

## *The Long and the Short of It*

The good news is that Jesus has returned.

The bad news is that he's brought his family.

The result is that nothing will ever be the same again (not that it ever was).

The good news is that the earth is round (or *roundish*, anyway).

The bad news is that it's floating in space.

The result is that we're going to have to think fast.

The good news is that our bodies are mostly water and so are relatively inexpensive to maintain.

The bad news is that, due to global warming, water levels are rising.

The result is that it's impossible to keep your head above water, unless you drain it.

The good news is that the century is almost over.

The bad news is that another one is about to begin.

The result is that there is nowhere to hide.

The good news is that tons of radio waves are passing through us at all times.

The bad news is that we can't hear them unless we buy a radio.

The result is that we're left with a sense of violation and dismay, which is sometimes unintentionally transmitted to our fellow beings.

The good news is that the government has fallen.  
The bad news is that it has fallen on us.  
The result is that everything will always be the same forever (not that it ever wasn't).

The good news is that everything old is new again.  
The bad news is that you have to pay for it twice.  
The result is that the cyclical is as taxable as the static.

The good news is that the meek shall inherit the earth.  
The bad news is that there won't be much left of it after the brave have had their day.  
The result is that the meek should probably get together and attempt to colonize Space at their earliest possible convenience.

The good news is that your star is rising.  
The bad news is that your power animal is extinct.  
The result is that you will more or less break even on the New Age.

The good news is that the Kingdom of Heaven is within.  
The bad news is that you can't find the damn thing.  
The result is that you will redecorate your apartment.

The good news is that Art is long.

The bad news is that Life is short.

The result is that you should invest in Art while you're still alive.

## *Platform*

IF I AM ELECTED all the rats will wear jewellery. The trees will be raked of lizards nightly. No one will ever go hungry without a permit. Skyscrapers will be renamed cloudsnaqqers. Giant maple keys will come spiralling from the sky to cut off the heads of the Evil Ones and delight the children. Pussycats will climb willow trees to eat the cicadas, but the cicadas' wits will be sharpened by this and they will never be caught, their wings will sing forever until they evolve beyond us into the supercreatures of the new millennium (meantime, we put them on our flag). Horses will get birthday cakes. Punches will be thrown out of windows, showering spirits upon those living below the party line. Nightcaps will be dislodged an hour later on holidays, extending daylight for the revellers and looters. Aperitifs will be served in the deserts and a pair of teeth will be served in the desserts. I will say no more on the subject.

BUT

IF I AM NOT ELECTED an era of dark depravity will reign, such as you've not seen since the mid-70s or so. The tails of your schnauzers will droop. Caterpillars will not turn to butterflies but instead grow to monstrous size and lie rotting on your thoroughfares, tying up traffic and stinking to the heavens. The elderly will wear hotpants. No one will ever know what time it is, but all will have the sense that it must be getting very, very late. Forget-me-nots will be renamed what-the-hell-are-these-things. The Beast of War will ravage the globe, and there will be nothing on tv except reruns of curling matches and infomercials about wheatgrass grow-kits. Chickadees will fornicate with badgers. Car alarms will become contagious, a single incident setting automobiles squonking and whooping for miles. It will become impossible to get a decent sandwich anywhere. The denizens of Hell will walk the earth in pink lycra gymsuits, their Walkmans blaring Vivaldi. And moths will eat your pillows.

## *Ten of Swords*

Ten swords in my back. One would have been enough, but you had to go and shove ten swords into my back. That's what I love about you.

## *The Sepulchral Gazebo*

Build an engine with words. Let it make you speak.



There's a bear in a dress at the top of the stairs. A candleflame flickers, casts its granular light upon the deserted deck of a whaling ship. Neuro-accretions in soft tryptamine sleep. Wherever the stage disappears in blackness. A caboose snowed under. You ripen at will and I like it. Nothing develops short of this widening diaphanous summer squall. Choral reefs ring the tomb, and abominate the residual typhoon. Toxic libations murmuring enveined through your biovenetian floodways. But in the morning she is everything neolithic and savoury. A quavering aquarian harem in the quarry. A quorum of slaving Pre-Raphælités relinquishing diction for a prime ordeal latent with lysergic appeal.



Ultimately you get two staircases out of it, but initially there's just the fog ... And you are the one who has been pumped full of ghosts. Their feigned tincture. Every hourdaze coming through the pipe, like a suntarnished egg tumbling from its chute into the ignorant and diffidently gluttonous pond below. The city, on the other hand, grows soft and porous within the storm. I cry before your dumptrucks and sausages and skyscrapers. I have been dead all these years and you never once noticed.

It's a pathetic little cart without wheels, and it wants a good nailing – yet you risk your life for it, Father, down in the tube. Ah, well, it ends in a jubilant embrace when you come up alive and all soft with age. I can't particularize the sensations, they're from yet another realm and my permit does not extend (mnemonically) to this tremendous emotional zone.



Diffuse portability. Air bludgeon. Vernacular slope. Flossy chisel. Gown rampart. Molten negligence. Curve pummel.



Your slick damp stare growing across me like mould. I look at the world as if through slats of closed venetian blinds. Every time I think of you I get a shock. Sparks fly from my Horus eye, spray from my crown in a luminous froth: brain waves crashing on cranial shores. On obsessive nights this stroboscopic cogitation hypnotizes passersby on the street outside my room.



They're all running away to join the circuits. Watch them disappear into the electrogel.



Everyone I've ever loved has left for the space stations. All that remains to me is a dead man with an accordion. Whenever the subway train rumbles past beneath the apartment, it shifts him just enough that he plays a single note of Quarantino's *Rigor Mortis in D Flat*. If the trains would pass twice a second, he'd be more alive than I am. There's a note stuck to the fridge door. Its crayon letters have melted to a coppery olive green string of spectreglyphs: PREPARE THE MEAT OF THY DOG.



Deliriant cataleptic. I am a bleakness. In streams like these, motions turn up that cannot be replaced. One of us is dead, I can't tell which, but we reconnect here. Generate terrific monuments made of coloured steam. In hail we storm the edifices of a scream more incredible than the bursting of a thousand hearts amplified through vacufazers at full speed.

Untimely script from the loom of oneirica. Own an area in a nano era. A molecular tremendum.

Open the Gaudi folds and release the thing.

## *Smargana Lareves*

- 1 This sentence uses only recycled words.
- 2 Using this sentence for any purpose other than communication or information storage may be dangerous.
- 3 This sentence began life as an artifact.
- 4 This sentence has a fixed meaning that does not change, whether spoken in a catacomb or spoken in a control tower.
- 5 This sentence may be used repeatedly without deterioration, though overuse may lead to apparent diminishment of its significance (and in extreme cases insanity or the delusion of enlightenment).
- 6 This sentence may be spoken with the impunity of ignorance by animals, or computers, capable of mimicking human speech.
- 7 This sentence is not immune to polyglot shift – if it has been written, spoken or otherwise processed in any language other than English, a translation has occurred; in this event, please contact the manufacturer should you wish to be issued the original English language version.

- 8 This sentence should not be taken literally by pregnant women, or laterally by dyslexics.
- 9 This sentence may be used to rouse someone from a deep slumber if spoken loudly enough – optimal volume will vary according to proximity of speaker to subject (and density of the sleepstate).
- 10 This sentence is communicable and may be transmitted orally, or in Braille, through photic projection and similar forms of reproduction, via the print medium, telepathically or by means not yet imagined.
- 11 This sentence can be stared at without comprehension.
- 12 This sentence is several anagrams.

## *Okalas Ouflak*

I am told of a race of gigantic white-faced humanoids who stand like doofuses in a land I've never heard of, waiting for you to come hiking along their pathway so they can crush your skull and eat your brains. And that's the best news I've heard all day.

## ***A Black Ribbon***

When first we met, you tied a black ribbon around my neck and I held you up to the sunlight for all to see.

As the years grew and our love evolved, a train slipped under our window and carried off the nightingale's shadow.

Now we are old and ungainly, we have grown to absurd proportions, but our love is still fresh and small and as rabid as the rat that bit Poe in his sleep.