

11/16 For all your life, there's been a winding. Now the spiral drills the other way. You think of how some kids used to shoot the yo-yo between their legs.

Baby's back

Dressed in black.

Silver buttons all down her back...

Walking the dog.

If you don't know how to do it...

All candidates Manchurian.

The golden apple spins too fast in Newton's hand. Hot potato! ¡Ay, Mama!

The guy at the neighboring cafeteria table wears a watch so big you could put it in a sock and use it as a cosh.

Time has come today.

Over one thousand dead in the Bangladesh cyclone, perhaps many times more. Unlike in the first world, casualty statistics in the mid-latitudes don't seem to shrink each day after the traumatic event. You gaze with a seven-league stare. So much is breast-aching.

You dream you're operating a business in a Flatiron loft. Somehow it is both today and yesteryear, for you can hear even now in your mind the switchboard

operator's voice as she answers incoming calls: *Reciprocating Systems of New York*. Adenoidal but utterly confident and unfazed by the blizzard of ringing phones, she pronounces the first word *Ree...ciprocating*.

In what tense does one use the past participle?

¡Viva los alamos!

Dybbuks of the world unite.

We're being winked at. Teased. Toyed with. Hence the headline: "Bush Plans to Relieve Holiday Airline Delays."

The *Times* dispatch puts it thusly: "A week before the peak Thanksgiving travel period, the White House got involved at an unusually detailed level with air traffic... as President Bush announced that airlines would be able to make fuller use of military airspace to relieve congestion and cut delays."

Ah, so, the idea is that the DOD will cede, temporarily, its sovereign airspace to civilian flights. For which magnanimity, nay chivalry, so many travelers will doubtless offer Thanksgiving praises. But behind the gift lies a smirk. For who was it controlled the airspace that severe clear morning when, in the midst of kids, this same man read aloud about a goat that devours everything in its path. Might that morning have been another of those "unusually detailed" White House involvements with air traffic to which the *Times* refers?

The flag of our capitulation, sisters and brothers, he's waving it in our faces.

One hand washes the other. And yo, there's more than two hands in the game, know what I mean?

Bear baiting? No, rating: Aujourdui, Standard & Poor's (that last name being a malappropriation of the plooral of "poor") done writ down Br'er Bear Stearns's credit from A+ from A flat.

All Uncles' animals in distress now. Not only Bear but too-clever Rabbit. Wish you wuz back home in the old briar patch now, dontcha? – stead of stuck to that subprime Tar-Baby.

Pornucopia. And bust.

11/17 Folks pursue, with great, if flash-in-the-pan intensity, every sort of failed strategy and tactic, hoping perhaps that this time things will work out differently.

Unsustained by her beauty, the physically exquisite one sitting across from you in the café cannot muster the wherewithal to smile. No, I'm not Gibreel, she stutter-spits. Or swallows whole the un-utterance, into some rancid-making place. Was the Buddha ever this depressed?

The populace at large remains unsure whether the next act ought to be to take a bubble bath or kill one's self. Or kill one's self in a bubble bath, or even *with* a bubble bath. To merely feel tired and grumpy immediately puts one in a far more advantageous frame of mind than 99% of one's fellow spinners and revolvers and

revolutionists. Por ejemplo: While you're on your way home, you wait, straddling your bike and positioned a bit out into the traffic lane, for the light to change at 22nd and Ninth. A man, pedestrian, heading north in the crosswalk, abruptly changes his direction and walks straight at you as though intent on walking *through* you while giving no evidence that he registers your presence at all. At the last instant, he swerves out of collision course, as if deflected by magnetism and realigns, loopishly, with his original trajectory. Whereupon he proceeds up the street. You do not follow him to see what happens next, but now find yourself retrospectively curious. Is he operating, eyes wide open, by sonar rather than sight?

*You had to see Monk to hear his music properly. The most important instrument in the group – whatever the format – was his body. He didn't play the piano really. His body was his instrument and the piano was just a means of getting the sound out of his body at the rate and in the quantities he wanted. If you blotted out everything except his body you would think he was playing the drums, foot going up and down on the hi-hat, arms reaching over each other. His body fills in all the gaps in the music; without seeing him it always sounds like something's missing but when you see him even piano solos acquire a sound as full as a quartet's. The eye hears what the ear misses. Says Geoff Dyre in "Melodius Thunk," *Chimurenga*, #11.*

Whyo whyo whyo something something Ohio.

Ventriloquism, the belly talking.

Adoration of the mystic lamb.

Take the center.

Yes, the body electric. But the solar capacitor is pushing the circuit too far. Hot times for the heliotrope.

USB and Barclay's walk their respective junk-paper planks into the ever-redder mortgage sea. Flotsam and jetsam, a crucial distinction: that which floats, versus that which has been thrown overboard.

Anything, anything for an instant's more soma.

Book of Wonderment.

Which is better under the circumstances? "Reciprocating Systems of New York – how may I direct your call?" or, "Reciprocating Systems of New York – how may I help you?"

Wells Fargo produces, for its third quarter, only a quarter horse of a loss, a mere \$16 million on mortgage paper. Cleverly, WF had already, pony express-style, handed off most of the \$2 trillion in loans it originated since 2001. Though it still holds \$83 billionsworth. WF's CEO, a black hat named Johnny Strumpf, bids us, in essence, to return with him now to those thrilling days of yesteryear: "We have not seen a nationwide decline like this in housing since the Great Depression," he whispers,

surveying the greed-blasted prairie around him. Yet still, three legged and badly shod at that, the 4 closure bag o' bones gallops on. Hiyo Tinfoil and away!

Remember when everyone used to call the Lone Ranger the Loan Arranger? Wah'goes come surround.

Para nuestro punto de vista, two nights hence on the 19th, and lasting until the 21st, Holmes will conjunct Mirfak, aka Alpha Persei aka Alganib – the latter representing the wingtip of the Flying Horse, its name derived from Arabic “the wing.” Alganib, a yellow supergiant, will appear to be swallowed up by Holmes, yet will remain visible – bright and tiny – within the comet's sphere.

And in that moment, will Perseus rescue Andromeda again, and/or for the first time? On verra. When worlds collude.

11/18 Yo conozco me trabajo.

Pero hoy es el domingo.

You zoom by the movie poster too fast to register the title. But the image appears, photographic yet incommensurable – what you've come to call PhotoShop realist. In this case, an attempt at Iconic. A man with a dog and gun walk toward or away across a rubble-strewn field. Behind these figures, isolated in the middle distance, the Brooklyn Bridge, its cathedral uprights ravaged but still standing, the span between them blown away. Bless the mega-imagemakers. Bless them for knowing with their

preternatural sense just what we need explicitly shown and when. And bless the artfulness of their dosages.

Bless the dogs and guns. And bless the wars themselves, psychological and concrete, and the harrowed ground on which the twain shall ever converge. And bless Gaia herself, who'll be riding all four horses when she comes.

WOW is MOM turned head over heels.

Seven for the seven who never got to heaven.

"As Owners Feel Mortgage Pain, So Do Renters," headlines the *Times*. Dateline Las Vegas. Las Vegas?!

"In the foreclosure crisis of 2007," the article begins, "thousands of American families are losing their homes without ever missing a payment. They are renters in houses whose owners default on their mortgages – a large but little noticed class of casualties." Ah, the language of war, domesticated. Large, this class – class! – yet little-noticed – by whom? – while the Sherman banks roll through Georgia. Collateral damage.

Now, I didn't mean to be nosy

But I went into a bank

To get some bail for Arab

And all the boys back in the tank

They asked me for some collateral

*And I pulled down my pants
They threw me in the alley
When up comes this girl from France
Who invited me to her house
I went, but she had a friend
Who knocked me out and robbed my boots
And I was on the street again...
Sang Dylan in his "115th Dream."*

"The foreclosure crisis of 2007." So they think they've got a lid on it, eh?

The most recent dispatches from AP and Reuters, stacked one on top of the other like a totem pole:

"Auto Sales Could Hit 15-Year Low."

"Detroit Declared Most Dangerous US City."

Ever more *Times* becometh Gray Lady Macbeth, gone from handwring to hand-scouring but always, always, reliably, authentically, linguistically mad. Witness on the same electronic front page as the above, the headline "Does Death Penalty Save Lives?" G'wan Mr. Darktown, try and unpack that one.

All the news that's what me worry?

L'chaim!

And if the debt, the trillions in mortgage loans, could speak, would it reckon like Topsy: “I s’pect I grewed. Don’t think nobody never made me.” But yes, Topsy, though you may be an orphan now, once you did have parents – multitudes of ‘em.

11/19 Predawn realization that what we call *social* consists of numberless individual impulses to regulate the balance between internal and external heat energies.

Or as one mouse said to the other: *you are what you chews.*

Screams the thousand-and-something-point headline on the *New York Post*: RUDY: I’M MR. 9/11. Though in truth, cross Alexander Hamilton’s heart, that’s an inference not a quote. Nonetheless, his Iowa campaign mailings proclaim him “America’s Mayor,” the man who has already demonstrated, and now future-threatens a reign of “Strength through Leadership.” Fuck Joy.

Now if we were Visigoths and Giuliani a proper chieftain of our clan, on that September morning, he would have taken his sword in both hands, split his rival’s skull with main force, then hacked the body to bits. Lifting high his enemy’s head, or some other piece of *membra disjecta* and waving it gorily about, he’d proclaim his sovereignty to the roars of the democratically assembled warlords.

But that’s not us. We’ve learned Latin. And the language of empire. *Mutatis mutandus*: with suitable or necessary alterations. Up to the point where ruthless is not the *only* qualification for a king.

Turns out the movie advertising the destruction of the Brooklyn Bridge is called *I am Legend*, and it stars (triumph of the) Will Smith. And his dog and gun. Opening mid-next month in time for saturnalia.

Now the movie you'd pay to see is a less a loner flick than mano a mano action with a twist, something along the lines of *Rudi vs. the Hidden Imam*. Or *America's Mayor vs. the Mahdi* – something like that. Let's see, how to platform the concept? Who's out there that we could attach? Gandolfini? Penn? Jackman? And we need a director, a really hot director. Get me Kubrik's DNA – stat!

ELECT, the graffito urges, *THE DEAD*.

Elect the Bouncing Dead Cat.

Lawyer ad – a car card, as on dit – above the windows across the aisle in the subway train downtown. It's a kind of Janus-faced bi-partite design: the graphic consisting of a pair of heads – hard to tell if they're illustrations or highly retouched photos – both oriented horizontally, top of head to top of head, both whitish males, could be twins, somewhat beat-up looking, caught between stress and outright anguish, and depicted with that weird chiaroscuro oiled quality to the skin the Marine Corps poster boy exhibits. Call it PhotoShop Expressionist. Both guys hold their hands up beneath their faces, the left one defensively, a *jno mas!* gesture. His accompanying text:

BREAK FREE

CHAPTER 7 • CREDIT CARDS • MEDICAL BILLS • TICKETS • DEBTS

1-800-BANKRUPT

The fellow on the right raises clenched fists, his wrists wrapped in chains.

BREAK FREE

ASSAULT • DRUGS • WEAPONS • DOMESTIC VIOLENCE • DWI

1-800-INNOCENT

A friend has had a piece published in a magazine begun in the 30s which died out and is newly revived: *Thrilling Wonder Stories*.

Ever more stridently falsehoods speak their verity, and the truth burrows deeper into lies.

Morning's rain let up. Visigoths and Mondays always get me down.

Night. Out there, somewhere to the left of the Empire State Building, comet and star play optical tricks no Gotham fool can see. For above these parts, too overcast by half. Fast moving webby clouds before the moon which, on its way to full, pulls its own visual prank – appearing as a disk that someone creased down the center, then partly unfolded. Lunagami.

A spark. Methane gas deep underground expands exponentially. Ninety coal miners dead in Donetsk, east Ukraine. Ten missing.

Who made the mine owner?

Say the black bells of Rhondda.

11/20 Jesterday was not, officially April fools. But the streams of silliness were a-burble alongside the Hudson. Five developers, amongst them Durst/Vornado (what's that sucking sound?) "unveiled," like so many bloated Salomé's elbowing onto the stage, what the *Pest* calls it, their "competing proposals to convert the West Side rail yards in to a complex with parks, housing, and in some case office towers rising as high as the Empire State Building."

Really, it's a hubris contest wherein the greediest, most Bluto-like non-minds in urban orthopedics have "been asked to come up with a project that would spark" – spark!? – "the city's growth much the same way Rockefeller Center or the World Trade Center did...". The asker, in this case, being a curious hybrid state-city corporation, politically shielded from any sort of meaningful accountability, much like the MTA, which is selling the land itself – though how the MTA, also a presumably public corporation in charge of running busses and subways came to be a mega-real estate player is another Talmudic tale altogether.

But in the paper of wretched, it was Doctoroff, Bloomie's deputy and most serviceable villain, who dashed away wearing the fool's cap. Surveying the proposals, he shook his jingles and pronounced: "This is the market talking."

No picture does justice to these monstrosities, which, fortunately will never be built. For to see any one of them would truly be bereaving.

Builders of the gazillion new and retrofitting projects in Chelsea never bother anymore to stencil Post No Bills on their hoardings. Consequently, the streets have turned into a festival of posters and it's curious to see how certain qualities emerge out of an essentially bankrupt grammar of iconography. Lately, many of the advertising

images, such as those for Epson printers, that depict peoples' faces, make them look like a blend of human and cartoon, the features peculiarly exaggerated, yet rounded off. And almost invariably, that sheen of oil, that slick. Which oddly, makes those intended to be white folks appear mulatto. *Imitation of Life*. But exactly what sort of being are these digitally-processed creatures passing for?

Scan the titles as you walk by the Loew's cineplex on Broadway and 21st. Among other flicks, they're showing *LOVE IN A TIME OF CHOLERA*, which for concision's sake, on the marquee has been abbreviated to *LOVE CHOLERA*. But, by virtue of sloppiness in the original placement, windshift, vibration or some other happenstance, on the southern face of the display the letters have shifted a jot rightward to reveal a vertical sliver of the white background. Hence by accidental design the new title appears: *I LOVE CHOLERA*.

No you don't. You're just choleric by nature.

What's the obverse of a "still life"?

Fuck genre, let's dance.

"I'll be back shortly," said the dwarf.

"OK, don't be long."

Six for the six that never got fixed

Five for the gospel preachers

Four for the fore-closures...

“Losses rose...” what a strange elocution. Like a tide. Or a flower.

In the language of the ever-grayer Lady, it is possible too for “credit related” losses to “surge.” As they did for Fannie Mae a week or so ago when they owned up to taking a \$1.4 billion hit on the quarter. Fannie’s entire bag of mortgage assets weighs in at \$2.7 trillion. And today, Fannie’s, er, brother, Freddie (el puerco) whose own straw Mac-mansion is stuffed with around \$1.3 trillion in home loans announced it has writ down \$2 bil. and squealed, via the *Times*, that it “might not have enough capital on hand to cover the mandatory reserves for its mortgage commitments.”

Which said, “Freddie’s misfortune is particularly rattling because the company is considered to be protected by an implied government guarantee. There was no mention in this morning’s earnings release about an infusion of federal capital, though the company said it would seek counsel from Goldman Sachs and Lehman Brothers for its short-term efforts to shore up its reserves.”

Winners have yet to be announced.

Freddie Mac, when are you coming back? Martha, and the Vandellas, want to know.

Did you hear about the Kabbalistic shoe repair man who believed in the transmigration of soles?