

*October 7, 2008*

Declension – in certain languages the inflection of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives in categories such as case, number and gender.

Also a decline or decrease; deterioration: “States and empires have their periods of declension.” (Sterne)...

Contract – as a verb, literally to draw in or constrict.

*October 14*

A large banner across the window of the check cashing storefront on Eighth Avenue and 21st Street: WE CASH CHECKS PAYABLE TO CORPORATIONS.

A block and a half north, between 23rd and 24th Streets, on the street next to GAP, a convoy of small military vehicles, mixed camo and dun-colored, parked by the curb. A few double parked. Several camo'd soldiers lounging around leaning against the jeep and truck hoods, others snoozing in the cabs. You ask one of the lounging ones, “What are you guys doing here.” Sergeant O’Neill, who’s taken off his forage cap and runs his hand over his buzz-cut replies “Waiting for someone.” That’s all the 411 he’s good for, smile-smirk and all. You continue north and as you overtake a woman who’d also stopped to enquire, ask her what the soldier she’d talked to said.

“Nothing,” she says in a Brit accent, “I asked him if this had anything to do with the submarine that was in the [Hudson] river this morning, but he wouldn’t say. It was a lovely sight, the sailors all lined up on the deck in white...”

*October 15*

All along Broadway, from Park Place to Bowling Green, the stench of death. And no one, neither ambling tourist nor frenetic office worker seems to smell it. Not a single handkerchief held up to a solitary nose. And yes, el mundo es un panuelo. Sulfur in the hole.

Eat the fortune. Feed the cookie to the sparrows.

**October 22**

Peripeteia – [Gk. from *peripitein*, to fall around, change suddenly, from *peri* + *piptien* to fall – more at FEATHER]: a sudden or unexpected reversal of circumstances or situation, esp in a literary work.

Krummholz – German, from *Krumm* crooked + *holz* wood. Stunted forest characteristic of Timber line. Name for a character: Baron von Krummholz.

The “lost” and “rediscovered” comet Bernard Boattini sweeps past earthgasm at something like seventy-five lunar distances. Comet BB’s dimensions “unknown.”

*Al pie del cañon* – to stand beside the cannon, like a soldier.

**October 24**

Activity at the seminary site comes closest you’ve seen to the actions of a human hive. Nearly heroic coordination of labor. A.L. remarks that one could paint a WPA mural of it.

Down and up the Khyber pass, like a teddy bear... Reversals ‘r’ us. What a difference a century makes. In the Great Game, the goalposts, and mountain ranges, scarcely move at all. But the rules, well, you make ‘em up as you play.

Proposal for a new financial instrument: the Monkey Mock-it Account.

Today marks the first anniversary of the Comet Holmes explosion. Explosion? Well, what’s the right word? Undeniably whatever Holms is made of radically changed state, expanded outward very quickly and became more diffuse.

Some folks followed its transformation via telescope, then when it was large enough, with their own eyes. Most people didn’t likely know about it. Did we all feel something though, or did some of us? And what was the nature of the change, to it and us?

*November 28*

Decisions, decisions! Whether to appoint a fish or a marine mammal as minister of aquaculture?

*March 20*

Spring arrives in a coat of wet snow. And just when you've got the problem solved: *That's it! We need to roll even more hearts down the pyramid* – what do you see but sails coming up over the eastern rim.

Late afternoon breakfast at Le G. You stand up to put your coat on and glance down 20th Street just as a flock of pigeons, startled, takes off the street from near the PS11 playground. Shimmering. They swoop around, regroup in more or less the same spot, startle again and take off shimmering. It's if something compressed were exploding into a hundredfold, or myriad fragments subsuming into a whole. Four times you watch this, coat halfway between off and on.

Wondrous and rare our age wherein an all-embracing conformity manifests through hyper-individualism.

Two American naval vessels, engaged in a “Maritime Security Operation,” contrive to collide in the Strait of Hormuz. One is a – need one say nuclear? – submarine, the other an amphibious assault ship carrying a thousand personnel. Fifteen sailors aboard the sub, the Hartford, are injured, and the assault ship, the New Orleans, suffers a ruptured fuel tank which disgorges 25,000 gallons of fuel into the Gulf.



Rick Scuteri/Reuters

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke spoke at a community bankers' convention on Friday.

And that stage set... uh, exactly what are they trying to tell us? Their sections don't look any too golden.

Dusk, ESE:



*March 21*

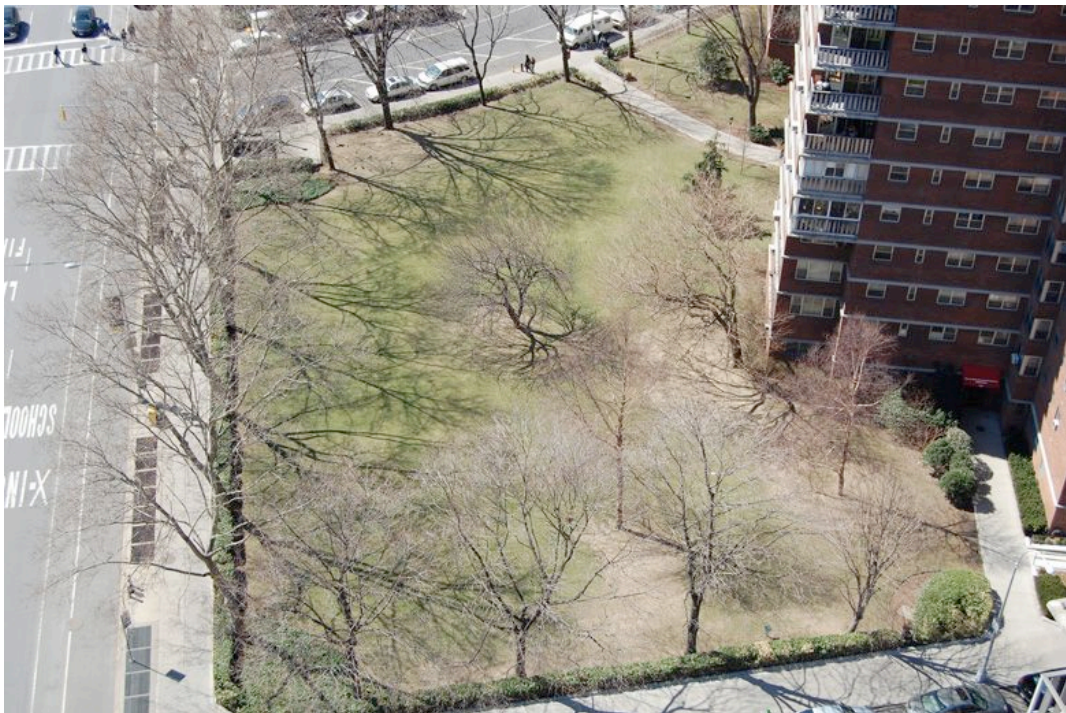
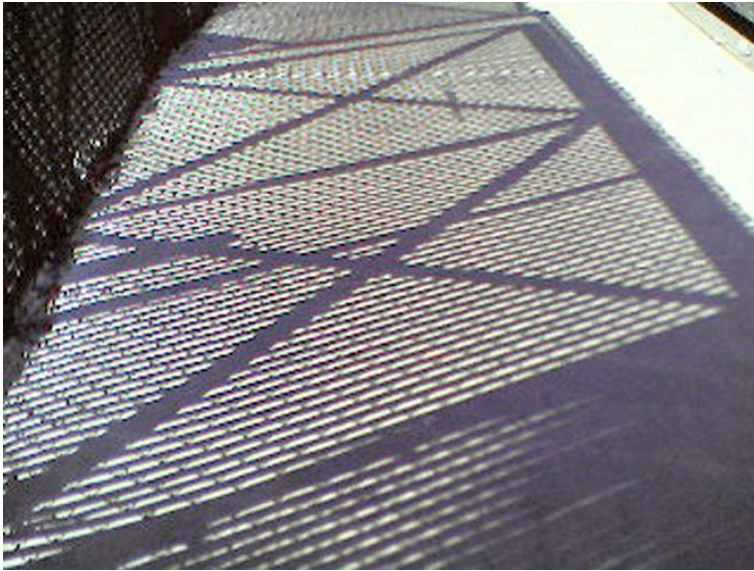


Early morning haze. The golden pyramidal tower near center is Cass Gilbert's U.S. Courthouse in Foley Square.

Then toward noon, severe clear the sky O sky.



And on the ground and raised above it, wherever's surface, shadow supremely defined.



Long awaited: *The Origin of the Specious*. Ah, but will it ever be published, much less apprehended and writ – or taken – down?

Still, the title of Christopher Bollas's book evermore unscrolls as wonderment:  
*Shadow of the Self: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known.*

Sez Reuters – dateline Luxembourg: “UN Panel Says World Should Ditch Dollar.”

Luxembourg – A U.N. panel will next week recommend that the world ditch the dollar as its reserve currency in favor of a shared basket of currencies, a member of the panel said on Wednesday, adding to pressure on the dollar.

Currency specialist Avinash Persaud, [chairman of an entity called Intelligence Capital, ex-currency chief at JP Morgan and] a member of the panel of experts, told a Reuters Funds Summit in Luxembourg that the proposal was to create something like the old Ecu, or European currency unit, that was a hard-traded, weighted basket.

Ah those, hard-traded, weighted baskets, how they do get holey, like the old oaken bucket. But truly is this not the ancient prophesy fulfilled: *Dollars to donuts?* [Ich bin ein Berliner.] And the ultimate non-convertibility thereof?

Once upon a time in '44, Bretton Woods. But by 1971 couldn't. And now?

Proposal for a new unit of exchange: the WouldaCouldaShoulda.

Stood in bed. But better kept under the mattress.

The welt(schmerz) of nations going to hell in a hard-weighted basket? Or, like Toto, do we wriggle ourselves free and let evil pedal on.

Here comes the twister.

Don't bother, they're here.





Chen Rong, *Nine Dragons* (detail), 1244



Helter skelter gimme shelter.