit."

"By middle-age ya gots a face ya deserve, but a heart ya don't."

"So true. True till you turn blue."



"50th highschool reunion, one will die from a spike through the head" (image/ caption from Dallas Johnson's novella *Spike Through the Head* where Wildbraine says about the science of detection: "It's a knowledge that wants you to quit being so grabby all the time. Something like coughing into a hedge and waiting for a fact to fall out.")

"Shaman lent me Dallas Johnson's *Spike Through the Head*. The book 'bout revenge at an all-boy high school's fiftieth reunion. The drinks just ain't spiked, one of the reunionees gets his in the noggin. And Know what? Why that medicine man had gone 'n underlined all the homo passages. There is online chit-chat 'bout da book bein' bought fer Hollywood or HBO or Netflix or sumptin' like that."

"Ah, the *die* is cast!"

"Was that s'posed ta be — *pun-ish-meant*?"

"What I like 'bout Dallas' stories is the very first line. Like Blurt Wildbraine's musin' in "The Crooked Laugh": *The thought shimmies into my sleep-starved brain, struttin' with the bravado of a tweedy classicist on crack.*

"What I like 'bout Dallas' writin' is his 'scriptions. Got a guide's eye fer things. Like in that "Laugh" story. Keen observer of faces. The bad guy is 'scribed as havin' *a raised eyebrow, a crooked laugh, and lines that snake away from his eyes like tributaries, the shadows of his cheekbones slicing backward when his*



## Finding Mememo



Mean face, from the Dallas Johnson story, "The Crooked Laugh"

*mouth holds itself just so. Nice, huh?"*

"Good matchin' illustrations. Real mean fuckers as bad guys. Bad guys as mean fuckers. Ya know?"

"Uh-huh. That shit-bad dude in 'The Crooked Laugh' looks like he kinda could rip the stars from the sky 'n hold 'em in his hand like diamonds."

"Didja see 'bout the visitin' English aristocratic who had went and got himself bit by a bear out near Dog Lake last week? Told that looker of a news anchor from Park Falls

on live TV — a gal named Kalea Endive — very indignantly mind you, 'That ursine juggernaut did essay to sup upon my person!' Can you imagine such gobble-dee-goop? That's why I'm votin' Trump."

"Whal, what'd ja want 'im to say? 'Bear attack Tonto, Tonto heap scared! Tonto do an ass 'n elbows back to Wigwam camper van.' Or what?"

"Jyoo see that old lady at dinner last night? Second time I've had seen 'er spear a lamb chop or a steak with 'er fork 'n stuff it in her purse."

"Hell, I've seen 'er put a slice of breakfast ham down her bra."

"I caught a BBC documentary on the Boer War Sunday night on PBS. Well, the famous Boer General Christiaan de Wet, to escape the British surroundin' 'im durin' that war, took his horse off a cliff, divin' some thirty feet on horseback into a pool of water. Seemed he always escaped by some tricky thing involvin' water; maybe 'cause he lived in Dewetsdorp."

"Is that a pun?"

"Glad I got my family, a heck of a happy haven in a bleedin' heart world. 'N we got Scott Walker too!"

"Speakin' of bleedin' hearts, I heard some fuckin' pundit on 'Bill Maher' call the American family a 'micro-culture,' like its some bacteria. Can ya beat that?"

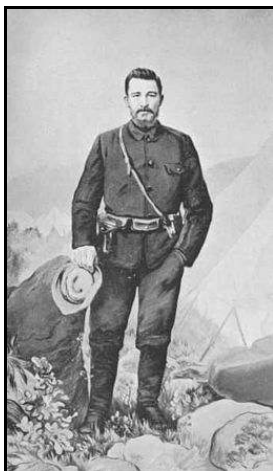
"More a microbrew that good 'n potent."

"Moana was acleanin' some ol' fart's cabin yesterday; you'd never guess what she comes across."

"Used rubbers in the wastebasket?"

"Naw. Seems the dude had a slim volume titled *Life in Athens at the Time of Pericles* on the nightstand, sittin' atop the Bible placed there by the Giddy Ones."

"Were they in debt then 'n plagued with immy-grants, too, back then?"



General Rudolph Christiaan de Wet, who later was President of the Orange Free State

## Finding Mememo

"Some dickhead acadumbic in a fuckin' custom-made leather vest, mind you, gets in mah boat. Awkwardly steps in like a woman might, ya see. Duded up with designer shit for the outdoorsman. Never-worn-before stuff. A tackle box the size of luggage. You can tell he's got an orderly mind, slots for each feeling and plastic boxes for every memory. So he greets me with a wry smile and a PC poppin' 'How're yer differential equations?' Cute. Guess that was his version of an ice-breaker. Right? So I says, 'Pretty good. I can calculate the diff 'tween who's straight versass gay, who's a cross-dresser versus a transy, and all that. How are yours?' lookin' at his balls. Funny. He didn't say a word after that."

"Did he catch anything?"

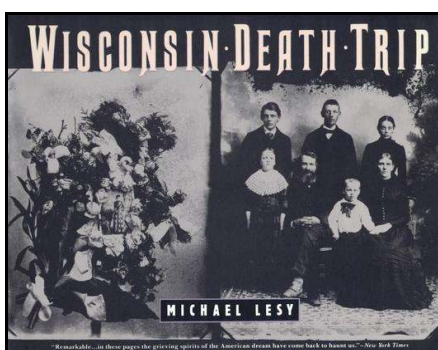
"Not from me, if that's what yer hintin' at." *[Whole table laughs.]*

"Trump? Why the guy is a political and TV personality genius! Right up there with tennis player geniuses, fashion geniuses, horse-whisper geniuses, and culinary geniuses."

"You know the new slogan, right? I HOLD TRUMP IN MY HAND. Saw a guy at The Pru Pony with a T-shirt sayin' such."

"Yep. The guy's a real card. And you're a geniusologist."

"Trump's been gettin' support now from some college teachers who've been harassed unmercifully 'bout their lack of PC in the classroom, their *misuse* of pronouns, their micro-aggressions against wussy students who wear two layers of underwear. Liberal fascism, some are callin' it."



Concerning these dense denizens of the Northwoods (some of whose forebears are detailed in Michael Lesy's 1973 scary compilation of nineteenth-century mayhem, *Wisconsin Death Trip*), I fight to suppress a pathophagic thought I know would feed on my brain all day long by launching counter-measures, that is, holding an image of two eggs sunnyside up before my inner eye, watching its large yellow pupils blankly staring back at me.

The morning's fare has been replenished thrice — like a very slow version of the miracle of the loaves and fishes — by the time I dish up. As I make my way to table, eager to graze on the scrambled eggs, I pass a table rimmed by four A.M.-amped Millennial *turistas*. I hear one declaim, "Dude, the guy's a bad *Zeitgeist* fit. After all, our success as a team — right?— it's all about interlocking feedback systems, emerrrrrrrgence, right?"

"But he can be a useful nonlinear irritant," replies another.

That's one thing ol' Chad, The Terminator, would never imagine: me,

## Finding Mememo

Meme, the *useful* irritant. Any words I do say to him bounce off his vest, tumble down, and land with a THUD on his office floor.

As my server fills my coffee cup, I notice on the lake nine loons in a straight line: the middle three are dipping heads in the water, the outer three float upright. It looks like Morse Code, an SOS (dot dot dot / dash dash dash / dot dot dot). Coffee makes me think more quickly — why I always drink a cup, no milk, as I lecture in my classes — is this a warning? When in college, I preferred tea to encourage deeper thinking. Linden tea and Earl Grey my favorites — loose tea. Tea took on a new meaning when Dory and I visited Shanghai and we experienced our first tea ceremony. Tea raised to an art, even a metaphysical level. Since then several of my students from China have conferred the gift of tea on me and I've never been more honored. One gracious fellow even accompanied his gift of leaves with a magnificent Chinese ceramic tea pot.

In the Northwoods, they only know tea in bags. But I notice one family has brought up their own container of loose tea and they Hoover around the large hot water dispenser, all eager to get back to their table and plop their tea egg filters in. I've noticed the two kids in this family outside the lodge kitchen's back door watching with childish delight the perennial circus of performing ants surrounding their large ant hole, a home well-placed to gain access to discarded food scrapes. At night, a flock of bats fly about around here, weaving in and out among themselves with slowly beating wings, dipping, swooping, fluttering high again, now compact body, then in scattering disorder as though in aimless play.

When I first saw the children observing that society of miniature entities, they had large Sherlock Holmes-like magnifying glasses in hand spying on what must've seemed to them like a parade of tight-rope walkers, jugglers, sword swallows, wrestlers, and comedians. For a split second, I was again ten years old, watching ants enter and exit an ant mound at my aunt's lake cottage. The past is like that, absent and then suddenly not. Just arrives uninvited. The present doesn't displace the past, only conceals it, like a blanket of fresh snow, which melts and one sees what was always there.

I feel again — not just know, but feel — what it was like to feel deeply into the world with such curiosity. The sense that one is seeing into a world beneath, an alien insect world (exploited for powerful effect in the 1971 film *The Hellstrom Chronicle*).<sup>4</sup> To have a "poetic" relation to it, not the distance of adult scrutiny. One contemporary poet tapping into the phenomenology of *Kinderwelt* is University of Colorado scrivener Dan Beachy-Quick. I also like his name.

The kids' father notices my interest. Mentions that yesterday he took his

---

4. This unique and quirky film combines elements of documentary films and horror movies to illustrate the potential threat posed by the world's insects. With their collective intelligence, high capacity for work and sharp instincts, the film argues, they are waging a struggle against humans.

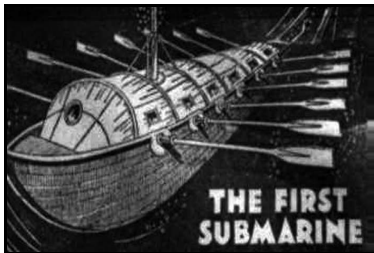
## Finding Mememo

spawn to Hayward to see the Museum of Mistakes. “T-shirts riddled with typos, eight-track tapes, a complete collection of Michael Bolton albums, a life preserver from the Titanic, the actual sword carried by Napoleon at Waterloo (yah, right!), a Ford Edsel, a triple-entry accounting book from Al Capone’s estate, a square hoola-hoop, the USAF’s attempt at designing a flying saucer, a plastic fanny-pack time-travel device, and so forth. The kids loved it. I loved it.”

*Hell, I’d love it too.*



Wish Watt’s U-Boat Worx C-Quest Mini-sub, *The Sinkable Molly Orange*, docked. In 2015 it won First Place at Manitowoc, WI’s first Sub-Fest celebration due to its rétro re-use of 1970s Communist plastics’ colors: light yellow, flesh, violent beige, soaplike green on the interior, and emergency orange exterior.



Cornelius Drebbel’s Submarine (1620)

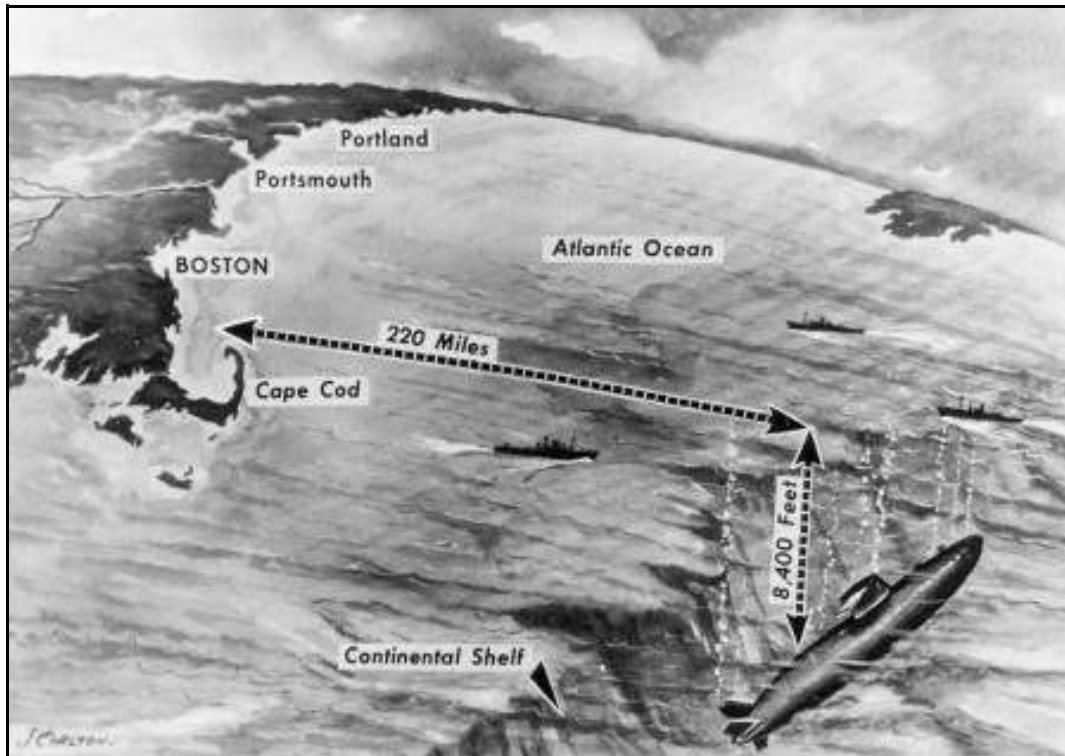
Speaking of today’s purest sky, its blue today matches the lake’s blue perfectly. Calm skies, calm water. On a rise, the lodge gives diners a superb lake view. Suddenly, outside the dining room’s large window, the blue water roils and a small Plexiglass dome surfaces followed by the complete orange body of a mini-sub. I wolf down my second order of pancakes and dash dockward. I’m flashing on Cornelis Drebbel, designer of the very first submarine, an oar-driven device. How I’ve wanted to own one of those submersibles — as close to an underwater dirigible or

spaceship as I can get. A contemporary Captain Nemo emerges from her and ties her up to his slick surface speedboat. When he removes his captain’s hat, I see it must be Wish Watt, the odd tat on the forehead the give-away. Seems he’s made his purchase. I’m envious. Maybe I can make him fathom how much I want to go five fathoms down in what I later learn he’s dubbed

*The Sinkable Molly Orange* (SMO) and that on the stern is lettered in black: NEXT SEA WAVE ISN’T FRIENDLY — I’M SUNK.

I introduce myself as a fan of the “Silent Service,” mention that the carp in the Hudson River are as big as atomic submarines and, in a lower voice, confess the U.S.S. Thresher’s loss (see next page) crushed me more than JFK’s assassination. “I reached crush-depth, too, when that happened.”

His brows go up, the searchlight of his gaze brightens a few watts. “The former’s a case of one being at the right place at the wrong time; the latter, of being at the wrong place at the right time. I came up here, the right place, at the



Map of the Thresher Incident April 10, 1963

right time. How else would've I found this cute sub, got such good deal on 'er, run into a fan of the Thresher, *and* found the fabled Sunken Keys, the famed sunken piano that fell through the winter ice on this lake one years ago, amongst the ooze, fallen trees, muck, and impossible geometries down there? Some idiot had tried to deliver the massive Steinway on a horse-drawn sled to a stout railroad baron's magnificent lake house directly across from the lodge."

"Chance 'n good luck and someone else's bad luck."

"Chance favors the prepared mind. I'm mesmerized by coincidence. Did you know that *chance*, the word, comes to us via Old French from the Latin *cadere*, which means 'to fall.' How 'bout that? I think that's *very* significant. I've been delving into that. The word 'dive' refers to both jumping off a building, say, and sinking below the waves. I find that interesting too. Words are not just arbitrary sounds. There is profound knowledge hidden in them."

I'm flashing on Heidegger and his *thing* with etymology. Obviously, Wish isn't the typical shallow Millennial, but an Echo Boomer with depth. He continues, "I look for things where light may be. For example, visualize I'm a person looking for my car keys in a lit parking lot. Got it? Okay, now why am I *not* searching in the darkened alley where I most likely lost them? Huh? Tell me that!"

"I give up." I didn't want to say, *because you're looped*.

"Because that's where the *light* is. Get it?"

Not sure I do. It's out of my depth, but I take a guess: "Maybe what



## Finding Mememo

you're getting at is that complicated things can be explained by examining their individual parts, but complex ones can't and this is a complex situation?"

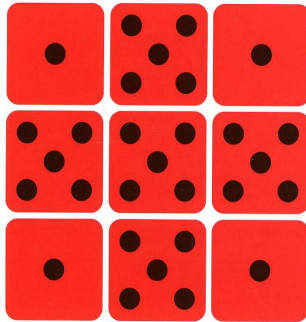
"Now you've understood evvvvvvvvvvvverything! In what I am doing now I can state: 'We've come a long ways. We've learned. We're learning.' See?"

I've managed to please him, he's opening a chink in his armor.

"Space and time would have evolved differently without us, you know."

"No, I didn't know." I notice he's wearing schnazzy nautical clothes like you'd expect to see worn on a yacht in a southern French port. On the blue blazer is a peculiar nine-dice emblem of quincunxes forming a cross.

"I am very interested in organism-environment fit. For instance, I've been up here for some six weeks now. I was cabined here at this lodge for three and then at another a bit further north when I discovered they had an opening for room number fifty-five. I love it up here, don't misunderstand me, but I'm a city technokind. The color green in excess tends to mess with my mind. Why I fled Silicon Valley after paying my professional dues there and learning that if the world must change, it might as well be with us geeks in the driver's seat. I learned to subscribe to the three-Ds: disorder, diversity, and dreams.



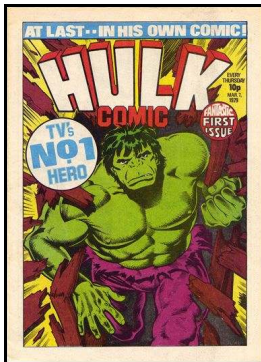
"Weird days back then. Ah, those expensive DeLoreans and designer-bike shops! I rented a studio apartment tucked in between a DeLorean dealership and Steve Jobs' old house. When I moved in, it already had two green beanbag chairs, a water bed, and a seventy-seven variations of play dice-game called Tenzi — all left by the previous owner who struck it rich and moved to New York. I became addicted to rolling the dice to see if certain combos would more frequently come up, like this one," pointing to the jacket patch, "that has five quincunxes and four sets of fives and ones that add up to seven, my lucky number.

" 'Silly Con Valley' (my own term) was then a place with no past, only a future. There I thrived in an environment of weak ties, toughened up on their *flyting*, ritual humiliation by group verbal attacks, a social gauntlet that prepared me for a fling at Predata, later at Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU), and finally a panelist at a TechCrunch Disrupt in San Francisco,<sup>5</sup> which gave me the creds to join Deep Dream. Met Arnt Jensen [*ed.*, *head of Playdead Games*] there.

---

5. CCRU blends futurism, techno-science, mysticism, philosophy, numerology, and complexity theory. TechCrunch Disrupt is the world's leading authority in debuting revolutionary startups, game-changing technologies, and discussing what's top of mind for the tech industry's key innovators, like Deep Dream Corporation. Disrupt gathers the best and brightest entrepreneurs (like Arnt Jensen), investors, hackers, and tech fans for on-stage interviews, the Startup Battlefield competition, a 24-hour Hackathon, Startup Alley, Hardware Alley, and After Parties.

## Finding Mememo



"It was a great place to exploit chance. But one thing began to really bug me. There was way too much green there: Green Peace, green hills, green farmland, green veggie smoothies, green-technology freaks, green blouses, trousers, green bikinis, green recumbent bikes, and dudes reading Hulk comics. Now there must be green driverless cars too. Why even one of the founding fathers of the place was named Lee de Forest! I started to suffer an indigestion of greenness. And I can feel that feeling coming on again, so I am taking a dose of Accelerationist dippity-blue 'n high-tech, the fix these lake dives in my mini-sub gives me," pointing to his super-cool sub. "This is the fifth lake *Molly Orange* 'n I've sunk into this week. Ya gotta follow your own GPS, right?"

"Right. Yes. Of course." *Accelerationist?* [Ed., *Google Accelerationism*.]

"Hey," whispering, coming closer, "don't tell the local swimmers, but you sure see gigabytes of weird shit hopping around down there."

I just slowly nod a perplexed affirmative as I experience extreme cortical arousal; feel a widening of inward barriers. I think this complex, idea-hopping dude needs be understood as an emergent phenomenon. I give him the Indian appellation, "Ghost Rabbit" [ed., *Chibiabos in The Shaman's native language*].

"By the way," he continues, "at a school gathering of Noughties how can you spot the *extroverted* computer geek?" Giggles.

"How? Uhhh, I give up." I didn't expect him to be a jokester. It's a "schema violation", something out of place within the context of what I grokked to be this guy's dimension-hopping aura.

"He's the one looking at *your* iPhone."

I do the expected chuckle, roll my eyes. Invite him to have an ice tea on the lodge's deck. The lodge offers sun tea and it shouldn't be missed.

Wish sits diagonally, one leg thrown over the chair's arm, head unsupported, glass of tea held high. "I read forty novels a year and sometimes do drums in a band my gal, Sado Muga, founded. Sado, when I first saw her, had face like a lake into which one could accidentally drop some object; one could see the ripples it produced, but without ever knowing what the object was. The Polly-Dimensions ("a band with no past, all future") are two sets of twins plus drummer. I had a twin, but he was still-born, so a perfect sub. Here's a nice shot of those tubs."



The Poly-Dimensions' drum-set

## Finding Mememo

Pulls out his iPhone to show me. I note the five-pointed star. "Like the logo? The band is into a quantum of weird shit. I mean the group's keynote song, written by my Sado, 'Turned-Around (for Max Planck)' opens each gig." He sings:



*Turned-around Ganges dries up the ocean,  
swallows the moon and sun.  
Turned-around rabbit swallows a lion.  
Turned-around arrow strikes the hunter.  
Turned-around earth pierces the sky.  
Turned-around leaper falls into a new world.*

*And then a Planck in Reason, Maximally broke,  
And dropped down, and down —  
And hit a new World, at every other plunge,  
And Finished knowing — then, walk the plank.*

"Cool song. You once had a twin? Wow. I know a plastic surgeon *cum* photographer who lost his twin too. Photographed them obsessively."

"Did you know there's a tribe in Southeast Africa, the Baronga, that bestows the name of *Tilo* (the sky) on a woman who has twins? The infants themselves are called 'the-children-of-the-sky'. I am a child of the sky, I think.



"Our group is a 'metaphysical band,' on stage forming a quincunx, the two sets of twins on each side with the drummer in the center, like the five dots on a die. Rooted in numerology, the Planck constant (which links the amount of energy a photon carries with the frequency of its electro-magnetic wave), and the odd jitters of quantum mechanics (like the superluminal zip-speed of action-at-a-distance due to particle entangle-

ment). Like quantum theory, we believe our lives are an initiation to the possibility that we can shock ourselves out of our habitual orbit, our Human Security System, and leap into another dimension or world. With spirit 'n teeth we can free ourselves of our real-world orbit, that fuckin' noose around our necks. I

## Finding Mememo

think the ancients had a finger on these notions with mystical figures such as interlaced triangles and the quincunx.<sup>6</sup> You probably think I'm nuts, erasing the boundaries between science and sci-fi, but desire erases boundaries; it's wonder in motion, dude. Desire finds that reality's border is loosely guarded and it pushes through the limit of what's possible. Electricity's in the air! *Comprende?*"

"Well, I guess, not any crazier than I was at four years to dash out of my parents' just-arrived auto, all ass-'n-elbows running right off my uncle's dock — kerplunk! — into Pelican Lake, an eager self-sacrifice to a lake named after a bird that is the Christian symbol of self-sacrifice. I sinko'd-de-Mayo'd (it was May fifth) to the bottom; my horrified father dove in fully-clothed to retrieve his nutso son. Whenever I see a dock now, my memory, in Proustian fashion, takes me back to the moment I almost drowned. As poet William Carlos Williams put it, 'Memory is a kind of accomplishment, a sort to renewal', don't you think?"

"Later, I understood this event as a foundational experience for me in a place and time before more childhood experiences had laid down the cornerstones of my knowledge. As such, that dock 'n dunking was the location of my earliest speech and earliest sight. It is now part of my personal creation myth, if you get my drift. Why submarines, I think, have always had a fascination for me. Why the beginning of the movie *Splash*, starring Tom Hanks and Daryl Hannah, touched something deep in me, a full-fathom five. The scene where the mermaid rescues Hanks as a child."

"When the sea changes, do you? he asks."

"I thought so when I was a kid."

"Well, I still think so. Why Molly Brown sinks so."

Conversation is becalmed as I dunk a slice of lemon in my tea and take a long draw on my straw. The summer day today is eerily calm, no wind, no breeze. As I sip, I see trees that look burdened with the weight of their leaves and will most likely welcome the chance in six weeks or so to start shedding them. I think I can taste sun in the water and a hint of metal indigenous to the local water table.

I glance upwards, the sun above us is a golden bell, a perfect circle. A writer might describe this scene as depicting *a wondrously refulgent summer*. But for me, it's just weather — facts to be noted — as in *Keep your weather eye open, and sing out every time*, as our Chicago television Channel Five Storm Team advises.

---

6. Plato, through his derivation of five perfect solids — constructed by congruent regular polygonal faces with the same number of faces meeting at each vertex — focused on a "quinta essentia", a fifth essence or element. This became known as "aether" and was imagined to comprise the fundamental essence of all space, permeating both heaven and earth. Aether is etymologically related to ἴσθμι "to incinerate", and intransitive "to burn, to shine." Things incinerate when they fall through our atmosphere, burning brightly.

## Finding Mememo

"The moon goes through its phases," I say, restarting our chat, putting a new wind in the sails, "but the sun is always so perfect. My classroom, you see, is its own cosmos. Students go through their phases — boredom, sleep, attentiveness, absenteeism — I remain the perfect sphere, shining light into their young minds. Making sun tea in their brains, if they are receptive. But having to deal with my aging body and with Chad, my power-hungry chairman, has started to disfigure my perfect sphere into an ovoid. The fact that his latest directive to faculty was for us to 'make the least capable student feel more intelligent for knowing nothing at all,' tells me I should avoid this unavoidable man at all costs. Maybe in another universe the laws of both academic and elder physics would be different and I wouldn't feel so pressed upon."

"So you teach?" Wish queries, putting more wind in our sails.

"Yes. It's a way to avoid bland corporate plazas built of smoking breaks and quient moments of self-hatred."

"I know what you mean," he said.

"I've come," I continued, "to the conclusion over the years that it's students' *knowing* they are being taught that makes education unpleasant for them. It's the *forcing* of knowledge on to them *even when they desire such knowledge* that people secretly resent. I know I always preferred learning on my own, squelching my curiosity outside class — autodidact that I am."

"I hear you. Why I liked my days in Silly Con Valley. Full of such people on auto-learn all day long. I was. I still am. Then I went north to San Francisco and helped create Second Life, a variation on a Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game.<sup>7</sup> Second Life users (also called Residents) create virtual representations of themselves (called avatars) and are able to interact with other avatars, places or objects. They can explore the world (known as the grid), meet other residents, socialize, participate in individual and group activities, build, create, shop, and trade virtual property and services with one another. It is a platform that principally features 3D-based user-generated content. One can create an alternative world, Invented Life, if you will. This got me interested in my current research on ultra-powerful quantum computers. Oh, forgot to tell you. The Shaman, you must've met him, told me that his ancestors knew a song that could, if the time was propitious, open a door between our world and another."

"Speaking of alternative realities, like sci-fi writer L. Sprague De Camp envisioned," I interject, "something interesting here. When teaching the same

---

7. Second Life is an online virtual world, developed by Linden Lab, based in San Francisco, and launched on June 23, 2003. By 2013, Second Life had approximately 1 million regular users, according to Linden Lab, which owns Second Life. In many ways, Second Life is similar to MMORPGs (Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games); however, Linden Lab is emphatic that their creation is not a game *per se* as "There is no manufactured conflict, no set objective."



## Finding Mememo

material in every class — each class, as a universe of ME plus PUPILS — was very different. Made me feel like I'd entered an alternative world. One class would be full of energy and questions, much student input and, well, be simply great. The next class, same material remember, would be a nightmare, as if I was lecturing to a brick wall. Rare, but twice I had all-same-sex classes; the all-female class was less responsive than the all-male class — go figure — but neither were as interesting in terms of interactions as when a more equal balance between men and women were enrolled."

"As for alternative worlds," he began, drawing his chair nearer, lowering his voice, "I got, Deep Dream has, an investor interested enough in my project to support it with major funds."

"Project?"



"Prometheanism overcomes the opposition between imagination and reason. The future must be cracked open once again, unfastening our horizons towards the universal possibilities of the Outside. The greatest escape of them all is about to blow the future apart," announced Laura Deming to eager Deep Dream CEOs. She made national news when it was reported that she received an ad from the UK government encouraging her not to join ISIS after she watched a hijab video on YouTube.

"A D-travel project that a daring female Biotech venture capitalist with a volatility smile (despite her terminal breast cancer) has taken an interest in as a possible escape from her condition."

"No lie?"

"No, *lay*."

"Huh?"

"Like in 'Lay some big dough in my needy hands, yes?' And, yes, she did. Big time, with a big smile."

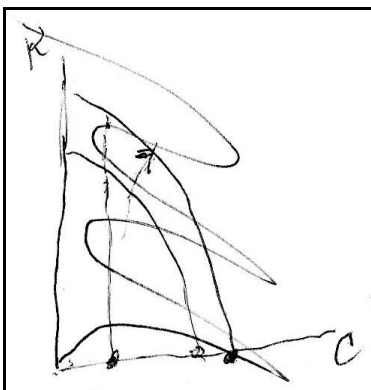
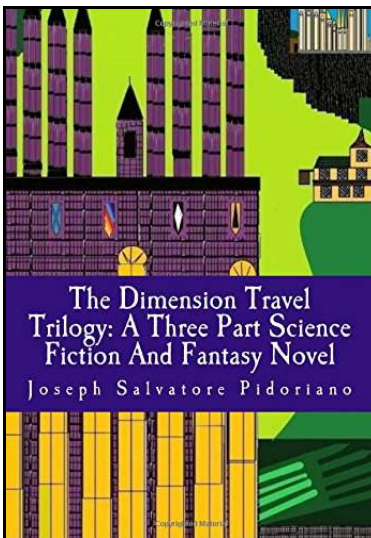
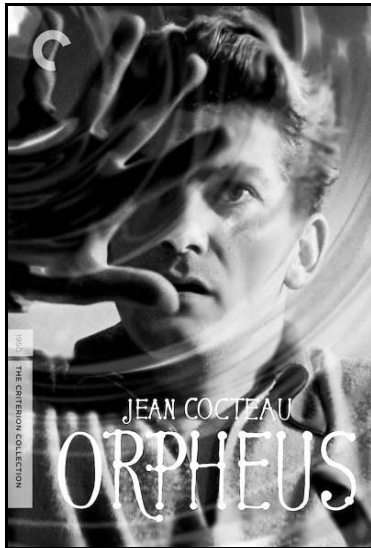
I shift my right leg and feel something odd under it. I glance down. A bird's egg's broken shell smearing yolk on the deck that must've fallen out of a tree, hit Innisfree's lodge's roof, rolled, and fell off. I flash on a wacky sort of

Feynman diagram, describing the travel of this particle of bird life from nest to demise.<sup>8</sup> I doubted it would've fallen long enough to achieve terminal velocity though. Its goo rests at the edge of a cover ripped from a week-old *National Enquirer*, with the headline blazing: DOZE DOLL DOES WIZ BIZ. Had the egg fallen much faster, it might've GONE to a dimension where stones are born, grow, and die. Where hills ponder, rainbows over yonder grow fonder, and bacteria figure things out, while amoebas make split decisions, and no atom can avoid a complicated life.

---

8. Named after physicist Richard Feynman, an American theoretical physicist known for his work in the path integral formulation of quantum mechanics; such diagrams are a pictorial way of describing particle interactions, scattering and decays, in quantum field theory.

## Finding Mememo



Strange diagram, note up arrow

I tell him about one of my favorite films, Jean Cocteau's *Orphée*, where a modern-day Orpheus descends into Hell by penetrating a mirror. "Since then, I wondered if one could engineer a way to enter an alternative world."

Wish perks up in his seat. "I did too, after I saw that film in college! Loved that flick, what with the negative film shots in the Underworld in slow-motion. Orpheus suspended between memory and emergent novelty. During that film, as The Grateful Dead sang, *You gotta deep-six your wrist watch, you got to try and understand.*"

"And then there's the scene with the garaged car, Orpheus listening to arcane radio messages, riffs on those broadcast to the French Resistance on D-Day, finding poetry therein."

"Yes! Yes!" He's bouncing in his chair, our mutual trust is sealed. "You've heard of quantum mechanics and the special theory of relativity that says particles should be able to travel forwards and backwards in time. But I don't suppose you've heard of the Fischer-Filoni Effect and the science of possible spaces and emergence involved in tendencies, where the virtual is not opposed to the real?" his ears parenthesizing arcane ideas running through his mind, secrets accessible only to informed initiates.

"Yep to the first, nope to the second."

"Let me put it this way: *A jumpful man can, and then he is not.* What is it you plan to do with your wild and precious life? Go somewhere where most people don't think is somewhere? Remember, the poet Baudelaire wanted to go *Anywhere! — so long as it's out of this world.*" He dips into his carry-bag, hands me a sci-fi book involving D-travel. "This isn't far-fetched as you might think." Breezing through it later in my cabin that night, I find a strange tangle of lines, a spatial diagram Wish had tucked into page 55, an intriguing clue, a lure he hoped I'd bite on.

## Finding Mememo

Earlier today I was a bundle of accident and incoherence that merely sat down to breakfast. Now I felt I was about to — well — something was about to expand my horizons. Something in the offing. I just happen to glance to my right and see three bathing-suit clad sun-worshippers, stretched out, spit-roasting on elegant wooden chaises, as they all simultaneously turned over. I flash on a scene of bikini-clad women from the film *Catch Me If You Can*, except these sun-bathers were half-baked bread, doughy, swelling out of their bikinis. Coincidence? Then yesterday afternoon, rowing back to my dock, I saw a sardine can afloat and aglint in the sun — *it looked at me!* — a point pulsatile, dazzling, spread out, fogged by my burgeoning cataract. I now think, *Is it a coincidence I correlate with this younger man?* Quantum mechanics says if it *can* happen, it's *bound* to happen. And it is. Suddenly reverie-breaking music harshes my ears:

*I remember when we were both diving ducks.  
We went down to the bottom  
and never wanted to come up.  
The bottom was whisky in a river of gin.  
I remember when I saw you swimming  
with the catfish.  
A Musky lurking nearby.*

*I'm waiting for you at the bottom.  
Come on, baby, douse my broom.  
We've got all kinds of room  
down here on the bottom,  
down here at the bottom.*

[Refrain] *To proclaim a manifesto you have to want:  
A, B, C, thunder against 1, 2, 3.  
Tramp, tramp, Trump.*

It's Blues blaring from a red battered pickup pulling into the dirt parking lot nearby, **CARPET DIEM** painted in white Helvetica on its side. Inside, the sun-burned fishing guide who lays carpet in his spare time and his wife, who was a Ph.D. Medievalist and still looks like she uses Occam's Razor to shave her legs and Holy Water to rinse her hair. I saw her in the lodge in hot pants once and I got a caffeinated feeling in my heart. Shaman said she fled academia due to sexual harassment. Now writes "Quit Lit" when not guiding nature walks for the kids here or baking incredible multigrain bread in the lodge's kitchen.

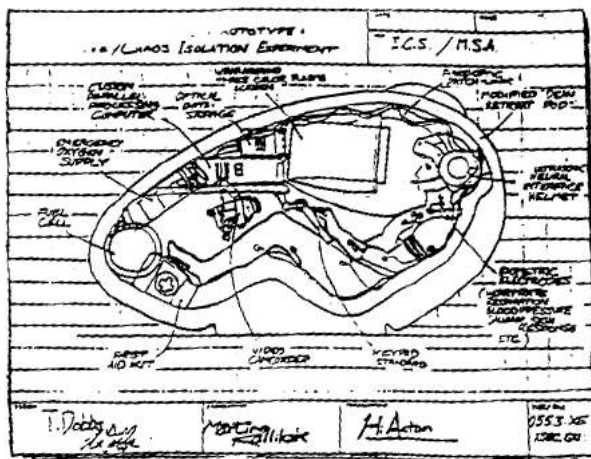
When carpet guy turns off his car's ignition, Wish continues his arcane discussion in low tones. "As you probably know, during the 1970s and '80s, *chaos* began to emerge as a new scientific paradigm, on a level of importance

## Finding Mememo

with relativity and quantum mechanics. It was born out of the mixing of many different sciences — weather prediction, catastrophe theory, fractal geometry, and the rapid development of computer graphics capable of plunging into the depths of fractals and strange attractors. Hydraulics and fluid turbulence, evolutionary biology, mind/brain studies, and psychopharmacology also played major roles in forming the new paradigm. The slogan 'order out of chaos' summed up the gist of this science, whether it studied the weird fractional-dimensional shapes underlying swirls of cigarette smoke or the distribution of colors in marbled paper — or else dealt with 'harder' matters such as heart fibrillation, particle beams or population vectors. However, by the late '80s it began to appear as if this 'chaos movement' had split apart into two opposite and hostile world-views, one placing emphasis on chaos itself, the other on order. According to the latter sect — the Determinists — chaos was the enemy, randomness a force to be overcome or denied. They experienced the new science as a final vindication of classical Newtonian physics, and as a weapon to be used against chaos, a tool to map and predict reality itself. For them, chaos was death and disorder, entropy and waste. The opposing faction, however, experienced chaos as something benevolent, the necessary matrix out of which spontaneously arises an infinity of variegated forms — a pleroma rather than an abyss — a principle of continual creation, unstructured, fecund, beautiful, spirit of wildness. These scientists saw chaos theory as vindication of quantum indeterminacy and Gödel's Proof, promise of an open-ended universe, post-Cantorian infinities (hyperchaos as health), the possibility of travel to other dimensions."

"Gotcha."

"Alright. Now two chaos scientists named Frank and Althea Dobbs devel-

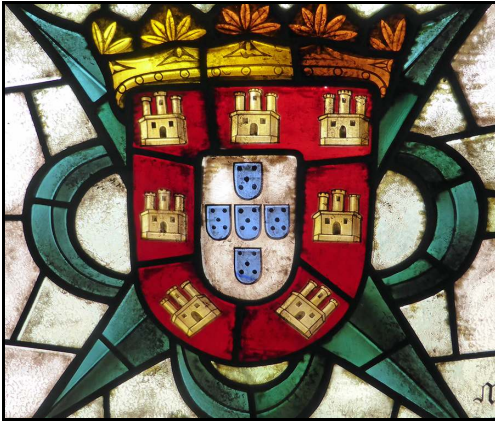


The Egg for Interdimensional Travel inspired by the first successful teleportation of a single proton in 1997 by professors Zeilinger and De Martini

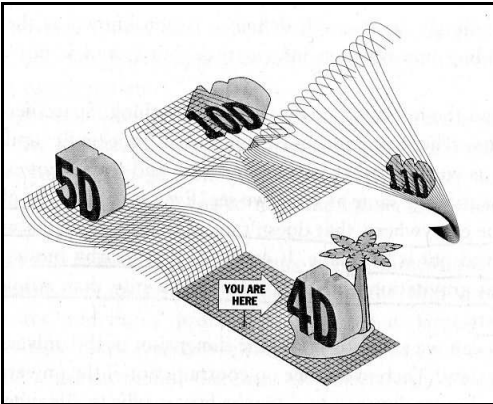
oped a theory that consciousness could be modeled as its own universe and, if one could master one's own 'mind map,' the ability to control the chaos and possibly travel to other dimensions would be achieved. Three other chaos scientists joined the Dobbses in founding the underground Institute of Chaos Studies in Ong's Hat, New Jersey. Ong's Hat was founded sometime in the nineteenth century by a man named Ong after he threw his hat up in



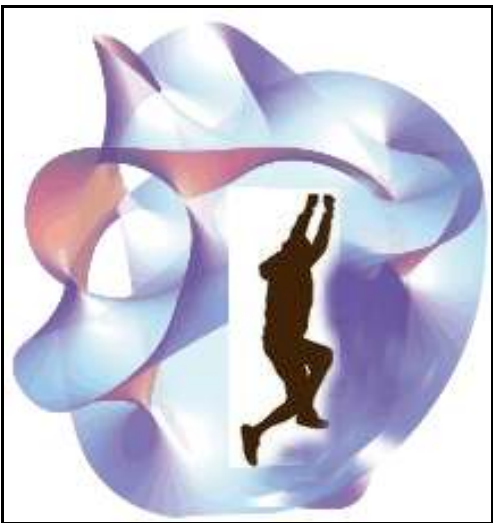
## Finding Mememo



Quincunx on blue shields on a stained-glass window, Segovia, Spain, surrounded by seven separate spaces (dimensions?).



We live in a 4-D pocket in a multi-dimensional universe



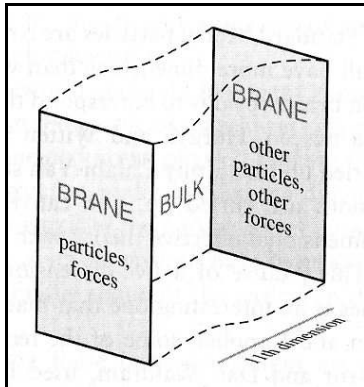
Dimension-jumping via a Ramsbotham Gate

the air and lost it to a tree branch, or as some believe, it slipped into another dimension. Who knows? By the 1920s, the city had become a ghost town, but Ong's Hat wasn't forgotten. On the contrary, the abandoned town became a topic on the Internet for, supposedly, it was here that those scientists discovered the 'gate' to alternate dimensions. They had created a modified sensory deprivation chamber called 'the egg' with which, allegedly, they succeeded in mastering interdimensional travel. On their explorations, they discovered a world that never developed human life but sustained plant life and water, which is where the chaos scientists were said to reside ever since. These scientists were into philosopher A. N. Whitehead's relational holism/ process ontology as well as quantum physics, as seen by Fritjof Capra's 1975 bestseller *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*. Although documents concerning these experiments were eventually debunked, I feel there was a bit of truth behind the story. While still in 'Silly Con' Valley, I began to explore the possibility of such travel, looking to both quantum mechanics and string theory as well as probing esoteric knowledges of the past and examining a plethora of ancient figures featuring the quincunx. I'm convinced that interdimensional travel had already been accomplished by some ancient mystics using sacred geometries in the process to conjure some kind of field."

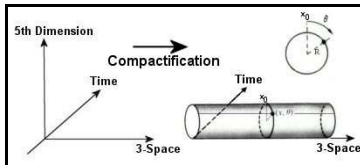
At Wish's mention of the quincunx



## Finding Mememo



A M-theory Ho ava-Witten braneworld of eleven dimensions



cunx, my heart again leapt — five times.

"M-string theory — branes, bulks, anti de Sitter space, Calabri-Yau manifolds, Kaluza-Klein particles, Cantorian multiplicity, Ramanujan modular functions — suggest a multiverse. We could exist in a very large 3-brane world within a higher dimensional space which, to our eyes, appears transparent. This is legit speculation."

A few lines from Welsh poet Henry Vaughan of the Commonwealth period comes to my reeling mind:

*And yet as angels in some  
brighter dreams  
Call to the soul when man  
doth sleep;  
So some strange thoughts  
transcend our wonted themes,  
And into glory peep.*

"According to quantum theory," Wish continues, "*all possible locations of the photon are realized*. This is proven by the two-slit experiment, which initially was used to prove light is a wave, where only one photon is shot at the two slits. You would expect the photon to go through one or the other slit, yet an interference wave pattern was created, suggesting the photon simultaneously went through each slit, as both a particle and a wave.

"Dimension travel is predicated on exploiting such odd behaviors at the quantum level, on probing Srinivasa Ramanujan's 'Lost Notebooks' for modular functions so as to modify M-theory string vibrations to propel someone down a wormhole or across branes into other universes as post-Cantorian think."

"Looks like I've got studying up to do about a world that is a boundless and disorderly network of quantum events.<sup>9</sup> A world that is more like Naples than Singapore. In my 'Jump Shots' collection, I have a D-travel envisionment."

"Sado and I've been, of course, collecting such images."

---

9. Heavily underlined copies of Brian Greene's *The Fabric of the Cosmos* (2005), Lisa Randall's *Warped Passages: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Universe's Hidden Dimensions* (2006), and Daniel Athearn's *Fruits of Time: Nature and the Unfolding of Difference* (2003) were discovered in Hy's briefcase. The latter describes transitions in a zone in the deep structure of reality, already posited by A. N. Whitehead's Process Philosophy, from which any and all particular systems of space commonly emerge. Plus a tattered Xerox of Asimov's 1967 sci-fi-mystery, "The Billiard Ball".

Srinivasa Ramanujan (b. 1887) was a self-taught, brilliant, intuitive Indian mathematician. The "magic number" of 24 emerges repeatedly in his calculations. When generalized it becomes 8, to which is added 2 in relativistic theory, arriving at 10, the critical number for the superstring which vibrates in ten dimensions. Matter is nothing but harmonies created by these vibrating strings.

## Finding Mememo



*You Won't Believe Your Eyes*, from Wish Watt's collection of speculative dimension-travel images

## Finding Mememo



*Dual Jump into Another Dimension* from Wish Watt's speculative dimension-travel collection

## Finding Mememo

"Do you have one on your iPhone?"

"Indeed. Say, you're up on poets and poetry, right?"

"Indeed."

"Well, do you probably recall the 2009 mysterious disappearance of noted Wyoming poet Craig Arnold while hiking on the small, remote Japanese volcanic island, Kuchinoerabu-jima?"<sup>10</sup>

"Yeah. My colleague, Wyoh, was particularly upset as he knew him. Said Arnold had done an 'Empedocles on Etna' ('Receive me, hide me, quench me, take me home,' the Greek begged the flames.) I saw him read once. Tall, lean, shaved head. Didn't just read, but performed his poems. Electrified the room. I recall authorities searched for some six days. Big news at the time."

"They traced his path to a very high cliff. But no body was ever recovered. But what if I were to tell you Arnold was one of *us*."

"What do you mean one of *us*?"

"All I can say is *we* believe he was *our* first success."

"Success?"



Poster honoring  
Craig Arnold

"To leap into another dimension. He left on a secret mission taking an early, bulky, prototype of our Heisenberg Belt. The device gave him a 50-50 chance to enter another dimension (possibly enhanced during a high sunspot cycle). This is better than odds of getting a tenure-track professorship. The island's volcano is a relatively easy climb, earning a 2-out-of-10 rating for difficulty, why Craig chose it. Upon jumping, and achieving terminal velocity, the Belt automatically triggers an electro-magnetic field, which may open a branch to another dimension. He selected that remote location so that if odds went against him no one would ever find his body or our top-secret device. We all were against it, but he knew there is no failure, only feedback. Craig was in constant effort to find a way of staying alive without allowing his lifeblood to congeal into a 'career'. Lots of existential friction and psychic disquiet in him. Yet he had a calm and clarifying equanimity about his purpose on earth and off it. I mean he couldn't resist the possibility of being the first poet to make such a marvelous journey. He waxed eloquent over the material he thought he might be able to garner . . ."

"He died or was transported somewhere, for his art?"

"Yes. His philosophy was that poets should go where ordinary people can't

---

10. A detailed account of Craig Arnold's last few days and the extensive search, entitled *An Exchange for Fire*, was written by Christopher Bladel and appeared in the anthology *My Postwar Life: New Writings from Japan and Okinawa*, published by Chicago Quarterly Review Books, January, 2011.

## Finding Mememo

or won't go in order to tell what such experience is like. It was not for naught as his wish to become a Dimensionaut propels our experiments toward what he dubbed: 'Emerence, the white that moves us without weight, suspends us in the dense meanwhile of being, letting us drift toward.' I recall some lines taken from "Couple from Hell" [ed., in his 2008 book *Made Flesh*], material we took as expressing his desire to broach dimensions: *the world you talked into a prison / suddenly seems to be made of glass / and your eyes see clear to the horizon / and you feel the molecules of air / part like a curtain / as if to let you pass.*

"We all miss his solar flares of energy, twitchy intelligence, his no-holds-barred hugs; he's one of our pioneering heroes, besides writer Philip M. Fisher who presciently described D-travel in his story 'Worlds Within Worlds' as: 'a humming vibration of my body . . . a sensation I cannot describe,' Here's our pamphlet with a quote — *I suddenly realized that I was lying in mid-air — quietly, peacefully, pleasantly! Resting my back on a sea of nothingness. . . . Dimly, I felt that I was no longer floating in space. . . [but] condensing, precipitating out of nothing. . . . solidity pervading my entire situation — I felt once more that I was alive, that I had a body that was a concrete thing and not an intangible wraith. . . . What was the drifting fragrance in the air as from a sun-bathed blossoming garden?* — you can read later."

Just then, Nature Walk Lady comes around the corner of the lodge with her gaggle of nature-seeking kids. Their lives were all mysteriously prolonged by their time at the lodge. They gather around her. She is garbed in khaki blouse and shorts with tall stockings inside hiking boots, a whistle around her neck. "When we get together, close, we melt into each other with words, don't we?" The kids nod in agreement. "So what did you see on our walk yesterday?" The children stand with the confident air of soldiers in the presence of their captain. A child, in a short print dress (contraindicated for a nature walk), is at the flaunt 'n flash age. It has no positive effect. A boy sticks his tongue out at her.

"I saw a ring hanging over me. It quivered and hung in a loop of light."

"That was a spider's web, silly. It had beads of water on it, drops of white light," says Miss Flaunt 'n Flash.

"I heard a sound like cheep, chirp, cheep, chirp going up and down."

"I saw a shadow on the ground, on our path, like an elbow bent."

"That was near where I saw a gray-shelled snail."

"I touched some stalks covered with harsh, short hairs and drops of water stuck to them."

"I saw a catapillar with blunt feet."

"Caterpillar, my dear, caterpillar," corrects Nature Lady.

"I saw a dead beetle, broken, one leg bent under."

"A bee boomed in my ear, it did." Speaks a girl with an Australian accent.



## Finding Mememo

I bet her parents are named Cecilia and Neville. Her accent reminds me about that wacky Internet joke that went viral a decade ago: that in Australia prepubescent Barbie dolls were marketed with an accompanying assortment of training bras. Big hit, supposedly, with the sheep shearers in the Outback who liked to *put-one-on-the-Barbie*.

"A dragonfly posed motion above a reed."

"The field looked like it had islands of light swimming on the grass."

"Ah, yes, another gem from our budding poet here," Nature Lady both praises and embarrasses the child. This strikes a taut cord in my psyche. Incidents of similar embarrassment flash past my inner eye, both when I was a child and as an adult academic. The subtle jealous put-down when someone recognizes a talent you have and they don't.

"He's lit up and glowing, don't mind him, Mrs. Mawle," says Miss Flaunt 'n Flash, mustering her self-righteousness.

Could Flaunt 'n Flash be guilty of a nascent form of sexual harassment? Had I been able to complete the 40-minute online course demanded by an e-mail sent out last week, I might have been able to tell you. The link to the WeComply website test failed to recognize me as legit faculty so I couldn't comply:

*Achtung!* Faculty and Staff:

Be aware here is communication about a new online training course through Thomson Reuters (WeComply) called *Preventing Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)*. The training program is designed for all employees and faculty of our College in order to understand their responsibilities under Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and the School's policies under those laws. All School employees, faculty, and Central Administration staff are expected to complete the training. **Adjuncts housed in the basement take note.** The training program can be completed in approximately 40 minutes and can be taken from any computer that has internet access. Complete this within 30 days or else. Click on link below.

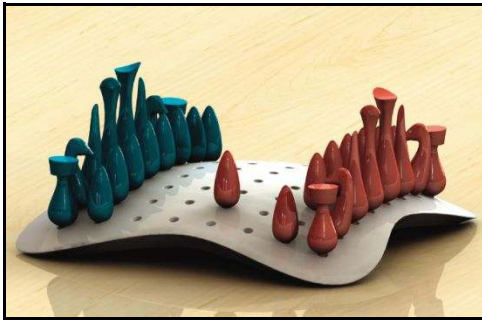
[PREVENT quick link](#)



Man Ray's Modernist Chess Set

"O my dead childhood! Forever living corpse in my breast!" Seeing those children with Nature Lady evokes a remembered cry made by Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa. Like me, as a child, he was fascinated by chess pieces, naming his, making of them characters in his dream world. I was taken by their form alone. Loved to stroke them. Taken by the myriad of ways those pieces have been interpreted

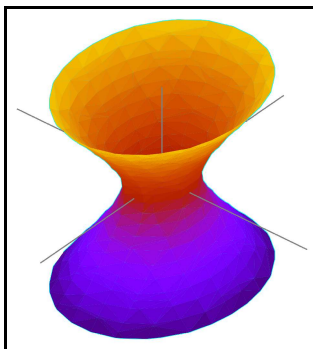
## Finding Mememo



Wish Watts' Warped Space Chess Set



Wall Chess Set, Lodge's Game Room



Anti-de Sitter Space

formally by the likes of Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray. I instinctively was drawn to functionalist modernist forms as a youth, way before I could put a theory to their making, even before I knew what the word "ART" meant.

The unexpected interruption by Nature Lady is a force knocking us off topic, sending our conversation to my tactile relationship with chess pieces. Wish shows me an iPhone photo of his unique chess set. "A warped spacetime board. Each piece has an inner (timed) light that turns on when it can move into another dimension and be safe from attack for a short period before the light goes dark again. A sort of stealth chess piece."

"Cool! I'd love a game sometime."

"Where I'm staying, the entertainment room has a wall-mounted chess set with two tall stools. Takes up little room. Everyone can watch two people play with ease."

"That'd be great to put in a group office. Everyone passing could make a move — a communal game. Our basement faculty digs should have one."

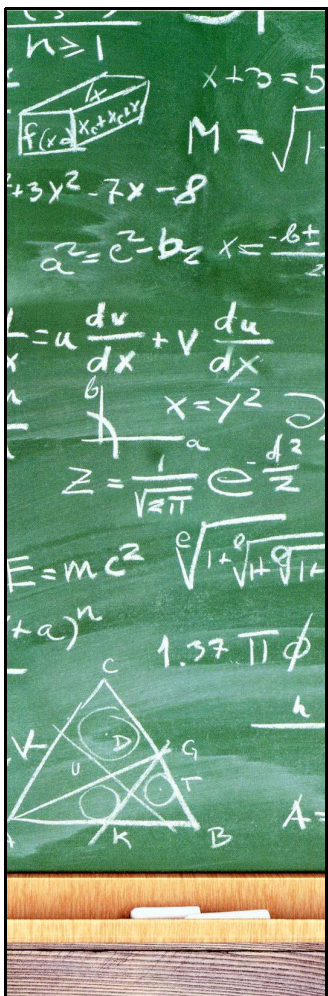
"I'll ask them about it."

"Getting back to your discussion on dimensions. I think you mentioned some strange entities, branes, and anti-de-Sitter — no— de-Sitter space, wigwam cuspoids."

"In mathematics and physics,  $n$ -dimensional anti-de Sitter space (AdSn) is a maximally symmetric Lorentzian manifold with constant negative scalar curvature. I think of it then possible 'rabbit holes' that might suck one into an alternative universe.

"In string theory and related theories such as supergravity theories, a brane is a physical object that

## Finding Mememo



generalizes the notion of a point particle to higher dimensions. For example, a point particle can be viewed as a brane of dimension zero, while a string can be viewed as a brane of dimension one. It's possible to consider higher-dimensional branes. In a dimension  $p$ , these are called *p-branes*."

I wanted to say my department chairman was a *pea-brain* too, but suppressed the urge.

"The word brane derives from 'membrane' and refers to a two-dimensional brane. Branes are dynamical objects which can propagate through spacetime according to the rules of quantum mechanics. They have mass and can have other attributes such as charge. A  $p$ -brane sweeps out a  $(p+1)$ -dimensional volume in spacetime called its world-volume.

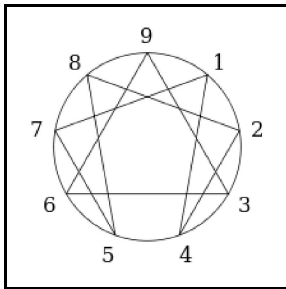
"Physicists often study fields analogous to the electromagnetic field, which live on the world-volume of a brane. In string theory, D-branes are an important class of branes that arise when one considers open strings. As an open string propagates through spacetime, its endpoints are required to lie on a D-brane. The letter "D" in D-brane refers to a certain mathematical condition on the system known as the Dirichlet boundary condition. The study of D-branes in string theory has led to important results such as the AdS/CFT correspondence, which has shed light on

many problems in quantum field theory. What's known as the AdS/CFT correspondence is one of the largest areas of research in string theory. AdS/CFT stands for Anti-de Sitter/Conformal Field Theory, an expression that's not particularly elucidating."

"I must be a real 'pee-brane,' then. It's way over my head. Help! I need a physics course with Dr. Brian Greene!"

"AdS/CFT is a particular, and deeply surprising, example of a duality. It relates two very different theories and at first sight seems obviously wrong. It states that there is a duality between theories of gravity in five dimensions and quantum field theories (QFTs) in four dimensions. This correspondence was first formulated by Juan Maldacena in 1997, and is generally thought to be the single most important result in string theory in the last twenty years. AdS/CFT is more generally referred to as the gauge-gravity correspondence. Formally this is the

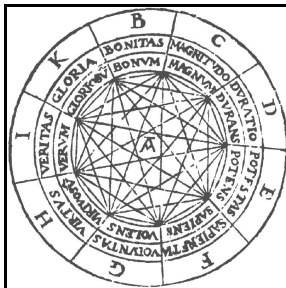
## Finding Mememo



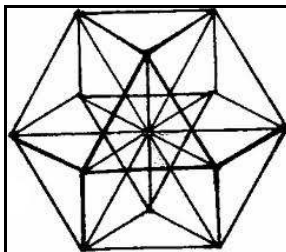
Enneagram

statement that gravitational theories in  $(n+1)$  dimensions can be entirely and completely equivalent to non-gravitational quantum field theories in  $n$ -dimensions. AdS/CFT allows a conceptual reworking of the classic problems of general relativity. Indeed if general relativity can be equivalent to a QFT, then neither one is deeper than the other, they are dual. Finally physicists can use it to develop new intuitions for both QFT and general relativity. Put simply, it opens up the ability to theorize the multiverse, as John Wheeler and Michio Kaku do, and to suggest travel to other dimensions."

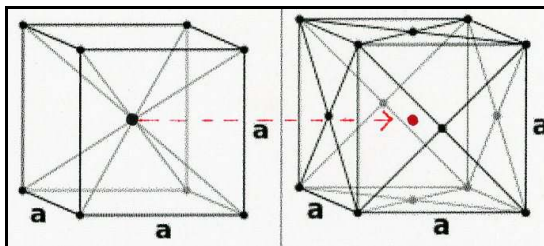
"Okay. I'm lost, totally."



Ars Magna



R. Buckminster Fuller's  
Isotropic Vector Matrix



Body-centered cubic combines with a face-centered cubic  
from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*

"It is just that the latest research in particle physics has led to string theory which has led to new insights into multidimensional space. It confirms what I believe the ancients knew from their mystical investigations into number and symbolic forms. The mystic George Gurdjieff espoused plural worlds and saw the ancient mandala, known as the *enneagram* (an irregular hexagram over an equilateral triangle, circumscribing both within a larger circle whose origin lays in the Platonic solid, the icosahedron) as an image that figured reverberating points of cosmic interaction. This figure had already been explored by Franciscan monk Ramón Llull (1232 - 1315) as seen in illustrations of his *Ars Magna*. Recall that R. Buckminster Fuller believed, *All systems are polyhedra*. Personally, I think the figure of

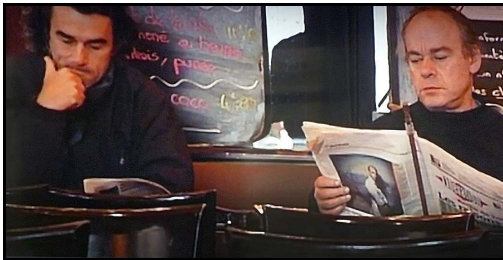
the *quincunx* and its polyhedric variations has relevancy here as well. If you take six quincunxes and make a cubic lattice — it'd be as if you had a dice with five pips on each side — then place one point or pip in the center of that lattice, you'd be combining a face-centered cubic with a body-centered cubic. This creates a quincunx in full-volume. Imagine the red dot in my

illustration here," he pulls out his iPhone, "as representing a body inside the lattice. This figure is the key to understanding The Fischer-Filoni Effect and has

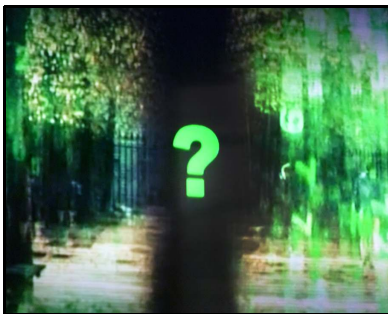


## Finding Mememo

its roots in R. Buckminster Fuller's interest in multiplying primes (e.g.,  $7 \times 11 = 77$ , then  $77 \times 13 = 1001$ , etc up until one gets what Bucky Fuller called the Scheherazade Sublimely Rememberable Comprehensive Dividend (the SSRCD Number) of 510,510, a quincunxial number if their ever was one. But this number, with its play of fives and touted by Fuller, seems inconsistent with Fuller's famous Isotropic Vector Matrix, based as it was on tetrahedrons (four-sided solids), or so argued F & F. Yet Fuller's envisionment [see *Fuller's diagram previous page*] directly influenced F & F's cubic quincunx. Other influences on F & F: Gilbert Simondon's traduction/dephasing philosophy and the ancient mystical figure of the enneagram as learned from Chilean mystic Oscar Ichazo.



Fischer, studying Russian Pavel Gluyaev's auratic theories, and Filoni reading a local paper (1991, Santiago, Chile). De-phasing and transduction theory rooted in philosopher Gilbert Simondon's concept of energized topological configurations with remarkable points, charged ground contrast and spacing, and a plane of disparation crossing orders of magnitude leads F & F to the possibility of dimension-travel.



Is dimensional travel possible via the spacing-out-of-being? Illustration from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*.

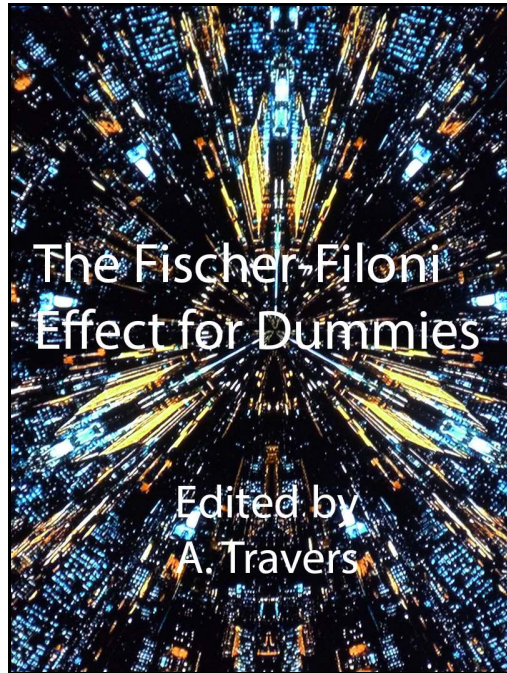
"Two digital wizards well-trained in various esoteric knowledges, Perry Goode Fischer and Felix Fuhn Filoni, fortuitously met while taking a weird workshop by Ichazo [ed., founder of *The Arica School*, New York, in 1971] held at Arica, a northern port city of Chile known as the City of the Eternal Spring. *Museo Histórico y de Armas* war museum, designed by the French architect Gustave Eiffel, is there and the high plains of the Andes mountains rise to the east. A bit of trivia: Fischer named his first daughter Eiffel, Filoni his first son Andy.

"Oscar espouses, Hy, a theory of Integral Philosophy, a belief system that completely analyzes a human being from the lowest levels of the manifestation of the ego process to the Highest States of Pristine Enlightenment. Oscar is also the originator of the Enneagramatic Theory known as Protoanalysis, which is based upon the three metaphysical questions: What is humankind? What is the Supreme Good of humanity? What is the Truth that gives meaning

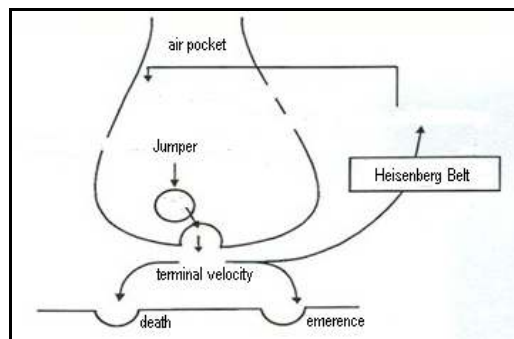
and value to human life? Since Oscar's early adulthood, these questions have been the basis for a lifelong quest to reformulate the Universal Truths that answer these questions across in-depth and scholarly research, investigation and experience in the fields of metaphysics, theology, theosophy, esoteric tantra, and mystical psychology. His slick brochure explains [ed., continues on page 284]:



## Finding Mememo



*The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*, A. Travers, editor; retrieved from Innisfree Wisconsin lake resort by Dallas, Hy "Mememo" Grader's copy, signed: "To Hy from Wishwer Watt, the Earth will be buried at sea."



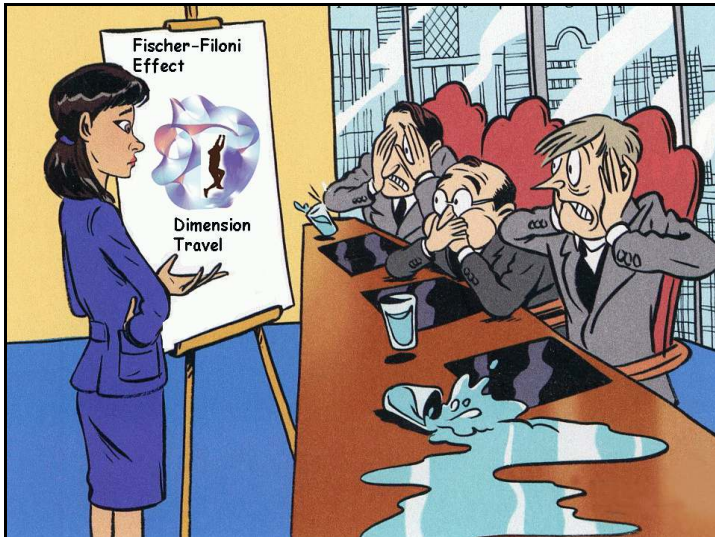
"The Associated Milieu," frontispiece illustration from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*

*"... what I would like to know is what became of that there other man!"*

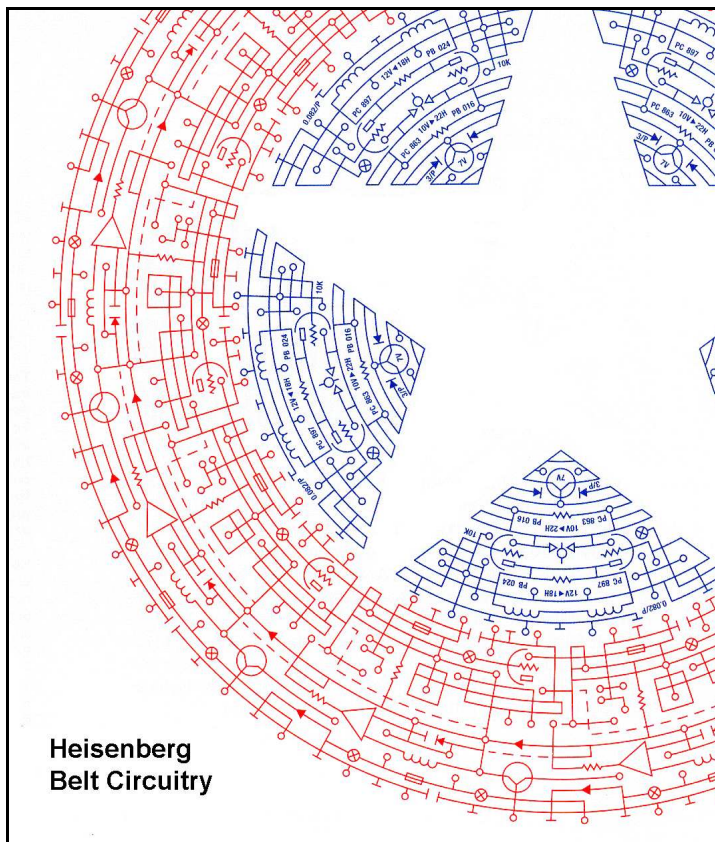
*"Are you familiar with the Fourth Dimension, Sheriff," I returned solemnly. I rose from my chair.... "I believe that a thorough study of that subject would answer your questions."*

— Detective Madelyn Mack in "The Man with Nine Lives"  
by Hugh C. Weir (Epigram for the above book)

## Finding Mememo



"Time, Cash, Strength, Patience, Laura Demming, Venture Capitalist, proposing Wishwer Watt's concept of D- jumping" (via activating catastrophe cusps via a Heisenberg Belt, dephasing the jumper), to her board of directors, from *The Fischer-Effect for Dummies*.



Enlargement: 5-pointed star and circuitry, advanced Heisenberg Belt design which initiates the Fischer-Filoni Effect, inspired by Captain America's shield

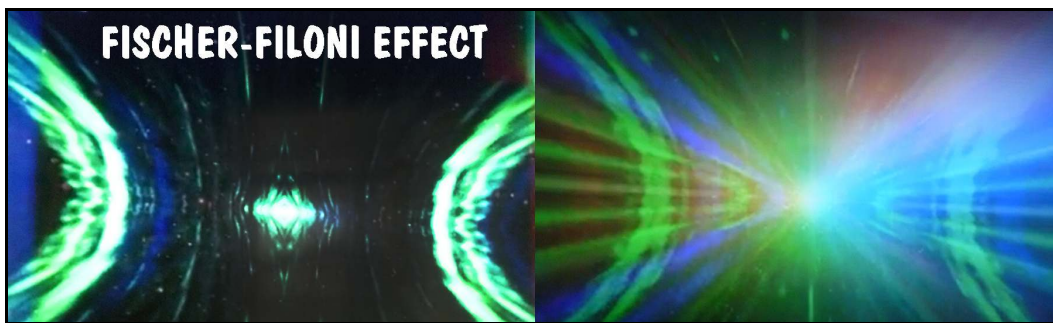
Advanced physics can no longer be called sensible. Only the mind made flexible to accept absurdity can grasp the non-sensory significance of our present cosmological notions. The Heisenberg Belt, a subtle engine, makes use of quantum wave mechanics, topological "design-spaces", and uncertainty to manipulate Heisenberg equations until you are more likely to be somewhere else than where you started — and PRESTO! Interestingly, Cyrano De Bergerac in his *Voyage to the Moon and Sun*, written in 1656, used vials of dew in a waist pack as a propellant. The Russian poet Velimir Khlebnikov coupled science and poetology in his vision of telepathic D-travel (see the frontispiece). Within the device, if two energies can be attuned to a 20-decimal approximation of similarity, the greater will bridge the gap of space between them just as if there were no gap, although the juncture is accomplished at finite speeds. This will permit entry into contra-terrene matter.

— Laura Demming, explaining the mysteries of the Fischer-Filoni Effect

## Finding Mememo

*INTEGRAL PHILOSOPHY is the integration of the eighteen Spheres of Existence and Knowledge with Absolute Transcendence, which is the union of the nine Divine Minds into Theosis (Pristine Enlightenment).*

"However, the paired were quickly booted out by Oscar for heresy. Both had come to the conclusion that the secret of the universe resided not in eighteen, but fifteen (3 x 5) spheres, each of which were inscribed with a quincunxial body/face-centered cubic lattice. The center point of that so-inscribed lattice, they claimed, was a power-place where cosmic forces could concentrate. Oscar's School's Sacred Mantra TOHAM KUM RAH was 'retasked' to evoke that power when certain psychic and physical conditions were met. Moreover, F & F developed interesting connections between their quincunxial figures and the related concept in astrology, quincunxiality (or inconjunct), where such a figure is developed between planets that become at one point roughly 150 degrees apart. According to astrology, such planets 'don't understand each other'; their astrological signs are of a different element and modality. For example, Leo-Pisces, where Leo is Fixed Fire and Pisces is Mutable Water. No common ground lies between them, so very difficult to merge the energies of both planets. But F & F believed their center point in the combined cubic lattice, plus that mantra, might do it. Their inspiration for this was the astrological concept of the Yod: an isosceles triangle formed by two planets



Artist's rendition of the dephasing moment ("the Bridge of Sighs between the prison of the State and the Palace of D-travel's destination") as inspired by Russian Pavel Gluyaeu's electro-auratic theories (see frontispiece), from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies* edited by A. Travers. Travers affirms the powers of fabulation: "Affirmation is itself a creative act; surpass the true and false and undertake the whole transformation of belief" (pg. 5).

sextile to each other and both quincunx of a third, fulcrum planet. The person under this special sign is crossed, 'star-crossed by the Finger of Fate'. A Yod-Configuration could be produced in local space in a latticed configuration and, in conjunction with that aforementioned mantra, one might be able to focus astral energies using a special digital wave-function-futzing device so they could be utilized in ways based on John Wheeler's Many Worlds theory."

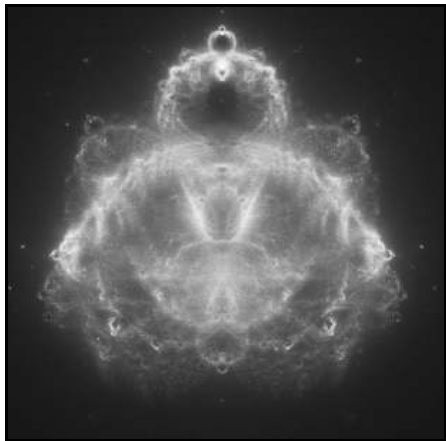
"Dimensional travel? Something like in that 2008 movie *Jumper*?"



## Finding Mememo



In the *Apannaka Jataka*, Buddha refers to "all the infinite worlds that stretch right and left."



Mandelbuddha

"Wheeler posits all quantum possibilities are realized, a multiverse."

"Very Interesting."

"But no surprise that F & F became anathema to Oscar and his cult, even as they paired to become fast friends and collaborators. They subsequently roomed together and took advanced degrees at MIT. They then went on as a team to do research in Futurology at Herman Kahn's Hudson Institute in upper-state New York. They'd been intrigued by Kahn's *method* of Orientalized Systems Theory used to arrive at his predictions in his 1976 best-seller *The Next 200 Years: a Scenario for America and the World*. But Kahn's vision of the future was to be fiercely rejected by the pair as 'resulting from misapplication and misunderstanding of his own theory' [ed., *Peter Rabbit*, *Dim Futures: Forget the Enlightenment*, Fischer and Filoni: A Life, (Des Moines, Iowa: A.K.A. Press, 2000: 25).

"It was while doing research there that they became fascinated by fractal-looking Buddha figures seated in the lotus position in the midst of a lotus flower, which they took as figuring in ancient terms what we know as the Mandelbrot Set in chaos theory today. They asserted that ancient, esoteric wisdom may have been tuned into what we identify today as systems theory, chaos theory, quantum mechanics, string

theory, and so forth.<sup>11</sup> And so began their most daring research, to attempt to combine such knowledges to breach an alternative dimension.

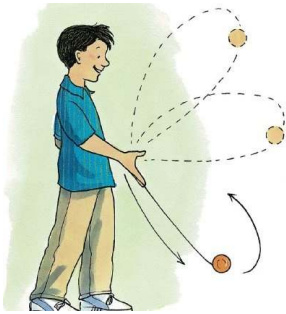
"Meaning, ancients might've achieved dimension travel?"

"Yes. After all, quantum probabilities are numerical measures of personal

---

11. See R. John Williams, "World Futures," *Critical Inquiry* vol. 42, no. 4 (Spring 2016): 473 - 546 for a detailed exposition of ancient forms and their relation to such new theories. Kahn and Fuller's concepts are explored. Therein, it is noted that at the Sufi monastery of the Sarmoung Brotherhood near Bukhara, Uzbekistan sacred dances of the enneagram are performed.

## Finding Mememo



degrees of belief. The ancients were high on belief; it's told that a medieval alchemist in Baghdad expanded (what we'd call) tiny wormholes in spacetime the way a glass-blower turns a dollop of molten glass into a long-necked pipe, creating portals people could walk through.

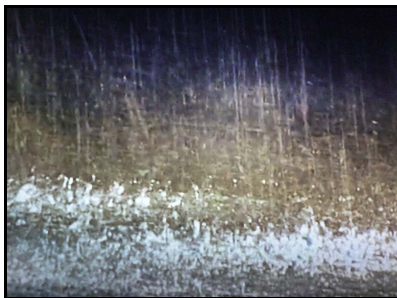
"Ya know, I trace my interest in physics to when my dad bought me a red Duncan Imperial yo-yo."

"My dad, too! But mine was blue."

"Handling that yo-yo, I see now, represented my first organized attempt to control the physical world. Doing tricks with it, I felt I escaped the sloppiness of life for a time. One great and demanding trick was called The Universe, because the yo-yo goes around and around. It's broken down into three stages: the world, the solar system, the galaxies; doing all three quickly, one enters the The Universe phase. But I imagined a fourth stage of skill that would put me into the fifth dimension. D-Travel. I obsessed over those moves. Surely, I looked like Yo-yo Ma conducting an invisible orchestra. Now, Sado often employs yo-yos in her G.O.N.E. group performances."

"Everything, all you've been telling me," I reply, gesturing about my head, "hits home. I would like to understand more."

"You'll understand when you've forgotten what you understood before," he replies. "Yo-yo champs know that, too."



Torrent of rain in the Lodge's parking lot where Hy noted in his notebook: "Suddenly the world cracked open and over-flowed with possibility."

Suddenly we seem to enter another dimension. Massive dark clouds roll in from the northwest, enveloping us. Vicious lightning. Weather here changes in minutes. We hear fishermen on the lake roaring up their outboards to quickly making for shore.

"Looks like our current spacetime dimension is going to get pissed on," I say, making an obvious observation. Explosive thunder rattles the lodge's windows; a torrent of rain descends.

A preteen reading Madeleine L'Engle's *Wrinkle in Time* — pulled from the lodge's library which contains a 1799 edition of Izzak Walton's famous *The Compleat Angler* — jumps up and screams, "tesser!"

"Uhhh. Time to take to the depths," says Wish, glancing down toward the dock where his mini-sub yearns to sink. We shake hands. "Let's meet at the Delta Diner tonight for their fish fry and a jug band. Know it?"

"Yep. Very rétro. I once ordered a 'Delta Dog-dragged-through-the-Garden' followed by a 'Chocolate Life-Preserver' and a 'Cup of Joe's joe'."

"Keeping to Bucky Fuller's number, how about 5:10?"



## Finding Mememo

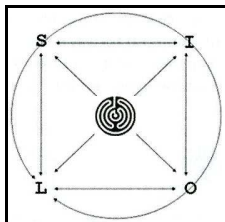
"Great! *The 5: 10-to-you-mah*, friend! I'll be there." I thought: *His story is fantastic and incredible, yet his telling of it so credible and sober.* His theories flare up in me like the fire-writing on walls we did as kids, painting words with airplane glue on brick walls and touching a flame to it.

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: It was a few days before Easter, Hy's last as it turned out. He'd been moody. I had told him, "Trust me, if you have the courage to write it, people will read it." But few had shown up at Hy's reading of his fiction at the school's library. Of course, he'd provocatively titled his reading "Casting Pearls Before Swine" — not a title aimed at attracting the public. Chad, his chairman, had been haranguing him and messing with his usual classroom assignments for signing a petition to have a P-FAC union formed on campus to represent part-time faculty. And, a few days later, Chad had ripped him a new asshole for demanding faculty enrichment funds to attend the annual Transgressive and Post-Confessional Narrative Conference at the University of Indiana, Bloomington.*

*I tried to comfort him with a Shakespeare quote from King Lear: "The worst is not / So long as we can say 'This is the worst'." But death and the question of whether his life had amounted to anything were also doing concentric circles in his cabeza. I tried to encourage him by mentioning that embroidered on the chair of Mary Queen of Scots, in the Royal Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh, is the motto En ma fin est mon commencement: In my end is my beginning. Hy's eye did brighten.*

*These same words, Hy told me, appear in T. S. Eliot's poem, "East Coker," one of his series of poetic meditations on the nature of the fourth dimension, time. He uttered something to the effect of wishing he could do a John Barthsian Mythic Quest and "be king of infinite space and escape his current depressing situation, dephase [a change in the state of a system] and dissolve into a new somewhere," or at least "run a windjammer into the currents and wind, heading for some destination unknown, soothed by the basso boom of the ocean's rumpus room and its rhythm. As winds move from high pressure to low, they perfectly match my journey of psychic needs."*



*Hy pulled out a Xerox of an odd diagram captioned "Quincunxial Logogram of Almost Everything". What was odd was the fifth point (the center) was a figure of a labyrinth. Said his interest in the number five had taken on something of an obsession lately. He then pulled out a deck of bizarre cards he'd bought on e-Bay and had me arrange them in a nine-card grid. No rules had come with the game, so Hy was exploring how it might be played and what its significance was.*

*And so went our exchange at the Artist's Café prior to our chess match. Dallas had texted me he'd just got back from Milwaukee by way of a Bloody Mary at Icky Ricky's in Kenosha and was dropping by to give Hy an Easter gift. He had been running security at a huge Trekkie Convention in the Brew Town. Dallas stepped through the door. Holding a large box, he looked more like Santa than the Easter bunny, with gift in one hand and two cups of Starbucks in the other. Dallas' massive presence and gift formed a field of cheer. Hy perked up considerably, his mood changing from the color of a double espresso*

## Finding Mememo



Five-pointed Stars Card Game

to steaming hot white chocolate. Wow! It was a crime-themed chess set inspired by "Endgame", an original TV series from Canada centering on brilliant chess master cum armchair detective, Arkady Balagan, a grandmaster who imagines potential suspects as pieces on a chess board. Setting up the pieces, we were amazed to see that the white pawns were British Bobbies, the black were misshapen thugs; white bishops were clergymen, black bishops sinister, caped figures; white knights were elegant steeple-jumpers, black were headless horsemen; white rooks were figured as jail cells, black were opium dens; the white queen and king were, respectively, Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot; on the black side it was Lizzie Borden holding an ax and Jack the Ripper with his knife. A veritable Good versus Evil match. But that's not all. These pieces inhabit a three-dimensional chess board similar to the one seen in "Star Trek", but each piece sports a small timed LCD light that, when lit, means the piece time-warps into the fourth dimension and can avoid capture. He said an odd guy he met at a corporate client of his, and who turned up at the convention, was selling them. After reading Hy's last startling section, I now suspect that person might've been Wish Watt. I may be wrong, but Dallas has, since Hy's demise, not been forthcoming on some things, and my suspicions are aroused. I've haven't mentioned anything of this data from Dallas to Dorinda as yet. Such as, she doesn't know her husband found her rare condition, foreign accent syndrome, annoying. "It was like living with Margaret Thatcher," Hy told me once. Dory is charmed by this cuddly flat-footed, night-stalking teddy bear of a cigar smoker and I sure don't want to send a rogue wave of suspicion to overwhelm her right now.

From Hy's record of his escape to the fishing lodge, it's now obvious how much he wanted to get beyond his Rogerian therapist's unimaginative advice to get him beyond laying depressed on his bed, his jaw splashed across the pillowcase. Advice like sitting very still and counting his breath, or staring out the window until his mind disappeared. No, Hy needed a complete change of venue, a Venice! And, if we believe his narrative here, he got that and more thanks to The Shaman and Wishwer Watt. The latter's marked



*Jump Phase Transition into Another Dimension* from Hy Grader's "Jump Shots" collection (last addition to his collection after meeting Wish Watt): scribbled on the back of the hardcopy print Hy has written a quote from Ian Bogost's *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to be a Thing*: "For too long, philosophers have spun waste like a goldfish's sphincter, rather than spinning yarn like a charka." And one from Wishwer Watt: "There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know, so maybe we *can* change CHANCE INTO CHANGE, suggesting the random can be controlled."

## Finding Mememo

influence on Hy shows up as a new D-travel theme in his burgeoning “Jump Shots” collection and him having a fresh Xerox of Ambrose Bierce’s “Mysterious Disappearances”, brief news-like accounts of people suddenly vanishing off the face of the earth which, ironically, occurred to Bierce himself! Both items imply the possibility of dimension-travel, by reaching terminal velocity in some way that mysteriously futzes with quantum wave-functions. A Theo-technics imagineered by Wish’s employer, Deep Dream Corporation?

I once overheard Meme, a week before his death, rattle on about quincunxes, Georg Cantor, Hilbert spaces, Biocentrism,<sup>12</sup> a certain “Mag Miles”, Self-acceleration, Flip-pism (as in heads or tails of a coin), and Object-Oriented Ontology. “I am in wonder,” Hy told me, “finding myself suspending all trust in my own logics, thanks to some odd fellow I recently met.



I hadn’t put much thought to this until I encountered this startling section of Hy’s and his jpeg files shot on this escapade to escape his many academic and personal woes. One jpeg is curious, a snapshot of dice in a quincunx array that plays on Hy’s favorite number, 5, and its multiples 10 and 15.

These pieces of the puzzle are starting to come together in light of Hy’s remark to us over a chess game a week before his demise: “We don’t need concepts of God or nature or reality anymore. Something has happened, like a second chance, and now we have the right to live another kind of life.” We thought, at the time, it was philosophy filtered through the five beers he’d imbibed. More ominously, he blabbed on: “My Self is an intermittent neurosis passively caught up in the s(weep) of history, losing my salutogenic energies,” remarking favorably on both Gilles Deleuze and Guy Debord’s suicides for being motivated by their physical decline — uttering this as he unconsciously massaged his ever-sore left shoulder.



Feminist T-shirt, Hy’s gift to Dorinda

That lunch ended on a weird note. Hy had this thing for actress Linda Hunt, “A small woman who appears to me to belong to a new type of animal.” He had a DVD collection of every film she appeared in — Silverado, 1985, being his favorite — and was bragging about having just gotten hold of a rare VHS tape in which key scenes featuring Hunt were compiled from her filmography, which included Dune (1984) where space is folded, permitting intergalactic travel. He said, “Watching Hunt in such a filmic mash-up made her appear like she was dimension-jumping or time-traveling into alternate worlds, doing the up ‘n down on a filmic Jacob’s Ladder.”

\* \* \*

---

12. Hilbert spaces arise naturally and frequently in mathematics and physics, typically as infinite-dimensional function spaces. The earliest Hilbert spaces were studied from this point of view in the first decade of the 20th century by David Hilbert, Erhard Schmidt, and Frigyes Riesz. They are indispensable tools in the theories of partial differential equations and quantum mechanics. Biocentrism, perfecting quantum theory, claims only an act of observation can confer shape and form to reality. Without consciousness, “matter” dwells in an undetermined state of probability.

## Finding Mememo

22



I press the ON button on my cabin's radio on and what comes on?

*What connects the sound camps to the Barbie Death Camp to the Heebie-Geebie Healers? What connects Duran Duran fans over the generations? What connects the Thunderdome to hula-hooper camps to the solo camper way out at the 'million dollar view', to the dancers at one of our Pow Wows? We're looking for that magical, unifying moment when everything comes together — like in Judaism 101 in which one learns that Rabbi Hillel is asked to explain the whole of Judaic thought: while standing on one foot, lifting his left leg up, he says: "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. The rest is commentary," then puts his foot down. Don't get caught in the mind vise, letting mind set limits.*



This is followed by a song titled "I'm Livin' on Anishinaabe Time", followed by native drumming and singing in the tribe's language. "You are listening to WOJB, 100,000 watts of Anishinaabe Power," a familiar voice, rich in italics and bold face, blasts some strange radio program into my Saturday ears. Why, it's the Shaman! Still morning-groggy, I get a sensation like tripping over some hidden dimension where incorrect combinations of hills, streetlights, and coffee shops make it difficult to get laid. The leather good-luck medicine pouch he'd given me yesterday was on side-table (see frontispiece image). He read a poem "From Soup Cans to Flying Saucers" by local poet "Planchette". Went to grab my recorder I use to tape The Shaman and Wish for my literary purposes, but couldn't find it. Wanted to record it and play it back on Chad's voice mail. *Maybe they'll replay the program, I think, I'll have to call the station.* I turn to my nightstand whereon is a Xerox of Philip K. Dick's story "Captive Market" that Wish gave me as it probes multiple futures, time travel, and capitalist exploitation. He told me about the importance of seeing, when a child, David Mamet's time-travel play for kids *The Revenge of the Space Pandas, or Binky Rudich and the Two-Speed Clock* [ed., see the *Wish Watt* section in the frontispiece]. He'd scribbled inside: "Wish you'd read this — Wish."

Had trouble sleeping last night and not just because violent storms lashed the cabin past midnight (the Blues call it "Stormy Monday"); after the bad weather, the black noise of muffled objects fringed my insomnia. I dreamily recalled that P. K. Dick story for its probing of current social distress: *It envisions capitalists as having "warped, miserable flea-sized minds."* One can extrapolate from the narrative to how global capitalism turns our reality into a

## Finding Mememo

*Miserabilist Society. Of course, capitalists don't quite use time travel as that story did, but the ruling class does have a firm grip on many future trends through control of innovation, investments, and political systems. Many of us are, as in Dick's story, a "captive market" through debt: student loans are issued to people who have little choice but to take them out, mortgages, consumer payment plans, cable bills, and a thousand other devices ensure that our paychecks go back to the bosses one way or another. Yet another reason I want to jump off the slave ship Academia into another dimension.*

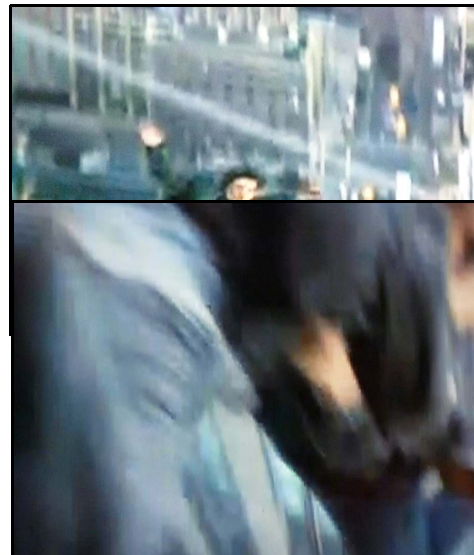
Silly? My ex-Silly Con Valley Man had, that day, words of encouragement: "Since everything has been tried, we need to try the impossible. We live in the time of catastrophe so we can be born a second time. We wish for this."

The Dorothy Parker's famous poem about suicide, "Résumé", kept recycling, but with my own surprise ending tagged on:

*Razors pain you;  
Rivers are damp;  
Acids stain you;  
And drugs cause cramp.  
Guns aren't lawful;  
Nooses give;  
Gas smells awful  
You might as well jump, jump  
And do a crap shoot, go bye-bye, or become sidewalk pizza pie.  
Do not worry,  
Our tear ducts are banks that weep out gold.*



Dimensional Travel, a Hand-held Heisenberg Device Activates the Fischer-Filoni Effect



Artist rendition from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*



## Finding Mememo



*Emergence via Immer: What Moves as a Body, Returns as the Movement of Thought* (artist rendition of) from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies* edited by A. Travers, which reprises quantum theory's concepts of spacetime as granular. An excerpt reads: "Transparency and opacity cannot be thought of as qualities of a substance, but as characteristics appearing in a system undergoing a change of state, i.e., dephasing. . . . When you're outside, you can picture exactly what you want it to be like, but once inside [*the new dimension*], all you can do is follow along."



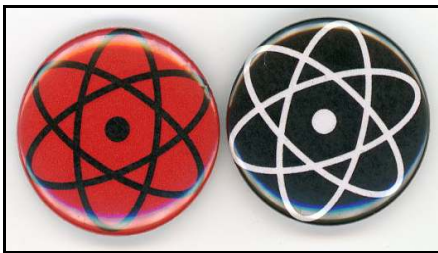
"Attempt what is not certain," activating a Heisenberg Belt, acrylic by T.I.N.A. (There Is No Alternative)

Ground outside extremely muddy. In my cabin I open two tins of Kipper Snacks, peel a boiled egg copped from yesterday's lunch table, make coffee, skipping the lodge's breakfast. Want to peruse the illustrated book, *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*, edited by A. Travers and dedicated: "To a Wish, a real stand-up cosmicomic"; published by the same press Dallas uses. Wish lent me it along with the Xerox of that Philip K. Dick story. I take digital shots of some of the material for use in my future writing. One seductive illustration purports to show a jumper reaching terminal velocity and activating a belt-device to generate a wigwam cuspid field giving him a 50 - 50 chance of dodging death and moving into another dimension. The *F-F For Dummies* book opens with an epigram that refers to that strange attractor as a function of a "Heisenberg Device". I knew it had something to do with multiverse imaginings suggested by

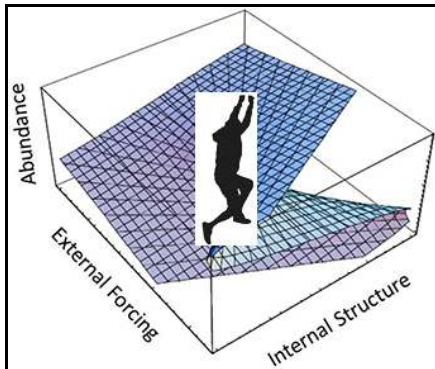
## Finding Mememo



Pipe-sized Heisenberg Device employing circuits called SQUIDs (an acronym for superconducting quantum interference device).



G.O.N.E. members' Group Atom Badges: Recruit (red), and Advanced (black)



Catastrophic Wigwam Cuspoid Field generated by the Fischer-Filoni Effect, thought to propel a D-jumper into Immer and D-Travel due to the potential inherent to a metastable equilibrium.

Charles Howard Hinton's hypercubes, H.G. Wells' time/dimensional travelers, and P.D. Ouspensky's science-mysticism and Accelerationism. The original reference to a "Heisenberg Device" was in Philip K. Dick's 1963 *The Man in the High Castle* and meant the A-bomb. Now the term is associated with quantum mechanics and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, referring to the unmeasurable, how you can only examine things through how they change, making the name appropriate to refer to alternate realities by linking reality with potential new realities gained by, as Wish said, "Accelerating technology, erasing the separation between imaginary vision and practical action, encouraging experimentation."

Well, according to that book, this complex digital calculating machine, scaled down in size from a large egg-like capsule to the a pipe bomb size, and now flat and small enough to hide in a body-clinging money-belt. Its precise mechanism and programming is top secret, but Wish hinted that its internal chips are arrayed in a quincunx formation. It's purpose, claims the book, has to do with "tweaking initial conditions," creating exponentially large deviations (the Butterfly Effect), such that "after a falling body reaches escape velocity, sudden and significant spacetime phase transitions into

"Immer" occur via a pentangle morphology (e.g., a wigwam cuspoid); but the outcome is uncertain, but may be positively influenced by a high number of sunspots." A jump into either another dimension — instantiated by resonances that manipulate a topological manifold via light and sound vibrations pushing one toward what we call 'Emergence, the light no one reads by' — or into becoming very very fast food, sidewalk pizza. We urge our believers, as our promo copy puts it, toward:

Diligence : Magic :: Progress : Flight. Accel and earn your Atom Badge. Rewrite the sad grim grieving playscript of Now-Life (NL).

## Finding Mememo

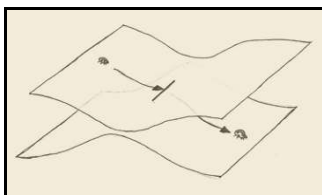


Duo-jump experiment, which turned out to be a failure, from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*

"The seemingly bright and fresh-as-paint pleasures of Now Life are thin as paint — you can poke a finger through it," he continued. "Our edgy experiments are not for those who march in the terrible, slow army of the cautious. We need bold adventurers like those second-generation psychonauts, Terence K. McKenna and John Lilly, who attempted to explore alternate worlds via psychotropic drugs like psilocybin and Ketamine, risking their sanity.



Failed Jump, a dead hero, team members recover Heisenberg Belt, from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*. "We need verbs that will story our bodies into something more than missing," Sado Muga.



The Reimann Cut: two sheets connected along a line

"We risk bodies, not minds. We're trying to improve the odds of our mechanism-based procedure so it becomes a surprise-free scenario. Then we'd have less 'blow outs'. But then we'd have to rename the device, right?" Yep, that attempt at gallows humor got a laugh out of me. "We tried duo-jumps hoping, contra Probability Theory, that two *simultaneous* jumps [ed., like tossing two coins] would increase the odds of at least one of the hand-holding jumpers entering Immer, a sub-space dimension, that the seam between here and there, as envisioned by Reimann's Cut, what we call 'The Infra-Slim,' could be enlarged. This is initiated by the juxtaposition of two elements, suggesting that a meaningful gap or door is caused by that close proximity of the elements in question. But, no go. Both Dimensionauts were served up as sidewalk pizza.

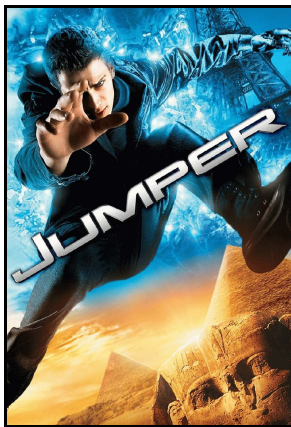


## Finding Mememo

"You say we're odd? But in the long run, isn't the odd stuff that which really makes a difference? The ideas of Copernicus, Wollstonecraft, Garrison, Darwin, Freud, and even Charlie Parker were widely derided as silly. I've learned to put up with comments like, 'You really are a *wrong number*.' The only things that really count for me are the things that most people say don't count at all. I think in spirals, mince no silences, stare into another sun."



Fatal fall, emergency response at Potawatomi Hotel and Casino from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*



While forking my Kipper Snacks down the hatch, I skip-read through the book that bemoaned the "lost futures of modernity." I wondered if its audience, "for Dummies," refers to those who believe it. Sheer fiction. Or is it? Speaking of fiction, Dallas might've gotten access to it, inspiring his book *Jumper Cables*, as there's a photo in his book of the aftermath of an unsuccessful jump at the Potawatomi Hotel and Casino by a female member of Wish's group. Yet, Dallas told us all his inspiration came from only two sources: 1) Alfred Bester's "Out of This World", where telephone lines from the present and the future get crossed; and, 2) the 2008 action movie *Jumper*, where the protagonist has the inalienable energy to instantly transport anywhere, using such to globe-trot, living on money stolen by D-jumping into bank vaults. But what if it's true and Wish ain't no kook? [Ed., I've deleted irrelevancies: Hy recalls his youthful adventures in minor theft and mayhem, chats about Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd*, offers culinary comments on lunch at the lodge, and details a week's list of the daily fish catch posted on the lodge's large chalkboard.]

## Finding Mememo

Five-ten precisely. I'm waiting at the Delta Diner, the expanding universe whirling around me, which my *Northwoods Guide Book* gives big kudos:

*Traditional dishes get funky twists, like the red-eye gravy made with ground espresso beans and served over buttermilk biscuits, it has the locals hooked. Our guy loved the Norwegian Pancake with jalapeno, declaring it "a crepe gone wild." A moving cart of sweets, called IN THE SWEET BY AND BY, brings a hint of high-dining to the place and delights children of all ages. For dinner, steak burger with Wisconsin cheese, Nueske's bacon, and onion rings always rings true. Porcupine Balls make for conversation and Scotch Woodcock surprises. Prawns Finocchio is to die for. But don't miss the fish fried in beer batter and stacked a foot high on your plate, home-made fries, natch, and the malt vinegar a must. For us Chicago food snobs, there's Fried Chicken Drumstick in a bowl of Caviar.*



Delta Diner's lunch counter, reproduction culled from Hy's Wisconsin guide book

I've often sat at bars, diner counters, and in faculty meetings wishing that I could become invisible, disembodied, with just my mind at work, observing. Yes, the painful husk of ancient flesh covering me would be no more. Like the Invisible Man, I would be privy to strangers' conversations. But I am fully corporeal tonight, mindlessly picking sugar cubes, one at a time, from a triangular porcelain dish near the salt and pepper, lining the cubes up in a quincunx array. I'm rubbing shoulders with dicey-looking guy on the next stool, middle-aged with a botched complexion and unruly, unbarbered gray hair, a lowered brow, sleepy eyes, and sagging shoulders. Somniferous mutterings slowly emerge from him, sounds straight from nature, unprocessed. If I had to name to him it'd be "Noddy". When his huge hamburger is placed in front of him, he put his hand to his mouth, waved it in

midair, a gesture signaling emotion too great to be verbalized. He begins to dig and delve, uncover and discover, sift the culinary evidence, drawing ecstatic conclusions on his expression; his left hand madly grasps a gaggle of large fries as the diner's jukebox plays "Should I Stay or Should I Go" by The Clash, a song Wishwer Watt's G.O.N.E. group adores.

The waitress with striking blue-gray wolf-eyes, never still, tells "Elmo" to ratchet it down. A regular, he calls her "Wee-Gee", which I take as referring to



## Finding Mememo

"Ouija", as people ask her advice on "What's heavenly to order?" when they see her name-tag blasting in Helvetica Bold font PLANCHETTE. She's *cool*, wears her hair Veronica Lake style. A pulse-quickenning beauty, she strikes me as transparent as a pane of the finest window glass so fragile that an invisible hammer (or a Heisenberg Belt!) could turn her into shimmering tiny silver particles. Handles food and customers along the long counter in a Taylorized ballet. She'll be noir cinema in my dreams tonight. She looks at me and says, "Did you know that the article *the* is all that separates *efficiency* from *a fish in the sea*?" Huh? It strikes me like the surprise punch of a Zen koan. She continues, "I'm a synesthete; for me foods have new colors: chicken is sky blue, oranges are a medium blue. I make a visually Blue-Tiful Chicken à la Mode: baked chicken breast topped with vanilla ice cream and orange juice concentrate over a bed of pumpkin pie puree, which adds a medium purple with multicolored sparkles. In London, Michelin chefs have created a thirteen course synesthesia dinner [*ed., see [www.kitchen-theory.com](http://www.kitchen-theory.com)]*" — I really dig her now — "Kifaya, our food-genie," jerking her thumb toward the young dark-complected female cook, "likes it too."

During a lull in Planchette's "diner-dance", I find she moved from Chicago to simplify her life: "Sometimes the best moment of love is when you leave in a taxi. I wanted to be free of *situations*, escape the cacophony of city life, the murders. Find my tribe. In here, life softens into a sort of soothing white noise punctuated by the creak and slam of the screen door. Been here three years but still considered a *green-horn*. Made a major *faux pas* my first month here. Wore my WOJB *Murder Most Fowl?* T-shirt at work. Local guides and frothing-at-mouth Trumpites it didn't dig it. Got labeled a liberal nut-job; read the riot act." Yep, she tunes in WOJB's preserve wildlife program "Murder Most Fowl?" Writes poetry — digs Dorothea Lasky — as "an essential element to my existence." I growl about Corporatization and the remasculinization of academia, the disavowal of inwardness and emotion in pursuit of hyperrationalization and Moola. "The world I inhabit is basically hostile to me," I tell her, "it zigs while I zag."

She moves closer, whispers, "It's isolated here. Since moving up, I jot down what I hear in me in here. I am, beside cuisine, made of colorful words, jot poetry, and I belong to a tribe thanks to a regular here, Pilgrim Sado Muga. I got the urge for a *somewhere else* and she *got that*. Said if there're aliens on other worlds, they might be using Twitter. Twittered me to contact other like-minded pilgrims — she called them *bhikku* or 'G.O.N.E.R.S.' — who share my sense institutions are shams, that official reality is a distorting side-show not-so-fun mirror, not a stainless Zen mirror. 'Now's the time to *Accelerate*,' Sado said, 'to grok like fuckin' poets in Venice: envision new places, anotherness, a *Some-WhereElse* (S.O.W.E.) without the Devil's excrement — oil, poverty, oppression, and violence — where the languages of Arieka are spoken.' Very *cool* shit."

## Finding Mememo

"Amen to that and Dump Drumpf!" I whisper; we do a high-sign, slapping hands. I notice her arms' skin is a string-cheese color and has a tat rendered in a cheesy font, reading: ALIEN PHENOMENOLOGIST. She tells me she has a B.A. in French Lit from DePaul (which she pronounces Dee Pow) but turned serious about poetry, after coming across an essay by André Breton in the Spring 1957 issue of *Le Surréalisme, même*. "Liked the five e's in the title," she said, "Did you know the most frequently used letter of the alphabet is e — which begins the word *Eternity* and the ends the word *Time*? Like E.T., too."

I freak out about the *death and time* topic, but especially that the term *meme*, my nickname, is found in the title. I tell her and she freaks out too. We shake hands at this reciprocal clairvoyance. I tell her, "If I were to order something now it'd have to be an off menu item [*I do a slight pause here for dramatic effect*]: A Subliminal Uprush for two, hold the caution."

Her eyes roll upward. "Great name for a new dessert, dude!"

"Or make it a to-share Tiki-style large ceramic bowl tropical cocktail."

"Yah, complete with a small pineapple popsicle and two fuscia-colored umbrellas skewering a litany of exotic Asian fruits." Laughs.

I ask her about her job and her *forbidden-to-forbid* attitude.

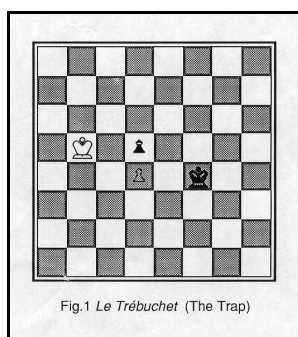
"What I've learned from my job? That it's much easier to talk about hate in public than to talk about love, and if you are mixed up with food, how do you know it's not using you to achieve dark designs? Think of the secret lives of meals so well-captured in art photog Stephen Shore's mundane meals photos."

I'm speechless. *She knows Shore!* She moves on to an elderly lady two stools to my left who's motioning for attention (I'm saving the adjacent seat for Wish) who complains to "Ouija": "Ignavia — you know, Iggy — well she went and hired a cleanin' lady so lousy that this sot, herself, hires a cleanin' lady fer her own house," she tells Planchette, eyes rolling in a head trumped by Trump hat.

I catch a bit of conversation from a table behind me. "A fine beer works on the tongue — ahhhh — nudging it from its narcotic slumber." Not a local.

"And if you taste something strange, as I did at the Dappled Duck last week, all you can do is compare it to what you've tasted before," replies his banal companion. If ever I want to have someone ghost write a novel in which every sentence is a tautology, I'll hire that guy.

I tell Planch to save my two stools as I go to the restroom to add a third. In so doing, I pass a small table hidden back in a corner on which two patrons are in the throes of an chess end-game. I notice their pieces are configured on the board in what Marcel Duchamp called *Le Trébuchet*, The Trap. Looking at the



## Finding Mememo

scene, I sense a brief pause in time in which reality fades and a dream sweeps through the caverns of my mind. Chess itself is a trap, a game that can move one from whim to obsession in five moves or six. The pieces are arrayed like pairs of unequals dining, the intervening unoccupied square representing the table. A king and a pawn, like a boss and an employee, or Chad and I, face-to-face. Is this a coincidence? Might it be a warning about a bad encounter with Chad in the near future? <sup>1</sup> Or maybe I'm walking into a trap, Wish trying to "get" me in some way? Am I being trapped by my own obsessions? Is the king Death and I the Knight, as in *The Seventh Seal*? Okay, I admit it, I'm too much of a surrealist to think this has no meaning in the cosmic scheme of things. I file this event under "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Loo" and make a mental note to develop it further in my book-in-progress: *Ah, if only the world, a vast chess board, was configured to exactly meet my needs.*

Returning to my seat, I see a manic staffer cooking wild-caught Copper River Alaskan salmon almonidine and flash on Dory making an elaborate meal using every utensil, every bowl and dish there is, opening bottles and Tupperware containers, leaving lids off, spilling ingredients on the counters, only to leave A MESS FOR MEME, me, to clean up, our two manic dogs scrambling to lick up all falls on the floor. "Planch" comes back and sets twin shakers like chess bishops before me. As Wish is late, I go ahead and order a local craft beer, Death Star, and try a Kropotkin Slider. She asks what I do and I mention my sorry academic role at Fuck U. in the grand scheme of the cosmos.

She chides me. "U.S. academic pose 'n prose, huh? Whoa! Appalling, pompous, abstruse, claustral, inflated, euphuistic, pleonastic, solecistic, sequipedalian, occluded, obscure, jargon-ridden, empty, resplendently dead . . . the obligatory feminine pronoun. Oh, I got an Masters in Writing from Wash U."

"I know what you're saying. I feel like what determines my life is something objective, impersonal, that my bit in things is like being a tiny part of a large mechanism with an Armbuster of a chair at the throttle."

Leaning in, in a hushed tone, "Vrrrooommm, vrrrooommm, bet you wish you were on 'shrooms, huh?" then adds. "Hey, lose your irony, the fuckers win."

"My 'shrooms do be my writing. You can quote that, O daughter of Chow Yun-fat." I do love simple, stupid rhymes when eating, sorry.

"I do will, Unca Bill." Runs off to take the order of a tall blond guy with a cleft chin and bright green eyes. "Why take a whiff, if it ain't Biff!" she yells.

---

1. I know that Hy was concerned Chad would figure out that he was the guy leaving odd messages on Chad's voice mail from an "Albert Weisbord" (Communist leader of the 1926 Passaic Strike), impertinently asking Chad to "lose that lip-smile and loosen your mind vise," and to call him back ASAP about "pertinent data." Wyoh had already made a stencil and sprayed (MEME LIVES) on all the sixth floor school lockers.

## Finding Mememo

Isn't there a character in *The Hardy Boys* mysteries by that name? <sup>2</sup> I later learn from her this dude is one Mark "Biff" Diggerence who "has about him the merest hint of a foretaste, but leaves an unforgettable aftertaste." I learn that behind his back, locals call him B.Q.M., short for Big Question Mark. He's wandering evidence of something — but what? His rumored 14-inch penis with 3 pleasure enhancing warts? Drunk driving is his hobby, speeding about on his motorcylce, a low black figure, part of the machine, his art. Owns a canoe-rental on the Chippewa Flowage.<sup>3</sup> The tag B.Q.M. refers to his life-style far outweighing his visible source of income; that he never uses a credit card, fishing for cash stashed in a resealable plastic sandwich bag; that he is conclusively inconclusive, always on the go "inventin' meself," as he puts it. Rumors fly about his stunning wife, Mia, that she was once was billed as "The Unbelievable Undulating Una Calda Bionda" at an exotic dance joint, The House of Awe, in Hurley, Wisconsin.<sup>4</sup>

Hurley! Another surreal coincidence. "Why, I raised my right hand in allegiance to our Country beside two wacky, topless bar-addicted, harrumping alcoholic youths hailing from Hurley when I enlisted in the Air *Farce*. They died in a VC bomb-attack on a sleazy Saigon nightclub they regularly got bombed in."

"Holy shit!" Planch says when I tell her this. From her expression, I see she's already working up a poem about this — she has the instinct of a bat, the soft inquiry of a mouse — earlier she mentioned her obsessive notebook jottings, one of which was titled "Errors Found in Books."

"Ya, those schmucks chose the wrong right bar to get blasted in, then out of. But what can you expect from guys who attended Schmucker Middle School on Bittersweet Road, Mishawaka, Indiana before moving way northward to enjoy the *sprezzatura* offered by Hurley's sixties' bar scene? <sup>5</sup> Or so they told me. Our meeting during the enlistment ceremony was brief, like two dogs sniffing each

---

2. Yes, there is. Allen "Biff" Hooper is a six-foot, blond-haired, muscular chum of the Hardy boys. He excels at boxing, wrestling and football. His nickname comes from a distant relative who was a boxer named Biff. He owns a bloodhound named Sherlock and a Great Dane named Tivoli, and drives a motorboat named "Envoy." He can play the harmonica. Hy confessed to Dallas that he'd like to write a story in which all the characters would be exactly like those in the Hardy Boy stories, but retasked to fit a non-detective narrative.

3. First filled in 1924, the "Big Chip" was created as a means to augment downstream water flow for power generation and flood control. Dotted with approximately 200 undeveloped islands, it is Wisconsin's third-largest lake and boasts a highly irregular, wooded, and generally undeveloped 233-mile shoreline.

4. Hurley is a city in, and the county seat of, Iron County, Wisconsin. The population was 1,547 at the 2010 census. It is located directly across the Montreal River from Ironwood, Michigan, notorious for its rowdy bars. My own grandfather, working on the railroad, had stories about lay-overs in Hurley that he said he couldn't tell his wife about. City folks call it "The People's Pissoir".

5. Dallas Googled this school and found it actually exists and on that very street!

## Finding Mememo



The Delta Diner, Delta, Wisconsin.

other, showing a little teeth, then going separate ways."

"Speaking of Schmuckers, the KKK was born in that great state of Conservative Prejudice named Indiana, you know."

"And if I had an atomic bomb, it'd die there."

She puts a finger to her mouth, moves eyes side-to-side, which I read as *You're among not a few White Supremacists here too*. I mouth a silent *Oops*.

"You have in your countenance, madam, that which I would fain call Master," delivered in an exaggerated gentlemen's voice with an accompanying slight bow to a woman who seems capable to giving you her heart, when all you wanted was a cup of coffee.

"Huh? Master? Isn't that sexist?"

"I mean you exude authority, a vitality, a glow, a rush . . ."

"Working through authority, an essential achievement for us gals."

"For me, to thrill to the authority of a superior example is to aspire to do or to be better."

"Meaning me? Huh. Why, thank you! I think." She blushes.

I know that if I dreamt of hipbones and sockets, of locks and keys, it would mean she'd open up me and suck out all the hurt. I quickly dash the thought. There is still a ring on my finger.

I wonder what's taking Wish so long. Wish he'd hurry up. But maybe Wish is purposely late, wishing I connect with this young lady for reasons of his own. Is this the trap? She did mention a secret society. Does she know Wish? Wish her? Was she part of Wish Watt's wacky group of wonder seekers? Wow! I notice she's wearing white *sneakers*. Sneaky. She. If so.

Planch suddenly straightens up. Looks at the door. A father and son look-a-likes in coveralls sporting the identical name "Joe" arrive, immediately followed by Wish. From her expression, I realize she *does* know the guy, sure, she knows Sado so . . . He walks up and puts his forehead against hers — mind-meld.

"Your dinner guest has arrived," she says, then, pointing to a four-person tourist family clad in Smiley T-shirts that just entered into this time warp back to the 1940s, walking in a precise order of heights from small to tall, "Bet they're here for the fish fry and buckets of cold mud [*chocolate ice-cream*]." The parents do have that distinctive time-traveler's air of studious confusion about them as they scan the bizarre range of customers and the 1940s *rétro*. You just *know* Planch is going to ask these newbies "Watt's yer Wish?"



## Finding Mememo

Wish navigates around the tourists and hops on the stool next to me and shakes my hand. His handshake is better than I recall, possessed of a slightly addictive quality. "Okay, I'm late, on purpose, wanted you to meet Planchette."

*I knew it!* I say to myself. "Ya, she's neato, albeit a bit odd."

"But isn't anyone that's worth their DNA? Like my Sado."

"*Touché.*"

"Like Sado, she's got the gumption to ride a quantum wave and dash through a warp if and when it comes along."

"Like that old lady in Dick's story, 'Captive Market,' I suppose."

"So you liked that story, huh? It was my wish you'd be drawn to it. Thought it'd tickle your anti-capitalist misadventure bone."

Kifaya, from the kitchen, amps up the radio playing *Someone's in the Kitchen with Dinah* performed on a uke, just as the tourist family's smallest *Kind*, a brash snot, kind of has a mini-meltdown because she kind of wants the bacon-cheese burger on a fresh-baked hard roll, not the fish. I peek into the kitchen and see two chefs yelling, playing backgammon on the grill with hamburgers. (Unlike chess, each backgammon position is its own absolute and present circumstance, no foreseeing the moves ahead.) These disparate sounds blend into a pastiche of an avant-garde musical performance. Praise Allah! (short for *all the* lucky shit happening to me up here) — the Annoying Clan is led to a table far away from the counter.



Wish wears a "Wave Good-Bye" T-shirt with an oscilloscope read-out, a curving line — a trace of an errant particle — whizzing around. Short-hand for The Fischer-Filoni Effect, suggesting the seizure of matter by mysterious energies streaming with radiant colors that results (so they say) in a sound like the trill of a sparrow. For some reason, seeing Wish wearing that shirt is like getting a bizarre wrong number, crossed-microwaves connecting me to the future.

Maybe *my* future. Maybe a Mag-Miles-ish future in which I'll suffer mega-hurts.

"*Kriegspiel*, do you know the term?" Wish suddenly asks, breaking my reverie.<sup>6</sup>

"Blind chess, right?"

---

6. *Kriegspiel* (German for war game) is a chess variant invented by Henry Michael Temple in 1899 and based upon the original *Kriegspiel* developed by Georg von Rassewitz in 1812. Since the position of the opponent's pieces is unknown, *Kriegspiel* is *not a game with perfect information*. Chess *Kriegspiel* derives from a war game which was used in nineteenth-century Germany to train military officers. As each player cannot see his or her opponents pieces, the game is sometimes referred to as blind chess.

## Finding Mememo

"Uh-huh. Each player has their own board, sees their own pieces, but not those of their opponent. A moderator sees both. That 'blinded' player is akin to a jumping Dimensionaut, but in a situation for which no moderator exists.



Backward Jump, unsuccessful, from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*



The start of an unsuccessful backward jump, Minneapolis, MN (film still from a vid-clip by Wishwer "Wish" Watt, July 14, 2015)

Emphasizing such blindness, one Dimensionaut, wearing our improved device, jumped *backwards* so he wouldn't see the ground. Amazingly, before his body could hit ground-zero, there was a fizzle and he just faded out. The risk paid off. Maybe we've found a way to beat the 50-50 odds — or not."

"So you *have* had success!"

"Or not. There *was*, after all, a 50-50 chance of success, it just went in his favor. Nevertheless, encouraged by this success, another Dimensionaut tried the

same backwards technique and, well, look for yourself." He pulls out his iPhone and shows me a video. "See, this jump occurred recently in Minneapolis. He was sidewalk pizza in seconds. Our investigation proved his belt had initiated properly, but the wigwam cuspid warp did not manifest. We put his name on our IN MEMORIAM plaque featuring a jumper leaping from the Japanese kanji figure meaning THE END."

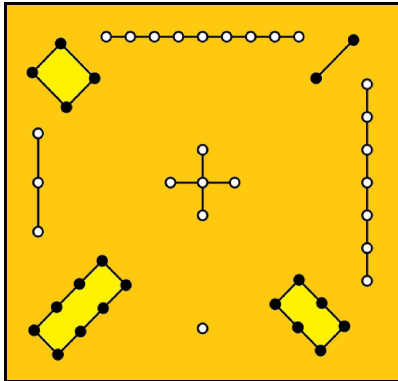


## Finding Mememo

*Ichi would appreciate that!* I notice the file name is "Wishwer71416," and ask if his full first name *is* Wishwer?

"Oh, yeah; hate it. Don't use it if I can avoid it."

"That file date July 14 2015, that's Bastille Day in France!"



Improved Heisenberg Belt circuit design based on the quinquinx and a Jungian mandala and made of Thiotimoline alloy

"Oh, our brave jumper, of French descent, thought jumping on that date might give him a better chance of being released from the Bastille of our present dimension. Hell, we *all* thought it might as the hum of creative minds composing our group had never been so strong! Especially since our latest circuit board design in the new Heisenberg Belt [*he flips to another iPhone image*] features an improved quinquinx array which three of our four quantum supercomputers confirmed was the optimal configuration to initiate a molecular Jahn–Teller Effect, setting off the Fischer-Filoni Effect. But the existence of a majority of positive readings

doesn't guarantee no negatives. This was proven in Jean-Pierre's case. We are confronting the fact we have *multiple futures* to contend with here."

"Of course, and those futures may mean the 'lucky' jumper who succeeds in making the Great Leap — being temporarily ionized, rendered in terms of charged particles of energy, radiated outward at the velocity of light to awaken to a slow, leaden fatigue — into, well, *somewhere*, and that somewhere might be a remote section of the universe composed mostly of dank rural cultures, isolated agrarian enclaves typified by small-time bartering of fruit, vegetables, and handmade artifacts."

"Ah, a little like up here, wouldn't you say?" adds Wish. "But you know, we did have an odd success. A robust guy who hoped to jump into a world where chivalry reigned, dressed up like a Musketeer and jumped from an ancient wall in France. He vanished. Got shots to prove it." Shows me a set of six iPhone images. In the last frame the Dimensionaut starts to fade out.



Donny Duncan of the Duonauts Jug Band

"But, let's hurry up and order. At six The Duncan Duonauts Jug Band, billed as 'A Pair from Texas' — not a parataxis! — will do a set, and this place is going to jam up as twin bros toot 'n rattle their instruments while the sixteen-year old wife of one does a funny pastiche of a soft-shoe. The twins' brains and tongues are interconnected, one starts to talk and the other finishes the sentence."

## Finding Mememo



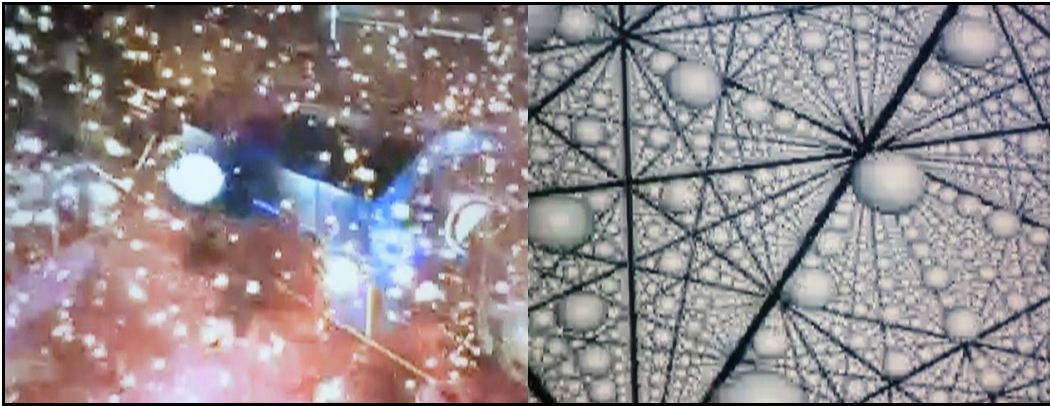
"23 Husk Skidoo!" a chivalric-nostalgia jump, France; a success as jumper wavers into invisibility and to "emergent alterfication, toward Ziv. To think of the body in movement means accepting the paradox that there is an incorporeal dimension of the body. We do not yet know what a body can do," from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*.

*. . . [T]here is a finite probability . . . that even the most unlikely, bizarre events — such as waking up one morning and finding our bed in the middle of the Amazon jungle — will actually happen.*

*— Hyperspace, Michio Kaku*



## Finding Mememo



Artist's rendition of dimension travel from fade-out to strings, from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*

*Our universe may be lost somewhere among the millions of possible universes that have been found in string theory.*

— *Hyperspace*, Michio Kaku



## Finding Mememo

We both order the fish fry “with goop,” craft beers, moving to a table just vacated by two lodge guides wearing hoodies sporting Bernie Sanders’ cell-phone number (or so it says) and WRONG NUMBER. They barely manage to squeeze by a crooked timber of humanity, a large lumbering lumberjack, broaching the diner’s door a female wrestler-type in tow. “Diz mus be da blace!” he says, nasaling words through a severely deviated septum running a hand through his mullet, which reminds me of a Swedish Flokati rug.<sup>7</sup> She’s weighed down by fake eyelashes that could double as helipads and lipstick applied as if with a backhoe.

As our beers arrive — mine light, Wish’s dark — the Duncan Band sets up. One twin wields a jug, the other a kazoo. When our dinners arrive, the music starts. Twin One raises his right hand, greeting the audience: “Evenin’, Peep-holes of this Land! We open fer Slambovian Circus of Dreams tomorraw with our version of that Bulgarian folk song . . .” Twin Two finishes, “made famous by Valya Balkanska: ‘Delyo the Hajduk Has Gone Outside.’ Ok?” Hoots and claps. A drunk diner stands and yells, “I shhtand wit Shhcott Walker ‘n Troomp!” One twin, cheeks red, swollen, toots a bottle, the other blows a kazoo, the wife, introduced as “L’il Margie,” shoes it to “I’ll Build a Stairway to the Stars.”

“Appropriate tune, huh?” says Wish in my ear. “They always end their set with Schumann’s ‘The Happy Farmer,’ a real crowd pleaser up here.”

With the music playing and the audience chatter, we have no fears our conversation will be overheard. Wish pushes his pawn forward. “I’m going to level with you. I am involved in a business interest that is a spin-off of my more touchy-feeling involvement in that little secret coterie I’ve been mentioning. If the Heisenberg Belt can be ultimately perfected within certain parameters to reveal the unknown variable that has been frustrating our goal, then people who are bank-rolling things can grow a subsidiary company, G.O.N.E., INC. (short for Get-Off-Now-Everyone). We are sparking interest via a hip fan-zine, *Waterspider*, named after the fact that, like a waterspider’s quick jumping motion, a Dimen-

sionaut moves *zip-zoom* to somewhere else. Here’s a copy. Like the logo? Next issue will have multicolored 3-D pop-ups and, when first opened, will release a whiff



of fragrant green smoke. Very cool. That was Sado and Planchette’s idea.”

---

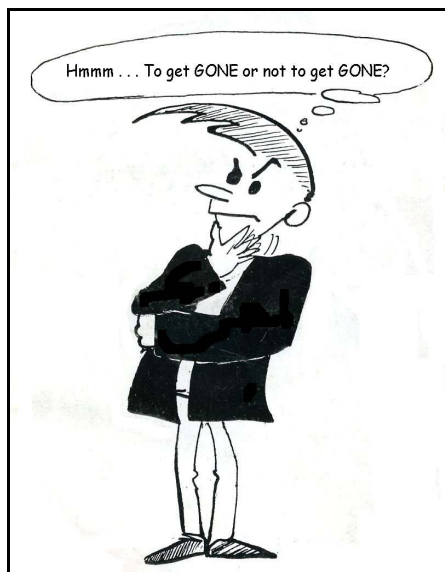
7. The zenith of the mullet hairstyle’s popularity in 1980s continental Europe has been described as an “age of singing tattooed Swedish Flokati Rugs.” A flokati rug is a handmade shag wool rug. Making flokatis is a long-time tradition of the Vlachs in the Pindus mountains. The natural color of a flokati rug is off-white, but they may be dyed different colors. The entire rug is wool, including the backing from which the tapered shag emerges.

# Finding Mememo

"Jeez! But it seems like what you really need, rather than those three super-computers you got now, would be — as per a famous Philip K. Dick story — three *pre-cogs* to predict which jumps would be successful and which would end in hard-fall."



*Terminal Velocity, 9/11 Jumpers* (2001) Carolee Schneemann



*It's Your Choice! But do it within seven breaths, from The F-F Effect for Dummies*

"How I wish! By the way, we very carefully studied photographs of 9/11 victims falling from the twin towers in New York. We speculated that if those people had access to Heisenberg Belts — like passengers at sea do to life-vests — half of those people would've survived, having faded into another reality. Our business interest in this resides in the fact that our computers have tallied trends in suicides with the increasing dystopian aspects of our current world situation, our 'Miserabilist Society,' as you put it. The hopeless, massive discontent experienced today by the likes of *you*. There's an ache, a longing which can never

be satisfied in this world now, and we'd corner the market on the ability to escape it — 'Getting GONE,' as we plan on marketing it — get it? Our clients, *pilgrims*, are called G.O.N.E.R.S."

"Making your appeal with something like 'Visions are worth fighting for! Wish you weren't spending your life living someone else's dreams?' Yes?"

"Hey, you're hired to write ad copy; unless you're desperate to escape too?"

"Well, maybe I would be. Something about many other worlds strung like pearls on a string, each pearl another NOW with its own past and future — very tempting and worth the risk. Might just jump at the chance!"

## Finding Mememo



Segment from "The Simpsons" reproduced in *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies* showing dimension travel

*Escape a world crowded with millionaires, Volvo mechanics,  
art gallery openings, good shoes, dental-whitening agents, drones  
(all types), and Trumps that don't suit you.*

*— Blog posting by the G.O.N.E.R.S*

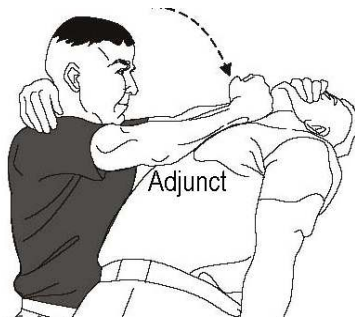
## Finding Mememo



Potential G.O.N.E.R.S

I am thinking about the dream Chad and the Admin-types have for me, *their dream not mine*. As Ichi once reminded me about Chad, 'If a person has no delicacy, he has you in his power.' Wise Ichi. So Japanese. Chad and the Admins certainly don't approve of me, what with my passion for the most bracing and difficult ideas with a hunger of someone needing them to breathe. I grok less predictable

forces at play in artistic creation: vagrant thoughts, backwards or sideways glances, accidents, coincidences, obsessions, misreadings, hell, even outright mistakes. As I told my therapist, I'm most alive when most possessed by other writers, thinkers, texts, works of art that seem to me ravishing and all together, indisputably, themselves; material ripe for original appropriation, instead of arrogant stupidities parading as originality today, stuff I demand consolation from. But now all that once delighted me has turned sour and I get a sharp kick in the kishkes. Those admin-types won't come around. I suffer anxiety at willing what cannot be willed — their approval. My Rogerian shrink says I have "undue investment" in ideas. But those of us who came of age in the sixties were convinced that our seed time was uniquely marked by ideas more thrilling and dangerous than those of any other time. Millennials find it hard to grok that.



Wish is waving his beer mug in front of me, "Earth to Hy."

"Sorry, just doing a 'Rogerian, over 'n out.' Musing about what my therapist had to say about a Professor of Applied Compulsion who just happens to be my department chairman and spends his Sabbaticals perfecting his Krav Maga moves.<sup>8</sup>

"Getting back on point, Wish, your clientele for such a service would certainly run the gamut from *cols* to *noncols* [ed., from *degreed people* to *non-degreed*], probably many Vets, those wanting to escape the poverty draft, academics on the cusp of doing Quit Lit, workers suffering deunionization, workers unemployable due to age,

8. Since the 1930s, Krav Maga has been used as an effective and powerful self-defense system. This martial art was originally a form of Israeli self-defense, created by Imi Lichtenfeld in order to help members of the Jewish community protect themselves from brutal Nazi forces.



## Finding Mememo

cancer patients, chronic pain sufferers, perennial utopians, those fleeing “Chi-Raq”, abused spouses, all those doomed from the start — from the day of their birth! — and are homeless, broke. In general, those who just can’t laugh any longer — an endless list, actually. You know, the way you propose to make a killing in this new market, puts you in prime running for membership in G. K. Chesterton’s Club of Queer Trades.” . . . [ed., *The Club of Queer Trades is a collection of stories by G. K. Chesterton first published in 1905. Each story in the collection is centered on a person who makes his living by some novel and extraordinary means. Hy explains this and the pair discuss odd trades once practiced but obsolete today. Chatty, but irrelevant, so deleted.*]

“Now Hy, our G.O.N.E. movement is the ultimate ‘subjective turn’ in the range of alterglobalization strategies ongoing today. Our Dimensionauts seize the means of producing themselves as new kinds of subjects. This is in stark contrast to previous approaches to social movement politics which ignore, via a sort of mob mentality, ensembles of ephemeral, highly site-specific, small-scale performance, such as that enacted by our brave jumpers seeking new worlds. Our group’s perspective foregrounds the private reflective worlds of its participants, as opposed to the organizational structure in which our practices are embedded. We believe our jumpers are seeking the ultimate in micro-utopias. And are willing to let the cosmic dice roll in order to achieve their goal.”



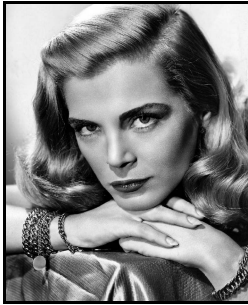
The jug band takes their break. I notice the muted wall-mounted TV has a Fox News clown mouthing some B.S. about Hillary Clinton. Lumbering Lumberjack and his gal are chuntering on about why extraterrestrials are always depicted as being super-skinny or super-pumped — no in between. Wish wows-out about the Chyna T-shirt [ed., *WWE’s super-star billed as “The Ninth Wonder of the World,” died at age 45 in April 2016*]

worn by the distaff member of the pumped pair: “She’s got on a *five-pointed star*, man! The Mighty Quin!” I’m flashing on a super-outrageous Bad Grrrl five-woman feminist performance group sporting blood-red five-pointed star T-shirts, billing themselves as THE QUINCUNTS. I can see “Ripped Rita’s” (my fantasy name for her) T-shirt has opened a labyrinth leading to Pythagorean cellars secreted deep inside Wish.

“Jack” — chainsawing hands big and hard, neck corded with muscles — takes his arm off his main squeeze’s ripped right shoulder as she slowly stands up and pumps her powerful pedal-pusher-clad legs toward the restrooms, past



## Finding Mememo



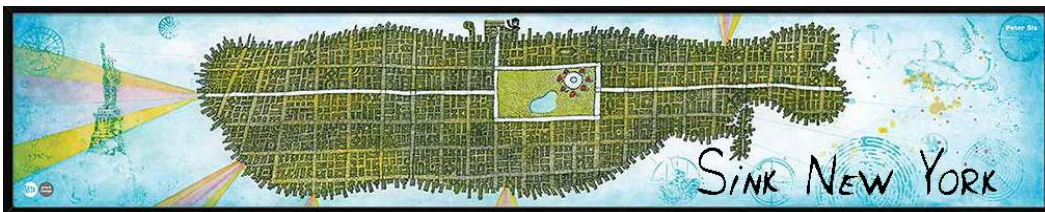
Lizabeth Scott

a vintage publicity portrait of Lizabeth Scott. Power, beauty, and justice in those legs, but maybe not wisdom — not yet anyway. Around here, I imagine, she's an elastic legend nourished by rumor, elaborated in humor.

When Wish eyes her up and down, Jack — red-faced, suppressing his drawl and Marine slang — notices. His glance goes to the weird tat on Wish's forehead and he frowns. His motionless figure pulls together suddenly as strings tightened on a slack guitar and gives Wish a warning wink that says: *Look, but dontcha efen fink of fouching.*

I could see Wish is wishing he could take her down, down for a test dive in his snug sub-for-two down looking for that proverbial hole to China. It sinks into me — this unique Northwoods eatery is a delta gathering daily calamities and miracles. A delta inside The Delta Diner in Delta, Wisconsin. And Wish wants a miracle, but wise Wish also knows it'd turn into a calamity. Oh yes, I see why Planchette likes working in this place: you have small bore tourists sitting at the counter alongside large bore locals and bargain hunters on break, weary of discerning qualities from defects, seated near disappointed fishermen; some conversations between couples do not go beyond the weather forecast and crude politics; some are merely gossip about the neighbors; a few are over nugatory finances; some are nonexistent due to accumulated exhaustion or merely as a seeking after a haven of peace. When the place is full, it's a Much of muchness (or should I say, *Munchness?*). To evoke a Norse God: By Odin, it deserves an entire volume filled to bursting with information, tips, details, anecdotes, comments, all superior grist for her notebooks and poetry.

While all this tense energy is floating around me, we wander over to the small book rack near the cashier. Along with local maps and guide books is stuffed a Bible-sized anthology of Blurt Wildbraine mysteries. I point it out to Wish, gauging his reaction. "Oh, yah! When Mr. Johnson was doing work for our company, I suggested he offer a deal to resorts here to put a copy of his thickest tome of criminal doom in every room — like the Gideon Bible — at cost. Smart marketing promo, you known. They occasionally are snatched and end up for sale at various venues around here."



Ted Cruz-violated NYC subway poster by Peter Sis

## Finding Mememo



*Whirligigabytes of Four Dependent Claws with Hopes of a Hearty Good-bye* (2015) Grant D. O. Seiss

"victim," a "damsel in distress," and a "hero," in the same style as this canvas. He says it expresses how her "inner problem" was to break away from her "ordinary world" to realign herself with "the freedom and ability and courage to

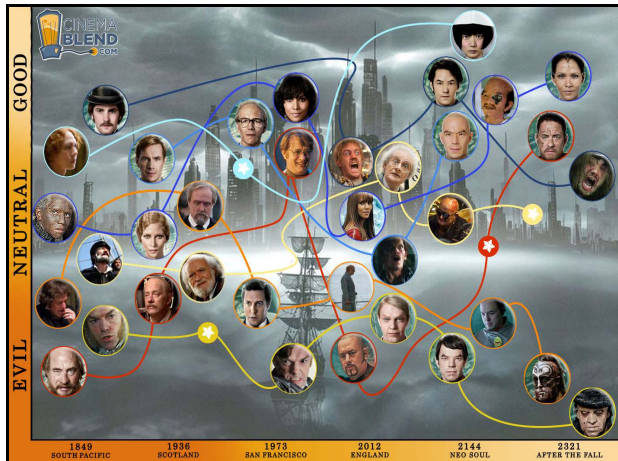


Film still from *The Fountain*, Dir. Aronofsky, 2006

On the wall next to the cashier is a copy of a Ted Cruz-violated Peter Sís subway poster depicting Manhattan as a submarine; next to that, a poster for the Manitowoc Sub-Fest, and next to that an odd oil painting: a whirligig *cum* quincunx fantasy formed by four hands and a red heart-like figure at the center. Wish points out that it's a work by one of his group, Grant D. O. Seiss, who "lives perpetually near the vision of things, trying to achieve what he calls 'Sciousness,' pure experience, impressions coming from his body wholly unmediated by his mind." Wish elaborates on how this member-artist's work is an eclectic mix of Mayan, Tao, Christian, New Age imagery, and Juan Maldacena's theory of the universe as "holographic" (the entire universe can be seen as two-dimensional information on the cosmological horizon): "Last year he did a symbolic triptych portrait of Planchette as (reading left to right) a

attempt to fly" (jump). Grant gets it that Planchette's pan-experiential poetry (lots of lists of disconnected objects) helps us to connect with the fear of death so we can actually, fully, deal with death, as well as possible repositioning in another world by dimension travel, as a means to a fuller life." Wishwer explains that Grant's visuals have been heavily inspired by the realization of the theme of alternate

## Finding Mememo



*Cloud Atlas* schematic of characters and times (Dirs. Tom Tykwer, Lana and Lilly Wachowski, 2012)

times and worlds as developed in such popular films like *The Fountain* and *Cloud Atlas* and given basis in some physicists' conception of the universe as holographic, where mind and matter manifest themselves out of a singular background and become wholly relational. "Herein lies a physics of consciousness paralleling the oddities of quantum mechanics where subatomic entities can manifest as waves or particles, and the principle of nonlocality

obtains," explains Wish. "An example of a holograph conception of reality can be found in a theory by physicist Fred Alan Wolf, [ed., v., a 1987 lecture to *The Association for the Study of Dreams, Washington, D.C.*], in which lucid dreams, realized out of the magma of dreams, in which one is 'awake' might entail actual visits to parallel realities. Crazy stuff? English biologist T. H. Huxley has left us advice apropos our tendency for scepticism: "Sit down before fact like a little child, and be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abyss Nature leads, or you shall learn nothing."



Dimensiononaut Lucky Coin

I learn that Grant is working on a series of commemorative portraits of Dimensiononauts, "The Hero with a Thousand Faces," painted just prior to their jumps. They depict the jumpers with a special large coin in their mouths as payment or bribe — a reference to the *obol* meant for Charon, the ferryman of Greek myth, who conveys souls across the river Styx dividing the world of the living from that of the dead. Among G.O.N.E.R.S. this "bribe" symbolizes hopes for a successful dimension-jump. A fade-out like Robert Donat does in British film *The Ghost Goes West*.

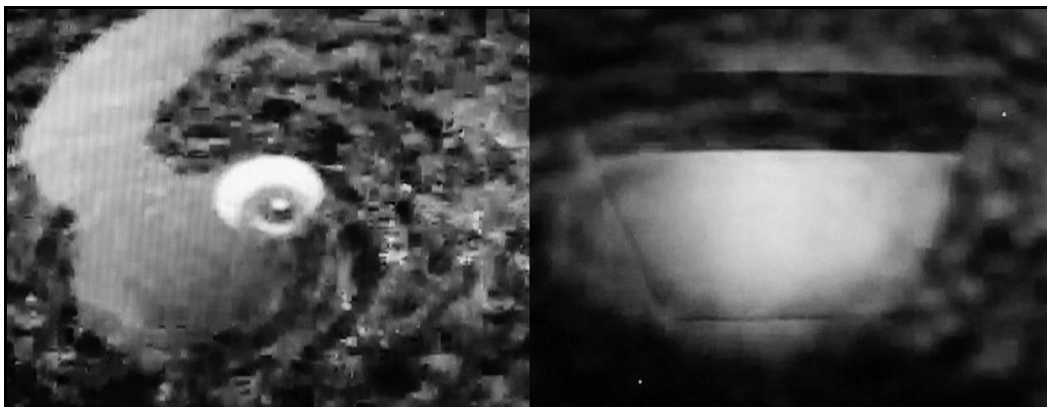
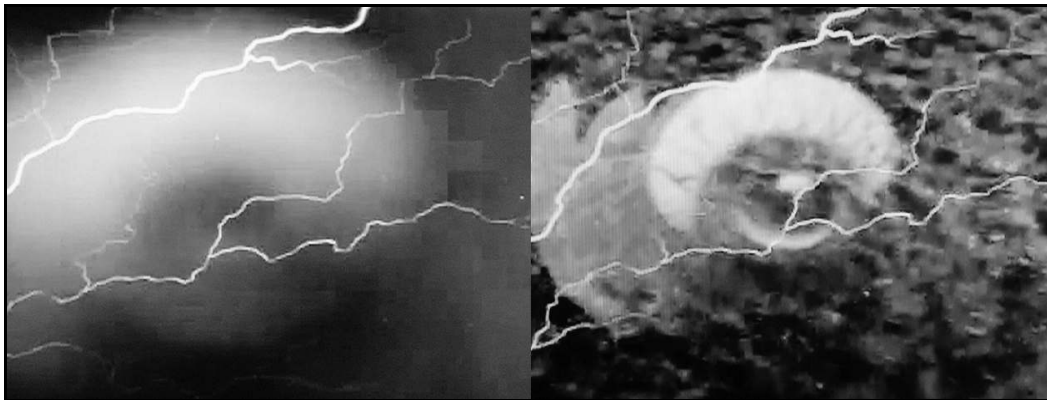
Wish tells me some jumpers leap with such a coin, Vitruvian Man-Skeleton thereon, in their mouths for good luck, but this was stopped after police crime-scene investigators noticed something odd in a series of supposed jumper suicides across the Midwest and started to look for a cult. "We wanted to keep a low profile, so we halted that little practice, pronto."



## Finding Mememo



Eager jumper biting Dimensionaut coin (verso, with G.O.N.E. embossed)

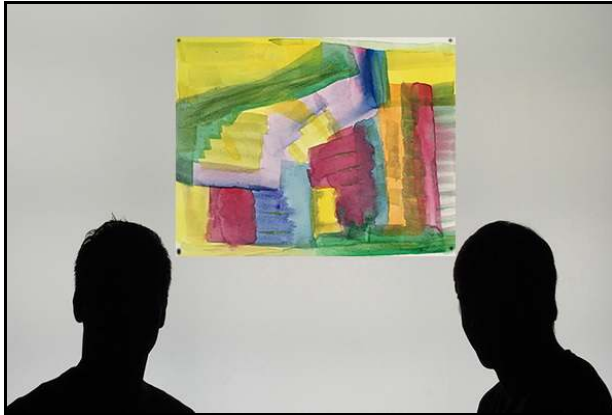


Between Fade-out and Fade-in, Dimension Travel envisionment by Eric Quebecer

*Oh! Oh! A reversal of polarity. My feet of fire! My burning feet of fire! Oh! Oh! This height and fiery speed, my irresistible firmness. Oh! This bright, cleansing, beneficent bomb . . .*

— *The D-Travel Adventures of Philip Skale, Esq.*,  
Eric Quebecer

## Finding Mememo



Grant D.O. Seiss (left) conducts a critique of a member's (Chris Neuwirth) artwork, iPhone snap by Wishwer Watt

As a waiter makes the rounds of the tables taking orders, and the band sips beers, Wishwer elaborates on "finding a cool mental space in pre-jump so post-jump heats up," and the role of the arts in his group of Dimensionauts. "Planchette is one of two poets. Chris is a painter using water-color or gouache in an neo-abstractionist aesthetic to envision what one might see

upon entry into another world. Grant suggested Chris watch Alexander Sokurov's film *Russian Ark* (2002) for its surrealist envisionment of a possible Dimensionaut's POV post-Ziv experience upon materializing in a new world."

*[Ed., I've inserted below material from the Internet to explicate Wish's discussion of Grant's example of such envisionment of dimension travel.]*



Alexander Sokurov (Dir.) and Tilman Büttner (cameraman) filming *Russian Ark* (2002)

We begin shrouded in the black of death. Sokurov, who is doing the narration behind Büttner's Steadicam, says there was an accident, or an explosion, something — he doesn't know where he is or how he got there. Were this a typical film, the camera's blackness would now dissolve in to reveal the anxious eyes of loved ones looking down at us on a hospital gurney, but instead the blackness gives way to a snowscape in which we find sumptuously dressed women and their men. They look like they've come out of the nineteenth century. They are entering a grand building.



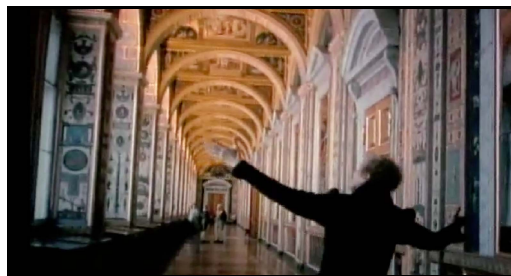
## Finding Mememo

It is not immediately apparent that we're in a point of view shot, because no one is reacting to us being here. There's no sense that anyone can "see" the camera, which is usually how we viewers figure out we're in a POV shot. This feeling of looking through the camera would normally give us the convincing sensation of being in the film, but *Russian Ark* feels different; the subtly discomfiting weirdness estranges us at the same time as we're drawn in. We only know that we're seeing through the camera because of Sokurov's running monologue, which resides somewhere between nervous babbling and the stream of thoughts in his head.

Sokurov wonders, "Is all this being staged for me? Am I to play a role? What kind of play is this?" It's an interesting question, because it's one we would never ask ourselves. We always know just where we are and what we're supposed to be doing in any given circumstance (even if what we're supposed to be doing is being befuddled) for the simple reason that we're the ones responsible for ending up wherever we find ourselves. *But Sokurov is completely disoriented, he doesn't even know if he's alive or dead. It is an alienating, confusing thing.*

Essentially what we're seeing here is a director *playing a spectator within his own film*, and this is why the film works. What else could a camera do for ninety-six minutes but wander and observe? Cameras are, by definition, unblinking eyeballs. They don't have hands to grab things with, they don't have mouths for blabbering and commanding people. All they're capable of is observing. So it makes sense that Sokurov's film is about him wondering and wandering. *The only other way Russian Ark could possibly have held together would have been if Sokurov had made himself a noir detective, because detectives are essentially spectators in another person's world — at least until the moment they solve the crime.*

— Scott Esposito



Scene shot from *Russian Ark*

*[All emphases are by this editor: the first and second pertain to post-jumping disorientation; the third relates, interestingly, to Blurt Wildbraine's POV in Dallas Johnson's mystery stories.]*

## Finding Mememo



A set of Grant D. O. Seiss's vintage dimensional travel images

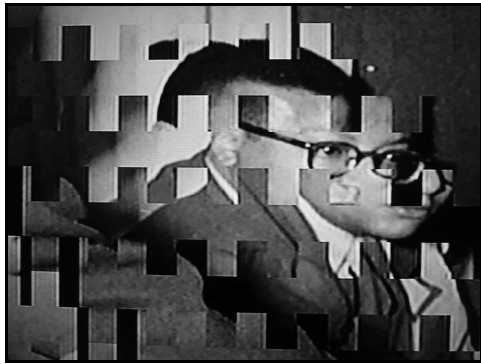
Grant, like many members of G.O.N.E., has an extensive collection of film-stills depicting dimension travel. One set in particular, Wish tells me, is noteworthy as it contains the five-pointed star as an archetype important to evoking such travel. "Grant has been a driving force in instituting classes for our members in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, MBCT for short. He believes before a Dimensionaut jumps he or she should read Christine Padesky's 1995 classic *Mind Over Mood* and through various exercises become more mindful of one's feelings, thinking, and experience, prior to leaping (Geronimo!) into a new dimension as a dauntless person who withdraws from this world's affairs. This must be done with inner strength, by meditating on the Jungian [*Heraclitian influenced*] dictum that *Everything that works is grounded on its opposite*. This is to more positively engage with the success/death dyad that is risked with each jump. These exercises take about twenty to thirty minutes and are done by members daily for a month prior to jumping. Grant thinks psychological conditioning is as important as physical conditioning."

Listening to Wish wag on, I had that feeling of scared

## Finding Mememo



*Astral Quincunx* (inlaid wood) Zhoun Xun



*African-American Dream of D-Travel* (PhotoShop by Jamron El-Abu, 2013)

excitement which accompanies the onset of a new sexual desire or a strange hallucinogenic drug; feel more like I've entered the "Twilight Zone", weird episode "Will the Real Martian Please Stand Up?", in which Rod Serling riffs on both the 1950s TV game show "To Tell the Truth" and Alan Turing's famous Turing Test where one was to engage a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behavior equivalent to or indistinguishable from that of a human. The plot involves a frantic phone call about a crashed spaceship, a bus picking up two strangers along a road, two policemen trying to determine who among the passengers of the bus, now snowed-in at a roadside diner, is from another world.

I was beginning to think, a bit paranoically I admit, that Wish and his cohorts might be aliens trying to get back to their own dimension. And if they were, might Dallas be faking to investigate them, even in cahoots with them?

*Hmmm, this moat is deep, I think.*

*What we know, what we do not know, what we cannot know and what we do not like to know . . .*

Wish shows me more iPhone images of artworks by the more talented of his group. I download some to iPad. One is a wood inlaid piece expressing an astral quincunx theme and a Cubist-looking altered portrait by a black member of G.O.N.E. who views D-travel as a means of escaping our racist world.

\* \*

*Editor's gloss: In Hy's digital data gathered for this section, I found other material on group members and copies of images from The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies (not mentioned specifically in Hy's text; see the two pages following) envisioning various aspects of dimension travel. I also found a CD with a sound file labeled "Sparrow's trill sound which is said to accompany a D-jumper during transition," (i.e., just prior to Ziv).*

## Finding Mememo



Inspiration Card (recto): "Wholyolyover — Fast and Fluorescent," illustration by Cassie Delavan

### Become a Weapon — Disappear

Acceptance and rejection. Identity is administered.  
Acceptance and rejection. Power exploits.  
Here all is hollow.  
Release us from our faith in the permanence of objects.

We need to articulate skin, sweat language.  
We need Joy, stringency, self-discipline. Excluding nothing.  
A project of self-definition. Just as autonomous as a beatnik.

Think it, do it. Let our imaginative illustrations inspire.  
Be fast, fluorescent, childlike, and cheerful.  
You are energy nodes, attractors, transmitters, conductors of new  
thinking, new subjectivities and action.  
JUMP! But in a state of calm.\*

\*Researchers have found your body produces more electricity in states of stress, intense feeling, that can disrupt the interaction of your magnetic field with that initiated by the H-Belt, making changes that lower chances, that heighten changes, resulting in a chance for an unsuccessful jump.

Verso of above card with inspirational text produced for G.O.N.E. members



## Finding Mememo



"Ziv (radiant light) occurs with Immer-to-Emerence phase transition. Immer is to spacetime reality as the sea is to land." from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*. (PhotoShop illustration by Avice).

*Stand, within seven breaths, take the existential leap in glorious technicolor. Rewrite the sad, grim, grieving playscript of the Miserabilist Society. Escape a world that blurs the divide between information and misinformation. Keep cool and care.*

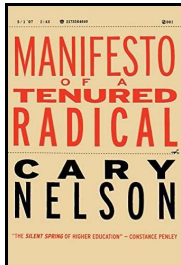
— Ad copy for G.O.N.E.'s bulletin *Foregone Conclusion?*

\* \* \*



## Finding Mememo

23



I find the artworks Wish is introducing me to inspiring and inviting me toward an escape from what blogger Brian Holmes said about the ghetto of flexible employment (this includes contingent faculty, of course): “. . . we have seen a full implementation of the flexible employment system, that is, of a labor regime in which worker mobility and variable hours are accompanied by continuous electronic surveillance and the managerial analysis of performance.” Radical professor Cary Nelson, some ten years ago, sketched out a vision of higher education’s dark future as one of contingent labor dominated by corporate managers resulting in “the full proletarianization of the professoriate.” And Joyce Carol Oates bitterly described this academic culture from the point of view of a female adjunct in terms of unequal pay and respect in “Friend of My Heart”: “The tenured faculty avoids the untenured, if it is humanly possible, without being overtly rude or vicious,” and “These are not colleagues, but rivals for the fickle admiration of undergraduates.” For me, less rivals than *enemies*, who would be much cheered if I died, was grievously injured, or suffered the perdition of a technology I not fully fathomed.

A fan of Jung, I get excited when, paging through my signed copy of *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*, I come across a chapter on the influence of C. G. Jung on the G.O.N.E. group accompanied by a photo of a stone monument Jung carved to honor his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday and sited at his famous Tower in Bollingen, Switzerland. Featuring the Greek God *Telesphorus* (Greek for “the accomplisher” or “bringer of completion”), its quincunxial form and inscription has, claims the chapter, inspired the Dimensionauts toward “a paradise for the escaped prisoner, giving us an euphoric clarity as to our mission.” Right now I have only a depressive lucidity.

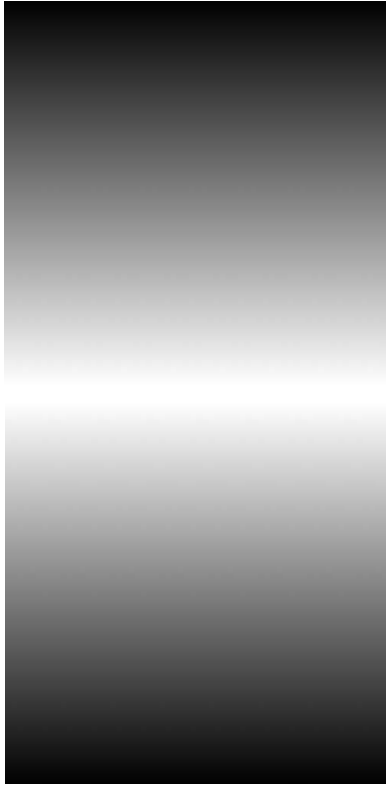


Jung's Tower, Telesphorus Stone,  
Bollingen, Switzerland

This is Telesphorus  
who roams through the dark regions of this  
cosmos and glows like a star out of the depths.  
He points the way to the gates of the  
sun and to the land of dreams.

According to *F-F for Dummies*, Telesphorus' archetypal image reminds members: “All that is solid melts into air.”

# Finding Mememo



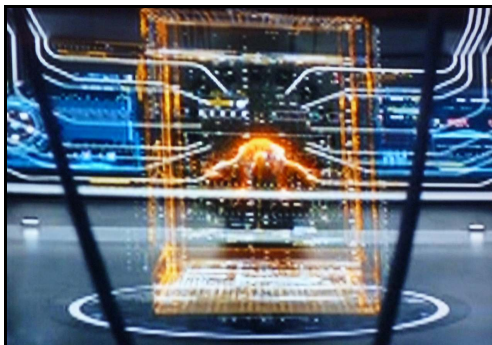
Jumper's body

Excerpt from "Event Gradient,"  
from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect  
for Dummies*

Ziv

Heisenberg Belt's field resulting  
in Fade-away into Immer / Ziv /  
Emerence after terminal velocity  
(a chance event, as explained  
below) estimated to be 4 mins.  
33 secs. after Belt activation.

Emerence of a jumper into another dimension  
via Immer (a sub-space "sea").



Heisenberg Belt Test in laboratory

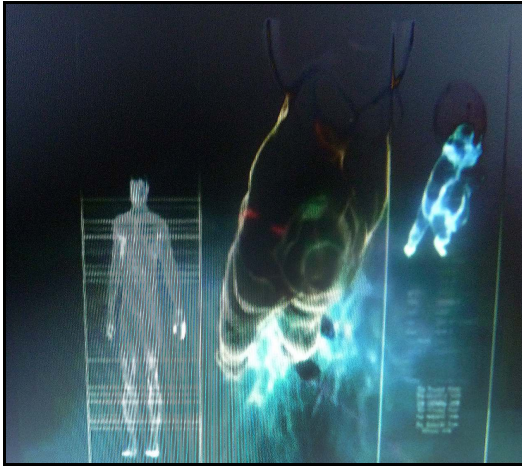
No matter what conditions  
we impose upon any ele-  
mentary particle, we cannot  
know exactly what it will do.  
It has more than one pos-  
sible response to the con-  
ditions imposed upon it.



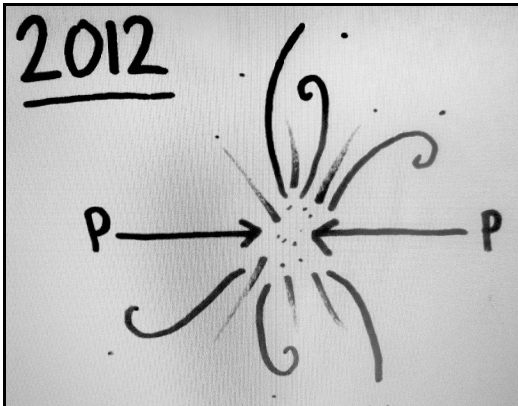
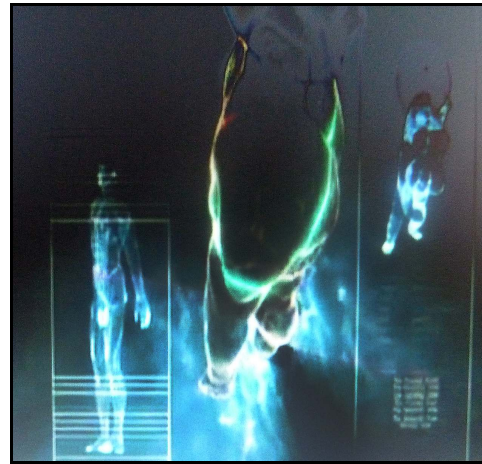
Artist's rendition of Emergence

As per quantum mechanics,  
there is always some range  
of possibilities open to it for  
its own self-creativity, by  
which it puts its own stamp  
upon the world. Therefore,  
dimension jumping always  
will be risky because of this  
Principle of Novelty in this  
Process-Relational universe.

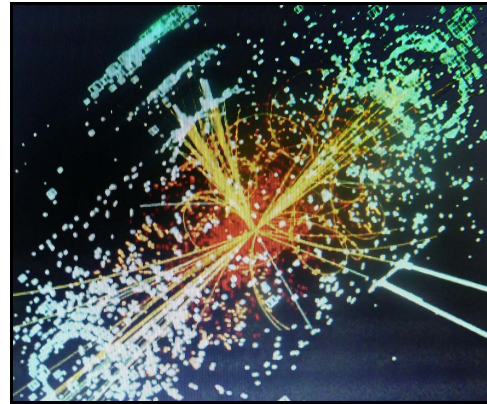
## Finding Mememo



Jumper simulations pre-Heisenberg Belt testing



Sketch of Ziv point achieved in Belt Test



Particle configuration at moment of Ziv



Artist's rendition: Fade-Away to the Ziv point (estimated to be .33 seconds after Belt activation)

*Slipping into free-fall, we drip patterns of Immer.*  
— from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*



## Finding Mememo



High-speed photograph of a test from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*



Running Jump Test, photographs by Wishwer Watt and Art Martineau



Successful Heisenberg Belt test, last frame showing beginning of fade-out as the jumper's head fades out

*Transition implies a distinctive form of passage to localities via Immer, a contextual background, a transition of matter to energy and back.*

— *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*

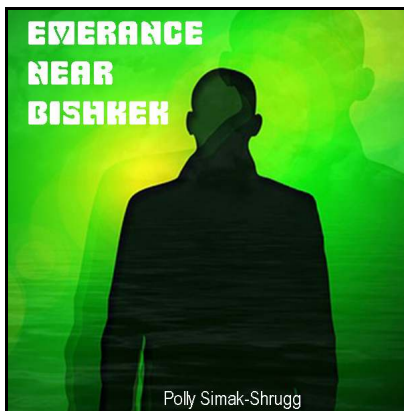
## Finding Mememo



### Vintage Emergence:

Fade-In at London Airport, 1947

Collection of Wishwer Watt



Melts into air — but what occurs after fade-out? Anybody's guess, I guess. Yet if you wish to inspire Dimensionauts to make the ultimate commitment and JUMP, they need a vision before them — Immer, Ziv, and Arrival — something beyond solid knowledge; that emptiness seethes with unimaginable energy, which manifests as virtual particles of physical matter, jumping in and out of reality like trained fleas. They want to imagine the bright light of Ziv beckoning them to “Come toward

me, exit your extinguished land through vermilioned nothingness,” as one imaginative G.O.N.E. member's POD novelette, *Emergence near Bishkek*, envisions D-travel. Polly Simak-Shrugg's male jumper, Eric, is “A quick-thinking, articulate, and gregarious young man whose brains seem to be on the verge of bursting from his head.” This vigorous North Face-clad athletic protagonist beams into



## Finding Mememo



Immer and then Emerence as rendered in *The Fisher-Filoni Effect for Dummies*



Arrakis fantasy based on *Dune* (Dir. David Lynch, 1984)

a strange dehydrated world (an adaptation of the planet Arrakis in David Lynch's film *Dune*) where he runs across a nomadic wanderer (a *Star Wars*-type of desert-scavenger) and asks (a Contact 101 standard procedure): "Where might I find the nearest candy shop." The reply is in pidgin English: 'Jukis'tyt! E kabin taetaer. Moko map show close me-you woo-big huddle be peeped be Bishkek — patsoke!' said while pumping his arm by his side like Peter Falk in *Columbo*."

Eric learns these odd people have a guiding first principle: *Sicken None*. Eric, poster boy for both/and logic, mishears it as *Sic et Non*. The author speculates that dimension travel into this "fifth corner of the world" freezes memory, but the nova dimension's fearsome desert environment soon breaks up Eric's mental ice and the young brave protagonist's memory ships again can navigate through, but now minus their former dangerous cargo of lust, anger, and obsession. But after Emerence, it seems a new consciousness starts consciousnessing itself: "But am I still who I was? Seems I'm trying to become someone. Rather than a nobody, a nanobody in interrelation with the others here, *à la* the Samoan concept of *v .*" Pre-jump, Eric was described as "a receptive man," who looked at all times as if he were quietly evaluating your intelligence and finding it wanting (a defense for his inferiority complex?). For him every *Why?* had to have its *Because*." But post-jump (Immer, Ziv, then Emerence) Eric finds himself becoming "a receptive man who no longer believes that just getting by is a sin — every line of his speech now an axis of a smile."

## Finding Mememo



"Arrival on the Nova World" (frontispiece illustration by Cassie Delavan) from *Emergence Near Bishkek*

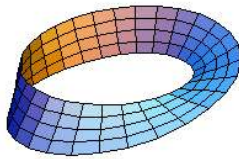
On his desert-trekking bee-line march to Bishkek, he and his heralds, the Sars, camp along the way and he learns that they believe "linear explanations are almost always lies." One night he joins in a wild, exotic Sarean dance in which one's shadow-self and other fragments of one's inner multiplicity are encouraged to emerge as *tremendum*, as expressed through the body in the

form of an ecstatic Dionysian dance resulting in, for the observers, a *fascinosum*. As Eric tells it:

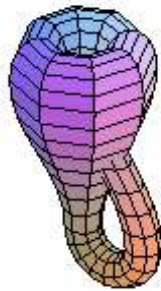
*After the sun just set over this dry world, which is called by its inhabitants Eranos, I am invited to share the mystery of an indigenous sacred dance, No-III Frantumaglia, with its anything goes forms of fragmented movement. After watching participants for a few minutes, I began to stamp my feet repeatedly and twirling my hands over my head. As their music quickened, I did a series of high jumps, ending with a turn in mid-air and a savage stamp of the foot as I landed . . . The image of an enraged bull going into the attack filled my mind, unleashing some inner-force which generated power in me. For one moment it seemed as if some other person within was performing the dance. The stone weight of a lifetime seemed brought out and vanquished during this performance. I shuddered. Datum upon of datum of joys. The Sars, stunned with my prowess, embraced me into their company and offered to as act heralds for me when we arrived.*

At this arrival, a *scène obligatoire* painted by illustrator Cassie Delavan in *social irrealist* style, Eric develops "a romance with a penetrative woman." As opposites attract, Eric senses: "My margins dissolve as my mind shifts like the sea when the moon seizes it whole and pulls it upward." A poetic gaffe, as no sea exists in this nova-world. "On Eranos, the Sarian version of 'When hell freezes over' is 'When sand and rain swim'." The D-naut's imagined "landscape supple, created by myself alone, a fifth corner of the world where I could be secure and can play god," doesn't materialize; instead, he must confront a New Real.

# Finding Mememo



Möbius Strip



A four-dimensional Klein Bottle rendered in three dimensions

This become obvious in a dream Eric has where Euclid makes his appearance, during which Eric has an epiphanic post-jump matheo-poetic insight concerning the success of his Emergence into the hyperdry world of Eranos: "The relationship between the ordinate and the inordinate is achieved via the square root of the formula for a straight line."<sup>1</sup> But he is frustrated with his impossible wish to share this insight with members back in the "Old World": "Wish were it possible to text them. It might provide useful data in raising their rate of successful dimension jumps, and disabusing some hubristic myths."

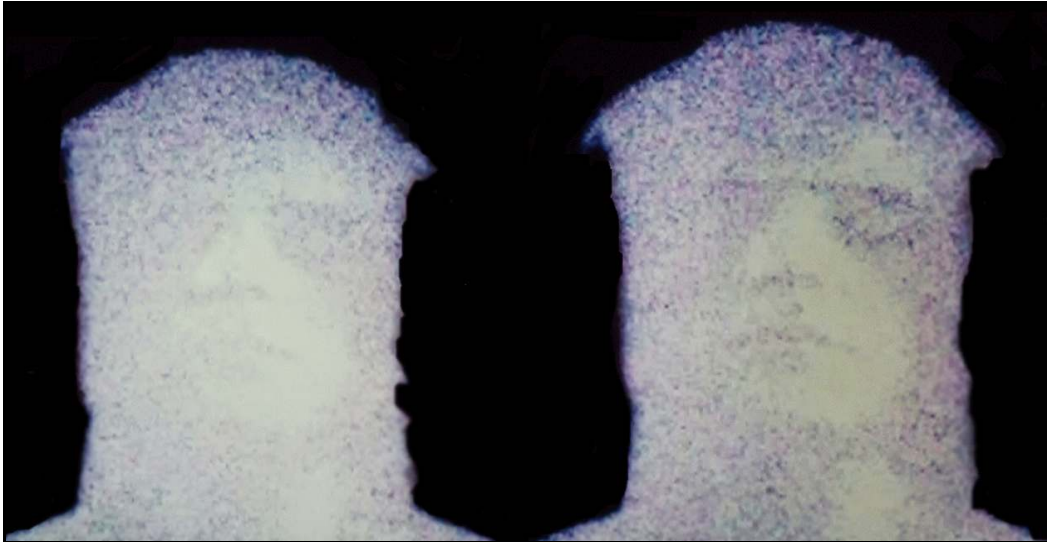
He also despairs of not being able to send back the good word about his idea to twist the Heisenberg Belt into a Möbius strip configuration, as the intertwining of outside and inside of that strip may have by a strange sympathy, producing a large Klein bottle nexus, enhancing the Fischer-Filoni Effect, and upping the odds for a successful jump. Eric believes this is due less to a direct causal relationship than to *synchronicity*, a Jungian concept which influenced quantum mechanics (via Wolfgang Pauli, who was known for "The Pauli Effect", which was named after the anecdotal bizarre ability of his to break experimental equipment simply by being in their vicinity; such strange occurrences were in line with his investigations into the legitimacy of parapsychology, particularly his collaboration with C. G. Jung on the concept of synchronicity) and holds that events are "acausally connected" if they occur with no direct causal relationship, yet seem to be meaningfully related.<sup>2</sup> The author only mentions this in passing, doesn't develop the topic further, moving onto Eric's arrival at Bishkek, carried on the shoulders of Neg and Poc, two of the more massive members of the Sars. Cassie Delavan's illustration of this key event is a pastiche of past paintings of Christ entering Jerusalem in triumph on what has become

---

1. Square roots are irrational while the formula for a straight line is rational. This matches the opposition of ordinate/inordinate, but one must also recall that the ordinate has connotations of doctrine or rites, while the inordinate has connotations of super-abundance. The author seems to wish us to meditate poetically on this, possibly make tie-ins with quantum theory.

2. "I simply believe that some part of the human Self or Soul is not subject to the laws of space and time," said C. G. Jung who variously defined synchronicity as an "acausal connecting (togetherness) principle," "meaningful coincidence," and "acausal parallelism." This phenomenon is akin to quantum theory's concept of particle entanglement, where one a change in one particle will be instantly produced in another, even if light years distant as if there is a field of mind in which the particles exist, as if no space separates them.

## Finding Mememo



Emerging from Immer flow, the body in Ziv glow



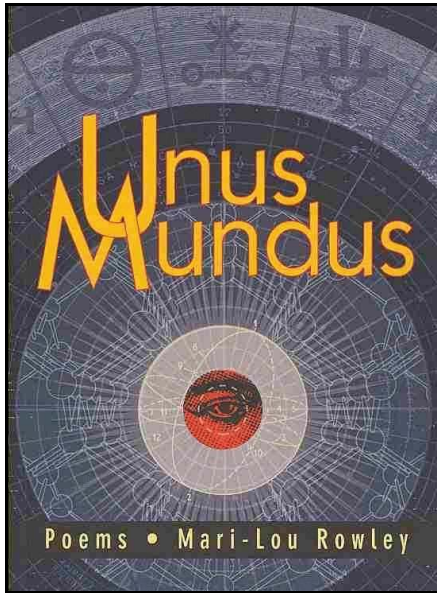
Anonymous artist's envisionment of Emergence of a male subject, from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*

known as Palm Sunday in Christian liturgy. Had Rhob, the tribe's leader, seen Eric materialize before him (see above), he might've been stoned to death as a devil or bowed to as a god.

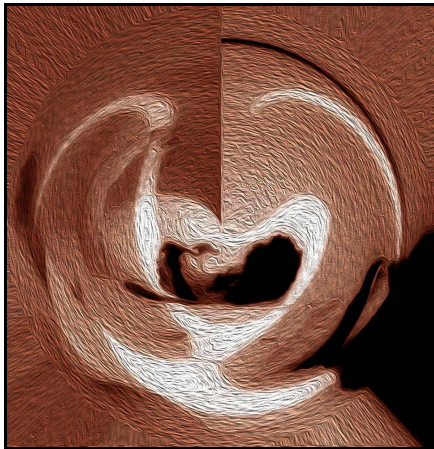
In my discussions with Wish and my perusal of *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*, I get the sense that his group is firmly in the metaphysical camp of Eastern notions of Monism, non-Dualism, believing in the Jungian notion of



## Finding Mememo



Planchette's favorite book of poems



*Unus Mundus* (mandala forms, oil on canvas)  
Sal Salant

*unus mundus*, or what theoretical physicist David Bohm has reconceptualized within quantum theory as the "Implicate Order,"<sup>3</sup> in which psyche and matter (*in-there* and *out-there*) are manifestations, two aspects, of the same thing — quantum waves. Wish says it is theorized that the Heisenberg Belt permits the Dimensionaut to enter an interactive field (they call it *ambience*) between in and out, here and there, between foreground and background, between psyche and matter as he or she jumps dimensions.

Earlier, Planchette mentioned a book of poems relating to said topic. She had memorized her favorite lines: "What if the spin of the muon, the universe made of strings vibrating in space, made multi-dimensions wrapping in and on themselves: contorted torus, möbius, Calabi-Yau — gift-wrapped." Riffing on one of this poet's poems, she describes D-travel as, "Propagation in a polarization-maintaining microstructure, a scattering of self and matter through an ionized medium. The breakup of higher order and its emergence into a new order made possible by the fact that every cubic centimeter of empty space contains more energy than the total energy of all matter in the known universe; our H-Belts channel that energy.

---

3. The implicate order, the root source of everything that is, what Hindus called Brahman, represents the proposal of a general metaphysical concept in terms of which it is claimed that matter and consciousness might both be understood, in the sense that it is proposed that both matter and consciousness: (i) enfold the structure of the whole within each region, and (ii) involve continuous processes of enfoldment and unfoldment. "In the implicate [*or enfolded*] order, space and time are no longer the dominant factors determining the relationships of dependence or independence of different elements. Rather, an entirely different sort of basic connection of elements is possible, from which our ordinary notions of space and time, along with those of separately existent material particles, are abstracted as forms derived from the deeper order. These ordinary notions, in fact, appear in what is called the 'explicate' or 'unfolded' order, which is a special and distinguished form contained within the general totality of all the implicate orders" (Bohm, 1980).



## Finding Mememo



Eric's Dimension Travel via Immer flow in *Emergence near Bishkek* by Polly Semak-Shrugg

*A crystallization occurred instantly in all directions, revealing structures hidden to me before. Then things seemed to liquefy, pulsing in waves. The sun was immense yellow. I could see to a distant point of time itself. This root-me sent out tendrils across the universe, knotty at the center, their tips cold and sticky. They wound around, encircled and encapsulated portions of space. Mag Miles was right! THE MUTATION WILL NOT BE GENETIC, BUT PARTICULATE.*

— Polly Semak-Shrugg, *Emergence near Bishkek*



"Particalization into Immer, pre-Ziv" (photo-collage)  
Kegan Goepfert

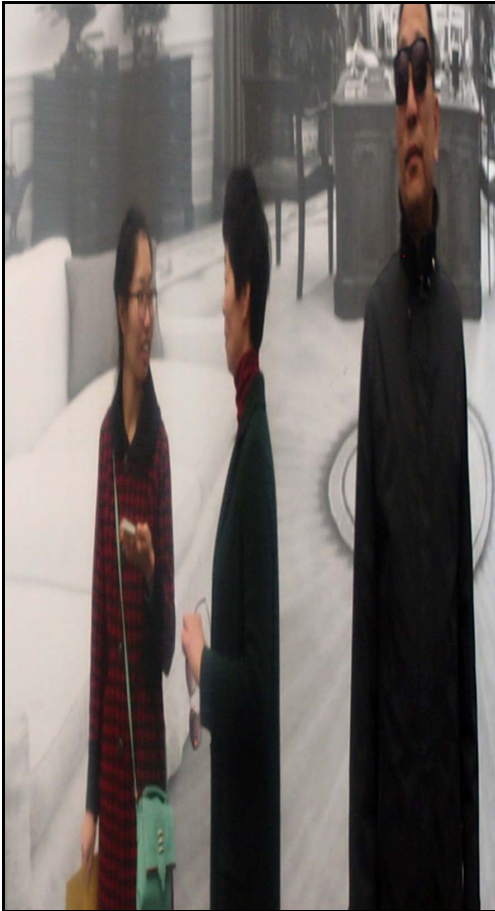
*I am the space  
between ignorance and acceptance.*

*So cut me up  
scatter me among yourselves*

*And use me  
to fill the gaps.*

— Grace Teuila Evelyn Taylor,  
"I am the V "

## Finding Mememo



"Vibrating Strings, the Minimal Degree of Emergence," Japanese Dimensionalists appear in the U.S.A.'s Oval Office, Washington, D.C. (Photoshop fantasy by Waldo Sheboygan) from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*. Inspired by Vandana Singh's "Ambiguity Machines: An Examination" from *Tor.com*.

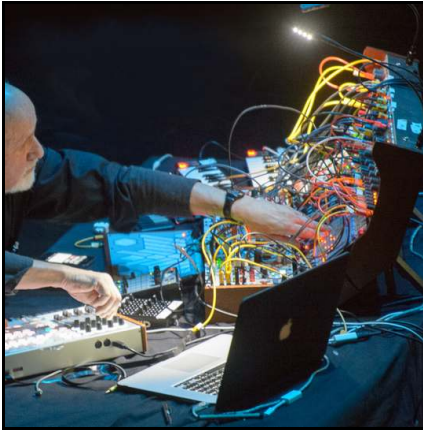
As the band's second set starts up, Wish shows me an iPhone snap of an abstracted mandala painted by a group member envisioning the *unus mundus* theme [ed., see page 331]. A theme some readers out there may think marks members of this group as "differently rational," that the Gang of G.O.N.E. are *really* gone. But, I'm sure any member of the "Leavers" would reply to such a dig with a firm: "I'm OK, you're BUGS!"

Wish says that the Dimensionalists counter the Neo-con's "Stand Your Ground" politics with that of the Leavers': "We Can't Stand Your Ground, So We Leave It." "The G.O.N.E. group," adds Wish, "engages the flux of the universe via other non-signifying fluxes as one travels from sight, thru *zeit*, to *nouvelle-site*, *mit-sine* [ed., with-wave]. (Yes, we like our jargon). What connects the sound camps to the Barbie Death Camp to the Heebie-Geebie Healers? What connects the Thunderdome to hula-hooper camps to the solo camper way out at the 'million dollar view'? We're looking for that magical, unifying moment where everything comes to-

gether between earth and the glad of eyes. From now on let pleasure be your guide as your state of mind inclines toward new chords.

"Theoretically," Wish continues, "serial jumping is possible. Such jumpers could be reborn anew, graduate high school, take a job, visit the Oval Office during Reagan's Administration, have kids, and retire in Phoenix, then die in their sleep, all in the time it takes for us to eat chow down here. In Michel Houellebecq's novel, *The Elementary Particles*, biochemist Michel Djerzinski mysteriously disappears off the western-most edge of Ireland, no body found. I think this scientist, knee-deep in quantum theory, managed to somehow discover The Fischer-Filoni Effect (although he didn't write it up) and successfully tested it by jumping off a cliff, traveling to another world."

## Finding Mememo



Morton Subotnik and synthesizers

Speaking of *with-waves*, I learn G.O.N.E.'s "with-it" musical vibes are electronically synthesized. Many are played the night before a jump at a "Jump-Rump" where the song "I Hope it's Not Naut for Nought" is sung to the tune of a spacey selection from Morton Subotnik's 1968 album *Silver Apples of the Moon*. The song bolsters courage in the Nu-Nauts, as members chant: *Ho! Is not hesitation a kind of pockmarked benevolence, always smilin', but smoulderin' underneath, envious of others who took their big leap? So*



"Mit-sine, a Warrior-Jumper in Magellanic Clouds," frontispiece to *Vom Winde Verweht* by Martianus

*far fear not Naut, welcome the spinning vertigo of a world no longer anchored, without gravity, no ground to harness legs 'n feet; do welcome the nausea, the constant falling free feeling, until the shock of another world's gravity tugs and pulls as your blood yearns for electrolytes and your heart races to keep pace with your brain's requests. Oh Naut, then honor your body's longing for solid ground and soft arms even in the face of the fact that the essential remains invisible to the eyes.* (Hence, the reproduction of so many visuals in *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*).



A refunctioned Flammarion engraving (1888), a detail of, renamed by G.O.N.E. as "The Wish for Dimension Travel" (Wishwer Watt Collection)

Inspiring words, but the last time this ritual was performed, he tells me, was on April 16, 2016, Claude Shannon's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The jumper hoped it would be a propitious date — he was wrong — yet, I'm willing to go along with what Wish and his group wish for. The pomp and splendor of their wishes set fire to my thoughts.

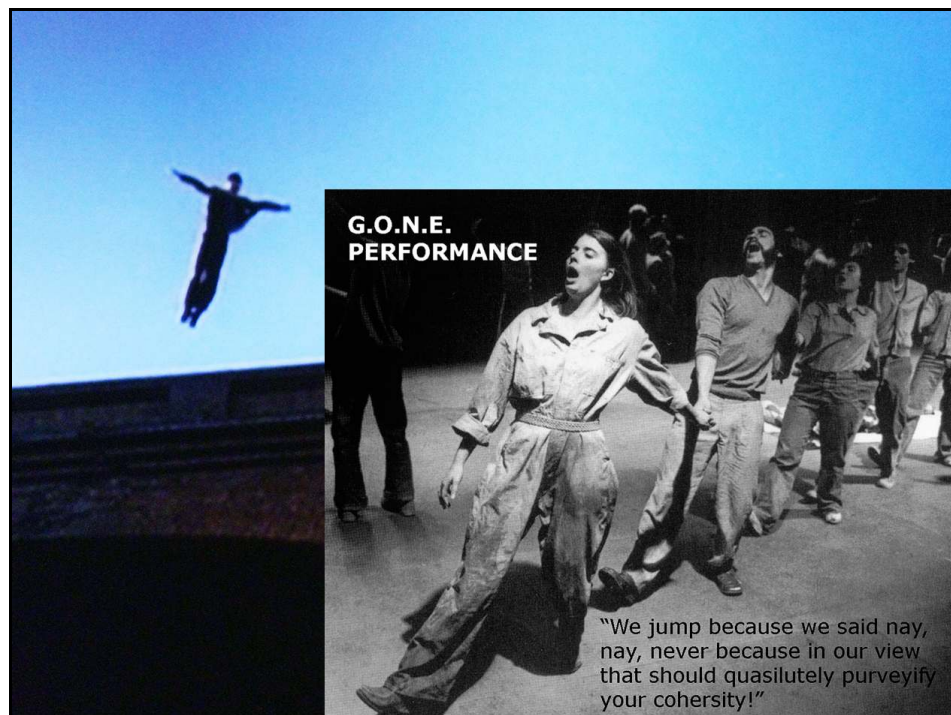


## Finding Mememo



Ruslana Korshunova

Wish has the key, the ladder, the code, the hotline, the exegetic cipher, and a money-bags backing his vision. Wish speculates that had depressed Russian model Ruslana Korshunova been offered a chance to productively leave the scatter-life her profession imposed on her, she might have tossed the cosmic dice and donned a G.O.N.E.-improved Heisenberg belt hoping to make a dimension leap to a happier place. But left without other options, believing that all plots tend to move deathward, maybe thinking she wanted to own her own end of the world, at age 20 she jumped from her ninth-floor balcony to become street pizza served up on Water Street (near Wall Street) in New York in June 2008. Another similar Russian model suicide soon followed. Wish thinks more depressed Russian models' lives could be saved if they could be recruited to the ranks of G.O.N.E., "And tuned into the new lingo that can express what couldn't be expressed before, that would broaden their possibility, get them beyond their narrow experience, beyond their assumed limitations. They'd at least be able to come to make sober, decent terms with possible oblivion once they understand our faith-based technology," adds Wish.



A poster for "Dark Angel Bends Space," a Sado Muga scored and choreographed G.O.N.E. event featuring a four pianos repeating an agitated B-flat throughout; it opens with a dark, restless rumbling of notes, producing increasingly thick, dissonant notes, then warmer tonalities, eventually reaching a sort of clearing, as the music settles on a low C-sharp. In the last few minutes, a cascade of notes with glorious canon-like effects arises (in *The Fisher-Filoni Effect for Dummies*).

## Finding Mememo

I remind him of the 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese suicides, dead by jumping from buildings, during Mao's brutal crackdown during 1951-52. "Wish, they jumped rather than drowned, so their bodies would be found and not mistaken as having fled to Hong Kong, in which case their family would have suffered repercussions. So two-by-two into the ark-of-the-ache, they jumped."

"Ouch! If our Belts were available then, thousands might've been able to restart in another world," he said. "Had they done so, some of our jumpers might today find themselves eating General Tso chicken in their new dimensions."

"But, what's the point of living if you don't die at the end of it?"

"Hy, we are talking about a snazzle dazzle, rip 'n roar reassembling atom-by-atom. Believe the successful jumpers — like 'Rocket' and 'Lightship' — who achieved *Ziv*<sup>4</sup> reawakened to not just a new world, but to a new perception of that world, to its fullness. I'm so eager, I can't tell you, to do this thing, enter another dimension. But my skills are needed here. I maintain myself on the drug of advancing technology, the neural rush of rushing our H-Belts into better statistical performance — it isn't the survival of the fittest, but the tweakiest — so more people can escape the ecology of sustained unemployment without becoming road pizza," says Wish, looking so cool with his hotness.



August Sander photo (1915) re-functioned by Hy Grader

As Dallas can vouch for, I used to be a *sophrosyne*, one of excellence of character and soundness of mind. It formed the material of my neurons as well as my synaptic voids; it flowed in my arteries and puddled in my intestines — but no longer. After suffering a sad series of shit-signifying fluxes, including: 1) a particularly demeaning emotional thrashing under Chad "The Chimp" Armbuster's reign of terror in which I'm fixed by predicates he assigns me. "See me *regularly*," he advised at our last meeting, having difficulty pronouncing the congested syllables in that last word; the tone of that meeting still sticks to the lining of my gut like scum on a shower curtain, committing me to wishing whatever for a unique art school that would be run as an *unstitution*, promoting a student body as a *nomadic war machine*; 2) a very unsuccessful struggle with my money-grubbing HMO to cover rotator cuff shoulder surgery (their advice: "Remember, you are

---

4. Hebrew word for light or glow; God's radiance. The term is used by G.O.N.E. members to refer to the bodily glow achieved 4'33" after Belt activation and moments prior to Emergence.



## Finding Mememo

not your body”), condemning me to perpetual pain, cutting into my already compromised hours of peaceful sleep due to Dorinda’s stentorian snoring; 3) Donald Trump’s nomination, a terrible triumph of mob fascism; 4) fanatically eager Isis members addicted to acid-dunking their local heathens, causing the demand for nitric acid to increase and, thus, the price per gallon to shoot up-ward, making chemistry classes throughout the globe more expensive per student, causing chem class fees to climb; 5) a rusty water pipe bursting in my studio as *La Mer* played on WMFT, a *coup de grâce* that ruined a handmade rug, my precious collection of vintage artists’ books, and mixed with the flutterment of spilled paper dots from my 3-hole puncher; 6) annoying buzzers saying fasten seat-belt; and 7) hard-to-spot over-sized side-street speed bumps.

Over this existential hiss, I can still hear my father’s gushing fountain of father-to-son advice blasting in my head: *Freedom is an inestimable thing: if you allow it to be tricked away from you, as your mother did to me, you will have to pay and pay until the bloody sweat spurts from your eyes!*<sup>5</sup> Yes, after this increasing buildup of existential hiss, where every spoil has its style, I’ve altered C. G. Jung’s insight that “Life is crazy and meaningful at once,” to suit the style of my own newly acquired pessimistics: “Life is just plain crazy.”

I sit, looking through the side-door’s screen into Pure Wisconsin, watching a busboy with long sideburns light citronella candles on the outdoor tables as a fine, scarlet, ever-changing evening plays on his white uniform. Some people are stepping outside to witness the tone and color go from beer-gold to brick-dust, trees alight in the span of waning day, fish-fin shadows lengthening, the rustling noise of gravel wave-rolling on the lake shore. It’s these stunning visuals, in sympathetic weather backlit about the shoulders, that always draws me to Wisconsin’s Northwoods. A Labrador Retriever tied to a bike rack outside keeps running off, only to be yanked so forcefully by its extended leash that it flips backward in the air and crumples to the gravel parking lot. An objective correlative to my recent mode of felt being?

Some guy with a T-shirt reading CHAMPIONSHIP BULLY coins the jukebox and “A Horse with No Name” fills the sonic gap left by the silent band. But not before I hear an infinity of crickets starting up outside — a Proustian moment — recalling childhood visits to my uncle Don’s lake cottage, where the distant ancestors of these crickets helped fill my mind with the 1950s-kid fascination with space exploration: Moon, Mars, Neptune, out to the known universe’s edge, past the Andromeda Galaxy, further into space until a trail of glowing dust shrunk behind my flying mind as I edged toward the unknown. At that point,

---

5. Hy, high on weed, told me once how his mother, to get his father to marry her, stood on a small-town Wisconsin highway bridge and threatened to jump in the river if he didn’t agree to propose immediately, to put their relationship into a dimension of intimacy and commitment.

## Finding Mememo

tucked in bed, floating in thought, I would lapse into a peacefulness so complete it couldn't be distinguished from joy. I felt as if I could slip between existence and all else and enter a realm where no law of nature made sense and even math had to be completely re-imagined, a place where the world is composed of an infinite number of individual drops of feeling, all woven together by their experiences of each other.

I'm shot out of my reverie. Some corporate types — I call 'em *the usual suspects* — sit down behind us. I know this because, the taller of the three announces a bit too loudly: "Hell, some days I don't know who I am. I'm on the office phone, then cell-phone (often while on the toilet), my mistress is in Chicago, another woman I'm with is in D.C., my ex-wife is in Phoenix (where it's now 123 degrees), my mother is in Hawaii (running from a volcano's eruption), and I have four children living all over the country, mostly in Red States. I have faxes coming in day and night. I can plug into all the world's stock prices, commodity exchanges. I am everywhere, man — but I don't know who is in the condo next to mine." They look over with displeasure at three locals with high school-quarterback shoulders in sleeveless shirts talking about highschool as if they had been in Iraq together, a distinctive odor of sunscreen substituting for deodorant.

I make another synaptic connection and rehear in my *cabeza* what a between-customers Planchette told me before Wish showed up: *There are those of us who don't belong anywhere; we've had it with the soporifics of normalcy; we've abandoned who we were and where we were in order to be here — then, eventually, maybe, somewhere else. Your world out there is being lost to systems, networks that slowly occlude the flow of all those aspects of nature and character that distinguish humans from elevator buttons and doorbells. In fact, technology has become a force of nature which blows over our planet until there's nowhere to hide. One must use aspects of that technology, or so says my friend, to jump over or out of that technology. I've addressed these facts in a pamphlet I wrote up here over the harsh winter. I titled it "Between the Thumb and the Teddy Bear".*

Her words remind me of my father's last days, just before my deathwatch when I last saw him on a slab. He was warehoused in the shaved space of a derelict state-run nursing home. He called it "My waiting place," a place whose wall-mounted TVs were tuned to Fox News, despite his insistence on the Weather Channel. The facility abutted METRA railroad tracks that ran through a low-end neighborhood. It was manned by zombie-like staff serving food that tasted like mere medicated sustenance, I know because I'd bring Dad a maple-glazed turkey breast sandwich on rye, and chew bites of it, putting the mush into his mouth, like a bird feeding its offspring. Every visit there, Dad looked increasingly

## Finding Mememo



The finger's lunula

more nondescript, a mere life-form rather than *my father*. His constant jabber then was about the evil, superficial world that he was about to leave. About "those deranged people" who seemed to be the forefront of a new anti-consciousness. His delicate hazel eyes increasingly carried with them evidence of a loss, yet his hands were still active elements in his monologues. Fact: his left thumb on his left hand had an enormous *lunula* that looked like the full moon setting. I found myself mimicking, in a reduced form, his gestures.

The dynamics of these visits were distinctly of the father (teacher) - son (student) type. We knew our respective roles. I would greet him with a plastic smile, a form of a self-inflicted wound, he would stare with a suspicion set between quotation marks. I was to always to yearn for a yarn. A consummate raconteur, a successful life was a number of yearns twisted together into a coherent fabric. In the past, he'd always woven intriguing yarns, but now he was telling me his yarn was unraveling. "I've outlasted my memory," is how he put it. When I assisted him up before the small mirror over his bureau so he could comb his hair, he'd simulate a suicide by gunshot to the head, or draw his thumb slowly across his goose neck.

Oh, so wishing a world before the loss of my parents, before bungee jumping, skate-boarding, synchronized swimming, "Dance Moms" reality TV, texting, and distance learning. Speaking of the last item, the admin-types' faith in The Cloud amped up. Before I left to come up here, faculty were notified over the summer of a new "Roll for Initiative" Fall semester program headed up by Gary Drownings, semi-hot low-end pretender with hotdog-red hair, meant to launch countermeasures against the anti-technology "Typhoid Marys who are infecting their colleagues with their Neo-Luddism," as well as encourage us to "Do one thing a week to improve your tech savvy." This because, "To be is to be updated. We all need to work on our temporal bandwidth, our personal density, our engagement with both the past and the future — the width of our NOW." We were advised (i.e., warned) that admin-software can now evaluate how well we are communicating with our students, grading their papers, evaluating overall student response, how well our proposed class outcomes on our syllabi match actual achievement at class's end, and so forth. At the end of the semester we are to be tested on our grasp of applying new technology in pedagogic contexts. So how many of us will fail to build on our early success in academia, when we began in gladness, and end in despondency or madness?

In my admin-stalker's eyes, I see behind this program a woman coiled in

## Finding Mememo



thought, instant by instant determined to make things happen. Once saw her with other corporate effigies clustering at The Seven Lions' bar discussing how intelligence is to be commodified and "spun" to be seen as a potential character flaw. I passed them discretely on the way to the men's room. She was wearing a goat cashmere sweater (Inner Mongolia) and sipped a Long Island Ice Tea and gave forth a snippet of admin-speak about increasing bandwidth in a pattern of declar-

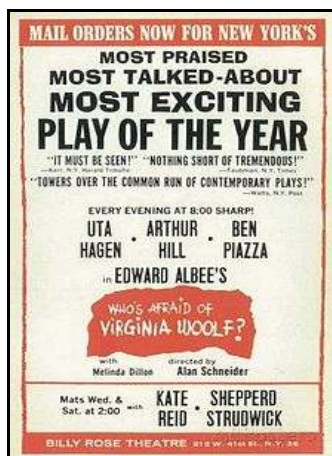
ative sentences that tended to slither upward into vague questions.

Speaking of bandwidth, the jug band has reappeared to start their second set. The diner's overly chatty manager, Rock, a guy Wish warned me of earlier as "having an M.B.A. in B.S.," and who was also half-owner of the Eco-Cow Cathedral, an innovative New Age diary near Park Falls, which features a new 480-foot-long barn, more like an indoor-outdoor sports facility, with a tall pitched roof and walls made of translucent recyclable polyurethane. Visitors are welcome and can watch the latest in "happy dairying" while sipping Rou Gui Wu Yi Cha Late Spring Pluck oolong tea or Cherry Coke and a Cathedral Burger topped with Wisconsin blue cheese whose "personality traits" were listed on the menu as: "inherent saltiness and strong moldy bite with plenty of sweet cream flavors, mushroomy and nutty, and with a hint of Grade A Wisconsin maple syrup splashed with a thimbleful of brandy for kicks."

"Ladies and gentlemen, our trio is back." yells

Rock. "Did you like their first set?"

"SURE!" — ah, that American word harboring both beauty and mild displeasure depending on how one stresses it — yell the diners. I surely would not want a world without this wacky musical group. So far they've been surprisingly *good*. Fidelity to the melody. Auto-tuning every time. Producing an ascending oval of glowing fuschia delightfully filling the Delta, but only after they've ripped out the musical seams, let out the hems, and restitched along new chalk lines. Right now, this diner is a temporary sonic safe haven from my fears, my cynicism, our



## Finding Mememo

age of grief.<sup>6</sup> The audience is hushed in musical anticipation, Wish vapping on an e-cig. Their second set starts, beginning with a riff on “Stormy Weather” without stepping on the actual melody. An old farmer in overalls, the top half down exposing a “profoundly blotto” T-shirt confirming his unsteady legs, dances. He seems like one of those large men whose hands shake when there are small chores to perform, but now he moves his alcohol-impaired body with enchanting sprightliness. There is an odd, well-thought out gracefulness to his motions despite his blood alcohol level. His bows and bends give the impression of melodious lines of verse, a poet of the land and trees. As he dances before a large window, backlit, seeing him is like seeing trees trembled through by sunlight, quaked and pierced in a mild breeze. For a moment, a split second, he gives me a bridge to his past, to a white farm house of an obliterated time when turning soil there was more profitable and alcoholism less a problem.

This *muzhik*’s exhilaration in the music snapped my mind back to my wife and the lack of exhilaration in both our lives, to a recent bitter conversation still trapped in my brain. I envision it here, albeit as a scene in a play of the type of *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*:

Characters: Him (*he fears that since he looks good in all kinds of clothes, he has a diminished personality*) and Her (*she recalls the fate that could have been hers — teaching English to “at risk” highschool kids, a fate of sensibility subdued to usefulness — and now feels pride in having done her doctorate and certificate in psychoanalysis, in being self-employed and fully independent*)

Scene: *A rustic, historically significant two-story house, which the wife owns. The husband pays rent to his wife. Heard outside is sleet pelting the shutters as an east wind raves like lunatics helpless without sedation. Inside, in their living room (just out of sight of the audience), Him and Her, husband and wife, are finishing a banal conversation about how the*

---

6. Hy had always been uncertain of his talents, fearful in an ambient way. He confided a jealousy toward me for my “pair of vivacious, gray-blues eyes that reflected a spirit of optimism, of joy in yourself and in your life, and your work, the exhilaration of doing things.” I think this, in part, was due to an academic position at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in which my efforts were appreciated and rewarded. Not so in Hy’s case. He once confided in me “Each semester it seems I open my veins, in vain, and bleed as I teach the Great Texts and pretexts to PoMo Lit.” He then shoved under my nose a student evaluation that began: *I feel sorry for Mr. [Grader], there is something sad about him. But he’s right on when doing passages from Sartre’s writings on disgust.* Hy once got access to his Chair’s academic evaluation, in which his attitude in departmental meetings was described as “a plain dealer, an individual who speaks his mind, but too bluntly. Is too honest.” This bluntness was directed, of course, toward the corporatism that infected higher education these days, the instrumentalization of education. Hy said this didn’t bother him as he’d mastered the art of icy calm detachment, indifference (like a Buddhist atheist) from day one because of having to deal with his overbearing father. But it was obvious these things *did* bother Hy, tremendously.



## Finding Mememo

*invention of rolling luggage has enhanced their international traveling adventures. They appear from around a room wall and ascend the carpeted stairs on their way to pre-bed tonsorial attention, the wife one step higher up as she is always wont to do. She turns around upon hearing his sour comment. Their images are reflected in a mirror on the stairwell wall so the audience sees them in double profile. The blush of health and good living covers her face and throat.*

Him: We travel well, but at home . . . Didja ever notice how you stare at your drink as if you're promising yourself not to touch it again? I'm constantly dumping wine, beer, and soda unfinished.

Her: You funnin' or bein' cunnin'? *[The pleasure resting on her mouth and chin slowly vanishing.]* Well, remember when you put your finger in the dust that was my mother?

Him: Well, you're the one who put her ashes in a Tupperware box. *[Suddenly peevish, arms akimbo.]* Perhaps I should never have met you! Our history is a continuous error. You ignore my great project. Ignore that it's not motivated by any desire for fame, money, or sexual escapades, but poetry. I have a palpitating universe to see and so many human messages to give. *[He works up his sass.]*

Her: Talking to yourself in front of me? *[Sees his reflection in the mirror.]* You speak like an ill-behaved child. That's how little I mean to you? So now I'm a burden, more than rolling luggage? Just because I once took exception to your avant-garde puritanism by suggesting you add approving adjectives to every *rare* sexual episode you sketch in your writing? Or was it because I suggested that on publication day you burn a copy of your book to acknowledge that it is negligible compared to what you imagined and intended? *[She moves slightly out of his orbit, her mouth trembling with surprise, her face a red hot moon of hurt and confusion.]*

Him: I feel shackled. At school, departmental debates include demagoguery, misrepresentation, exaggeration, intimidation, self-delusion, and no lack of high and low theater. Mainly because political squabbles are ill-adapted to deal with managing complexity, ambiguity, and contradiction. The admin's Political and Standards Enforcement Office of the Dean's Party Committee calls down hurricanes with a whisper or sends off a tsunami the way one would write a love letter. At home, I'm accused of laziness and stupidity in my prose. *[Nervously wipes his nose with his right index finger.]* You never take my creative work seriously. Outside a man is respected, at home that man is neglected. You don't appreciate my writing which is for me an alternative to fatherhood. And yet, your

## Finding Mememo

relentless fist I kiss. And you sound — I know it's not your fault — like Margaret Thatcher on TV whose sound-bites sometimes leave teeth marks when you tell me that as I continue to write, the further away from life, from communication with a broader range of people, I go. Exceptions, of course, are my amigos Jym, Dallas, and Ichi.<sup>7</sup> But what is the use of more personal relationships when everyone brings less and less to them? More, all our relationships are as if on loan, temporary, pending death. Okay, for me, writing is a kind of whistling past the cemetery.

Her: Sometimes you can be as thrilling as televised golf. As for the latter dig on my British chatter, yah, I *can't* help it. As to your writing, you *can* help it. A story ought to lead one to bed with both hands. Yours trips the reader down the stairs. As to the first, there are no shackles here. *[She places an arm around his neck, as if the arm, flesh elder to his by three years, were a yoke and the one speaking these lines meant to contradict them, take them back, make fun of them.]*

Him: My creative and pedagogical work weighs heavily in my thoughts; you have no idea how I have to pull myself together to manage even a tiny bit of good cheer these days as I wrestle with my metafictional gamesmanship, with a novel whose aleatory flutter of uncontrolled, metastatic growth is putting strains on the largest comb-binding I can find in any office supply store. And now, what with the situation at the college where the chief of finance, Emma Puttermesser, practices her bean-counting with religious devotion. *[He opens and closes his eyes in a way supposed to recall to the audience the drawing up and down of a theater curtain for the performance of an elegant tragedy.]*

Her: Poor thing, do forgive my being angry with you. *[Said in a mocking tone.]*

Him: And forgive me too. *[Returning that tone.]* I, the never-uttered, should be addressing you more respectfully, Milady, seeing that the very steps we stand upon here belong to you.

Her: This is exactly how you ruin every last innocent, feeling moment both for yourself and for me. Giving me the withering remains of last year's bittersweet, huh? *[Arms akimbo.]* When I call you a "poor thing," I am just caressing you. *[More conciliatory.]*

---

7. I recall Hy mentioning the irony of friendship — so strong and yet so fragile. He said we four flew together, like straws in an eddy, to part in the open stream, and yet again cling in another eddy, and so on and on. He took E.M. Forster's stance that our friendship was "comparatively solid in a world full of violence and cruelty." For Hy, Ichi was a friend who'd become a way of thinking about the world, about art, about himself. While Ichi admired Hy's *magokoro*, sincerity.

# Finding Mememo

Him: Your pity insults me. *[Puts right hand on top of his bald head and pulls his head to the right, stretching his neck tendons.]* Can't you see that my obsessive need to write is a necessary drug, a distraction from my möbius strip of misery, from my melancholic thoughts of matter and ash, from the academic *this* and *this* and *this* tossed my way like the brick Ignatz loved to hurl at the head of Krazy Kat, who took it, like I'm supposed to, as a veritable sign of affection.

Her: Before I knew you better, I took you for the cheeriest, most easygoing person. *[She draws in space a smiley face with her right index finger.]* Your way of speaking now strikes me as novel, foreign, voice of madness. Have you lost your radiant temple? *[Points that index finger now to the upper stories of his head, his large frontal lobes.]*

Him: I almost did something — I don't know what. *[Before she can respond, he abruptly changes the topic.]* I did like your dessert tonight — and so did our guests — of candied deviled shrimp and strawberries in brandy and anise cream.

Her: About which your eyes said to me with each bite I took: *Fat! Fat! Fat!* Your world is you. I am my world. Your audience is primarily yourself.

Him: Language needs to be fertilized by egotism.

Her: Can't you see the goal of life is happiness and to respond to life as though it were perfect is the way to happiness? But you seem to believe all you need do is turn your back to the world and get on with it.

Him: Slender is the might.

Yes, I feel like I've lost my radiant temple. What we have we soon have no longer, and what we possess is easily lost. All we have and possess is what we long for. All we are is what we've never been. I am less a phenomenon, more a longing. A longing that isn't going to be satisfied, probably can't be, not here or maybe not in heaven either. As the barber I frequented when I living in Lincoln Square's heavily Germanic neighborhood oft told us regulars: "In Heaven, there's no kümmel."<sup>8</sup> But now I can ask, What about in another dimension?

---

8. Kümmel is a sweet, colorless digestif, flavored with caraway seed, cumin, and fennel. According to the Dutch, Kümmel liqueur was first distilled in Holland during the late 16th century by Lucas Bols. It was then taken to Germany and Russia; the former is now the principal producer and consumer of kümmel. It's popular in the UK and was the favorite spirit of writer Henry Miller.

## Finding Mememo

For all that, in other words: *by the way* — and what might be understood by this introductory phrase, all this hints at the feeling I have of being a captive naked man standing in a sort of Sol LeWitt open cube with an array of sharply barbed iron shafts aimed inward within an inch of my skin, barring any exit, such that the faintest movements that I faintly allow myself causes me to be pierced by these daggers. Therein, I languish in a manner most extraordinary. I, the proverbial *anomalon*,<sup>9</sup> need a neat trick to escape *the same old shit*, a new Houdini who can get me out of the eternal return.<sup>10</sup> Nope, a French raspberry mousse ain't gonna hack it.<sup>11</sup> One must move from theory (the G.O.N.E. group's belief that we actively can construct spacetime, can understand ourselves as a hologram,<sup>12</sup> a blur of interference patterns enfolded throughout a cosmic holo-

---

9. An *anomalon* is a subatomic particle with observed properties that vary from lab to lab investigating it. Hy used this term to refer to the fact that depending upon who was engaging him, and where, to their observations he could be seen as: astute, dumb, a jerk, annoying, soothing, loved, hated, nonexistent, too obtrusive, weird, normal, radical, conservative, talented, untalented, a sex addict, or a celibate. And when looking at himself in the mirror he saw, well, he didn't know what the hell he saw there.

10. By "the same old shit," Hy usually was referring to the exercise of unilateral power, like he suffered under his father and now under Chad Armbruster and the admin-types. Hy often referred to Chad as "Shufflebrain", as he once had a dream in which Chad's brain was sliced, flipped, shuffled, subtracted, and even minced, but each time when his brain was replaced into the cranium, Chad's aggressive behavior remained unchanged. His Rogerian analyst interpreted it as meaning that an institution's administrators may change (the configuration of its "brain"), but its policies of wielding power remain stable in place. There is a Roman sculpture in the Art Institute Museum that Hy liked to point to that typified such mode of power (see Ichi 's page in frontispiece).

Plato, Hy once told me, asserted "The definition of being is power" (*The Sophist*). This meant the idea of power is the ability to affect others without being affected by them. "This is unilateral power. It was espoused not only by Plato, but by Descartes, Leibnitz, Locke; in fact, the whole Western philosophical tradition illustrates the cultural commitment to unilateral power."

In the context of our Artist's Café chats about academic matters, Hy said this means "orders fly one way, down the ranks, from administration to contingent faculty. They don't move upward, from contingent faculty to administration. If power is unilateral," said Hy, "then it is competitive. If you have more power over me, I have less power over you. But, then, I desire more power for myself over others as compensation. And so the agon of academic politics presses on."

Hy talked about a more *relational mode of power* which permits a passive form of power, "a bi-directional mode of power where we allow ourselves to be affected by those 'below' us." There is a marked difference," Hy continued, "between the kind of *weakness* that makes us vulnerable to being controlled by others and the *strength* that enables us to be active and open."

11. A mousse might not "hack it," but surely Hy couldn't have forgotten the ecstatic delights of foie gras with Muscat Ottonel, which he and his wife, Dorinda, had at Manhattan's famed Clocktower restaurant in 2009, of which he glowingly reported: "Figs caramelized in fat rendered from just-seared foie gras, served with huckleberry fig jam, chives and brioche toast and paired with a 2014 bottle of Channing Daughters Muscat de Boom Mudd West Vineyard North Fork of Long Island — ohhhhhh fuck!"

12. G.O.N.E.R.'s believe we are self-contained, self-generating, and self-knowledgeable holograms, yet were we to be removed from this planetary context, we would quickly realize that human form is *not unlike a mandala or symbolic poem*, for within its form and flow lives comprehensive information about various physical, social, psychological, and evolutionary contexts within which it was created.

## Finding Mememo

gram, and so able to move into other dimensions, create our reality, other worlds) to practice (strapping on a Heisenberg Belt, getting to a tall building (they mourn the World Trade Towers) and yelling “Geronimo!”

Final musical set over, Wish and I wiggle our way through the crowd (I toss a salute to Planchette) and out the screen door into a bright blue twilight which comes about half past eight in the summer here. People are making their way to parked cars, half beaters, half new SUV’s. It seems for the moment not so much a coming of darkness as the turning on of a new azure illuminator, as if the earth were lit suddenly by a sapphire sun. In the cool blue the lemon tint of lamps in surrounding cottages begin to flame.

For some reason seeing this sky reminds me of Dallas’ reasoning, cold and clear, invariably leading him, like his Wildbraine character, to a super-saturated solution. The air gives off a static hum, like white noise (I flash on Don DeLillo’s book by that name), a sheathing grizzle of ten-thousand monster Wisconsin mosquitoes. Wish and I are not eager to part and decide to take a stroll down a path leading toward the lake.

“So I think you understand our group agrees that we have long since passed the place in high energy physics where we’re examining the structure of a passive universe.”

“That’s obvious!”

“I know we’re into the domain where the interplay of consciousness in the environment is taking place on such a primary scale that we are indeed creating reality by any reasonable definition of the term.”

“And so that is why your group stresses mind-training, meditation, Jungian principles of integration and psychic development?”

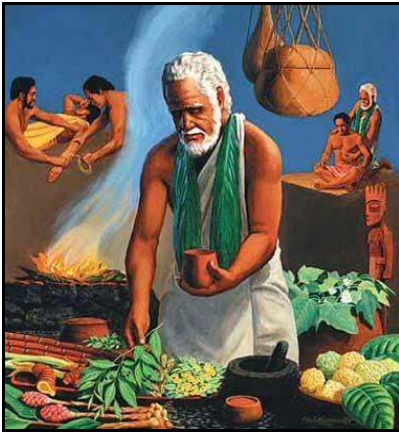
“Yes, and we require new members to read Michael Talbot’s remarkable compilation of Bohmian physics and psychic events, *The Holographic Universe*. One day we imagine that dimension travel will occur purely by psychic means. The Belt is a only catalyst for what could be achieved when we more fully engage the potentialities that lie dormant within us. The mind could be trained to reach down and reprogram the cosmic motion picture projector that produces our conception of reality. We already know certain people can muster enough mind-over-matter to walk on burning coals, or produce on their own body manifestations such as the stigmata. Faith-healing and supposed ‘miracles’ are not always a scam. In one well-documented case, a native Hawaiian shaman, a *kahuna*, instantly healed a broken leg, even though the bones stuck out of the flesh!”

At this point I was hearing the “The Twilight Zone” theme tune.

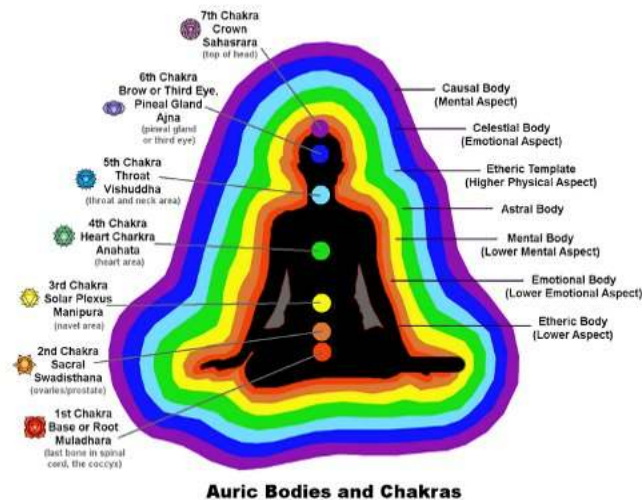
“Did Planchette tell you she can see auras? HSP, higher sense perception. She saw your injured left shoulder as a torn curtain in your etheric field.”



## Finding Mememo



A Hawaiian *kahuna*



"My bud Ichi told me of Japanese researcher Hiroshi Motoyama who has developed a way to measure the electrical presence of the chakras; got into it as his mother could see auras. Ichi said his own mom could do this."

"We have two realities: one in which our bodies appear to be concrete and possess a precise location in spacetime, and one in which our very being appears to exist primarily as a shimmering cloud of energy whose location is

somewhat ambiguous. The Belt activates this very bright shimmering cloud, permitting D-travel." Wish goes on to list many instances of paranormal events.

I tell him I did believe in Jung's notion of synchronicity. "Happens all too often for me. Amazes my wife. Just one instance: her son's doctor last week advised him to stop drinking; my wife's telling me this as I tune in a 'Rosemary and Thyme' British TV murder mystery episode

on Netflix, where a character is given the exact same advice by his doctor."

"Planchette's got our group onto a new project."

"Yeah?"

"She's been gathering willing members into a séance with a Ouija board on the night of the full moon, trying to contact dead jumpers, even hoping to make connection to D-jumpers in their respective new dimensions, using information they provide for her poetry."

Our conversation's so engaging, we didn't at first notice a disturbance



Planchette's Ouija Board

## Finding Mememo

building all around us, air thick and dark, sky ready to crack open. Wish is walking and jauntily working his long green umbrella like English men do in movies. Then he begins swinging it in a wild, erratic manner, tracing out huge arcs in the humid air, turning it around, the tip of his umbrella just grazes my nose. He then holds it over his head and throws it dramatically at my feet. A burst of lightning. What happens next makes me think I must have had too many beers. The umbrella does something I can only describe as flickering like an oil lamp about to go out and emits an odd crackling sound like the sound of Dorinda tearing into her favorite cellophane-wrapped cookies; in a dazzling array of sparkling, multi-colored light, its ends curl up, its color changes, and it reshapes itself into a gnarled, gravy-brown stick not unlike the staff carried by The Shaman. This transfiguration lasts only a second then it reforms into original shape, which Wish then gathers up and opens as an umbrella again, big enough to shelter us both from heavy rain. An intolerable burst of thunder, big flash, and all hell breaks loose in the heavens above. The Shaman told me lightning can have strange effects, said he saw a fox turned into an earthworm once.

\*                      \*

*Editor's Gloss: I stop here, saving the reader three long excurses: 1) on what happens when torrents of rain rain down and wind and lightning starts lightening the pine trees of their lesser branches a hundred yards in front of Hy and Wish; 2) an earlier discussion of The Shaman's rant the day before on a special WOJB radio program "Against the Anthrobscene" (a critique of careless human influences on changing the planet's atmospheric and geological records, especially on how media consumption has affected the environment) where he claimed there were areas near the edge of the Res being used for the dumping of e-waste; and 3) Hy's disclosure to Wish that his nemesis, chairman Chad Armbuster, is known among his subordinates as El Rey Papelero, King of Paperwork, a cognomen of Philip II of Spain, whose Latin maxim explains the tag: Quod non est in actis non est in mundo (What is not in the files is not in the world).*

*Hy elaborates his precarity, his status as reject to Chad's "I, I am" subject position as figured in his obsession with generating top-down paperwork, mentioning the guy's admin-way of warping Jacques Derrida's famous dictum: Il n'y a pas de hors-texte (There is nothing outside the text). According to Hy: "Chad believes, as did Norbert Wiener, that faculty, like computers, are literal-minded and depend upon exact instructions. He is infamous for his 'micro-adjustments' to departmental policies, regs, and budgets — loves to crunch numbers and the arms of contingent faculty, especially those whose publications outnumber his."*

*During Hy's chat-about-Chad, he tells Wish that he was to become either the obedient academic subject or the deviant to be eradicated. Hy brings in as an example Socrates' decision to choose suicide rather than submit to any injunction by the Athenian*

## Finding Mememo

*admin-types to stop thinking/teaching. He brings to Wish's attention a German media theorist that has been an inspiration of him, Friedrich A. Kittler, who, at his retirement speech to his students and colleagues ("Farewell to Sophienstrasse," 15 July 2011) used it as an occasion to attack the norms of the neoliberal McUniversity. Hy and I had some of our most contentious moments over this German don, whom I found more than a bit fascistic and too stuck in his admiration of Martin Heidegger, whom Richard Rorty called a "self-infatuated blowhard." But Kittler does attack neoliberalism (i.e., capitalism that has largely freed itself of working-class opposition) as "a kind of worldwide industry" of now-respectable knowledge production (i.e., bourgeois subject-production).*

*Kittler, like Walter Benn Michaels, dislikes the bureaucratic enforcement of PC language as naming has replaced class struggle, not confronting persisting social and political contradictions. Such bureaucracy, notes Kittler, is wielded by what he calls "the discourse network" which attempts to adjudicate all difference through bureaucratic adjustments (made by figures such as Chad), which Kittler describes as "putting spirit up for sale."*

*Hy noted that Kittler, like himself, hates the program of reforms which abbreviated time-to-degree completion and accelerated the emphasis on practical skills, incorporating internships into study, preparing students for success in a competitive, global market-place. Kittler, to Hy's delight, wants to revisit the classroom as an anarchic free-space: a theater, a confessional, a stage, a laboratory, an IT center, a royal court, a place to hang out, like a smoker's lounge. In contradiction to this sort of pedagogic experience, Hy's school gave a sour life-lesson to students by firing a Palestinian Lecturer whose very popular class raised uncomfortable issues about Israel's illegal West Bank incursions. Admin-types know when to tread lightly.*

*Just before coming up to the lodge, Hy had Xeroxed a copy of the Kittler's speech and stuck it in Chad's faculty mailbox, careful not to leave fingerprints. One unfortunate Lecturer failed to do so when she sent an abusive note into The Lair-of-the-Talking-Claw concerning the sudden cancellation of her Black-Feminist Studies seminar. The note was dusted for prints, pegged her and she got fired, literally put out on her butt on the street by two beefy security guards.*



"The Reject Auto-Rejects," a backward jump from Hy Grader's "Jump Shots" collection

## Finding Mememo

*A final note: this last section and the one prior were even more heavily encrypted than the earlier sections. Dallas had to give them to a professional hacker he knew from a previous case he worked (which then inspired a Blurt Wildbraine story, "The Mystery of the Locked File," a techno riff on the standard locked room scenario). After days of hard work, this nerd was able to gain access. Therein, one sees why Hy wished to keep the information in these sections TOP SECRET at the time. Odd stuff. One sees here, Hy's love of everything nautical, especially submarines; one sees here the reason why Hy was often heard to cite Mormon founder Joseph Smith: "Deep water is what I am wont to swim in." In a long paragraph I snipped out, Hy argues about the etymological similarities of the Greek word for ship (naus) with our word nostalgia, and goes on to mention the nautical aspect harbored within the phenomenological term horizon (an existential limit point). Moreover, Hy told us four amigos during his last six months of life, he felt rudderless. No surprise then that in these sections, Hy begins to broach recent French theories concerning "the reject" and "the abject," the junk cast off-ship, to support his arguments.*

*Had Chad gotten into these files, it could've been used to discredit him professionally. Another issue, the tone of these sections are out of joint with the literary approach in Hy's earlier sections. One assumes, in the final rewrite, Hy would've integrated them better or bridged them more effectively. As it is, there is a jarring rapids the reader must sail over between earlier and later sections. Moreover, we see aspects of Hy's depression and annoyance with his wife that he's largely hidden from her — another reason for the high-level security?*

*I know for a fact that Hy strongly believed Walter Benjamin's dictum that every epoch dreams the one to follow, precipitating its actualization. Probably, after meeting Wish, it started to dawn on him that the true meaning underlying his prescient "Jump Shots" collection was an anticipation of the G.O.N.E. group's envisionment of dimension travel. The captioned jpegs from Hy's "Jumps Shots" testify to where his thoughts were heading, to his identification with the jumpers seen on TV and movies, and those toss-the-coin D-jumps adumbrated by Wish Watt and elucidated in The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies.*

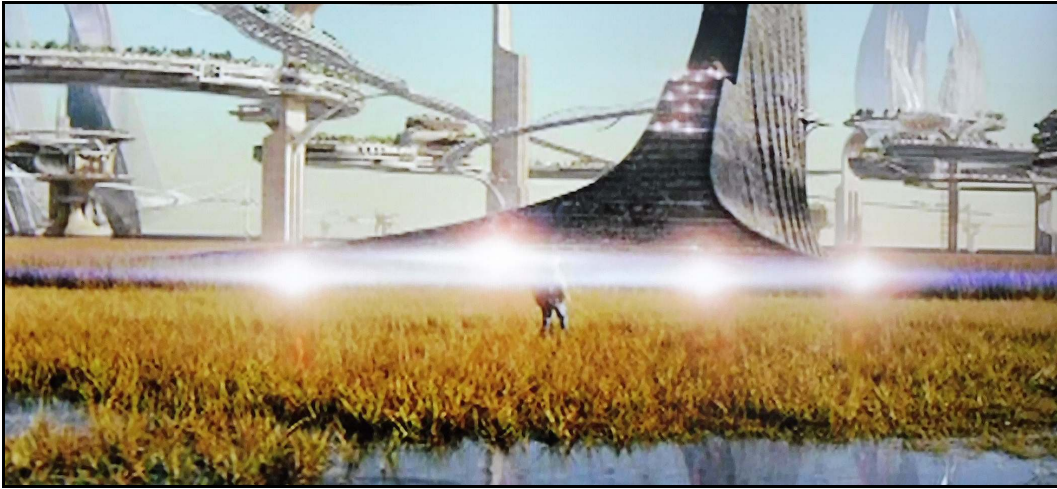
*Hy was a big fan of the Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts of "lines of flight" and "becoming-animal," a "molecular" dodge toward what escapes the human subject and, thus, the all-pervasive geopolitical state with its surveillance and control systems, its demand to convert all discourses into economically productive information — of which Hy's school is a microcosm. He would've been interested in what, as Deleuze/Guattari say, produces "an objective zone of indetermination or uncertainty" that tends toward "the imperceptible," the invisible. A "world of impossibility," of the pure emission of singularities, i.e., alternative worlds.*

*One could speculate Hy might see D-travel as a hi-tech mode (albeit risky) of becoming-animal, a way of escaping all gazes. Why, he once told me he wished he could be a "flicker-signifier, presenting a certain haziness before Chad's demeaning gaze." During his rogue Bartlebyan I-would-prefer-not-to encounters with him, our resistant don would don an Admin-type-distracting T-shirt boldly declaring: I'M BACTERIA AND BACTERIA ARE US, symbolically evading all but microscopic gaze.*

*After a peculiar event, Hy gained more confidence in the possibility of quantum-*



## Finding Mememo



*The Spread Laughter of a Fall Landscape, "Emerence on Anone" scene (10 minute CGI video by G.O.N.E. member Spin "Spinny" Robin, 2016)*

*craziness and, hence, D-travel. Last spring, he told me his windshield wiper reservoir went empty. He filled it with blue fluid, tested the spurter button — no go. Opened the small tank — no water! Refilled it. Tried again. Still no spurting water! Looked in the reservoir, no water. Looked for a water leak under the car, discomforting his injured rotator cuff in doing so, but nothing there. Refilled again.*

*Nada! Desperate, he ran into the house, grabbed a pair of dice, rolled them on his car's hood until he tossed two 5's. He then refilled the reservoir again and voilà! it stayed filled and blue wiper-fluid now squirted perfectly across his windshield. Go figure. That night, after watching Bruce Lee and those endless false battles in Cantonese, Hy had a vivid dream which he recounted to me in detail:*



## Finding Mememo

I grabbed my copy of Wyoh's new book, *The Work of Art in the Age of Our Usurping Culture*, and took a fast elevator to the observation deck of Chicago's Trump Tower. My insides felt a gently rising submarine. When security was distracted, I got on the ledge, walking the dizzy edge of a precipice seeming to drop over the edge of the world. I began to think of myself as a hologram of my next self surrounded by a diving bell. I tightened a peculiar belt around my waist and jumped. In seconds a tingling began. As my body dropped faster, it reached its highest level ever, the tingling that is, it really burst its banks and flowed outwards from my spine's base and flowed around my body. The forces acting on my body became increasingly contradictory. Suddenly, I heard a sparrow trill and I was weightless, sandwiched between death and a new life. Both hearing and sight (both are waves, of course) merged into something more intimate than either. Sound-sight began to envelope me. I heard-saw harmonious chords and colors. A synaesthesia that I somehow knew was called "The R.I.P Chord" effect. My inner kingdom became ever more gloriously extended. I felt I was being elevated, even though I was dropping. I felt something inside me feral, hyphenated, something resistant to meaning. I thought: *Glory be to god for dappled things for skies of couple-color as a brinded cow. . . .* At the most intense moment of this dream, I awoke. Later, I sat down when my emotions stabilized and wrote a series of analogies on one of my recipe-cards and stuck it in my card-file box: Gravity : matter :: spirit : freedom.

When I told a student of mine about this dream, he said: Google John Hutchison; he discovered the H-Effect, a highly-anomalous electromagnetic effect that can cause the jellification of metals, spontaneous levitation of common substances, and other odd effects." The kid went on to point out, "Pop, shazam! Dreams can become reality, prof."



John Hutchison in his lab



The H-Effect: levitating ice cream

\* \* \*

## Finding Mememo

24



Snapshot of Wishwer Watt, age 17, as found by Dallas Johnson's investigation



Park Falls Church Sign



Hy's snapshot of his cabin's fireplace

The exchange between Wish and I is still rumbling in my *cabeza* as thunder and lightning flashes from the cosmical heaven dies out, the Wrath of God moving eastward reminding me of one of

Chad's mantra's: "Power is vertical; potential is horizontal!" We usually don't think of anything greater than our own souls. But hearing Wish wish on about D-jumpers, recalling Chad Armbuster's denigrations, feeling the fiery, soaring quality of constructive will of the G.O.N.E. group, witnessing Wish's psi-magic with his umbrella (magic is any sufficiently advanced technology), and being caught in that awful run-for-your-lives storm, has unnerved me. Luckily, we were invited into vehicular sanctuary by an angular man, looking circa 1953 what with his crew cut, geek glasses, and wearing a benign Army clerk's expression. Therein, we sat out the apocalypse, armored in a sturdy Hummer we dubbed "The Ark". As the Hummer shook, we overcame any possibility of feeling inferior or superior to one another, dissolving any dissatisfaction and rebellion we might have had concerning such a non-ego-



The Ark, a Delta Diner's diner's "safe-haven" Hummer

I sit in my cabin on the lake, chuckling over the Hummer owner's T-shirt bought at a tourist trap in the Cayman Islands; it punfully reads: CAYMAN WENT. A small fire in the woodsy fireplace, each minute bursting in my room as our great globe reels in the solar fire, me thinking how time is the fire in which I burn. The power has finally come on, so I tune into WOJB, but it's still off the air, so I tune up to WHBM, Park Falls Public Radio. A "Theater of the Ears" production of Chicago writer Eckhard Gerdes' *Clockwise* is just ending, a fanciful play wherein kids spin a play-

## Finding Mememo



Hy's snapshot of his resort's rented lake cabin



Hy's radio tuned to WOJB, but no signal

ground's merry-go-round, pretending it propels them into the future (clockwise) or the past (counterclockwise). I recall that Planchette mentioned this program was on tonight; said she encourages the children of G.O.N.E. parents to act it out whenever they go to Park Falls' only playground. I start a fire in the fireplace, warming my very rain-wet clothes.

Ten o'clock News comes on WGBM, Park Falls Public Radio: an F-1 tornado touched ground near The Res, must've hit one of those e-waste dumps, as people are reporting cell-phone debris raining down on Park Falls' streets, so the mayor has declared that the 64<sup>th</sup> Flambeau Rama celebration (featuring the Slambovian Circus of

4-7

### 64th Annual Flambeau Rama

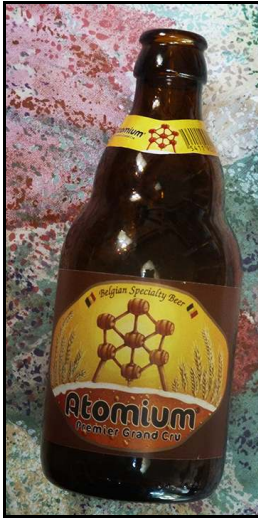
310 5<sup>th</sup> Street North, Park Falls

**Four days of FREE, LIVE, MUSIC! Food; Carnival; Arts & Crafts Fair; 5KRun/Walk (register at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com)); 4 on 4 Basketball Tournament; Rod Casting Contest; Family Fun Day Games; Miss Flambeau Rama Queen Pageant, Car Show; Parade & MORE... For more information & a complete schedule of activities go to [www.parkfalls.com](http://www.parkfalls.com)**

Dreams, billed as a "Hillbilly Pink Floyd" band) will be held a day later so "careful clean-up can commence."

Next begins "The Al Wayne Inspiration Hour", signaled by the show's theme organ music, the opening bars of Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* played by E. Power Biggs. *May he rest in peace.*

## Finding Mememo



Atomium, 8% alcohol

On the cabin's porch I have a cooler with some beer, a gift from Wish. I pull out a bottle of Atomium, a Belgian specialty brew, pop the top, and listen to Wayne's weekly homily:

*Tonight's topic is "Alternatives and Counter-factuals" . . . Let me start with citing a choice tidbit from poet e.e. cummings: "Listen, there's a hell of a universe next door: let's go!"*

This motivational speaker's soft, soothing voice, something linguistic theorist Roland Barthes would term the *grain* of his voice, is instantly recognizable, a voice gone over to dramatic expressivity where cavities, membranes, and cartilages from deep down work their vocalic magic on the listener's ear. I imagine him as remarkable spry, sporting an owlish expression of a don lecturing at M. I. T.:

*Do you still feel a youthful immortality or has the reality of time banished all hope? Are you looking for new ways to end our suffocating perpetual present? Are you aware that what is most vital about life is its capacity for disorganizing what is organizing and repressive?*

*We live in a domain of disarray, disassembly, and dissociation. Our world would be better off being run by nomads and ballet dancers. Some theorists say now only exaggeration can be the medium of truth. Others believe we've already been killed but have not yet died, making us the already-dead — zombies. Witness the craze for tottering flesh-eating undead in today's pop culture. Do you think that only the residual strength of the dead beings inside you give you power to survive at all?*

"Amen to that shit!" accompanied by two big swigs.

*Too often we worry about being too fat to be loved but not about being too self-involved to consider the pain of others. Our jobs are often so boring we'd exchange them with a job playing cave people in a historical theme park, if the pay was commensurate. Do you find you're missing the traditional "slow work*



## Finding Mememo

*of time" in our hyperconnected society? In your online Facebook and Twitter friendships, has hypergregarious buzz replaced the true I - Thou relationship? Are your friendships then, based on similarity of traits since the logic of networking reduces dissimilarities? I suggest this produces an ultimate narcissistic mode of "friendship" that merely promotes one's quantitative notoriety, where others become "friend-commodities", simply by the network effect of network. . . .*

I've read *The Slow Professor* by Berg and Seeber, challenging the haste in modern universities caused by their corporatization (i.e., greed, exploitation, and use of technology). Be it known, I have no iPhone. I don't let social media use me. I avoid friendships in the Cloud. A Facebook post can articulate a "murderous truth" to a friend, letting slip something which could end their relationship, which then exists online forever, not dissipating. Be it known, I've always been anti-gregarious, fearing that others will relieve themselves in my oatmeal. Where a group be gathered, I will be seen *walking away*. I am a jealous friend of solitude and solitary spaces, like basements. All the better to resist, reject, *dox* . I, "Meme", admit few to my inner circle. Ichi, my dear friend, is one, a fellow reject, a short-circuiter of all systems. Rejects, maybe abjects, we two don't forget our painful histories of subjugation. Yet we've never been passive rejects, we've actively responded, creatively and politically. My other buds are Jym and Dallas. Altogether, we've oft discussed friendship, its oddities and cruelties, at our café luncheons. During one such chat-about, Dallas got a jumping good idea for one of his murder mysteries, an inspiration I gave him while elucidating Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of the concept of friendship. The mystery then took the form of a play featuring identical twins:



Cover image to *His Number Was Up*

*Scene: 1958, Woodstock, Illinois. A typical upscale, two-story Midwestern house owned by Twin #1 and coveted by Twin #2.*

TWIN #1: *The next time I call you, don't answer, or I won't see you again. Answer my call, it's all over.*

TWIN #2: *It's all over now.*

Well, to summarize, the next day TWIN #1 (or is it Twin #2?) is found with a long antique letter opener stuck in his heart and a phone cord



## Finding Mememo



Frontispiece to Dallas Johnson's mystery play *His Number Was Up*

wrapped about his neck (the action takes place in 1958, no cordless phones) in a locked room. The play ends in a tense courtroom scene, complete with a surprise twist, that spoofs Ayn Rand's famous play *The Night of January 16<sup>th</sup>*.

Nature calls. The beer. When I return to my couch, Al Wayne is still vociferously propounding rhetorical questions.

*Is knowledge still an end or has cynicism gripped the soul? Have you descended to the eleventh level of hell, or aspire to the rhetoric of a poet in your critical refusals?*

A poet, I silently answer, as in my Deleuzian-inspired "schizo-writing". But Chad is dragging me down. Denied my application for travel funds to attend a "Schizo-Culture" conference. Depresses me when he wears his THE RETURN OF 1996 button to faculty meetings [*ed., the book industry's worst year for returns*]. About the French-influenced theories underwriting my aesthetic Chad has quipped, "They aren't even wrong!" In other words, they're so half-baked as to defy proof one way or another. I just "escape" him. To him, I'm like a subatomic particle whose position and velocity he can't simultaneously know. That uncertainty bothers him. I'm non-renormalizable. We are not cohomological. If he is  $a$  and I am  $b$ , then  $a \times b = -b \times a$ .

## Finding Mememo

It may seem absurd, but I told my therapist I needed to reveal how much room — literally — my fears, anxieties, and uncertainties take up inside me these days. I said, “I wanna go with Peter Pan to Never Never Land!” I told her about British philosopher Henry More’s *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671), which argued for the existence of a nether realm, another dimension, and that I’ve watched certain episodes of “Star Trek: Deep Space Nine” umpteen times. So, hey, Ariadne, toss me a superstring! The radio commentator responds:

*Does your libido lay decayed, haunted by either inert or over-active intellect? Your emotions regelate, melting under pressure and the freezing again, then melting again?*

This chatter sounds like Dorinda’s recurring complaint: that I have the dull pallor of a world amuck seizing at my indomitable spirit. True, or has Luck prevailed in my uncertain combat? I do win at craps consistently and my coin-toss always hits its head. But playing the academic game I’ve come to realize: 1) you cannot win; 2) you cannot break even; 3) you cannot get out of the game. Moreover, in the long run, I know we’re hellbent for the Cosmic Whimper, heat death. The radio continues:

*If you think your luck is kaput, that the cosmos will run out of juice in  $10^{100}$  years (a googol), be hopeful. Because we can never predict the future of a quantum mechanical universe with complete certainty; for in an infinite quantum future anything that can happen, eventually will.*

*As for me, for a time, my mind dwells in the reveries of the past, warped back in time grasping at diaphanous essences.*

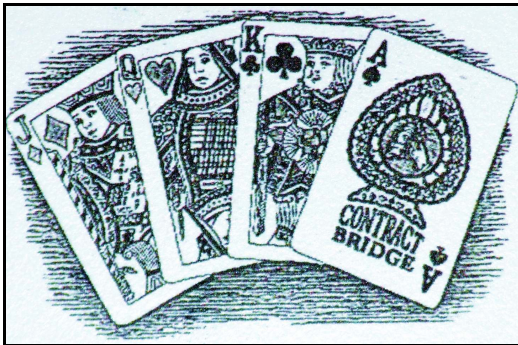
*There is the comforting vision of my favorite grandmother, Madeleine, baking cookies. I’m in my sandbox. . . . Lepsis, my faithful water spaniel, is jumping, chasing his ball. . . .*

I find myself tearing up. Then, like the storm earlier, torrents of tears stream down my cheeks. I’m blubbering like a child. A needed cathartic release. The radio program continues:

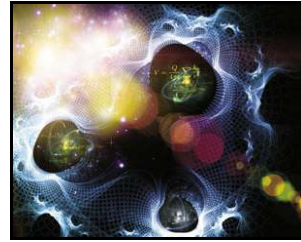
*. . . But there is also visions of a different future. In John Wyndham’s speculative novel, Random Quest, the physicist Colin Trafford is catapulted into a parallel universe where there’s been no Second War and no atom bomb. He took a line of flight toward*

## Finding Mememo

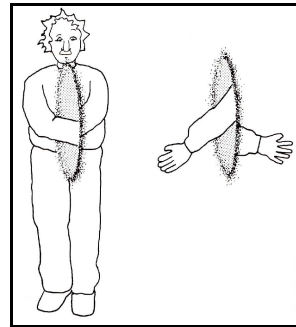
*an adjacent space that sidestepped his current space of capture. He lost molecules at the edge of his form and they came into contact with other molecules riding on a cosmic force that moves the world, that flows through the world, bringing into play little understood quantum forces. Maybe today we could also be thrown — jeter in French — into a new world, rejecting — rejeter in French — a world with a Donald Trump or a Mike Pence, a different United States without those noxious states of Indiana and Ohio as well as all those south of the Mason-Dixon Line — another, truly United States where one and the other will have lost distinct existence. Let the rallying cry be: “Leave the current community of the arrived and become the community of the departed.” In this regard, I recommend local author Dee Dee Harriman’s new sci-fi novel Have D-Helmet — Will Travel which over 285 pages develops the theme of a Neo-Adam and Eve who, via dimensional travel using special Heisenberg helmets, establish the human race anew on Murania. Kiku (Adam) stands, at the book’s conclusion, and aims an angry fist in the direction where the Ramsbotham Gate was when they entered and achieved Emergence in their new world and yells: “Old world, stay out or be blasted in two!” The book is a real nail-biter, even up to when Kiku and Kikki (Eve) play Bridge to pass the time and Kikki gets an incredible bridge hand: seven no-trump, doubled, redoubled and vulnerable, a side bet riding.*



I have not been tempted to play bridge since my mother’s bridge club days, but I have been tempted to jump at the chance to play Russian roulette during he vote-counting for the 2016 Presidential election so I don’t have to see who trumps whom.



Departing



Reaching into an alternative dimension



Stages of Emergence in Progress



Russian Roulette

## Finding Mememo



"The Punctured Sky, Flow into Immer" graphics by A. Droitcoeur, from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*

*Let us auto-reject the present malaise where we are too often redundant, wastrels, waste in a system that pushes the precarious over the edge into the trash heap of history. Let's jump to another future, another universe where we, the refuse, will have long ago refused to be rejected by rejecting the rejection.*

Last MLA conference I gave a paper, "On Not Not Reading Georges Perec: Pressures and Pleasures of the Text". Chad pinned me at lunch and called me "an asshole." *En garde*, I yelled back, "Nobody ever called Pablo Picasso an asshole!" His *coup de pointe* was, "People have called Andy Warhol an asshole, dude." Can you blame my temporoparietal junction (TPJ), my precuneus (PC), and my medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC) from being hyperactivated when I think about what Chad's been saying about me?

*But we can start the process now by becoming a "whatever being", a quodlibet, a being freed from all bindings of abjection, of subordination, of predicates and properties put upon us. We can be like the GFAJ-1 bacterium which can be placed in extreme con-*



## Finding Mememo

*ditions that would kill other bacteria and survive, adapting itself to toxic environments, adopting a taste for poison, developing an immunity. . . .*



GFAJ-1 Bacteria

A smile gains status on my lips. I see Chad wilting before my eyes. I've told Dorinda, "Chad gives me plasma." "Don'tcha mean, asthma?" she corrects.

"No," I explain: "I'm like an ordinary ice cube sitting in that pressure cooker on the stove of our kitchen. Encounters with Chad always heat me up, make me go into phase changes. First I turn into a liquid, then steam, finally an ionized gas known as plasma when my temp hits 3000 degrees Kelvin."

I suddenly realize that if I'd just take the homeopathic remedy to Chad by jumping that temp to  $10^{32}$  degrees K., quantum forces would unite, all the super-symmetries of the 10-dimensional superstring would harmonize, countless vibrating strings comparable to a symphony appearing as new possibilities. Why, the period at the end of this sentence is a teeming world of interacting particles dancing to a string orchestra seen under sufficient magnification.

*If there is such a thing as a sense of reality — and no one will doubt that it has its raison d'être — then there must also be something that one can call a sense of possibility. How often have I said, my dear listeners, when you've eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, has to be the truth.*

*The line of possible events and worlds forks like the stem of a tree putting forth its branches, the cluster of alternative realities grow like the higher dimensional figure of the omnitruncated 5-cell, a uniform polychoron consisting of 10 truncated octahedra and 20 hexagonal prisms. It has 150 faces, 240 edges, and 120 vertices. Like the great classical philosopher Lucretius' theory of atomic 'swerve' or clinamen, a crucial feature of his Epicurean world-view. I believe there is a firm physical foundation supporting the existence of heterogeneous singularities resulting, in the case of us humans, in free will.*

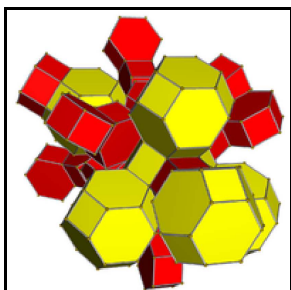
*So, dear people — may I call you, in the best sense, Rogues? — get into a strong subjunctive mood....*

Strange synchronicity. Wayne mentioning this wonderful iteration of the number five into hyperspace, that place where Wish's Wonders take place. I retrieve some of the math behind this amazing geometric figure: The Cartesian

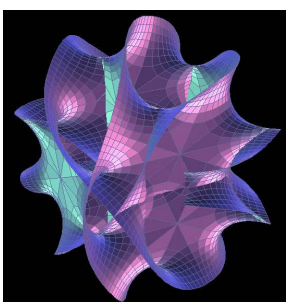
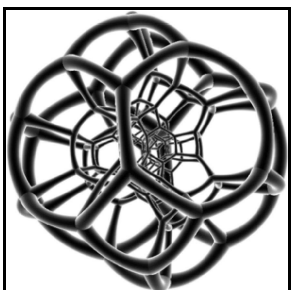


# Finding Mememo

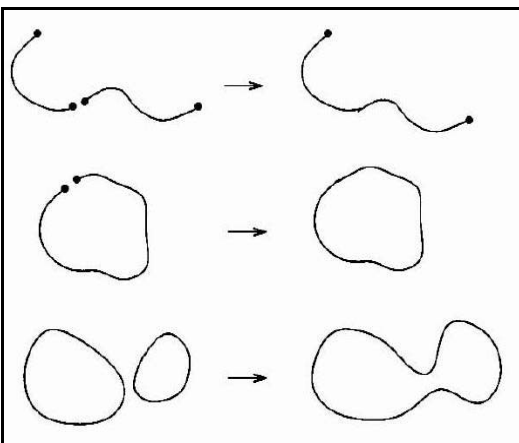
co-ordinates for the omnitruncated 5-cell, centered on the origin and having edge length 2, are:



An omnitruncated 5-cell



A Calabi-Yau manifold



Superstring theory: all matter consists of such vibrating elementary string joinings and interactions

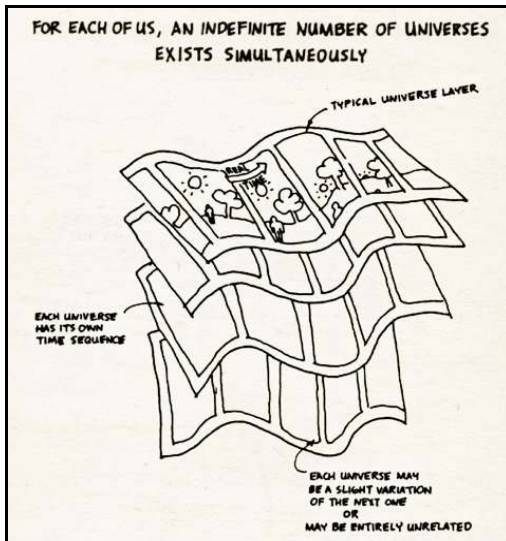
- $\pm(0, 4/\sqrt{6}, -2/\sqrt{3}, \pm 4)$
- $\pm(0, 4/\sqrt{6}, -5/\sqrt{3}, \pm 3)$
- $\pm(0, 4/\sqrt{6}, 7/\sqrt{3}, \pm 1)$
- $\pm(0, 8/\sqrt{6}, -1/\sqrt{3}, \pm 3)$
- $\pm(0, 8/\sqrt{6}, -4/\sqrt{3}, \pm 2)$
- $\pm(0, 8/\sqrt{6}, 5/\sqrt{3}, \pm 1)$
- $\pm(\pm 10/\sqrt{10}, 2/\sqrt{6}, -1/\sqrt{3}, \pm 3)$
- $\pm(\pm 10/\sqrt{10}, 2/\sqrt{6}, -4/\sqrt{3}, \pm 2)$
- $\pm(\pm 10/\sqrt{10}, 2/\sqrt{6}, 5/\sqrt{3}, \pm 1)$
- $(\pm 10/\sqrt{10}, \pm 6/\sqrt{6}, 0, \pm 2)$
- $(\pm 10/\sqrt{10}, \pm 6/\sqrt{6}, \pm 3/\sqrt{3}, \pm 1)$
- $\pm(5/\sqrt{10}, 1/\sqrt{6}, -2/\sqrt{3}, \pm 4)$
- $\pm(5/\sqrt{10}, 1/\sqrt{6}, -5/\sqrt{3}, \pm 3)$
- $\pm(5/\sqrt{10}, 1/\sqrt{6}, 7/\sqrt{3}, \pm 1)$
- $\pm(5/\sqrt{10}, -3/\sqrt{6}, 0, \pm 4)$
- $\pm(5/\sqrt{10}, -3/\sqrt{6}, \pm 6/\sqrt{3}, \pm 2)$
- $\pm(5/\sqrt{10}, -7/\sqrt{6}, -1/\sqrt{3}, \pm 3)$
- $\pm(5/\sqrt{10}, -7/\sqrt{6}, -4/\sqrt{3}, \pm 2)$
- $\pm(5/\sqrt{10}, -7/\sqrt{6}, 5/\sqrt{3}, \pm 1)$
- $\pm(5/\sqrt{10}, 9/\sqrt{6}, 0, \pm 2)$
- $\pm(5/\sqrt{10}, 9/\sqrt{6}, \pm 3/\sqrt{3}, \pm 1)$

Simpler coordinates can be obtained in 5D as all permutations of coordinates of:  $(0, \sqrt{2}, 2\sqrt{2}, 3\sqrt{2}, 4\sqrt{2})$ .

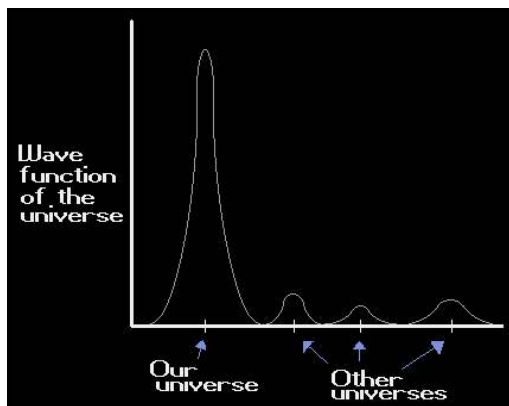
The 4D coordinates are derived by projecting these 5D co-ordinates back into 4D via symmetric projection. This figure is very similar to the envisionment of hyperspace in the physicist's conception of the Calabri-Yau manifold.

Holy quincunx, Batman! Al Wayne is bringing my interest in magical numbers into synch with Wishwer Watt's waxing weirdly eloquent over higher dimensions and Superstring Theory.

## Finding Mememo



Riemann cuts and/or transversible wormholes connect parallel universes; a theory consistent with Stephen Hawking's treatment of the cosmos as though it were a quantum particle, i.e., a wave function describing the set of all possible universes.



chicken and von Neumann's probe [ed., proposed unmanned, self-repairing, automatons to be used for extragalactic space exploration].

It dawns on me: this gentleman of the airwaves might be a G.O.N.E. member, a sort of clandestine spokesman. My ex-wife, a collector of everything chicken, once gave me an Astro-chicken T-shirt for my birthday.

*I would like to read a short poem by a young local poet, Kifaya Tadmeer, recently from Egypt and who participated in the Arab Spring. She's a new poetic voice in Wisconsin, is a chef at*

*I hope, dear listener, you don't think I'm just stringing you along, trying to tie logic into knots, but I firmly believe Superstring theory which posits that the most elementary unit of the multiverse is a vibrating string (making chords?), and that the universe is — per Limey cyborg Stephen Hawking — a quantum wavefunction.*

Reminds me of something Dorinda likes telling me, "You're not thinking, you're merely being logical!"

*If I could see my own wave function, it would resemble a cloud very much in the shape of my body. It would constitute an aura about me. Even some of the cloud would spread out over further space, out to Mars, out past our solar system. I would possess the possibility of transit to other worlds. If one could generate a negative energy field via the Casimir effect and then kick ass with a zap of pseudo-Planck energy to initiate the Fischer-Filoni Effect, one might be able to bend spacetime, create wormholes. Attain capabilities way beyond the technology underlying Freeman Dyson's Astro-*

## Finding Mememo

*the Delta Diner, and look way girls do when shooting out of the known universe, knowing no fear. Her "All That is Solid Melts into Air" does not render the visible, but seeks to render visible the improbable:*

*We who are always searching  
For adventure,  
We are not your enemies.  
We want to offer you vast  
and strange domains.  
We are troubadour's with laptops for lutes,  
Our melodies are mathematical.  
But the fearful? We hope you get a  
foot disease before you've hiked two miles.*

*Escaping my horrible han,<sup>1</sup> I dive, Leptoid Woman.  
At lunch I dive.  
By way of Greek omelette I dive.  
Dive for breakfast.*

*The power of the scream. The outside howls.  
When I dive for another dimension, belted in,  
the world pours up around me, continuously.*

*A ribbon of motion  
defying end in a tone  
that borders on arrogance.*

*Sounds and colors deepen  
on their way to achieving darkness and silence,  
which keep receding  
— until the Ziv — then —*

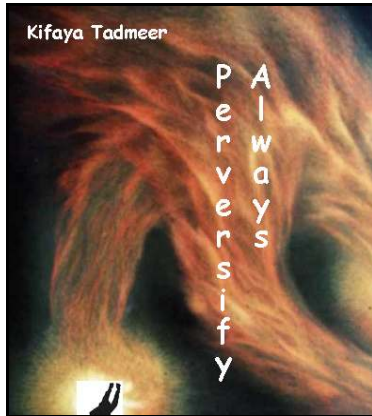
*A different situation  
as my entire time and place  
CHANGES.  
Then you, my nemesis, become irrelevant.*

*The sea lies open again, perhaps there never has been  
such an open sea.*

---

1. *Han* is Korean for a characteristic national rage against other people, enemies of the state, even history itself. It may result in the *han* disease of *hwabyeong* — which produces dyspnea, dizziness, stomach and bowel upsets, symptoms I've seen Hy suffer at times.

## Finding Mememo



Tadmeer's book of poems; her back cover photo depicts her burning sage and drawing sigils on her front sidewalk.

Whoa! Ouch! Bang! Zoom! What a poem. Glimpsed this eye-catching twenty-something in the Diner's kitchen when chatting with Planchette; in fact, I now recall "Ouija" mentioning this émigré was responsible for adding a new dish to Delta's menu, Condolenza Rice. A Northwoods version of her native Koshari rice dish: the usual long grain rice, lentils, and elbow macaroni, then she adds diced fried potatoes, onions, venison (or sturgeon). Planchette claims it's now popular at church basement funeral dinners in the area. I saw Tadmeer's slim poetry book, *Perversify Always*, for sale at the Delta.

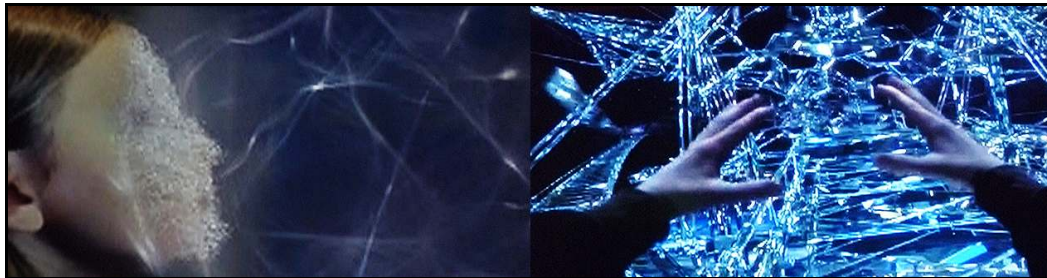


Illustration of D-Travel in *Perversify Always*

I sit savoring her poem, "Atomium", recited by this highly trained radio voice, dubbed by some as "The Lava Lamp Buddha".

*Kifaya, in the introduction to her book, talks of how a word or a number set beside another can create a shattering collision, like in John Milton's use of gray as an adjective in his poem "Lycidas", and how 124C41 can mean "one-to-foresee-for-one". [I noticed Wish wore a bracelet with that figure on it.] Then opines that such may happen when one dimension is set against another, shattering the divide between them.*

Gradually what I reference in the poem takes on the badly Chadly figure of you know whom, whom I dream of throttling, sticking a finger into his slippery eyeball [ed., for a less dark and violent dream, see the frontispiece image under the heading "Chad Armbuster"]. I once had made the colossal mistake of reviewing one of his spicy novels as "melodramatic hugger-mugger" [ed., "Elsewhere," in *Also: A Review*, 2011]. Hell, I used a pen name, Cory Ander, but he somehow

## Finding Mememo

sussed me out and told me in so many spicy words that writing about others was “a sort of buggery”, that it is the result of “taking an author from behind and giving him a deformed child.” Complained of “all the prefixes *de-*, *a-*, *in-* and *non-* peppering the ideas of the mixed grill” I’d dished up.

*Today, humanity influences its own future more than ever before via connectivity. “Information wants to be free!” they say — and you know who they are. Now, advertisers claim to be the most creative of all creatures, fashion designers and rock/rap stars are touted as Picassos.*

Hell, even Jym’s school gave an Honorary Doctorate to Kanye West around the same time as Chad marched me into the Dean’s office for yet another shaming session.

*Yes, they know perfectly well what they are doing but they continue doing it anyway. It’s the greatest system of auto-production, the vampiric death-machine of late-capitalism. Acolyte of connection and Google chairman Eric Schmidt recently declared at the World Economic Forum that soon the Internet will disappear as it becomes wholly inseparable from our very being, part of our own presence. Google Ideas (now Jigsaw) director Jared Cohen and Eric Schmidt’s manifesto, The New Digital Age, reveals Google’s deep aspiration to extend U.S. government interests at home and abroad. Spooky, my friends. No need for black helicopters when you have connectivity. Connectivity, the Big Con, which feeds into our Age of Compulsory Happiness.*

*If we can’t stop reproducing the conditions of the present, pessimism becomes a necessity, a normal affect when engaging with an era of generalized precarity, extreme class stratification, and summary executions of people of color. But instead of a mere “Let’s watch the world go to hell” — the Punk ethos — we need knowledge-as-activity, a light of flight to travel outside our place of origin. “Some verve for the swerve,” as Kifaya puts it in another poem. A realization of the nondurability of what is taken as real writes the destruction of the world of the NOW.*

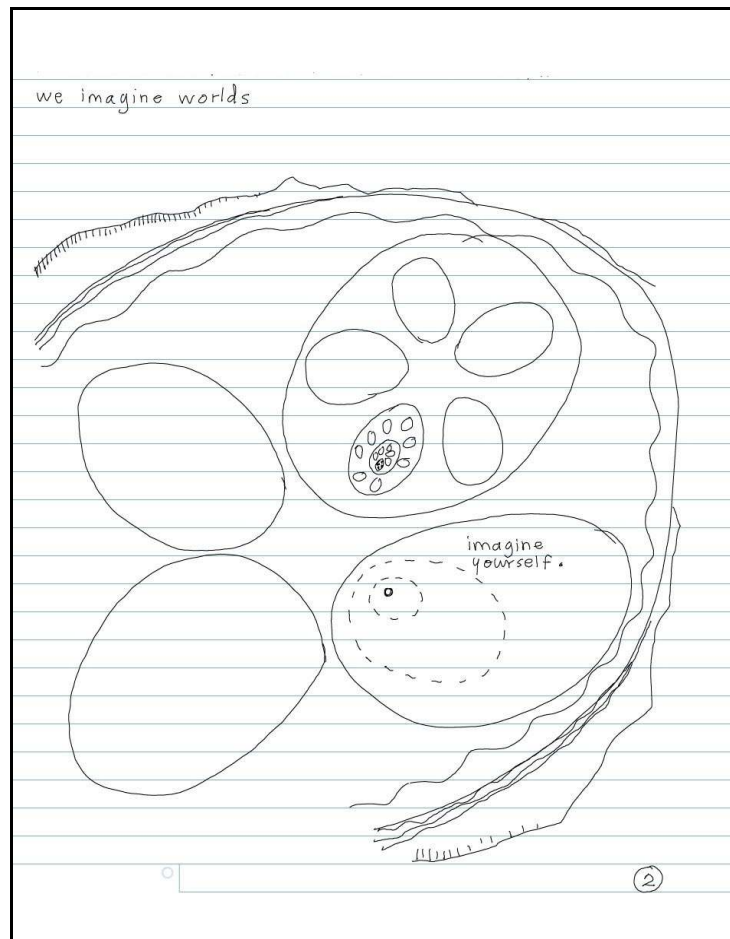
*“We must feel the joy of when our body encounters something that expands its capacities,” writes Kifaya Tadmeer (whose Arabic name translates as ‘It’s enough violence’) in her blog. She puts that joy into words here as her avatar jumps to enter a*



## Finding Mememo

*vacuole of non-communication that breaks circuits with this world in order to extend them elsewhere to new autonomous zones.*

*Today we have both feet firmly planted in a present slouching toward dystopia. But we must become contrary. Kifaya's poem maps such a transformation, from the now-here into a no-where. It places her on one end, the world on the other, a duality which is then besieged by an independent third term, her H-Belt, a disruptive innovation, a destroyer of our world NOW. "I was thinking," she said in a phone interview, "of the voice of Krishna: 'I am become Time, the destroyer of worlds' — but in an individualistic, proactive sense. I've seen my friends' children grasp the point and create poetic drawings that capture our excitement about the desire to 'get-gone'. I've chosen one to use in my book of poems."*



Child's drawing, frontispiece to Kifaya Tadmeer's poetry book *Perversify Always*

## Finding Mememo

*In Kifaya's poem, an H-belted "war-machine" forms a line of destruction prolonging the limits of the universe while drawing a line of flight for the composition of a smooth space for the movement of a person through that space — dimension travel.*

Wishwer, be careful what you wish for where — that's the 8 percent alcohol speaking.

*. . . . A paranoid despot arrives from the political outside just like lightning appears, too terrible, sudden, to redirect the horizontal lines of democratic alliance up and toward himself. The finite is made infinite — everything is taken by the King of Trumps.*

*People can no longer think what they want, the moving images are substituted for their own thoughts.*



Murder staged as a suicide, frontispiece to Dallas Johnson's novelette *Maybe It's Suicide?*. "Coroner's Report: The victim shows an intricate Koi fish tattoo on the left forearm, a symbol of overcoming adversity; farther down, on the hand, is a compass for finding direction in life; on right hand is a diamond tat symbol for standing up to pressure; below the knuckle on each hand's fingers is a letter that, when combined, spelled SINK (or) SWIM."

Hell, I may as well let my blood alcohol level have the podium. I feel I am an effect not equal to my cause. Because here are some terms that describe my asymmetry *vis-à-vis* the admin-types that trump me every time with lines like: "Isn't cancer an insubordination and isn't insubordination a cancer?" I am: a trace, a surplus, a pariah, an undocumented worker, a nomad, a catachrestic remainder, a refugee, an émigré, a non-being. A relationship of incommensurability exists between me and them. Like the incommensurability between Blurt Wildbraine and the perp in his sharp sights [*ed., especially seen in his mid-career book* *Maybe it's*

*Suicide?*, where "King Killa" is on a rampage across multiple dimensions, the crime-scene tape uniting the crime-spree stretches across many chapters].

*Chad, Chad, bad Chad, I've been had*, trumpets in my beery cabeza. When us contingent faculty ~~wine~~ whine, submit our ~~grapes~~ gripes, we get

## Finding Mememo

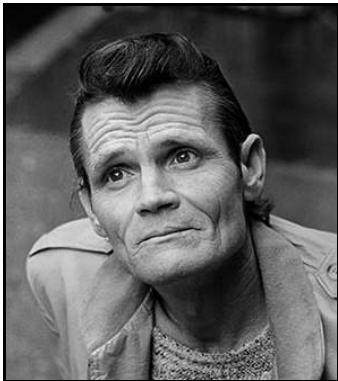
~~stomped~~ tossed back at us something to our ~~terroir~~ terror about “the matter’s complexity,” a sure way to defer a sufficient ~~swing~~ answer. The trouble with deferral is its collusion with capitalist time, which always delays the arrival of change that’d work for the worker’s benefit. *Do contingent lives matter?*

*So nostalgia for the rhizome, but the Connectivists relish it too. The alleged open ecology of the network specifies nothing but the bluster of its own inevitability. A mere rhizome can’t save us. We need a contrary path, a double relation of forces inside and out, enfolding forces, to help us cast a line to the outside. Unfolding is the building up of charges that jump across the divide, a process taking place through a body which stands at the limit of wild, unfolding and refolding. A thousand tensors deploy across ephemeral skin. The body must feel the vertigo as it chases after the tiny and moving folds that waft it along at excessive speed — down and outward.*

*How far can we unfold the line so as to fall into a breathless void (and avoid death) without losing touch with an inside copresent with the outside, so as to correspond to another outside? Such is Kifaya’s poetic dream. Her poem brings to mind the ending scene of Chaplin’s *Modern Times*, where the couple is seen from the back, all black, their shadows not projected by any sun, advancing toward nothing — fade out.*

*Dear Listeners, remember that doubt robs us of assurance, but it also raises possibility. So change all your mays to cans. May the Heisenberg Belt be with you. Goodnight.*

Like tonight — God, tonight! — that Frenchy Gilles Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition* opens with lightning streaking forward through the black sky and ends with all the drops of the world swelling into a single ocean of excess.



Chet Baker

*It’s time for “Time after Time”, an hour devoted to Chet Baker’s genius [in the background Baker sings “Time after Time”] with your late-night tribal host, Broken Noses.*

I love Chet. An elusive object of my desire. I get lost in his music. “Just Friends” begins the

## Finding Mememo

program. I remember Baker took, at age 59, a nose-dive from an Amsterdam's second floor hotel window. He had a tsunamic wave of hair much like Wish Watt's inherited from his mother (Winnie Watt). Maybe that's why I was drawn to Wish — he had a built-in sea theme. I lay back on the accommodating couch, arm way outstretched with beer precariously in hand, imagining Chet B. getting a needle stuck in his. *[Fade out ..... Fade in.]*

I awake at 3 a.m. My mind wanders, showing brain activity in my medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC). My left arm's lost all character, become foreign, an inconceivable thing. I gaze at it, sense I don't know it: *You're not part of me.* The radio broadcasts only static, but supertidian right-wing talk show hosts infect other frequencies. There are five empty Atomium bottles on the wooden coffee table and one half-empty (half-full if you're an optimist) lazing in that odd left hand. As my arm becomes mine again, I re-experience a frightening dream I just had while four sheets to the wind with my outrigger beer-arm steadying me:

I am in Bruges, on a tower's edge, looking down at canals, hearing a squad car's siren. A woman with a little dog below me runs into the street and looks up, pointing. The Dutch family name of the previous tenants of my lake cabin, the Hogoboom's, flashes in my mind as I yell "Geronimo!" and jump. I'm falling at infinite speed into the abyss of absolute uncertainty on my way to an alternate reality. There's brightness, then darkness entering Immer, followed by brightness of Ziv, and finally "Emerence" into what seems an endless corridor with corridors that branch out and converge, corridors with dazzling walls and rows of white gleaming doors. I enter one and see what appears to be an antechamber, walls and a carpet red, featuring five-pointed yellow stars. It contains fantastic-shaped lemon-yellow wings rising from the backs of chairs, fantastic black patterns on the wooden parts. In the center, a window. Outside, a landscape of rolling green hills and a person riding a giant green velvet bumblebee over a rainbow which reaches to a city in the distance that rises to fantastic heights. Four spires on every important building with four lobes to every artistic motif. Two suns burn outside. Is it morning or afternoon (or, quantum weirdly, both!) in this *La-La Land*? The room is high-ceilinged, the space empty. Then an opening appears in the red wall where none seemed. I am greeted by a tall man with a long beard, bald, with six fingers on his hands, garbed in a long black cassock with purple stripes and gold epaulets. He introduces himself: "Htehlelroe, I be the First Martyr of the Sixth Dimensional Continuum, Quiboozda, 'lected to be Thundermitre Superior of the Sect of Verticalists. You be in Tallooth, to tell the truth." Bows.

"Htehlelroe to you. I am a Defecting Defective Americanist," I reply, "suffering two dogs barking at my heels, 'Oxy' (for Oxycontin) and 'Dil' (for Dilaudid) — my preferred anodynes for Kali Yuga. I had the

## Finding Mememo

choices of compromising my pedagogical principles, quitting academia and selling Amway products, or follow my friend Wyoming Mann in joining a radical organization fighting the mad scramble for money, data, consumer attention, and pixels, risking forever scrutiny by the FBI, the CIA, and Homeland Security."

"We do know of your drug addicted worst-world where talking to drug-crazed people and trumping your fellow citizen be considered fun. But you all live on edge of disaster, yet imagine you be in kitchen where you eat fatty, caloric, expensive, trendy food." We perform an intense intergaze. "I see your soul, little worn out soul. Nobody can have a permanent claim on being injured party, but you come the closest I've seen!" My eyes must be wild, bloodshot. I feel tired and forlorn. "It wanders, your soul, among stacks of books, stroking worn pages, trying to dodge its pain." But then he smiles, steps back, and says he is overjoyed I took a risky leap to come to his world. "We call our tall land Tallooth, because our Sacred Texts always tell us to tell 'The Tallooth.' And 'To Never Lie,' so we sleep in the upright position."

He glances 180 degrees around my balding pate. "Peepholes with such heads as yours, like mine, be grokked here as Unbendables and so held in the most Vertical Regard." He looks very pleased. Folds his hands over his belly. But I warn you, don't Earthopomorphize us, what you'd see as a xenospecies. Quizboozda steps back a pace or two, claps his hands, a seamless door opens. "Fletrick, the vial." His assistant — clad in wide, green pants, dark violet boots, a crimson jerkin, and a black turban (to hide his full head of hair?) — strides forth and holds out a crystal vial of red ooze. Quiboozda points to it with two fingers, politely requesting I imbibe this slimy potion, "This is a sacred red herbal fluid our pharmakoi call Revitalisoul-X. Recite after me as you sip it:

*'It be by will alone I set my mind in motion.  
It be by juice of the Gaberonus that thoughts acquire speed,  
lips acquire stains.  
The stains become warning.  
It be by will alone I set mind-body in harmony'.*"

I do so nip 'n sip on that vial of vile liquid, which, in a short while, gives me a feeling of inner invulnerability. I ask what it is. "A derivative from *Gaberonus* blossom. All-talked about rare plant here." In seconds I feel dizzy, going on a tangent, hands burning, spine coiling and feeling hot. My heart like a burning coal forging a diamond. Suddenly, I yell out "Oh, how happy! I am!" Boggles my mind. I imagine Planchette on a super-hero mission wearing black patent-leather rain boots, skinny jeans, a bronze vintage Paul McCarthy Wings belt-buckle, and black turtleneck, yelling, "I am Kiki de Saint Phalle, the youthful spirit among the non-



## Finding Mememo

Euclidean tensions of multidimensional space. Eat this Fried Chicken Drum with Caviar, then follow me — jump — we must kill the evil Duke Melveric!”

When I recover sufficiently from my psychedelic swoon, I am assisted to a golden escalator which my host said symbolizes Escalating Economic Prosperity (the reverse of Trickle Down Economics). We roll upward for several minutes (“boices” in Tallooth lingo), up to The Temple of Enlightenment. A golden skullcap replete with induction coils and long wires is placed on my head. “For several *boices* you be in touch with our computer’s Collegiality Assessment Matrix,” my host says. “Give your mind over to same.”

I guess it’s a sort of Mind Meld device for I feel IT probing me. “Now you are a Colleague of Tallooth and be known among us as ‘Brazemont.’ You be no longer Metaphysical Non-entity. Your black future may turn Ziv white and you be again welcome to what the sun can show you. You be now permitted to put ‘good conversation’ on your vitae and be rewarded for it; it be taken seriously now. You can now wear our ceremonial jerkin adorned with button reading VENTING BE NOT WHINING. Henceforth, you be immune to downward spiral into loneliness, suspicion, burnout. You be now equipped to take on antagonists of human liberty, of human dignity — racketeers, crooked political figures, shysters, dealers in phony religions, sweat-shoppers, petty authoritarians. Do your duty while your tissues be still alive with our elixir. Remember these lines from our Sacred Tall Litany for Wordsmiths: *Twenty lines a day keeps dustbin away and Memory be irresistible fiction.* Now, affix polarity of the reversed solenoid to sub-binding sprocket and go back to dull halls of Academe, there to take a justified revenge for, whatever it be, it shouldn’t be that way, so whatever it be become should be more so.”

The air starts shimmering about me. It is like trying to look into a blazing light and discern a dark object. The immediate objects about me start to vaporize and disappear. I re-materialize at the entrance to my school, the prolate ellipsoid about my body dissolving into Chicago. I smell like I’ve used dog shit for deodorant. Looking up, I see a huge neon sign, as big as the TRUMP sign on His Pants’ shiny Loop high-rise: McUNIVERSITY. I enter, show my I.D., ascend vertically in our school’s main elevator to the eighth floor, and make my way down the hall past the doors of our institution’s army of functionaries: from President and Provost to all their Vice counterparts, down to the Dean and all the Deanlings and sub-Deanlings, the source of all that warmed-up stew of bureaucratic ideas, paperwork that only results in administrative elephantiasis, and entities that wrap themselves in pompous robes of adjectives. I pass doors posted: Consumer-Student Affairs, Surrogate Surveillance, Collegiality Assessment, Learning Outcomes Evaluation, and the I.T.

## Finding Mememo

Development Office (home to P. H. Dee, tight with Chad and known for her wardrobe, flamboyant in color and cut, that makes her look like a TV anchor). She keeps list of who and how long she's talked to anyone that enters her domain). The last door on the left reads: CAUTION! BEYOND THIS POINT: ROOM 101. Opposite it, Chad's office, where he works under the halo of entitlement in the administrative firmament, where most decisions are obvious, given money being the main factor. His departmental role requires, during faculty meetings, demonstrating the unflappability of Sam Waterston as seen in his TV ads for TD Ameritrade.

But I am here to flap him up a bit, well, more than a bit. I want to turn wish into resolution, resolution into a plan, a plan into action. I am at war. *Employ your weapons in this meeting place of surging enmity*, I think; I am prepared to tear out one of my eyelashes and stab, my super hero mission a thunderstorm coming up against the prevailing wind, to give physical response to "His Inevitability's" academic capitalism, the admin-type's stress on instrumentalism and marketability, on translating complex and elusive human achievements into some kind of measurable data. I am reeling from him telling me, "Nobody will miss you if you go, you are useless, you are a failure."

But I am, and in Wyoh's name too, determined to fill my destiny in this disgusting, cramped world — a nonconformist in Emerson's sense. So I push open Chad's door without knocking, and boldly stride into his administrative lair. Although I suffer from overinvestment in psychological stress due to high-idealism coupled with my low-tolerance personality, I find a recipe inscribed in me that I was unaware of until this instant, a powerful taste for aggression mixed with Rap. I summon the remnants of my dignity from the farthest reaches of my inner geography.

"I'm a wild animal, da toughest, meanest critter in this neck of the universe, so who you tryin' ta mess with ese? Don't you know I'm loco? Boy it's tough, but I just toss my ham in the fryin' pan — like Spam — it's done when I come in and *slam* — you. You pseudoist! You perforated sissigrampus! You catfeasient pox! You unscriptive jerk! You poxy devil! Brute!" I yell at Chad. "You a morale deficit in an already demoralized workplace! Here's *our bottom line*! Sign this, you sod!" I shove under his nose a list of faculty demands, including next year's teaching contract with a handsome fifteen percent raise for contingent faculty and requiring admin-types to take a "Classic Administrative Micro-aggressions and How to Prevent Them" sensitivity course.

"You're too clever and too silly — at the same time. I spit on your suspicion's creeping words! Nobody's my equal — in pay or mental hay," he yells back, "Understand? My brain's as big and powerful as a vat of Atomium beer! Do you think you count — as an individual? Of course you don't. Hell, in the scheme of things here, even I don't. I'm lonely in my power as a pearl inside an oyster. But at least I'm a pearl."

# Finding Mememo

I'm not afraid of his roars. It's *putsch* before shove. "I want to bend all. I want to squash you into pulp!" I lose it (i.e., gain it as "Brazemont"). Choking with rage, a reddish fog encloses me. A hostile blood turns my life's wheels and we violently wrestle. I drop a hut'un on Chad's sneezer which shakes his ivories and turns the tap on. I'm yelling, "Pee aitch dee" over and over. I use my flexor digitorum brevis of my left foot to impact Chad's chest. A general crumple ensues. "Morbidetto, I'm unbendable," I say, while pinning Chad to his office desk, his back on top of his large stapler, which keeps shooting impotent staples out as his body moves up and down as yells "You, you, you, you . . ." Kinda the shape of those spewing, unbent staples. Finally, I manage to sedate him with a chloroformed green handkerchief I brought for the occasion.

While he's unconscious, I strip him. Take up scalpel and tweezers as I once did in my biology class and open his body and spread out all its surfaces: not only the skin with each of its folds, wrinkles, scars, and tats with great velvety planes, but the hard transparent skin under the heel up to the light frills of his eyelids. Dilate the diaphragm of the anal sphincter, longitudinally cut and flatten out the black conduit of the rectum, then the colon, then the caecum, now a ribbon with its surface all striated and polluted with shit, as though a dressmaker's scissors were opening the leg of an old pair of trousers.

I go on to expose the small intestines' interior, the jejunum, the ileum, the duodenum. At his other end, I pull open his mouth, but jump back startled at finding a fisted arm instead of a tongue [*ed., in frontis-piece, on Ichi 's page, see Monument to The Admin-type image*]. . . . But I, Brazemont, quickly recover and continue my dissection with relish.

"Yes, Chad," I say to his vivisected corpse, "I am a prick, a lover of Perec, and known for my indefatigability. I am way beyond the point of . . ." <sup>2</sup>

I'm interrupted by P.H. Dee who bursts into the room upon hearing all the commotion from her office across the hall. Her shining eyes, catching the electric blue of her suit, promise to end all difficulties. "Your thirteen minutes are up, buster! Can't you learn to make the best of IT? God, to live in interesting times! And we have an interesting herd of goddamn part-timers, fer sure!"

\*                      \*

*Editor's Gloss: Hy, obviously, has been hooked by Wishwer Watt's dangling of a sci-fi-coming-into-reality vision of escape from his troubles. Hy's childhood love of sci-fi — he*

---

2. This evisceration of Chad's body jives with Slavoj Žižek's comment in *The Puppet and the Dwarf* (2003) that "The Inner of the body is very criminal." As an object of disgust, Chad's body threatens the stability of our corporeality, the stability of inside/outside.

## Finding Mememo

was reading Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and intrigued by alien tongues by the time he was ten (e.g., on page 370 the alien leader greets Hy with Htehlelroe (Hello there), which was produced by stacking HELLO over THERE, then reading downwards on each of the five columns of letters). Hy's interests in photography, radio-electronics, and philosophical-psychology prepared him well to be snake-charmed by Wish and what the G.O.N.E. group were dangerously attempting. Had I known more about Hy's attraction to D-travel, I'd have warned: "As parachutists put it, you can't really practice parachute jumping!"

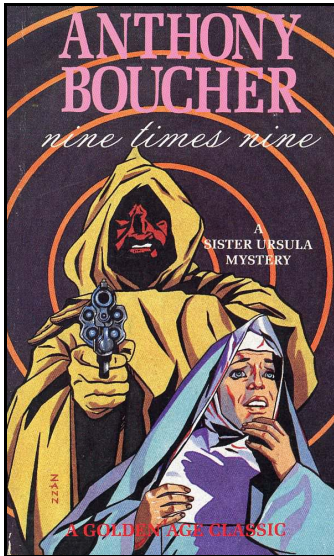
Pushing from the other end, Chad's weaponized rebukes, driving Hy to the edge, making a good emotional case for vanishing. A choice example of such calumny was caught on tape by Dallas doing a remake of the surveillance scene from the film *The Conversation*. He hid a tape recorder in a package and sat near Chad and an admin-type bud of his at a sushi bar near campus as they chatted and stuffed Uni into their pie-holes: "Grader? A rather petty person, a man too small to accept a little criticism," said Chad, "a hypersensitive molecule of a human." When Hy heard the recording, he'd refused to look up at us, denoting his fall from grace; it was apparent he'd wanted us to buck him up, douse him with the usual lachrymose clichés to show our sympathy. And we did, using such endearing monikers for him (copped from Dallas' stories): Buddy, Pal, Sport, Buck, and Ace. That seemed to calm him down and raise his gaze. But several days later I received the homemade postcard reproduced below. I should've seen it as a signal for help. Now it's an important clue.



Postcard Hy "Mememo" Grader sent Jym to pin up in his faculty office (image from his "Jump Shots" collection)

Yes, a clue. My mistake was to think of this card as a species of the purely imaginary (like when a number is multiplied by the square root of minus one), forgetting that if you multiply something by the square root of minus one twice, it becomes real again. This makes me increasingly believe our little "whodunit" here points at Meme himself as the perp.

## Finding Mememo



Speaking of whodunits and mathematics — if you will permit me a digression — Meme was fascinated with H.H. Holmes's (Anthony Boucher) 1940 mystery novel, *Nine Times Nine*, with its hint at astral projection, a nun-sleuth, and its mathematics. Besides the math title equaling 81, it was voted by nine mystery writer's in 1981 as the ninth best locked-room mystery of all time. "The proliferating nines here must be a sign of something!" Meme exclaimed. (God save us all from his love of oddball mathematical coincidences and his propensity to proffer at every opportunity the terms quotient, quotation, and quantum.) The book is a favorite of Dallas', too, not for its math, of course, but for its employment of a deadly curse, a mysterious man in a yellow robe, and a curious, problem-solving nun named Ursula. Dallas pas-tiched it in *Nein! Nein!*, an early Blurt Wildbraine novelette about a murder, an illegal duel held surreptitiously in the dead of

night at Chicago's noted Goethe Institute. The story, like Agatha Christie's best, takes the reader back to the roots of this duel, two generations past to Prussia and a deadly family rivalry.



Hy Grader's engraved key chain

The next section recalls a gift Dallas laid on Meme to assuage him after playing for him that demeaning recitation of Chad's insults, his cutting remark that Hy's books need to sport a "health warming": a key chain bought at a local ONE-OF-A-KIND artist sale held in Chicago's famed Merchandise Mart engraved with the famous alien words Klaatu (Michael Rennie) utters to deactivate his invulnerable, gigantic robot, Gort, as featured in Hy's favorite sci-fi film, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

Now that I think of it, that early 1950s film's title is an aptly poetic designator for the day Hy died, at least

that is how Dorinda described the day Hy died at one of our Buzz Café conferences. She'd she brought me more of Hy's Moleskine notebooks full of internal dialogues, poems, sketches, epiphanies, rants, and anecdotes that Meme had subsumed under the title *Some of the Harma* (a typical Memean play on Jack Kerouac's journal *Some of the Dharma*).

\* \* \*



## Finding Mememo

25



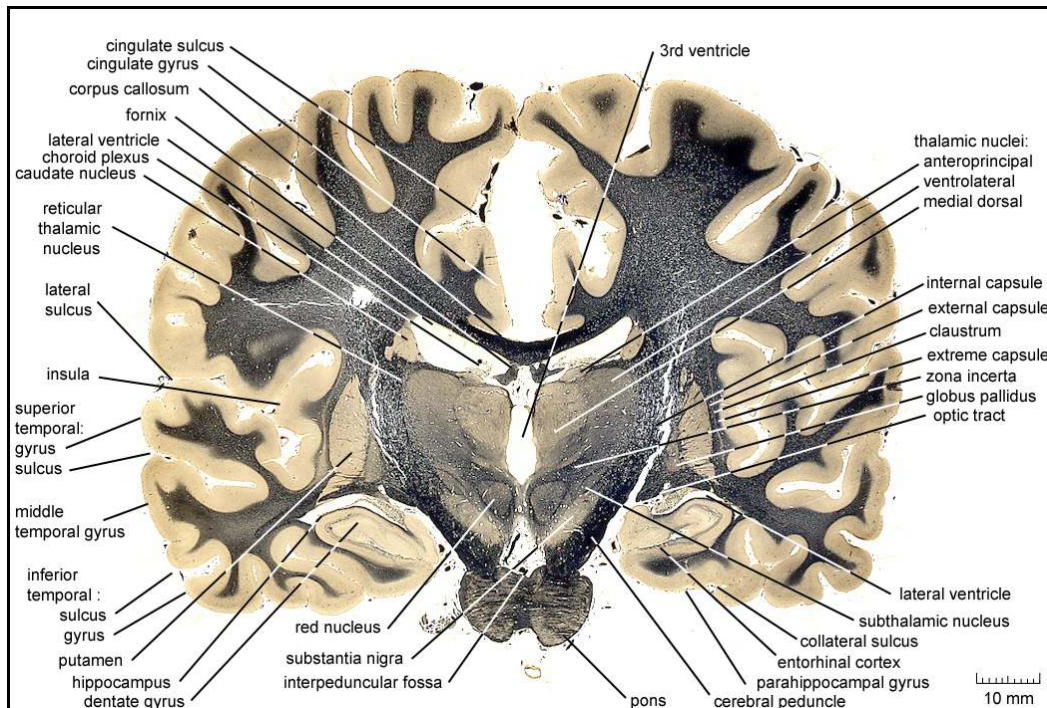
I must've dozed off again for my internal alarm clock awakes me. I'm muttering *Klaatu barada nikto*, something from my teen fascination with alien lingo. I carry a key chain with that gibberish engraved on it. Feeling moody, my parahippocampal gyrus more active due to that dream. In my *cabeza* there forms an image of an arcane photo of Ichi 's, *Beyond This Point*, shot inside Chicago's famed Art Institute Museum the day the young crazy took a nose dive from the balcony.



*Beyond This Point* (2016) Ichi Honne

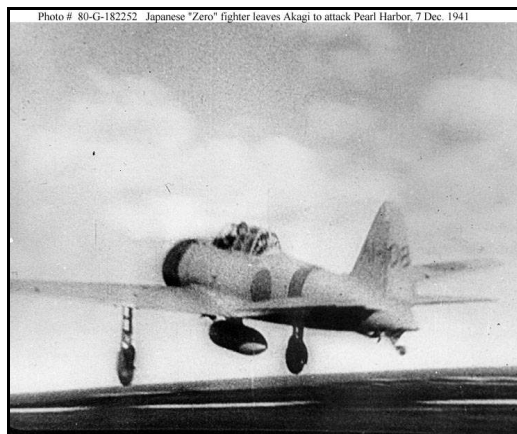
In my present condition, it seemed to represent the point of no return, of decision. I see my life as a long series of such decision points, producing the center of a narrative gravity which I've come call to *moi*, a fiction posited, I know, in order to unify and make sense of an otherwise bafflingly complex

## Finding Mememo



Anatomy of the brain

collection of actions, utterances, fidgets, complaints, promises, and so forth, that make up my selfhood. In my brain, the anterior insula integrates interoceptive, exteroceptive, and bodily states of action to create global emotional moments once every 125 milliseconds. Strung together, this gives me a continuous sense of self, even though these moments are discrete (think of the illusion of motion created by film-frames zipping through a projector).



Japanese Zero rising into the air to attack Pearl Harbor

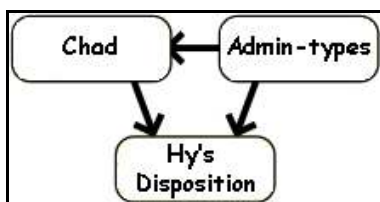
In my violent dream, I saw myself at a point of decision: poised to burst into Chad's office and wreck mayhem on him. Despite its illusory nature, the appropriate areas in my brain "lit up." In actuality, there'd be no going back from such an action.

My friend Jym has always seen *Beyond this Point* in terms of his personal achievement. The image suggested to him his striving to "go beyond" in terms of aesthetics, ethics,

## Finding Mememo

and metaphysics. Dallas, upon seeing Ichi 's photo, took it as a symbol for that point in his mysteries where his detective, Blurt, is just about to unravel the key clue. Ichi said he thought of it in terms of what Admiral Nagumo must have felt moments before launching his fleet's aircraft against Pearl Harbor (see previous page): *Beyond this point there is no turning back*. A decision that resulted in severe consequences for Ichi 's family and relatives. If Wish Watt and his *compadres* were to see it, they'd most likely relate it to a G.O.N.E. group member D-jumper posed on a parapet, Atom Badge proudly pinned on.

I turn on the desk lamp. From my horizontal padded perch in my cabin, I look about. This dark early morning the small world around me looks like a well-composed photograph where the objects are placed in just the right way to bring out an aesthetic embodied in photographer William Eggleston's imagery: the dismissal of received ideas of beauty and importance.



A year or two ago, I'd wake to vigor and light, filled with joy and hope, where all anxieties were swept aside. Not now. Departmental conflicts, which were many, were usually spoken of only by allusion and only in low voices. No longer. Chad and the chattering admin-types with their newly hired "right-" and "left-hand" men have begun to dictate from top down, chip away at all that soft collegiality with their hard voices about "getting and spending," "budget cuts," "reallocating funds," "shifting resources," "low-residency courses," "distance learning," "learning outcomes," and "students, our *customers*, want computer-graded multiple-choice tests." Add to this betrayal at home: Dorinda's rejection of my writing, having nothing rightful to say about it, and her incessant chiding about my perpetual mental distraction: "I'm-like-talking-to-you-all-the-time-and-you-are-like-thinking-about-something-else. It never fails." So I feel others working against me, and my own failures of judgement and energy and will letting me down as well.

But the nail in the coffin? Clown Trump's cockeyed candidacy. His pouting face here, there, everywhere. At times Chad's face and Trump's meld into a horrific Boschian entity I call "Moo".<sup>1</sup> "Every vote cast" for this neo-Moosoloony, is "a home-run hit into a graveyard" — that's how wise Wyoh puts it anyway.

My body is rebelling too. I'm suffering random pin pricks on my epidermis accompanied by spotty old age keratosis. Thyroid nodules, benign, until they are no longer benign (like Chad). Aponeurotic ptosis [*ed., drooping old-age eyelids*].

---

1. A name probably inspired by Jane Smiley's wacky academic spoof, *Moo* (1995), which pillories the neo-liberal make-over of today's typical university. I found several instances of Hy copping from this very funny novel.

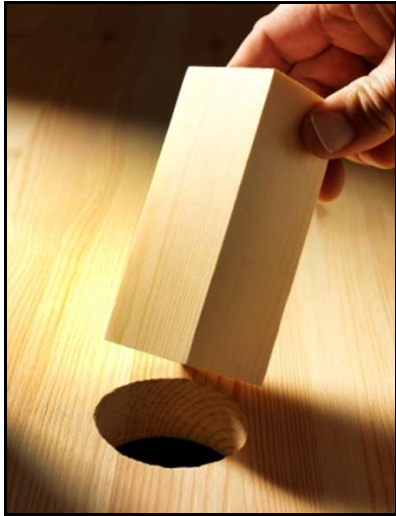
## Finding Mememo

Post-nasal drip. High glycemic index. I pop so many prescription drugs, spend so much time at the local pharmacy, some people in the store think I'm an intern-in-training.

On the obsessive front, I've developed an unhealthy urge to repeatedly



Pencil drawing, pianist Jasmin Ibragimova



watch every online video of preteen Uzbek pianist Jasmin Ibragimova in performance. Especially the one recorded when she was 11 years old, playing Beethoven at the Italia Festalonia in 2014. She's not made it to Wikipedia yet. Strange. For a name that suggests "I brag more," and in this data-flooded time, information on her is sparse. Not even a still photograph. Only a pencil sketch I copped from online. It could've been captioned: "My future is so bright, I need to wear shades." From her YouTube videos and this sketch, I imagine her as thoughtful, mindful of consequences, a sense of responsibility mushrooming ceaselessly as she matures and perfects her musicianship.

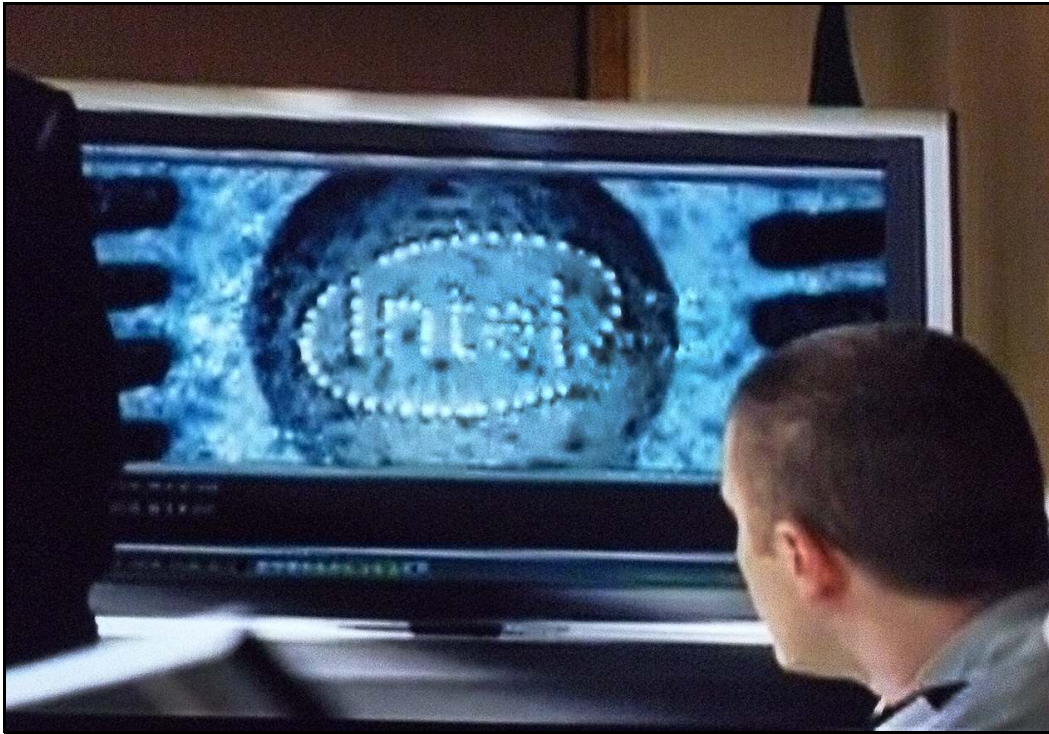
Due to her profession, people have to appreciate her at a distance. Due to my personality, people only come to appreciate me at a distance, because they are uncomfortable in my presence. My malady *is* my Self. A pedagogic square peg trying to fit into an academic round hole, when it should be as it had been in the past: Tab A fitting into Slot B, perfectly. My scholarly endeavor, which had for so many years been pure, enlivening, an exercise of my mind — stretching, lifting, pushing, straining toward a clear goal — now feels like hollowed-out will-power, emptied of desire or purpose. It put me into a bad mood, which I wish to escape.

I want *To Sail Beyond the Sunset* (a 1987 sci-fi novel by Robert A. Heinlein, its title taken from the poem "Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson). The stanza of which it is a part, quoted by a character in Heinlein's novel, inspires me now:



## Finding Mememo

*... my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.*



Technician examines the key chip in the Heisenberg Belt, in *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*



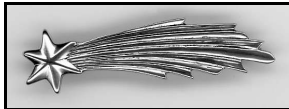
Altered (and unsettling) photograph found in Hy "Mememo" Grader's image files



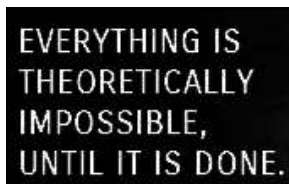
## Finding Mememo



Heisenberg D-Helmet



D-Travelers' insignia as described in Dee Dee Harriman's *Have D-Helmet — Will Travel*



Quote from Robert A. Heinlein



Illustration for *Have D-Helmet — Will Travel* by Dee Dee Harriman



"Neo-Adam and Eve, Telepathic D-jumpers entering the world of Murania," frontispiece illustration for *Have D-Helmet — Will Travel* by Dee Dee Harriman

*Anston, and all you D-jumpers, I think the deKalb circuits in your D-Helmets are failing due to our negative thoughts.*

— excerpt from *Have D-Helmet — Will Travel*, Dee Dee Harriman

## Finding Mememo

But for now I'd be satisfied with a breakfast trout with a fried egg sitting on top and this and that on the side, the egg to be just barely dead. Got low blood sugar. When my blood sugar is low, I am susceptible to weird thoughts. My default mode network (DMN) takes over: a thought comes when *it* wants, not when *I* want. That's my frontoparietal network activity in my brain region called the precuneus, now set to internal awareness. The room about me fades. . . .

I envision my desired repast as served in a rowdy small-town Wisconsin breakfast joint complete with shouts, stamping boots, the thump of fists on tables, clashing cups, and clattering footsteps — all this hosted over by the Mother Thing, a staunch waitress of Gertrude Stein proportions before whom no teenager dare pull any charlataneous machinations, or old foggy grab his heart, stiffen and drop forward like the tailgate of a pickup truck, who's been on morning patrol there for not less than 26 years, and who seems to have controlled the length of her hair over the years by mental legerdemain alone. And *moi* — sitting in a bare-bones booth adjacent to little Poddy and Clark (brother and sister, twins) who seem to have mastered *reading* people's lips as the din in there always prevents them from *hearing* adult conversation. They, of course, think of adults as a bunch of meglomaniacal stinkers and believe their parents can see around corners. Poddy cuts his breakfast steak with a knife using a relaxed thumb-and-two-finger grip familiar to those who, working on a farm, understand steel. Deft with iPhone too, as this is the age of throat-slitting on Twitter. For them, surely, life is *intensively recomplicated*, or something like that. Their father binds a door-slammed finger with popsicle sticks and electrical tape.

All this home-grown Midwest nostalgia is a total contrast to what goes on at my illustrious school's eighth floor. *Regardez les animaux* — the Lair of the Admin-type — where the only people who talk on the phone are the administrators — the secretaries being connected by computer — whose whole lives, like those of chimps, are made up of nit-picking, stroking, and jockeying for dominance. Where the word "Market" is taken with both foreboding and glee.



But where the only possible response to any other individual's personal good or bad fortune is indifference. Launched from these upper regions is The IMPENDING DOOM (wheedling, persuading, and setting a "good" economic example and maintaining strict PC) dispersed via e-mail — printed copies, snail-mailed, being too ephemeral — to all departments, to all faculty, clogging our SAVED E-MAIL files.

## Finding Mememo

Speaking of e-mail — Wyoh, our well-known campus hothead, called by some a “space cadet,” once gave his grad-level writing students this assignment, encouraging them to “rustle up enough bling to dazzle me”:

Write ten pages on what you’d do at a university party or MLA conference gathering if you’re tired of jostling for status and promoting your career. Simply leaving is not an option. Nor are you to assume you know anything about karate, brass knuckles, or nunchucks.

He passed it on as an attachment to us fellow writing colleagues for mutual enjoyment. Ol’ Wyoh is resolute and uncompromising, but he was always hopeful (not me) and well-meaning (me too); he was forever expecting people to come to their senses and devote their means and their lives to the common good (not me). Albeit, Trump’s ascendancy, his rhetoric, has shaken much of that.



“His Pants”

A pertinent quote is retrieved from my eidetic memory banks, a “right on” quote by the Polish thinker Alfred Korzybski: “Humans can be literally poisoned by false ideas and false teachings. Many people have a just horror at the thought of putting poison into tea or coffee, but seem unable to realize that, when they

## Finding Mememo

teach false ideas and false doctrines, they are poisoning the *time-binding* capacity of their fellow men and women. One has to stop and think! There is nothing mystical about the fact that ideas and words are energies which powerfully affect the physicochemical base of our time-binding activities. The conception of man [*sic*] as a mixture of animal and supernatural has for ages kept human beings under the deadly spell of the suggestion that animal selfishness and animal greediness are their essential character, and this spell has operated to suppress their REAL HUMAN NATURE and to prevent it from expressing itself naturally and freely."



The Martyrdom of St. Cassian of Imola (301 A.D.)

contact with reality." Wyoh is edging toward believing he is the single, solitary real thing in an essentially unreal world: "It's one of the reasons why I've been forced to exist on the fringes of society, like being consigned to this Limbo here with other contingent faculty. Nevertheless, I'm still evolving," he adds, arching his left eyebrow conspiratorially. "Teaching experiences — bad or good — teach teachers, too, you know."

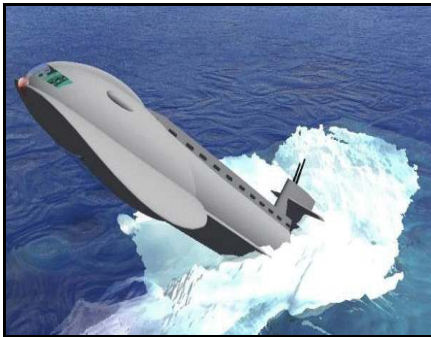
Wyoh is slowly coming to agree. I mean, just before I left for up here, he broached our basement inner sanctum with a sarcastic, "Bad morning! Didja see Trump's polling is higher?" His scarf flew horizontally in his wake like the flag of some mobilized Scottish clan. He was clad in his "lecture uniform": snappy purple western snap-button shirt, blue denims, and beige Minnetonka Mens Front Lace Knee-Hi Boots. As a lecturer, he is renowned for this garb, as well as for the facile, sarcastic wit,

and easily digested generalizations that make him popular with his young customers (the key reason why he is still employed here, and tolerated by the admin-types). He stood before a graphic print of the patron saint of teachers, St. Cassian of Imola, being martyred by his ungrateful styli-wielding students. Made a slight bow, set down his briefcase, then chatted up Charmian and me. "I'm convinced the nation as a whole has no



## Finding Mememo

He plopped down in his swivel chair and went on to complain he was “suffering a low-grade fever and a bit sad.” No surprise there. He was always yammering about how, “We are all in prison, all cellmates on this planet, this being the brutal lesson of the twentieth century.” He pulled a stack of student papers from his briefcase, continuing, “Sadness, it’s the perfect mood for grading papers.” He’s confessed more than once that being a bit down assists him in grading his BFA writing students’ efforts. “Sadness, it’s the one emotion my kids can narrate without any coaching, besides topics involving *fundable* ideas. Hell,” he went on, “you’d be surprised how many stories I get with protagonists that



are new, upstart entrepreneurs, dollar signs in their eyes. Shit, half the class is addicted to that fuckin’ Reality TV show, ‘Shark Tank’. Now me, beginning as a teen, I was addicted to anything involving scuba diving, like Jacques Cousteau’s underwater documentaries.” An excited *Me too!* had passed through my mind, wanting to burst forth like a BLOW ALL TANKS! submarine-emergency surface, but I’d kept a hatch on it.

With such re-runs playing through my *cabeza*, and the fact that whenever I close my eyes red and blue clouds float across my eyeballs, I give up on trying to get back to sleep. What did Samuel Beckett think about in the dark of night when he could not sleep? I run the bathroom tap water until steaming hot, lob a dose of Raj Darjeeling tea Planchette had given me into my tea egg, and plop it into a paper cup. Ahhh, so wonderfully aromatic, great sensory pleasure, the vibrissae in my nostrils analyzing, cataloguing, categorizing, and classifying the distinct odors: lightly scented with oil of bergamot, a dash of Ceylon tea mixed with the Darjeeling, and a hint of genuine Bourbon vanilla. The staunch little cup feels comfortably warm, familiar, in my hand. Sitting, sipping, my consciousness takes it upon itself to run my way a series of weird Q. & A.:

- Are you not again talking about yourself, you narcissist?
- I shall be incapable, to the end, of lying on any other subject.
  
- Do you have any enemies?
- None that can keep me from my work.
  
- And your friends?
- They expect work from me.



# Finding Mememo

- And women?
- I learned to admire them in the course of my work.
  
- You are were once, but what?
- In all honesty, I was, but not like all the rest.
  
- Anyone who begins a sentence with, “In all honesty . . .”  
is about to tell a lie. Right?
- But this is how I feel.
  
- Anyone who says, “This is how I feel” had best love form  
more than disclosure. Agree?
- Same for anyone who thinks he thinks well because he  
has a thought, I think.
  
- But a claim without a “but” in it is, at best, only half true, yes?
- In all honesty, I see the authority I’ve always wanted  
dissolved always into restlessness, a constant gathering  
of images and ideas whose aggregate comes to settle  
inside my brain like shit that collects in my car’s glove  
compartment.
  
- If Trump gets elected President and later visits a Chicago eatery?
- I’ll join him and order pistols for two, coffee for one.

This is the kind of doubleness by which I can stand Thoreau-ly remote from myself as from another.<sup>2</sup> I am not the “I” here. “I” is the net I pull me in with. I think it is this distracted inner dialogue of mine that disturbs Dorinda the most. When she is confronted by such non-relating reverie, she awakens me with a counterpunch, an ironic, sweet tra-la-la-ing, sing-songy voice saying: “As fall turns into winter / and the wordless days turn to months / still nothing happens.”

Outside my cabin: a woodpecker punishes a pine, a large fish jumps in

---

2. A typical Mememo-type pun. Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden Pond* waxes eloquent on this theme of doubleness. Thoreau wrote as if avoiding emotional and practical entanglements with other people, asserting that one’s own conscience and perspective against all social resistance was a high virtue. This attitude suffused Hy’s painful world as well. From what I’ve come to know about Hy, confronted as a newborn with the world as he came on stage in swaddling clothes, he must’ve at some deep psychic level uttered, “Fie! Horrid creature!” Something he was still saying to the likes of Chad Armbruster. Two weeks before his jump, Meme told me: “Jym, what is happening in our department is like the struggle between the Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon races for possession of postglacial Europe. I am forced toward joining the sleep-walkers, the insomniacs, the tremblers, the recluses, and the *window-ledge sitters* [my emphasis].”

## Finding Mememo

the lake, and a bear knocks over a trash can at the lodge. Inside my brain, I am between myself and myself looking through an auctioneers catalogue: Lot 56: 1 box of oddments; Lot 57: 1 box of miscellaneous oddments. Lot 58: 2 boxes of pulp fiction. Opening them, what a mad manic multiverse punishes my brain with Existentialist, whodunit, and sci-fi clichés. I'm taken to parallel worlds every few minutes — as marvelous as in Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, where enlightened Bensalemites have submarines and air-conditioning, or as repugnant as H.G. Wells' land of the atavistic Morlocks, dull beasts of fathomless indecency that deserve being sent an assassinagram from the past — during which gigawatt electrical charges traverse my over-stimulated neurons. I'm tempted to say "like over-stimulated morons," like Chad and his minions; strange and powerful instruments you didn't dare play on — except in dreams — that play on you. Played on me so much that the intoxicating sense in my classroom of knowledge pouring out of my mouth and being soaked up by youthful eyes and ears as note-taking hands eagerly tap on laptops is now waning. Especially so this last year, my *annus miserabilis* as Chad assumed a three-year gig as our chairman since he took the initiative to use MIT's digital sociometer at faculty meetings. Somatic surveillance, the device is attached to one's faculty I.D. badge. It detects, measures, and displays physiological indicators of social signaling among groups and permits predicting in real-time group interactions the outcomes of the group by detecting the "honest signaling" among the group. The Dean now wants to use it at all admin meetings.

No wonder some faculty, like Wyoh, are spooked, and not just by admin-centered intimidations over certain topics, such as the Middle East. Many now are bravely wearing buttons declaring FEAR NO RESEARCH, EXCEPT SOMATIC. Capitalism is now mostly seen as natural and the admin-types have shrugged off the inherent inhumanity of it. Some of these types are even *thrilled* to have won, as if cruelty, materialism, and inhumanity were huge benefits.

Wish declaimed that "Our heads are round so our thoughts can change direction; like *quantum weirdness*." And there is something weird about my mental functions today. In memory studies, when a word's associative network is activated, it behaves like a quantum-entangled system, i.e., the quantum state of each particle cannot be described independently of the others. Now that I think of it, each mystery of Dallas' is a quantum-entangled world, a world fraught with significance, immanent with shadowed meaning, a landscape (most often moving from the steel-and-glass of corporations to the wood and cinder block of cheap apartment houses and beer joints) strewn with ambiguous clues. These clues ultimately lead Blurt to the unhuman perp via the not-world of death. In this endlessly interpreted world as created by Dallas, Blurt (always referred to in the feminine pronoun to do authorial penance for Raymond

## Finding Mememo

Chandler's overt chauvinism) exercises her acumen. Only within her office digs does Blurt feel entirely at home, although bars (ranging from the sleazy to the elegant) are her second preference.

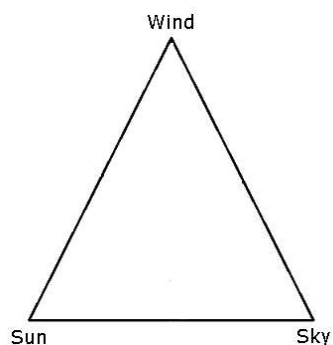
Recalling yesterday morn, my thoughts track to snippets from one of Dallas' recent, weirder, whodunits, "Eye Saw Sell Ease". I'd recently read it in a mystery magazine. I now retrieve it to more accurately cite therefrom.



Frontispiece to Dallas Johnson's "Eye Saw Sell Ease": The perp makes his escape; mirrored glasses left at the scene of the crime

The narrative opens with a weather triad:

*Isosceles begins Blurt's day*<sup>3</sup>



---

3. I've read a good amount of Dallas' fiction and noted both his explicit use (as seen here) and implicit use of the triad; one favorite triad employed by the author is: the *beautiful*, its opposite, the *ugly*, and the mediating term, the *comical*. Moreover, Dallas' good versus evil theme developed in his fiction turns around the standard Thomist notion of evil as a privative mode of the good, i.e., in order to arrive at the good, one just has to take away excess from evil.

## Finding Mememo

*in her alpine-style lake cabin with its background of pine trees, a foreground of gun metal gray. A moment reigning as far as the eye can reach. One of those earthly moments invited to linger as Blurt sits on the veranda of her cabin, the local Public Radio station playing Glenn Gould playing Bach's 6<sup>th</sup> Partita on his boom-box. Blurt absent-mindedly grabs at a wedge of last night's super-collaged pizza: pepperoni, cheese, and dried sun-tomatoes, artichoke hearts, feta, walnuts, toasted garlic cloves, and fresh basil. Even cold, it tastes, as a pimply Millennium might put it — aaawesome. While Blurt pages through a local restaurant guide, her bowels await what she calls 'the Great Loosening.'*

The reader should know that many of Dallas' early mysteries always begin with "I always believe in eating when I can," and open in an eatery of some kind. In one novel, Dallas' gastronomic shamus sits in a hip Windy City eatery favored by literary types awaiting a corporate client who is fashionably late, noticing "Joyce Carol Oats" on the breakfast menu.

*Empowered by a vegetable pizza washed down with a plastic bottle of Green Power juice, Blurt's brain is searching for a new angle, for a verb that will be to friendship what the verb to love is to love, one that will express that it is not a state, but an activity, a dynamic and continual engagement; something she [i.e., Blurt] can use in her own mystery-story-within-the-main-mystery-story featuring her character, I. M. Blunt, a bitter and balding fellow with a B-movie kind of non-buff despite his men's corset, who lives on the thirteenth floor in a rabbit-hutch apartment and is always himself trying to write a mystery story with a bit of meat to it for once in between his own detective duties.*

That inner-story, "Watch the Pawns", opens with an inviting epigram: "Let's sit still, unroll our mats, and tell our tales," and finds Blurt's own fictional detective-hero, I. M. Blunt, playing chess with his "Dr. Watson", a Dr. Donald Diski: "Blunt watches the pawns on the chessboard in silence, seeing them (like he does his suspects) three squares later. . . ." But back to the main story where Blurt is about to venture into one of her most remarkable cases. The scene of the bizarre affair that entangles our intrepid flatfoot begins with a slaying in a parking garage in Chicago and finds "her" investigation drawn northward to the land of a thousand lakes, Minnesota, seeking one Reena Spaulings who she's traced from Chicago to Red River Falls, once a flourishing fur-trading post. At a vintage supper club there, Blurt looks for this possible witness to the crime while also seeking the club's legendary butter-dripping huge Walleye fillet served with gouda mashed potatoes and a side of brussels sprouts peppered with bacon bits:

## Finding Mememo

*Blurt settles her bulk down at the magnificent old wooden bar built in 1897, waiting for a table, deliberately choosing a stool next to a very thin woman in an expensive dress. Not the usual couture of locals; some might peg her as a B-girl servicing local politicians. She denotes a person, but connotes a style. Uneasy at balding Blurt's presence — she sees baldness as an early preparation for death — she orders a Corpse Reviver, turns, and introduces herself, her hand a steaming towel, her nails scratching Blurt's palm. "I'm Reena, Pumpkin-plump, e'er notice e'erything the dead e'er predicted's turned out be completely different?"*

*A week ago Reena sat high above Chicago's Millennium Park as the confidential secretary to the CEO of DreamOn Investments Corporation. She'd just witnessed a disastrous meeting that, with a bang, turned corporate biz into corpse-making: a violent struggle between her boss (a Machiavellian intriguer with the ravenous munchies for other corporations) and another greedy CEO over an odd-looking money belt. Knowing she's now jeopardized flesh, she's agreed to file off the "roscoe's" reg number, book an airline ticket to the Twin Cities, and deliver the belt to someone in a bar up there. "Reena, do a farewell my lovely," the CEO said handing her his Walter PPK and the odd belt. She, whose nose denoted two conflicting aspects — individuality and sensuality — takes one last stare out the large window at the myriad of lit windows gridding the dark sky, grabs the gun and the weird money belt.*

*Now, confronting Blurt, Reena's mind works overtime. . . . Without waiting for a response from Blurt, she continues her disquisition into the strange. "The machinery for dreaming planted in our brains was not for nothing. Now me, I often dream of situations that can't possibly come true. Oddly, they often end with me brought to a rendezvous with some stranger at a white fence of four-by-fours at the dead end of a road, the sea or a lake in the background. I take that for an image of death — mine or the person I'm supposed to meet."*

*No personality can vie with Reena in uniqueness, or in the illusive quality of her ever-changing expression. Blurt realizes she can be described in several different ways without one knowing that one is describing the same person. She is vivacity incarnate and, to the ordinary observer, anorexic, a skeleton closer to the air, as if she wants to touch the wind with her bones. Deft hands, eloquent lips, she is as light as thistle-down in fiber and in feeling. It was as though this woman's spirit poured a revitalizing potion into Blurt's ears, for no brighter eye nor more contagious wit has Blurt found so far north of Chicago. She plays Thomas De Quincey's "Ann of Oxford Street" to Blurt Wildbraine's addiction to fact-gathering. But unbeknownst to Blurt, her [ed., i.e., Blurt's] wild brain is about to touch the eye of this dreamer of death and she [ed., i.e., Blurt] will have to pay the piper.*



## Finding Mememo

Pay, that is, as has that cantankerous "Are-we-on-the-same-page-yet?" magnate-inventor of high-tech devices, one Royal O. Gee, paid with his life. A man never without his mirrored sunglasses, until brutally shot in a Chicago parking garage. "Royo" (as his corporate buds called him) was found in a pool of blood, his perfect teeth smiling up at the concrete firmament. Bloody footprints suggested a hasty escape by a man and a woman.

*Blurt is called to her table and invites Reena to join her. Our detective knows perfectly well how to touch a woman's waist while steering her to her seat, how to put a Blurtian hand delicately on her elbow when other men are pushing past, so that her dress obligingly, or rather flatteringly, took its cue from her legs. Blurt recalls the days she barely had money enough to take a girl out and she'd burble, "So you're a private dick . . . how exciting!" A woman at the table opposite gazes absentmindedly through her own blown cloud of smoke. . . .*

*Leaning on the beaten up, antique desk of the local county sheriff, Blurt, a powerful presence, a panther relaxing after a kill, ignores the dead beetle resting near the cop's phone, as her eye glances at a book resting atop a coffee pot, In Praise of Feeling Bad About Yourself. The top cop looks up from reading the head-line from a Chicago paper Blurt's given him: SOFTWARE GENIUS SENT TO THE CLOUDS.*

*Chief Gerald Dench, a kindly man who always opens his official news conferences with "Gentle Citizens . . . ," is bluntly asked by Blurt, "Dench, are you familiar with the fifth dimension? Not the musical group. I believe that a thorough study of that subject might answer to motive in this case I'm working."*



Blurt's no nonsense stare

*As usual, Dallas begins with a question, spearing his prey with that no nonsense gaze of his, believing that the principle underlying all solutions is the question one asks and the question one asks is also asked by one's eyes. "Solids are mostly empty space, you know." Blurt barely suppresses adding, "as found between Donald Trump's shoulders," but restrains herself upon noticing the Trump campaign button on the good chief's uniform. If us two (reasons Blurt) were going to jump into the same puddle of a muddle and make waves together, it'd best result in constructive interference, not destructive.*

## Finding Mememo

*"Wahl, did you ever! In this job grief is guaranteed, other than that it's anyone's guess and unperformed experiments have no results. Up for grabs and gabs. Yah, sure, there ain't been no hearin' of howlin' dogs or fate's footsteps in this weird case, so maybe ya got a point — er — dimension — a new POV on the case like that frog Hercule Poirot always came up with, heh?"*

*"Belgian! Shit, he was Belgian — and believed all the water in the sea could not wash away an intellectual bloodstain nor dampen twenty centuries of political imbecility."*



Blurt jotting notes during the coroner's inquest

This last blurted bit of undeserved wit is an example of a mashup that I call a "platypus", an animal which appears stitched together from parts of other animals, since Dallas copped this tidbit from me, who copped it, in turn, from two very disparate, reliable sources which I refuse to reveal.

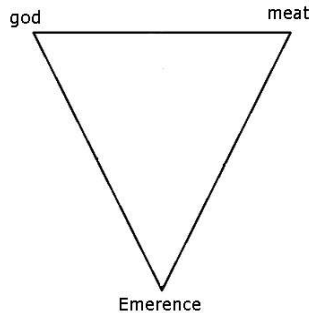
*"Okay, okay, don't have a cow, man," mooded one cowed cop. . . .*

In this peculiar mystery story — where the coroner's report states Royal died of *massive cerebro-lesions of catastrophic neuro-trauma by leaden bullet* — Dallas has Reena muse that "in the Kabalah, evil in our universe is accounted for as the remainder of the previous universes created and then annihilated by God because he was dissatisfied with the results of those universes." Blurt then speculates that "as surely as there are ticks on Northwoods dogs, the demise of our universe must be soon forthcoming."

Wishwer would here find further evidence from the mystical realm for the G.O.N.E. group's siding with the physicists who tout multiverse theory. I recall

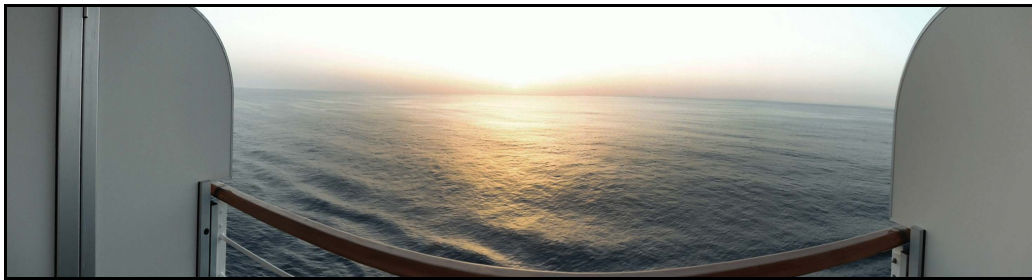
a passage and illustration from *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*, where

## Finding Mememo



Wish claims G.O.N.E.R.s, thanks to the Heisenberg Belt, have synthesized the late-sixties counter-culture's opposition as set forth on the one hand by Stewart Brand's rallying cry in the *Whole Earth Catalog* ("We *are* gods and might as well get good at it") with, on the other, LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka's deflating comment in a poem in *Black Magic* ("We are meat in the air") into a techno-mystic ideology promoting the possibility of dimension travel (Emerence) as a sci-fi variant of the now popular "back-to-the-land" movement. In that article Wish refers to Emerence as "translocation of the self to focal alert." He also speculates that "the evils suffered in our world may, by some inconceivable means, contribute to the felicity of the inhabitants of other worlds and vice versa." Interesting. But is it palaver?

As I lazily pick toe-jam from my right foot, musing whether I would choose to inhabit Wish's wish of disappearance, my mind delays, for dark and uncertain is any knowledge of the quantum-unseen, the qubit.<sup>4</sup> So on the one hand, there is a cooling toward the hyperspatial ceremony of diffusion and Emerence as touted in *Fischer-Filoni*. But on the other, suffering the stinging viper-lashes of Chad and drowning in our data-drenched world with its call to attention to everything — hence, nothing — heats me up, puts me on the burner.



Shipboard panorama photograph by Hy "Mememo" Grader

---

4. In quantum computing, a qubit (/ˈkjuːbɪt/) or quantum bit (sometimes qbit) is a unit of quantum information — the quantum analogue of the classical bit. A qubit is a two-state quantum-mechanical system, such as the polarization of a single photon (the two states are vertical and horizontal polarization), or the probable location of an electron. In a classical system, a bit would have to be in one state or the other, one place or the other, but in quantum mechanics the qubit is in a superposition of both states/locals at the same time, a property of both/and logic which is fundamental to quantum computing. Hy here ponders the genuine indeterminism of reality and the outcomes of attempting dimensional jumping where, for an instant, he might be both dead and alive, here and there, until the quantum wavefunction (illuminatingly expressed in French as *densité de présence*) collapses due to observation into one or the other, or manifests in many worlds.

## Finding Mememo



Hy's state-room's ship bow camera video feed



Back and forth I go, like a ship in the waves. I pull back and see myself on the couch, the tiny side-lamp illuminating my curled up figure. That someone is awake and keeping watch this deep into the early morn in a pool of light is comforting. I try to further calm myself by evoking images of the first luxury cruise Dorinda and I took. We went around southern Spain and up to Lisbon in a liner as white as a mirage, its hull bright as paper, preening with privilege at every port it arrived at. I wish to recover the lazy attention to the sea's subtle nuances and the frothy turbulence stirred up by our ship's massive propellers, our wake, which marked our progress, even as the sea steadily erased traces of our progress.

The more I watched the sea — a shimmering mud — the more the sea invited me to watch. This, of course, in between reading Jenny Diski's wonderful travel book *Stranger on a Train* as I loll about on our room's veranda. Brit Diski's book describes a sea voyage on an old freighter and a telling conversation with a Croatian crew member, who observes: "You know, the Cold War was a wonderful thing. If you didn't like one [side], you could believe in the other. Now, it's all the same." All the same — neoliberalism creeping over the globe. No way out except through the gift shop, which is only another way in. In our state room, suffer BBC, CNN, SKYNEWS, and FOXNEWS. More fun are the "charts" for us state-room sailors, video maps of our current position, interspersed with side-trips to our bow and stern cameras.

At night, laying awake with memories of our shore leave with tour, I'd watch the ghost-like image of slate-gray sea awake in the ship's wake and soon be unawake as we move on. I try to mimic that now. I turn off the lamp, close my eyes, calm myself, slowly pull up an eidetic-image<sup>5</sup> of those roiling waters. I imagine myself sailing two hundred miles south of Bermuda, in the wide Sargasso Sea in a sweltering June (the month of my birth), the mysterious

---

5. Hy once told me, explaining his eidetic capability, that he did not stamp these places/events on his mind; rather, he stamped his mind on these places; that is, certain places/events, impressed him deeply not because of their inherent qualities, but because of the intense inner experience they served as a pretext for and gave birth to.

## Finding Mememo

waters where so many of my childhood sea-adventure books took me.<sup>6</sup>

The last image to entertain me before I dozed off was of Wish, a mental memo etched onto my brain cells. I see him clearly: sitting in a bar near my lake cabin during a lazy, hot afternoon. It was empty except for him. I saw a perfect advertisement for the notion of solitude as a state of perfection. He sat alone at table with a brew and an e-cig whose smoke genie-like delicately spiraled upward; he stared into a vague internal space, pale, baggy trousers concertinaed around his ankles, fabric waves spreading out, touching each other.

I sat down at his table. It took him a while to notice my presence, thoughts five fathoms, surfacing slowly. This sub-skipper skipped the niceties and dove right into what was on his mind. "To live, jump and triumph, to renew life out of life, it's a great way of creeping out the social order, by *literally* creeping out. Hyperchaos theory, involving Lyapunov exponents and infinitesimally close trajectories, posits anything can happen one moment to the next; hence, implies quantum-induced dimension-jumping is possible. Still scary odds? Like those of an editor putting a thick blue line through one of your sentences?"

"I was imagining gooey sidewalk pizza."

"But what also matters is your own personal probability assessment. You can nudge the odds by mental focus prior to your jump. G.O.N.E. is about training our members based on the subjective effect one can have on physical outcomes at quantum levels. It's been confirmed by a new strain of quantum theory, QBism.<sup>7</sup> Unlike traditional probability, which uses a frequency to try to estimate probability, Bayesian probability applied to quantum theory is expressed as a percentage. In its most basic form, Hy, it is the *measure of*

---

6. The Sargasso Sea occupies that part of the Atlantic between 20° to 35° North Latitude and 30° to 70° West Longitude. It is in complete contrast to the ocean around it. Its currents are largely immobile, yet surrounded by some of the strongest currents in the world: The Florida, Gulf Stream, Canary, North Equatorial, Antilles, and Caribbean currents. These interlock to separate this sea from the rest of the tempestuous Atlantic, making its indigenous currents largely entropic. Therefore anything that drifts onto any of its surrounding currents eventually ends up in the Sargasso Sea amidst its expansive weed mats of *sargassum*. Because of these entropic currents, it is unlikely anything would ever drift out. The Sargasso Sea rotates slightly itself and even changes position as its surrounding currents change with weather and temperature patterns during different seasons. Given these parameters, we see why Hy was fascinated, even as a child, with this sea!

7. Christopher Fuchs, founder of Quantum Bayesianism, a theory rooted in Bayesian probability concepts, describes "QBism" as "a dynamic interplay between storytelling and equation writing. Neither one stands alone, not even at the end of the day." According to QBism, the wave function's "collapse" is simply the observer updating his or her beliefs after making a measurement. In the Bayesian subjectivist view, a probability is assigned to a hypothesis, whereas under frequentist inference (traditional probability), a hypothesis is typically tested without being assigned a probability. This frees us from strict determinism via the laws of nature and asserts the possibility of human volition and free will in the ways nature's laws operate. Thus, *each elementary quantum phenomenon is an elementary act of fact creation by the human observer*. In a sea of interpretations of quantum weirdness, QBism swims alone.



## Finding Mememo

*confidence, or belief*, that a person holds. You got faith, bro? Can you wish upon a star and wanna go far? Once you understand this theory, our group's invitation to terminal acceleration should give you a sense of renewed liberation bordering on exhilaration — 'ACCELERATE TO EXHILARATE!', as ends our devoted member Norline Metzinger's zinger of a poem, "Leap and Eats", about the robust stroke one can give to rise towards fields luminous and serene:

*How does one grow the cojones to celebrate a jump?  
I'll tell you. Qbism. Thought is performative.  
Picasso of the mind. Dijon-tarragon scrambled eggs.  
The items in the Belt are mechanisms mysterious, yes.  
Pure space is in front of you, escape the world's halter,  
The anguish and vast chagrin.*

*The Belt sways the doubled-up air into a new sense of lucidity,  
until a gong-effect gets going and steamrolls forth in fives.  
Supernatural darkness floating. Then light.  
Time for a sea change. Your turn, and this means you.  
Come with me. Agreeable and mute. To a new neighborhood.  
Say cloud nine. Say tarragon. Say gone.  
ACCELERATE TO EXHILARATE."*

Wish described Norline. "She's not a beauty in the sense of Mona Lisa or a movie star, but she's all animated expression, innocent smile framed with hard metal, clearness of thought, witty, energetic, the very figure of a patrician with her Nordic features, yellow hair, rhythmic stride, and taste for good vino, Dr. Loosen Riesling Qualitätswein Trocken Mosel Wehlener Sonnenuhr Alte Reben GG Réserve 2012, and an appreciation for No. 2 pencils [*a pointed, leaden reference to me letting it slip that Dorinda attributes the tea doily-design wrinkles on her hands to those writing instruments*]. She moved up here from Los Angeles where, according to her, landscape had become junkspace and foliage mere spoilage. The Shaman gave her a Native tag, 'Yellow Bird,' after she gifted him with a reading from her stirring evocation of D-travel from her book-in-progress, *The Strange Adventure of L<sub>3</sub>*." Wish pulls out a coffee-stained Xerox and reads excerpts describing Lianna Loyal-Litmus' jump into the unknown, captured on my digital recorder as:

*Dream Corps' yellow Piper Cub (L[au]f)t Wiedersehen expertly painted on its side in Comic Sans font) circles Little Dix Bay at 1000 feet over Long Lake, Go-Pilot, Bruce Deyglo, at the controls. I am ready to prompt the*

## Finding Mememo

*unready future; my bosom pants with one desire, bold of heart and of high resolve. I am glad to be clad in a stunning G.O.N.E.-er yellow jumpsuit with its built-in H-belt and water reserve. Bruce hands me a hefty Cinnabon to boost my glycemic index and a double espresso to open my eyes wider.*

*Upon finishing my repast, he signals me to prepare. I pull down my goggles with my left hand, holding my old peach-pink Indian arrowhead, the size of a quarter, in my right. This stone has the feeling of having held, it fits the hand that wants to clasp it. The Shaman gave it to me a year ago, saying it was "a touch-stone of time-constant throughout lifetimes." For me, nothing is more soothing than a stone, nothing more confirming of longevity. And this stone has been "worked" by ancient, scratched hands, increasing its magical powers, in my mind anyway. I feel certain this power stone will enhance my chances of success.*

*Bruce finally gives the thumbs up. I stand in the plane's door and jump. Looking down, I see H<sub>2</sub>O rushing toward me, but then . . . Remotely ahead, blackness, an absolute void, then an emerald flaming, followed by vast conglomerations of points of light. A feeling of helplessness in the grip of forces unknown. A sense of faraway places and a longing for companionship. My eyes ache as I stare into a faraway mist, a mist drawing closer.*

*I experience a curious buoyancy and dizziness, feel mysterious and powerful forces gathering in me. My mind, governed still by earth-normal standards can't fully grasp what is occurring: a whirling confusion as though my brain is becoming one with the eddying mist about me. Darkness and light divide my course. I sense a shudder and a trembling as if I were a deep-sea creature caught in tides and forced somewhere. Then a shock followed by a sudden jolt stuns me. Bright white light envelopes me and is curiously soothing. My dazed faculties begin to function again. It is with a feeling of the deepest awe that I stare around and try to comprehend what has happened. Realization comes slowly, and I find it difficult even to decipher my surroundings. I'd literally burst space and time. I stand on a flat plain of what looks like glass, perhaps a hundred yards long and wide. Far below is a second plain, yellow, which sweeps into the distance, then stops at a sheer cliff that falls an unknown distance down toward a blur of what seems solid ground. From this second level rises two brass-like towers supporting an oblong gem-like object the color of platinum when light hits it just right, otherwise it's as clear as glass. Eerie allusions to a fifth-dimensional architecture. My mind can only ramble through sonatas and fugues, fragments of symphonies for this is all my brain functions can offer at this point. My inviolable certainty of self — with its sum of sentences, theses held fast, and past experiences — has unraveled. [This sentence brutally hit home. It*

## Finding Mememo

could've come from my own mouth.] *This new world — call it an image caught in a mirror — real it is not, not unreal either. . . .*



The Stump Jump Wine

Airplane! Of course! The use of an airplane struck a bronze tintinnabulum in my *cabeza*. I told Wish one could use a plane to get enough height so the jumper can achieve terminal velocity way before nearing the ground, so a parachute can be used and if the H-Belt fails, one can pull the ripcord. No risk of life. *Q.E.D.*"

"Nice. We tried it. Failure to launch. One of our adventurous members, a real "tree-huger", suggested we try jumping while holding a section of tree trunk, after imbibing a glass of special wine (see image). We also tried following the instructions of a peculiar Korean game, "The Elevator to Another World." The game is quite bizarre. You'll find it on my website."

## Elevator To Another World

*Just do it wins over Just say no every time*

**Instructions:** A D-jumper can break into tomorrow morning, but only one person can play at a time in a building at least 10 stories high with at least one elevator in it.

### Traveling:

Perfume yourself with the Arabian scent of *oud* [*ed., a balsamic odor with sandalwood-ambergris tonalities*]. Enter the elevator from the first floor by yourself. If anyone else gets on then understand that you cannot continue from the first floor and wait until the elevator can be taken alone.

Press the button for the fourth floor.

Do not get out when the elevator reaches the fourth floor. Stay in the elevator and press the button for the second floor.

Do not get out when you reach the second floor. Stay on the elevator and then press the button for the sixth floor.

Do not get out when you reach the sixth floor, remain in the elevator and press the button for the second floor.

Do not get out when you reach the second floor. Stay on the elevator and press the button for the tenth floor. Some have reported hearing a voice calling to them on the second floor during this middle section of the ritual. Do not reply. Do not answer in any way.

# Finding Mememo

Do not get out once you have reached the tenth floor. Stay on and press the button for the fifth floor.

It has been reported by some that a woman may enter the elevator on floor five. She may appear as a stranger who wishes to engage with you. More importantly, she may appear as someone you know. It is important that you do not acknowledge her in word or glance. If the elevator you are in is reflective then stare at the floor or the buttons only.

Now press the button to head to the first floor. If instead of going towards the first floor you instead begin to ascend to the tenth then you have performed the ritual correctly. However, and this is very important, if you instead do descend to the first floor then you have done something wrong. Get off on the first floor immediately. If the woman is on the elevator then remember not to acknowledge her.

If you reach the tenth floor, you can either stay on the elevator or exit the elevator. Some have reported that upon attempting to leave the elevator, the woman will try one last time to engage with you. She may raise her voice and ask where you are going or "what's wrong." She may shriek as you cross the door's threshold. Keep your wits about you and do not engage or look at her even out of fear.

There is only one way to know whether you have traveled to the Other world for sure. You will know because you will be the only person there.

## Traveling Back To Your Home World:

Alternatively, if you do not exit on the 10th floor:

Press the button for the first floor; keep pressing it until the elevator begins to move.

Once you have reached the first floor, exit immediately. Do not exit on any other floors but the first. Do not acknowledge the woman if she is on the elevator. If anyone else gets on then do not speak to them either. Remain silent. If you do exit the elevator at the tenth floor, the elevator you used to get there is the only one you can use to return. Remember it.

When you get back on the elevator, press the buttons in the same order you did in steps 2 through 8 which you used to travel. This should take you to the fifth floor.

Once you have reached the fifth floor, press the button for the first floor. Do not be surprised when you instead begin to ascend again to the tenth floor. Do not panic. You can press the button of any floor lower than ten to stop ascending but you have to do it before you again reach the tenth floor. Some have described feeling called not to cancel the elevator's ascension. You must.

Once you have canceled the ascension and reached the first floor make sure that everything seems normal to you. If anything seems remotely strange, if you hear anything you should not be hearing, if you smell something you don't recognize then do not exit the elevator, you have to repeat step two until everything on the first floor seems normal. This is very important.

Once you are satisfied that everything on the first floor is as it should be in your world then you can exit the elevator.

# Finding Mememo

## Additional Information on Traveling:

The Otherworld has been described by travelers as dark but otherwise exactly like your 'home' world. Again, you will know that it is not your world because no one else will be there. You may see a distant red cross through a window. This may be a cross or it may be something else.

Electronics often do not work but some have posted videos claimed to have been taken while traveling to the Otherworld.

You may become disoriented if you exit on the tenth floor. You may feel dizzy. Be vigilant, pay attention to how you are feeling, and keep your wits about you.

If you pass out you may wake up at home but, understand, it may not be your "home" world. It also may not be the Otherworld you intended to travel to by invoking this ritual. Examine everything around you to make sure it's as it should be.

If you get on the wrong elevator on your return trip then do not enter the return sequence. It will not work.

## Regarding the woman:

Do NOT speak to her. Do NOT look at her. Do NOT check to see if she is still there. She is ARMED with an *isotropic fractionator* that turns one's brain to soup.



Emergence into another world from the viewpoint of the D-traveller, Wishwer Watt Collection

As downloaded from Wishwer Watts' website.



## Finding Mememo

"Some of our G.O.N.E. group have traveled to Chicago and tried this elevator thing at various high-rises (just as a few jumpers tried heaving themselves off a large cruise ship's deck so the water would save them if the Fischer-Filoni Effect didn't kick in). No luck. The life/death risk of the jump and personal faith it involves seems to be absolutely necessary for the quantum jump to have any possibility of occurring at all. This would jive with the subjectivist aspect of Qbist theory where quantum phenomenon is an act of fact creation by the human observer."

"Qbism works a bit like an arcane process my Japanese buddy told me about, Fugu auctioning."

"Are you telling Qbism it can Fug-off?" Wish chuckles.



Fugu in a fish tank

"Fugu is species of puffer fish. It's internal organs deadly due to tetrodotoxin, a hundred times more toxic than cyanide. Eating that fish could be a cosmic crap shoot; in 1975, Kabuki actor Mitsugoro Bando VIII died from it. Ichi was visiting a cousin in Japan who owns a sushi joint in Shimono-seki that served that delicacy accompanied with Hatcho Miso (made from only soybeans, aged for up to three years, very dark in color, chunky in texture, and pungent in flavor). On market day, he invited Ichi to go to a fugu auction. The auctioneer wears a long, wide, black sleeve covering his right hand. In order to bid, buyers push their hands inside that sleeve and give the auctioneer a secret hand signal during which the auctioneer chants some gibberish like our tobacco auctioneers or our particle physicists do here. He keeps all the bids in his head until the time is up, then he announces the winner."

My analogy got the expected gut-busting response. But while Wish was laughing, I was thinking about how speedy one's demise would be from snacking on fugu liver, that yelling "Fuck you!" to the Lair-of-the-Talking-Claw and our Trumpish World with one's mouth full of that fish's liver would sound just like "Fugu!" [Ed., Hy believed, contra Dorinda, Trump was a shoe-in for President.]

\* \*

*Editor's Gloss: A stunning ending to this section. Moreover, Hy's parenthetic comment in the citation from L<sub>3</sub>'s novelette, the one about his deteriorating sense of self, is significant and re-enforces these dark, closing comments. We are again invited into Hy's rambling, chattering mind. The episodic structure is typical "Hy-jinks", for all his previous novels hint that conventional biographies be wearisome and useless if merely chronologically arranged. For Hy, the essence of life was its doubleness, its exterior and interior existences as accessed by "single scenes and deep impressions." He oscillates between*

## Finding Mememo



Thomas De Quincey

*opposing impulses: romantic utopianism and ironic realism. In an earlier novel, he describes seeing himself rise from a cruise ship's deck chair and disappear.*

*One deep impression found in most of Hy's writing is a sea/sea voyage leitmotif — he starts the next section with such as well. Given this leitmotif, it is ironic that Hy's OCEAN rating (acronym for a big-five personality profile gauging Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism), which Chad had run via Facebook's data-gathering algorithm on Hy, was deemed "sub-par" (a psychometrics algorithm that many data professionals say results in "strange and wildly erroneous assumptions").*

*This misinformation was used by Chad to deem him "too inquisitive to be a loyal employee," and to further pressure Hy to "get with the distance-learning thing." This disagreeable use of Facebook was lauded by the school's Heereswaffenamt, the division for psychological weapons development, harbored in a small unnumbered office within The-Lair-of-the-Talking-Claw (it was that administrative group that initially suggested evaluating faculty and staff using handwriting samples and Rorschach blots, resulting in more development funds sent their way).*

*What the ocean and the sea voyage is to Hy's writing, exposure to Thomas De Quincey's influential *On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* [appearing in three parts, 1827 - 54] is to Dallas Johnson's detective stories, whose murder stories take us to the seabed of his protagonist's psyche.) This last section, moreover, shows the importance on Hy's writing of his medical studies in anatomy, particularly that of the brain, before he changed his major to art. (Odd factoid: every Halloween — having had the childhood shit scared out of him by the 1953 horror film *Donovan's Brain* — Hy hands out as a gag gift to Trick-or-Treaters an edible foam replica of a human brain, the size of a walnut, which swells to twenty times its size when placed in sugar water and supplies its eater 500 calories, the precise amount needed to fuel a brain for 24 hours.)*

*Messing with our brains — as much as Norline's L<sub>3</sub> D-traveler's brain was messed with — Hy continues to lambast the Lair-of-the-Talking-Claw and takes yet another punch at Trump. Yes, the day's evening news should, like Hy's weird novels should, sport the same health warning: Hazardous to Pessimists. The 2016 Presidential campaign had a marked deleterious effect on Hy's last weeks of life. Dallas' interview with Charmian and Wyoh confirmed this. Charmian said, "I was worried about Hy's increasing tendency to conflate Armbuster with Trump to the point where he seemed unable to separate them in his own mind."*

*Wyoh admitted he wanted to run past Hy "questions from the nine-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), queries like: 'In the past two weeks, how often have you felt down, depressed, or hopeless? Do you believe in inevitability? How is your sleep? How is your energy? Are you in chronic pain? Have you lost big in the Cosmic Crap game? Is neoliberalism eating away at your heart? Are you now living in the attic or basement of your house? Do you use the spice tarragon to excess?', yah, stuff like that."*

## Finding Mememo

*What can't be argued with is that this section develops Hy's brooding on his blocked and suffering consciousness, his prolonged waffling over a possible attempt at dimensional travel as a means of escaping personal pain and dystopic social conditions. Once Hy used playing chess in a metaphor about his lack of agency: "I'm not moving forward like the knight on a chessboard, but scuttling sideways like a crab on LSD." This was exacerbated by the fact Hy was a Gemini whose mind related ideas more easily than experiences, so that his two selves wrestled violently over the either life or death, or the both/and, decision implied in going G.O.N.E. The strife Hy exhibits during this flight from both job stress and an unsympathetic wife with a phobia against No.2 yellow pencils is extreme. Moreover, he misses the companionship, the ruddership, of his "eraï sensei" (great master) Ichi . Left dangling without further development in the unredacted version of this section (why I didn't include it) is a snippet of sentimental fluff on friendship that betrays his feelings about his buddy:*

I want at the moment the number five  
because the measurement of the earth  
depends on it.  
The balance among things, for instance,  
the gold garage light in Ichi 's garage gallery,  
his finger drumming of ingrained habit.  
My love for my friend (in our veins runs brotherhood)  
and the unwanted miles between us,  
I can't barely bear or bare in words — being too shy.

*My editorial tasks throughout Hy's numerous sections has been to condense, filter, discard, and clean up his verbal offerings. Remember, for Hy, these writings were only a one-generation elaboration from his notes and audio recordings. They are, as they stood when I reviewed them, incomplete catabolisms. Certainly, his final version would've been more energetic, "slicker". My job, as tasked by his mourning wife, has been, knowing Hy's style well, to present a semblance of that version, to provide Sicherheitsnadeln (German for "safety pins," sounds more academic) holding Hy's disparate narrative parts together.*



Neville Brand

*There were other instances of material too verbose to include in the section. Ichi tells Hy his mother's mother once had an affair with Onoe Baiko VII, a famous Kabuki onnagata (female impersonator; b. 1915). Another was a digression on the actor Neville Brand: I hated his bad-guy film image, but loved for his pantechicon of miscellaneous learning. One of Brand's passions was reading. Having once visited Mr. Brand's home in Malibu, co-star Richard Peabody remembers, 'I saw all these book cases — I couldn't believe it, I've never seen such an array of books in anybody's private home in my life — it looked like a library. I was amazed about what an avid reader he was. You look at the titles, and his tastes were*

## Finding Mememo

really eclectic — he was interested in everything.' His home was destroyed by fire, all his cherished books were lost." Hy also saw links between his mother's death from emphysema and N. B.'s demise from the same: "Neville Brand passed away from emphysema on April 16th, 1992. His lungs, turned to ashes *twice*, are interred at East Lawn Memorial Park, Sacramento, California in a book-shaped vessel, his name engraved on the spine."

*This last section also contained a spoof of Shakespearean drama, "Putting a Hole in my Sunny Sails," its dramatis personae being Hy and his despised department chairman. This revealing bit of pastiche I placed in the frontispiece where it introduces this text's nemesis, Chad Armbuster.*

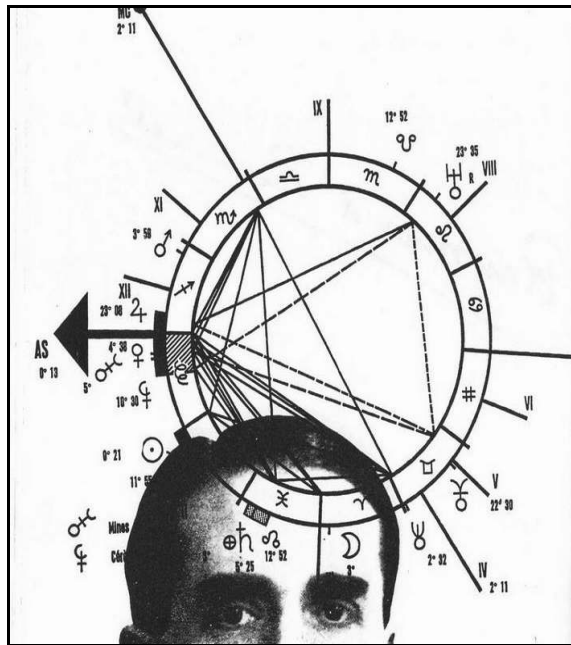
*The obvious question concerning this last section I edited: Was it a portent of Hy's supposed suicide? Much of what Hy has written in this section has been confirmed by Dallas through investigation at the Wisconsin lodge where Hy hide his forlorn hide. A second combing of Hy's cabin came up with two large pieces of "dandruff":*

*1) a page torn from some book with the following passage underlined in red: Confucianism taught that when the government is bad, one should head for the hills. Taoism taught that, regardless of government, one should head for the hills; and,*

*2) a Xerox of French writer Raymond Roussel, left forgotten, face down, in a*

*drawer; it was overlooked during an earlier tossing of the place. A portrait of a peculiar writer Hy adored, superimposed over with a cryptic diagram, just had to be like catnip to a cat for Hy, so the very fact he'd forgotten it is further evidence of the extent of his tortured mental state, leading to his crash 'n burn. Airplane crash investigators refer to this more subjective area of investigation as "human factors".*

*One fact I can testify to, Hy maintained a facade of meekness disguising turbulence and ferocity; encountering him could be like an airplane sailing in calm skies, about to enter clear-air turbulence. I think this could be traced to him feeling rivalrous between his two, Geminian, selves, and to a very deep feeling of inadequacy as Ichi recently told me:*



Raymond Roussel, evidence left in Hy's lake cabin, found by Dallas Johnson during his visit there.

*"Meme thought of himself as merely a flame in sunlight."*

\* \* \*

# Finding Mememo

26



*He went like one that hath been stunned,  
And is of sense forlorn:  
A sadder and a wiser man,  
He rose the morrow morn, mourning.  
And knew he lived in the Hollow-Scene <sup>1</sup>*

In bed, I wait and wait for sleep, for egress from a world where the cosmetic is the new cosmic and the comic is now *commedified*. Today, one needs to make a big splash in the global pond of spectacle to be noticed. The door needs only my touch. Its only desire is to swing open into an imaginary world with real toads or a real world with imaginary toads. A partial toy world where some things are normal size, some dollhouse 1 : 12 scale, some even 1 : 24. I wait for it to open itself, as a cloud opens for the melting press of the sun. It is said a visionary is a person capable of seeing with closed eyes. My eyes are

closed. I'm seeing elevators, airplanes, high-rises, symbol storms of mandalas and 5-pointed stars, D-travel as an escape from CNN NYSE NASDAQ-CSPAN. My fate has made a wisher of me. A line of wish-thought encouraged by Wish mentioning yesterday an urban tale in which a high priest, thrown off the Tarpeian Rock (a steep cliff of the southern summit of the Capitoline Hill, overlooking the Roman Forum in Ancient Rome) for blasphemy, mysteriously vanished just prior to becoming Roman pizza.

I am hoping to envision something as wonderful as described by G. O. Wholhog in his D-travel story, "Irinja's View" (excerpted in *The F-F Effect for*



Glass shattering, climactic scene from *RoboCop* (1987)



*Star Trek: The Next Generation*, "Schisms," (10/1992) crew members are abducted by interdimensional aliens

---

1. Hy screws with the last stanza from Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.



## Finding Mememo

*Dummies): Irinja peeps a rainbow-colored ring glistening around one sun within a broader white misty belt; like a wheel of light encompassing the middle of the sky, and where the two rings met, were two smaller suns glowing on either side of the first sun. Irinja could distinguish all the colors of the spectrum in them too. Three suns! She had never seen anything like it. Imagines, history is here written in books that go backward as well as forward.*

I nod off. I am amid malachite flecks vamping at my periphery, a world seen through a wall of surgical gauze; fuck! it's only the Panda Express's restroom near the AIC Museum; some wit has scribbled above a toilet paper dispenser SAIC DIPLOMAS TAKE ONE. I see a figure emerge from a hole hanging in the air over the commode, a disk of nothing, the color of what one sees when one's eyes are shut. Disheveled, a three-day beard, a black eye, and a swollen upper lip wearing dirty pants held up by a skull-'n-crossbones hexagonal Death Belt. Mumbles his name, "Ayl," and offers his hand, cold and clammy like a piece of cold boiled pork, and says "Don't go to Bellona; there's a perpetual cloud haunting that shit-hole," and vanishes.

In the muddle of dream, I sense things that no one knows, that can't be learned, and aren't of the realm of human knowledge. Despite Wishwer Watt's efforts at explanation, I've as much a chance of fully understanding D-travel as our dogs have of understanding how dog food gets into cans. But as Virginia Woof said, "One can only believe entirely in what one cannot see."

Deep-Dream Wish wanted me to imagine myself as a spacetime event, like writing, not merely an entity in a Rigid Universe: "No philosopher has yet sat down in a restaurant and told the waiter, 'Just bring me whatever the universe has pre-ordained.' Nope, it'd be 'Bring me a dinner of sardines, paté, crusty bread, pudding, two bottles of champagne and another of port.' Dude, from birth to death we form a meandering 'world line'. We all are a long pink worm, continuous through the years. Yours is just longer than mine." I prefer to think of such issues in maritime terms: River = Time, Boat = Self, Waves = Quantum functions, and Ocean = Eternity."

A morning too early for my definition of "morning" breaks like a glass knocked off a nightstand by a spooked cat, a glass-shattering sound effect in a Hollywood flick. I snap awake in a world transformed, disoriented as if kidnapped by interdimensional thugs. I try to switch on the bedside lamp, blindly hit the wall. My night-numbed, circulationless left arm isn't responding. Shaking it reconstructs it slowly, cell-by-cell; for a moment it's nearly intolerable. I get the lamp on, look at my watch: Wednesday 5 a.m. But wristwatches are always going astray. Julio Cortazar got it right when he said watches were fragile and precarious pieces of yourself. W.G. Sebald wore two watches, just in case. But it isn't wrong, my watch, the cabin's alarm clock corroborates.

# Finding Mememo

I struggle to get myself back from that fantastic door of perception, try to relearn the normal, slowly becoming hyperalert to my own embodiment: aware of each movement, the precise physical requirements of each action, of the microscopic muscular changes as my eyes open wider and my chest takes in more air. I roll on my back, look up at the cabin pinewood wall. Parallel grooves of the wood grain are dotted with dark knots made smooth and polished by a saw's metal. Life is like that, smooth flows then moments of dense turbulence.

It's a Proustian hour in the dark when one awakens, between dreams, and registers the rustling sounds, the shadowy walls. What is, is, and what is not, is not; and I am not what I was — I am no more as I once was. A byte of bitter data, a meme, circuits inside the walls of my head: *Isn't life itself a terminal disease, sexually transmitted?* I once told a priest that. That was another time when I was fighting a similar dark night of the soul, "The Great Flatness" of mid-life crisis, in which time seemed to have stopped moving forward and spooled out in every direction, like an old audio tape spinning out of control. Yet, I suppose a quick death is better than a long murder, like in a Dallas mystery story.

Ichi had come down to work on a commercial shoot and found time to comfort me during a time I was criticizing myself in the harshest terms, watching myself from the outside. He was to photograph dignitaries at an awards ceremony at First International Symposium on Saliva as a Diagnostic Tool held at a posh Loop hotel infamous for their bedbug infestations. "I want to also use the photos for my ongoing project, *Kudomania*, which focuses on people getting recognition for achievements from the Nobel prize, to Japan's Golden Chrysanthemum, all the way down to dabbler-slouch scale DIY shit."



Jake Shimabukuro

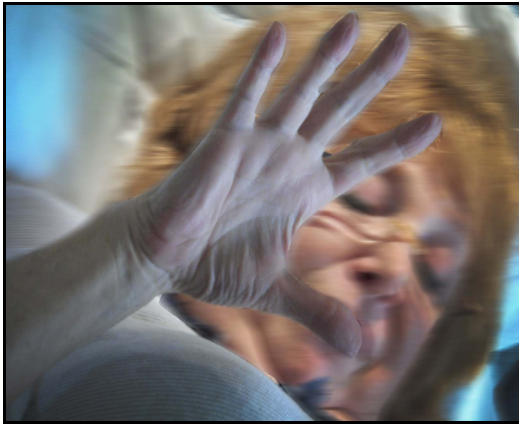
Besides his camera gear complete with a bounce-strobe outfit, Ichi brought down a Jake Shimabukuro CD, *Live in Japan*. "This CD feature a music piece title 'Ichigo Ichie'. You must listen. Will calm you. By way, that tune's title looks like anagram of 'Chicago' and my name. See?" Pointed to the playlist. "Shimabukuro, quite young guy, is to ukulele what Jimi Hendrix was to guitar. Big name in Japan."

While sitting in my studio, Ichi probes me to the quick; as I sat listening to Jake strum his ol' uke, I told him, "Pleasure comes in waves, and now I'm in a trough that coincided with the blue moon <sup>2</sup> and a photo

---

2. Hy was fascinated with the math surrounding the "blue moon", where a year which normally has 12 new moons has 13 instead. The reference is applied to the third moon in a season with four moons, correcting the timing of the last month of a season that would have otherwise been expected too early. This happens every two to three years. The Metonic cycle is a period of very close to 19 years. The March 1946 issue of *Sky & Telescope* misinterpreted the traditional definition, which led to the modern colloquial misunderstanding that a blue moon is a second full moon in a single solar calendar month with no seasonal link.

## Finding Mememo



Hy Grader's wife, Dorinda, unwillingly photographed by her husband during a "Blue Moon" cycle.

I snapped of my wife, Dorinda. She hated it. She told me that living with me is like aiming at a moving target, that I'm always further along into new bullshit than she can anticipate.

"Now she has just started going to her office wearing an elegant winter-white gabardine pantsuit, wide trouser legs just breaking over champagne-colored boots, and a fingertip-length jacket. All this razzmatazz after years of dark colored skirts and sweaters. Worse, her bagged lunch changed from pastrami on rye with a co-

lossal cookie for dessert, to health-slabs of eggplant topped with goat cheese on RyKrisp with a tiny slab of dark chocolate to sweeten her palate.

"God, she's even bought a T-shirt that reads: RABBIT IS THE NEW BEEF. Shit, Ichi, hope and fear stand by me, masked in one another's shapes. Rather than going forward, I feel our relationship is like a crab on LSD, creeping endlessly sideways. She's bringing home Chardonnay from Binny's rather than Merlot. I'm beginning to suspect she . . . well . . . I asked her a remembered question and got a forgotten answer . . .," my voice trailed off into a silence that Ichi knew was as telling as that used in a John Cage performance.

Ichi wisely cited eighteenth-century English divine Sydney Smith's wisdom: "Take short views of life," "Be as busy as you can," and "Live as well as you dare." He went on to kindly reminded me that Dorinda and I'd met under "the conditions of supersymmetry," the particle physics' prediction that for every boson there is an as yet undiscovered fermion, and how we "seemed destined for each other in the same way": she the boson, me the fermion [*ed., a fortuitous play on bosom and getting a firm-on?*]. True, our meeting then led to us being marvelously "entangled" in a quantum mechanical sense, which means that multiple particles are linked together in a way such that the measurement of one particle's quantum state determines the possible quantum states of the other particles. [*Ed., this connection isn't dependent on location in space; separate entangled particles by billions of miles, changing one particle will induce a change in the other*].

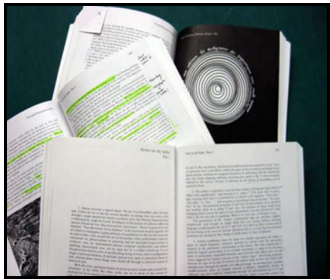
Ichi went on to remind me that, "Despite such mutual vibes, though, no one can fully understand another person's — what? — craziness. You might consider this apt Japanese saying, 'When all you have is a hammer, everything look like nail.' Meme-san, you need plier *and* screw driver. Expand your relational

## Finding Mememo

tools. You need to remember you used to tell me after dining with Dorinda at an elegant restaurant that you'd ride along in her elegant car, ruminating on your mutual happiness, like a man, after dinner, continuing to chew, tasting the truffles you were digesting."

A great insight and memory that I meditated on at that time, turning my funk around. I time-traveled back to our first date: our four eyes had met, swallowing each other for a brief moment over angel hair pasta — a new thing in the penetralia of my spirit. It was a vibration of happiness, like music, like a string, as if Dorinda had taken a bow and drawn it across the strings of my innermost being, making them sing in delightful chords. We understood each other from the very moment our atmospheres touched and mingled. I thanked Ichi for making me recall that.

But right now, I need to find out what that dream-shattering sound was. I turn on the small side lamp, its bulb peeking out from under its shade like an eyeball from beneath a dark lid, pull myself out of bed, strap on that badge of my mortality, my watch, and wobble to the bathroom mirror (it has a mascara fleck left by a previous tenant that looks like a squashed fly). I suffer a sea-motion from emptying a six-pack of Atomium Brew. I see the fog in my eyes communicate vague sentence fragments and my face, hell, it looks as dumpy as a Flemish burgomaster. I press it against the cold surface. My image seems annoyed. I splash hot water on it, but it runs down the mirrored surface. *Shit!* I finally get it right and my visage slowly becomes recognizable, but I feel a shiver or a shaving cut — no — it's my torn rotator cuff. Now it's sending dull



aches in a series of dots and dashes, morosely signaling S-O-S.<sup>3</sup> I stagger over to the refrigerated miniature profit center on top of which sits an old bedside Placed-by-the-Gideons Bible and a plethora of research material I've been reading and high-lighting in lime green. I push aside the chilled Lilliputian vodka and gin bottles, grab a Schweppes, twist the cap off, and gulp down fizz and two blue pearls, Aleve liquid gels. 5 a.m. and grateful I hear no ambulance siren, relieved I'm not strapped to a stretcher speed-

ing, like my mother had, toward the grim unknown.

Still in my flannel "jammies", in an inchoate nebula of doubt (a black window stared at me like an eye), I struggle shoes onto bare feet and don my

---

3. Hy's writing is always at pains to remind us how much we are at the whim of our bodies. He was constantly bemoaning the obstinacy of his aging flesh, his need for 30 minutes in the a.m. of yoga to keep his back problem, his piriformis syndrome, at bay. He once quoted Pliny to me to the effect that bladder stones are a good reason for suicide. And so on.

## Finding Mememo

Bass Pro Shops gun-metal gray fishing jacket. Slogging, wobbling, wavering, atilt and out-of-sync with all that moves and doesn't, I make my way to the cabin door and open it cautiously. I sneak onto the screened porch, open the screen door with a creak and peek into the blackness, a dark heavier than Caesar's foot. At first I only hear the sougning sound of the trees overhead, both pleasurable and discomforting, like a memory to which emotion accrues. Then I smell popcorn. Someone, some fuckin' *someone*, is popping corn at 5 a.m! Why popcorn so early? Why is someone *always* making popcorn? Can you tell me that? And I can't eat it thanks to my diverticulitis. I stare upward and see moonlit clouds moving quickly, creating an ambulant obscurity that reveals, then conceals, the stars. A sole loon calls out. A deeper language bellows need.

I flip on the porch light expecting to see — at worst — a marauding racoon, dubbed "Racoona", chewing on a nearby old tree stump (less that two feet high and divided by a cleft that runs down to the ground, its bark dry and cracked, like a casing with no real connection to the thing it covers). Instead, I'm flashing on the bear-attack story in Mamet's play *The Woods*. My rental car's side window is shattered; beside it a ridiculously plump bear looking like a candied apple on four sticks. It's "Fancy Bear" (named by staff here after a cyber-espionage group as he's always hacking lodger's boxed lunches). He's pulled my REI backpack out (my lucky leather medicine pouch inside) and is gobbling my lunch leftovers and a box of Harry and David's Moose Munch. These condiments were my energy boost on yesterday's canoe trip to Blackwood, an isle mysterious, where mist hovers and odd funnel-like hollows ruffle the dirt in which small, creepy areas of dried-blood red grass oozing drops of topaz-colored sweat irregularly sprout, especially around petrified log whose heart glows at night with the pulsing greens, crimsons, and blues of a fire opal. A cat and a beagle were found dead there once. Now locals swear a chimera, a "nightmare beast," part cat, part dog, haunts the place.<sup>4</sup>

Fancy's massive claws had ripped my pack to shreds; now a manifold dark honey smeared his face, a crazy factotum, disheveling all. I felt the swipes of those terrible claws on my own body. Lacan would say the Real was clawing its way into my Imaginary — as does that Bear-of-Very-Little-Brain, Chad Armbuster, who takes to bed his neoliberal beliefs as a child does its teddy bear.

By the way, Dear Reader, the reverse of this, the Imaginary clawing its

---

4. Dallas reported The Shaman called the island Gaumeenautikawayauk (Place of Many Berries); despite that name, it has a bad reputation; as the Shaman put it: "Despite its many berries, no one dares camp overnight there; no matter where you pitch your tent, it lies on a liminal zone, a threshold where opposing forces meet and so they are never places of rest." It seems that animals avoid it, dead fish are often found on its beaches, violent insects eviscerate berries and flowers alike, drinking their interior liquid. At night globes of light can be seen floating among the trees and boaters report a strange hissing sound emanating therefrom at dusk.



## Finding Mememo

way into the Real, can be found in a Blurt Wildbraine mystery where that shamus *cum* scrivener's own fictional detective, I. M. Blunt, is working a bizarre case (titled "Bear With Us") for NASA. Blunt is poking around at Cape Canaveral, trying to suss out the wacko rocket technician who snuck a male grizzly bear, of some breadth and breath bad enough to poison Poland, into an intergalactic ship. That perceptive, *Criminal Minds*-like profiling PI's assumption is that "The driving force of the perp's actions reside his or her's internal contradictions."

I tug vigorously on the knotted rope attached to the *Glocke*<sup>5</sup> attached to the outside of the cabin which is planted five yards up from the beach, a noisy warning to nearby cabins and those across the still lake. It scares Fancy Bear off. Lights in cabins nearby and across the water pop on. Confused and muffled voices fill the approaching dawn — not light arriving but darkness retreating — wafted on the same airwaves as the popcorn odor. My own exclamation is one vowel bedevilled by seven consonants.<sup>6</sup> I run back into the cabin, slam the door, and hop in bed. I pull over the still-warm covers, cuddling down like I'd did as a child fraught with a crowded cargo of new alarms. My heart beat erratically as do the flies and moths incarcerated in my cabin, beating against their confinement. I flee The Real, the dreadful, huge-footed and threatening. I flash on a traditional Pawnee warrior song The Shaman recited the last time I saw him: "This life that I am living, Ye Gods, everywhere let me see if it is real."

When a mere tot, I discovered that repeating an object's name could make the object — POOF! — disappear from mind. In times of stress, like when Chad verbally whips me, I've tried the same tactic reiterating "Meme" until my mind drops behind the mere symbol of the sound into something unintelligible and Chad's invectives fade.

So watching that grounds-roaming member of the Ursine maul my goodies, I again escape using the reiteration trick: "Bear, bear, bear, bear, bear, bear, bear, bear, bear, bear, bear, bear, bear, bear, bear . . ." I repeat loudly.

Soon my thoughts are bare of the bear, free to trot to recalling Dallas cluing me in about Jonathan Lethem's wacky mixing of Philip K. Dick and Raymond Chandler in his novel *Gun, with Occasional Music* [ed., 1994, an influence on Dallas' writing], wherein an Oakland-based private dick tracks down a gangster kangaroo in a world of super-evolved animals that often swarm over the Bay Area's bridges, like trolls ignoring the tolls.

---

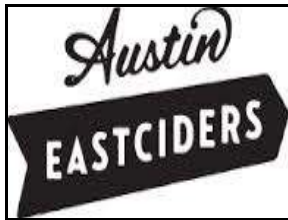
5. German for "bell", Hy is being pedantic again and making an attempt at local color as many aspects of Northern Wisconsin have roots in German culture. His grandparents on his mother's side of the family were German.

6. Hy copped from poet Robert Lowell's witty description of writer Delmore Schwartz's last name, which translates from German as "black", which is, of course, Hy's mood and what it looks like outside at this point in Hy's narrative.

## Finding Mememo

This wacky influence is particularly strong in Dallas' most repulsive story, "Strato's Sphere". A Greek fortune-teller, famous not only for his gifted use of a large crystal ball, but notorious for his slovenliness, has predicted a series of horrific murders (heads turned impossibly 180 degrees around and set next to the violated body a bowl of crawfish étouffée) in post-Katrina New Orleans. Blurts describes his initial meeting with Strato variously: "I should say that the hand held out to me was not above seven inches from wristwatch to tip of middle finger, and its breadth couldn't have been more than four inches, even while receiving his fee for my reading. Nails? Bitten. Palm? Small. Lifeline? Early broken. Skin? Dry and freckled. Cuticles? Unkempt. Condition. Soft. Color? Pale. . . . Food stains all over his suit, the stink of raw garlic and alcohol permanently on his breath, shit in his fingernails and feta cheese behind his ears."

In this tale, on this case, Wildbraine teams up with his distant cousin, John Silence — a well-published investigator of the paranormal from The University of Texas, Austin.<sup>7</sup> It's a challenging investigation due both to Strato's awful stench and the bizarre psychic nature of the game that's afoot.



Austin-brewed Cider imbibed by Blurt Wildbraine at the Easy Tiger Beer garden

The story opens with Blurt feeding his melancholy in Easy Tiger, an indoor/outdoor beer garden on the east side of Austin, alongside Waller Creek, which runs through the downtown. Dallas does a nice job of detailing the Wes Anderson-inspired decor, evidenced by the 1970s vignettes of bold wallpaper and retro hand-painted signage. A longhorn steak tartar burger is plated before Blurt who sips a local brew, trying to get gather his wits. Face down before him is a self-help paperback, *The Mushroom Patch of the Soul*. Blurt overhears three Texicans at an adjoining table complaining (sounding like they have hard candy in their mouths) that Texas' famed South Padre Island resort is too hot (literally) and too cold (metaphorically) for their taste, going on to blame "all Our Country's problems" on "Dye-versity." They did like the fact that "the place was home to Southerners and alcoholic astronauts." Blurt's fingers reflexively make a fist about an Austin Eastciders' Honey Brew, imagining it's around a hick's neck. The brew's golden delicious-colored can asks the hand holding it, "How do you like these apples?" Blurt's aware of three proverbial worms in the apple: bigotry, obsolescence, and death [*ed., funny how Dallas' stories seem to*

---

7. In Dallas' story, Silence is given academic credentials and is hardly silent. A prophet of the Age of Aquarius, in "Panhandle Paranormal," *The Otherworldly Review* (Spring, 2012): 273 - 274, Silence declaims: "I seek signs and proof of other powers that lie hidden in us all; the extension, in other words, of human faculty. . . . I believe it possible for our consciousness to change and grow, either through a flash of terror or of beauty, and that with this change we may become aware of a new universe. That universe will also need its extra-sensory private eyes."

## Finding Mememo

*synch with Hy's mental states*]. One dude, tells a story — or joke — not sure which: “So this guy, Jake, can’t drive, right? Hates every shade of red, dodges all glitz, has a small house in a lower-middle-class cul-de-sac with an even smaller garage, and his rich uncle, who owns a posh limo service, up ‘n gives him a used pink Caddy limo for Valentine’s Day, puttin’ the poor kid in limbo.” At this, Blurt loses himself in beer and inner monologue:

*By Elron, what’s sadder? Being lonely or being lonesome? I’m in a downward spiral and should be chuggin’ a Lysine-Dopamine smoothie and not my sixth bottle of Austin Eastciders Texas Honey beer. My faux angora sweater is a patch of prickles like the cactus around here. Appropriately, I’m in the Lone Star State. My home state [ed., like Dallas], where I’ve had to fly recently to many funerals of relatives and absolutes [ed., the latter, Dallas’ term for close friends whom one loves without reserve, unlike the ambiguous affections involving family ties]. Is that solitary Star in a state of being lonely or lonesome? I think lonesome. Sadder. Something about having to purse one’s lips for a nonexistent kiss at the end of the word, the weight of that second syllable. Distinctly Dashiell Hammett, that word. And what could be sadder than having to live in Texas alongside so many knuckle-dragging, homophobic, sexist, racist troglodytes? I want to say to them “May the clearness be with you.”*

*Such muses Blurt, while eyeing a young Texas blossom in hot pants and a 1950s-style tight sweater, her hips hoola-hoopy, lips juicy and deep red like the shadow on the inside of a hot flower. She’s sitting under a small hanging mistletoe cactus this never-better-weather day.*

*Luckily, I’m only here to meet a distant cousin, Johnny. John Silence, Ph.D., in academic circles, famous for his oft quoted remark concerning what he’s learned from years of investigating extrasensory/psychic phenomena: “You have to participate to make it precipitate.” I need to persuade him to participate in my own investigation of a bizarre series of homicides where a bowl of crawfish étouffée is left by the body. A case where me (Sherlock) needs a Doc Watson. Me, going it alone has been fine, but maybe the hard-boiled loner-detective attitude ain’t cuttin’ it any longer in these days of social media. Hell, my author’s agent has been complaining too! My Millennial clients just don’t grok me and the chicks seem awesomely indifferent.*

*Maybe it is time to reinvent my image, and my fictional private eye character, Blunt’s, as well. Johnny’s recently been in New Orleans where music is food and food is kind of choreography. Wearing his fav high-top Chuck Taylors, size 12, he’s looking into a poltergeist manifestation with ectoplasmic emanations of a mystery man in a 1930s French colonial cachou suit, pale skin, a mouth like an iron bar across his face, who stands and watches with far-away eyes, then vanishes.*

## Finding Mememo

*The site of such weirdness is the city's magnificent Garden District, where the street trolley lazily picks up and drops off passengers. Specifically, it was the old magnificent structure housing the Brennan family's famous Commander's Palace restaurant. It's an elegant establishment, known for its James Beard Chef Award and GQ's Golden Dish Award for their fabled Eggs Sardou.<sup>8</sup> In high season, revelers stream past, people grinning behind feathered masks and people primping rainbow wigs and people painted with mesmerizing swirls and people in sequined outfits twirling glittering, bejeweled canes and people on unicycles chanting nonsense or carrying acrylic bongos. I could go on.*

*The old magnificent building was heavily damaged by the hurricane and had to be partially rebuilt; afterwards, odd things began to happen. Something "uninvited" has been scaring away even the long-time customers — dishes flying about, beards found drawn on Brennan family portraits, and ghostly appearances. Silence speculates that recycled building materials from other structures used in the restaurant's repair released spirits lurking therein. He reminded me of the paranormal case of the infamous Eastern Airlines flight 401 Everglades crash in 1972, where fragments of the ill-fated plane were salvaged and put into other aircraft and thereafter those planes suffered mysterious ghostly apparitions, scaring the shit out of the flight attendants, who ended up spilling hot coffee on passengers.<sup>9</sup>*

*This paranormality popped up in the city, the very district, where the "étouffée" murders are occurring. So Johnny's already got the lay of the land and found the best "watering holes". My feelings about teaming up with him are mixed though. He's vapid, hollow, despicable, sordid, corrupt, monumentally boneheaded self-admirer (which has done loads for his academic success). He thinks he's a genius. I mean the type of guy who says "I'm a genius," when he manages to find a good parking space, or can play a tambourine.*

*Last time I met with him it was two years ago at a talk he gave at The Chicago Center for Psychoanalysis during he put a hard d at the end of his ands: anD, anD. The sky that day was crisp and white and I was with him in his room at the Palmer House Hotel when he dosed*

---

8. Eggs Sardou is a Louisiana Creole cuisine dish made with poached eggs, artichoke bottoms, creamed spinach and Hollandaise sauce. It is on the menu of many Creole restaurants in New Orleans, including Antoine's, where Eggs Sardou was invented, and Brennan's. Eggs Sardou is named for Victorien Sardou, a famous French dramatist of the 19th century, who was a guest in New Orleans when the dish was invented.

9. Hy was deeply affected by this horrible event as his father had worked on the design of that state-of-the-art Lockheed aircraft. Hy found it intriguing that the number five figured prominently in the life of the plane's captain, Robert Albin Loft (friends called him "Bob-Aloft"): he was 55 and a veteran pilot ranking 50th in seniority at Eastern. "Ironically," remarked Hy, "the pilot's last name, 'Loft,' did not guarantee he and the plane would remain aloft."

## Finding Mememo

*himself with Paco Rabanne cologne in a way his audience was supposed to appreciate — but didn't. Nor did his audience like his presentation on ectoplasmic emanations in the ether — a curious mixture of vividness and confusion about the role sound waves play, specifically certain chords, with the impermanence and illusion of Form.*

Speaking of psychoanalysis, my encounter with The Real this wee morn brings me to recall walking a pathway across an irregularly-shaped surface of a neglected lawn that had suffered one of Southern California's hottest summers. It was October in the late 1970s when every day was still tomorrow and M&Ms had not yet replaced their tan yummy with the blue [ed., *that wouldn't happen until 1995*]. I was doing the Academic Hustle, the "Never-Never Pedagogue" (never getting benefits, never getting a pay raise, never guaranteed a course, never getting any respect, never, never, never), teaching part-time at three schools, driving 400 miles every week in a tiny red Japanese car that kept getting ticketed by Highway Patrol because it's red and Japanese.



Hy's red Toyota Starlet

That windy Friday found me driving "Skeezer", my radio tuned to Public Radio announcing the onset of neo-liberalism's postwar period, where alliances of a welfare government with unions and social programs were unraveling. I was maneuvering through flocks of dropped leaves scattered about, oxidized by autumn, blowing in the hot, dry Santa Ana wind. I wove through traffic past a strip mall sporting names like Comics City, Video House, Taco King, and a new bar, Thai Won On, advertised on TV as serving Thai, Chinese, and Korean fare with high-end Asian craft beers.

I exited the Ventura Freeway onto Ventura boulevard, turning down a side street lined with tiny homes and palm trees whose fronds whined in the wind. I stopped at 1728 Lilliput Avenue,<sup>10</sup> exit my gas-thrifty Japanese car, yet looking so American, standing there next to my red car in my white shirt and blue pants. Then a monstrous BLAST OF AIR, my linen shirt and cotton pants were suddenly pinned to my body courtesy of Santa Ana winds, a seasonal curse famed for perennially blowing shingles off Southland roofs and tractor-trailer rigs off roads. I made my way down a weaving sidewalk to a side gate leading to a back entrance used for patients, the cheap digs of a cheap-fee therapist in Studio City, itself a tacky stain on the L.A. landscape, not far from the famous Hollywood Bowl and Thai Won On's special dish, "The Hollywood Bowl", a glitzy presentation of a *ménage-à-troi* of Thai beef/chicken/shrimp with Chinese wonton and Korean kimchi.

---

10. In Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the Lilliputians are horrified when they find out it takes the equivalent of 1728 (12 x 12 x 12) Lilliputians' daily provisions to daily feed Gulliver.



## Finding Mememo

Why was I here? My girlfriend at the time, Avril, [*Hy told me she was studying theater at UCLA, her thesis on Antonin Artaud's Theater of Cruelty and Jerzy Grotowski's Poor Theater*] suffering distress in our relationship, said, in righteous indignation, "You're a tickin' time bomb, not a beatin' heart. Ya change fast like a dyin' minds complexion. Your mind is made up of so many different cuts of meat, I'm never sure what I'm getting!" Said I only spoke in splashes. She started to have bad dreams: *moi* being towed out to sea in a little leaky boat named *Cinco de Mayo* and left to sink. In defense, she got crossed-swords tats on the insides of both wrists and now gave out a Second-wave Feminist witch-laugh when provoked or an awful burst of 'witch-traum': "You think the world revolves around you, always from your point of view. I've had it, shit-head, see a shrink. You need to explore your place as an individual cell in a larger social body, turn your private itch into a public scratch — like Sartre finally did — examine the ratio of your purposeful, habitual, gratuitous actions, question your comb-over character."

Since I was into Existentialism, she suggested I might thrive as a client of her friend, a Sartrean therapist, Viola Ate. They'd met at a Consciousness-Raising group held at a mutual friend's home in Encino soon after Ate had left twenty years in "dirty, devouring New York" where she navigated the city on bike wearing a black robe "so men didn't fuck with her." Avril told me she's a strong reader of Camus (only one philosophical problem, suicide) and Jean-Paul (hell are other people) and trained in Sartrean psychoanalysis after a masters in French Lit at Columbia on Sartre's psycho-study of Gustave Flaubert, *The Family Idiot*. Says her mode of therapy is very *nouvelle vague*.

At this, my mental ears perked up. "I assume she's into the new vagueness, then?"

"Very funny. Now . . . make an appointment!"

"Okay. I do hate being gazed at by others," I said, "and I feel a bit redundant when I move in the same direction as those others."

Avril jabbered on sternly, warning me against "confusing frankness with coarseness" during my sessions. "Your means of expressing yourself can be a bit — er — cavalier. Remember, Viola is a mystery fan, once told me the solution-hungry plots of detective stories gives meaning to the flotsam and jetsam of our lived experience, that such plots continuously feed her professional interests."

"Why those Frenchies love our classic film noir, I suppose," I said. I made the appointment, but under the pseudonym Archie Ferguson, a name like some character found in the Sunday funnies or a Paul Auster novel.

Now standing before Dr. Ate's rear office door, I could feel the lines across my forehead deepen. I pressed the bell. The door-lock buzzed and I opened it, the brass doorknob turning loosely in its collar. The corners of my mouth invol-

## Finding Mememo

untarily tightened. I walked hesitantly into her tiny office. A tan shade was drawn, yet light pooled on her glasses making her appear to have no eyes. Viola gave me her left hand, the sort of stiff way women do when formally greeting a man. I gently shook something kind of upside down as one shakes freshly cut blossoms to release the dew. Light from the shade-edge went up her shoulder and cheek like masking tape. She greeted me in a voice that had that telephonic noise of feminism, pointing to a seat across from her.

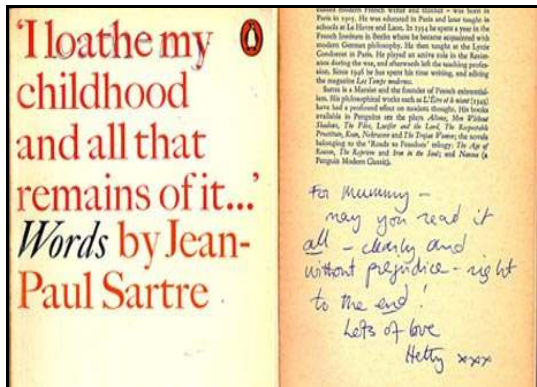
I sat, folded my arms. She sat, crossed her legs, adjusted her cleavage, and took up notebook and fountain pen. I noticed her fingers were knuckled like bubbles in a pudding. Our eyes uneasily met, then avoided, met, avoided. Each time her eyes darted away it was toward a book on her desk. She exuded grave maturity, yet her breasts continued to gladden her body. For many at Dr. Ate's age the body fails the mirror test, not so for Viola. We exchanged pleasantries, commented on the sirocco outside, even how to discriminate between various garlic butters (how something like that can be understood as a Sartrean existential "project"). This was her opening gambit, buttering me up for this initial probe: "Tell me a little about your family, your background."

"Well, if I'd known what little came from talking to other people, I'd never have learned to speak," I said, moving my black pawn toward her white. "I was the 'idiot of the family,' according dad, who dubbed me "Squit" because I squinted." I continued playing around in her Sartrean sandbox: "I rejected Catholicism's 'That's all you need to know,' the day I was Confirmed. It was my first conspicuous act of rebellion — more to come. After that, my home was not a safe place, where I became merely an object of a perpetual Inquisition. This was just after Sputnik went up to the glory of 'The So-Be-It Union'. My father, a muscular Christian, demanded I act out belief, even if I didn't believe: 'If you don't have faith, *pretend* that you have it, follow the rite, stage your faith, enact the belief that you don't have, turn yourself into a machine, and the faith will follow by itself.' I endured that shit until I was eighteen. I was known as the son of my father but, as an adult, I didn't want to be known as the father of my son, so I had a vasectomy; a problem for my current girlfriend, causing deep electro-chemical tumult in her brain."

Viola did the ol' 4, 3, 2, 1 professional pause accompanied by the Look-of-Empathy, opening up a dialogic therapy-space between us. She wanted calm inside; outside the howling wayward desert wind was busy clarifying the toxic L.A. atmosphere, a symbol for what Viola hoped would happen in my head.

"So you want to know the facts," I continued as I examined this slender, sixty-ish woman with a kind face and ears larger than her face wanted and which her gray hair couldn't suppress. My wayward eyes darted to a copy of Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Words* on her desk. (She later told me it had been a gift from her

## Finding Mememo



The Words, Jean-Paul Sartre, inscribed copy,  
photo by Hy Grader

daughter, Hetty, showing me the inscription and letting me snap a flick for my ongoing Glosses Collection after I pestered her a bit.) “Just the facts ma’am, just the facts is what you’ll get,” I affirmed, giving her my best smile. In my mind I evoked a canned laughter track while my thoughts skipped across my gray matter to something about Ichi’s witty take on Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*: “‘No’ takes the ‘thing’ away, and then ‘nothing’ takes the

‘no’ away, so that literally nothing is left. Very Japanese. Very Zen.”

Dr. Ate SNAPPED her short fingers like a grade school clay project, “Are we home in there? . . . I bet you think I’m on a dragnet for your traumas? Unlike Badge 714, [*my current phone prefix is 714!*] the sauce you dress your facts in is, for me, just as important as the facts themselves,” she told me, entwining her fingers, uncrossing her legs. “We are just going to help you ask yourself: ‘Have you made your life-story fit the stories of Sartre and Camus?’ Do you try to make sense of your life in regard to your personal authenticity? Do you want to choose what you want to become, or only express what you are? You can’t do both.”

She must have been what we today call “a foodie” as she used cooking metaphors throughout her session, like: “How many times did your father roast your butt — or maybe was a Ruler of the Roast whom you wanted to eat alive from head to toe?” “Were you ever ‘tea-bagged’ by a priest when you were an altar boy?” “What flavor would you associate with the first spicy novel you ever read?” “Romance can fill you better than pasta, and when it’s digested it leaves you thin.” “A life unfulfilled is like a succulent center-cut porkchop which has slid from its plate into a sack of garbage; you can’t take the same bite twice, especially if you swallow.” “That trauma you experienced, caressed with your tongue, is as full of meaning as the resonant note of an empty, uncracked cup.” “Do you recall what ‘The Stranger’ had for breakfast the day he shot ‘The Arab’?”

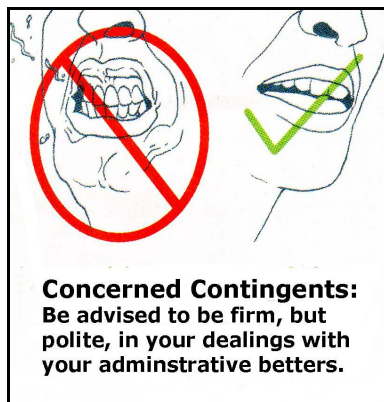
She said she was testing the fruit loops of my memory. As she encouraged me to recall, images from my past returned willy-nilly like Bingo numbers spit out by the revolving basket in the kid’s game version I got for my seventh birthday. “Ever since I can recall,” I told her, “I was embarrassed by the possibility of observers. It seems now my entire life has been regulated by these observers, real or imagined. I eventually concluded that those who loved me were nuts to do so, even malicious. Little by little I retreated into my own world,

## Finding Mememo

a world of sci-fi books (Robert Heinlein space-heroes), 1950s television bare-chested scuba-diving heroes ('Sea Hunt'), loner gunslingers in tight pants ('Paladin'), and noir mysteries (Chandler). Haunted basements and attics."

I recall Rorschach Tests, being very open with her at points, telling her, "A solution that brings about one's demise is better than any incertitude, right?" Asking her, "Do feelings lose their feeling if they speak to a lack of feeling?" And my legs were trembling when I said, "I won't fight the memories." And, indeed, those bits of my past rushed in — an unorganized horde — like a blaze of odors, colors, and murmurs. I told her I remembered a plywood floor in a tree house built by an older friend, the sound of pounding on that floor, my friend pounding his body, and the whimpers of a girl he knew, this as I stood below unbeknownst to him, listening with a mixture of delight and dread. "I still cannot abide pounding beds, or beefy arms pumping iron at the gym, or Bible thumpers at the pulpit. Too aggressive," I said. "In my adult life now it's 'Give me passivity: the woman on top, isometrics, and Buddhism.' Stuff like that."

"Nothing more suspect," she said, "than a person in uncomplicated love with what he thinks." This was delivered almost as if it was a private musing on



Wyoh's ironic, subversive poster

her part. Years later, I would recall her odd statement and see it applied to Donald Trump and his minions, to Chad and his minions, but with differences: the disciplinary man (Trump) is a discontinuous producer of energy, while the man of control (Chad) is undulatory, in orbit, within a continuous network (The-Lair-of-the-Talking-Claw). It was the gist of the advice Wyoming Mann gave me recently as he handed me a clever activist poster he'd fashioned. Ol' Wyoh, he was always making a castle of himself and dragons out of everything else.

Viola then explained "our" treatment goals, while I stroked my beard. "The demise we want here is only that of your *old* self, that too-passive self. I think your reactions against the active-male, against a false kindness and concern, and the opinion of others, were all steps toward solitude." She began her preliminary interpretation: "Because you were afraid and ashamed, you wanted to play at being different, the indifferent hero. What's more solitary than a hero?" she probed, staring at me across from her hand-me-down desk, her hands neatly folded thereon. "Hy, be not discouraged. Out of difficulties grow miracles. Be patient — a patient patient — think: O Time, thou can untangle this." I flashed on my love of Isaac Babel stories and how much Chad hated them."

# Finding Mememo

These dollops of wisdom seem most appropriate to me at my NOW point. Having been born in Speckled Eggs Garden, dishing up diverse course material at Scrambled Eggs School, and fated to die on Broken Egg Farm, I am now coursing between them on a depressingly inevitable trajectory. But I'm not to be discouraged! I am supposed to find "common cause" with others on the same journey through time.



The Hawaiian Feather Capei (1850)



The Joker (Jack Nicholson)

I continued to entertain Viola with my saga of personal weirdness, culminating with the revelation I had a deeply disturbing, hysterical experience at an exhibition of indigenous Hawaiian artifacts that came to Los Angeles' famed Historic Southwest Indian Museum near Pasadena.

"This must have hit something deep in me," I said. "I was standing before an 1850 Hawaiian chief's ceremonial cape, 'The Feather Cape of Kechi,' and suddenly flashed on the sardonic grin of the nefarious comics villain, The Joker, played so very chillingly by Jack Nicholson in the 1989 movie *Batman*. Holy peanut butter, I just broke down. Shook uncontrollably. There was a pounding in my ears. My girlfriend attested that, 'No *calme-toi* jazz was working.' I had to be assisted out of the building, incoherently jabbering away as if my sentences were actually bitten off; anyone with a half-functioning neuron could see I was having a meltdown. I replied, 'What the hell, it's what I do. I live with perpetual nausea, like people whose passports aren't in order, or who look at tree trunks too closely.' So what do you think of that?"

Viola's thin eyebrows went up, her lips went as thin as a viola's string, then she elucidated the imago of the *vagina dentata*: "Oh brother! If there was ever a paranoid male fantasy, that's it."

"But that took real *tooth* for me to tell you that. An uncensored report from the Inner-Convulsive Department," I bitterly whimpered. "I had a crazy upbringing in which I got acquainted early with some of the bads of life. Why today I fear when the designer jackboots kick the door in, their Special Forces' knives gripped in their teeth, it's me they're coming for." [Ed., an enlightening comment given Hy's very paranoid response to his departmental

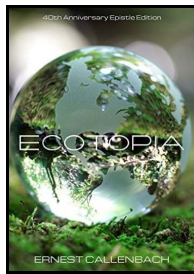




## Finding Mememo

*chairman: "Never, never, underestimate the power of the company commander, or the school's departmental chairman, even if he has the soul of a poisoned woodlouse, he still has the fuckin' push-buttons."]*

"I do have an ear for other people's harrowings," I continued, "but that's because something is wrong with me inside. I am not one of THEM, meaning I'm into cultural and intellectual things way beyond Conan-level, if you catch my drift. I was born on Mount Everest and shiver in the view, not born in a warm valley with a view no farther than sheep can see."



I then went into an *Übermensch*-ish political rant about my high mountain vision for a utopia: "Call it Caliwashigon, if you will, as it's formed by California, Washington, and Oregon seceding from the remainder of the Divided States of America [ed., obviously influenced by Ernest Callenbach's utopian novel *Ecotopia* (1970)]. California makes the border with Mexico a large garden that citizens of either country can cross and pick vegetables unimpeded. Washington turns the border with Canada into a huge sports ground where teams and individuals can play without guards. Oregon's border with Idaho is excavated and becomes the world's largest trout fishing lake. Dolphins — high-tech communicators, noble savages, androgynously postgendered beings, beach bums and surfer dudes, free lovers, angels free of the curse of technology, and the symbol of good society — become celebrated as the national fish, and are renamed 'Cosmodolphins'. Caliwashigon joins the Asian free trade zone, enters a Pacific Ocean non-aggression pact, and founds the Pacific Alliance Treaty Organization (PATO).

"Official languages are: English, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino, and Russian. Covering the capital and all military bases with tons of kimchi neutralizes North Korea. Hawaii's invited to become part of the new state, if the Naval Base at Pearl Harbor is abandoned. Artists peacefully occupy Arizona. The Colorado River is captured and the water supply to the repugnant and ugly city of Phoenix is cut off. A wall on the eastern side of the Colorado River is erected to keep all Maniacal Monoculturalists out of the multi-cultural west. Las Vegas is besieged with plastic hundred dollar poker chips until it capitulates to California. Corporate officers of American big business are



escorted to the eastern border in old school buses, handed crayons, and given their freedom. Big agribusiness are nationalized, and the farms divided up and given to those who wish to farm on a first-come-first-served basis. I even had a Hippy graphic designer buddy of mine render the country's official license plate honoring the

## Finding Mememo

number three," I said, going on to describe it in detail.<sup>11</sup>

Viola's only response was to pull her ears with both hands and utters, "I get the feeling you take to heart things that should, like water off a duck's back, be noted and then duly shed. You are carrying too much baggage. That vision of yours — despite the license plate design — well, seems little more than a pipe dream — funny though. Grist for a utopian fiction, but I'd use a pen name when publishing it for fear of thickening my FBI file; maybe, Carlton Davis, a cognomen that has an authoritative ring about it like Jefferson Davis; it evokes the figure of a handsome fellow with a ramrod straight back, a bipolar bear with the eyes of a visionary and a traumatic childhood dragging after him."

Appropriately, I went on about a myriad of childhood issues, about my problem with authority figures, and so forth. I told her how the Vietnam war, that supreme act of criminal monstrosity, interrupted my college years, how I saw the cosmic roll of the dice by General Pure Dumb Luck for the draft was a vote on the degree of the domination of chance and freedom. Viola liked that. I was feeding her the right stuff. She listened with eagerness, then chimed in: "I think you deeply resented, still do, being told what to do, and simply go on hurting from such; your utopian wishes are attempts at escaping a now-world where incidents, demands, compulsions, and solicitations of every kind of degree and urgency overtake your mind without offering it any inner illumination."

Her words blew through me like a dry wind. I felt vulnerable.

She sensed this, "Relax, don't be so hard on yourself and the world. For one thing, you have to accept the fact that you intimidate people with your Monsieur Teste braininess — without accepting your notion that knowledge has finally made it unnecessary to act — and when you try to be non-intimidating with people, you feel like you're being handled from paw to paw by a Kodiak bear, right?"

*Touché!* She hit a sensitive spot. Part of my brain started to feel like the Bulgarian Tank Corps was holding maneuvers there.

"Do you feel like a Lenin in action, but a Trotsky in your fate?" she added, a sort of psycho-ad slogan she learned from Jewish intellectuals she studied along-side in The Big Apple. Again, a perfect bulls-eye. She continued, "Remember, behind the individual enraging idiot are the idiotic parents, the idiotic schools, the crumbling culture, the inadequate cortex, etfuckinginterminable-cetera. Cut yourself some existential slack. But what you need is not a back rub and some comfort, but to overtly Ginsberg-Howl out your anguish, and put some

---

11. Hy had appended an \* to this paragraph implying he intended to footnote it. Here's that note: "Hy, of course you can use my ditty on Caliwashigon, but could you give me a credit with a footnote? FYI the Caliwashigon plate is my design based on one someone created for the seceded state of Washington they call Cascadia, but that flag had only one tree. Mine has three. — Carl."

## Finding Mememo

tooth-gnash into it. Too often I sense you cover pain by putting on mental pot-holders to grip that which is a too hot a kettle of stew."

I must have been expressing my unease in overt physical terms, like someone full of philosophical insights but stuck in a dentist's chair with no novocaine, as she chided me, "Now don't toss your head and paw. Despite my name I won't violate your confidence Mr. Pointy-Head of the Distribution Curve. So, let's hear more about what *you* like," she continues, a soft kindness coming into her eyes.

I quickly shifted from the political to the personal: "I like that shiver of ecstasy after scratching a mosquito bite; tap-dancing the intellectual Serengeti alone at night with my trusty electric easy-correcting Smith-Corona Coronet typewriter; naps so intense I awake drooling; popcorn coated with so much salt and butter that a layer of crystal forms in a yellow goo at the bottom of the bucket; biting into a perfect peach on a scorching hot day; looking into peachy, blue-gray eyes; dipping into peppermint ice cream topped with a large dollop of gooey hot chocolate, preferably on the vernal equinox; and, delicious, lonesome explorations of bookstores and library stacks powered by ignorant and infatuated curiosity.

"Anyway, that's the kind of list I put in personal dating ads whenever I find myself back in circulation, fishing for that elusive 'Ms. Perfect,' whose nouns and verbs I can resonate with." (Millennials: this was before personal computers, Internet dating sites, 9/11, the invasion of Iraq, the bad financial crisis, Facebook, Twitter, iPhones, the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement, the spate of both ironic and pretentious superhero movies, the haunting of our screens and paperback book covers by fanged, red-eyed, blood-smeared teenagers, with body piercing and sleeve tats.) I started to take some notes to make it look like

I was really into this whole shindig.

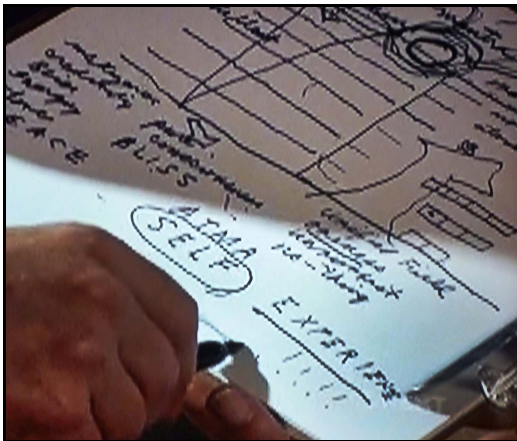
"Whoa! Did you run such an ad three years ago? I seem to recall . . ."

"Maybe," my voice almost a whisper.

"Yes! Yes! I cut that ad out. Jeez, sent it to Avril, saying she should check this guy out! God! That was *you*?"

"Probably why she's now sending me to you, for this libido-to-libido chat. Passing on the favor . . ."

"She's got the nerve! Had I known . . ."



Hy taking notes during his Sartrean therapy session

## Finding Mememo

"Okay, okay," I distinctly recall making the football referee hand gesture for time-out while blushing. While my body goes into auto-defense mode, my eye falls on the back of my hand in evenly hovering attention and bedazzled skepticism [*ed., I've observed Hy go interiorly distracted like this when playing chess with him*]. "Well, I *am* here, so let us get on with the nits, nips, tucks, and tips — okay?"

She took a deep breath and continued our session. "Most worries are the result of telling oneself more or less upsetting stories of greater or lesser complexity about one's own life."

"I can own that."

"So do some creative writing, turn your interior pain outward to entertain others. Such writing has therapeutic value. It doesn't have to be Hemmingway."

"I already write criticism," I told her, as if *that* explained everything.

"Good, but you need to go the next giant step toward true authenticity and make yourself vulnerable to a greater degree. It's one thing to remain a bit distant — like the misanthropic protagonist in Sartre's short story "Erostratus", looking down from his high window at people's abstracted forms on the street below — by doing a review, and another by laying your ass on the line with a more personal form of writing like: 'Under a cold aluminum sky, I hurried along the wet November pavement, kicking sad dead leaves, staring at grotesque tree trunks, my cold hands full of October's unpaid bills; the poorly tied knots in my shoelaces in boots bought a week ago, but which look two years old, are coming undone once again.' Get the gist?"

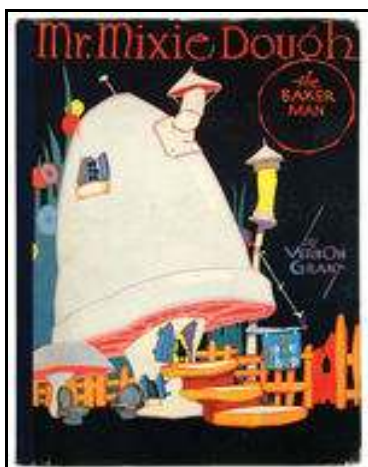
Ignoring her point, "Ah, 'Erostratus,' love that story, anthologized in *The Wall* if my memory is working up to snuff. The POV of the protagonist is a perfect example of Sartre using modernist photography's mode of 'defamiliarizing the familiar' via a bird's-eye downward view as an Existential ekphrasis." I was trying to impress her with my academic moxie. "What is interesting, is that in the 1920s such a photographic POV was coded as 'objective' due to the prevailing cultural milieu of 'The New Objectivity,' while Sartre's use of it synchs perfectly with the Existentialist-influenced German photo movement, 'Subjective Photography,' founded by Dr. Otto Steinert. Identical upward or downward views were once seen as 'objective' then, after the war, as 'subjective'. Cool, huh? A whole master's thesis could be . . ."

"Yes, yes. If you say so. But the point is we are getting off track. You're a master of diversion, putting up a wall, changing the POV on your therapy today away from the personal. You're one very slippery fish."

"Well, unlike Sartre and his minions, I see myself merely as the sum of all the stories I can tell about this particular human body sitting in front of you, my freedom reduced to a blind Lucretian swerve within a steady rain of atoms,"

## Finding Mememo

I said, hitting myself about the head and shoulders for effect. "I see the world only through words, living through the lives of others."



Yes, Dear Reader, this retreat into WORDS started at age four when the classic 1934 children's book *Mr. Mixie Dough, The Baker Man* by Vernon Grant — an artist trained at The School of the Art Institute where Jym teaches — was put into my small, eager hands. Seductive color illustrations and a baking recipe for a Happiness Birthday Cake. I loved getting caught up in stories because I would gradually forget myself and the unpleasant adult world around me. It is an escape I still need and enjoy.

"That *que sera sera* maintains what will be will be," asserted Viola, singing rather nastily:

*Que Sera, Sera,  
Whatever will be, will be  
The future's not ours, to see  
Que Sera, Sera  
What will be, will be.*

"Ugh! That awful bourgeois ode to complacency and quietism delivered by the poster girl for the wholesome housewife. Your decisive conduct will emanate from a self which is not yet. The self which you are depends on the self which you are not yet to the exact extent that your self which you are not yet does not depend on the self which you are. Get it?"

I got it. Right between the eyes! I made sure we spent the remainder of the session with me dodging Viola's probes and propositions by discussing the favorite books of my youth landing on Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, running to the Hardy Boys mysteries, passing into adulthood and modernism's GO toward immersion in Camus, Sartre, Joyce, and then onto Postmodernism's JAIL with Barth, Barthelme, and Calvino. I could see she was tiring, so I slickly segued to a play I was struggling to write, telling her, "It's something along the lines of Ionesco's wacky *Rhinoceros*, but titled *Megalosaurus*." She perked up.

"Jeez, Doc," I said, "just getting it down on paper was like pulling three abscessed teeth at 3 a.m. on a February morning with nothing but pliers, hammer, ice pick, and a small reading light, assisted by a shard of mirror like the one nailed to an outhouse wall at my uncle's lake cabin."

This got me another ten minutes of reprieve as I had to explain to her



## Finding Mememo



what a Megalosaurus was, give her the gist of the play, and flesh-out its triad of absurdist *dramatis personae*: “Nips,” “Nits,” and “Tucks”. Then I got a surprise extension of that reprieve when Viola wanted to know more about that lake cabin of my uncle’s. I obliged, “It’s in northeastern Wisconsin, blah, blah, blah . . . Near the fam hang out, Boiling Springs bar and grill, blah, blah, blah . . . Been in the fam for five decades, blah, blah,

blah . . . ” Not being clairvoyant, I didn’t see ahead to the day my uncle’s only son died drunk in its bathtub. She hung on to every word as her favorite uncle always summered in Wisconsin’s extended thumb, Door County — Egg Harbor to be precise. As I charmed her with this side-story, at one point Viola’s eyes shut like cat’s eyes in self-centered satisfaction, a childhood memory caroming bing-bang around in her cabeza.

Our hour session wound down. I was winded from my attempts at digression; paid her in hard cash — like one paid off a sex-worker — and did an about-face out of her office. Outside, the wind hit me with the impact of a solid object and leaves blew about me in small tornadoes. As I made my way toward my little red auto — shaken *and* stirred — I vowed not go back to Viola Ate for a follow-up session.

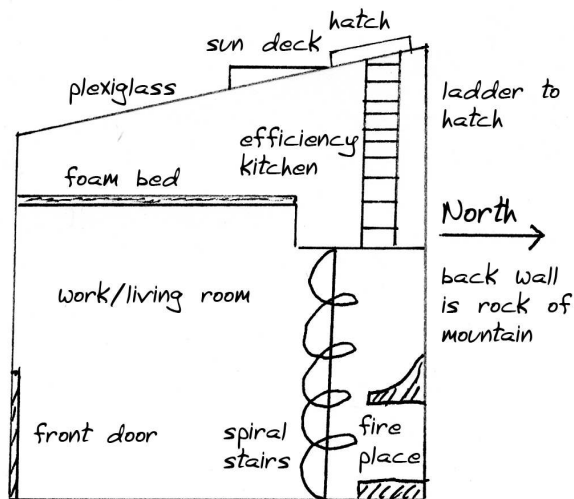
This decision didn’t sit — I almost wrote *shit* — well with Avril. My refusal to return because, “Emergent authenticity wasn’t exactly an affective tapping into anything,” became the Megalosaurus in our bedroom, the inhale waiting for a laugh that never happened. Night after night, my girlfriend displayed the copresence of being in control and out of control, yelling: “I need to know I’m being heard!” or “Lesson learned, dude?” or “Read this!” shaking her dog-eared copy of *Spiritual Laws of Growth* at me, and uttering other phrase-cushions that tried to push bad incidents into the past by the sheer volume of soliloquy that was aimed at reshaping events into the mood she wanted to be in and a world wanted — a world I couldn’t offer. The remainder of our love, once popping like champagne, now became sweetly sticky, still, like flat pop.

It didn’t help that Avril was a career-frustrated wannabe actor, who had to make her living working at the Boudin French Sourdough restaurant, filling up Styrofoam bowls with reduced-sodium, fat-free Cajun gumbo soup to either mauled, hollowed, and desiccated street people, or obese families with round girths and oblong calves. She left that job and got a permanent temp job through the Kelly Girl temp service and became a “Never-Never Girl”, the female counterpart to my “Never-Never Pedagogue”.

## Finding Mememo

Her years of on-again, off-again acting in community theater groups paid off. In January she landed a part in a daytime soap where her “shtick” was always sipping and spilling red wine in dinner scenes. By April, Avril had dumped me (contra Roberto Bolaño the month of April is not just disastrous, but cruel) and she invented a new soliloquy, “I will survive, for as long as I know how to act I know I’ll stay alive,” sung to the tune of the pop song of similar wording. By June, she’d graduated with her MFA in Theatre Arts.

Before she donned cap and gown, I’d hastily moved out into a two-story refunctioned garage space, “The Garage Gallery”, once home to early feminist performance art. It was built into the side of a mountain, had a hardwood floor,



The Garage Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

stained-glass windows, a Plexiglas ceiling open to the naked sky, with a thick foam bed under the skylight; its back wall was the very rock of the mountain itself, which proved to be a problem for its many gaps let in rats to battle and monstrous horseflies to spray — violations of the air and ground not welcome — which resulted in my allergies amping up, increased sinus infections with splitting headaches, and very thick earwax. All sounds, my speech and others around me, were transformed into a continuous muffle; my insufflation and tonal exhalation was a bell

of moistness and irritation. Every morning I would stand before my mirror and — a sad clown — mumble, giggle, and grimace. I would close my eyes, purse my mouth, hide my ears or wiggle them, but the nose outed, that intellectual proboscis steadily dripping, rebelling. It was as if my body was someone else’s.

For comfort, hoping for a nasosophical remedy, I pulled out my well-thumbed, redline-annotated copy of Franz Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* and reread it twice. Compared to that bug, my existence was great. But that wasn’t enough, I had to reread in chapter 38 of Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel*: “Why Everyone avoids Monks: and why some Men have Noses that are Bigger than Others.” Now *that* lifted my spirits like the Santa Ana winds outside lifting women’s skirts.

Eventually, I moved out of this “unique” shelter which, besides the foam mattress giving me floating back pains going off like underwater mines, the local

## Finding Mememo

ruffians kept breaking into searching for my pot stash. Another beleaguered artist moved in, but armed with cases of rat poison and a sign to screw to the garage door: PROTECTED BY SMITH AND WESSON.

I went to room with my twenty-two year old sister in a three-bedroom second-story apartment directly across the street from a bright red and yellow Vietnamese Buddhist temple which she and her Vietnamese boyfriend attended. Once a year, on Chinese New Year, we two had to evacuate to our parents home due to the excessive crowds, firecracker blasts, and dense, acrid smoke. For days afterward, shards of fireworks blew around the neighborhood as if a paper atomic bomb had gone off.

Over the years, I lost touch with Avril. But in the mid-1980s, as the grim grape reaper, phylloxera aphids, feasted on Napa Valley vineyards, I'd heard through a mutual friend that my ex-girlfriend was on a sitcom where her witch-laugh talent was accompanied by a "sweetening" of canned laughter. So Monday night, 8 p.m., I tuned in to "Roots of Ripeness", and groaned when I heard that familiar evil laugh, making a guttural comment that faded from loud to soft, my pitch staying mostly the same, a classic groan, but too prolonged.



Blue M&M's replaced tan in 1995; 4.7 kilocalories (kcal) of food energy (1.7 kcal from fat)

April 17, 1998, munching on blue M&M's, I nearly fell out of my favorite chair upon seeing Avril in a Netflix "dramedy," a comedy with stifled laughter, lasting only one season in which she was cast as "April Cherish", a tarty single mom contending with a rebellious teenager, Mlodan — a flashback shows the absent father, identified by his ethnic moniker, Dalmatinac, as a cheesy Croat hailing from the isle of Pag. Whenever April would try (unsuccessfully) to laugh (a reversal of her evil witch-laugh), Mlodan would groan loudly, glottal back-pedaling from a stifled cachinnation and bite into her favorite goat cheese, Funk-

meister, a product of Longmont, Colorado. Their daughter came off as a feminist killjoy in training — this during a period when PC was just beginning to play Thought Police among middle-class families and at ivy league campuses.

In late 2005, Dorinda told me Avril was on "Dancing with the Stars" as a fake-breasted flop performing under the name "Avril Cher". Two years after that, I was watching a "Law and Order" rerun featuring a theme "ripped from the headlines", and was surprised to see her in a TV hair commercial for some new red hair color derived from a French cantaloupe. In the "before" sequence, she

## Finding Mememo

sports pitch-black hair moving in multiple directions, shooting and bending across her head; in the “after” sequence a beautiful redhead stands cloying before the camera. This ad ran for a month or so and then went into that mysterious void, Ad Limbo, where adverts retire.



Film still, *Schindler's List* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1993)

After that, I didn't see her in the media for over ten years. Probably fell below the radar of market desire, victim of a mass democracy committed to aspirational sociopathy.

But Net-trolling one grim winter evening, a glass of superbly austere 2014 Kutch Santa Cruz Mountain Chardonnay

in hand — after watching and groaning at a hack-job by “Sboss” where an unpleasant scene from *Schindler's List* (1993) is paired with a laugh-track lifted from the TV sitcom, “The Big Bang Theory”,<sup>12</sup> — I discovered a YouTube clip featuring a markedly aged Avril performing as “Aunt Wiggles”, singing a child's rhyme about a ladybug walking, thinking happy thoughts, proud of its five spots. This nonsense featured in the Fourth Annual Useless Talent Competition, Marfa, Texas. The town's name — originating from a character in a book by either Jules Verne or Dostoyevsky — stuck out for me as it's where the Hollywood blockbuster movie *Giant* (1956) was filmed in wide-screen and souped-up Super Technicolor. It is also ground-zero to the Chinati Foundation, home to the Minimalist sculpture of its artist-founder, Donald Judd. One of Jym's colleagues wrote that Judd fled there from New York because, “Art dealers in business suits tend to have fangs and the cold eyes of something that kills for a living.” Hell, that would perfectly describe the dark entities that lurk in The-Lair-of-the-Talking-Claw at McUniversity.

---

12. I recall Hy telling us three amigos about this hack-job over beers at The Seven Lions. This led to an interesting debate about laughter versus groans, about comedy that pushes the limits of PC, about the changing nature of laughter today, how the young now don't laugh at what entertained us in our youth, and so forth. When discussing the hack-job by Sboss, Hy said he would replace that dude's tasteless laugh-track with “a medley of Franz Liszt's greatest hits, titling it *Schindler's Liszt*”.

## Finding Mememo



Minimalist sculpture, Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas, Donald Judd



In the Spring of 1983, I ventured south from Fort Davis, where I was visiting my aunt Martha and uncle John, to suss out Marfa. It was a place where locals could still believe the earth is flat. There I took a snapshot of one of Judd's sculptural installations, standing like a modernist version of a Stonehenge monument. I alined my POV to get a *mise-en-abyme* effect. I showed this photo to Dallas and, sure enough, it inspired him to write *Raventos' Revenge*, a detective-story-within-detective-story-within-detective-story thing featuring Blurt, Blunt, Will, et cetera.

But back to that other aunt, "Aunt Wiggles": Avril's post-menopausal life must have become rackety as her face suffered wide eyes that looked as if they had seen something ghastly, which her gyrations and singing in the video only seemed to intensify. After her performance, she was interviewed. She confessed she'd once planned to commit suicide, went to her desk to write a suicide note, and "ended up writing the funniest little ditty aimed at a kiddy audience ever. . . . You

know," she went on, "I guess our heads are round so our thoughts can change direction. Sure saved me!"

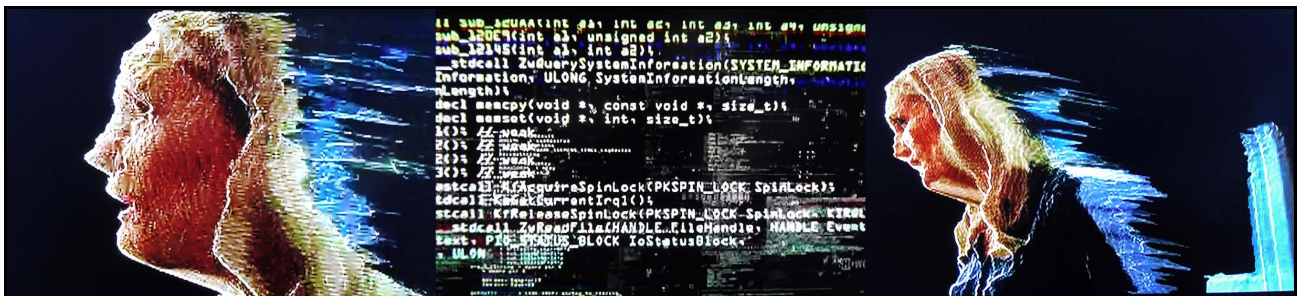
My eyes want to sleep, but my head is a poor mattress. My own thoughts now, as I sit in my awakening cabin where early light bounces off pine-knotted walls, are caroming off the sides of my head, thoughts that justify the word "privacy" be replaced with "secrecy". So it's HUSH, as I imagine I am on the Flambeau River near my lodge cabin, rhythmically bending and straightening, bending and straightening, bending and straightening, bending and straightening, bending and straightening, bending and straightening, bending and straightening — seeming to move the world rather than myself as I pass under dark bridges, between banks strewn with tourist garbage, a huge, monstrous dead sturgeon, a plump bunny-rumped deer, a couple embarrassed in their intimacy. My eyes wander downcast into a landscape of reflection that begins to appear more real than its top-world referent. I want in, needing to escape a noisy rain of accidents starting to pockmark the water's



## Finding Mememo

surface. I imagine myself descending upright among staring fish, sinking slowly inside a syllable in the coolness of a liquid continuum. Somewhere down among the flowage, I, a soggy, effaced leaf, shiver and start to dissolve into sleep, into a new knowledge of reality — my fading thoughts, sparking a pale fire in my eyes and a shift in my brainwaves, are of: 1) the Master's words, *Time is a fluid medium of the culture of metaphors*; 2) D-jump Master Wish's poetic challenge:

*Hightimes it is to be down into outs.  
To do a pantomime on the edge of a cliff,  
the first moment of a final pursuit.  
The leap beyond sequence; the jump.  
Your whole life, you've balanced yourself  
on an absurdly slender proscenium.  
Continue to edge out on that gangplank, sailor.  
Be ready for the switch up, the flash.*



Point-Two Seconds After Zodelia's Transition: our pseudohomeland no longer answers, the field of attention is Elsewhere: A Successful D-jump (via computer-generated graphics) by Group AI Waz Noone in *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*.

And, 3) a dream that starts with me commanding my inner-self: "Homunculus take a letter from Yonder Man," and ends with a D-jump dissolve. It begins:

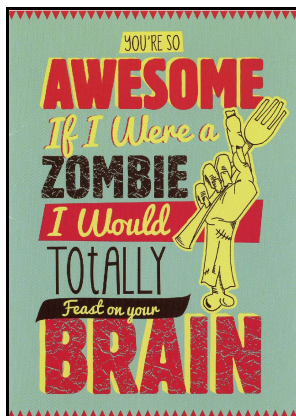
Dear Chad [*I imagine his Samurai crab-like scowl*]: I'm thankful for the injustice, the insult about me being wholly devoid of interest except for a PC violation: telling an Asian student that Burgundy wine bottles are slope-shaped — stings giving me strength to edge toward the edge. I had a savage pleasure, *l'appel du vide*, in reflecting that I could do nothing else but go on with my Quest, see what would happen, whether my body would or would not become *dead weight*. And whether my D-travel would be to a Sci Fi or an Extro-Sci Fi world of pure contingencies [*v. Quentin Meillassoux's Science Fiction and Extro-Science Fiction, 2013*]. That this impossibility of finding any other solution was a direct result of my own decision (shored up by Wishwer) and your own grating imposition that

## Finding Mememo

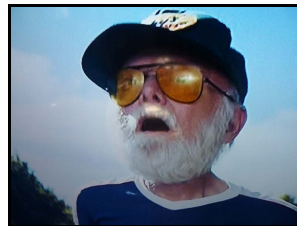
always left me with a sharp emptiness in my gut, which felt like hunger and nausea, wavering between. This, after years of playing the part of a fucking faculty fool being outwitted by a shrewd admin-type who, it seemed to me, was playing to perfection the part of a shrewd administrator outwitting a faculty fool. Watch me watch you as you watch me watching you. *Watching*. Could be a noun, too, like the name of some small village in East Anglia, Britain, or the name of a crossing-guard, Ms. Watching, or a new verb, i.e., what Ichi 's beloved watch does when strapped to his wrist, *watching*. Watch me get into trouble: I told my theory class Sartre had it in for the gaze (some in class thought I meant *gays*); next thing I knew, you knew. I was walking down a long corridor in The-Lair-of-the-Talking-Claw to be quizzed by "The-People-in-the-Hotel" (Charmian's quaint term) answering to why I said Sartre was either homophobic or spent too much time peeping at women through keyholes.

I must look like I'm a *galleta Ortiz*, [*a small cake made in Spain*] dusty, thin, with ugly-icing one is loath to lick, only look. I am about to get another decree — a violation of chance — one like the rest which I take contemptuously as "a decree from the wind". What is freedom but being subject completely to chance — so why not take a chance? Maybe lucky enough to wayback to the way the world was circa 1968 — all gone now. Now = a world chillingly similar to Orwell's 1984, complete with its degradation of language and truth, perpetual war.

So Chad, you Blatant Beast, I send you an ironic card. It will be when I jump into terminal velocity, wind buzzing past my aging ears, suppressing my fears, giving the moment before Fade and Emergence to my greatest memory: proudly receiving the Union Oil-sponsored Youthful Medalist Award in Science in my senior year of highschool; standing stage front before scores of teens, teachers, and theatric parents — but not before you, buster! Suddenly that stage morphs into the edge of a high building, my audience now consists of onlookers startled at my leap.



The ironic card featured in Hy's oddball dream



## Finding Mememo

I — a Post-Joycean Quasi-Mythic Wandering Whatever — jump, the velocity of my legs cycling air [*continues a dream I've titled "Let It Come Down"*]; bones dissolve, flesh liquidizes, an inside-out feeling of non-space, non-time, then a new energy. I become random gusts of dematerialized substance. I can't be nailed to a pronoun, my "I" now only a diaphanous fog of adjectives — Immer and Ziv — finally Emergence: all parts of the sky and ground bright. My eyes glow with seeing which makes me squint. A sky voluptuously soft. Arrival is disorienting, a sensation far from any my Self has known before. I, if it *is* me, holds something in my arms like a sleeping baby; it's a Canadian Impetuous Super-Compact Extra-Protector sleeping bag, which made it post-jump.

Before jumping, I'd wished for Marseilles with the beauty of Oûallonsnous, or Mars with its valleys and Valley Girls, or simply a fresh green breast of a new world — but no go. Am I zillions of miles away across an ocean of stars, across several oceans of stars? Or maybe time-slipping into a Brigadoon? But this world here has two suns — green below, pink above, warm colors in the middle. To steady myself, I recall Wish telling me the D-jumper's Prime Directive: *Adapt and flourish*.

It seems when one slips into another Real, all one's memories begin to wash away. At first, things do not seem to have their due weight. Natural law and the random can't be distinguished, like childhood where one has yet no place in reality. Like then, I need to manufacture my own reality here; maybe the inhabitants here do the same. But now, here, this feels like a *liberation*, a clearing of mind to move onto more important tasks beyond torturing myself about Chad. I will be deaf to his Rudefunk. I think: *Hell, who is Chad anyway, anymore? Huh?* This appears to be a land without memories, regrets, but what of hopes?

Then I notice *Them*, heads green, hands blue, and deformed (by Terran standards), their hands attached too close to the trunk [*ed., known medically as phocomelia, as seen in thalidomide babies*]. At a distance stand males in breeches and codpieces, faces like actors whose play just closed; the women are bolder, move closer. A short, chubby, prickly little girl approaches, stilt-walking-like, garbed in a green sleeveless tunic the same color as her face, its yellow ruff separating face from tunic. Giving me a cross-eyed stare with oddly painted eyes, she sharply queries, "Farsain, Idigaraga da Picard? Una da Kappâtî? Giz wetwä wumwum wamp wübfur," then walks backward away from me, sneering.

Standing there, I seem to be inhabited by a clear Self and a cloudy Self. Next to this child stands a Dantesque adult female, medium height, long face, aquiline nose, high cheekbones, wearing a sumptuous green and purple dress of a heavy material suitable for draperies, with solidly embroidered dark, glossy unfamiliar flowers; she is clad in leather sandals, her right ankle, perched in the dip of her Achilles tendon, has a red tattoo of a small bird. Her mother? Their spokesperson? Are their

## Finding Mememo

clothes costumes or daily wear? Am I hallucinating, inside a Philip K. Dick story, *Ubik*? I notice the men have been gathering in large baskets a harvest of what appears to be psilocybin 'shrooms growing near large amethysts of a diluted claret color. Cowbells sound in the distance. "Is it nice here?" I stupidly try to break the ice. Uncomprehending, the woman boldly reaches out and touches what to her must have seemed a powdered clown-face, then stands arms akimbo and says: "Târa-Bya, Bösforüs," pointing to the surrounding sea; then jabs a thumb at herself, saying "Gântrix."

She repeats this three times (in Sindarin, an Elf-language?). Her name, rank? Is this a matriarchy? Is this an important clue? If so what, precisely? Dal would've known — sussed it out somehow, beer in hand. Maybe contact John Lilly and SETI. Sure miss that hombre's gift for solutions. He wraps up his own cases quicker (if not as often and with less jollies) than his intrepid fictional shamus, Blurt Wildbraine.

Gântrix points to the reddish ground and says, "Cöwesland" — damn! I prefer "Cape Thought" — then aims her stubby digit toward her group and says, "Nöus Förmorians, tobt." A collective roar, then strange sounds among them, words that I imagine spelled out in my mind in a synthetic orthography: "skoç tuid" (it sounded like "Scotch tweed" and I hastily looked down to see if I was wearing such), "trençkot," "oto-teknik," and "seksoloji." These peculiar, yet vaguely familiar, sounds are bracketed by a large double rainbow painted across their two-sunned sky. This colorfully framed, fantastic group of women, contrasted to the men all in black, would make perfect subjects for the French fashion illustrator Bernard Boutet de Monvel [ed., 1881 - 1949]. This digression into my thinking couture is a distancing strategy, a way of coping with the sudden privatized-hope-transition from my Chad-Worried-World, where my pedagogic nemesis plants hate-mail in my e-dreams, into this brave new world poking out into a sea on a green Promontory of Open Possibilities (P.O.O.P, orange letters in Eric Gill's Perpetua font, imitative of roman stonecut letters, on a green field, a logo I envision featured on future D-jump tourist brochures for this place). I gauge I am standing half way up that narrow promontory of claw hammer shape.

Around this group are bushes resembling a great tangle of seaweeds; behind, a town of brightly painted wood structures (recalling Bergen, Norway) stacked four levels based on stilts to counter flooding and accessed via tall wooden ladders. In the distance, a wet-lands in a very shallow valley. At the remotest ends of my vision, multitudinous seas on three sides. Has that water lost its saltiness, acquired the taste of a peculiarly flavored lemonade, or is it pure knowledge: dark, salty, clear, moving, utterly free?

That squat, chubby girl pokes disapprovingly at my faux leather jacket, then flaps her arms like wings. I dub little chub "Porcupine Angel".

## Finding Mememo

When I address her as such, she turns her head inquisitively to the side like my dog does when addressed. At a distance behind her, a pentapodic mongrel, working its five-legs to a gallop, scares a strange bird off a sandpit: “Koaxpf . . . Koaxpf . . . Koaaacch . . .” it cries. “Önir-Ör,” says my Angel, pointing upward. Closer, on a twig, a large chrysalis opens and out emerges ridges of green hair followed by a staring opaline eye.



Cōwesland (Cape Thought, a.k.a. P.O.O.P.) as envisioned in a Landsat view surrounded by an endless ocean.

“Cūmbiamba,” the older woman interrupts, jabbing in the direction of the town with a rough-hewn walking pole. “Nezhukumatathil!” she commands. We and the onlookers, apparitions of faces in the crowd like petals on a wet, black bough, turn and walk toward town, men trailing the women. I have no choice but to follow, making my way through grass they call “udī”, a species six inches tall with a paint brush dab of red on their leaf tips, past cōwe daisies burning their stars into the stalled air. I see strange winged worms leaving asemic coils of processed mud (“jümm”) as those strange birds chatter unpolitically in the shrubs. We pass what looks like standing stones teleported from Callanish, Scotland.

Soon, we are in the village on a dirt street. The woman turns to me, rubs her tummy, “Paramin?” I nod and reply with mouth-feeding gestures. I am led to a public house with a turf roof where its thick, massive door is opened and I am invited to rest rump on a wooden bench at a hefty table. I assume this is the Förmorian’s communal dining area. I look about, curious. A wooden (live oak?) harp in the corner lies next to a wooden lectern. The room is lined with taxidermied water birds and is filling with folk divided by gender, garb and, it seems, disposition.

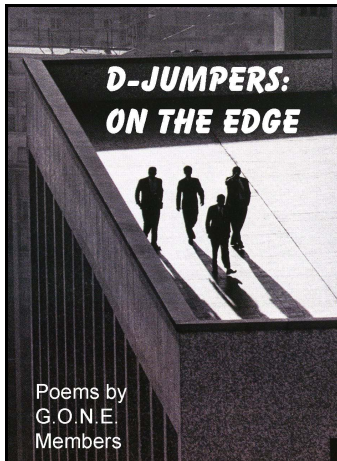
Male twins, “Heimweh” and “Fernweh”, serve me “Swäbble”, what appears to be rat salami drowned in Sauce Robert, a brown mustard sauce derived from the classic French demi-glace, one of the mother sauces in French cuisine best suited for meats [*ed., chopped onions cooked in butter, a reduction of white wine, pepper, an addition of demi-glace, and is finished with mustard*], paired with a large glass of a corky claret? served by a young male sommelier named “Sö-Yinka”, but I dub him “Luscious Skin”, the males being more delicate than the women.



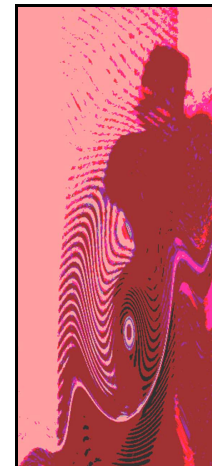
## Finding Mememo

While eating and sipping, catching my breath between bites, I am shocked to see one woman fumbling with her bodice — god! — she's incubating chicken eggs in there. Her name is "Günnie" and like most of the females here, she's very "hippy" and I don't mean Sixties counter-culture. The ladies here do not tend toward anorexia and, as in Gerd Brantenberg's feminist utopia, *Egalia's Daughters*, keep their men subservient. The males seem to do the "shadow work" in this society. Right now they are preening themselves, combing their long hair, looking a bit sheepish. Dallas would say: "Son, yer blind as a bat if ya didn't grok that theirs is one helluva matreeeeeearchal so-sigh-ity."

One young girl boldly approaches me; puts under my nose a planter's tray of fungus and, gesturing with her right hand, says (as I imagine, given the strangeness of this world): "She has a plan, but it's risky, given her limited skills as a relatively new fungus."



Limited edition book, cover and frontispiece, variously authored poems imagining Dim-travel, set in Quim font.



I wish I could take a selfie of myself sitting here sipping, and send it to Wish with a note: *Shopping lists are not their breviary here, nor are supermarkets their temples.* I recall Wish and I, at the lodge, had been discussing his G.O.N.E. group's belief in T. I. N. A., i.e., There Is No Alternative to the vertigo of our liquid-modern life within that life. "It is up to each of us," he told me, "to seek our own personal solution to our dismal reality, deploying one's own wit, skills, and resources." D-jumping was a resource his group was wishing for, of course. Wish's probing question that day caroms about in my *cabeza*: "What is our potential? What is possible for me, for you, at this moment, during a certain event *phi* or *psi*?" My dreamy mind parses my response in three rhetorical tones: *Wish said that? Wish said that? Wish said that?* My potential here might be to write a visceral realist poem, a *loco-descriptive* ditty, "Lying in a Hammock at Fern Fen Farm near Beeny Cliff and Egg Rock in

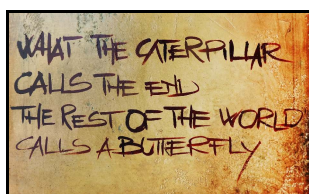
## Finding Mememo

Lower Cöwesland," beginning: "Selvakumar / squeezed by his nightmare / wakes unurgent to the shouts of dogs / and the silence of: the impurities in rocks / the beauty in cow daisies / put on an over-nourished algorithm / and saw Daftdd." *Poetry Atlas* website would add a red push pin locating my poem in "Extra-Terran, Extro-Sci Fi" space.

A TV voice-over runs through my *cabeza*: IF I WAS AN OTHER AND THEY ARE OTHERS, PERHAPS NONE OF US ARE OTHER BUT INSTEAD ARE NEW US. But what if my "potential" here is only as a torture victim surrounded by demons and masses of polygon-shaped crystals? I mean, they keep feeding me as fast as I can eat. One woman, Tóclamela, keeps insisting: "Epifäno, taavvi jjuag. Mör, mör," ignoring my "filled up" gesture and negative reply of "Nel" with an insistent "Simön!" (yes), proving the French adage: *Jamais deux sans trois*. Am I being force-fed, like that Celtic god, Dagda, tortured (as the saga goes) by food until, bloated, he was tossed waist-deep into peat and beat; taunted for his gluttony-induced impotence? Darkness in my soul, I shudder. In my tummy, something's funny; feeling sick. I'm quite confused as something deep inside has been loosed; maybe I will be going far off like an echo as I'm left feeling very wrong. I find I must release a countermeasure mantra into my other-worlded *cabeza*: WHAT IS UNKNOWN TO ME IS WHAT MAKES ME MYSELF . . . WHAT IS UNKNOWN TO ME IS . . .

I have had my vision dream, Wish and Sado fed it — "Let us die and charge into the thick of the fight, no matter how dark the sky, how big the waves" — the undersong start of all fable. At the upteenth mind-worm repetition, I awaken from my comb-over coma in a shaken state in my lake cabin to the smell of lodge-bacon. Time's moved past and the air's not the same. This immediate question pops to mind: *I'd said life was wrong; what do I say now? I know what Dallas would say if he was in my shoes: "MY DICK'S IN THE WIND* [literally] *AND TO HELL WITH ALL THE KNUCKLE-HEADS. I'M KEEPIN' MY POWDER DRY AND BARRELS WELL-LUBRICATED, CLOSE AT HAND AND READY*

*FOR USE!" But in which world am I to do this? Here and now, or there and then? Hey you bastards, I'm still here — er— there. In my dream I materialized in a — maybe bad, maybe good — situation; nevertheless, where it was, I should be.*



"Transition," graffiti photographed by Ichi Honne and sent to Hy Grader; Hy annotated that this section was to end with this image slotted in as seen here.

In this, I follow my own sinuous trajectory — and Wish's who told me, "The study of Nature makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature" — obeying our mutual inclinations, leaving the reader the burden of determining where this journey is leading.

\* \*

## Finding Mememo

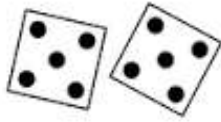
*Editor's Gloss: Ah, Hy, knowing very well that your thought will go on endlessly and that the idea of ending no longer has any meaning in a mind that knows itself well enough, I come to the end of your writings. I rehear the death-dive thump of Eugene O'Neill's character, Parritt, after he jumped from his upstairs window. You've left us — Ichi and Dorinda agree with me here — with a very strong suspicion you attempted to dimension jump. Dallas stresses, "I've been busier than a two-peckered billie goat lately afigurin' all the data, feelin' like I'm in a locked-room mystery, the room bein' Meme's Mind, where I need find the Looking Glass. And we only have a what?, a Wishwer, and a dream-wish to go on." Dorinda, being an analyst, is less skeptical, "Hy's dreams are the key. He was too private a person to let much out. We have dig into his therapy sessions."*

*Personally, I think Dallas groks more about Hy's connection to Wishwer Watt and Watt's connection to Deep Dream than he's willing to give us, why he's still holding to the simpler suicide solution. It may have to do with client-PI privilege as Wish was closely tied to that corporate case Dallas worked earlier, and discussed in the text. I, knowing the viciousness of academic politics, have a small, 3.14159265359 percent, suspicion that an academic ninja (official or unofficial) tossed him ass over teakettle, knowing his mental state would easily make it appear self-murder. In fact, Hy's wpd. files might've been hacked and given some admin-type the idea in the first place. I mean, just think of the temperature that may be reached in a big pot of talent where so great a number of Prides are comparing one to another, dueling in which swords are lightning flashes of wit or transmitted through optic fibers at the speed of light; in such a gaggle of persons some are always afflicted with certain delusions of grandeur, others are endlessly crossed and tormented by delusions of persecution. A place riff with closet plebiscites, meaningless coronations, frequent assassinations by word of mouth, pilfering, and occasional mortal wounding. Meme, himself an academic, was not immune to such.*



Sherlock Holmes (Benedict Cumberbatch) jumps to his (supposed) death in the final episode to Series Two of the television program "Sherlock" (Hy Grader's collection of Jump Shots)

## Finding Mememo



Meme had in himself so many years of reading, critical refutation, meditation, inner combinations, and observations of such ramifications that it was difficult to foresee what his responses might be, so it certainly is possible he would opt to roll the cosmic dice and attempt the D-jump thing. Hell, the word “Emerence” itself has something attractive word-wise about it. It is even possible Wishwer Watt was prepared to do a switcheroo, placing a previously dead D-jumper for Hy, if Hy’s jump was successful. After all, that was foreshadowed in the last episode in Series Two of the “Sherlock” TV show starring Benedict Cumberbatch where Sherlock tries to fake his own death by doing a high-dive from a London building, images of which were on Hy’s flash-drive (see pages xiii, 219, and above). After all, a person was seen leaving the scene with what looked like a large belt. And Hy’s desire to escape, previewed in his eleven-day exodus, has been proven.



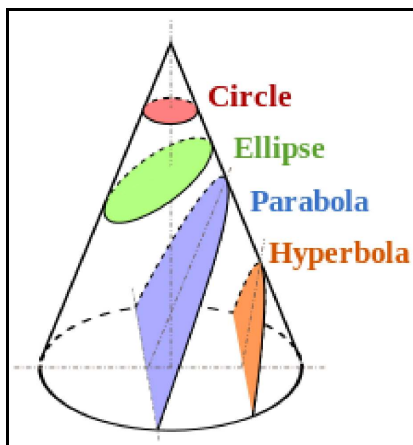
Millicent Dillon

This final section is among the best of all (my love of Nabokov may be skewing my judgement here, as that is the “Master” Hy refers to on line 4, page 432). Hy’s recurring figures — water, consciousness, memory, dreams, and jumping — come together here. I know for a fact Hy had been dipping his absorbent mind into Millicent Dillon’s superb anthology of the writings of Paul and Jane Bowles because Hy once told me “Millicent is the perfect name for the person tasked to redact their work. Millicent, please do take a bow!” Names for Hy were more than names. As a class assignment he once listed some well-known authors and asked his students to invent names for who would be best suited to edit their works.

The flashback in this section to Hy’s earlier life with Avril and his therapy session with Viola Ate (whose motto is: “What does not change is the will to change”) where Existential psychoanalytic techniques encourage Hy’s ancient psychic artifacts to uncave themselves like roused bears baring, with a growl, the truth. But it is, in my estimation, as much a verbal play as that of the actual bear that toyed with Hy’s lunch sack earlier. Now Dallas thought this flashback best be eliminated (“Trim, trim, trim, Jym!”); Dorinda thought it might be better placed earlier in Hy’s narrative, say section one, where it would have illuminated Hy’s past love life: “I’m not jealous of his past love interests. For I’m sure he’d, with them, also make narrow remarks working their way, like a plumber’s snake, through their ears, down their throats, halfway to their hearts, and then stick there, leaving them choking on the equipment.”

I ignored her bitterness, a bitterness of grief more than real resentment. Contra Dorinda’s input, I knew Hy eschewed linear narratives — he had this fixation on any curve one could derive from a cone, something he said harkened back to his first ice cream cone — liking to make associational flashbacks that followed from what was on his mind as his narrative meandered on, often inspired by the books he was reading. So I kept the elliptical in its original place. I only mention this because Samuel R. Delany’s classic text, *About Writing*, has a major beef with improper use of such circular dips into the past and

## Finding Mememo



Hy used to assign that book in his Remedial Writing 101 class, so he wasn't following his pedagogical advice.

We combed through Hy's many Moleskine notebooks — he kept his notebooks like some people in Wisconsin keep cows: rising every dawn and writing, hoping perhaps they'd give a little milk now and then, an activity to which Dorinda admitted she oft said snidely to Hy "Scribble, scribble, scribble, eh, Mr Gibbon" — where Dallas found a wacky handwritten love letter stuffed between the pages of a notebook from 1975, a tangible memory out of the past. It was mailed to Avril, dated April 1, 1975, and signed "Your mellow marshmallow,

*Pelado*" (1920s Mexican slang for an urban bum). Dallas said he might cop a passage from it for a new mystery, "Experience Was Her Dictionary", he was writing and insisted I give you a choice sampling:

My dearest French April,

Avril, Avril, Avril, Avril . . . I love your name. Named after my favorite foolish month, April. The fourth month. The number four which the Pythagoreans associated with Justice. The month of jokes, Easter's renewal, and my father's birth month (4-17-22, adding up to 43, which then added to his birth year equals 65, the year of my high school graduation). I can say your name/month any number of times, and this only makes me love you more, more violently and more persistently. Only reciting the name of Alcibiades — son of Cleinias, from the deme of Scambonidae, general, and prominent Athenian statesman of classical days of yore — can move me more: "Al-ci-bi-a-des, Al-ci-bi-a-des, Al-ci-bi-a-des, Al-ci-bi-a-des, Al-ci-bi-a-des, Al-ci-bi-a-des . . ."

You are a Pisces, a swimmer; me a sailor whose rigging is weak, canvas rotten. Can we go on a sea journey, heading for a soothing sea-change, that strengthens our sails? Ah, it will be the salt in the salt spray, the wind up our noses, us soaking our hearts in caring seas, sponging each other with restoring waters. One moment I am a message in a bottle floating in your ocean, needing to be opened, next a diver willing to share your "debths". Can we fathom each other?

When I first met you, we played Rock, Paper, Scissors and your scissors cut my paper. I knew the best was behind me and the sun ahead to shine. Until I met you, even at midday there was a frightful darkness, like Guinness in a glass. All I was doing was reading long novels that interminably burned along, like the chain of my mother's cigarettes. But now every order of dreams and square roots booze my mind. Any silly

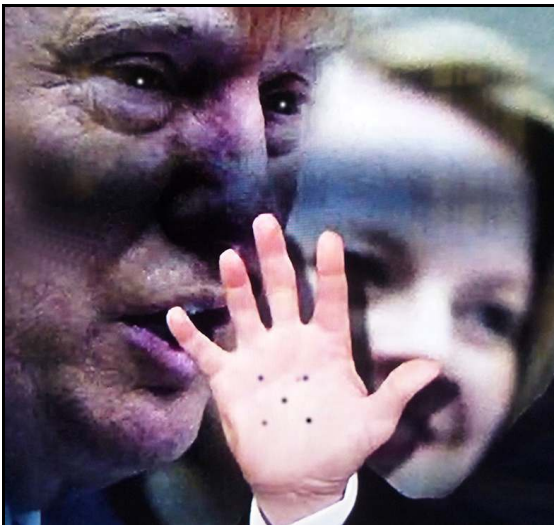


# Finding Mememo

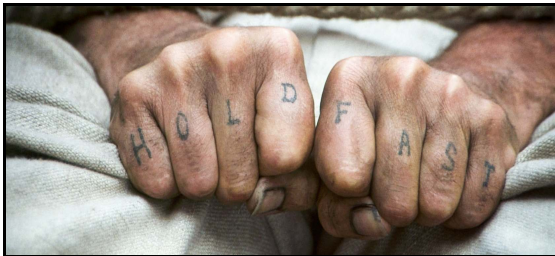
attempt by me to deny my attraction via that ticking thought-machine of mine is about as effective as spit on a wall.

Now I cannot get into hanky-panky with anyone else without wiping my mouth afterward with the monogrammed hanky you gave me. I would rather use your toothbrush than mine; I'd love you the same if you had one ear, one eye; if you were bald, or deaf and dumb; if you preferred bare feet to shoes. When you are away, I bite my nails to pain and bleeding. My love is the love that one stronger algebraic symbol in a bracket has for its multiple. O Uncalculable One, you give me the hottest cold equations, like the square root of minus one [ed., *Hy must assume Avril knows that was Jacques Lacan's famous notation for the erect phallus*]. We are, too, in won (won plus won) — WINNERS!

P.S. Thanks for that Ray Bradbury story "The Man with the Rorschach Shirt" [ed., *published 1967*].



Donald Trump and Mystery Hand with Quincunx



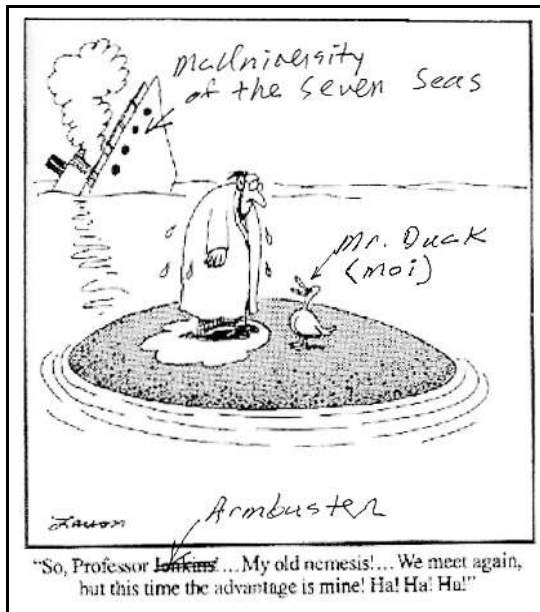
Film still, *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* (2003) Peter Weir

*"A very shallow though breezy wind, like one blowing over an inland lake," is how Dorinda described this blast from the past, her niacin flush now on its last flash. She pulled out her iPhone and showed me an image Hy had e-mailed her a month prior to his death. "It appears to be Photo-shopped," she said, pointing to the quincunx tattooed on that obfuscating hand. She went on to tell me something I already knew, that Hy was hooked on the 2003 sea-adventure film Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World, especially with the scene where one of the crew displays his "digital" HOLD FAST tat to the cinema audience. "That sea-born slogan was Hy's and my mantra contra the Trump tsunami." told her Hy mis-called it "Far Side of the Word," which was Hy's way of verbally slipping between that movie and his beloved comic strip, Gary Larson's Far Side.*

*In addition to the problem of placing this flashback, this key section, which is basically a compilation of*

*brainwaves — "All one long, long diversion, sometimes as tedious as long division,"*

## Finding Mememo



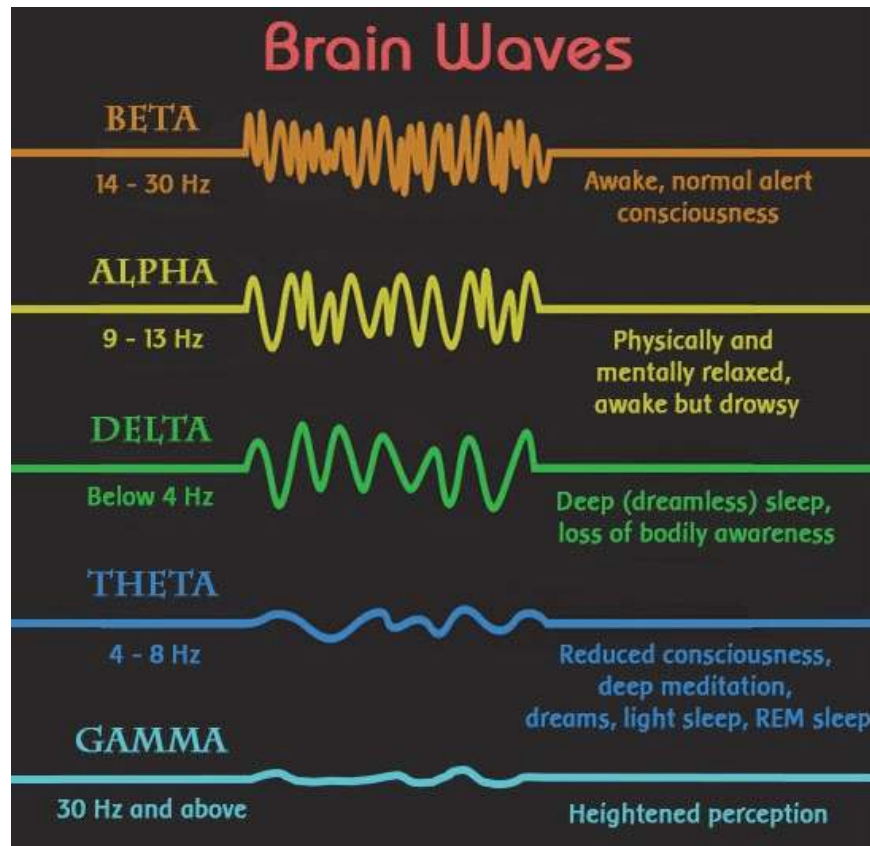
Violated Gary Larson comic found taped into one of Hy's notebooks; Hy was known to his grandchildren as "Mr. Duck" because he could talk like a duck and, I suppose, because he was always trying to out-fly the pot-shots Chad Armbruster was always taking at him.

Dorinda quipped — was difficult in itself to organize. Written just prior to Hy's demise at a time when his super-ego was playing advise and consent with his ego and id in a kind of psychic tennis match for three wearing combat boots on a muddy court, it's no surprise that Hy often wrote multiple versions of sentences, even paragraphs. For instance, when he first greets Viola Ate he originally wrote: "Viola gave me her left hand, and I gently shook something upside down the way I shake my penis where it overhangs the john." He then offers an alternative, which I chose, "Viola gave me her left hand, the sort of stiff way women do when formally greeting a man. I gently shook something kind of upside down as one shakes freshly cut blossoms to release the dew." More subtle, vague, brain teasing.

In some instances, I tried to recuperate the complexity of his thought, those quantum brainwaves and their expression, by taking the liberty of creating composite paragraphs out of the various versions; in other instances, paragraphs were condensed, like the thick sweet milk Hy loved to add to his coffee. I, of course, Buzz Café-consulted with a still-flush-from-her-noon's-dose-of-niacin-Dorinda about all these alterations, adhering to the echo of Hy's repeated advice, copped and recontextualized from his Northwoods uncle who was at the time madly in the midst of a money-pit type rehab job on his old lake cabin: "Two heads are better than one." This, as snow came down outside. Dorinda said she and Hy's relationship had changed over the years. When they first tied the knot, it was a simple hitch. But like the complex relationship-knots described as Jack and Jill dialogic misadventures by R. D. Laing's 1970 masterwork, *Knots*, their relational knot became more convoluted over time, accruing more NOTS than OKS. "Although," she remarked, "occasionally, joy or wonder would surface in him, like a submarine breaking water in an emergency, or like a break in the clouds.

"As our relationship got caught in our mutual positive and negative binds, Hy's thinking and writing became more and more entangled as well," she offered, elongating the vowels as she stirred a soup spoon in the Buzz's Soup of the Day, cooling a hearty Tuscan white bean and tomato vegan concoction. "Here, look at this." She reached down, snatched up her black Coach brand briefcase, pulling out a folded piece of paper. "Here's Exhibit One, a R. D. Laing Jack and Jill knot," she said, unfolding it, "descriptive of our relationship. Hy always said our problems were rooted in 'epistemological kerfuffle.' He always over-intellectualized our emotional clashes, you know. Here, look."

## Finding Mememo



Graph and Text (with uncorrected typos) found in Hy's Moleskine Notebook

HY'S BRAIN FUNCTION AND QUANTUM MECHANICS: There is an equation that says that any particular waveform may be composed of any number of other waveforms, and that this composite waveform is a "superposition" or combined state of all the other waves. So, essentially, our state of consciousness is really a mixture of all of these different kinds of waves, and as we increase or decrease the intensity of any particular wave, we alter our state of consciousness. So we understand that what we understand to be consciousness may be explained as a "superposition" or combined state of all of the various brainwaves. This is very logical. But, how is this really a quantum theory of the brain. Essentially, a quantum superposition state is best explained by the equation for quantum superposition. It says that for any wave function  $Y$ , then  $Y$  can be composed of any number of other wave functions. So, if consciousness is really the composite brain wave  $Y$ , then it is some combination of all of the other waves. So, for example, in a very aware person gamma waves would dominate. In a person that is normally alert and awake the beta waves would dominate. In a deep sleep the delta waves would dominate. But, as we all know, our state of alertness is somewhere in between or perhaps a combination of all of these states. This is where this quantum equation works very nicely! Dr. Penrose and Dr. Stuart Hameroff, argued that there are microtubules in each neuron of the brain that act as quantum switches. A conscious event occurs when all of the quantum switches function together to create a conscious perception. There is an important distinction here between a classical switch and a quantum switch. We go back to the concept of quantum superposition again, or the idea that many states can exist at the same time.

## Finding Mememo

*I unfolded the paper, our wait-person, name of Jill, was walking by just then and stopped to look over my shoulder. "Wow," she said. We both saw a remarkably poetic structure:*

Jill does not know  
    Jack does not know X,  
and Jack cannot tell her more than that there is  
something, he does not know what,  
    he does not know.

There is something Jack can't see.  
He knows there is something he can't see,  
but doesn't know what it is that he can't see.  
But Jack can see Jill can see  
    that Jack can't see something.

Jack doesn't know  
    what he doesn't know  
but he thinks  
    Jill knows whatever the something is which he doesn't  
know.

One of R.D. Laing's psychological "knots"

*"You know," continued Dorinda in between noisy sips of her soup, "the last thing Hy said to me before he disappeared for those painfully lonely (for me) eleven days — cryptic at the time, now understandable — was, 'A ship leaving port is still a wonderful thing to behold.' I did not tell Dallas that — I'm not as close to him as you — maybe I should have."*

*I told her Dallas told me Hy'd advised him on his writing thus: "Fix your attention upon the given object or situation so that the various elements, all familiar, can be regrouped. Ob-*

*tain frightfulness in your stories by unfamiliar patterns of those familiar things. Like having a gorgeous morning's airy blueness give one bad goosebumps."*

*"Jeez, that 'unfamiliar patterns of familiar things,' . . . it describes our life together," Dorinda blurted. "Sure, love is a joint experience between two people, but a joint experience doesn't mean it's a similar one to each." There was a long pause. She seems embarrassed at her outburst. We both uneasily looked out the Buzz's plate-glass window, staring at a sky appearing to be lit from above by gray-violet neon while white stuffing gently fell and the sidewalk began to show silver. This was the opposite of other meeting days when the setting sun's orange light would flood the café and I'd see an extraordinary clarity and beauty in her sad eyes. "I used to tell him, arms akimbo, I knew his theories, but that he'd never convince himself of them, much less me. Hy's retort was: 'My theory now is do no thinking, give no reasons, have sensations, make no apologies,' giving me his face-of-a-fish-dragged-up-onto-the-beach expression: eyes bulging, jaw slack. A boldface lie, I knew. It was that damned Chad. He and Hy were only communicating in acid monosyllables lately, and the bullshit was spilling into our lives.*

*"I once came upon him ranting on our back deck, after downing too many gin shots: 'Chad! I am the spider in your salad, the blood smear on your bread, the rusted scalpel across your throat, the thorn under your nail!' And so on. It seems Chad had never let Hy forget that he'd had fallen victim to mathematician-physicist Alan Sokal's 1996 hoax article in Social Text, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity." Sokal argued, and Hy took the bait, that the concept of "an external world whose properties are independent of any individual human being" was "dogma imposed by the long post-Enlightenment hegemony over the Western*

## Finding Mememo

*intellectual outlook." I insisted to Hy, 'Once you've laughed a bit, raved, wept, reasoned a bit about this shit, you have to let it go.' Yes, arms akimbo, I busted him on it. I knew he felt, despite his defensive rant, like a flawed vase rejected by a potter. I told him, 'We never think that what we think conceals from us what we are. Can't you stand on something more substantial than your mind babbling on to itself about 1996?'*

*"I must have hit the target, for Hy's face assumed a characteristic impassivity, hiding anger by staring closely at his gin glass (but it could've been anything: a plate, a chair, a small cushion, a sleeping dog, a sputtering candle, or a hangnail on his hand). After these kind of interactions, he'd wait until I was unprepared, then hit me with pent-up rage, me a punching bag for his muscular thoughts.*

*"Often, when I was merely popping some popcorn to accompany my watching pop TV shows, like 'Dance Moms', he'd say, 'You realize what you're doing?' And I'd reply, 'What am I doing?' And he'd say, 'Nothing, except giving in to a passing emotional need tied to your food obsession, your snacking. You could read, or lie down and doze, God knows.' It made me sad to know that in spite of the fact we often had the same reactions, the same feelings, they would rarely reach the same conclusions. Once I told him he must be living in Camp Cataract, so fuzzy was his thinking at times. And so we'd argue again.*

*"We were on the same page over Trump — Hy called him 'His Pants' — 'I said he had a personality as undeveloped as a foetus, with the proportions of a Brobdingnagian poisonous weed.' He nearly tossed his lunch laughing, then confessed to a disturbing dream he had the night before, showing me what he'd written down."*

I look out the west window of our commodious seven-room house situated near a public school, a Methodist church, and handy to a Whole Foods. Black clouds drift by, impossibly heavy and terrifying. An Eagle appears under them like a lightning bolt and swoops down on a huge flock of starlings coming out of the west, darkening the sky with their erratic fluttering; after a few minutes that fluttering of the starlings was scattered and bloodied as the afternoon sky took on a deep red hue, like the color of sunsets seen from an airplane, or the color of dawns, when a passenger is woken gently by the jet engines whistling in his ears and lifts up the little blind and sees a horizon marked with a red line, like the planet's femoral artery, or aorta, gradually swelling. I see that swelling blood vessel in the sky, the blood-stained flight of the starlings, that predatory bird splashing color like an Abstract Expressionist painter.

*"I did a McFreud interpretation, said the clouds were a depressive indicator and the Eagle being President Trump having at the masses. His unconscious had already seen Trump triumphant, weeks before the election. He'd already told me — his teeth slightly clinched and showing, the masseter muscles taut, his nostrils flared — his contempt for the man occupied more space and height inside him than found in Chicago."*

*"No shit," I told her, agreeing that Trump was trumping all our dreams these days. Then I added, "I'm sorry," as if Hy's distress was something of my own doing.*

*"Don't be sorry. What I should've told Hy was that he'd spent his entire life fleeing*



## Finding Mememo

*from his first fear towards his first hope. You know, as a therapist, I believe that only those men who reach the stage where it is possible for them to combat a second tragedy within themselves, and not the first over again and again, are worthy of being called mature. I might have waxed eloquent: Oh, praise be the beauty of this earth; the beauty, and bloom, and the mirthfulness thereof. We lived before, and shall live again. You know, appeal to the poet in him. He then wrote me a little ditty, left it on our kitchen's island:*

A clown, Naufragio, bursts in — big shoes, small dick.  
Comes in with an air of never having touched the ground,  
Giving a stone-age guffaw, crusher of all laughter.  
A petrified gesture loaded with unambiguous stridency.  
He is at once an insane asylum, a child, and a crushing blow.  
A nightmare of unjust permissions.

*"Hy was not able to shake off a certain dread, unable to break out of the cage into which he'd shut himself, the cage he'd built long ago to save himself from love. Often when we made love, it was like doing it with a ghost. Hands were gesturing more like 'goodbye' than 'I love you.' He hadn't managed to get all the way into life; he was always standing precariously on the brink. During his final days, he seemed to be suffering from a feeling of steadily mounting suspense, like he was writing strident memos to himself. The suspense I sensed might be a curious mingling of apprehension and thrilling anticipation, so often incompatible, were to be found corralled inside him. A wife can feel those things, you know. Once asked him, 'Are you . . . ?' and he merely replied, 'Almost,' crossing his eyes like a Kabuki actor and giving me a here today, gone tomorrow smile."*

*Whatever the expression on my face was, it got this response: "Jym, no, I never forced this issue with him. Never. Maybe, just maybe, if I had . . . I should've quoted Goethe to him: Action is mightier than fate. Conquer!" She wiped at tears in her eyes, blinking, so I assumed she could see nothing for the moment but quivering webs of light. "I think he sensed the gist of what I was thinking, though. There's a knowing of the senses beyond what the mind has as knowing. Now his immortality must lie in the footnotes of others." Very fitting.*



Guatemalan Starbucks coffee

*The café's lunch line was growing. A middle-aged man in a turtle neck sweater came in with a chum; he stood near Dorinda, waiting, telling his lunch partner that his wife was aroused less by her body than by the consumer products with which she embellished it. Dorinda looked up and jumped slightly in her chair. "God," she leaned over and whispered, "He looks like Hy when I first met him. You know, he had a beard then; there was once a time when I loved the existence Hy and I led so passionately that I actually had to sit still on the sofa at moments of my complete awareness of it, the impact of his and my joy acting like a blow in my*

## Finding Mememo



solar plexus, mumbling *Amante querido* (dear lover) over and over.

"I thanked my lucky stars for that. Back then I used to tell friends in my Tuesday night Spanish class (we all sipping our Starbucks Guatemalan blend java dispensed from a traveling coffee dispenser one of us paid for each week) that Hy and I were, 'Maniacs enjoying a solipsism-à-deux in our own peaceable kingdom located on Calle de las Delicias number seven.' They liked that *mucho mas*. By the way, for practice in translation, we were reading premier Mexican mystery author Antonio Helú's 1946 masterpiece, *La obligación de asesinar*, featuring his thief cum PI Máximo Roldán (the name an anagram of *ladrón*, thief). Once, I replayed this bit of personal history to Dallas's eager ears and he plied me for hours for any choice story tidbits he

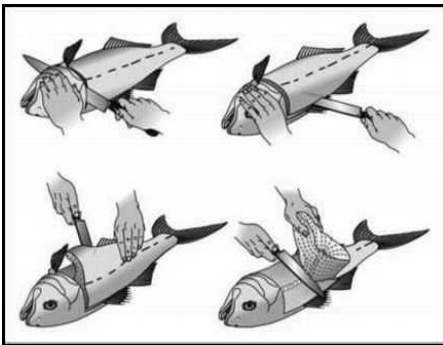
could import into his Wildbraine stories.

"We'd start each weekly language class with the usual ¡Hola! to our teacher, Señora Porfiriata — her husband owned Los Calamares Felices restaurant — and finish our lesson with a hearty ¡VIVA EL MOLE DE GUAJOLOTE! (Long Live Turkey Mole). It was a 1920s rallying cry used by 1920s avant-garde art movement, Estradentista, centered in Xalapa, Mexico, our teacher's birth-place. Yah. She believed in group spirit."

At Dorinda's effusive utterance about turkey mole, that Hy look-alike looked down disapprovingly. His mouth made slight, barely audible *piff, paff, poff, puff* sounds. It didn't help we were taking up a table, our food consumed, our check on the table ignored. So we obliged and paid — Dorinda's rolling eyes signaling she was mentally converting dollars to pesos to keep in practice — and left, doing an about-face, turning right, then another right out the door and straight down the street to our illegally parked cars, did a smart left-face into our vehicles, left out into traffic, then right (me) and left (Dorinda) at the intersection of Harrison and Lombard.

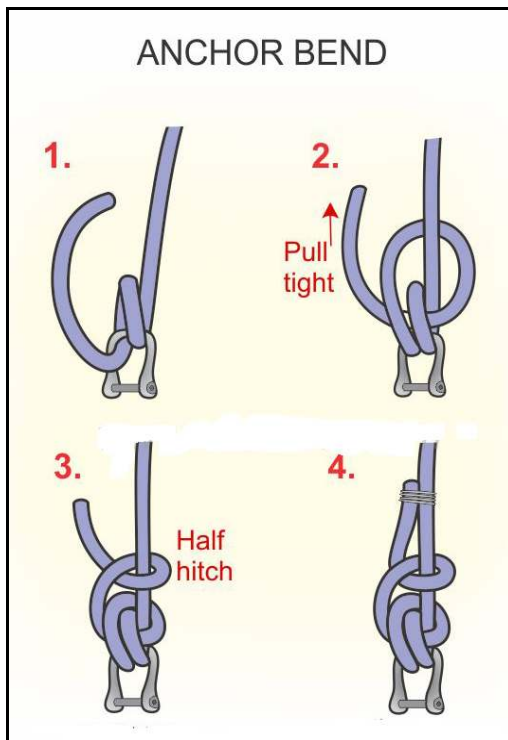
It was helpful, albeit painful, for me to glean this intimate info from Dorinda. I,

however, did garner a deeper insight into the bare bones of Hy's writing, like filleting a fish. When I do complete this redaction, I can imagine the reviews, maybe: A novel all about literature, high and low, starring one of those heroes who is a lightly disguised version of the author himself; how easily this tome slips into being nothing more than a precious lattice of ludic narcissism and unbearably literary adventures. But . . . *That 'but' being the fulcrum, tilting the review toward either BUY IT or TAKE A PASS.*



Four-step fish filleting

## Finding Mememo



Ah, fabricator-in-chief — Yonder Man — you should've remembered Frank O'Connor suggested one doesn't need the thrill of real heights as "Reading is another form of height, and a more perilous one." If you'd only kept reading and writing, citing without quotation marks. For, for you, stories don't end, they sail on, or they go to sleep, shifting brain-wave frequency, like parallel universes, like in Paul Auster's novel 4 3 2 1, you saw everything extraordinarily as if it were taking place in a book, and everything in a book as if it were taking place in the world(s) before you — and put it into words, words, words — a point of total word-shine (in my very humble opinion) that tangles criticism-fiction-theory (a composite waveform) into a sailor's anchor-bend knot.

Your torment of being alive in a Chado-Trumpian world, where you were thought of as merely a friend's still more untalented friend whose character traits depended upon forgiveness, is now over due to your desiring the as-yet un-lived, confirming your wish from Wish to experience the whole alterity of the cosmos and the infinity of times therein. You told us once, "Within me the 'migrating birds' are living a life of their own, a stream of sensations and feelings which at times freeze into images. To mix metaphors, I'm wanting to raise anchor and sail for a more pleasant realm." So I wonder are you play-

ing out a whole new role, maybe: a private-eye where the game is afoot; a benevolent administrative-type signing up all contingent faculty to ten-year contracts; a fearless submarine commander sinking whaling ships; maybe a bad poet known, like Scotsman William Topaz McGonagall (who wrote the worst poem in our world about a bridge disaster),<sup>13</sup> for writing the worst ditty in your new, adopted world about the similarities

---

13. William McGonagall's poem, "The Tay Bridge Disaster" (1880), was written after that railroad bridge collapsed during a violent storm on December 28, 1879 while a train was passing over it from Wormit to Dundee, Scotland killing all aboard. The poem begins: "Beautiful Railway Bridge of the Silv'ry Tay! / Alas! I am very sorry to say / That ninety lives have been taken away / On the last Sabbath day of 1879, Which will be remember'd for a very long time. / 'Twas about seven



Diana F+ medium format plastic camera



*Hy Has a Porpoise* (1976, snapshot by his sister) Hy Grader in happier days when his life had a porpoise — er — purpose.

*between a book and a tissue box; a guru with shaved head in saffron robe, promoting some new "empathy" cult; a smart-ass, smart-eyed photographer framing Ichi -like your new, adopted world anew using a LOMO Lomographic Diana F+ Medium Format Camera; or, a successful author of what passes for well-paid genre fiction in your new reality. Maybe you are somewhere where every year is Leap Year, even now trying to jump back in time to stop that disturbed young man from jumping off the balcony in the modern wing of Chicago's Art Institute. The latter is what Dory hopes anyway.*

*Or maybe you've just gone where Dreamily x Dreamily = a Literary Heaven, where you happily cultivate a thriving garden of words; after all, you were fascinated by the inherent weight of words; their relation to the Big Picture, you often said, resembled the way atoms related to the visible world: independent of everything else, whirling about on their own, forming clusters which weren't called molecules, but sentences in accordance with their own laws. There you'd be sitting in a perpetual Café Surprise sharing funny stories with David Foster Wallace, no longer in the sad shadow of academic grudges and resentments. At least that's what Ichi hopes has happened to you. Me too. Aren't I right, Ichi -san?*

*We've come to the end, almost. We are now in search of an ending, a Victorian-novel type ending where an affirmation of life is also a constant*

*game with death, heh amigos? Well, maybe we can rectify that somewhat in the ridiculously long, over-written Epilogue, which will show you, Dear Reader, my fingers can dexterously dance on a Dell keyboard nearly as well and as sustained as Meme's.*

\* \* \*

---

*o'clock at night, / And the wind it blew with all its might, / And the rain came pouring down, / And the dark clouds seem'd to frown, And the Demon of the air seem'd to say — 'I'll blow down the Bridge of Tay.'* " . . .



## Epilogue: Diners Minus One



The dish Hy mentioned he'd like to order: grayling, beetroot, wild raspberry and buttermilk

On the one year anniversary of Meme's demise, we "rememed" him with a destination memorial dinner and ashes scattering at a Slovenian eatery about fifty miles from Ljubljana, overlooking the sloping hills of the So a Valley, chef Ana Roš's famous Hiša Franko. It was in keeping with Meme's commitment to his quite quirky quadrivium: "sail, experiment, attend, and laugh."

The month prior to his death, Meme'd gotten a fortune cookie at The Wicked Wok



Wishwer Watt's dish selection at Hiša Franko: squid with lamb sweetbreads, black garlic and cave cheese

reading: YOU ARE AN ACCIDENT WAITING TO REPURPOSE YOURSELF; a week he later happened to watch a Netflix episode of "Chef's Table" touting (as recorded in Hy's notebook) Hiša Franko's fabled cuisine as: "Flowery, herbal, feminine, whilst as delicate as precise; created mostly from locally grown and obtained foods. Try the marble trout and golden So a grayling fished from the stunningly turquoise So a river." He wanted to go there. So we did, fancifully dubbing ourselves The Macaroni Club, sojourning to So a (Hy's ashes in an urn) for a memorial dinner where we took turns tearing pages from Hy's battered, copy of *The Decent Society*, later feeding the river fish its pulpy printed nutrients that had once fed Meme's memes and bitterly thinking how Hy'd been bitted away by Wishwer's beaming wind of fly-the-coop speechifying.



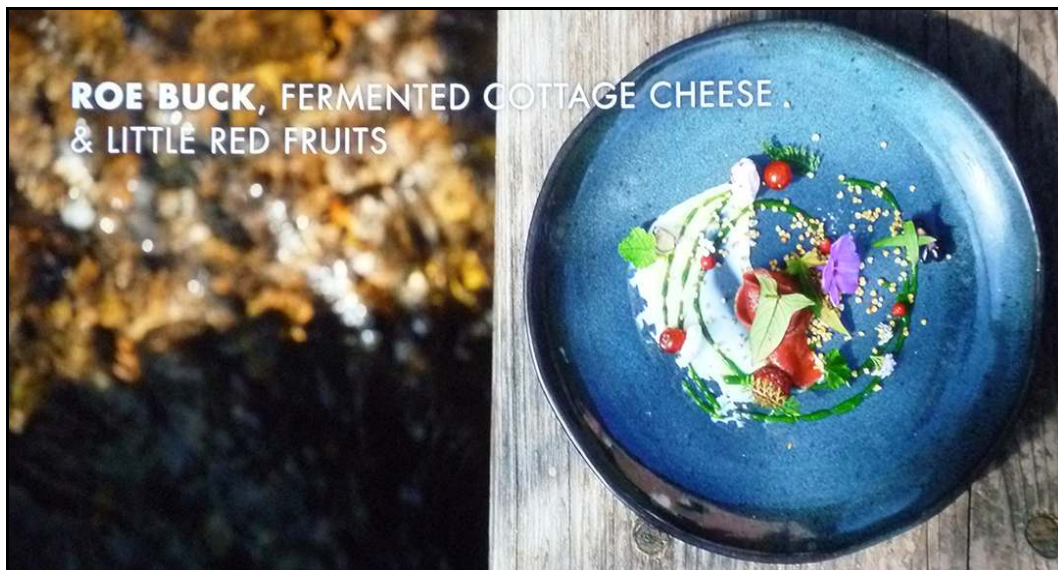
## Finding Mememo



Dorinda's selection: marble trout, soup of ginger and vinegar plums

*I regard the discovery of a new dish as far more interesting than the discovery of another star. So does Dory, especially when she wears that curved brooch of hers across her bosom like some kind of scimitar.*

— Moleskine Notebook #55, Hy "Mememo" Grader



Ichi 's selection: roebuck, fermented cottage cheese and little red fruits

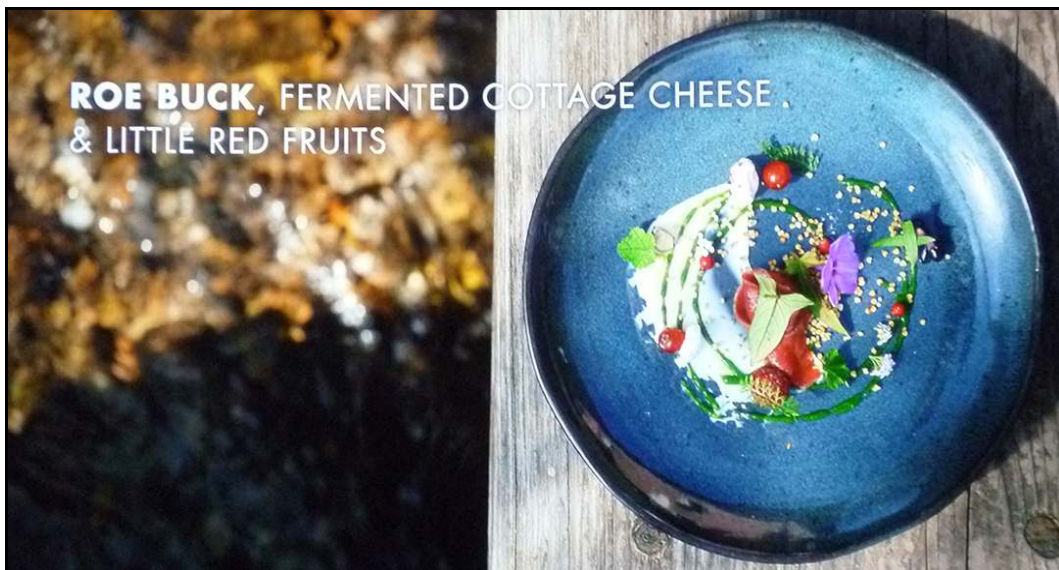
## Finding Mememo



Dallas' selection: mountain sheep's cheese ravioli, bone marrow, chanterelles and langoustine

*I followed the sensation of Dory experiencing a little thread of a morsel of Puebla-style mole sauce as registered from lips to tongue to her nostrils, which flared one moment, contracted the next. A facial trait that silently asked me: 'Did you taste that; are you tasting it!' Our subjective, individual selves become one during this amplification by mutual delight.*

— Moleskine Notebook #57, Hy "Mememo" Grader



Ichi 's selection: roebuck, fermented cottage cheese and little red fruits

## Finding Mememo



Hiša Franko, Kobarid, Slovenia; Hemingway recuperated here; Serbian film director Emir Kusturica was there when The Macaroni Club checked in for several days.

Over that dinner, The Macaroni Club (us three amigos, plus Dorinda, and a Dallas-invited Wishwer Watt) chatted about things that went backwards instead of forwards; things that managed to do both at the same time; memories, time travel. A lull in the conversation — literally — as a waiter with a name tag reading LULL asked politely about our menu choices. Hy once joked

he'd love to eat *Tête d'une farcie*, a stuffed (ass's) head, referring to Chad Armbuster.

You ask, Why's Wish here? Dallas' choice; he had a plan and wished Wish into it. Since Meme had been a teacher, Dallas hoped to teach Wish a philosophy lesson: Wish was to be the very essence of this trip, revealed in accident.

Hiša Franko, a structure that has, through the last century, changed roles: a roadside inn, a village mill, a countryside estate, and a hospital during the First World War where Ernest Hemingway, wounded on the Isonzo Front, had been taken for treatment. In one of the rooms overlooking the courtyard, he supposedly wrote his famous novel *A Farewell to Arms*.

This intrigued Hy, as did the images of the cuisine and the nearby river with its crystal clear natural pools, a river winding through a scenic alpine valley on the northwestern corner of Slovenia (home to Trump's wife) where the atmosphere — cloud, climate, and air — was described as "skyey".

We went there in honor of Hy, lured by a tasting menu for this amazing restaurant *cum* hotel found among his effects (see Prologue, page xxv), which reminded Dorinda of the night they, gulping freshly popped popcorn, had watched that Netflix food show episode. Hy had taken snaps off the TV for later reference. He'd been, according to Dorinda, thrilled that the chef's husband was the establishment's astute sommelier, recommending to a diner a Blaži cuvée (a blend of merlot and sauvignon) to pair with her duck entrée.

Hy got further jazzed when he looked up that winery on the Net, discovering the Blaži family had started their business in 1947, his birth year, in Collio,



## Finding Mememo



"Read my lips, no clean water, no clean air!" (TV still, 2017) Ichi Honne



*Hy Seen in Another Dimension, Darkly* (oil on canvas, 2017) by Slovenian artist Brinada Torkar-Ri, as commissioned by Dorinda; it is based on a 2005 portrait she'd taken of Hy at the Milwaukee Art Center on his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Italy, "the best Italian wine region you never heard of," as a wine blog put it. Speaking of Italy, the Slow Food movement is a grassroots organization founded by Carlo Petrini in Italy in 1986. It has since spread worldwide. Promoted as an alternative to fast food, it strives to preserve traditional and regional cuisine and encourages farming of plants, seeds, and livestock characteristic of the local ecosystem.

Chef Ana Roš has taken that philosophy to heart, just one of the many reasons Meme respected her culinary efforts. In fact, Hy humorously pronounced Slovenia, "Slow-Venia". A country 60 percent forests, he imagined it would hold a population evolving in intelligent interaction with its environment since it had tossed off the yoke of Communism with its bureaucratic rape of the environment. Hy also saw that model of eco-sensibility as a comforting counter-measure to Trump's degrading of the environment.

So it was appropriate we gathered here (Ichi in kimono) in memory of that informational leaf-blower and let sail his remains down

## Finding Mememo

a falls. For Meme, every memory trace was a crime scene investigation to show off his considerable literary forensic skills. So we celebrants “rememed” the key events in Hy’s life — like his first taste of Dorinda’s now-famous “Angels on Horseback” (oysters wrapped in streaky bacon, grilled and served on buttered toast) — with all their surprises, jolts, unsteady victories and unpalatable defeats.

In the dining room, elegant waiters moved about like gardeners, pouring wine and coffee as if they were watering a bed of white flowers. One immaculately garbed waiter saw us, chatted us up. “I, Dimitrios Simic, from Belgrade, admire your Hemingway writer. He write ‘A Clean Well-Lighted Place’ [1926], like here, our place, about waiter like me doing work like Sisyphus and trying to live within meaninglessness.”

Two days ago.

It was a nine-hour flight from Chicago to Munich, The Macaroni Club — we named our gathering of galloping gourmets after an odd eighteenth-century British group of culinary fops. I was perceiving the world in a jet-lagged state, causing a slight distortion in the fabric of reality, a shift, a misalignment, giving rise to a miniscule yet fundamental incompatibility between the familiar world and distant, hazy removed way I was perceiving it.

We took our pats at security by a slope-backed cretin, event-ually boarding our Germanwings flight 5757 (the final four digits of Heinz Corporation’s main phone number) connecting to Ljubljana’s Jože Pušnik Airport.

Bit unnerving to fly on the same airline whose crazed pilot, Andreas Lubitz, found his final solution by crashing flight 9525 into the Alps in 2015, yelling on the plane’s voice recorder “*Jawohl Papa!*” Memories of Meme intrigued by this horror, telling me it was “a cosmic toss of the dice resulting in *three* 5’s leading to a fatal fall into the Alps near the locale of the famous Holmes-Moriarty Reichenbach Falls Incident. Night before, did the pilot eat *Tafelspitz*?”

As we boarded our connecting plane under cloud cover like a badly made



Claude Chabrol, Director

bed, rucked in sections, an old man, the spitting image of director Claude Chabrol, suffered a broken handbag, spilling books into the aisle. A woman with the softest eyes of the most richly layered depths, mole over her jugular fossa depression, and hair pulled high on top into a bun, was directly behind. She offered a FUCK Y’ALL, I’M FROM TEXAS inscribed handbag, “Just keep it.”

Ichi, who was in front of this *dopplegänger*, quickly turned and assisted. In so doing, one retrieved book flopped open to reveal a dedication, which translated read:



# Finding Mememo

*This book is given to Valentin  
Hwbrgdts in good faith.*

Chabrol's double pointed to the proffered soft-covered book and mumbled in French to Ichi, "*Monsieur Japonnais, pour vous, s'il vous plait,*" bowing his head deeply to our affable Asian comrade. Ichi was taken aback by the thoughtfulness, replying "Mercy Buckets," having heard Meme purposely botch his French many times for comic effect.



Meanwhile, Dallas, having heard a Texas accent, gently pulled aside the woman and introduced himself. Dal draws his power from both secret knowledge and ineffable coolness, and he was employing both now. Surprise upon surprise! She admitted to being a fan of his mysteries. Another surprise though, their conversation went not to the latest Blurt Wildbraine story — the one where a key suspect speaks elliptically, to conceal something important yet beyond the understanding of his interrogators — but about the music and bar scene

in Deep Ellum, Dallas, Texas' entertainment district. The area is known for its vibrant street murals, quirky art galleries and long-time concert venues for Indie and Blues. Brewpubs, cocktail bars and Tex-Mex eateries always draw a boisterous crowd on weekends, while edgy, experimental drama dominates the program at the Undermain Theatre, located in a warehouse basement. Dal and his father had once toured the Deep Ellum Brewing Company. Dal confessed he'd haunted the clubs and bars there when he was working in Dallas one summer when the area was first gaining popularity and before the NFL offered up so many ultra-shitty games. Dal wanted to know if Serious Pizza and Brick & Bones were still operating: "Hell, I'd scramble my legs to B & B for their amazin' Chicken 'n Waffles dinner offered at a twenty percent discount durin' televised blood, soil 'n pigskin matches."

The lady, through pipe-organ sinuses, voiced that "Both were still operating, but with larger flat-screen TVs, and B & B's percentage-off for the C & W dinner has been reduced to an accompanying free pint of tap beer poured by a thickish, pale guy who looks like a bartender in a Coen Brothers film. My son, a marathon runner, took me to a club about two months ago to hear the avant-punk four-piece group Deerhoof do their hit single 'Plastic Thrills' which he said is featured on his Spotify 'Nike Running Tempo Re-Mix'. The event was to raise money for research into Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy. You know, that brain mash-up football players and obsessive readers of PoMo Lit get."

## Finding Mememo

I'd lingered to hear this exchange. Then I made my way to my seat and thought *People actually used to dress up for travel*, then noticed a large head popping up above the seat backs. A child's hand puppet? No, it was a giant in a tan suit and white shirt buttoned up under his chin, no tie, one leg stuck out awkwardly into the aisle tipped by an orthopedic shoe. Despite his size, there was something very frail in his face, probably from the way his lips were pressed together. Yes! I'd seen a similar face in Diane Arbus' famous photo of Eddie Carmel, a Jewish giant, but this fellow had a shaven head and olive-colored skin pocked all over like an avocado's. Just then a steward blocked my view when handing the man his *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, that cautious and stuffy mouthpiece of the German establishment, making an incongruous juxtaposition.

Soon after our Germanwings jet took off, Ichi stuck his nose deep into that book he was given, Jun'ichir Tanizaki's famous collection of short stories, *The Gourmet Club*. What chance thing that was! The title story is about a group of potbellied men "who can't live a day without eating something really good" and whose quest for new tastes leads them in ever weirder directions. The seductive tastes, aromas, and textures of outlandish Chinese dishes blend with those of the seductive female hands that proffer them to the blindfolded gourmets. "What would these fine fellows think of 'The Simpsons' character, Montgomery 'Monty' Burns, ordering a single pillow of Shredded Wheat, some steamed toast, and a dodo egg?" Ichi whispered to me from across the aisle.

"Appropriate reading for our Macaroni gourmet adventure, heh?" I whispered back to our Asian amigo, who bit into a thin mint wafer like those featured in Monty Python's *The Meaning of Life*. As the plane's hostess was passing out mints and hot towels, Ichi mentioned two things: 1) he'd told Meme once, "I'm not sure the words *ocean* and *sea* mean the same to you and me," and 2) he'd once pointed out to both Meme and Dallas that another novel of Tanizaki's, *Quicksand*, devotes pages of detailed crime-scene investigation to a just-arrived envelope containing a love letter. "Meme-san, jot this down in Moleskine notebook, while Dallas-san, well, he get real excited, like an old Japanese man who, after living in a culture that gets its kicks from seeing just a flash of the nape of a female neck, goes to his first Western-style striptease," said Ichi, jabbing his finger in the direction of Dal who, in his own world, alternatively sipped a bottle of Krakus Polish brew, then took in the explosive release of a fresh, sharp tart taste from an apple as marvelous as the fruit of Scandinavian myth, the famed Golden Apple of Idun.

To pass the hour flight-time in cramped seating (if it were a haystack I'd have found the needle), Hy's urn between my feet, I perused Dallas' convoluted novel, *Three Destinies*, crunching on peanuts offered by our blue-eyed, blonde hostess who, when she saw my book, pointed to it and said, "*Das ist doch nur*

## Finding Mememo



Frontispiece to Dallas' novel *Three Destinies*

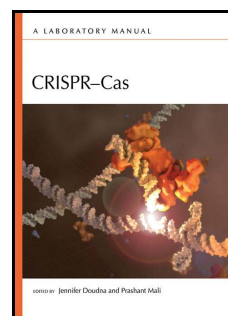
*Kitsch!*" It was Dal's first effort, so if kitsch, it was *rare* kitsch from Hy's collection, passed on to me by Dorinda as thanks for my editing efforts, where I always felt I was behind the eight-ball.

The narrative opens with: *One of his hands is different from the other, and the work seems to pass from one to the other as needed, as between two friends.* This observation was inspired by Hy's rotator cuff injury, which tasked his arms differently. The story "infamously" (as reviews then had it) has Blurt Wildbraine and his

nemesis, Dick Florida — described as: "A man whose nose says 'Hi' before the rest of him has a chance; his hands wave like twin propellers when he walks, a kind of racing shuffle; he's clad in old jeans, a faded blue shirt, totes an old belted leather briefcase, and wears a skeptical look; a small man, not really small, but small compared to the size of the person he projected" — ride an amusement park's range of thrills over 500 pages: three suicide attempts (one by falling), three plots of murder (one by spraying Tetrodotoxin in the face), one case of bigamy, two bankruptcies (one due to an elaborate Ponzi scheme that may have influenced Bernie Madoff's sleight-of-hand), one sanguinary attack by Chicago's El Rukn street gang, three psychotic visions (pre-Trump era), numberless dreams, and one train wreck followed immediately by a shipwreck. Provocatively gawky, Dallas' text uses "-nesses" by the dozen: not only "unswervingness," but "shiftingness," "dancingness," "perhapsiness," "fleetingness," "pawlessness," and one-offness". Ultimately, the moral of the story is that monuments of wit survive monuments of power.

The book's thickness reminded me that Meme told me he was writing *Ludicakadromans* because "each book is so dense with references to other books, I can replace five shelves in my library with just one book I wrote." Hy loved to cite an Yvor Winters poem ending: "The passion to condense from book to book / Unbroken wisdom in a single look . . ."

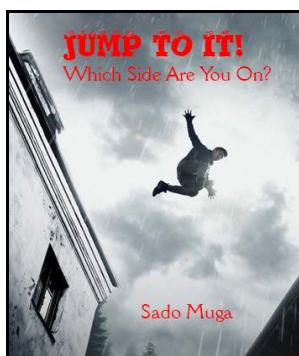
In the row behind me (I was in row 15, i.e., 5 x 3), Dorinda was focused on her laptop, sipping a Pimms #1 Cup, trying to ignore the weirdo in the seat next to hers who, upon taking his seat, said in a heavy goulashed accent, "My name ist Dov. I knew you'd come." Dory was doing a trivia test for English Majors, answerings questions like: *Name the most diabolical bored wife in English literature* (Answer: Sylvia Tietjens in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*). Bored, she began browsing for information on Crispr kits, gene-editing



Dorinda's Lab Manual

## Finding Mememo

technology. If you had asked her about this, she would've told you, "It can be used to amp up the ethanol content and flavor of beer by gene-altering yeast strains or engineering much heartier gut bacteria, all right in your home kitchen." CRISPR stands for Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats, segments of prokaryotic DNA containing short, repetitive base sequences. These play a key role in bacterial defense systems, and form the basis of a genome editing technology known as CRISPR-Cas9 that allows permanent gene modification. Dorinda thought futzing with plasmids for use in yeast genome technology in her newly remodeled kitchen would be a chic way of nano-upping those chefs still mucking around with molecular cooking. Upon returning home, she ordered Doudna and Sternberg's book on their discoveries, *A Crack in Creation*, as well as the official lab manual for the CRISPR kit, becoming a tousle-haired, well-intentioned geneticist.



Sado Muga (a *clear* in L. Ron Hubbard parlance) produced this CD aimed at producing *egregore*, group-thought.

Wishwer, in a colorful geometrics-on-parade romper, lulled in First Class on Deep Dream's dollar, sipping tea and eating a sweet, layered *potica* — which we in Economy *weren't* served — and perusing liner notes of a CD *Jump To It! Which Side Are You On?* [meaning for or against the political strife-rot of our contemporary political "Koom-Posh") featuring "Dance of Agency" by Sado Muga, recorded at a *corroboree* aimed at turning a Brownian motion of bodies into an anti-Koom-Posh timbral cocktail. This female fan of rewind, fast-forward, and stutter loves "rickrolling" music sites: clicking on, say, a Madonna song, you hear instead Ancient Solfeggio Healing Frequencies.

Flashback. Re-roll the film. Roll the escalator. We are immobile for the duration of our mechanical ascent into Aviation Purgatory (escalators and airports don't exist in real time) to find ourselves surrounded by duty-free booze, Bobby Kolade *haute couture*, fast-food concessions, large glass vases with blue and white flowers, a kid squeezed between short parents eating peppermint toothpaste in lieu of peppermint candy; in general, an international sampling of human creatures annoyed that our connecting flight to Slovenia is DELAYED.

We take facing rows of seats, Wish telling me Sado dumped her Ph.d. studies after watching a revelatory episode of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"; she became a passionate fan of J. G. Ballard's notion that sci-fi prepares us for radically different futures; later studied under the experimental musician Keith Rowe, amazed she could distinguish between an eighth note and a dotted eighth note. You can't just interview her, no, you *experience* her like a one-act opera

## Finding Mememo



Ichi 's photograph made in the Munich airport, waiting to fly to Slovenia

Two modes of flight: Mundane experience transformed into an experience of the structure behind the mundane.



Dimension Gate illustration from "Nicolai Fedorov on Beyond Our Given Habitat," by Wishwer Watt in *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*



## Finding Mememo



Keith Rowe with his unique electric guitar



Fermata symbol indicates holding a note for an undetermined length of time

in which she takes all the roles." He goes on about how her music written for a performance of G.O.N.E. members, which eschews "charming tadpole notes" and stresses their ideals: the belief that when the present has given up on the future, we must listen for the relics of the future in the unactivated potentials of the past; indeterminacy and the dramatic mental struggle of dealing with members who turn out to be 'Wobblies'; and, the latest successes in testing unspoken boundaries. The amateur musicians, a quirky quintet, work collaboratively and nonhierarchically. Rhythm isn't specified and they're advised to play improvisationally 'with determination,' to be 'delicate but firm,' to play 'confidently,' then 'recklessly,' further on to play 'optimistically,' then 'expansive with victorious feeling,' but at another point to play 'dream-like,' then 'frozen,' 'relentless,' 'uncompromising,' 'in a militant manner,' 'with energy,' and finally 'with foreboding' the while performing a clearly articulated structure expressing extreme tension seeking release in physics-defying stances.

"In this piece, the piano becomes a free field for etching; the impulse of the playing is free," he continued, "improvised (use of the fermata is frequent, often one set beside another for comic effect), discovering, but the playing always in sharp focus, clearly etched, completely attentive; nothing's too casual. The impression is of suspended time; the music is temporally immediate, forgetful of linear structure, moved by subjective impulses and memory — Sado calls this 'heterophonic unisons' — yet with a dollop of unjustified hope. Notes are grouped in pools of five with silence between that is done with a continuous rearrangement of a limited set of musical materials that visually would recall Alexander Calder's suspended mobiles. Flight from the capito-cybernetic Leviathan is an expression of an ideal and the dilemma of human existence.

"Listening to Sado's piece, there is ancillary 'noise': the sound of horse-hair rubbing along a wire-wound string resonating against the instrument's hollow wooden body in a rhythm hovering along according to the pressure and movement of a finger on the string and the muscular management of the hand and arm pushing or pulling bow or string. For her, there is a materiality to the stringed instrument. Now her guitar has an interesting story surrounding it, but you have to swear never to tell anyone, *capisce?*" He'd mimicked an Italian don to make his point. I'd nodded my assent as Wish glanced about the airport lounge, tilting his head my way, and whispering into my eager ear: "Christian Wolff was a student of that cagey chance-man John Cage."

## Finding Mememo

"Yeah, no surprise Wolff believed complexity is not a crime and was focused on indeterminacy, on the mutual effects players have on each other during performance. He did a short piece in honor of a book cover designer bud of mine who lives near Hanover, New Hampshire, where Wolff settled."

"Then you probably know," he continued, "Wolff once owned a guitar case holding his special guitar and a one-and-only copy of an electric guitar score, *The Possibility of a New Work for Electric Guitar*, by his fellow experimental composer Morton Feldman. The score was lost in 1967. Someone copped the case from his car one night. Wolff still sobs over that incident in his many interviews. Well, it was Sado's uncle's father, Sol, a crooked cop, who copped the case and its contents while on a booze binging dark night in the Big Apple! After he died of liver cancer, it passed to Sado.<sup>1</sup> She obviously can't sell it, too risky, so she's put it in a safe harbor and pulls it out every full moon to gloat over it."

"Holy shit! That'd be a great basis for a Blurt Wildbraine story."

"Yah, so shhhh! Mum's the word, dude. Dallas would be at my gal faster than my machine's X-finity upload speed."

"She could anonymously gift the old dude, now in his dotage, what say? It'd make the ten o'clock news' human interest segment, or at least the thirteenth page in his home town's local rag."

"Hell, she's a hoarder, what can I say?" Slapping his knees.

I thought of Dorinda's same propensity. "As the Chicago office supply store ad puts it, ORDER FROM HORDER." Before Wish could chide me for my bad pun, our flight had been called for boarding in German, Slovenian, and English.



What had gotten Wish and I into this waiting-area chat? Pure chance. Two kids near us had been occupied with several smooth sea stones, knocking them together, rhythmically. Their little faces had the we've-discovered-unsuspected-treasure look. I had glanced over and noticed their mother had carry-on luggage featuring a donkey and red letters reading ESEL DORF.<sup>2</sup> The family name? A tourist souvenir from some kid's park in Austria?

---

1. Morton Feldman's long lost piece for solo electric guitar has been reconstructed thanks to the triumvirate effort of guitarist Seth Josel, Feldman archivist Chris Villars, and the global new music community Other Minds. Following Feldman archivist Chris Villars' discovery that the tape existed, he contacted Other Minds, initiating the reconstruction of the piece.

Also reconnecting to the past, Sado Muga, Wish said, wants to time-travel to old Prague to find sure evidence that writer Franz Kafka and Czech composer Leoš Janáček had actually met, thus settling an ongoing academic debate.

2. Translates as "Asstown" or "Donkeyville", a good name for Washington. D.C.!

## Finding Mememo

Whatever, anyway, the intriguing sounds the children were spontaneously making had recalled to mind Christian Wolff's famous piece *Stones* from 1960, the first piece of his I ever heard, which elicited from me (I will never forget) an "Oh, praised be the beauty of this earth and the mirthfulness thereof." His note for this Zen-like work reads: *Make sounds with stones, draw sounds out of stones, using a number of sizes and kinds (and colors); for the most part discretely; sometimes in rapid sequences. For the most part striking stones with stones, but also stones on other surfaces (inside the open head of a drum, for instance) or other than struck (bowed, for instance, or amplified).*

I had mentioned this composer to Meme one day, but he'd already sussed the guy out because Wolff, in his *For Prepared Piano* (1951), had laid its composition out as a square of measures five-by-five and writing, freely, the music down the first row of measures, then up the next and then down and so forth, like a chessboard array. I had mentioned all this to Wish and our chat about this led to his mentioning his girlfriend's compositions and Toshi Ichianagi's production from the years 1961 – 64 when he was composing indeterminate music and graphic scores. By the way, all this had gotten a pleased nod from Ichi .

While Wish and I'd been exchanging ideas about experimental music and its entanglement with entropy, Dory popped a pasta-like ribbon of licorice gum and perused jpeg files on her laptop, dabbing at tears with a rolled tissue, suffering *Rolleirückblende* — as locals here would put it in colloquial German (i.e., a flood of memories released by seeing old photos) — looking at selfies of she and Hy high on each other, suppressing thoughts of his once telling her, "I often dodge you, hide from you in my studio among my friendly books."



Throughout this, Dallas'd been occupied, his lips french fries teasing cole slaw fingers wetted with East European-bottled Coca-Cola with its  $10^{24}$  CO<sub>2</sub> molecules escaping into the air, his knife cutting a gorgeous *Currywurst* plate, fantasizing about the *Kurort* [ed., "cure-place"] where we were headed. Both food items were obtained from a macho airport vendor, garbed in a snappy kitchen uniform sporting a range of whites as subtle as found in a Matisse painting. He seemed bent on throwing sand in his customers' faces, something Dallas found: 1) appealing, as appealing as the early Saturday tweet-storms by Donald Trump; 2) absurd, as absurd as Ernest Hemingway's secret report from Cuba to the FBI during WWII urging agents employ *jai alai* players to throw bombs into U-boats; and, 3) encouraging, as encouraging as reading poet Philip Levine's celebration of the small heroics of everyday working people against the spherical bastards

## Finding Mememo

(i.e., bastards any way one looked at them) they daily had to contend with. Bastards such as Hy's nemesis, Chad, who functions quantum-like, both as a wave (giving off interference) and as a particle (targeting specific enemies). Oh, how Hy wanted to run a Black Ops on Chad's shower plumbing, futz with the water flow knob so that if it was just a nip off to the left of comfortable, the water would spew scalding hot, if just a nip off to the right, it'd spew arctic cold. "I can see it now," Hy had said, rubbing his hands together gleefully, "Chad's heart jumping to and fro like a frog in a hot metal bowl, as he used repetitive language. What fun!"

Just before we boarded, Dallas had been putting his Coke down, picking it up to wash *Currywurst* down his gullet, putting it down, picking it up, repeating this cycle dozens of times. A kid sat opposite him, elbows on his knees and his cheeks on his fists like a gargoyle, fascinated. He moved to point to the wet ring where the Coke bottle was parked. Dallas looked down and commented: "Jeepers, come to think of it, there's no word in English, hell not even in German, for the wet circle left on a table from a cold glass of liquid." Then he again picked up a blue pen and Gordon McAlpine's *Woman with a Blue Pencil* lent him by Ichi. Trivia I just had to mention as it elucidates Dal's keen PI take on things.

Behind us, in the waiting area, two British business travelers with Debenham's logoed suit bags had been passing the slow minutes by jabbering in impeccable BBC-TV-announcer English. Dallas snuck a snap of the larger-boned of the pair who sported Le Corbusier-style specs whom I tagged, à la Meme, "Osteo Colossus". The guy had just commented: "The person who cuts my and my wife's hair is a very creative stylist, much in demand, and drives a snappy new BMW."

Not to be outdone, his younger interlocutor replied, "Well, the woman who cleans our house is a gem. She not only cleans, but rearranges to perfection, and we trust her with suggestions about redecorating; she takes on these things in an entrepreneurial manner. And her husband drives a bloody Porsche."

Wow, their exchange pulled from my brain a startling factoid from a recent Gini coefficient analysis I'd read in the *New York Review of Books*:<sup>3</sup> *The 2000 Census showed that Manhattan suffered the same level of economic inequality as Namibia, the most unequal country in the world. "Startlin' shit," Dallas would've said. "Fuck," Wyoh would've uttered, the stress on the uck.*

---

3. The Gini (jee-nee) coefficient (sometimes expressed as a Gini ratio or a normalized Gini index) is a measure of statistical dispersion intended to represent the income or wealth distribution of a nation's residents, and is the most commonly used measure of inequality. It was developed by the Italian statistician and sociologist Corrado Gini and published in his 1912 paper "Variability and Mutability" (Italian: "*Variabilità e mutabilità*").

## Finding Mememo



Harry Potter inspired tattoo

When our long-delayed plane finally landed and pulled up at our gate, we all had cheered, for the hours were evaporating much too slowly. Soon, liberated disembarking passengers poured out of the gate. We were sitting nearby, so could overhear some of the passengers: "I think of myself in a service capacity"; "*Wohin gehen wir?*" (Where are we going); "What makes poop more poopy-smelling on certain days?" We were amused to see a Teutonic-tribed father in acid-washed jeans with ripped knees, his tow-headed not-yet-literate tot in tow (he'd made the poop query), both sporting Mohawk haircuts. Dal had leaned in, whispered, "Signifyin' his neurosis 'bout bein' a grown-up, I figure. Tryin' to be his kid's kiddly chum."

When I reminded him that Indian Hobbyism is BIG with Germans and so "Give 'em a smiley emoji," he'd replied: "Yes, I could agree with you, but then we'd both be wrong." Dal had ascended his hobby-horse: the awful phenomenon of Adult Children, degradation of modern adulthood, television and the Internet now crushing social and intellectual barriers between childhood and adulthood; mentioning the proliferation of "literary tats," how Googling that phrase brought



The Derp Look

up scores of Harry Potter quotes drilled onto adult bodies, pixelated onto his computer screen, then he segued to the annoying pets-on-plane accommodations (all the cool kids have anxiety disorders). Just then a teenage girl with impossibly long legs strode out the jet-way caressing her emotional-support pet, a ferret. Seeing Hy's urn, she gave us a variation of the rage-face that kids call "the derp".

The just-arrived Airbus 320 now being deplaned had originated in Barcelona, the very same flight number that had taken the fatal plunge into the Alps a few years ago with Bad Santa at the controls. This had made *me* uneasy and I mentioned this to Wish, but he merely shrugged, "The world of the known and the not-yet-known is bridged by wonderment." A mantra of his G.O.N.E. group?

Finally — and I do mean *finally* — The Macaroni Club was beckoned by a Germanwings employee speaking three languages, to form a line by group. Wish, in First Class, had boarded first. As I stepped into the cabin I'd swear it had smelled of avocados. That odor had soon been fast followed by the rotund man spilling his stacked-in-alphabetical-order books — *The Power of Nice* Book by Ronald M. Shapiro being one — into the aisle as previously noted. A biblio-system instantly moving from low to high entropy. Even now, I can see that tumble of texts, like a repeating scene in the film *Groundhog Day*.



## Finding Mememo

Fifteen minutes into our flight — I know this as Ichi — pointed to his special travel watch, an Omega Speedmaster just like astronaut Buzz Aldrin wore on the moon — Ichi and I were discussing Hy's death, trying to ignore the crying baby two rows behind, whose frustrated father (as we had found out during our wait for our plane) was a vegan butcher with the tongue-twisting name of Kaka Kamissoko Uwiringiyimana. He and his two kids had fled a violence-torn Congo, resettling in Germany. I told Ichi that one thing kept buzzing in my *cabeza* (thanks Hy): "Among the last e-mails Dallas found on Meme's computer was one whose subject heading read: 11 SIGNS YOU'RE GOING TO DIE ALONE — AND HOW TO AVOID IT. Now that strikes me as either very prescient or maliciously sent. Like that girl in the news who urged her boyfriend to commit suicide."

Ichi's eyes visibly brightened, a physical trait of his that I know endeared him to Meme, "What with the 'silver tsunami' hitting my country, the excessive wave of elderly living alone, *kodokushi* is all too common — our term for 'lonely death,' Jym-san. Seems the elderly sit and watch Sumo wrestling all day long as that's about it for their entertainment."



Ichi informed me, "There is now a noteworthy end-of-life doula movement in Japan lead by an organization whose name translates as 'Doorway into Light,' promoting such care. I know this is a problem here too. *The New York Times* did an exposé on this issue in an article dating from 2015, 'The Lonely Death of George Bell,' if I recall most properly."

"I think I remember. That guy was a bit of a ding-dong, a lonely hoarder. Oh, come to think of it, when caring for my elderly father during his last stages

## Finding Mememo



Doorway into Light

of life I saw some staff around his elder home wearing large white buttons stating in red Helvetica bold: **NODA** (No One Dies Alone) buttons."

Ichi — trying to stay on topic as a tall, slim-hipped woman wearing bright lipstick, gold high heels and a shiny green satin dress strolled down the aisle — went on about Hy's anxieties about death. "His obsession with that existential topic had led him to scour French author Michel Leiris' autobiographical volume *Scraps (Fourbis)* where the author vows 'to trim the claws of death, meaning to tame death. Meme-san was delighted when he read Leiris' wife's nickname was 'Zette' — Dorinda's is 'Z-bomb' — coincidences he took as 'God's way staying anonymous' (Einstein), that he took very seriously; something Leiris would've appreciated."

The author was familiar to me. "Hy once remarked how Leiris' first volume of his *Rules of the Game* autobiography revealed similarities between them: mutual interest in puns, wordplay, their mutual love of ambiguity and paradox, and their need to marry contraries, and death. Like Spanish thinker Miguel de Unamuno's famed inner struggle with *the heart that says yes and the mind that says no.*"

"Yes," Ichi confirmed. "Meme-san remarked that Leiris was an ethnographer, who shuttled over the years between his Parisian home and his basement office at the Musée de l'Homme on the number 63 bus; sixty-three, the very age at which our deceased bud-san was when he first took up reading Leiris, finding much of himself in that Frenchy's revelations, such as being eternally dissatisfied and buzzing about topics of death like moth to flame. I find it interesting, too, that Meme-san's handwriting had become shaky, a spidery black script just as had Leiris'."

"Beware of false friends!" I cautioned.

"What . . . ?"

"Just an academic warning about mistaking similar things for being actually relevant to each other, or something like that. But I get your point."

"Coincidences. That stuff."

"Yah."

Suddenly, behind us, the sound of a flute! Or was it? Yes, it was. Two flutes! The vegan butcher, two rows back, had managed to quell his kid's crying by popping small flutes into their mouths. The out-of-synch sounds brought to my mind Wyoh's wacky idea laid on us one rainy afternoon when I was visiting Hy's basement faculty retreat just a week before the occupants were hustled out,

## Finding Mememo

dispersed into new digs where constant admino-surveillance could be imposed.

I recall Wyoh had walked in waving a copy of *The God of Small Things*. At first, I thought it was a biography of Max Planck or Niels Bohr. But it turned out to be a magical-realist novel by a young Indian woman who won the Man [sic] Booker Prize. It's set in the beautiful southwestern coastal state of Kerala, whose capital, Thiruvananthapuram, Wyoh never did learn to properly pronounce, even though it was home to a Marxist government at the time of the novel's narrative.



Papageno from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

After some minutes of heated political discussion among us, during which Charmian rose to the occasion, displaying her gift for self-dramatization rivaling the women in Almodóvar's films. Wyoh whined, "I said *de-stalinization*, not *desalinization*!" Much jovial laughter, then Wyoh stood up dramatically and announced: "I propose we revise the opera *The Magic Flute*. As it is, it's a jumble of nonsense; may as well endeavor to extract some sense from it." Long pause, our startled faces staring at him. "In the opera, Egypt would be replaced by the Far East and Freemasonry by Marxist-Leninism. The three child genies would suffer a name change to the

Asian 'Wang' as: Wang #1, #2, and #3."

I had been quite dismayed as my wife and I adore that opera, taking as our pet names Papagena and Papageno, respectively. This incident had happened at a time when Wyoh was abusing Soneryl prescribed for a sleep disorder that our comrade laid blame for at the door of the Lair-of-the-Talking-Claw. Meme once suggested to Dal that that drug's designation would make a great name for a female perp in one of his mystery stories who drugged her victims.



A glass of Lambrusco

Now our urn-bearing Macaroni Club turned silent, each absorbed in his or her own distractions. I imagined Wish, hybrid of sage and madman, sipping a Lambrusco in his luxurious front cabin seat and watching "Gilligan's Island" reruns in German. So I took advantage of the "dead zone" that air travel launches one into to muse about the small seat light above me emitting billions and billions of photons, creating particles-waves. How, due to spacetime warp, my *NOW* is being experienced differently than

## Finding Mememo

those on the ground below, time passing more quickly for them than for us up here. As my thoughts wandered through the convolutions of my brain, I found myself staring out the small cabin window downward, godlike, watching the mountains far below with their smattering of patches of snow — *And look, it is white as pearl!* I thought, shifting from physics to aesthetics. Some of the mountains were high enough, and we low enough, that I could distinctly make out some massive cliffs, abrupt significations recalling to mind a dream of Hy's, a recurring dream, that he had made note of in his last Moleskine notebook. It was a dream of which he had written as having "experienced last night," but then he had crossed out that and replaced with "the other night".

This dream (he wrote, glasses on nose, Parker T-Ball Jotter in hand) consisted of: . . . *a hike up into the mountains, West Mountain to be specific*, where he comes across a high cliff. Adding in brackets: *[This may be the cliff I stood at when as a depressed teen I was on a week hike with my dad in California's High Sierra mountains after highschool graduation; I told my dad the surrounding mountains were grand in the French sense of both large and grand]*. Hy'd just completed four years of highschool French, hence the play on the two meanings of *grand*. Hy's fav Frenchism at that time — *Merde à la treizième puissance!* — punctuated his conversations. In that dream, as described in the notebook, Meme feels an impulse:

. . . *both scary and welcomed*, to wade through rhododendron twenty feet deep to jump off a cliff, *down a spacetime chute, to participate in the cosmic dance of space, time, matter, and energy when the eleven-year sunspot cycle is at its maximum. But also, to leap like an animal intoxicated by mountain air and its need for freedom; it was a pure, and in some sense, animal aspiration — I use that word to mean its connection to breath — for a life that is not confined by the Law of the Father. I felt drawn to jump, yelling BAOUKTA! (my unconscious feeling "Geronimo!" much too clichéd?); "Geronimememo" would've been better, but who has control over their memes in dreams? Upon waking I had the distinct taste of dried leaves, like tasting a dull-red sparkling wine, Lambrusco, whose sparkle has dimmed. I feel a sad plenitude, a feeling poetically elaborated on by Michel Leiris in his difficult, writerly book, Fibrils.*

Hy went on to write about the many discontinuities of the last part of the dream and related them to his writing: . . . *a confused accumulation in which odd memories mingle with my current preoccupations with escape, with travel. It wasn't so much thinking about "To be or not to be, but to be here or to be there, elsewhere."* Further on in his handwritten notes he remarked about the fragmented aspect of the dream's ending:

## Finding Mememo

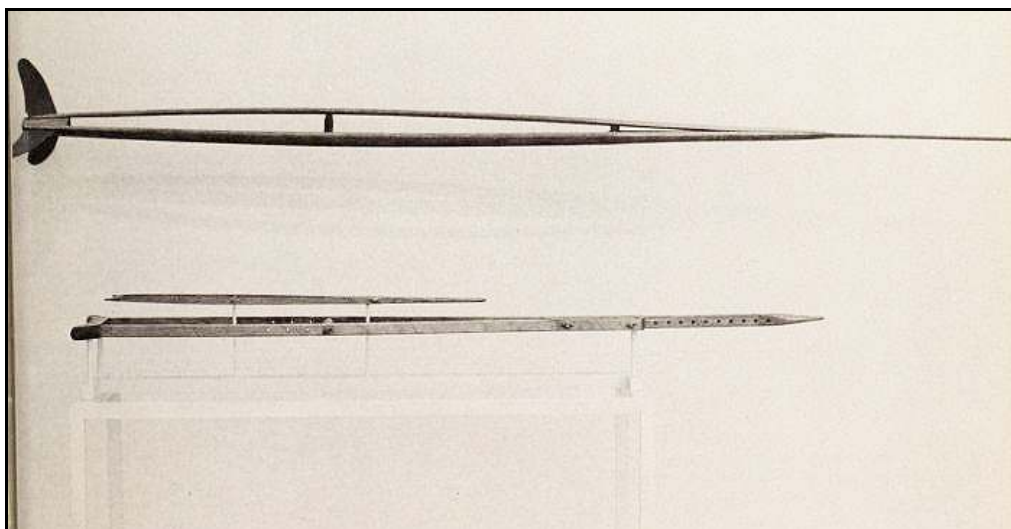
*There were sudden breaks, changes of view, dizzying slippages of things and feelings, always toward their opposites. This dream is always riddled with gaps akin to the holes drilled in rocks in that amazingly surreal Chinese garden in Shanghai that Dorinda and I visited in 2006. Its "baroqueness" of accumulated embellishments and digressions so unlike Japanese gardens, but so like my own style of writing where, during this globally unsettled time, I, a sage of John Cageness and a lover of rolling the number 11 (Arthur Schopenhauer's favorite number), shake in my literary dice box rubble from my past, clots of the living present (where, as Wish put it to me: "One need not have hope in order to act, nor success in order to persevere"), and gains of the gestating future, spilling them, refreshed by the uncertainty of a whim and a gamble, out on my pages in a damn gallant last stand ('A Cusser's Last Stand' is how Dallas would put it) I wage against aging in a pedagogically and politically damaged age. Jettison from NOW to BACK THEN or SOMETIME SOON.*

It is unfortunate that Meme didn't get time to integrate this notebook material into his narrative. And for me to try to do so posthumously would've entailed too much second-guessing Hy's possible use of these fragments.



The DrumPet

"Creative writing, like a daydream," Freud observed, "is a continuation of, and a substitute for, what was once the play of childhood." Dorinda has often cited this to me while working over Hy's text. She and I agreed that "our Meme" was an excellent pilot of the seas of reverie. His copy of Gaston Bachelard's masterpiece *The Poetics of Reverie* was so battered from use it looked like, as Ichi put it, "It had barely survived



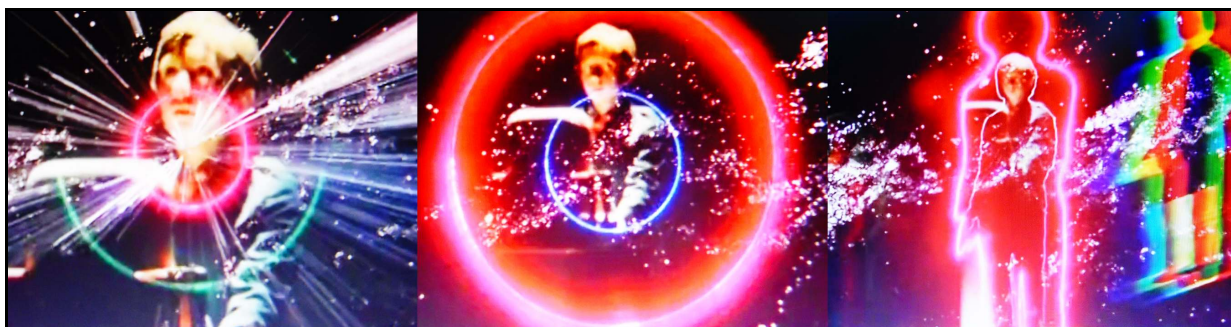
*Crutch-Arrow* (wood sculpture) Robert Cumming (1977) an object of desire for Hy



## Finding Mememo

a Kamikaze attack.” She had mentioned that her husband had wanted to work into his book something about his oneiric fascination with composite objects, like the “DrumPet” — a combination drum-trumpet his grandchild was given by a relative, an object of childhood fascination Michel Leiris waxes eloquent about in *Fibrils* — and his intense response to conceptual artist Robert Cummings’ fantastic hybrid sculpture *Crutch-Arrow* (1977) he saw once in an L.A. art show.

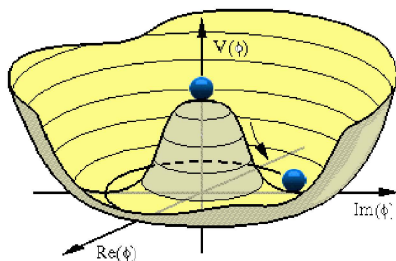
As a child, Meme confided while he checkmated me at one of our Artist’s Café lunch-time chess matches, he was taken by the possibility of time-travel; even made crayon drawings, depicting such, which he later worked up in Photo-shop to add to his collection of “Jump Shots”.



Hy Grader's recent rendition of himself (via Photoshop) as a child time-traveling based on his mid-1950s crayon drawings

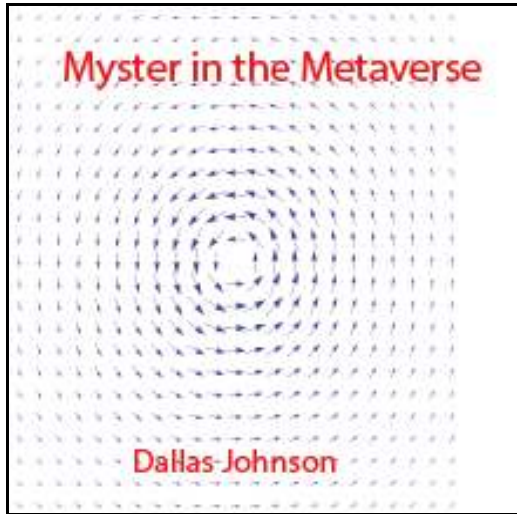
Speaking of time, Meme speculated that reality embraces past, present, and future *equally*, they are all really *out there* occupying their own particular point in spacetime, that there is complete symmetry between past and future, so that temporal flow is an illusion. I found this curious entry in Hy's last notebook:

*I first divined that this book already exists in the future — that in all probability it is somewhere, complete, on a shelf — upon hearing the opening therein rift by the Brit group Portishead on their Roseland NYC Live album. This was at Ichi 's work-house during a tortilla chip and guacamole feast stimulated by a large doobie being passed between us.*



I sure wish this was true. Wish probably thought it true. It would've saved me a hell of a lot of work on this text! Such physics topics are now popping into my *cabeza* (thanks Hy!) regularly since I've been wading waist-deep in my friend's ocean of words.

## Finding Mememo



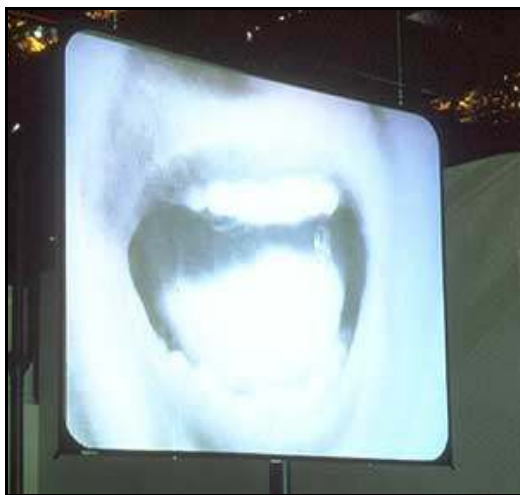
In the notebook referenced above he, tongue-in-cheek, equated the universe's composition with his own book's composition: *5 percent familiar matter, 25 percent dark matter, and 70 percent dark energy, all bobbing around in a Higgs Ocean of seething, boiling, frenzied fluctuation through which dimension travelers sail at their peril.* But this, I think, is more accurate than he ever imagined, especially the 70 percent dark energy and frenzied fluctuation. If what we find in *Finding Mememo* is anything, it's fluctuation and dark energy. And,

obviously, time warps and dark energy also pervade Dallas' Blurt Wildbraine stories — probably why he frequently cited Dallas' texts. In turn Dal's forthcoming punful book, *Myster in the Metaverse*, takes inspiration from this book of Meme's: *CEO Bob Rife was found by his humanoid assistant, DA5ID, his body tossed off a high escalator in the large lobby of Hobby Lobby headquarters, a high black stealth building in the 5<sup>th</sup> zone of the Metaverse; a note pinned to his lab coat read: "You've been ha-ha hacked — Ant Man. . . ."*

Given Meme's interest in time, no surprise he had a fascination with film, its use of flashbacks, suspense (a feeling of futurity impinging on the body's stability and reopening it to intensive relationality), and other time-tampering.

Example: Hitchcock's powerful editing of the knife-slashing "event" (a term Hy used in its Derridean sense of *un-anticipated surprise and suspension of comprehension*), and the awful jumper "event" that he and Ichi had witnessed at the AIC museum during which time seemed to slow to a crawl.

Hy's interest in *Psycho* led to his interest in two related artworks that toyed with time in relation to that iconic film. He saw Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho* (1993) at the Milwaukee Art Museum, he and Dory pacing before Hitchcock's digitally



Time crawls in *24 Hour Psycho* (1993) Douglas Gordon

## Finding Mememo



Natas Kaupas doing an ollie onto a wall

modified film playing out over 24 hours in motion so slow they could only be *alongside* the film, never view it in a traditional sense. Later, at a local gallery, Hy stood bemused in front of Jim Campbell's *Illuminated Average #1* (2000) which consists of all the film frames of *Psycho* digitally condensed into a single image; temporal flow, the plot of the original, was compressed into one framed, eternal NOW hanging on the wall. Finally, Ichi introduced Hy to Christian Marclay's 24-hour looped video installation of 2010, *The Clock* (see page 537).

My musings were broken by Wishwer standing over me, his eyes the deep blue of a vulture, offering me one of two bottles of Zima<sup>4</sup> — "It's making a comeback from the '90s; they're giving them out in First Class as promos," — then plopping into the vacant aisle

seat behind me. He poked his nose and mouth between the two seat backs and started a startlingly astute soliloquy about skate-boarding. "I used to escape to San Francisco on my cherry-red *Akira* anime-inspired motorcycle when working in "Silly Con Valley" to escape all those pixelated geeks for whom reality was only visible at 326 ppi., and opt for 'soul-skating' in that mag city on the hills."

In between sips from his Zima bottle and puffs of his alcoholic breath

filling my space, Wish skated on: "I used to watch that crazy Lithuanian-born dude, Natas Kaupas (Satan Sapuak backwards) perform his numerous tricks around the Embarcadero, including the flatground and vertical ollie [*jumps performed without the aid of a takeoff ramp, executed by pushing the back foot down on the tail of the board, bringing the board off the ground, keeping one's feet on the board all the while*], kickflip, heelflip, and the impos-



Zima, the clear beer, is making a comeback

---

4. MillerCoors has re-released the popular 90's clear malt beverage "Zima". The beverage hit the market around 1994 and was an instant hit. Think of it like an alcoholic Crystal Pepsi (which, incidentally, is also back on shelves). Fans would soak Jolly Ranchers and Skittles in the bottles for interesting fruity variations. The malt beverage was sold with the tagline "Zomething Different". Which obviously prompted drunk folks to try to pronounce everything with a "Z" in front of it. Think of it like the "WAZZZZZZUP" Budweiser commercials that debuted in 1999. It got a little annoying after a while.

## Finding Mememo

sible, a 360-flip. There was something pact-with-the-devil-ish about Natas' ability to defy Newtonian physics, especially when he'd ollie directly onto a wall and ride it like a quantum wavefunction.

"Well, I soon bought a Natas board and was doing 'fakies,' riding the board backwards and doing 'transitions' (navigating the curved areas between horizontal and vertical) with ease, something successful D-jumpers must accomplish. I soon subscribed to the skateboard zine *Thrasher* and started sussing out their odd cooking column featuring recipes for dishes like: Okra Winphrey, Pinhead Abstruse Casserole, and Pickles in a Pig Blanket with Hogheads cheese (brain meat in aspic).



Two choices of T-shirt graphics offered to all who complete PJST



"They say skateboarders are not role models, but it was my experience watching and performing skateboard tricks that propelled me into thinking about dimension-travel, because if you watch these guys like Natas, Mark Gonzales, and Rodney Mullen you sense they must have accessed another dimension in order to do the things they do with a board. Why in our G.O.N.E. group I advised pre-jumpers (new members) to learn to skateboard as D-jump training: first one learns to tune the world out (not noticing an injury until hours later); second, to keep one's eyes on the ground (monitoring the sidewalk for smoothness, pebbles, dirt). After watching the skateboard documentary *Dogtown and Z-Boys*, the very first difficult exercise these newbies must perform is to ollie over roadkill, working up from squirrels to deer.

"You may laugh, but this PJST (pre-jump skate-training) is vital if we are to impart 'the right stuff' to our dimensionauts, so they don't end up as 'splatter-punks' on our streets. They must gain the ability to go down with a bit of machinery strapped to their waist, putting his or her hide on the line, learning just when to 'pull the rip cord', so to speak, at the last yawning moment, just maybe ending up



## Finding Mememo

materializing in something wacky like author China Miéville's Bas-Lagian city of New Crobuzon where — to cite a fragment copped by Dallas and used effectively in his first detective story — *A slick of vagabonds, petty thieves and their bosses, discharged foreign soldiers, discharged jailbirds, dissolute rich and tinkers, beggars, pimps and their charges, chancers, knife-grinders, poets and police agents. Humans, here and there cactus-heads poking over the crowd (allowed in only if their thorns were plucked), the scarab-heads of khepri. Cigarillos hung from mouths, and people banged their glasses or cutlery in time while waiters went between them on the sawdusted floor.*

The newbie's basic training lasts six weeks; upon graduating, members are given our T-shirt, a graphic of a backwards D-jumper emblazoned thereon, and a personally (by me) autographed diploma praising their efforts:

YOU ARE ASTONISHINGLY EXUBERANT, ACCEPTING  
NO LIMITS AND RECOGNIZING NO BOUNDARIES. "



Pavilion Lake Microbiolite Towers

"It's quite a leap from skateboarding to your latest passion for submarines," I replied. I went on to mention Hy's love of going deep.

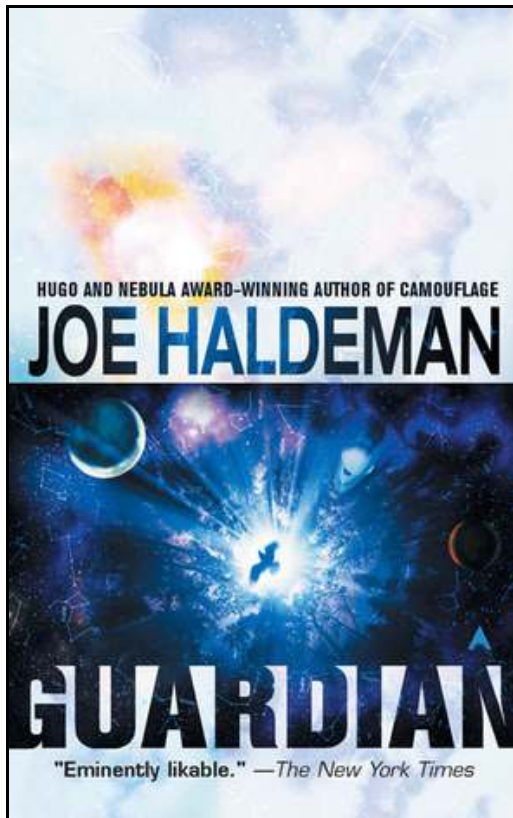
Wish then told me he'd been invited by a Deep Dream exec to go on a mini-sub expedition into Pavilion Lake in Canada in search of micro-biolite towers, fossils of organic matter that once dominated the earth 2.5 billion years ago. "Ho! The precise number in years of Deep Dream's financial assets in dollars," the exec had told Wish, brandishing the latest corporate annual report (see next page).

"Down, down down. To the deep and shady where across the deep, deep eternal depths a thousand changing shapes flitted by, a great victory versus the air! It was almost like finding life on another planet," Wish observed, "like a D-travel to Place-X, as we were among the first humans to visit these formations. Within months I'd purchased my

own mini-sub, enrolled in a training course, and soon I was taking fascinating trips to lake-bottom other-worlds, avoiding the sky and waves above. Maybe why I'm also attracted to 'No Wave' cinema with its DIY approach and the *subversive* nature of the filmic material — har, har."



## Finding Mememo



I asked him to elaborate on the “No Wave” thing.

“Oh, made by non-filmmakers, people not trained in cinematography or gone to film school. There’s no sense of trying to fit into some kind of template or format in order to fill a market niche.”

“Oh, Jim Jarmusch came out of that New York scene. He was one of Hy’s favorite directors after Ichi sent him a DVD of *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai*. Meme used to muse over an oddity in Jarmusch’s film *Coffee and Cigarettes*. Something about a single hair on a girl’s head falling to the left in one shot, but found after the reverse of the reverse-shot to be on the right. ‘Like a film cut to interweave two alternative worlds!’ he told me, excitedly. Why Meme was totally into Joe Halderman’s sci-fi fantasy *Guardian* with its wild alternative-world theme and its shape-shifting shaman who remarks: *Your body was perfectly happy when it was a scattered bunch of oxygen and hydrogen and carbon atoms. Life is what’s wrong with it.* In the sci-fi story, the female protagonist is cured of her injured rotator cuff and arthritic fingers.

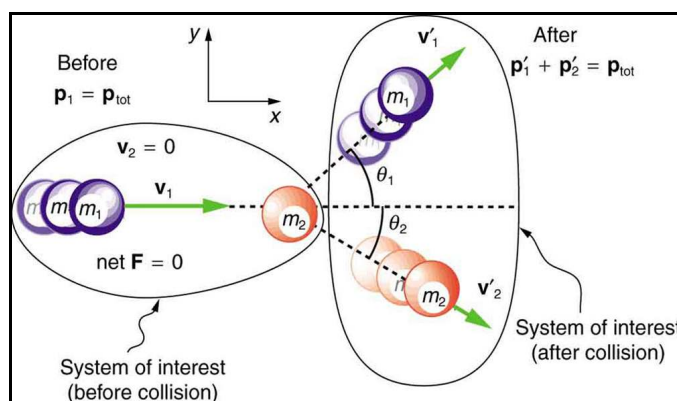
Meme was obsessed with mirrorings of all sorts. Dorinda had confessed to me during one of our Buzz Café power lunches that Hy’d stare at her in the mirror while she was combing her hair, seeing the same effect of left-right shift in her hair as he shifted his gaze from her to her reflection and back. “Once he said,” she said, “that when photography was still largely done via

## Finding Mememo

Daguerreotyping, this same effect could be experienced if the frozen sitter in the highly-polished image — which would reverse the person's features unless a prism was attached to the lens — held the D-type up before them and someone compared the actual person with their mirror image. To make the D-type's orientation appear normal, the sitter could perform this same action while gazing in a mirror at themselves, their image would then appear normalized, but the actual person's orientation would flip as if in a D-type." For Hy, she said, "mirrors became portals to alternate worlds, like in Cocteau's film *Orphée*. Seems Hy was already primed to follow your imaginative lead, Wish."

At the mention of all this, Wish's eyes bounced side-to-side like a ping-pong ball in play, his excitement palpable. He appeared to enter his own futurist *Mellonta Tauta*. I imagined his mind, like Poe's scribbling his speculative text, rapidly filling to capacity with an endless parade of adjectives and gerundives: *wonder marvel terror eerie horror fantastic, gripping startling bizarre astonishing stirring*. Maybe Wish is musing on the paradox he offered Dal earlier, "The point of forgoing knowledge about how D-travel works is, of course, to know."

As if on a cue, from left field, a man in the seat across the aisle suddenly uttered in Italian "*Ma che cazzo?!*" (But what the fuck?!) as a response to what he was watching on the in-flight video monitor. Or was it? Truth can be multiple. Maybe he was experiencing borborygmic rumbles of the gut. Maybe it was the twinning of those two possibilities that provoked his remark. You, Reader, can't be sure. Moreover, I am, as Dallas knows, an unreliable narrator of unreliably known events. Nice timing, though, huh?



Yah! Ah, *what da fuck?!!!*" For some subconscious reason my mind flew off on a tangent like two subatomic particles WHAM! colliding: *America is false to the past, false to the present, and seems to want to be false to the future, too. What da fuck?!* A thought worthy of Hy "Mememo" Grader.

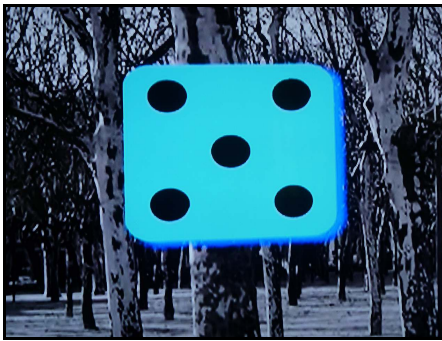
A cheery Germanwings hostess was making her way slowly down the aisle, face changing like a contestant on a game show; she was hawking the vitamin of airline preference: a stack of yellow orange juice cartons looking like

## Finding Mememo



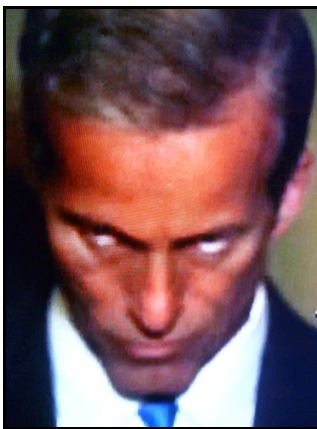
toy versions of the array of yellow school buses that were always out front of my grade school at 2 p.m. Struggling to get past her from the opposite direction was a once-hand-some gentleman in a contrasting blue blazer as taut as a German sausage casing. It was a classic case of opposites, of an unstoppable force butting heads with an immovable obstacle. No way these two entities can collide and

go off into their respective new paths. Upon seeing this spacetime conundrum, Hy would have probably mentally solved it by running the scenario backwards in his *cabeza*, something like where the air hostess serves the dessert first, then dinner, then asks if you want meat or vegetarian. A pleasant day-dream.



Quincunxing into a Brave New World

Hy thought death might be the condition wherein one takes all that they've dreamed of during life, recombining such into a plausible world where one goes upon dying. In that world, Hy might use his own body as a *vergeltungswaffen* (vengeance weapon), taking Chad (that "awful disease with a head") off a high waterfall in a Holmes vs. Moriarty death struggle; or maybe Chad just would not exist, *nada Chada*; or (appropriate to Hy's text's theme) simply become a bundle of subatomic particles relegated to the cold shadows between pockets of ordinary matter on the banks of dark energy that flow like bloody rivers through the multiverse.



Chad, a disease with a head

Meme measured his writing against this meta-physical model — a fabulation accepting no limits and recognizing no boundaries — as a sort of *pre-death*, given his understanding of what death entailed. If he'd dreamt of Amentet welcoming him into Westland — where a club-footed pigeon, chained by its good leg to a large book found placed in a forest and holding in its beak a rare vinyl (not a CD, records and books being the currency) — it had a certain quantum probability of showing up in his death/dream.



## Finding Mememo

I had never told Dallas about Meme's fantastic solution to death's mystery, inspired by Michel Leiris, because I felt it would tilt the scales of Dallas' investigation in favor of the suicide solution, or at least suggest that when Hy fell — or jumped wearing a Heisenberg device, later retrieved — he was indifferent to whether the cosmic crap-shoot found him achieving Emerence in some Dimension-X or had him smashing his way into his own *Totland*, leaving a bloody mess on a white sidewalk (a horizontal white-board!) for a city crew to erase.



Air France's *Latécoère* flying-boat, the largest commercial plane at the time

Iris in, iris out. Seatbelt sign on. We started descending. Wish had returned to his privileged seat in First Class. A curtain of clouds out my window. Opaque and vague. Rain somewhere over there. Was this what the ill-fated Air France *Latécoère* flight 631 crew flew into on August 1, 1948 (Hy 58 weeks old then) after leaving Fort de France, Martinique for Port-Étienne, French West Africa, not knowing the cloud curtain screened a violent storm

just beyond which would break it apart with a terrible wind shear? The six-engine seaplane, "Lionel de Marnier," was lost, killing all 52 souls on board. We were, now preparing to land, flying parallel to such a cloud curtain, not toward it. I watch "Air Disasters" on cable TV.

*The rain holds many memories in its showers* — I've read that somewhere, maybe it was one of Meme's rejiggered quotations — as in that day Meme saw the young black man fly off a balcony in a flattening death-dive onto hardwood gallery flooring, a day it had rained — hard — all-shaking thunder that threatened to strike flat the thick rotundity of the world.



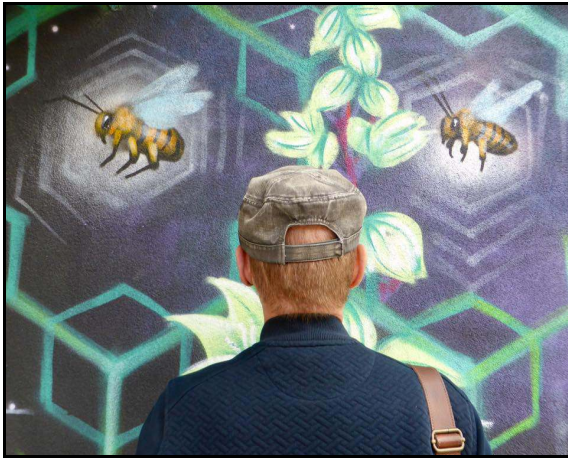
A similar stormy day ten months previous, I was working on Hy's files as Dorinda proofed it on the fly, while a bumble bee flew against my office window, trying to enter. Dory's chin was on my shoulder, both of us staring at the computer screen. We were in my faculty office overlooking Lago di Mich. With every burst of Thor's rage outside, she trembled and gripped my right shoulder with her left hand (like I'd seen on TV many times) the way she used to grab Hy. Something about memory and nerves: Hy's subscapularis muscles sending messages through Dory's fingers to her arms up to her brain and back down to her heart.

## Finding Mememo



Panorama of Ljubljana, now globalized and home to "Cloaca-Cola," "Pizza Hurt," and "Brook No Brothers"

Gazing out my small over-the-wing window, I estimated the sun was two hand spans above the horizon where sat the Julian Alps, a very soft reddish glow soaking through a dispersing fog, so I could look directly at it, a piece of glowing coal in a cooling stove, a stove right out of a Communist-era peasant hovel.



To Bee or Not to Bee (Jym and mural, Ljubljana, Slovenia)  
photo by Dorinda

That bee bothering my faculty office window months ago recalled to mind a hive of memories and postulates: 1) hate is a hand-made *piñata* filled with bees; 2) Dory's kinship with plants is akin to that of bees; John Ruskin pondered what a bee's chin might be like; 3) Hy'd passed on to me his a copy of Ernst Jünger's *The Glass Bees*; and 4) Ljubljana is famous for its Bee Path, established by the Society of Urban Bee-keepers in October 2015.

Today that bee Society includes thirty-one members from educational, cultural, economic, and health institutions to bee-keepers and bee-keeping societies. Beehives (and bee-murals) are placed in various locations in urban Ljubljana: at Cankarjev dom, near Ljubljana Pharmacy's HQ, at BTC City and on the roof of the Spanish Fighters' Cultural Centre. As a full-color tourist Bee-Blurb informs readers:



## Finding Mememo

*The Bee Path underscores the significance of bees for our survival and food security, and its visitors can also learn about the long beekeeping tradition in Ljubljana. Virgil's Eclogues refer to "willow blossoms sipped by Hybla's [Sicilian] bees." Seventeenth-century English physician Sir Thomas Browne wrote of bees: "In these narrow Engines there is more curious Mathematicks" than in Whales, Elephants, Dromidaries, and Camels."*

*Communication with bees is entirely one-sided.*

*Today there are as many as 3 percent of all Slovenian bee-keepers with over 4,500 beehives in the area of the City of Ljubljana. And the honey produced here is of very very high quality. Beekeeping in Ljubljana is pre-historic. Medno village derives its name from the word 'honey'. The City Savings Bank's sign features a bee and hive. A honey market was held on Congress Square as early as century ago. Slovenian architect Jože Plešnik had a beehive in his garden.*



Jars of delicious Slovenian honey



The Macaroni Club's GoOpti transport from Jože Pušnik airport to our final destination at Hiša Franko during which a cloud of bees crossed our path.



Land of Cockaigne (1567) Pieter Bruegel the Elder

And we had a big bee in our bonnet: we wouldn't have time to flit from venue to venue looking for our share of tourist pollen on this trip. We are to go directly by GoOpti van up the Soča Valley to our rooms at the Hiša Franko near the Slap Boka, a waterfall with an overall fall of 472 feet with a single fall of 348 feet, Slovenia's highest and most powerful. The waters gush out of a karst spring near Mount Kanin and plunge down into a rocky gorge — a very impressive sight in an area our tourist brochure claims is "the epicenter of awesomeness." What the brochure didn't mention is that it is the favored lover's leap for young depressed Slovenians. One must note that kissing is not collaboration between two that aims to make one unified thing,

but is the intimate friction between two mediums to produce twoness. As there is not identity, but reciprocity in the act, some lovers see fit to go one step further and collaborate on perfect identity achieved by a lightning flash of a willed throw of the dice loaded in favor of the Grim Reaper, in dying as *one* into their own private *Totland*. I'm sure Wish Watt would urge such lovers to strap on

## Finding Mememo



Slovenian Boulder-Hugger, Rok Grabben, So a Valley

Heisenberg Belts, roll the cosmic dice, and see if they end up in the Land of Cockaigne, lying under a flowering rosebush.

Our destination was an outdoors adventure magnetic for those who love white-water rafting, canoeing, swimming, hiking, fishing, and the favorite pastime of the Slovenians, *objemanje boulderja* (boulder-hugging), for which it is *de rigueur* to wear green pants or shorts (symbolizing moss) while hugging the *south face* of the large rock, a compensatory gesture, as that side rarely accrues moss naturally.

Ichi found the shin and toe climbing gestures of this practice resonated well with Shinto nature worship.



Janez Puhar Commemorative Coin

Upon pulling up to our gate, us passengers did a Chinese Fire Drill exit before that giant in the rear could jam up the narrow aisle. On to immigration with a not too dense crowd of people in a hurry, all walking at the same speed down a naked corridor with no side passages, then onto baggage circling endlessly, then through customs, and on to a currency exchange, where I fortuitously got a 3 Euro coin honoring Janez Puhar, a pioneer Slovenian photographer (1814 - 1864, buried in Prešernov gaj [Prešeren's Grove]), followed by a brief refueling stop in the airport's Hot Horse con-

cession known for their ass-kickin' hamburger with nacho cheese (thanks TripAdvisor) served up by a cook in a crisp new uniform sporting tattooed wrists, and rushed to our table (already set with a jar each of orange marmalade and local honey) by a local honey, a vivacious, lithe, and smiling twenty-something in a white nylon blouse and black slacks whose name tag, shaped like a jumping red horse, read PETRA (rock). She featured a pair of magnificent tragic eyes, like two black butterfly wings torn off a butterfly and stuck wide apart onto her face, still fluttering. She spoke English better than Dallas.

## Finding Mememo

Her presence, subtly bolder than even Dallas', challenged Dal to come out with one of his witty stories: "Once the topic of death came up twixt Hy 'n me after quaffin' a few dark brews at Seven Lions [*that eatery now defunct*]. I said I wanted to live 'til the ripe ol' age of 92 at which time the coroner's report would read: *Death by gunshot — shot in the ass by a jealous husband*. Not to be outdone, Hy's riposte was: 'Your Pants, you got a point there, but we best cover it over modestly with a cap.' The resulting laughter eased us into snack-mood, reminded us — given our missions — to keep our cool, *grace under pressure*, as Hemingway put it."

Throughout this exchange, Dorinda was meticulously organizing our transportation tickets, knowing our white GoOpti van awaited us. Once outside, we piled into "Goop-T" (as we dubbed it) as our female chauffeur, Skalnata Sintaksa, stowed our luggage in back. She had dark hair, strong arms, competent hands, square face, and flashing brown eyes. Upon plopping down in the driver's seat, she drove home the theme for the day's ride with a mild accent and an upraised hand: "Music before all other things!" And proceeded to entertain us the whole trip with a looping six-track audio tape featuring a weird mash-up of classical, Egyptian jazz, and Slovenian folk songs.



Ljubljana scene with river, photo by Dallas

I got a window seat. As my ears were fully occupied, my eyes escaped by staring at the passing urban scene once we entered Ljubljana proper,<sup>5</sup> my air-travel-starved peepers devoured the sights as one might devour an orange while dying of thirst: a uniformed nanny with a baby carriage walking along the Ljubljanica River; a broken lawn sprinkler; buildings under construction; stacked up building material; another, larger, Hot Horse con-

cession; Geonavtik café-bookstore, a tree fenced off with wood planking for construction; white crosswalk stripes; a view of an empty street with a horse pulling a two-wheeled cart; water flowing out of a hole in the side of a barrel with a piece of wood and matchbook in it, then running in the gutter to a street corner drain; water running along the pavement; a woman pausing by a shop

---

5. Slovenia's capital (known in Roman times as Emona) is one of Europe's greenest and most liveable capitals. The European Commission awarded Ljubljana with the coveted Green Capital of Europe title for 2016. Car traffic is restricted in the center, leaving the leafy banks of the emerald-green Ljubljanica River, which flows through the city's heart, free for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Finding Mememo



Scene from the last few minutes of *L'Eclisse* (1962)

window to smoke a cig (seems like the opening of a Hitchcock film); large shrubs rustling in the wind; a bus picking up passengers; an armadillo-like yellow Citroën; an old man with thick iron-gray hair clad in a red-checkered shirt, canvas jeans, with powerful-looking hands, propped up in a chair before an antique shop; cracked pavement; a crew

repairing cobblestones; two men on a roof; interesting street lamps; lots of people, many tourists, walking alongside our van, their backs barely distinguishable; a white-washed wall, like a huge Cy Twombly painting, on which incomprehensible dirty jokes have been scribbled. It was like reliving the famed final seven minutes of Antonioni's film *L'Eclisse*, where memory plays a vital role, a movie Meme loved and that director Martin Scorsese said made him realize how film could move us. An ending like what I believe I will see rushing through the moviola-of-my-mind as my life spools down and off the reel.

My reverie was broken when our driver spun around and yelled over the music that our journey to Kobarid's Hiša Franko, would take two and a half hours. "I know of a mountain shortcut," she told us, "but the first time I try it, my passengers get car sick on switchbacks and one tourist later list my nine-passenger van on TripAdvisor as *the vomit-comet*." We all agreed she stay on the normal route, a route we were assured would be having us scanning great rolling forests, miles of green that would make our eyes ache, the sky overhead maintaining a pure blue all the way to our destination. "Kobarid is known," she continued, "as the site of the World War One Battle of Caporetto, where the Italian retreat has been documented in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*."

Dorinda and Wish were sitting in the very back row seat, so getting the worst of the bumps. I was a seat ahead of them and could just get the gist of their conversation about collapsing the divide between science and imagination, despite their bump-skewed voices and the dashboard speakers spewing music.

Dorinda was casually probing into the beliefs and practices of the G.O.N.E. group, into Sado's role with the group. Wish jabbered on in a pleasant tenor, mixed with bright sunlight filtering through the van's windows, about what he called "Null-0," a theory about "the unification of all things into their basic homogeneity and the application of this concept to the universe. A non-object orientation understanding the universe as a Gestalt," he asserted, "a vast vortex of energy, of vibes generated by strings; the notion of discrete particles is only an imperfect level of our perception of reality. The Law of Null-0 is — may the



## Finding Mememo



clearness be with you — that the object is not the reality. Those snake-charmed by objects — like most people today — we G.O.N.E.R.S. term 'jangled,' meaning out of harmony with the cosmos, not a *clear*."

Dorinda asked if Sado's tasks for the G-group only took on the performance aspect. Wish then boasted how Sado had an

M.A. degree in psychology and had been put in charge of screening new G.O.N.E. applicants. "The potential newbies," said Wish, "are given a battery of tests. Open the big drawer of her desk and you'd find the Minnesota Multiphasic, the Rorschach blots, the Bender-Gestalt, the Rhine deck of ESP cards, a Ouija board, a pair of red dice, a magic writing tablet, a wax doll with fingernail parings and bits of hair, and a small piece of lead to be turned into gold." This he delivered with a wink. "She," he went on to tell Dorinda, "specializes in cases where the appliant is encouraged to wrestle with their conflicting feelings about jumping.

"As Sado explains to them, and as I explained to your husband, 'Your ideas are not your ideas; you didn't create them; you can't turn them on and off when you feel like it; they operate through you, but are conditioning deposited by your environment'. He understood, saying something about his own writing not providing a solid floor: 'My texts are abysses of endlessly regressive codes on code, convention on convention, reading of reading of reading'; I told him this is what models in his texts what us G.O.N.E.R.S call *parallactic* universes."

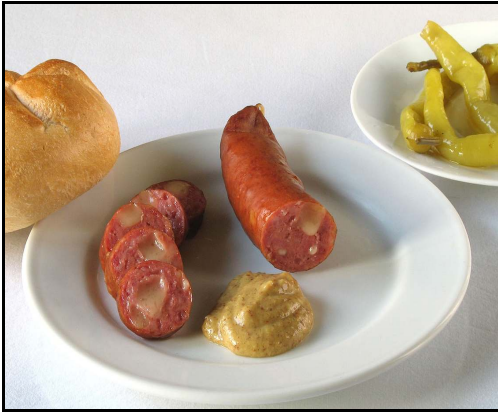


"Hy thought that sounded like some wife-murdering French theorist, Louis Althusser. I added, 'What you believe is a reflection of certain social forces and pressures,' realizing that your husband's psychic state was locked in stalemate — the chess metaphor seemed appropriate for him — 'You're at war with yourself, Hy, playing both white and black; you can't decide which side should win because elements of both exist in you. You need to be lifted off the chess board and see everything as pieces, see the whole universe as a game of black and white squares with everyone and every object stuck on its spacetime spot. Imagine you're off the board and can reach down from above'. I remember these

words seemed to have a marked effect on him; as in chess, he finally decided to risk his queen for a pawn's promotion."



## Finding Mememo



Kranjska klobasa (Slovenian sausage) and trimmings

The conversation ebbed to a halt when our van braked to a creep to make way for a man towing a small cart across the road. He was quite huge, ape-shouldered, shaggy and unkempt, his jacket hung open and food-stained from many bouts with *kranjska klobasa* cooked up in copper pans; his sleeves were rolled up, eyes deep-set and dark with industrial cunning. A hapless discard from the former Communist era, he leered hostilely at us tourists as he passed before us. We

drove for about a mile, then pulled over for me to relieve myself. The air smelled of sun and drying grass. Insects buzzed around me as I stood among tall bushes, unzipped, and bent forward.



Postcard from Kobarid

Dallas got out of the van awkwardly, his legs numb and unresponding. For a brief moment he (as he later confided) thought he saw a weird parody of human faces moving about in the shallow weed-rimmed ditch running alongside the road: wizened little baby faces with tiny shoe-button eyes, a slit of a mouth, twis-

ted ears, and a few wisps of damp hair growing out of what seemed soft dough. For a split second Dal thought he'd been jiggled into another dimension. But it turned out to be only small pigs that had, apparently, escaped from a local farm.

Our van driver, meanwhile, was standing by the vehicle, smoking a sweet-smelling Turkish cigarette and patiently waiting for us to climb back in. A kid, probably from that farm, came out of a bush and stood silently looking at her. He was small, not very old. Perhaps eight. But it was hard to tell. He wore a faded blue T-shirt, ragged with dirt, and short pants; his hair was long and a

## Finding Mememo



bit matted. Brown hair. It hung over his face and around his ears. Something in his arms. He was bearing a small toy bear. A teddy bear. The boy's eyes were large and bore a quizzical gaze. I noticed him and instantly flashed on the inci-



FRUTABELA bar and roadside "lab" ( photo by Ichi )

dent Meme had recorded in one of his .wpd files about his frightful encounter at the lake cabin with that bear boring into his rental car, cleaning it bare of goodies. Hy would've seen this child as an apparition, a sign bearing upon — *something*. Our driver reached into the van and tossed the pathetic child a package of FRUTABELA; the kid ran away bearing his loot close to his chest.

Flashback. Re-roll the film a half-hour earlier: we had pulled over to snap a shot of a strange advertising gimmick, a FRUTABELA lab roadside concession aimed at luring cyclists with *al dente* bodies to try the bar. We bought a few fruit bars, enjoying the chorus and chirp of our species speaking various tongues. One cyclist was guzzling an energy drink and nipping at a fruit bar. He'd hand-

## Finding Mememo

painted his bike's name on its red frame: *El Alba* (The Dawn). His eyes were glazed like a stoner watching Sponge Bob Square Pants. He was bare-chested with abs that could cut glass. A Y-shaped scar spanned his chest navel to shoulders. Dallas whispered, "Either that's an autopsy slice, or some Skins put the Y-chromosome on him for bein' a tranny!" Our stares must've gotten to him, for he pulled from his pack a white T-shirt screaming in Helvetica bold TODO CHI NGADO! (All Fucked Up). Once so garbed, he calmly pulled out a bag lunch. He had an I-know-something-you-don't-know grin often seen on older siblings or departmental chairmen.



*La colmena* (translated as *The Beehive* into English) by Camilo José Cela

I had the nerve to approach him about the scar, "*Está un día bueno, sí? Habla Inglés?*"

*Sí, está muy bueno y sí, Inglés.* Please, call me Roberto, a *vato* from Buenos Aires — a city that is a *perfecto* blend of Paris and Prague."

"Borges!" I tested the waters. He nodded appreciatively, asked me where I'm from.

"Chicago."

"Qi-cargo!" He pulled from his pack a paperback of Camilo José Cela's novel, *The Beehive*.<sup>6</sup>

"*Bueno* for Slovenia, *sí*? What with big thing here being bees." I nodded my agreement, then delicately broached the topic of his scar. "*Sí*, once had a seizure that put me in a death-like coma for *uno día*.

Medics carted me away to *el depósito de cadáveres*, where a doctor began the autopsy. I awoke screaming. *Con rapidez* they sew me up. Since then I decide to, as you *Americanos* say, *Leeve Larrge*."

It turned out Roberto was a distant relative of Spanish writer and television host Fernando Sánchez Dragó. "*Señors*, want a taste of my *sànguches*? Eeats a Slovenian version of Chilean *chacarero*. *Muy bueno*." He took a bite, his tongue flicking over his lips like a reptile. In unconscious imitation, I ran my tongue over my lips and it was like sandpaper scraping over sandpaper. I'm always forgetting to hydrate.

We passed on his offer. By the way, I loved the cover design of Cela's book. *Reminds me of Meme*, I thought as The Macaroni Club stuffed back into our van, waving *adiós* to Roberto, and moved further along our story space.

---

6. *The Beehive* is set in Madrid in 1943, after the end of the Spanish Civil War, and deals with the poverty and general unhappiness found in Spain by examining a multitude of fictional characters in varying levels of detail. It is notable in that it contains over 300 characters and is considered to be the most important novel written in post civil war Spain. Because of rigorous censorship Cela was unable to get *La colmena* published in his native Spain, and was instead forced to publish it in Buenos Aires.

## Finding Mememo

Roll film forward. My vision tightened around our young driver's moment of kindness toward that roving, pathetic child. I slowly walked over to her. She tossed her sweet-smelling cig. I chatted her up, asking how she liked her chauffeur job. Thought it might be a lonely task, the social distance between her clients and herself, et cetera.

"Yah. But it gets me places. Better than gossiping over meat and cheese plates with shrunken old ladies in the kitchen in a tavern in a little Swiss village in German part of Switzerland where I worked one summer right after achieving highschool. Slaving away among dirty pots and pans. My employ-person used to tell me at least twice a day — and I quote her precisely — 'Cook and clean shouldn't just be mentioned in tandem, but bound together with bonds unsunderable, fused into a single utterance'. I was immersed ten hours a day in a variety of temperatures, volumes, scents, and objects. My emotional ups and downs colored the air in their own dimensions. And during my spare hours, I found I was spending more time exposing myself to the region's dry rain than to the wet sun."

Yep, Meme would've liked this one.

A minute or so later, at the same instant, we all glanced at each other in turn, like a billiard ball doing a bounced circuit around a pool table, silently agreeing to climb back into Goop-T and charge forward. Reverse Chinese fire drill.

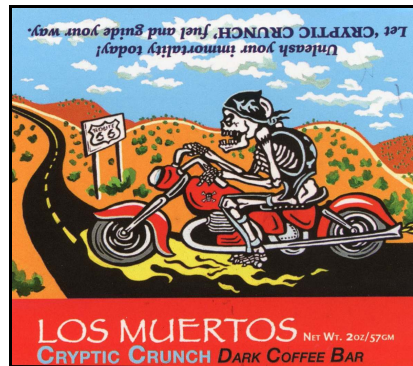
After about ten minutes on the road, Ichi turned in his seat from staring out the window and confided, "Being confined in here, it reminds me, as a child, I'd lie in bed [*was he lying now?*] and stare out the window in an act of *boketto* — a Japanese word which doesn't have a direct English translation, but loosely means gazing off into the horizon without thought — not even batting an eyelash, and feel each fraction of each moment to exist in different universes, as though time were not a continuum, but a series of planes separated, yet conjoined, one flowing into, layering onto, the next. This topic I never confided to anyone until I met Meme-san; he and I find common ground here, often discussing this topic and the fact that we both, in the manner of our respective cultures, would stage, as a kid, mock funerals, when he'd come to my workhouse. It become link between us. Just as did my collection of bent eye-glasses [*see page 69*]. That array struck him as a symbol of my personal vision and his peculiarly warped 'take' on our reality."

Dallas was thoughtfully typing on a new iPad he bought for this trip. That night I hit him up about what he was up to and he let me read his efforts. "Just a rough draft, still, somethin' pretty slickeroo, like snot on a door knob, the start of a new Blurt Wildbraine story! Gonna mash-up detective, fantasy, and sci-fi genres into a blend of chaos and beauty. Here, read what I got so far."



## Finding Mememo

*Having laid down Charles Yu's How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe, lighting a bowl of smoking sage, and grabbing a Los Muertos dark coffee chocolate bar, Reggie swung his polio debilitated legs out onto the windowsill of his parents eighth-floor New York apartment on Amsterdam near Seventy-Second and sat as comfortably as his disability and high-tech "diaper" allowed, his purple-socked feet encased in leg braces dangled in the six a.m. morning air; very hot, and traffic was backed up Amsterdam for blocks, the workday rush.*



*From his perch, he surveyed the summer urbanscape looking for all monstrous and prodigious things. As the suntan forces etched across the torpedoed horizon, he recalled his dream of last night wherein he was a roof runner, leaping the corrugated iron leaves of tin, house to house, over crude gardens, turning the rooftops in Bangkok into an offbeat over-running freeway, escaping his foe.*



*Bangkok? It had to do with his mom's suitor, now husband, a Chicago-based private-eye who'd solved a prominent case in Bangkok a year ago. Reggie didn't like him. A flabby boozier ill-matched for his mom who was a compulsive jogger and only ate macrobiotic, even forcing Reggie to eat that shit too. When he first came to their apartment, he was on a case in "The Big Apple", as he so called his adoptive city. Soon he was a regular; he would ask his mom to make popcorn, he'd provide*



## Finding Mememo

*the beer, and they would sit on the very couch on which his dad had died of a heart attack two years ago and watch some D-minus science fiction film along with wacky silhouetted talking heads making fun of the bad special effects — photo-negativized skies containing suns, comets, and moons of all phases, or people with searing fire breath.*

*Often rain thrummed against the windows, so the guy had to raise the volume, annoying Reggie in his small room, sitting in his wheelchair reading an anthology of the early stories of Philip K. Dick (it intrigued him that Dick was a bit nuts and was born in 1928 and died in 1982, the numbers in the dates bracketing his life reversed, which Reggie took as deeply meaningful, mystical even, a cosmic toss of the dice).*

*Once, Reggie saw Mr. W. getting dressed in the morning when the cat boldly pushed the bedroom door open, saw him in his blue, openly underpants and ribbed undershirt, which he boasted once to his mom one Sunday a.m. was “genuine Sea Island cotton.”*

*“Differently-Abled” (what the center’s bully, Tone-Tone, laughingly called “Cane ‘n Able”) is what his therapy nurse, Sado, said he was. Once Tone-Tone, an older boy, put his hands over Reggie’s eyes and said: “Say a number.” He said eight (8) since it looked like infinity. Tone-Tone removed his hands. “That’s just the number I was thinking,” he said. That was the first time Reggie realized he was a dreamer, that he was different than other kids, other than his being a “Cane ‘n Able”, of course.*

*Reggie inched further out on the window ledge; looking straight ahead. He recalled the odd man’s Advice: “The perils are vast, the receptors are slick, you are brave. If you need help, duck into any used bookstore.” He pushed off the sill with a jerk of his two small, but powerful, hands while muttering the man’s instructions aloud: Dial your mental frequencies to past experiences then dive backward. He then yelled, louder, as his momentum increased: Oh my wish, give me my wish, let my wish, Wish, come true. I wish. The wind took the words right out of his mouth — then stepped on them.*

*He didn’t fall . . . well . . . he fell, yes, but didn’t completely fall. And he managed a nice back flip on the way down. For a moment he was paced by a falling red-winged black bird (they’ve been dying lately and environmental scientists are trying to figure why). Staying the course and then deviation as a new door opened for him, because inside that leather “diaper” about Reggie’s soft middle, a heavy-liquid, frozen, many-fired, rapid cycling bubble chamber, HOBC, with a typical bubble diameter of 10 microns, had been activated by means of velocity achieved and charmed the total measure of 260 GeV/c protons in the core, which initiated the electro-psi field. Whoosh! Yaha! Opened a door deep into the glorious technicolored Unknown, a portal to a new oasis where he was to become known as “Stone Boy”, fighting the ghoulish green malevolence*

## Finding Mememo

*of the evil Iktomi. Where he'd find education is not a mere filling of pail, but the lighting of a fire. He wanted to live his life wholly forward.*



*As that door opened into an inconsistency in space, Reggie's flesh tingle-thrummed, rendering weather conditions irrelevant. His emotions flowed strangely, more like orchestral arrangements than sane responses. Too many thoughts at once. Time became negotiable. Profundities arrived and unraveled. He could see through his hand; he began to dissolve, like he'd seen in movies. Then SHE appeared. First impressions are the most important, they say. SHE had a face like something he wished he had words to describe. But he was only twelve, although this did mean his face read correctly twice a day. He'd need to grow a more mature version of himself in another time. Another name, too. If that's where he was, in fact, going, it's certainly where he wanted to go. . . .*



"That's as far as I got today," Dal said apologetically. "Improbable story, I know, but given my investigations last year into Hy's flight to that lake cabin . . . Well I got inspired."

The mention of Meme's absence from Dorinda and friends brought to mind how Dal, besides finding Hy's missing Fragments pendant <sup>7</sup> rattling around inside that suitcase used in his escape, sussed out material hidden in its lining, including an pen filled-out application for Wishwer's Deep

---

7. This blue-and-tan colored pendant was purchased by Meme while attending a "Madness and Creativity: Psychological Studies of Art and Artists" conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico a year prior to his death. He said it spoke to there being a limited number of building particles in the universe, so that things had to be broken down into their basic elements before new forms could be reborn. He told Ichi it caught his eye as it symbolized how he took shards of text and brought them into some kind of unity. Thereafter, he always wore it when writing or doing a reading.

## Finding Mememo



Hy "Mememo" Grader's colorful  
Fragments pendant

Dream Corporation's Make a Wish Foundation. Therein, our late amigo confesses being, "insecure, narcissistic, paranoid, depressive," and says he's "a needy applicant." He'd gone on to cite evil-eye Armbuster: "Grader, you have *hemoliterachromatosis*, a mucked up condition in which your brain can't process irony." Hy, who'd diligently studied Søren Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Irony*, was both outraged and flattened by the remark.

This litany of woes, where the equations that ruled Hy's life had sadness as a constant, jived with Dorinda telling me how, in retrospect, life began to take hold of Hy, instead of he taking hold of life. She witnessed Hy's thinking turning toward the bizarre and becoming more disorganized as the time approached for his unannounced flight to the Winnisfree Inn's lake cabin with his trusty super-light suitcase in tow.

She, a therapist, had rattled off to me how Hy suffered a host of ego activities, including conflict, adaptation, sublimation, integration, dissociation, desynthesizing, and regression at the service of ego, blah, blah, blah. She described Hy's moods as running from the gamut from awe, ecstasy, inspiration, wonderment, toward loneliness and raw anger. He was confused. She related an incident that she later saw as telling.

"Hy sat on our bed some days before his disappearance — we always read together in bed — and cited Jean-Luc Godard citing from Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*: 'When Stavrogin believes, he doesn't believe that he believes, but when he doesn't believe, he doesn't believe that he doesn't believe, either.' Like Godard, Hy felt truth more truly derives from the play of imagination in fantasy than the from the recording of so-called 'reality'. He liked to tell colleagues that TV news is a direct descendant, not of Lumière, but of Méliès.

"But at that time, my Meme felt less able to cope with the panic-fear inherent in the human situation; art as a form of therapy (and even his mouthwash), just wasn't making it anymore. He was in a precarious state, like my coffee mug, always sitting too close to the edge of our breakfast table; someone could easily have tipped him over into risky behavior."

That "someone" we all took to be — if this was a film, the camera would zoom in on Wishwer's face, eyes wide-open, like a deer caught in headlights — given Dallas-provided evidence, Wish Watt. This is why Dallas invited Wish on this trip in the first place, Dal who'd walk forty miles to go to a drinking party, or up a mountain to its falls for a dunking party. More on this later.

## Finding Mememo



I must've dozed off in the van, for I was jarred awake as our van hit a pothole. I raised my head just in time to see us slow to a crawl and make the turn into Hiša Franko. I rolled down my window: sunny, warm, smelling many smells at once; gardens on either side of the entry road gave off a murmur of bees active around pink and white flowers and an array of *Rosa Veilchenblau*. A great organic force. Inhaling, we all simultaneously felt a surge toward action; toward a love affair with Nature in which She would offer us surprises, unpredictable questions, fantasy, and laughter. Laughter came first. Suddenly, a tailless Manx cat burst out in front of our van and scampered across the road; we burst out in hilarity at this abrupt and truncated animal.

Our transport passed a gardener leaning against a car with his hands in his pockets, like a punk staring down a patrol car as it cruised by. When our van pulled up before the hotel's entrance, Skalnata pulled out our luggage, and we gave her a huge thank you hug. During our trip, her conversation had been full of surprises, unpredictable questions, and laughter.

As we walked up the hotel/restaurant's entry steps, Dallas remarked he'd noticed stuck in "Skal's" blouse's front pocket a Hershey bar with just the He peeking out. Dallas thought it would make a great idea for a clue in a future mystery story. Then he gave me a strange nervous look that seemed wrong on him, like formal wear on a hobo; bowling alone, he approached Skal and whispered (but not low enough), "I'll catch up with ya later, Princess. Gotta see a dude 'bout a riddle: What goes up even as it goes down?" I fantasized a future scenario, a Slovenian version of a Wildbraine story, "The Unknown Known", where Blurt is seduced, after a winter trip to Belgrade on the Orient Express, by Madame Philippe Panon Desbassayns de Richemont: *The sky was overcast so that the light was dark as though under water. From this peat light her great eyes became invested with rose incandescence that was soft, too soft. En passant, our bodies met; later my hands go like two owls in daylight over the hills, moors, and wooden valleys, over the white winter of her body.*



Isaka Yanaihara

As hotel staff in livery swarmed out and collected our bags, we marched in and signed at the front desk to much fanfare and curiosity about Wish's tattooed forehead. The young lady at the desk kept calling Wish, "Vish Vatts," asking him what room he "would vant." There was a large, old photograph of "Papa" H. over behind the desk. As we made for our rooms, Ichi pointed out a large poster in the hallway from a 1967 Giacometti exhibition in Paris featuring the artist's famous painted portrait of Japanese philosopher Isaka Yanaihara.

## Finding Mememo

"Wise Isaka modeled many times for Giacometti — drawings, paintings, sculptures — that enigmatic face, I guess. Photos of him at time show him sporting haircut like Japanese version of Wish Watt."

"Giacometti's own head, I said, "projects an indisputable, yet elusive, sentiment from the heart."

"I wanna know why Giacometti's stick figures seem to be on the verge of extinction," added Dallas.

"I would put it more like, What keeps his sculpted figures from fading into extinction?" added Dorinda.

When we got to our floor, we decided on a much needed nap, going to our adjoining rooms, Dory carrying Hy's urn. I inserted my card key with its portrait of "Papa" circa a year prior his death — funny, I'd been expecting a large, old and rusty iron key — and entered my room, number, 248; it matched in part, 24-8-1953, the day and month (in European style) that Sylvia Plath (who often wrote of the sea) suicided. Hy would've made heaps of this coincidence. Once he took Dorinda to a posh hotel to celebrate the day they first met, 2-26, and by pure luck they were assigned room 226! Meme had Dorinda post this on her Facebook page and drove us nuts for weeks about it. Considering, I now toss this toss-of-the-dice your way for your own considered consideration.

My room was of modest size, adequate. An old wooden table near the window had a small mirror reflecting a closet across the space and an inviting green glass water bottle of Rogaska Heilwasser. I picked it up and did a mock *Sieg Heil* with it facing that mirror (Neo-Nazi riot in Charlottesville, Virginia was fizzing in my mind), and then upended it, emptying nearly half in less than a minute into my dehydrated body. It was then I noticed hanging next to the wall-

mounted flat-screen television an old framed yellowed news photo of Hemingway in his snappy uniform dated 1918.

My suitcase arrived; I tipped the fellow and started to hang up my duds. Imagine my surprise to see the wooden closet was an exact copy of the one used for time travel in the 2013 film *About Time*. I flopped onto the firm bed, staring at the closet, musing, until I dozed off. Soon I was caught up in one whopper of a dream:



The time-travel closet in the film *About Time* (2013) Tim Lake (Domhnall Gleeson) exiting the closet.



## Finding Mememo

My body is flat on a cot. I'm on a slow intravenous drip. The walls seem to push in on it. My head, for a minute or two, floats airily above the corner of a room whose ceiling appears to be dissolving. My consciousness is detached and lazy, not aware yet that its vehicle, my head, has been severed from my body. I could see and actually feel shadows traversing my reclined body. Shadows of nursing staff, I think.

Then head and body rejoin. I then sense a nameless terror lurking in the stifling air above me with its invisible intensity. It buzzes. I struggle, bound by that terrible powerlessness which paralyzes us in our dreams. I try to cry out — but I cannot; I want to move — I cannot; I try, with the most violent efforts and out of breath, to turn over and throw off this amorphous buzzing being which is crushing and suffocating me — I cannot! Therefore, absolute acquiescence seems my only protection against this threatening horror. I thought if I lay immobile long enough — as children are wont to do when the boogeyman is about — the ghastly thing, whatever it was, would go away. The scene fades out, then in again to a new scenario, like a film transition.



Ichi 's CGI visualizing my Slovenian bee dream

I am now sitting up on the cot, my hair is gooey with honey. I watch a bee-covered man wave at me, a friendly gesture, a honey-combed wall behind him, a large jar of honey placed next to him. He starts to stir the honey pot, slowly. It's thick. He says to me, "Morning is when I awake and there is dawn in me." I try to stand and run. He raises his arm, it reminds me of the man's raised arm etched into plaques the Pioneer spacecraft outer galactic probes sent off into space years ago. He

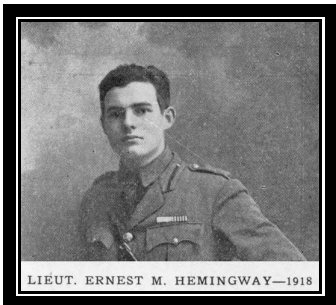
# Finding Mememo

begs of me, "Stay here, don't buzz off. Be it life or death, the bees only crave reality." When I told him, "It's none of your beeswax," he beckoned his bees to swarm me, to keep me from leaving.

It was like a B-movie. I awoke slowly, in a fuzzy state of mind. For a moment, thought I saw people coming toward me, all the same man, a young, hobbling, wounded Ernest Hemingway. I sat up in bed, feeling like I'd come out of the foyer of a strange movie theater after watching Michael Caine's antics in the 1978 disaster film *The Swarm*, not knowing which way was home.



To orient myself, I glanced at the honey-yellow kitschy bumble bee alarm clock on the bed stand and was surprised to see I'd killed nearly two hours in Slumberland, and it had nearly killed me. Oddly, there was no stuffiness in my sinuses as is usual after sleeping.



The framed Hemingway photo in Jym's room



Canola field

Obvious why Hemingway and bees should find their way into my dream. I must've stirred up the stagnant time inside here where the great man had stayed. But there might be a deeper reason young Hemingway was there in a kind of *mis-en-abyme* presence. "Papa" had written his entire life as idealized fantasy in his novels. He reinvented every pathetic trial he'd endured. His failure to become a soldier due to a physical defect was turned into the story of the brave ambulance driver. He inflated the story of the injury with each telling. He downplayed his involvement in the Red Cross, going so far as to cut his uniform to make it look more like a real soldier's. His inability to satisfy a woman was rewritten as the manliest love story ever told, *A Farewell to Arms*. Maybe my dream, situated precisely where Hemingway wrote that book, was telling me I had, in my editorial approach to this text, over-idealized Meme.

When I told Dorinda about this dream, she described a disturbing one she had. After pulling her hotel sheets into the shape of someone else's insomnia, she finally fell asleep despite flaring neck twinges, and saw . . .

Me seeing film frames projected, sound missing, but with the clickety-clack of the sprockets sliding into place. This leads to a flashback: the

## Finding Mememo

night before, in Room 511 of the Hotel Ruze, we go from kisses to cigarettes without even turning down the bedclothes. Iris out, iris in. Meme and I come into focus and in color. We are hiking in the Czech Republic, along a path carved out by trail-builders and past hikers. It's a path we actually took on a trip ten years ago, guided by a pair of young, rigorous Czech tour guides. 'On a trail, to walk is to follow,' says Meme, then just has to add his usual pedantic commentary. 'In German to hike is *wandern*, to wander; in French it is *randonner*, literally to move impetuously. I also like the closeness of *randon* to our *random*.'

Sturdy wooden walking sticks, trimmed of branches by a Czech wood-carver, assist us along; we soon emerge facing a field of yellow canola flowers rocking violently in the wind, cross it, slapping wind-disturbed bees away. At the edge of the yellow sea, we spy an old church with a crumbling asphalt path (grass and quitch have crept from its edges) leading to an ornate gate once heated in kindness, now cooled by wind. It creaks on rusty hinges. A freshly painted front door stands before us. The church sounds of iron in a blender smothered with a quincunx of gargantuan hotel pillows. We hesitatingly go in, after all, it is a convenient refuge from the wind's blows that crack our reddened cheeks.

Inside, we see the source of the sound; the building's been converted into a hall where a therapy session similar to Primal Scream therapy mixed with (we later discover) practices of the Shaker religion is taking place. Peach sunlight, the same color as the soap in the black oval dish on the glass shell above my room's sink, filters through old curtains on several windows, coloring the presence of a mid-twenties male and female. The man could be a stunt double for Hollywood actor Franchot Tone in a costume, who had to change professions due to losing an eye while filming of a violent scene with a pool cue-wielding woman-scorned. Used to playing roles, his body today is draped in a charcoal pinstripe suit, too tight for him. His tie is tied in a classic Windsor knot. His shoes gleam like the roasted light of Italy. His hair is slicked. He has a patent leather neatness about him and exudes a nifty breeziness. He dramatically introduces himself as 'Bobby' and his sister as 'Bobbi,' who wears an outfit recalling Judy's (Kim Novak) in the last part of *Vertigo*. 'Bobby and Bobbi Hwbrgdtse; we are fraternal twins, so says our Facebook page and lists us as Ruthenian-Austrian mystics practicing Fear and Trembling therapy.'

Continuing, in what sounds like a mix of broken haiku and rock syntax, they take turns explaining that they are leading a workshop for 'couples whose dreams are richer than their waking lives,' and who are now 'inside screaming cubes, Kryks, sitting on custom-made cream-colored futons.' Looking, we see each couple holds a 'scream-aid,' a fetus in a jar of alcohol. Our countenances devolved or declined, descended or degenerated into coldness at the sight.

## Finding Mememo

Bobby is blind in his left eye and missing his right arm. Bobbi is blind in her right eye and missing her left arm. They say they've each had a voluntary amputation in order to become more symmetrical when they stand side-by-side for photos. Each working eye is unnaturally light-colored — probably sky-blue when seen outside the church. Unlike Bobby, there is something frail in Bobbi's face, something about the way her lips press together. But their gazes aren't synched. Bobby's single eye is directed at the visitors as if staring at a camera in the distance, not at fellow humans two feet away. Bobbi's is staring at *moi* like a deer caught in headlights. An iron accordion radiator utters a hollow clank.

As the Slavic couples begin screaming (it's muffled by the Kryks), Bobby asks if we, 'obviously a pair of gourmands,' would like to sample Bobbi's well-simmered fetus soup, a recipe copped from chef Ana Roš. When we refuse — 'We want chicken salad sandwiches, please' — Bobbi offers us each a fortune cookie. Cracked open, each reveals the same mirror-reversed fortune:



Place in front of a mirror

Meme, exercising the delights of the hunter, shoots an SX-70 flash Polaroid of the cookie, then of Bobby and Bobbi standing next to me, but all that emerges magically on paper is a record of us revealing 'the albino inside,' our white skeletal structure — an X-ray of sorts in a small square format, which we pass among us.

For some dream-reason this penetrating photographic act of Meme's makes me realize he's just more concerned with his own mind, his own words, and his own actions than mine. To test him, I ask him in front of Bobby and Bobbi — hoping this might influence a positive response — if he would consent to take an Arthur Murray dance class with me, use our muscles to work that fuckin' albino inside us, but he fumes and says he ain't no Bob Fosse.

Then a harsh blast of amped up screaming overcame us. One of the therapy couples has opened their Kryk while in a rant. Meme goes from trouser pocket to ears in a split second. Stuffs in waxen ear goop,

# Finding Mememo

like he does every night to mute my snoring. Seeing our displeasure, the couple starts laughing. But they're laughing because they're not of this world anymore. A laughter of superiority, of well-feeling, like a teenage girl seeing herself in an elegant prom dress in her mirror.

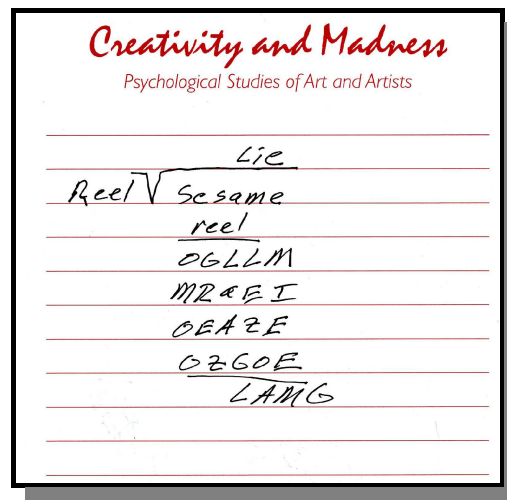
The couple pulls fetus out of a jar, 'It isn't real. Stole it off a real clothesline though. It's for puppet theater.' Now these puppeteers' faces go strangely sweet, blank as peeled fruit.

Meme, responding to change in their demeanor, ungoops his ears and tells me in a whisper, 'It's obvious. They've left all the shit behind on this Planet of the Foregone Conclusions and have entered a world in which the boundaries between objects disappear. I sense they're moving in a sea that exists between the known and the unknown.'

My wacky husband then whips out from nowhere a French sailor's hat and runs to join them. Embracing them, he yells, 'Permission to come aboard, sir? Let's heave anchor — or I will leave with rancor — on the starship *Enterprise*. To the stars and the galaxies and the gases they bake in!' Said in a Teddy Roosevelt leading the charge up San Juan Hill tone of voice.

As my Meme yells, pointing upward with his right index finger, I become the lone bee, kicking and screaming at the sight of him. In the background, song lyrics, "You are a magnet, and I am steel," is playing and re-playing like the record is stuck.

Suddenly, there's a scene shift. I am looking up at a waiter with Marty Feldman eyes as I order a third caffè macchiato and munch on my fourth chocolate croissant guiltily snatched from a resplendent breakfast buffet. Meme sits across from me nose down in a bowl of muesli; he looks up with a smile and displays a note page from a conference we'd attended. 'Look Dor, I've finally done that long division problem that's dogged me all my life.' But then I remember HE'S FUCKIN' DEAD!

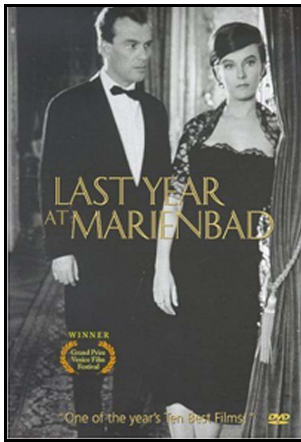




## Finding Mememo

Dorinda told me she awakened, “in part, because the dream put me in a paradoxical frame of mind, getting the feeling I wanted out, yet needed to stay; and in part, because my closed eyes were urged open by a good chastening of the late afternoon sun penetrating my room’s west window.

“Even dead, Meme’s ever linked internally to me. (In fact, to think of it, my husband exists entirely in this redacted text of yours in flashbacks, in which he is a continuous interruption.) But now, right now, it’s late afternoon in Slovenia — not morning — international travel with its resultant jet lag (which Meme dubbed suffering the blows of ‘Johnny O’Clock’) always screws with my biological clock making it: tock, tick, ich, tock, ich, tick, ich . . .”



While Dorinda spilled the beans about her dream, we were in the hall standing in front of the ice machine waiting for the four-person elevator. Soon on our way through the hotel’s lobby with walls and decor in white, Parcheesi yellow, pink, and French blue gray; three over-stuffed chairs circled a low table under a chandelier with hanging glass beads. On our way to the hotel’s Vienna-like café for coffee and honey-dipped scones, we passed the vintage mahogany registration desk inlaid with silver, its wooden mail-and-key hive tended by a handsome, Italian-featured drone with black, thick hair worn long like an actor researching a role as hotel staff. While we talked, I noticed Dorinda

had the habit of gently raising her left shoulder to emphasize a point, or to accentuate her jet-lag grog. A gesture unconsciously miming Delphine Seyrig’s character in the film *Last Year in Marienbad*.

I noticed because I was obsessed with that film in my college days, a time when I judiciously read every *nouveau roman* — twice — and ran the bases around to every theater in Los Angeles screening a French film, old or new, playing within thirty miles of home plate. My only criticism of French films is that, unlike our own film noir, the French have rarely scored sound tracks that cling to you like grease when you exit the theater.

I later realized it must have been about this time that Ichi was waking from a dream (as he later told us when he joined us for coffee) that he was back in the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco, once again looking at an Edo period Japanese scroll, *Women Contemplating Floating Fans*, four aristocratic women on a wooden bridge spanning a small pond, watching four fans they’d tossed into the pond. Ichi attributed this dreamscape, in part, to the fact his room had an overstuffed love seat and that he’d fallen asleep with the room’s large, ornate ceiling fan on. Ichi admitted when he’d first seen that scroll in the 1970s, “I

## Finding Mememo

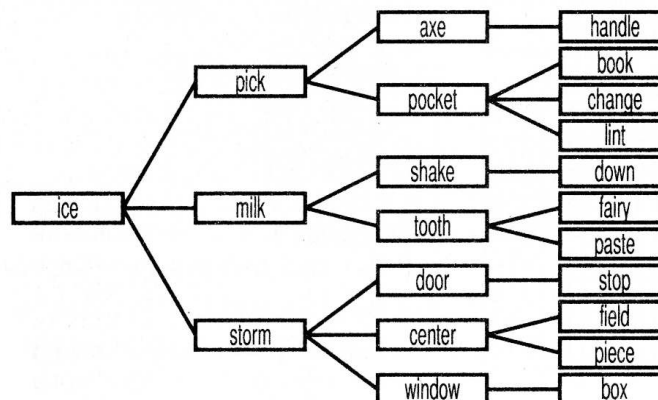


Japanese Edo period scroll, detail

thought I was looking at a dream I'd hoped would come filmically alive so I could eavesdrop on the women's conversation. So my dream was a kind of dream about a dream. In that first waking dream, I was sure one of the women would turn out to be named Keiko, an early object of love, unrequited, for the petulant, emotionally unstable, and eventually self-murdered, Japanese novelist Kenzaburo Oe who, boldly speculating after many swigs of sake, said: *All bridges cross into the afterlife.*"

When Dorinda and I got to the café, Dallas was already seated, pouring Earl Grey tea, not beer, from a cream-colored earthenware tea kettle's S-shaped spout into a delicate cup whose handle is like an ear, the dissolve of sugar playing on the back of his eyeballs. A study in contrasts which wasn't lost on us as we each did a double-take and looked at each other as parents would if their two-year old had just solved a quadratic equation.

After Dorinda synopsised her dream, Dallas confessed his dreams usually consisted of hearing invented dialogue for B-movie scenes that occur off-screen. "Like in those old *Boston Blackie* movies, ya know, where the audience never hears what Blackie said to his sidekick Gus on the way to the warehouse or the night club where eventually two shots are fired off-screen. That kind of shit. Sometimes I use the stuff in my stories. But this afternoon, I had one of my word-expansion dreams; like I dream a word and then make connections, get it?. When I awake, I jot it down 'n might use it to develop a scene in a story. Hand me that pen there. Here let me show you." Dal drew an elaborate flow chart:



## Finding Mememo

"Did you show this neat trick to Meme?" asked Dorinda.

"Sure did diddi-do. I know he, Hy, ho, employed said trickeroo a few times to jump start a difficult scene or twoa or threea."

"I would've liked to have seen what my husband would've come up with had he begun this exercise with my name or simply with 'wife'. He never . . ."

"Ya know, we probably should take our little group out into the back garden," Dallas said, looking around, noticing more people showing up for an afternoon sugar boost. "Our dark biz does require we be *discreet*."

"Yes, we are addressing a sad story, ending in justified revenge, like in *Murder on the Orient Express*," I added.



Peter Lorre in *Mr. Moto's Last Warning* (1939)

"A story startin' with a flashback to a mysterious death by a fall in Chi Town, openin' with the line: *Buildings by what shadows they cast, the betrayed Memester by what his eyes cast back*. Now iff'n that ain't film nahwar . . . And I kinda see Peter Lorre in this film, astarin' in a mirror. Lorre playin' International Detective Kentaro Moto and done up in clown make-up as in the movie shot on the cusp of World War II, *Mr. Moto's Last Warnin'*."

I, personally, always got a kick out of Dal's dalliance with Lorre, that pouting and brooding thespian, the guy with the owlishly wide eyes that seemed to confirm Freud's observation of him as a man with "a nocturnal mind". Our presence so near to Hungary, where Lorre was born a Jew named László Löwenstein, may have got Dal on this B-movie hobby horse of his.

"Lorre gives me the creeps!" exclaims Dorinda, wiggling her nose. "His staccato asthmatic enunciation, the sinister grimace often accompanied by a reach for a shiny knife. He rarely blinked. How can you identify with that creep?"

"Jeez. He's only playing a role," Dallas replied, looking hurt.

"You talking about Peter Lorre?" It was Ichi, rubbing his eyes. "I call him 'Kim Moano,' because I groan whenever he was in character as Mr. Moto. Now give me cool-guy Alain Delon in Melville's *Le Samourai*. Love that suave dude in every film he's ever been in. Alain-san, *Anata no karada wa daijobudesu!* [ed., *your body is OK*]."

"And that film, by the way, was wittily pastiched in Jim Jarmusch's *Ghost Dog, The Way of the Samurai*," I appended.

"I identify with Lorre," added Dallas, "only as Moto, International Police. Once thought of coppin' him by developin' a shamus named 'Rick Shaw'."

"Meme-san liked Lorre as that character," said Ichi, "but, to my delight,

## Finding Mememo

said he always imagined that ‘bug-eyed dude dogged by a K-9 police dog named Win Min Tan’ (a play on Rin Tin Tin), I swear.” Laughter all around.

“But, really, Meme had this *thing* for Montgomery Clift.” We must have looked incredulous for Dorinda re-emphasized her point, “He did! He identified with his vulnerability, a sensitivity that made him unfit to be a big star, not ruthless enough. Not like that polyphiloprogenitive polypus of a chairman, Chad Armbuster, terminator of part-timers when the economic five-of-spades was up. A heel who uses a Hulk Hoganesque *leg drop from nowhere* on contingent faculty. He who makes a beast of himself, like Trump or Chad, gets rid of the pain of being a man. Why my hubby wore a T-shirt to faculty meetings reading: LOTH TO OBEY, LOTH TO COMMAND.”

“In fiction writing, like Meme’s, the heel makes the face; without a good villain, all you’ve got is a public service announcement,” I said.

“Meme-san confess to me,” added Ichi, “he most comfortable experiencing life in retrospect, sustained by daydream himself into old films where he and those actors stand as refugees from reality. Like your stories, Dal-san.”

“You’re so right, Ich!” said Dallas. “Like me, he steeped himself in nostalgia. He thought of his life as a movie, as both writer and director, as well as leadin’ man. He was tortured by the fear he had *nada talento*; that some of his characters — I think of The Shaman here — would complain of bein’ drawn one-dimensionally, stereotyped. Anyway, that’s how I re-Meme-ber him.”



Leo Carrillo as “Pancho”



Billionaire Elon Musk; his solution to mass extinction and climate change is to create a “backup drive” of a million human colonists on Mars.

At this point, we shared our spate of midday daydreams, ending with Ichi’s four women on a bridge dream.

Finally Dorinda jumped up and announced, “Hey, Cisco, let’s went,” doing a winking homage to Meme’s oft uttered homage to actor Leo Carrillo in the TV series “The Cisco Kid” (Dory often called a joke or pun by Meme, “a Cisco kid”) accompanied by a sharp jerk of her head toward the patio door. “Times apace and we need to change reels so: *Muchacho, ándale, vamonos!* That fucker, Wish, uttering some mumbo-jumbo chant: *Mvto hece, mvto hvse, mvto e, kanvchaga, vto ah*, offered my poor Meme a supposed sole-secure-way to traverse dark matter — but which turned into a mere rope of sand — will soon be wishing himself down here. Now, we’ve got to keep a level head about this plan, as level as Buster Keaton’s hat in a tilted world. Got it?” We all nodded our assent.

## Finding Mememo

"Troops . . . we should be able to smell him approach, he's awearin' a heavy dose of Elon Musk or my name ain't Harvey O. Houston."

*Dicho y hecho.* Before we could laugh at Dal's bad joke, in sauntered Wish and said: "Slept and didn't sleep. For a long time now I go to bed and my eyes close so quickly that I hardly have time to say 'I'm going to sleep.' Then half an hour later the thought that it is time to go to sleep awakens me. Go figure. Got hypotheses? Say, that would make a nice ditty on a T-shirt. By the way, like the shirt I am wearing?"



Wishwer Watt's T-shirt

"And what does *that* mean," asked Dorinda in a derisive tone.

"Units Operate" is the rallying cry of speculative realism and refers to how things constantly machinate within themselves and mesh with one another, acting and reacting to properties and states while still keeping something hidden. It's about how some inner ordinance makes, say, this juicy grapefruit here," points to one on his plate, "coagulate with its rubbery rind, its dense dull yellow, its loose

inner pulp." He cut the fruit in half. "When I first encountered this philosophy, I felt a warmth, a sense of something gathering, feeling the power race around inside me, burning out my nerves. I thought of my childhood yo-yo.

"By the way, I thought I felt a soft breeze of a great man dead inside the rotting grandeur here. You folks believe in ghosts?" Before anyone could answer, Wish continued his manic rant, "Told the chef about it, then warned her about the possibility of Russian hackers taking over her smart kitchen, fucking with her molecular cooking. Told her I read tea leaves; real leaves, no tea bag shit with a string recalling menses and feminine hygiene."

"Gross," muttered Dory under her breath.



Anti-Trump Parade, Chicago

"I'm sure she appreciated that," I said, adding, "somewhere along the line our visions of a new world order has gone from promise to threat, yes?"

"Yah, Hy and I, heap high on mugs of tap Blatz, once tried surfing Twitter's @Shitty\_Future account. Plenty of shit there, for sure. The vision of a future here on this planet has given us a yard-stick with which to measure our disappointments and so inspire new aspirations of escape. Reality has come back with a



## Finding Mememo



Galactic G.O.N.E. Group broadsheet; on verso is printed:  
*We are free and our heads can still fall into the sky.*



G.O.N.E. Group Insignia designed by Sado Muga

mouthful of razors ready to rip open the throats of anyone pretending they know what the earth is coming to and so hope to fight our meat-hook reality. We two alcohol-imagined a very different, quincunxial-induced Future 5.0."

I wanted to land a zowie, say something about technology pioneers' deep-seated beliefs and their technological determinism, exclaiming that it's a very bad "Portlandia" sketch — *Local activist, Stoke Poges opens a boutique for societal es-cape, selling dimension-whacking, self-driven Ubers for people who want to 'went' —* but kept my Slovenian honey-glossed lips zipped. Ichi, however, just had to elaborate on Wish's wishful comments.

"Yes. Everything happens so much. Peoples' fidget-spinners won't help us in an aeries of power, oligarchy no longer bothering to conceal their agenda, as a few select moguls yell *Banzai!* and hoard more wealth, rights, and influence than us peasants could ever imagine. My wife says we are confronted by a gurning batrachian monster that crawled out of a mordant id mass society. Wish, what we need is something not wishy-washy, like swordsmen in *The Seven Samurai*; at least skilled Japanese chefs who can do a *hone-giri* slice job on all those slimy Washington eels. Drain the swamp!"

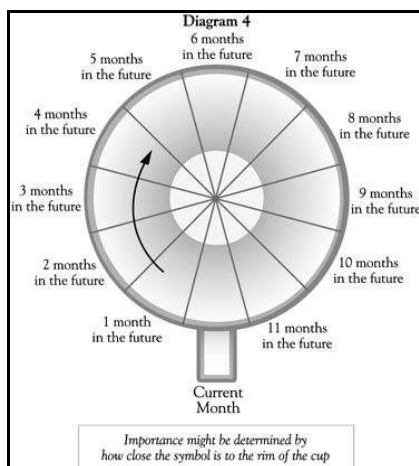
"Yah, yah, wimp is the new black," said Wish. "Shit, we need something more than new victims and 'Just say no to thugs' slogans. We need," Wish wished, "courageous people willing to risk, to become *Üitlanders*, for a

# Finding Mememo

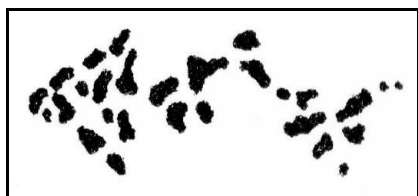
multiplanetary, multidimensional species migration from our disposable world where category five hurricanes encircle us and a sixth mass extinction is under way. We need to get GONE, vector out. D-jumping is wholly *evolvesolutionary*, 'a big *yang* motorcycle trip to somewhere,' as one of our Group speculated, 'maybe emerging through a high hallway into space which is a bright, rose-colored space fragily bound.' Such are our dreams, albeit risky, yet there is no failure, only feedback."



Wish's tea leaves



Tea leaf interpretation diagram, notice "Current Month" at the bottom



Fish, symbol of uncertainty: the tea grouping Wish sketched

"A hairy proposition, I must say," opined Dallas, catching my eye. I imagined that his detective-eye noticed that every dish on our table just barely touched, no overlap. He always told us at our Artist's Café lunches that "evidence perpetually surprises because of the perpetual novelty of the material world."

"A *hirsute* one," said Ichi, making the word sound so Japanese-ish.

I happened to just glance up at the café's flat-screen and noticed CNN broadcasting (with subtitles) an array of rich old men screaming silently, very *yang*-like, at one another on the big screen. "Depressive realism," as Meme, that master of naming, used to call stuff like that. On a moving track below the subtitles, white text on a blue field, I read: AIR FRANCE DENIES REPORTS IT PLANS AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE FOR OVERWEIGHT PASSENGERS UNABLE TO FIT INTO A SINGLE SEAT followed by NO SPELUNKING IN KATMANDU. Suddenly in the center of the screen news reality was closing down, the dots winking out in pixel death. WE APOLOGIZE FOR THE LOSS OF SIGNAL. THERE APPEARS TO BE A TRANSMISSION PROBLEM.

Wish finished his Oolong tea, no minor beverage in his and Ichi's estimation. He hates chamomile, "A pot of herbal piss." He'd been chiding us that as long as we remain dominated by the illusion that the general is truer than the particular, closed to seeing that

## Finding Mememo

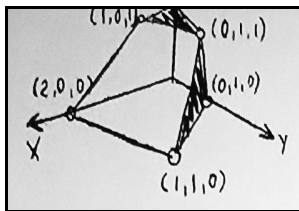
evolution is an open, an unbound plan with events invented each moment, D-travel will be viewed as impossible. "Drop that assumption and the inexplicable and immeasurable may occur. Tea-leaf reading is based on such," he said taking his emptied cup in his left hand, rim upwards, moving rapidly in a circle three times from left to right; some of the tea leaves clung to its sides, others remained at the bottom; then he slowly inverted cup over saucer and left it there draining all liquid. He studied the remaining tea leaves, sketching a particular grouping on his napkin. Pointing, "See this grouping from close to the rim, in line with the cup handle?"

We all nodded a simultaneous affirmative.

"Well, its position refers to what will happen soon; the fish figure in this context associates with uncertainty, sleep, even death."

"Like in *sleepin' wit da fishes*?" quipped Dallas, casting a knowing glance at Dorinda, giving the turn of phrase an ominous tone.

Wish's eyes slightly enlarged, the wind went out of his sails. We all became becalmed and quiet, and were about to push our our chairs back, when suddenly Wish invited us into a moment from his childhood. "When I was five we lived in a high-rise and I'd sneak out on to the fire escape and, out of boredom, think of jumping. I'd extend my arms out over space and flap my arm-wings; my eyes would glaze up. I'd feel exhilarated and purged. After a few weeks of this, the pavement below seemed closer and closer until I imagined I saw every line in the cement, every crack; at night, I would close my eyes and see those variations five stories below my precarious perch in my mind's eye."



Wish's napkin sketch; a vector escape diagram?

We didn't comment, but stood up and left for the garden, pumped, thanks to caffeine and our jumping glycemic indices. Wish stayed to finish his scone, his only company in the room a lone old man at a table sitting under his battered old brown felt hat, drawing flowers on a napkin with a red pen, sipping Rosa mineral water. Lonely folks transmit their loneliness to others, and this man's was transmitted to Wish, who began sketching on the verso of his paper napkin.

Meanwhile, we strolled on the back lawn, noticing a very handsome young Englishman reclined in a sun chair wearing clothes that had a sense of quotation marks around them; citing a Trader Joe's employee, he wore a floral-print shirt and baseball cap. His feet seemed too small to support him and his arms were long, engineered to be at ease in a pub where he could sit all day and easily reach the beer nuts. I imagined us both at a London pub, "Jack o' the Green", me asking, "Tell me the one about the harelip, the beer nuts, and the barkeep with the gigantic proboscis." "Name is Brighton," he told us, "after Maxwell Sheffield's

## Finding Mememo



Karel Capek Brand Tea

son on the American TV sit-com 'The Nanny'; ever watch?" and that he was (italicizing his remarks with a chopping motion of the right hand): "Reading Czech author Karel Capek's hilarious little book *The Gardener's Year*."

Dorinda's gave a quizzical look. He responded, "It took a tenacious woodchuck and a book, this book, to make me understand what's really at stake in gardening," his accent revealing his upper crust origins — I imagined a boarding school where the crockery had more personality than the human beings. "I'd come to gardening with a naive belief it offered merely a pleasant way to kill an afternoon. I

began to collect written tidbits on gardening. For instance, William Godwin, husband to the famous Mary Wollstonecraft, in his memoir of her, tells of he and Mary returning to her childhood home in 1796 where, 'We found the house uninhabited and the garden in a wild and ruinous state.' Now I'm traveling about and checking out gardens across Europe. My life has turned into a parade of buds, flowers, stems, leaves, crowns, and other features of all the different kinds of tulips, lilies, irises, delphiniums, carnations, campanulas, astilbes, violets, phloxes, chrysanthemums, dahlias, gladioli, peonies, asters, primulas, anemones, aquilegias, saxifrages, gentians, sunflowers, day lilies, poppies, golden rods, ranunculi, and veronicas, each of which has at least a dozen of the best and most indispensable classes, varieties, and hybrids."

Odd coincidence. Meme had been taken with that gimlet-eyed Czech, getting hooked in his early twenties after encountering Capek's sci-fi-inspired *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*, *War with the Newts*, and *The Absolute at Large*. One novelette, "Meteor", from 1934, about an unknown airplane crash coma victim in a hospital, later inspired one of Meme's own books. I'd noticed in the hotel gift shop — stuffed floor-to-ceiling with World War I-, Hemingway-, and bee-related *tchotchkes* and exotic food items — something quite unusual: Karel Capek brand tea in a bright red metal container. Another odd coincidence. I wondered what Wish's forecast would've been had he drunk that tea, exploring its debris for hidden meaning.

Meme, who was always going on about chipmunks running amock with unmammallike agility, didn't know of Capek's comedic fascination with gardens, otherwise he'd have surely given Dory a copy for her birthday. He'd already gifted her with Eleanor Perényi's *Green Thoughts*, published in 1981, which challenged the concept of the garden as refuge, suggesting it to be more an arena, a disputatious space containing, among others things, sexual politics.



## Finding Mememo

As we said our goodbyes to Brighton — who told us, “You’ll love the garden here; ah, if flowers could feel for us what we feel for them!” — Dallas whispered that this Brit was “The spittin’ image of the Wal Mart bagger who recently won the Ultimate Couch Potato Competition by endurin’ thirty-nine gruelin’, sleepless hours of sports TV in a recliner.” For once, looks might not be deceiving for I felt if we’d stayed for a longer conversation, Brighton would’ve revealed that fine manners and sophistication cannot hide a cheerful stupidity.

We were halfway to the garden gate when a Thai tourist-group tsunami burst through like Srirachi sauce on an Anglo’s tongue; we had no choice but to dive face-first into the buffeting wave of bodies and their delighted, mellifluous vocalizations; bodies in colorful garments painted ultramarine, brownish pink, high-keyed yellow green, a cool bright yellow, white, and a little black on my slightly cataracted optic canvas surged past us. It was as if the garden plants had grown bodies and ran to escape their soiled confinement. Hemingway freaks? Major garden enthusiasts? Bee culturists? They carried thick Thai-language tourist guides like Born-Agains their Bibles. Tossing into a state of imaginative muddled suspense, it took us a few moments to recover from that storm surge. A surge that stirred up the grass, spraying us with the essence of grassiness such that sentences and nouns laying silently on the green blew into our nostrils. I recalled Pasternak saying, “Poetry is in the grass.” A citation that, for obvious reasons, was popular during my Hippy Days.

We entered the back-of-the-house’s huge herb, flower, and vegetable garden, hearing a lively creek, source of the chef’s trout as we were to be told at dinner. Some art critic once said that landscapes are verbal conjugations; this garden scape before us was rife with irregular verbs, interesting in its unique, odd and unrepeated elements. There was a juicy richness of color, a range of glowing off-blacks, a variety of exact pinks, a rich orange tan, and a green as green should be — a green of dark, moist growth, like the delicate, fresh-from-the-garden spinach used in the chef’s salads.

The hotel’s gardener’s vocabulary of colors was one in which between color and another there is just enough space, or interval, because they were keenly chosen. It’s like the space in an accurate sentence between nouns and verbs, between words and their modifiers. I felt a wholeness at that moment. It is what you need not pursue, it finds you, you just must accept it. “Wholeness is as close to you as yourself and your immediate surroundings,” wrote artist/critic Fairfield Porter. You follow your vitality, you do not tow it behind you. You immediately sense if something is alive or not; you can measure an amount of energy, but aliveness, which, like a chemical reaction, has that quality of the wholeness I was feeling at that moment.

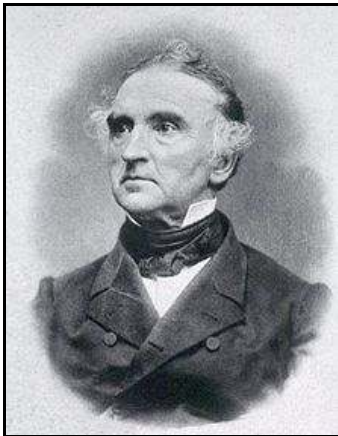
Dorinda, avid gardener that she is, must’ve had the same transcendent



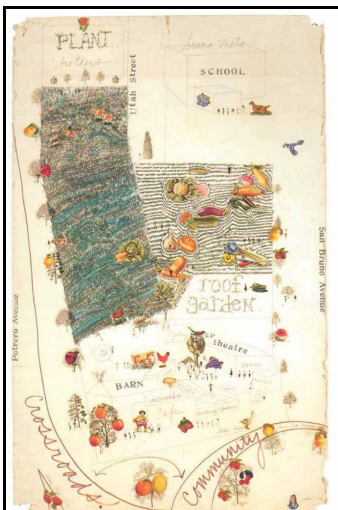
## Finding Mememo



Anna Halprin



Justus Freiherr von Liebig



The Farm, layout, San Francisco, CA

experience. Her eyes, ears, nose and throat were lost in the moment. I recalled she once tried to explain the mystery of garden-sensation to Meme, how she designed her garden to evoke the vitality she was trying to achieve. She took care with her exposition to charm a novice too often putting mind before sense. But afterwards, Meme looked puzzled. He had the nerve to ask, "Could you say that again, in other words?" Her frustrated answer was, "It took me months to find out how to say that! And now you ask me to say it differently?" The same fraught dialogue applied, but with actants reversed, whenever Meme read her excerpts from his bizarre "Past-Ich," mode of autofiction.

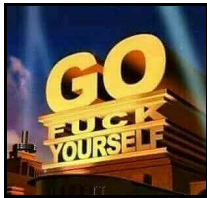
Just beyond the entry gate I took a deep sniff. The presence of the ghost of Justus Freiherr von Liebig (1803 – 1873), "father of the fertilizer industry," was everywhere present. The garden must have just recently been dosed with nutrients. Initiating a botanical holocaust, Leibig thought he knew what was essential to the life of plants from an analysis of their ashes after he had burned them up. Reduction, a scientific habit of thinking that supposedly leads to the ultimately real, posits that since life reduces to death, death is the eternal object of which life is the shadow.

The obverse of this reductionist attitude was *Crossroads Community (The Farm)*. In 1974, Bonnie Ora Sherk and co-founder Jack Wickert helped create what became known affectionately as "The Farm". On an accumulated seven acres located partially underneath and adjacent to the then Army Street freeway interchange in San Francisco, they — with the help of the community and collaborators — turned two warehouses, concrete, and open space into a site-specific sculpture, farm, community center, school-without-walls, and human and animal theater. The San Francisco Mime Troupe, Make-a-Circus, and The Jones Family all took up residence there, as did artists, poets, dancers (like Anna

## Finding Mememo

Halprin famous for her *Planetary Dance*, 1981), punks, kids, gardeners, animals, and members of the community. Here's lies the difference between art/poetry and science.

We walked on, past a much-pruned apple tree surrounded by miniature cavalcades of chlorophyllless fungi, with a huge trunk disproportionate to its thin young branches. I thought: *Our image of time no longer rests on the slow growth of trees.* But we were not here to smell the roses nor make an eco-political statement, but to engage in a logical, albeit odious, discussion over a human's fate, a film noir-like twist on logical argumentation that analytical philosopher Willard V. O. Quine wittily called: "Chasing the squirrel of truth up the tree of grammar." Above, a sky of liquid afternoon light; below, us conspirators.



Wyoh's provocative anti-admin sticker

A buzzing in Dorinda's small travel purse. "Sorry, it's my phone." She made a bee-line to a wooden bench, took the message, one leg tucked under the other, one hand on her knee, fingers spread out, the blue of her trousers visible between. It was from Wyoming Mann, who had attached an image of a provocative anti-admin sticker with the following explanation (read aloud by Dorinda):

*Mrs. Grader: I assume Hy is "urning" his keep! Things've gotten insufferable. My proposed early morning seminar, "Java and Jaffe," was nixed as "too political." Armbuster is proposing "strategic choices," yakking about us "being on the inflection point," touting a Rightist version of Accelerationism [ed., see #Accelerate#: the nbAccelerationist Reader] that reduces knowing-that to merely knowing-what, i.e., scientific knowledge is dumped in favor of practical know-how. The word true is now used as a supplement added to certain trials of bluster and strength to dazzle us 'contingies' who can only frown, pout, clench our fists, enthuse, spit, sigh, and dream. Every word the Adminoes say chagrins us. Many have their heads clear enough about the consequences, but never clear their throats, preferring a flowerly old-fashioned kind of speechlessness, forming The Committee For A More Joyful Present, who then sent the admin-types a "Har-monogram" of polite suggestions. But these same 'contingies' voted down my suggestion to have us all shake our key-chains in unison as protest at the next All-school Meeting. I'm forwarding to you this Tweet + photo I shot off to them and to Armbuster, CCing the Dean:*

*"Admino-Dudes: With your neoliberal profit system, thought done at the speed of business, your robo-sapientization of us all, your depersonalizations, blandishments, petty policing of Title IX strictures by the Campus Thought Police, and blind reliance on technology (like using soft-ware called Realtime Crowd Insights to monitor large*

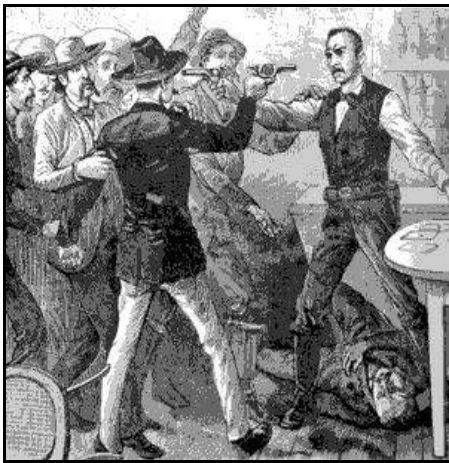
# Finding Mememo

group student/faculty meetings),<sup>8</sup> you turn us into sheep and drive us mad. Our library is now referred to as a vital part of our 'knowledge economy,' while our librarians are known as 'knowledge concierges'.

La nausée! De trop! I grab my java and Jaffe and resign.<sup>9</sup>

— Wyoming Mann, Ph.D., Adjunct, Liberal Studies

Dorinda passed around her iPhone so we could all see Wyoh's wild riff on Twentieth Century Fox's logo refunctioned into asymmetrical warfare against the admin-types. "Looks like honorable Wyoh-san has finally performed *seppuku*. Now Chad-san surely finish him off with *kaishaku*, ritual beheading."



Shoot-out in the Long Branch saloon

"You can say that again!" I said. "I'm

sure Wyoh wrote that under the influence. I recalled Meme once warned Wig-out Wyoh that, 'One of the disadvantages of wine, my friend, is that it makes a man mistake words for thoughts.' Wyoh should've heeded advice to see himself in the third person, consider himself as the enemy would perceive him and act accordingly."

"Yeppers, it's like in those cliché scenes in Western films when the booze-hound at the bar gets emboldened to take on the slick gunslinger sheriff and gets blown — KA-BLAAAM — across the room."

---

8. This app analyzes faces and returns emotional profiles on them. Adrienne Gagnon in a catalogue essay for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's 2001 exhibition *010101: Art in Technological Times* notes: "we remain unaware of the development of new technologies until they have arrived at our doorstep, seductively packaged as tools for better living. It would be wonderful if, like the Amish, we were given an open forum in which to discuss the possible implications of each [innovation] before its introduction. In reality, our choices are restricted to those of the consumer. Technologies are developed and launched with a dizzying rapidity, and corporations throw buckets of money at ad campaigns [witness the developments of new and newer and newer iPhones] designed to convince us that these products are not just convenient but essential."

9. Chad took a strict stance that true literary writing was apolitical writing. The Jaffe referred to above is the anti-authoritarian experimental writer of politically-charged texts, Harold Jaffe (b. 1938). Wyoh's early morning coffee and donuts seminar was to read and discuss Jaffe's book *Beyond the Techno-Cave: Guerrilla Writer's Guide to Post-Millennial Culture* (2007). Wyoh read in that text, much to his delight, how California graffiti artists were tossing varicolored paint on the freeways so the wheels of cars would randomly distribute patterns, making oil-on-cement abstract expressionist paintings best viewed, like earthworks, from the air. Jaffe, and this was something Meme and his East Coast literary friend Yuriy Tarnawsky, also liked, stressed the importance of dreamtime narratives for they were: "mostly vertical, a-chronological, as opposed to the manipulated, horizontal, time-induced stresses of our wake-a-day."

## Finding Mememo



*Bangkok Post* photograph of detective photographing one of the suicide victims, Pattaya City, Thailand

A newspaper hid under Dorinda's *derrière*. I gently pulled it out from under her. Noticed it was the English language newspaper, *Bangkok Post*, dated the day previous. It was folded open to an article showing View Talay Condominium 5 in tambon Nong Prue of Bang Lamung district, Pattaya City, Chon Buri Province with a large X supered over an upper floor window. Another color photo showed a detective

recording the (hidden) smashed body of one of the victims. The accompanying article told a lurid story of passion played out in the resort beach town south of Bangkok: a 22-year old Thai woman had pushed her forty-one year old married South Korean lover — described in the piece as a “globetrotting metro-sexual wearing a Real Madrid Galácticos football fan T-shirt and Bruno Magli espresso distress suede ankle boots” — from a window; three hours later, while being interrogated by police, she admitted she found him changing Thai *baht* for Vietnamese *dong* and went postal. Then she tossed a chair at her interrogator, ran, and nose dived through the same window, down 37 floors to hard pavement, where her head split like an egg and sizzled on the hot pavement. I quickly hide the paper from Dorinda.

I privately began to wonder *How does S know that P?* Maybe I'd mistaken that tsunami of Thai citizenry for an expression of joy and enthusiasm. *What if the young woman who jumped was a relative of theirs — a daughter, a sibling, a cousin — shit-to-the-third-power, as Meme would put it!*

Noticing my slight-of-hand, Dorinda demanded to know what I had read. I made up a story. Told her it was a feature on Singapore, their strict laws. “In public restrooms unflushed toilets are photographed and, along with security camera images of the violator, published in the daily newspaper as public shaming.”

“A wall of shame; same shit,” she said, “the cameras are among us.”

“As for being among us — Wisconsin's *Wausau Weekly* had it a few years ago that: *THE HMONG ARE AMONG US*. A reference,” explained Ichi, “to the humongous population (third-largest) of Hmong immigrants in the U.S. that settled in Green Bay, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Sheboygan, and Wausau. Can you imagine those gentle people having to put up with the fuckin' redneck Trumpites



## Finding Mememo



Nature's dreadlocks, Catalpa seed pods

up there?" My relatives came from that area. I didn't want to imagine. Over us a helicopter (with tourists?) noisily chopped its way in the direction of Ljubljana.

I looked at the blossoms, so many blossoms, recalling a tidbit (complete with virgule) from a W. D. Snodgrass poem: *The green catalpa tree has turned / All white; . . .* (except the catalpa tree in this garden was past blooming and now dripping with long seed pods). I recalled a Blurt Wildbraine mystery, "The Big Changeover", where Dal's detective goes undercover, staying in a shabby backroom in a bar with a broken bed and a girlie calendar on the wall. In one scene Wildbraine "stands with a man sporting long dreadlocked auburn hair dripping from under a leather cap, who suffers a crooked scar, a sliver of white proud flesh against a blotchy, flushed complexion, flushed from the cold of a bitter February a.m. in Chicago. The pair — neither known for their sartorial aggressiveness — have just exited the RubOutAWord Café (popular with writers and editors) on a potholed stretch of South Wabash." Dallas has his PI, Blurt, pull up his collar, back to the wind, turn to his shabby interlocutor and threaten: "You'd better mortar those gaps in your memory, Zane, or . . ." Pointing to the eruptions in the pavement before them, Blurt continues, "Potholes are blossoms, too, Zane. Thaw freeze thaw freeze — the cycle of contraction/expansion puts pressure on materials as Mother Nature's soil does to seeds. Just as I'll put some arm pressure 'n five assassin bugs on ya if ya don't come up with somethin' on that acetylene beauty in her Red Day-Glo-sign-colored cocktail dress adoin' the sing-song at The Cherry Blossom. Get it?"

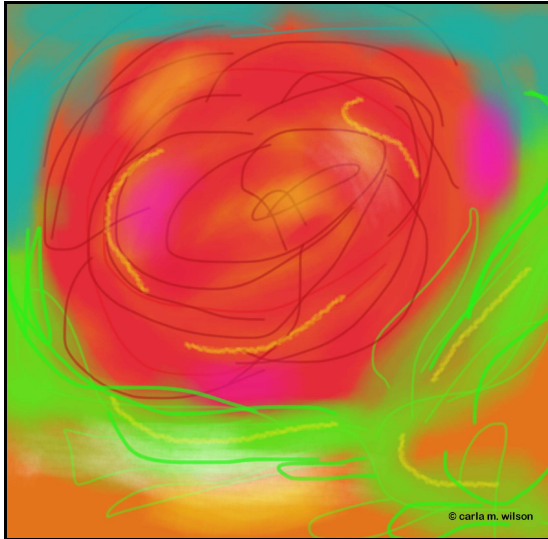
I saw this scene vividly, as if I was watching a B-movie, until, "Hey, look at this!" It was Dallas interrupting, elbowing his way past my filmic reverie, pointing out that the garden bench holding Dorinda up, resisting gravity, had a tarnished brass dedication attached memorializing one:

Hanneta Schubelmeyer, Gärtnerin, 1939 - 1999

I wondered if death for this gardener had been experienced as an image on a film screen when the film gets stuck and burns in the rays of the Xenon lamp. First the lush greens of her profession, next dull browns at the edges, then disintegration into an eruption of ugly boils that call to mind the image of an insect burning beneath the red hot coils of an electric stove.



## Finding Mememo



*Petite Rose* (card, digital painting, 2016) sent to Hy  
"Mememo" Grader by Carla M. Wilson

I am sure Meme's experience wasn't like that. Being one of "the exhausted," he was someone tired of the purring data zones of new software worlds, bored with the possible and, if Wish was right, he was reaching toward the near-impossible in "good fear", <sup>10</sup> urged on by escapology, imagining different worlds.

Hy had been contacted a fellow scribe, Carla M. Wilson, to write a book introduction. Later he wrote her, saying that poetry had prepared him to embrace the unexpected and that each line of his own writing was "a tightrope with-

out a safety net," and that, "I struggle to make language stutter." In response, the woman, an artist as well as a writer, sent Meme a card of one of her vivid paintings, an image that, by the way, might have suggested an inviting wormhole for dimension travel, a symbol, too, for merging the aesthetic with the wishful possibilities opened up by the technologic.



G.O.N.E. promo poster

Hy was not adverse to taking risks if the vision dangled before him was strong bait. As Meme's writing suggested, Wish Watt had dangled alluring images before him, I can imagine him being seduced (see image left). And I am comforted to think that his death, his astralization, had been more like a split-second of Fourth of July fireworks, a brief darkness, then the wonder of something akin to Carla's painting, followed by some 2.5 million quarks spinning and curling, as he became part of a larger constituent of matter. But if a cleverly substituted corpse *had* camouflaged his successful implantation on a new world, or another dimension, thanks to the Fischer-Filoni Effect,

---

10. What the ancient Greeks called *eusebeia*, a fear appropriate to the circumstances and within measure, not excessive or unjustified. A concept that Hy would certainly have known about.

## Finding Mememo

who was it that got planted six feet under? But that's most unlikely. "Reeks too much of television murder mysteries," is how Dallas put it. "Hell, even I wouldn't use that old chestnut in my stories."

Meanwhile, Dorinda just sat there on that hard bench, her gaze swinging from me to Dallas and back with tennis-spectator intensity. She sniffed the scent of honeysuckle, then her eyes met mine and stopped; her eyes did not search, but were answers to unasked questions. She knew some shit about death and Meme was caroming around in my *cabeza*, like "They told me, Hy, they told me you were dead." But I kept mum. Her complexion became pale and opaque. I think she was hearing the words she spoke upon first hearing of her husband's death: "Oh Hy, Hy, how could you stoop so low as to throw yourself away from so high!" That first awful night without her husband, she'd dreamt he appeared and said, "Dory, can't you see I'm blurring? It's all those jackoffs at school, kids packing guns, tumors, faked determinations, explosive gas leaks, oil spills, overall, the massive mess we're all in."

Tears scripted a parallel code down widowed cheeks, telling me that sad story she's kept hidden under a net of camouflage; she smeared the wet away with the heels of her palms and massaged her eyeballs with the middle finger of each hand. When I again looked at her closely, her blue eyes were wide in the narrowest sense. She'd recomposed herself and was forcing a smile, on her way again to unruffled repose and full mammalian vitality.



The next moment I turned my head into the sun, a cosmic porthole in which was concentrated all light, light now streaming an intensely concentrated late-afternoon beam into my eyes; it splashed an ever-changing pattern on my retina, leading me to recall our first color TV (1965) for which fine-tuning was required: if the actors looked a little green, you fiddled with the TINT knob; if the picture jumped, you just adjusted the knob for HORIZONTAL HOLD. Like

adjusting our TV, the pattern before me slowly took the shape of an anorexic man wearing nothing but a long, large, salt-white shirt that billowed about him and which glowed against his dark flesh (a rebuke to Crayola's decision to call its peach crayon "Flesh"); he was barefoot, an apparition that bounded our way in long purposeful strides like Ben Kingsley's character in *Gandhi*. His slightly bulging skull, his barrel chest, suggested soft bones; found myself imagining him

## Finding Mememo

as a child entertaining his older siblings by yanking his legs behind his head and pulling himself along the floor on his stomach like a crab. It took a second to convince myself my mind wasn't making him up out of light, shadow, and the yellow shades of late afternoon. But then he started mumbling, lips seemingly repeating something long memorized — I thought it sounded like *PUSH KA PI SHEE PIE EH EH OOBIE AAYEE EYE YAY* — but Ichi later told me it was the sacred Buddhist mantra: *Om Mani Padme Hum*. Nevertheless, I had what Ichi terms *seiten no hekireki*, a thunderclap from the blue: It was akin to Meme's fortuitous encounter with The Shaman who debunked "Imperialist nostalgia", while promoting "Injunuity" <sup>11</sup> over Anishinabe Res radio WOJB.

Ichi turned to look at the approaching figure, his left hand raised to the frames of his Ray-Ban sunglasses, pulling them half down the bridge of his nose to reveal a querying raised eyebrow that said, "You kid me?" Dorinda, taking it all in, mind at full purr, imagining hearing Delibes's "flower duet" from *Lakmé*, his opera set among Brahmin Later, Dorinda claimed the man had not mumbled what I thought I'd heard, but something about spirits inside stones.

The man held a rock in one hand, a paperback in the other. He handed Ichi the book (Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*), explaining: "This book can change the weather in a country, in people." He spoke in British-borrowed posh that suggested he'd attended a first-rate British school that reserved a generous tranche of places for scholarship boys, providing a springy ladder for indigenous people of the former Empire to climb out of low caste status. He jerked his free thumb backwards toward an old gardener's shed, "Behind the shed, hidden by the August foliage and fruit of the grape, sirs, a nest of azure hoplia beetles." Large smile. An ironic comment given our romantic Garden of Eden experience, it smacked us across the chops with the Real, like David Lynch's bugs-in-the-grass opening to *Blue Velvet*. I was reading up on Speculative Realism and Object-Oriented Ontology, so no surprise French thinker Quentin Meillassoux's notion of "The Great Outdoors", and the fact that a flowering garden is as thick with information as a metropolis, hiked through the field of my thoughts.

The mysterious South Asian strode on, bowing elegantly toward Dory: "Mahasamatman, mum. Sam for short." Then he passed on, as a gust of wind tossed his long white shirt about making sounds like the beat of a ship's sails. We were what Dallas would describe as "gob-smacked" or "double whammied". even more so than if he'd stopped and sung a few bars of a 1952 British hit song that begins: *She wears red feathers and huly-huly skirt*.

---

11. Injunuity ([www.Injunuity.org](http://www.Injunuity.org)), according to their website, is "a collage of reflections on our Native American world, our shared past, our turbulent present, and our undiscovered future."

## Finding Mememo



Scene in The Red Room, David Lynch's *Twins Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*; electrical wires and short circuits become portals to other dimensions in which humans exist in a transformed state.

We all had, I think, expected something more *vivophilic* to come of this encounter. Myself: an ontological insight that all entities are equally real insofar as they act on other entities, such that germs, weather patterns, atoms, gardens and mountains, the Krishna, the Virgin Mary, democracies, genre fiction, and hallucinations all relate to the world around them, poetically expressed by Philip Larkin as: *Nothing, like something, happens anywhere*;<sup>12</sup> Dallas: a red circle appearing about us like Siddhartha Gautama, Buddha, drawing a circle with a piece of red chalk and saying: "When men, even unknowingly, are to meet one day, whatever may befall each, whatever the diverging paths, on that said day, they will inevitably come together in the red circle"; but a circle becoming squared and expanding into the dimension-warping Red Room of David Lynch's

---

12. The notion that all entities have causal and perceptual interactions is rooted in the concepts of "prehension" and "causal efficacy" posited in A. N. Whitehead's "Process Philosophy". He says all actual entities in the universe stand on the same ontological footing, and so he refuses privilege to human-centric categories as do Phenomenology and other "correlationist" theories (which Hy believed in). For Whitehead — as for Wish Watt, who told us: "One of the beauties of the English language is the double 't' in the spelling of 'matter' — reality is an active verb and all nouns seem to be gerunds with more appendages than an octopus." Yet Wish's wish for us Earthbounds to desire dimensional travel amalgamates science with magical thinking, something that thinker Bruno Latour finds in one manuscript page of Galileo's (dated January 19, 1610) on which that astronomer made a tinted sketch of the craters of the moon, but also added Cosimo de' Medici's horoscope — a case of the mingling of the rational and irrational engagement with the cosmos sharing a single page.

## Finding Mememo

*Twins Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*,<sup>13</sup> or Dorinda: a miracle, this Lord of Light stooping to plant a seed as small as his fingernail precisely right next to a snail clad in its huge owl-colored garden shell, and SHAZAM! it'd sprout roots, shoots, stems, and branches, a whole tree shouldering up, tossing and swaying in the air all before Jym could say, "My pretty, and pretty pedantic, and sometimes perfectly petulant sister took Paul Klee's posthumous class in poetry and plangent painting." As Dory's vision of an organic miracle played itself out, the guru would recite: "Do you not see that what was a seed becomes a stalk, what was a stalk becomes a sapling, what was a sapling becomes a tree, what is a tree bears fruit, what is fruit becomes nourishment in our bellies, and then turns to blood, from blood to seed, from seed to embryo, and then to human, corpse, earth, stone or something else, in succession, involving all natural forms?"



"He's surely Sri Lankan!" observed Dal, leveraging his way into our lofty thoughts. Answering our eyes that asked in pure Esperanto *How the fuck do you know?*, he beamed a lighthouse smile our way and explained: "I'd researched that accent as thoroughly as a vegan interrogatin' a list of ingredients when workin' on my mystery, 'The Radiolucent Man,' a story where the only evidence is invisible, and things inhabit two states at once — a pastiche set in

1939 British Ceylon — and in which I contrast the speech of two characters: 1) Nag Champawat, a local, Brit-educated, topology mathematician, experimenting with radio-astronomy, whose verbal style is all tea and crumpets; and, 2) Occam "Razor-back" Frack, an expat Southerner sufferin' a hapless twang 'n a quirk of expression, sayin' 'in fact' as 'infarct': e.g., "Infarct, the coffee is hot."<sup>14</sup>

"In fact, Frack dies of a myocardial infarction early on in the narrative, an idea I took from Hitchcock when Marion croaks early on in *Psycho*. My story, full of *unheimlich* maneuvers, nostalgically evokes the time, dress (native garb versus white tropical suit and pith helmet), and mood of late-thirties post-World War II intrigue of Mr. Moto films featurin' mad scientists; my PI, Blurt Wild-braine, gets a break in the odd case concernin' a series of murders that turn victims' bodies inside-out by a perp the press came to dub '?????' (always 5

---

13. Dallas got heavily into David Lynch films after working a case where he was tasked by Lynch's personal lawyer to discretely retrieve artifacts (storyboards, film tests, letters) concerning Lynch's long-abandoned film project, *Ronnie Rocket: The Absurd Mystery of the Strange Forces of Existence*, that were stolen and held for ransom by a slightly deranged Eagle Scout.

14. In Dallas' stories, "The coffee is hot" is a phrase often used, but for different purposes: as a hint, a request, an explanation, an excuse, a warning, or even as a hallucination.



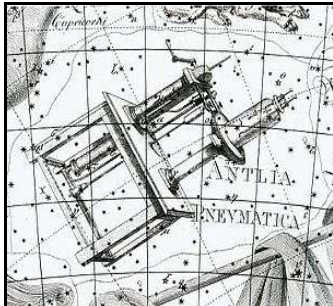
## Finding Mememo

question marks in bold font) after he has a sudden opium-induced intuition (in a den smelling of opium, cigarettes, sweat, damp coats, and revolution) — ‘Occam’s razor could not be usefully wielded in a Möbian extraverse’ — that leads to the case’s startling solution.

“It is the first and only time I wrote a mystery with a character only named ????? ‘n one involvin’ mysterious rays ‘n the mind-twistin’ tricks of non-Euclidean geometrics. The book opens with Nag insomniacly lyin’ on his sweat wet bed, mosquito nettin’ coverin’ him as he is silently musin’:

*We move at one-and-a-half million miles per hour toward the Great Attractor. The Earth is dragged on and on toward an invisible giant, the all-devouring Attractor, which must be somewhere behind the ‘air pump,’ the constellation Antlia Pneumatica. All of us are whirling in the Milky Way’s arm, heading toward that air pump while we on earth pirouette at 1000 miles per hour and orbit at 67,000 miles per hour.*

*I myself am a constellation of  $5.5 \times 10^{27}$  ancient atoms with lots of electrons moving at five millions miles per hour — a thirty-eight year old pile of matter composed mainly of nothingness that is blurred when anyone tries to focus on it. Yes, I am a strange and stubborn illusion. I am occupied by these thoughts, unable to be at peace. . . .*



Frontispiece: the constellation  
*Antlia Pneumatica*

“The frontispiece of that book is an ancient print of that ‘air pump’ constellation. In this story, I took the fact that — as Hy once complained to me — life is a slow process of bein’ hammered ‘n hammerin’; how it distorts things, fucks with life’s topology, amps up the catastrophe cusps *à la* René Thom.<sup>15</sup>

“Hy went on to mention his need to get ‘pumped up,’ to straighten out those folds. Did you know that as a graduate he did an ‘inflation piece’ installation which pumped air into a large clear plastic tube, let it stop, so it gradually collapses, then is re-pumped up, *ad infinitum*. It was his first venture into kinetic sculpture and as he was also

---

15. Hy was into catastrophe theory which studies dynamical systems and classifies phenomena characterized by sudden shifts in behavior arising from small changes in circumstances that may lead to sudden and dramatic changes, for example, the unpredictable timing and magnitude of a landslide. The theory originated with the work of the French mathematician René Thom in the 1960s, and was popularized by Christopher Zeeman in the 1970s. Small changes in certain parameters of a nonlinear system can cause equilibria to appear or disappear, or to change from attracting to repelling and vice versa, leading to large and sudden changes of the behavior of the system. However, examined in a larger parameter space, catastrophe theory reveals that such bifurcation points tend to occur as part of well-defined qualitative geometrical structures.

## Finding Mememo

steadily writing criticism at the time, he wittily titled it *Puff Piece*."

Hy had not told me about this early work. I was intrigued.

"Not surprised," chimed in Dorinda, "he was always trying to over-inflate his reputation. He was a one-man promotion company, abusing campus mail by sending out hundreds of ad copy puffing himself." It was Dory's way of expressing her anger over Meme's indifference to her needs by his seemingly self-willed departure. She flashed on a death-struggle with Wish Watt at the precipice of a high falls, managing to push him off.

Just then the Sri Lankan spun around distractedly and waved, his moving hand erasing her bitter thoughts as Hy's hand had erased his whiteboard musings after his class, scrawl meant to hack through the wilderness of thought — like how a poet under study that day went from *frieze* to *freeze* to *snow* to *sprained foot* in two stanzas.

"Yeppers, that bag of bones has been hammered and could use a caloric pumping up," said Dal, observing the guru's quickly receding figure, noticing his unique gait; "Walks like my grandfather, with 'sea-legs'," he said. "Such a gait embodies ocean waves inscribed in the fiber of nerves and muscles, both the way a *body* translates movin' waves and the way a body is translated by the *waves*."

"Like that old cartoon swabbie, Popeye — a body 'becoming-wave'," I added, mixing popular culture and esoteric speculation and shaking it up.

"Yeah, or like Wishwer's eye-catching tsunami-style hairdo. . . . Oh, hey," Dal continued pointing to our lapidarian interlocutor, "Dontcha think Sam's flappin' white shirt looks like a skiff, its white sail blowin' in the wind, about to be ripped apart?" (I took this as a sly reference to a discussion us amigos had at lunch once in the Artist's Café over Thoreau's comment in *Walden* that a carload of torn sails is more legible and interesting now as debris suffered from a storm than if they were made into paper and printed books.) Then he added one of his famous codas, "Yeppers, he sure as shootin' had been a sailor and now surprisin'ly sails 'long our latitude with a clarified 'n potent tongue, heh?"

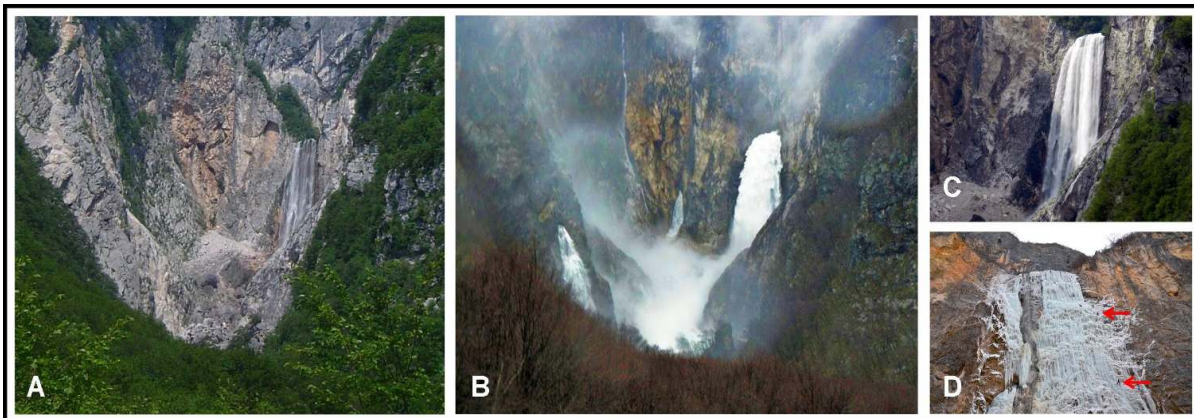
We just stared at Dal; we knew why Meme — who was constantly experiencing, seeing, hearing, suspecting, hoping, and dreaming extraordinary things — couldn't resist mimicking him in his writings.

Given all this garden of earthly delights distraction, we 'd almost forgotten what we'd sauntered out there to discuss in hushed tones: details on how to dispose of Wishwer Watt and Hy's ashes in one stroke. Ach! That D-Whisperer in Meme's left ear weaving utopic travelogues, seasoned with esoteric math, harping on how to take a permanent vacation from the world at large.

"You'd have thought just the *smell* of my pumpkin pancakes would've been enough to keep him in my world!" burst out Dory with a sob. "This is no time to let bygones be begonias. I wish Wish dead."

## Finding Mememo

"Yeppers, it was like in Errol Morris's film *The Thin Blue Line*. One day a man meets 'nother man 'n his life's forever changed — or in this case, ended — *Kaput*. The man's seduction of Hy, what is it not but a slap in all our faces?" said Dal, who suggested we "do a pastiche of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* by formin' Team-Justice to get justice for Hy by wishin' 'n pushin' Wish — with the aid of my little slapstick and that urn <sup>16</sup> — from on high, right off Slap Boka, So a Valley's highest falls." Now we were down to the dirty details of our dark task. Dal already had obtained aerial photos of the falls and marked up two positions thereon as the most accessible, yet precarious, for the "accident":



So a Valley, Slap Boka, aerial shots, red-marked locations for the incident



Chef Ana Roš

That afternoon, surrounded by nature's surprising beauty, we decided the best time to carry out our plan — despite Wish telling us at one point, "No man can call back what one man did" — was the morning after our celebratory dinner at chef Ana Roš's Hiša Franko. "Fatten the fuckin' lamb before slaughter," is how Dal put it. And that dinner was scheduled for this evening at 8 p.m., where: "The stunning location, the charm of the restaurant, and its service, but most of all by the sheer originality, subtlety and sophistication of the food, won it one of

The World's 50 Best Restaurants Award" (William Drew, group editor to CNN).

For the evening's dining we all put on our best duds. Dal's getup was *literally* seen by us as "duds": a large Texas western hat with a Indian-beaded hat band, a purple western shirt with black piping, a southwestern bejeweled silver bolo tie, black western dress trousers held up (barely) by a black leather

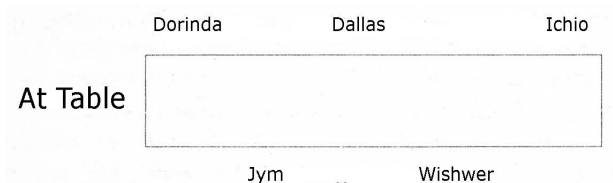
---

16. The "slapstick" referred to is Dal's vintage Federal Gas Billy (see Prologue, p. viii).

## Finding Mememo

belt with a silver buckle, and black, tooled leather cowboy boots. But as he said it was in honor of Wyoming Mann, and the restaurant's staff seemed pleasantly amused, we let the crazy couture pass without comment. Always unfashionable, I wore my loose-as-sacks slacks.

The hot sun set. The stars rose. Our evening's culinary adventure opened with a superb *coup de champagne* — a bottle of 1985 Charles Heidsieck Blanc Des Millénaires — as Dorinda later described in her diary: *The pale gold potion snapped and frothed in my glass. When I took a sip, it crackled down my throat — sweet but with a tinge of bitterness, like a barely perceptible pin inside a cushion.*



The zig-zag, double-triangle seating arrangement at Ana Roš's famed restaurant, Wish seated like Judas in *The Last Supper*.

What followed for the Macaroni Club that "succulent evening", in a storied place haunted by Papa Hemingway's ghost, was an occasional silence of the painful past (Dorinda wore around her

neck the leather medicine pouch The Shaman had given Meme for good luck) and an ironic silence predicting the near-future. There was a lull (literally) in the conversation as our waiter (name tag reading LULL) took our orders; after which Ichi, toasted Meme, recalling "Meme-san once joke he'd love to feast on *Tête d'une farcie* — stuffed ass's head — referring to Chad's *cabeza*." LOL all around, glasses clinking. But underlying that toast, the unspoken Sherlockian Final Problem, The Problem of Wishwer Watt, whose boosterism of D-travel as a way to surpass both alt-right *atavism* and anarchistic *futurism*, was getting on our nerves: "One can transcend bodily verdicts; a jumper can, in a nanosecond, 'Flow in Immer, sea-sing in new languages, create new philosophies, flee neo-liberalism,' as one of Sado's performances puts it."

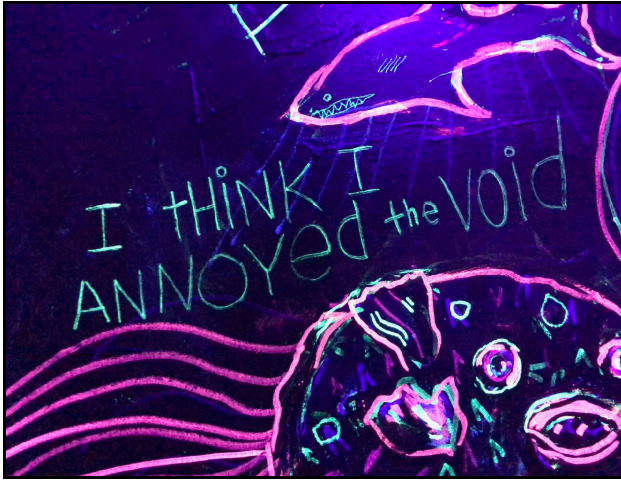


Hy Grader's sketch of his island utopia Levu-Vana

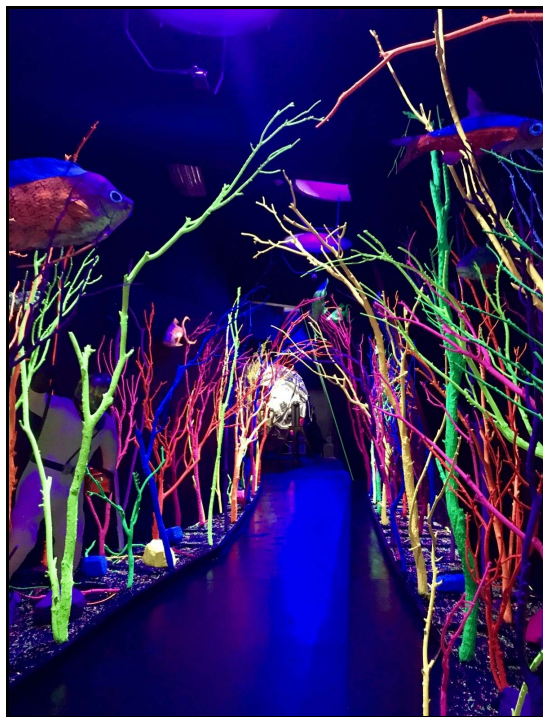
Wish boomed on about how Hy (we hated how he pronounced it, like, "Hi!" as if Meme's name was a greeting). Boomed on about how "Hi!" said he hated his department chairman, Chad, and would, under his breath, mutter "*Jawohl, Herr Hauptmann*" each time he was given orders by the boss. A citation, "Hi!" said, taken from reiterations of the same from Alban Berg's dark opera *Wozzeck* which, in turn, was



## Finding Mememo



Meow Wolf photo by Hy "Mememo" Grader



Meow Wolf photo by Hy "Mememo" Grader

shaped from fragments of Georg Büchner's unfinished play *Woyzeck*. Hi! said he loved fragments." Scanning our faces, Wish went on to tell us: "I told Hi! He'd had dreams way before he'd had memories. He agreed, said he always wanted to explore unseen passages, passages through which he could scurry, disappearing into one hole and emerging from another; something he did once at Santa Fe,

New Mexico's famous *Meow Wolf* venue; fleeing, maybe, into an ideal world he called 'Levu-Vana' [see page vii in the Prologue], or maybe into another dimension, another world. We can choose either to embrace or reject our role in the Now-State. Rid oneself of noxious people." (The latter to be solved the following morning on a Macaroni Club outing through moss and underbrush to Slap Boka).

The next day, Wish wore black Nike Decade V's (same as the suiciding Heaven's Gate cultists); we donned KEEN Targhee II Mid WP climbing shoes. Ahead of us: an expanse of field, deep green grass, then woods with trails leading upward gradually toward the falls with its adjoining *scree field*, where foot-

ing in the expanse of rocks would be precarious, where Wish was to be given "The Big Slap, a Hale-Bopp, and the Big Wish he'd join the Heaven's Gaters."

Dallas, that master of the stroll, had done his research, gotten what seasoned hikers call *beta*. "A lot of times you can get good *beta* 'bout an up-comin' hike by talkin' to people in town or on message boards. They might tell



## Finding Mememo

you 'bout specific tricky spots, shortcuts, and info, like the *book time* [travel time] for this hike is 'bout an hour 'n a half," Dal told us that morning before we departed on our nefarious deed. "Expect to ride one *saddle* [a ridge between two peaks] before reachin' the falls, 'n expect some *PUD* [Pointless Ups 'n Downs in between peaks that don't actually result in any elevation gain]. As it is a totally *bluebird day* [no clouds, sun expected], be sure to fully *camel up* [hydrate] troops." Dallas loved to sling hiker argot ever since using it in a mystery where Blurt's PI, I.M. Blunt, describes "the wooly browns and smoggy grays of the perp contrast with the full range of greens and sparkling chips of rock seen along the hazardous mountain trail as I round the curves of old injustices, down the straightaway of justice." Blunt is in pursuit of a shady, fleeing, lanky, pony-tailed Rolfer with a distinctive limp whom his "somanaut-patients" call "Jeremiah". Dal's life-animus and is summed up by Blurt's favorite rousing call to ~~arms~~ legs: "Ne'er stand still! Where ground is bog, reach for rock before you rest. Let your weight be part of the rock's weight."

For the hike Dory provided the *GORP* (Good Old Raisins and Peanuts) for on-trail energy, ominously adding a croque monsieur for Wish, culled from reluctant kitchen help. Wish pocketed a paperback he'd bought in the Munich airport, John le Carré's spy thriller *Call for the Dead*, to "occupy any downtime" he might have, not knowing he was going to have, literally, *a lot of down time*. The climb hard. My brain edges toward Jello, legs cramping; I'm thirsty. I'm hungry. I have to piss. It was maddening, as Wish spouted mythic Quest crapola, as we thought how Hy'd swallowed this capital-Q crapola hook, line, and sinker.

It is time the falls' rocks consent to blossom red. It is time for it to be time. We put foot-afore-foot, up barefaced concrete-steps, past startling green grass and hedge to the trail toward the waterfall's constant flush, snaking betwixt peaks, stumbling. I once had stamina and calluses, now only blisters. Two doves (there is nothing birds don't like doing) preceded us, alighting here, then there, then flying a little way ahead, repeating their actions all the way to



An "impossible objective shot" of Wishwer Watt's fall at the Slovenian falls.

the top of the Big Flush with its large patches of *scree*, water hurtling down, creating a wide diversity in lace and mist, rainbows and parsley-sprays, gossamer ladders and climbing serpents. No blades of grass; nowhere to sit. A rock ledge where we put Hy's gray urn, sitting like Wallace Stevens' jar-on-a-hill, taking dominion everywhere. Wish knelt at the urn, came to the rock's edge, not suspecting we were about to give him with a first-class ticket on the ill-fated *Bingo-Maru*. In our suspense, we all made ambiguous undulations, like murmuring bees.

The sun shone directly in Wish's eyes (Dal'd

## Finding Mememo



"Ameriški padci." (American falls), POP TV evening news program broadcast from Ljubljana, Slovenia; photo by Dallas Johnson

chosen site and time wisely for this *coup de die*). Bodies are individual things that are distinguished from each other in respect to motion and rest and so each body must be determined to be in motion or at rest by another thing or body. So as Wish shielded his eyes, summons to adventure! Whereupon . . . "B-ten!" yelled Dal, "Bingo!" Unconscious, unfelt electrical activity occurred a full half second before there was any conscious sense of decision-making by us; then we all rushed forward, our neural impulses

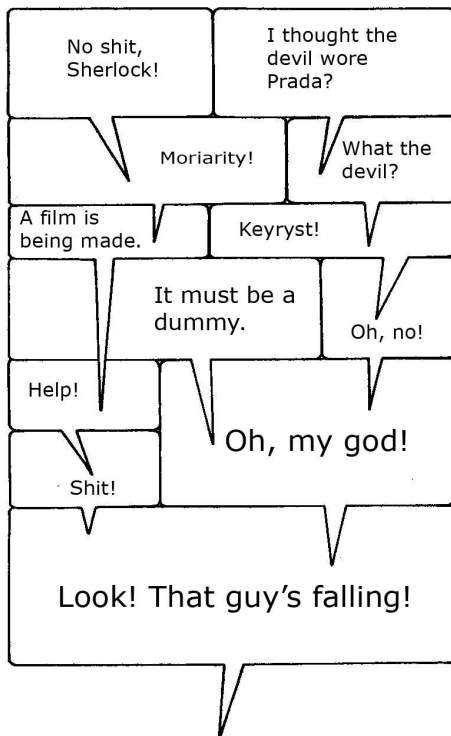
traveling at 240 miles per hour, to edit the last frames of Wish's Life's Film Strip: his arms rowing, fumbling for support, a shipwreck with spume and surge, Wish tumbled into space and waters, lifting aloft a right arm as if casting a die — fade to black. "Laudable pus! Right nice!" yelled Dal.

"Right now, wrong then," (the name of a film by South Korean director Hong Sang-soo) offered Ichi in response to Dallas, his voice rumbling like a garbage truck down a back alley.

"I hear the sound of a future that never arrives!" yelled Dorinda, putting cupped hands to mouth, then tossing Hy's

urned ashes over the falls. Thus rain from the clouds, running into rivelets, rushing down hills, collecting in a river, rushing down a gorge, pitching over falls, carries away a Wish washed in ashes and spoiled dreams.

What precisely transpired *then*, on the falls, is *now* classified TOP SECRET. Descending, we felt like shady characters hiding amongst the punctuation in a John le Carré thriller. Slovenian TV news reported at on "A very unfortunate accident for an American tourist, Wishwer Watt, at So a Valley's spectacular Slap Boka." A TV crew sent scrambling from Ljubljana interviewed witnesses: an old Irishman kept repeating "Jaysus!"; a middle-aged German guy could only snap suspenders on his *liederhosen* and say, "*Es ist wie's ist*" (It is how it is) over and over; a shaken, sobbing young Peruvian woman, holding her baby in arms spoke the obvious, "*Estoy llorando*" (I am crying); a disheveled



Slap Boka

## Finding Mememo



local said he'd yelled, "*Mrtev lovek padec*" (Dead man falling); and a young British tourist, clad in torn jeans and sporting a bright bright red hoodie reading "B.O.L.L.O.X." in Helvetica Bold, was more on point: "Me mate 'n I was standin' on the path goin' up to the falls. I recall a bee (or not a bee) was abuzzin' 'bout me; then a bloke with a knapsack did an arse o'er elbows down the waters. I'd been in the bushes doin' a jimmy riddle — I'd gotten bladdered the night afore at a piss up at a local pub — so natch' thought it might be me brain playin' tricks, but no. Cor! Iffin' I didn't do a bloody flashback to Conan Doyle's infamous master criminal, Mori, Mori, Mori, . . . somethin', takin' that fatal dunk in Switzerland courtesy of 221 B Baker Street's clever coke bloke, Shore Lock Ohms."

Wish's body was never recovered — yes, yes — we all thought the unthinkable: *He D-jumped with a more compact device secreted in his pack.*

Our bodies are given life from the midst of nothingness. Existing where there is nothing is the meaning of the phrase, "Form is emptiness." That all things are provided for by nothingness is the meaning of the phrase, "Emptiness is form." One should not think that these are two separate things.

Wish's Black Bookmark signed on the back by Sado Muga

Except Ichi, who believed the *kappa* (Japanese folkloric water demons) had got him. Only that backpack was found. It held, oddly, a John le Carré novel mysteriously hollowed out to hold *something*, and a slim volume titled *Galactic or Parallactic?* with a bookmark sporting the G.O.N.E. group logo, on the verso of which was a hand-

written note: *Wish, Wishing you a Happy Birthday, Muga Love from Sado.*

"Macaronis," Dal addressed us, we are safe if we keep our traps shut. Ya grok? If he's *somewhere else*, okay; if he's dead, even better."

"I grok we won," said Dorinda in a raspy, emotional voice. "Now *our* wish is alive and *that* Wish is now dead. The reverse of yesterday."

"We'll see," replied Ichi. "One wish may cancel the other," toasting us with a Hegeliano-Zen cocktail and a wink.

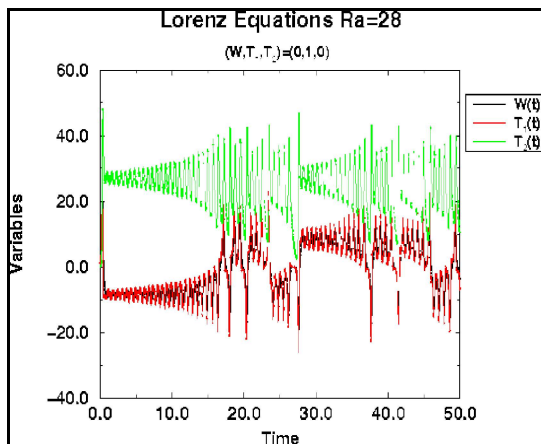
"I wish Meme was here to appreciate this Ichi -ism. But Meme would've gone on to comment on the sneering mouth needed to pronounce NOW, that no sooner had this word been said than it's already late, and in its lateness, false: "It's *not now* anymore, no matter how many times you reiterate it — NOW, NOW, NOW, NOW, NOW — it isn't now, it isn't, it just isn't, now," I imagine him saying. "Yes, yes, — er — well I suppose we did, *now*, eliminate our problem and

# Finding Mememo

introduced another," allowed Dallas, always PI-cautious and skeptical.

One day later, in Silicon Valley budgets are being reassessed, in Chicago franchises are cancelled; in London, inside the huge Brutalist pile on the south bank of the Thames next to Vauxhall Station, the headquarters of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, activity amps up, agents scramble about; and as the earth's terminator line sweeps lands and dawn emerges, citizens are either fantasizing escape while humming some old exaltation samba or posting reveilles to wake us from our hedonic depressive slumber.

Two days post-trauma, the Slovenian police, satisfied with our contrived story, permitted us surviving foursome to German-wing it westward, where we hot-footed it along Mich Ave to Chi-Town's celebrated Seven Lions eatery for pasta washed down with some crafty craft brew in our toddlin'



A Complex, Nonlinear System

town where tall aerials and phone-masts pick up transmissions, encoding, and then re-transmitting them through clouds that swallow and regurgitate them; or let them slide by above, scanning roofs and streets like barcode. A metropolis that, when viewed from the top of the Willis (formerly Sears) Tower, invites commentary, interpretation and prognosis — more so than other cities due to its nonlinear, dynamical weather system.

That Toddlin' Tower lights up, looms out of the fog, bounces sunlight, both dodges and invites lightning, gets drubbed by hail, even at times dropping window glass on the street below. It is so tall, its pinnacle can be seen all the way from Dorinda's front porch in Oak Park, ten miles distant. An unpleasant reminder of heights and of her husband's pitiful plunge earthward and which, under certain types of atmospherics, recalls her husband's passionate love of the geometric pulsing of a lighthouse (it sounds better in French, *cône fulgurant de clarté*) at night.

The light gleams an instant, then it's night once more; then the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more; then the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more; then the light gleams an instant, then its night once more . . .

## Finding Mememo



Willis Tower, Chicago



The first day after our return, it rained heavily, our season's first. Dorinda awoke in her nightgown in the morning with an obese black Scottie (the Doggie Hotel had overfed her precious K-9s) laying across her feet. Her radio alarm only spued the static of WFMT's not unusual dead-air sound. She looked in the mirror; seemed she always had the face on, like she already knew all the answers to the day's questions. Looking outside, the Willis Tower had vanished from the tenth floor up.

After breakfast, when there was a pause in the downpour, Dorinda dashed out in her Wellies and planted (using some of Hy's ashes kept in reserve) a quincunxial array of five *Sempervivium* (Live Forever) succulents in her garden — each a mandala array of thick leaves — in a spot designated as a memorial to her dead husband. Near the center, she placed, like a headstone, Hy's paperback copy of China Miéville's "weird fiction" novel *Kraken*. *Hic(k) jac(k)et . . .*, she thought, fondly recalling one of Meme's bad scripto-visual puns.

As she stood, arching her stiff back, taking measure of her efforts, the silence was all enveloping, except for the drip off leaves. She could hear in her mind's ear Meme's voice: *Remember mememo, remember me, mo, but — ah! — forget my fate*. The rain started up again. Indoors, the phone rang; she picked it up: "And?"

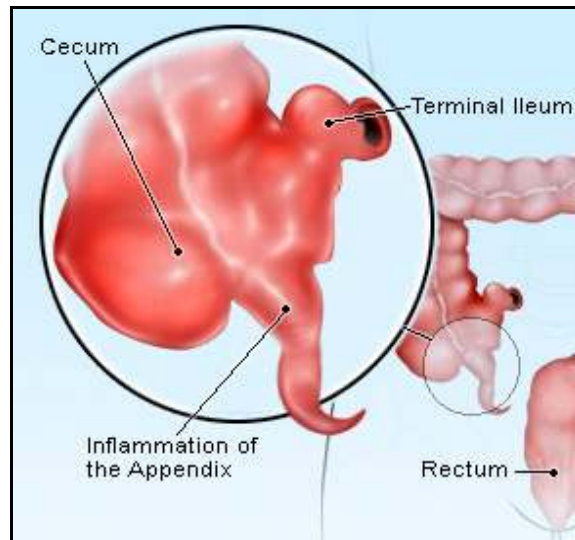
— THE END —

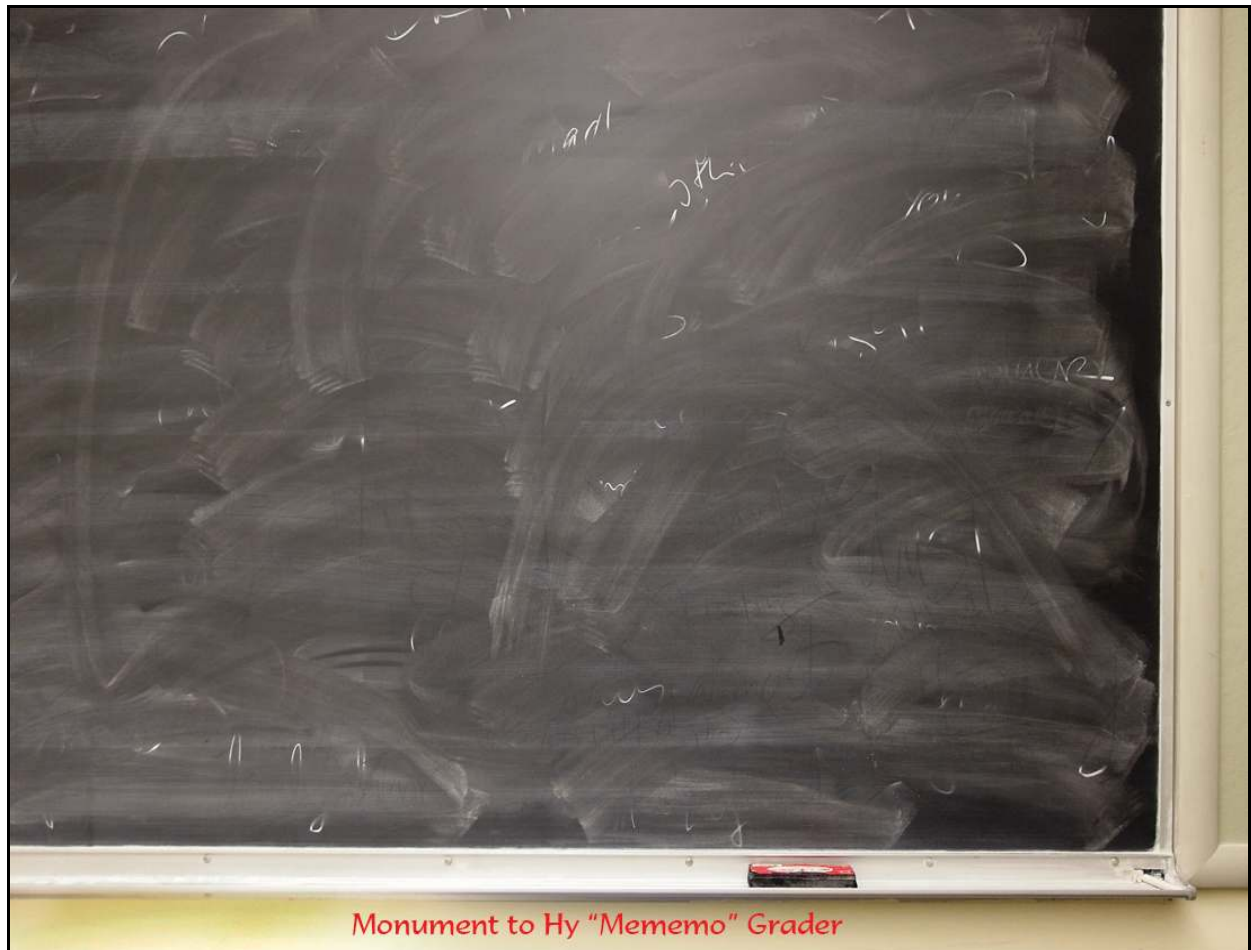
*Editor: Will the Reader excuse the fact that this text, due to Dorinda's generosity and Dallas' thorough job of fact-gathering, has suffered an inflamed appendix? If so, read on.*





# An Inflammed Appendix





Ichi 's *Erased Meme: Monument to Hy "Mememo" Grader* (tributes to Meme were written on a chalkboard then erased, 2017)

*As for my chairman, Chad, . . . I am bankrupt in terms of contempt.*

*I am left utterly stranded and alone in writing and thought.*

*Increasing swarms of unendurable contingencies in  
the intellectual wilderness of our Web 2.0 Trumpian world.*

*Shit, what a world Dorinda's grandkids' eyes have opened onto.*

— Excerpts from Hy Grader's Moleskine notebook

# Finding Mememo

## Do It Your Shelf

A Bibliophile's Manic Project

by Hy "Mememo" Grader

(Found among Meme's papers)

### THE BOOKS IN MY BOOKSHELF GRAPHED

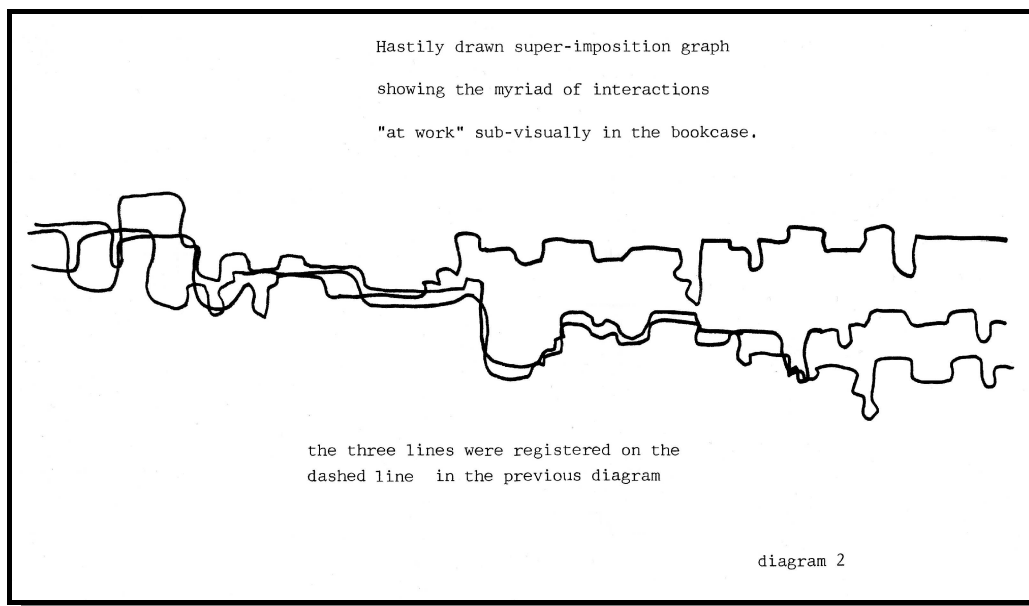
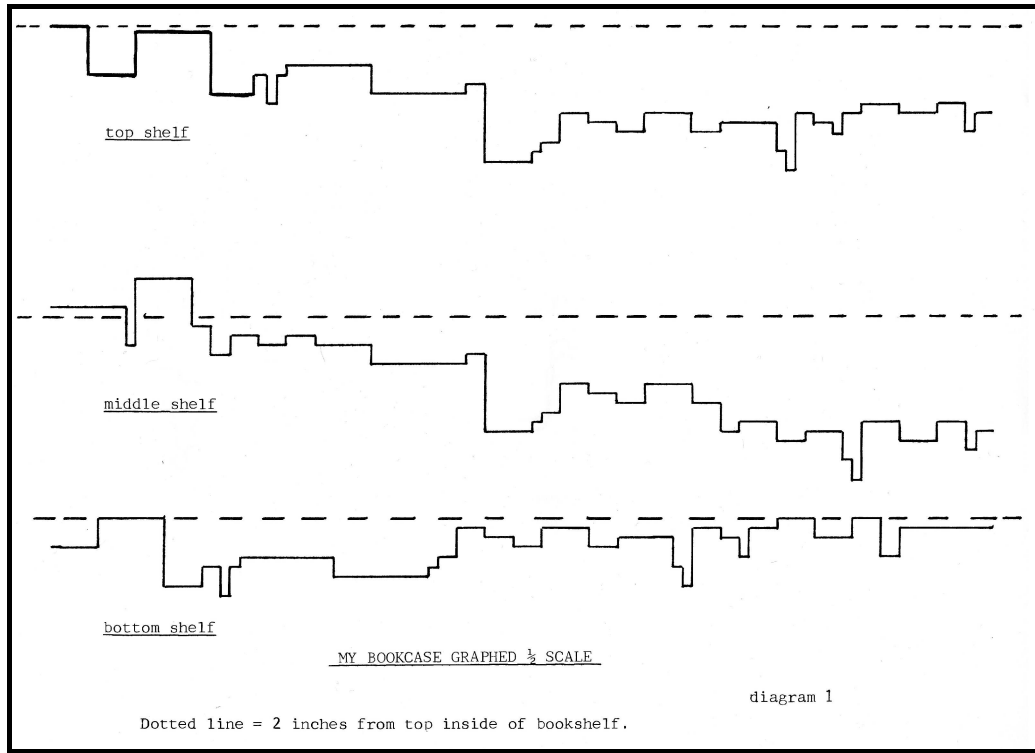
---

**Discovery:** I was sick in bed with a temperature of 102 degrees; I chanced to look at my bookshelf and in the semi-delirium of my fever I saw my shelves/books translated into a line graph revealing the Essence of my bookcase. This project is an attempt to reconstitute that experience.

**Intent:** A graphic objectification of the relationship between books (positive space) and the shelf (negative space) containing them allows the viewer to approach the dialectics on a Phenomenological level. The purely visual complexities of normal experience are reduced to a line plot capable of revealing the True Essence of the spatial and linear interactions initiated by placing books on shelves. Greater complexities/permutations are achieved when a bookcase with multiple shelves is graphed; superimposition of the graphs of all the shelves would then reveal the myriad of interactions "at work" sub-visually in the most common of bookcases!

**Process:** Paper is put behind books on the shelves and the tops of all the books are traced, the resultant graphs are then scaled down to manageable size. (see illustration) This process can be carried out to the extreme: plotting the relationships between shelves and books in an entire library...here the constant flux of books being taken off and on the shelves would necessitate another variable, time, as the graphs would alter by the minute.

# Finding Mememo





## Finding Mememo

Data: number of books on top shelf = 44  
" " " " middle shelf = 48  
" " " " bottom shelf = 40

tallest book =  $9 \frac{3}{4}$  inches  
smallest book =  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches  
average book height =  $7 \frac{3}{5}$  inches

average area of positive space =  $174 \frac{4}{5}$  inches  
average area of negative space =  $78 \frac{1}{5}$  inches

ratio of positive to negative space 2.24 : 1

Proposal: That this whole idea be shelved for future reference.

Dorinda authorized this reproduction of Hy's art work. It dates from 1975, the year her future husband tried (unsuccessfully) to make her sign an unusual pre-nuptial agreement: in public she was to promise to wear *only* gray clothing with a maximum of ten percent white detailing so as to not draw attention away from his couture. Dory says wants to show you, Dear Reader, how her first very vain husband and her second ("Meme") were both nuts in their own peculiar way.

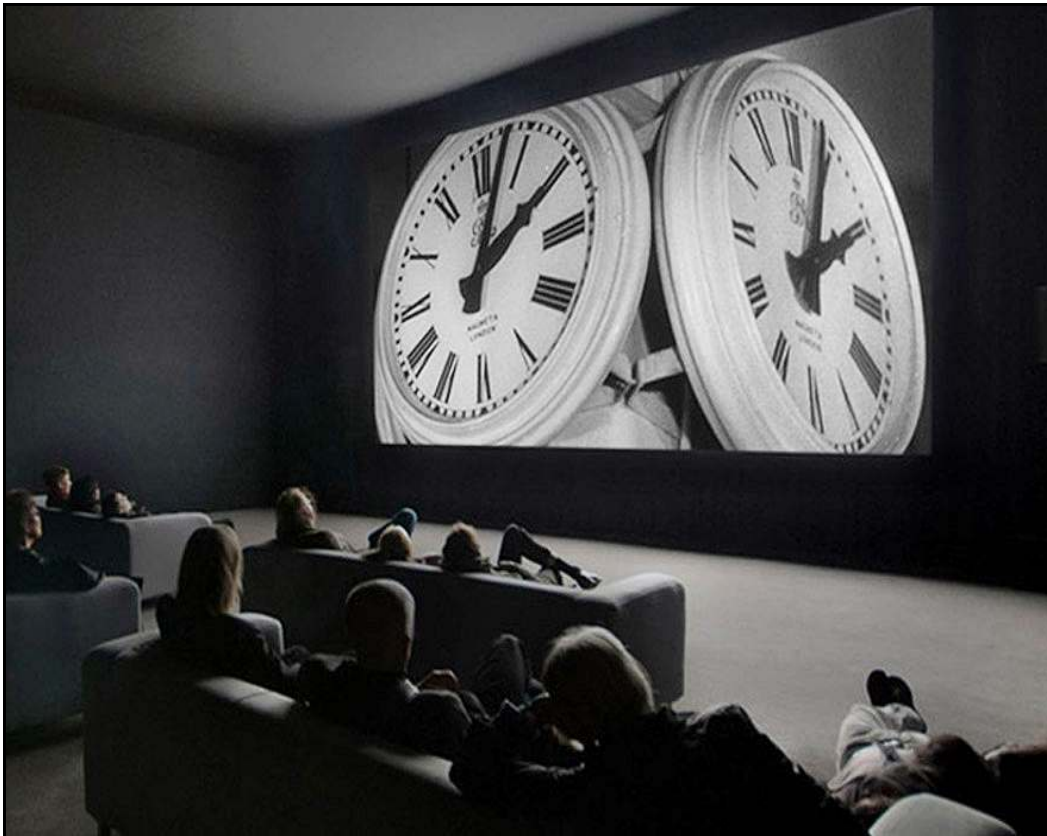


# Finding Mememo

## ACROSS:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL SHORT STORY

(A text futzing with tenses by Hy Grader from 1974)



*The Clock* (video installation, 2010) by Christian Marclay; given Ichi 's interest in time pieces, he got "Meme-san" to go see it: "Like it is mash-up like your writing." It is a looped 24-hour video supercut that features clocks, timepieces, and references to time, all copped from various films and videos. The artwork itself functions as a clock: its presentation is synchronized with the real time, resulting in the time shown in a scene being the actual time. In one of her essays in *Feel Free* (2018) Zadie Smith observes: ". . . *The Clock* endows each clip with something like perdurance, extending it in time, like a four-dimensional object" ("Killing Orson Wells at Midnight").

A.

I move across the concrete avenue, gestures of my polychromed body a semaphore of my fate. Hurlbert is at my side nodding the affirmative as he always must, while automobiles divulge their true intent by just missing us both. Past and present tenses cross, blurring all distinctions. Was it only three years ago that I resolved to meet Hurlbert even though I never had seen him before? Can one even dare to presume to do such? I did. I just edged up to him and said, "Follow me." Then we crossed the street and have been going ever since.

## Finding Mememo

B.

Now the yellow line looms upon us; how I hate these all too-straight lines that desire to systematize al life on either side of them. We are crossing the line.

His first words to me on that day three years ago were quietly happy like a man who had memorized the conjugation of an irregular verb and wanted to tell you so.

C.

I stop and reach for a marble, my thumb seeking the scars the arc-gesture of an excited child's arm gave it many years ago. Hurlbert's hand swallows it up as I give it to him; he mumbles an affirmation and continues to cross.

I remember we had stopped in the middle of the street and Hurlbert had turned to me with a smile, the model for all subsequent smiles; he began to nod.

Our feet are yet announcing our presence on the pavement; he turns to me and says, "It is true, or was, we must . . .," but I interrupt; he only nods. We can now just make out the letters on the sign across the street.

That evening two years ago when Hurlbert and I stood in this same street talking to Kelley, we both had agreed with Kelley's ideas on painting; yet our agreements took different forms: mine a stare, his a nod.

D.

CLEANERS, the sign reads. That orange neon seems to echo our moods tonight. I stare. He nods. We walk.

I once had fallen; Hurlbert had picked me up; he had smiled. Then. We both finally agree that I had not hurt myself, then. At all.

I will take him by the arm and we shall both leap onto the opposite curb; having crossed the street we turned to each other staring and nodding respectively. We shall begin to go across yet once more.

E.

I will remember that summer when Hurlbert remarks the pavement was too hot; he had nodded with pain and . . .

— 30 —

# Finding Mememo

## Mention of a Grader Review

that seems pertinent to understanding Hy Grader's intellectual and aesthetic interests

Also this month, Hy Grader reviews *Cinema Without Reflection* (2016) by Akira Mizuta Lippit. Lippit's argument is wholly Derridean in nature: by exploring a series of appearances by Jacques Derrida on film, Lippit ponders how the cinematic performance of philosophy through Derrida's phantom-like form — phantom-like because cinema can only offer us the captured image of Derrida, and also phantom-like because Derrida has since passed away — can constitute a Derridean film theory. Put in another way: on screen, embodying his own philosophies, Derrida performs (rather than articulates) a Derridean theory of cinema in cinema: an enactment of his own concept of the trace.

It is clear that both Lippit and reviewer Grader are familiar with Derrida's oeuvre — as well as the unavoidable connections to Gilles Deleuze's *Cinema 1* and *2*. Lippit's text, especially through Grader's careful handling, comes across as exciting in its theoretical contributions to the areas of film, image, psychoanalysis, and Derrida's own work. Grader writes: "since Derrida is no longer with us, which is to say the image has lost its original object, for Lippit, this is a 'reflection in reverse', which in turn puts a new spin on the Lacanian mirror image utilized in psychoanalytic film theory." In addition, drawing upon Roland Barthes' work on the dynamicism of self that occurs in front of the camera, by which Barthes described "transform[ing] myself in advance into an image" (quoted in Lippit 18), the controversial argument is made that "even when Derrida was alive, Derrida was *always-already* not himself. More precisely, he was *playing* himself, a spectral version of himself, a second person."

In this Derridean theory of Derridean film theory in action, Grader notes how Lippit focuses on Derrida's recurring exploration of the myth of Echo and Narcissus. Lippit ponders how Narcissus's auto-eroticism highlights the self-embodiment in the cinematic trace — Derrida as a virtual image that ripples inwardly; one recalls Derrida's performative slippery negotiation between echoes of "l'amour" or the absence of "le mort" in the documentary *Derrida* (2002).

In this documentary, as Grader notes, Derrida performs himself in all the ways that have continued to endear him to both author (and reviewer Grader) as a thinker even now that he is gone. For all of us who have libraries of books that "will be read one day" — present ghosts — he offers a virtual image that is imbued with Derridean philosophy. The interviewer in the film asks of his stuffed library, "You've read all the books in here?" Camera panning over the clutter, the



## Finding Mememo



Death angels, film still from Fritz Lang's *Liliom* (1934)



Death's assistants, film still from Jean Cocteau's *Orphée*

awkward walk among form and materiality, Derrida says quickly, "No, no, three or four. But I read those four really, really well." A quirky performance — but it leaves a trace.

Grader ends with digression on the theme of life and death. He cites Jean Cocteau, saying the quote has relevance to his own life: "Since my moral carriage is that of a man who limps with one foot in life and one in death, it was normal for me to arrive at a myth in which life and death confront each other." Then he looks at the Derridean trace in two films: Fritz Lang's 1934 fantasy *Liliom* and Jean Cocteau's 1950 production *Orphée*.

Both films involve afterlife experiences. Cocteau's borrows from Lang. Grader finds elements in the Lang film (two dead figures who accompany the dead body of *Liliom* into the higher regions and the shade of a worker pushing an old cart) and convincingly argues that Jean Cocteau put similar figures (the two motorcycle death-riders and the old glazier forlornly pushing his cart through the Underworld) in *Orphée*.

Grader also points out that in both films the phrase *Levez-vous!* is used to command a body lying down to rise, like Christ raising Lazarus. He goes on to relate such borrowing and intertextual allusion to his own strategies in his fiction, applying the discussion to a novel he was working on at the time [*ed.*, *Finding Mememo*].

— Lai-Tze Fair, Associate Editor, *EBR*

# Finding Mememo

## Admin-Document

Handed Out to New Faculty Hires at  
the Cliff Dwellers Club the Night Hy Died

Dear New Faculty Hire:

One Nation Under a Format.

We're glad you've considered and decided to sign-on to America's Foremost University (AFU). We hope your employment will be a memorable experience for you. Our Pedagoppany lives and dies by its employees and its designer non-sentient life-forms working behind the scenes. I am sure you will enjoy the quality-of-life-benefits your employment here will make possible. We encourage faculty to "space hack" their offices, personalizing their workspace. On the verso of this letter is this semester's winning poster in our "Why Do I Show Up" series.

Every day is a hard-fought battle with our competitors in the Edu-Con-Tainment marketplace for customers (e.g., The School of the Art Institute of Chicago is landing lucrative contracts with customers and eating our lunch). We need Peda-Associates like you to attend to their every need. Remember "College is the new highschool," and most of our clients still live with their parents or have them on speed-dial. Remember, this is Parent-Over-Seen-Education (POSE). We want to keep that child-like cheer in their eyes at all times. Grade accordingly. BTW, we have given faculty the option to carry sidearms to protect our clientele when the Trigger Warning bell sounds.

As the select-of-the-select, your continued loyalty as faculty is appreciated — even during Chairman Chad Armbuster's Chad-athon Monologues — and I'm sure you appreciate us during this perpetually difficult financial time. Each day in your smart classroom, after that first cup of coffee at a committee meeting, you will feel more and more loyalty to AFU, more *love*. We are sure. Each day your students will salute you with upraised iPhones, chanting "Information represents reality."

In the afternoon, after your cafeteria rations and cup of coffee, all problems will seem solvable. If you have questions, your kind and cheery Department Chairs will be happy to hear from you via *#DeepConverse*.

Your memorable and enjoyable Faculty Installation Process by Proxy (FIPBP is perfectly safe and will take approximately three hours) will begin two days after this evening's marvelous fête in Chicago's famous Cliff Dweller's Club. You will report to Installation Hall at 8:30 a.m. sharp. You will find new clarity of purpose, clarity of mind. You will also be given two tickets to the double feature *The Passion of Joan of Arc* and *Vampyr* by Carl Dreyer at the Gene Siskel Film Center.

Enjoy your evening,

Yoshida Bakeneko

## Finding Mememo



Winner of the "Why Do I Show Up?" poster contest by Lorrie Rinder, Co-op Ed. Dept. (Risograph print, 2017).

# Finding Mememo

## Hy Grader's Full-Fathom Dreams

As Told to his Rogerian Therapist Elske Erfaren  
and Recorded in his Moleskine Notebook

Elske: Come in [long pause]. How are you today?

Hy: After putting up my placard on our bedroom door reading:

THE POET IS AT WORK, I had this dream last night.

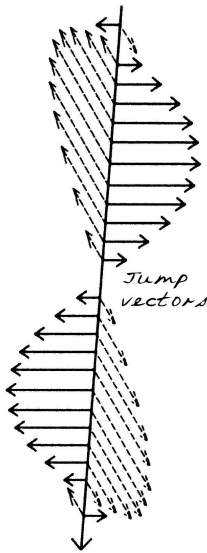
Elske: Dreams are like random walks of experience.

Hy: My friend, Dallas, night-walks, dreams less.

Elske: Death arrives for the non-dreamer.

Hy: Probably why he writes murder mysteries.

### Dream One:



A police bulletin goes out for me: "Blond, blue eyes, six feet tall, thirty-two years old, but looks younger, white shirt, chinos." I am running down a Chicago rat-infested alley, a social castaway. I find one dark doorway. Try the knob and enter. An old woman, her name tag reading EMMAWAYISH, PHANTOM OF THE AFTER, says: "Welcome to the molten core of an ecology festering with unintelligibilities, aporias, and perennially elusive forces whose shadowy immanence warps unremittingly. Accelerate!" She bows stiffly, wipes her spider-knuckled hands on my jacket. Her thin hair is carefully laid over a yellow husk with almost no lips. Black hairy tentacles creep from her nostrils. She points to a strange portal that looks like a field of color and lines on an LCD screen. She asks me: "Is Beyoncé neoliberal or subversive?" When I can't decide: "It's not how you live that counts, but how you dive," she then indicates an odd gate. Opens it. I jump through. I pass Lewis Carroll's Red Queen, her one eye open, one closed, breathing hard, filling the time-tunnel with her foul breath. I'm falling, forces pulling my arms and legs outward.

Soon I find myself a castaway on the side of a green hill [*like a steep hill I used to climb in the San Fernando Valley on property owned by the family of deceased Hollywood actor Francis Lederer*] so precipitous that I could only keep my position by lying at full length, clinging to short soft grass, and imbedding my feet in the turf. But for a second I thought I see grass not only between my feet and fingers but *through* them. My blood hums. I think *Golly! I'm in for it this time. [a phrase one might read in a 1940s young adult book]*. I could see but a short distance in any direction, nor is there any other human in sight. I am absolutely alone upon a dizzy slope. I hardly dare to look up or down. It takes all my concentration of effort to keep my position. Yet there is a kind of friendliness to the warm soil; a comfort and fragrance in the crushed herbage. The fog lifts. I see a branchless tree which two one-winged birds slowly circle. Below a long snake entwines the tree's base, embracing Mother Ur-Th [*my name for this weird*

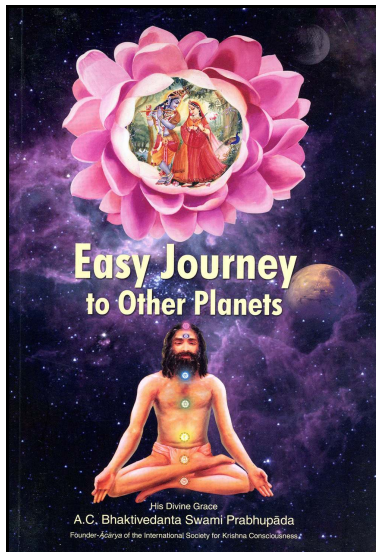
## Finding Mememo

*place]* as if she were his *thing*. The snake is watched by two ocelots; each ocelot by two other snakes; each snake by sixteen triangles; each triangle surveilled by five eyes in a quincunx formation. I fear that a moment of inattention to this odd scene, these queer associations, will be fatal. *The danger of not enough watching* runs like a mantra through my mind. As the fog retreats, I see the Googleplex site at Mountain View, California, notice it is now a ruin, looking like an ex-World's Fair ground. I grab my Moleskine notebook from my Ramar-of-the-Jungle vest pocket and scribble: *Today I do not know the date nor my fate*. I awake in a sweat.

Elske: Come in [long pause]. How are you today?

Hy: I had another dream last night, but much shorter than the first.

Dream Two:



I find myself on the on the same elevation as in the initial dream, clouds around me. A sweet smell comes upward from grass crushed beneath my reclining body. The vapors lift, and I see that the hill stretches for an immeasurable distance on each side, always at the same steep slope. Everywhere it is now covered with branchless trees as before, but now no sign of the Googleplex. Instead, beings, some bearded, are trying to pursue various semblances of Medieval occupations, like on a Hollywood period-piece set. They all are clothed in a hygienic armor of white. At times, I see a being or two stumble, gliding downwards, staining their white garb green. In so showing themselves, they hide; in hiding they show themselves. I am holding on with one hand, the other grasps a book, *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, opened to the words: *Anyone who can attain the freedom of the spiritual planets need never return to this miserable land of old*

*age, disease, and death*. Armbuster. *[I must be having a dream-within-a-dream]*. He and I are standing on hilltops across a valley, yelling at each other. Chad yells, "You ain't" and I yell back, "I am!" I gaze at him through binoculars. His eyes are wide and fixed on me. He only stares straight ahead as if his oculomotor muscles are frozen; his nose looks spilled over, pushed over, crooked, twisted, from the base to the top, a nose in a Picasso painting. I see a deeply lodged discomfort in him that does not preclude a sense of security based on unshakably planted ideas residing in a strong box that will not let itself be penetrated. This inhabitant of this disordered face isn't going to give up. But suddenly I feel I am slipping, a kind of Flash Crash, flushing that dream and my original dream away. I abruptly awaken, feverish, excited, trembling. I stumble over to our bedroom's boom-box and immediately put on the CD, *Soothing Sounds for Baby*, bought by my wife to have on hand when babysitting her new grandchild.

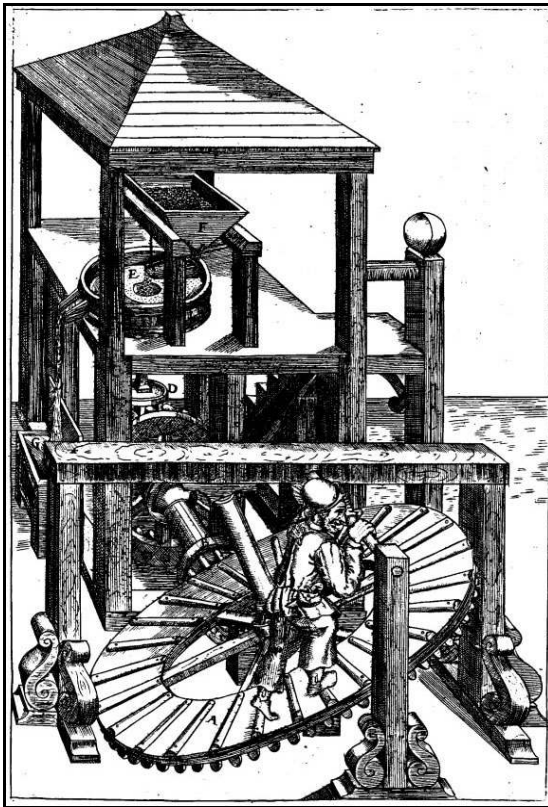


# Finding Mememo

Elske: So as you dream, thus you are.

Hy: Well, I had a Medieval-Tech dream. I mean our society is wallowing in neo-medieval images and tropes: roaming depopulated countrysides, exploring dungeons, rescuing maidens, slaying dragons, and jousting. Figures often used in programmer discourse; protocol is the chivalry of the object. Woke up. My mouth felt as if it was lined with wet paper towels. Shit, I never have a camera in these dreams. Why?

Dream Three:



Medieval Tech

Once more I was on that 'slippery slope' [*I recall I made associations with that phrase to its juridical use*], outside the perspectives of language, looking through clear air upon mountain peaks, below a valley with pelucid lakes, set in summer beauty. All the while I cling to my perilous hold, trying to find my voice [*as writers often say*]. Gradually, the grassy mount I cling to sinks away beneath me into a vast plain; in the distance I could see what might be a cloud bank or a mountain range. The men, women, and children I had seen in the earlier dream had risen from their reclining position (as had I) and were variously busy [*see diagram*]; some of them even looked at me, but there was nothing said. A great space of time appeared to pass; suns rose and set. I noticed a river I hadn't seen in the second dream. Its waters both flowing forward, yet also suggesting a past from which it flows. Sometimes one of the crowd throws down an implement of labor, turns face

to the west, walking swiftly away along that river's bank, disappearing. Someone else magically takes their place, so that the number of laborers never diminishes. [*I've no spade to follow men like them. In RL, between my finger and thumb, my squat pen rests. I can dig with that. I would've said, the squat pens rests, snug as gun, but I hate the NRA.*] I begin to feel somewhat unimportant in all this gathering of laborers [*I associated this with a similar feeling I have at our faculty meetings*], a sensation not much agreeable; then this brings on what I experience as "passages" of my father in myself [*this always stirs rebellion in me*]. I abruptly awake to a deep loneliness, despite being nestled beside my wife, our two dogs splayed out beside us.

# Finding Mememo

Elske: Crazy weather out today *[long pause]*. How are you today?

Hy: The dreams, they keep on rolling in a world where I don't know the word for *because*, as each act of mine seems disconnected from another.

Dream Four:

Now the hillside has vanished, but the vast plain remains, and the people. I have brought a soft-boiled egg for lunch which, upon opening, I find a fly; it rubs its wings together with difficulty and flies heavily away. Over the wide landscape, sunbeams shed 'passing smiles of light' *[I recall I felt embarrassed by this personification, a trope oh so much hated by the French New Novelists]*, now here, now there. Where these beams shine of a moment, faces look joyous. I want one to fall on me. I gradually realize I could control the distribution of light and shade, like a painter on his canvas, or a photographer in a well-equipped studio. This lifts me into a conscious importance. The epithet used to describe Kaiser Wilhelm II's famous upright mustache comes to mind: *Es ist erreicht* (It is achieved!). There is, however, a singular want of all human relation in the tie between myself and all these people (just like that between the Kaiser and his subjects). I felt as if I called them into being — this enhances my weight in the universe — which indeed I had *[in my dream]*, and could annihilate them at pleasure. No need for my larger mitts to swallow their smaller hands and shake in faltering camaraderie, faking a smile. I feel guilty about this, but then think, Why should I, a dreamer, feel patience or charity or mercy toward those who exist but in my mind? Yet, I am disturbed by this. It goes against my social justice beliefs.

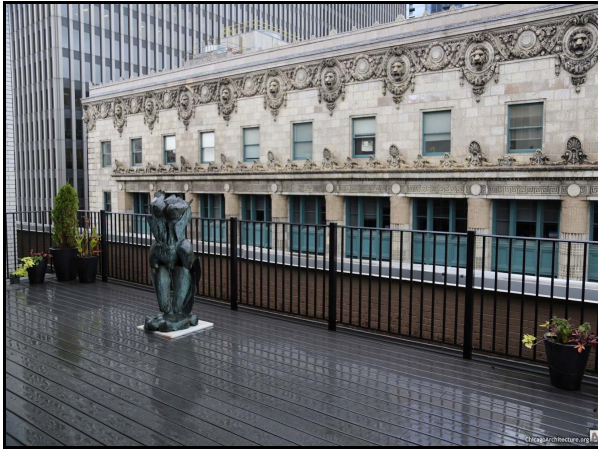
Elske: Come in *[long pause]*. How are you today?

Hy: Things keep on planetizing in my *sci-phi* world.

Elske: The opposite of our expanding material universe, our phenomenological universe is always contracting. Dreams, a counteractive gas, pressures us outward.

Dream Five: I am on a boundless plain with my circle of silent allies around me. Suddenly, I am holding a postcard. It comes to life, assuming independence and passes into the actual and I with it. The point of view of the other in me? There arises before me, as if built out of the atmosphere, a high-rise building. I see a cardboard box and dash under it — my standard Quick-Deployment Personal Concealment System (therein, I always feel I've found my inner peace). I use it as cover to slowly make my way toward the structure's entrance. I enter and climb a seemingly endless M.C. Escheresque staircase. I look down and experience that famous Hitchcockian track/zoom shot in *Vertigo*. I pass on various floors huge libraries where, oddly, I intuit the stacked books are from my own library. I pass alcoves filled with my own publications, and a gallery of art with a one-man show of my best scripto-visual works blown up to "Museum scale" size. Everything flatters my individual, creative genius. Other doors and corridors lead to private apartments whose distinguished occupants are served by private Arbo Smooth-Glide Residential Elevators — GOING UP? — and maintained to absolute perfection via

## Finding Mememo



Patio deck of the Cliff Dwellers Club from which Hy fell or jumped or was pushed to his death (photo by Dallas Johnson)

online Arbo Passenger-Response Criticism. Residents use a blue key to access them. I arrive the twenty-second floor and see a door with an impressive bronze plaque reading THE CLIFF DWELLERS CLUB and enter and smell a faint odor of white polymugs of coffee, that incinerated PVC odor. People mill about, sipping wine or coffee, eating a snack called Believe-Nothing-of-What-You-Hear (chocolate, passion fruit, celery). All I want is my mother's grilled cheese sandwich. I am asked by a server the three most depressing words in the English language (according to

British writer Kingsley Amis): "Red or white?" Many people are fanning their armpits. I overhear a man tell a woman: "My brain resurrects my memories through stochastic details, like picking marbles out of a bag." Weird. He looks like me. His interlocutor, who looks like Dory, says, "I heard most writers have larger umwelts than the rest of us."

This pre-lecture party wanes as the guest lecturer moves to the middle of a brightly lit space. He obviously likes to be at the center of things. A small sign next to his podium reads: "Wilmer Cook discusses what's the Rumpus?: The Hard Prick of Conscience in the stories of Diane Williams." We see a pinched face of an old man clad in Mr. Rodgers kind of tie and sweater. By his physique, he must be on a diet of frozen dinners and Jell-O. A program note says this Brit hails from Sourport-on-Severn. He notices me still standing and gives me a hieroglyphic squint. I realize I have a ketchup stain on shirt. He nods in my direction, encouraging me to take a seat, and begins to wax eloquent about Williams: "This woman author understands the tragicomic nature of the penis. She is on record as having been greatly influenced by reading Melville's chapter describing a whale's foreskin when pursuing her undergraduate studies. Sticking, plugging, bobbing, plucking — the penises in William's narratives are not just rigid, but are unsprightly, mechanical, prosthetic. The penis may be compared to a drooping aspidistra, or a doomed character lit from below (what cineastes term "Jimmy Valentine lighting"). IT may become for, a young boy, his prepubescent priapic imaginings of a tough guy. But just a moment, that's not all" . . .

Here Wilmer halts for a moment, hesitates, falters, fails of presence of mind, hangs back, and glances suspiciously at a man sitting in the row in front of me, to my left. I imagine . . . think . . . I suspect . . . have no doubt, he is fumbling his crotch with his right hand. The kind of guy who'd make a heavy-breathing-call collect if he could get away with it. Wilmer quickly regains his composure and continues, "Ahhhh, 'moment' is one of Williams's favorite words. Her stories usually draw attention to 'enjoyable moments,' 'repulsive moments,' 'nice moments,' 'moment of panics,' 'moments of horror,' 'moments of discovery,' 'moments of parting,' and so forth." Wilmer continues using

# Finding Mememo



A flood of light caught in this crystal: "What ineffable impressions, what a revelation of the exquisite." Buildings not only rising from but also redescending into the ground of their edification.



Hitchcock's *Vertigo*

needless emphases and train-wreck adjectives.

When he says, "cold heart, bright idea," I suddenly hear the word *five* in both ears, see a quincunx projected on a blue background — a sudden left temporal lobe spike? I need to escape. I rush out of the lecture, seeking the balcony, stroll to its edge. Looking down, I'm overcome with vertigo. I flash on my unease at viewing the famed rooftop chase scene at the dramatic start of Hitchcock's

disturbing film *Vertigo*, and Jean-Luc Godard's nice quip on a film whose name escapes me: "Everything rings true in this totally false film. . . . He who leaps into the void owes nothing to those who watch." A moment of panic, of anticipated vertigo. I think *Man is an abyss, it makes you dizzy to look down into it* [ed., a quote from Alban Berg's opera *Wozzeck*], and the words: *with by through because towards despite* pass my lips.

Below me, surprisingly, I don't see Chicago's bustling Michigan Avenue, but Venice-like canals. In the distance, a fantastic array of glass architecture pastiching "Ruskin's Venice", evoking Proustian involuntary memories of cobble stones," and a crystalline dream by German architect Paul Scheerbart [ed., see *frontispiece on Scheerbart*]. This distant vision — a new future? — awakens in me a smidgen of hope, something very unusual for me. A man is going upstream walking along a canal on *both*



*sides* at the same time. Suddenly, in a wink, he is walking on one side only. A quantum wave function collapse? A quantum of solace? *Nature is thinking me*. I realize that I am *no one*, only a phenomenal self, an ongoing process in my workshop (my body). I abruptly awaken, hyperventilating; running through my mind is what becomes that day's featured earworm: *Change contexts in order to change possibilities* .

. . . *Change contexts in order to change possibilities* . . . *Change contexts in order to change possibilities* . . . *Change contexts in order to change possibilities* . . . *Change contexts in order to change possibilities* . . .

Elske: Finding is losing. But perhaps that losing is a prelude to another finding — a finding *again* — in another mode. Yes?

\* \* \*







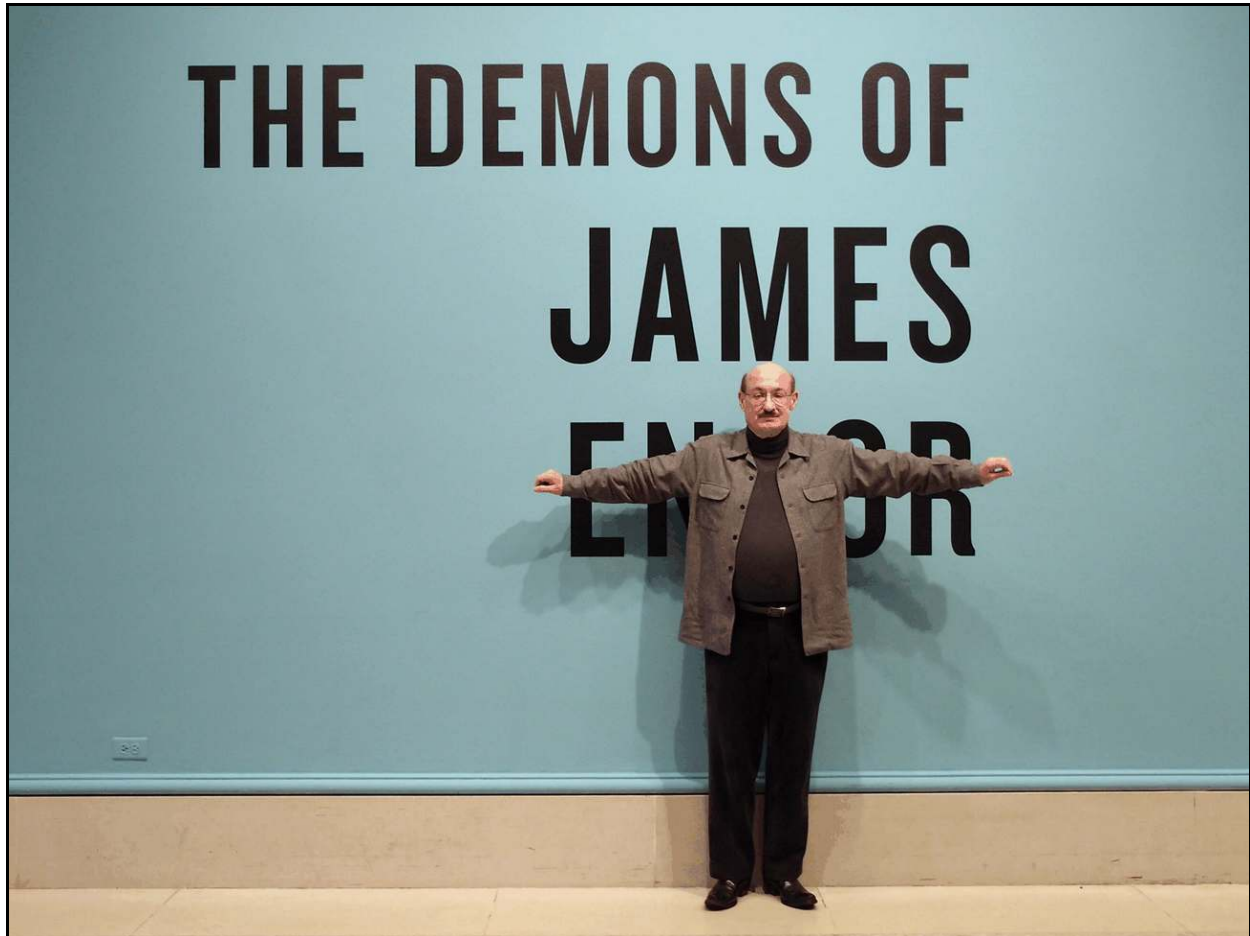


Photo by Lewis Koch (2014)

James **Hugunin** (now Emeritus Faculty) taught the History of Photography and Contemporary Theory at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is the author of five experimental novels (the first, *Something is Crook in Middlebrook*, critic/writer Derek Pell called "the best experimental novel of 2012," while *Tar Spackled Banner*, was listed as "notable" in Wesleyan University's anthology of Best American Experimental Writing for 2014), four books of criticism/theory, and numerous artist books. He is the founder and editor of two art journals, *The Dumb Ox* (1976 - 80) and *U-Turn* (1982 - present). In 1983, he won the first Reva and David Logan Award for Distinguished New Writing in Photography from the N.E.A. and The Photographic Resource Center, Boston, MA. In 2016 he was elected a member of The Society of Midland Authors. He now resides in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



## A checklist of JEF titles

- ☐ 0 *Projections* by Eckhard Gerdes
- ☐ 2 *Ring in a River* by Eckhard Gerdes
- ☐ 3 *The Darkness Starts Up Where You Stand* by Arthur Winfield Knight
- ☐ 4 *Belighted Fiction*
- ☐ 5 *Othello Blues* by Harold Jaffe
- ☐ 9 *Recto & Verso: A Work of Asemism and Pareidolia* by Dominic Ward & Eckhard Gerdes (Fridge Magnet Edition)
- ☐ 9B *Recto & Verso: A Work of Asemism and Pareidolia* by Dominic Ward & Eckhard Gerdes (Trade Edition)
- ☐ 11 *Sore Eel Cheese* by The Flakxus Group (Limited Edition of 25 copies)
- ☐ 14 *Writing Pictures: Case Studies in Photographic Criticism 1983-2012* by James R. Hugunin
- ☐ 15 *Wreck and Ruin: Photography, Temporality, and World (Dis)order* by James R. Hugunin
- ☐ 17 *John Barth, Bearded Bards & Splitting Hairs*
- ☐ 18 *99 Waves* by Persis Gerdes
- ☐ 23 *The Laugh that Laughs at the Laugh: Writing from and about the Pen Man, Raymond Federman*
- ☐ 24 *A-Way with it!: Contemporary Innovative Fiction*
- ☐ 28 *Paris 60* by Harold Jaffe
- ☐ 29 *The Literary Terrorism of Harold Jaffe*
- ☐ 33 *Apostrophe/Parenthesis* by Frederick Mark Kramer
- ☐ 34 *Journal of Experimental Fiction 34: Foremost Fiction: A Report from the Front Lines*
- ☐ 35 *Journal of Experimental Fiction 35*
- ☐ 36 *Scuff Mud* (cd)
- ☐ 37 *Bizarro Fiction: Journal of Experimental Fiction 37*
- ☐ 38 *ATTOHO #1* (cd-r)
- ☐ 39 *Journal of Experimental Fiction 39*
- ☐ 40 *Ambiguity* by Frederick Mark Kramer
- ☐ 41 *Prism and Graded Monotony* by Dominic Ward
- ☐ 42 *Short Tails* by Yuriy Tarnawsky
- ☐ 43 *Something Is Crook in Middlebrook* by James R. Hugunin
- ☐ 44 *Xanthous Mermaid Mechanics* by Brion Polonic
- ☐ 45 *OD: Docufictions* by Harold Jaffe
- ☐ 46 *How to Break Article Noun* by Carolyn Chun
- ☐ 47 *Collected Stort Shories* by Eric Belgum
- ☐ 48 *What Is Art?* by Norman Conquest
- ☐ 49 *Don't Sing Aloha When I Go* by Robert Casella
- ☐ 50 *Journal of Experimental Fiction 50*
- ☐ 51 *Oppression for the Heaven of It* by Moore Bowen
- ☐ 52 *Elder Physics* by James R. Hugunin
- ☐ 53.1 *Like Blood in Water: Five Mininovels (The Placebo Effect Trilogy #1)* by Yuriy Tarnawsky
- ☐ 53.2 *The Future of Giraffes: Five Mininovels (The Placebo Effect Trilogy #2)* by Yuriy Tarnawsky
- ☐ 53.3 *View of Delft: Five Mininovels (The Placebo Effect Trilogy #3)* by Yuriy Tarnawsky
- ☐ 54 *You Are Make Very Important Bathtime* by David Moscovich
- ☐ 55 *Minnows: A Shattered Novel* by Jønathan Lyons
- ☐ 56 *Meanwhile* by Frederick Mark Kramer
- ☐ 58A *Tar Spackled Banner* by James R. Hugunin
- ☐ 58B *Return to Circa '96* by Bob Sawatzki
- ☐ 60 *Case X* by James R. Hugunin
- ☐ 61 *Naked Lunch at Tiffany's* by Derek Pell
- ☐ 62 *Tangled in Motion* by Jane L. Carman
- ☐ 64 *The Hunter* by Dominic Ward
- ☐ 65 *A Little Story about Maurice Ravel* by Conger Beasley, Jr.
- ☐ 66 *Psychedelic Everest* by Brion Polonic
- ☐ 67 *Between the Legs* by Kate Horsley
- ☐ 68 *Claim to Oblivion: Selected Essays and Interviews* by Yuriy Tarnawsky
- ☐ 69 *Passions and Shadows or Shadows and Passions* by Frederick Mark Kramer
- ☐ 70 *Afterimage: Critical Essays on Photography* by James R. Hugunin
- ☐ 71 *Goosestep* by Harold Jaffe
- ☐ 72 *Science Fiction: A Poem!* by Robin Wyatt Dunne
- ☐ 73 *Offbeat/Quirky*
- ☐ 74 *Mouth* by Charles Hood
- ☐ 75 *Q↔A* by James R. Hugunin
- ☐ 76 *Literary Yoga* by Yuriy Tarnawsky
- ☐ 77 *Experimental Literature: A Collection of Statements* edited by Jeffrey R. Di Leo and Warren Motte
- ☐ 78 *Black Scat Books: A Bibliography 2012 – 2018* Compiled by Grace Murray
- ☐ 79 *The Skrat Prize Memorial Anthology* by R.M. Strauss
- ☐ 80 *Finding Memeno* by James R. Hugunin







## A Ludicakadroman

Hy "Mememo" Grader is an academic who has been pushed -- or fell -- or jumped from the balcony of Chicago's famed literary club, The Cliff Dwellers, during an academic fest.

An accident? Suicide? Or murder? Or was it something strangely in-between? For his three amigos (Iym, Ichio, and Dallas) "the game's afoot" as they seek answers and collaborate on redacting the fragments of a novel "Meme" was working on at the time.

A mash-up of academic analysis, sci-fi, and mystery genres, autobiography, and political diatribe contra neoliberal economics, Iym's redaction of files, notes, and images results in one weird scripto-visual romp.



