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And More Eventually.

QUESTION

How many monkeys even own typewriters anymore?

I Spit On Your Womb

The feel of spit on her neck was nothing new. A source of comfort even, by now. She had to tell herself that, eventually, Louis would grow up. He would have to stop spitting on her, his own mother. And every time she turned her back she wouldn't need to bristle reflexively in anticipation of his traitorous act. Living in fear of the projectile motion of his saliva—her own DNA being thrown back at her as though in rebellion. Yet when Louis grew up, his disgusting “habit” did not

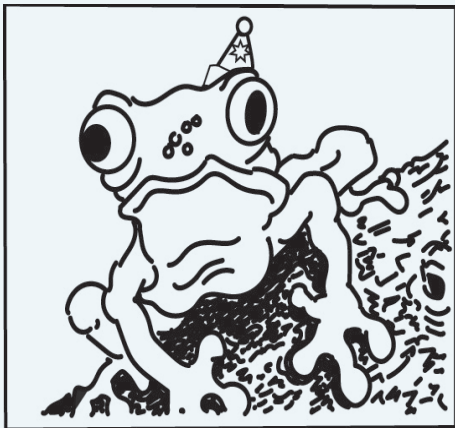
cease. Each time he would come over for dinner, without fail, whenever his mother's back was turned to the stove or sink, he would hawk a loogie at her even still. She would turn around slowly, as though hit with a bullet. Somehow surprised every time. Amazed, really, that such ingratitude could persist. But Louis claimed with each spitball that it was an unconscious act—a mere response to the stimulus that was her, his matriarch. That is, one supposes, why he could never control his spitting. For what is a mother to her son but an endless source of contempt? The blueprint for which all subsequent latent rage toward women in general is directed.

Baby and Child Care

Chapter 1
Keep her alive.



ERSATZ FÜR DAS UNERSETZLICHE



SPORTS HOTLINE

Hello, Chuck Tennis here at the International Hall of Babies in Moscow where this year's world's championship 5 meter baby crawl race is about to begin. Fans from around the world are

pouring into the hall to root for their country's competitor. Some of the leading contenders for the world's fastest baby includes the host country's Igor Speedski who is just now crawling onto the track in his red diapers. His fans

are waving Russian flags... he looks very self-assured. But wait, he has stopped moving and has a funny look on his face. Oh, I see he's just taking a dump, lightening his load so he can move faster. Now here comes the French contestant Henri-Sylvie Vite in the blue diapers. Remember this competition is a mixed gender race - any sex can compete even hermaphrodites! Sylvie's Mom Michelle is beside her. They have come to their bench & Mother Michelle is taking her right arm out of her sweater and offering Sylvie a drink of some pre-race fortification from her right breast. Entering now is Zing-Chi the Chinese super-baby, gender unknown, who is being spoon fed apple sauce mixed with ancient Chinese herbs.

And now here comes Baby Sam from the USA in the diapers adorned with Coca-Cola logos, her corporate sponsor. Look, she is drinking some of that dark beverage now from her plastic baby bottle. And in the yellow and black diapers is Wolfgang, the pride of Bavaria who started racing in his father's fields of hops. His father is feeding him his pre-race meal of a bottle of hefeweizen. Now I see South America's hope - Brazil's Jobingo, in the mango diapers who is on loan from Sao Paulo's kindergarten football league. He is sucking on a stalk of sugarcane. The start is moments away. We will be back after a word from our sponsor, Handi-Wipes for every occasion!

FETAL DECIBEL SYNDROME

At the rock concert, I wasn't worried during the opening set (by an Asian woman with tympani). And I wasn't worried during the first two songs of the headliner set—droning numbers with prefab beats. But when the feature band's third song began, the crash and roar was such that I was sure it would damage our unborn baby's hearing. I imagined the fetus shrinking from the tsunami of sound, cringing from the mix of snap and pop.

So I asked my spouse, "Should we leave immediately?"

"Why?" she asked.

"Because this music is dangerous to unborn living things."

"No," she said. "The kid might grow up to dance."

We stayed through the whole set. We even grooved to the band's attack. After all, we were in the IP balcony, thanks to the doorman's sympathy for the mother-to-be's delicacy.

Afterward, though, I couldn't forget that frightening wave. I asked my friends with children, "Can rock concerts cause deafness in infants? Fetuses can hear, you know. Babies learn to fear the sounds of the world by the time they're born!"

I conceived another plan. I picked up books about pregnancy and looked through the indexes for words like "rock," "noise," "pain," "hammer," "anvil," "cochlea" and "deafness." But I found no listings.

I could not understand why my friends and the birth experts alike were denying the existence of fetal decibel syndrome.





3 Haiku

nite sky
baby goats ears
flapping

the baby goats
lie down
nite busy
with insect sounds

dark nite
surrounding the
mother goat's bell
her babies

No Wonder

Baby! Baby! Baby!
you sang & told me
that I was your baby.

Baby! Baby! Baby!
I sang & told you
that you were my baby.

No wonder
we didn't go anywhere

Neither of us knew
how to walk, run, ride a
bike or drive a car.
We didn't even know
how to crawl.

Sigmund, Surprised by Joy

Sigmund, a bouncing
baby boy,
Transcribes his dreams
Scribbling them
On his bedroom wall
Using a purple crayon.

When he plays
With his die-cast cars
Pushing them across
the rug
He can't help but hear
The music of
the spheres.

Stilleben

The stillborn infant
lies dead
amid the mucilage
still it's dead

still dead still

still
still dead

still



How to begin?

How to begin... is for me, Eremita, a dilemma; between doubt and wonder and the gap these two ordinary and also extraordinary sensations create.

'one must' not spend time doubting just begin.

Begin with wonder, with wonder comes doubt, with doubt comes despair, with despair perhaps wonder?

How to begin?

Repeat, repeat ...

This perpetual dilemma is repeated endlessly as I walk in the hills.

IN PATCHOGUE

Suddenly babies used to arrive in Patchogue and then they didn't for a time. Later on there would be a fire on Cedar

Avenue and a baby would have died in the fire. It was always either described as a tragedy or blessing depending on who was remembering. Now babies are not talked about...

No Stork Delivery Permitted

Mother said she was expecting a baby to be delivered to our house soon. It could be UPS or a private outfit. She wasn't choosy. All she cared about was that it wasn't delivered by a stork.

They had a bad reputation of dropping the baby on his head, and leaving feces on the window sills. It must have been some territorial thing. She stayed at home her whole pregnancy. She didn't want others to know she had sex. It was none of their business.





The Asphalt Debut of Jayne Mansfield's Last Child (A Distillation)

I remember my mom doubling up in pain in the naugahyde interior of her Buick Electra. I remember her aimless spirit, shorn of keel, not knowing which way to turn, about to run aground, when suddenly her left foot reached across the floorboard hump to press the accelerator so that speed could become the dope of motion.

She was about to create her own personal Big Bang Theory: jostle, explosion, pink flash, with the body of the speeding Buick sliding easily under the tail of the stalled tractor-trailer, minus all tail light display. My mom, famous for her 14 pink baths, swan-shaped onyx faucets, electric toilets and claims to an as-

tronomical IQ, gave birth to me at that precise moment of impact. The jolt forced my head and torso out of her womb and into this screaming, dark world as mom herself was thrust from the Buick's interior, as if the car were giving birth to her, landing with a thick, nauseating thud on the still-warm asphalt.

I lay there glistening, dazed, curled up in a greasy amniotic mist of viscera, metallic particulates, petroleum, burning rubber, glass crystals and sweet-scented insecticide. My first blurry sight was that of my mother lying there next to me, perfectly frozen like a movie still, her final role as an actress.

We Fight for Sweet Dreams

Just a little prayer that the tiny zombies and ghost babies of our abortions and miscarriages will cease plaguing us on dark nights and be allowed to shape themselves into the harbingers of hope or the plump cherubs and bundles of joy that we have pictured on the best of days.

This is a country where infants are universally cherished, perhaps because abortion on demand is free and unencumbered. The woman next to me was nearly twice my age. Her husband and grown sons came to kiss and reassure her before they wheeled her in. I had come after an ectopic pregnancy blasted away half my fertility and nearly drowned me in the bath, but I went on to have a child soon after.

Although the room we

shared had pulsed with fraught emotions we were both happy by the day we checked ourselves out with our choices and outcomes. The right babies at the right times are the ones we can birth with certainty into this uncertain earth.

Firstborn

When you get old enough, don't kill me.

BABY RUSH HOUR

It's baby rush hour: nine-month-olds are crawling to work by the hundreds.

NEW SUIT

My new suit was incredibly wrinkly after I'd been shot, beaten, and left for dead. That's the trouble with linen.





The Two Babies (or, The Therapist)

Many would have described him as inexplicably suspicious of babies. To him, however, his suspicion was quite explicable, and he explicated it regularly to his therapist.

"Babies are always up to something," he told the therapist last Thursday, "Yesterday, on the up-town IRT, over the course of several stops, I saw a baby inflate, ever so imperceptibly – although I perceived it, of course. And I further perceived that the rate at which the baby was inflating was increasing exponentially."

The therapist nodded politely. A three-times-a-week patient who paid the full \$275 an hour rate was nothing to sneeze at. So she didn't sneeze. She nodded. He continued.

"I was quite certain that well before that baby got to Marble Hill, it would either fill up the entire subway car or explode. Prudentially, I got off at 72nd Street, even though I was headed to Columbia University. One can never be too sure."

The therapist continued to nod. Her patient continued to expound.

"That baby, by the by, was not unlike the one from last July. Remember? It oozed pus from seemingly every pore.

That the pus looked precisely like sweat did not fool me, and I will never regret what I did next."

The therapist, who was two and a half months pregnant but was not yet showing, remained impassive, but ceased nodding. She refrained from pointing out to her patient that there seemed to be very little connection between the two babies.

MERCURY

Mercury being in retrograde is not why you were late to work this morning.

NEWS YOU CAN'T USE

One of those weird albino alligators that live in New York City sewers wriggled out of its tube yesterday and began stirring up a crowd. Observers say the move may signal an impending power grab. So far, details are sketchy.

Too Many Kids

I've never told anyone
How many illegitimate
babies
I've made.
I don't have to –
Everyone seems
To already know!

PROBLEM

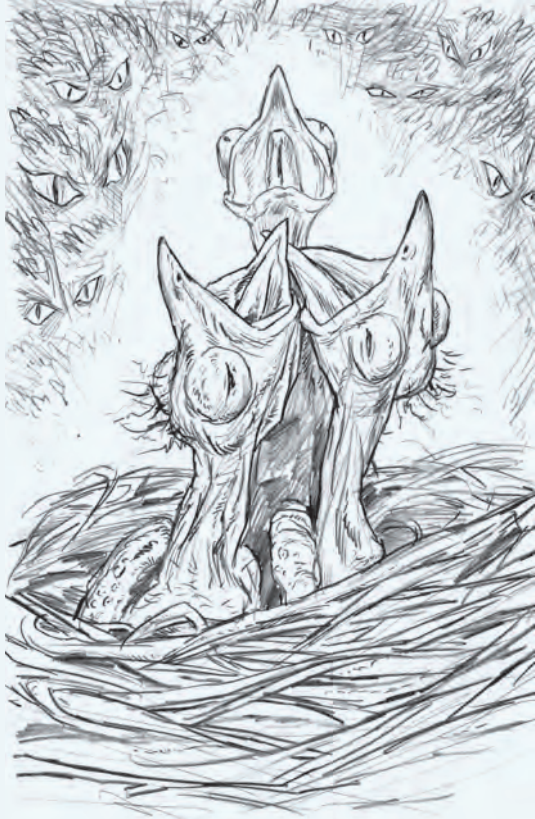
I child-proofed my apartment but they still get in.

WATER

Once I had some water on the stove. Just as it was about to boil I was called away. When I came back 20 minutes later the saucepan was empty. Now I had locked the door, the window was closed & the room was empty except for the cat. So obviously it was the cat who drank the water.

CYCLE

The child is father
to the man.
The man is father
to the corpse.
The corpse is father
to the soil.
The soil is father
to the carrot.



coming
soon:



next issue's theme:

BEASTS