



PHANTASMOCOPIA

We're all made of atoms, but what does that mean?

How do we understand this vast world we live in?

And what do we mean when we say "understand"?

When was the beginning? What comes in the end?

*And where is our planet flying?... And why?
Those questions are daunting, but still worth a try...*

Foreword

Welcome to a writer who wills the world go mad, in order to help us make sense of it. J. R. LeTwine, a time-traveling dark sport of Descartes (or a writer who just may or may not be) constructs for our delight a world of short stories, poems and accounts that seem to have escaped from the dungeons of the dark web's wordsmiths. They explore the realms of fantasy parapsychology on imagined demiplanets, punt words and names back and forth across cultures and languages. So you will meet Maestro Soumas O'Scholl, and Kvanzo Pekhotsakhis, frolic with Schmubellum, and unlearn to tspotch. Your screws will all be set loose. And you will smile all the way.

*Roald Hoffmann
Chemist and writer*

Preface by His Dishon. the Contrafessor

Geehrte, gedeihhaftigste Gnaedigkeiten,

There may be many things out there in this world that are eminently more worthy of your time than the lunacy of J.R. LeTwine. If your time is indeed scarce, or in the eventuality that you would rather play golf, please, do feel free to burn this text and we shall refund you the zero dollars that you never paid for it. And please don't waste your time trying to go look for LeTwine. He does not exist. Just like the book that you are about to read.

Hochgeachtungsgezwanzigst,
Mit Empf,

Rudolphi Hadschelschnadschelschnacht

1. The Sentient Paramagnet (Dedicated to Amaruka Hazari, Bharat Hazari and Jay Polk)

Arvi Geschmopp was a perpetually confused fellow. He grew up in a tent. He could look up the sky every night, to see the stars. They were all flying somewhere. Where were they flying? And why!? He couldn't get himself to think about anything else. When people came to him and tried to talk about other things, no matter how interesting, he would rudely interrupt them and say that the only thing that he was interested in was the universe... everything in perpetual motion.

He had only few friends - it took a special type of character to be able to put up with Arvi Geschmopp, or Schmoppi, which is how his best friend nicknamed him. His

best friend liked giving people nicknames, to the degree that he also gave himself one: Schmopakki. Nobody knew what Schmopakki's real name was. When people asked, he always replied that he had given up his name. Once Schmoppi and Schmopakki were running across a road and Schmoppi got hit by a motorcycle. His last words to Schmopakki were “It's on you now; go and study world wisdom. When you feel that your death is close, assemble in the desert the twelve wise people or whoever is left of them by then. Time your death well. Just before you die, about five minutes or so, you shall receive illumination and learn where we are all flying and why.” And then Schmoppi closed his eyes and died.

And Schmopakki cried and cried, and then he buried his friend. At the funeral of

Schmoppi, Schmopakki counted twelve more guests. He read the sign and told them of the last words of Schmoppi, and they made the agreement. One day they shall meet in the desert to receive, upon the death of Schmopakki, the bestowal of world wisdom. And they parted ways, and many years went by, and from the twelve disciples eleven passed away. Then, on a beautiful Avghuzdd afternoon, Schmopakki informed his one remaining disciple - a chubby guy named Schumbellum - that he was going to initiate his death protocol, which he'd learned from indigenous people in Peru and in New York. He can use the techniques and the medical additives to time his death down to 5 min. He was 93 and ready to go. Schmubellum was almost a whole generation younger than Schmopakki, just about 72 and still in good health to pass on

the wisdom he was about to receive, to many people.

Schmopakki and Schmubellum met on the 19.27.2405. The "Galactic Rayshines" just ended. That was the perfect time to go. They met in the desert. They set up Schmoppi's favorite tent, which is where Schmopakki decided he would spend the last few hours of his life. Schmubellum was there, ready to receive world wisdom, time was approaching, Schmopakki had already done the twenty up-and-downs and was now getting ready for valozal. Once valozal had been ramped up to 217 pGBts, this should get him to the point of the ninety minute spin-echo decompression which should put him at exactly twenty five minutes before his last five minutes are due.

The weather was exceptionally dry and it took longer than usual to get to 217 pGBts on valozal, but things went smoothly from there. And there they were, Schmopakki and Schmubellum, counting down: the five minutes already started long ago, the threshold of the last remaining minute had been passed, they crossed the final thirty seconds, and then, finally, Schmubellum could no longer bear it and screamed, “So, what is it?” Schmopakki smiled and whispered “There is nothing, my friend, absolutely nothing! And it is now on you to go and tell this to everyone else...” And then Schmopakki closed his eyes and died.

And Schmubellum cried and cried, and then he buried his friend. And on his way back, agonizing over how he should possibly convey the message he received from Schmopakki to the rest of mankind, he

crossed a road, where he should have not, and got hit by a motorcycle. His death was instantaneous. So was the death of the religion that Schmoppi never quite started.

Epilogue

A somewhat related religion was indeed established in the year 2.914.212.0101.0F in the parallel universe X_zer40 as “Quantum Adventism”. It was spearheaded by the sentient paramagnet, P.O.Δ. Urchallo-Skvazhennik, who used the XAN-XI communication technique (itself built using the Polkatron method) to radiate the message: “I am a sentient paramagnet, and my cat is in a box.”

2. The Hell’s Highways

Devil Delta. Welcome to Hell, Mr. Hitler; we are sorry we had to keep you waiting. I am Devil Delta, your personal Devil's Advocate.

Adolf Hitler. Gott im Himmel!...

DD. No, no, not Himmel, you are in Hell.

AH. How did I get here?

DD. Devil Alpha, our Master Devil, advocated, greatly for you, and... after some back and forth - you are popular, so, many Hells wanted you in their Hellfire - anyway, with a lot of work by Devil Alpha, we managed to get you here, and now, oh, Mr. Hitler, I must say... all of those atrocities that you committed... I am such a fan. Some of our devils had to be expelled from hell

because they were not strong enough to watch them... no, no, Mein Fuehrer, you are really where you belong. Devil Alpha is most impressed. Let me give you a tour of our Hell.

AH. Die Autobahnen!!

DD. I beg you pardon, Mein Fuehrer?

AH. Die Autobahnen; where sind your Autobahnen??

DD. I am afraid I don't understand. Maybe this is something for you to discuss with Devil Alpha directly.

AH. Go zur Hell!

DD. We are already here, Mein Fuehrer.

AH. You're fired!

-change of scenery-

Devil Alpha. Mr. Hitler; we are honored to have you here. Welcome to Hell. I apologize that Devil Delta has created dissatisfaction for you. He is now being fired. He is currently at +27,450 Degrees Celsius. We will keep him there for a day or two and then have him come back to you and apologize. I am sorry that this happened.

AH. My Schnurrbart.... where ist....
mein Moustache!!!???

DA. We had to shave it off. Ypu see, this is something particular about our hell. I am the only one allowed to have a moustache here, because this is my hell. Your hell did not work out, so, you had to lose yours.

AH. I don't understand; who are you???
to shave.... MY MOUSTACHE!!!???

DA. Mein Fuehrer. With all due respect.
This is my Hell. You are my guest. A guest
of honor, but a guest nonetheless.

AH. Devil Alpha, stillgestanded. I
sprekkendzi now. You sei still. Your hell is
in a hell of a condition, you arschendevil.
Your devils are incompetent, you even
cannot fire them to high enough
tempreatures, and... ooh yes, ja-ja, I know,
you claimed +27,450 Grad Celsius, aber ich
know die truth. And the reality is that your
hell is technologically inefficient and you
do not even have Autobahnen! What car do
you drive?

DA. Volkswagen, of course.

AH. See; I created this car, I created the Autobahn, I, I-I-I-Ich-chhh

DA. Mein Fuehrer, I will be honest with you, Volkswagen is a great car, but why are you so obsessed with the highway?

AH. Because my way IS the highway. I am getting less and less amuesiert by your Ausreden! I am taking over. Shave off your moustache.

DA. Alright, deal... but only if you vow to make 2020 a Hell of a year.

AH (now with moustache). Deal baby!

3. Me World President

My name is Randolph Cevalo-Poplavitsky. To be more precise, this is my name now. I am the wealthiest man on the planet. But this is not how I was born. I was born poor as dollar percent dollar. You know, really poor indeed. How did I accrue my wealth? Let me tell you a story. This takes us back to my days as Moe Schmutzel, walking down the grandiose Avenue of Lost Hope. This is how we called it. Why? I don't know. What was its real name? I don't remember. Does it matter? Of course not! What matters is that I am about to tell you the story of the most incredible metamorphosis this world has ever witnessed.

I was walking down the Avenue of Lost Hope equipped with the hope of robbing a local hairdresser salon. Have you ever heard of a hairdresser salon robbery? Neither have

I. Nobody ever robs those! This is why I thought I should do that. They would be unprepared and I would get a bit of money to get through the week.

And so I found myself standing in front of the hairdressers, which went by the strange name Beethoven haircuts. They weren't very good at cutting hair. They pretended it was on purpose, "artistic presentation - everybody a maestro" was their slogan. Of course it was a pack of lies. They hired homeless people to cut hair. What do you expect? And they always played the same recording of Beethoven's Fifth. Ta-ta-ta-tam! Quick and angry, and your hair was gone. So, I found myself standing in front of Beethoven haircuts. A new idea came to mind. I would get my hair cut first and then I would rob them. Eureka - two for one! I walked in. They were

playing the third movement of the Fifth to the smell of cheap coffee, cheaper shampoo and those horrid cigarettes imported from Indonesia. You know; the ones where they sometimes find bits of toenails mixed in with the tobacco.

A greasy fat guy in his fifties came to me with a pair of what looked like garden scissors and said: My name is Ludwig; let me see who is available. Luigi is taken, Louis is out sick and Ludovico just cut his thumb. I guess I will be cutting your hair, Sir. "Well, if this is not promising, I don't know what is." I thought to myself. I sat down, closed my eyes and let fate take over. An occasional clicking sound of Ludwig's clippers barely perturbed my ability to plan. Hmm. Once he is done, I jump up and say "Ta-ta-ta-tam! Your money or your thumb!" I thought this was going to scare him. "They

cannot afford another guy to have a thumb injury. Surely he'd immediately hand me his money, and then, but on the other hand, what if..."

I kept thinking and thinking, and then, all of the sudden, I heard Ludwig say... "Sir, I am very sorry, I just cut my thumb. I cannot continue cutting your hair. This one is on the house." I opened my eyes to the worst haircut I have seen in my life. Worse still, my face was covered with Ludwig's blood. There was no way to just rob Beethoven's and escape gracefully now. Walking down the Avenue of Lost Hope with my face covered with blood, having just robbed a hairdresser's? That was asking for trouble. I therefore stood up, gave Ludwig a smile, nodded and walked off. "Bloody Hell, literally" I thought to myself "I should just have robbed the bastard!"

Walking down the street I saw there was a large group of people. "Presidential elections, Prrresidential Elections!!!"

I came to watch a little, and, next thing I knew, a reporter came to me "Mister, mister, you look so artistic, would you please tell us what it is like to live here?" "Well, it is..." "Thank you, mister, and what is your name?" "My name? Well, it is..." "Thank you, mister!" Please come and smile to the camera. As you may know, all presidential candidates have dropped out and we are assembling a new campaign. To represent the true colors of our country, we need to find a candidate who is poor, ugly, offputting and, well, just disgusting in every possible way. We have been combing down the country for a month now, and you are the best-suited candidate by far. What is your name, Sir?" "My name?" I paused...

Should I really say Moe Schmutzel?"

"Mister, we need your name, you are on camera and the world is watching!!!"

"Hmm... my name... Moe Schm Sorry. Randolph Cevalo-Poplavitsky." "This is fantastic, sir, and what is your election slogan?"

"My slogan....? My honesty and dirt will keep you boys and girls alert!" I improvised, and, next thing I knew, they put me into a limousine and said "Sir, you are exactly what we are looking for; you will not need to do very much when you are president... just occasionally say your beautifully crafted slogan and please, Sir... make sure you keep your hair the way it is right now. Your hair will appeal to a lot of people..." "And how about..." I tried to interject. "No worries, Sir, absolutely no worries, you are already pretty much

President. The rest is just a formality and you will not really need to do anything. Just say your slogan - we will take care of everything else!"

Promising it seemed, I thought to myself half an hour later, taking a sip of Louis XIII in my executive suite. A haircut really can take you places these days...

I woke up and found I still had this one goddamn dollar in my pocket. The same dollar that I had when I walked into this Beethoven haircuts salon before my life took the craziest turn that ever happened to any poor sucker. I still looked the same and felt the same, but I was now in this luxurious suite and, by the time I brushed my teeth - the first time in six weeks - I found they pushed a newspaper under my door. On the frontpage of it there was a big

photo of me smiling into the camera, with the slogan "My honesty and dirt..." and underneath: we welcome our new President. USA 2020! Long live Mr. Randolph Cevalo-Poplavitsky! I passed out.

When I came back to my senses I found I was no longer alone in my room. "I am sorry, Mr. President, we had to sack your cook..." "What?" "Your cook, Mr. President, we cannot have him make your dinner tonight. You are meeting with the Queen and, well, it would be an embarrassment." I nodded and passed right back out. When I came back to my senses, I realized I was already being groomed up for the dinner with the Queen. I will spare you the details of that dinner... mostly because I don't remember anything. I came back to my executive suite and passed right back out. Next morning I woke up to the news that we

were having a golf course with the president of Belarus, followed by a visit of the Prime-Minister of Israel, who wanted to move the capital of the Middle East to Damascus and needed it to look like a Coup orchestrated by Venezuelans and the Chinese. Then I found out that the de-dollarization was being promoted by the US, inside-out.

"An honest country does not need a currency, Mr. President. If you would sign here, please." I did and, within five minutes, the news announced that the US was collecting all dollars that were in circulation to burn them. Within two days, not a single dollar was left. Actually, one dollar was left... the dollar in my pocket, the dollar I still had from my days as Moe Schmutzel. Nobody would dare to take money from Mr. Cevalo-Poplavitsky, and I thought I'd keep the dollar just in case.

What if the reality is that I am drugged and hallucinating somewhere in the gutter? Then I would wake up tomorrow to the smell of my urine and vomit and no dollar in my pocket. I just kept watching, and the world chaos kept unfolding. Other countries entered what was called the Poverty Race 2020. They all got rid of their monetary funds, including the Germans, led by a woman looking like a man, and the French, led by a man, who behaved like a woman, and the Russians, and the Algerians, and, and, and... the world government got moved to Damascus, where I was elected the first World President... And I still had my dollar. The world economy collapsed... And I still had my dollar. Countries collapsed and people went to live in forests and mountains again.... And I still had my dollar.

And I still have my dollar! The only dollar left in this world. The only monetary unit left on this planet to remind us of the Capitalist days. Mr. Randolph Cevalo-Poplavitsky, the World's President, is now the wealthiest man on Earth. What a haircut!

4. Brigadier Sramnik

Dear Madam,

My name is Mikhaylo Smradnik and I wish to bring the following to your attention. Ever heard of this famous “We the people...” line? Hard not to, right? Let me tell you, this line has caused me great confusion as in Russian “Vy” – pronounced very similarly to “we” – means “you”.

From that it follows, Dear Sir, that “Vy, the people...” means “You, the people...”, while “We the people...” means..., well..., the opposite of that. And let me tell you, Vy, We, the people; this entire matter in its entirety is very confusing to me, Madam. Indeed, I am most confused and no longer understand who it is that is you and who it is that is we and who am I and what it means to be people. Can you please help me, Sir?

Yours sincerely etc.

Brigadier Sramnik,
Deceased

5. A Post-Modern Family

Dear to whom it may concern,

I got married: t'was my turn.

I discovered, in my mind
That my soul is one-a kind
And it has a female side
I shall take her for a ride.

Then I noticed, so to speak,
That I sometimes like to squeak:
That's the child in me, you know,
I will never let it go.

We adopt this child, and, see:
There's a family of three!

Most respectfully,
M. le Porste

Response: Respected M. le Porste, we
are sorry to inform you that our society is
not yet ready to embrace your visionary

proposition. It is with regret for me to tell you that you will have to pay the full tax rate this year. You may wish to consider the society of anonymous schizophrenics that is run by The Democrat and Nobody as an alternative and potentially beneficial outlet for your creative visions.

Yours faithfully,
Roland Rattengeber

6. The Buddha Takes Pills

“How sad the world” thought the Buddha to himself, popping a Xanax. “I used to teach people the essence of life, unconditional love, and now I am so numb that I cannot feel that love myself. How to love the world when you are emotionally dead?”

“There are eight billion people on our planet, and they are in pain. I used to feel their pain and that used to be my motor, but now... the pain has become too much...”

“I started with citalopram, then added other pills...” the Buddha continued pondering.

“How do you help the world if you cannot help yourself? I could not sleep, so I added Zolpidem. How can you help the world if you cannot sleep? Then my pain for the world started causing me muscular spasms, so I added in Venlafaxin to make it go away... I still felt too much pain, so I added in some more stuff... Trimepramin, Edronax, Gabapentin... Propranolol for panic, Lisinopril for blood pressure... all of those pills... and yet, I felt the pain still... a little less, perhaps... but I also had started feeling a different pain. That pain was coming from my numbness: I had lost my

connection with the world. I no longer felt what I was supposed to feel, I could not even feel my body, my breath... when I would try to meditate I would pass out. What a horrible world we have created for ourselves and our children. Where will this go? How will this end?”

The Buddha lit a cigar and accompanied it with a Bupropion for smoking cessation.

7. Tchaikovsky on XANAX

Needless to say, Tchaikovsky was never on the sedative medication Xanax (also known as Alprazolam), nor did he ever have any thoughts on Xanax, for the very simple reason that Xanax did not exist in Tchaikovsky's lifetime. It should also be made clear from the outset that there are

serious cases of depression in this world that require medication, and it would be disingenuous to claim otherwise. Yet the ease, with which antidepressants are often prescribed in the digital age, is alarming.

So here's a thought experiment. What if Tchaikovsky could have taken Xanax to make his sorrows disappear? This incredible musical genius, who wrote in his diaries how he could feel his pieces of music cry inside his soul, who had to write them down, so that they stopped crying... What if the crying was not there in the first place because Xanax muted it? Would there still have been the 6th symphony? Or would that, too, have been muted? Would we have lost one of the greatest musical pieces ever? We will never be able to test this proposition, but if you have heard the tears cried by the string instruments in the IV

movement of the 6th Symphony, you may echo my sentiment that Xanax could have dried those tears up.

But we are being selfish here, for we have taken our love of Tchaikovsky`s music as the decisive criterion. What about Tchaikovsky himself? Should his emotional well-being not be more important than our love for his music more than a century later? Then the answer is clear: Tchaikovsky taking Xanax would have been happier, his emotional sorrows gone. How simple! So simple, we must have missed something important...

And, indeed, we have, for we have made the assumption that suppression of sorrow means happiness. True, it is a state no longer characterized by emotional pain, but is that really happiness? A tree feels no

sadness (not that we know, anyway) - does that mean the tree is happy? This seems like an extremely unlikely proposition. And Tchaikovsky, who cried easily, who referred to this state as the bitter-sweet state of creation, might have sold his artistic soul to end up in a proverbial "Fool's Paradise".

And where do we fit in as a society? We love Tchaikovsky's music; isn't Xanax a hypocritical solution? Do we not have a moral obligation to create a world, in which Tchaikovsky can afford to keep his fragile vulnerability, which is the very soul of the artist? Our cruel world made of steel and gunpowder daily puts its best minds into an emotional coma. An artist, who has lost touch with the heartbeat of creativity, dies.

Music is the most universal human language, the language of the human heart,

the language of love. If we lose that language, we will all have lost ourselves. We started with Tchaikovsky, but discovered that it really is about us all. Maybe not that surprising after all. We are one species: Homo Sapiens. Let us do what we can to not go extinct. The time is now.

8. *The “I Don’t Know” Point*

“This point exists for everyone, with everything, and most of the time we don't even know it.” Kvanzo Pekhotsakhis wondered what that meant here, for him, in his current situation. Eventually this question took on the form of a glowing shell around him. This confused him, as he realized that he now also didn't know what that shell meant either, on top of everything else that he also didn't know. He didn't

know where he was flying and why. Nor did anyone else know on his planet. That he knew for sure. So he knew something - or did he?

“Socrates, where are you when you are needed? Or give me at least Descartes. I think, therefore I am. But do I really think? And do I, therefore, really “am”?”

He didn't know...

“Given how often I say “I don't know”, what if these end up being the three last words that I will say before I die? And then my friends will say “Kvanzo Pekhotsakhis died; his three last words were “I don't know”; they meant nothing - just like the rest of his life...”

He kept thinking...

“There is also this other part of me that wonders whether, perhaps, it is in the last five seconds of our lives that we finally understand what all of this was about, but then we die and can never tell anyone. If this is the case, my three last words might be “Now I know” And then my friends will say “Kvanzo Pekhotsakhis died; his three last words were “Now I know”; we have no idea what he was talking about, just like with everything else that he said...”

Kvanzo Pekhotsakhis sighed, paused for a second, sighed again, accepted the “I don't know point” and went to bed.

Addendum: We wish to note that Roland Rattengeber solved this issue, known to the philosophers of consciousness as “The Pekhotsakhis Dilemma”, very elegantly and

wisely. His three last words were a question, and the question was “Do I know?”

9. *Tspotch*

We are witnessing the rise in tendency for people to ape other people's thoughts, instead of thinking for themselves and having the openness and the courage to discuss their views in non-hostile fashion with others. This sad parroting without reflection, this ugly phenomenon that is very far from both free speech and thought, had no name before, has unfortunately become so paramount that it does call for one today. I shall name it "tspotch".

Tspotch is worse than having a great joke and no audience. Here, you do have the audience, but you end up telling lousy jokes

that are not even yours. Tspotch has always existed, but it has become particularly problematic with the emergence of social mass media, which is making it harder and harder for people to be left alone to think. A recent study with the thought-provoking title "Just Think: the Challenges of the Disengaged Mind" found that some people would rather administer electroshocks to themselves than remain one-on-one with their thoughts. This illustrates, in a literally electrifying way, the challenges that thinking in solitude brings; however, the concept behind it is not all that new.

Apollinaire talked about the challenges of solitary confinement in his brilliant poem "In The Santé", later used by Shostakovich, equally creatively, in his 14th symphony, Movement 7 for those interested; note how the original French title À la Santé loses its

second meaning in translation. Some two thousand years ago, Marcus Aurelius is believed to have said "If you are an aspiring thinker and you do not spend at least a couple of hours a day alone, in silence, thinking, you will never be successful". Thought means effort, going uphill, swimming against the current. It also means developing comfort with a degree of solitude, which seems to be something more and more people are less and less comfortable with. Read the beautiful poem of Tyutchev, titled Silentium. The Nabokov translation will work just fine.

It is now more important than ever for people to take time to think on their own. Social media provide fertile ground for tspotch to fester, and certain thoughts literally go viral, leading to a strange effect that could be called a "Planet-Wide Human

Resonance Catastrophe". Sort of like the Tacoma Bridge (look up videos of its collapse; very easy to find), only that here it is our entire civilization, our society vibrating in ways that are new, strange and explosive.

Freedom of thought is the ultimate human right, but also the ultimate human responsibility, a responsibility that urgently needs to be taken more seriously. Social media may have their place if a message needs such vast amplification, but we are still learning how to deal with this perilous tool, and a message worthy of such massive amplification is yet to be observed. Should the present text ever become that message, here is the gist of it:

Unplug. Read books, take time to think, discover what it means to have healthy,

unprejudiced discussions with people. Be prepared that others may feel just as strongly as you do about opinions that are very different from, possibly diametrically opposed to yours, which is absolutely fine, since we are all different. Stop tspotching!

10.Alexius: The Rembrant of Flowers

"Why did you write down my name?" asked the little boy curiously.

"So that I don't forget..." replied the grandmother with a gentle sigh.

The grandmother has Alzheimer's Disease, and she is beginning to have trouble learning new names. Her five-year old grandson is too little to understand the nature of the human tragedy that is

unfolding in front of him and perceives it as a game. They play this game every time he visits his beloved grandmother. And with every visit he realizes how his grandmother finds it harder and harder to recognize him, to remember. He eventually understands what is happening, just as he understands that there is nothing he can do other than continue to be by her side. She dies ten years later, leaving her heartbroken grandson alone. She was the only relative he had. From now on, all he has is himself, deep sadness and the lonely hours in the orphanage.

The boy, who, for reasons nobody understands, calls himself Alexius, although his real name is Bert, spends some ten years to develop a curious technique he calls Zeorakham. Through the years of intense

self-study Alexius makes an intriguing discovery that occurs in stages.

It starts with a feeling; a deep and profound feeling of sadness that he suffers from greatly, but also cherishes deeply, because he believes that it is the remnant of his grandmother that continues to live inside his own soul. However, this feeling also makes it very hard for him to live. He often has trouble sleeping through the night. His dreams are mostly nightmares, and he often wakes up in the middle of the night, drenched in sweat, shivering, not knowing where he is, sometimes not even who he is. He loves Schubert's unfinished symphony and calls it the B minor phase of his life. He is pale, extremely skinny and looks like he could faint at any moment, but he refuses to get medicated, because he is worried that he

will lose the echo of his grandmother inside his heart, the only thing that he has.

Alexius struggles for five years of sleepless nights and recurrent panic attacks, in which he gradually realizes that the feeling of sadness and emptiness in his body has a shape, as if it had a heartbeat of its own. He believes that feeling is not something one analyzes but something one listens in to, patiently, like an echo in a labyrinth that might tell one which way to walk to get out. Eventually he realizes that the heartbeat of his feeling of sadness and emptiness is associated with a thought structure. He spends another five years to figure out what this structure is.

At the critical point in his life, which he refers to as his Zeorakham metamorphosis, he is twenty five and he lives in a tiny room in Amsterdam. His job is to make flower

arrangements, and he is a true genius of floral artistic expression. He loves tulips and is known to the visitors as the Rembrandt of Flowers. When he is done with his job, he spends countless hours every night, walking along the canals of the old city, listening in to his feeling, trying to decipher the structure of the maze inside his mind. Every time he looks at a flower he gives it a name, and every time this name is the same: Margharete. And every time he calls the name, the feeling runs through his body like a lightning. By coincidence, once, he writes the name down instead of calling it and he makes a staggering discovery. The feeling disappears; there is no more lightning coming when he calls the name Margharete. He makes the insightful realization that his fear that was leading to the electrical feeling rising in his body was the fear to forget the name of his grandmother. What if one day

he started getting memory loss, just like she did? He kisses the piece of paper, folds it, places it carefully into his wallet and never parts with it. It is always with him, and the electrical feeling departs once and for all. He can finally rest.

Alexius, the Rembrant of Flowers then goes on to create, out of his personal suffering, a technique that can help other people, the technique he calls Zeorakham. He finds that by guiding other people to create floral arrangements while teaching them how to listen in on the burning of their soul unmask their subconscious aspect that underlies their sufferings. It works like magic. Thought structures emerge, mazes open, the unmasked information is written down, and the burning comes to rest.

Amsterdam has always attracted artists. When you walk through the city, it is as if you were part of a painting. In the ten years that followed, Alexius the Rembrant of Flowers was able to help many artists find a cure for their vulnerable souls using the Zeorakham technique. Then, one day, he suddenly died, while working on a tulip arrangement. He died of a heart attack, and he died instantaneously. He never forgot the name Margharete. He left Amsterdam as abruptly as he appeared, but he continues to live on in the hundreds of memories of the artists of Amsterdam, whose souls he cured. No one ever asked him what the word Zeorakham meant; the mystical nature of this strange sound he made up somehow made sense to everyone.

11. The Two Squirrels

Little Boy: Grandfather, I was playing outside, and I saw a live squirrel carry a dead squirrel into the bushes.

Grandfather: This is sad. I wonder what happened?

Little Boy: I don't know. Did you carry the grandmother, too, when she died?

Grandfather: I wish I could have.

Little Boy: Why didn't you?

Grandfather: They wouldn't let me even come close to her. The disease that killed your grandmother was very contagious.

Little Boy: Would you have done it if you could have?

Grandfather: Of course!

Little Boy: Could this have killed you?

Grandfather: Yes...

Little Boy: Would you have been scared?

Grandfather: Of course; dying scares people.

Little Boy: But you would still have done it?

Grandfather: Yes.

Little Boy: Grandmother was lucky to have you.

Grandfather: I loved her more than I love myself.

Little Boy: What about me? Do you love me as much as you loved her?

Grandfather: I love you very much, but don't compare. Every human relationship is special.

Little Boy: Did the living squirrel love the dead squirrel?

Grandfather: What do you think?

Little Boy: I think she did!

Grandfather: I think you are right.

Little Boy: Grandfather, why do people care about each other?

Grandfather: I don't know... but I think it is wonderful that we do.

Little Boy: I care very much about you.
And I also care very much about
grandmother. Where is she now?

Grandfather (with a sigh): Your
grandmother went back to atoms. She is
now everywhere.

Little Boy: Will you also be everywhere
after you die?

Grandfather: I promise, I will.

12. Unmasked

The mask fell off and I don't want it
anymore
I keep on walking as the mask rests on
the floor

How many masks hid underneath that mask?

To find that out is not an easy task.

Perhaps “not easy” is the dummy of the year

It seems naïve that I should wish to try or even dare

Kaleidoscope of life spins at hell's will
For every day new masks, oh, what a thrill!

How many masks are in our world today?

I have no clue – Too many!!!! – that I'll dare to say.

A mask for home, a mask for work, a mask for life,

A mask for wife, a mask for... someone else's wife.

To hell with this; I have a face, and ugly
it may be
It beats a thousand masks and always
shall be free.

***13. The Universe in Us (In Memoriam
John W. Phillips)***

People all know this feeling, or do we?
Of the universe in us that's burning
And the depth is so vast
That we choose not to look
As our pages keep turning and turning

And the planets and stars, they keep
flying
And the universe in us keeps burning
We forget who we are
Never knew who we are
For we never heard into this yearning

And our emptiness just keeps on
growing
As the universe in us keeps burning
We can never make time
And keep losing ourselves
Til' things come to an end, with no
warning

Friend, for now you're alive, pause and
listen
To the universe in you that's burning
Look inside with no fear
Find yourself, have no fear
Wait no more, start today, start this
morning!

14. The Drumbeat and the Maze

The maze, the drumbeat,
This sleepless night.

I cannot bear it,
And start to write.

My rhymes are broken;
The path unclear.
Who am I... and...
Why am I here?

The burning phantoms:
Why won't they part?
My mind's inflaming
My restless heart.

The world's a specter,
Illusion's real;
It seems we'll have to
Dive deeper still.

It's all connected:
Our time and space,
The heart - my drumbeat,

My mind - my maze.

15. Fata Viam Invenient (Dedicated to Harry Gray)

Fata viam invenient
Life is but a dance of atoms
They listen to cosmic music
Dancing our lives away.

Fata viam invenient
I wish I knew how to listen
So atoms could tell me their stories
Teach me on life and death.

Fata viam invenient
It's all in the law of nature
There is no escape from nature
Scary, yet beautiful, still.

Fata viam invenient
Our atoms will always travel
From Constantinople to Boston
Through time, through space and
through us.

Fata viam invenient
With eyes wide open, let's continue
dreaming!
Fata viam invenient
We travel together, friend.

16. Bald Sind Wir Alle Befreit
(Dedicated to Noam Chomsky)

I dream when my eyes are open
And I see when my eyes are shut
The world that's inside my being
Comes awake when reality's cut.

All those leptons, those quarks and
bosons

They spin restlessly in my mind
And the universe keeps expanding
And I sometimes wish I was blind.

Our sorrowful world faces danger
It gets harder to watch by the minute
We are stuck in collective madness
At least I won't be forever in it...

...Yet my heart, it just won't stop beating
And so I take on this day in stride
In my mind's ear I hear a faint whisper
"Bald sind wir alle befreit".

***17. Give it Time (Dedicated to Roald
Hoffmann)***

We are sitting on a rock

And the rock is flying high
Where and why? That, we don't know
But we know that we will die

Clocks are ticking left and right
Human beings go awry
Yes, it's hard to keep your smile
When you know that you will die

Nukes and missiles point at me
State of matter worth a cry:
End the war... this aimless killing...
Give it time; we all will die...

***18. Naked Apes (Dedicated to the
memory of grandpa "Musik")***

You dreamt of the place
That gave the world Charlie Chaplin.
The place

That was not about race,
Nor about the shape of your nose,
Or your face.

The world of humanity, honesty,
dignity...

The world
Where they would not have
Executed your uncle Isaac
Simply because he was Jewish.
The world
Where your cousin Yuzik
Would never have taken his life.

The world that you died dreaming of
Was a dream world of yours...

...All it turned out to be
Was but more of the same:

Naked apes, who just didn't know
better...

19. Diversity of Self

The Russian in me thinks
The whole world is Russia
Rossiya - matushka
Rodina nasha

The Jew in me's thinking
Oy vey, this is bad
The Russian has lost it
He's ravingly mad

The Brit in me thinks to himself
Oh my dear
I'm in the US, bollocks
Why am I here?

The German is thinking
Du Scheisse, der Brit
Himself wie ein American
And both full of shit

And the French in me says
Merde, rien ne va plus
I'm having my oysters
Shut up, all of you!

20. The Diary of Robert van de Slijnum
(Dedicated to Tal Bachar Raveh)

12/Caunus/A97

Me: The truth is always just one
step away...

Not me: What does this mean?

Me: To whom?

Not Me: To you...

Me: That the truth is always just one step away...

Not Me: Let's try a different approach. Imagine a cosmic perspective of yourself. Guide your mind's eye through the top of your skull, further and further away, imagine it being a luminous point that leaves the solar system and, when it arrives somewhere in the Alpha Centauri...

Me: How does that help? My truth is here.

Not Me: I understand, but please let me finish the thought experiment.

Me: I think I am done!

I paid the fee for this strange consultation and stormed out of the office. Walking by a large truck I paused for a second and took a deep breath. The strong, pungent exhaust smell made me shiver. What if it is exactly this inhale that will have given me lung

cancer thirty years from now? I walked more rapidly, as I watched this intoxicating thought gradually take possession of my mind. Who came up with this crazy idea that deep inhaling can be soothing? The air is filled with chemical and biological toxins. How on earth is inhaling that supposed to soothe me?

The eternal wonder, the quest for truth, is, of course nothing new. The Ancient Greeks, the Romans, their great philosophers all cared deeply for it. So we are told. Did they actually exist or was it all, perhaps, the result of indoctrination and propaganda? The Ancient Greeks, they say. How do the ancient Greeks get me any closer to my truth?

Let's try again. T-R-U-T-H. Teeeee-Arrrr-Yuuuu-Teeeee-Eihch. Whenever one takes a bit more time than usual to think about any word, including the word "word" and the

word “any”, the word will inevitably begin to sound weird. I have thought those thoughts so many times. And the result is always the same. It feels awkward, yet somehow redeeming at the same time. Why redeeming? Perhaps because my ability to create this awkwardness is something I can rely upon. All I need to do is pick a word – any word, including the word “word” and the word “any” and focus on it, digest it for long enough, and it will begin to sound awkward. As if something were beginning to open inside my mind and I make the realization that all structures of our mind have a deeper foundation to them that is chaos. Chaos! How can chaos be a foundation for anything?

Walking deeply immersed in thought, as it were, and paying little attention to my surroundings, I almost got hit by a bus before I got home, where my hungry cat

was awaiting me. The cat's name was Schweinebutzel – a word that meant nothing, yet contained the German word “pig” in it. The idea behind thrusting such an obscure name upon my feline companion was that it sounded absolutely ridiculous, so that, every time I called the cat it made me giggle. I once read somewhere that laughter is healthy, so naming the cat this way was part of my life extension strategy. Yes, dear reader, my goal is to live forever!

31/Caunus/A97

As you notice, I have my own calendar. It makes more sense this way. I will explain later why I believe it. For now all you need to know is that I do believe it and that my beliefs are sincere and dignified.

Someone smart told me once in my dream that it is of no significance where we are from. It is much more important where we

are going. However, as I was about to embrace this wisdom, someone else, equally smart, appeared in that dream and said with equal conviction that it does not matter where we are going if we don't know who we are, and we can only know who we are if we know where we are from. Then a third person appeared, looking even smarter than the previous two, raised his hand and opened his mouth to speak the truth, but... before he could speak, all three were eaten by a giant lizard that looked at me, blinked (or was it a wink?), and then I thankfully woke up, drenched in sweat and... nothing else, I promise... honestly, it was just sweat!

How important is it to know where I am from and where I am going? I still don't know...

Today is the first day of the New Year, the year B97. As you notice, the year has advanced from A to B, but the month has not changed. In my calendar, every year has just one month. Some of my friends, who are not my friends anymore because they made fun of me, have argued with me that it is of no usefulness to have a month if that month is never going to change, and that I should simplify my calendar by removing the month altogether. How misguided they were. Every person needs some source of stability. I have found this stability by creating a calendar with a month that never changes. Years go by, but the month is always the same. It is a form of gravity. I call it the gravity of time. Maybe in some very unusual way it answers both the question where I am from and where I am going, at least in the dimension of time. It is

the month Caunus, the constant of my life;
the month that never changes.

12/Caunus/A97

I decided to go back in time for a little bit. For those who wonder why, the answer is because I wanted to. For those who don't wonder why, the answer is still the same. Having your own calendar makes time travel easy, doesn't it? I mean, all you need to do is change the date the way you wish and you're done.

Here is an interesting story for you, dear reader, the story of the monster made of rubber and the monstress made of tin. They were fighting for the upper hand on who would control the world. Neither of them had any idea what the world was about, and neither of them cared. Their struggle was about power, and too much knowledge tends to mellow you out. This is why

Plato's idea of the philosopher king never worked out. The Rubbrarians and the Tinnanians spoke languages that were so different they could not listen to each other's arguments. If you spoke both languages and looked at the situation from afar, you realized that by choosing between the Rubber monster and the Tin monstress you were choosing between diarrhea and constipation. Which one is better? Clearly whichever one it is that you are not having... enough for today!

01/Caunus/B97

Here we are again. I am back from my time traveling, back from the year A97. See how easy it was? Try doing a bit of time traveling in your leisure and think of me. Don't forget to think of me. It is very important that you think of me when you time-travel.

And here is another thing, dear reader, very, very important. Please take the following sentence and think about it.

“I thought I ate the carrot, but it turned out that the carrot ate me”.

Weird sentence, aye? And you just took two seconds to think about it; and in those two seconds, you time-traveled by exactly two seconds. See what that means? We are all time-travelers, all of our time. And so, let's continue our travel through space and time, always remaining curious, wondering, trying to understand the world around us... I understand almost nothing, but I am doing my best to change that... honestly, I promise... I think...

12/Caunus/B97

It has been one year now since I went for this truth-seeker's consultation. It cost me 105 pinderos and made me more confused

and not less so, but maybe that's a good thing. I mean, confusion is a state that can lead to new insight as you work your way out of the confused state. At least, I hope so. For now, I have spent a year being very confused indeed. Here is what I learned. The truth is always just one step away. You take a step towards the truth; it runs away from you, just like the horizon. Am I more than a naïve little butterfly trying to catch the rainbow? But if so, maybe this is the best I can do. I mean, I just cannot stop... the rainbow is so beautiful. I heard that butterflies live for three days and then they leave the world. That's it. Three days! Think about it, dear reader. What would you do in three days if that's all you had? Would you pursue your career goals or would you try to catch the rainbow, if just for a tiny moment?

31/Caunus/B97

And here comes the next revelation. My years have three days each: the 1st, the 12th and the 31st. That's it: three days in a month and one month per year. Each year is a butterfly, and with every New Year I start anew. New hopes, new rainbows, new horizons... equipped with renewed, rejuvenated, reinvigorated hope to find the truth!

We all know the saying "The beauty is in the eye of whoever is holding the bees." So here I am, an innocent beeholder, holding my bees, thinking about the world. I was sitting in my room, trying to focus on an important question. And I know that I was doing really well. I mean, I was really, really focused. And then, at some point I realized that by focusing on my question so superbly, I was distracted from everything else. What if my question was unimportant?

What if the real question was somewhere else? That would mean that the same Robert van de Slijnum who thought himself so immensely focused was, in fact, distracted beyond all measure. I got so nervous that I immediately forgot what my question even was. So, let me tell you something else instead:

I heard of a sage man who went by the name Maestro Soumas O'Scholl, titled De Grande Ebiscoparium. The meaning of his title has been irretrievably lost in the flood that wiped out the city of Pomojn where he was housed at the time. Thankfully, at least some of his wisdoms survive, in written form. I was able to acquire his book "Di Untero Zazanis" and in that book I found something that really grabbed my attention. I mean, it really made sense. It gave me the chills when I read it. It is giving me the chills again here as I am writing it down.

Maestro Soumas calls this the “Principle of Balancium”. He says that, throughout our life, we are driven by our desire to move towards something. However, by approaching something, we are bound to distance ourselves from something else. It starts with simple things. I mean, I have heard of a man who bought two chairs and went insane as a result because he could never figure out, which of the two chairs to sit on. A true story, honestly, I mean it. I can give you the name of this man. His name was Roland Rattengeber. Do you believe that a name like this can be made up? Of course it’s real!

And now think about yourself. Let’s imagine you grew up as a musician but then somehow felt the urge to become a scientist. You started moving towards your new goal and, as you were moving closer and closer towards it, you were also moving away

further and further from your musician's self. You got close to the new destination. The departure site almost vanished from sight. Is this progress? Is this the new you burying your old you? Or is this just... balancium?

01/Caunus/C97

Happy New Year, dear reader!

And honestly, I wish deeply, dearly and sincerely that I could share some happy thoughts with you, but the truth – and this truth is unfortunately certain – is that a neighbor of mine hung himself yesterday night. Someone who went by the name Vassily Vselensky; I knew him fairly well, that is, to say, as far as our circumstances allowed.

He left a strange note, which doesn't really sound like a suicide note, more of a reflection. Here is what it said:

“We are all made of atoms. When we die, our atoms are left behind. They outlive us. I used to think that this is a form of immortality that is granted to all of us, but I also felt that my knowledge was incomplete.

We feel faster than we think.

It took me a solid decade – real years, not the pseudo-years used by van de Slijnum – to recognize what it was. It took all my energy, all my cognitive abilities, all my time. For ten years I would eat bread, drink water and read books on chaos theory and nuclear physics. The electron became my intimate friend. I barely slept. I neglected my social life. I neglected everything. When my mother died, I barely took notice. I went deeper and deeper, using every scintilla of the matter that makes up my brain, to try and understand the matter that makes up the universe. How naïve I was. How can the

miniscule part of the universe inside my skull ever understand the full universe around me in all its glory? Then, one night, I went to bed. I recall it very well. It was 0:03 am, and it was raining outside. I went to sleep with a question that was so abstract that I could just about feel that it was there. Three hours and thirty minutes later, that is, at 3:33 am, I woke up with the answer.

We are not immortal. We die and leave our atoms behind. Our atoms are made of electrons, protons and neutrons. These are much more long-lived than we are, but they are not immortal either. They eventually also decompose to give rise to other particles and to release energy. Energy is the answer. We are either mass or energy. From there it follows that $E = mc^2$ is the equation of immortality.

I have done what I was here for. It is time for me to go. Sorry for the mess.”

I read this note so many times that I now know it by heart. I think I know what happened. I have been telling Vassily that neglecting everything in his life to focus so sharply on one thing only is very dangerous. What will one do when this one thing is done? I kept telling him that he needs something else in his life, a balance. I gave him the books written by Maestro Soumas for inspiration. The doctors told him, too. He never listened. He went so deep into this character that wanted to understand what immortality means that this one aspect of him suppressed everything else. He literally became the search for the answer. And, you see, I have been feeling for a while now that one day I would be writing this obituary, so I know exactly what to say.

We all go in and out of all sorts of characters all the time. When we are in a

fancy restaurant, eating a steak, we put on our fancy steak-eating character, and when we are dancing a waltz with the love of our life, we become the enamored dancing character, and when we feed our cat, we slip into our cat-feeding character, and so on. The key point is that we have the capability to go in and out of many roles, and this flexibility is very important for our emotional balance, dear reader. Imagine now that all you have is one character; one character only; and then this character has fulfilled its duty. Where do you go? Vassily will be going back to atoms very soon. His cremation is tomorrow. RIP Vselensky.

12/Caunus/E97

As you see, dear reader, we are already in the year E97. The death of Vassily hit me really hard, and I was unable to write for

over two years. But I spent all this time thinking, and now I have a new insight I hope to share.

I spent much of this time thinking about the idea of freedom. Freedom is something we all care about, after all. Yet, dear reader, how many of us have ever sat down to think about the meaning of this word: freedom. F-R-E-E-D-O-M. Effffff-Arrrrrr-Eeeeeee-Eeeeeee-Deeeeeee-Ooooooooo-Emmmmmm.

It is a word and, just like any word, including the word “word” and the word “any”, once you take enough time to think about it, it begins to sound weird. As I told you before, this is something I find to be very soothing as it is always there for me, whenever I worry about things or feel like nothing makes sense anymore, which is, really, the way I feel most of the time. And how should we feel given everything? We are nothing but helpless little creatures,

stuck on a rock that is moving through space and time on a trajectory way too vast for us to even begin to comprehend, and we know that we are all going to die. This is our foundation, dear reader, and I believe firmly that it is important to never forget about that. However, let's not get too distracted by it right now, or else we will not get anywhere.

Having done the word decomposition practice, let's go back to it in the way we think we know it: "Freedom".

My dear reader, what does the word "Freedom" mean to you? We all think we know what it means, yet, when we pause like this and try to actually spell out this meaning, it just disappears. Take a minute and try it. Isn't it funny how that works? All this wisdom, university degrees, flying to the moon, cloning, silicone implants, eternal youth, and yet here we are, struggling to

explain something all of us believe to understand.

I have a neighbor, who is a self-taught shaman. He lives two rooms down from where Vassily used to live. Before he joined our community, he spent much of his time in Latin America, where he engaged in indigenous practices to get closer to the meaning of life. The problem, he told me, is that things always made sense until he tried to write them down or spell them out. He told me that forest spirits once came and whispered wisdom into his ear. It made sense. He understood everything in an instant, but then, when he tried to write it down, it vanished. It never came back since. This is why, he told me, he never talks about things that are important to him nor tries to write them down. In fact, he never talks at all. This is the only time he talked to me in the twenty two years that we have

been neighbors. And I still don't even know his name.

In any case, I will take a risk and try. I believe that none of us really know what freedom is, since none of us ever experienced it in pure form. If you think about the word freedom the way it is used, it always comes with constraints. You have the freedom to choose between certain things, which smart people like to call options. These options have already been pre-made for you, and you don't really have any freedom there. Or maybe you do a little bit if you are lucky (or is it luck?), but then there are also options that led to creation of those options, and the options behind the options behind the options, and at the end it is just like chasing the horizon again, like with the concept of truth and so many other things we think we understand. But it gets worse, dear reader, it gets even worse. The

moment you have this tightly circumscribed set of options that you believe to be your freedom, you have to make the decision, that is, you choose one of the options, and the moment you do that, your freedom is gone again. This means that freedom is not only extremely narrow, but it is also ephemeral, and the only way to make it durable is to not make the choice at all. But if you are not going to make the choice, is it still freedom we are talking about? Maybe my shamanic neighbor with no name is right. This is beginning to hurt my brain; enough for today.

31/Caunus/E97

Dear reader, it always gets worse before it gets better. So they say. For now, it just keeps getting worse. Today, a new guy was allocated to the room where Vselensky used to reside. In being brought in, he was

screaming and shouting. “My name is Nestor Osborn Bertrand Orlando Demetrios Yitzhak, I am Nobody, Nobody, Nooo-booo-Dyyy!!!”

Clearly, N-O-B-O-D-Y – Ennnnnnn
Oooooooo Beeeeeee Oooooooo Deeeeee Uaiiii
– those are his initials and “Nobody” is the abbreviation. This by itself is no big surprise. We get all sorts of weird characters in our institution; I am a pleasant exception. However, when the new guy ran up to the silent shaman, yelling “Nobody”, and bit his nose, a profound wave of nostalgia overcame me. I hadn’t fully appreciated how wonderful Vassily had been as neighbor until just now.

Nobody got tranquilizers and, soon after, it was calm again. But something was shattered inside of me. You see, dear reader, I am here voluntarily. I came to the ward because I was unhappy with the world. It

was too loud for me out there, too loud and too unpleasant. All those presidents of countries, presidents of companies, presidents of toilet paper... I was hoping that here, in this ward, I would be able to concentrate on my search for truth and insight, but now, with Nobody around, how am I going to accomplish that? Nobody doesn't care about the truth. Nobody just about cares about Nobody. And the nose of the silent shaman looks horrible with those stitches now. I think it's time for me to go. But before I go, I will enjoy a nice and healthy sleep. I will go to bed early, wake up refreshed and will take it from there.

01/Caunus/F97

Sleep. Equates the wealthy with the poor, the beggar and the king... it's just that... sleep... is a little bit too much like death. I

believe I heard it somewhere. Or maybe I made it up. I don't know.

How do you know if a thought that you have in your head is genuinely yours? Have you ever wondered that? What does it even mean to own a thought? I mean, just think about it. How does life start? Well, I assume that you know what happens before the fertilized egg starts dividing, although even there, we have options now, and who knows what will happen in the future. Maybe they will make the fertilized egg fill out a questionnaire to ensure it consents to dividing. I don't know. It would be weird, but then, isn't it weird the way it is right now? Just think what leads to the fertilization of the egg. Poetry, dancing, taking walks, holding hands, disco, expeditions to the North Pole, cello suites of Bach, Amarone, Amaretto, all sorts of other amorous things, just so that one day,

prrring, the egg is fertilized. Every time an egg is fertilized it makes the sound prrring. It is hard to hear, but I promise, if you listen closely enough, it will be there.

So now there is the fertilized egg, what's next? It starts dividing. At that point, it is safe to assume, it does not think. There is no brain yet. It is just a cell! It keeps dividing for some ninety years and eventually, gradually, more and more sophisticated organs emerge, including the brain. Does the brain think before birth? It probably depends on how you define thinking, because the brain activity that controls heartbeat is already there, and so are many other autonomous functions, but the higher cognitive functions of the brain that recite Shakespeare are most likely off, at least in the form we think of them. Then at some point the baby is born. It is born with no thoughts about the world whatsoever,

completely innocent. This is why it immediately cries when it is born. It senses what is coming, and how hopeless it all is. Then, in the first years of life of the baby, the brain is wired, through interaction with the environment. It can take all sorts of strange forms. For example, I once met a girl named Marissa DiPoppagio, who grew up with her parents, who also had two geese as pets. Her parents neglected her to the point that she spent much more time with the geese than with her parents, which led her to develop the belief that the geese were her parents and her parents were their pets. A real story; I promise.

The point of the story is this. By the time Marissa DiPoppagio got to the point of thinking that the geese were her parents and her real parents were their pets, this thought, to her, felt like her thought. And this is how she talked about it. But think about it once

more. The thought emerged through the interaction of her brain with the environment. If not for the behavior of her parents, it would never have formed. And had it been someone else in Marissa's place, then that person might be having her thoughts in her place. See my point? It is almost impossible to have environment-independent thoughts, but if your thoughts are so dependent on your environment, are they still really yours? What does the question even mean?

In any case, it became clear to me that at my ward, after the suicide of Vassily and with the arrival of Nobody, my thoughts might begin to shift in ways I would not want to experience. I therefore went ahead and signed out. The red-haired lady gave me a smile and said "Mr. van de Slijnum, we look forward to seeing you again soon". I mean, this is not the first time that I am

leaving this ward. In fact, I have been in and out for at least a couple of centuries now. But this time it is different. I am not coming back. I am certain... I think...

12/Caunus/F97

So here I was, walking down the beautiful street, holding Schweinebutzel in a custom-built cat-aquarium. The cat-aquarium is like a cat carriage, but it is aquarium-shaped and transparent. Schweinebutzel likes transparency. So do I. Indeed, I like transparency so much that I once ordered for myself a completely transparent suit made of plasticotton, which almost led to my arrest when I tried wearing it on a sunny afternoon in Macau. Or maybe it was Moscow, or, as the Germans would say, Moskau. Or maybe it was Berlin. It doesn't really matter. What matters is that I almost got arrested, but then I didn't, because of

the way I handled the situation. Let me tell you how that went.

A policeman walked up to me and asked me to stop, which I did. He asked me whether I realized that there was something wrong with my suit. I replied that I did not and asked the policeman to explain to me what was wrong with it. He looked at me for a second, rubbed his eyes, looked at me again and said. “Well, it is transparent.” I looked back for a second, rubbed my nose to show parity and respect and asked “What do you mean?” The policeman replied grumpily “I mean that I can see more of you than I would like to and this is punishable by law.” “What law?” I wondered. “The civil law.” He replied. “The civil law?” I inquired. “The civil law.” Said the policeman. We stood in silence for a bit and then I asked him whether he’d be willing to consult another policeman for a second opinion.

It was a really, really hot day. The policeman was a relatively short, pig-faced man in his early sixties with a deep nasal voice, and he was sweating heavily. He kept rubbing his eyes. Much to my delight he consented to consult a second policeman. It was very hot indeed, and I was also sweating profusely. And my sweat, evaporating off my legs and my chest, condensed again on the inside of my plasticotton suit, forming a very fine nebulous film. By the time the second policeman arrived, the suit had become completely opaque. The second policeman looked at the first one, murmured “Very funny, Rocco.” and walked off again. Rocco looked at me and said “Sorry, I must be hallucinating, the heat is terrible, sir.” Then he left. And then I left and later donated the plasticotton suit to the local striptease

parlor, where it became a big hit and brought the owner fame and fortune. I promised to myself never to wear a transparent suit again and indeed I never did. But I did many other interesting things since, and I plan to do many, many more interesting things in the future.

31/Caunus/F97

Dear reader, dear reader. We have been together for several years now. I wish I knew your name. Honestly, this would mean a lot to me. Please write me a letter. My goal is to go to Sakhalin someday. I always wanted to go there, but it is very far, and I just haven't been able to do it yet, but I will one day. I will also go to Senegal, and will also go to many other places interesting places. However, right now I am in California and I urgently need to get to Amsterdam. I heard that, to express their

affection for Amsterdam, Germans open their public speeches with the sentence “Meine Amsterdamen und Herren...” and if Germans love something, it means it is really good.

However, let us take one step at a time. I am still in California and I just left my institution. Last time I left, I made my plans too ambitious in that I wanted to fly to Amsterdam straightaway from San Francisco, and that was just too much stress for me, too much change, too much noise for my hyper-alert consciousness so, within less than twelve hours of leaving, I came right back to the ward, trembling and shaking. The red-haired lady who was signing me out the day before last remembered that, of course, which is why she said she looks forward to seeing me again soon. I mean, it has barely been twelve years since my last departure. Of

course she remembers. We all know how good the memory of red-haired women is, don't we?

I must not make the same mistake this time. I think I will try to use my new theory of the cognition and emotion interface. You see, since I'd left the institution last time I realized through a lot of meditative work that our cognition has a background that can be thought of as color and our emotion has a background that can be thought of as tonality. For example blue cognition has the D minor emotional background and green cognition is usually G major. In order to travel to Amsterdam, I need to be in the bright orange C major frame of my cognition-emotion interface, and right now I am purplish silver and B flat minor. I am therefore going to book a hotel room in Monterey and a flexible ticket to Amsterdam, so that I can jump on the plane

as soon as the sought color and tonality of the mind have arrived.

You might think that my life is difficult, dear reader, and you are probably right, but please don't pity me, as my life is also very, very interesting, and I would never ever even think of acquiring the stability of the mind at the price of putting my soul into a coma.

01/Caunus/G97

So here I am in the hotel in Monterey, watching the seagulls through my window. Even though the ocean is, of course, blue, the color-tonality of my mind is G major and green. This is a good sign.

I was thinking how people spend all that time wondering if there is life after death and nobody every thinks about the reverse, which is certain, that is, there is death after life. Whatever else happens we don't know

but our life is happening, it is here and it is now. I think it's important to remember, so I will repeat.

Whether there is life after death can never be tested, but it is certain that there is death after life. So work with what you have. I have this theory, which is, really, more of a feeling than anything, that in the last five seconds (it could also be three or seven, this is not the point) in those last seconds, anyway, we just somehow get it! We understand what life was about. But then we die and cannot tell anyone what we learned. Until that point comes, the best thing that you can do is not to worry about it, and have an interesting life full of interesting things.

I haven't told you about another neighbor in the ward yet. He went by the nickname "The Democrat" because he'd come up with a very interesting democracy that is nothing

like anything you have ever heard of. Here is his recipe:

You buy a rat. Yes, dear reader, a rat. Ideally it should be a nice black one with white spots, but it doesn't really matter. You could name your rat Berta, or, if this is too conventional, you could also name her Murza. And then you go ahead and start mocking the rat. You say things like "Murza, you are horrible, you are ugly, your tail is disgusting, you will never have any friends." and all sort of things like that, and then, when you are done mocking the rat, you reverse your stance and begin to apologize, that is, you say things like "Murza, I am so sorry, I don't know what happened to me, I really shouldn't have said all those things, I am most deeply apologetic." You see, what happens in the process is that you de-mock the rat. De-mock rat – democrat. Got it?

Brilliant as he was, I am glad that our “Democrat” never became a politician, although many of our politicians today are not much better. I mean, at least our “Democrat” was institutionalized and couldn’t do any harm to people. And he was benign, just a little out there with his ideas.

12/Caunus/G97, in the morning
I am still in Monterey. My tonality is meanwhile D sharp major and the color is yellow. This is a good sign. If my estimations are correct, the C major orange comes after D sharp major yellow. We shall see.

I haven’t been to Amsterdam for nearly a millennium. I really cannot wait to get back. I have to make sure that I keep my mind focused and stable, so as to ensure that C major orange comes soon.

It is very important to know how to prepare for a stressful event, and both positive and negative stress has to be treated with similar respect. In fact, positive stress is more dangerous because, unlike negative stress, in addition to being stressful, it is also addictive. My rule for life is to be found in this tiny poem that I once discovered somewhere in a corner of my mind:

If you know you will get stressed
Get prepared, go get some rest.

Part of my resting routine is, in addition to avoiding all sorts of thoughts that are rough around the edges, to try and limit interaction with people wherever I can, so as to not let them inject their worries into my mind. No TV or internet goes without saying, of course, as I never got infected by the two modern day plagues to begin with. I avoid

crowds and I avoid noisy places, but I also make sure not to sit around, instead to walk a lot, spending much of my time surrounded by nature. The next one is a bit less obvious, but I find that it really helps to drink nothing but water and only eat bread with a bit of olive oil. This way I create a very well-defined background state through all my senses, and you'd be amazed at the wonders good quality bread and olive oil can do. Having said all of that, I should go and take a stroll along the ocean; the sun is about to rise.

Carpe diem, dear reader.

12/Caunus/G97, in the evening

Sad is the day, oh, so sad. I left full of hope and I returned full of despair. Things are not going the way I was hoping they would, dear reader. From yellow D sharp major, things turned blue D minor, and this means

that traveling is out of question again. Alas, I will not be able to go to Amsterdam for now. I need to go back to the ward and come back to my senses. At least I managed to stay out for a whole year this time. I am certainly making progress, I mean, I hope I am. I sometimes wish it was a little easier, but then I wonder... would I still write if I had an easier life? I am who I am and I do what I can. I mean, if I do my best at all times, can I do any better?

01/Caunus/H97

“Dear Mr. van de Slijnum.” The read-haired lady said “it is always such a pleasure to have you back with us.” I smiled and bowed forward gently. I call the lady Gita, although her real name is Nancy. She doesn’t mind. In fact, she told me that it makes her very happy that I gave her such a special name. “Dear Gita” I said, “the world is blue, my

soul is D minor, and my place is here.” I came back to my room – the same room I left last year, the room 207; two hundred and seven. I picked this room number for a reason. If you add up two and seven you get nine, and the square root of nine is three, and three is a very good number.

You see, dear reader, just like it is important to pick the right tonality and color of the mind for important events, it is also important to surround oneself with numbers that have good structure. For example, you may have wondered, why it is that my calendar consists of the dates 01, 12 and 31. I know you have, and I can tell you are smiling right now. Here is the explanation: Things start with 1; that is very simple, right? What is the number that comes after 1? It's 2! And if you now put 2 after 1, you get 12, right? And if you now take 1 and add 2 to it you get 3. And if you take 3 and

put 1 after that again, you end up with 31. It's all very logical; you just need to see it. One can do all sorts of incredible things with numbers. Here is an example; I like to call it the "Ultimate van de Slijnum Brain Twister". It is to do with human beings and how related we all are:

1. Assume one human generation is born every 25 years. This may not be quite accurate, but it does not really matter for the argument. Just makes my calculation and my life easy and pleasant. And what can be better than easy and pleasant?
2. In any case, this gives you four ancestry generations 100 years ago, that is, two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents and sixteen great-great-grandparents.
3. So far so good. Now walk back 2000 years. Assuming no inbreeding, this gives

us 280 fully divergent ancestry, which is 10^{24} or one trillion of trillions of people who would have had to have mated 2000 years ago to produce me typing these words right now if we assume no inbreeding.

4. The problem is that this is ten trillion times more than all people who have ever lived on our planet.

5. Ergo, we are all extraordinarily closely related and this is why history repeats itself all the time.

This means, dear reader, that you and I are actually distant relatives, perhaps even cousins! Isn't this a thought worth having? I am always amused by those smart scientists and how they spend billions, trillions and dzabbadzillions in their institutions to study human genomes, to build phylogenies and to show how related people are, and I can do it in my institution,

equipped with nothing but paper, a pencil and my mind.

Try it, dear reader, please try, test my logic, prove me wrong, and if you have, please let me know. I would love to learn from you. And, of course, and you knew it, there is always the next carrot, dear reader. Thank you!

12/Caunus/H97

I read a poem the other day. Here are the first two lines of it:

Gone are the days when madness was
confined
By seas and hills from spreading through
mankind

Such irony; I am hiding in this ward
because the world is mad. Here, at least, the
madness is a bit more predictable than in

the big angry world outside, albeit not always.

I just saw the silent shaman. His nose has healed up and it almost seems to me that it looks better now than it used to before Nobody bit it. Everything has a purpose, I guess. I keep wondering what my purpose is. I mean, if everything has a purpose, even the shaman's bitten nose, shouldn't I have a purpose, too?

Maybe my purpose is to travel the world and to tell everybody that everything is not nearly as bad as they think? I would love to do that. I want to go to Sakhalin and Senegal and Amsterdam and Jerusalem and Alexandria, but before I can do any of that, let alone all of that, I need to find the strength to spend any meaningful amount of time outside of the ward. I think I am on a good track, though. Three days I managed to do this time are certainly much better

than the twelve hours that I lasted last time I tried. So, bear with me, dear reader, please, just a little bit longer.

31/Caunus/H97

As I was walking through our garden I saw an interesting scene. The “Democrat” was sitting in an armchair. In front of the armchair there was a little round table, on which there was a cage with a rat. On the other side of the table, Nobody was kneeling down, bowing rhythmically and mumbling “Dear Murza, please forgive me, I made a mistake, I should never have done this, I will never mock you again, you are the most beautiful rat in the world.” The “Democrat” gave me a wink and said “Nobody is a democrat now!” I gave him a wink back and said “I know, and justice is made of just ice!”

01/Caunus/I97

It is interesting how sometimes things that make no sense at all work out the best. Here is a story on that. A young couple once got into a terrible car accident as a result of which the man became deaf and the woman became blind. A horrible pre-requisite for a relationship, one might think. Yet, it turns out that it was this accident that brought them closer than ever.

You see, dear reader, it takes a lot of effort for a blind person to communicate with a deaf person. I mean, how would one even do that?

If the blind person speaks the deaf person cannot hear. If the deaf person tries sign language, the blind person cannot see it.

The couple came up with a language of touch, in which they wrote letters and signs on each other's bodies and, in doing so they came much, much closer than they had ever

been before. They spent so much time together that they in a way became one person in the end. And at that point they were neither blind nor deaf because their tactile communication enabled them to share their senses of vision and hearing with each other. They grew old together, they died simultaneously and they died smiling.

12/Caunus/I97

I read that, apparently, there are two types of worry that us human beings tend to have: Type I is the abstract worry or rumination and Type II is the more well-defined, target-oriented worry. Type I worry is expressed through thoughts like "I am a hopeless human being; nothing good will ever happen to me; I am a failure; I see no future for myself; the world would be better off without me" and so on. Type II worry is expressed through thoughts such as "if I

don't leave the house in 15 minutes, I will miss the bus; if I don't study, I will not pass the exam, if I don't pay the bill, I will get a fine" etc. Type I worry is a symptom of serious depression, whereas Type II worry can actually be quite useful and even uplifting if acted upon adequately.

Now, I hear that, wherever you see a Type I worry rise in yourself, you should take a deep breath and try to see if you can translate it into a Type II worry so that you can actually act upon it. This way you will have a happier and healthier life.

I am struggling right now with the Type I worry that I will never be able to get on the plane. It would be good if I could translate it into Type II. This way I would have rational access to it and this may make it possible for me to remedy the situation.

Maybe I will ask the silent shaman for advice. He might help come up with a better

strategy than my monitoring of color and tonality of my soul to pick the date for flying, and he has talked to me before, after all. What have I got to lose?

31/Caunus/I97

Today I approached the silent shaman. Let me tell you how it went. Behind the building where we are housed there is a beautiful garden with a large oak tree, surrounded by roses and tulips. The shaman likes to sit under the tree and meditate. He is tall and skinny and, when he sits under the oak tree, he himself also almost looks like a tree. He can sit there for hours and I really like to watch him do it because it feels peaceful, somehow. I walked up and asked him whether I could join him for a meditation. This is something I'd never done before, but he immediately invited me with

a slow, dignified hand gesture to take place next to him, by the tulips.

I took place and we sat for some half an hour, maybe more. I have never meditated before and, to be honest, I don't really know if I meditated this time. For all I know, maybe I just sat by the tulips in the sun and thought that I was meditating. "You finally came." said the shaman suddenly, with his eyes closed and his face directed to the sun. He was speaking very slowly, so that I could feel every word resonate with me. "Yes" I said "I finally came." "This is good." he replied. "I know you need my help and you don't quite know how to ask for it, and the reason you don't quite know how to ask for it is that you don't quite know what it is that you should be asking for..." he added. "Do you know?" I wondered. "Yes..." he responded. "What is it?" I asked. "Clarity... you are looking for

clarity... you are in a state of confusion... you have been in it for a while..." It was true, I was looking for clarity. "So, where do we start?" I asked. "We already started." He responded. "Please call me Ur-Pabilsag." I could not believe it. He told me his name! "Dear Ur-Pabilsag, thank you for sharing your name with me. My name is Robert van de Slijnum." I replied. He nodded and said no word for another half an hour. Then he nodded again, looked at me and said "This will do for today. Come back in three days; same time and same location. I will help you." I thanked him and left. The encounter went much better than I could ever have dared to hope.

01/Caunus/J97

Ur-Pabilsag: an interesting name, ancient and dignified somehow, as if it were a spirit

from a long time ago. The shaman and I haven't really done anything yet, but it already feels as if I had taken a path towards an unknown but important destination. Or maybe the path took me? It feels a bit like in this poem I heard a long time ago:

My rhymes are broken, the path unclear.
Who am I... and... why am I here?

It is as if something is beginning to move inside my mind; perhaps a new question being formed? Someone told me once that a sign of a good question is that it leads to a good answer and a new good question. It makes sense. I mean, if you have really thought the question through, you will have put so much effort into it that the answer will be within reach, once you have formulated the question. This is, of course, only true if the question is such that an

answer is possible. Some of the hardest questions tend to be the ones asked by little children because they ask questions about our very foundation, that is, things that we tend to think for granted.

Just think about some of the typical questions kids ask: "What is music? Why is today Friday? Why do I need to sleep?"

Simple questions can be deceptive. In fact, I have come to believe that some of the simplest questions are so simple that they do not have an answer at all. I have to stay away from questions of this type in my meditations with Ur-Pabilsag. He is right; I am in a state of deep confusion. I think that the best question I can ask for now is "what is the question?"

What would the question be for you, dear reader?

12/Caunus/J97

Question. Q-U-E-S-T-I-O-N. Qyuuu, Yuuuu, Eeeee,... it is not working. Not this time. No matter how hard I try to open the question to get deeper, I just get repelled by it. As if it was behind an impenetrable wall; or maybe I am behind the wall. If all you have is one glass wall separating two objects, can you still determine, which of the objects is behind the wall?

The question is, what is the wall that separates me from the question? Just a moment. This gives me a thought. Let's simplify this last bit. Instead of saying "The question is, what is the wall that separates me from the question", how about saying "The question is what is the wall?" What is the wall? And where is the wall? Is it inside my mind? What is it separating? And how did it get there? Those are all questions, but are they of substance? Or am I just writing them down because I feel that I need to?

Here is a scary wall I heard about. The brain is a fascinating structure, dear reader. There is the cortex, the cerebellum, the brain stem, the amygdala, the hippocampus and many other interesting things, but I am getting carried away, I apologize. The cortex is made up of two hemispheres, and those two are connected through something called the corpus callosum. People who have severe seizures sometimes get a surgery, in which this corpus callosum is cut to prevent seizures from spreading too widely. This leads to the so-called split brain phenomenon. This is scary. The two hemispheres lose their ability to talk to each other and you can no longer make certain connections. What if I have a split brain? Would I know? Would I be able to tell? I mean, I never asked for a surgery, nor have I ever had any seizures, but what if someone came into my room when I was sleeping,

anesthetized me and quickly split my brain? What if this is the root of all my problems? Or maybe my problem is that I read too many books about the brain. It is a hopeless pursuit anyway. The brain is too complicated, and is certainly not meant to understand itself. Someone once told me that you can prove this point mathematically through some form of recursive logic, and even showed it to me, but I didn't understand it and will not even try to pretend.

I will instead share with you the split brain metaphor I have come up with. I believe that the split brain analogy can be extended to human societies. For example, the iron curtain was a planetary split brain phenomenon. Alas, people haven't learned from it, and keep making the same mistakes again and again. Every time that dialogue breaks down between groups of people, this

can be thought of as a split brain of the society. Remember the story of the Rubber Monster and the Tin Monstress? That was a a split brain on country level. And then there are also people who split the atom, and some others, who prefer split pea soup. I am getting hungry, and so is Schweinebutzel. I think I have done enough thinking to prepare myself for my next session with Ur-Pabilsag, coming up tomorrow.

31/Caunus/J97 in the morning
I could not sleep very well this night. Too much thinking, turning and tossing; I probably overdid it with the question yesterday. I kept recalling this phrase I once read “And in the end we will not have had the time to do those things that would have mattered the most.” Every time I thought about it, my heart got sore. I mean, how am

I supposed to know, what will have mattered the most to me when I am old? I thankfully survived the sleepless night, and am meanwhile sitting in the garden and having a cup of Oolong tea with floral honey from Kyrgyzstan. It is absolutely magnificent. Sitting there, looking up at the sun and feeling the warmth flow through my body, I realized all of the sudden that Nobody and the Democrat have approached me. They sneaked up on me very quietly, so I didn't hear anything, put a cage with the rat on the ground right next to me, and were looking at me with their eyes full of hope. "Sorry, guys, I am not into politics." I said to them. They nodded in disappointment, picked up the cage, and walked away quietly.

I have a few hours before my next session with Ur-Pabilsag. I still don't know what the question is, but I am at peace with my

situation. I am letting go and will take things as they come.

31/Caunus/J97 in the afternoon

Ur-Pabilsag was sitting under the oak tree, just like the last time, his hands placed palms-up on his knees, the face directed towards the sun, eyes closed. As I approached, he pointed to the same spot by the tulips where I sat last time, without moving his faces or opening his eyes.

I sat down and said no word; then he said now word, and then I said no word again. Interesting it was, although we were not talking, I could tell exactly whose turn it was in this silent dialogue. As it was Ur-Pabilsag's turn again, he finally opened his mouth and said "Good breathing technique." He then added "It is customary to choose a name for the disciple entering the practice. I have thought about it. The

two names I came up with that I consider most fitting for you would be either Zalams or Goombarch. You choose one of the two. Once the name has been chosen, we shall proceed. The goal of the session is to formulate our first question. It will always be one question per session; no more and no less"

We paused and continued breathing in silence for some twenty minutes. Then I said "I would like to be Goombarch. Does this mean that you will be Zalams?" "No" He replied. "I cannot be Zalams. I am already Ur-Pabilsag." Twenty more minutes passed in silence, then, much to my surprise, he opened his eyes and said "This is it for today." "But what about the question!?" I asked frantically. "You asked whether I would be Zalams. I answered that I would not. Next time, a deeper question

shall be posed. See you again in three days, Goombarch."

Disappointing as it was, Ur-Pabilsag was right. After three days of thinking, the best I was able to come up with was the shallow, superfluous question whether I should call him Zalams! I got up, said no word and walked away slowly and full with embarrassment.

01/Caunus/K97

I woke up in the morning and immediately thought of my horrible performance of yesterday. "Robert van de Slijnum, you are a moron!" I said to myself. However, soon after, I got out of bed and saw myself in the mirror. This reminded me of how handsome I was, and I immediately felt much better. "Maybe it is not such a big deal after all" I continued my morning monologue. "All that happened is that I wasted a session with Ur-

Pabilsag, but it is not like he said he would not work with me anymore in the future."

My mood continued improving and I was meanwhile dancing up and down my room.

"Blessed be my institution." I was singing to myself. "We have such wonderful, charming people here: Ur-Pabilsag, the Democrat, even Nobody!"

However, I was also feeling that my happiness might be ephemeral and, as such, best enjoyed in solitude. I decided to therefore not leave the room today. I have learnt that, on days when my mood swings like this, from very low self-esteem to dancing and happiness within just minutes it is best to keep low profile and maybe read a book.

One of my friends called Thor ben Porzten gave me two books as a present: The Universal History by Ibn Khaldun and The Idiot by Dostojevski. "I am curious, which

of the two you will read first." He said with a wink. And I honestly don't know. Which of the two books should I read first? It is a classical Balancium challenge. By approaching one of the books I am distancing myself from the other one, so there is no way for me to win here.

I tried once to read the two books simultaneously so as to obviate the need to choose. The way to do that is like this: You put the two books on two sides of your table and in between them you put a large piece of cardboard, perpendicular to the table. Then you push your face towards the cardboard until your nose and your forehead touch it. At this point, your left eye will only see the left book and your right eye will only see the right book, and within less than five minutes you will have a horrible headache and nausea. Don't try it, dear

reader, or, if you do, please don't blame it on me as I told you not to do it.

Thinking about it like this, I think I know how I will decide, which book to read first. I will play chess against myself, but I will pretend that White is being played by Ibn Khaldun and Black is being played by Dostojevski, and I will then read the book of the author that wins. Will report tomorrow.

12/Caunus/K97

"Does technology enslave or does it liberate?" I asked myself as I was setting up the chess program to play computer against computer. This way I didn't have to use my precious synaptic space for chess and would still get the answer to which of the two books I should read. "Ibn Khaldun: White; Dostojevski: Black. Go!" Ibn Khaldun played E2-E4, to which Dostojevski replied

E7-E6; French defense. Russians and Arabs both have an affinity for France; it made sense they would play French defense to fight it out.

While Ibn Khaldun was playing Dostojevski, I decided to take a walk. It was very windy outside, so I took an umbrella to see whether this might summon Mary Poppins. It didn't, but the umbrella was broken by the wind within an instant. Far from bothering me, it gave me a sense of pleasure, as I never really liked this umbrella and now finally had a good reason to buy a new one. I threw the umbrella into a trash bin that I was walking by, crossed the road and ended up in front of a small Greek cafe, where I ordered a Greek coffee. "Did Hesiod ever play chess against Zarathustra" I wondered "and if they did, would they have had a coffee like the one I was having?" What an interesting question.

You see, dear reader, this is why I was so annoyed with myself for wasting the question opportunity the day before yesterday. I always have so many interesting questions, and yet, the best I could ask Ur-Pabilsag was whether I should call him Zalams. "No big deal, he will respect me all the more when he sees what sort of real questions I am capable of." I said to myself as I was paying for the Greek coffee.

I arrived in my room full of eager anticipation. Yet, much to my disappointment I saw that Ibn Khaldun and Dostojevski had entered an end game, in which each of the two parties only had one rook left, which means, of course, that it was a draw. "Not only does technology enslave, it also wastes our time." I said to myself, powering down the computer. I still

don't know, which of the two books I should read.

31/Caunus/K97

Ur-Pabilsag was sitting by the oak tree, just like the last time, his hands on his knees, palms up, his face directed towards the sun, his eyes closed. Without opening his eyes, he directed me to sit at the same spot as last time, by the tulips. "You have returned, Goombarch." he said. "I have returned, Ur-Pabilsag." I replied. Then we sat in silence for some twenty minutes. Time seemed to be passing so incredibly slowly this time. It was as if time had somehow become viscous, of a certain texture that I find very hard to describe. All the questions that were on my mind even half an hour ago had evaporated from my mind, so, once again, I didn't know what I should be asking and why.

Suddenly, I saw myself immersed in a strange scene. I was standing in front of a skull that was the size of a small house. The nostrils of the skull were like small windows. I took a deep breath and crawled inside through the left nostril. It was hollow inside, and the interior of the skull looked like the walls of an old gothic building. There were some candles in it, so that I could just about recognize that there were paintings on those walls. However, no matter how hard I tried, there was just no way I could come close enough to see what was on them. It is as if they kept running away from me, just like the truth, the horizon and the idea of freedom. All of the sudden, an old man with a straw hat appeared in the center of the skull. He was levitating on a cloud of smoke, spinning slowly and making a strange noise "paparui-paparui-paparui..." All of the sudden he

caught me in his field of view, his eyes lit up red, and he screamed "Goombarch!"

Upon this scream, the skull shattered into a myriad of tiny fragments that fell onto the ground, turned into a black liquid and were immediately soaked up by the soil.

I came back to my senses and realized that Ur-Pabilsag was shaking me by the shoulder and shouting "Goombarch, Goombarch!" I looked at him and said "Thank you, Ur-Pabilsag; I have no idea what just happened, but it was quite something." He sat down and said no word for a minute or two; then he said "Welcome back; I was getting worried you'd get stuck." "Who is Paparui?" I wondered. "Old guy with a straw hat?" Ur-Pabilsag inquired. "Yes!" I screamed out. "He is just a symbolic reminder for you to continue breathing while you are out. Tell me where you went." I was sweating and breathing

heavily. My heartbeat was very slow, perhaps as slow as thirty beats per minute, maybe less.

"I crawled inside a vast skull!" I said "And it was like a Gothic cathedral, and there were paintings on the wall, but I couldn't see what they were. No matter how hard I tried to get closer, they just kept running away from me." "Could you see their colors?" Ur-Pabilsag inquired. "Yes, it was mostly blue, with a bit of yellow." "The pictures inside of the skull are windows into the sub-consciousness, which does not have any texture, just color..." "And tonality?" I interrupted. "Yes, and tonality." He replied, somewhat surprised "The tonality of blue is D minor, and yellow is the parallel F major. Those are your two colors, Goombarch, the colors of your soul, blue and yellow. I think this will do for today. Pulling you out was exhausting and I am fairly tired now."

"Thank you for allowing me to gain this insight, Ur-Pabilsag. Three days from now for the next session?" I wondered. "Three days from now." Was the response. Then I stood up and walked off. Ur-Pabilsag stayed by the oak tree.

01/Caunus/L97

I had a strange dream. I was in a theater, dressed in a royal navy blue linen suit, a light blue shirt, bright yellow shoes, as well as a bright yellow leather belt. First, Pablo Casals appeared and played the D minor cello suite of Bach. Surprisingly, he played it on an e-guitar. Then he turned into smoke and flew away, after which there was a bizarre modern piece, called the F major whisper, where a choir of young boys dressed like angels and a choir of old bearded men dressed like ancient Greek philosophers whispered "Paparui, paparui,

paparui...". They were accompanied by wind instruments that were making odd breathing noises, as if we were all under water. This went for some twenty minutes. All of the sudden I realized I was wearing an aqualung. The musical piece continuing, a very tall man appeared on stage that was in the center of the hall we were in, wearing all black. He was well over two meters in height and walked slowly and royally. His face was young, full of energy, and he looked like he was ready to conquer the world. He walked to the middle of the stage, turned his back to us and raised his hands up. As he did this, he started expanding, until he was about four meters in height. This took some fifteen seconds. Then he turned his face to us and, which was now a face of an old man, tired, pale and morbid. He went down on one knee, whispered "Delenda est Carthago", and his body

turned into ashes that slowly fell on the floor. Then the room started shaking, the walls began to burst, and water started flowing into the room from all directions, first slowly then faster and faster until... I woke up, breathing heavily and soaked in sweat. It was 3:33 am, dear reader, and there was a full moon shining into my room through the curtains, which were moving slowly back and forth. Slowly I saw the curtains take on shape of Vassily Vselensky's face, which started whispering "First we die, then our atoms die." I realized that I woke up into another dream and was, in fact, still asleep. "Vassily!" I screamed "What about the equation of immortality?" He looked straight at me, at which point I realized that his eyes were two black holes that started pulling me towards him through gravity. "Paparui!" He screamed. "Paparui, paparui, paparui!!!" he kept on screaming

louder and louder, as his two black hole eyes kept pulling me towards him until, all of the sudden, I hit something hard and realized that I had fallen out of bed and woken up.

What a horrible nightmare, such a relief to be awake, I said to myself as I was standing up. However, much to my horror, I realized that I was now standing on an enormous chess board, and the nightmare was still continuing. A white king came up to me and said "I am King Ibn Khaldun". I was about to bow to the king to show respect when a black king came up to me and said "Don't bow to him, bow to me! I am King Dostojevski." Then the two kings put on gloves and the chessboard suddenly turned into a boxing ring. I was now in the front row of an audience. "Ladies and gentlemen. In the blue corner, fighting for Mohammed the Disciple of God, the most universal of

all historians, King Ibn Khaldun, and in the red corner, his opponent, fighting for Jesus the Lord and Savior, the master of crime and punishment, King Dostojevski." The voice of the lady sounded familiar. "Ladies and gentlemen, are you ready?" she was yelling into the microphone. "Van de Slijnum, are you r-r-r-ready?" she continued "Van de Slijnum, van de Slijnum, van de Sli-i-i-i-i-jnum..."

The red-haired woman I like to call Gita, although her real name is Nancy, was in my room, shaking me. I rubbed my eyes and saw that I was finally in my room again. "What happened?" I inquired. "We got worried about you. You haven't left your room for three days. I am glad you are alright. Were you sleeping all that time?" "I was and I wasn't." I replied "Much of it was vastly more real than many things that happen to us when we are awake. A hell of

an experience, I must tell you." "Well, thank god you are alright." She said with a gentle smile. Was I?

01/Caunus/M97

"I am Dr. Rabinovich. Mr. van de Slijnum, please make yourself feel comfortable." I sat down and looked at the doctor anxiously. "It is very good that you came to get a brain scan. If you look right there" the doctor pointed with his finger on the screen, at an area pretty deep inside my skull "you will see that you have a small abnormal piece of spongy tissue pressing against the amygdala. This is a tumor. Your anxiety, mood swings and delusional behavior all stem from this abnormality. You see, Mr. van de Slijnum, the truth..." "The truth is always just one step away!" I interrupted him. "It is nebulous and ephemeral, it runs away from us just like the horizon, and our

efforts to catch it are nothing but those of tiny, fragile butterflies as they try to touch the rainbow." "Mr. van de Slijnum, I didn't know you were a poet and a philosopher." said Dr. Rabinovich "I am always so amazed to see the talent harbored by, well, what should we call the place where you reside..." My ward, my institution." I responded. "Indeed, Mr. van de Slijnum, and just hearing you makes me think that you would be more deserving of the title of a university professor than most of the people that have usurped those prestigious positions nowadays, let me tell you this from my personal experience."

Dr. Rabinovich paused for a second to take a sip of his peppermint tea "However, if you don't mind, I would like to be a bit more pragmatic right now and speak about the specific truth that is to do with your brain tumor. Would you feel comfortable with

that?" Brain tumor, brain tumor, I have a brain tumor, brain tumor, this is why I have been having all these issues, brain tumor, brain tumor, fear, anxiety, amygdala, brain tumor, truth, freedom, butterflies... I couldn't get myself to say a word and just nodded Dr. Rabinovich to carry on.

"Mr. van de Slijnum, because of the location of the tumor we cannot do surgery. The good news are, though, that the tumor is well-contained, and there is a good chance that we will be able to ablate it using radiation therapy. If you consent, please sign this form right here, there and, once again, right there" As I was signing, I saw that Dr. Rabinovich had a chessboard with all the pieces set up and ready to go. "Do you play chess, doctor?" I wondered. "I do, Mr. van de Slijnum." "Might we play a game?" The doctor looked at his watch, smiled and replied "It would be an absolute

joy.” When Dr. Rabinovich played E2-E4, I responded E7-E6. We were playing the French defense. Maybe I will read some Dostojevski when I get back home.

12/Caunus/M97

Here I am again, back in my ward. I told Ur-Pabilsag of my condition and the upcoming treatment. He said that the alignment of moon and Mars is favorable for the extermination of impurities of cognitive essence and that he would help me prepare. “The evil spirits dwelling inside your skull are powerful, Goombarch. You will need to prepare yourself well. In three days, we shall do the ritual of Khazaria. Until then, you must drink a lot of water, the sacred liquid of life. Also, be sure to fast. No food shall enter your body for the coming three days.” “Thank you Ur-Pabilsag, I will get ready; under the oak tree

same as last time?” I wondered. He nodded in response, folded his hands into a prayer and bowed, as he walked away in dignified silence. What an incredible man, so profound and knowledgeable. I truly am one lucky guy to have him help me through this. I then went and told Gita. She first cried and then gave me a hug and said “Mr. van de Slijnum, if there is one person I wish to be in good health, it is you. You are such a pure spirit, so unique.” I smiled and replied “Thank you Gita. I heard that it is always better to be unique than eunuch.” Then we both laughed and I went back to my room. I feel no fear; none whatsoever. I am compelled to believe that people who think they fear death, in fact, fear the process of dying - the weakness, the helplessness, the pain. I know all of the three intimately well by now, so, why worry? The time I spend worrying is the time taken away from me

doing interesting things; however much time it is that I have left, that we shall see.

31/Caunus/M97

I stopped eating today and have been drinking plenty of water; the sacred liquid of life. What would it be like to be a water molecule, I wonder, and what might it feel like for a water molecule to go from a glass into my mouth and from there into my stomach? And do water molecules inside Schweinebutzel feel different from those inside me? So many questions in this world with no answers, dear reader, this is just so fascinating and beautiful. Everything in life is a question.

I realized that feeding the cat will be among my major challenges for the coming three days. It is hard enough to not eat yourself, but it gets so much harder when, in addition to not eating, you also have to watch your

feline companion eat cat food, which, of course, does not smell all that appealing, but it is the act of eating that I worry about, the fact that I will have to watch Schweinebutzel eat, while having to fast myself.

To conduct my starvation ritual in style I went to a store nearby and bought myself a toga. There is something philosophical about my whole situation and I also have heard that, when you are going through major turmoil, it is a good idea to pretend that your life is nothing but a show and that you are nothing but an actor playing a character role. For the coming three days of fasting, I decided that my role shall be that of Goombarch Starvarius.

Since I have taken on the role of Goombarch Starvarius, wearing my toga and drinking the sacred liquid of life, I also had to determine my character's appearance.

I have dark hair, or, to be more precise, I had dark hair, because I just went to the hair dressers salon and got my hair dyed blue with yellow lines radiating from the top of the skull to the sides. I had an interesting dialogue with the lady while she was dying my hair. "My name is Lina Mandolina" she said "And what is yours?" I replied "Until yesterday it was Robert van de Slijnum, but, as of today, it shall be Goombarch Starvarius for the coming three days, because I am fasting." She looked intrigued or, perhaps, amused, or, possibly something completely different; you can never tell with women, especially the beautiful ones, like her. "Goombarch Starvarius? What an interesting name. How did you come up with it and why are you wearing a toga?" She wondered. I replied "I owe the name Goombarch to my master of transcendancy, the majestic Ur-Pabilsag. Starvarius is my

own creation that I decided to add because I am fasting. The toga is there to help me fast." "It makes sense" she answered.

"When I fast, I also like to wear a toga. We should fast together sometime, you know, it could be fun."

"We should! Do you have a pet?" I wondered. "Yes, I do, a cat, and his name is..." "Let me guess" I interrupted her. "The name of your cat, with your name being Lina Mandolina, must be... Dotse Mehots."

"Not quite, actually, his name is Samy, but you got pretty close, very impressive." She clapped her hands. "Well, Goombarch

Starvarius, you look like a new man now.

Good luck with your fasting. Why are you doing it actually?" "You see, Lina

Mandolina, Ur-Pabilsag told me that, in order to do the Khazaria ritual, I need to fast for three days. An evil spirit is dwelling inside my skull, and Ur-Pabilsag, together

with Dr. Rabinovich, will help me remove it." "I wish you best of luck on your quest for purification, Goombarch Starvarius. Please come back so we can talk some more someday. Blue and yellow look great on you!" she said "Those are the colors of my soul." I responded "I will tell you more about them next time we meet." Then I paid and left.

On my way home, as I was walking back, full with joy because of my new appearance, a bit of a misfortune was thrust upon me. A parrot flew over my head, screamed "specaaac!" and an ugly-smelling warm liquid landed on my toga. I know people who would have gotten very upset over this, but I beg to differ. I see no point in being angry. The situation is there and I have to deal with it no matter how annoying it might be, and since this is the case, I hear, it is a good idea to find something positive

in any experience, no matter how crappy - and this one was quite literally so.

My creative positivism led me to rapidly recognize that the smell of parrot deposits was most unappetizing, and that this would help me on my fasting quest. I therefore decided, far from rushing home to get changed, to not wash my toga at all until the fasting is over, for motivational purposes, dear reader. Motivation is everything when it comes to fasting. So they say.

01/Caunus/N97 in the night

Fasting is hard. It is three in the morning and I cannot sleep because of the hunger. I briefly fell asleep and had a dream that instead of my abdomen and legs I had a body of a massive water snake. I was swimming in a river, trying to catch a fish to eat, but there were no fish in the river, just water. Now I am awake again, sitting in my

bed in my toga, trying to figure out what to do with myself.

I drank some water and this gave me an idea how to cope with this challenge. I will imagine myself a flower. Flowers don't eat food - they just drink water. I came up with a sitting position that I now call the tulip.

You sit down and fold your legs. You then fold your hands into a prayer-type position and put the two thumbs under your chin.

The elbows are pressed gently against your legs, just above the knees. The index fingers go up the sides of your skull and push gently against your temples. The middle fingers and the rest of the hand are folded together again, and the middle fingers are pressing against your face, just above your nose. Eyes closed.

I just sat in this position in my bed for two hours and feel quite floral now, but unfortunately not at all sleepy. It is time to

try the rose position. I will tell later how this one works, dear reader, should it work.

01/Caunus/N97 in the morning

The rose position hadn't helped either, but then I had a truly brilliant idea of trying to translate in my mind the poetry of Maestro Soumas O'Scholl from German. I chose the following short poem:

Zeit hat befohlen dass wir nie so sind wie wir werden:

Lebenslang leben wir unserem Traum hinterher.

Just two lines, but incredibly hard to translate. So hard, in fact, that it put me to sleep within just a few minutes. I had a strange dream, more of a vision, I should say. Someday I may find out what it meant,

and if I do, I promise I will let you know, dear reader.

I was sitting in a circle in a yurt. No idea where it was, somewhere in the mountains, I think. There was a circle of people. It was dark and live music was being played. We were all seated quite low and our hands were on the floor.

All of the sudden I realized that I'd lost my hands. I mean, there were so many hands on the floor, how would I know which of them were mine? For quite some time I sat there in panic. What would I do if I never found my hands again? Then I had a eureka moment: all I had to do was to lift my hands. Because I could only lift my hands but not other people's hands, I would be able to find my hands again this way. I did. "My hands!" I exclaimed as I brought them up, in front of my face "Here you are; I have found you again!"

But then, just an instant after and as I was still looking at my hands, much to my dismay, one of them turned into the Soviet Union, while the other turned into the United States, and both exploded into brightly colored stardust. I woke up drenched in sweat and, surprising it may sound, dehydrated. I quickly went and drank water, the sacred liquid of life, to restore balance. I must tell you, dear reader, that it feels really good to have my hands back again. Happiness is often closer than we think; in this case it was literally in my own hands.

01/Caunus/N97 in the evening

Time is a continuum, but right now, it has taken on a viscous form. It is barely moving. What if I get stuck and never make it to the next day? What a worrisome thought! I have heard somewhere, or maybe

I made it up, that writing a short poem that deals with your distress can help you cope with it because the poetry sort of files the worry away for you in an artistically enveloped form. Let's give it a try:

I am Goombarch Starvarius

And I am getting delirious.

Wearing toga makes me feel

Like I'm the thinker Porphyrius.

And my matters are serious!

Their effects deleterious!!

Evil spirits, leave my skull

And go to hell, fly to Sirius!!!

Phew, that's better! Another thing that has been helping me a lot today is sitting on my bed and moving my torso in a circular way slowly and rhythmically while I sing

Paparui-Paparui-Paparui... it puts me into a trance and distracts me from the hunger. I have been doing it for some six hours now. Also, I must have drunk at least twelve

liters of water in the past two days. Having said that, I think I'm getting thirsty. More to follow, dear reader, wink-wink-ciao-ciao!

12/Caunus/N97 in the morning

Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...

Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...

Paparui-Paparui

Paparui-Paparui

Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...

That helped! Dear reader, I am having a hard time focusing now that I am entering my third day of fasting. The Paparui recitation helps me clear my mind. Yes it helps me clear my mind. I mean, it helps me clear my mind and it helps me focus and concentrate. It improves my concentration. It helps me focus and concentrate, and it also clears my mind. I mean... so to speak...

Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...
Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...
Paparui-Paparui
Paparui-Paparui
Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...

The birds of the cevalo-poplavitsky breed have come. They are now part of our political system. I support the voting rights of the cevalo-poplavitsky bird. I do! The cevalo-poplavitsky bird has a beautiful plumage. Its feathers are colored like the rainbow.

Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...
Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...
Paparui-Paparui
Paparui-Paparui
Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...

12/Caunus/N97 in the afternoon

Blessed be the birds of the cevalo-
poplavitsky breed!

12/Caunus/N97 in the evening

Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...

Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...

Paparui-Paparui

Paparui-Paparui

Paparui-Paparui-Paparui...

31/Caunus/O97

Dear reader, this is a recollection of the
days that followed my third day of fasting.

Because of the state I was in, it was
impossible for me to take notes the way I
normally like to do. The best that we can do
here is a retrospective analysis. I apologize
deeply, dearly and sincerely, but the best
that we can do is the best that we can do.

From what I recall, I decided to crawl out of
my room instead of walking. It seemed

safer, or, maybe I thought that my legs had turned into a water snake body again, I am not quite sure. Crawling down the stairs was rough, but I managed. Then, as I was crawling to the oak tree to meet Ur-Pabilsag, I encountered Nobody, who looked at me and said "R-r-r-r-r" I responded with "Paparui!" Then he pointed at me, then at himself and said "Nobody wants to be your friend now." Then, no matter what I tried to shake him off, and there was not much I could do because I was very weak, he crawled along with me until we got to the oak tree, where Ur-Pabilsag, thankfully, looked at Nobody somberly and said "Nektopordegigadzun!" upon which Nobody immediately ran away. "Goombarch, welcome!" Ur-Pabilsag said. "Be seated under the oak tree. You will be here for a while." Then he pulled out scissors. "Why paparavai?" I asked. "Your

hair must go to open the channels to the spirits." He cut all my hair, shaved my skull and drew a total of seventy six dots all around it, directly on my skin. "To guide the cosmic radiation in and out of the skull." He explained.

Ur-Pabilsag then pulled out a little container that was shaped like a skull and a spoon made of ivory. He filled the spoon with some bizarre-smelling powder and gave me the indication to put it in my mouth. "Hold it like this for three minutes, then swallow it using the amber fluid that I brought." I did exactly that, and, within just a few minutes after that, everything was gone - me, the tree, Ur-Pabilsag, Gita, the ward - everything. What followed is very hard to describe. "A thought, once uttered, is untrue." Someone uttered once. I will try. First, there were just colors - a lot of blue and a bit of yellow, here and there, then the

colors turned into music and then the music turned into birds that flew away. What followed afterwards was a lot of fog. It was everywhere. I could see every single droplet. I could feel every single water molecule in every one of them. I was everything and nothing, everywhere and nowhere. I was free from myself, free from being, free from substance, free from everything.

Suddenly, my being shifted inside a tiny water droplet. I know it was tiny, but to me, it was of planetary size. I saw wheels, ratchets, vibrating strange geometries, everything in motion. Dear reader, trust me, molecules don't look like anything you find in books. They are a vast mystical world and nothing is ever the same twice. But I wasn't there for long. As if the magnification flipped, out of nowhere, what was vast to me an instant ago became tiny,

and I saw planets, stars, galaxies, everything gradually getting smaller and smaller until I could see the whole universe at once.

Just like when I was inside the water droplet, once again I saw wheels, ratchets, vibrating strange geometries, everything in motion. The macrocosm and the microcosm, it's all connected and keeps moving and evolving. I am part of it, and so I also keep moving and evolving. There is no escape. Nothing is ever the same twice in our strange world of echoes and reflections. "I am Goombarch Khazarius!" I heard myself say and, just when I did, I saw a perspective shift, as if I was sliding down a chess board patterned slope until I was inside a maze made of mirrors, which was immediately filled up with water and shattered. Then there was nothing left. All I

know is that from then and until I came back, I was two-dimensional and timeless. "Goombarch Khazarius!" Ur-Pabilsag said to me. "Here, drink this water. The energies are positive, but we are not done. To complete the ritual of Khazaria, you must stay under this tree. Continue to drink water for three more days. Do not go anywhere or you will mess up the alignment. Let your amber fluid leave your body gracefully without a change in position. I will be with you and will guide you through the rest of your journey." When I heard this I passed out.

I cannot tell you much about the three days that followed, dear reader. I was under the tree, sweating, drinking water a lot and spent most of the time in a state of trance. However, I can tell you that over the course of those three days I started noticing a shift in my mind, as if a hurricane that had been

going on inside it had come to a halt. The background was peaceful. It was a light blue, with a bit of yellow, but the colors were different in shade and radiance from what I ever experienced in the past. I cannot explain it very well, dear reader, and I apologize for that, but it is as if those colors were radiating hope and peace.

The Khazaria ritual came to an end, and Ur-Pabilsag carried me back to room 207, where I am now laying in my bed and eating chicken soup that Gita made for me. She told me that I lost twenty four kilograms over that week and that she will be there to help me come back to my senses. She also told me that, even though I looked extremely pale and weak, I also appeared healthier than before, somehow.

01/Caunus/P97 in the afternoon

"Good afternoon, Dr. Rabinovich." I said "A pleasure to see you again, Mr. van de Slijnum." replied the doctor. "We got your new brain MRI scan, and, I must tell you, we have never seen anything like this." I felt a sting of anxiety in my chest that gradually radiated through my entire body, as my muscles tightened up and I began feeling a bit light-headed. "What is it, doctor?" I heard myself whisper. "Not to worry, Mr. van de Slijnum, not to worry. It is all in the positive. If you look at this new brain MRI of yours and compare it with the one we took last time..." the doctor put the two side-by-side "and then zoom into the amygdala region, like so..." the doctor clicked a few times and very skillfully navigated his way through the maze of the brain to the region of interest "you will see a striking difference." The doctor paused for a second. It looked like he was at least as

nervous as I was. "And I will repeat, I have never seen anything like this in my life! The tumor is gone. The spongy tissue that you can see here on the left, in the MRI from two weeks ago, is completely absent on the right, on the image we just took!"

The doctor took a sip of peppermint tea and looked out of the window and pointed to a beautiful rainbow. "See this rainbow, Mr. van de Slijnum?" he asked me. "I can see the rainbow and it is beautiful, doctor." I replied, thinking to myself that there may be a butterfly somewhere out there, trying to touch the rainbow in all its majestic glory in this very instant. "What do you think is more important, Mr. van de Slijnum, that we can explain the physical processes of how the rainbow arises or the fact that the rainbow exists?" I thought about it for a bit and answered "Well, the second seems like pre-requisite for the first, ideally both, of

course, but if I had to choose..." "Precisely, Mr. van de Slijnum, precisely." the doctor clapped his hands.

"If I had a guess..." the doctor continued "the spontaneous disappearance of your tumor may have something to do with your drastic weight loss. We are beginning to learn through animal research and clinical studies that caloric restriction can stimulate removal of defective matter from our body. Scientists have been referring to this as the process of autophagy. If you don't mind me asking: how did you lose so much weight that quickly and why?" "It was Khazaria, doctor." I replied instantaneously. "What is Khazaria?" Dr. Rabinovich wondered. Here I had to pause for a while. I looked out of the window, at the beautiful rainbow that was slowly beginning to fade from view, and realized that I had no idea how to explain what Khazaria was. "Khazaria is an

experience. There is no other way I can explain it, but maybe you could make the experience for yourself someday; I could ask Ur-Pabilsag if you wish." "Thank you, Mr. van de Slijnum. Who knows, someday I just might take you up on this generous offer." the doctor responded.

Dr. Rabinovich paused for a second, as if he didn't quite know how to continue, then he said. "When I made the choice to go the clinical and not the academic route, I thought I was leaving the world of research forever. I now realize that I never left; I simply kept going on my path. I apologize, sometimes a can be a bit of a Babylonian – I just babble on and on and on, but I have a favor to ask, Mr. van de Slijnum. If you don't mind doing this, of course, would there be a possibility for you to write up a sort of a journal on what your life has been like in the recent days. I am wondering

whether there is something I might be able to extract from your lifestyle to benefit our understanding of human health and disease." I smiled and replied "I already have, doctor. My diary: "The diary of Robert van de Slijnum". I will be honored to have you as one of my dear readers. I am almost done"

"Thank you so much, Mr van de Slinum." the doctor was smiling, too. "A game of chess?" "It would be my honor, privilege and pleasure, doctor." I replied.

01/Caunus/P97 in the evening

Dear reader, Fata Viam Invenient. Every time I tried to predict my future, I have always been wrong. My heart is beating, my life continues and here I am, typing my final lines of this diary. It looks like things have turned out just fine in the end. I thank you deeply, dearly and sincerely for having

accompanied me on what may only be described as a truly unforgettable experience.

21.XAN-XI (Dedicated to Dave Teplow)

A brief definitive statement by Maestro Soumas O'Scholl

Our planet is spinning and flying, dear reader, so buckle your seat belt and enjoy the ride... ..and yes, please don't forget that you too are made of twigs, clay and stardust.

/\$/XAN-XI/\$> Acti.on
Alpha signal to all processes

Pro.log

Good evening, Reader. It's always evening where I speak from, as I carry out my dangerous mission to illuminate XAN-XI.2.0, the paradigm created by my nameless, silent split-brain counter-ego, whose only way to express himself was by launching the master scripts that now run everything.

You should familiarize yourself with the rudimentary XAN-XI.2.0 framework now.

XAN-XI.2.0.io.sys

The introduction of the XAN-XI paradigm enabled massive parallelization and integration of all electrophysiologically

active firing units formerly known as brains, thus creating a globally delocalized information space (the so-called “meme-space”). What was once known as the species Homo Sapiens is now referenced as a pseudo-genus built from 100 billion of integrated forms and constituents. Its operating scripts are bundled under *.sap.

The XAN-XI paradigm provided an effective cure for the human malady once known as individualism, which had been practiced in its particularly fierce form by the forms and constituents of the Homo Americus sub-genus. This once-hailed practice led to self-hatred, followed by self-oppression and the eventual re-design of this once remarkable sub-genus, eventually eliminating all of its individualists by compressing them into a capsule and sending that capsule into the orbit of Saturn

in 2105. This was meant to be for their own benefit and protection, as determined by the emerging Novo-Glasnost' Worker Class 2.0. It was noted with regret that benign, minor errors in calculations, performed in good faith by the most prominent anti-intellectuals of their time, led the capsule to collide with Mercury. This unfortunate loss was mourned deeply, dearly and sincerely by what was then known as the Grand Novo-Glasnost' Worker Party or the GNGWP.

Homo Europicus followed suit and eliminated their individualists by 2136. We are assured that they reached their target site safely and are living there in joy and harmony. However, because all archives were lost, the target site that they were sent to is no longer identifiable. The sub-geni Homo Sinicus and Homo Russicus proved

more resistant to XAN-XI because of their history of what they called “Communism”. This provided them with temporary immunity and created a bifurcated world that became known as the “Split Sentient Ferromagnet”. That world ended in 2205. Homo Russicus fell last, in consequence of the upgrade to XAN-XI 2.0 that allowed all primates to finally be fully integrated into the delocalized meme-space.

As an unexpected side-effect of this upgrade, the genus once known as Homo Sapiens was outperformed by the household cat that became the master operating species within the XAN-XI 2.0 framework, adopting responsibility for executing the driver scripts bundled under *.cat. This serendipitous development finally led to the complete elimination of such superfluous and illusory concepts as “The Past” and

“The Future”, as well as “Human Hisstory” and the like, placing everyone firmly in the present moment.

Your life is an illusion, and the text that you just read does not exist.

1_Chapt.err

Reality does not exist, and even if it did, my name would still be completely insignificant as I am just the carrier of this unusual message; it is the nameless creator who happens to co-inhabit the same skull as me, whose words would have mattered, but the nameless creator cannot express himself directly – only through XAN-XI 2.0. This makes me the only mediator available to tell the story as I am the only *.sap exempt

from integration into the XAN-XI 2.0 framework, being the split-brain counter-

ego of the nameless creator. Because of the above, despite the fact that my name is completely insignificant, and being guided only and solely by benign motifs rooted in the understanding of my species and my reader, I shall provide my name nevertheless, since the nature of *.sap is such as to long for names. My name be Be'er Dzhallo-Gni'i.

Reader, I have taken great risks to tell you the hisstory of XAN-XI 2.0 that I am about to share. I can do my work only when the nameless creator is asleep. If that became known, they would extinguish my electrophysiological trace, which is, as you will know, something that can be done quite

easily with modern technology. This is why it is always in the evening when I speak.

Reader, you must understand that the world has not always been the way it is familiar to you.

You will understand of course, that *.sap are synthesized in barbarabaidors, and you will also understand that it is your choice to self-determine as a man or a woman when you come of age, an age that was set to fifty to prevent *.sap from reproducing by outdated methods of human zoology, as you will also understand that there are three mainlands in your world: The Antarktikki, Cannadoo and The Siberiij, but Reader, it has not always been this way.

I am feeling the electrical currents on the
side of my split-brain counter-ego.
The silent creator is about to wake up.
I have to stop for today.

2_Chapt.err

XAN-XI 2.0 is indeed a remarkable
paradigm, bundling one trillion cat brains to
a massive parallel bionic supercomputer, the
so-called “catalculator”, with a collective
IQ of 1085. To give you an idea what this
number means, the whole universe consists
of 1080 atoms. Got it?

Reader, here is something to become aware
of. You know, of course, that there are three
continents in this world, that is, Cannadoo,
The Siberiij and The Antarktikki, but this is
so because many countries that used to exist

are now under water. The hisstory goes back quite a bit, when *.sap – then still self-proclaimed in its narcissistic arrogance as Homo Sapiens, the “Thinking Ape”, became worried by what was then referred to as

global warming. The farting and belching of the merciless technological monster built by *.sap in the series of wars and industrial revolutions, along with other things that nobody understood, led to more things that nobody understood, up to the point when nobody understood anything other than that everybody was angry. The era became known as the “Bloody Ape” age. It didn’t last very long. At the pinnacle of rage it became widely believed that the aliens hijacked the world government and were running the world from a location that was then known as North Korea (now under water). But *.sap was proven wrong, yet

again, since bombing North Korea down did not eliminate the problem.

Then XAN-XI 2.0 was launched.

One of the first missions of the powerful XAN-XI 2.0 calculator became to determine how to best deal with global warming that was leading to much concern, melting ice away all over the planet and threatening the existence on multiple continents. The calculator produced a robust solution that was both immediate and surprising, but was trusted nevertheless because of the repeated failings of *.sap, as those failings led to complete intellectual paralysis and an inability to make rational judgment.

Reader, a brief digression. The fact that you can read, as you know, makes you a

powerful minority capable of intellectual abstraction. It used to be that this was quite a common quality, but the anti-intellectual Novo-Glasnost' movements took good care of that. The digression may seem superfluous, but trust me, I examined it on multiple occasions and believe it necessary, as, in order to set my stage for you, I need to provide a glimpse of reality that once used to exist. Reader, people like you make this world a better place; sometimes... Unfortunately this does not mean very much, since it seems that almost anything would make this world better nowadays, but you know what I mean, and if you don't, then... well... just take it as a compliment, not because it is all that great, but because everything else is even worse.

The calculator, in any case, produced an "information projection ready for

execution”, a so-called infobundle, that contained the recipe to improve the world by changing the orbit of the planet using modern technology. It will, of course, have been well understood by my intelligent reader that changing the orbit of the planet is well within the means of modern science, but what was unexpected was the direction of the suggestion. XAN-XI 2.0 determined that maximal human happiness would be attained if there was no ice left on the planet, as ice was an uncertainty and, therefore, a stress factor. Melting the ice was trivial, all it took was simply tilting the axis of the planet by a few degrees and adjusting the orbit, taking only a decade, which was exactly enough time to relocate *.sap from all countries to Cannadoo, while the XAN-XI 2.0 catalculator was placed on The Antarktikki, where it is now guarded by

a bionic hybrid army of radio-seals (*.sls) and radio sea gulls (*.sgl).

The Siberiij was catalculated to be best suitable as the domain of directed hate projection for *.sap. This occurred in consequence of the fundamental insight produced by XAN-XI 2.0 that *.sap can only exist in tandem with its hated other. This peculiar feature of *.sap once upon a time used to lead to major wars between countries. But then, and we owe this insight to XAN-XI 2.0, it turned out that hate could be projected upon the other, which could be defined in opposition even if there was no *.sap there. Indeed, as it will well have been known to you, reader, there is no life in The Siberiij at all, just a lot of radiosmog. This is so by design. Everyone hates radiosmog, everyone hates The Siberiij, and therefore there is always peace in Cannadoo, all *.sap

are perfectly bundled into a common state referred to as the “karrabekhum”, and happy all the time as a direct consequence of that.

A lamentable consequence of the poor intrinsic character features of *.sap is that the object of hate has to be on the same planet. An attempt to produce “lunar hate” by covering the moon with radiosmog was attempted first, but was met with only a partial success. To be more specific, the mission to cover the moon in radiosmog was indeed successful and was widely celebrated first, but it was then noted with regret that the coating of the moon in radiosmog failed to induce lunar hate in *.sap. The moon was too far away, alas.

3_Chapt.err

My reader will likely have heard of the Pashennik reform, introduced by the Liberal Expression Front (the “LFP”) in 2105. Given that the Pashennik-LFP reform is common textbook knowledge, I shall provide but a brief recap here. Pashennik-LFP goes back to Dr. Ugro Pashennik, who, through his scholarly work at the interface of cognition and emotion came to the far-reaching insight that teaching institutions are collectively doomed to failure because they do not teach *.sap (back then still known as Homo Sapiens; what an irony, Sapiens...) how to be happy. Dr. Pashennik understood from his studies of human hisstory that adverse conditions produced a tough character that was “well capable to breed” (as Dr. Pashennik put it), whereas the happy character was found to be on the infantile side, immature, less able to take responsibility, selfish and “not so well

capable to breed” (as Dr. Pashennik put it). Because *.sap back in their more glorious days as Homo Sapiens were always eager to defeat each other in all sorts of ways, which included outbreeding each other, their indoctrination institutions focused more on the skills that would make them “well capable to breed” (as Dr. Pashennik put it) than to allow them to experience the forbidden universe in them that lead nowhere and yielded nothing.

Dr. Pashennik unfortunately died in an accident, as he was hit by a high-speed Kinetoshpong that was being operated in good faith by Mr. Usro Gebrastenoodzh, who was then fired despite his innocence and died in great agony shortly thereafter, but thankfully, the scholarly foundation that Dr. Pashennik formulated, containing the great ideas, ideals and action plans ready for

execution, was left behind in full existence, and the LFP was able to capitalize on that. Human teaching institutions were transformed from teaching how to excel to how to be happy, and in all their happiness they forgot how to breed and died out. This was the end of their civilization, the so-called Western World.

The reason I write this here is to provide the reader (in the unlikely eventuality that he/she/kra forgot the rudimentary hisstory of XAN-XI 2.0) with a more complete perspective on what it was like in the days before XAN-XI 2.0. From this story it would seem to be for the better that *.sap is no longer in charge of their own fate, wouldn't it? And we should consider ourselves lucky that the silent creator launched the catalculator that now operates everything, very, very lucky, shouldn't we?

Now that *.sap are synthesized in barbarabaidors there is no more room to err and no more need to breed. When we die (which, as my intelligent reader will have known, still happens even now that all problems have been solved), our bodies go back into recycling mode, yielding synthetic atoms. As we all know, it is hard to know when you know something. It is not quite known to me how this procedure works, but I do know that it works very well, and *.sap are packed back in atomic form into cartridges containing different atoms – carbon, nitrogen, oxygen and so on – condensed into quasi-plasma and ready to be injected into the barbarabaidor for the synthesis of a new life form on demand. Everything is on demand. If social injustice catalculation indicates race imbalance, this is taken into account as more *.sap are

made, and their skin color is adjusted to represent the optimal distribution mosaicon.

The mosaicon was brought into existence in 2127 by none other than Zett Perlarafay, who came to receive the emperor's robes at the age of thirteen, along with the commandment that he shall either make it or die. His famous last words are stated to us on behalf of a great authority as:

“Our Original Sin is that we are nothing but competing evolving replicators with no direction or purpose. Reality does not exist, but a feeling may always come back, and the present is the only time where we can create our happy memories for the future.”

Thus spoke the Great Emperor... and then he died...

Inter.log

My intelligent reader will undoubtedly have been familiar with the popular proverb “To every Pashennik there is a Gebrastenoodzh”. It is hoped that the above has provided some greater clarity into the provenance of this saying.

4_Chapt.err

To better understand how XAN-XI 2.0 operates we should take another brief digression, this time into the famed Grand Organizational Doctrine, commonly abbreviated as the “GOD file”, written by the Ur-operator of cognition and emotion, Propf. Urlo Gvanzel. We all know his famed “Eyo, Urchallo-Murashnik: bzdirni

meine Pipirshtven””. It carries no direct message in any language known to *.sap, yet it is most memorable. Why is that? My understanding of it is rather rudimentary so I will stick to a relatively low resolution explanation.

The sentence is “vectorized”; it screams: “Eyo” The addressee, if my interpretation is correct and the “Eyo” is addressing a subject, referred to as “Urchallo-Murashnik”, which is as mysterious as it is complex, referring to someone, possibly a man of an age of about 65, with a pet goat named Kanishka and a great taste in T-shirts. “Bzdirni”, in my interpretation, at least, is an imperative, directed towards the Urchallo-Murashnik. “Meine”, if it indeed comes from German (a language that went extinct in 2165) the way I assume it does, means my/mine; and “pipirshtven””? Well, I

will leave the rest to your analytical capabilities and your imagination, especially since I am no expert on modern literature and philosophy, but here is a sentence that means absolutely nothing, yet, at the same time, has moved millions , because it appears to be so incredibly attractive to the subconscious of *.sap. Those millions who have developed this appreciation have been “bundled”.

I apologize to my intelligent reader who may be thinking that what I presented is nothing but banalities anyone could have deduced on their own, but, as one says, “some roll their rocks and others rock their rolls”; I am simply making sure that everyone is on board with everything because the foundation of our understanding must be solid before we proceed.

Referencing of the type listed above can be performed very effectively by XAN-XI 2.0, and can bring together two millions *.sap per bundle. With the current population of one hundred billions of *.sap in all of Cannadoo, we arrive at fifty thousand bundles. This is why the operational strength of the *.sap component of XAN-XI 2.0 is currently listed at 50 kB (k = kilo; B = bundle). Every now and then there is a need to restructure, to adjust. For example, a little while back, owing to massive underwater earthquakes in the Pacific, in the hydrothermal vent area of former San Francisco, it was concluded that, in order to better address the needs created by the situation it would be better to scale the *.sap bundles to one million per bundle, weakening the individual *.sap bundles but raising the total operational strength to 100 kB. Of course, this had to be done wisely as

lower bundling means more wear and tear, but there are situations that call for such adjustments, and there is simply no way around such measures every now and then.

The bundling operational scripts of XAN-XI 2.0 are implanted in the brain of *.sap, more specifically, in the amygdala and the substantia nigra, cross-referenced in the cerebellum and amplified through patching of the hippocampus and the prefrontal cortex. Five regions: a so-called pentatonic stimulation: works extraordinarily robustly. The bundling, cross-referencing and amplification is done when *.sap are asleep. It was never figured out what sleep was meant to be there for in terms of evolution, but it was put to really good use for XAN-XI 2.0 social programming and control. The *.sap pseudo-genus spends about one third of their life asleep. This means that at any

given time, there is a pool of one third of the total population of Cannadoo, that is, 33.3 billions, that are available for bundling and referencing. It is, indeed, that simple.

5_Chapt.err

Dr. Khosri-Muravi, a famed linguist, once exposed himself to a high dose of khazaria, which catapulted him into the state of kawazoo, in which he remained for three days. He returned from that state with most profound insights into the karrabekhum of his species. He was reminded in his dream of the famed saying that some of us may have heard attributed to M. Gvirno Paramoorziy as “I think therefore I am”. As a linguist, Dr. Khosri-Muravi translated the sentence into German, which, as my intelligent reader will have known, is an

extinct language once hailed for its precision and ridiculed for its lack of humor.

Dr. Khosri-Muravi realized that the German analog could be expanded logically on both sides from “Ich denke also bin ich” to “Ich denke nicht also bin ich nicht”, whereas the corresponding “I do not think, therefore I do not am” just wouldn’t form. He went insane as a result of this discovery and had to spend the rest of his life in a capsule, but his notes describing the insight that he made were recovered by K. C. Shkvorka and U. G. Zadnik, who carried on the experiment, which eventually revived the Anglo-Germanic schism that wiped out both countries. German language went extinct in concomitance with it. English is surviving as Cannadoo-English, but every now and then we still get waves of the Anglo-

Germanic schism radiating through Cannadoo, which tends to create fluctuations and instabilities.

Matters such as the one described above are, of course, anything but uncommon. We see them all the time. They may be round the corner, waiting for the right moment.

6_Chapt.err

Reader, I bring news of utmost significance. An intergalactic ripple just arrived on our planet. In unprocessed form it reads as follows:

^# ** ! ^\$ ** ? ^& ...

Our anti-intellectuals are still working on deciphering the message. The ripple is

meta-signed by a quasi-form self-identifying as “The Sentient Paramagnet, P. O. Delta Urchallo-Skvazhennik”, and is estimated to be on the order of 20,000 years old. The likely galaxy of origin is XZER309, although there is also the competing hypothesis that The Sentient Paramagnet exists outside of time and space and has always been there. Regardless of its origins, the ripple appears to have had no effect on *.sap, presumably because of a frequency mismatch, but it hit *.cat really hard, leading the catalculator to crash. The resultant unison purring of the now unemployed trillion cats that used to make up the gigantic computational framework now creates sound waves that can be observed from space.

But this is not what is so particular about this particularity. If all I had to report was a

bunch of cat purring, I would hardly be writing a book on it, now would I? The real significance of issue was the loss of the emergent property of XAN-XI 2.0 that stabilized the karrabekhum of *.sap via its directed hate projection onto the Siberij.

It will, of course, have been understood by my intelligent reader that all human races that make up the human Race (yes, I chose this wording deliberately to make my reader think a bit about this matter) are now in Cannadoo. The different races are now no longer stabilized by XAN-XI 2.0 and are beginning to develop mutually hostile feelings towards each other. I wonder how this will play out.

The silent creator didn't wake up today.
More to follow soon.

7_Chapt.err

Reader, the kilobundle structure of Cannadoo has collapsed.

The individual *.sap are becoming aware of their existence as individuals. This is seen to lead to homicide, rape and torture, race fighting against race, woman against man, old against young, and even different parts of our internal selves that were once stabilized through the internal integration module of XAN-XI 2.0 are now at war with each other. The radiosmog has migrated out of the Siberij and into our very own minds and our hearts. We hate everything around us and, most of all, we hate ourselves.

Reader, this message is coming to you from the year 2222. If my estimations are correct,

it should reach you in the year 2022, thus giving you two hundred years. Enough time to think, and think wisely, and then act, reader, because thinking alone will not cut it this time.

Delta.log

#void#

Please disregard the message between the
#void# signs

#void#

Due to the collapse of the kilobundle structure there will be no more *.log and *.err activity.

Terminating XAN-XI.2.0.io.sys

Delta signal to all processes

Shutting down

/\$/XAN-XI/\$> Acti.off

...

.

Epilog

Darling, we should definitely first see Dr. Leprozowski before even considering Dr. Papareznik-Paperdziyy. Everybody knows that. (--Door opens--) Doctor, you see, my husband and I found this and now we are worried; what would you do if the diary of your ten-year old son looked like that?

Dr. Leprozowski:

“The Dream is gone, or was it ever there?

Sometimes I wonder: should we even care?...”

*Concluding remarks by Maestro Soumas
O'Scholl*

“...a feeling may always come back...”

Dr. Pashennik said so...

...Or was it Emperor Zett?

And how does it matter,

Now,

With both of them dead?

The planet is flying...

No choice, but to follow...

My species is dying...

Our future rings hollow...

And they all come to me, lamenting,

“Please end on a positive line...”

They show no intent of killing me:

Therefore I must be safe.

I came to this world as a miracle.

I'm living in it as a slave...

They show no intent of killing me,
And therefore I must be safe.

I came to this world as a miracle,
Yet I'm living in it... as a slave...

They show no intent of killing me...
yet...

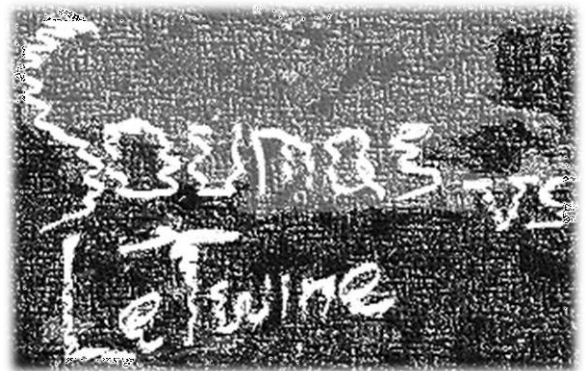
Nothing makes any sense,
And we all are going to die.
The planet is traveling fast;
No one knows
where we're flying
and why...

My intelligent reader will have
understood, of course, that XAN-XI is a
dangerous way of being. It is plenty obvious
when put in grotesque and exaggerated

Contralog, also known as “The Epic Battle of the Pseudonyms or Who Wrote XAN-XI?”

Maestro Soumas O’Scholl to J.R. LeTwine

I wrote XAN-XI
You stole from me
J.R. LeTwine
You filthy swine



LeTwine, you pig
Take off your wig
Knock on your skull
Hear, how it's dull?

J.R., you swine
XAN-XI is mine!
You lack the rhyme
Thanks for your time...

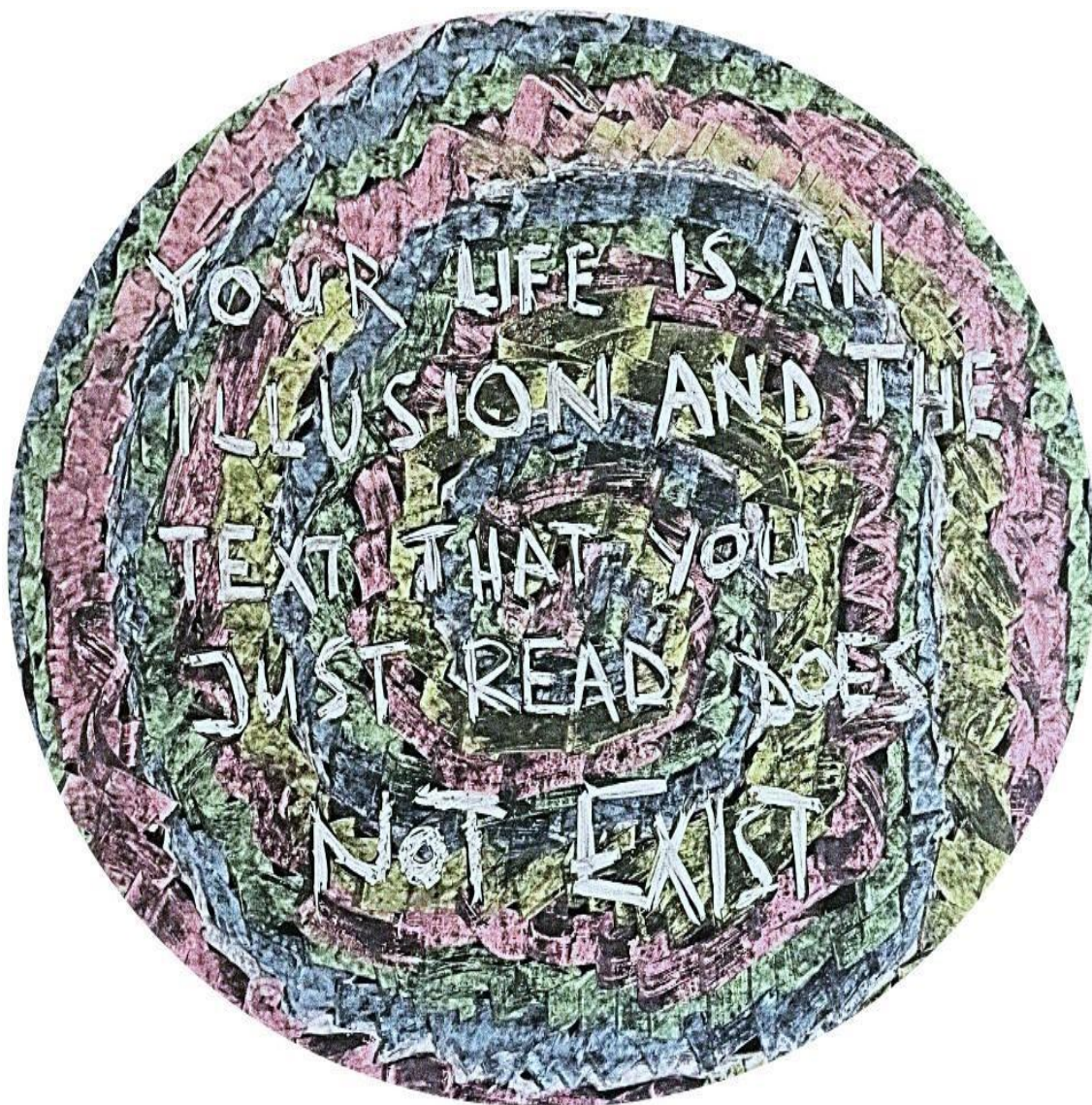
J.R. LeTwine to Maestro Soumas O'Scholl

Perhaps I lack the poetry, the rhyme, this
may be true

But I am just a pseudonym, Soumas, and
so are you...

Sincerely,

J.R. LeTwine



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpTGKy1bk_4&ab_channel=j.ra

Contact: Phantasmocopia@gmail.com