



# Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

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## Low Resolution, High Fidelity By Irving Washington

I know that New Year's Resolution Columns may appear as a clichéd pile of utter tripe, if not an outright and shamelessly contrived assault on the collective self-esteem<sup>¥</sup> and implicit applied values of a readership. However, I also know that humanity is an infamously masochistic breed, RIT students in particular... and that I have angst and free-floating guilt<sup>£</sup> to burn, so as I see it, What The Fuck,<sup>™</sup> it's damn well time I manipulated it to work in my benefit anyway. So remember, my unsuspecting (and still less anesthetized) guinea pigs, that if this twilit pyre warms *your* bones down to the charred shadows upon the bitter ground, *I'm* Heller's own Snowden... and so, on with the show. Bum-ba-da-dah... *because it must, you know...*

i. **Embrace Procrastination.** No, really embrace it, learn to enjoy the act, rather than building it into some kind of pending guilt trip... Remember how glamorous slacker culture used to be, between the cinema of the eighties and the cut classes of high school? At what point did it fall from the majestic pedestal of devil-may-care hedonism to a status of puritanical masturbators guilt, the shallow yet unsatisfying secret pleasure which only the truly crass may speak of freely as aught but roughshod feet of clay beating a conquistador dirge for the cult celebré of hubristic humiliation? *Get over it...*

ii. **Learn Acceptance.** A, if not *the*, all-important skill for *making it* in the world... at least so far as success may be measured by the assured complacent amicability of ones' fellow man. The rudiment of this process, "Accepting That Which Cannot Be Changed," has been long and widely regarded as a fundamental element of a morally solute life—the alternative horrors range from simple Descent into Madness to the unrepentant depravity of the Indomitable Victor. This abiding philosophical principal has, however, long since evolved into a much cohesive and applicable more, namely: "Settling For Less," and pinnacled as the intellectual backbone of all political, socio-economic and interpersonal activities in the Continental U.S.<sup>¢</sup> and much of the world. While some experimental psychologists have recommended that such extended topics as "Implacable Conformity" and "Strident Political Apathy" be added to the curriculum, they have largely been rejected by experts due to their association with such potential risks as the onset of *Righteousness* and *Self Determinism*. So stick to the program—it's really your only option, anyway.

iii. **Learn to Medicate.** Happiness, indeed, has a name, knowable to all men who would seek it, but delivered down in darkness unto only those few whose labourious pursuit hath wrought the path unto the mountains of the holy, and amongst Them, in that fearful twi-

¥ And a poor mark to strike at, it is... because there is, as of yet, no scientific evidence to suggest that such a thing has ever existed. Think about - have *you* ever heard anyone claim to possess this mythic element - at least without that characteristic psychic wavering and the haunted eyes significant of none but the brainwashed and damned? 'Tis not but a cancerous maladjustment of the ego...

£ Copyright Jim Davis - which is the reason Televangelists are always so angry...

¢ Attempts to apply this principle to Aleutian garment manufacture were regarded as an unremittant success by researchers, but heavily decried by international human rights groups...

light, 'twas bespoke o'er slurred tongue to bated breath: *Ål köhaallf*. Likewise was the wellspring of the blood of life bespake of the ancients as *Kö-feé*, whilst the gateways betwixt the lands of dreamers may only be passed by he who doth hold the pills<sup>ç</sup>. The burning of pungent incenses were amongst those ecstasies most pleasing unto the gods, so betoke these same sages... and we all know that people who died hundreds of years ago knew more than we ever will, so don't start any trouble or you'll have the inquisition on your degenerate ass.

iv. **Create a Good Persona.** Yeah, sure, all those bullshit platitudes may say that "It's what's inside that counts," but who can really *see* that anyway? It's the appearance that makes all the difference between a best-seller and an utter lack of commercial prospect... so screw all that pretentious, romanticized balderdash about "Being Yourself™" and play ball with the rest of the world. If you don't think being a rapidly trend-conscious plastic cookie-cut will fit you... think again. Or try a flashier facade on the pseudo-intellectual/individualist scene—there's sure to be something to tickle

your fancy—and a healthy distance from any true introspection or emotional intimacy will keep *even you* from knowing what a poseur you are—or are you? Remember, you're not *selling out*, you're *buying in*...

v. **Remember: It's All About You.** Humility may be a virtue, but why settle for a discipline which is it's own reward when Shameless Self-Promotion™ can reap so many benefits<sup>°</sup>? Not to say that narcissism isn't rewarding in and of itself, in fact, it's a major step towards true self-sufficiency<sup>ö</sup>; after all, what good are others but to marvel at your own radiance or be moved to tears by your poignant melodrama? At the very least they're here for your convenience, and is just a bit of exaltation really too much to ask? There's no harm in a little hubris, so don't let any self-righteous bastard steal your thunder - make damn sure you put those immature pompous fucks back in their place, *then* remind them of how burdened you really are to be surrounded by such hopeless scum... A little egotism can work such wonders, non? Just make sure to save something potent for your *Sunset Boulevard* days...

<sup>f</sup> "...and there was great rejoicing."™

<sup>ç</sup> Purple = good

<sup>°</sup> Dental? Sycophants? An entire cult? The possibilities are endless...

<sup>ö</sup> Somewhat akin to "doin' the knuckle shuffle on the ol' piss-pump," to paraphrase Andrew Dice Clay...



**Come home with GDT tonight.**

**[gdt@hellskitchen.org](mailto:gdt@hellskitchen.org)**

**Between Fairfax and Carlisle****By R. Meinhart**

The stage was cold that night  
 And, while I tried to feed off of  
 The spirit of the audience,  
 I was blinded by the lights, only  
 To, squinting, find empty rows and dirty floors.  
 But the lights were lit and my cue was up.  
 And so I spoke my bit. Played my role. And  
 When all was finished my  
 Eyes blinked and gazed into the dark mass of a now  
 Closed black velvet curtain.  
 I  
 Dropped to the stage with triumph,  
 Tears streaming from tired eyes.  
 Knowing that  
 I had sung my songs for no one.

**Is This Called Futility?****By R. Meinhart**

If I find the lace-maker  
 My search will be complete.  
 That will be the end of the  
 Toiling under wicked assumptions  
 And careless words and  
 Apathetic lies.  
 But the lace-maker continues to escape my grasp;  
 Oh elusive maiden of frill!  
 Come out from your shadows and lend me some light.

# Poetry

**She****By R. Meinhart**

She stops in the midst of traffic  
 To breathe. A smile pierces the  
 Cold, trembling earth. Behold!  
 A million shards of broken glass.  
 Her hand reaches to soothe the cuts—meets an  
 Uncontrollable flood instead.  
 She begins to cry.

**For the Birth of a Harmony****By R. Meinhart**

My weak fingers  
 Bleed over the worn metal strings  
 Of my faithful companion—the weathered  
 Martin guitar that fits so  
 Comfortably in my lap. I  
 Slaughter my hands for the  
 Birth of a Harmony—my  
 Akward, Clumsy digits flailing—  
 Stumbling through the abyss  
 Between G and A minor.

## A Day By Gary Hoffmann

I stand staring out the glass sliding door, still in my pajamas but with an extra flannel shirt to war off the chill of winter that has permeated the house overnight. I clutch white-knuckled the still steaming mug of hot chocolate and Jack Daniels. I sip slowly and gaze out at the dead world, the peaceful world, grey and frigid beneath its soft, white cover. It only snowed last night, so the sky is still greasy with thick clouds. Having spent most of my life in Rochester, this is what I'm used to. The season has been too bright so far, and I've spent too much of it squinting, trying desperately to keep the blinding, horrid light out of my eyes. Some call the clouds depressing, dreary. I call them soothing, steadfast guardians against the hideous glow of the too close sun.

Staring at the pristine beauty that will slowly drain you of warmth and life if you stay in it long enough, I can't help but wonder how long it will last before my neighbor and his snow mobile destroy it. It always happens. Every time it snows more than an inch I don't have long to wait until I hear the loud churning of jealous machines as they feast upon elegance, leaving only gasoline soaked entrails in their midst. But that has yet to happen today.

Tiny rivulets of ice run down the face and neck of the small statue of an angel—a young, beautiful woman with dove's wings who is dressed entirely too sparsely for the weather—that stands vigilant over my mother's garden. Frozen tears, perhaps. Maybe she knows something. In my mind I venture to guess that they're the remnants of the last snowfall, which partially melted over the past few days' brief almost-warmth. Snow must have sat atop her head and merely followed the natural contours of her eyes and cheeks as it melted, only to find the stone still too cold and refreezing. It only looks like frozen tears by natural coincidence. Yes, this must be what happened, and I ponder over it no more.

My mind wanders. Words flash by like a radio caught in between two distant stations using the same frequency. Someone is twisting the tuner too quickly. Barely recognizable sounds are glimpsed between static, but it all remains incoherent. Music plays, but there

is no melody, just the staccato of songs coming sharply into focus for a briefest instant before fading away just as quickly. It all sounds the same but at different pitches. An Om condensed into the merest moment of time, shouted by a thousand agonized voices from miles away.

Driving, even the car protests disturbing the stillness surrounding it, groaning at every left turn. Some part of it creaks as I pull on the steering wheel, sounding like an ancient whaler returning forsakenly home empty handed after years away, returning less some of the young men that disembarked a world ago upon it and less a part of its captain's leg, perhaps. It creaks like a bow pressed hard against a double bass cello's strings and dragged twistingly down the ill kept catgut. It moans like the old man it is, like the old man I feel like today, wanting only to sit and enjoy the tranquility of a frosty sunrise but forced to move, to act.

I realize at some point I must have turned the radio on, because I notice it now, loud and profane, unholy by contrast to my ruminations. It's off before my thoughts can form, and the world is that much closer to perfection.

“Why do you believe it so impossible that God raises the dead?” My favorite line from a book I long ago denounced and rejected is stuck in my head as I wander down the ice covered asphalt pathways between classes. I step on salt and footprints and tightly packed snow, no destination in mind but walking anyway, to enjoy the day, to enjoy the cold. The Cold. When the wind gusts in just the right direction it stings my cheeks and ears with the beak and talons of some arctic bird of prey, cutting deep into my flesh and freezing even my bones, and as it happens I smile, closing my eyes and breathing deeply, thankful for the proof, the reminder, that I'm alive. Opening my eyes again I find that a lonely, forgotten flyer has hugged itself around my foot for warmth and safety. Mud that remarkably resembles someone's size ten boot mars its skin, once a brilliant shade of yellow, now dull and weary, but its words are still legible. “Campus Crusade for Christ.” I chuckle once to myself and return it to the ground for someone else to step on or to read.

Green tea, no milk, no sugar, as I sit down on a garishly colored couch. I watch people as they walk

down their private thoughts, bumping occasionally and randomly into the mind of another, gently jostling it from isolation, then stepping back and glancing up to mumble an apology, then looking back down at the ground and continuing on their way. It's interesting to watch how people avoid eye contact, staring absently ahead at their destination but without consideration to the humans around them, or pointedly looking away from and pretending not to notice someone they don't want to talk to. I watch and after a moment I find myself caught staring as a rather attractive girl with red hair and a small scar on her lower lip turns to look at me. For a full second our eyes meet—uninvited, violating, penetrating, not so much a meeting of gazes but a brushing of souls in passing, the way a gust of wind shakes the boughs of an old tree sick with Dutch elm disease on a bright day in July and then disappears. I'm the first to break the stare, jerking my head quickly down to a notebook as if I was merely thinking of the right words when she happened to enter my field of view. For a moment I hope she sees the tiny scrawlings and dozens of thick, black marks where I angrily scribbled out a phrase I didn't like that fill the notebook like maggots in a bloated, rotting corpse. I hope

she sees me writing and walks over to start a conversation with me, to ask me what I'm writing or to simply ask my name, but she just turns back and keeps walking.

There are no clouds tonight, so the stars are out and the moon shines down to light the snow with a soft bluish glow. I stand outside and watch my breath rise into the empty air and dissipate long before it reaches an empty heaven. A small glass of gin or vodka or water—I can't tell the difference anymore—is sipped from by numb lips. The angel is still crying and I wonder again why she's doing so. There are easily a dozen things I've done today that are deserving of divine sadness, and it's entirely possible that it wasn't me who made her cry. Deer tracks are pressed into the snow, mercifully untainted by my neighbor and his demonic snowmobiles. I look at the naked trees and the silent, taciturn rocks, and I look for long minutes at angels not yet fallen. I glance back at the beautifully feminine face of yet another woman I'll never understand. She will never tell me what she's weeping for, and so I will simply never know. I breathe once, then turn around and wander inside to sleep.

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"trptych"

the papers  
run ragged,  
ringing  
blinks  
of points  
upon our  
eyes'  
perceptions,  
as safety  
lies latent  
between  
the curves  
of our  
sleeping  
backs.

by

the ancient  
ways  
are passed  
through  
concoctions  
of context  
and  
unspoken,  
indelible  
meanings.

dalas verdugo

to think,  
these tales  
grow from soil  
equally active  
with life,  
as beings  
churn earth  
and  
the planet's  
skin  
pulsates  
with  
the squirming  
of a billion  
blind  
agents.

# What is this magazine?



This is Gracies Dinnertime Theatre, a magazine of satire, literature, poetry and art. We publish out of Rochester, NY but we have readers around the globe. We exist as a medium for your expression and invite you to contribute.

**Anyone is welcome to submit.**

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