

2/26 No football-sized bits of satellite fell out of the heavens onto the streets of the city yesterday, far as you can tell. And the rain was rain, not a hail of Matchbox-sized school busses. Looks like maybe we dodged a bullshit.



Oil 101. Dollars that is. Black gold. Texas tea.

O hidden hand with reach so long

What power makes your push so strong?

Are you an immortality,

Or just a wilder child than me?

2/27 Petroleoglyphs. The only mode of representation available today.



David Ahnholz for The New York Times

Beneath which, the *Messenger's* caption runs: "Consumers are being hit hard as the oil shock coincides with credit and housing market turmoil." But that's not at all what the picture is about.

Nasty, brutish, light, sweet, crude and short.

Q. Why does nature abhor a vacuum?

A. Because it really sucks.

Like a grinning little energizer bunny, Sarko moves through a dense crowd of invited gladhanders at a big traditional event on the outskirts of Paris – the Agricultural Fair. It's his chance to meet and greet the farmers, the collective Physiocratic backbone that keeps la Patrie upright and strong. Amidst robotic utterances of "bonjour" and "merci," and immediately preceded by a sound that cuts above the throng hum and could either be "moooo," or "boooo," M. le président grabs for the hand of a fellow – bespectacled, middle aged, propre-looking – who pulls back his arm and turns aside saying, "Ah non, touche moi pas..." – literally *No, touch me not....*

Sarko does a quick double take but without missing a beat replies, "Casse toi alors," *Well, shove off then*, before the man finishes his sentence with "...tu me salis," *you dirtied me*. Sarko can only fix his antagonist with a secondsworth of glare before he's borne along on his tide of dignitaries and guards. But he half turns, eyes slitted and offers his Parthian shot: "Casse toi alors pauvre con," for which there's no precise translation, but perhaps *Shove off you pathetic schmuck* comes close. But not really, because "con" is one of those complicated French insults that don't really translate and in this case – though the term may at times be used with affection – there's un soupçon of sexual contempt added to the implication of stupidity.

But thanks to the web, it's all before you in sight and sound – Ubique. The footage, taken with a camcorder or cellphone is a bit shaky and though it ain't of the highest res, the images are clear enough and the dialogue's audible. Readily available via YouTube if one searches under "Sarkozy casse toi." Multiple iterations of the same clip come up, but the one you clicked on first was posted by someone with the handle *nicowar*, who claims to be a she, aged 38, and uses this pic as her screen icon:



nicowar's page also informs you that she joined YouTube in January, '06 and has watched, as of her last login an hour ago, a total of 510 videos. This is simultaneously both more and less information than you would like to have about the source of the clip and alleged subject of the photo. One wonders though: is the You in YouTube meant as tu-toi ou vous-votre?

And how does one say "candy apple" en français?

Search, search in what's left of the memory bank. Reel back the roll to your strolls through the several parks of Paris. Vivid to your recall the gaily-painted stands that along with barbes-à-papa and other sweet things, often sold preternaturally red and glossy candy apples. WTF were they called?

Absent a clue you click to the front page of the *Messenger*. Bernanke signals that he's open to more rate cuts in the fed. Sure, and he'd signal his openness to selling his grandmother in exchange for five more minutes of ex-post-capitalism. Ah, William F. Buckley's passed on, aged 82. A b/w pic of him from '55 looking handsome and boyish, white shirt and cravatted, clipboard on his lap, pencil raised as if caught in a moment of punditish inspiration. Beneath which the caption: "Mr. Buckley marshaled

polysyllabic exuberance and a refined, perspicacious mind to elevate conservatism to the center of American political discourse.”

Whew.

Market's up a few ticks. Go figure. What's this. A thumbnail cartoon of a hammer banging down on someone's head complete with a kind of starburst at the point of impact signifying *kapowie!*



Ah, this too has a caption: “OPINION – Migraine: Answers – Oliver Sacks offers responses to reader questions.” Now would that be several questions from one reader – minus an article and a possessive – or is it meant to imply readers' questions? Or has someone, possibly Dr. Sacks himself written a Reader, in which case, where's the capital “R”? Ça fait rien.

Aha, that's it: Barbes-à-papa, le pop corn, glaces, fruits enrobés au chocolat, et... *pommes d'amour!*

If GM gave up on cars and started making battery-operated sex toys, they could keep their initials and logo and simply change the name to Genital Motors. Note to self: call Buffett and get a meeting on this. Hell, he owns Gen Re, why not Gen Mo? You could get maybe 20% on the deal. Settle for 5. Like Gulbenkian.

The two innermost rocks, Mercury and Venus have taken to rising virtually

together in the southeast just before sunrise. Would that soon, a morning dawns clear enough to see them. And March 5, the crescent moon will make it a trio.

Hey, let me talk to Warren. Who? Who shall you say is calling? Oh for Christ's sake, tell him it's Darton. Wha'? He's what? Say, just cut the crap and put Warren on the line. Bull-shit he'll call me back when he's out of his meeting. Put him on now, stat, *maintenant*. *Quoi* – the Federal Prosecutor? *Eh alors, tu me prend pour un con?!*

Even Berkshire Hath-a-way of revealing its corruption, given time.

Ding! As a reward for having lost, respectively \$3.6 and \$1.5 billion in the fourth quarter of '07, the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, winningly nicknamed Ofheo, has waved Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac even further out on to the already strained and leafless limb they're clinging to the end of. Both of these cuties had been in the doghouse for fudging their books, but, the *Messenger* reports that Congressional Demo-cats in particular have been pushing to lift controls "so the companies could play a more active role in the housing market by buying bigger and more risky home loans and securities backed by those mortgages." And Hillary's tweedle-dee on Capitol Hill, New York's own "Boneless" Chuck Schumer is said to have "welcomed the lifting of the portfolio caps and called on [Ofheo] to go even further by removing a requirement that the companies hold a 30 percent surplus over their normal minimum capital requirements."

The *Messenger*, bien sûr, does not deign to say what exactly those requirements

are. Though given the state of delusional banking today and the fact that Fannie and Freddie are already allowed to operate with only half the backing required of most lenders, their minimal capital may be infinitesimal indeed.

“In a conference call with analysts and investors,” the *Messenger* continues, “Fannie Mae executives said they welcomed the lifting of the portfolio caps and the eventual lifting of the capital requirements but emphasized that the company would be conservative in using its new freedom.

“Daniel H. Mudd, [that’s spelled with a double D, son] Fannie Mae’s chief executive, said the company saw more opportunities in packaging mortgages into securities for sale to investors than in expanding its investment portfolio.”

Indeed, indeed. As Donaldo – a fellow from the neighborhood and missing a leg who often parks his wheelchair in the dappled shade of 24th Street – once called out to you by way of greeting: “There’s a muddy road ahead.”

And all around like rubble in the streets, cheap solidarities, two bucks for a dozen.

And the buck, why today you need \$1.51 of ‘em to buy a euro.

A muddy road, and a slippery slope.

Break on through to the other slide.

language is subjected in the interest of domination. Thus ran the headline in today's *Pest*, above which, one could read, albeit in much smaller letters: "The Steroids Scandal," and beneath: "Congress seeks perjury probe; Clemens could face years in jail." Now Rocket, in this case, refers to the nickname of a certain ex-NY Yankee baseball player. But indeed DC is launching rocket attacks, though with far less media exposure. Droning in the skies over Pakistan, and based at a secret airstrip in that not-so sovereign nation, at least one and possibly several American UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) of a type officially designated MQ-1 Predator – the M stands for multi-use, Q means unmanned.

The USAF describes the Predator as a MALE (Medium-Altitude, Long-Endurance) UAV system. Originally designed as spycraft and converted into a weapons delivery system [an earlier version was designated the MQ-9 Reaper], the Predator is remotely controlled and carries two AGM-114 Hellfire missiles whose most recent use has been to blast folks to bits in remote villages in Pakistan.

Now who can say exactly what the chain of command is: Commander-in-Chief, vice-President, Secretary of Defense, some General or high-ranking CIA operative? But the method is known: the drone's up there and armed. And whomever possesses decision-making power decides to take something "out." They issue the order, a mouse gets clicked – one report claims the actual targeting is done on a base near Las Vegas – and within seconds, the target is visited with one, or potentially two, fantastically destructive rockets shot from a plane that could neither be heard nor seen buy those on the receiving end.

Curiously, the attacks launched of late – such as one this past January 29th that obliterated the town of Mir Ali and many of its inhabitants, and today's early morning

Predator hit on Kaloosha that killed at least ten and, according to one resident “shook the entire area” – are exactly the sorts of strikes that candidate Obama proposes to initiate against Pakistan if elected. *So send in the Drones. Don't bother they're here. Sorry,* Judy C. and Stephen S. Been there, still doing that.

Meanwhile, to much fanfare, rockets launched by angry cousins fly back and forth between Gaza and Ashkelon giving proof through the night, that our flag is still there – even if we dropped out the red and just went with a single blue star, six pointed, on white. The red is implied. And ubiquitous elsewhere.

Yet the *Pest* is correct: the scandal is one of steroids. Nihilism on steroids. And perhaps other drugs that cause sociopath delusions. A nihilist cocktail, a real global intoxicant-accelerant. Which begs the question of the CIA functionary who floats the arrow over the screen and clicks the Predator's mighty mouse. Is he flying high on paco – hypercrack derived from crops the Company cultivates in so many happy lands? And the one who gave the order, what's he beaming up on? Or is the cause just unanchored energy that overwhelms us with fear so that we burst out in periodic flashes of abstract hate? – flares from so many volatile sons and daughters.

We, the People, the three hundred million, minus kids, whose compliance and the cashola minted in our names makes unmanned drones, predators and hellfires of us all. What force could possibly break our addiction to aiding and abetting our ruling class of serial mass murderers, who cleverly scrawl our names, addresses and cellphone numbers in blood on the wall at the scenes of whose crimes? Can we wean ourselves of this, or does the rest of the world have to do the job? Which by the sheer propensity of things, given time, it almost certainly will.

The numeral one with a pair of ohs to the right or left of it, depending on your coign of vantage, figures big in the news today. One of every hundred adult Americans resides in the slammer. Add a dollar sign to the opposite side of the one and you get oil's new baseline. Now, are the dollar and euro, in this beautiful decimal world, approaching that magic ratio, 1.618..., or will the sawbuck just keep dropping until it reaches 2.618... (Φ^2) and beyond?

The new black golden section standard. Texas tease. And loudly, wildly the call of the margins.

A big birthday for J. and a celebration of it this morning at the café. In the midst of la fiesta – A. has brought her a girly pink princess crown which she's wearing – Marcos (who refers to her as "la rubia," the blonde, though not to her face, perhaps because it's easier to manage than the pronunciation of the English "J") and Melanie beckon you over to the register. They point to the display of the iPod plugged into the sound system and specifically at a song titled "Las Mañanitas." *No entiendo.*

"It's a traditional Mexican birthday song," Melanie explains. "Should we play it for her?"

"Sure," you say, "put it on." And thus, J. is serenaded by a recorded mariachi band joined live in chorus by the entirety of the café's Poblanoyorqueno and otherwise hispanohablante staff:

Estas son las mañanitas, que cantaba el Rey David,

Hoy por ser día de tu santo, te las cantamos a ti,

This is the morning song that King David sang,

Because today is your saint's day, we're singing it for you,

Despierta, mi bien, despierta, mira que ya amaneció,

Ya los pajarillos cantan, la luna ya se metió.

Wake up, my dear, wake up, look it is already dawn,

The birds are already singing and the moon has set.

Que linda está la mañana en que vengo a saludarte,

Venimos todos con gusto y placer a felicitarte,

How lovely is the morning in which I come to greet you

We all came with joy and pleasure to congratulate you

Ya viene amaneciendo, ya la luz del día nos dio,

Levántate de mañana, mira que ya amaneció.

The morning is coming now, the sun is giving us its light,

Arise with the new day, look it is already dawn.