

9/10 Fireballs over El Norte yesterday, numerous meteors as bright as Jupiter or Venus – some twenty-five, más o menos, over a stretch of four hours. Most of them, seemingly, having a radiant near Perseus. September Perseids are not unknown, but they're usually few and dim. Unknown comet?

Eh, la ba!

See Lehman Brothers as a big ol' aircraft carrier, topheavy from all the planes massed on its flight deck, torpedoed definitively by submariner bears.

Lions and tigers and...!

Bears, bears and rumors of bears.

The fog and friction of bears.

The art of bears.

Hi, bear nation.

Canaries in the bear submersible.

What color are they, ensign?

Yellow sir!

Very good, full ahead and fire at will.

An ebbing tide sinks all boats. Excepting those already sunk.

And as the Caspian shrinks...

...just because you have stopped sinking doesn't mean you're not still under water.

Writ Amy Hempel, oncet.

Gogol. "The Overcoat."

Sarah Putin. No, must be a misprint.

Sarah Bellum. Yeah.

An old rumor of bankruptcy acts as a surface-to-air strike against United (We Fall) Airlines. And down comes the old stock like a stone. Do bears lie?

"This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend." Said Maxwell Scott, a newspaper man in the denouement of John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*. Kan ya makan.

Change you can bereave in.

Little America – run, run!

Chasing waterfalls. Don't, yo.

Idea for a teeshirt: POTENTIAL FAILURE

Uncle Ho's Cabin. Uncle Joe's Cabin.

Sarah Putin, must be a typo.

Whose airspace?

Ground to dust. Ground to air.

Did you hear the one about Lehman and the bear?

Or the pig with the wooden leg?

What's my punchline?

This is the part of the story where Hansel and Gretel find themselves in a very Jungian neck of the woods.

And bears, and orangutan...

Syndrome initials after names, juste comme the professional class:

Jack Sloan, TBI, PTSD

Jim McFee, ADD

But it doesn't have to be either/or.

Miriam Feinstein, MSW, SAAD

Like a fat man walking down a skinny road.

Central Park midday, Midtown, Downbound C-train: Amazing. Even with the reclining Euro, the tourists haven't gone away. And they're snapping pictures of everything almost at random – that odd non-vista, an undistinguished bush, or inchoate bit of mosaic – as if their subjects, or their selves might vanish in the next shutter blink.

And a golden drop of Retsin...

It takes lots of bucks to get a Little Bang. But as of tomorrow, after fourteen years and \$8 billion, the little rascals at CERN are finally ready to race their particles round and round the seventeen mile long track faster than lightning and whamo! smash 'em together. They're curious as cats to see what happens and nobody can talk any kind of sense into them.

Not likely, but it's possible they'll create a black hole that'll first engulf Switzerland, Lichtenstein, the Bahamas – all the major no-questions-asked capital havens – before getting around to the rest of us.

9/11 Rethinking the Big Bank theory. First, change the name from Lehman to Loman. Right away, you'll at least get sympathy, as scarce a commodity on The Street – there's more among salesmen. Nevertheless, the *Times* reports that the stubbornly soi dissant Lehman, "one of the nation's largest investment banks, said it expected to report a \$3.9 billion loss for the third quarter, an even bigger deficit than analysts had forecast, and cut its dividend to shareholders. It also announced long-expected plans to sell most of its prized investment management division and, more radically, to split itself into a 'good' bank and a 'bad' one.

"The split, a strategy employed with mixed success by several other banks in the 1980s and 1990s, would enable Lehman to hive off worrisome commercial mortgages and real estate.

"Lehman plans to spin off about \$30 billion of such assets into a separate company – the 'bad' bank — which would be owned by Lehman shareholders. The hope is that the holdings of the bad bank will eventually increase in value, yielding profits for its shareholders....

"...Executives at Lehman also said the mere creation of the 'bad bank' structure could help it sell other remaining assets. Potential bidders would know the firm now had the option of moving assets into the bad bank, where they do not have to be valued at current market prices, rather than selling at what they viewed as fire-sale levels."

OK, not Loman Bothers. Jekyll and Hyde. Or Burke and Hare.

And when it comes to banging particles, for less money than it would have cost to bail out Lehman, we coulda been a contender. Blame Congress, which in 1993

scrapped plans for the much panted-after Superconducting Supercollider, an accelerator so powerful it would have left CERN in the kosmik dust. This after its projected cost Big Banged out to \$11 billion – by today’s standards a mere bag of shells and a sum for which, even factoring inflation, one could have built another five or six World Trade Centers.

But at CERN, as at our own Fermilab in Illinois, the Snark these science fellows are hunting is a hypothetical particle called the Higgs boson, which, somehow, by banging enough protons together at increasingly higher energies, they hope to drive from its hiding place yelling, “Enough already, I give up. I’m here!”

Supuestamente, the Higgs boson endows other particles with mass. But the bangers also hope to plumb the nature of the elusive dark matter that, on dit, makes up 25 percent of the universe and provides, what the *Times* science writers describe as “the scaffolding for galaxies.” Perhaps not the rebar, ready mix, marble facades, concierge service, underground garage and heated rooftop pool, but at any rate the scaffolding.

And amidst the happy clamor, one wag, a University of Michigan physicist, calls the CERN collider, “a why machine.” One might well ask. A machine for manufacturing whys?

But then, “some [scientists] dream of revealing new dimensions of space-time.” Ah, the terrible itch to see the face behind the veil. It driveth men mad.

Tonight, about thirty minutes after sunset, if one looks west into the twilight through binocs or a telescope, one might be lucky enough to see Venus and its moon. Its moon?! Ah, that would be the planet Mars, which from our coign of vantage, will appear to be orbiting a mere third of a degree from the evening star.

And internal worlds. What happens when they collide? Or rip asunder?

The elephant has left the living room.

Pipeline dreams. Highways for oil and gas. To nowhere fast.

Baku Baku.

The U.S. is an only child, hence no mirror siblings surround us. Only the funhouse we've managed to imagine.

And the glass at our feet.

...Blood in the streets runs a river of sadness...

The shadow of your snarl.

Collide-a-scope.

Big bucks. Little bang.

What *did* we see that morning seven years past?

...Yeah the river runs down the legs of the city...

On and on the futile search for the real.

We seize whatever part of the elephant we can blindly feel and say, aha! that's the beast! Yet there's less, ever less, in our hands.

And Happy Loman.

A Coney Shanksville of the mind.

The feminine being ever ripped to pieces for cannibalization and use value by the chaotic male, we now offer a mouth for Vice President. With legs.

...Think about the break of day

She came and then she drove away

Sunlight in her hair...

Ike. Coriolis effect. Amped to max. And there's Coriolus too. Particularly *Coriolus versicolor*, a polypore. Used since forever in Chinese medicine as a tonic. Certain clinical studies suggest indicate it may have immunostimulant and anti-tumor properties useful in treating a variety of cancers.

...Blood is the rose of mysterious union...

Riders on the Sturm und Drang.

The sky over Lower Manhattan has, at any rate, the good grace to be partly overcast.

...Blood on the rise it's following me...

Sang the Doors of Perception kan ya makan.

Mixed, as they say, sun and clouds.



You were out at coffee when it happened, but Katie grabbed her camera and caught it: balloons with American flags attached, rising off the roof of the Port Authority Building.

Galveston, oh Galveston, I still hear your sea winds blowin'...

Ike looks to make landfall as a probable Cat. 3, an hour or two after midnight Saturday. He's drawn a bead on Houston, one of the vital organs of the global military industrial complex, not least NASA's Mission Control and home to a goodly concentration of the nation's oil refineries. Arguably the busiest port también, and a very dense population center.

...Galveston, oh Galveston, I still hear your sea waves crashing

While I watch the cannons flashing

I clean my gun and dream of Galveston...

Workers by the thousand evacuated off hundreds of oil platforms in the Gulf – even as the seas rise, even as crude sinks toward the \$100 mark.

Nature or nature nurtured? And if the latter, by whom? CIA, Triads, Ivans? Resource wars waged with wind and water and trembling earth? Or is Gaia, finally, just fed up with us all? Or will we behold another miracle miss?

Earlier today, across from Tarallucci where you coffeed with T.J. you watched from your sidewalk table as seemingly the entire the personnel of Engine 14 gathered in front of the firehouse in dress uniform to pose for their formal seven years after photo. All except one guy in the front row, odd man out, who wore blue shorts, polo shirt and

baseball-style FDNY cap. If narrative were a table cloth, no matter how much starch, nor how hot the iron, you could never get all the wrinkles out.

Thirty-fifth anniversary of the overthrow of the Allende government. “I don’t see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people,” said Henry Kissinger, then U.S. National Security Advisor, shortly before the coup d’état.



The Sarah Palin “Schoolgirl” action figure, from Herobuilders.com.

No, no, bubby, you got her all wrong. Especially the legs.

Hard to see if her waist rotates. If not, useless.