

10/1 Intrigue and strange doings. Comes word via the morning *Post*, of the crash last Monday in Yucatan, of a Gulfstream II jet, the sort favored by the CIA's program of "extraordinary renditions." This plane was owned until late August by William Achenbaum, a principal in the Hotel Gansevoort, the appalling architectural beast that reared up on West 13th Street, just across Greenwich Street from Melinda's Bombora House a few years past and has since proven itself a bad neighbor in a general way. The charter company that managed the plane, Air Rutter International of Long Beach, CA, is also owned by a Gansevoort Hotel partner, one Arik Kislin.

According to an attorney for an ex-employee of Air Rutter (whom the paper mentions is in jail "awaiting trial on unrelated kiddie-sex charges,") eighty percent of the plane's charters were "confidential, governmental flights," among which numbered several trips to Guantánamo Bay. At the time of the crash, however, the plane was reportedly carrying 3.6 tons of cocaine.

The accompanying photo is weird too: a jungle clearing that looks even more like a ham-handed theater set than one for a film shoot. In the foreground, a neat row of hefty-style plastic bags apparently filled with something oblong and presided over by a couple of soldiers sporting head to foot camo. The bags, purportedly containing los drogas, are remarkably undamaged – incredibly undamaged – given the airplane debris in the background, dominated by a mangled section of fuselage.

¿Por qué, Rupert, por qué? And what does it all mean?

Amazing early evening for contrails. A completely gridded sky, as if it's the board for a game to be played by atmospheric titans. A perfect cross hangs over what you judge to be Fifth and 34th. Or thereabouts.

10/2

All your cares

Now they seem

Oh so far away

All your fears

I fear I once shared

Now I know

There's a future

For all of us

Not so long ago

I was so scared...

So wrote and sang Bryan Ferry *kan ya makan*.

"Florella will ruin."

Florella was the name of a stuffed doll you had when you were very young, so young that you have no recollection of its shape or color or texture apart from a trace memory of the flat, open features of its face and perhaps yarn hair – although this last may be imported from subsequent impressions of Raggedy Anns.

"Florella will ruin." Apparently this was your reason for not wanting to take Florella outside in a rainstorm. Perhaps your mother said something like "You can't take Florella – it's raining." And you, imagining the effect of water on a stuffed doll, supplied the rest.

Why do these words come to you now after what must be fifty-five odd years? Who knows? Probably the reason it stuck was that your mother repeated the phrase several times to other adults, mimicking your intonation, and you dimly recall their amusement – at what? Was it your tone of gravity, or the notion of such an archaic sounding locution emanating from someone so young?

You didn't wonder at the time why this particular utterance signified over so many others you had made, but it opened the door to an evolving consciousness that what came out of your mouth could expect to live a life entirely beyond your immediate intent.

10/3 Once upon a time in Victorian England, a certain theologian named Fredric William Farrar offered the public an improving tale called *Eric, or, Little By Little*. It is the story, presumed to be largely autobiographical, of a boarding school boy's spiraling descent into moral turpitude, and his subsequent incremental salvation. Of which the author wrote: "The story of 'Eric' was written with but one single object – the vivid inculcation of inward purity and moral purpose, by the history of a boy who, in spite of the inherent nobleness of his disposition, falls into all folly and wickedness, until he has learnt to seek help from above."

Seek. Oh, seek. But above?

Still, little by little – that's a path you know.

For "pursuit of happiness," read bonfire of the vanities. Voracious. Which much be fed at any cost. And even Fed.

Noonish. Drop off some copies of *Suburbanization...* at Le G. As you emerge and mount your bike, you notice two cop cars flashing lights, one half up on the curb, jaunty-like. Yellow tape too, strung across the sidewalk billowing in the breeze. Whoa! you think, something's going down, and right next to the schoolyard too. Then you spot the canteen set up round the corner on Ninth Avenue, a little table spread with a picknicky cloth and bearing coffee canisters, sandwiches, fruit and cookies, all shaded with a scalloped white awning. Your eye shoots back down 21st in time to catch the camera dollying backwards toward the corner in front of two actors, one of each gender, walking briskly and dressed to the nines. The actors cut sharply to the left into a doorway and the camera halts. You don't wait to see if the drama machine resets itself to do another take.

Onward. To xerox shop, and the air hose outside the bike store where you discover that your tires are literally disintegrating around the wheel rims, the rubber can be rubbed off with a finger to reveal the fabric it once adhered to. Will you make it downtown to your lunchdate at French Roast before they go altogether? You're running late. Let out a little air. Risk it.

Pedaling across 11th Street, just before you hit Sixth, goddam, if you don't see arrayed on the other side of the avenue, two cop cars flashing, one half up on the sidewalk, supplemented by an EMS van and a NYPD vehicle boldly labeled CRIME SCENE UNIT. Orange traffic cones all over the place, some dude holding a big silver board to bounce lights off, then the lights themselves and further on, the trucks that brought all this crap here. Good gravy, is there a scene of fake mayhem being enacted within spitting distance of bloody every café you've ever patronized?

Lock up bike. Secure a table inside. Your friend arrives more or less on time. Eat lunch. Outside again. Film shoot's wrapping up. Unlock bike. Something hits the back of your head and neck, a too light to be painful, but it's startling. A piece of paper, whipped into you by a gust, falls to the ground. Bright orange with a strip of tape still stuck to the top edge. A thick black arrow pointing left. Block letters: HOLDING & CATERING. Another gust and the sheet skitters away.

Bike wrong way down the block weaving around guys pushing laundry carts full of movie equipment toward waiting tailgates. No hurry. Workmen from local renovations lounge on stoops in the shadow of scaffolds. Something mildly festive, feckless in the air.

Trust appearances

To be

Just that

Dunking the stale bread of vanity

In the turgid soup of greed

In the absence of past, however imperfect, no capacity to conjugate the present.

In place of idiosyncrasy, the micro-fetish.

10/6 It's going up, all rebar and concrete and needy, greedy dreams. Aerialists in hardhats hammer wooden forms in place toward the greater glory of Young Woo &

Associate's new condo slab at 24th and Eleventh designed by Annabelle Selldorf, protégé of the late Philip Johnson and rising tastemaker to the rootless poshoisie.

Back in April, the solid citizenry of Community Board 4 voted the project down but that didn't signify for City Planning and the Buildings Department who issued the requisite permits, and yes, this building ups the ante just a notch in the timeless war against life on the ground. Owners will be able to drive their cars into a lift that carries them straight up to their apartment. "For a client who is haunted by paparazzi, it is a dream come true," quoth Leonard Steinberg, the condos' marketing director.

According to the mythic origins of the project, Annabelle saw Martha Stewart drive into the big old industrial elevator at the Starrett-Lehigh building and thought, "why not for residential too?"

Thus comes to Gotham, at last, a primitive take on Corbu's scheme to build the highway right to the door of the people-coop. See, it all comes to pass if you wait long enough. Annabelle, in her description of terrors to come, threatens gunmetal terracotta cladding at the base, giving way to brushed stainless steel "some of which will be visible from inside the apartments." Eighteen stories of maxi-max lockdown featuring 2,500 square foot cells and up the river views. For which the sixteen prisoners will pay. Oh yes they will. Their debt to society? No, a bagatelle only, somewhere in the "mid fives."

Mid fives. What multiple of someone's labor, at what rate and over what duration does that represent?

Green is the new black. And white, white is everything.

“If humans could also elevate themselves into space,” ventured Leibniz, “their wickedness could no longer be held in check.”



Midday walk along the northernmost reach of the High Line. Quaking aspen. Gravel bejeweled with broken glass. Then cherry trees, crab apples, ailanthuses, queen anne’s lace, multifarious hybrids – whatever blew into the railbed and germinated. A graffiti on the ironwork balustrade proclaims this stretch *Nocturnal Kingdom*. And

borne amidst it all on great white dot-edged black and orange wings, the Monarchs, exalted and humble servants of poly-nation.



There are things to realize...

Sang the Chambers Brothers

10/8 Writ in chalk upon the slate easel on the sidewalk out front of Le G., the day's specials:

Crepe:

Onion, Swiss.

Tomato, Egg

Risoto:

Chicken, Asparagus

Tomato, Portabella

Pasta:

Shrimp, Broccoli

Cherry Tomato,

Fresh Basil, Ponderosa

Ah, the phonics of Los Estados Unidos de Mexico come to an Irish-run outpost of France nestled on a little island hawsered to the flank of the grate and terrible U.S. of A. But the truth is that the food tastes better here now than when it was cooked by the graduates of French culinary academies.

Further south, Costa Ricans, in a national referendum, narrowly approved the Tratado de Libre Comercio (TLC), or CAFTA, Central American Free Trade Agreement

as it's known in Gringolandia. A squeaker – three percent. Assuming this wasn't a Diebold job à la Cook County or a simpler, more traditional, mechanical steal.

Vote this down and we cut you out of the action – permanently! growled Uncle Sam, while Óscar Arias, el presidente, who, for reasons that strain the imagination was once awarded a Nobel Peace Prize, led the domestic pro-globalization forces. The Arias campaign whupped up avaricious fantasies if *¡Si!*, promised economic disaster if *¡No!* and straight up plagiarized pages full of dirty tricks out of a script by Haldeman. Which caused a ruckus when exposed, but in the end, didn't signify. Another micro-threshold crossed in a little country that hardly matters. Right? Still, you can't change your mind once you lift your skirt. Or sell what you grow for what it's worth.

Chicken without a cause.

If Gød gives you Apocalypse, weave a tapestry.

No guessing her age since you only see her from behind – a thin woman in jeans sitting at Table 3. Emblazoned across the back of her sky blue tee: CLOUD APPRECIATION SOCIETY. When you look up again, she and her companion have gone. Empty chairs as though they were never there. Flash on Wilhelm Reich.

Oh tell me, where do they bake the bread of empathy round here?

<http://www.iofthestorm.calm>

10/9 At Ba Gua, before class begins, you look out the back windows of the studio toward the 6:57 a.m. Empire State Building, then downward at the new foundation being laid below, groves of rebar poking up ailanthus-like from the set concrete.

Flashback: when you were young, sometimes a construction site would be fenced off not with plywood but rather the old doors taken out of the building just demolished and nailed side to side in a varicolored, patchwork wall.

Millie died yesterday at 99. Hardly a surprise, but it hit you like a two by four. Knocked part of you straight back into the indefinite past.

*Bad saxophonists
on packed subway trains,
This is but one of
my rush hour pains.*

Suppose you had a penny for every time someone on the planet said “Wha’ the fuck...”. Or a nickel for each utterance of “...problem with the computer...”

10/10 a.m. and on your way out the door, comes an epitaph for your old man: *His daemons won.*

A crew with palpably inadequate earplugs has blocked the street and is busy tearing up the pavement just west of Ninth on 21st. Who knows if they’re from the Seminary and this has some bearing on the infernal geothermal wells they’re boring, or

whether they've been deployed by the municipal DOT (Department of Trauma). Perhaps they're just a merry company of urban chaos makers wearing dayglo vests. Clown theater really, a bunch of little guys wielding shovels, save for one who drags an immense jackhammer from the maw of a truck – kathunk! – even as the vehicle backs up and runs over the yellow hose of its built-in air compressor.

Whence commences an astonishing racket that shakes the windows of Le G. But wait, here comes a dumptruck weaving around a pavement saw that seems at once related to and utterly extrinsic to the rest of the spectacle, involving as it does its own crew of attendant water-hosers inundating the street, and now arrives with whirling lights, a backhoe. This last implement of destruction, half hidden behind the dumptruck, begins thumping furiously away at the pavement with its claw arm. The building shakes. Take leave of your coffee, its surface rippling, and walk outside. The sidewalk shakes. Imagine ancient cement between Le G.'s venerable bricks and the bricks themselves pulverizing incrementally with every jolt. There's a man inside the backhoe's cab, tweaking the controls with great subtlety, yet producing awesome effects. Now he's scooping chunks of pavement into the dumptruck. Each load lands in the hopper with the authority of a Beethoven finale. On the black macadam they're tearing up, freshly laid not a month ago, a multitude of lines spraypainted in red. Rune-like. Legible, or no, they seem in no way relevant to the actions of the crew.

You stand there amidst the insanity, the shocking amplitude and sense-overload. Catch the eye of one local, a veterinarian walking his own black Labrador. Leash in one hand, poop bag clutched in the other, he's heading for the corner garbage can to make his deposit. Fido seems utterly unfazed. Ah, there's the owner of the Le G. building – she lives upstairs – suited up and on her way to work at the midtown

whiteshoe law firm. Is she thinking *oh shit my home's about to come down*, or has she already jumped ahead to the condo that'll rise out of its rubble? Or neither of the above? For a moment, the three of you attempt to shout your puzzlement to one another above the din, but unskilled at lip reading, you soon fall silent. The others gape awhile, then disperse into their separate cities. Has your jaw gone slack too?

If not, it surely does back inside when you read little blurb on page something or other of the *Post* to the effect that yesterday the legislation permitting Abu Dhabi to open a branch of the Louvre Museum slid through le parlement français like shit through a goose. Thus, potentially, Veronese's wedding feast draws a little closer to the geographic Cana. Thus too begins the miraculous conversion of water into wine into sand. \$1.5 bil is what it the emirate will camel up for a thirty year license on Louvre's brand name and the loan of several hundred artworks. But no one possesses a monopoly on pyramids or phi. Some things just belong to themselves. All things, really, belong to themselves.

Henceforth every instances of the word "union," particularly when connotating organized workers, will be corrected to "onion."

Buggeroff to Sodoff, Sodoff to Cherkov, Cherkov to Buggeroff...
gooooooooaaaaaaal!

Hanging framed on the wall in the upstairs loo at French Roast on 11th, the front page of the April 30, 1874 issue of *COMIC-FINANCE: Journal Satirique Financier*

Paraissant Le Jeudi. Beneath the paper's masthead – which incorporates a tiny cartoon Puck writing figures with a plume in a ledger book – most of the broadsheet page is taken up with an engraved caricature of a very duded-up, cat-that-ate-the-canary-looking fellow grasping a 1000 franc moneybag abulge with coins. His last name's inscribed beneath his likeness – evidently a personage in his day, but unknown to you. That laugh's long past.

Still, how amazing. Each Thursday, one could buy a newspaper devoted to making fun of the bourse and its attendant follies. Can one imagine such a thing – or a time – when this most deadly serious of games might be subject to popular ridicule?

10/11 At what point does construction become traumatic? When does a city destroy itself in the building?