



Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

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**Gracies
Dinnertime
Theatre™**

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

~ or ~

THE GUILTY ONES

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LAMB OF GOD -

NOW YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING

TO DIE FOR

My Idea

By Tom Samstag

In the last few months, riding about five buses a day to and from work here in the Capital District of New York, I've been tossing an idea back and forth in my head. I figure that the loyal readers of GDT are as good a group as any to toss my idea against.

I plan to buy a large quantity of stink bombs. I think you know which kind I mean: the little glass tubes that, when broken, usually cleared out your high school cafeteria. I will expose myself to the stench and build up an immunity to their eye-watering power. When I've accomplished that, it's on to phase two. A small box holding several of these stink bombs will be carried with me in my pocket or backpack. Why you ask? Well, when I am sitting at the bus stop, or inside a bus shelter, minding my own business, possibly reading a book, and somebody walks up, sits down right beside me, reaches into their pocket, pulls out a box of cigarettes and proceeds to light one, my plan goes into action. I calmly reach down and grab my similar box, slide out one glass tube, and proceed to break it. I think it's genius. While the smoker has the supposed right to blow his smoke anywhere he wants outdoors, do I not have the same right to enjoy the smell of my stink bombs anywhere I please?

You may say that my plan is a little absurd, that I'm probably overreacting a bit. Well, this plan has been years in the making for me. Originally, the plan called for a tank of chlorine gas. That plan, however, had some complexities that I decided would make it rather difficult to carry out. I also considered using a cooler marked with radioactive symbol covered stickers, hoping for a good reaction, but I figured that it wouldn't quite be the same without the real thing, so that version is on the back burner. Finally, I arrived at the current incarnation of the plot.

If you feel the same as I do, feel free to use my ideas as your own. Feel free to make those nearby understand that they're free to smoke if they wish, but if they want to do it beside you, they'll have to breathe in whatever you feel like giving them a taste of. And smokers, have some courtesy and keep your smoke away from those that don't want to smell it. Because who knows, someday soon, you may light up right beside somebody who has easier access to chlorine than I do.

A Car Accident

By Franklin Roosevelt

A car accident. That was how she died. My wife. My wife and my youngest daughter. Both of them. They died. In a car accident. My wife had been driving. She was going to drop our daughter off at school. No, no, it wasn't school. It was — what was it? Hmm. Ballet lessons? No, violin lessons. Yea, that's it. Violin lessons. It doesn't really matter where they were going I guess. After they died, I just had to get out. Out of that house, out of that city. I couldn't stay there, everything was marred with some memory of them. No, I shouldn't use the word 'marred'. But they were. I hated everything that reminded me of them. My other daughter, Amber, was in California, going to school to be an engineer. I think she wanted to design airplanes. I can't quite remember. My son was dead. He fell out of a window from six stories up. They say he was so shit-faced he probably didn't know he was falling 'till he hit the ground. The only time I ever wasn't proud of him was the night he died.

We didn't move after he died. We stayed right where we were. Well, except for my older daughter. A month after her brother died, Amber decided she wanted to go to school in California, get away from the long New York winters. I don't blame her; the winters here can be pretty morose, especially if your brother is dead. My wife took up smoking again. I guess she figured if her son is dead, then her lungs might as well be too. I mean, what the fuck, Peter Boyle said it in *Taxi Driver*, 'one man gets sick, one man gets well, one man dies, another man lives.' What of it, people die. They die.

Shelley, the youngest, didn't come out of her room except for school and to eat for almost four months. I think she took it the hardest. My son, he was her older brother. He taught her all the things I wouldn't. How to light a bottle rocket, how to make spit wads, how to throw water balloons at the paper boy. I mean, he was Amber's older brother too, but Amber seems to have a heart of stone. But I think this might've cracked it a bit. Before she left for school, I would hear her crying in her room sometimes.

After that car accident, Amber flew back to New York. After the funerals, everyone cried. A collective outpouring of sorrow. Then they all went back to their homes. My daughter Amber took the quarter off from school to be home for a while. I told her I didn't want

to live in this house, this city, anymore, that I wanted to leave. She said it was a good idea. So Amber and I packed everything up into a big U-Haul truck, and drove it out to Virginia. Amber went back to school in September, and I tried to start fresh in Virginia. Well, not exactly fresh. I didn't want to forget my son and daughter and wife. But I wanted, well, to kind of forget. I didn't want the pain. No, I didn't want it, I wouldn't have it. But it found me, it hunted me down, and it found me. Way down in Virginia, the pain found my heart, and nested there. It had vile, disgusting sex with other pain, and had vile, disgusting children. And they bred in my heart, fucking and mating and fucking and mating. My heart became a breeding ground for pain, for all these fucked up little creatures that could eat you alive if you let them, or if you weren't strong enough to repel them. And they ate me. Oh, how they ate me. They feasted on my brain, and my thoughts, and my mind. They ate everything they could, and when they were full, they fucked some more, and made more of themselves.

I became a walking tower of pain. I was merely a container, a vessel, a habitat, a home, for all of those fucked up little creatures. And they were fucked up. Oh yes, yes they certainly were. They whispered in my ear at night. They told me things. Shit I didn't want to hear. They told me that my wife was being fucked by demons, and my little girl was being kept in a cage in Hell. They told me my son was pushing boulders up a mountain, being whipped by laughing demons. I didn't want to hear this. But they kept telling it to me. These fucked up little creatures, they turned a once sane man into a walking tower of pain, and in time, with their goddamn whisperings, into a walking tower of rage.

There are some days, some seasons, some minutes some hours some seconds, when you just want to tear the world apart. You want to rend from it its limbs. You want to rip out its heart and take a big, bloody bite out of it. I felt that way sometimes. I felt that way a lot. Those fucked up little creatures made me feel that way. I hated them. I hated myself for letting them ruin me, ruin my person, my self, my soul. But they kept at it. Despite my hatred of them, they stayed. They seemed to love my hatred for them. The more I hated them the more they ate and fucked. I just wanted them out.

* * * *

One day I decided to take a drive. I drove out of the city, into the countryside. The little creatures were still inside me, eating and multiplying. I was hoping the drive would calm them. I found a hitch-hiker standing by the road. Normally I don't pick up hitch-hikers, but something told me to. Something inside wanted me to give this guy a lift. He was young, maybe about the age my son was when he died. He even looked a little like my son. He introduced himself, I don't remember his name. I drove a few miles. All of a sudden, those fucked up little creatures all kind of woke up at once. They all started on each other again, and started to eat. They ate my mind. Everything was this guy's fault. No, he didn't cause the car accident, or push my son out the window. But it was still his fault. This little bastard, hitch-hiking his way to god-knows-where. Didn't he know how dangerous hitch-hiking can be? The fucked up little creatures were building a tower, a tower of pain and rage.

Shit, I didn't know the human skull was so delicate.

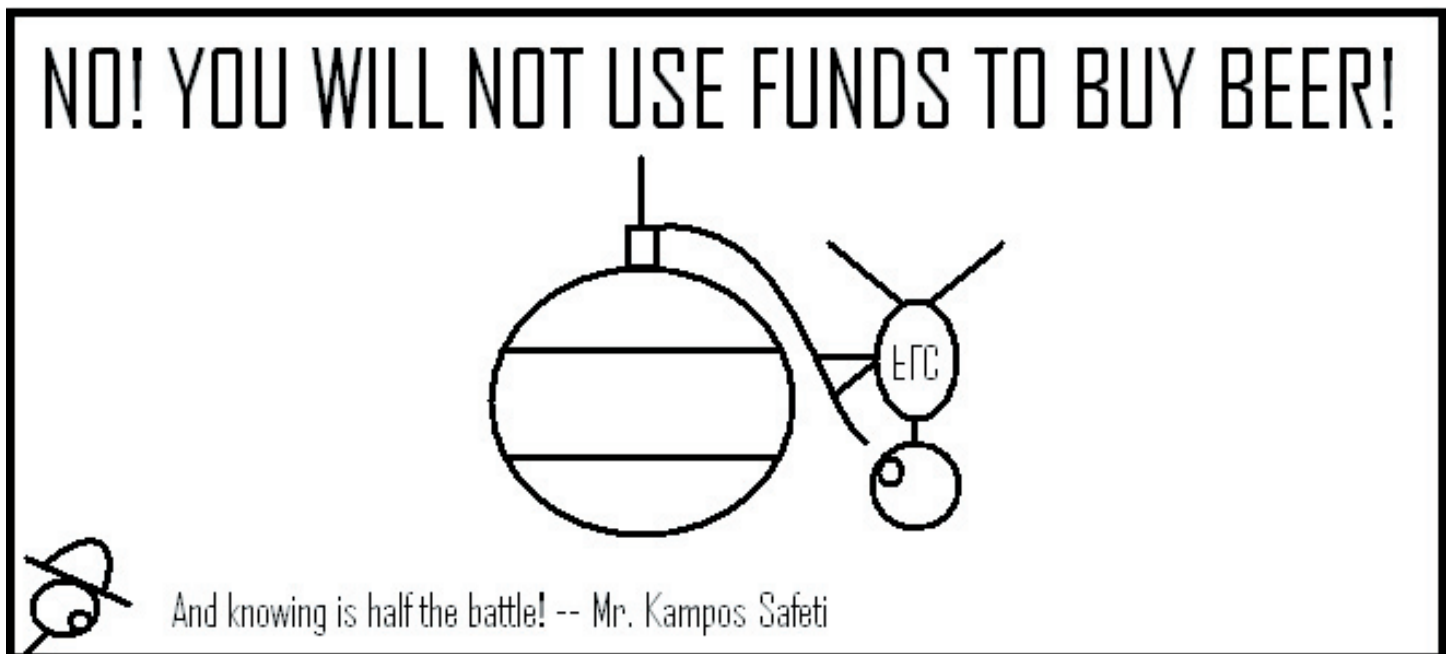
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Now I had blood on my hands. And on the dashboard, and the passenger window, and the windshield, and the gear shift, and the steering wheel. The fucked up little creatures settled down after that.

I think they were appalled at what they had created. I threw the kid's body into a ditch by the side of the road. They'd probably find him. What did I care? Right then, at that moment, I didn't really care about anything at all. As I climbed back into my car I noticed that the noise of the engine seemed far away, and so did the noises of the field around me. Everything seemed distant. I felt like I was floating. The creatures had left, had left me empty. I didn't feel anything now. I watched myself drive away from behind my own eyes, leaving that kid in the ditch. That thing I had broken. The road crew would pick it up tomorrow, a piece of trash lying on the side of the highway. It would be picked up and probably thrown into the back of the truck or something. It was too large to put in those orange garbage bags. It made quite a mess when it broke though. I would have to clean that up. My wife wouldn't like all that stuff all over her car. I don't even remember who it belonged to, that thing I broke. I probably shouldn't have broken it. It was a good stress releaser though, and it's better than taking it out on a person. It's funny; I don't even remember what I was so mad at anymore.

I have to go the grocery store before I go home though. My wife is cooking a special dinner for my son, who's coming home from college tomorrow. I have to pick my daughter up from her violin lessons too, but I should probably wash the car first.

It's good to have a family.



My Morning
by Tom Samstag

Two others in the bus shelter
on a cold and windy morning.
One smoking, blowing his fumes around
the smell irritating my sick lungs.
One rapping and singing
if you want to call it that
along with the crap from his headphones.
My senses drowning in discourteousness.

submit poetry to
gdt@hellskitchen.org

Thorns

When love is here
The one you love
One you hold so close
One you will always hold

That rose you picked
You only saw the softness
You only felt the beauty
You now only feel the thorns

When love is gone
The one you lost
One you held so close
One you will never hold again

Now you let go the rose
The thorns hurt so
And you ask, if you'd known
Would you have still picked it?

Jacob Chinn - Poetry in Action

Soul Tablet

Your blankness, your emptiness
The way you show nothing
Now I start and you are blank
But soon you will be full
Full of my dreams, my wishes
The way you let me say what I will
With no reaction, no criticism
You say nothing, you do nothing
You let me speak my mind
Your acceptance, your approval
The way you listen to me
You are now full my tablet,
My blank piece of paper
Into which I pour my soul
The black on you whiteness
I fill the lines as a chef fills a pastry
I fill your emptiness with feeling

Come, get out of the rain.

SUBMIT

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Halloween