



# Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

Time, Place, & Manner

Volume 36, Issue 1

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Boy, doesn't the world feel so bleak? Famine, rainforests burning for livestock space, CO<sub>2</sub> and methane emissions skyrocketing, the spread and creation of antibiotic-resistant superbugs, rising grocery prices, and more. It truly is a struggle to wake up in the morning, sometimes. Don't you wish that all this could be solved? That the root of all these problems could be addressed, and the world could begin to heal from the pain that we as humans have inflicted on it? If only, if only we could topple these monumental issues plaguing the earth in one fell swoop.

Walk with me down Innovation Avenue,\* as I pitch my brilliant idea to you. I think that you'll find this conversation enlightening, and that you'll join me and my efforts to save the world.

Here's a question for you: what is edible (and supposedly tastes like chicken!†), doesn't take up valuable grazing land, doesn't fart methane, has built-in protection from bacteria and cancer, regenerates its cells automatically, and is involved in a billion-dollar industry? That's right: axolotls.

Some of you reading this‡ probably just recoiled from your copy of *GDT* (by the way, thanks for reading!). A few of you may have just remarked "wait! You've tricked us. Clearly, lab-grown meat is the *actual* solution. It perfectly fits the description mentioned above." Yes, yes, I admit, the similarities are uncanny. But lab-grown meat has one thing that's not going its way: consumer impression. When I hear "lab-grown meat", it makes me think of scientists in lab coats injecting chemicals into blobs of cow cancer and then putting on cleats, grape stomping style, and grinding them up into patties beneath their feet.§ But, when I hear "axolotls," I think of the cute little guy who I swoon at when driving past the Reptileland¶ billboard on my drive back home.

Imagine, if you will, the magnificent world where people are fuelled solely by axolotls.\*\* Firstly, how many would we need?

$$8.2 \text{ billion people} * \frac{2000 \text{ calories}}{\text{human per day}} * \frac{365 \text{ days}}{12 \text{ months}} * \frac{2 \text{ months}}{\frac{1 \text{ tail regrown}}{1 \text{ axolotl}}} * \frac{1 \text{ axolotl tail}}{0.167 \text{ lbs of meat}} * \frac{1 \text{ lb of meat}}{317 \text{ calories}} = 19 \text{ trillion axolotls}$$

Nineteen trillion axolotls!†† God, that sounds awesome! Imagine bumping elbows in a world with nineteen trillion adorable little guys!

\* Located in Nabrasca, Innovation Avenue runs parallel to Technophilia Boulevard and runs at odds with Common Sense Way. It's best known for the creation site of the Torment Nexus.

† Seems like everything tastes like chicken. I wouldn't be surprised to hear of someone biting their own arm off and exclaiming "wow! That wonderful umami, that rich depth of flavor, and that excellent mouthfeel. Tastes like only the finest of poultry!"

‡ Sorry, I just felt like putting a footnote here. It's been a few sentences since my last witty comment.

§ Don't get me started on how they make imitation sausages.

¶ Clyde Peeling's Reptileland, to be specific. For which there is no alternative. It is simply the best.

\*\* America-Runs On Salamanders™

†† Fact-checked by TRUE American patriots using RIT's very best research methods.



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

*Gracies Dinnertime Theatre* (GDT) is a founding member of Hell's Kitchen and is published by Carissimus Diablo. GDT is edited by **Igor Polotai** and editor *in exilium* **Goose Waffles**, with layout done by **G.S. Marginalia** was chosen by the layout editors or carefully glued together by **Goat Caroler**, **wood man**, **Ada H. Ominam**, and **Igor Polotai**. The main article, "A Breakthrough," comes from **Sam W.** and GDT is spread to loving fans and haters alike by his legion of **printer daemons**. Other content was written by **Brian E. Barrett**, **Ada H. Ominam**, **Igor Polotai**, **Franklin Scharf**, **Sam W.**, and contributors on the GDT Discord.

## IMAGINUM AUCTORES

**Pages 1, 2:** Potter, Beatrix. Untitled. *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers, or The Roly-Poly Pudding*. 1908. [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Roly-Poly\\_Pudding\\_-\\_Illustration\\_26.gif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Roly-Poly_Pudding_-_Illustration_26.gif) and [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Roly-Poly\\_Pudding\\_-\\_Illustration\\_28.gif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Roly-Poly_Pudding_-_Illustration_28.gif)

**Page 3:** Prescott, William Hickling. "Axolotl." *The Conquest of Mexico*. 1922. [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:COM\\_V1\\_D406\\_Axolotl.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:COM_V1_D406_Axolotl.png)

**Page 3:** Unknown. "Helping Hand Masthead." *Helping Hand GI newspaper*. 1971. [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Helping\\_Hand\\_Masthead.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Helping_Hand_Masthead.jpg)

**Page 5:** Hollar, Wenceslaus. "Hands and arms." 1644-52. [www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/360716](http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/360716)

**Page 8:** Unknown. Untitled. *The Black Cat*. 1897. [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Black\\_Cat,\\_July\\_1897\\_Image\\_from\\_page\\_12.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Black_Cat,_July_1897_Image_from_page_12.jpg)

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I hear your cries of concern,<sup>##</sup> do not worry. They do not fall on deaf ears.<sup>§§</sup> "But wait," you may say, "wouldn't this be terribly inefficient? We can eat almost all of a cow, but we can only eat the tail<sup>¶¶</sup> of an axolotl?" Fear not, for I have considered this. By comparing the current biomass of agriculture and livestock globally and the total biomass of 19 trillion axolotls, we can establish how efficient this system would be. And don't forget, these axolotls need to eat something — we'll estimate ten times their body mass annually.

There are 280 trillion pounds of agriculture-based biomass,<sup>\*\*\*</sup> and 1.4 trillion pounds of livestock.<sup>+++</sup> So, our 19 trillion axolotls (weighing 9.5 trillion pounds) and 95 trillion pounds of axolotl food are actually *more* economical from a biomass perspective. 2.6 times more biomass-conservative, in fact. That's 63% less!

Someone shouts out: "How much space would this take up? 19 trillion axolotls surely must take up a lot of space on Earth!" To that, I respond with the following: one axolotl needs ~20 gallons<sup>¶¶¶</sup> of water (I'll use 40 gallons because I'm ethical about this), so the volume needed is 2.8 quadrillion gallons. Coincidentally, the total volume of all the Great Lakes is 6 quadrillion gallons.<sup>§§§</sup> Therefore, we could perform this whole operation locally, *twice over*. Talk about economically and ecologically viable.

Another cry of concern: "Oh, please, this sounds like a nightmare for anyone who claims to even remotely support animal rights. I mean, it's literally torturing the axolotls!" I've planned for this, too. A very simple solution lies ahead of us: anaesthesia. If the axolotls can't feel anything, then there's no concern that they'd be suffering! Get them all hopped up on morphine and go to town. Here's one more fact that'll placate even the most vociferous and feisty animal rights activists once and for all: if axolotls truly didn't want this to happen, why won't they accept their tails when we try to give them back? Isn't science truly wonderful?

Finally, some of you must think I'm mentally unstable for even *proposing* something like this. Well, let me ease your

<sup>##</sup> And... the maniacal laughter from someone in the back row?

<sup>§§</sup> I'm not deaf. I'm just always wearing my Yoplait Noise-Cancelling Headphones™ (with smooth and creamy audio, and a fruity kick of bass). So it makes it a little tricky to hear your concerns.

<sup>¶¶¶</sup> Editor's note: a person would have to eat 37.8 axolotl tails per day to reach 2000 calories. I hope you have a recipe book.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> [www.researchgate.net/publication/372558710\\_Biomass\\_Energy\\_from\\_Agriculture\\_Conversion\\_Techniques\\_and\\_Use](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/372558710_Biomass_Energy_from_Agriculture_Conversion_Techniques_and_Use)

<sup>+++</sup> [ourworldindata.org/wild-mammals-birds-biomass](http://ourworldindata.org/wild-mammals-birds-biomass)

<sup>¶¶¶</sup> [apifishcare.com/post/caring-for-your-axolotl](http://apifishcare.com/post/caring-for-your-axolotl)

<sup>§§§</sup> [www.glc.org/lakes/](http://www.glc.org/lakes/)

fears. I took a mental aptitude test (which are really hard, by the way), and I got a perfect score.

I'm sure there are more concerns. But I do not have the space on this page to address them all.¶¶¶ Just know this: I've done the math. Together, we can save the world. \*\*\*\*

¶¶¶ Nor do I plan to.

\*\*\*\* And make me exorbitantly wealthy.



## Baloney Sandwich

-by Igor Polotai

Could you help me? I can't seem to find my baloney sandwich. It would really mean a lot to me to get my sandwich back. Yesterday, I was having a rough day. So I decided to get myself a nice meal. I went to my local deli, hoping to get a cold cut sandwich of goodness. Unfortunately for me, it seems the deli was closed, because the butcher got arrested for the crime of not being white. Well that sucks for a lot for me, because I really needed that sandwich. So I decided, I would do it the American way. Man up, pull myself up by the bootstraps, and do it myself. But the supermarket was out of baloney as well. Apparently the delivery driver was shot earlier that morning, and no shipment had been delivered. Now I was getting mad, because it was starting to affect me. How dare someone get in between me and my baloney sandwich. The audacity. It must be the communists. I decided to then go to an international market. But their prices were absolutely absurd. I am an American citizen. But here I am, in the greatest country of the world, and I can't even afford a baloney sandwich. It must be those foreign narco terrorists. Good thing we bombed them. That will teach them, for messing with me and my baloney sandwich. This whole world thing, it's too complicated, too messy. All I want is to be left alone, and to eat my sandwich in peace and quiet. I deserve to. I am an American. These things, they shouldn't be affecting me. That's for others to deal with. Still sandwichless, I decided that any baloney sandwich would do, and so I walked to the nearest food bank, stocked with everything I needed for a mean sandwich. As I was walking back, I saw a homeless person, down on their luck. In their eyes I saw a tiny flicker of hope. They should have worked harder, I thought. I kept walking. The sandwich was delicious. I ate half of it yesterday, and saved the other half for today. But now, I can't find it. I swear I put it right here. This world is so cruel to me. What did I do to deserve this? All I wanted was to be left alone and to enjoy my baloney sandwich. Is that too much to ask for, America?

**Have articles? Poetry? Art? SUBMIT!**

**We can lend creatives a**

**HELPING HAND**



**graciesdinnertime theatre@gmail.com**





## Neighborhood Watch

-by Igor Polotai

After a not so chilly Winter Break, our weekly column that keeps YOU better informed about the happenings at RIT, Neighborhood Watch, returns with a vengeance! New stories, things you might have missed, or even the latest happenings of the RIT Cabal, we're here to provide you with all the latest happenings at

RIT, good, bad, and weird. Want to submit your own story? You, my friend, have come to the right place!

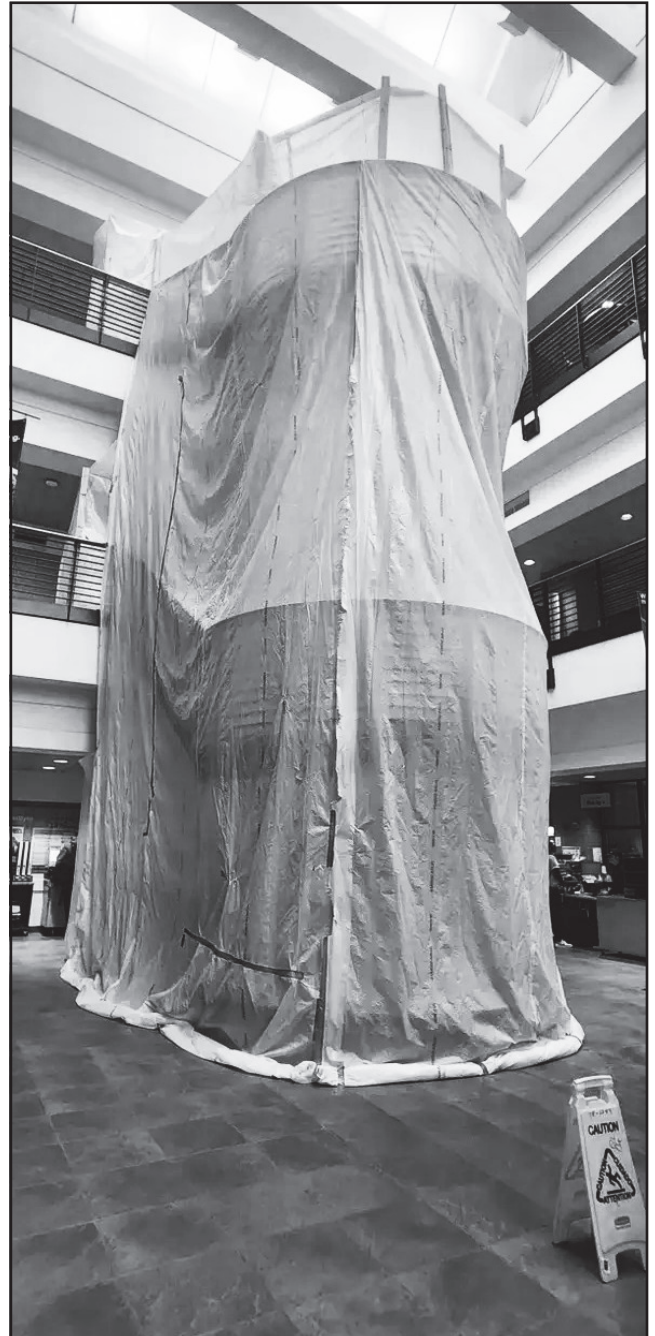
So, what happened recently? This break hasn't been without some big news, small news, and moist news. Student Government's PawPrints 2.0 released its alpha version, but in true RIT fashion, it won't actually be complete until later. Winter break saw many renovations all across campus. In the Campus Center, a new Greek Life Display was put up. The SAU had some of the high tables taken down for a new display for international students that will be replacing the international flags hanging on the ceiling. Brick City Cafe is no more, being renamed and remodeled into the new Kitchen at Brick City, now with exactly the same food options as before. The Commons got the memo and built a new wall after perhaps the biggest fall-off of any dining location at RIT. Even the stairwell in the Golisano College of Computing got some much needed anti-slip and slide technology.

The biggest piece of news is the near completion of the Music Performance Theater, or as it's better known to those in the know, the Barbed Wire Marshmallow. Much has been said about this 2003 computer rendering turned mass of metal. Ironically, for a campus that has an Aesthetics Committee, it seems they forgot the key thing that makes RIT special: bricks. Even the SHED has a golden brick. But this "evil lair," "Great Value brutalist," "Chunk Loading Error," "Iceberg" looking building is set to open on April 10<sup>th</sup>, with special tours on April 25<sup>th</sup> during ImagineRIT. One of the main things they tout is a restored almost century old organ that is two stories tall. Which, while certainly impressive, does beg the question of why RIT is more focused on rebuilding a decrepit organ than, I dunno, the many clubs that are getting kicked out, the students who are struggling, or perhaps the fact that for the tuition that students are paying and the job market right now, is RIT the best choice for studying music? Just some food for thought, which you can now get on even more ordering screens! No human interaction needed!

Until next week, stay zingy, zwifty, zeely, and just a bit zwinney. 

☛ Investigative reporter's note: employees say "it looks like I work in a prison. Metal bars? Really?"

Do you have a story that the weekly Neighborhood Watch column should inform RIT about? Email it to us at [gdtneighborhoodwatch@gmail.com](mailto:gdtneighborhoodwatch@gmail.com)! All submissions will be kept anonymous. We value our whistleblowers!



*This new, likely short-lived, Christo and Jeanne-Claude art installation can be seen in Golisano.*

# Their Hands

*-by Franklin Scharf*

**E**arly autumn. The hazy breeze carrying the sweet scent of decaying leaves. The deep night sky punctuated by a bone-white moon staring through wispy clouds. The faint sound of clapping from squirrels in the trees.

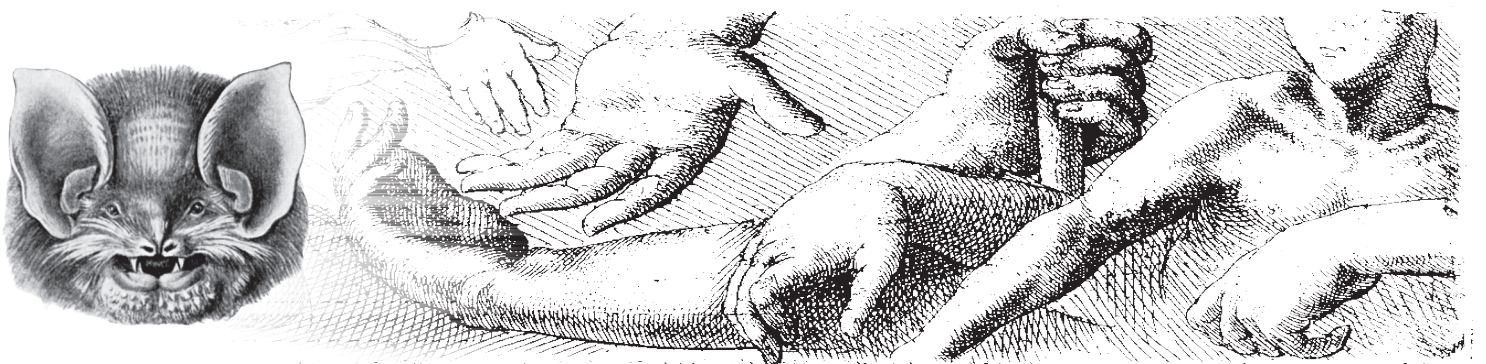
I've come to expect it at this point. Without hesitation, I walk back inside, march over to the fireplace, take my rifle off the mantelpiece, and sling it over my shoulder. When I get back, my quarry hasn't moved much at all, unaware of what's coming. I take my time lining up the sights with the center of its little body and pull the trigger.

The rodent falls unceremoniously from the branch, hitting the ground with a familiar flop. Trudging towards its corpse, my eyes are naturally drawn to its hands—identical to a human's, but with none of the grace to use them. Instead of topping off a long arm, each hand simply shrinks down into the squirrel's shoulder, forming an unpleasant cone ending at its open-mouthed head. These look smaller than the rest. They're targeting children now. I grab it by the fingers, allowing it to hit the side of my leg with every other step. I used to hold the creatures away from me out of disgust when I brought them in, but I got used to it. All I feel now is hatred. I set the bastard down on my kitchen table and reach for the hacksaw.

They've taken their hands. I'm going to take each and every one of them back.

Pressing it against the wall with my palm, I grip a nail between my fingers and strike until I feel it digging into the wood, pinning the thing in place. Its counterpart goes right next to it, and the rest goes in the freezer. I step back and admire my work—there must be over sixty of them now, neatly arranged in pairs and at varying stages of decay—when the silence is disturbed by a shrieking cry. My head pivots towards the window in time to see my neighbor (I forget the name) sprinting away from the house, screaming as if their life is in danger. I pull the window open and call after them, insisting that everything is fine and repeating what I've been telling them time and time again. They don't seem convinced. They're about halfway across the lawn when I notice them fiddling with their phone.

They're going to call the police. That can't happen. The window is hardly big enough to squeeze through, but I manage. They start running faster. I catch up to them with ease. The mallet for striking nails is still in my hand. I use it to strike something else. They're on the ground. The operator speaks through the phone. Hello? Is everything okay? No, it fucking isn't. Help is on the way. We'll be there in ten minutes. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. I turn off the phone and head into the forest. I'll find a squirrel and bring it inside. I'll show it to the officers, and they'll see that I'm telling the truth, and we'll share an awkward laugh before they get back in their car and drive far, far away. There has to be one nearby. I don't have my gun. That's okay. I'll grab it with my hands. There has to be at least one left. I'm in the woods. I listen for clapping. I listen. There's nothing. This can't be happening. I can already imagine what they'll say. All I see here, sir, is a freezer full of squirrels and a wall full of hands. Missing people's hands, in fact, as DNA evidence will later suggest. They'll handcuff me and throw me into the aforementioned car (that's if they don't shoot me right then and there), and I'll take comfort in knowing that I have completed my work. I eliminated the threat. I saved the forest. I've taken them all back. Every last finger. ▣





# Winter Break, Self Actualization, and Weezer

-by Ada H. Ominam

The first time you do anything is always the hardest— you'll never fall off your bike more than when you were first learning, you'll never write a poem worse than the first limerick you wrote for homework in fourth grade English, and no falling out will ever haunt you like the one with your first friend. Fourteen years old was the first time I really looked at myself, and I think one of the few times I've really seen my whole, true self. Before this I was an oblivious kid doing what felt right, and after this, disgusted with what I saw, I tried to change my reflection. But before I could reform it, mold it into a sleekier, shinier, more palatable costume of myself, for a brief moment I had to sit with the unfiltered reality of my true self. Around this time, I was a boy\* with a **fat** crush on a lesbian.† I'd also just discovered *Pinkerton*, the 1996 Weezer album featuring the song *Pink Triangle*—you know, the one that goes "*I'm dumb, she's a lesbian / I thought I had found the one*"—alongside many other tracks of unrequited love and self-loathing. The album is loud to the point of hurting your ears: guitars shriek and buzz with distortion as the lyrics are screamed and yelped as if the singer is being stabbed. The lyrics hurt in their own unique way when you're fourteen, and as if determined to prove the gateway theory of pain‡ in my own little fourteen-year-old way, I put in my earbuds and cranked it§ as loud as I could, reveling in my little masochism so I didn't have to face real pain. I'd keep them in as I wandered the woods behind my house, taking pictures of the trees and the trails and the snow, but most of all the stream near my favorite trail's end. I would head off the beaten path, through mud and bramble and ice to stand beside it, as if trying to absorb a piece of its beauty into myself via osmosis, all the while the music in my earbuds made my ugliness sore, pounded it,¶ bruised it, and held it like a drunken boyfriend.

Recently, I've been thinking a lot about the person I was at fourteen. It was the end of my great denial era— at fifteen, I'd make friends who'd encourage me to explore and express my identity. I'd drop *Pinkerton*, deeming it nothing more than a relic of a past incel phase. I'd move away from the stream, to Rochester, where I'd come out for real. I'd find real love with my best friend. And yet, when I'd truly failed academically for the first time, when I fell into drinking until I'd vomit, when my mother had a stroke, when I was wandering the cold alone on my birthday, every piece of my being aching and bruising I remembered what I went to when I didn't know any better—or maybe, when I didn't tell myself I did—my personal gateway theory of pain. The aching of a stranger in a place close enough to mine to not care. It didn't fix anything. It wasn't a miracle cure. I didn't feel like I'd made a connection with the artist. Quite the opposite: I felt like I'd made a communion with my younger self.

I went back to that stream over winter break. A trip down memory lane,\*\* complete with period accurate soundtrack. It took me a bit to get to the stream's shore, winter brought snow and ice and the very real danger of



\* Not for long.

† I think they're a guy now.

‡ "The gate control theory of pain asserts that non-painful input closes the nerve 'gates' to painful input, which prevents pain sensation from traveling to the central nervous system." — Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gate\_control\_theory

§ The volume. Why, what did you think I was cranking?


¶ It's a metaphor!!!

\*\* Or rather, memory trail.

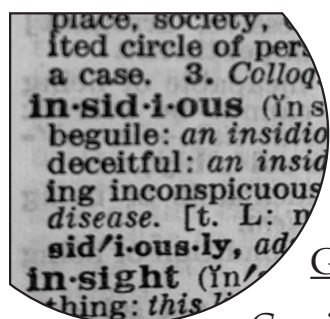
falling on my ass as it always does in New England, but once I'd made it I felt something—or rather, someone. The ghost of my younger self, somewhere in the trees. They'd been haunting the water ever since I left, and I could feel their gaze illuminating the parts of them that remained intact in me. My favorite smash characters. My [over]use of em dashes and parentheses. My love for this stupid album. My hope to get out of this stupid backwater town, change my name, buy myself dresses. My dreams of finding love, of seeing cities, of writing. I felt the ache of the album, that melodramatic angsty album I'd melancholically and angstyly ached to all those years ago, and I realized:

I am finally the person that kid wanted to be.

I stared into that stream, for the first time in my life, truly at peace with myself.<sup>††</sup>

Good luck this semester, Tigers. I hope you can be the person fourteen-year-old you wanted to be. 

†† I then started dying of laughter, as I realized I had a deep moment of self-actualization and reflection to fucking Weezer.



## Definitions

*-by the denizens of the GDT discord*

Crime and punishment – a meal of hotdogs and bottom shelf vodka.

Glitteris – a gay man's prostate.

Gracies Dinnertime Theatre Derangement Syndrome – whatever is in the minds of *Reporter* writers every day.

Grink – a troll whose heart is three sizes too small and who forever will be in the shadow of the more infamous Grinch. Takes joy in derailing conversations to mock grammatical errors and misspellings.

Irving Finkle – language Santa.

Lowballing – that definition's worth \$2.30 at *most*.

MATLAB – when you hate yourself and have no money.

Octave – when you hate yourself, have no dignity, and no money.

Peer-pressure welding – social connections enforced by intense external pressure. See "*trauma bonding*."

Proctor & Gamble – a large American multinational corporation dedicated to gambling and losing.

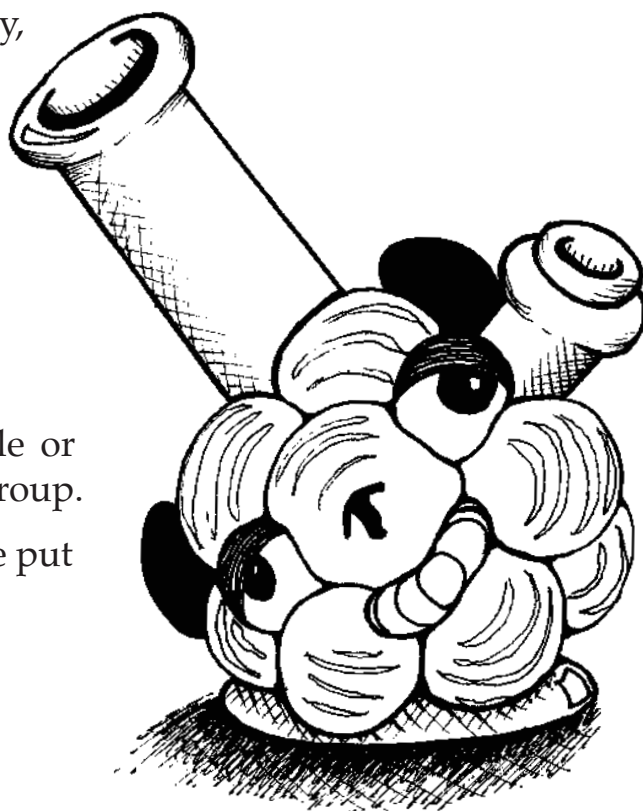
Punishment – the impunition of a pundesirable or punpleasant wordplay upon an individual or group.

Schrödinger's Nabraska – both can and cannot be put in a box until observed.

Sussurance – assured susurance.

Sussusurance – suspicious whispering.

The Rapture – religious slam poetry catastrophe.





## Untitled

-by Brian E. Barrett

I keep forgetting about the lead!  
But I will always remember how  
those paint chips were so tasty.  
Sweet and cool, with a crisp  
snap, clean cleave, and smooth  
mouth feel...

I didn't eat many, but still...  
I keep forgetting about the lead

## Sycophant

-by Sam W.

G reat question! Let's break it  
down...

P erfect! You're really  
understanding these concepts!

T hat's exactly correct!

L et's delve deeper into this...

I t's important to remember...

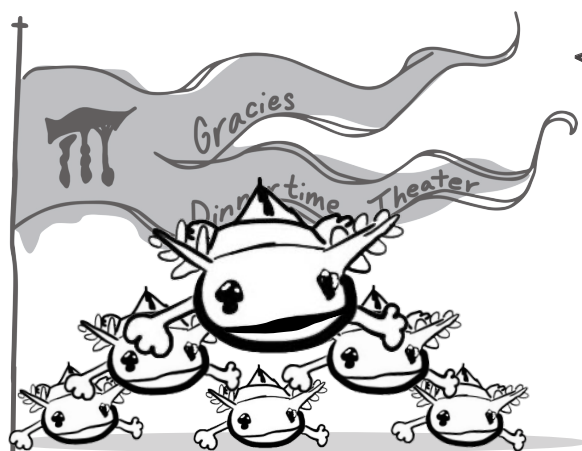
E xcellent plan!

S ure! I can explain each of these  
concepts for you...

## Winter ~~Run~~ Gap

-by GDT's head languisher

Make sure to remember,  
All the things you need to do over "break"  
All the things you've ignored since August  
I hope they have appointments.  
Make sure to apply, while  
Losing your mind in your childhood home, surrounded by  
childhood artifacts and people who still treat you like a child  
I hope I can start over now.



<rise up, my lake children!>

Recharged your creativity  
over break? Like GDT?

Join our Discord!

