

1/22 Assaulting your wounds.

Strong southwest winds move the clouds across the skydome like a hand caressing the surface of a ball about to be thrown.

See the 0 neither as a something nor a nothing, but as a framing device.

*Where have all the scaffolds gone? Gone to Chelsea every one...*

Yesterday the *Messenger*, BBC, and other windmaking organs announced, almost proudly, that the drop in some Asian and European markets was “the steepest since September 11, 2001.”

Everyone is born in possession of seven internal veils. How does one dance with them? And when to let them drop?

Causality.

Gauzality.

What’s not erotic turns sclerotic, then, *en ultima instancia*, necrotic.

Pulling nine oxen by their tails.

Three dishes fall to the ground.

Headline in the *Messenger*: "Dealbook: Panic or Opportunity?"

Or?

*Est-ce que ce monde est sérieux?*

*Si, si hombre, hombre*

*Vaya vaya*

*Baila baila*

*Hay que bailar de nuevo*

*Y mataremos otros*

*Otras vidas, y otros toros*

*Y mataremos otros*

*Venga, venga a bailar...*

There will be blood. *Si, si hombre*. For is not a bull, like any mammal, filled with blood?

*Por qué no te gusta?*

All a question of whose ox is getting gored. Or pulled backward by the tail.

Once upon a time in America, a very clever man named Antonio constructed a device that transmitted voices, via an electrified wire, across considerable distances. He called his invention "il telletrophono." Very promising indeed. With this sort of thing one could make a fortune! But Antonio had good and bad luck. First, the bad. He was riding the ferry to Staten Island when the boiler blew up and injured him severely. However, unlike many of his fellow passengers, he was alive. It was necessary though, for him to sell his drawings and a few telletrophonos he had made to cover his medical costs and to keep himself and his wife Ester in pasta e fagioli. And the rest, as they say, is *brrrring, brrrring* – the Bell done rung.

Someone years later, a much less clever fellow named Benjamin B. confronting similar, though less personal financial distress, cut the Federal interest rate by .75%, thereby giving away the farm, which was, in any case, already worthless.

APPALLING DISASTER.; Explosion of a Staten Island Ferry-Boat Boiler.  
Wreck of the Steamer Westfield at South Ferry. Dreadful Loss of Life and  
Limb the Result. OVER FORTY PERSONS KILLED. Nearly Two Hundred  
Known to be Injured. Several Men and Women Still Missing. TERRIBLE  
SCENES AND INCIDENTS. Statements by the Engineer, Fireman, and Eye-  
Witnesses. List of the Killed and Wounded as Far as Ascertained. The  
Vessel of Death. Her Doomed Passengers. A Deadly Sound in the Hold. The  
Explosion of the Boiler. The Moment After. The Cause of the Disaster.  
Scenes at the Eastern Hotel and Surrounding Houses. Horrors in the Streets.  
Scenes and Incidents at Park Hospital. In the First Precinct Station-House.  
The Recognition of Friends. Grappling for the Drowned. Work of the

Rescuers. Humane Narrations of Naval Officer Laflin. APPALLING DISASTER. Labors of Police and Firemen. Scenes and Incidents Narrated by Eye Witnesses. The Killed. The Wounded. The Missing. Deaths Late Last Night. Resume. The Excitement in Brooklyn. The Excitement in Jersey City...

...This City, which has lately supped so full of horrors, has never been afflicted with a tragedy so appalling as that which burst upon it at 1 o'clock yesterday afternoon, when the boiler of the Staten Island ferry-boat Westfield exploded while the vessel lay in her slip alongside of South Ferry, off the Battery.

Thus bilge-pumped *The Messenger*, Wednesday, July 31, 1871.

The wind sways the lotus leaves.



Jehad Nga for The New York Times

Soldiers assessed the safest way to cross a field in Arab Jabour on Saturday, the day an anti-mine vehicle was destroyed nearby.

And there the sky looks almost-real too. Twice real.

*Yahoo* is what it will say at the top of several hundred pink slips come the end of January. Google that.

Snowflurries at 3. Wind's still southwest. Hudson river the color of lead. Count cranes. None of which are moving.

José Padilla, systematically broken as though the subject some awful behavioral experiment, receives a seventeen-year and four month sentence.

Considerable debate over the exact weight of the gorilla in the room. All hypothetical, since who among us is going to put him on a scale?

From far-away Broadway and 54th Street, Eric B. sends a verse via email, subject line "Oops."

*spicken gruth in the land of nod*  
*praise and glaze under guise of glod*  
*the grat man rests on glean man's bones*  
*twists and turns to gleaners groans*

*all grumble and drumble under weight of themselves*

*all glisten and gleam at the empty shelves*

*all gringle and gripe at the state of the game*

*all groggie and grunt at graspellers shame*

*all lend to the lenders of last resort*

*all gasp at the ocean from empty port...*

'e grot that gright.

Full wolf moon.

1/23 The *Messenger* reports high tuna levels found in mercury.

Exciting morning thusfar. On your way to the café, you kicked a cab that tried to cut you off at 24th Street, swerved in front of and Parthian gestured to a truck with perfectly adequate rear-view mirrors that tried to cut you off at 23rd Street and exchanged a lovely hug with Danielle (*blonde*), just back from a trip to Israel to renew her visa. Between her and Danielle (*brune*) – another Israeli Le G. waitress – they've exported the best walking promotion the Jewish state ever had.

*The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher*

*Called the chicken an elegant creature*

*The fowl, pleased with that*

*Laid an egg in his hat*

*And thus did the hen reward Beecher.*

So rhymed the senior Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Abandon chips!

Project and swerve.

One hand watches the other.

On the way home, near 10 a.m., temperature's hardly up a jot from two hours ago, and the sky maintaining its severe clear.

*"His Master's voice is calling me,"*

*Says Tweedle-dee Dum to Tweedle-dee Dee...*

*Well, the rain beating down on my windowpane*

*I got love for you and it's all in vain*

*Brains in the pot, they're beginning to boil*

*They're dripping with garlic and olive oil*

*Tweedle-dee Dee – he's on his hands and his knees*

*Saying, "Throw me somethin', Mister, please."*

*"What's good for you is good for me,"*

*Says Tweedle-dee Dum to Tweedle-dee Dee*

The need 'n' greedmongers meet in Davos.

*Well, they're living in a happy harmony*

*Tweedle-dee Dum and Tweedle-dee Dee*

*They're one day older and a dollar short*

*They've got a parade permit and a police escort*

*They're lying low and they're makin' hay*

*They seem determined to go all the way*

*They run a brick and tile company*

*Tweedle-dee Dum and Tweedle-dee Dee*

Extraordinary. The print version of the *Times* front page features a graph of the market's fluctuations that looks almost exactly like an elevation drawing of the buildings of Cesar Pelli's World Financial Center, complete with their jagged, stepped rooves. So much do the recent peaks and valleys of profit and loss resemble an architectural rendering that at first glance, you're certain that's what it is. And which it well may signify: the grids of abstract and concrete realms finally aligning in realtime and thus caught, candidly, in a frozen moment, for the world to see.

Leafing through the pages, the eye lights on a subhead: "This year, the World Economic Forum is actually going to be about the world economy. Which is not to say that there won't be fun." Butterfly-like, the flutters on.



*Well a childish dream is a deathless need*

*And a noble truth is a sacred creed*

*My pretty baby, she's lookin' around*

*She's wearin' a multi-thousand dollar gown*

*Tweedle-dee Dee is a lowdown, sorry old man*

*Tweedle-dee Dum, he'll stab you where you stand*

*"I've had too much of your company,"*

*Says Tweedle-dee Dum to Tweedle-dee Dee*

Something there is that does not love a wall. Between Gaza and Egypt, or anywheres.

Pulling nine oxen backward.

Pushing eight horses forward.

Three dishes fall to the ground.

Down at Bowling Green, the tourists clustered around the bull are almost all young women. One, with a long, pretty face, wearing a gray wool hat, leans against his head almost in a nuzzle. Poor fellow, he's eating it up. His bronze eyes roll toward her, jaw extends diagonally forward in a kind of sad smile. He'll take all loving warmth he can get.

Peeing in the bathroom of your new favorite noodle restaurant, your gaze goes vacant, glides down the white tiled wall past the *Employees Must Wash Hands Before Returning to Work* sign, then focuses on the pair of stainless steel kitchen tongs that hang from the wheelchair grab bar mounted over the toilet tank. Come to think of it the tongs were hanging there last time too. Hmm. Most peculiar, mama.

Yes, and for sale at every tchotchke shop in Chinatown, celebratory decorations for the imminent Year of the Rat. Will that mean something very literal in Darktown?

Time comes ripe to undertake a clandestine project for the Advancement of New York City, code name Fuckin'-A. Most important thing: Plan B.

On Crosby between Spring and Prince sits a big kelly green garbage truck into whose hopper a crew of workmen feed dumpster after dumpstersworth of refuse from a nearby building – including some fine-looking wooden filing cabinets. “Radio Dispatched” (this framed by lightning bolts) and “Container Service,” painted near the cab, and in larger letters along the flank: WORLD CLASS DEMOLITION.

They’re digging up skeletons in Washington Square Park. Which makes sense given that, during the late 18th to early 19th centuries, the area was used as a potters field. Deeper down, beneath the bulldozers of “restoration,” the Manetta gurgles on.

Heath Ledger, star of *Brokeback Mountain* is found dead in his rented SoHo loft,

apparently killed by an overdose of prescription meds. Purely coincidental, but U.S. stock exchanges surge. Wicked and devious the whip-round energies of these days.

1/24 Yes, that extraordinary brightness in the eastern sky must be Venus. And if Venus is the center of the dial, than down at the 7 o'clock position, there's another star or planet, though not nearly as intense.

Lower in the sky, a narrow band of clouds stretches southeast to northwest. It appears not to be stationary until you see the rippling within what seems a solid mass and realize that, like a river current, it's rushing very fast indeed. Somehow alive within the water's depth, a ruby coal: the Con Ed building's lantern. And yes, further south and east, over Brooklyn maybe, a single UFO cum chopper flashes its lights and hangs suspended.

In the time it takes to write this, Venus fades, and its companion disappears from view. The morning advances, soon the cranes will be moving. Fuckin'-A New York.

Why does a man need earrings?

9:20, General Theological Seminary on Ninth between 21st and 20th. Massacre of the birches and bushes. The mulching machine on whose side is written: EMERALD TREE CARE CO.

You walk through this block long tree Antietam, this roar of chainsaws – how many old birches? Six lined the front of the seminary and in half an hour from the start, only two remain, marked with pink ribbons tied round their trunks about human head

height. As you get closer to the mulcher, the air fills with flurries of white bark, while the most pathetic of the workmen, the one who doesn't rate a hard hat, rakes up the twigs. He reminds you of the little fellow who followed behind the triumphal procession in *Fractured Fairy Tales*, sweeping up the rose petals. Would that it were.

And tomorrow? Scaffold? Work fast, the bonfire needs stoking. But no matter what fuel's thrown on it, it cannot last. Vital heat's draining away. Stimulus? Purely galvanic. No more to be done. Pull up the sheet and bring on the keeners.

Fuckin-A New York.

L. stands at the corner of 20th, cheeks streaked with tears as the last tree's hewn down in awkward chunks. Under the building overhang, another crew of workman heave perfectly good metal filing cabinets into an enormous dumpster. The bark of white birch makes, among other useful things, a durable writing material.

But L.'s eyes are fixed on the tree. You put your hand on her back. Her blue wool coat's flecked with white. "Somebody's got to watch," she says.

"Leslie, you don't have to do everything." She doesn't seem to hear, so you repeat it, more softly.

Walk back up the block to Le G. Unchain your bike. An amiable fellow passing turns and says: "Driving your BMW?"

You slap the seat. "No, my Cadillac."

He laughs and you think of Charlie. And away.

It was Mark, sitting opposite you at Table 4 and facing south who first spotted the action – the guys going after the thinner upper branches with pruning hooks, and for an instant, framed in the happy window, you thought: maybe this isn't what you

think. Maybe they're just giving the trees a haircut. But then, vibrating the thin pane, the chainsaws.

Looking up at the façade of the building that gets demolished next, you could see, absent the tree cover, where bits of concrete had fallen away leaving chinks large enough for small birds to roost in. In fact, it was the fluttering of one of them in its niche that got you to notice the distress of the structure.

So distracted that as the elevator door opens in the lobby and a neighbor gets out and says hello, you reply, "Hello, hollow you?" He doesn't seem to register your gaffe. And flash again on the chainsaw men, cutting themselves down.

*I'm so glad to have you*

*And I'm getting worse*

*I'm so mad to love you*

*And your evil curse*

*I've a plan to save you*

*From my misery*

*I'm a man too brave to*

*Follow history*

sang Skye of Morcheeba back when.



Official logo of JackassWorld. Just like the MTV show, but now gone, er, global.

Which launches February 9, four days after Stupor Tuesday. The day following Stupor Mundi.

*Venga, venga a bailar*

*Y mataremos otros*

*Otras vidas...*

The convergence of narrative and associative orders.

3:15, gray skies, weirdly tinged with pink.

*Arise my beloved, my beauty, come away!*