

7/1 Now it can be said, having been thoroughly grokked. Somewhere in the great plastic play of kultcha this...



Mutated into...



Whilst downtown, a world class demonstration of *Change? Don't make me larf* nutshelled nicely by the BBC:

“In a report to New York governor David Paterson, Mr Ward [executive director of the Port Authority] said: ‘The schedule and cost estimates of the rebuilding effort that have been communicated to the public are not realistic.’

“He said developers and government agencies would set new ‘clear and achievable timelines’ by the end of September.

“Mr Ward said the earliest rebuilding estimates in the wake of the 9/11 attacks were not truthful, referring to them as ‘emotional dates’.

“The deadlines for the redevelopment work have been moved several times.

The project's initial \$14bn (£7bn) budget has continued to rise as commodity prices soar and developers and government agencies wrangle over site plans."

And the smoke of Big Sur.

Dust and larger bits. Fall of towers, fall of angels, fall of Man.

Today's *Times*: "A glazed terra cotta relief by the Renaissance sculptor Andrea della Robbia came loose overnight from its perch above a doorway at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and crashed to the stone floor below, seriously damaging it, museum officials said Tuesday.

The shattered 15th-century sculpture, a 62-by-32-inch blue-and-white lunette depicting St. Michael the Archangel in a traditional pose, holding a sword and the scales of justice, [containing a little person] was found early Tuesday morning by a guard on regular rounds....

"...The museum has several works in its collection by members of the della Robbia family of Florence, who are credited with the invention of brightly colored tin-glazed terra cotta, a kind of work that quickly became popular throughout Europe because of its beauty and relatively low cost.

"The della Robbia family members were traditionally employed in the textile industry, and their name derives from *rubia tinctorum*, a red dye. Of the work of Luca della Robbia, Andrea's uncle and the first pioneer of glazed terra cotta, Walter Pater wrote, 'Nothing brings the real air of a Tuscan town so vividly to mind as those pieces of pale blue and white earthenware, by which he is best known, like fragments of the

milky sky itself, fallen into the cool streets.'

"The St. Michael sculpture was commissioned around 1475 for the church of San Michele Arcangelo in Faenza, a small town between Bologna and Ravenna.... The Met bought it in 1960 at an auction of the collection of Myron C. Taylor, a chairman of the United States Steel Corporation.

"[A Met official] said that there were no immediate indications of what cause the sculpture to topple...."

Ask the angels who they're calling

Go ask the angels if they're calling to thee

Ask the angels while they're falling

Who that person could possibly be...

"...It is not the first time a sculpture has fallen and broken at the museum. In 2002, a 15th-century marble statue of Adam by the Venetian sculptor Tullio Lombardo crashed to the ground in the Met's Velez Blanco Patio, scattering its arms, legs and an ornamental tree trunk into dozens of pieces.

"The 6-foot-3-inch statue tipped over when one side of the 4-inch-high base of its pedestal buckled. The statue is still being studied with the goal of restoration and it was never determined what caused its pedestal to collapse."

Which event you noted in *Notes of a New York Son* back in October '02, having been, if not on speaking terms with, at least well acquainted with the victim:

Some time last night, amidst the potted lime trees in the Spanish Patio of the Metropolitan Museum, a larger-than-lifesize 15th century marble statue of Adam (grasping an apple) keeled over and shattered into bits large and small – in any case many. Apparently the plywood base, only two years old but poorly built, gave way beneath the sculpture, a putative masterwork of the transition between the middle ages and renaissance.

This time, no seductive rib-girl precipitated the Fall of Man, just bad carpentry. He crashed to the ground unheard, to be discovered later by a guard on his rounds. The Met puts a brave face on for the *Times* – promising to restore Adam to his former state so flawlessly that “only the cognoscenti will know.”

You recall the sculpture well, passed it dozens of times, but are certain that the figure possessed a navel. So how could he have been Adam? Or was there an Adam before Adam? In which case this Adam may not be all he’s cracked up to be. Perhaps they’ll restore the statue *sans* navel – more authentic that way.

“Studied with the goal of restoration...”

So then why not set an *emotional date*?

After all, only the cognoscenti will know. Yes, truly, only the cognoscenti will know.

*And I know you got the feeling,
You know, I feel it crawl across the floor
And I know it got you reelin'
And honey honey the call is for war...
Chanté la trouvère Patti Smith kan ya makan.*

Pero, only angels have wings.

And, headlines the *Times*, "These Wings Will Not Fly."



"It was to have been an audacious gesture in an already daring design. As envisioned by the architect Santiago Calatrava, the enormous counterpoised wings forming the rooftop of the World Trade Center Transportation Hub were to have opened almost 50 feet wide to the sky, in fine weather and on each anniversary of the terrorist attacks.

"'On a beautiful summer day,' Mr. Calatrava said, 'the building can work not as a greenhouse but as an open space.'

“And on each Sept. 11, he said, the rooftop could open again, ‘giving us the sense of unprotection.’

“The idea of an entire building in movement was startling, but it would not have been the first kinetic work by Mr. Calatrava, who is a sculptor and an engineer. The winglike sunscreen at the Milwaukee Museum of Art opens and closes twice daily, and has become a civic attraction in its own right.

“But this morning, Mr. Calatrava’s wings were clipped at the World Trade Center site, as officials began to reckon with budgets and timetables that they now concede are well beyond earlier estimates....”

Four and a half years ago, back in late January ‘04, David W. Dunlap, the same *Times* scribe wot scribbled the above, channeled the city plutocracy’s euphoric reaction to the wing’d hub when he kvelled:

“Where there was darkness on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, the architect Santiago Calatrava would bring a flood of light in the form of a winged railway station, draped in glass, suffused with natural illumination and, on occasion, open to the clear skies above.

“Mr. Calatrava’s design for the permanent World Trade Center PATH terminal, which was unveiled yesterday, is a soaring, sculptural, steel-and-glass shell covering a cathedral-like concourse. Through a network of passageways, the terminal would connect the Port Authority Trans-Hudson underground rail line from New Jersey and 14 subway lines.

“‘Wow is the first word that’s just got to come to your mind,’ said Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. He joined in the unveiling with Gov. George E. Pataki and

officials of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which will build the terminal. It may cost up to \$2 billion. Construction is expected to begin early next year and take four years to complete....

“Governor Pataki seemed to anticipate criticism of the project as an extravagance when he summoned the memory of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. ‘He would lament the fact that we don't build grand things any more,’ Mr. Pataki said. The governor said he vowed that on the trade center site, ‘the buildings themselves would be a lasting tribute to those we lost and to the courage that showed on Sept. 11.’

“After the unveiling, Robert B. Tierney, the chairman of the city Landmarks Preservation Commission, asked, ‘Should we pre-emptively landmark this?’

“The terminal will not in fact be eligible until it turns 30 years old. But glancing at the shimmering models nearby, Mr. Tierney said, ‘This will still be flying at that age.’”

7/2 11:40 p.m. Reading down the top *Messenger* headlines:

“Fugitive Hedge Fund Manager Surrenders.”

“China Inspired Interrogations at Guantánamo.”

“Deepening Cycle of Job Loss Seen Lasting into '09.”

“In Court Ruling on Executions, a Factual Flaw.”

2. The Physics of Verbs

A verb is a word to denote action or being.

Attitude toward verbs

The verb has never incurred such extreme ambivalence of homage

or disapproval as the noun. That is because it is kinetic. It is pure energy, and people respond to energy as moths to light. The verb either *acts* or *is*. We see action and being as proof of life. To *live* and to *be* are visible images of energy.

Think of the wordless motion we see every day on TV. The screen vibrates, automobiles chase, eyes gaze, mouths speak, people shoot. The fact of motion impresses, attracts, beguiles. Often we don't care *what* vibrates, *who* gazes, *what* is said, *who* shoots *whom*, for we worship energy. Movement satisfies as objects cannot. We see our destiny and think of ourselves in a process of motion. If we don't know what we are or ought to do, at least we feel that we *are* and *do*. We even *die*. The grammar of ourselves may exist without any other part of speech, but it has to have the verb. Without the verb, we cannot exist.

So the verb does not, like the noun, look like a static shell. It does not yearn to transcend its operational use. It is operation. And it glorifies operation, transcends its subjects and objects. It is so strong that it makes its modifiers, adverbs, the weakest of all parts of speech, like dust obscuring the runners' feet, or even obstacles to the goal. Unnecessary afterthoughts.

If the world is following that famous second law of thermodynamics where energy is dissociated from subjects and objects, and, unharnessed, going wild into chaos instead of doing work, the state called entropy, then it does so on the back of the verb. Surely we need to examine such ecstasy.

Utter a verb by itself. It immediately flies out like an arrow and takes wing. Saying a verb may be a command to feel, to sense, to experience. Or it may be an evocation. You don't feel obliged to burrow into its being, as you do with nouns, or strike the chord that will release its essence. You don't have to wind yourself around it or figure out the meaning behind it. The more unhinged the verb from its subject and object, the more authoritative and resonant it sounds. It has no need of person, number, subject or object to be understood. It speaks.

The unqualified, indiscriminating and unbridled quality of verbs is greater in English than in any other language. Why is this so? Because there are no inflections. Person, number, voice and mood are not tied into the single verb word. In English verbs have minimal rules to bind them to their subjects in person and number.

These several preceding paragraphs from *Music and Pure Meaning: A Book of Language*, by Daphne Athas, a bound manuscript privately circulated circa 1990's and published in substantially revised form in 2007 as a paperback, *Gram-O-Rama*.

Not the absence of struggle.

Kinesthetic legacy.

Having picked up M. for lunch, you ramble through Chinatown in hopes that an as-yet-unknown restaurant will speak to you. Traverse Canal. On the opposite side

of Mott Street you spot an interesting-looking place and the two of you cross over to have a closer look. Chinese characters painted on the canopy, and beneath them: *The Dining Room Management Group Inc.*

You pause outside to look at the menu outside, but M. bounds straight up the stairs and hold up a V to the first waiter he sees. Here's your booth. Plenty of customers, most of them Chinese. Good sign. You order two different sticky rice casseroles to share. Bit of a wait. Worth it though. Black chicken with sausage. Frog, flavored with some sort of very tender mushroom.

On your way out you pick up a business card, souvenir of the restaurant with the world's strangest name, and several letters too long for the cash register display which flashes: THE DINING ROOM MANA.

I seem, said Fuller, to be a verb.

It takes, sometimes, a little while for the news you read to catch up with you – for its substance and significance to register. So only now does what you learned at the end of last week take on the weight to move you: that the Senate, by a 92 to 6 margin, passed another \$162 billion in Iraq-Afghanistan war funding already approved in the House. Two Senators weren't present for the vote – but they probably would have yea'd the measure – and the naysayers aren't peaceniks, rather Republicans who apparently didn't cotton to some aspect of the spending package.

Hitler and Stalin must be smiling down – or up – on us and saying something on the order of *We knew you'd come around some day.*