



longer true, after police discovered someone who had dissolved his victims in acid and flushed them down the bathtub drain. But as usual I digress.)

In TOWING JEHOVAH we know God is dead because we have his body. It's floating at 0 degrees latitude, 0 degrees longitude, and it's starting to be a bit of a nuisance, blocking shipping lanes and all. So the Vatican hires a disgraced tanker captain to tow the body to a frozen crypt in the Arctic.

This being by James Morrow, you won't find much reverence here, and indeed when two of the Vatican's representatives explore the enormous cadaver, they are somewhat unsettled by the experience: "It wasn't just that the sharks had wrought such terrible destruction, stripping off the foreskin like a gang of sadistic mohels. Even if in good shape, God's penis would still rank high among those vistas a priest and a nun could not comfortably share."

God may be dead, but there are still supernatural forces at work, forces that drive the characters to examine their own faith or lack thereof. And Morrow looks at how people believe and how they react to having their beliefs confirmed--or rebutted. As with any great discovery, there are those who try to deny the facts, or even to conceal what they know to be to truth in order to further their own ends. As usual, Morrow is unsparing of all sides.

Morrow has a sacrilegious and at the same time reverent attitude toward religion. This may sound odd, but it's a function of his examination of what religion could be, and how often it, or its adherents, fall short of this ideal. I liked it a lot, it was nominated for a Hugo, and by now for all I know it may have won (since this is being written before the award ceremony). [-ecl]

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2. I am continuing this in-depth study of modern plane flight. Now, I am a guy who wants a little air turbulence. I think of it

as sort of like the Tabasco on my pancakes. I mean, things are pretty bland without it. But why do I always get it only when I am trying to eat? I am careful to put my napkin in my lap then we do something like hit a warm air mass that finds my shirt a much more inviting target because it is a light color and shows the stains better.

Not that some of the food might not be better on my shirt than in my mouth. Although it is starting to taste like what it is at last. For years you got beef that didn't taste like beef and chicken that didn't taste like chicken. I am not suggesting that they were serving something else. I mean I know they weren't serving anything like rat. Rat tastes like chicken. Airline chicken doesn't. Had they served rat it would have tasted like chicken. It just wouldn't have tasted like rat.

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But at last the airlines have the problem in hand. Last time I flew United they served for dinner heat-and-serve pizza. And you know, it tasted just like heat-and-serve pizza. My sister tells me one reason that the food may have a funny taste is you may have been giving the stewardess a hard time. My sister saw an expose on one of the news shows that said that if you had given a stewardess a hard time she might have gotten her revenge by wiping the dinner roll around the rim of the toilet. Of course the joke would have been on her. You probably couldn't tell. Particularly since it was an airline dinner roll.

I am not sure what I am hearing on planes these days, but it sounds a lot--and this is the truth--like a toilet flushing. I hear it when we get into the air right after takeoff and again after we land. I have tried to tell myself it is something like the landing gear landing gear going down or up, but I can't believe you would hear that after you are on the ground. I think the crew is playing some sort of silly game involving the toilet. I don't know what kind of game they could be playing, but I don't understand pogs either.

Then you land and what do they say? "Welcome to San Jose." Well,

that's if you are flying to San Jose. But they give you a hearty welcome, don't they? But the plane entered the town at something like 300 miles per hour. That's 440 feet per second. They are maybe 40 feet forward of you, right? That means they got to San Jose about 1/11th of a second before you did. Now they are coming off like old-timers. "Ho-ho. Welcome to our fair city," and all that. All this for 1/11th second. It would be more sincere if they said "Well, we just blew into town ourselves; you wanna go find something to do?" But don't hold your breath. It isn't going to happen. Once they put on those starched uniforms they get downright snooty. But if they have so much class, how come they are still playing games with the toilet? [-mrl]

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The end of the human race will be that it will eventually die of civilization.

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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