

Castro's Kitchen

Miami, Florida

Please God, be on my side today. Napalm my face. Spray me down with Malathion. Let a rabid mole eat through my brain. Dip my balls in a pot of battery acid. Fart in my mouth. Shove a canister of Agent Orange up my ass. Canker me with erratic skin pigmentations. Embalm me full of castor bean oil. But please don't let this neurotic idiot sit across from me.

Shit! Holy Bitch of Bad Luck! Be quick. Put a werewolf bullet in my heart.

That's right. Go ahead. Ignore me. Invade my space. Savagely scrape the bottom of your paper cup with that flat, wooden spoon you nicked from the fast-food stand across the street. Sniffle every five seconds. That-a-boy, wipe it on your sleeve. Constantly shift in your seat.

If I were a doctor, I'd pump you full of Nembutal and toss your burnt-out tumid body into a bag of weeds. If a Phrenologist measured your head, science would possess the perfect proportions and characteristics of a slob.

There are four other tables available in this empty parlor, and yet you sit directly across from me, crinkling that paper bag to get at your powdered soup.

Tramp back and forth to the microwave. Nuke your water. Scald my eyeballs with sweltering vapors as you make your third trip. Violently scrape into my nerves with your wooden spoon.

How much can you scrape, slurp and sniffle?

More crinkling. More scraping. More slurping. More sniffing. Just blow and get it over with.

Can't you see I'm trying to read Jon Sobrino and have a smoke?

Settle down. Read something. Smoke. Get the idea?

That's right. Slurp till your stomach's content. Mind no one. Regard no one. Apologize to no one. Continue scraping, slurping and sniffing, unaware, with no dignity.

Please, I beg of you. Please God, send Daedalus back from the dead so he might construct a Labyrinth to contain the Minotaur raging within me.

It is nebulous, but being given the right to declare one's independent thinking--as an honest pursuer of thought--often amounts to being reduced to a Beanie Weenie shot from a .38 Revolver. We can arrive at agreements that appear harmonious, but ostensible peace is merely the profanity of a dirt-weed cowboy who breeds self-indulgent luxuries.

One day I recited Charles D. Gibson to my Okie uncle,

One cannot create enthusiasm for the war on the bases of practical appeal. The spirit that will lead a man to put away the things of his accustomed life and go forth to all the hardships of war is not kindled by showing him the facts.

Goebbels, who was influenced by Gibson, said, "The truth becomes the mortal enemy of the State."

My uncle called me a homosexual communist. He had been in the Army during the Vietnam War and traded generators, on the black market, for heroin. As a self-professed hippie and fearless meth-slammer, he represented his district (in the state of Oklahoma) at the Independent Political Party's National Convention in Long Beach, California, during the 2000 Presi-

dential Elections. My uncle also collects a government Nut Check.

A conversation with my uncle might be compared to a *tête-à-tête* with the skeletal host from *Tales From The Crypt*, which falls into a grievous and pernicious carousel, which reverberates through one's head, and culminates into a boil that begs to be popped. And the only person to blame is me, because I knew better than engage him in any political discourse. But I'm not quite manipulative enough to steer him away from a political conversation.

"I'm not negative! I'm not complaining! I'm not insulting! I'm not accusatory! I don't interrupt!" my uncle shouted, as he told me how "I" felt in life, and what "my" intentions and motivations were. He considered himself the grand knower of my being. The man hardly knew me--if at all--yet he reviled my existence, while simultaneously declaring that I had the right to pursue freedom. He was a warlock of psychological absurdities.

"I'm a person who speaks my mind. I'm a person who says it like I sees it!" He continued his declarations of self with a wide-eyed, thick Okie accent, swinging his bruised arms.

"You're a person who says it like an asshole, and you might consider looking up the words negative, complain, insulting, accusatory, and interrupt before you tell me anymore about yourself. You may find yourself in the dictionary," I retorted.

"You can't label me. I'm a free thinker." Then he disappeared into the bathroom to shoot a bit of meth into that true blue arm of his.

"Everybody can find themselves in the dictionary. You're not immune to the human condition. And as for being a free thinker, you seem to think you're the only one who should be allowed to engage in the civil liberty. And if I might say it like I sees it, you're no free thinker. You're a free drinker and a wee thinker."

He came out from under the door frame aiming his fingers at me, “We’re no longer family, you card-carrying Communist. You Stalinist.” I wondered where he got that bit of information since I have never been a member of any party and am a reluctant card carrier of anything.

My uncle finger-gun-pointed and focused his eye through his thumb, “If there is a war in this country you will be my enemy, and I will have the cross-hairs of my .38 aimed at you.”

This is when the propaganda of politics and nationalism turns brother against brother.

“I wouldn’t pick up a gun and point it at anyone for being a free drinker and a wee thinker nor for having a different opinion than mine. But uncle, if you pick up a gun and point it at me, I’m going to pick one up and pull the trigger as fast as I can because now your ideas are threatening my existence.”

I finished my bourbon and left my uncle’s country rock-shack located off Highway 75 north and 3 west. It doesn’t matter if you’re traveling north or west you’re headed in the same direction.

The National Security Act can’t jettison the *jeu d’esprit*. The junta is coming armed with jaundiced javelins, jabbering judiciaries, and a jujitsu juggernaut.

My uncle walked me to my car. As I drove away I saw in my rear view mirror the cross ears of his .38 aimed at me. He wore a warm grin that contradicted his aim, as he seemed sad to see me go.

Edgar Allan Poe’s, “I became insane with long intervals of horrible sanity,” hummed through my head, ringing like a god-damn tin pan, resembling a drunken member of the Revolutionary Popular Block (BPR) of El Salvador whose sole activity is ambling around Los Angeles in a never ending interview with History, all the while suffering from a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. He knows everything, but he can’t stop masturbating

his words with a tobacco leaf dangling from his lips and ask the serious question.

I'm starting to think that the UN is an acronym for You Need or You're Nothing, and that there is not much difference between Helen of Troy and Helen Keller.

When your soul consorts with the flames of hell from early childhood it becomes a delight to suck on sulfuric lollipops or a book of matches. Every time I sit on the toilet I contemplate what kind of man I am capable of becoming, but by the time I wipe my ass, pull up my trousers and flush the toilet I've forgotten who I might have become and have flushed my freedom of choice. But somehow I have witnessed a becoming.

How is it that the back of John F. Kennedy's skull gets blown out, and then he becomes a gold chocolate coin in a Halloween trick-or-treat sack? That's as close as he will ever get to presbyopia despite the creation of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

The elements in the play during the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero were choreographed to such a striking extent that some biorhythmic satellite transported killers, who were most likely the initiates of some evil coven. When you kill an honest priest the scope of the drama demands an equal response and that is why the FMLN lost when they compromised for peace. They couldn't perform the brutality necessary to win a war as they surrendered their sword to purgatory, growing tired of bloodshed and therefore set aside an imperative principle for warfare, "An army that has not been defeated must not surrender its weapons." It's an anthropic principle that relies on schizophrenic electrons to impose restrictions, while at that same time saving lives, that is, if one is willing to build more fast food franchises in San Salvador.

To bring down the Beast, one must blast it from all sides and then take shelter in the unraveling of the worst and the best.

One must do it when history presents itself in a Time of Daring; when a man crosses the street and hopes for God, waiting for a friend to give him a ride. Companionship manifests a biological truth that the Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development cannot manage. There is no glistening summary of this companionship. It is intimate but so few take the necessary risk to maintain its balance.

An old backwoods Moonshiner, who ground his corn in a barrel skinned with tar, told me, "Boy, there is a marshland where a man enters his menstruation, bleeding from his deliverance and his captivity. In this marshland he will know that his labors will be the death of him. History will rise from the swamps like a plate of spaghetti and meatballs, looking like an overweight black woman and a skinny, little Jewish man making love."

I had no idea what the fuck this Moonshiner was getting at. He passed me a mason jar full of hard stinking ethanol. I handed him a twenty, inhaled deeply, took a swig, grimaced slightly and thanked him kindly. I suspected he knew something about the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development--of which I knew nothing about.

This old Moonshiner grabbed my sleeve and put another jar of moonshine in my empty hand. I set it down on a rusty barrel and pulled out a five, which he quickly snatched and demanded that I drink up as he asked, "You ever been to the Carnegie Carnival?" I didn't get a good whiff before I drank up, so I grimaced hard. "No," I choked and coughed.

"Drink up, Boy! One's values determine one's definition of self," he said kicking a crusty Firestone tire. "You ever hear of The Treaty of Westphalia?"

"No. No I haven't," I answered, as I took a big whiff before taking another quaff. I swirled that one around my mouth for a while and gargled before swallowing. Then I drug

my sleeve across my lips, wondering why there were no cynics at The World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. I didn't know what was going on in Davos or in these backwoods of Oklahoma, but this Moonshiner knew something about the death of labor. He grabbed the mason jar from me; not taking a whiff, he swigged big and did not grimace.

"Boy, the war of kings is over. The war of peoples is over. The war of ideologies is over," the Moonshiner said "ideologies," grinning toothlessly. "Don't call me a Commie, but I sure do like lighting those Chinese firecrackers." He handed me the mason jar and I noticed for the first time that he was missing portions of four of his fingers. He grabbed a welding torch and lit that Firestone tire on fire. "You ever see that there movie, *The Elephant Man*? Boy, that John Merrick was in bad shape, but his left arm and genitals were normal and intact and so was his mind. He was one of those favorable mutations." Then the Moonshiner grabbed his balls with his disproportioned hand and did a less-than-dazzling impersonation of Al Pacino, "The only thing in this world that gives orders is balls. All Merrick needed to do was use his balls."

This Moonshiner was brewing what the Ancient Greeks called nepenthe, "a drug that caused forgetfulness of grief and a lack of awareness for sorrow." The way this Moonshiner put it, John Merrick could have been Al Pacino in *Scarface*. I took another big swig that got my boots kicking for one last spasm.

"You never heard of the Carnegie Carnival? We're livin' in the hangover of the after party, boy! You understand what I'm telling you?"

I acted as if I did and hit the mason jar again. What I thought had been my last spasm was not. As I wiped my beard dry, the old guy pulled the jar out of my hand and pounded its contents down to nothing. I gave him ten bucks and he gave me another mason jar of moonshine, which left me with two full

jars. I hopped in my car, the CD player was spinning Gillian Welch's *I Dream A Highway Back To You*, and I wondered how it was that "Dracula had a predilection for raising humble men to high ranks," and if that was what Colonel Gregory Fontenot was getting at in his essay titled *Seeing Red: Creating a Red-Team Capability for the Blue Force*. The moonshine had a blue hue to it that made everything look like a montage sprinkled with red fairy dust.

The words on the pages came into focus,

Jesus cannot tolerate the will of God being interpreted in the exact opposite sense to the obvious one given by God. And let us note once more that the example he gives bears on a tradition—coming from God—to do with defending the lives of people in need. Jesus seeks to come out in support of God's honor, we might say, and to come out in support of human life. He cannot allow God to be used to defend the opposite to what is clearly God's will.

~Jon Sobrino, *Jesus The Liberator*

Then I realized that the mason jar was in my bag. There were a few shots of moonshine left.

The guy tramping back and forth across the smoking parlor, scraping his soup out with his flat, wooden spoon declared, "I've been gifted with my own self-deception. Where'd you get yours?" He didn't wait for an answer because he wasn't really asking me. In fact, he didn't notice me at all as those schizophrenic electrons were pulsating into anthropocentric principles.

"That's a fallacy of composition. I earned my self-deception. Nobody helped me get to the top. I got here on my own. Why should I help anybody? I'm not lazy. I'm accustomed to luxury!" he shouted pounding his table.

I sipped the moonshine, surmising that religious wars

were a reoccurring contradiction. I think Einstein had something to say about it with regards to insanity, which doesn't excuse identity dominance achieved through biometrics. Radu R. Florescu and Raymond T. McNally wrote, "In Dracula's tortured mind cruelty and religion were deeply intertwined." That seemed both true and insane, since I could not think of a cruel act that did not lend itself to ritual in some perverse way.

The freak sitting across from me continued to talk to himself as if he were being interviewed by the late Oriana Fallaci. He criticized Umberto Eco, Che Guevara and John Maynard Keynes. Adamant that Che was wrong when he said, "the social development of a justly run country is done for men, not for some social ideal spirit. It is done for the sole purpose of guaranteeing man's happiness," he then reviled Keynes for understanding that "material progress" was the result of "individual initiative, and owed almost nothing to the directive influence of organized society as a whole." Then he burst out against Eco for showing us the force of falsity. This slob had no point of his own.

I went down stairs, bought a cigar and returned to my table. This guy hadn't stopped scrapping or sniffing and talking to Fallaci or to himself or to Che, Keynes or Eco and or whoever else he had stirring around in his head. This guy was proof that language and lunacy are inseparable. Hell, I felt insane when I engaged my own internal dialogue. I just hid it better than this guy. I started my own imaginary conversation as I cooled the willy with General LeMay.

"I may be a maniac, but I'm not crazy. I go to war to win!" LeMay shouted.

I struck my cigar, tasted and chewed, "I understand, but firebombing all of Tokyo and killing hundreds of thousands of civilians does seem a bit excessive and crazy."

"No!" LeMay pounded in my head. "Excessive? Maybe!"

Crazy? No! I fought wars to win, kid. Grow up!”

“What about the victims?”

“What victims? Casualties! Collateral Damage, kid!”

LeMay explained, puffing through his cigar.

The nut across from me was really going after Che’s misconception of happiness, and he also seemed to have a problem with Bentham’s utilitarian conception of happiness. Misconceptions swirled through the smoke.

LeMay calmed down and casually explained the statistical results of necessary casualties in winning a war.

The loon across from me continued to crinkle his bag, disrupting my lunacy. He had turned himself into a floating particle that I could not avoid inhaling. He was getting on my last nerve. He bore a striking resemblance to Luis Posada Carriles. The paper bag at his feet resembled a block of C-4. I prayed for grace, for mercy, for compassion and for liberation from myself, but I came up short. Way short.

“Hey, you, buddy,” I whispered to the Carriles look-a-like. He paid no attention. He just kept slurping, mumbling that Eco was wrong about vernaculars being the first form of language that man acquired. “Vulgar!” he shouted, as he finished his soup and reached into the bag by his feet.

What I thought could have been my last spasm of my last spasm back in Oklahoma was not at all my last spasm here in Miami, Florida. “Hey, Buddy. The prevailing concept of worth and value have distorted man’s determination of himself. It is not only man’s physical character that gives him access to the world, but he is wholly dependent on an unknown yet ever present existence in order to gain access to himself and others. It is in the remembering of events and experiences, it is our loyalty to responses and actions of the past that make us who we are. One’s ability to identify language and acquire the capability to communicate is essential to understanding our facets of being

and our will to become. Language is the only damn tool we have to situate, reestablish and rearrange ourselves in a not so unique world of generalities,” I explained, as I drew a fake identification card and presented it to Luis, if that was indeed who he was. My fake identification card depicted me as an agent of the Department of Language and Aptitude Battery. I asked him if he knew Grandma and Grandpa Inkblot. He picked up that brown paper bag that may or may not have contained C-4, looked deep into my eyes, and addressed me for the first time, “I am the tempering mitigating force!” He looked more and more like the CIA Cuban who blew up Cubana Flight 455 in 1976.

“Tempering, mitigating or forcing complex multicellular organisms is an unpredictable activity,” I responded, as I karate chopped him in the throat with the binding of Sobrino’s book. He fell back off his chair, clutching his neck, choking for breath. When he finally got a breath, he gargled, “*Tu no eres Cubano, Chico.*”

I grabbed hold of the mother fucker’s collar, (my prayer was not answered as I was lacking compassion and mercy), reached into his pocket and dug for his identification papers, pinning his head to the ground with my knee. He was Luis Posada Carriles. I bent down to his ear, with all my weight on his head and whispered, “*Yo soy parte Cubano y Americano. Mi corazon estaba en esa e avion.* You half-witted, imperialistic, malefic neophyte. Can you hear the bells of hell chiming?” I lifted my knee off his head, stomped his face into the back of his skull with the heel of my boot, poured the last of my Oklahoma moonshine on him and lit him on fire with my cigar.

The parlor owner was on his way upstairs as I was on my way down. My blood was vaporous. All I wanted to do was read and smoke in this Little Havana smoking parlor with some peace and quiet. And then some goddamn soup-slurping,

Americanized terrorist, reviling lunacy and language had to disrupt all my good intentions. LeMay had no problems with casualties, so why should I? My gait picked up and my left arm started swinging erratically. All of a sudden I couldn't control my urge to talk to myself out loud.

“The purpose of the Marshall Plan was to rebuild Europe and displace her as the center of power. Europe became a proud beneficiary of the U.S. Welfare system. Everybody pays rent in the United States, even land owners, while yuppies become the new Hanseatic League selling hamburgers and internet search engines instead of timbers, resins, furs, wax and grains. Colloquialisms elucidate the current events in the streets the way that a militant Nexus model who has seen warships burning off the coast of Orion seeks immortality. And Daryl Hannah does one hell of an erotic crotch face-plant.

Mark Twain witnessed his wang for the first time in a frog hut, then he wrote an illuminating essay on democracy. Marx's proposition still stands unchallenged, not even a ladder climbing, McKenzie & Company banana-grabber can challenge Marx's assumptions. But I never cared for Hegel and his allegiance to the State, which is now beholden to corporate rulers creating the Age of the Great Unraveling of our origami. The lettuce picker definitely deserves more, but he shouldn't run the company, but neither should the CEO. The Linguistic Determinists should run the whole shebang. They seem to recognize history rather than avoid it. Limies knew how to ward off scurvy by carrying a couple of limes in their pockets as they crossed long, windless seas. Yet poetry seems to be on its way to becoming a barrel of lemons.

The world of recurring banalities seems insignificant and irrelevant to the person who desires being, form and matter, which could be attained through an immersion into corruption, which the prophets despised and from which he or she longed

to be completely disassociated. But righteousness often necessitates guilt. Samuel was declared righteous when he hacked up Agag, king of the Amalekites, whom Saul had spared against the command of God.

I was left with myself to harness confusion and clarity; with a longing to receive and a longing to bestow; with courage to look away and charity to peer into the unknown. The vigor to embrace pain vibrates the nerves. The pineal gland sits front and center in the brain. It is made up of the same tissue as the roof of one's mouth, yet I grapple with the words, with the purpose to communicate with others and understand myself. Nature is a borrowed perfection."

An impetuous Floridian gnat flew up my nose and snapped me out of my audible rant. I killed a man today, I thought to myself. Big deal. Anyone who knows anything about power knows that the history of the world began in a kitchen. So let's drink tonight and trade tomorrow. Don't worry, because a slow and steady spic will most likely win the race, while a cloud hangs over the North American sky as we lose our shoes, riding bare back into sweet nothing.