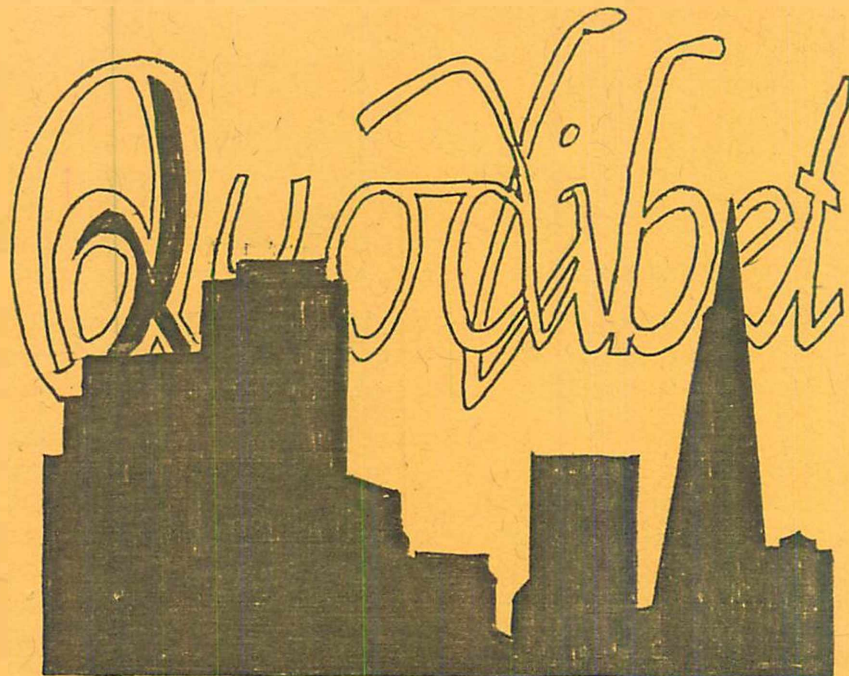


QUODLIBET: In the thirteenth century, when Scholasticism was a vital intellectual force, the universities celebrated each of the most important high holy days with a series of debates among the doctors and masters, who posed subtle theological questions, or "quodlibets" for argument. The term translates roughly as "what (one) pleases" or "at will." From the example I have seen, those professors must have been made of stern stuff, indeed, to take pleasure in the difficulties of quodlibetal questions. Alternatively, a quodlibet is a whimsical combination of familiar melodies or texts. The Quodlibet was a popular musical form during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, antedating but serving the same purpose as the operatic paraphrases of the nineteenth century. The quodlibet has all but disappeared in contemporary music--or all muzak is quodlibetal...you may take your pick.



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THE EXEGESIS BEING COMPLETED, WE NOW PROCEED TO THE ARGUMENT

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A few weeks ago, I looked out the big windows of the Alcoa Building, where I work, and had one of those rare moments of summing-up and self-realization: the sight of the Bay Bridge arching gracefully from the City to Treasure Island, varicolored Bay glittering between the stonework pylon and the shadows of the shallows of the harbor, did not--for the first time--give me a frisson of pleasure.

It's time to be moving on.

Something inside me stirs restively when I think that--something very fundamental. I am not, essentially, a restless or adventurous person; and San Francisco has been very good to me. But I have daydreamed of wandering...

In part, the ebulliance of this city has permitted me to finish dealing with my emotional problems. In a way, I suppose, this urge to move is symptomatic of the fact that at least this aspect of the ongoing struggle for self-realization is--satisfactorily--completed. I try not to think in these terms too often: of self-analysis I make too much. That can be a trap: my life is not a thought-experiment...at least, not one in my mind. Maybe someone else's...

There are some commitments I must fulfill here. That should hold me through the end of July. But, after that, I will go and visit those east-coast cities I know and do not know--Boston for the WorldCon; Philadelphia because I liked its ambience the one time I passed briefly through a few years ago; D.C. for the museums and galleries; and New York, the second love of my life. I plan to settle there for a long stay--more than a year at least. You see, if I can pry myself out of San Francisco at all, I ought to plan on staying away until after the earthquake. This, I am well aware, is mostly double-think. If it doesn't happen quickly, no doubt I will scuttle back here right smart. I knows where my loyalties lies.

It is fortunate that I reached the decision to move in May--since it will take all of the two months to dispose of the load of personal proper-

ty I have accumulated in the last three years of relatively good living in a very wealthy city.

When I came out from Phoenix in 1977, I brought a bag of clothing and four books--The Summa, The Nichomachean Ethics, The Metaphysics, and the Norton Anthology of English Poetry. Those, along with a bag of clothing, a handful of cassette tapes, some miscellaneous papers, and a battered old Canadian portable typewriter, were the sum of my wealth. But, now...!

A houseful of furniture, three hundred records and three thousands of books and magazines, antique china and crystal stemwear, gold flatwear and stereo equipment...the world is, truly, too much with me.

I have thought, three times now, that I had firm arrangements for the furniture, etc. But each time the arrangement has fallen through. Roger is showing his true colors, again, and giving up the apartment here, so I have absolutely no leeway in the disposition of the stuff...and I must get of it all by the end of the month. Some of it I will ship out to New York when I find an address; the rest I will store or give away. I could hold a garage sale...but the prospect of carting it all downstairs and having to cart the unsold back up again (three flights--ugh) is more than I care to face.

Fear not: you will have further progress reports as progress materializes.

\*

In the meantime, our ceiling has fallen in.

Not the entire ceiling; just the dining-room ceiling. It was a most well-behaved falling-in, having taken place sometime between 3:00 am and 6:30 am and woken nobody in the house. But there was a large hole in the ceiling of the dining room--just where one has to walk to get to the bath room.

I should probably explain that I am now living in a third-floor flat in a historic landmark. The building is of no particular importance as a historical piece, but it was built in 1870, and since it is only three blocks from Van Ness (the fire-break in the 1906 fire following the earthquake), it does possess a kind of historicity.

Unfortunately, the landlord who bought it is a space - case who has never properly taken care of it. After nudzing for three months about leaky ceilings during the winter rains (would you believe these are caused by a dog who scratches the zinc-roofing paper off the roof?)(I thought not), landlord finally got a plasterer in to repair the gaping hole. His first job was to take down the rest of the plaster in the ceiling.

Oh, yuck; oh, putrid! Half a ton (perhaps a small exaggeration; not too small...) of filthy-smelling and powdery-fine gray dust descended into the dining room and from thence to every room in the house. And Roger had an allergy attack.

It was three days before we could mop and sweep. The plasterer is gone, leaving us with a filthy mess to clean up and an unpainted ceiling. Typical. We will not be able to get the smell out of anything before the beginning of August. Oh, well: it's the next tenant's responsibility.

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I hate being an island of chaos in  
the middle of a sea of instability

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I picked up a delightful little book the other day - The Natives Are Restless. I cannot recall, at this moment, the author's name, but it was published in 1960, and it is all about Procals--or Angelenos--whose arrogance makes that of the New Yorker whose world stops at the Hudson pale to insignificance. True, the Los Angeles of the Fifties has passed on--none

too soon, for my taste--but there remains enough of the madness even now to make it a vastly entertaining book.

In the midst of the first chapter, which took up, briefly, the relationship of San Francisco and Los Angeles ("...the Procal refers to San Francisco as 'Frisco.' The San Franciscans do not refer to Los Angeles at all..."), I suddenly realized that a calamity had befallen me: I had become--shudder--a Californian. Ick! Ick! California cooties!

Well, that will soon be taken care of.

Isn't there some way one can become a San Franciscan without becoming a Californian?

The distaste we San Franciscans have always felt about belonging to the same political entity as Los Angeles has actually become a political occasion more than once. I am informed that there have been no less than seven referenda calling for a division of California into northern and southern states (us-en being "Pacifica") since 1851...and, although there has been nothing formally presented, yet, the discussion is heating up in this neck of the woods, again. I think the drought three years ago had a lot to do with it: I remember passing through Los Angeles on a bus at the height of the drought up here, where water was used for nothing but vital applications, and seeing the damned idiots sprinkling the freeways! This would not hurt so bad if it weren't for the fact that LA gets a big chunk of its water supply from the Delta region up here...our whitewater areas are being destroyed by unnecessary dams to fill an Angeleno's swimming pool and sprinkle his freeways.

---

"Be calm in arguing; for fierceness makes error a fault and truth a discourtesy" George Herbert

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TECHNICAL NOTE for those who are interested in such things: Quodlibet is being produced in two pressings for this issue--one canary twiltone; the other white bond. The reason is that this is being xeroxed. I discovered that, while twiltone will take xerox beautifully (those of you who are receiving the canary twiltone pressings will have the opportunity to make their own judgements), the fuzzy surface has too much friction for the feed-mechanism. I have to intercollate white bond with the twiltone to get a steady flow...a royal pain. Patrick Nielsen Hayden was rather stern in suggesting that I ought to print it in plain bond...but I like twiltone; and I like fanzines printed on twiltone...even when they are xeroxed, instead of mimeographed. It may not be faanish--but it sure do look faanish...

\*

There is a movie I wish to recommend to all and sundry: Roadie. I saw it only last week, and was amazed at its occasionally subtle humor and relative good taste, despite which I think it has all the makings of a cult-movie. The main character, played by Meatloaf (of Rocky Horror Picture Show fame) (yes, indeed, the very same), who does not sing, even once, during the entire show, is a kind of a cross among Jon Singer, and a Watchmaker, and Larry the Duck: fixes anything; repairs a transmission with a nail-file and a bobby pin; repairs a sound system with two potatoes and a sardine tin, etc. creates a generator, when a show is called off, by burning cow manure with solar reflectors. "The Greatest Roadie that ever lived!" The movie is framed in a soppy love story--but it doesn't try to take itself too seriously, so that's okay. Good movie for its type, and entertaining.

\*

TOTALLY AUTOMATIC: A few weeks ago, Tim (Kyger) and I happened to be on the Wharf--Fisherman's Wharf. This is, perhaps a more unusual circumstance than it might seem, since the Wharf area is disgustingly touristy

DEPARTMENT OF NO COMMENT, NO COMMENT AT ALL...  
 (Thank you, Patrick & Teresa)

FRIDAY

JUNE						
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4

JULY 1980

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FRIDAY

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4

JULY 1980

INDEPENDENCE DAY

THE NEW COLOSSUS

NOT LIKE THE BRAZEN GIANT OF GREEK FAME,  
 WITH CONQUERING LIMBS ASTRIDE  
 FROM LAND TO LAND;  
 HERE, AT OUR SEA-WASHED,  
 SUNSET GATES SHALL STAND  
 A MIGHTY WOMAN WITH A TORCH,  
 WHOSE FLAME  
 IS THE IMPRISONED LIGHTNING,  
 AND HER NAME  
 MOTHER OF EXILES.  
 FROM HER BEACON-HAND  
 GLOWS WORLD-WIDE WELCOME;  
 HER MILD EYES COMMAND  
 THE AIR-BRIDGED HARBOR THAT  
 TWIN CITIES FRAME.  
 "KEEP ANCIENT LANDS, YOUR STORIED  
 POMP!" CRIES SHE  
 WITH SILENT LIPS, "GIVE ME YOUR  
 TIRED, YOUR POOR,  
 YOUR HUDDLED MASSES YEARNING TO  
 BREATHE FREE,  
 THE WRETCHED REFUSE OF YOUR  
 TEEMING SHORE,  
 SEND THESE, THE HOMELESS,  
 TEMPEST-TOST TO ME,  
 I LIFT MY LAMP BESIDE THE GOLDEN DOOR!"

EMMA LAZARUS

DAY OF THE YEAR  
186 -

FRIDAY, JULY 4

DAYS REMAINING  
- 180

--And if patriotic sentiment is wanted,  
 I've patriotic ballads cut-and-dried:  
 Where're our country's banner may be planted  
 All other local banners are defied.

Our warriors in serried ranks assemble:  
 They never quail; or they conceal it if they do.  
 And I shouldn't be surprised if nations trembled  
 Before the mighty troop, the troops of Titipu!

W.S. Gilbert, The Mikado



10 San Francisco Chronicle ★ Thurs., July 3, 1980

# Carter Orders Draft Signup to 'Preserve Peace'

and glittered--a place to stay away from. Coming back from the storied boutiques, we happened upon a local legend--the Human Jukebox. There is a tiny tent pitched near the Hyde Street Cablecar terminus, gaily bedight and properly scalloped, painted with a number of musical selections and a "blues button," surmounted overall with the legend "Totally Automatic." One inserts money--any amount--into one of the various slots cut into the canvas of the tent, and up pops a flap and out pops a trumpet with a peculiar gentleman on the other end. The quality and length of the music is a function of the amount of money one puts into the slot. Understandably.

This gentleman became something of a cause celebre in the city last year when he was arrested for dealing cocaine. Apparently, if one put enough money into the slot, one was rewarded with a baggie. I think it a general tribute to the generally lovable craziness of this city that he is still plying his other trade for the benefit of tourists and locals -- totally automatic(ally).

\*

IM WESTEN, NICHTS NEUES... Tim and I were treated to another set of fingers yesterday (July 6), when we went together to see Airplane at a local theatre. I think someone may have already remarked about the particular craziness of some of SF's theatres--those which make its patrons stand in the rain in long lineups when there is no conceivable reason for doing so at all, at all. This was the Royal on Polk at California. They had just opened up for a Sunday matinee, and there was a fairly long line. Tim had arrived earlier than I, and he had gotten tickets and waited for me in the lobby, dashing out when he saw me searching the line for him. Ticket in hand, we started back into the theatre, when the two cops in the lobby refused to let us in.

Without going into detail about the altercation, let me simply observe that those overgrown bullies infuriated me more by their simple assumption of superiority in their ignorance than by the actual matter of the tickets. After being threatened with arrest--and standing on our legal rights--and repeatedly reminding the officers that they were outside their legal rights (e.g., refusing to let us talk to the manager to resolve the dispute; using threatening language and posture without provocation; threatening arrest where no offense existed, etc.), the ticket-agent finally refunded the tickets--the sensible thing which should have been done instantly, if they weren't going to let us into the theatre--and we were shoved out of the line by the officers.

This kind of grotesque bullying is not, unfortunately, limited to the Police Department: a few weeks ago, while walking down Market in the evening, I came upon a peculiar tableau: a group of five firemen in full regalia gathered around a man on the ground shouting at him and kicking. A scene from Germany, 1932. I do not know what about the man provoked a reaction such as this, but that such a scene could occur is a Bad Scene.

Keep these incidents in mind next time you are tempted to pass off as exaggerated or inflammatory reportage the news that cops have invaded, say, a gay bar and clubbed the patrons. There are pigs even in paradise.

\*

FREE AMBROSE SMITH! The next section of this, our Balancing Act, is about another local legend of very recent vintage, Ambrose Smith. This is one of those things that are so typically San Francisco that they gladden the heart.

It seems that there was this young man--16 years old and a Black--named Ambrose Smith who loved Muni. This is a passing strange affection, since most San Franciscans spend a great deal of their time cursing Muni. Oh. That stands for Municipal Railway, SF's bus/cable/streetcar transportation system. Ambrose was underage for Muni drivers, but he couldn't wait on the system to be ready for him. So he went to the car barn each

morning, passing himself off as a new hire, and was duly issued a car and a route. He was courteous, efficient, and on time. His passengers loved him. That was his downfall: After a year-and-a-half of this, he was arrested and charged with "joyriding."

So Muni offered to hire him.

Jubilation in the land. Ambrose Smith was, overnight, a cause, a symbol that San Francisco had not lost that je ne sais quoi which made it the regnant seat of Emperor Norton, the home of George Washington II, and the stage of the Great Unknown.

Of course, he was still underage, so the Muni couldn't make him a driver. They took him on in the repair shop. The predictable happened: a few weeks later, Ambrose Smith disappeared and has not been heard from since. \*sigh\* When will they learn?

\*

The Fourth of July fireworks at the Presidio was a bust, although the newspapers seemed pleased with it. We watched part of it from the living room windows.

I didn't go to Westercon this year...saving up the money for the move. Instead, I spent the fourth and fifth packing. Now there are only boxes instead of kitchenwares. We have the rest of the month to finish up on makeshifts. I kind of dread this, even as I welcome it. It is unlikely that I will happen into circumstances so financially remunerative for quite awhile. And, at least here, the temporary market is collapsing with the onset of depression.

Funny how history repeats itself. The Great Depression--the other one--came about when the Fed tightened up monetary controls then released them at inopportune moments. Right now, the Fed has just released controls it put on a few months ago. Things are looking bad.

\*

QUODLIBET has been something of an experiment for me. I hope that I can bring it out on a frequent basis, now...the discipline of publishing again on a regular basis will be good for me. Look for it when you aren't looking for it, if that makes any sense. Ciao.

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