

4/7 Supuestamente, tomorrow around sunset, a very new crescent moon will pass in front of the Pleiades. Will it be clear enough over Darktown to glimpse this rare transit?

Once, the Pleiades, seven sisters, daughters of Atlas, were pursued by a giant hunter. To save them, the gods turned them into doves and set them in the sky. Most folks can only see six with the naked eye, and the Greeks explained this by saying that the seventh and "lost Pleiad" dimmed her light in shame over having fallen in love with a mortal.

Often, in myth, a creature is "rescued" by turning it into something else.

Told and retold.

Loop the loup.

The morning fixing just in from Agence France-Presse:

"An Israeli government minister warned on Monday that Israel would respond to any Iranian attack by destroying that country, public radio reported.

"An Iranian attack against Israel would trigger a tough reaction that would lead to the destruction of the Iranian nation,' National Infrastructure Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said in remarks of rare virulence.

"Iranians are aware of our strength but continue to provoke us by arming their Syrian allies and Hezbollah,' he said during a meeting at his ministry.

"Ben-Eliezer, a member of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's security cabinet,

stressed however that the Iranians were unlikely to attack as 'they understand the meaning of such an act.'

"Last month, Defence Minister Ehud Barak told visiting US Vice President Dick Cheney that 'no option' would be ruled out in Israel's bid to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons."

Oh to read the actual transcripts of that conversation and compare them with its coverage!

Under which circumstances you can't get cranked up much one way or the other about the news that Sheldon Silver, Majority Leader of the State Assembly, and a Lower East Side ex-Yeshiva-bucher with a talent for basketball and powerplays, has "killed" – though is any political boondoggle really ever dead? – Bloomie's congestion pricing plan. Oy, when Jews collide.

Apart from the tussling of vested interests involved, it does appear that the mechanism of governance becomes evermore paralyzed. Nothing significant seems to happen without a kind of nine-elevening of the political apparatus, for the moribund creature only moves in response to increasingly severe shocks applied from without. Externalities, as they say in Best-Laid-Planning biz.

Jeez, I can see the light just fine, but where's the tunnel?

Tibet flares like an Olympic torch, and in the glare of such enlightenment, to all other machinations, plots, barbarities, atrocities and yes, genocides, millions around the world go blind. There is after all, a spiritual ranking of the oppressed. A pyramid.

Even unto aristocracy.

Congestion pricing. Is it really most sincerely dead?

Who knows? But your old comrade and commune-mate M. from Crazie days sure is. Comes a call from his son, E., whom you last saw in his infancy. Dad collapsed last night. The big MI. Resuscitated, stabilized, then gone.

M. lived in Astoria and according to E., he had “not been taking care of himself.” A brief service tomorrow morning just across town in Gramercy at, lord help us, a place called Direct Cremation. “Family Owned and Operated – Serving the Metropolitan Area Since 1964 – provides dignified and low cost services...” Who knew?

When did you last see him? Twenty-odd years back when he had a gig as a salesman for Sam Flax. And before that? 1979 maybe, when your band played his (second) wedding party and E. was just born? Ah, but you did see him on the street more recently, say mid-90s? He was working for HIP.

Son of New York. Brooklyn. The Lower East Side, not even. Thus, as they say, the hidden injuries of class.

Back in the day, M. tried to self-create as you all did. Nom de guerred himself “The Mad Cavalier.” Only by some fluky circumstance did you learn that his father worked as a stock man in a Jewish deli on Second Avenue – a physically small and almost transparently unvital man – whose position his son, the heavy revolutionary, you could tell, felt great shame in acknowledging, yet there was desire there too, to avenge the old man’s attenuated life. And to do something dramatic. That mattered.

Which is how, a year and change after the commune fragmented, M. ended up

getting busted in a bomb plot you'd been recruited for but just said no to. It was a sad group he joined, Weather-wannabees really, in a venture infiltrated and partly instigated by someone you and everyone else with a nose had already pegged as an obvious informer. M. pulled a four year sentence in Great Meadow of which he served what – about half? Paroled. Good behavior. Good grief. If they'd sent him to Attica, he might've died in '71. Like Sam.

And yes, it comes back too that M. had been, before and even early on in Crazie daze, a very talented commercial photographer. Upwardly mobile. Generous with what he had. And of course, one of the very few people from that world-upside-the-head-moment whom you could absolutely vouchsafe was not an informer. Or a cop.

He changed his last name around the time of the second marriage. Never asked him why. Couldn't have been matter of hiding or reclaiming Jewishness since the two names didn't seem all that different in either character or implied identity. Maybe he liked the sound of being someone new. Mad Cavalier.

...Tweedle-dee Dee and Tweedle-dee Dum

All that and more and then some

They walk among the stately trees

They know the secrets of the breeze...



“Mr Bush,” quoth the *Telegraph*, “left the Black Sea resort of Sochi empty-handed and the two men to glossed over their failure to achieve a breakthrough by exchanging words of personal flattery.”

...Tweedle-dee Dum said to Tweedle-dee Dee

“Your presence is obnoxious to me.”

They’re like babies sittin’ on a woman’s knee

Tweedle-dee Dum and Tweedle-dee Dee...

4/8 Everybody’s good for something.

Up betimes to Direct Cremation housed in the Gannon Funeral Parlor, a building which is also home to a 24 hour laundry, very possibly under the same ownership.

What you learn, among other things, is that for the past seven years, M. was married to an Indonesian woman, whose name sounds like Mi-wei – you didn't get the spelling. A slight woman, not tall, possessing a kind of sober beauty and extraordinary dignity. She spoke forthrightly of her love for M., whom she had met at work but never imagined as a "romantic companion," and also of their subsequent happiness together. Though she owned as there were occasional "bad days," they always somehow "made it right." When he'd leave to go out, M. would always blow her a kiss.

Last night you called V., another Crazie *compañero* and commune-mate, whom you'd found actually listed in the phone book, wonder of wonders. All he said when you told him about Marty was "Oh, shit." But he did take down the time and address of the service and, by golly, showed up, in company of K., a boyhood friend of his from Grace Church School, who, far as you know, had never been very political.

You saw them leave the room together immediately after the service and thought, OK, that's that. But when you finished your round of condolences twenty-something minutes later and walked out onto the street, there, standing by one of the awning poles were V. and K., and a woman V. introduced as his wife, though she hadn't been sitting with him upstairs. Perhaps she arrived afterwards?

All very odd. Had V. and K. been waiting for you those twenty-something minutes? A strange, strained conversation ensued, maybe a quarter hour's worth. K. circumspect, but more voluble by half than V. with whom you'd once been pretty tight, but now he appeared to regard you alternately as an object of rage and fear, all the

while uttering as near as possible to zip. As though to even open his mouth would be to implicate himself. And he seemed to draw his head and upper body back and away from you, but who knows, maybe that's just the way he's aligned these days.

Mountainous remove. Oddly patrician.

If in some way you ticked him off immemorially lo these years past you've no idea how. No broken trust, not from your perspective anyway, just post-traumatic drift and a general wash of shame at having failed to make a revolution, or perhaps really *grok* the other.

And now a sense of your dialogue as ice creaking but not yet ready to break up. Or maybe it's the ice age – permafrost – a glacier, not a river. Not really a seasonal thing at all.

On verra.

4/9 Cloud cover too heavy last night for you to see crescent moon conjunct Pleiades. But Mark Riddick in Staunton, VA caught the essence:



Under the headline “Anxious San Francisco Braces for Torch Protests” quoth
the *Messenger*:

“The Olympic torch arrived at the airport here from Paris in the wee hours
Tuesday morning, exited out a side door and was escorted by motorcade to a

downtown hotel. There it took a well-deserved break in a room complete with cable TV, room service and views of the city's popular Union Square shopping district.

“It has very comfortable accommodations,’ said Mike McCarron, an airport spokesman, who said the flame – ensconced in a handsome brass lantern and accompanied by several backup flames – was ‘treated similar to a head of state.’”

Yeah, yeah. Similar-like.

Well I'll be a doll-eyed llama.

Life, a cautionary tale.

Lose a week to grief.

Your muse announces her name: Providencia Peligrosa.

Ah, the torch, the torch. A stirring tradition, but not exactly venerable. Or Greek. Was it Goebbles's idea, or Speer's – who knows? The torch relay's eureka moment is clouded in mystery, but one thing's certain, this heroic symbology dates from the '36 Berlin games. Shown to great effect in *Olympia*. Go Leni, go.

It comes back to you now, something V. said t'other day after M.'s service. V. had gone to court one day during Sam Melville's trial, when the accused himself was on the stand. Sam must've realized his goose was cooked, so perhaps hoping to exonerate his comrades, he started confessing to the sole authorship of every bombing in New

York City since the rein of Mad George Metesky.

There on the street, beneath the funeral parlor awning, V. imitated, channeling really, Sam's litany: "I used six sticks of dynamite on the Chase Manhattan job, twelve sticks of on the General Motors job, an amount of nitrate I don't want to disclose right now on the RCA job..."

V. said he listened to about half an hour of this, then fled.

4/10 From a letter to Daphne A. congratulating her upon the publication of her wonderful book *Gram-O-Rama*.

It's been an utterly surreal week thusfar and continues on so. No melting watches yet, but close. On ne sait jamais.

You among very few people may understand that some recent personal events have erased my practical sense of having a past tense. It's all Now. Thus I can use various past phrasings in my speech, but the past does not exist as a distinct realm for me just now in these lived moments. As though everything in the closets, basement and attic decided to walk out and occupy the living room, kitchen and front porch.

So it's one of those times when metaphors and actualities cannot be teased apart in any meaningful way. Wild.

You can understand why some folks, faced with the this large and very nauseating can of worms react, as if driven by self-protective reflex: *You call this is enlightenment? Well then stick it where the sun don't shine!*

But honey, if this isn't enlightenment, it'll have to do until the real thing comes

along.

Never been too strong on the future tense anyway, so no big disconcertion there.

4/12 Emotional rocket science.

Lentic. Lotic. Lentic. Lotic. Lentic. Lotic.

Lock and load.

Attalea amygdalina. Native of Colombia. Called taparo. One of the *Arecaceae*. Possibly the most beautiful plant in the world.

Lenticular fibulation.

The DARPA bums have entered into the *Jungle Book* phase of techno-warfare's *Heart of Darkness*. "BigDog," a headless transport robot, or Packbot, developed by Boston Dynamics, ambulates through a variety of environments, though perhaps not into the hearts of millions, in a clip available at the corporate website or ubique on YouTube.

Here's the official bitch about this pitch:

"The Most Advanced Quadruped Robot on Earth.

"BigDog is the alpha male of the Boston Dynamics family of robots. It is a

quadruped robot that walks, runs, and climbs on rough terrain and carries heavy loads. BigDog is powered by a gasoline engine that drives a hydraulic actuation system. BigDog's legs are articulated like an animal's, and have compliant elements that absorb shock and recycle energy from one step to the next. BigDog is the size of a large dog or small mule, measuring 1 meter long, 0.7 meters tall and 75 kg weight.

“BigDog has an on-board computer that controls locomotion, servos the legs and handles a wide variety of sensors. BigDog's control system manages the dynamics of its behavior to keep it balanced, steer, navigate, and regulate energetics as conditions vary. Sensors for locomotion include joint position, joint force, ground contact, ground load, a laser gyroscope, and a stereo vision system. Other sensors focus on the internal state of BigDog, monitoring the hydraulic pressure, oil temperature, engine temperature, rpm, battery charge and others.

“In separate trials, BigDog runs at 4 mph, climbs slopes up to 35 degrees, walks across rubble, and carries a 340 lb load.

“BigDog is being developed by Boston Dynamics with the goal of creating robots that have rough-terrain mobility that can take them anywhere on Earth that people and animals can go.”

T'aint funny Magee. By no stretch of the imagination is this creature man's, nor woman's, best friend.



Though we do know who the enemy be.

And then there are the insects, O Best Beloveds, the cyborg insects, animals with electronics embedded in them and soon, oh soon, capable of carrying all sorts of plagues, accidentally or on purpose. Will BigDog be brought low by Nano Tick? Tune in as the blue sky dreamers become evermore severe clear and the fog of war engulfs us all.

Strange this anti-animist messing with the animal forms, as though we've spun our innate wonder at the spirit in things into the most monstrous possible forms. Out of what phobic drive do we create this deadly non-life?

Would it not be better to simply whisper: "shhhhh..." and let lie the sleeping dogs of war?

Yes, I've been running a long time

On this traveling ground

Wishing hard to be free

Of going round and round

Yes I've been moving a long time

But only up and down...

...Cause I've been waiting a long time

Eons been and gone –

looking at the horizon

For my light to dawn

Oh yes I've been living a long time

Looking on and on

I've been running a long time

Summer's come and gone –

Drifting under the dream clouds

Past the broken sun...

“Bitterblue,” chanté le trouvère Cat Stevens, aka Yusuf Islam, back in *The Day*. On the same album, the hit “Peace Train.” When the record was released in fall ‘71, M. was nearing half a year into his bid in Great Meadow. And once again you borrowed Jerry’s Austin America and drove M.’s then-wife F. upstate for a visit. But this time it was less than a month after Attica and when you tried to pull into the prison parking lot, troopers with pump shotguns surrounded the car, ordered you out and pushed you

up against the hood. Be cool. Shepherd sniffing at your thigh. The realization that the dog-men *wanted* to blow you away. Like the sharpshooters had done Sam, albeit at a farther range, from the safety of the rooftops, picking him out from among the shorter inmates in D-Yard. But fortunately for you, you weren't important. Only a routine roughing up after which F. got a multi-pig escort into the prison and after her visit you drove her to the bus home and continued on to Vermont not stopping at Jack's house, taking the curves around Vergennes like a master skier to Burlington where S. & G. and their two little adopted daughters lived and somehow you couldn't, just like now, find the words to tell even the best of friends and lovers, or that stranger known as self, what was really going on.

What got you to today through the week was modifying a wine crate shell into a Cornellish box for Gwen's art class. Measure, cut, sand, drill, push-pull and screw. And then, something useful, that she'll make lovely and strange. Sawdust blanket on the parquet quadrants of the living room floor. Though the window's open wide, hanging smell of burnt oak in the living room, as though from a wood stove.

The drowning man festival.

A day that will live in empathy.