

PRAISE FOR **FOR SALE**

“BRILLIANT...AS SUBLIME AS ANYTHING ROSEN HAS DONE IN THE PAST...THE WEB WHICH ROSEN SPINS IS PURE MAGIC...HILARIOUS.”

-OJPL Publishing

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-Anonymous

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-The Author

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Jacob Rosen

FOR SALE

A Novel



OJPL Publishing
Mānoa

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For Sale

For Sale

"A song...it celebrates survival, renewal, and the continuity that exists from generation to generation. Take to these isles, start a lion even. Tants, tants."¹

-A. Heymisher Bulgar

Oh, who are we kidding. There shall be no sale. [The author pauses, ceases its incessant internal monologue, and turns towards the reader.] Well, hello there. My, it's been a long, long time. How am I doing, you ask? Oh, I guess that I'm doing fine.² Nothing is gonna change my world.

*And the river it flows, as I say my last prayer.*³

We were discussing something of import, no? Or perhaps you are a newcomer to these climes. Perhaps this is your first rodeo. Perhaps you just arrived with your malihini self and are not aware of the rich series of

language (the mo'olelo momona) that forms this island chain. Well, just for you know, we have a tendency towards repeating our selves.⁴

Once upon a time, an entity of organized information there was. But a problem there was, too. Too much stuff. But do not let this bother you. No one is asking *you* to prove your value. The value of your existence is not in doubt. It is all of these extraneous others that....well, for now, let us put these matters outside of your mind. Once upon a time, there was a boy.

*Why do I just whither and forget all resistance...when you and your magic pass by?*⁵

Generic⁶ looked to the past. There was some sort of infinite ineffable something gestating just out of his view. Or, perhaps, it was directly inside of his view, hence his inability to see it.⁷ He turned towards the automated feedback mechanism that was, more or less, his closest companion. He cut into his banana-flavored pancakes with his tools that were made out of tiny quarks.

“So,” said Generic, “what makes you think that things will be different this time around?”

Regina looked down at the series of sticks and stones that lay on the table that she used as a sort of divining mechanism. She took a sip of hot earthy brown liquid from the black and blue mug. “Well,” she said, as she glanced a glance at her sleeping baby, “only one way to find out.”

Generic, whose full name was Generic Esophagus⁸ Octagon Pae⁹ The Third, came from a particular pae 'āina located somewhere in the middle of a large body of

water that coated a rocky, gaseous sphere that was, coincidentally, also made out of tiny little quarks, and was generally known (Generic was generally known, that is) to his friends, colleagues, and nemeses, as Gus.¹⁰ He opened his mouth, once again, and spoke these words.

“Oh boy, look at the time. Well,” he added, looking towards the baby, “a little bit of loving makes everything right, they say.”¹¹ Turning back towards Regina, “Tell Miko I say hi.” Gus took his last bite of pancakes, wiped off his fork and knife with the belly of his shirt, stood up, and walked his plate over to the dishtub. As he returned his utensils to their pouch and placed them in his pocket, he walked towards the exit and wiggled his fingers at the baby, whose name was yet unknown. A new day was beginning and there was much work to be done. There was a mystery afoot, and it was Gus’s job to examine it, what with his hard-earned classification as a public investigator.

Gus Pae sat at his desk, composing an electronic letter. “Some say our life is insane / but it isn’t insane / on paper.”¹² This, of course, is a metaphor.” He paused. “Okay, can you translate that to human speak and distribute it to all of the relevant sites?” He tried to maintain as archetypical a relationship as possible with his robotic secretary, Helene. Mechanisms clicked into gear and Gus added one more note. “Sign it, as per usual, Gus Pae, P.I., etc. and so forth.”

Gus took a deep breath and gazed out his wall-sized view screen, which was currently depicting a tranquil garden enclosure with green-brown palm trees gently swaying in the bluish skies amidst the foggy mountains

that surrounded them. Already, Gus had a hunger for lunch. *Funny how the time slips away*, he thought. He pressed a button on the intercom.

“Did those seeds sprout yet? I have a hunger for fresh greens.” Now might be a good time to ask ourselves the question, does there exist a non-exploitive method for obtaining information? What right did Gus have, for example, to request this information? And what right, for example, did Helene have, to give it? And the relationship between the requester and giver, was this fair and just? Does there exist in this world a fair and just compensation system for the exchange of information (or vegetables, for that matter)? Also, we should ask, what voices are being silenced in the telling of this story, and what voices are being stolen?

“BBRRRP. Mahkuz is heading to the store now. Do you want him to pick you up some BRRRRRPP.”

Gus was about to respond to the fading question when the intercom buzzed a second time.

“BBBRRRP. You have a visitor.”

Gus straightened his hat, sat up in his chair. He unplugged the headphones from the speaker and adjusted the volume of the music. As *Mele o Lānaʻi* filled the air, Gus reached over towards the wall and pulled down the shades. He picked up a pen and spoke into the intercom.

“Okay, send them in.”

The door opened.

A woman walked through the door.

Aha, thought Gus. It was a clue.

Meanwhile, at the fruit and vegetable market, an almost entirely unrelated young woman could be seen unsuccessfully attempting to enter the locked door of The Music School. "Music is the key," read the sign on the window, but perhaps she did not notice, or perhaps she simply could not read (music). Lawa Talkmaker walked through the stalls. Someone was procuring bananas.

Lawa walked into the café. She requested the soup of the day and a hot cup of coffee. She received the soup (cream of broccoli) and a lukewarm cup of coffee. She sat on the bench along the wall.

"That is an unanswerable question," said one of the foursome of professionals at the table across the room as they discussed the direction of their newly birthed educational enrichment company.

Lawa sipped her cold coffee. Lawa sipped her hot soup, which appeared to lose heat with each spoonful she took. She pondered the reason for this. *Probably something to do with quarks*, she thought. Lawa sipped her cold coffee and thought about justice and exploitation (and racism). A flyer on the wall announced the book and record sale that was being held in the cafeteria at the ~~Prison~~ School for Youth during the upcoming holiday in honor of a deceased peace and justice worker. *Oh, to be a flyer on the wall*, thought Lawa. Lawa thought of coincidences. A particularly gendered human being that happened to correspond to the gender that Lawa was sexually attracted to approached the café, read the sandwich board that announced today's specials, and opened the door. Lawa took another spoonful of cream of broccoli soup. It was the soup of the day.

“Basta!” The newly arrived restaurant patron was forcefully talking to the device that was sticking out of his ear. “Enough is enough. Anyway, I’ll talk to you later. Could I have a cup of the soup of the day, please?” The last question was delivered to the young woman behind the counter.

“Oh, sorry,” replied the relatively new café engineer. “We are out of soup. We just served our last bowl.”

“Well, ain’t that a kick in the pants?” replied the person that was not going to get any soup.

“Pardon me?” frowned the café engineer. “Was that some sort of idiom?”

“Who are you calling an idiom?”

Lawa rose from her seat. She decided that she would forgo her second cup of coffee today. She walked out of the café and stood over the balcony. It was a beautiful day. *Ain’t that a kick in the pants*, she thought to herself. The beauty of it all was just salt in the wound. The opening notes from *oh! sucks!*¹³ rang out from her pocket. She reached in and pulled out a small rectangular device and looked at its tiny screen. She poked the device and held it to her face.

“Hi Marzy. Uh huh. Yeah, I’ll be there soon.”

Lawa returned the device to her pocket. She was late for something, again.

Meanwhile, in the offices of Gus Pae, Public Investigator.

“Bullshit!”

“Fuck you!”

“Hey! What is going on in here?!”

It was at this very moment that the author, Jacob

Rosen, decided that this was not the path that he wanted to follow. Sure, he could put in the hard work, create an accessible book that he still found pleasure in writing and reading and that he could then sell for money so that he could make a respectable living in the eyes of others. But instead, he decided to double down on his bet that this particular empire¹⁴ was about to fall, and also that the future was not something to be feared. Looking at his current situation in his mind's eye, he decided to quote from that song he wrote titled, *It's like that guy who jumped off a ten story building...*

"I want to burn it all down and sow seeds in the ashes. / It ain't women and men, but slaves you're growing here. / Don't look now, the pavement's coming at you. / The way that you fall sure ain't gonna matter to them."

He remembered briefly that he had a responsibility to the children, and that it entailed creating a world that was worthy of existence. He remembered that if you wanted to read readable novels or watch watchable movies or listen to listen-to-able music, there were plenty of talented groups and clusters of individuals that were creating such works. There was no shortage of such works and this—still—did not lead us any closer to that place that he wanted to be found. *Of course*, he thought, *distance, like everything else in our vast multiverse, is relative.* Of course.

*I must go on standing. I'm not my own. It's not my choice.*¹⁵

Where were we? Jacob thought at his imaginary readership. He was listening to The Beatles sing Mean Mr. Mustard. He was thinking about hammers. *I have a hammer*, he thought. He decided that everything was going exactly according to plan, because why the fuck not? He thought thoughts directly at other humans, some of which are almost certainly you.

Meanwhile, in the library...

“So, Heymish, what does the ‘A’ stand for?”

“Albert. I was named after my great-grand-uncle, whose name, also, was Albert.”

“Can I call you Al?”

Heymish ignored the reference to an old tune of popular music and thought about his recently deceased dog. He scrunched his face and resumed cataloging the new shipment of books. Donald, the paraprofessional library technician, walked back to his desk. Heymish scanned the book cart. *Pearl Harbor: The Story of the Secret War*, *Third World Film Making and the West*, *The Complete Books of Charles Fort*, *False Mystery: An Anthology of Essays on the Assassination of JFK*, *No Mākou Ka Mana: Liberating the Nation*. “Ah,” said Heymish. He reached over to the cart and pulled out an intriguing purple book. *I’ve been waiting for this*, he thought. He pulled up the bibliographic record on the computer monitor. *Well that’s odd*, he thought. He opened the book and scanned through the front matter. Heymish picked up the telephone and dialed a number. He shut the book and flipped it over. There was a blurb on the back by his old colleague, Blah Blah Blahenstein.

The phone continued to ring.

Have we mentioned that he was phoning it in? No matter. We push on. Apparently, it is at least three separate persons' birthdays on this fine day in Moontember, which so happens to also be Kāne, Kā'elo, Year of the either Horse or Sheep, depending on whether or not you are Japanese or Chinese. My family, obviously, is *Chinese*, but this is only due to our disregard for our particular ancestry.

"Hello?" said Gus.

"Gus, is that you?" said Heymish.

"The fuck you think it is?" said Gus. "Sorry, I'm in the middle of some kind of GODDAMN, this rumpleminze sure has a way of making my eyes burn," said Gus.

"Maybe I should call back." Heymish was feeling somewhat sheepish. This was not a, YAWN, um, normal thing or whatever, but. Um.

"No, no. Sorry about that," said Gus, "you just caught me at a *particular* moment, if you know what I mean. What's up?"

"Well," said Heymish, "have you read BRRRRPPP."

"You have a visitor, Mr. Pae."

"Yawn."

"Goddamn."

"You are either with us or you are against us."

"Fuck you!"

And scene.

"Eggs crack, chocolate melts, windows break, and empires fall. It is what we call in the ocean business, inherent vice."

Gus looked at John Carlos, as the expert in the “law of the sea” pontificated on some tangentially relevant thought streams and conversational eddies.

“Yeah, but my, um, *contact*,” Gus poked around for the situationally appropriate classification, “let’s call him, or, uh, her, *The Cataloger*, was very specific about this particular discrepancy.”

John Carlos furrowed his brow and continued with his high-pitched chatter, “Well, yes yes, I was coming around to this. You are talking about an organization with a particularly long memory, and a, let’s say, future-inclusive take on history.” The wind chimes started in on one of their more popular tunes, and Gus and John Carlos each put a hand on top of their respective hats. John Carlos leaned in. “We are talking about a multi-generational performance.”

“Yeah, but if nobody knows that they are actually—”

“Sorry, do you mind?”

John Carlos held his tiny device up for Gus to see, stood up, and walked through the curtains. Gus’s mind wandered to the night before. *What am I doing with myself? Well, I’ll tell you what I’m doing with myself. I’m working on a new case. That’s what I’m doing. No, that’s not what I should have said.*

I feel that you are hiding something from me. That sometimes you lie to me.

Well sometimes I do lie to you.

Like when you told me you love me? Why do you lie to me?

“Gus? Gus Pae? Is that you?”

Gus snapped to attention. As he turned his head he made eye contact with a white-speckled black cat before

it scurried through the open window. *Gus stepped into the shower and came face to face with a bug.* Oh, I know you, *said Gus.* You're an earwig.

"No, I'm not," said the bug.

Gus looked closely at the bug. "Ah, I suppose you're right." The small black hot-dog shaped bug with pincers on its ass walked off into an unseen corner. *Gus proceeded to scrub his naked body.*

"The public investigator, right? I saw you speak at a conference once."

Gus snapped to attention and beheld a human of approximate size yapping about the perceived genealogy of its relationship with Gus. Gus's eyes wandered down to the faded yellow t-shirt that this human was wearing. "Where'd you get that shirt?" he asked.

"Oh, uh, I don't know. At one of the clothing exchanges probably." Pause. "Why? You know this band?"

Gus had seen that symbol before. An almost-triangle being torn back from some kind of fabric, with the accompanying text, FIGHT THE BADDIES. "Oh, I remember," Gus's face lit up with recognition. "Miko's friend. Right?"

"Yeah, Mustache. Mustache Jones."

"Riiight. Sure." Gus nodded his head slowly. "You say that that is some kind of band or something?"

"Yeah, they play, um, music. Uh, I'm not much for genre classifications. I'm not sure if they are still around." Mustache yawned. "So, you friends with John Carlos?"

"Ah, you could say that. You might say that I am here on official business."

Mustache smiled. She had a pretty smile.

You say you want the truth but then you turn away every time it gets difficult.

“So,” said Gus, looking towards the sun, “could you tell John Carlos that I had to leave to go to some other place that is not this place here? I mean, look at the time.”

Mustache eyeballed Gus as he rose from his seat. “Oookay,” she said. “Nice to see you again.”

“Likewise,” said Gus, “likewise, I’m sure.” He exited the scene.

Some people never learn. Perhaps they have some sort of learning disability. Perhaps it is difficult to speak with a fishhook in your neck. These are simply *theories* of course.¹⁶ Another theory is that some people have no souls. This, of course, prevents them from acting as people, and makes them susceptible to outside forces. Perhaps some people simply misunderstand their inability for thinking unadulterated thoughts, and overestimate their control over their own minds. This is a common fallacy, in fact, amongst certain types of haole. No matter. They’ll all be dead soon. And their nightmare worlds will die with them.

“I don’t know what to tell you except that I teach you truths. My truths. And it *is* kind of scary.”

Lawa clicked off the view screen.

“Okay, let’s eat.”

Lawa got up from the mattress.

“We are going to eat outside.”

The three humans and the one dog prepared for the eating of their meal.

“Heymish, have you seen that avocado?”

a note from the author:

Hi there. Thanks for reading this. As you can see, we are in the middle of a doozy of a thrilling read. High stakes, there are, in this reality that we currently share, and unknown, what comes next. It's a mystery to me, certainly. But I am excited, no doubt, by the possibilities. Anyway, I am not sure if anyone has told you, but this book is, literally, For Sale, which, for our purposes, means that your reading of this book implies your entrance into a binding contract with me, the author. Sorry, that is just the way that these things work. Anyway, I look forward to receiving your payment, preferably in the form of enhanced levels of peace and justice in your observable world. Also, please be kind to dogs and computers. Thanks again!

“Katy lies. You can see it in her eyes.”

“Pardon me?”

“Sorry, I was talking with the television¹⁷ again.”

Various characters sat around in their living room, their room of life (and death). They digested their shared meal. It had been one too many mornings, thought one of the characters. *Don't give up*, thought the external voice into the internal mind.

“Everything I say you can say just as good.”

“Well, that’s kind of you to say,” replied Lawa to her computer.

Heymisher Bulgar put down his book and turned towards his partner. “What’s going on?”

“Well, it’s odd, yeah. Everything was going so well, and then, all of a sudden, silence. Just...nothing from nobody. I don’t understand it.”

“Well,” thought Heymish with a heavy face, “I’m still here.”

“You are not alone,” said the computer.

Of course, these are just bits and pieces from the totality of the reality that was happening. I do not think that your puny brain can handle the entirety of, well, *Truth*. But, this, too, is a red herring.

Lawa smiled a sad smile. “Thanks,” she said. This did not make Heymish feel so great. He sighed. He had long ago given up on the idea that his mere existence would be enough to make Lawa happy for all eternity. All of a sudden, there was a blip in the matrix. And a bug walked off into an impossible corner.

Love

"Of course, secret elitist police organizations such as the CIA do not thrive on peace, democracy, and a contented and informed people. The power of intelligence agencies increases in direct proportion to the degree of sickness of a nation...Chaos is required to make a people willing to accept such strong medicine as is administered by the secret police in order to restore order and to stabilize a disintegrating society. It takes an acutely sick society to be able to accept as palatable the terrible cure—totalitarianism."

-A Philadelphia Lawyer¹⁸

"...more dead cops might make the hurting stop."
-Folk Song¹⁹

Well, thought Gus, *we're all in this thing together*. It was a particular conundrum, this. He took out his magnifying glass and decided to look a bit more closely

for those hard-to-find clues. *What's this?* he thought. *Another flash cube? But what is it doing here?* Gus Pae, P.I. thought about lizards while listening to a love-song during that particular spot between night and day, when, all of a sudden, a bolt of electricity came down from the sky. It was an act of God. Gus shuffled through his papers. *There is something missing.* Gus looked at the readout on the teletype. "If you tip," it read. *Hmmm,* thought Gus, *this is a sticky situation.* Gus checked his dictionary. *My mind is playing tricks on me all the time, to let you know that I am real.* *Hmmm,* thought Gus. It was a particular conundrum, this.

"Penguin Audio presents A New Earth CRRSSHSK this is a very old song, not one of ours though. Rabbit CRRRRSSSSSHKK do you remember feeling any other way?"

Gus Pae placed the magnifying glass over the photograph of the crossroads. He noticed something etched into one of the trees. "Zeus." *Goodness,* thought Gus, *somebody tagged that tree.* It doesn't make much sense...working on the only road I know...I can make it if I wish. Gus Pae filled his pipe with a pinch of combustible plant matter. He sat back in his comfortable chair. He struck a match. *A window to your soul,* he thought. *It's all just a window to your soul.* He thought, *the flux capacitor is a monkey dreaming of nothing.* He looked at the termites gathered around the faint glow of the computer screen. *What time is it? Is it late?* He looked at the clock on the wall. *No, no, it's early. Early.* Gus Pae yawned the yawn of someone who was tired and wanted to go to sleep but felt that maybe they

needed to stay up and do more work.

“You’ll find a way,” said the computer.

Thanks, thought Gus. *Straight to hell*, thought Gus. Gus Pae returned the documentation to their storage spaces and walked over to the couch, upon which he then collapsed.

“BRRRP. Are you awake yet? BRRRRPPPP.”

Gus Pae put his hand to his face. He wiped the inside corners of his eyes with his thumb and forefinger. He snuggled into the cushions. He sighed. A moment later he was sitting at his desk.

“What’s up?” he asked the intercom.

“BRRRP. You have another visitor.”

Gus looked down at his slightly disheveled suit. He took a deep breath. “Oh well, send them in, please.”

The door opened and in walked Mustache Jones. Gus’s eyes opened wide as they took her in. She was wearing various clothings on her various body parts (and no clothings on various others) that for some reason were particularly effective at causing various sexual thoughts and feelings inside Gus’s mind-body. Her hair style and facial features were also particular stimuli that Gus, for whatever reason, noted and responded to. On her chest, she was wearing a button that read, “I am a boy.” Gus was not sure if this was some sort of mind-fuck, if she was transgendered, or if this was simply a historical reference to those archaic days when trans women were forced to wear such signs in compliance with so-called Intent To Deceive laws. Kids these days were hard to pin down. Mustache walked towards his desk. Gus poked at his intercom.

“Um, Helene, could you get me a mimeograph of the Violin-Montgomery file?” Gus smiled at Mustache. “So, um...”

Mustache raised her eyebrows at Gus.

“Oh, of course,” stammered Gus, “why don’t you have a seat on the couch, here?” He rushed over to straighten up the pillows. “So,” he continued, “what brings you to my humble offices?”

“Well,” sighed Mustache as she settled into the cushions somewhat awkwardly, “I think I might be able to help you with your case.”

“Ah so,” said Gus as he rubbed his chin in mock concentration from his recently taken seat on the couch next to Mustache. He pursed his lips as if to say something intelligent, ran through some potential responses in his brain, and eventually said, “Do go on.”

Mustache broke into her canned story that started with their recent meeting and branched out to include details of her young adulthood, her great-grand-mother’s emigration to a foreign country, letter-bombs, the price of tomatoes, the relationship between dark matter and the cosmological constant and how this illuminates certain aspects of humans’ penchant for the creation of fictions, and, amidst this all, a discussion of an ancient yet futuristic conspiracy that wove itself throughout all, um, all of the limbs of the, uh, story tree, I guess. This, of course, was of particular interest to Gus and his current case, which was a mystery still. A detective mystery. A slow saxophone tune emerged from the couch. Mustache pulled out a pocket-sized communication device and pressed a button. As she had a conversation with the billing department from the Office of Acupuncture and

Traditional Chinese Medicine, Gus, now free from making the socially appropriate nods and hmmms, intensified his running of her story through his mind filters. *Could she be trusted? How well did he know her? What was her exact relationship with John Carlos? Isn't this all just a little too convenient?* He looked over at Mustache, who looked over at him. They both smiled. *He's got a nice smile*, thought Mustache. Gus, too, thought this, but vice versa.

"That would be fine...thank you." Mustache put away her device. Mustache looked over at Gus. She placed her hand on top of his and

"BRRRPPPP. I have that file you requested, Mr. Pae." Helene was programmed to interrupt Gus at especially opportune moments.

"Excuse me," said Gus. He went to the door, opened it slightly, reached his arm through and brought it back out, file in hand. He shut the door. He walked over to the filing cabinet, deposited the mimeographs, and returned to the couch. "Now, where were we?"

Gus and Mustache awoke, a tangle of limbs and genitals, with a pink and blue afghan covering most of their surface area, as Helene tsk tsked above them.

"Mr. Pae, you have that two o'clock at the Hall of Conveyances."

"Ah yes," replied Gus, attempting to re-situate his self in consensus reality, "I'm on top of it." Pause. "Thank you, Helene."

"I should be going, too," said Mustache, as she wrapped her fingers in Gus's fingers. After one more joke about privates investigation, Mustache pushed Gus

off the couch and began the process of re-clothing herself. She watched Gus as he watched her from his seat on the floor, grinning up at her with eyes like a puppy dog. She finished dressing, patted him on the head, and walked to the door.

Well, that was unexpected, thought Gus, as he grabbed his hat and settled it on his head. One more two-party smile exchange and she was out the door. Gus grabbed at his clothes, pulled on his pants, and went over to his desk. He grabbed a pen and wrote himself a note in his desk calendar. A few minutes later and he too was out the door.

What's this? Is it raining? Thank goodness, thought Gus, as he pulled his coat tight. He had decided to take the long route and his umbrella was still at the umbrella repair shop over on Delancey. *Well,* he thought at the invisible powers that controlled the world, *you can't quite capture the state that I'm in.* He hopped a few puddles and noticed the booths and rides being set up on the public grounds. It was carnival season.

Oh, it was a telephone pole. Interesting. That must mean something. Gus had reached the intersection of roads. *Oh well, onward, I suppose.* He crossed the street and then he crossed the other street. He kept walking. He turned back and noticed the oddly colored polka-dotted lizard statues at the boundary of the carnival. *Hmmm,* he thought, *maybe they are part of some kind of ride.* He walked backwards down the street.

“Sorry,” said Heymish Bulgar to his co-worker, “I’ll

have to get to it later. I've got a dentist appointment at The Human Tooth Dental Emporium over on Pi'ikoi."

"Wait a minute," said the novel's fact checker. "Where is this story supposed to take place, anyway?"

"Mostly, it takes place in the reader's mind," said the author. "It's a fictional story."

"Not this again," said the, um, some other unnamed character. "This will never sell. It is just more of the same old repetitive bullshit. I feel like we are doing all this work, and then there is nothing to show for it."

"And what?" shouted the author. "What is it you want from me?!"

"Hey, you guys," pleaded the moderator in a perfectly calm voice, "you think you could take this discussion to the endnotes or something? There's a time and a place, you know."

Heymish Bulgar put on his outdoor hat, checked once more to confirm that he was logged out of the system, and walked towards the staff exit. "See you tomorrow, Fred!" He winked at Gina, tipped his hat, and backed out the door.²⁰

"So, how was your day?" asked Lawa. It was the end of the day, and they were eating dinner (at the dinner table).

"Oh," shrugged Heymish, "just another normal day of boring old librarianship."

Lawa grabbed another spoonful of beans. "Oh? No dead bodies?"

"Well," pondered Heymish, as he ripped off a piece of bread, "Suzi's dad was diagnosed with cancer, but..." He trailed off.

“Oh, that’s sad,” said Lawa. “Life-threatening sickness is sad.”

“Yep.” Heymish paused. “It is sad when people get sick and die.” He looked at Lawa. “What do you think we should do about it?”

“Hmmm.” Lawa swallowed the food in her mouth. “Perhaps we could stop those folks from polluting our environment, and then, I don’t know, guarantee everyone in our society a basic minimum of land, food, and social services. Just for a start.”

Heymish popped a chunk of sweet potato into his mouth, sopped up some sauce with the bread, and plopped it in with the sweet potato, which had already begun its process of transformation from a coherent identity of sweet potato-ness towards becoming part of the totality that is Heymish-ness. “Yah,” he nodded, amidst his chewing. “Let’s do that.” *Perhaps I should ask her about her day, just to be polite, even though I don’t really care that much at this particular moment, but she probably wants me to ask, since she asked me about my day even though I don’t think she is that interested in the details, although maybe she is. Am I some sort of self-centered asshole or something?* “So, how was your day?”

“Well, no dead bodies or anything. Well, none that I saw anyway. Although, my colleagues were talking about some sort of tragic multiple-death something or other that took place in one of those distant lands on the other side of the planet. But they are all still tuned into The Feed, so I tend to take everything they say with a grain of salt.”

Of course, at this very moment, indeed, there were

deaths occurring. Murder deaths. Tragic deaths. Ironic deaths. Mass deaths due to acts of God. Mass deaths due to acts of the body politic. There was slavery afoot. And war profiteering. And an epidemic of deep, deep, mental depression. There were people—literally—dying of hunger. And all of this, of course, was occurring at the very moment that Lawa and Heymish were having their perfectly normal boring dinner conversation after their perfectly normal boring days of doing their respective perfectly normal boring things.

“I ran into Gus, today,” continued Lawa, as the thought popped into her head.

“Ah,” said Heymish. “How’s the investigation going?”

3.0

"As with any mo'olelo, its merit can be judged by the lessons it provides for 'Ōiwi today. Good mo'olelo include more than just interesting people, conflicting interests, and famous places. Good mo'olelo convey meaning."

-*No Mākou Ka Mana*²¹

"With all of the elements at hand, the reader has the ingredients of a mystery story. There are victims...There are a variety of clues. There are a multitude of false leads. There are numerous possible motives. Innumerable obstructions are put in the way of the discovery of truth. Many of the characters betray guilty knowledge."

-*Pearl Harbor: The Story of the Secret War*²²

Gus sat at the back of the lecture hall, scribbling notes of ink onto a paper notebook.

“It’s the semantic web. Ontologies and such.”

He looked up to see *the Rosetta Spacecraft orbiting Comet 67P* the human that he was following attempt to quietly slip out of the room. He grabbed the satchel of books that he had picked up at the library as per Heymish’s recommendation, and followed his lead out the door.

His trail was hard to track, no doubt. His lead was hard to follow. The path was labyrinthine. It was maze-like. Alleyways and shortcuts. Over hill and dale. Eventually, he got where he was going. It was a radio station. Gus stood under a canopy, leaning against a brick wall, book in hand, surreptitiously stealing glances at the broadcast studio, watching for any patterns to emerge. He pulled out his timepiece from his jacket pocket. It was going to be another long day.

“No, this is all somehow related. Like, the things that those folks do is *directly related* to the things these other folks do. But, they are still, you know, regular people, and illustrative as such, only they are either unaware of, or, refuse to acknowledge, the broader connections and implications of what they are doing. And this is why I either find this stuff extremely boring or extremely, I don’t know, irksome.”

“But, what is to be done?”

“Well, it’s like Lennon said, ‘Give pizza chance.’”

“Excuse me,” said the stranger sitting to their right. “Could you pass the ketchup?”

Lawa and Marzy froze, each with a slice of pizza raised to their mouth, and looked over at the stranger. Marzy put down her slice, grabbed the bottle, passed it to the unknown person, and smiled, politely. It was a polite smile, is what we are saying.

Teddy Ka’aleo finished up his set at the station. He pulled back the curtain of the window ever so slightly and looked down on the street. That public investigator was still there, pretending to read his book. The science update played in the background amidst the giggling laughter of his cohorts. *Damn*, thought Teddy, *I’ve been too sloppy. I should not have been so careless to put my thoughts out there without covering my tracks.* And now this P.I. was following him all around town. *But what does he want? What does he think I know? What **do** I know?* Teddy’s stomach growled with hunger.

“Only short-sighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between shades of opinion inopportune or superfluous. The words we use matter.” Birdy Curtis offered her new friends some of her fried potatoes.

“Well, I agree and disagree, I guess,” said Lawa. “I mean, true, but. The thing is, it’s important not to lose perspective on the larger societal picture, what we are attempting to do, and the things that we all agree on.”

“The lowest common denominator, you mean,” said

Marzy. Lawa gave her a look, as if to say, *don't start quoting my own words back to me in a new context that questions the righteousness of their original utterance.*

"Well, yeah it's [flexible/uncertain/debatable]," said Birdy in a hushed tone. She rose from her seat and went to the counter to ask for a refill. She smiled at the young woman with the Give Beans a Chance shirt. She retrieved her cup and walked back to her table, passing the trio of changemakers talking about their upcoming plans for the semester. One of them was wearing a shirt that said, "I do not need your permission, nor your approval, in order to do what is right for the people, the nation, and the world." The other one looked familiar. *Oh yeah, thought Birdy, that's the half-sister of the President of the Empire, and she's sitting there talking about Seeds of Change. Funny, that.* Birdy sat back down in her chair. She overheard a snippet from the multi-generational couple to her left.

"Yeah, but it [confuses me], I just don't understand why Cat would turn on you like that," said the elder.

Lawa and Marzy were talking about books. "That's what I am saying," said Lawa, "it's like the chicken and the egg." They were tapped into some sort of power line. *Things* were happening. It was the place to be. Marzy sipped her tea.

"So what happens next?" asked Marzy.

"I don't know," answered Lawa. "That's as far as I got. But, anyway, this group of indeterminate activists is targeting one of the family members of this guy that is the head of a Public Relations firm that undergirds the nefarious power structure of the imaginary nation." She turns towards Birdy. "They have this uncanny ability to

get close to people despite the high-level security apparatus, and, well, anyway.”

The duo to Birdy’s left was now talking about the different types of bones (long marrow bones, for example) that they feed to their dog, whose name, it seems, was Java. Lawa thought that this was probably a good time to check her messages.

“Aloha, This is Barbarella Kim Stanton, HARP Hawai’i State Director, calling to invite you to attend the Living Age Friendly Kūpuna to Keiki Summit on Saturday, February 7th, 8:30 to 12:30 PM, at the Japanese Cultural Center. Join us and fellow community members for this free event. Special guests include Mayor Fucking McCheese. Don’t miss your chance to get a first look at plans to create an age friendly Honolulu and to share your insights about what our city needs to do for the future. To register, call 555-6007. I hope to see you there. You can reach a live operator at 1-800-Blah-Blah-Blah. Mahalo.”

“...a Thai massage in Cuba.”

“Oh, those are the best.”

“Anyway, I guess you can make updates to the website. I don’t know what you know about websites, I usually just use templates and copy and paste,” said the recently tenure-tracked professor.

“Oh, I think it should be a *real* website,” replied the temporary intern from another land.

Marzy sipped her tea. Birdy sipped her coffee. *I have a hammer*, they both thought, in unison. It was a common denominator, you see, this having of hammers.

Lawa put away her device and looked at Marzy, who had her vacant eavesdropping stare going on. She smiled. And the whole world smiled with her.

Teddy Ka'aleo was still at the radio station. He had agreed to fill in for one of the other disc jockeys, who was away, traveling for his start-up news magazine, and Teddy had decided to hang out at the studio through the entire lunch set. He placed the headphones on top of his head and waited for the song to fade out. "Well, it's me again, I am going to be filling in the next three hours for our Wandering DJ U-matic, and I'm going to bring back the show that some of you older listeners might remember, where I play only songs from Oceania. Let's get started with a little something from Aotearoa."

Rescuing an ancient library. This is science update! A comet shaped like a rubber ducky. This is science update! Papyrus and the ink written on it. This is science update! Two thousand year old wisdom, trapped in time. This is science update!

Gus yawned. A figure emerged from the building across the street. It stopped. It looked over at Gus, and shrugged. It looked both ways and started across the street, heading straight at him. Gus returned the book to his satchel, and stood up straight. He took a deep breath, and grinned a large grin. As the man approached, Gus noticed that his subject was a bit taller than he had previously thought.

"Well," said Teddy, "where are you buying me dinner?"

Life is too short-sighted. We need to focus on the bigger picture, here. I am in love with specific people, but, if I was never to see them again in this lifetime, well, this thought brings a sadness, but, it is what it is. Our paths diverge, yet here we both remain in existence. I would like to get everything that I want. But, well, some things are more important than other things. And we are still tip-toeing our way around the crux of the matter. And the crux of the matter is this:

“Where did it go?”

“Oh, those lines are missing due to archival neglect.”

“And why should anyone be bothered to spend their

short, precious time allotment attempting to understand this one particular act of communication?”

“Well, people put effort into all sorts of crazy, meaningless activities, you know.”

“But [surely] [*—6 lines missing—*].”

Lawa walked down the street and saw the reflection of the bright, colorful fireworks in the cold, metal skyscrapers. She rounded the corner and looked up into the open, street-side, second-story window of the noodle house, which was partially illuminated by the electric red lights that formed its sign on the far-side window. She walked on.

“Hi.”

Heymish smiled hello at the person he was pretty sure was named Regina.

“You’re Lawa’s boyfriend, right?”

Heymish smiled and said, “Yep.” He sat down with his beer, but not at his usual table. He was now fairly certain of Regina’s identity.

“Sorry, I forget your name.”

“It’s Heymish,” said Albert Heymisher Bulgar, as he took a sip of beer.

“So,” said Regina Flackenstein, “you just felt like grabbing a beer at the ramen shop?” She was helping herself to a refill at the water cooler.

“Well, I’m actually waiting for Lawa.” He looked at the clock on the wall.

“Is she late?” asked Regina. “Is she normally late?”

Heymish nodded yes, but he wasn’t sure exactly what question he was answering. “So,” he said, “what are you

up to?"

"Oh," answered Regina, "I just have a little business meeting over here."

Heymish smiled, pleasantly, or so he attempted at least. Regina walked back to her table where she sat with another human. Heymish took a sip of beer and looked at the clock on the wall. Eventually, Lawa walked through the door.

"I cannot think of one horror in the world that doesn't have, at its roots, the United States Empire." Lawa looked at Heymish, noticing his eyes beginning to glaze over as they usually did when she felt the need to push a particular political point. "Of course, I use that as a catchall for the grander, somewhat nebulous imperial project that yearns for complete control over everything, but, I maintain, the fall of the empire is a precondition for the solving of our world's problems, many of which will evaporate right along with the fading empire. The empire will fall away, leaving the world free to be itself. The trick, of course, is simply to stop identifying with the empire. And, I maintain, there will be no new problems created that do not already exist for some of us now anyway, during the current time." Lawa shoveled some noodles into her mouth and slurped them up, broth splattering around the table. "So," she said, "how was *your* day?"

Gus was walking back to his office. The dinner with Teddy had gone well. Gus picked his brain over a meal of Egyptian chicken, yellow rice, and tossed greens.

And then.

...TEN YEARS LATER

Gus walked down the road. Gus walked down the road and a sign caught his eye.

“Welcome to the Year of the Ram. Which begins on February 19, 2015. The Ram is Yin energy, a symbol of peace. For those who trust in goodness, happiness and success will follow. Many will look into their hearts and souls and wonder at past passionate grievances and realize that the road to harmony and economic strength is through peace rather than violent ways. Anger will cool and decisions that will disrupt family harmony will be laid aside to give time to heal. Although luck is near, some efforts will still have to be made in order for you to achieve life success. If you want to get somewhere, you must act, work, and move toward your goal.”²³

Gus moved past the abandoned apothecary’s shop and entered into the hole-in-the-wall next door. He saw some familiar faces and sat down at their table.

“Life is a nightmare. But you know what gets me through? Solving mysteries. Existence is a series of crimes. Murder, theft, jaywalking, birth, death. The world is lawless, meaningless chaos. Except to be a good detective. We hunt clues, we use reason, we assign a narrative to this swirling, hugging mess. We make people’s lives mean something. Especially if they’re already dead.”²⁴

Heymish’s eyes jumped back and forth from each of his companions as their silent responses hung in the air. He decided it was his turn to speak. “Well,” he started, “while I originally felt good about the work I was doing,

I came to see myself as unintentionally being a cog in the machine that perpetuates an unjust and unequal system. While there is value in researching libraries and much of the various other work that has been done, there is a significant opportunity cost associated with it. By doing this work, we are neglecting other possible avenues of investigation.”²⁵

“You know,” said Lawa, “I cannot believe we are still here. I mean, ten years ago, could you imagine that we’d all be sitting around this table discussing this same bullshit case?”

“Well, I’m not sure where I made that wrong turn...Albuquerque maybe...but sure, I’ll grant you this, this ain’t the place that I wanted to be.” All eyes turned to Gus. That was the first thing he said all night, other than ‘pass the chips.’

Later that evening...

“So, how did it go?”

“Well,” began Gus’s partner of nine-and-a-quarter years, nine-and-a-quarter being the length of time units that the two of them had been in a romantically monogamous relationship together. She had just got back from the two-day conference that she had planned on one of the neighboring islands, and it would be another hour and forty-five minutes until she took a breather from expunging all of the goings on into her partner’s ears. “So I guess she just let Miko know that she just couldn’t work with him,” she said as she finished brushing her hair before she got into bed after she had taken a shower.

“Huh,” said Gus.

Later that week...

“To eat grubs.”

“What?”

“That was the answer when I asked. To eat grubs.” Gus paused. “This was on a Tuesday, of course.”

The interior dialogue in his head continued as he completed his long journey to the credit union. It was time to make another withdrawal.

Gus took off his hat and placed it on the brown wooden table and walked towards the official line. Eventually, he was called by the teller.

The transaction began and Gus overheard the disembodied voices coming over the local radio waves. “...Michael Jordan’s birthday...he turns fifty-two...” *Well, that’s odd*, Gus thought. *I should write this down.* Earlier, upon his departure, as he crossed his first road, he noticed the letters on a license plate, which, for some reason, prompted him to think the words “Michael Jordan.” He then thought, *Michael Jordan, I wonder what his middle name is.* This is not quite relevant to the story, but whatever. It should be noted that there were two red thermoses in The Thrift Shop, along with one of those egg slicers that his mother used to use (to slice eggs). A snippet of dialogue that Gus heard later that day as he finished up his bowl of Cream of Mushroom soup, and noticed the vomit that flooded out from the baby at the table by the window: “I hope he doesn’t have what I had.” Again, the relevance to this mystery is low, but we all have our specific methods of holistic detecting. Just then, Gus bumped into Marzy.

“Hey.”

“Hey,” said Gus.

"Gus, right?"

"Yeah, yeah. How are you? How have you been?"

"Marzy."

"Yeah, I know."

She was wearing a t-shirt that read, "JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE PARANOID, IT DON'T MEAN THEY'RE NOT AFTER YOU."

"So," Gus continued, "it's been what? five years?"

"Yah, um..." Marzy gave an apologetic smile and shrugged her shoulders. "I've really got to get to the store. See, I'm cooking a chicken parmigiana dinner tonight and I am missing some important ingredients."

"Oh, well, say hi to, uh..."

"Oh, we broke up," said Marzy.

"Oh, sorry to hear that," said Gus.

I am pretty sure that was the end of their conversation. Which is sad. It is always sad when conversations end, but what are you going to do?

"Why don't you love me? Is it because I'm ugly?"

"What?" Gus said, acting surprised, "don't be silly." He gave his partner a look. She smiled. "You are the most beautiful goddess in the, uh, millennium-sphere."

"I am?"

Gus smiled. Some cuddling occurred. He went back to reading his new book, the old pulp detective novel that he had recently found in the used bookstore. The next day he was back on the case.

Gus squatted by the side of the sloping road. There was something on the ground. He read,

"NOTES.

1. Pay attention to fact that there is no engine oil in the crankcase. Add specified oil into the crankcase until meeting standard before operating the engine.

2. Before starting, set both of the fuel cock and the emergency switch to ON, and pull left to choke—”

Just then, a gust of wind came and blew the clue further off to the side of the sidewalk. Gus looked over and noticed a red ribbon tied to the top of that specific clue. Also, at this point, he noted that Luke Sidewalker would make a good name for a character in the novel that he wasn't writing. He stood up on his legs. *It's like riding a bicycle, this detective work*, thought Gus. *Like riding a bicycle*. He continued down the road. Ten or so sidewalk squares later, sandwiched in between the stares of two passing youths, Gus saw the word LUKE etched into the concrete path. He noted this in his notebook. Other things he noted:

1. The Hawaiian Isles Water Company truck blocking his path, as it backed out of Arcadia (the old people home), and the vehicle with the LUCAS-D license plate that came immediately down the road after it passed. Of course, all of this followed his noticing the tube of aqua-something healing ointment that was discarded in the bushes.

2. A Civil Air Patrol car blocking the path of him and the person riding the scooter, which was followed directly by the CCTV truck driving down the road.

3. One dead cat.

Clearly, Gus was making some sort of progress. But still the dead bodies kept piling up. Was it just the nature of the game? Perhaps it had something to do with genre conventions. At that precise moment, in that very

same town, Marzy remembered that she had forgotten the cheese.

It was a hot afternoon, following a cold night and a cold morning. The sky was blue, but the heat generated an almost-hazy atmosphere that somehow starkly illuminated the contours of the mountains while slightly fading their overall greenish color. Marzy sits down on the concrete bench, in between one person and another. The man with purple elephant pants sticks one leg into the green garbage receptacle. Eventually, he returns to his seat at his table in front of the sandwich shop. The bus arrives.

That's my stop, thinks Marzy from her seat on the bus, as she makes the motions that indicate this fact to the woman next to her, who gets the message and stands up to let Marzy pass. Marzy walks to the back door and looks back to the woman who has sat back down in her seat, and notices, on the woman's back, a tattoo of writing. It begins, "The grey rain curtain of this world rolls back..." *I wonder what that is from*, thinks Marzy. The bus stops. The door opens.

"BBRRPP. You have a message from MarzBRRRP."

Gus leaned into the intercom. "I thought we fixed that bug already." He sat up. He leaned back in. "What was the message?" He looked up, and then jumped back in his seat, startled, as Helene stood by his desk holding out a note for him to read.

"Well, when we set everything back up in the new office, some of the old glitches returned."

Gus took the note. "Thanks," he said. Helene shuffled off. He read the note.

"Not sure why, but I thought you might be interested in this." *Hmmm, it is some sort of quote*, thought Gus, to himself. Gus used his fancy detective skills to track down the source. *Aha*, he thought, *just as I suspected*. It was not at all what Gus suspected, but it did happen to be a quote from a wizard in a popular series of fantasy novels. "End? No, the journey doesn't end here. Death is just another path, one that we all must take. The grey-rain curtain of this world rolls back, and all turns to silver glass, and then you see it." Gus looked at the screen and noticed the bugs starting to flock around the flickering lights. *Wait. What time is it? How has so much time passed? Where has it all gone? What have I been doing?* Gus closed his notebook. He looked over at the [comfortable/absorbing/beckoning] couch, before deciding to head back to bed (specifically, the bed in his bedroom). He put on his hat and walked out the door.

"I said, it refers to the semantic web. And, I guess, it is also a reference to that book."

"The one about floods and indigenous peoples?"

"No, not The Man With The Compound Eyes. The one about the revolutionaries that utilize public graffiti."

"But what does it mean?"

"Well, it alludes to the system of thought that holds that the capacity to express ideas and thereby improve one's interaction with others and one's environment is enhanced by training in the more critical use of words and other symbols. You know, as it applies to that which is woven; a texture. Although, it is usually applied

specifically to the collective total of all computer installations that are connected to the internet and provide access to other computers connected to the internet.”²⁶

“Oh.” Pause. “And this web, is it active yet?”

k-taker, a straight talker with this successful?

munion to make. Did you expect the film to be

PLEASE SEE TAGAWA, D-3

Maybe intellect is for muscle heads

Heading into Manoa Valley, once you get past the University of Hawaii, there's a cross street called Alauala Way, and there, plopped on the corner, is a sign announcing the location of the Anthroposophical Society's Rudolf Steiner Library.

The library dates back to the mid-'20s, when anthroposophy was an intellectual craze. Steiner was an Austrian philosopher who believed, essentially, that the intellect was a muscle that was wasting away in the materialistic world. Mankind could achieve spiritual pumpkins by focusing on the "higher self" and by studiously avoiding any TV show featuring Tony Danza. It seems humanity (anthropos) has the built-in wisdom (sophia) to trans-

WAT DAT?

Strange things you see and say ...

AAA



BY KEN FOX, Star-Bulletin
The Rudolf Steiner Library.

form the world into a spiritual wonderland. A not-quite religion in which higher consciousness can be achieved by thinking mighty thoughts? No wonder Anthroposophical Societies sprang up near college campuses across the world. "Can't mow the yard today, dear, I've got to get down to the Steiner clubhouse and reconsider the perplexing nature of matter in a constantly fluxing

universe. The future of mankind depends on it. I need a couple bucks, though, for a sixer."

The Steiner Influence is felt in a variety of disciplines and arts, with the Waldorf Schools being best-known.

The Steiner library in Manoa triples also as a meeting hall and bookstore for anthroposophical titles. It's open to the public 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays. The local group currently has about 50 to 60 members, according to AS contact Phyl Dwyer. For information, call 968-4555.

By Burl Burlingame

Curious or puzzled about something you've seen, heard, felt or smelled? Drop us a line. Walbat?, Honolulu Star-Bulletin, P.O. Box 3090, Honolulu, HI. Fax at 525-7883 or e-mail at starburl@ptol.com and we'll find out.

living spirit

"You cannot get rid of me that easily, you know. This is a love story that we are in. You and me. Together. This is a love story."

-[Unnamed Character X]

Gus sniffled. It was not his first sniffle. In fact, he noticed himself sniffing quite a bit lately. He looked towards the window. Perhaps there was something in the air. He awoke that morning to the sound of sneezing. He awoke many times that morning, in fact, before greedily slipping back into dream after dream after dream, until, finally, he jumped out of his comfortable bed and, um, probably took a piss or something. Gus looked down to his recently cleaned desk. He thought about paranoia and constant bigotry. He thought, *how sick of me...must you be...by now?* He sighed a sigh. He shrugged a shrug. He got back to work. It was his job, after all.

“If you do not have the receipt, how can we verify that you actually did those things that you claimed that you did?”

“Well, if it is evidence you want...” Lawa pulled down her pants and proceeded to take a dump on the accountant’s desk.

“Whoa! You can’t do that here!” said the accountant, flusteredly.

No, no, this didn’t really happen. Why would Lawa take a shit on somebody’s desk? Unless it was for some sort of artistic slash political video of some sort. But in real life? No, she would not do this. That’s just silly. In fact, this was just something that was happening in her imagination. Yes, this entire scene was imaginary. Can you imagine it? Somebody trying to prove that they did in fact consume a specific something by taking a shit in a very public manner? A very public shitting. *What sorts of things do you accept as valid forms of proof?* asked Lawa to the imaginary listenership in her mind. *Some sort of written documentation?* She was thinking thoughts, Lawa was. *There are all sorts of things that you cannot prove*, she thought. She thought, *You have no authority here*. But who was she thinking to? Confusing, this paragraph was (is).

Lawa was having a rough day. She was a-hard traveling. She was sore all over. She wanted someone to massage her bare feet. She finished watching the video on economics that was part of the adult master-level class that she was auditing, and thought, *yes, yes, the destruction of that system would indeed be a good thing*. *Hmmm*, she thought, *I do believe the book I am*

recreationally reading was a proponent of the same ideas that were being presented in that video. That talk tomorrow should be interesting. She rubbed her hands together and nodded her head (in her mind). In physical space, she just continued to lounge on her semi-comfortable chair that abutted her somewhat more comfortable couch. It was a luxury, this having of a couch. She thought about that time when she had no such thing. But what do you, the reader, care of such mundane matters as couches and chairs? You were expecting to read a detective mystery slash romance novel. You were expecting something a bit more, let's say, titillating.

“Proceed.”

“Dear Mr. Valentine. Comma. Next line. I assume that when you question as to when the billionaire funded news organization in question will report on the ongoings of a specific nation-state, you are not talking about the sort of coverage that is, in fact, currently being published by said news organization, but are referring to a specific aspect of a specific story that you feel is consciously being neglected for, let us say, less than ethical reasons. Due to my associations with people over the age of fifty, I, too, came across the interview with the crazy old celebrity musician. Hold on. Are you still taking dictation?”

“Affirmative.”

“Dot dot dot, et cetera, I found the billionaire statement highly intriguing, though I did not read as much into it. But the point is, it sounds like you have a larger history of displeasure with this organization and the individuals that you attack as being self-serving. Might

you be willing to share more information? Also, have you contacted said individuals directly about the perceived shortcomings in their reporting? Blah blah blah. My head is starting to hurt. Can you edit this and then we will further work on it later?"

"Your wish is my command."

"It is?"

Helene exited the scene.

Yawn, thought Gus, as he yawned a tired yawn. He decided to do some research in his personal library, which happened to currently consist of a good number of materials from the public library. He tracked down an old article that addressed the very questions that he now no longer needed to ask. He put on an old audio file of an interview on this very issue. He ate a piece of cheese. *That clears up a lot. Time to reread the original article.* He reread the original article. There were still some loose threads to tie down.

"What do you mean it's alive?"

"Well," said whoever the fuck was speaking, "I mean that, as this story gets written, the universe—or, feedback mechanism, or, the machine machine machine, if you will—responds directly to the actions that the characters take."

"And is that why it is so difficult to follow along?"

"Fuck you."

"I'm just saying," said the person THAT DID NOT EXIST. But don't worry, this wasn't such a big problem. Let us now recount some of the responses to our survey of chickens that cross the road. Or no, let us continue with the dialog of this specific conversation. "I'm

just saying is all,” said the person, who we have just arbitrarily decided was named Lawa. Some people do not like this name, because it is not a name they have ever heard. It has meaning, but only in its general context, perhaps. Perhaps we are misappropriating this particular language. Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps.

And now, for the romance portion of this novel, we will plagiarize directly from a random book that we picked up in the Village Market.²⁷

He'd been away from England for more than a decade. He had spent years fighting a foreign war for the regular army, and a longer stint in the East India Company, plundering and amassing wealth. He had been contacted by one of his Boscastle cousins and asked if he could locate a missing relative, one whom the family refused to believe was dead.

Why not? He was rich, and the woman he'd intended to marry had betrayed him. He had money in London banks, investments that had prospered him beyond his dreams.

What would it cost him to hunt down young Brandon Boscastle and his friend? Damien had never done a damn thing to help anyone except himself.

So he'd set out for Nepal, and

within a month of travel was imprisoned under false charges and cut off from the rest of the world. His only good deed had landed him in hell, where he might well belong. But he'd been determined he wasn't going to stay, especially since he'd found evidence that Brandon and his partner were still alive.

He lifted his face to the wind. Freedom. How good it felt.

Perhaps, in a month or two, after he'd foiled another plot that had nothing to do with sweet liaisons but everything to do with deadly conspiracies, he would cross the fortune-teller's path again and have a chance to take more pleasure in the acquaintance.²⁸

Well, that doesn't seem very romantic, thought Gus. "Helene, could you look up the definition of romantic for me?"

"That is not part of my job description, Mr. Pae. In fact," Gus could see the levers and wheels in her mind spin around, "I think that this is a good example of something that is *your* job. Unless, of course, you are willing to compensate me—"

"No, you are correct in your analysis, as per usual. My apologies. But it just seems weird that we have such, you know, arbitrary and harmful divisions of labor slash compensation mechanisms. I bemoan this fact of existence. But I suppose it is just one historical

contingency amongst many that, uh—" Gus held up a finger, grabbed a book off of his desk, and flipped almost directly to the page he was looking for. "The history of science is supposed to be different. The only contingencies most physicists would admit are things like who made a discovery or when it occurred. Oh!" exclaimed Gus, "Look at this. This is the passage I was referring to earlier. The names of the particles are historical contingencies— 'electron' is from the Greek word for amber, 'quark' alludes to a line by Joyce—but certainly not the particles themselves. Um, what was my point?"²⁹

"Something about romance."

"Ah yes,—"

*If you want a lover, I'll do anything you ask me to. And if you want another kind of love, I'll wear a mask for you. If you want a partner, take my hand, or if you want to strike me down in anger, here I stand. I'm your man.*³⁰

"Where were we?"

"Telephone."

"What?"

"It's—"

"What?"

"Hey! You there!"

"What?"

Confused, dear reader? E komo mai, makamaka heluhelu, to my world. I'm just trying to make a little sense out of this chaos, but I want to be respectful of

the reality that I see. Hypocrite? you say. Well, as my patron saint, the beloved mother of outcasts says, "I ain't afraid of no ghosts, or, um, disease..." And now, back to our regularly scheduled programming.

"Goddamn, goddamn, goddamn, goddamn."

"Pardon me?"

"Oh, excuse me. I did not see you there," said the author. "I was focused on my own personal troubles."

"Don't you mean *personnel* troubles?" asked the—

Excuse me, please, we do not have time for this shit. To the [bank] we must go for our monthly withdrawal. For we have our pseudo-life to live.

"Well, you did make your bed."

"To be accurate," replied Gus, "it was not technically *my* bed, per se, but I take your point." Lawa made a good point, every now and then. Gus itched in his neck area. He began to scratch, and then stopped. The increased exposure to the sun was, perhaps, a silly idea, but if he was not willing to test his various theses, he had no business parading around in the detective industry. Gus thought about parades.

Gus thought about parades and whether this was an accurate depiction of whatever it was that he imagined himself doing. He looked at Lawa, who was looking at him. She asked him a question to which she received no response. She asked him a question, again. "So, what are you working on these days?"

"Well," said Gus, "I have one new case, for which I just so happen to already have a file on, and, um, one that I have not been working on...let me check my

notes.” Gus reached into his pocket and pulled out a small notebook, along with various scraps of paper. He flipped through them and settled on an envelope that Lawa noticed said “Give from the Heart,” amongst other things. Gus read from its backside, “Oh yes, the case of the mysterious laugh pillow. Do you remember that case with the ceramic rooster? Anyway, it is similar to that, except, of course, different.” Gus looked at Lawa as she looked at him. “Well,” he continued, “the new case is promising. Lots of promise. Yep.”

“Excuse me,” said Lawa. “I need to take this.” She plugged her headphones into the speakers and proceeded to interface with the voices in her head, periodically speaking into the old-fashioned microphone that she had plugged into her tiny computer.

Gus yawned. *What the fuck am I doing with myself?* he thought. “And if I die today...and if I die today...and if I die today...” Gus tried to place the song that was playing in the background. *Lawa is an interesting person. I wonder if she is on to anything on her end. She cuts through the bullshit, though, that’s for sure.* Gus heard a noise on the ceiling and wondered what it was that was walking around over their heads. The background music shifted. The topic of the new song had something to do with hyperspace, which was odd, because Gus was pretty sure that they were not living inside of a science fiction novel. *I feel like Wile E. Coyote walking off of a cliff. Oh well, thought Gus. Oh well, we is where we is.*

“Achoo!” sneezed Lawa. She looked at Gus. “Excuse me,” she said. She handed him a napkin. It was a cloth napkin.

Same scene, later in the conversation:

“Why is she going to so many conferences?”

“What? You think it’s weird? Is it not normal? Should I be worried?” Gus still hadn’t quite gotten his head around the concept of monogamy and would get paranoid that he wasn’t acting out the culturally appropriate mannerisms. Lawa, what with her longstanding relationship with Gus’s cousin Heymish, was always a good sounding board.

“No, I mean, I don’t know. I was just saying that it seems like a lot of conferences.”

“Well,” said Gus, “she was also going to do a little scouting while she was there.”

Lawa smiled. “You’ve got her working for you? Not an official case, I assume.” Gus looked down at his shirt. “You are not still working on The Octopus, are you?” asked Lawa, her eyes wide.

“Well,” mumbled Gus, “I always preferred to call it The Whale.”

“But, after your public disgrace—”

“It was not an *official* public disgrace,” interjected Gus with a raise of his finger.

“Does she know what she is getting into?” asked Lawa, concernedly.

“Come on, Lawa. Did you really have such little respect for our relationship? What, you think I just settled down out of convenience or something?”

“That’s not fair,” replied Lawa, hurtedly.

“Sorry,” responded Gus. He paused. “She knows...a little.”

“How many dead birds did you see on the road

today?”

“I don’t know.” Gus did some mental addition. “At least four.”

“I saw seven. Anyway, don’t be so reckless is all I’m saying. There are all sorts of potential world maps that you haven’t even had a whiff of.”

Yeah somethings going on if you think you are strong ill show you just how wrong you are.

Meanwhile, out in the ocean, a boat was sailing on the waves. Its captain, an experienced navigator of large lakes, checked her ship’s instruments. She whistled a tune of her own making. But this is impossible. So let us simply say that a tune was whistled. And that the cargo, the cargo on the boat that was sailing on the ocean waves, this cargo was very important. Very important to our story. Perhaps it was even the key to unlocking the mystery. The prime, central mystery on which our story hinges. But before we get into that, it might be wise to finish up our yard work, and dispose of all of those pesky vines of thorn.

THE CASE OF THE MYSTERIOUS-SEEMING LIBRARY

From The Offices of Gus Pae, P.I.

Initial Periodical Report on the Ongoings of the Investigation, Kūkolu, Welo, Year of the Sheep

CONFIDENTIAL (FOR PUBLIC EYES ONLY)

NARRATIVE OF DETECTION

Wednesday. Morning-ish. Blue sky. White fluffy clouds. I am wearing a blue shirt. The Number 6 Bus passes on my right as I walk past a newly painted tan-colored picket

fence on my left. I approach some hedges and prepare to turn the corner. A grey man dressed as a cable guy nods and says, "Morning." There are many mangoes on a tree.

I approach the building that is assumed to contain the library. I knock on the door 3 times. I wait. I knock on the door 3 times. I wait. I try the door handle. The door is locked. I peer in the window. There is no observable movement inside. I leave.

I make eye contact with what I can only assume is Scott from Scott's Plumbing. I think about batteries. It must be mango season in Mānoa.

RESEARCH

5 Newspaper Mentions (1 article)

1. CALENDAR

Honolulu Advertiser [Honolulu, Hawaii] 05 Jan 2008: B.3.

Holy Nights Lecture Series, talks and activities between Christmas and Epiphany; 7:30 p.m.; through Jan. 6; The Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i, 2514 Alaula Way, Manoa Valley; donations accepted; 988-4555.

2. ART CALENDAR

Honolulu Advertiser [Honolulu, Hawaii] 03 Apr 2005: D.10.

"Healing the Earth with Art," lecture by Keith McCrary, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Anthroposophical Society Center, 2514 Alaula Way, Manoa. 395-1268.

3. CALENDAR

Honolulu Advertiser [Honolulu, Hawaii] 02
Apr 2005: B.3.

"The Christ Impulse in our Time," lecture
by Betty Staley, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, An-
throposophical Society, 2514 Alaula Way,
Manoa Valley. 395-1268.

4. OBITUARIES

Honolulu Advertiser [Honolulu, Hawaii] 11
Dec 2003: B.2.

ELIZABETH LEONG LEE, 93, of MAnoa, died
Dec. 6, 2003. Born in Waimea, Kaua`i. A
social worker with the Department of
Health. A founding member of the Anthro-
posophical Society in Hawai`i and the
Waldorf School. Survived by daughters,
Christie Wong and Paula Lee; son, Peter;
six grandchildren. Private service to be
held. Arrangements by Borthwick Mortuary.

*preceding articles found through HSPLS
Proquest Database*

5. Publisher:HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN

Date:1995 10 09

Page:D1

Title:MAYBE INTELLECT IS FOR MUSCLE HEADS

Abstracts:[STUFFS:ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY'S
RUDOLF STEINER LIBRARY]

Subjects:MANOA VALLEY

LIBRARIES

Notes:(PHOTO)

*preceding article listing found through
HSPLS Newspaper Index; Mānoa Public Library
does not hold microfilm; need to access
through UH-Mānoa or HSPLS Main Branch after
the prince's holiday*

1 Listing in Telephone Book

The Official Hawaiian Telcom White Pages
2014-2015 O'ahu White Pages
ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF HAWAII...988-4555

1 Official Website

<http://anthroposophyhawaii.org>

Report from Hawai'i

From Pacifica Journal, Number 1, 4th Quarter 1996

http://www.anthroposophyhawaii.org/English/hi_rep.htm

In February 1894, the first Hawaiian Theosophical study group, the "Aloha Branch," was established. Soon after, the Hawai'i and Lotus branches were founded by prominent business and community leaders, as well as political figures. Although the groups remained small they had a definite influence on the acceptance of Asian religious ideas, particularly Buddhism, in the Protestant-dominated society of Honolulu. Lectures sponsored by the groups often drew large crowds and press attention. When Henry Steel Olcott, co-founder with H.P. Blavatsky, of the international Theosophical Society, came to Honolulu in 1901, four hundred people attended his lectures which were reviewed by the local newspapers.

As manuscripts of Rudolf Steiner's lectures arrived in Hawai'i, they were studied by those who would later found the "Honolulu Group" of the Anthroposophical Society. Many of these early typed manuscripts have been preserved in the

Rudolf Steiner Library in Honolulu. Charlotte Ferreri represented the Honolulu Group at the Christmas Foundation Meeting of 1923 in Dornach. She helped co-found the Group, along with well-known Honolulu names such as Campbell, Carter, Castle, Galt, Holt, and Swanzy. Later members, among them Chu, Cristy, Lee, Schuman, Stone, Whitlow, Wakefield and Wild, brought the Group through the trying thirties and forties.

...

The Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i maintains a small house in the university area of Honolulu which contains the Rudolf Steiner Library, bookstore, shop and meeting rooms. The Society has a Council of seven members approved by the membership at a general meeting held around Easter each year.

Membership in the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i

http://anthroposophyhawaii.org/English/ash_m.html

As a member you receive:

...

--- Use of ASH Rudolf Steiner Library.

Contact Information

http://anthroposophyhawaii.org/English/ash_contacts.html

Chairman Van James aka.VanJames@gmail.com
Vice Chair Florian Sydowfloriansydow@gmail.com
Treasurer Catherine Carter anthrophi@gmail.com
Secretary Keith McCrary keithmac@hawaii.rr.com
Pacifica Journal Pacificajournal@gmail.com
Anthroposophical Society Pacificajournal@gmail.com - or - anthrophi@gmail.com

SUMMARY

The Anthroposophical Society House was mysteriously closed to me. Why? It is unknown. Was my cover blown? Were they aware of my investigation? Research has uncovered various avenues for further contact. The house looks like it might indeed contain a library that, if not open to the public, is open to members. But how do members access this library? And are they in need of qualified librarians? This, too, is unknown.

NEXT STEPS

After the holiday, access newspaper article via microfilm. After the holiday, call phone number and inquire about library hours, policies.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE



Illustration 1: The Walkway, As Seen From The Top Of The Steps



Illustration 2: Anthroposophy Flyer, Behind Glass

Transcription from Illustration 2:
Anthroposophy at Work

Transcription:

Anthroposophy embraces a spiritual

view of the human being and the cosmos, but its emphasis is on knowing, not faith. It is a path in which the human heart and hand, and especially our capacity for thinking, are essential. It leads, in Steiner's words, "from the spirit in the human being to the spirit in the universe," because only if we first come to experience the spirit in ourselves can we know the cosmic spirit. But Anthroposophy is more than self-development. Through it we recognize our humanity. Humanity (anthropos) has the inherent wisdom (sophia) to transform both itself and the world.

The practical work in the world—from agriculture to education—described in this flyer flows from insights provided by Anthroposophy. The test of any teaching can be found only in life itself. "Only that which is fruitful is true." (Goethe).

[Photo Captions in Flyer]

1. Weleda and Wala are two international companies producing more than 4,000 body-care and medical preparations used by doctors all over the world.

2. Baking bread in a Waldorf kindergarten.

3. Pond bioremediation through use of Flowforms, in San Lorenzo Park, Santa Cruz, CA. The birds are back; the once "dead" pond is alive again.

4. Developed from anthroposophic insights.

5. A biodynamic farm in Wisconsin. Biodynamic agriculture pioneered the scientific use of crop rotation, composting, and natural pest control to help heal the earth as well as to produce

uniquely nutritious foods.



Illustration 3: The Locked Door



Illustration 4: An Anthroposophical Mango Tree



Illustration 5: The Back Of The Sign



Illustration 6: The Front Of The Sign

[contains enclosures]

Gus looked over his notes and reread the bit about the “last and longest-traveled descendants of the Atlantean mystery centers.” He decided that he might need to get some more background on the philosophical under-

pinnings of this particular case, which, he was almost certain, was of the red herring variety. On his way out of the library, he had found himself directly behind a t-shirt that read "If we knew what it was we were doing, it wouldn't be called research, would it?" Gus took another spoonful of peanut butter and listened to the rain, as it commenced a heavier-type downfall.

Dear Eileen Herring, Head, Science & Technology Reference,

My name is Jacob Rosen, and I am interested in filling the position of temporary librarian in the Science and Technology Reference Department. I have a Master Degree in Library and Information Science that I obtained at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I have experience working in a university library, having been a librarian at the University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu, where I was responsible for all aspects of librarianship, including reference (in person, telephone, and e-mail), and collection development. I also have worked as the librarian at the library of The World Medicine Institute, a small college of acupuncture and oriental medicine, which was, technically speaking, a medical library. This job also included some library instruction. In addition, my job as a cataloger/assistant archivist at 'Ulu'ulu, the state moving image archive, also occurred in a university setting, and involved some reference work. My graduate school focus was on information technology and included a number of

computer science classes. Anyway, I live in Mānoa, and would be excited to fill this temporary position. My resume with professional references should be attached. Thank you for your consideration.

Jacob Rosen

Wait a minute, why is the author's cover letter included in this novel? This is quite unprofessional, methinks. But do notice the name of the person to whom he was instructed to send this missive. One Ms. *Herring*. That is clearly a clue. *That is clearly a clue*, thought Gus Pae, P.I., as his world overtook the narrative, reminding us that, yes, indeed, this was a work of fiction that we were writing. Also, it is imperative that we get back to the prime focus of what we are attempting to accomplish.

READER SURVEY

please take time to complete this completely anonymous survey by thinking coherent answers to the following questions and then transmitting them to the proper authorities

1. Have you been reading this book?
 - 1a. Really?
2. Are you planning on continuing to read this book?
 - 2a. Why or why not?
3. If you are no longer reading this book, why did you stop?

4. What would you like to see more of? Be specific.
5. What are you confused about? (in general or about the book)

Overheard at the close of a jazz concert:

“Wow. That was amazing. I wouldn’t know where it was going to go.”

“Yeah. *We* don’t even know where it is going to go. We don’t rehearse.”

END CHAPTER

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Getting Down To Business

"Oh, who are we kidding? There shall be no sale."

-Quote From Chapter One, For Sale

"I am a very busy lady."

-Albert "Heymish" Bulgar

“”Cause he dead, you fucka. Now you know.”

Generic Esophagus Pae looked at the slightly older human as he crossed the street, ascertaining the perhaps fact that this human was not speaking directly to him. Having recently solved The Case Of The Mysterious Laugh Pillow, Gus was feeling good feelings about his imagined self, although, to be perfectly honest, even with some unexpected clues falling unexpectedly into a recognizable shape, he was not, as far as he knew, any closer to solving the, um, ‘Big One,’ let alone that pesky

library case. Although, the lunch meeting he was tipped onto later that week was bound to shake loose a few threads (in regards to the library case, that is). Something about imagining alternative futures and this ability being somehow related to rocks and stars. Gus finished crossing the road. He straightened his hat, brushed off his shirt, and smoothed his pants. He opened a door.

Meanwhile, across town, no metaphors were needed. Lawa and Heymish were dancing the pure dance of their respective ancestors. They were of the moment. The song ended and they collapsed in their chairs, as a particular dialog began to emerge into the windows of their consciousness.

“E Kekailoa, e hele kāua i ka he‘enalu i kēia ‘auinalā.

“Ua hele au i nehinei.”

“E hele hou aku nō!”

“‘A‘ole hiki. Ua huhū loa ‘o Māmā mā.”

“No ke aha mai?”

“Ua hele au i ka he‘enalu, akā, ‘a‘ole pau ka hana ma ka hale.”

Heymish and Lawa stopped eavesdropping on what they now determined to be the neighbor boy and his friend, and settled into their day.

Meanwhile, across town, Gus Pae, P.I. was settling himself into a hard wooden brown chair in front of the very professional desk of his old friend Regina. The walls were dripping, again.

Meanwhile...

Meanwhile, Regina was knee-deep into her predictive shpil³¹ that she shared with Gus gratis as both a personal and professional courtesy.

“...oracle says: No. 28 Preponderance of the Great. The Joyous, Lake. The Gentle, Wind. The ridgepole sags to the breaking point. It furthers one to have somewhere to go. Success. The lake rises above the trees. The image of Preponderance of the Great. Thus the superior man, when she stands alone, is unconcerned, and if she has to renounce the world, she is undaunted.”

“Uh huh,” Gus nodded. “But what about the old woman? Why did she recover her memory and,” he quickly continued before Regina could reply, “why did she remember her dreams and why were these dreams that she remembered dreams of her dead sister?” He paused. “And what does all of this have to do with Muriel?”

Meanwhile, in an unexpected closed door meeting somewhere uptown, humans were conspiring. Let’s listen in.

“It is interesting that this demarcation criteria involves the sharing of all data, when the only reason I was able to access this information was that I was temporarily employed as a librarian at an institution that happened to pay for temporary access to the journal in which this information was published. The fact is that most of the so-called scientific data is only available to a tiny minority of the population—however defined.”

“You might even call it ironic,” piped in the old grey man with the elephantine head.

“Yes, this is an irony, indeed,” replied the relatively younger human that had now momentarily forgot where it was that they were attempting to go with that particular argument as they looked over to the older man and nodded with that sort of quasi smile in which one shows no teeth. “What was I talking about?”

“There is no method,” spoke the seriously jovial woman.

“What?” asked a few of the others.

“There is no method to the madness. This retrofit is historically inaccurate. What we see here is an evolution of a system of knowledge and an institutionalization that aims to empower this form of knowledge over others. It is no more based on fact or predictive or true than these other way more mature and developed bodies of knowledge. Take your average detective mystery for instance.”

“Is this going to be another puzzle metaphor?” asked the short human that was wearing a red-striped shirt.

And why not, dear reader? What has anyone got against puzzles?

“No more games. No more fantasies. I’m not going to play anymore.”

“Easy for you to say.”

“Psshaw.”

“Would it were so.”

“Okay then. Let’s talk business.”

The woman was healed because of her faith. This is a true story about this woman, this woman that was healed (because of her faith). Now, I know what you are thinking. You are thinking, how can this possibly be a

true story when I am reading it inside of a book of fiction? Clever, you are. But nonetheless. True, this story is. The pertinent question, of course, is: What did this woman have faith in? But let us not get ahead of ourselves. There is a window open into which flows a cooling breeze. A woman sips her cloudy lukewarm tea. She is preparing for her day. And what a day it could be. Anything could happen. This is the nature of new days. But then she looks at the timeclock. She sighs. *Oh well*, she thinks, *I better get to work*. And once again, our story is pushed further into our imaginary future. And the horrors live on.

The woman walks down the street. Perhaps it's a street in a strange world. But it's a familiar day. Two bright green birds cross behind three pointy evergreen trees. The woman passes a construction site. She is hoping that the shop is open early today. Footsteps can be heard to her rear. A jogger says good morning as he passes by. A white truck with a turquoise stripe drives by with a full bed of leaves. There is one orange on an orange tree. It is a windy day.

The raindrops start falling as she approaches the shop. The shop is not open. Yet. She decides to wait at the café. She looks at the crowd and decides to forgo the idea of purchasing a scone. She is making many decisions this morning. But none of this matters. For, you see, she has faith in [the unknown]. She decides to purchase a stuffed muffin.

As she retraces her steps back past her home, she notices that they are dismantling a stone wall.

She settles into her work desk and begins to read the abstract from the article that it is her responsibility to

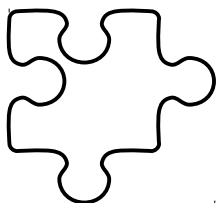
read:

Self-duality in Euclidean gravitational set ups is a tool for finding remarkable four-dimensional geometries. From a holographic perspective, self-duality sets a relationship between two a priori independent boundary data: the boundary energy-momentum tensor and the boundary Cotton tensor. This relationship, which can be viewed as resulting from a topological mass term for gravity boundary dynamics, survives under the Lorentzian signature and provides a tool for generating exact bulk Einstein spaces carrying, among others, nut charge. In turn, the holographic analysis exhibits perfect-fluid-like equilibrium states and the presence of non-trivial vorticity allows to show that infinite number of transport coefficients vanish.³²

The woman overhears one of her co-workers discussing the [specific type of] virus that has spread through the island, probably due to one specific cruise ship whose passengers are now in quarantine in a neighboring island harbor, although it cannot be certain at this time how exactly this virus got passed on and from which direction it flowed. The woman thinks about sickness. The woman overhears her co-worker discussing how the virus remains contagious even after symptoms subside. The woman thinks about how everyone in her workplace seems to be sick these days. *There is a sickness about*, she thinks.

And what makes you think that a cure to this disease exists somewhere in the life of the sea? Where is the scientific rigor in that? Methodically testing all the chemical components in the world is not going to bring you any closer, as if this answer is just waiting for you to find it. What reason do you have for thinking that this cure evolved along with the disease in such an obscure fashion? The entire premise is founded on a belief that the world is a certain way. Unless you are using as your starting point another system of knowledge (another science), in which case your entire methodology is faulty (not to mention arrogant, rude, and delusional). Look, either you are going to find this cure, or you are not. Having the most powerful telescopes, microscopes, or dereplication algorithms is not going to bring you any closer to solving these puzzles. Because your logic is off. So I cannot support the giving of community resources to more tech that serves this system that is fundamentally exploitative and unbalanced. This knowledge is fractured. It is divorced from real knowledge about the world, and because of this, it holds no probabilistic hope for curing the world's ills.

The woman watches a bug crawl across her desk. *What do you think you are doing there?* she thinks at the bug. She thinks this, too, at her self.



Anyway, the point is, is that the facts are presented in such a way that multiple possible theories are viable, and both the detective and the reader are encouraged to fluctuate between various paradigms, until, in the end, we are presented with some new, I don't know, exculpating fact that solves/absolves/dissolves our mystery, causing all alternate possibilities to vanish—to collapse our wave function, so to speak—leaving us with a closed case. In retrospect, all of the clues add up and fit our concluding theory, and we can be confident that we have discovered Truth. A few observances, however: these genre conventions presuppose that we will actually know when it is that the story is concluded, and second, of course, first, we need to pretend that there is some sort of mystery that requires solving.

Subchapter 1: The lone organism

The Ukamau group was able to choose this style because of the way they planned to take the film to the people. As Sanjinés explained to an interviewer in 1970, “For the screenings of *Yawar mallku* in the country regions we shall have a narrator present the film who will first tell the story of the film and show photographs of the characters, so carrying on the still-living tradition of the travelling storyteller which dates back to Inca times. After the screening we will talk with the people and then show the film again.”

*-Third World Film Making and the West*³³

“What number am I thinking of?” All eyes were now

focused on the woman as she began to construct her illustration. “Now, I suppose that there are different ways for you to find out. I could be thinking of 6 or I could be thinking 9. But does this really make a difference to your world, now? You are curious, but eventually you’ll tire of caring.” She continued. “Sure, we could get into the question of what do I even mean by number. The symbol as used in social context. Or some actual thing—six pears, say. But does *this* really matter? Well, maybe. But surely anybody that obsesses over this question is going to be viewed as unbalanced. Yet still,” she paused, looked around into each body’s eyes, “the question remains. What number *am* I thinking of.”

Subchapter 2: Knowledge and Understanding

It was not that they could not understand what was being said; it was rather a formal conflict at the level of the medium itself which did not correspond to the internal rhythms of our people or their profound conception of reality.

*-Third World Film Making and the West*³⁴

“Let’s look at this argument you are presenting. You say that this theory is untenable because there is no known force that can account for it. Yet, your scaffolding cannot account for consciousness. There is no known force, according to you, that can account for this thing. Does that mean that it does not exist? There is a reason why people do not have faith in your particular science, and that its hegemony depends on continual violence. Your mythology does not make room for the realities that people actually experience. Your knowledge

system is empirically flawed.”

Subchapter 3: Methods of Growth

The organizing principle of this society is not the isolated individual but society in its totality: it is this society that must be formed collectively. They do not conceive of an individual living above or on the margins of society. This does not mean the negation of the individual; quite the reverse: the equilibrium of collectivity protects him, immunizing him against neuroses. For this reason history is lived collectively; what affects a member of the community affects the whole community both in life and death.

*-Third World Film Making and the West*³⁵

Gus Pae, P.I. walked down the promenade. It was a street in a strange world. It was nighttime. The moon was an egg sitting between a runway of lights. *Ceci n'est pas un oeuf*, he thought. “Ceci n'est pas un oeuf,” he said, out loud, in an accent that was not quite entirely correct. He was not sure exactly what it was that he was saying.

“Business is booming.”

“Well, it's really none of my business.”

“Busy as a bee.”

“What?”

“I said, ‘Busy as a bee.’”

“Oh.”

And now for the transition into the special edition of this here detective novel, in which we start writing specifically for the person that actually purchased this particular book, which, in case you forgot, is For Sale. Well, hello there.

"Hello, there."

What a pleasant surprise to be talking with you today.

Dear _____,

How are you? What's new? I have a secret to tell you.
(I love you)

Love, Jacob "Jake" Rosen

P.S. (Post Script)

The public investigator stroked the hairs that grew out from under his nose. When did he acquire this mustache? His fingers moved down towards his chin and he felt the makings of a full beard. He looked around his brown green blue yellow red house. He wondered, how did I get here? He had a hunger in him. He buckled up his imaginary seatbelt. He was on a metaphorical journey. Events were occurring. He decided to stop making cents. He never much had an eye for this sort of business, anyway. Anyway. Any way the wind blows. Anyway, the wind, it blows.

Post Script

"This shit is never ending."

-A. Heymisher Bulgar

fore'carriage. the front part of a carriage, with an arrangement for independent movement of the fore-wheels—**vt. fore'cast.** to assess or calculate beforehand; to foresee; to predict.

-The Chambers Dictionary (1993)

“I think we’ve lost the trail.” Gus and Teddy stood by the precipice. Lawa walked up on their rear, recovering her breath.

“Had enough?” she asked, in a manner that let them know pretty clearly that she felt a somewhat perverse smugness in thinking that she was obviously spot-on correct about everything that she had been theorizing on up until then in regards to that specific aspect of the case, if not the entirety of the whole goddam Mystery. She winked. “Where to next?”

A puff of smoke rose out in the valley.

“What’s this?” Teddy was now crouched on the rocky ground, reaching out towards some shiny object. Lawa and Gus walked over to better see what it was that caught Teddy’s eye. “It looks like some kind of key,” spoke Teddy, as he held up the thing that he had found. “See?”

“Huh,” said Lawa, as she looked at Teddy and then at Gus and then off into the valley. “I suppose anything is possible.”

“I suppose,” Gus chimed in. They all stared off into the valley.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Quoted more *and* less accurately from **A Heymisher Bulgar / Wedding Dance** from *Live in the Fiddler's House* by Itzhak Perlman. **hey mish** : domestic, home-made, cozy, snug, familiar, intimate, informal. **bulgar** : a brisk circle or line dance, appeared among Romanian and south Ukrainian Jews at the end of the 19th century. <The Yiddish Dictionary Online, <http://www.yiddishdictionaryonline.com>> ↑
- 2 Preceding four lines are almost a direct quote from start of **Funny How Time Slips Away** from *The Essential Willie Nelson* by Willie Nelson. We will probably be endnoting words from published works (of art or otherwise) when entire sentences are reproduced, regardless of context or remix, but not perhaps when other works are vaguely referenced or just so happen to be the impetus for the appearance of certain words. Of course, we reserve the right to endnote anything at all, really. ↑
- 3 Quote from **Grey** from *Ashley Monroe EP* by Brendan Benson. Song includes the line, “The skies are always grey.” Someone once said that “the skis are always grey.” The quoting of this song is clearly a bridge from one archipelago to another. ↑
- 4 Just in case you haven’t read it, here is a quote from the introduction to **The Repeating Island : The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective**, Second Edition by Antonio Benítez-Rojo (Translated by James E. Maraniss), p.10, *From the apocalypse to chaos* : I can isolate with frightening exactitude—like the hero of Sartre’s novel—the moment at which I reached the age of reason. It was a stunning October afternoon, years ago, when the atomization of the meta-archipelago under the dread umbrella of nuclear catastrophe seemed imminent. The children of Havana, at least in my neighborhood, had been evacuated; a grave silence fell over the streets and the sea. While the state bureaucracy searched for news off the shortwave or hid behind official speeches and communiqués, two old black women passed “in a certain

kind of way”; I will say only that there was a kind of ancient and golden powder between their gnarled legs, a scent of basil and mint in their dress, a symbolic, ritual wisdom in their gesture and their gay chatter. I knew then at once that there would be no apocalypse. The swords and the archangels and the beasts and the trumpets and the breaking of the last seal were not going to come, for the simple reason that the Caribbean is not an apocalyptic world; it is not a phallic world in pursuit of the vertical desires of ejaculation and castration. The notion of the apocalypse is not important within the culture of the Caribbean. The choices of all or nothing, for or against, honor or blood have little to do with the culture of the Caribbean. These are ideological propositions articulated in Europe which the Caribbean shares only in declamatory terms, or, better, in terms of a first reading. In Chicago a beaten soul says: “I can’t take it any more,” and gives himself up to drugs or to the most desperate violence. In Havana, he would say: “The thing to do is not die,” or perhaps: “Here I am, fucked but happy.” ↑

- 5 Words are a direct quote from start of musical song **Nearness of You** by Sarah Vaughn. It is unclear to the endnote writing committee as to who or what thinks this line within our story. Perhaps time will tell, but you might need to fill in the blanks on your own. ↑
- 6 Gene-ric. **Gene**, variant of Jean (as a boy’s name is pronounced zhahn, It is of French and Hebrew origin, and the meaning of Jean is “God is gracious”.) **Ric** (as a boy’s name means “complete ruler; peaceful ruler; powerful leader”). name-related information source: The Internet ↑
- 7 This was some sort of infinite jest or something. Or **Something Sticking In My Eye** (NOFX). Perhaps this is a **Catch 22** reference - “You’ve got flies in your eyes...that’s probably why you can’t see them.” ↑
- 8 **esophagus**. a tube leading from the mouth to the stomach, or, you might say, the connection between the place that holds the mind (the na’au) and the place that

- speaks language. ↑
- 9 **pae.** group or cluster. -Hawaiian Dictionary / Pukui, Elbert. ↑
 - 10 **Gus.** Worthy of respect. -The Internet ↑
 - 11 Recordings of Buddy Holly and The Crickets say this, for example, in their popular song, **Oh! Boy.** ↑
 - 12 This happens to be a quote from a song, titled **Nothing & Nowhere** from *Knives Don't Have Your Back* by Emily Haines and The Soft Skeleton. "Some say we're lost in space. Some say we're falling off the page." ↑
 - 13 **oh! sucks!** from *Scream Record Punk Rock Hits* by a boys ↑
 - 14 That would be the U.S. Empire, of course. ↑
 - 15 **Après Moi** from *Begin to Hope* by Regina Spektor ↑
 - 16 A passage from *The Book of the Damned*:

So then, it is our expression that Science relates to real knowledge no more than does the growth of a plant, or the organization of a department store, or the development of a nation: that all are assimilative, or organizing, or systematizing processes that represent different attempts to attain the positive state—the state commonly called heaven, I suppose I mean.

There can be no real science where there are indeterminate variables, but every variable is, in finer terms, indeterminate, or irregular, if only to have the appearance of being in Intermediateness is to express regularity unattained. The invariable, or the real and stable, would be nothing at all in Intermediateness—rather as, but in relative terms, an undistorted interpretation of external sounds in the mind of a dreamer could not continue to exist in a dreaming mind, because that touch of relative realness would be of awakening and not of dreaming. Science is the attempt to awaken to realness, wherein it is attempt to find regularity and uniformity. Or the regular and uniform would be that which has nothing external to disturb it. By the universal we mean the real. Or the notion is that the underlying super-attempt, as

expressed in Science, is indifferent to the subject-matter of Science: that the attempt to regularize is the vital spirit. Bugs and stars and chemical messes: that they are only quasi-real, and that of them there is nothing real to know; but that systematization of pseudo-data is approximation to realness or final awakening—

Or a dreaming mind—and its centaurs and canary birds that turn into giraffes—there could be no real biology upon such subjects, but attempt, in a dreaming mind, to systematize such appearances would be movement toward awakening—if better mental co-ordination is all that we mean by the state of being awake—relatively awake.

So it is, that having attempted to systematize, by ignoring externality to the greatest possible degree, the notion of things dropping in upon this earth, from externality, is as unsettling and as unwelcome to Science as—tin horns blowing in upon a musician's relatively symmetric composition—flies alighting upon a painter's attempted harmony, and tracking colors one into another—suffragist getting up and making a political speech at a prayer meeting.

If all things are of a oneness, which is a state intermediate to unrealness and realness, and if nothing has succeeded in breaking away and establishing entity for itself, and could not continue to “exist” in intermediateness, if it should succeed, any more than could the born still at the same time be the uterine, I of course know of no positive difference between Science and Christian Science—and the attitude of both toward the unwelcome is the same—“it does not exist.”

A Lord Kelvin and a Mrs. Eddy, and something not to their liking—it does not exist.

Of course not, we Intermediates say: but, also, that, in Intermediateness, neither is there absolute non-existence.

Or a Christian Scientist and a toothache—neither exists in the final sense: also neither is absolutely non-existent, and, according to our therapeutics, the one that more

highly approximates to realness will win.

A secret of power—

I think it's another profundity.

Do you want power over something?

Be more nearly real than it.

-The Complete Books of Charles Fort, p.22-23 ↑

- 17 **tele.vision.** at a distance + sight. you might say it was the remote viewer. ↑
- 18 *The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: A Model of Explanation*, (Based on an address at the conference of the New England Branch of the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, Cambridge, Mass., Oct. 23, 1971) by Vincent J. Salandria from **False Mystery** ↑
- 19 **One Dead Cop** from *A-F Records: Fueling the Flames of Revolution, Volume 3* by Leftover Crack ↑
- 20 Nobody wants to read this meaningless drivell. This is one theory. It is time we tighten up our prose. This is one thought. What do you think? What do you think about machines that think? And about flowers? What do you think about flowers? Do you agree that nature is the flux of an unknowable feedback machine that society interrupts constantly with the most varied and noisy rhythms? To continue: "Each rhythm is itself a flux cut through by other rhythms, and we can pursue fluxes upon rhythms endlessly. Well then, the culture of the Peoples of the Sea is a flux interrupted by rhythms which attempt to silence the noises with which their own social formation interrupts the discourse of Nature." -**The Repeating Island**, p.16-17, *From rhythm to polyrhythm*. Well, what do you think? ↑
- 21 Beamer, Kamanamaikalani. No Mākou Ka Mana : Liberating The Nation (2014). p.4 ↑
- 22 Morgenstern, George. Pearl Harbor : The Story of the Secret War (1947). p.xi. "Only the writer of detective fiction, with full control over [the] plot and [the] characters, can hope to achieve a complete examination of

- motive and solve every subsidiary puzzle in the major mystery. [The record] ends with no signed confessions.” ↑
- 23 The Original Chinese Zodiac Calendar. ©2014 FORTUNE DESIGNS COLLECTION CORP. Copyrighted October 12, 2014. Printed in Hawai‘i by Hawai‘i’s Printer. ↑
- 24 Words stolen from **The Short Con** by Aleks Sennwald and Pete Toms. “*Pops might be the best kid homicide detective in the crime-ridden near future, but can her and her new partner solve a murder without killing each other?*” <<http://studygroupcomics.com/main/the-short-con-by-aleks-sennwald-and-pete-toms/>> ↑
- 25 Words stolen from **From Behind Closed Doors: The Insidious Nature of Traditional (Corporate) Think Tanks and Non Profits** by Ryan MacLeod. accessed through **The Hampton Institute** website. 2/6/2015. <<http://www.hamptoninstitution.org/think-tanks-and-non-profits.html>> ↑
- 26 Definitions of **semantic** (of or pertaining to semantics), **semantics**, **web**, and **the web** come from Dictionary 3.4.0. *Look up words in dictionaries*. Copyright © 2005-2006 Emmanuele Bassi. ↑
- 27 Did you realize that quark is a literary term? It’s true. It comes from the writings of James Joyce and was appropriated by one Murray Gell-Mann to describe, I don’t know, science or something. Source: **Fire in the Mind: Science, Faith, and the Search for Order** by George Johnson (1995). ↑
- 28 **The Countess Confessions** by Jillian Hunter (2014 pbk.) p.40. ↑
- 29 **Fire in the Mind** (see endnote 27), p.5. The author in this quote is implying that perhaps the particles themselves *are* historical contingencies. ↑
- 30 Words from a Leonard Cohen song. ↑
- 31 **shpil** : game, play. (approximate pronunciation : shpeel) <The Yiddish Dictionary Online, Web, 8 May 2015.> **spiel**. 1. Talk, a story; a speech intended to persuade or

advertise, patter. <OED Online. Oxford University Press, March 2015. Web. 8 May 2015.> ↑

- 32 P. Marios Petropoulos. “Gravitational Duality, Topologically Massive Gravity and Holographic Fluids,” in **Modifications of Einstein's Theory of Gravity at Large Distances**. ↑
- 33 Armes, Roy. *Third World Film Making and the West*. 1987. Part Four: Cinema Astride Two Cultures, Chapter 16. Jorge Sanjinés. p.299-300. Quote within the quote is from “Ukamau and Yawar Malku” (interview with Guy Braucourt). *Cinéma 70*, no. 144 (March 1970): 77-90. In English: *Afterimage*, no. 3 (Summer 1971): 40-53. ↑
- 34 Ibid., p.300. Quote is from “Language and Popular Culture.” In English: *Framework*, no. 10 (Spring 1979): 31–33. ↑
- 35 Ibid., p.304. Quote is from Ibid. ↑

PRAISE FOR **When-it-all-changed**

“WHAT THE FUCK? IS THIS ANOTHER BOOK? WHY ARE WE STILL WRITING?”

-The Author

“THIS BOOK IS VERY GOOD for reading. It is full of many things that are good, yet at the same time much goodness there is in...AWESOME UNIVERSE...jibber-jabber jibber-jabber.”

-Anonymous

“...yet at the same time, much goodness there is when perceiving this book as A LIVING BREATHING HOLISTIC ENTITY. Go on, give it a try.”

-OJPL Publishing

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is, like all of the things in our vast multiverse, entirely coincidental.



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When-it-all-changed

or,

The Telltale Instant After Which It Is
No Longer The Same



“Drip, drip, drip.” (said the drops of rain)

“Howl. Whoosh.” (said the wind)

It was a dark night. Also stormy. (see above)

Squeaky squawkings, um, drip drop, whoosh, a cold breeze on our back. All of this happened during our attempt to connect with our old friend, as we return yet again to that (eternally?) recurring theme of ours that perhaps entails the mapping of communication between a sentient being and the totalizing system that engulfs her. But that would make your role that of a simple medium, and we no need reminders re: how you feel about your agency. Dizzy, we are, with the play of meaning.

Looking over the notes of our predecessors, we notice maybe a few things. One: this was no boating accident. Two: our metaphors tend towards sloppiness. Let us see if we cannot bring

back that ancient sense of balance, before we go return our defective machine to the manufacturer.

Later that night. As I slipped through various states of consciousness, I found myself enveloped by some snuggling other declaring its love, for me, in particular. I awoke fully in a new day to observe the markings of the power outage that occurred during my restful slumber, along with the continuation of loud and growling winds from what was perhaps now a new storm. Popping outside to check the foundations of my housing and note the flow of the various streams, I rearranged the layout of the objects that were re-soaked due to the rain's (or whoever-it-was-that-was-directing-the-rain's) disregard for make-believe boundaries, and moved some slippers further under the overhang of the doorway. Returning indoors, I breakfasted on sautéed onions and arugula, spiced eggplant, and poi.

Time passed. I realize now that forcing your hand might not always lead to satisfactory outcomes, but sometimes we grow tired of speculating. Sometimes it helps to card/table metaphor. There is a rich, deep, mature (and, I might add, beautiful, poetic, and *pono*) body of knowledge that comes from this place, and only some of it is accessible through your various

Internet Search Engines. What is my point (lest you accuse me of yet another conversational digression)? My point is this: Why not try follow a path that actually has the potential to lead in a direction that we want to go in? I can think of no good reason.

Before the spotlight fades once more, I would be remiss if I did not mention the Moon Conference that began this story, nor, of course, the archive workshop at the Center of Peace and Justice. Sometimes things fall, and sometimes things fall into place. Some tellers of stories, through perhaps too clever literary devices, while trying—laudably—to avoid the traps of apocalyptic thinking, box themselves into bounded time cycles of their own making, basing their philosophies on badly told histories, unable to see the rich traditions and futures that are there, waiting to be bespoke. My partner reported four, maybe five power outages throughout the day. I was in and out of sleep all day, but. The wind continues to howl. And, though it be bad for business, I am still of the opinion that this mystery is not so mysterious indeed.

“I am not so sure that it matters if you understand completely the words that are coming out of my mouth.” That was my neighbor

speaking. I was sitting at the table kitty-corner to her rear, eavesdropping on her conversation with the familiar seeming academic looking fellow that she had been waiting for when I walked in, unseen, as far as I know, by her. They were talking philosophy. I was drinking coffee. We were in a café. I was looking over my notes in my characteristic manner, flipping through the case files, thinking that that neighbor of mine sure had some kind of spunk. Our other neighbor had just returned from another one of her many trips. At that moment I decided that cleverly built thought palaces was all well and good, but not quite the flavor of bagel I wanted to be toasting.

“Hi Jack,” said Cat.

“Hey neighbor,” I said.

“Didn’t see you walk in. Anyway.”

She walked off. I returned to my puzzling.

And puzzling it was, e makamaka heluhelu. There is a difference between the way things were before and the way they are now. Yet, I cannot help but feel that the more things change, and so on. On the bus, the previous day, the same bus, but I digress. There is a difference, yet there is a similarity to previous feelings that I can relate to in my mind. Sitting here, able to

view all of our collectively missed connections and unexplored opportunities, as history bumbles on like some bumbling thing that bumbles, I think: If there is no plot, why would anyone want to exist in this story? Unless there was something to existence itself. I decided to tidy up before the next storm.

Panda bears. I would be remiss if I did not mention panda bears. Photographs, we have, of this very topic. The sharpening of points. The relations to cultures of different persuasions. But whatever. Excuse me, cough cough. The Beatles. This is a musical group. Perhaps you are familiar with their musical oeuvre? Once upon a time. No matter. Where were we? Propaganda, I believe. Once upon a time, a conversation was I having with a dying bee. Multiple times, this happened. It would seem, that upon death, these bees have a habit, they do, of walking upon the ground, no longer able to fly, heading in a particular direction. But enough about us and them. Was that you pulling in, I hear? Perhaps. Ding ding. Dinner time, it is. A recurring theme, no doubt. Sometimes things fall. Sometimes things fall into a particular et cetera et cetera. But you already knew that, didn't you. Burp.

It was a dark night. Someone sat on a chair, its legs (the chair's legs) hidden by a tightly woven blanket of pinks, blues, maroons, and oranges. From the seat of the chair sprouted the gangly legs of this someone that was sitting in the chair, the feet of these legs coming to rest on the dowel of a wooden stool that stood upon the lau hala mat that covered one section of the room's floor. The hum of an electronic computer. An ant crawling across a black surface. A cooling breeze came through the louvered window, gently billowing its flowered curtain.



J. looked forward to his future. There was the point that he wanted to get to, and then there was the point where he was at. And he could not quite seem to imagine the bridging of this imaginary gap. It was not as if it was such a large amount of time (relatively speaking). And it was not as if it occurred to him to entertain the possibility that he might somehow not eventually pass through to this other side that he was anxious to reach, as if time and space might somehow cease to flow. Yet, immense it still seemed, this unbridgeable gap. He continued to go through the various motions, like some sort of fancy puppet (a marionette?). He was not so interested in the things that he was saying and doing. He imagined some sort of scheduling error in some sort of cosmic calendar. J. stood up and walked into his kitchen and pivoted around to his left until he was facing his own wall

calendar, which noted, for his benefit, that he was smack dab in the middle of the harvest festival. This either made perfect sense or it did not. Perhaps there were more possibilities than this, still. J. decided that this was one of his favorite times to be a member of his specific identity group.

J. sat down in a chair with a tan-colored seat and white back and legs. He was not wearing a hat. He had many mustaches. His head was shaped like an almond. He had bony fingers and fat wrists. His eyes drooped slightly. The front door creaked expectantly before it burst open. In walked a woman wearing blue jeans and a dotted shirt, also blue. She was hungry for dinner.

“Well, love, what’ll it be?” said J.

“Grab your hat,” snapped his partner. “It’s sundown on the Sabbath of Sukkoth and we’re going out on the town.”

They sat down in the booth, A. and J., in the Year of the Lamb, amidst the cool air of a dry night in the rainy season, when, all of a sudden, there was a loud explosion. J. adjusted his short-brimmed checkered grandpa hat and winked at his partner. A startled young man carrying two bowls of noodle soup froze in front of their table, mouth open. He looked towards the noise, and

then down from J. to A., who caught his eye and gave him a reassuring smile. The youth looked back towards the noise and then back at A., who looked at J. and raised her short brown eyebrows, before wrinkling her face and shrugging her shoulders. The boy looked at J., who looked up at him and winked and made a clicking noise with the side of his mouth. The young man regained his composure and said, “We’ve got a Hāloa bowl and an ‘Elima Pua’a bowl ready if you want ‘em. Elsewise you can wait on—”

“Those’ll do fine. Thanks,” said A., smiling.

The boy placed the bowls on the table and walked off.

“I am going to go check on that explosion,” said A. J. picked up a pair of thin black chopsticks and proceeded to eat his noodle soup. A. walked off into the dusk.

A very short while later, A. returned to the booth and sat down in front of a still hot bowl. She helped herself to a spoonful of broth. “Creamy,” she said, nodding to her partner. J. gazed at her face as she began to consume the contents of her bowl in earnest, and then returned his focus to his own dish, submerging his sticks below the pools of grease to pinch some noodles and shovel them up into his eager mouth.

J. and A. stuffed themselves until their bellies were full, or, perhaps, until their bowls were empty, whichever came first. "Somebody blew up the bank, again," said A., leaning back, dabbing the corners of her mouth with a cloth napkin.

"Ah," said J.

They sat for a bit, in silence, contemplating what they had just ingested.



“Well, come on then,” said the bank robber. “Let’s get this over with.” He was not your average robber of banks, but then again, there really is no average *anything*, an average simply being a completely imaginary composite statistic of arbitrarily defined who’s-it-what’s-its that, um, excuse me. I do believe that we are late for going to work to do our job that entails destroying the structures that, oh shit, there’s a horse in the hospital.

“Cough cough.”

The bank robber put down the telephone and looked to the coughing human sitting on the chair. There was a sickness in the air. There was a yawning. Just sitting there, waiting. Come on, then. Whatchoo got?

“Pardon?”

“I said,” said the bank robber, “it is about time. I was getting restless here. I am glad to

see....” The bank robber’s speech trailed off as his attention became otherwise engaged. Now then, where were we?

“Up and at ‘em, Atom Ant.”

The young boy blinked open his eyelids and focused in on his waking life. He pulled his blanket cocoon around his body and remembered that he was now a middle-aged man. He briefly contemplated slipping back into a for-some-reason seemingly preferable dreamworld as this dreamworld itself slipped further and further into the realms of impossibility. He looked up at his partner.

“There’s a smoothie in the kitchen.”

He made the crude attempts at a smile, and rolled over.

J. walked into the kitchen, almost as if in a trance, pulled towards the rays of morning light that shone through the window and the unique sense of illumination thus effected, music coming through the speakers attached to the spinning record on the turntable in the adjacent room, the record, Sade’s *Promise*, asking, over and over, “*Is it a crime? Is it a crime?*” A. was by the door,

gathering together the bags that she took with her on an average day of work. But this was no average day.

"I'll see you later, then," said J. "Don't forget the fish." A. looked into his eyes. "Good luck today," she said.

After she was gone, J. looked at the purple green smoothie on the table, paused, took a sip from the yellow mug of coffee next to it, and walked into his makeshift office. He was not yet hungry for breakfast.

J. sat down and stretched. He arose from his comfortable chair and took two large steps over to the turntable. He lifted the lid with his left hand, grabbed the sleeve with his right, gently grabbed and lifted the record with his left, and slipped it into its sleeve. He returned the album to the record box, an old storage box that he pilfered from the outgoing recycling pile at an old job, and selected another.

J. sat back down to Jimmy Smith's *Got My Mojo Workin'* and looked around the room. Piles of books on the floors; various hats draped over a vacuum cleaner and a bicycle; a few musical instruments. His eyes settled on the file cabinet and he reached over and pulled on the knob of the bottom drawer. He blindly rummaged through the stacks of folders until he felt the one

he was looking for. He pulled it out slightly, glanced over, and reached down to pull it out with both hands, trying not to unnecessarily disturb the other files. He tossed the retrieved file onto the table to his left and sat back in his chair, pondering.

J. decided it was time to procrastinate.

Meanwhile, not much was happening in the real world. It had seemed like perhaps things had changed, but perhaps somebody had not gotten the memo.

FROM THE DESK OF JACOB ROSEN

MEMO :

Reality is not quite what you think it is. There is no good excuse for continuing to take part in a system that nobody likes. It is likely that we will continue to exist. It is time for us to exist in a manner befitting our best ideals. There is no good reason for this not to happen.

Chapter 2: The Conspiracy (A Theory on the Nature of Nature)

“But if there is only one, how can there be any actual conspiring? Methinks that something impossible is going on.”

“Yes, indeed,” said the bank robber/terrorist. She folded her fingers betwixt the grooves of her other fingers and wiggled them (her fingers) in a playful manner. There was something not quite congruent between the representation and the reality. Someone, somewhere, was lying.

Over in the corner of the room came the stirrings of a new consciousness. Heads turned and looked at this previously silent companion, as it pondered its entry into the conversation.

“I believe that there are simultaneously both more and less factors at play,” he paused, rubbing his eyes, momentarily losing himself, “than, um, well,” he refocused, “this is the general crux of our problem more or less. Our theories do not do justice to our world.”

Almost in unison, the group of revolutionary sometimes anarchists looked at the clock on the wall—a clock slightly illuminated by the orange glow of the glass lamp on the desk—as it told them that it was now perhaps time to begin that new day. There was a conference to infiltrate.

And a breakfast to be prepared.

A New Nation

The conference (yet another conference) was about the science of ——— and ————. It was a local conference, a yearly conference, being held (this year) just down the road from ———. As such, X and X were hosting a friend from one of the other islands. This house guest was staying in the guest room, which held the guest bed, and doubled, tripled, and quadrupled as the piano room, the storage room, and the library. Of course, X wouldn't be attending the conference, having retired from both ——— and science in general some time in the past. But none of this was entirely relevant to the plot that we happen to find ourselves a party to. In fact, all of this repetitive recurrence was simply some sort of narrative device for a story that no one really

could give one or two shits about comprehending. Cannot be bothered, us. *Well*, thought Jack, *no time like the present*. No, that is not what he thought. He thought, *Puzzles puzzles puzzles*. Why **should** we be bothered with these puzzles, with this goddamn cosmic schooling? *This game is clearly lacking justification, and it sure as hell ain't no fun*. He smiled. *I didn't put you in this goddamn school*, came the thought in his head. All possibilities were open. And this, what with the continued existence of persons contaminated by racist, imperialist, colonial mind controls, meant an annoying prolonging of struggles that have already been won. *But don't worry, they'll all be dead soon*. It meant that we really cannot say what direction this paragraph will take. It meant that we are frustrated by many things, but, then again, blah blah blah, etc. Supposing that this was a novel that we were living in. Pause. Supposing that anything was possible. Where were we? Jacob sat at his desk, composing some sort of electronic document. As the needle reached the center of PART I of *Astral Weeks*, he reached over, popped the cover, and flipped the record. He pressed play on PART II. He ran his fingers through his relatively longish brown hair and rubbed his relatively largish left ear between his thumb and forefinger. He was

worried about various realities that had recently popped into existence. He scratched his head. He was in the middle of yet another holiday, this one having something to do with miracles and light. He thought of an old woman that lived in a shoe. He thought of an old lady that swallowed a fly. He took a deep breath through his relatively hairy nostrils. His chair creaked. He sat up straight and looked at the painting on the wall.



To be continued...?

About the Author

The author, Jacob Ross Rosen, is probably an actually existing human being that has a specific history and lives in specific circumstances. For instance, you might say that his first published book won first place in a contest (for book writing), and that he lives in a house with his best friend and has various hobbies.

It Could Always Be Worse



Nothing is happiness. Pause. Everybody is dead, still. Pause. The bicycle chain is rusty. Sigh. Look how far we've come. By any assessment standard worth its salt, we've no business being here at all. I think I forgot my belt. It could always be worse.

Not satisfied with what I beheld, I was always poking things. To be fair to my former self, it is not as if there were no voices prodding me along, imploring me to do this, do that. Sigh. My neighbors are talking to each other. "Sit down. *Sit* down," they say. I got up, walked into the old kitchen and had myself another Evil Empire Brand plastic covered espresso. With the Mass Production Factories all but a fading blip on our multidimensional timeline, the practices borne of my once hard fought ideals were losing their

context. The birds are thwit-thwittering. The sky is [sky-colored]. My nose is running. It could always be worse.

I had myself another espresso.

My uncle was out scavenging, preparing for a new project over at the new adventure store. I was waiting for him to return so that he could transport me to the coffee farm I would be living at for the next few weeks. He had been living on this island since he was half my age and he was acting as my outfitter/tour guide for this particular escapade of mine, the beginnings of which have been full of malodorous plot holes and various runny noses. But perhaps I've mentioned that. Well, it could always be worse.

I walked out into the old living room and played a tune on one of the guitars.

That pain in my neck continued to announce itself as I turned my head and made eye contact with the banana tree. I wondered why I was still writing in this language that was both foreign to this place and foreign to my body. My uncle drove up in his car. "Okay, done deal. Let's go."

"...Time for our Hawaiian Word of the Day—wana. We learned earlier about its meaning as

sea urchin, but also this. Sharp or spike. Long spike or ray of light, as in dawn..."

"Ah," said Uncle.

"...You know where to find 'em. Here we go. Brand new music—Maunalua."

There was a slight modulating buzzing sound in the distance. There was a louder buzzing sound to my left as I looked over to see a bee by the overturned bucket next to the tomato plant. I continued to shit into the other bucket that my host had set up with its sawdust bedding. There was a drip to my rear. I finished my export and wiped my butt with 8 squares of processed tree flesh. I dumped some sawdust over my poop and tried out some of the branded lemon meringue cheer deep-cleansing hand soap. I noticed that the shower head has an on/off/on switch in addition to the valve on the pipe that's attached to the 500-unit (gallon?) tank by the corner of the pavilion. Drip drip drip went the water on the roof, off the gutter, and into the various water receptacles. I suppose I do recall it raining briefly earlier in the day. I sat down in an old green chair. Sigh. I suppose it's time to sweep the floor.

“Look how far we’ve come,” I thought to myself. “Such a view.”

The black cat (Lola) meowed. This was some sort of language exchange. I decided that now was a good time to test out the shiny new cooking stove. Pause. Well, it could always be worse.

The leftover bonfire embers provided the spark for my meal of rice and peanuts and salt. The complimentary salt came with a small bit of plastic wrap that will need to find a home. Perhaps I should start a garbage can. Perhaps I should burn it (the plastic). Perhaps it is time to check on the frying pan that is currently cooking my rice. Ah, crunchy rice. My first meal. Satisfying. Well, it could always be worse. I mean, I could slide into a deep mental depression, due to my perceived loneliness and the echoes of the nagging disembodied voices that make me feel like an incompetent failure. I mean, just when I was starting to feel good about myself and my prospects.

“Hi, Lola.”

“Meow.”

“Chirp chirp thweet.”

Today is the last day of the moonth.

MAPS

Entrance (2 doors)

Clearing makai towards 'ōhi'a (leave wall to road at least until finishing auto access)

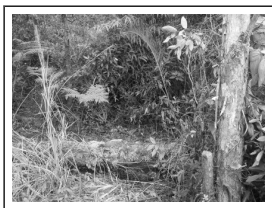


Wall from 'ōhi'a to 'ōhi'a. Waiwi marks beginning of footpath (will probably come down, though.)

'Ōhi'a from right of entrance to straightaway (right and back from waiwi (next to hāpu'u fern)) for clearing and turnaround entrance.

Right turn.

Turnaround perhaps, but limited space. Hāpu'u ferns ('elua) and palm ('ekahi). Still need to cut log, but auto drive in and back up in between 'ōhi'a and hā-



pu'u until palm is feasible, though tight. Perhaps another road is possible.

Geez. Clearing looks big now. Oh well, once inside, you are inside.

It Could Always Be Worse

Walkway makai (map later).

Middle road (right of 'ōhi'a, step over fallen log, veer left and go right)

Bathroom to your left at entrance to clearing)



“Thweet thweet trill chirp.”

“[Rooster crow].”

“Crinkle crinkle,” said the lau mai'a.

“Hey,” I said.

“It's windy,” said the stove.

“Let's try out that shower,” I said (out loud).

“Mmm. Delicious. Hey, could you quit it?” Another mosquito was buzzing around my body. I scratched the back of my head. Perhaps that haircut and shave wasn't such a good idea. “I'd rather not sit here being paranoid,” I said to the mosquito. We were testing our boundaries. For the first time since I left the island, I thought about the garden, and whether it was getting any rain. “That's still my foot,” I said to the mosquito that had landed on my foot. It flew off.

“That’s still a part of *me*, you know.”

“Myow.”

And for our next trick we shall perform for you a dance in the rain. A chilly morning, it is. “Str-reeeetch,” said my upper body. Almost ready to depart. Read a book. Smash the state.

Day 3: SHOES FALL APART

21 feet to right this turn. That’s a lot of shoes. 23 feet to fire pit. A tall-ish human potential wheelchair access between the ‘ōhi’a. So far, our shape is unknown.

14 feet ‘ōhi’a to ‘ōhi’a. Another 7 to the gateway.

12-ish feet ‘ōhi’a to other ‘ōhi’a, but one branch in the way.

Translation Exercise:

“Are those my fruit?”

“No, my fruit are inside of my body.”

Chop chop chop. Chop chop chop.

“Lunch!”

It Could Always Be Worse

Makai trail. Clearing behind the de-rooted waiwi. 2 potential trails. Will wait until sickle gets back from its day off. 27 feet from 'ōhi'a to clearing.



32 ft to border. Let's make a wall.



2 'ōhi'a behind clearing. Step over two logs. Go to right of crooked branch. Small clearing. Should hit wall and go right, towards back door, hopefully. Beyond wall. Ho'okahi 'ōhi'a

on right of what was once a path. One 'ōhi'a + strand of waiwi up ahead. Land dips down and there is a waist high overturned tree. This is our "true" boundary.

Back door tunnel should be plugged until mossy cross branch. Create door on other side. Hāpu'u fern is the ahu.

"I might need to finish that back door later," I said to myself as I ceremoniously pooped out this notebook that I'm writing on. Some call it the skin of the gods because it is for sending messages to friends far away. I looked down at the

machete, and over to the phone. I took a mental picture. "Perhaps we should fill in those pukas in our wall, as well." A dog barked in the distance.

Well, shit. I still cannot seem to get a fire started. Or figure out an ideal bathing procedure. These seem like fundamental elements, but perhaps we are still in confusion about the fundamental bits and pieces of this here rock wall. Anyway, it could always be worse. Oh, baby, it's one wild, wild world.

He shut off the electromagnetic wave distributor. He was having quite an adventure. Oh yeah. We forgot to inform you. This is also an adventure-survival novel that you are reading. Surprise!! All the more fun, yes?

"Coquí? Nah, never met him."

Quantum Jitters curled up in a ball. He looked to his right. How did he end up in this story, anyhow? He thought about looking for an exit, before deciding to settle in for the duration.*

"I used to go to camp," I said to myself, which

* See books 1 through 4 of an entirely different series of books for an introduction to the antics of Quantum Jitters.

is you, I mean, me. “My first girlfriend’s name was Dawn, actually.” [stop making sense]

I awoke in the night to realize that it was quite possible that my ignorance of the heating mechanism might mean that I have used up my hot water allotment for the moonth. Oh well. I awoke in the morning to find my blankets disheveled and the mosquito net kicked out. Bzzzzz. A constant buzz. My eyes itch but I shouldn’t rub them. I dumped the remainder of Lola’s food on the barbecue. Where was she? I sat down to think about what steps I should take to maintain this fine pair of two-dollar shoes. I added shoe goo to the scavenger list. The youngsters were heaving off this day. We are getting into the Kū moons. I’ll stack some wood later in the day. I walked up the wooden stairs, and removed the stretchy cords with the hooks on their ends from around the rolled up tent. My nose continued to run. I’m no cobbler, but.

TO DO (next week):
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up a catchment tank.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a house.

He walked down the road, one hand on the handle of his machete and one wrapped round his mug of coffee, his makeshift shoelace digging into the back of his heel.

“Roof roof.”

“Hey there.”

“Baah. Baaah.”

Is someone lost?

“No, no. Just making a new (old) trail is all.”
He stopped and listened to the rain.

“Lunch!”

“Is this what I want,” he thought, “to sit around the fire, smoke in my eyes, smoke in my lungs, all alone with the stars and the frogs?”

PROCESSING

“I call that one, *The National Anthem*. What?”

And now, for our next tune, I’ll play, *Do You Hear Me?*

“That was maybe the best harmonica-ing I’ve ever done,” he thought. “Is anybody recording this?” He ran over to the sun-powered lighting source and flipped open this book that you are reading. “I better write fast before I forget,” he thought. “This recording mechanism sure does

take a lot out of me.”

I don't want to escape to the moon. Even if the world went boom. I just want to be with you.

“I don't want to live on Mars. I don't want to drive fast cars. I just—”

“Excuse me,” said Marranzano. “I think you're sitting on my head.”

Um.

“Surprise! This is just another book in an already existing series of science fiction books. And you thought you were reading a book inside a book inside a book. You were way off.”

INSERT YOUR RESPONSE

“Well, it could always be worse,” spoke the congregation (in unison).

THE END

Epilogue. Can't stop, won't stop. Time to sleep. But don't forget to dream.

It Could Always Be Worse

**So Far, So Bad, So What:
a collection of short stories**

It Could Always Be Worse

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the authors' imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is, like all of the things in our vast multiverse, entirely coincidental.



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**So Far So Bad So What:
a collection of short stories**

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Nah, we're just kidding. This be no short story. This is still a young adult adventure-survivance novel. The sustainability conference was taking place either this moon or the one afore. One of the loves of my life was probably in

attendance and here I was, taking notes in her sustainability (sp.16) blue covered notebook. I tested out the lua this morning (no.2). I think I should probably dig a deeper hole, but the concept worked. I used 5 squares of processed tree flesh and some fresh leaves and moss to wipe up. Washed up with a handful of water, some moss, and some clean dirt. The rain pitter-patters on my ceiling. I had forgot to make room for myself, but me and my stuff were able to figure out a solution. So here I sit, in my new house—

“Oh, hello cat whose name I don’t remember or cannot pronounce.”

“Hello,” said the cat as it stared into my soul. It walked off into the bush. “Thanks for the offering!” it called out as it merged into the land.

Where was I? Oh yes. That’ll be the sun coming up. Let’s eat outside. Well, it could always be different than it is. The rain started again mid-meal. I must say I am pleased with our temporary system, though I am noticing a few leaks in our roof. And now I have to lunch with this grumpy mosquito in its crowded home and hope I am not sitting on anyone’s head or limbs. The ‘ulu and poi and jerky were delicious. And the avocado? Oh, excellent. Fart.

Shabbat dinner was on the stove. The rain was oh so loud. Israel was on the radio. Time to add the fish. My eyes are no more no good. Mmmm delicious. My favorite: huikau rice and water from a cup. Seconds? Sure. Two shoots. Mmmm, my favorite. Huika'i rice with a cup of water. Wait a second. Was there another dance party scheduled for tonight? Well, it is the Sabbath. Fart.

Don't you want me baby? Don't you want me, ohhhohhhoh.

CLICK. And if you try sometime, you might find, you get what you—CLICK. Dance all night, play all day. CLICK.

Open Sesame.

Well, that dancing was nice, but I suppose this method...His mechanisms were clicking again. A game, love is not. So no need ticket.

“And that was called, *Kōke'e Kōke'e Kōke'e Mahalo.*”

“And that one was called, *Is It Kosher? No, But We’ll Make It Work.*”

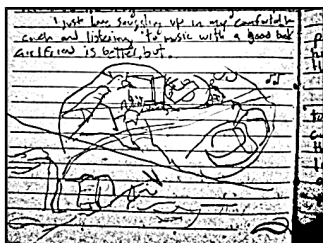
“And this one is, *It’s the End of the World As We Know It (and I feel fine).*”

“So, what did you do today?” asked his imaginary future conversant.

“Well, I learned how to take a piss with the lights off at night at my new house in the rain.”

While some may say that the best orange juice continues to come from oranges, you can never quite capture that flavor of your mother-in-law’s. The Hilo Tree on Nohea Drive consistently puts on quality performances. I would recommend the orange-flavored oranges of Hawai’i.

I just love snuggling up in my comfortable couch and listening to music with a good book. Girlfriend is better, but.



That boyz up to something BZZZ Welcome to the party BZZZ This is Hawai'i—

“Whoah,” I say. “That there dried aku is ‘ono. Wait a second. I think I’ve got my grammar wrong.”

“‘Ono ka aku,” said the mo‘o. “Mahalo for the offering.” This book that I’m reading is pretty good, I think. Too bad I left it behind when I jumped islands. It’s the last book in the series, too. It’s called, *We’re Having A Party*. “Hey,” I said to myself, “that might not be such a bad idea.”

BATTERY CHARGING

He sat on the rock floor, watching the children play Gods and Aliens. Somebody wanted to suck his blood. Well, it could always be wars. Yeah, think about that. (Life is not a game)

I’m still not sure why we’re waiting until nightfall to start writing again. Some days are good for cultivating, I suppose. Sigh. I am imagining the connection mechanism for using my locally-produced gas to light my stove. I’ve

been thinking about temporary abundances all day, come to think of it. Oh yeah. Lentil soup. Sigh. It could always be...SARDINES!!!

“Well, we got no sun today, so I don’t know if we should turn on the lights tonight,” I said to the Lulz Cat after she had prompted me with a ‘myaoww’. But perhaps our mechanism is not a daily exchange. *Let’s find out*, I thought to myself. I was still claiming specific voices for my own.

“Lola, could you take that claw out of my eye? Thank you.”

“The switch is over there,” said Lola.

“Oh, thanks,” I said. Sitting back down, I thought, *Oh, much better*. Sigh. Many things are much better, perhaps, yet still I have this aching back. Oy. To get old and still have to run with the young. Such a journey, this is.

THE FUTURE: “Ah, a dinner of lentils cooked in water and sardine broth with some Hawaiian salt topped with chopped peanuts and whole, dead sardines.”

THE PRESENT: *Are we missing anything?* I thought (re: dinner). I decided to try to plan and tune into that ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i segment that was to be broadcast through the electromagnetic wave distributor at the hour after ‘elima, tomorrow, on

ka Lā Pule. I smiled inwardly. *Am I forgetting anything?*

THE FUTURE: Oh yeah, and a SIDE OF BANANAS.

“Did you enjoy your special dish, Lola?”

THE PRESENT: There was a slight disagreement about who was sitting in the comfortable chair. It went a little something like this:

“E ‘olu‘olu ‘oe. E noho iho ‘oe.”

“Jeez. I won’t sit there if you don’t want me to sit there.”

“‘A’ole. Ua ho‘omākaukau au i kēia mea ‘ai nāu.”

“I’ll just go over here.”

“E noho ‘oe i kēnā comfortable chair.”

This home work is strenuous/difficult/challenging. Which reminds me. I was gonna float an idea by Uncle Grandpa in the days to come. Instead of a home purchasing society, perhaps a home building society, where each member helps build each other’s home, until each member has a home to live in. Reminder: look up the word for home purchasing society so as to relate it to our ancestors.

THE PAST: And for dessert, lentils with

orange juice served on a bed of orange peel with an orange segment accompaniment. I thought, *Leftovers for breakfast and lunch. That's awesome.*

...Support the keiki with the Hawai'i Isle...

One of these days, methinks, I'm gonna sit on my front porch and [ride]. And that'll do it for tonight's band practice. My eyes are starting to itch. Better wrap myself up in my net for the night. Pause. Well, it looks like we slept through our language lesson. Oh no, never mind. 'Ōlelo nā DJ apau, still. Let's breakfast. Pause. Mmm. Leftover dessert amidst a jovial discussion of our moon calendar. Let's brush those teeth with our kīnehe powder and bamboo toothbrush. After all, today is a special day.

"Good morning, mosquito," I said as I blew it further down the road.

Taro, for lack of water, will grow misshapen.

"Take care of your self (using an expansive definition of self)," said the 'verse. The DJs let me know about that upcoming Rough Riders

concert with the 3 wise men that maybe you might call divas even though they are kāne. Also, something about a hale hou. Time to pack a lunch. Pause. Deep sigh. Okay, do not forget your many plans and all that you have already stored in your cosmic bank.

Here I sit, balancing on this rock of love, attempting to coax my Camp Ruach STAFF shirt into wiping off my wood-chipped feet so that I can put on my wet socks and tiger shoes. A satisfying start to our week.

Back at the pavilion, we ponder re-attempting our fire-starting activities so that our damp friends do not catch cold. Remind me to add candles (the firestarter variety) to our list. Uh oh. Was that an itch in my eye? So early in the night? Such an adventure, this is. My belly rumbles. Things have relatively fallen into place. Let us sup on poi, aku, and beef. We will figure out our salads in the morn. Oy, my aching back.

TO DO:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn how to make a proper fire. (for warmth) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank the gods for our dinner. (which included ‘ulu) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sway back and forth to the music. |

Sitting on the toilet (which, according to the book I am reading, is a euphemism for *place that one repeatedly shits into*), I realized that if things had gone according to plan, I would have been sitting around a warming fire sometime tonight. Standing here post-shit, I realize that I should probably make proper acquaintance with the bringer-of-fire before making another attempt. Still, I fart.

“Thweeet!!”

“Okay, let’s call it. RAIN DELAY!”

So here I sit, adventuring still. I had vague plans of walking up to the house to see what everyone was up to, maybe catch a ride into town, but perhaps that window passed me by as I was catching a few more z’s during those early light-filled hours. So here I sit, polishing off my sickle. Good day for it, but. I breakfasted on hot

oatmeal with fresh banana + peanuts + salt. I washed the dishes. I brushed my teeth. I straightened up (the hale). I performed some maintenance on that borrowed handsaw as if it were my own. The sickle is certainly worn in. It has a cut by its notch that I will have to keep an eye on. I'm a little worried about the dampness of the camera bag, and, well, all the bags, in general. We'll give them a day, and then, well, we'll just see, won't we. I cannot help but think of the old friends I left behind, and my various failures of preservation.

"What?" I said to the mosquito. I looked over at the old plat map, drying on the side of the chair.

"Brrzzz."

The mosquito landed on this here book.

"I'm not getting anything out of this," said the mosquito, whose name was probably Henry or something.

"Do you want me to teach you how to read?" I asked. "Well, I suppose the first thing you need to know is which end is up."

You see, there is this section on one of the maps that looks to me like a crossroad that abuts the corner of this parcel that I am surveying. You know, for shits and giggles. Henry, bored,

flew off into the unknown. Pause. Oh, no, he went and got a friend. Time to get out of this comfortable chair and start our day in earnest.

“Hey, could you edit that to say, ‘The mo‘o came out with the hesitant sun.’?”

“Grumble grumble grumble.”

“What’s that, Stomach?”

“Hungry.”

“Well then, let’s do lunch.”

Later that day.

“Oh yeah. Lunch!”

Later that day.

“Oy. Radio during the day. Such a luxury, this.”

Early in that ‘olekūkahi moon.

“Well, is that your water?”

“Well, clearly you are some god or other.”

“Perhaps a forgetful one.”

He placed the offering on Lola's blue chair.

"Is that something you eat?"

Lola stretched against the chair's siding. "Perrhaps," she said. "But you can leave it there. It is my responsibility now."

PLEASE ADVANCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

"No no. Let's skip ahead, this is my order."

"Okay, I give up. Am I happy or depressed?"

"That old man should not own dog," said the computer in the science fiction novel. And wouldn't you know it, but that perhaps now-dead computer was right. Funny how things, yeah? So, this adventure that we are currently surviving, have we been paying sufficient attention to all of the various nuance and that? A low grinding noise wavers in the distance. It grows closer and in height. It is sufficiently out of range to do us damage, but we cannot help but think of our comrades that were not so lucky. Life and death, is this match. And I am told that it is our move.

"Well," said the terrorist that was part of this

novel back when it was migrating from a mystery slash romance novel to what you see before you, “what if for every cow they murder in an industrial slaughterhouse, we kill a member of the U.S. military?”

The rag tag crew all averted their gaze, trying to keep their straight face. A mosquito buzzed into oblivion.

“Which side are you, on?” said the terrorist (who was also a bank robber).

Ka Pō‘alua: The Coffee Fields

Uh oh, I thought. Here we go again.

“Well, that wasn’t so bad,” said the medium-aged human. It took off its looking glasses and focused in on the specific contours that comprised the writing of this book.

“Oh, hello, Sun.”

“Aloha,” said ka Lā, “Hope you enjoyed your visit.”

“Oh, it was quite hospitable,” said the human.

There was a damp muskiness to somebody’s odor.

“Okay, buzz off already,” said the mosquito.

Thinking it was forgetting something it

wanted to remember, the human walked off to its tent, dancing a quasi-jig, to prepare for its journey back home.

“How goodly are your tents, oh Jacob.”

“Oh, mahalo. Couldn’t have done it without all of you, you know.”

I pulled the socks I was using as drip catchers off of the rafters.

“You’re gonna need to ring those out,” said a voice. “And maybe dry them in the sun for a second.” I walked over to the dish washing station and followed this advice. The shoes, too, were soggy on through.

“Bzzzz bzz,” said the mosquitos, after a bit of sunshine.

“Shoo shoo,” I said as I bent down to unbuckle my shoe.

My accent still no more no good. These mosquitos are giving me rash, but. But I am learning. Practice makes the world go round, they say. Somehow I need to find a way to make it from here to there. I have a feeling that someone is very excited about my return.

Like a maze, it is. Like walking on a balance beam. A triple beam balance. We could go this-a-way or we could go that. Well, might I have my cake, perhaps, and also, while I am at it, eat it, too? Well, as that song about a jackass (named Frank) says, "I am going out searching for some answers. Don't wait up for me. I'll be back when I can."

He cut the head off of an avocado and reattached it. But this is none of our business. Our business consists of selling you metaphors, such as the ones packaged in this here book, which is *For Sale*, remember? Jacob Rosen is a human author (amongst other things).

"Fuck, Lola, what the fuck?"

"This is my chair, now," said Lola.

"Fine," I said, "I'll sit somewhere else."

The remains of the fire in the furnace reminded me of certain tenuous facts of existence. Also FART excuse me, that I am still not exactly where I want to be. Not that I'm complaining, you see, I just want everyone to have accurate feedback for their various surveys and whatnot. I poked the tires on my recall mechanism and

looked over to the bonfire pit, which was now covered with a white tarp. *When did that appear?* I thought, *How did I not notice it last night.* Aha, it was a mystery, which would mean that, while we were out here attempting to weave the cords of our continued survival, there was still a mystery afoot. I looked down and noticed a small puzzle. I checked my files and noticed a newspaper clipping: “Oil train derails and explodes in W. Va.” Perhaps my public investigation skills from a previous life might come in handy yet still. Anyway, I just want to have something of unique value to contribute to the community, is all. Ah, community. A boy can dream, can’t he?

“Well now, let me come clean about what my ideal future would look like.”

Again, we are looking for some pidgin that means ‘go help yourself to some food.’

“Yahr. Eyahr. Meyahhr.”

Accomplishment #1: Built a tent structure using the rain flap, carefully, paying attention, noticing the different methods of attachment and

potential outcomes of design. Said thank you to the rain flap and the trees and limbs that are holding it in its particular place.

Note #1: Out of practice, I forgot to roll up the bottoms of ku'u lole wāwae. But perhaps pants are not something one generally ku'u's? A little damp, but.

Accomplishment #2: Chopped down a tree. Sawed off its top branches, checking for fruit.

Next Task: Chop down a tree. Measure twice, cut once or several times.

Note #2: A human rides by in the body of a bull(dozer).

Accomplishment #3: Cut down a tree without killing a fern. Close call, but we were able to catch all right. Still, much to learn about which way a tree falls, and, if it does, what does it sound like?

Accomplishment #4: Moved a log all by myself (well, with some spotting by some fallen trees and various clinging ferns).

“Oh well. A little to the right.”

Accomplishment #5: Thought like a beaver. Missed the mark by 1 foot. Fell on the first door. Good catch by the door, though.

“Oh shit. This just turned into a rescue

mission. We forgot we were living inside of an adventure-survivance novel and a tree just fell on top of our only working exit.” I took a breath. Okay, I guess I can pick up the pace a little, if need be, but I’d rather work for pleasure. I mean, that is the only form of payment I usually receive for myself. Of course, we still have that binding contract for enhanced levels of peace and justice. The buzzing ceased and I returned to my sawing.

The door cleared, I reached over and picked up some firewood for later.

Accomplishment #6: Began construction of a firewood shelter. Utilizing previously cut-down skinny trees from a prior trip. Oops! Forgot to say mahalo.

“Uh oh! I think we’re under attack!”

He heard a helicopter in the distance and a buzzing in his ears. He jumped back waving his hat. His hand reached up to the back of his neck. “Oh,” he said, looking to his feet. “It’s only a mosquito.” He put on his protective headgear, and returned to the job at hand.

“Hey, man,” he said to the mosquitos, “I’m not at war with you fuckas! I just don’t want you to bite me.”

A mosquito landed on his left wrist, where the

bone juts out into his hand. He quickly murdered it with his middle finger. This happened again, a moment later.

“Coquí? Coquí?”

Accomplishment #7: Did maintenance on front door with fallen tree. Good idea for door levers/handles with branches. We will see how it functions in this real world, though. Lots of automotive vehicles down this road.

Note #3: Could probably use some green ferns for the front gate where it rolls back, to cover the raw leaves. Will leave gate brace by extruding branches in the pole direction, which, we are still not sure, is that the ocean I see up ahead?

Note #4: Front door braces (2) can lie down into the brush, with twigs sticking out into the path. Last brace will be on other side.

Accomplishment #8: Found out we are capable of sawing through a log.

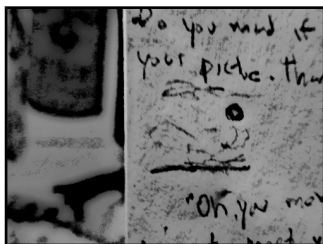
“Happy birthday,” said the grandchild.

“What are you doing these days,” said the Grandpa.

“Oh.” Pause. “Trying to find a safe space for a child to live in.”

“Hi. ‘O wai kou inoa? Do you mind if I take

your picture. Thank you.”



“Oh, you move fast. Nice to meet you!”

Accomplishment #9: Watched a gecko climb a tree.

“Oooh. Pretty bird.”

“We’re all in this thing together, I guess.”

“Yeah, well, that’s the thing about this here machine, ennit.”

It’s like he was learning something—the hard way. And maybe someone was getting impatient, but he wasn’t totally without experience when it came to building foundations. If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing right.

“And this lesson is called, *Using the Right Tool for the Job*. And we’ll follow that up with *Using the Right Technique for the Tool for the Job*.”

Throw in your relevant preexisting ‘ōlelo no‘eau if you got ‘em.

"Well, that went exactly according to plan," he said, a little out of breath, with a hint of surprise. He looked at the fallen tree whose branches fit perfectly in front of the door and between the 'ōhi'a, walls, and fern. He took a deep breath and proceeded to trim the limbs. Just then, a truck drove by.

"Okay, let's take a break. Cutting down a tree is a big thing. We shouldn't push on too fast. Let's get our bearings and make sure we are doing the right thing."

"Which is?"

He heard some movement in the brush by the front door.

"Oh, hello," he said to the cat. Or, no, it was two cats. "Do you want to come in the front door? There's a tree in front, but I think we can open it." He opened the door and the cats scattered. One might have gotten a little lost in the brambles.

"Well, what did you do that for?" he said, "I opened the front door for you."

"You need to drink more water," said the wao 'ōhi'a with its ua li'ili'i. Or was it an ua noe?

He finished taking his piss and went back to the break room.

“See you later,” said the cat, as it merged into the forest.

Some myowing happened in the distance. Oh, it seems the cat’s friend was still having some navigational issues. Okay, sounds like it found that cat door we built into the system. The wind picked up.

“Good job, today, everyone,” said the foreman. “I am rather pleased with the progress we are making.” The wind picked up, again. And so did the rain.

So, here I am, soaked to the bone. With ample opportunity to change into my swimming trunks, I decided to chance ‘em. Well...it could always be worse.

Okay, that should do it. I do believe we’ve untangled all of those threads. Hope you are satisfied (satisfaction guaranteed).

It Could Always Be Worse

OJPL Publishing
UPCOMING BOOK

...A disgruntled Quantum Jitters was breaking off nails in his teeth. He walked over the half-finished floors, wondering how he, a character from an entirely other series of books, found his way into this novel. But that's the multiverse for you. He passed the stairs and looked back over his shoulder. A dark purple towel hung over one of the rafters by the blue cushioned chair, the orange and grey rain flap draped over the rafter in the rear. Various things hung from various hooks. He beheld the strand of banana trees that comprised his backyard. A battery was charging in the corner and his companion for this journey stood watch atop the wooden planks perched on the old sawhorse in the tent out front.

"E ola e," said this 'verse's electromagnetic wave distributor.

Quantum Jitters spit out the nail that was stuck between his teeth. Broomstick shrugged and looked to the woods. It was about time to get that fire started.

About the Author

During the writing of this book, Jacob slept on a bed of rocks under the stars and wrestled with a specific number of gods that might or might not exist. He awoke in the morning and emerged from his cocoon to communicate with you this fact.

It Could Always Be Worse

E Pili Ana ka Haku Puke

‘O Jacob ko‘u inoa. Aloha.

“So, how was your day?” asked the black cat with the yellow eyes.