

4/24 Se faufiler = to worm or inch or edge or slip one's way in or out or through, say, a crowd...

*Il est minuit à Tokyo*

*Il est cinq heures au Mali*

*Quelle heure est-il au paradis?*

*Il est minuit à Tokyo...*

*Dakar, Bamako, Rio de Janeiro*

*Où est le problème?*

*Où est la frontière?*

*Entre les murs se faufiler...*

*Dans l'ascenseur, ascenseur pour le ghetto*

*Au Manhattan fast-food Dakar Sénégal cinéma Le Paris, cinéma Le Paris...*

*Chante Amadou & Miriam, le couple aveugle de Mali.*

4/25 9 a.m. Three NYC detectives whose fusillade of fifty bullets killed Sean Bell in November '06 are all acquitted of manslaughter, assault and various misdemeanors.

5:30ish p.m. On your way back from getting needled by K., you pass by Jamba Juice on 8th Avenue between 22nd and 23rd, next to the Starbucks and the T-Mobile store. JJ must be having a special promotion because the doors are flung wide, festive easels frame the entrance, and a pair of slender young black women hop about on the sidewalk raising gaily-colored placards mounted on yellow poles high above their

heads. A white fellow, maybe twenty-five, exits the store sucking on a straw buried in a large plastic cup. *Yaaaay!* the women shout. He turns toward them. Smiles. *Byeeee!* they chorus. An instant later a white woman, twentyish, emerges, similarly slurping. She bears south, head tilted to one side, affixing her iPod buds. The cheerleaders jump up and down. One calls after her: *You did the right thing!*

Welcome to the new economy.

We are not fuckin' amused.

4/26 Narrative nutrition.

Pearls before swine. Is that an appetizer followed by the main course?

The crabs are in the bucket.

*Tabernac!*

How bad is it, doc?

How bad can you afford?

Is this the 1950s or the 1590s?

*Nous sommes tous Roundup® ready.*

There will come a point – who knows exactly when? – that a foreign country, likely an oil-producing one, refuses to accept payment in dollars. But we will nuke Iran ahead of that. We will we will.

CENTCOM boss “King David” Petraeus and Joint Chiefs chair Adm. Mullen have synchronized their noddysto heads so that they bob in despicable, even nauseating unison. As reported in London’s *Sunday Times*, Mullen told a Pentagon press briefing that because Iran is an “increasingly lethal and malign” influence in Iraq and supplies arms to Shi’a militias which are “killing American and coalition soldiers,” the Pentagon is preparing for “potentially military courses of action.”

Such a conflict with Iran would be “extremely stressing,” but not impossible for U.S. forces, given the purported reserve capabilities in the Navy and Air Force.

“It would be a mistake,” he declared, “to think that we are out of combat capability.”

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

*They’re throwing knives into the tree*

*Two big bags of dead man’s bones*

*Got their noses to the grindstones...*

The crash is programming our system.

*C’t’une tabernac d’affaire, là.*

4/27 Wal-Mart and Costco begin rationing rice sales, the price in some areas of the country having doubled in the last couple of weeks. Worldwide, the staple of billions is up 70% for the year. So now it's four bags per customer at Sam's Club, y'all. Rumor has it that prices are about to really skyrocket, so the game is down to big hoarders keeping the little ones at bay.

Funny how a target looks like a spiral.

Literal belt-tightening after so many years of pure metaphor? And Condoleezza futures, how are they faring in this Cheney bull market?

*Tabernac' de fou!*

4/28 *I don't want to set the world on fire,  
I just want to start  
A flame in your heart...*

The headline's funny on the face of it: "Mars Acquires Wrigley's for \$23 Billion." Hey, why not Venus Acquires Mercury? Or Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto Form SUNP Consortium? Zebra-Horse Deal Could Prompt Cascade of Mergers. Giraffe Seeks Elephant Partner in African Mammal Consolidation Bid. Pineal Gland Makes Offer for Amygdala: Shareholders Protest...

Quoth the *Messenger*: "The deal for the chewing gum company, financed in

part by Warren E. Buffett, creates a confectionery behemoth.”

And where does the FCC stand in all this?

One notch above the candy deal on the *Times* headline foodchain: “Kerkorian Buys 4.7% of Ford and Plans More.” But on first scan, you’d read Kevorikan, and before you had a chance to rein in the horses of dyslexia thought: Oh, it’s good, they’re bringing him in. At least the old company won’t suffer at the end.

On May 1, members of the ILWU plan to close down 29 West Coast ports for the day shift in protest of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Back in February, Vietnam war veterans active within the union caucus drove the decision to take the Mayday job action – technically known as a “stop-work” request – which was, at first, supported by leadership. Under pressure from employers, collectively known as the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), union leadership withdrew the “stop-work” request in early April. All this as the ILWU and PMA are negotiating a new contract to replace the one that expires July 1. On verra.

But still, what a breathtaking idea in this day and age: an organized political act with economic consequences – however symbolic – aimed at the war machine. Makes you think: What if? What if God had made human beings vertebrates?

A truly nasty, bitter, windblown day came to call. Still it’s only a love tap from the seriously badass storm, replete with twisters, that’s rampaged through Virginia injuring hundreds.

The Iranians deny it was their boats that the Western Venture, a “U.S. Navy-contracted ship” fired on a couple of days ago in the Strait of Hormuz. Ah, Western Venture, you’re a Narrenschiff if ever there was one. Western Venture, Western Venture, where will you drift now?

Everyone’s favorite architect, Frank Gehry, lays off twenty-three employees in his Venice, CA office. West Coast fallout of Atlantic Yards, shrinking to inches.

4/29 “Some Chinese Exporters Prefer Euros to Dollars,” reads the *Messenger* headline. Beneath which:

“GUANGZHOU, China – Facing the double-barreled threat of a falling dollar and weakening American demand, some Chinese exporters are starting to ask European customers to pay in euros.

“Others are trying to increase domestic sales. This, in a nation whose economic juggernaut was built on exports.

“Drastic times call for drastic measures. And the dollar’s accelerating fall against China’s currency – down 4 percent so far this year, after dropping 7 percent last year – has left businesses across China nursing losses and trying to figure out how to raise prices for overseas buyers, Chinese executives and sales representatives said in interviews here at the Canton Trade Fair...

“...Quite a few Chinese exporters are concluding that the best way to minimize currency risk may be to turn inward and sell more at home. Mark Yuan, the president and chief artist of the Hefei Hande Artistic Lamps Factory, which makes stained glass lamps and windows, just began selling his products in China a few months ago and has

found that these sales already account for 20 percent of total revenues.

“‘In big cities there is demand, people are wealthier,’ Mr. Yuan said. ‘We are gradually increasing our emphasis on the domestic market until we can forget about the export market, because the profit margins on exports are so thin.’”

*Here comes the twister.*

4/30 Kar. Kultur. Krash.

And the rest is mystery.

When the bread is gone, the circuses go on.

Who’s for oil at \$120?

5/1 Amidst all the belt-tightening arrives La Bealtaine. Chuck the Winter Palace – to summer pastures we amble today!

Merrily.

Swiftly, though not merrily, the train now abyss-ward rolls verily. At an interestingly-timed two-day conference on the what the *Jerusalem Post* calls “the challenges posed by Iran,” sponsored by the Yale University [Good ol’ Yale, pro-Semitic at last!] Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism, a certain Charles Asher Small, the Initiative’s director proclaimed that “‘The most dangerous thing is the

inaction of our leaders – students and faculty, Jewish leadership and leadership of the Western world – to confront Iran on genocidal anti-Semitism and abuses in its own community.'

"Canadian legislator Irwin Cotler, a keynote speaker at the conference, said the precursors to genocide were more present in Iran than they were prior to any past genocide.

"'We have learned the danger of state-sanctioned incitement to genocide, and the dangers of indifference and inaction,' Cotler said. 'What differentiates other genocides and [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad, is that all those have occurred, this is only one we have the responsibility to prevent.'"

OK, it's the English-language *Jerusalem Post* and translated from Hebrew, so one can forgive, if not forget, the tortured grammar by which person Ahmadinejad has been constructed as a genocide unto himself. Still, pressing deeper into this journalistic Heart of Darkness, one finds that:

"Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz also addressed the conference. He repeated remarks made earlier in Washington and reported in Thursday's *Jerusalem Post* to the effect that Iran will likely achieve control of the technology required to enrich uranium for an atomic bomb within a year, again citing an updated Israeli intelligence assessment.

"In the past, the consensus in the intelligence community was that Iran had encountered technical difficulties with fuel enrichment and that its attainment of nuclear capability was much further off, Mofaz said, but a recent IDF Military Intelligence assessment showed that the 'point of no return' with regards to Iran going nuclear was 2010.



“Speaking on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Mofaz linked the Nazi atrocities with the threat posed by Teheran, saying that Israel would not accept a nuclear Iran.

“‘The Iranian regime is the No. 1 threat to mankind in the 21st century. It is a multi-dimensional, multi-armed threat, which increases every day, every hour,’ he said.”

Oy yoy yoy!



Lieutenant General Carter Ham (undated photo) [voanews.com]

And then, surfing on through the media runup, one finds the *Vice*, er, *Voice of America* reporting that:

“The Pentagon said Wednesday Iran is continuing to provide weapons and other material to Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan, in addition to its alleged continuing support for Shiite militias in Iraq. Officials spoke to reporters Wednesday shortly after a second U.S. aircraft carrier strike group arrived in the Persian Gulf.

“The chief of operations for the senior U.S. military staff, Lieutenant General Carter Ham, says Iranian support for the Taliban, first reported last year, is continuing.

“‘There is indication that the Iranian support of the Taliban has continued,’ said

General Ham. 'Again, we don't believe it to be at the same level of which they have provided fighters and weapons into Iraq. But there is some clear evidence that it has occurred.'

"General Ham says the support involves 'weapons and material,' but he did not provide details of what Iran sends or how much."

And not to be outdone, the CIA's uber-jeff, Michael Hayden, puts forth the proposition that "It is the policy of the Iranian government, approved to highest level of that government, to facilitate the killing of Americans in Iraq. Just make sure there's clarity on that." This in response to a student question at Kansas State University where Hayden'd been lecturing.

For its part, the State Department issues a wicked timely report asserting that in '07, Iran remained both the world's "most active," and "most significant" state sponsor of terrorism.

Mayday! Mayday! Yes, but nowhere to bail out.

And Israel. Dreamland come to nightmare. They would rather blow up the world than look one Palestinian in the eye. Hate him or her if you need to, but at least look them in the eye.

The dock workers don't show up for the day shift and twenty-nine ports from Seattle to Long Beach lie idle. The merest hint at what this Mayday might have been.

5/2 These are the molds into which only evil can be poured.

Grand Theft Autonomy.

If you believed in fate, this would constitute proof. Late p.m. at Instituto Cervantes. You've stayed after your official lesson for your weekly Spanish-English jam session with A. When the sun's out, you meet in a park nearby, complete with waterfall. But today's not so clement, so you appropriate an empty classroom and have your confab there. Little noticing, given the remove, the crowd gathering in the courtyard, in to which you walk upon leaving A. to her lesson prep.

Ah, you'd barely noticed the signs on the way in. A reception for the PEN World Voices Festival of International Literature. A platter of manchego passes. Grab a slice. Is that Umberto Eco? Yup. Chewing, apparently, on a thin, unlit cigar.

Little hot meatballs in some sort of sauce appear before you. *Muy bien*. Someone taps the mic at the podium set up on the north side of the courtyard. Hardly a line for the bar so you acquire a glass of vino tinto to speed the plough of digestion. Look, it's Salman Rushdie making a subdued entrance with a pretty young woman. Here come some beautiful little seafood salads served in Chinese soup spoons. Yum. Eduardo steps up to the podium, makes a brief and witty welcoming speech, then introduces Vargas Llosa. Extraordinarily tentative applause. The buzz of conviviality diminishes, but only just. No one seems to notice Rushdie, yet somehow the atmosphere of vanity around you grows appreciably warmer. Vargas Llosa waxes on about the institutional virtues of PEN and Instituto Cervantes in the most formulaic language imaginable, standing just far enough from the mic as to be nearly inaudible.

The vino tinto's gone straight to your allergy-benumbed head. Is no one going to seize the podium after this old windbag shambles off and use this moment to denounce the present and coming wars? In what version of reality is it meet and just for an international gathering of writers, here in the epicenter of New York City, to indulge in a languid, self-congratulatory love feast when we've so clearly failed at even attempting to exercise whatever powers of persuasion we retain?

It's only after you leave and are already stepping onto the downtown E train that it dawns on you that however small an act in the scheme of things it might have been, however much your unscheduled augmentation of the program might have embarrassed Eduardo, you let a world class opportunity slip.

You'll still partake of the sacrament of conversation, but are no longer willing to join any gathering not bent on insurrection.

The lefter. The writer. The wronger.

What stayed you in the moment?

Paper. Vapor.

Q) How wrong have you been wrighting?

A) For a wrong, wrong rhyme.

Q) Do you plan on ever weaving?

A) I've already weft.

Q) Will the warp ever end?

A) Only if we won out of womb.

5/3 Doubt the binary.

Bingo. In the abandoned orchard up in Rockland Co. – now surrounded by Hasid McMansions – you find a bumper crop of morels: yellow and black. And a Dryad's Saddle, good for soupstock.



Deerly beloved. Turn the bones over and you see the spinous processes. Not far off, a trove of delicate, finely arched ribs.

Plenty of reasonably fresh deerscat in the orchard too, often not far from a choice crop of morels that must have cropped up quite recently. Thus your 'shroom gathering takes place opportunistically between the last time the deer passed through and the next, probably this evening. Else the mushrooms you find would've already been et, the spores thereof on their way to being spread throughout the animals' range. You'll consume these mushrooms sautéed in shallots and cream, on toast, and at a great remove from here. In any case, for the morels you've harvested, the spore stops here.

Sometimes, you'd swear amidst the tricky leaves you see a gorgeous morel rearing up. And as you organize your mind to confirm it, and your body to reach out to touch it, woosh, it's gone. Was it an illusion to begin with or did the Dryads spirit it away? And why do they leave some for you, and not others?

*It's only mystery*

*But I like it.*

Forty years to the day, French riot police shut down the campus at Nanterre in response to a student uprising which had begun six weeks earlier with the seizure of the university's symbolic center of power, the administrative tower. Locked out, the students regroup on the Left Bank, and along with students at the Sorbonne, occupy much of that venerable academy. *Ce n'est qu'un début...*