

5/23 Heliotropic. That's how A. characterized you this morning, given your turning to face the sunbeams over the Ninth Avenue rooftops.

And recently, out on the sun's eastern limb heliosophers have observed and recorded a plasma rainstorm – showers of droplets big as all Texas that appear to fall both up and down, that condense from and evaporate into vast clouds of suspended hydrogen. Flame and sprite and geyser-like these prominences extend and pour back, spiral creatures that dance to a tune called from far below – where magnetic fields roll and tumble, beneath the visible surface, immune to mortal eye.

*Ah! sunflower, weary of time,*

*Who countest the steps of the sun,*

*Seeking after that sweet golden clime*

*Where the traveller's journey is done;*

*Where the youth pined away with desire,*

*And the pale virgin shrouded in snow,*

*Arise from their graves and aspire;*

*Where my sunflower wishes to go*

Sang William B. kan ya makan.

Luminous clouds. The first day that feels like spring, yet there's a distant quality in the play of the cumulous dotting the robin's egg skydome, or lining up in formations. They look like a computer's notion of an ideal sky, or the daubings of a

cynical painter, pulling our collective leg. Something mocking in the air.

A tree with wine-colored leaves, Japanese maple probably, and one of a whole arboretum foliating the penthouse terrace of the big beige building down on 23rd Street, waves its branches at you. It's maybe one story higher than you are, but given the distance, the angle isn't sufficient to disrupt the sense that you're communicating at a common level. The waving tree has a twin separated from it by a window's width, and now it's this latter one that catches more of the late afternoon light through gaps in the clouds. They both gesture now, with a nearly wild urgency, and the question is are they beckoning you forward or warning you to go back? For some reason, you're pretty sure they know what's what and are trying to make it clear to you. Light shifts in the time it takes to write this, and perhaps the breeze lets up too. Both trees stand motionless. Again they catch the light, and begin to wave, but it's one another they seem preoccupied with now. They've said their piece to you. Wait and see what's next.

5/24 Christopher Bollas, in his *Shadow of the Self: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*, observes that "It is an ordinary feature of our mental life to engage in subvocal conversations with oneself." And while you have known for some time about the second person mode in which your mind often functions, it was only this morning, and possibly as a side-effect of studying Spanish, that you realized the frequency with which you subvocalize thoughts in the subjunctive. "I wish I could..." "Wouldn't it be cool to..." almost always followed by a succession of portcullises slamming down in evermore finite iterations of "But this cannot be!" – all sounded internally with the sort of God-like reverberations Charlton Heston encountered on Mt. Sinai.

Your negations, unlike the proscriptions of Torah, generally come packaged

with a rationale. You cannot do A because of real-world X, Y or Z. But the bottom line is that you cannot do A for the simple reason that it is your wish to do it – though it's theoretically possible that someone else could. Thus a whole suite of negations derives from your temerity in wishing for anything at all. And this is the wall to wall carpeting beneath the feet of your ego. Good luck, son.

Mind the gap.

*I wonder if you care*

*I wonder if you still remember*

*Once upon a time*

*In your wildest dreams...*

Sang the Moody Blues kan ya makan.

*Where my sunflower wishes to go.*

Subjoin and fly with me.

Subjunctive... pp. of *subjugare* to join beneath, subordinate: of or relating to, or constituting a verb form or set of verb forms that represents a denoted act or state not as a fact but as contingent or possible...

*In your wildest dreams.*

Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma. The latter visited by tornadoes yet again and twice in as many nights. Someone's playing with magnets?

Winds of Helios. Even before nightfall, auroras visible in Quebec in the clear, blue sky.

Qatar and Kuwait, fronted by Mort Zuckerman's Boston Properties and Goldman Sachs, pony up \$2.9 billion – a record-busting price – to take the G.M. building off Harry Maclowe, who's trying to dig himself out of the \$7 billion hole he tumbled into a year and change ago borrowing short-term from Deutsche Bank and Fortress Investment at ridiculous interest.

Sheeeit. Is G.M. itself worth \$2.9 billion? Let alone its old white marble-clad elephant across from the Plaza? Just Kuwait and see.

Lucky for Harry Mac and son that we defended, back in '91, the sovereignty of that sheikdom on the Gulf, whose name means "little fortress built near water." Otherwise the deal might have fallen one sovereign wealth fund shy of "Sold to the man in the tablecloth hat!" And though the country is mostly desert, the Kuwaiti dinar remains a rock solid currency, at least relative to the greenback, which seems evermore to run through one's hands like sand. Hmmm, there is a pyramid on the back.

5/25 Out of the café into still-cool spring air. The sun's warmed the plastic surface of your bicycle seat though and the contrast in temperatures sends every nerve into a state of expectation.

Leonardo somewhere described himself as a “disciple of experience.” Knowledge, he wrote, was best verified through the senses.

Huge aftershock in Sichuan, eleven days after the initial quake. And again you wonder: Is this nature – Gaia doing her warmup stretches, or some kind of call and response between solar and earthly capacitors? Or are these tectonics an exercise in diplomacy by other means?

5/26 Three days since a “kamikaze comet,” one of the Kreutz sungrazer family – said by some to be fragments of a gigantic comet that broke up two thousand years ago – cruised too near old man Helios and zap! But just before the comet disintegrated, there issued forth from our star a gigantic magnetic explosion known as a coronal mass ejection (CME). A coronagraph aboard the Solar and Helospheric Observatory (SOHO) caught the moment in all its drama, and immediately the channels of received wisdom broadcast the notion that the comet’s proximity and the CME were coincidence, sheer coincidence.

But that’s only if one looks substratum, for the headlines everywhere, and pics abounding proclaim the glorious landing – tarantara tarantara! – of a NASA spaceship near the north pole of Mars!



NASA, JPL, Caltech,

Lawrence K. Ho, via Reuters

University of Arizona/Reuters

Which lead story the *Messenger* captions: “Scientists working on the Phoenix Mars Lander celebrated, above. Left, one of the first photos the spacecraft transmitted.”

While right below the gaily illustrated *Martian Chronicle* runs the headline “Powerful Storms Kill 8 in Iowa and Minnesota” – a world that exists, Oz-like, at an absolute editorial remove from either aftershocks in Sichuan or comets and their CMEs. Yet still, the affectless voice remarks as how “The storms came after three days of violent weather across the nation. Rural Oklahoma was battered Saturday and storms in Kansas a day earlier killed at least two people there.”

As though all events are distinct, monadic and refracted, and not, oh never, transpiring, even as we gaze, around and beneath the selfsame sun.



Matthew Putney/Waterloo Courier, via Associated Press

What sort of body would we imagine ourselves to possess if we only saw our hand before our eyes, or worse yet, an image of our face, floating at a fixed distance, obliterating the notion that we might have hips, or legs, or feet, or lungs, livers or hearts?

This is what happens when an entire culture obliterates the Mother. Or tries to. And how does that fit in with your general theory of – d-uh...?

We've orbited above ourselves so long. How ever will we learn to walk the earth?

*First there is no mountain then there is a mountain then there isn't...*

Here comes the twister.

Same as it ever was.

5/27 YouTube page comes up with the strangest juxtaposition of ads ever.

**2008 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION**  
SEPTEMBER 1-4 • MINNEAPOLIS - SAINT PAUL

Submit a video of someone in your neighborhood who serves "a cause greater" than themselves.

**ENTER NOW!**  
SUBMIT VIDEOS BY JUNE 26th!

**THE WINNER WILL ATTEND THE CONVENTION IN MINNESOTA!**

 **ROLLING STONES** YouTube *Living Legends*  
**You asked. They answered!**

Not to be outdone, the *Messenger* weighs in with a trio of headlines, scanning



across the columns left to right:

“Housing Prices Fall 14.4% in Sign of Continuing Slump.”

“Fearing Floods, China Rushes to Evacuate 150,000 people.”

“New DVDs: ‘The Thief of Baghdad’ plays like a timeless adventure fantasy.”



Everett Collection

Sabu, foreground, with John Justin and June Duprez in “The Thief of Bagdad,” produced by Alexander Korda.

Correction: that’s StabYou, not Sabu.

“At the end of this war,” says Trotsky to John Reed in *Ten Days That Shook the World*, “I see Europe re-created, not by the diplomats, but by the proletariat. The Federated Republic of Europe – the United States of Europe – that is what it must be. National autonomy no longer suffices. Economic evolution demands the abolition of

national frontiers. If Europe is to remain split into national groups, then Imperialism will recommence its work. Only a Federated Republic of Europe can give peace to this world.' He smiled – that fine, faintly ironical smile of his. 'But without the action of the European masses, these ends cannot be realized – now....'"

Reed continues:

"Now while everybody was waiting for the Bolsheviki to appear suddenly on the streets one morning and begin to shoot down people with white collars on, the real insurrection took its way quite naturally and openly."

The Provisional Government planned to send the Petrograd garrison to the front."

The Petrograd garrison numbered about sixty thousand men who had taken a prominent part in the Revolution..."

Meanwhile, comrades, in context of the great credit implosion ("As the home-buying season enters what is traditionally its busiest period, there are simply too many homes in many parts of the country, and too few people with the means to buy them"), the *Times* quotes an expert on such matters who offers up a telling simile:

"'It's like eating beyond your stomach's capacity,' said Ronald J. Peltier, the chief executive of Home Services of America, which owns real estate brokerage firms across the country. 'We have huge indigestion.'"

On the Flatiron streets, a million signs of slavery.

5/29 “Monkeys,” headlines the *Messenger*, “Control a Robot Arm With their Thoughts.”

“Two monkeys with tiny sensors in their brains have learned to control a mechanical arm with just their thoughts, using it to reach for and grab food and even to adjust for the size and stickiness of morsels when necessary...”

“The report, released online by the journal *Nature*, is the most striking demonstration to date of brain-machine interface technology.

In previous studies, researchers showed that humans who had been paralyzed for years could learn to control a cursor on a computer screen with their brain waves and that nonhuman primates could use their thoughts to move a mechanical arm, a robotic hand or a robot on a treadmill.

The new experiment goes a step further. In it, the monkeys’ brains seem to have adopted the mechanical appendage as their own, refining its movement as it interacted with real objects in real time. The monkeys had their own arms gently restrained while they learned to use the added one...”

Ah, gentle restraint.

“Robot Arm Controls Monkey’s Thoughts.”

Nous some tous Carrie. Nous sommes tous Uri Gellar.

While in some other part of Yenem’s Velt, a fellow straps onto his limbs an apparatus called the Sarcos Exoskeleton et voila! In the promo clip from the good folks

at Raytheon, Joe Average lifts a dumbbell marked 200 lbs as though it was made of styrofoam.

See, that's the problem with humankind: Insect envy. But since we can't beat the bugs, by golly we'll join 'em! Now if we could only figure out how to reproduce exponentially...

During the cauldron summer of 1948, E.B. White wrote a odd and vivid little book about New York in which he averred the most curious feature of the city to be that: "Each large geographical unit is composed of countless small neighborhoods. Each neighborhood is virtually self-sufficient. Usually it is no more than a couple of blocks wide. Each area is a city within a city within a city. Thus, no matter where you live in New York, you will find within a block or two a grocery store, a barbershop, a newsstand and shoeshine shack, an ice-coal-and-wood cellar (where you write your order on a pad outside as you walk by), a dry cleaner, a laundry, a delicatessen (beer and sandwiches delivered at any hour to your door), a flower shop, an undertaker's parlor, a movie house, a radio-repair shop, a stationer, a haberdasher, a tailor, a drug-store, a garage, a tearoom, a saloon, a hardware store, a liquor store, a shoe-repair shop. Every block or two, in most residential sections of New York is a little main street. A man starts for work in the morning and before he has gone two hundred yards he has completed half a dozen missions: bought a paper, left a pair of shoes to be soled, picked up a pack of cigarettes, ordered a bottle of whiskey to be dispatched in the opposite direction against his home-coming, written a message to the unseen forces of that wood cellar, and notified the dry cleaner that a pair of trousers awaits a call. Homeward bound eight hours later, he buys a bunch of pussy willows, a Mazda bulb, a drink, a

shine – all between the corner where he steps off the bus and his apartment. So complete is each neighborhood, and so strong the sense of neighborhood, that many a New Yorker spends a lifetime within the confines of an area smaller than a country village. Let him walk two blocks from his corner and he is in a strange land and will feel uneasy until he gets back.”

*Here is New York. Ah, that New York!*

White observes at several points in the text that the magic measure here, at least once upon a time, was eighteen inches, a space that served as “both the connection and separation that New York provides for its inhabitants.”

Is that the distance between people sitting adjacent at the café? Worth checking. Cousin G. introduced you to Simone Weil’s concept of *metaxu*, borrowed from Plato: the separation which connects. “Every separation,” Weil wrote, “is a link.” A metaphor which, extended, permits absence and presence to exist as dual valences of the same bond.