

8/16 A lump on the macadam inches from your bike tire. Double back. The sparrow is injured, lying on its side, breaths labored, paradoxical. Park the bike, take a newspaper from the kiosk, maneuver the sparrow aboard and convey it over the bushes onto a patch of shaded lawn.

If you crush its tiny bones with your shoe, how is this like, or not, treading on the glass at a Jewish wedding? But, of course, this is something you cannot bring yourself to do.

When you return, an hour plus late, post-café, you peer over the bushes hoping it to find it vanished, but knowing that's not possible, then as you do. On its back. Absolutely still. Only movement that of six companionable flies.

Great grief, great beauty.

Or, as your ex-friend J. used to ask of any failed fiction: *Where's the broken glass?*

A swath of Europa set upon by deadly storms, for which no apparent celestial or atmospheric mechanics can account. Particularly clobbered: Southern Poland – tornados, the whole nine yards – as well as Austria and the Italian Alps. Has weather become still another form of diplomacy carried on by other means?

The arhats, or luóhàn, sixteen of them, so it's said, dwell on earth in hidden paradisiacal realms. There, and here, they preserve the Buddha's teaching until the coming of the Maitreya.

*In this great future you can't forget your past,*

*So dry your tears, I say...*

Sturgeon moon tonight.

Fish 'r' jumping.

And the *Messenger* headlines grow high as an elephant's eye. One in particular causes your chair to nearly relieve itself of paroxysming you:

"Allies Ask Obama to Make 'Hope' More Specific."

Then, "Kremlin Agrees to Framework for Cease-Fire in Georgia." Not quite as powerful a kick, but still pretty droll. Only in the language of grammatically-correct absurdism is it possible to agree on a framework. And of course, there go the little minions, scampering about with their squares, hammers, nails, saws and two-by-fours, searching high and low for a foundation on which to build it.

Mickey puts on the sorcerer's cap and orders the brooms to fetch water.

Guan Yin, with infinite compassion, listens to the utterances of the world.

Even the ka-ching of Jerry Wexler, buying the stairway to heaven. Asked once what he wanted inscribed on his tombstone, R&B's godfather replied: "More bass."

8/17 Un emilio de F.:

*No plums on 26th Street. The tree is an ash – a green ash, I think. (Olive family, though its fruit is dry and winged.) Ashes are dioecious, meaning that flowers are unisexual and male and female reproductive organs are produced on separate individuals. So even if the tree is not too stressed to flower – something to watch for next spring – it wouldn't produce fruit unless a plant of the opposite sex was within pollinating distance. If tree is a male – something to confirm when it flowers – it would, of course, never produce fruit.*

You're going to have to get him to unpack that a bit when next you meet.

A green ash. Just like the one you walked circles around in Maine. But not just like.

Love is just a four-legged bird.

8/18 What to say about a world in which child sacrifice is not just normal, but ubiquitous?

There is only so long that one can swim against the current.

It seems that what we are is also made up of what we are not. And that the 'r' keeps rolling.

Once upon a time it came to be that a great mass of people emigrated to the land of the perfunctory. In the transient way of things.

The engine has stopped and now all the cars, from coalbin to caboose are trying to get ahead of it.

You grasp at things and they melt into space. And then, in some other place, reconstitute.

Ergo, ergot.

The Puritans. Ah, but Plymouth rock *did* land on them.

Radish, the orgasmic form of turnip.

If god gives you leeks, make leek soup.

Caveat, caviar.

Anything goes.

Whose feet are you prepared to wash?

Compañero.

The demo crew is down to five guys picking through the rubble and the steamshovel operator.



In Union Square a nocturnal gathering. And afterward in Williamsburg, along Bedford Street, the Great Panda Riot of Saturday Last.

Don't be bamboo-zled.

We're in retrograde. Mercury's doing just fine.

"And furthermore," shouts a woman on the corner, "I don't like your attitude!" She addresses presence or presences invisible to you.

How the other 9/10 lives.

The forty acres, well, that's as it may be. But Lord, so many mules.

*Informers inform. Burglars burgle. Killers kill. Lovers love. And in matters of, er, equities, Bears bear.*

8/19 And Obama's running mate is...

Sméagol.

Who?

8/20 The answer, *compañero*, is blowing in the solar wind.

Play the (g)race card (from the bottom of the deck).

Anywhere in the deck.

Deal the gracenote from the bottom of the scale.

Anywhere in the scale.

Olympic wind-down. Comes news of the death, at age 87, of Hua Guofeng, one-time Wise Leader under Mao. For a brief while just after Mao's death, Hua rose to

the positions of Paramount Leader of the CPC, and premier. An interesting man who passed through interesting times, not least the Cultural Revolution. Proximal cause and victim of the Two Whatever.

Theater is politics carried on by other means.

*Mustn't go that way! Mustn't hurt the precious!*

Try Harpo® brand voice lozenges!

Only Wednesday, but the *Messenger* previews on its front page, an article from this coming weekend's magazine section: "How Obama Reconciles Dueling Views on Economy." The breakout paragraph runs thusly: "Barack Obama is both more left-wing and more right-wing than many people realize. A 15-year debate among economics experts in the Democratic Party helps explain why."

Now after such a teaser, who, who could resist devouring the rest?

How long will European and Asian investors continue to prop up the floor under Fannie and Freddy? For how long will they be able to? And ah, the resource-laden Caucasus: mountain chain that delineates Russia's putative bicontinental spread, and encompasses Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and those ever-Breakaway Republics.

And ah, the fauna: eagle, bear, bison, leopard, wolf. And golden eagle. Flora too, like there's no tomorrow. Endemic. Timeless, or seemingly so.

While yesterday, far north, and a little to the west, in that great Eurasian

metropole called Moscow, a certain Alexei Kudrin, Finance Minister, announced to the world that, Da, Russia will continue buying up Fannie and Freddie's debt, but not on quite such a bolshoi scale as beforesky.

McCain, Obama, vitchever is becoming President, for sure he face hell of a Caucasian problem.

Before anyone imagined or dealt in molybdenum, manganese and natural gas, or bored into the earth in search of Texas tea – these mountains held up the world. And somewhere in those lofty reaches, Zeus caused a titan to be chained, for the crime of gifting fire to the freezing furless creatures known as we. And what an unintended consequence ramified from Prometheus's temerity, for hasn't our slaughter and strife furnished the gods with entertainment ever since?

Monsanto offloads their patent mega-cow hormone operation to Ely Lily for one third of a bil. For which investors boost the former and boot the latter. Sad, these petty plays. Hardly enough to get a rise out of Zeus.

MonsantObama. Not even a snore from high Olympus.

And the *Messenger's* travel scribe enthuses, front page, about the nightlife of "surprisingly picturesque" Vladivostok: "Extravagance at Russia's Edge..."

Toward Chinatown by underground rail. On the lower platform of the West



4th Street station, a duet: Steel pan, accompanied by African drum and shekere. It takes a few bars to recognize the tune, but yes, it is, they're slamming out a version of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" so relentlessly percussive it could raise the dead, while shattering their bones. Rush hour music for a zero-modulation world.

8/21 The past cannot hold you.

Howevermuch we live on land, our medium of interchange is water.

Two oxymorons walk into a bar...

Miracle of the lobes and fissures.

Swim for it!

"What I paint may not rank with the work of ancient masters, but compared with recent paintings, I daresay mine are quite different." Said Zhao Mengfu *kan ya makan*.

Old and sane.



La guerre est fini. Pour maintenant.

Comes an email, subject headed *Hello Dear*, from Mrs. Sylvia Phillips, to wit:

Dearly Beloved,

It's my pleasure to contact you for a business venture which I intend to establish in your country. Though I have not met with you before but I believe one has to risk confiding in someone to succeed sometimes in life.

My name is Mrs. Sylvia Philips Mgbue, from Zimbabwe. My son and I escaped from our country at the heat of the political crisis in my country after losing my husband and daughter in the political war; as a result of the political instability going on in my country right now.

My Late husband Dr. Chynwa Philips Mgbue, was a great politician in Zimbabwe political arena. Because of my father's sincerity, He was killed on the 04th of April 2008 by unknown soldiers in our residential house. See news for more information about my late husband's death. [There follows, in parentheses, a nonworking link to the CBS news website]

when this accident occurred at about "11:15 am on the 04th April 2008, my father did not died on the spot rather he was rushed to Harare Hospital by unknown soldiers and he managed to me through his assistance, and only managed to sneak a written message to me, explaining his condition concerning a diplomatic box contenting the sum of US\$21,320,000.00. (Twenty One Million, Three Hundred and Twenty Thousand United State Dollars) in a security company collecting centre in London.

He instructed us to leave Harare immediately for our safety, we relocated to Abidjan the capital city of Cote d'Ivoire for our safety and in respect of my consignment box in London, which I and my son wants you to assist us, by standing as our trustee, to help us receive this consignment on our behalf. The box (Consignment) contains \$21.320. Million U.S. Dollars that was deposited by my late husband for us,

However, I want you to know that Mr. Johnson Ascot who was suppose to receive this consignment in London, began to demand for 50% of the total sum after the death of my late husband, which I and my son did not agree on for any reason, that was why we have to stop the delivery to him immediately, and search for another Beneficiary who can help us on this.

Let be honest with you, I have contacted some persons in respect of this transaction before now, to assist me in this very matter. But due to the fraudulent activities going on in the world through the internet today and otherwise, all the people I contacted felt I am not for real. That is why I am

writing you this mail with due sense of humanity and responsibility, and with the awareness that you will give it a sympathetic and mutual consideration.

I will give you 20% for the total fund involve for your assistance, because that was the former agreement my late husband have with our foreign partner Mr. Johnson Ascot before he later change his mind because of his greed that is why I and my son put a stop to the delivery to him, please if you are willing to help me us, kindly reply us so that we can proceed immediately because of the time limits.

Thanks and kind regards.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs. Sylvia Philips Mgbue

The awful suspicion that at least in part, Russia's maneuvers in Georgia and its southern "near abroad" aim toward securing supply lines to Iran, even as yet more American and British ships head for the Arabian Gulf.

I like this not, Horatio.

Is it possible that the economic importance of resources is secondary to that of providing an excuse to make war?