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CHOOSING METHODS and materials with an inventor's originality was one of my father's great joys and he especially liked Celastic, a canvas-like predecessor of fiber glass that you dipped in a chemical and wrapped on any surface to add strength and waterproofing. Celastic was a good product but my father's zest for it was such that you never knew where it might next appear — kitchen counters, doors, furniture, tools, toys — and inevitably it became a family joke. Anything needing any sort of mend might be nominated for Celastic, even such obviously inappropriate things as a broken pencil or sore throat. My father tirelessly promoted Celastic among his friends but without result, surprising in view of its value, especially on boats where it prevented chafed oars and hull leaks when nothing else in those days did. Their resistance may have come in part from Celastic's appearance, reminiscent of human skin in need of medical attention (paint covered it but an aura of sickness lingered). Perhaps more important, my father was the only person anyone knew who'd even heard of Celastic and that alone made it suspect. When fiber glass came on the market his friends took to it right away, using it everywhere he'd used Celastic for years, and while fiber glass may have been better he stayed loyal to Celastic, suddenly shifted from eccentric advocate of revolutionary new product to eccentric user of quaint obsolete product, a view meaning nothing to him, for he had studied the matter and had determined that Celastic was the product he liked.

They Would Think Twice

When a midwestern university built a new campus area the landscape architects didn't design any footpaths. Instead they waited a year, watched the tracks people made walking day after day in their natural routes, then paved those paths and put grass and trees in the space between. "Since the time I was raped," says Maya Angelou, "not one day passes that I don't remember it. That was 40 years ago and I don't mean to dwell on it but I still wake up some mornings crying over it. I think if people had any real sense of the long lasting harm they can cause they would think twice before hurting others." Samuel Florman writes, "Technology is not on trial, though some people want us to think so. It's our democracy that's on trial — who chooses what we build, and how they choose."

At a posh suburban tennis club a party of elegantly dressed adults, sipping white wine, converse and laugh with stylish nonchalance, instantly recognizable as among the world's rich and privileged. Outside on the street, a bunch of children, brought to the party wearing similar finery and left to their own devices, frolic in a dumpster, their clothes getting filthier by the minute, exactly like any children anywhere in the world. "Now my soul hath elbow-room."

New Earth Managers

At last night's tumultuous final meeting of the United World Congress the 12,000 delegates of the earth's species elected by landslide margin the porpoises and beavers to be the new Earth Managers. Earlier in the day speeches by the owls, tortoises, and plankton had cited the porpoises' and beavers' outstanding environmental records. The humans,

fighting to retain global control, received only four votes: their own plus those of the automobiles, computers, and robots, the three non-living delegates admitted after intense lobbying by the humans. When the vote was announced the humans condemned it as "narcoterrorist fraud" and demanded that the porpoises and beavers be jailed without trial for drug trafficking and war crimes, but a motion by

the tulips dismissing the humans' charge as "forgivable hysteria" was passed almost unanimously, with only the humans opposing and the automobiles, computers, and robots abstaining. The new Earth Managers quickly enacted several emergency measures: ceasefire in all human wars, stopping the humans' practice of torture, shutdown of the humans' animal slaughterhouses, sharp cuts in the humans' burning of fossil fuels, and food relief for hungry creatures everywhere. "It's just a start," said one of the beavers, "but we're hopeful." *And these trees shall be my books.*

Art Wigs

"When the tyrant has disposed of foreign enemies by conquest or treaty, and there is nothing to fear from them, then he is always stirring up some war or other, so that the people will require a leader," wrote Plato. *For every human on earth there are three-quarters of a ton of termites.* The FBI maintains a "security index" of 15,000 politically unacceptable people slated for arrest in the event of a "national emergency." **Out, vile jelly!**



How to read Rollmag: bits and pieces, slowly absorbing. Give it time to sink in.

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Fashionable suburbanites, flocking to the new breed of personal service shops, are enjoying elite manicure parlours where one has one’s fingernails and toenails gold leafed (24 carat gold, \$350) and coiffure salons where celebrity artists design unique art wigs for clients. *The frenetic cadence of the licentious exurb embroiled my vibrato.*

“Once you’ve read Shakespeare with attention,” says George Orwell, “it’s hard to go a day without quoting him.”

In the mental hospital an affable young junkie from the Bronx named Richie, under pressure from his parents to conform to a long list of behavior standards before they’d let him come home, looked up from a bowl of red jello one evening at supper to answer a fellow inmate’s sympathies. “So? What’s to worry? It’s nothing a little nervous breakdown won’t straighten out.” A few days later he and his parents got into a screaming fight in the doctor’s office that could be heard two floors up. Richie was punished with loss of all privileges but seemed hardly to notice, and he and I continued playing gin rummy, as always, six or eight hours a day, Richie keeping the running score, going back months, in a spiral notebook. When a new arrival on the ward mentioned the screaming fight Richie shrugged, tossed down a card, and said, “Just technique.”

Huge Silence

Contemplate ineffable affinities. “I wanted to peel back the undergrowth at the edge of the pond,” Charles Farrow writes, “but the bank was too steep, so I walked to the dam and cleared the level ground. Aside from the rustling leaves and bird calls and my raking and snipping there wasn’t a sound and the huge silence was greater than a city’s roar, inviting one out to meet the world instead of hitting one back, as noise does, into a shell. Hawks screamed, *Craw-kockk, craw-kockk!* and I replied with my human *craw-kockk!* A pheasant flapped, lifted, glided and thumped in the brush. Suddenly woodpeckers: *Biddit, ptue ptue ptue, biddit, ptue ptue ptue ptue.* Time eased by, until dusk gave each living thing its signal to shift from day to night habits, and as the hawks settled into the tall trees to the east I set out on my long walk home to supper with my family.”

What is ornament but the guiled shore to a dangerous sea? When very young I asked my father each morning at breakfast to cut the crusts off my toast. Daily he obliged until one morning he handed back my plate with one square inch of toast. We never spoke of it, and I never again asked him to cut the crusts off.

By what understanding did the Jeep corporation name its big luxury car the “Cherokee”? In 1838 the US Army drove the Cherokee people, who eleven years earlier had founded the Cherokee Nation with a constitution like the USA’s, off their land in the southeastern mountains when gold was discovered there and force marched them to a reservation in Oklahoma, thousands dying along the way — a genocidal act rivaling the Nazi and apartheid crimes. In recent years it’s been fashionable to ask if the Germans and Japanese are coming to terms with their historical crimes; we in the USA have our own long road to walk. Seeing the name “Cherokee” flaunted in chrome letters on the side of a luxury automobile, one might well think twice. Who were those people? What was the world they made?

Patch grief with proverbs. *Pamela Worthington says that a new thrift shop where she works is enjoying booming sales. “The manager told me they did \$700 on Saturday. Of course, I wondered how much of that was big-ticket items. The manager said, ‘Well yes, we did have one — an arm chair. It was eight dollars.’”*

Ignore the Debt

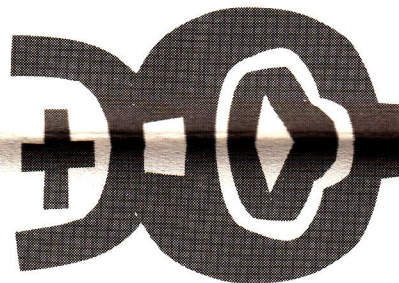
Asked about Latin America’s foreign debt Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga of Brazil says, “I am convinced that to collect the foreign debt is a sin. To pay the foreign debt is a sin. The only just thing to do is ignore the debt. I say this before God and before humanity, for many reasons. First, the debt was not contracted by the people. The rich took the money and the poor, who got nothing, are being told to pay it back. Second, the debt has already been paid. It was paid with our natural resources and our super-cheap labor. It was paid with our infant mortality and the blood and deaths of our people. The debt has been collected many times over.”

Rich nations in crisis turn first to the left — sharing wealth, guaranteeing civil liberties, drawing all their people into politics — and then in the long run to the right — seizure of wealth by the rich, police rule, and stopping politics. Poor nations tend the opposite way — from authority to gradual liberalization.

When the US Roman Catholic bishops called for social justice corrections to the harsh imbalances of capitalism a council of businessmen denounced the document as “naive,” saying the bishops, however well meaning, lacked “economic realism.”

Frog Arguments

“Liberals and conservatives need lots of hard evidence before they’re ready for common sense,” says Ed Ericson. America was promises. “There exists in the world today a gigantic reservoir of good will toward us, the American people,” wrote Wendell Willkie in 1943. Store potatoes and onions in a cool, dark place.



It was a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, but instead of bread it had plywood.

"There is no quiet place in the white man's cities," Chief Seattle wrote in 1854, "no place to hear the unfurling of leaves in the spring or the rustle of insects' wings. The clatter only insults the ears. What is life if a man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? I am a red man and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of a pond, and the smell of the wind cleansed by a midday rain or scented with the piñon pine." *What doth gravity out of his bed at midnight?*

Brought to Justice

Hiding behind thickets of yellow ribbons resembling sanitized little swastikas the USA also hides behind a lying word: the destruction of Iraq was no more a "war" than a gang of men beating a victim for an hour with iron clubs is a "fight." War is the combat of armies. The murder of over 100,000 people in a few weeks, many of them civilians, and the deliberate ruin of life-support facilities causing what the UN called "near-apocalyptic devastation," with remote killing machines that kept the killers out of harm's way, more closely resembles a Nazi death camp than a war. We say we "won the war" (the men with clubs "won the fight"?) and ask if this "war" was more like World War I or II or Korea, but the real question is whether the destruction of Iraq was more like Treblinka or the *einsatzkommando* mobile killing squads. Shall we reconvene the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal? Yes, right away. The US national security leaders must be brought to justice and removed from public life. *Diseased Nature oft breaks forth in strange eruptions.*

According to the *Academic American Encyclopedia*, the number of ants on the earth is "so large that it is almost meaningless."

Jane Jacobs says, "The chief obstacle to our leaders' doing constructive things is their proclivity for quick fixes on grandiose, standardized scales. They get away with this, indeed are encouraged in it, because ordinary people are willing to rely on so-called experts. What's useful is to see how things work and by explaining them laying a groundwork that many different people can think and act with. Development is a do-it-yourself process. It is a think-how-and-why-for-yourself process." **Investment Opportunity: New technology turns sea water to gasoline, pennies per gallon. Invest today, retire tomorrow! Call Mr. Smiles at 1-900-EZ-DOUGH now.** A missionary on a remote island received mail once a year. The annual shipment included his 12 issues of *National Geographic* which he read, one a month, one year after publication, for 23 years. **Stones sink in water. Bubbles rise. Fish swim.**

When I was in grade school my mother made my bag lunches but one morning when she was sick my father took over. I kept hounding him about what he was going to make and finally he said, "Go outside and wait for the bus. I'll bring it out." When he did, I noticed the bag was fuller than usual and figured he'd packed some extra treats. At lunch-time I ate the carrot sticks, tuna sandwich, hard-boiled egg, cookie, and apple in the bag — all normal so far — and then pulled out the last item. It was a peanut butter and jelly sandwich but instead of bread it had plywood pieces cut to the shape of bread slices, with the edges stained dark to suggest the crust. At once I knew the real reason he'd sent me outside — he'd gone to his band saw to make the bread.



Artist: Pamela Worthington. Sources: Michael Parenti, Wm. Shakespeare, Matthew Davis, *Claretian Newsletter*.

Doing Some Peace

LEAVING CHICAGO after the 1968 Democratic Party Convention demonstration I drove east in my VW bug with a big, burly man named Ed I'd met at the demonstration. Ed was a 35-year-old high school teacher with a full beard who went around in bare feet and jeans with suspenders and gave the impression of a scruffy hippie. Soon enough you saw through that. With twinkling eyes and easy gab he conveyed that true interest in other people that cuts across human variety and finds bonds with just about everyone, and his down-to-earth directness brought out the same in others. He was the kind of adult that makes kids want to grow up. During our days together I saw many Chicago shopkeepers and residents eye him warily and then warm up and talk with him at length after his first offhand remark got across the solid respect people want and rarely get.

Supper with Friends

I met Ed at a Quaker meeting house on the first night of the demonstration. He was next ahead of me in the supper line and when he tonged a hot dog from the steam tray he turned to me and asked, "Ready for a 'peace dog,' man?" By the time we got to the end of the line we were pals. We found a pair of seats and when Ed introduced me to the blur of faces I had to think twice to remember he'd never seen anyone at the table before. We were all shy and anxious about the demonstration but Ed got us chatting about the day's events and where we lived and who our families were and why we'd come to Chicago. Sometimes when people do that you feel you're on stage but Ed's easy chatting made it seem like an ordinary supper with friends.

“Man, these folks aren’t *applauding* — they’re *disrupting the convention!*”

Later the room turned into a sea of sleeping rolls on the hardwood floor and I counted myself lucky to have a companion to say good-night to. Ed whispered, “Tomorrow we’ll do some peace, man,” and started snoring.

Real Politics

The next three days passed like a dream. Some of it was nightmare: police violence, surging crowds, tear gas, guns, and rumors. Some was ecstasy: audiences spellbound by the great orator Carl Oglesby, moved to tears when Phil Ochs sang, “I declare the war is over,” and buoyed throughout by a hope that we just might stop a war.

Today it’s hard to imagine a nation boiling with social upheaval. We live in a media Disneyland nation, united proudly behind the Leader, dissent limited to a few cranks. National security, like national socialism, tries to get rid of politics, blocking public thought with slogans and slyly calling opponents “politically motivated.” We’re used to being lulled. But the air then crackled with demand. Media images of the era as a social mess are a lie to hide the fact that people were seeing how things work and insisting on change: entering real politics, the fight to shape life. Who owns, and who controls? Real politics was a new experience for most people and inevitably it got mixed up with the emotion of sudden beginnings, a mix up that hobbled progress and ever since has been exploited by propaganda. No wonder people fled into private self-seeking. Our political birth was hurt by its own thrashing and crippled by leaders wanting nothing more than to kill the baby in its bath. The Chicago demonstration was a spasm in the fight for democracy, and in that heated pressure it was a rare soul who remembered that even in fighting we all belong to the human fold. Ed was one.

An Avalanche

Over and over he showed respect for others, including those in different camps. When we passed a Black Muslim group the men’s coldly blazing gaze made me squirm until Ed, a few steps along, said with warmth, “They have no use for guys like us,” and my self-regard gave way to a glimpse of what their lives might be about. That night we faced the Guardsmen with their rifles and machine guns. People were scared but Ed, barefoot and unflappable, joked, “A bunch of guys, just like us!” and we laughed because in spite of everything that’s exactly what they were. A woman tried to put a flower in a Guardsman’s rifle barrel. Tension became danger. Ed took the flower in his hand, said gently to her, “Let’s go easy on these guys,” and then jovially to the edgy Guardsman, “Just learning, man.” The moment eased.

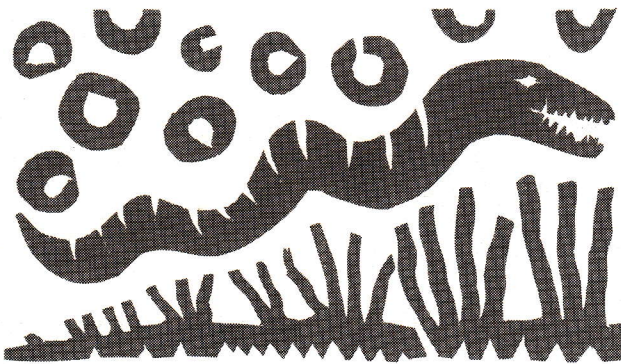
Ed and I drove out of Chicago on the last day of the convention, listening by radio. The hall surged with the short-circuiting of betrayed faith. Police had roughed up a few delegates and media stars, and out on the streets they’d beaten and gassed middle class kids. This was America?

Midday, a speaker sparked an explosion when from the podium he pronounced the name of Robert Kennedy, until his murder the likely nominee. When that name came over the air the delegates burst into applause and would not stop.

A minute, two minutes, five minutes, the uproar went on and on. The announcers’ broadcast technique fell apart as they gasped they’d never seen anything like it. It was a moment that broke history’s bounds, and even inside a little car speeding eastward at 60 miles an hour the sound of that applause coming over the tinny radio was an avalanche.

Their Revolution

But I was not moved. I would not accept it: would not accept the sincerity of the delegates, would not accept their fury at the beating of middle class kids when they’d voiced no fury at the endless beatings of dark-skinned and poor people, would not accept their out-pouring as anything but frustration at losing career tickets to White House power. What mattered their outrage now when they’d stood by idly mute or blandly tut-tutting at the scourging of the Vietnamese peasants by their own US army? My soul was bitter as I heard what could only be the crocodile tears of hypocrites — until Ed, at the wheel, washed the poison from my heart with a chuckle. “Dig this, man! It’s *their* revolution.”



They’ve Joined Us

In a flash I saw my pride illuminated by his tolerance and knew, as one sees a far shore which long voyaging may someday reach, that Ed’s wide-open embrace of the human possibility was a greater thing than my wish to be right.

Yet still I challenged him! It was a mark of friendship that I would try out my foolishness on him, half rebutting, half inviting his correction. It was a way to thank him.

“So where have they been all this time?” I scoffed over the delegates’ applause still cascading from the radio.

Ed laughed. “Man, these folks aren’t *applauding* — they’re *disrupting the convention*. They’ve *joined us*, man!”

A few hours later I dropped him off at a New York subway gate. Yanking his duffel from the car he fingered the V-sign — “Thanks for the peace, man,” and was gone.

Peace? What is it? Living is fighting. But to fight with respect, to hold a place for all within the human fold — might that be a start at doing some peace?