



Dear Reader,

As kids we used to play a game called "Simon Says". One kid would give other kids orders, some preceded by the words "Simon says", for example, "Simon says, take one step forward", and all the other kids would take one step forward. From time to time the leader would omit the magic words, saying, for example, "Step back" and anyone doing so would be penalized because the leader had not said "Simon says step back."

We still play that game today: "You're nuts!" (Just a figure of speech.) Psy-man psays, "You have a severe disorder!" *A psyentific fact.* "He's sad." (Cheer him up or let him be.) Psy-man psays, "He's clinically depressed." *Drug him.* "He's energetic." (Boys will be boys.) Psy-man psays, "He's hyperactive." *Drug him.* "She's angry." (Laugh at her, soothe her, leave her alone, get angry back at her, find out what's wrong.) Psy-man psays, "Oppositional Defiance Disorder." *Drug her.*

"He's like a zombie." "She's acting suicidal." "He's not himself. I don't recognize my son since he went on that medication." Psy-man psays: "We'll up the dosage." "We'll prescribe another drug." "No, the drug couldn't have caused that." "He'll have to stay with us for a while." "Shock him." "Don't worry — his teacher says he's quiet and co-operative in class."

"His insurance has run out." (Oh no! We can't pay.) Psy-man psays, "He's well now." "Her insurance has no cap." (Thank God. Can she come home soon?) Psy-man psays, "She'll have to stay with us indefinitely. She needs close supervision."

"He's dead." (Bury him. Grieve — but not where Psy-man can psee you). Psy-man psays, "You came to us too late. Please psign this waiver."

"This whole set-up is nuts. The shrinks are ruining our children. Sue them. Stop them. Make them pay!" Psy-man says, "Psorry, you have no psyentific credentials, because you didn't psay 'Psy-man psays.'"

Poet says, "ARGGGGH!" What do you say? Not that it can possibly matter if you lack that pspecial authority. Psigh!

I'd like to go back to Simple Simon and the Pie (not psy) man. We need to look about us, see where we are, what planet, what universe. Touching a wall may help. It will probably just stand there, but if you keep touching it, it may detach itself from some imaginary wall in some imaginary place where most of us must be living to allow the psy-man such powers in the realm of solid walls and all-too-solid children. Where are we? O universe, let me taste your wheres!

*Yours in opposition to  
psymony,  
Dean*

## Putt...Putt...Putting Things Off

Buried in blankets past eight,  
My farts range from tuba to flute:  
I can't wake just yet, but it's late,  
So I'm trying to get a round toot.



## Dear Shoulder, Phone Home

"He dislocated his shoulder..." — located, dislocated — do I ever LOCATE my shoulder? Yes! Here it is, right here. By God, I have located that shoulder. (Reader, can you locate your right shoulder? Your left shoulder?) It just moved — aha! There it is again, lost and found, what an adventure, what drama! Alas, where has my poor shoulder gone? My long lost, prodigal shoulder, I've found you again at last!

And how does one DIS-locate a shoulder? Improperly locate it? Not mis-, but DIS. (When you dis me, are you putting me in my wrong place?) If I said, "My left shoulder is vacationing in Hawaii" (when it's NOT — it's there on business, if at all), would that be a dislocation? Or a disvacation? And where IS my shoulder between the moments I think to locate it? Does it go to the movies or out for strolls? If it did, would I know about it? Shrug.

People who look back longingly at childhood have ceased to be children. Those who remain children enjoy adulthood, since it creates so many more things that they, eager children, are allowed to do.

## Children Should Be Herded Without Scene

While I don't hold with those who make a fetish  
Of idyllic childhood — for children are generally  
peevish, grimy and wettish —  
Yet those who, in manifesto, polemic or sermon,  
Portray children as parasitical vermin,  
I applaud NOT,  
For that would be robbing Peter Pan to pay Pol Pot.

[Note: Pol Pot's regime slaughtered a million or so alleged  
"parasites" in Cambodia.]

## Self-Discipline

Self-discipline — Ah, YES, self cracks the whip!  
Self whimpers as self strips self, softly humming.  
"You know, you naughty boy, what you've got coming!"  
"Oh please! It's tight!" Self squirms against the grip  
Of self-restraint — "It hurts!" Curling his lip,  
Self strokes till every string of self is thrumming —  
"Don't! Stop!" "Take THAT!" "**DON'T STOP!**" Look!

Self is coming  
To realize that self-control's a trip  
To parts of self unsettled, unexplored,  
To depths of sin so desperately sweet...  
Self shivers, panting: What would Mommy think?  
Self sneers — it's DADDY's smile, the true reward  
For self-control! Self frees self and they meet  
Face to face, naked, over a sink.



We all enjoy it; it's so gratifying  
that some live for it alone: the joy of  
being surrounded by people who are trying  
to help us solve our unsolvable problem —  
our CRUCIAL problem: We bat back at them  
solution after solution (for this is one area  
where we are the unimpeachable lone experts:  
We know as no one else can ever know  
the intricate reasons why our problem  
can never be solved), like a baseball player  
hitting the best they can pitch to him  
out of the park: SWACK! SWACK! SWACK!  
"Have you thought of seeing a doctor?"  
"Doctors! Are you kidding?..." "Or you  
could eat fish instead." "Allergic." "Maybe  
you could..." "Can't afford it." Oh, how  
they keep coming back for more, the idiots,  
they must enjoy it too!

## How to Have Interesting Problems Without Actually Doing Anything

For years meditation — trying to be or not to be —  
solved all my problems; that is, with meditation,  
who needed problems? It was consoling, like being  
a child again: "Sit still and don't touch anything!"  
But what I said was, "Sit still and don't  
be touched by anything!" Much later I worked  
as hard to learn again to be touched.



There I sat on my aching ankles or in half or full  
lotus (knees having given up on pain) or,  
self-indulgent, lay on my back — stretching out  
my breathing as a child stretches a rubber band  
to see when it will snap; trying not to be  
(or to be), trying not to be trying, never sure  
if I'd failed to achieve what I was trying not to  
try to achieve or had achieved it, but kept on going  
(not knowing) — and it was easy to miss having  
achieved something, because all the books said  
that what one aimed for was something inconceivable,  
but whatever I felt was something I felt and  
whatever I thought of was something I thought of  
and whatever happened to me happened to me, so when,  
sitting there, I felt terrific, I thought,  
this is just me feeling terrific, don't be distracted  
by feeling terrific; and when I slipped right out  
of my head and hovered above it, it was still  
just me, so I kept going (if you can call it that),  
hanging onto the universe so that I wouldn't  
miss when it vanished, and then I'd know  
something was happening —

and after that happened, I'd be a much better  
person — well, "better" and "person" wouldn't  
mean much (I'd be above all such considerations),  
but there'd be something about me — well,  
not "me" anymore (would my ex-wife notice something  
to make her regret having left me?) —

so that now the contrary efforts to and not to be,  
like opposing biceps in an arm-wrestling impasse,  
formed solid masses, brawny fists squeezing  
the eyeballs, screw-tightened vises disjuncting  
upper from lower jaw, rawhide bands contracting  
around the temples, a swathing in tautnesses  
bulky enough to lean on — hell, I could sit there  
motionless for hours, propped up by balanced efforts  
and counter-efforts, as if the air around me  
were a mold into which I'd been poured to set.

[continued]



The more I tried to be free of thought  
the more my thoughts became solidities.  
Early on, in quiet moments, able to hear myself  
not thinking or thinking of not thinking,  
I'd slip out of these impossibilities  
into a clarity where thinking continued,  
but I was a stillness in which it occurred —  
after such moments I'd think, why can't I  
be like this all the time, the Zen dishwasher,  
the crest of a selfless wave unraveling  
in precise, elegant, spontaneous action?

And now, sure enough, the crushing weights  
and torsions and other results of trying  
not to try to achieve what can't be  
achieved by not being the one for whom  
I was not doing it — all this stayed with me  
when I rose on tingly-numb legs, and when  
I shook my head, it was like shaking  
an auto junkyard; and when I walked I became  
a Picasso painting of "Man in Rusty Armor  
Descending the Stairs"; and when I thought,  
"OK, that's it, I'm done now," my solid thoughts  
like unwanted guests, refused to take the hint;

and that was bad, but worse was, walking about  
in my ill-fitting invisible strait jacket,  
I felt, not fear, but HOPE! — hope because  
something had happened; you couldn't miss  
that something was happening, and I'd been  
spending hours each day hoping something  
weirder than graduate school and more  
wonderful than wanting to get laid  
would happen, so maybe this was it —  
and who knows, maybe it was, and anyway,  
it cured loneliness: I had headaches  
(not really aches, but like the ancestors  
of ache, sheer forces of implosion  
and explosion as if I were a forming star)  
so solid I could talk to them,  
and it seemed to me they were talking back,  
or was that me as well? (When, one day,  
I rediscovered simplicity, I was cured  
forever of wanting to cure loneliness.)

Anyway, it had been hard to sit so still so long,  
but now I could prop myself up on my own stuck  
mental spasms; and it had been hard not to think  
of anything or to keep my attention on a spot  
on the wall or to just be there and not be;  
but now I could turn to stone, which is as good  
a paradigm as air is of very much being here, but  
not being here at all.

[continued]

So I'd solved all my meditation problems.  
Besides, when you're encased like a fossil  
in mental rock, who needs problems? I'd begun  
meditating heavily when my first wife left me —  
amazing how many problems having a wife had solved.  
I'd thought it would be depressing, after six years  
of getting it regularly, to be learning again  
what I'd never really learned — how to date —  
or to be jacking off like a horny teen-ager.  
Instead I meditated.

Eventually, I got excavated. I still see the logic  
of meditation: If one could sit still and be silent  
forever, that would solve everything.  
But I don't want to solve everything.  
I prefer to choose my problems.



### A Leaf too Red for Fall

What are you, bush, whose leaves turn lipstick-red?  
(Or carmine? coral?) TOO red — you appear  
Spray-painted for piped wiring or road bed  
Clearance. Clever plant that mimes its predator,  
As Jews name kids for those already dead:  
That stickler Death, beside the sick kid's bed later,  
Seeing the name (dead Grampa's) on his list,  
Says, "This has got to be some weird mistake —  
I just took him away!" — and with one twist  
Of bony wrist strikes off that name. This fake  
Spray-paint job might (you hope), likewise, deter  
Some bureaucratic civil engineer,  
Spray-gun in hand, pausing to scratch his head  
And wonder what competing agency —  
Without a word to his — what idiocy! —  
Has doomed this bush already? Now what? Grr!

I'm sure the ploy won't work: Jewish kids die.  
(Angels must meet quotas.) But, bush, nice try!

### Have a Ball, Tom

Did someone scare the cast away?  
There's only one in Castaway,  
Just sporting goods for hanky-panky —  
Poor Tom! Where did I put my Hanky?

### Excel? Sure

A pun is a play on words. On words —  
ever on words! — let us play.

[The next 4 are palindromes -- but not the titles.]

### A Priest Rues His Sins With Young Girls

Did I, maiden-mad, misuse Jesus?  
I'm DAMNED, I am! I DID!



### Owls Quiet Tonight

Too hot to hoot.

### KKK Motto

No DNA bar abandon!

### Target: Argot

Slang is signals: "Look, Ma --  
I'm KOOL!" Slang is signals.

Old homes -- who knew these piles of field stone  
and brick we cursed for the trees and fields  
they usurped would age to such beauty? They are  
alive -- like any form that contains life. Life  
is what cannot be contained. It overflows,  
possessing its containers.  
We will swarm over our granite grave stones  
with meaning as persistent as lichen  
and as soft.

### The Despair of Those Who Wait

Can I help you?  
Is there something I can do for you?  
What can I do for you?  
Have you been helped yet?  
Is there anything you need?  
How can I be of service?  
Can I be of use to you?  
Is there anything I can get for you?  
Is there anything you'd like?  
Have you found anything you want?  
How can I help you?  
Can I help you?  
Is there anything I can do for you?  
Can I help?

How can I win? Each time I kill one of my enemies  
I lose a neighbor.

A block away I see her see me, and she, seeing  
I see her, smiles. How is it we see what we  
cannot possibly see? For I know I saw her catch  
my eyes with hers, yet I can't, at this distance,  
see that she HAS eyes — only a ribbon of shadow  
across her face. Her eyes must differ from her  
seeing, which my seeing can see or know. And what  
did I actually see of her smile? For that matter,  
how is it I can see, now, my own smile?



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ISSN: 1524-0509

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