



# Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

Volume 21, Issue 7, Singapore  
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## Natural Disaster in California

By Rocko Bonaparte

GDT field reporter in Folsom, CA

In a sudden natural disaster of biblical proportions, a blizzard tormented Northern and Central California on Monday. Snowfall stretched from Redding to Sacramento and from Petaluma to the Sierra. This comes from a region that usually positions its snowfall by elevation in the mountains instead of by towns. There was enough white stuff [snow] to make snowmen and torment California drivers even further than usual.

About 8:30 a.m. Monday at 10th and L streets in Sacramento, the snow bore down at a ground-pounding  $\frac{1}{2}$ " an hour. It barrage lasted about 20 minutes, and left the citizens of Sacramento dumbfounded. Panic ensued. People rushed to the grocery store to stock up on essentials. Snow shovels, always in low supply in California, were wiped out by IT yuppies that are scared shitless of walking on a snowy sidewalk.

Families from other states sat back and laughed, only to be broadsided by an SUV whose driver could not handle the weather. Cuddles the Clown, an underground torture entertainer from Rochester, NY commented, "I DIDN'T COME OUT TO CALIFORNIA FOR A FUCKING FREAK SHOW! WHY THE HELL IS IT SNOWING? WHERE'S THE BEACH?" Cuddles was standing outside his small clown store in downtown Sacramento. He took some pictures with a 35mm camera and was selling the photos to passer-by's as mementos. "CUDDLES WOULD GET LAUGHED AT FOR DOING THIS IN ROCHESTER!" he told us.

According to Ken Clark, senior forecaster for AccuWeather, the weather forecaster to *The Sacramento Bee*: Tonight is expected to be very cold



**Praise thee, GDT!**

— *below freezing* in Sacramento. “But you won’t have the snow,” he said, “because you won’t have the storm.”

But there doesn’t have to be any snow for the disaster to come. Temperatures Wednesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> dropped to near 31 degrees, and lower in some places. But this pales in comparison to the lowest recorded temperature for the day, a prickly 29 degrees recorded in 1949. And what is unbelievable is that during December 1990, the temperature dropped to a mere 18 degrees! That year, almost half the population of Sacramento froze to death, and governor Deukmejian declared a state of emergency before dying himself. The city has regenerated from that disaster, but can this new generation handle the cold?

The snow can be traced from a really big pile of cold air that wander out of its traditional territorial waters of the Gulf of Alaska. It wandered along the West Coast, looking for a region to terrorize. It did not settle with Seattle since their citizens are comfortable with such cruel weather. It had to settle for the Bay Area, with its thin-skinned surfers and scantily-clad men. People stared with awe as the skies turned dark, thinking back to premonitions of “The Three Days of Darkness.” Then it snowed — not just in the wussy suburbs, but also downtown, where the vast concrete and asphalt keep the area slightly warmer. The snow fell in McKinley Park, Curtis Park, south Sacramento, Carmichael, Citrus Heights, Auburn, Davis, Woodland and beyond. On Highway 50 during the slow morning commute, motorists reached out their windows and cupped their hands to catch snowflakes. They then smacked into the cars in front of them due to the bumper-to-bumper traffic.

But it melted faster than Health Care Reform.

At Cup-A-Joe on 16th and P streets, customers were in a good mood about the snow. People walked in whistling Christmas tunes and thinking about how romantic snow is. They wished they could get twelve feet of it. One patron said the uncommonly cold, snowy weather convinced him to stop for a mocha. “Everybody was talking about it, even into this afternoon,” said Lala Gonzales, who works at the Pancake Circus restaurant at 21st Street and Broadway. “There were a lot of jokes about having to stop and put on chains down at Stockton and Broadway.” However,

when they actually had to put chains on, that was another story. Most commuters had to walk home since they only pack chains when they go up to Tahoe on the weekend. But chains are necessary if one wants to stay on the ground with a tenth of an inch of melted snow sitting around.

Chain requirements stretched on Highway 50 from Sand Flat to Meyers, and on Interstate 80 from just east of Emigrant Gap to Donner Lake. Snow also closed Highway 89 at Emerald Bay. About 7 a.m., westbound Highway 50 at Missouri Flat Road in Placerville closed for about 20 minutes because of spinouts, the California Highway Patrol said. “We always have a very difficult time getting people to slow down here, no matter what the weather is,” said Steve Anaya of the Placerville CHP office. “These people always have their thumbs up their asses. The speed limit is 65, so they figure 90 is safe.” Commuters who panic in the rain were no match to the snow. Totalled cars stretched along Highways 50 and 80 heading into Sacramento.

In Auburn, workers at the Placer County administration building on Fulweiler Avenue “had to run a snowplow through the parking lot,” said Anita Yoder, county spokeswoman. “Our crews were also shoveling the sidewalks to prevent people from slipping. “When further question, Fulweiler told us the workers really had no idea how to plow snow. “We figure we can just put the thing on and it will do its thing.” Anita responded.

CHP officers in Woodland and Davis had their hands full driving snow escorts on the county’s major routes. Officer Rudy Contreras, a Woodland native, said it was the most snow he could remember since he played a soccer game in the snow in 1973.

“Actually driving around in it was a different experience for me,” said Contreras, an 18-year-veteran with the CHP who said he’s driven in only one other snowstorm. “It was pretty neat, until I hit that tree over there”

Contreras said snow began falling shortly before 7 a.m. and was heaviest around Woodland. Visibility dropped to about 500 feet, he said, but most people obeyed the escorts and slowed down. The oddity of snow in the Valley was something to enjoy — especially for schoolchildren.



The snow didn't stop the city's bicyclists, dozens of whom still rode to campus or work. Some towed children in bike trailers. Scott Carter, the father of three boys, said the snow offered his family a chance to play and look back into history, since nobody was around from last time it snowed. His 17-year-old son was 4 when it last snowed in Davis in 1988. "They built a little snowman about a foot high, then put it in the freezer to keep it," Carter said. "We still have it, and we show it to people at parties. They're shocked to see a snowman. Most of them have never seen snow outside of a ski resort."

"Our kids were loving it," said Elena Hankard, a staff member at Sacramento's John Cabrillo Elementary School. "They were standing in the falling snow. They didn't care how wet they got." Cuddles the Clown wandered the local elementary schools, showing children how to make snowballs. He also offered them candy if they would take a ride in his van. "THESE KIDS DON'T KNOW HOW TO MAKE SNOWBALLS! I HAD TO SHOW THEM THAT IT WORKS BETTER IF YOU SPIT AND PISS INTO THE BALL BEFORE FORMING IT." Cuddles informed us.

At Patwin Elementary School, kids slid through the snow with glee on the playground, as teachers tried to move them into the warm multipurpose room before classes began. "We threw snowballs at each other," said fourth-grader Nicky Bunn. "That man over there showed us how to do it. It's gross but cool."

In Sonoma County, Carl Wong, superintendent of the Petaluma City Schools

District, saw three inches of snow on the ground outside his home about 5 a.m. He then said to himself, "Holy fucking shit," and canceled classes for the district's 7,800 students. Half the kids were stranded by the bus stop all morning. Nobody ever thought to check the radio for school closings. It was a magical morning in Marysville when the rare snowfall left almost a half-inch of snow on the ground and smiles on the faces of children and adults. Some of the older high school girls thought it was a great opportunity to have sex in the snow. "I mean, oh my God, this never happens." Kiki Rosie told us [if that's her real name].

Over at Intel in Folsom, CA, worked looked outside, acknowledged the snow, and kept working.

On D Street in downtown Marysville, men scooped the snow from car windshields to build a 2-foot-high snowman. Some women did it too. Children at Notre Dame School raced to the recess yard to play in the white stuff [snow] before it disappeared. "Don't slip on your butts!" the teachers told the students, only later to shout, "I told you to be careful! Jesus Christ." There were many sore butts during recess, but only from slipping and falling. Cuddles the Clown left the elementary schoolyards empty-handed. "A ONCE IN A LIFETIME EVENT AND I COULDN'T EVEN MAKE SOME NEW PLAYMATES!" Cuddles muttered as he went back to his downtown clown shop.

Image from <http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/People/bruce/images/snowmen.jpg>

## Definitions

By Andrew Gill

**aggr** - word of unknown origin and meaning applied to coloured and variegated glass beads of ancient manufacture found buried in the ground in Africa. (Actual definition from the Oxford English Dictionary)

**anti-britisism** - pseudointellectual term for Jew-Haters who don't want the other Semitic races to feel bad.

**Bulwer-Lytterate** - used to describe one who gets most of his/her information from Son of Sniglet and the Bulwer-Lytton fiction contest.

**conslutant** - euphemism for prostitute. Somewhat less refined than "escort," but more refined than "two-dollar whore."

**dictionapathy** - state of apathy regarding definitions of terms. "I think the judge has dictionapathy – whenever I ask him how he defines murder, he just laughs and says 'what you did.'"

**eupropism** - the use of an inappropriate (and often sanitized) word or phrase in place of a more appropriate word or phrase. e.g. "He said 'expletive The Man!' I really only objected to the expletive." "I have difficulty expressing my displeasure toward your actions in polite society." rather than "Fuck you!"

**expletive** - a word that adds no sense to a sentence, but merely fills out a meter or other blank space. "hey nonny nonny" and "jingo" are two common expletives.

**franklamnesia** - the condition of forgetting what major world leaders have stood for. "The Interim Vice President of Student Affairs has told us not to demonstrate, as a testament to Gandhi. I think he's suffering from franklamnesia."

**mexicocity** - a certain, specific attribute. "This Indian food has a delicious mexicocity." Usage Note: Mexicocity is not synonymous with *je ne sais quoi*. The speaker knows what the mexicocity is, and is using it in lieu

of a more specific description.

**peccavaryan** - member of the group that populated India in ancient times; traditional meaning of Aryan. Oppose resindhed aryan.

**resindhed aryan** - whatever the German ubermensch was. Oppose peccavaryan.

**romantic** - (1) desiring to rape, subjugate, and generally objectify a woman. "So he convinced me to leave my husband, follow him across Europe having meaningless sex and forbidding me to think of the past or the future, and he doesn't even try to remember my name; isn't he romantic?" – Fear of Flying (2) characteristic of a relationship between two people whose attributes compliment each other; neither oppressive nor co-dependent. "I try to be romantic, but women never appreciate it."

**semitaryan** - confusion of racial and ethnic barriers that have shifted. "I assumed that she was Aryan, since she came from Kashmir, but it turns out that it was just a case of semitaryan—she's really Semitic."



## Epiphanesque, Part 4: Nocturne

By Gary Hoffmann

I sit staring at the sun as it slowly sinks behind building 78, the reds and pinks (normally I hate pink, but for the moment I tolerate it and perhaps even... enjoy it) and purples of the clouds surrounding the bright orange glow of dusk, the rest of the sky still blue except for a few thin contrails miles above. The harsh glare fades softly, and my eyes readjust to the darkness they're used to until I no longer see that red spot in front of me where the sun was minutes before when I blink. The reds deepen; more and more pinpoint lights reveal themselves on the ground as countless humans ward off the gloom of night with feeble fluorescence. Dolls walk to their toy cars - row upon row of them - in the distance below me. Dolls I know as people. Dolls I've never met before. Dolls with new yellow sports cars and dolls with twelve-year-old blue Chevy trucks that are missing most of their paint and their carburetors, perhaps, but still somehow run.

On the other side of the sky is rising an angry, orange moon, the same color as a dim incandescent bulb just before the tungsten burns out in a brief but violent burst of brightness. The moon is full and large, shining down its pale apathy in introspection of its lonesome existence, separated from the nearest human being by 270,000 miles of a godless heaven. I stop and stare at the winter moon hovering over this too warm January weather, a warmth that contradicted the paleness of the sun - still hibernating through the expected wind and cold and snow - all day and all weekend, a sun I've seen a thousand times when surrounded by icicles hanging off of tired roofs and windows and snow covered in layers of salt. The sun told the truth, at least.

Today is the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, and on Friday or Saturday it will be Imbolc. I know the former because I went to a Catholic high school, and I know the latter from studying Wiccanism and various other paganisms. Tonight I will celebrate by reading *Summa Theologicae* and drinking. On Friday I will celebrate by lighting candles and drinking. Call me a religious person.

You see, I'm what's known as a recovering Catholic. If you aren't one yourself, then no amount of explanation will make you understand precisely what

that means. If you are one, then any explanation is superfluous. *O, Holy Night* is still one of my favorite songs. I admit that. I've accepted it, and I'm moving on with my life. Every time I hear Schubert's *Ave Maria* I can't help but stop and listen. On Sundays I sleep in, preferably still feeling the effects of a good bottle of cabernet and next to an attractively naked woman, still asleep, but that doesn't happen often.

I watch the cars out the window as they pass by silently in the night, a soft night, comforting, a night that banishes all thought and merely exists. I imagine myself dancing among them, with them as they slide gracefully through shadows and starshine. My reflection is out there, stern looking, unsmiling, eyes cloaked by deep wells of emptiness. I walk without moving and sing without sound as another silver minivan idles its way from one side of existence to the other, ghosts of the family vehicles I once knew, spectres behind the dim reflection of the coffee shop. Tables exist as hazy mirror dreams in imaginary reality, and in them sit old men that lived a thousand years from now, sipping from disposable cups made from 100% recycled paper that were thrown out a thousand years ago.

I bring my own single use cup to my lips more sensuously than I intend, hoping perhaps that it will soon be replaced by a girl I've met a dozen times but never learned her name. I set it back down tenderly, sighingly, staring for long moments after it. I sigh again and pick back up my pen. I've started and restarted a score times so far, but nothing has been good enough - trite, melodramatic, boring, whatever. The crushed tea leaves have begun leaking out of the tea bag, the kind that resembles an old dryer sheet cut into a circle and sewn shut.

I died two days ago. I was survived by my wife, Jessica, and two young children. The funeral is tonight at six p.m. at Sacred Heart Funeral Home at 2318 E. Main Street. I'm tempted to go but I've got work to do.

It's strange, opening the paper to see my own name in the obituaries. They misspelled my last name, but that's expected. I guess I just don't remember having been married. I sit for five minutes trying to think of how I died. It doesn't occur to me that I'm still alive and don't have a wife to survive me.



As I chew slowly my latest bite from the tuna-salad-on-pumpnickel-with-lettuce-and-tomato sandwich I ordered from the inept sandwich maker, I find out that I died of lung cancer. I don't remember having started smoking, either. The reason I ordered pumpnickel is because I enjoy saying it and because no one else gets it, so sometimes the sandwich maker has to ask a couple times to make sure he heard me correctly.

I was fifty-two years old when I died. I taught theology at a Jesuit high school. For the greater glory of God, right? I was a respected member of the community. I wonder briefly if anyone else will notice I've died, especially since I'll be meeting a few of them in an hour to study for our midterm tomorrow, an exam I apparently will not be taking, since by then I'll be covered in six feet of freshly dug earth and concrete. Damn. That means I'll get a zero. I'll fail the class. There goes my g.p.a. Unless, of course, the professor decides to drop our lowest test grade, in which case all I have to do is return to life in time for the next exam. Sure, no problem. Jesus ain't got nothin' on me. I take another bite of my poorly made sandwich.

I sit drinking more coffee than I should be drinking with a friend of mine late at night. The waitress is pleasant, apologizing for interrupting our conversation while she refills the sugar container before her shift ends and she leaves to drive home on empty city streets and watch the sun rise. The real reason we stop talking is because we're fascinated by the simple process, entranced by the ordinary and unable to look away with our unfocused eyes. Her name is Rebekah. Something about the way she says it makes obvious the ancient spelling. She doesn't fit the meaning of it, though. She's tall and slender, lithe and beautiful. Sometimes you see a person and know instantly that you'll sleep with them before the night is over. Looking at Rebekah, I know instantly that I will never sleep with her. Somehow this knowledge brings contentment, and I simply smile and leave a fifty percent tip before stepping through the glass double doors streaked with greasy fingerprints and into the still night air.



**Dr. Simone.**

**Forced to his knees?**

**Submitting to some kinky initiation by a fellow administrator?**

**Or fallen over from exhaustion?**

**Captions welcome!**

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**Based On A True Story**  
**By Matthew Rick**

So there I was, sitting peacefully in my room. It was a day just like any other: too much homework, too little time to do it and not nearly enough effort to even start any of it. In an effort to waste some time, I picked up a copy of the *Reporter* and started playing a solitaire version of the guess-the-year-and-major-of-people-on-the-quotes-page-game, when an article caught my eye. The article in question was one from the “Crime Watch” section. Its text is reprinted here (without permission, of course):

An RIT campus safety officer, while performing a non-consensual search of a room at the RIT Inn and Conference Center, found an exit sign in the room of two students. Not only are these creeps going to hell for this horrific act, but they will receive the brunt of the Office of Student Conduct and Mediation’s tender ministrations prior to their trip to the inferno-proper.

Now, fully aware of the *Reporter*’s great accuracy for details it occurred to me that this could easily be referring to the women’s restroom sign that I purchased from Office Max last year, which had mysteriously disappeared from my room. So, there was a strong possibility that the article actually referred to me.

Armed with my new knowledge and not willing to let \$2.50 slip through my grasp, I went upstairs to the room that Campus Safety annexed to their globe spanning agency to see if there was any chance that I could avoid my trip to the seventh circle for my horrid crime, not to mention getting my sign back.

After deciding that it would be better to take the stairs after hearing the screams of the people foolish enough to get in the elevator as it plummeted past into the sub-basement and wheezing my way up the four flights of stairs, I arrived at the Area Office / Campus safety annex where I was greeted with usual promptness.

Three hours later, I was chatting with the head of

Campus Safety for the Inn, who after having the entire situation explained to him in laborious detail agreed that I was clear of wrongdoing in this particular matter, and said that he would file a follow up report on the matter and make sure that Satan in his thirteenth and most unholy of forms (a graduate secretary from the Office of Student Conduct and Mediation) would not be making any personal visits to me, pitchfork in hand, to conduct me to the elevators in Elingson Hall.

As such, it came as a great surprise when I received a phone call two days later from the Thirteenth form itself.

\*\* Ring \*\*

\*\* Ring \*\*

“Good morning gentlemen. All your rights are belong to us. You have no chance to escape suspension, make your time.”

“Huh?”

“This is the office of Student Conduct and Mediation. If you do not submit to anything that we ask we will freeze your grades and you won’t be able to register for classes. Ha ha ha ha.”

“Uhm... I spoke to Campus Safety and they said that the sign thing shouldn’t be a problem...”

“Oh! So you know about that? You’re obviously guilty then. I’ll need your schedule so I can set up a time for a judicial for you.”

“But the guy upstairs...”

“That is irrelevant! Send me your schedule and sign over your firstborn.”

\*\* Click \*\*

“What? Hello? GODDAMNIT! I HATE THIS SCHOOL!”

**Pancake**

Wanting always to  
Refridgerated pancakes  
Snacktime delight

**Spent**

Cursed haiku rules  
Twisting brain to broken wreck  
Three thirty-six now

**To H and T and 6**

Oh divine doctor  
Come rescue me from this  
Restless strength kills me

**Dreams**

It stands  
A church  
Not far Away  
Thru gated  
Links of rebarred  
Wall  
Air tunnel  
Crept  
With burgaler's  
Pry stride.  
A candlelight  
Rendez-vous  
At the vault  
of  
Uncertain fate  
Be sealed.

We remixed  
Song lyrics  
When we  
Ran out of words  
To call our own  
And so it stands -  
The nevermore,  
The nonetheless.

**By Irving Washington**

# P O E T R Y

**Parrot and Cornell Avenues; Scranton PA**  
**By R. Meinhart**

When I think of her  
Sitting there alone in the house  
That he built so many many years ago,  
Changing the decorations that he built  
To make the house seasonal,  
And continuously packing away his  
Supplies. Projects. Humble works of  
Art. Sitting in the room where he  
Watched TV with the help of a  
Wide variety of monitors and tubes,  
Holding the remote that used to reside in  
His perpetually paint stained, kindly weathered hands.  
Buying groceries for one; because three oranges and  
Five banannas will get her through a week  
Of solitary breakfasts. Sleeping in their bed,  
Turning over to find that the comforter  
Remains unmessed on the otherside.  
Watering the plants that they cultivated together,  
And replanting the garden that he was so proud of.  
Selling the car he used to drive. Swinging on the  
Poarch swing that he built. Wandering through her days;  
So many to be with to suddenly be without...  
I want to sob.  
But when I ask her how she is, I get a shrug and  
Things are okay. Hard — but I'm getting through.  
I got a new carpet for Joe's room, and the neighbor  
Down the street bought me a fish.  
And thus I understand what strength is.

— God, was it really less than a year ago?



## House of Fun – Part 7

By Rich DeTommaso (rjd7184@rit.edu)

The rust is an old, wise red. It is thick and deep, the way a wave of pain floods and hammers the brain, over and over again. Fingerlike structures pierce the safety cushion of nature, bringing back old memories of hatred and self-loathing. Aside from my tape recorder, long out of batteries, this is the only bit of technology that I come into contact with.

It is a constant reminder, not only of the past, but also as a never-ending symbol of my own mortality. I am here because *it* is here.

Three bodies rest in the giant rusted hull, now acting as a tomb. Inside rests the three bodies, badly decomposed. Skin is stretched tight over what remains of a face. The face had life once. Beauty, too. It was the face of my wife. Her azure eyes, long gone, held the beauty of the stars, with all the tranquility of the sky. Her carefree smile has been transformed into a silent scream, with once soft cheeks now stretched so far that daylight can be seen through them.

If you look just behind her, you would see the body of my son. I can't even look at him anymore without vomiting. He was the reason all this happened. The hole in his chest is a flashback waiting to happen...

For the first time in years, I look at my only child. As I peek around my almost beautiful wife, I see the scream, the look of pure terror in all-too-young eyes. As my eyes start wandering downwards, I can feel the contents of my stomach wandering up.

The hole, small and infinite in depth, screams at me. Its screams at me, burning my mind. This is my folly. Seward only bought Alaska. I bought eternal damnation.

We were cruising at true airspeed, 455 miles per hour when He came. The Devil visited me for the first time at that moment. I was assuming the crash position, which, in my mind, led me to believe that I could survive anything. Even the Devil. He had a gun. Not a big one, but big enough to kill. A single bullet was meticulously loaded into His instrument, and fired with precision through the heart of my son. I was in the crash position... nothing could hurt me.

The next few seconds were a blur, but somehow, the pilot was down, and so was the plane. I remember finding myself at the pilots seat, with the blood of a dead man on my hands. I came into the cabin to see the silent scream on the face of my wife, her neck contorted into an inhuman shape. The actions of my cowardice left my family dead. I looked down to see the Devil, dead and broken. But it was not good enough...



# 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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