

3/29 Seventy-something hours gone and resonances of the time spent with E. and F. appear to you in the form of a poem Ni Zan calligraphed on his painting, made two years before his death in 1374.

We watch the clouds and daub with our brushes

We drink wine and write poems

The joyous feeling of this day

Will linger long after we have parted.

Elsewhere, Ni enjoined himself to “try to paint things in a sketchy manner. Develop forms with a free hand... by following your ideas and feelings.”

Amygdalliance.

Tonsil or almond-shaped groups of neurons that live deep within the medial temporal lobes of animals like us. Amygdala seems to be a major seat of the processing and memory of emotional reactions. Part, say the medicos, of the limbic system. Do the Limbic: how low can you go? And what borders might you cross? Limn. Liminal. And those prominences out there on the east limb of the sun.

Amandala.

In certain people, a residuum of dignity still inheres. In others it seems entirely fled, or perhaps it never nested to begin with.

Accident at the chopper port on the river near the Frying pan and just out from the Starret-Lehigh building, aka MarthaStewart Land. A rear stabilizing bar, whatever that is, hits a rotor and the former goes flying off to lodge, spear-like, in the wall of the trailer that houses the offices of the whirlybird operation. No one injured denks gott and though the chopper lands with a kathunk, the tourists aboard remain blissfully oblivious until the police question them about their non-adventure.

Ah that the helicopters would transform to heliotropes along our riverbank. *Maybe it's the time of season, or maybe it's the time of Man... whomever he is...*

In darkest Cally they're digging up the Barker aka Manson Family Ranch – again. Lord knows how or why this new bout of potential exhumation was set in motion but, according to CNN: “The sites were first identified by trained dogs. Testing equipment from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory also indicated the presence of remains, [said] Sgt. Paul Dostie of the Mammoth Lakes, California, Police Department....

“Methods of testing the soil ‘with minimal intrusion’ are available, the sheriff’s office said, and will be able to determine ‘with a high degree of reliability’ whether bodies are buried there.

“‘Forensic teams will focus on a very few spots in which search dogs recently indicated possible findings of dead bodies with some consistency,’ the sheriff’s statement said. ‘The various dogs gave inconsistent findings at many spots on the ranch property and all dogs were not controlled in the same manner accepted by recognized dog search organizations.’

“The testing will be closed to the news media, Lutze said, to protect the

integrity of the process and the property rights of the owner. Testing results will be released, however, probably in late April, the statement said.

“After Sgt. Dostie’s dog and another dog, from NecroSearch, a nonprofit organization that specializes in finding clandestine graves, indicated the possible presence of human remains, testing equipment from Tennessee's Oak Ridge laboratory indicated two likely grave sites and a third possible grave site, Dostie told CNN....”

Yes, of course, integrity of the process and the property rights of the owner. Couldn’t have said it better. But in any case, inconsistent or no, the dogs must know by now, or at any rate sense, that what used to be called civilization is definitely going to them, and fast. Inconsistent they may be. But these are not stupid animals. Unlike some.

NecroSearch. Hmmm. Note to self: find out if it’s publicly owned, and if so run the numbers. Your doggy nose tells you this could be an opportunity to buy buy buy!

Work hard and someday you might get to China.

3/30 Dith Pran dies at age 65.

3/31 *I was down at the New Amsterdam staring at this yellow-haired girl*

Mr. Jones strikes up a conversation with this black-haired flamenco dancer

She dances while his father plays guitar

She’s suddenly beautiful

We all want something beautiful

Man, I wish I was beautiful...

– Counting Crows

Counting seagulls. Then it begins to rain. You make it home just as it begins to pour in earnest.

...Mr. Jones and me tell each other fairy tales...

Comes a sense-presence through a century and more. The researchers who found the phonautogram in a Paris archive say it was recorded April 9, 1860. It's an ethereal voice, perhaps a woman or child, singing the first phrase of "Au Claire de la Lune." The phonautograph machine was designed to record sounds and display them graphically. Hence this song was never intended to be heard. This artifact was intended as a one way trip from audible to visual. But scientists at the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab in Cally translated the patterns on paper back into sound. Just click and listen. Yes, ten secondsworth, almost a whole couplet. The first line sounds like the expected melody, but the second morphs into something utterly else.

Another violent storm system clobbers the heartland.

...Mr. Jones and me look into the future...

4/1 Not far from Ba Gua, on 27th near Seventh, a green garbage truck – A/K

Construction and Removal – is consuming vast quantities of the contents of an office building. Out the freight entrance comes, in a sort of bucket brigade, all manner of stuff: metal-framed cubicle dividers, cushioned, fabric-covered and with glass panels at the tops, chrome and emerald green plushy-looking armchairs and odd bits of shelving and desk surface. All of this refuse appears brand new, or nearly so. By the hopper of the garbage truck, the man who pulls the lever that controls the jaw that smashes and compacts all this supervises the trashing procedure, flinging certain pieces directly into the maw, and holding others aside to be placed in with almost strategic intentionality.

Another fellow, perhaps he's the elevator man, stands by the open doors of the freight entrance looking on. He half smiles, but you can tell he's suspicious of you. What are you doing, going nowhere, standing there taking mental inventory of this festival of destruction, this careless wasting of still-useful things that took great amounts of labor, materials and technical know-how to produce. He starts walking toward you and you get the impression he's going to give you a hassle of some sort. But then something distracts him, could be the fine-looking woman going past, and he turns his head. You don't see what happens next, only hear the grinding, popping of a couple of chairs and the splintering of a divider panel because by then, you're gone.

Twenty or so paces further up the block by the curb stands a post office collection receptacle. These look like regular mailboxes except that they're maybe a third larger and are painted olive drab – and of course, there's no slot to put mail into. Balanced on its top, a single banana, not over-ripe, but brown-spotted here and there. This banana has taken some hits in its young life. Still, its curve fits almost perfectly with the rounded surface on which it rests.

What to do but laugh?

What have they done to my barcode, ma?

What have they done to my code?

Ils ont changé mon barcode, mom...

And now, let's have everyone out on the floor for a foxtrot with Les Ismore and his Band of Renown...

In a front page story headlined "Stocks Surge as Wall St. Hopes Financial Woes May Be Easing," a certain Michael M. Grynbaum, reporting for the *Messenger* asserts that: "Only on Wall Street can billion-dollar bank losses be a good thing.

"Stocks started off the second quarter with a rally on Tuesday as investors weighed a fresh round of mortgage-related write-offs at UBS and Deutsche Bank, two of the world's largest financial institutions.

"But despite the discouraging numbers – \$19 billion in write-downs at UBS and nearly \$4 billion at Deutsche in the first quarter alone – investors hoped that the bad news could signal the last of Wall Street's subprime woes.

"By Tuesday afternoon, the Dow Jones industrials had advanced about 361 points. The Nasdaq composite index was up 3.1 percent at 2 p.m.

"The Standard & Poor's 500-stock index gained 3.1 percent on the strength of a surge in shares of financial services firms. Lehman Brothers, the bond insurer MBIA and the mortgage giant Fannie Mae – stocks that have suffered painful losses in recent weeks – were among the index's biggest gainers.

"'It's psychological,' said Richard Sparks, a senior analyst at Schaeffer's

Investment Research. 'When a company comes out and writes down more, it leads people to believe that they're being forthright....'

"Adding to the good feelings in the financial sector, Lehman said that it sold \$4 billion of preferred stock in a move to dispel a swirl of rumors about its stability. Shares of the brokerage jumped 10 percent."

They can't be serious. But then it strikes you again. April 1. Of course. It's just the *Messenger's* way of having us on. The reporter's name alone should have given it away. A laughing tree! Which leads you to your German dictionary to discover there is no such word as Gryn. But the verb *grinen* does mean to grin. Also to sneer.

Ach, sneering all ze way to ze (Deutsche) Bank, ja!

Or is Gryn a Welshification of Grüne? In which case, ah, it's all a Bildungsroman – arduous journey with a happy ending.

Yes, April Foolz for sure: Under Movies, the headline "Marketing War: How can Hollywood get audiences to another war movie?" Is that last word really necessary though? And in all honesty, isn't only Hollywood's job is it? Other media have to step up to the plate too.

Adjoining this squib, in the column to the left, a very cinematic, er, "still" from the ever-lengthening reality-based Iraq mocumentary written out daily in actual lives.



James Hill for The New York Times

The pic has no caption, rather serves to illustrate a story headed “Baghdad Bureau Blog” which recounts:

“The First Day, by Ahmad Fadam.

“An Iraqi employee of the *New York Times* remembers the first day of the American invasion of Iraq.”

First Day, Longest Day. Best Years of Our Lives. And the Academy Award goes to... April fool!

All eyes off Basra!

Nostalgia for the very recent past.

Bridge over the river coy.

Real estate investors: Better get while the ghetto is good.

4/2 According to the Bank for International Settlements, an organization of central banks, \$8.3 trillion in “real” money is controlling \$313 trillion in derivatives. These being over-the-counter derivatives, not global exchange traded derivatives in currencies, stocks and commodities which account for an estimated \$75 trillion more, though how one comes up with these numbers is more than your little head can reckon.

Still, at its most conservative, that’s a thirty-eight to one leverage. Very difficult to imagine that state existing, except as an anomaly, within any known physics of perception.

Chaque matin, un couillon se leve. Il suffit de le rencontrer.

Your path homeward leads you along Horatio Street to #45, where by the look of the upstairs windows Frank might still be in residence – all you’d have to do is ring and wait for him to struggle opening the too-tight window, stick his head out to make sure you’re you and drop the key, reminding you, though you’d opened the door scores of times, to turn the top lock to the left. Except he’s not.

Wend your weary way toward the old meat district. Past El Faro which has a large sign posted in the window to the effect that lunch is served from x to y hours, a seeming response to the darkness within, so stygian that nobody would imagine the place to be open without concrete information to the contrary. On the opposite corner, Parisian footwear pour femmes, an infinity of heels attached to shoes almost as

manifold and varietal and strappy as there are instances of love in the world – heels that seem as though they could at once transform into mountaineering pitons. And the shops as one staggers northward: Abercrombie & Fitch, Fulton, Smith, Wesson, Kalashnikov und Totentanz.

It's been going to the dogs. And now the dogs have got it. Who's next.

Hot breath of the market along 10th Avenue. The stench of half-digested carrion. Who says a brick house will fare any better than the straw and timber ones did?

A cluster of manikins behind the window in the new uber-glitzy Equinox gym beneath the elevated High Line veer-off toward the rail yards. One dummy wears a teeshirt, dark blue or black imprinted in rust-colored letters:

NEW YORK

SOUL

The type's distressed as though eaten away by the elements or exposed to some corrosive substance. What exactly is the message here?

On the corner of 17th and Tenth, you pick up two fragments of brick. Lord knows where they came from since they don't have anything like the same hue as the bricks in the buildings nearby. Wait a minute. The fractured edges are much redder in color than the more subdued, brownish, finished sides. So yes, probably they came loose when whomever's pneumatic nailgun banged up the plasticized banner hanging

over the bar: Red Rock West Saloon.

These bits, they're coming home with you to join their cousin, a half brick from the 18th Century that Kenneth gave Gwen once, picked up from the rubble of a restoration site in Kingston. They'll all live together, along with some pitted iron bits from the old Penn railway, on the bookshelf in the hallway to the bedroom.

Blame it on the *Totentanz*

With its magic spell

Blame it on the *Totentanz*

That you do so well...

How can one know? Particularly when the informant is Prudential Douglas Elliman, the real estate brokerage, via the evermore toxic and misinformational *Messenger*. But the assertion is that, in the first three months of '08, the average Manhattan apartment sold for \$1.7 million, up a full third from the same time a year gone by. One must factor in, of course, the recent sale of dozens of extremely high-priced apartments in 15 CPW and Plaza. But still...

Foreclosures are up by 66% and inventory expandeth exponentially.

Who will buy

This wonderful morning?

Such a sky

You never did see!

*Who will tie
It up with a ribbon
And put it in a box for me?*

*There'll never be a day so sunny,
It could not happen twice.
Where is the man with all the money?
It's cheap at half the price!*

*Who will buy
This wonderful feeling?
I'm so high
I swear I could fly.
Me, oh my!
I don't want to lose it
So what am I to do
To keep the sky so blue?*

Dunno, young master Twist. But seems to me the sky's for free and belongs to itself. Still, to get your daily bread and milk, not to mention roses, you'll have to take a page from Fagan's book.

*You see, Oliver,
...In this life one thing counts,
In the bank, large amounts...*

[So] when I see someone rich,

Both my thumbs start to itch

Only to find some peace of mind

We have to pick-a-pocket or two.

Pace, Boz. And Lionel Bart.