

Seeing
the **there**
there



visual poetry
david alpaugh



Once Upon A Time

**Like the Soul
is difficult to locate
no wonder if you've forgotten
killing seven flies with one blow
being brought back to life by a kiss
stealing rampion from a witch's garden
enough if you remember simply this
long ago an ownliest bottle opened
a beneficent genie did appear
and you were granted more
than three paltry wishes**

Albert's Mind Began Whirling



LIKE A DERVISH!



He Cried Eureka! Everything's Curvish!

REVOLUTIONARY

SONNET



LEAF FALL

Why do I hide
behind this leaf?
to mask a smile?
conceal a grief?

Or urge passersby
to contemplate
the "I" no "I"
can penetrate.



Each of us has an animal within

SHE'S A ZEBRA

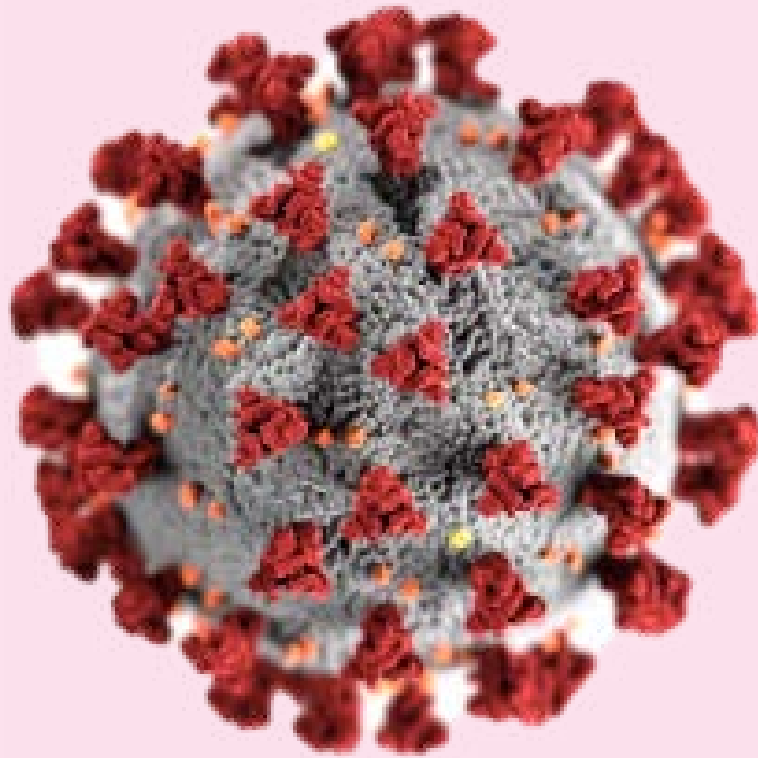
If she only knew

One of her life's mysteries

would be solved

Are you searching for the animal in you?

*On the Kinder, Gentler Image
for Covid19 at www.cdc.gov*



Why should a killer so callous, so vicious
Look so darn cuddly? So unsuspecting?
Such beguiling duplicity slyly deletes
“Beauty is Truth” from that ode by John Keats.

A rotter so dangerous, so ruthless, uncanny
Should **strike** us as **jagged** or **squishy** or **oily**.
Not like a birthday gift from your Granny!
(A throw pillow, say, or a doily.)



DISUNITED WE STAND

**But on 1 thing we agree:
We much prefer *fiction* to**

REALITY





HERAKLITUS

Says the way up and the way down are the same.

“I second his demotic Greek!” Old Possum chants.

Guess neither was ever buried in an



AVALANCHE



Should you come across Schrodinger's Cat
Let me know if it's living or dead.
Don't waste time looking underneath rocks.
Don't waste time looking under your bed.

That Cat's in a sealed box.
The box is in Schrodinger's head.
His Cat is both dead and alive.
But Schrodinger's simply dead.

THE THIRD COMING



**W. B. Yeats! Falconer!
Let your falcon go!
We're sick of watching
it wobble about
in the gyre!**

**Put things back together!
Cobble! Paste! Sew!
Don't be a slouch!
Lead us out
of this widening mire!**

THE TREE ADVISES ITS TWIGS



BEND to the Weight
Of the fluffiest Bluebird
THE HEAVIEST CROW
It's up to the wind to sigh
Your job is to silently bear
whatever

falls

from

The Sky

WHO



To prove he isn't really wise
That only our kind can think
We've a mumbo-jumbo word
To humble every beast & bird

INSTINCT



MAYFLY

Here Today

Gone Today

No Tomorrow



overwhelmed

by an urge to break free

sick of the tyranny of water

was she heeding Rilke's advice

trying to change her life



Who Says "Poetry Makes Nothing Happen?"

Back when poetry readings were held in caves
(Before Dante saw Beatrice; Petrarch, Laura)
a lusty rhapsode sang to **ONE** of many cave girls
gathered round him on the cold rock floor:

"Your Lips are Like Roses... Cherries... Wine...."

A few days later LIPSTICK was invented!



THE CRYING OF LOT #449

Today it's Sotheby's delight (and duty)
To auction Emily Dickinson's Mind
Via her poem "I died for Beauty."
(We've acquired the manuscript—signed!)

A sheik from Dubai bids 900 million...
Going once, going twice, going ... thrice?
(We owe it to our poet to top a billion
Lest she suffer "disgrace of price.")



LIEUTANT COLUMBO

Interrupts the Duke of Ferrara's Latest Nuptial

**Fra Pandolf sez someone's buried
behind that muralled wall.**

**Claus of Innsbruck reports what he calls
"a sickening smell."**

**Hate to barge in on your wedding festivities
with this funereal call.**

**Sarge! Dynamite "My Last Duchess!"
And, Sir—please don't yell.**

Damn It, Mr. Blake!



Flies Are Not At All

Like thee or me (or him or her or us).
Swatter in hand, I nail 'em to the wall
Without regret. Sorry! I'm not a wuss!

A tiger is shown in profile, yawning widely to reveal its sharp teeth and pink tongue. It is standing on a patch of dry, brownish ground. In the background, there is a large, reddish-brown structure that appears to be part of a zoo enclosure, possibly a wall or a large log. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Burning Bright

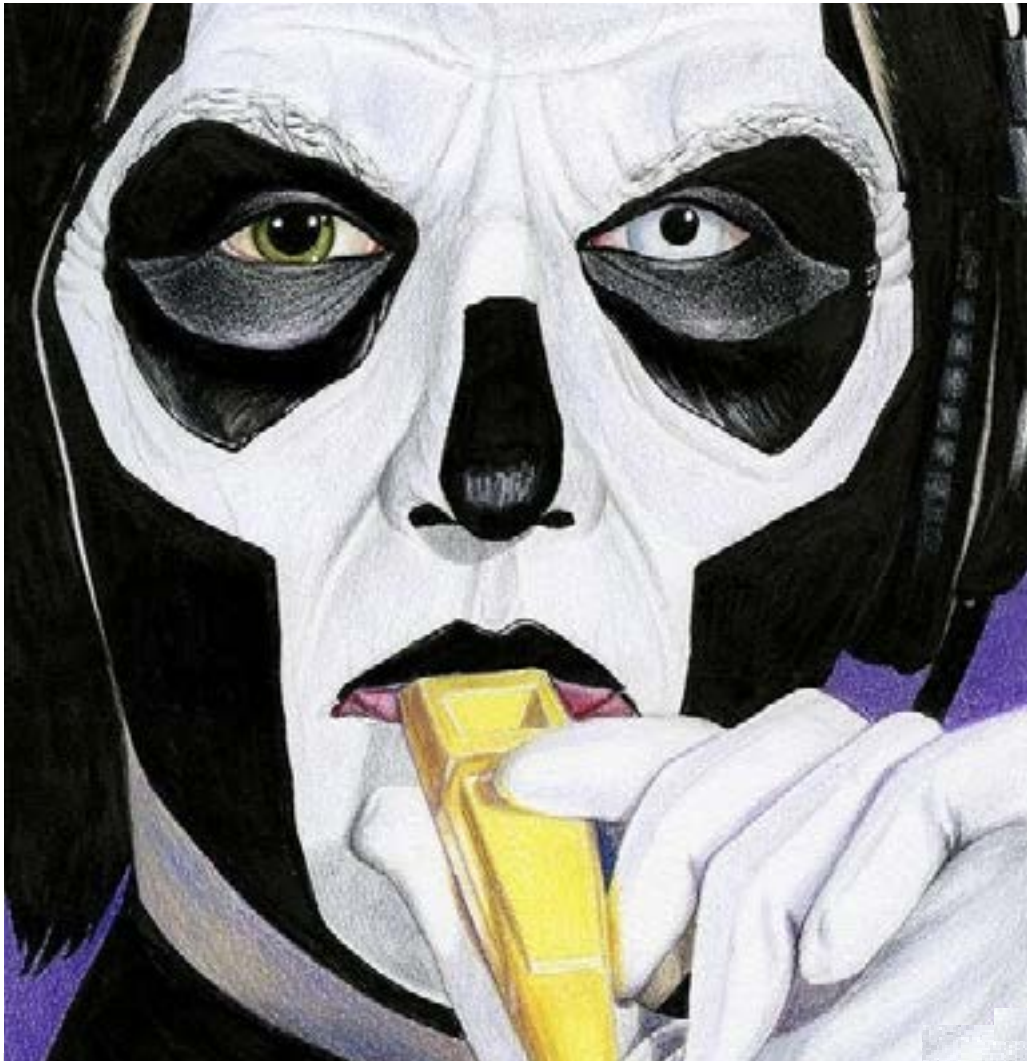
**Deer wonder why we had to shock.
Doves wonder why we had to awe.
Field mice, why we ran amok
The tyger must exercise its JAW.**



AGAINST always makes the scariest face;
always wields the bloodiest knife;
strongest crowbar; bluntest battering ram;
packs dirty bombs with raspiest nails;
attaches nuclear warheads to emails.

Against has season tickets to wherever
fans of the status quo gather en masse:
town halls, senate chambers, churches, saloons.
Against is the big bad wolf, howling at the door
to the little lambs within—baa-baa-ing **FOR.**





WHISTLEBLOWER

**Sits in the back of a smoke-filled room
Practicing on the Kazoo
Its dissonant note deep in his throat
Will he play it in the key of**

TRUE

A TALE OF 2 COLORS



BLACK versus GREEN

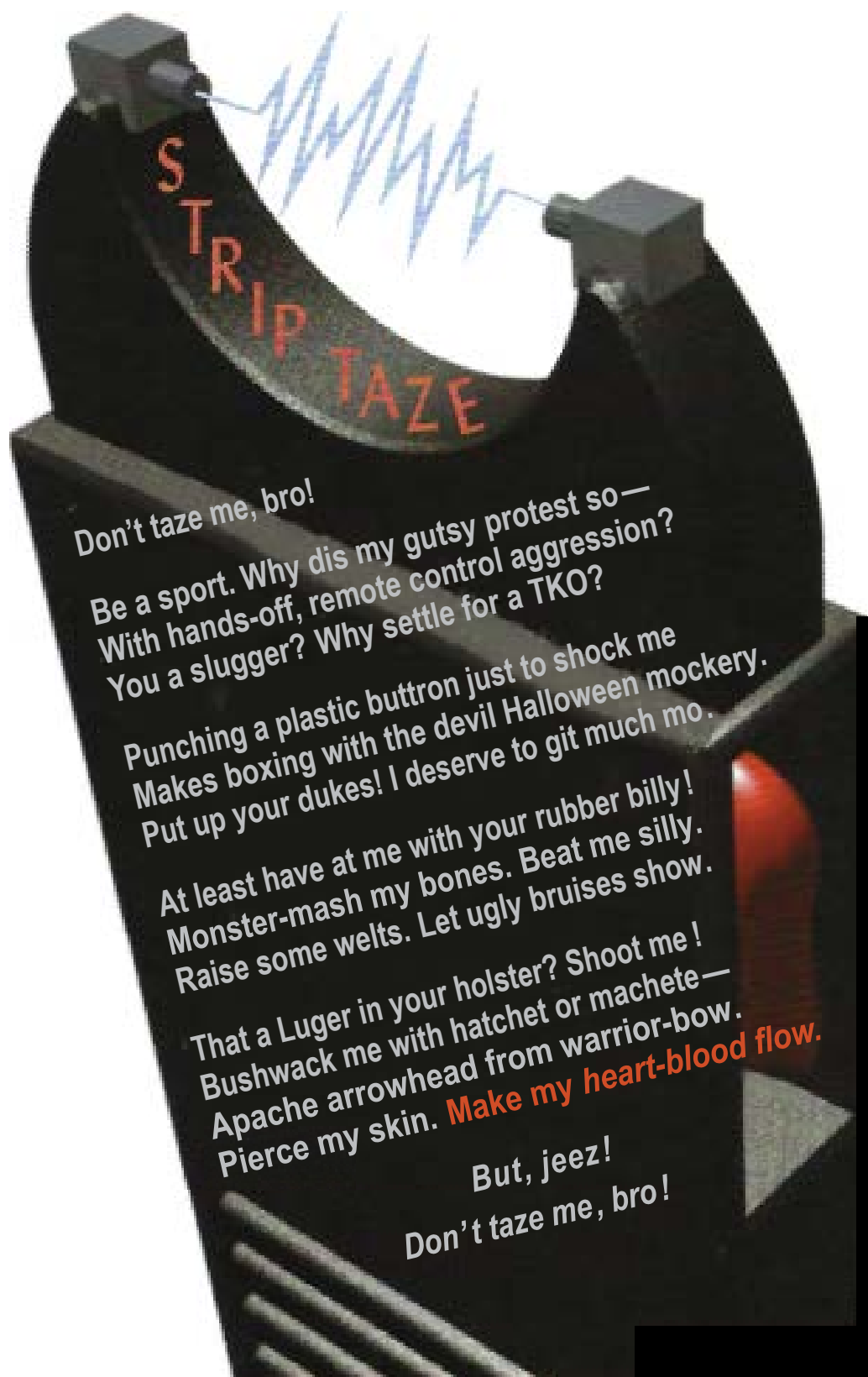
One driver gets to drive all the way home.
Have pizza with his family. Go to bed.

The other's pulled over. Sits in a cell.
Lies in a hospital ward. (Or is dead.)

EACH CAR HAS A BROKEN TAIL LIGHT

ALL TAIL LIGHTS ARE RED

But something has made "all the difference"
or so the poet said.



Don't taze me, bro!

Be a sport. Why dis my gutsy protest so—
With hands-off, remote control aggression?
You a slugger? Why settle for a TKO?

Punching a plastic buttron just to shock me
Makes boxing with the devil Halloween mockery.
Put up your dukes! I deserve to git much mo.

At least have at me with your rubber billy!
Monster-mash my bones. Beat me silly.
Raise some welts. Let ugly bruises show.

That a Luger in your holster? Shoot me!
Bushwack me with hatchet or machete—
Apache arrowhead from warrior-bow.
Pierce my skin. **Make my heart-blood flow.**

But, jeez!
Don't taze me, bro!



Trying to live in “the moment”?

No one’s ever that fast!

Those “bright” stars you “see”

May no longer be

All we can see is our past.



WHY MUST THEY TURN AND LOOK BACK?

Ruin everything at the last moment.

Lot's wife... Eurydice's lover....

Their answers only partly satisfy:

"Had to make certain she still followed."

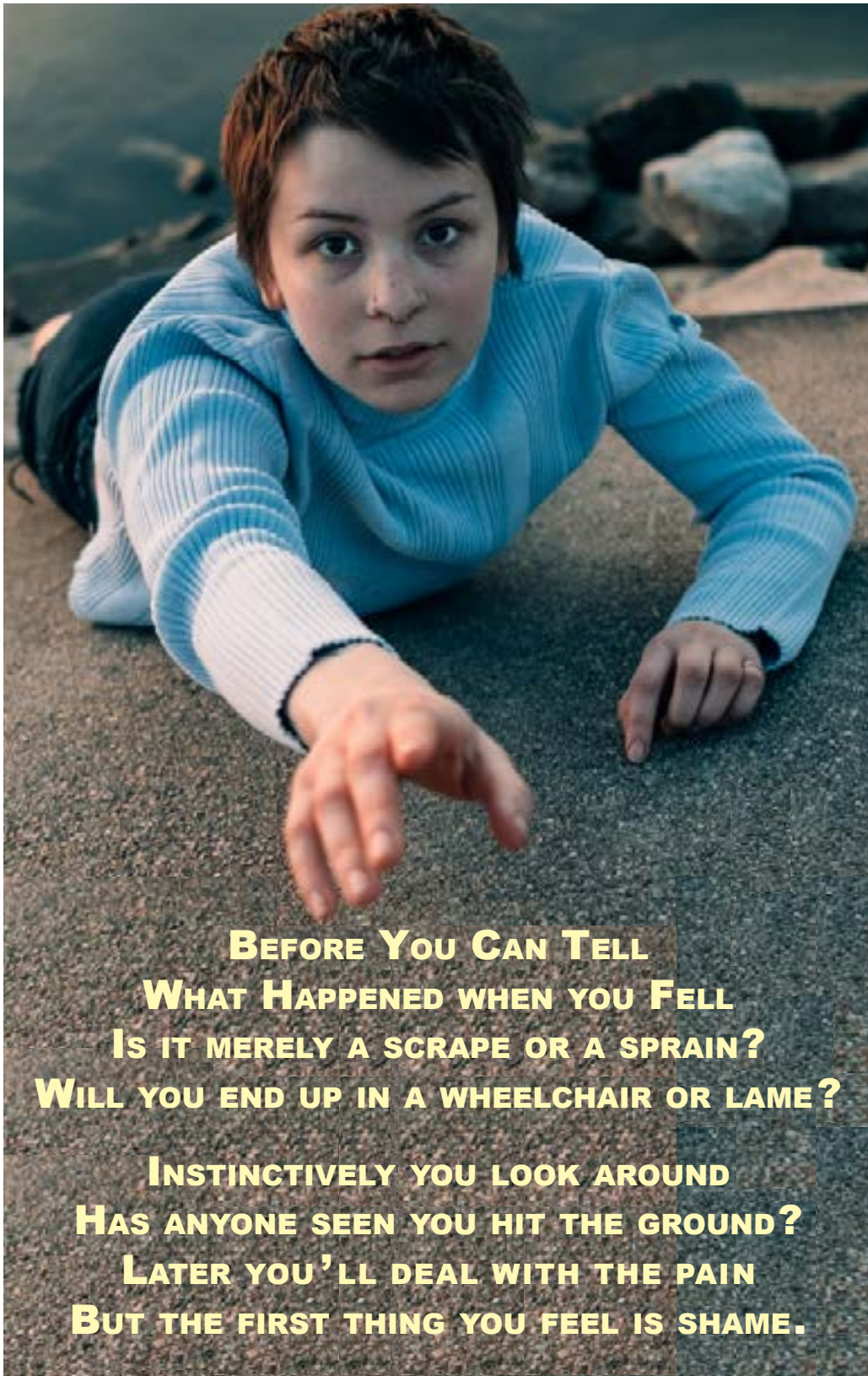
"Couldn't believe the city I loved was in flames."

Why, steps away from sure ground,

This urge to look over our shoulder?

To risk untold joy just up ahead

For a furtive glance behind.



**BEFORE YOU CAN TELL
WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU FELL
IS IT MERELY A SCRAPE OR A SPRAIN?
WILL YOU END UP IN A WHEELCHAIR OR LAME?**

**INSTINCTIVELY YOU LOOK AROUND
HAS ANYONE SEEN YOU HIT THE GROUND?
LATER YOU'LL DEAL WITH THE PAIN
BUT THE FIRST THING YOU FEEL IS SHAME.**



As you stand on a high place
SUDDENLY THAT URGE

Your knees weaken.
You feel the impulse grow.

Will you take a small step back
Into all the things you are?

It is not the business
of this poem to know.

The Weed Complains to the Gardener

I stood **ERECT** amidst your droopy flowers.
Fought pansy and chrysanthemum and won.
We were all treated equally by April Showers.
Why deny me my place in the Sun?



The Gardener Responds

For lots of reasons you can find
Well argued in gardening books.
But skip all that. Love is blind.
I just don't care for your looks!

The Crinklers of the Opera



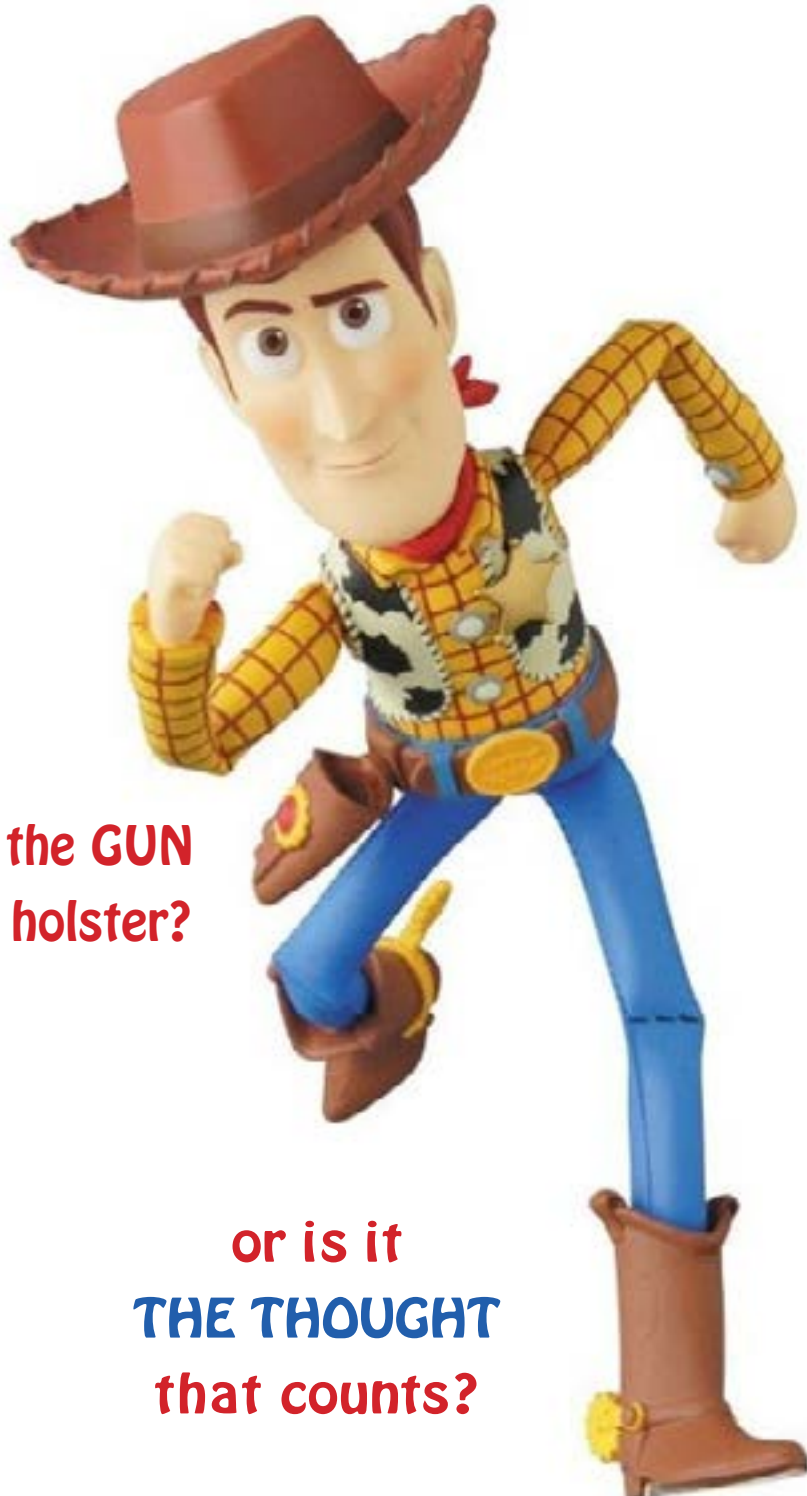
m&m's peanuts ritz crackers

Dulcet *instruments* purchased in the lobby
Are unwrapped in the dark for your delight
Enhancing the beauty of Cosi Fan Tutti
(Or whatever be The Music of the Night)

Does America's Favorite Cowpoke

MISS the GUN
in his holster?

or is it
THE THOUGHT
that counts?



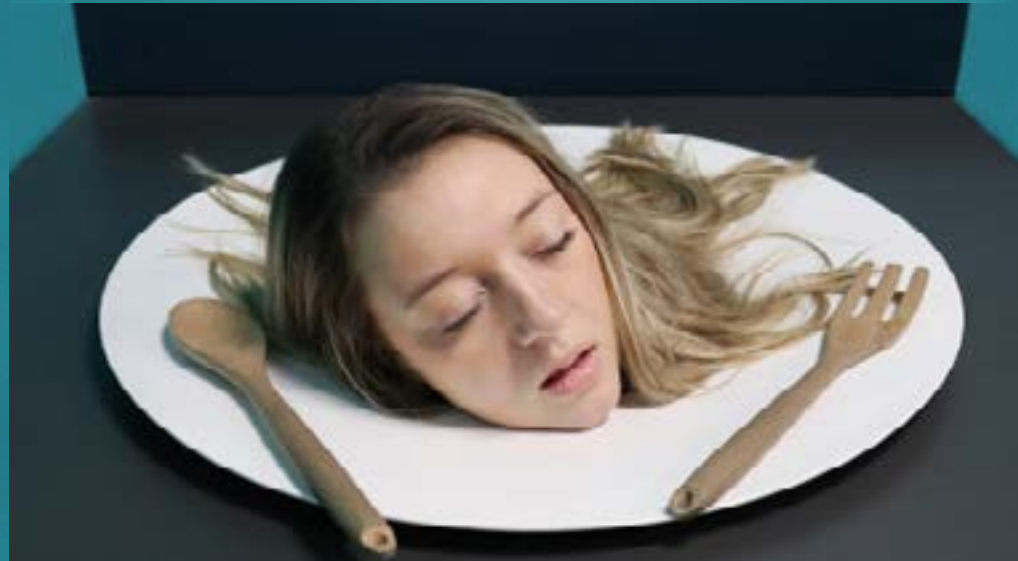
Dealing With Bad News



A messenger arrives and begs your attention.
He has climbed three mountains
And crossed a burning plain to be here.
He has survived the opening of the skies
And shaking of the earth.

Your firing squad is assembled in the courtyard.
Shall we kill him now?
Or do you want to hear the message?

—INSTALLATION—
At the Museum of Illusions, Toronto, Canada



Since our **BLOODY SUBCONSCIOUS** insists
HEADS be brought in upon **PLATTERS**
I much prefer hers



to John the Baptist's
(Prufrock says **his** is “no great matter”)

WOE IS ME!



By nature meant to be
A luscious pumpkin pie
To fatten up your rump

Here I sit on a porch
Pretending to be a torch

Wearing this humiliating grin
Someone gouged through my skin

Who in their right mind would ever think
That I was born to merely rot and stink
And end up buried in a city dump?



So why do I have bad dreams?
Wake & shake with fright?

Because I know those who suffer from

THE GOD DELUSION

are headed for

ENDLESS NIGHT

That they'll never get to know they were wrong.

And I'll never get to prove I was right.

TRUE STORY



the
reality
of
fiction
is
ALL
in
your
mind



At 5:15 on a Friday afternoon preceding the 4th of July
(from his hideout under the bleachers at the football stadium)
or a subway tunnel deep below the city . . .

THE JOKER

WILL CACKLE AND FLICK A SWITCH
and every traffic light in America will turn

GREEN GREEN GREEN GREEN GREEN
at precisely the same moment!

I'M BATMAN

This is the kind of SHIT I have to put up with

EVERY DAY!

SECRET SMILE



Consider the mime
Biding its Time
under your flesh

Eternity's Grin
hiding beneath
showing only its

T•E•E•T•H

when i try

to imagine

nothing



some thing

always gets

in the way



I saw two snow flakes
exactly alike
but they melted
before I could post them
to instagram

What are the juncos doing
in the snow-burdened pines
on this ice on every twig & needle night
in strict December?

singing

