



Man vs. Nature :

Earth Day Is the Time to Challenge the Environmentalist Premise that Man Should Be Sacrificed in Order to Preserve Nature

For the first time in American history, the government is ordering the destruction of a dam--for environmental reasons.

This July, Edwards Dam, a small hydroelectric facility on the Kennebec River in Augusta, Maine, will be torn down by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Its crime? It is blocking the path of fish that swim upstream to spawn. As recounted in a N.Y. Times article, "the hindrance the Edwards Dam posed to migratory fish outweighed the benefit it provided in electric generation."

On Earth Day, it is worth noting this event, for it illuminates the essential meaning of environmentalism. The closing of Edwards Dam is the implementation of environmentalism's fundamental, though often unrecognized, tenet: that man ought to be sacrificed for the sake of nature.

The common view of environmentalism is that its goal is the betterment of mankind--that it wants to purify our air and clean up our parks so that we can live healthier and happier lives. But that is a very superficial interpretation. When environmentalists are faced with a conflict between the "interests" of nature and those of man, it is man who is invariably sacrificed. If there is a choice between electric power for human beings and swimming lanes for salmon, it is always the fish that are given priority. If there is a choice between cutting down trees for human use and leaving them untouched for the spotted owl, it is always the bird's home that is saved and human habitation that goes unbuilt. Why?

Because the requirements of human life are not the standard by which environmentalists make their judgments. Their goal is to maintain nature in its virginal state--despite the demonstrable harm this inflicts upon people. They want to preserve wildernesses, to enshrine wetlands, to tear down dams and levees--i.e., to prevent the man-made "intrusions" upon nature.

In the case of Edwards Dam, for instance, they want to protect the salmon not because it is a source



<http://www.student.potsdam.edu/spring83/recycle.gif>



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PUBLISHER: C. Diablo

EDITORS:

Matthew Weaver
Jeremiah Parry-Hill
Giles Francis Hall
Adam Fletcher

LAYOUT:

Matthew Weaver
Jeremiah Parry-Hill

WRITERS:

Sean Hammond
Howard Hao

CONTRIBUTORS:

The Hell's Kitchen
Member Publications

of food--or of any other human value. (They regularly denounce hatcheries as "unnatural" and commercial fishing as the "exploitation of nature"--and the very eating of animals as insensitive "speciesism.") Rather, they regard the "welfare" of the salmon as an end in itself--for the sake of which man must forgo the benefits of the dam.

Environmentalists often declare their philosophy openly. For example, David Graber, an environmentalist with the National Parks Service, described himself as among those who "value wilderness for its own sake, not for what value it confers upon mankind. . . . We are not interested in the utility of a particular species, of free-flowing river, or ecosystem to mankind. They have intrinsic value, more value--to me--than another human body, or a billion of them."

David Foreman, founder of the organization Earth First, bluntly stresses the environmental irrelevance of human beings: "Wilderness has a right to exist for its own sake, and for the sake of the diversity of the life forms it shelters; we shouldn't have to justify the existence of a wilderness area by saying: 'Well, it protects the watershed, and it's a nice place to backpack and hunt, and it's pretty.'"

The environmentalist goal, in other words, is to protect nature, not for man, but from man.

But this means that man must suffer so that nature remains pristine. Human beings survive by reshaping nature to fulfill their needs. Every single step taken to advance beyond the cave--every rock fashioned into a tool, every square foot of barren earth made into productive cropland, every drop of crude petroleum transformed into fuel for cars and planes--constitutes an improvement in human life, achieved by altering our natural environment. The environmentalists' demand that nature be protected against human "encroachments" means, therefore, that man must be sacrificed in order to preserve nature. If "wilderness has a right to exist for its own sake"--then man does not.

Litter-free streets or pollution-free air--or any provable benefit to man--is not what environmentalists seek. Their

*All material copyright 1999
Gracies Dinnertime Theatre and
the respective authors.*

Deadline for submissions is
2pm on the Saturday before
publication. Submissions
should be emailed to:
gdt@hellskitchen.org

Or mailed to:
**Gracies Dinnertime Theatre
c/o Hell's Kitchen
472 French Road
Rochester, NY 14618**

aim is to eliminate the benefits of the man-made in order to preserve-- unchanged-- nature's animals, plants and dirt.

Earth Day is an appropriate occasion for challenging the environmentalists' philosophy. It can be the occasion for recognizing the Earth as a value--not in and of itself, but only insofar as it is continually reshaped by man to serve his ends.

Peter Schwartz, editor and contributing author of the recently published *Return of the Primitive: The Anti-Industrial Revolution* (Meridian/Penguin) by Ayn Rand, is chairman of the board of the Ayn Rand Institute.

<http://www.aynrand.org>

people are cool/people suck

by the Venerable Sean Hammond

Remember the bridge I built because I was bored? Well, before break, one of the cinder blocks was cracked. I chalked it up to weathering; they are old and chipped. Anyway, I shored up the broken brick with rocks and went on break.

When I got back, the entire bridge was shifted. It was at a 45 degree angle to the way I left it. I assumed there was a big rainstorm and the entire structure was simple pushed by the force of the water. I rebuilt it and got ready to strengthen it.

Well, these actions are active, not passive. On Friday, I found every single cinderblock used shattered. There was no chance it could have been caused by water action.

I hate losing, so I spent most of the night working on rebuilding it. It is now made out of rocks so large I had to use ropes and levers to move them.

If this version get wrecked, I'm going to buy a bunch of metal rods and cement and pour myself a fucking bridge strengthened with internal metal rods.

On a related note, there's a lot of construction on UMBC and lots of greyish plastic pipes acting as conduits for electrical power poke up through the ground. In one place, the terrain has been planted, so here's a nice looking area with the end of a grey pipe sticking up. Some wonderful person bought grey paint to match the pipe, painted a small, dead tree, and stuck it into the pipe so it looked like a grey tree had grown there. Someone did that just because they thought it would be a good idea. It wasn't spontaneous, cause they had to buy the paint and get the tree.

People can be so cool.

-STH

Letters From Serbia

Contributed by Laura Mildon, Mad Dog News

I am in NO WAY an authority to fully describe what is going on in the country of Serbia. However, I did live in Russia and Eastern Europe for a number of years. Since I speak several Eastern European languages, I often got entirely different reports from watching Eastern news and Western CNN and NBC (via satellite.) I can only express from my experience and learning the history of the region that relationships (whether good or bad) between all these countries extends HUNDREDS of years. Why, Serbia has had a relationship with Russia for more than 600 years! Idealistic happy U.S. citizens gleefully think fuzzy cola-type thoughts about the cold war being over and how "now Russia is our friend."

Well, any non-U.S. citizen will caution you to be careful as to how you define "friend" or "ally."

These are letters I've received from Dragan, a Serbian in Serbia and a Father Sava from the Decani Monastery in Serbia:

=====

Hello Laura!

I watched Clinton the other day talking to Serbian people... how could I believe him that he has best intentions when I have to go to a shelter every time I hear the siren in case a pilot misses the target (either deliberately or not)?

I think about myself as an reasonable person. I watch CNN, Sky News, BBC and I hate what the president of Yugoslavia (Slobodan Milosevic) is doing and what he has done and there are many people who don't believe in his propaganda either, but what NATO is doing to us right now will not make anyone believe in so called 'western democracy'.

I hope that not all people in the US think that Serbian people are dirty, barbaric animals that are born to murder others... as some would like to portray us.

I hope that the world will be able to see today's pictures from Belgrade when about 10 - 20,000 men, women and children gathered during the day in the center of Belgrade where music bands played and from where Serbians sent messages of peace to the world. I don't know, shall I say it was funny or sad to see children (and others) wearing papers with printed concentric circles and written bellow in English 'target' (<http://www.beograd.com/nato/target/target300.gif>). There were many others funny banners. :) I've just seen on the TV that there will be such gathering again tomorrow, it starts at noon. I remind you that NATO is bombing Belgrade as well. I know it sounds mad but I guess that is what we are. :)

Dragon

Hello Laura!

I just hope you and your Mad Dog column won't have problems telling our side of the story about all of this.

Talking about liking Slobodan Milosevic... well, I can't express how much I DON'T like him. Actually, when I think about some things he has done, it looks to me as if he had some mental problems in his head. There are many, especially, young people opposing him (including myself) but since the NATO attacks began, the situation quite changed. Now everyone keeps together. The world certainly is not going to democratize society in Yugoslavia in this way. Besides, I've got a feeling that western politicians (USA, Britain etc) did give him some kind of support all through the war in Croatia and Bosnia and NOW they decided that he's like this or like that... the same as with imposed sanctions, they are ONLY hurting ordinary people.

BTW, if you wish to see some more info about things happening in Yugoslavia I would recommend <http://truthinmedia.org>. I stress, this is not a site that belongs to YU government (it would be the same as if I pointed you to CNN but the news would be just opposite). I am in a no way connected to these people, I only heard about this site a week ago, but it looks pretty good (informative and objective).

I'm frightened to think that Clinton's actions may be because the U.S. does not want to address how China has possession of nuclear weapons technology while the U.S. remains firm in its stance on 'nuclear non-proliferation.' It's really scary when you realize that something like this is quite possible. I ask myself from time to time, where is this world heading...

Laura, you know, even before these attacks had started, YU government used to talk about world conspiracy against Serbia as if all American, British, Germany etc. people hate Serbian people. I spent year and a half (1991 and 1992) living in England (where I have relatives) and I very well know that is far from true. I use every chance to explain it to people and I showed your message to many of my chance.

We just have to remember to be what we are and not what politicians want us to be!

Many regards, Dragon

Hello Laura!

Right now I am at my friend's house... By now NATO usually started bombing at night. There are no military sites in our town but there is a military airport (Batajnica) some 20 km away from us so you never know... Still, we refuse to go to basements and wait for something to happen. Despite, it is hard to sleep when you hear all those detonations. So we gather, listen to music, play cards, in a word, have fun and that help us go through this easier. I brought your message to my friend's house and I let them read it. I tell everybody about the words you've written to me and I explain to them what you wrote because I believe you and I know it is true! I'm also writing this reply at friend's computer and later I will upload it to the BBS...

Once again, thank you very much for your understanding. I often watch BBC, Sky News and CNN, and it's a strange feeling when it LOOKS that everyone else think of Serbia as of some evil war machinery.

BTW, did you know that during WWII Serbs are saving and hiding American and British pilots which had been hit by Nazi forces?

Lots of greetings from my friends and me!

Dragan

>>This is from Father Sava at the Decani Monastery.

I am writing this appeal while the NATO bombers and cruise missiles are spreading death and destruction all around my country. It is my moral obligation to say that the statements by the NATO officials that only military targets are attacked in Yugoslavia are not true and they are intended to deceive many peace loving people in the West that their air force is in a *humanitarian* action.

>From our credible sources we learned that several dozens of civilian facilities (infrastructure, education, telecommunication, environment and traffic facilities) were attacked and destroyed by NATO air force. Besides there are more and more civilians who are killed or crippled by NATO bombs, including refugees from Bosnia and Croatia. Their refugee camp was hit near Kursumlija and 10 women and children were killed or wounded at the spot. Several schools have been destroyed and many of them damaged so that children cannot go to schools any more because there is a danger that they might be killed in them.

The areas with important cultural and religious monuments are also targeted. Day before yesterday Gracanica monastery area was attacked. Thank God there is only a slight damage on the monastery roof but on the other hand several family homes were burned to ashes.

Last night a cruise missile hit the old town in Djakovica, mostly inhabited by Albanians, and made a great fire in which several Albanian houses were destroyed and several civilians seriously wounded.

In short, NATO attacks are nothing but barbarous aggression which affects mostly the innocent civilian population, both Serb and Albanian. Their continuation will not only break the will of the people of Yugoslavia to live in freedom but will strengthen their determination to resist the Tomahawk Democracy which is trying to bring *peace* by crimes against humanity.

Such actions are a shame for Western democracies and the whole world. Serbian Orthodox Church remains fully faithful to the principle that good can never be achieved by evil and that the Kosovo crisis must be resolved by peaceful and diplomatic means so that all peoples living here will be granted full protection of their human rights and freedom. NATO attacks will only make the things worse. They will definitely destroy the prospects of peaceful coexistence and will FURTHER RADICALIZE EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES. And finally, the greatest victims of this criminal policy will be innocent civilians.

We have the full moral right to protest against these crimes because our Church has strongly condemned acts against civilians committed both by Serb and Albanian extremists in this conflict and has made great efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the crisis. As much as we have committed criminal acts against innocent civilians and their property in the course of the last year, by extremists on both sides, we are equally condemning these NATO attacks which do not differ at all from what we have seen in Kosovo so far. In fact there is a danger that NATO

bombing produces far greater humanitarian crisis than the one we already have. These inconsiderate actions will destabilize Balkans and possibly create a European Vietnam which will obstruct the political and economical processes in Europe for years ahead.

Unfortunately, many people in the West still live in illusion that their super-powerful and precise air force is fighting against the FRY military. The truth is that there are more and more civilian victims and damages on exclusively non-military facilities. Therefore the Western governments bear great responsibility for these criminal acts in front of God and history.

The ironic statements that the goal of this operation is to prevent suffering of civilians are absolutely hypocritical and tragic. President Clinton speaks sweet words to the Serbian people while his bombers mercilessly destroy schools, kindergardens and fill the hearts of children with hatred against the peoples which they believed were their friends and supporters of true peace and democracy.

It is not true that our country is against the peaceful solution of the Kosovo conflict. The paper proposed by the Yugoslav delegation in Paris granted full autonomy to Kosovo Albanians and all other national communities.

The delegation also said that they were ready to accept certain kind of international supervision. What our delegation did not accept and what no one in this country can accept is secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia and Yugoslavia and occupation by NATO forces. There is not a single country in the world which would accept such terms. Therefore the claim by Mr. Clinton and others that our country is against negotiations and peace are not true. The truth is that we cannot accept disintegration of our country, not even under the threats of NATO missiles and bombers. I am always ready to ask for my fellow Albanian neighbors the same rights which Serbs and all others in this country have, but neither me nor anyone in our Church can accept that Kosovo is given into the hands of Albanian extremists who have already cleansed 50% of Kosovo from Serbs and other non-Albanian ethnic groups, who kill our children in cafes and our farmers working in fields. Unfortunately, openly supporting the Albanian separatists NATO is not supporting suffering civilians on all sides, as it so proudly said, but exclusively those forces both among Albanians and Serbs who want more war and blood.

It is true that Kosovo has many refugees and many times we have urged responsible on both sides to stop their violence and let the people go back to their homes. But the West forgets that in Serbia there are 600,000 refugees who are now directly endangered by NATO bombs.

In the name of God and my fellow Albanian and Serb neighbors I make a strong appeal on all people of good will to stop these barbarous attacks immediately. The peace is not built by deaths of innocent children and pride of the mighty ones.

Fr. Sava

Mad Dog Mildon © 1999 All rights reserved worldwide.

<http://maddog.buster.com>



Howard's Happy Hour

By Howard Hao

La morbida nota che suona stappando un tappo invecchiato fa l'esatto rumore di un uomo che apre il suo cuore. (The soft note of an aged cork being withdrawn has the true sound of a man opening his heart.) --William Samuel Benwell

The Underprivileged

Mere mortal souls who wish to
Tempt their taste buds with the bitter
Sweetness of a cold brew. Then there
Are those who wish to handle a gargantuan
Maniacal mechanical terror. No pity for
Those who try to do both without the
Proper authorizations...no sympathies
For these unfortunate souls,
The Underprivileged

Rainy Day at the Bus Station

They run in, sheltering themselves from the downpour.
They shake themselves clean of the wet nuisance.
Homeless folk bundling themselves, trying to warm
Their tired bones with what scant rags they own.
Yuppies in their spanking clean business suits rush
Past, unaware, or ignoring their presences. Gabbing
Away to their cellualars, running to and fro like
Chickens without heads. Some lady gets muddy water
Splashed on her new dress and is in a fit of rage.
An old man curses the modern technological geniuses
That invented an umbrella that cannot fold close.
The ticket vendor looks bored and glum behind the
Three inches of bullet-proof glass, whistling to
Oldies jazzing from the ancient transistor radio
With the bent coat hanger for an antenna.

Indirect Instigation

Screaming not for the victim to percieve
 yelling out with all your might
 but only in your head
 caterwaul and colorful words
 dancing within neuron pathways
What is unknown remains the best solution
Target is acquired. Target is destroyed.
Straining platysma, baring teeth.
 You swear under your breath,
 Planning no remorse,
 No retribution,
 No sorrows,
 None

NYC Subway

As you step out into the platform
There is the immediate assault
Of stale urine on your unprotected
Nostrils. Rumble, rumble goes
The mighty train, whisking away
The next load of business-people
Staring intently at the Times.
Ah, the panhandling, the litter,
The occasional rat. The
Opposite wall across the tracks
States the rule of a local
Young punk while torn
Announcements of Doctor
Zizmore's miracle skin
Restoration flaps violently
In the backdraft current
That blows echoing through
The dimly lit tunnel walls.
God, I miss the City!

A Plea

And a crying outburst filled to the
Brim with corroding desire
Why? Why can it not be my turn?
Surely there must be some means
I mean, everyone else has it
So just what the heck is going on?
Alas, there is no murmur
Nothing but the emptiness of
Chirping crickets and the
Vast blowing wind

Rainbow Brite

-for Amie

Resplendence.
And here she comes, smiling for
The world, for everyone, cheering
Them up no matter where she traverses.
A grin from ear to ear, aglow,
A brilliance for all those to see.
Bright and shining and never glum.
For when such a possibility exists
Then it is truly the end of the world.
Radiance.

The Golden Flower Bet

-for Ket

Hell, I've learned my lesson;
I'm never betting with you again!
Whatever...

Swearing at the World

Fuuuuuck!
Did ya hear me?
I said FUCK!
FUUUUUCK!
Hatred of this boring shitty life
My soul ceases to urge my body
To move on,
to continue endlessly,
to continue into an unknown
bitter, black void of unheard
SCREAMS and untender lights,
sights, frights, and plights
FUCK!
Did ya hear me, damn it?
FUCK!
FUUUUUCK!
This entire WORLD is FUCKED UP beyond
belief!
AND I'M NOT JUST SAYING THAT!
i'm FUCKING YELLING it...

The Power of Love

And in the end there it was
Shining with a glow so bright
So miraculous that it somehow
Puts everything else to shame.
The sheer magnificence of it all.
One just cannot help but rejoice
All other thoughts stray.
And why not? Such thoughts
Are now unnecessary.
You want your money? Take it!
You want your physical possessions?
Take them; take it all!
What is required cannot be met
With mere physical desires. No.
It is much, much more.

Currency

The answer to all prayers
And almost all problems.
Cash IS the universal language!

A Mere Touch

It can mean
Oh so much more than you
Or I can fathom.

How it Feels to Cry

traumatic lancets finger
 those sensitive projections of
 your inner character.
 the tears well up quickly inside;
 you feel the unsuppressable fury
 of the imminent deluge.
 it kicks and screams, not wanting to
 be held back. so don't!
 just let it all go!
 spaz attack.
 a gargantuan cancerous clog in your throat
 hardened and impervious
 and you try to choke back that feeling.
 no, no, control yourself they say.
 but to hell with them all;
 you cannot help it.
 just let it be.

Run-on & Roundabout

The wind it blows on my face cooling
 With a refreshing tingle like anti-
 Bacterial soap from the drug store
 Down the street which reminds me of
 A story from my youth about two dozen
 Hippopotami engaging in various
 Positions and a settling piece of mind
 Since what else does it matter and of
 Course it doesn't as dripping sanguine
 Lead weight on her lap like a bitter
 Old man without a spouse who sits
 Silently at the window with a clenched
 Fist and curses and spits at all passer
 Bys who look on with confused charisma
 But such is the way all people treat
 The wind that blows on my face cooling



Howard's Happy Hour : Fiction For Free

By Howard Hao

"Whatever I'd dream, the world is not a lie."

Rodney Jones, The Troubles That Women Start Are Men

The Bottle

After dinner I proudly paraded out the bottle of Mœt et Chandon, Dom Perignon, 1985. Being New Year's Eve, 1999, I supposed it was as good a time as any to whip out the treat that I've been hiding from my husband for eight years. Imagine my delight as I watched his eyes pop out of his head when I surfaced from the wine cellar with that beauty in my hands.

"Good God, Mag! How long have you had this?"

He was incredulous. Still enjoying my high from his surprised delight, I assured him that the treasure had been well hidden for a good amount of time. Seemingly satisfied with my response, although still shaken with disbelief, he reached for the bottle.

"Oh no! This one's mine!" I quickly snapped.

I wasn't going to allow him to open my little treasure. Call me selfish, but with a wine aficionado for a husband, keeping something like this unknown to him for so long was a phenomenal feat!

"Not a prob, hon. After all, you deserve it!"

Being married to Tom for twenty years, I, too have become a wine aficionado, albeit an amateur. So I've really not a lot of experience with opening sparkling wine bottles.

I unraveled the harsh foil covering around the neck and proceeded to unwind the labyrinthine wired mess around the cork under a towel. After a few minutes of toil and torture, I managed to get the stubborn thing off. Ah... soon, refreshment.

Of course, I was opening the bottle the correct way, reasons being that this is real expensive stuff, it's dangerous to shake and open, and that I'm not a dolt. I'm a wine connoisseur! So the towel remained over the bottle. A single, slight twist of cork and bottle and we would have been enjoying the fine Prestige brut champagne. Would have.

Unfortunately, while still basking in the glory and power of the moment, I twisted a tad too hard and the top of the aged cork broke. My face immediately glossed crimson.

"Hon, what's wrong?"

"... uh... noth... nothing dear..."

What could I say? I suppose it's an honest mistake; thousands of people must have made this same error before! I had to think fast in response to his pressing looks.

Confounded curs! Mötet et Chandon has duped me into purchasing an inferior product!"

Much to my relief, Tom bursted into laughter. He laughed so hard and so long, he must have split his pants three times over. Rolling on the ground, clutching his pained abdomen, he roared unceasingly for fifteen minutes. After he ran out of tears, or was too much in pain to laugh anymore, he slowly crawled over.

"And that's why I love you, hon."

The moral? If you err, try to make it amusing.

Despair

I'm not completely certain when the voices started...when they started to talk to me. All I know is that they freaked me out. They still kind of get to me sometimes but I know an end is near, so I don't really give a shit anymore. Sometimes my life reminds me of the life of that character--I forget his name now--in Gaiman's and McKean's *Signal to Noise*: a prosperous life unhappily affected by unforeseen circumstances; a life influenced by some totally random and unpredicted faction. Chimera. I guess that's where the voices come in. I suppose they are a solution to my loneliness: a distraction, if you will. Here's a pointer: never try to psychoanalyze yourself. You'll either become more confused or more disturbed because you realize how fucked up you really are. Reprise.

The beginning is the end, so I suppose I'll start from the middle. She hit me like a ton of bricks...well, not literally. I just couldn't believe she did it. We had been serious for four years. At least she could've been merciful on me during my depression or something. I guess it was my male tendencies that finalized it. Whom am I kidding; of course it was. After all, I can't help it and I don't think any man can. And it was only one time; it's not like it happened frequently or anything. But I do admit I cheated on her...god, Susan was such a babe! I mean, with an ass like hers and that huge stack--how can any normal male resist? I had a damned good chance and I took complete advantage of it. The end of the beginning.

I've never touched the stuff in my life, even under peer pressure, which we all know is quite pressing and tantalizing. But it's my only glory now. My mind feels weird all over--even as I sit here reflecting, I can feel my fingers cracking apart, bone splintering into a myriad of shrapnel under pressure of this pen, alveoli disintegrating into pure nothingness as I inhale the blessed weed. And it talks to me; well, basically everything else does too. Chanting, saying how I'll be okay once I inhale the acrid, wholesome goodness. And I feel like soaring. Like Lucy, up in the sky with her diamonds. I love that song. It makes so much more sense when you're fucked up. Repose.

And so she knew. Or maybe she knew all along from the beginning. Maybe it was some strange women's intuition thing. I don't know. Me and my pathetic cover-ups. Women scare me: men can't live without them, but they can live without us. We were not created equal and they are not of the same species as us; they are fully functional and self-sufficient. You name one guy that can go a week without thinking of sex; he probably can't even do his own cooking. Take Lilith, for example. A typical feminist role-model. She didn't need Adam; hell, she just took off and spawned all those demons and shit and lived her life the way she wanted. Anyway, whichever way, whatever happened, she found out. Shit happens and life's a goddam bitch. Injustice.

So I saw her standing there, alone and defenseless, desperately trying to avoid the drunken frat jocks that were trying to paw her. Made me so damned angry. I hate jocks, but I hate drunken bastards even more. Looking around for salvation and solace, her eyes came into contact with mine. Now that I think about it, I'm not so sure I was actually drunk at the time, but

she was incredibly hot. And she walked over. And we talked. She was no retarded bimbo cheerleader. An intelligent conversation: we talked about school, her hometown, Dave Matthews, amongst other stuff. Needless to say, we hit it off quite well quite fast. And before I knew it, I was at her place, hyperventilating like a madman on her floor, trying my very best to rip that fucking bra off her gorgeous breasts while trying to take off my pants at the same time.

And we made love. Magic. Spectacular. God, she was spectacular. Speaking of god, I now believe in the truth. For he, she, whatever...saw my sin and made me repent. There really is a god, and I believe he, she, whatever looks like my cat. Confusion.

I hid that night's glory from Bobby for the longest time. I guess I had to tell her sometime. You can't avoid these things. But I did such a great job, even avoiding the naughty stuff she wanted so much. Roberta...my dear, sweet Roberta. After that incident, I couldn't fuck you the way I fucked Susan. I sound like a goddamn poet.

So in order to apply for the position, I had to have a physical examination. The works. I went down one day to the joint and had it done. It was that goddam STD testing that killed me. Well, I suppose it was better that she knew anyway. Hell, it was better that I knew too! A few days later, the call came.

I wasn't home. Bobby answered it. When I did get home that night, she was sobbing and gushing like a cracked water pipe. Deluged. Sometimes I still wonder if it was out of spite or relief. But suddenly I knew she knew.

"How could you? After...a-all we've been through!"

"What are you talking ab--"

"You fucking b-bastard! You k-k-know...exactly what I-I mean!"

"Bobby, I assure you I didn't--"

"Y-y-your physical...results c-came back...they c-c-called. They s-s-said...they...they said..."

And she just snapped. The poor thing. I thought these exams were supposed to be confidential! I felt horrendous. After all, I cheated on my goddess. Luckily for her, I never felt like fooling around with her after that fateful night. Damned lucky girl. Damned women. Yes, I was diagnosed to have something. Something pretty bad, in fact. Life's a bitch and don't you forget that. Trepidation.

I can't believe she left all her stuff. What a way to pour salt on an open wound! It wasn't like I actually had acquired immunodeficiency syndrome at the time. I love those words. They sound cool. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. Oh well; I guess I can't really blame her. But a few weeks down the line, I got bacterial pneumonia. And that started the whole goddamn cascade.

So here I am, sitting, writing, reflecting. Months have passed since then. I guess there really isn't much more to say. It isn't acquired immunodeficiency syndrome that kills you but the secondary infections. And I'm suffering for my deed. The pains. I can't eat. I can't sleep. I can barely hold this pen. So weak. Weakness. My family refuses to visit anymore. They still refuse to accept the facts...the truth. I'm starting to hear the furniture and stuff talk to me. It's cold and grey and boring as all hell in here. My only visitors are Doc and the nurses. I feel bad for them. Having to take care of an idiotic little shit like me. There is only one savior now and it's sure as hell ain't god. I've got to smoke the kind weed; bless and rejoice for California and marijuana legalization! Salvation.

One more chance. That's all I really pray for now. But I think I've pretty much sorted out my life and gotten past those stupid phases of death; I realize my mistake and my situation. It is reality, much as I dislike it. An irksome factor in my life...nothing more. Wow, I guess I really did learn something from all those psychology classes I took. There; I did it again. I psychoanalyzed myself. Oh well. I feel tired. And anxiety, and loneliness. A strange sensation of jubilation that I'll be at peace soon. Envy of those who live life still without a care in the world. But one feeling predominates and swallows all others with its marauding pitch black wake. Despair.