

PRAISE FOR READING BOOKS

“READING BOOKS IS A MOST EXCELLENT THING TO DO. YOU SHOULD TRY IT SOME TIME.”

-OJPL Publishing

“Hi, how are you? I know what you are thinking. You are thinking, why should I trust some out-of-context quote about the wonders of reading books, when I am reading it *inside* of a book...The message cannot but help be a reflection of the vessel through which it is being communicated, am I right?”

-Anonymous

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-The Author

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A New Nation

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Are You Buying This Shit?
A Mainstream Novel



OJPL Publishing
Mānoa

This book is a work of fiction. Fiction does not exist. 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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This book was typeset by a wise, old computer whose time with Ke Kahawai Nui Hou might prove short-lived, though truly worthwhile, and certainly worth all expenses paid. This computer, whose name is/was Kahalepe'anui, sure could write. Additional computing duties were performed by Gus. Let us also note the fonts utilized in this book: Century Schoolbook L, Pijiu, and Dingbats. Oh, and, of course, thanks to the fine folks at _____ for all of their fine printing of OJPL books, such as perhaps this one here.

Are You Buying This Shit?

“I ain’t never going back to Turtle Island.”

-Anonymous Bloody-faced Co-passenger
on the Transport to Harbortown



“So, did you know we lost power last night?”

“Um, I think it was just a small temporal disturbance in certain sections of the house,” replied J., with an impish grin. A. hit her partner in the leg with the backside of her hand and gave him the eye. He smiled, this partner of hers. The clocks in the kitchen had a discrepancy of 42 minutes.

Many things happened that morning in between that paragraph and this. J. emerged from the water closet to the sounds of the arrival of the special breakfast guest. Mrs. P. came bearing gifts.

“Are these from a hala tree?” asked somebody’s mother. “Annie’s been teaching us.”

“Where’s the whisk?”

There was much a-happening now that all of our characters had emerged from their various metaphorical caves and were existing in the

same metaphorical kitchen-slash-living room. Indeed, there was a lot of emerging happening.

Annie Tempelator walked into the adjacent room to retrieve her tiny device. The table was discussing the older generation and various other opened and/or closed entities. Some dishes were washed. They were amidst a holiday that involved packing up your stuff in a hurry and crossing a body of water in a perhaps search for a perhaps promised land. But what was actually promised is anybody's guess.

“So, are you going to return the book or should I take it with me and drop it off in Hilo...or maybe Mountain View.”

J. and A. were discussing strategy. Or tactics. They were planning the future is what we are saying.

“Well,” said A., “I want to go drop a lei off for [the person that is retiring], so I can bring it with me then.”

J. had given his book review over a rainy breakfast at their local café not more than three or two days ago. It involved a diagnosis of what he was tentatively calling indigeneity blindness, and the predilection of certain haole writers to confuse specific groups of humans with all of humanity. There certainly appeared to be, in this subset of books, a seemingly willful disclusion

from the broader, more beautiful stories of the places in which these books were set and from which they were sprung. There was still, it would seem, a need for the language of decolonization. In fact, one could say that language was a central factor in postcolonial studies. In fact, one could even sing it in a song.

“Okay, then,” said J. “Sounds good.”

Aboard the giant flying island, Gus Pae, P.I. took his seat—23 B—as the young boy speaking ‘ōlelo called out the numbers on his walk down the aisle. Familiar, him and his travelling companion seemed. Using his fancy detective skills, Gus located a clue (the companion’s name) that enabled him to re-member their prior acquaintance. The redhead in the seat next to him kept talking in his ear about some ancient technique for creating indigo dye, which was a coincidence, as that just so happened to be the name of this old friend of Lawa and Heymish’s that Gus had met at some mutual friend’s wedding that had just sat down in seat Iwakālua Kūmākolu-E, next to her son. This was auspicious in that it was the second trip in a row that Gus encountered one of Heymish’s friends at that very same terminal. He pondered a future conversation where he (re)introduced himself. The redhead next to him continued to read her inflight mag-

azine. A rainbow appeared over Lē'ahi. Flying, they were.

Overheard in a bathroom stall at the bus station in Downtown Hilo:

“Eh brother, how you?”

“I’m having trouble getting into the computer. You think I need to call the office?”

“Uh, you need to call da kine. You know, in Honolulu.”

We move along. Slowly. At light speed. We move along. And the rain falls from the sky. And all the islanders sing.

“But don’t you think sometimes that there is some kind of force—,” J. was waving his hand over the table, “that is acting and that, you know.” He made a specific shape with his fingers to better express his mind. “—that you can *feel*. You know, this force?”

Sybil looked over and started to tentatively agree, but in her own words. “Well, yeah. I guess.”

J. continued. “And do you ever feel that maybe sometimes it’s trying to sell us advertisements?”

Their order of food substances arrived and the conversation veered into a discussion about the amount of cheese that one should expect to see in

a bowl of onion soup.

Meanwhile, down the street, Gus found himself privy to a discussion about freemasonry, urban planning, and deep politics, the particulars of which just so happened to correspond neatly with Teddy's groundbreaking graduate thesis that he never finished writing once he dropped that double major. Gus thought about that old red-headed carpenter that used to work with his grand-uncle over at the Institute and her insistence that the important work to be done was *in the city*, because that was where most people lived, and that simply encouraging people to "go back to nature" was not a solution to our problems, and, divorced of context, reinforced existing structures of privilege and inequality. This dovetailed nicely with that new project Sybil was contributing to re: designing livable cities. Of course, Gus would not be aware of this project until the next morn, after his long night of live music and kava drinking, and after he was introduced to Sybil through his old associate, J. Of course, as Lawa would so often remind him, any design technology, no matter how well-intentioned or thought out, becomes a technology of imperialism and control if it is parachuted into communities and lands without, how should he put it—the proper due process. But speaking of 'awa, which we were, it was at this point in the evening that

the redheaded human that Gus had met on the passage over offered him the remainder of her shell. Gus determined that it was within his kuleana to finish her portion and swiftly tossed the earthy liquid down his gullet. It was at this moment that Quantum Jitters walked up to the bar.

“So, you see, if you jump around like that, no one will be able to follow you. Unless they already know where you are going.”

The bus arrived fifteen minutes late. He got on the bus. It got him where he was going. It should be noted that this bus made all efforts to make him feel at home, mimicking his home island transport with just enough uncanniness to remind him of where he was. But, getting back to that previous discussion of jumping around (see above paragraph).

Put the garden to sleep in a way that's gonna make the inside flat.

[insert map]

“Well, fuck you, too.”

There was a buzzing outside Gus's temporary pop-up office. He was pondering the acquisition

of a second robotic secretary. Not to replace the first, of course, but, well, um. Some sort of ‘mobile drove off and took the buzzing with it.

“Do you think you could get me the number for that surveyor?” Gus asked his not-yet-existent secretary, just for see how it sounded. He looked around his office, his head bobbing up and down. “I think this might yet work,” he said, more quietly now. Gus ventured out into the field. *I am on her track now, no doubt*, he thought to himself. *I am on his track now*.

Mustache Jones was wondering why she ever got that librarian degree, what with the abundance of all those librarians still walking around. And this speaker series she was responsible for, *plus*, learning that chant, *plus*, her mother wanted her to housesit on the Sabbath, which meant keeping an eye on Grandpa *plus* Gracie. Ever since that high-profile kidnapping, but we digress. Point is, all of this stuff was making her wonder about her part in the plan. And now all of these dead bodies were piling up. Well, at least there would be plenty of māmaki tea. She looked at the picture of her ipo, from a time before they met, and sighed.

Gus had already murdered about ten or nine times the amount of mosquitos as his predeces-

sor, which, wait a second. What if there was some sort of time reversal and his predecessor was actually following *him*?

“Bzzz.”

“Chirchi-cheep-cheep.”

“[Untranslatable].”

Anyways, Gus was questioning the so-called statistical intelligence re: some other human coming out of this trail with such little blood on its hands. Yet, at the same time, a legend was congealing in the shadier parts of Gus’s mind. *Cannot ignore these clues*, thought Gus’s nether-regions. Pretty soon now, a recalibration was in order.

A grrzzrrrrzz flew overhead. I could not see it, due to my taking shelter under Kahalepe’anui. But there it was on the monitor. Someone was close by. I could not quite make out the temporal direction, but they were closing in.

“Goddamn, that cat,” grumbled Quantum Jitters. “Where’d ‘e get to now?”

Marranzano woke up with a hangover. *What moon is it?* he thought. He checked the calendar. The transceiver brrrung like it had been, all morning long. Some battery somewhere needed charging. *Well*, thought the once-decapitated one-

eared armadillo, *if we want to make some change, we've got to take some risks. Now, about that breakfast...*

“Okay, we’re in tune,” screamed Rose from across the pavilion. This would be her first time sitting in with the band. The Timekeeper announced its time with its intricate beeping mechanism. Marz counted off the beat. Gus left the alter kakers to their business, and attended to some pressing matters of his own.

“Quite a concert.”

“Yeah, better than last night.”

“Oh yeah? Have you been following them from the start?”

Backstage, we helped ourselves to craft services. Some of us were working for peanuts. Others were working for the fish. And me, well, I was in it for that good old-fashioned Pu‘u‘eo Poi. [This message brought to you by OJPL Superstores.]

The electromagnetic wave distributor kicked on, and Quantum Jitters jerked leftward.

“About time,” he grumbled. The remote children gave him the wary-eye, in that way that only a children can.

“We’ve had so much education today on tex-

tures and placement. It's not just about the ingredients, you know," said the radio.

"Thank you, chef," said the radio.

"One free," said the radio.

There was more being said, of course, but I am not so sure that your kine brain could grasp the totality of our world. But this, too, was a red herring.

"Did someone say herring?" asked the only somewhat shaggy brown dog-type dog.

Quantum Jitters kicked the machine.

"What?" he said. "The goddamn record's skipping again."

The sky darkened. The plot thickened.

The plot thickened like a creamy soup stock, or maybe like a nice chicken fat reduction with some fried Maui onion.

"Did somebody ask for me?" asked the horse, whose name was Maui, obviously. Or was it Māui? The sky darkened. The sky darkened like a slowly darkening thing that darkens when no more ka lā. No more kālā, no more light. Good thing for us authors that this thing is For Sale, eh? Or wait a minute. Maybe it isn't. Are you even buying this shit?

READER SURVEY

(please respond to the following question)

1. Have you been buying this shit?

TRANSLATION EXERCISE

please translate the following sentences

1. She buys the shit.
2. We (inclusive) buy this shit.
3. Have you been buying this shit?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When the author says, *Are you even buying this shit*, what do you think she is saying? (hint: try placing the stress on different words in the sentence)
2. Do you remember that time when I couldn't remember one of the songs on the album, and then, when I finally remembered it, it turned out to be the one about you? Discuss amongst your selves.

“Yawn.”



Well, I guess that must have been the end of the chapter. So that makes this a new chapter, I guess. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jacob Rosen. I am the author of this book of multiple chapters. Welcome. Good to have you along for the ride. Please keep your arms and legs inside the train. You can stick your head anywhere you like. Delete. Backspace. Backspace. Delete. My apologies. Sorry for the inconvenience. Please let me know if we can make your journey more better. You can count on me to do what I can. And you might as well expect the same from all of my associates. Of which, I guess, you, now, are one. E komo mai [to] [our] (inclusive) [world].

Overheard at the start of the after-concert:

“The name of this album is *Annie*, where did you go? Or no, it’s *Annie*, are you okay? Are you

okay, Annie?”

[insert parking SPACE [digital hyperlink](#)]

“Okay, we’ve got a request for one Peaceful, Easy Feeling.”

Meanwhile, somewhere on the ‘āina.

“We met before. I think your memory is lacking. You have to pass it on from generation to generation so you don’t forget me every time.” Our protagonist was talking to some mosquitos. He finished rolling his Mānoa grown creamy-style tobacco cigarette. He continued to sit on his fancy-pants bench.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

“Are you eating? What do you eat?”

“Mostly food.”

“Sometimes other food.”

SONG LYRICS

They say a watched pot never boils.

They say a watched pot never boils.

Barcode.

Barcode.

They say a watched pot never boils.

They say that girls will be girls.

They say that purslane has plenty omega-3 oils.

They say at the bris there’s gonna be moyels.

Barcode.

Barcode.

For dinner we got boiled potatoes.

I bet you're wondering what happened to them tomatoes.

I guess I'll see ya later.

Barcode.

Barcode.

They say a watched pot never boils.

They say if you don't watch a pot, it'll boil.

And then you'll boil away all the water and you'll have to scrub the pot real good.

They say a watched pot never boils.

Barcode.

Barcode.

*I'm looking at a cat whose name is Lola.
This morning I ate some poi and granola.
My grandmother's name is Nola.*

Barcode.

Barcode.

They say a watched pot may or may not boil.

They say, with the pots these days, who can tell?

They say a watched pot never boils.

Barcode.

Barcode.

I think it might be time to stick a fork in them potatoes.

And maybe we'll stew up some tomatoes.

And I'll see you later alligators.

Barcode.

Barcode.

Barcode.

Barcode.

(more) PHOTO CAPTIONS

Temporary shelters, benches, & cetera.

Lentil stew w/ boiled potatoes (and stewed tomatoes)

...and now, back to our narrative...

‘Ōlelo ma ka ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i nā DJ. Ah, some genealogy. Mo‘okū‘auhau. Followed by one foreign language commercial. And what is it selling? Mo‘o insurance. Some kind of mo‘olelo, this. Gus looked at the picture on the cover of the book by the red lighters and couldn’t help but notice that it bore more than a passing resemblance to his likeness. He switched on the digital ki‘i grabber that his predecessor had left behind and managed to locate the archive. *Is that some kind of temporary shelter?* thought Gus. He did not notice any itching on his neck. *Ah, that elephant jungle salve still does the trick, lo these many years,* he thought. Thinking thoughts, was Gus. *I just might make it out of here alive,* he thought.

Now, if I were J., what would I eat for breakfast?

“No hea mai ‘oe,” said the radio. I proceeded to fart muffledly into my shiny black chair.

“Aloha no Maunawili,” said the radio. I proceeded to wrap up my dancing lessons. Rigorous, this hula.

“Kanaloa [...] pili mai,” said the radio. But which moon was it? When was the last time you saw the moon? *Hmmm*, thought the person whose autobiography this was, *perhaps we are into the kāloa moons. If I had to guess, I’d say Kāloakūkahi.*

“Kiss her tenderly [...] tell her I’ll be coming soon.” (said the electromagnetic wave distributor)

I leaned back on my leg joints.

“Mahalo to ka Lā for charging these batteries of mine, so that I can have the power to hear conversation and music,” I said to the radio. *Werp*, I thought, *that should do it. Now that this here public radio is transmitting pae ‘āina-wide—Or wait. Are we missing somebody?*

...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 ē,” said this ‘verse’s electromagnetic wave distributor.

Quantum Jitters spat 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.

“If not now, perhaps then, later.”

“Indigenous literary nationalism offers a way to shift the focus of research away from postcolonialism studies and the effects of colonization to the contributions and potential of Indigenous worldviews.”

-ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui

voices of fire : reweaving the literary
lei of pele and hi'iaka



Phase two. Things not so far so good. Still, we die. Still, we come back to life. Could always be worse, but. We wait for our perspective. We get back up on *kēnā lio*. “Hey!” shouts our Captain. “What is the gauge reading?” Our fever has subsided. We are running in the negative. Our crew climbs back out of the river. We set our course.

“Is a song worth singing if it will never be sung again?” asked the troubadour, in her oddly paced accent born of an other place. The narrative paused for long duration. When we resumed it seemed like perhaps much time had gone by with much water under the bridge. But there was no bridge. Or no, there was a bridge. Yeah. Sorry, we forgot. There was, indeed, a bridge. An old-ish wooden bridge. A foot-bridge. But soooooo much has happened, perhaps. All the pickling and whatnot (don’t get us started on

the pickling). All the, um, dancing. The new boss was the same as the old one, except for that it was its own person, which, of course, made it different. But, um, still the same me. So that's why all the repetitive bum-bum-bum-bum. Was there a purpose to all this diddling?

The universe is a wonderful place and there's nothing I can't try.

And let's not forget the tahina cookies. That was quite a turning point. But, I guess, point was, all of this took place *in between* the narrative. In the silent spaces. Figures of silence and sound be very important in somebody's literary criticism, someone once said. The amazing thing about cookies is that we can eat them, still. Crumbs and all. So, who was driving this bus?

"It is not a bus," said our new character, who just so happened to be a robot. "I used to live on Spencer Street. You know, in Makiki." The robot gave a dramatic pause. "So I know a thing or two about buses." Somebody burped.

"Burp."

"I guess what the legal interpretation misses is the entire idea of *right* and *wrong*. Our Chamorro friend has the right idea, but let's not get caught in one trap."

[Knocks me off my feet: I don't want to bore you with my troubles. p.6 of A New Nation.]

“I said, you can call me Rob, if you like. You know, for short.”

“Oh,” said the transcriptionist to the robot, “I didn't hear you the first time.”

Someone was flying across our screen. Squeaking noises could be heard somewhere outside of our boundaries. The music resumed after a brief caesura. The medium was the message.

“Look, here is the thing. It does not matter what you do. Whatever slop you throw up on the page, it'll still—”

A car drove up. He ka'a polū. 'A'ole pilikia. But, then again, imagine my surprise. Just then, o kākou hoa noho intruded upon our space. Some kind of invasion, it was, and it was not quite clear whether they were hoa paio or simply manifestations of some Other loved entity that was perhaps hungry for attention and/or food. Some sort of lesson, this was. Some sort of ha'awina mānoa, some ha'awina ma nā wahi a pau, I mean, I suppose. But who placed us in this papa 'ōnaehana ao, anyway? 'Twas unclear. Oy, kēia ao holo'oko'a. Oy.

The wind, more or less. Its name was unknown by us. So, some kind of specific makani, it was, but we cannot tell you its name. We can tell you five or four ways to describe our farts, though. Ah, it would seem as though we might have cultural differences, still. Hard work, this language exchange, but, as they say, we are one hard worker. I believe we have even included this fact in our non-existent mo'omō'ali. But what was that about death that you were saying?

Ah, to keep our narrative moving along, we must leave you certain clues along the way, so that you know that you are in fact existing inside of a narrative. Sometimes we use characters for just such a purpose.

“We all like choices,” wahi a ka nūpepa, speaking perhaps in reference to the choices we make as to war and peace and reconciliation (and truth).

“I’m gainfully employed and normal,” wahi a ka pahu ho’olele leo, after our protagonist returned from (re)planting its kalo by the boundary fence. ‘Twas the last moon to plant and yield upright shoots. Well, perhaps it was this. Kēia moon calendar was still unclear to our protagonist, who, truth be told, was still malihini to this place. Was last night the last *night*, or are we,

this early morn, still amidst the reign of that Kūpau moon? Like I said (I, the semi-omniscient narrator), 'twas unclear. Would the boundaries hold? What does one do when one has a dispute with a psychopathic neighbor? Our protagonist cracked its knuckles and the joints in its back. Rumbling could be heard overhead, in the rooms above. How would this scene play out, assuming, of course, that we were attempting to live in a world subsumed by the seas of peace and justice. *Sure, you were probably at least partially responsible for killing my older brother, yet, still, what is my proper response, assuming the things that we generally assume*, ran the inner-dialogue of our protagonist in its only quasi-imaginary conversation with this particular hoā 'ōlelo. *How can we live in a world where you do not continue to murder my family, AND also where we do not have to live in a state of perpetual warfare? Hmmm, it thought, perhaps it is time to live the truth of our metaphors. To embody them fully.* Some face to face interaction was about to commence. Or whatever. There's always tomorrow.

Now, you might say that one of our characters, perhaps A., could tell one kind of yarn from another purely by utilizing her sense of touch. This here yarn, of course, was some kind of science mystery adventure yarn. Gus, on the other hand,

of course, had other means of clue interpretation. You might say that he had a finely tuned set of kishkas. Gus sighed a sigh as the pitter patter of a light rain brought forth the afternoon. He stretched his many limbs. Many knots were being untied, to Gus's great satisfaction. Well, let us be more accurate; 'twas to his somewhat mid-range level satisfaction. But satisfied he was, having just lunched on some leftover chili and rice and bok choy kim chi. Perhaps some more haupia for afternoon dessert? *Don't mind if I do*, ua no'ono'o 'o Gus, out loud, to the general audience. *Don't mind if I do*.

It was a hot morning. Well, relatively hot, anyway. Having already obtained 3 round tomatoes, Marzy was inquiring about that stew meat that she had sampled once upon a time. The trio of songmakers broke into their version of Mele of Lāna'i, which was fitting, as here was a song written for a parade, and here, today, well, around the corner and down the road, today, such a parade was occurring. Marzy would add some eggs and pa'i 'ai to her bag of treats, before rounding said corner and finding herself amidst the holiday celebrations. Many horses, there were. Down the road, Mrs. Pae and her offspring wiped their respective brows. So much walking, from one end to the other. And at such an age, to

be doing such a thing. They would lunch in the park, with the rest of the hālau. It was a holiday.

Perusing kona mo'omō'ali, Heymish looked over his various claimed skills and decided to get back to building kēlā hōkeo 'ikepili waihona puke that he had been working on, more or less, over the past many decads. Sure, he might be retired from ho'okahu puke, from being a mea mālama waihona puke 'oihana, but, so his thinking went, might as well put those various claimed skills to use, regardless of the ephemerality of his planned edifices. His illiteracy would just require some future collaboration, is all.

“Trrrrleet ttwit. Pswit.”

“Rruff arrghff rroof ruff,” came the muffled response.

There were things moving on a road. Heymish thought about kippered salmon. He thought about spawning season. He thought about obstacle courses. He got back to building that place-based database. Cue the wind and the rain.

THE OTHER SIDE

Nothing was going right. Except for the things that were going pretty much right. But other than that, nothing. So many factors in play, and why not they go our way? Frustrating, it is. Ua huhū loa au, but then again, perhaps it is simply a matter of certain internal mechanisms being out of balance. My brother was visiting from afar, and, well, I had many plans, but some of them depended on other people taking part. Yet I wasn't quite doing the best job of communicating ideas, and, so, obstacles there were. Obstacles, there are. And then, perhaps, poof! they're gone. Why not? I looked back at my sour partner who had earlier in the day picked a bouquet of beautiful flowers and expunged various metaphors from her mouth, some of these, no doubt, having something to do with consciousness. She walked into the kitchen. The sound of opening drawers drifted through the hallways

and perhaps the walls. The sound of birds. *Okay then*, I thought, *where were we now?* It was time to shake off these corn cob webs and link up with our grand mo'olelo.



“Nā Hōkeo ‘Ikepili to Pull From.

Ke Kula Nui o Hawai‘i – Check.

Ka Waihona Puke o Hō‘ulu‘ulu – Check.

0451163966;0452263565;0452274664;045226754
4;0441478123;1401209335;1401209254;14012097
69;0099494094;9780385354301;4811301838;0689
710682;0679779132;0553147617.”

Heymish paused his data entry as he pulled the next stack of books off of the shelf, all of which appeared to be lacking in identification numbers. The luna appeared to be wearing khaki pants. He flipped it over and ua heluhelu ‘oia,

“A NEW NATION.” *Well that’s odd*, Heymish thought, as he flipped over the pile. *We’re having a party, eh? Well, perhaps, indeed, we are.* After a brief lunch break by the harbor drinking rum based cocktails with coconuts and orange juice and family conversation and celebration of ancestors, Heymish picked up the light purple-covered book with the rustic artwork and turned to page three and read, “We will not obey.” Also, he

thought of rainbows. He proceeded with the bulk import.

“Strange library you’ve got there,” said the robot. Heymish gave it a surly look.

“We don’t get to choose our co-workers,” said The Monitor, as The Rhythmbox decided to play a tune called The Bodysnatchers. The White Rabbit looked off into the distance, perhaps peering through the roadside window and the ferns silhouetted in its frame.

“...other passages are partially correct, and still others are sheer invention. All three levels are to be found in the soliloquy beginning *To be or not to be*.” There was a community literature class being taught by a visiting scholar over in one of the public meeting rooms. Multipurpose rooms, they were, actually. Heymish scratched at his chest and turned up the volume on *Kind of Blue*.



Frank wobbled into the field.

“Hello there, Frank. Pehea ‘oe? Ua ‘ai ‘oe?”

“Alright alright,” responded the old donkey to the old cow, “How you been?”

Slim shrugged a shrug and the two quadrupeds began to eat of the land.

Good mornings they had, and lazy afternoons. Still, the garden grew, and well, it reminds us of an old joke that, well, was not maybe really such

a joke but, then again, I digress. It's how the world works.



“Yawn,” yawned J. as he removed what appeared to be a pubic hair from the top right corner of the keyboard. He stuck his crooked right finger in his droopy right ear thinking to dig around a bit and briefly became meta-aware before getting lost in the particular flavor of sound effected by this digging until which he snapped to attention pulling out his finger wondering whether he had removed the hypothesized wax which come to think of it was the initial impetus for the digging in the first place—or so J. thought, sheepishly. All of this occurred in a matter of seconds, of course, and J. thought back to the relative beginning of this paragraph, wondering, um, he forgot what he was wondering and proceeded to scratch at his genitals, which had bunched up awkwardly due to his particular manner of sitting and dress, which included both short-pants and underwear. J. scratched his head.

Perhaps I better recap the story-so-far, he thought. But for this, perhaps, might the services of a semi-professional narrator be more better suited?

“What do you mean you're retired?” asked the,

yawn, oh, we are tired this morning. *Oh yeah*, we remembered, *we wanted to contribute to the covering of this here book (or series of books (or whatever))*.

“Open your maka.”

“Diddle diddle diddle.”

“And behold.”

Are You Buying This Shit?

A Mainstream Novel

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(you know, for the catalogers and other such lovers
of imaginary structure)

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Recusant. That's the word. *Refusing to submit to authority.* That's the word Heymish was searching for, or, to be more accurate, that's the word that happened to pop up on the word-a-day calendar this morning. But we, of course, sometimes mean different things when we say *authority*. There were those authority records Heymish was creating in his new 'ike storage receptacle. And there were those invasive fascist settler colonial human imperialist thought patterns that made Heymish cringe every time he saw some knee-jerk rule follower bend to a will that wasn't its own. And then, of course, there was good, old-fashioned Tradition. Tradition, tradition. Tradition. BRRRNGGG BRRNNGG. In the not-too-far distance, ke kelepono.

"Hello?" said Heymish, after picking up the phone.

Someone was on the other end of the line.

“Oh, hey cousin. Sorry I missed the party.”

TICK TICK TICK TICK.

“Yeah, I think we are running a little slooow.”

Part of Heymish’s attention turned back towards the other room.

“Well, let me bring you up to date, then.”

Just then, the door opened.

It was a clue.

“That, over there, is Jupiter. But don’t quote me on that,” said the palindromic recent graduate as the small group of various-sized adventurers stared up into the night sky. Nāhōkū-ilunaa’eokākou peered back through ka pā ‘ehā, and smiled her twinkling smile.

Meanwhile, back in the house, Uncle Grandpa finished washing the dishes that had piled up from yet another family gathering. The Old Man sat on the chair, as his wahine hou talked story with her close friend in that language that only close friends share. Gracie snored in the hallway, where she had collapsed after yet another full meal. Yet another breeze through the window. Yet another day gone by. We were running short on time.

“Mmmmm. Delicious,” wahi a J., as his partner gathered various things into place on the

way to the showering room. It was now the next afternoon, relative to the previous day. I mean, that is where we are in time, in this narrative, which more or less follows a particular order without too much flashing back, perhaps, more or less. J. picked at his teeth, searching for any stray zucchini or radish greens.

“Are they trying to poison me?” wahi a ka box of music, as it continued living in a fantasy. Our wheels continued to turn. Like a circle in a spiral in the windmills of our mind.

“All right,” said A., after a brief interlude, “Shall we go?”

[interlude]

J. grabbed the bag of cans, bottles, and jars from inside the house and emptied it, along with the now-damp outside bag, into the rear of the bicycle. After recycling down to the blue bins at the Astronomy Center and a trip to the ~~mala~~ māla, J. proceeded to unpack—with the help of his trusty dictionary, of course—all of the baggage that he had not yet unpacked from his recent trip abroad, which had ended, more or less, last night, at just about half past the peak of the storm, said storm coinciding with the small-kine flood into J. and A.’s foyer-slash-kitchen, which was why J. had spent part of his

morning pulling up, taking out, and hanging up the partially wet lau hala mat that he could now see through the frame of the open front door from his seat on the comfortable chair in the living room. They had breakfasted on granola and nut-milk and pa'i 'ai and A. had almost forgot to take one of the jars of lentil soup for her lunch, although she did, in fact, remember, on her way out the door, on her way to do work, which was how she made her living sometimes. J. had a slight ringing in his ear and decided that now was a good time to contradict various statements that were made in previous paragraphs, although, of course, he didn't necessarily structure time into units of paragraphs and sentences and pages and such, not being always fully cognizant of the fact that he was a character existing inside of a book. But let us not get ahead of ourselves. There be some puka in our woven story-mat, that perchance we shall be now filling.

The rapporteur sat back down in her seat after reporting—re: the ongoings of the inquiries—to the group assembled at this particular meeting of this particular learned society. “Healthy eyes,” was the general consensus, along with, “Pretty colors.” Amidst some assorted spatterings of crowd grumbling, Teddy ran his tongue over the grooves of his recently cleaned teeth. Profes-

sionally cleaned, they were. *For some reason, he thought, we cannot seem to communicate all of the things. All of the things that have occurred. In the past. For some reason.* A tune skittered through his mind and he felt an odd sensation radiate throughout his core to the tips of his human fingers. *Hmmm*, he thought. *Hmmmm*.

Meanwhile, back in the library...

“Yawn.”

“No motivation, today, eh Heymish?” queried Rob the Robot.

“Suppose so, then.” Heymish yawned once more. The wind picked up (in both noise and frequency of gusting). A conversation was heard emanating from a room above. A washing machine in the distance.

“Twleet twillit tweet. Threetwu. Trilleet.”

Heymish looked over the disheveled assortment of notes that his cousin had deposited. He (Heymish) rubbed his temples. Somebody had to input this data, but. Important, it was. Well, that was the hui’s working thesis anyhow. Heymish drummed his fingers on the hard brown wooden desk, and swallowed.

“Type type type. Type type type type type type,” went the keyboard. Heymish breathed in sharply through his nostrils and looked over to the old armadillo who was sitting under the

multi-hued lamp. Just then, an epiphany. It involved a coconut.

~~~~~

“But what is it that you are trying to say? It’s just so dense. It seems so complicated. Why can’t you just communicate what it is that you want to communicate? Why do I have to go through all of this rigamarole?”

Frank handed Gus a memo.

“Ah,” said Gus. “No good reason.”

Broomstick continued to walk between worlds. His replacement on the Other Side, having previously retired from all this bullshit, sat on the old water cooler, contemplating. Quantum Jitters glared at his new partner, wondering whether this shaggy-haired human was up to the task at hand. Stories, he had heard about the relatively younger lass, but it was yet to be seen whether her sometimes imperturbable nature was due to an incomprehension of all of the things going on around her, or whether she was actually tuned into that alternate frequency. Every now and then, she would speak out loud, and make you forget all thoughts of non-sentience.

“Remind me again what we are doing here,” said Ged, dryly.

“Well, as the world rolls through its landscape,



things shift, you know.” Old Jitters paused. “Hard to maintain one perspective.” He narrowed his gaze. “But, the simple answer is, we are here to sell books.”

Ged rolled her eyes. Quantum’s face pulled up at the corners, projecting his internal grin. She was no cat, but he was starting to like this new partner of his.

Meanwhile, ma nā hale o nā kumu o ke kula nui, a huckster was peddling her various hua (and vegetables). But, as always, let us not get ahead of ourselves. We still have some catching up to do.

“At the outset of *Liber Novus*, Jung experiences a crisis of language. The spirit of the depths, who immediately challenges Jung that on the terrain of his soul his achieved language will no longer serve. His own powers of knowing and speaking can no longer account for why he utters what he says or under what compulsion he speaks.”

-Translators' Note

Mark Kyburz, John Peck, and Sonu Shamdasani  
The Red Book : *Liber Novus* (A Reader's Edition)  
by C.G. Jung



“**W**here do we go? Where do we go? Where do we go from here?”





**W**e were moving in time, again. Now we are here. Before we were there. I need to remember to not put much stock in the continued existence of utterances of pro-Evil Corporation nonsense that, for example, disjointedly talk up the benefits of a decentralized communal physical space information exchange while managing to somehow take swipes at the Public Library. I need to remember to continue to exist in the world that I can touch. Speaking of which, quite a storm I find myself in this morning. I scratch my ear. I yawn most tiredly. I sharpen my pencils. This game is tiresome. But we are close to making contact. Still learning the communication protocols, I am. Some bullshit filters/fences/moats, I

keep coming across. Oh well. My spirit pushes on, unenergated. Resisting these corrupted new technologies has left our company with a full store of mental and moral vigor—and intriguingly relevant. These be the facts. Follow me simple rules and you shall not be disappointed. Satisfaction guaranteed. Anywhatsit, it's your turn. Over.

“What is this nonsense? They are not making any sense.”

“Nonsense.”

“What?”

“Oh, nothing.”

Heymish eyed Señor Robot, and marveled at the intricate feedback mechanism that he was pretty sure was not contained completely in one computer's brain. Heymish scanned the room. *I'm getting too old for this shit*, he thought. *Perhaps it is time to change fields*. Just then, an intermission.

## INTERMISSION



“Thanks for picking me up.” Our traveller looked to its feet, and noticed the dirt crumbling off onto the passenger seat floormat. “Um, I might be getting your vehicle dirty.”

“No worries,” said the driver, who had so

graciously offered to give a stranger a ride. Later in the conversation, the driver would invite our traveller to a party at Aunty Sally's. Sentence fragments from their time spent on the road:

"My name is Keali'i."

"I am still, whadayacallit, malihini to this place. But I'm learning."

"I seem to have misplaced my postage, which would be a shame, as mailing this letter was the prime focus of this particular leg of this particular journey into town."

"Hot one today, yeah?"

"O Malia ko'u inoa."

"Oh, from the back, I thought you were that other guy. Do you know him?"

"Well, if you find it, it's yours."

"Thanks for the lift!"

"Contact is very important, don't you think?"

Okay, enough with the bullshit. I am not really that concerned with the question of whether or not you are buying it or not. This is what I like to call a fish of a different color. Truth be told, sometimes I get so caught up in trying to communicate, that I completely forget to pay attention to the message. Now, I am pretty sure that you have already received my message. So why are we still writing? "Yawn." Type type type type type type. Headache. Scratch scratch scratch. Seriously though, what do you think is

happening here? And what is stopping you from responding to my questions? I am not sure who taught you how to read, but this is interactive media, you know. And this technology only functions with the application of your consciousness. I am not going to beg you, though. I am not that kind of huckster. Uh oh. They are listening in again. Let us pretend we are inside of a fictional novel. Now, where were we?

### **SPOILER ALERT!**

None of the characters in this book actually exist. They are all fictional, *imaginary* characters. So, do we really care what mystery Gus Pae, P.I. is currently working on (The Case of the Human that Might Be Pooping in the Community Garden a.k.a. The Case of the Mysterious Flesh Eating Poop Virus), or whether Ged and Quantum Jitters are able to alter the reality structure such that we all find ourselves living in the world of our choosing, or whether Heymish ever actually finishes that database? But I jest, slightly. I am not that concerned with what you think you desire to know. Let us say that this book's philosophy of information service does not really care what your specific preferences are. If you like your stories packaged a certain way, tough shit, find another information source. Many schools,



and all that. Yet, for some reason, you seem to find yourself here. Now, you can try to make the most out of your time spent inside this venerable institution, or, I don't know, perhaps you could stop wasting our precious time and build your own. But us authors do not see why we should be bothered to put forth effort communicating something that you cannot be bothered to put forth effort into comprehending. So, either we are all in this thing together, or we continue to use that shitty old job metaphor, and the flavor of our lollypop will suffer. So, have I sold you yet?

“The fuck are you talking about?”

Gus Pae, Public Investigator returned the kelepono to its pahu, after the other line went dead. Something fishy was going on. His secretary was still on vacation, and the temp in the waiting room was not quite getting the, uh, general, um, modus operandi that Gus, you know, whatever. It's not important. Point was, something fishy was going on. Gus looked at the notebook on his desk and wondered, *Where did I put that other notebook, the one with all of the notes that I took on my trip?* Gus yawned, because he was both tired and lazy. Like a tuna fish or something. Indeed.

ARE YOU BUYING THIS SHIT?  
ARE YOU BUYING THIS SHIT?  
ARE YOU BUYING THIS SHIT?  
ARE YOU BUYING THIS SHIT?  
ARE YOU BUYING THIS SHIT?



~~~~~

“Let me tell you something about women,” wahi a ka Bank Robber to the sometimes hard-headed and/or -boiled P.I. “Most women don’t have functional penises, so they can’t go around willy-nilly just peeing in the forest wherever it suits their fancy. It helps to have a nice place to squat. And, having some experience squatting in the woods, I’d say a comfortable lua should be high on a person’s priority list. Although, now that I think of it, this really only applies to human women, and, um, also, I must say, I am not so much concerned about *most* women, but about specific women that might actually venture into this space.”

Frank glanced up and watched as the two

separate persons attempted to make themselves understood amidst the sometimes tumultuous construction process. But communicating was key to the success of this home building hui and its current enterprise, which consisted, mostly, of building a material thought (in the forest on the mountain). Gus's mindwheels turned a bit, and it occurred to him that maybe this apparent non-sequitorial digression was actually a response to an aspect of his most recent utterance and was a subtle attempt to communicate some nuanced idea without beating him over the head with it, while at the same time managing to shift the conversation back to a track that was relevant to their stated reasons for actually being where they were (in the same place, working towards the same stated goals). *Clever, these outlaws*, thought Gus. *Perhaps there is something to this grand philosophy of theirs.*

Meanwhile, back in the present time.

"So, what seems to be the problem, Doc?"

Dr. Enlightenment eyeballed her patient after suppressing a slight giggle. "Well, you've got termites in your accordion, that's what."

"Well, sure, I can see that," said Gus. But what's the *cause*?"

The doctor released a slight chuckle of disbelief. "You are asking me about causes? What kind

of doctor do you think that I am?" She paused. "Anyway, in the meantime, you are going to probably need a new shoulder strap."

"Sigh," sighed Gus, "Pshwew. And, uh, I am just thinking out loud here, but," he glanced at the doctor and then back down at his shoes, which he had neatly placed in the corner of the room, "is it worth it to get a new thing, like, you know, for somebody that might not live very long anyway. I mean, I don't like to buy new things so much, if I can help it."

"Well," replied the doctor, "the only way that your machine is gonna last is if it gets a little exercise. Cannot just leave it in a box, if you know what I mean. We all need a little sunshine now and then, is I guess what I am saying. Anyway..."

"Yeah, yeah. Any way the wind blows. Alright. Thanks, Doc." Gus jumped off of the table. The two humans exchanged polite half-smiles and went their separate ways.

Gus walked down the street. He was back on Monarch Avenue after a quick detour to The Shop of Pipe Dreams to pick up some cheap rolling papers and was still running some unfinished conversations through his mind, when something caught his eye. After continuing on auto-pilot for maybe twelve steps or so, Gus stopped walking,

took in his surroundings, and made the decision to turn around. *Ah, the old apothecary shop*, ua no'ono'o 'oia, as he retraced his steps. He glanced at the poster in the window. *Well, that's odd*, he thought, pulling a mechanical pencil out of his bag, *I better jot this down*. Gus looked to the street corner, and made for the phone booth.

“Welcome to the Year of the Monkey, which begins on February 6, 2016. Prospects for development of your life are bright and you should use your capabilities and optimism to their full advantage. Be open to advice as it may lead to a richer and more satisfactory life. Any opportunity to make new partnerships should not be ignored. Accomplishments will be rewarded, but largely through personal and individual efforts. An increase in communication, humor, and wit will help you through stressful times with grace and ease. Move forward and make strides for what will lay ahead as the Year of the Monkey is a time for risk. Run with ideas, embrace the inventive, and don't look back as the possibilities are endless this year. Yeah, did you get that? Okay. Printed in Hawai'i by Hawai'i's Printers. Twenty-fifteen Fortune Design Collection Corp. Reproduction of any part of the calendar without permission—”

“Whoah, wait a minute,” said Heymish, on the

other end of the line, “Are you involving me in some sort of reproductionary lawbreaking? Cheese and crackers, Gus. You know I’m a librarian.”

“Oh, come on, Heymish, you’re a *retired* librarian. Besides, it’s in a public display window on a public street. And since when were you ever one to follow arbitrary rules that you—”

“And anyway, why are you calling *me* with this? Don’t you have a secretary for this sort of thing?”

“Um, well,” Gus paused, smiling at a passerby, “Helene is still on vacation, and I don’t want to overburden the new temp. Besides,” he said, taking on a playful tone that indicated to Heymish that he was about to ask another favor, “I kind of wanted to see if you could ask Lawa to run this by Regina for me. I am getting some heavy resonance here, but I’d like to run it by a professional to see how much weight I should place on this, uh, particular story-bridge. I’d like to confabulate as little as possible when I write up my next report.”

“Huh?”

“Hold on a second.” Gus said, turning slightly and shifting the phone to his other hand, as a shifty looking stranger wearing a pair of dark sunglasses and a buttoned-up shirt that was tucked into his ironed slacks passed by, slowly, pretending not to notice Gus.

“Um, yeah, no problem,” said Heymish, in response to the previous question.

“Oh, thanks Cuz,” replied Gus. “Now, I do believe we were discussing the nature and ethics of reproduction.”

~~~~~

“So, what system are you using there? Is it Destiny? Still, using the old Horizon, eh? Been a while since I used that one. Mind if I take a look.” Ged leaned slightly over the desk and took a closer peek at the monitor. She smiled at the library technician, who continued with the automated book scanning while smiling back also. For some reason (Quantum Jitters’ claimed lack of a valid library card?), Ged found herself in the position of performing the more socially awkward phases of this system analysis that was for some reason required by Jitters’ mysterious plan, which Ged was going along with, of course, because, so far, it would seem, for some reason, this plan appeared to almost-magically correspond to what were, up until now, the imaginary plans of her own.

“Hmmm,” said the library tech, “that’s odd. This one doesn’t appear to have a record.” She looked up from the screen. “I’ll be right back,” she said to Ged, smiling, unperturbed, as if everything were normal, taking the rectangular



picture book in question and calmly strolling off across the lobby towards some unseen Staff Room.

*Oh boy*, Ged thought, leaning on the desk and looking back through the lobby. A line had formed in the queue of perhaps 8 or so humans. *Oh boy*, Ged thought, *here we go*. The internal dialogue might have continued more or less like so:

*“Not gonna get a better chance than this. Couldn’t have scripted it better.”*

*“No way. Are you kidding? This is ridiculous.”*

*“Nah, yeah, we’re gonna miss it. It’s not the right time. It’s never the right time maybe. Does it even matter, anyway?”*

*“Well, just the possibility is something. Good omen, but. Oh well, just another missed opportunity.”*

*“Oh okay, come on. What have we got to lose?”*

Ged stood up and faced the crowd.

“You all waiting in line?” she asked, breaking the veil of respectable silence, and receiving a couple of grim looking nods in response to her relatively obvious query. “I know the library is a weird place to sell books,” she began, “but...” Ged reached into her bag, having now jumped all-in with this absurd live-action make-believe play, “I do have this book that is ***For Sale*** in case anyone is interested.” Like a magician, Ged pulled

out one of the copies of the aforementioned book, whose cover, naturally, read “FOR SALE: A Novel,” and held it up for each of the various sized humans to view, but mostly focused on presenting it to the adult-sized ones. This particular book’s intended audience was not exactly *children* per se, you know. “Eh?” Ged prodded. “Hmm? Okay, no takers, I see.” She glanced back at the circulation desk and off in the direction of the unseen Staff Room. No one was stepping up to restart the timeflow. Ged returned the book to her satchel, a little jittery from nerves and coffee. “Well, let’s see,” she said, making eye contact with the people who she couldn’t quite read, but were still standing still in the unmoving line. The three children-sized humans to her immediate left looked somewhat intrigued, and, well, “I also do storytimes,” said Ged, thinking, *well, that’s a thing that people do to keep their kids entertained, take them to the library to hear a storytime*. “Let’s see, I think I have some **Left-over Scrap** in here.” She reached back into her bag and pulled out a tiny book. She began to read. “Leftover Scrap. A book of pictures and words.” It had been a while since she read for a crowd. Her technique was shaky, but. “Frank the Donkey...” She held up the picture book for all to see. She turned the page. She considered adding some commentary to the next drawing (Charon)

and how this obscure satellite of Pluto was just mentioned in a question on the popular mass-broadcasted quiz show of human knowledge “Danger! Danger!” that was hosted by the surly mustachioed colonial insurance salesperson from The North, but wasn’t yet deep enough into the book to risk breaking that flow. Page by page, she read the story. “...Robot...Rainbow...Tiny Chair...A View From a Diner. Do you know what a diner is?” Ged asked the children. They shook their heads no. “Ah,” said Ged, turning the page and continuing on, “Navel Gazing.” She paused, and added some explanation. “A navel is sort of like your piko.” In the corner of her eye, Ged saw the library technician across the lobby, ambling back towards the circulation desk. “Ah good,” said Ged to the people that were waiting to check out. “Here we go. Sorry for the delay.” She returned the tiny book to her bag and turned back towards the circulation desk.

“You know what it was?” the library technician rhetorically asked Ged upon her return to the workstation behind the desk, “When we migrated the old records over for the new upgrade they deleted all of the books that had not been checked out in the past arbitrary number of moons. So, good thing then you are keeping this book alive.”

Ged smiled, now with a bag full of officially

borrowed books, and walked off, noticing another library assistant walk up to one of the empty circulation stations to assist with the backed up checkout process. Ged circled off past the exit and back towards the stacks, breathing deeply, wondering what sort of reality she had gotten herself into.

Meanwhile, back in the FART. Um, meanwhile, back where we were now, um, someone was giving another one of their book reviews.

“..like it was written by one entitled, White, Man that had no actual experience with magic or things magical. But it had its moments I suppose. That said, I wouldn't recommend it to children.”

“No, no. But speaking of children. What are your thoughts? Do you think they should continue to exist?”

“Hey,” said the universe, which was in reality a God, which was in reality just an automated feedback mechanism, which was in reality just you, which was in reality me (I mean, aren't I you? Think about it for a second. No, really think about it. Whose voice am I speaking in? Where does this process take place? Doesn't everything that exists in your world get filtered through your perceptive lens, which means that every-

thing you experience, regardless of what might or might not exist independent of your self (let's forget that impossibility for a moment), is only your translation—your reproduction—of what is being communicated to you? You can only communicate with something that you can connect with. In order for something to *contact* you, it has to actually *be* you), “remind us again how brilliant all of this bullshit is that you're selling.”

I returned to my huckstering. “Satisfaction guaranteed, you know. Satisfaction guaranteed or you'll be a monkey's uncle. Or some such thing. What were we discussing?” *Ah yes*, I recalled as Mean Mr. Mustard came through the audio line into my earholes and my left hand reached out to turn up the volume. We were talking about hammers. We were talking about hammers and our various responsibilities to the future. *I have a hammer*, I thought. I thought thoughts directly at other sentient beings, some of which, almost certainly, were you.



**Enough With The New Chapters Already  
(We've No More Time For This Shit)  
or,  
Let's Get This Party Started**

“**G**ood job,” said the organism to its constituent part, “I like what you’re doing. I’m still in love with you,” it went on to say. This was, of course, a sign of artificial intelligence. This was a sign of *purpose*. But we were all out of patients. Er, patience. No more time, we had. It was time to inoculate.

“Yes,” said the good doctor, “I do believe you have a severe case of bananas in the intestines of your mind.”

“Well,” said our protagonist, “we shan’t disappoint our audience, shall we?” You looked up from the page. It was a sign.

“NEXT!”

The receptionist nudged us along. “Your turn, honey.” The door opened. We stepped off of the cliff.

*Don't want to lay here no more. I don't want to lay here no more. (Everything that happened is supposed to be; it's all predetermined, can't change your destiny.) I'll just keep on moving. Some day, maybe, I'll get to where I am going.*

“Groan.”

The fictional character was sitting in limbo. She or he was wanting to do something, but impossible this was. That is, it was impossible to do *anything*, due to various paradoxes that constituted this ‘verse, which made our very existence both impossible and inevitable.

“Groan.”

So many things to do, yet our fictional character did nothing. Until...

Ged smelled her armpits. She yawned a deep yawn. She pulled a pillow out from under the sweaty sheets. She looked around the room.

“That’s some fever you got there,” said a thoughtful Quantum Jitters from his seat by the side of the bed. “So then, how are things on the Other Side?”

“How long have I been out?” asked Ged.



“Oh, many moons, you know,” replied Jitters.

“And the plan?” asked Ged.

“Oh, you know, things are still on schedule, somehow or other.” Quantum Jitters smiled his eerie smile. “Waste of time if you ask me.”

Ged snuggled into her covers.

Meanwhile, in a wholly other segment of our space-time continuum, Gus Pae, P.I. was pacing back and forth.

“It has to be here. It has got to be *somewhere*.” The back of his legs were on fire. Someone had been attempting to eat him whole, perhaps. He scratched wildly at his itching self.

“You know, we generally consider most occurrences to be emblematic of something else. You know, like, a metaphor or something.” Gus stared at his new friend, who continued to speak. “Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah.” Gus was tuning out. He had to consider the possibility that the notebook was lost, and not only that, but the way things were going, it was possible that it had fallen into the wrong hands. Of course, the fact that it was—*Ah hell*, thought Gus, *I am in way over my head*. Gus Pae, P.I. was drowning.

*“Discovered below what amounts, quite literally, to fertile shit, the Nag Hammadi library is a remarkably rich collection of texts about which we previously knew only what the heresi—”*

p.xi Digging Up My Library (Preface)  
in *The Serpent's Gift : Gnostic Reflections on the  
Study of Religion*  
by Jeffrey J. Kripal



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Gus paused, and looked up from the clue, and focused his gaze through his façade of spectacles and mustache, over towards the desk of information. Another missed opportunity, perhaps? Eventually, Gus approached the desk. The fiction acquisitions librarian was not yet in. Gus took a card.

“Knock knock. Is anybody home?”

--silence--

“Knock knock?”

--silence--

“Anybody?”

But enough with the flashbacks. We have lost our will to write this story (again). Something about the compensation mechanism not being somehow or other, et cetera, and so on. Constant-

ly negotiating, are we.

This reminds us, have you heard about the prison strike?

“Burp.”

“Fart.”

“No, no. Don’t you see? This is an actual term they use. My writing professor told me.”

Annie nodded her head in agreement and whispered something to her co-passenger. The disembodied voice continued to make its serious jokes. J. looked to the river and made out BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP.

“What was that?”

Garbage truck.

“Ah, I see. Metaphor, right?”

No. We are simply transcribing reality. Don’t worry, though. We’re professionals.

J. looked to the river and thought about salamanders.

Meanwhile, back in the jungle ...

“You see, it is an exact recipe. That’s why all the procrastination.” Our speaker paused. “Granted, it does require you to keep an eye on the pot. So to speak.”

Meanwhile, it was time for breakfast.



“**G**oodness gracious. What have we gotten our self into now.”

