

\* \* \* \* \* The ninth issue of a weekly fanzine by Andrew  
A P P A R A T C H I K Hooper, member fwa, supporter afal, launched  
\* \* \* \* \* from The Starliter, 4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103  
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\* \* \* \* \* Production # 184, locked tight on target.

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And every day, the paper boy brings more.

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TUESDAY MORNING, 8:45 AM: The sense of wonder struggles to throw off the coils of sleep. I must be crazy, getting up this early after working until four. Staggering into the living room/office, I see the light outside is already dim; a skin of high cloud veils the sun, and the disc is fuzzy enough to allow me to look at it without discomfort, even though my eyes are still crusted and blinking.

In the kitchen, I fill a big tumbler half way with ~~ice~~ and scarlet Apple/Cherry/Marionberry juice, then mix it with seltzer to cut the sugar. I sit down at the dining room table, and the urge to lay my head on it is almost overpowering. My thoughts are still fumbling with the dream I crawled out of, something about a bunch of Rasta men trying to squeeze into an old Chrysler J car...why was I dreaming about guys in dread-locks? I half-way remember something Singer was saying last week at the bowling alley, about how some Jamaicans he met in a Manchurian restaurant had told him the right way to cook breadfruit...you burn off the peel in a fire, throw away the middle, and eat the box it came in. No, that can't be right....

Another peek at the sun. Nothing yet; the disc is still whole. I remember when I was about nine or ten years old, there was a total eclipse, a real one, about mid-afternoon on a Saturday. I was living in West Virginia at the time, and we did a long unit on the phenomenon at school, second or third grade, I forget which. I believe the Apollo program was still underway, so I already had a considerable fascination with the moon and its mechanics. When I was nine, I went back and forth between three major scientific interests, marine exploration, space travel and paleontology. Didn't all young fans wish they could grow up to be some synthesis of Jacques Cousteau, Neil Armstrong and Roy Chapman Andrews in those days?

We talked about the mechanics behind the eclipse. My hand was up in answer to the teacher's every question. I felt I had an almost proprietary interest in anything having to do with space and planetary science. Then another student raised her hand and asked the teacher, "But why is the moon just the right size to cover the sun like that? Why are they both just the right size?" As I sat struggling to imagine some kind of gravitational effect that would place the bodies involved in perfect proportional distance from one another, the teacher replied: "Because God made them that way, I suppose." This wasn't actually an uncommon response from her: The separation of church and state is tenuous in West Virginia, and she liked to cover both bases.

That night, I took out the collection of foreign coins my grandfather had given me, and held them up in between my eye and an unshaded light-bulb. Why was the moon just the right size? As part of an irreligious family, I was unwilling to accept the answer given in class. But as I held up a silver peso, an Irish penny, a yellowed 50 centime piece, I could formulate no better answer. I began to feel as if it were possible some hand had been at work, even if it wasn't a divine one. When the eclipse occurred, I watched the flaring corona safely, on TV. I ran up and down the stairs from the TV room to the porch, torn between the perfect recreation on the screen and the sickly, unreal light in the yard. The familiar dark green of the leaves became a heavy purple, with something metallic, coppery, at the very edge of vision. The dead

light spoke of some sinister purpose, and I was relieved when the disc began to emerge again, and rational, mechanical explanations seemed plausible once more.

Looking up, the scrim of ice has thinned, and the impossibly white circle now has a perfect little bite out of it, which grows until it occupies nearly the bottom half of the sun. I feel suddenly hot, and lay the sweating glass in my hand alongside one cheek. Time to put on that old Pink Floyd album. I see none of that remembered pestilential hue around me; it is merely as if a thicker band of cloud has passed before the sun. And yet my heart is still pounding, and I feel a little dizzy from looking into that furnace-light, as the Hammond B-3 wails in the background and a voice chants: "All that is now/All that is gone/All that's to come/and everything under the sun is in tune/but the sun is eclipsed by the moon." (Thank you for being patient; your letters will return next week -aph)

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[APPARATCHIK IS THE NORWEGIAN BLUE OF FANDOM: If it wasn't nailed to the perch, it would muscle up to those bars, and Voom! You can get three months worth of it for \$3.00, or a year's worth for \$12.00, or a lifetime supply for \$19.73, or in exchange for a few published LoCs or maybe you just deserve it after all the things that have happened to you: Fire, Floods, Famine, Piracy, Iconoclasm and Heresy, Civil War, Volcanic Eruption, Global Re-Glaciation, Collision with Cometary Bodies, Rickets, Seasonal Affective Disorder, Mumps, Hangnails, Toxic and Radioactive contamination, Tinnea Pedis, Jehovah's Witnesses, Burst pipes, Fallen arches and Twonk's disease, not to mention the fact that the Sonics got beat in the first round of the play-offs. Maybe next week will be better. Lifetime Subscribers to date: Don Fitch and Geri Sullivan. And a very sincere thank you to the various other fans who have sent smaller sums of money; I appreciate your generosity, and every little bit really does help. And if you pledge at the \$140 level you'll get the mug, the t-shirt, and the profusely illustrated companion volume, "The Making of Widgy Faneds on Holiday."

FANZINES received this week: The Reluctant Famulus #31, Tom Sadler; The Knarley Knews #45, Henry & Letha Welch; 9 Lines Each # 1, Forman, Hardin & Springer; De Profundis #45, Tim Merrigan for LASFS; Thanks! --aph]

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...sail rig and a 320 horsepower  
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