

# THE LIBERATED LIBERATOR



September 2019

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Dear Reader:

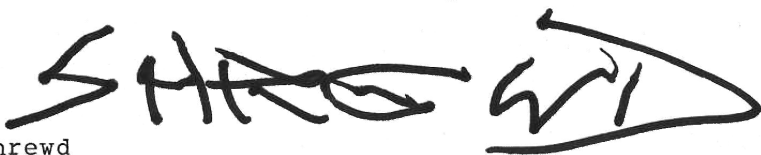
It was a suffocating week--damp heat plastered on our faces, our hands, our chairs, our seats. But the rain that threatened finally came, and the air turned as cool and sweet as a high-ringing bell.

The inside growing, irrationally, but daily, drum-taut, inescapable, the expanse of myself pushing to meet the expanse of the horizon. The inevitability is sometimes a marvel, sometimes oppressive, as mutable as the summer heat.

What is the distillation of a life, of a body, of my life, of my body? Or do such distinctions melt away? The dockmen in their coats believe in nothing more sanctimonious than a woman without a face, would impress on the world's child-bearers a Scarlet Letter, big enough to subsume the wearer. So much of birth is death; birth itself the very seed of death, withouten death and disaster could not be. Outside the offices of the L.L., the garden sways in the sun, overgrown with hale weeds, dame's rockets and trees of heaven, shaking with oxygen and surplus. Through the dense green jungle go the robins and the sparrows, the worms and the mice, trailing their dreams and detritus behind them, through the leafy cathedrals; beneath them, the small, unmarked graves of the forebearers lie singing, awake.

Yrs,

*Grim*  
Grim & Shrewd



# Letters to the Editor

*I have a magic 8-ball cursed by voodoo to always be right. I am eager to naïvely meddle with forces I don't understand, however, I can't really think of anything to ask. Please advise.*

—Dark Lord Mike

**Dark Lord, every idiot is filled with questions, it simply requires practice to phrase your pondering as such. For example, your letter came dangerously close to being a question, but faltered at the last minute and became a request. What you should have written was “is my magic 8-ball eligible to compete on Family Feud?”, to which we would have answered, “go ask your magic 8 ball”. We hope that helps.**

UUUUUNNNNGHGHGH

—A friend

**We know. It really is unfathomable that people like things sometimes.**

**To have your sneakers befouled, your issues made into laughing-stock, or your parents shamed, send your letters to:**

**letters@liberatedliberator.com**

*Dear sirs and dames:*

*I am writing to express my particular delight in reading the last issue's clear mention that “boxers” are no longer cool. This is wonderful news for those of us who have always enjoyed a tight, but discreet, underarmor. I am happy to see that codpieces are relevant again, and will end by sharing a happy memory of receiving my first “steel feel” codpiece Christmas 1988. It was a cold winter, and about to get colder!*

—Diligence P. Bod

**Mr. Bod, we regret to inform you that codpieces are no longer Cool. You now look a twat.**

*I have had it up to here with your ground squirrels! Let them eat cake and go back to where they belong! I'll have none of them in MY country.*

—Enough Is Enough

**E.I.E., happily, the squirrels are here to stay, which is more than I can say for the likes of you. Those that can “get with the program,” are welcome to join the 10th Annual Ground Squirrel Balloon Ball on the fall equinox.**

Esteemed Editors,

I have been a fan of *The Liberated Liberator* for the last two months. I love it.

I am sending along this art for consideration.

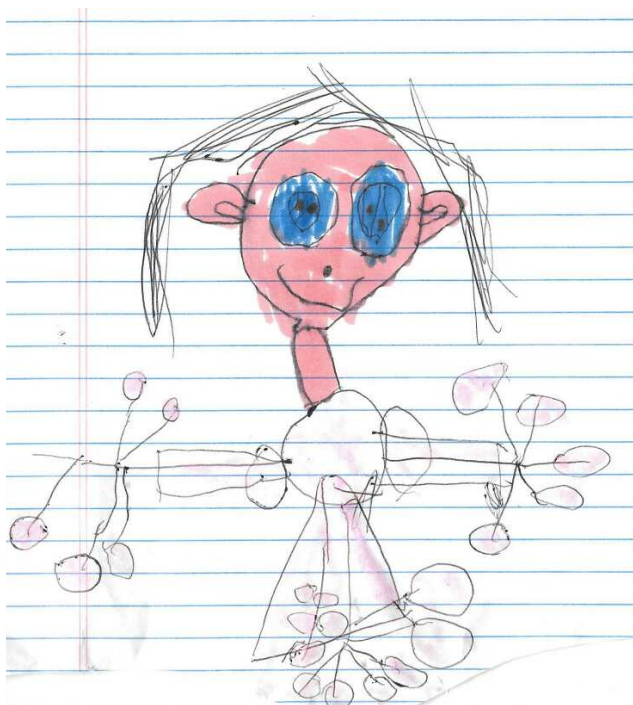
I live in Duluth, Minnesota, and my art has appeared on: the bulletin board at my school; our refrigerator; and the side of my dresser.

This art is not a simultaneous submission.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

ZOLA



The girl stood in the wood with a thousand fingers and a thousand toes. She was magic and full of power. She will grant you a wish but only if you make a good PB&J.

# Of Bromeliads, a Spirited Debate

Paid for by the Society for the Study  
of Deadly Forces, LMN, PTO, QED

From: Shrewd, Chairman of the Board (Retired)  
To: All Passionate Students of Truth  
Re: Pineapples

The Society for the Study of Deadly Forces have recently called into question the eligibility of “pineapple” as a Deadly Force. Field investigations suggest that despite its spiked visage and haughty flavor, the pineapple’s most widely feared risk (kamikaze-induced concussion) appears to have been founded on a terrible misunderstanding: the pineapple does not actually grow in the tree tops at all, but rather peeks out from low-laying bushes. In short and in truth, it is an unpre-suming and gravitationally-limited fruit.

However, it should be acknowledged that while the majority of the SSDF is in favor of emancipating the pineapple from its infamous standing as a Dangerous Bromeliad, there is at least one recalcitrant, and dare we say, old-fashioned, Disputator. In our efforts to preserve the spirit of democratic debate upon which our Society was founded, we print the detractor’s manifesto in full below for your consideration.

Please cast your vote by filling out the ballot on the following page and mailing it to:

SSDF  
P.O. Box 789223  
New Greenwich, IL 67344

All ballots must be received by September 30, 2019.

Should by popular vote the pineapple be discharged from its place as a Deadly Force, the fruit will be promptly released from its kryptonite prison and given \$25 in cab fare and clean set of clothes.

## Counterpoint

The “Society” or rather that blue collection of Good Old Boys [sic., there is at least one Girl and one Nematode] seeks nothing but its own glorification and has become downright masturbatory; led by a panel of social climbers who keep a closer eye on the calendar than the Deadly Forces they’ve been charged to contain. It is a pale shadow of what we started, and to take you, Chairman Shrewd, out of retirement to relay such a vile, by-the-book response disturbs me.

These “field investigations” are little more than boy scout outing internships using a private Instagram knock-off app; and what would they find given the dormancy of the subject? Yes, we’ve had theories on the exact method a, or a group of, pineapple exerts deadly force towards humankind, but the documentation still stands: pineapples have gone airborne, and will do so again.

There hasn’t been a thorough investigation into the ballistics of the pineapple from bush to sky, told we lacked the funds and that I was a fool. To release the pineapple, give it clothing , money and to place it in a cab is a deadly force in itself and of a magnitude we know not.

--M. Hefflebottom, UTL

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## Ballot

**I herewith cast my vote, on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of September, 2019 to**

- ☐ Remove the pineapple from its status as a Deadly Force, as recognized by the SSDF
- ☐ Continue to enforce an outdated and outmoded sensibility upon a harmless ground fruit, i.e. pre-serve the pineapple’s status as a Deadly Force.

# The Challenges of Band Management

as described by Wikipedia, discovered by Noah Epstein

“Monitoring is the key to reducing damage, with the early detection and eradication of bands being the objective. Ideally, a sufficient proportion of nomadic bands can be treated with insecticide before the swarming phase is reached.”



# An Ode to Tissue

by Shrewd

You're there when we're sick  
and when we cry,  
a thankless comfort in the eye of every misfortune.

You soak it up,  
soak up the detritus of our selves, all the mucus and heartache,  
soak it up only to be swiftly tossed away,  
forgotten, hopefully...  
except when a languorous toss turns you into a stain upon the floor,  
or a washing machine turns you into a thousand tiny disasters.

You're there at the end of our self-indulgence to catch our shame,  
wrap it up,  
mummify it for its journey into the beyond.

When the lifeless world dies, it falls into my trash.  
By your soft and sacrificial embrace, the world inside me  
can join them.

# Caligvla Cards

by Gil

when we travel down ancient roads; weary  
in the cusp of hard-pressed romanesque  
satire of our damaged loins, we queer  
kids ripped from dry roots and flung west;  
we do not stumble. when we break our backs  
on the metal infrastructure of whining  
gears and pistol-whip the piston cracks  
that plague our deep desert pining  
for fictitious gods, we are not heathen.  
and when the hands of mother's love decay,  
her rotten selma songs out of season--  
we gather quietly our last flop to play,  
as our restless faces tell her role;  
we make ourselves aces in the hole.



# Cabbage

by Grim

Ms. Euphrenia Dabble had done a crime.

She had never done a crime before, not remotely! She didn't even like taking sugar from the diner, though goodness knows no one would miss a few turbinado packets. She had done a crime, and she felt strangely marvellous, like she had swallowed a lightening bolt, whole. Now, she felt the jolt run through her bones like the touch of live wire as she reached down to caress her little theft.

The Cabbage Patch baby glared up at her with pale, unblinking eyes. His oviform face nearly featureless, bar the snub of an upturned nose, a slash in the shape of a sneer for a mouth.

"I'll call you Ronald." Euphrenia, seized by a moment of motherly tenderness clasped the baby to her chest, murmuring diligent sweeties in his wrinkled ear all the while. She felt unaccountably dazed and kept fussing with the large, odiferous cabbage leaves that curled around baby Ronald's body like a swaddle.

She planted Ronald in a large pot meant for a decorative dracaena and watered him daily. Ronald grew. Euphrenia bloomed. She hummed as she went about her day. Her hair and skin brightened. She managed to mount him, pot and all, in a stroller, which she pushed in tight circles in the lot behind her brownstone apartment. She felt it far to risky to let him outside the property, where someone might ask nasty questions.

Daily, Ronald emerged more and more from his cabbage sheath, the leaves of which Euphrenia collected for his baby book as they drooped and fell. He was a good baby, she thought. He never cried. He never did much of anything except to stare at Euphrenia as she cleaned the house, or worked at her laptop, ghostwriting for Parrots Weekly. She enjoyed his attention acutely. Sometimes, she felt he stared at her even when she was sleeping. One night, she tested her theory by peeking out of her covers and found the pale little eyes fixed on her humped shape as she lay in her bed.

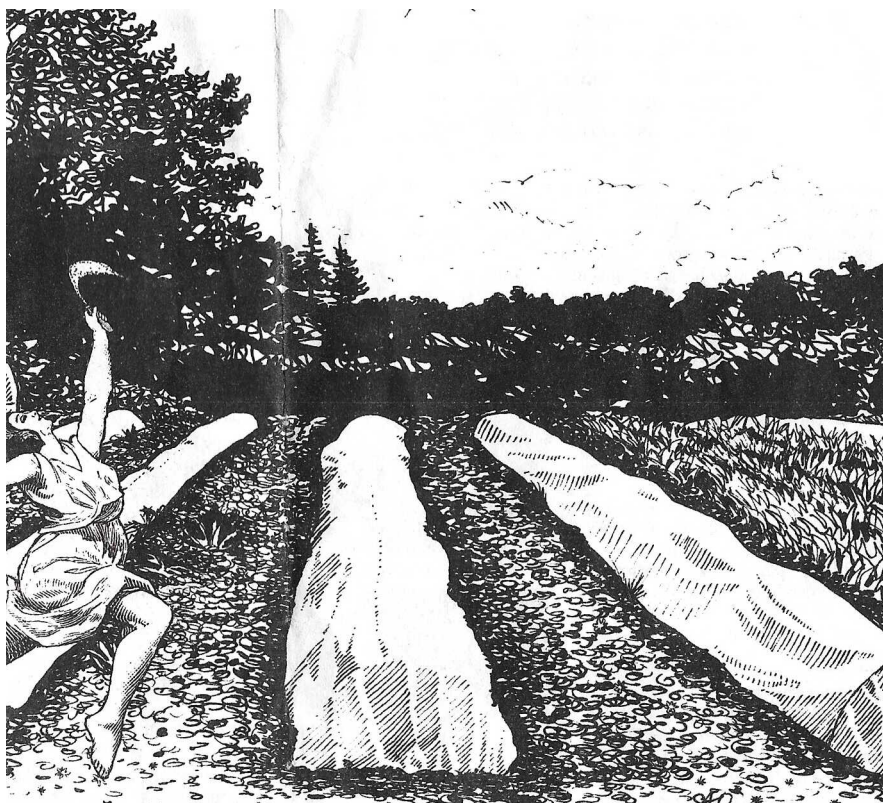
It was heaven.



Euphrenia waited impatiently for the day Ronald could safely be plucked from his placental cabbage stalk. She had been in such a tizzy when she stole him from the Patch that she'd neglected to read his plaque, which would have given her a due date. But she researched a good deal on the internet and settled on a day.

It would be a party, she thought, there would be balloons spelling out "It's a Boy!" and little paper plates and matching utensils of blue and green. She would wear a blue knit dress and Ronald the same. There would be a cupcake for her and some milk for him, for surely when he was no longer tethered to the earth, he would consume as humans did. Ronald watched the preparations, and said nothing.

The due date arrived, a summery day full of anticipation. Euphrenia fetched her balloons from the florist, who asked her if she was going to a baby shower. Hiding a proud smile, Euphrenia nodded yes. For a friend, asked the florist? Oh yes. Hmm, said the florist.



Euphrenia left offended, but was determined to throw a good party anyway. She strung the balloons on the brand new crib and threw open the windows to let in the breeze. "Even the wind is invited to your party, Ronnie! Ready for plucking? One, two, three!" She pulled. The cabbage stalk twisted and gnarled under her fists, but would not give. Ronald's face turned paler and paler, his little mouth twisted into rude shapes.

An insect flew through window and started worrying at her. She smashed it into a red smear against her arm and wiped the sweat off her forehead. "Third times the charm," she chimed brightly, and pulled again, harder. Ronald began to emit an odd noise, rather like a pitched dog whistle. The stalk did not budge. Euphrenia huffed in exasperation. Pools of sweat were dampening her dress, seeping under her armpits. She ran to the kitchen and returned with a serrated knife. A few more insects had gathered and were swirling around Ronald's head in urgent circles.

"Won't hurt a bit, darling," she muttered, and began to saw away at the stalk. The sound of buzzing intensified. Ronald's eyes bulged and his whistling stopped abruptly.

"Not much longer, now, dear."

The bees, for they were bees, now covered Euphrenia's arms and face. Impatiently, she swatted them, but more of them came, torrenting through the window in a whirl of soft golds and blacks. Somehow, she could still see Ronald, his flat cheeks the color of old milk. The bees left him alone.

"Almost there!" she cried as she felt the stalk give under the toothed blae, and immediately her open mouth was filled with bees.

At last, the stalk gave way. A sputtering veil of pink sap covered her hands, the blade slipped with a clatter, and Euphrenia lost her balance and fell, fell, fell down into the flight of bees, their wings flattening and supporting her, their stings like little claps of joy, of congratulations, as Ronald, freed from his cabbage base kept his glazed eyes fixed on her, even as the buzzing filled her lungs and blotted out the world.



-MOTHER-

by Jonathan Badizon

**BADIZON '19**



# Recipe for Another One

by Shrewd

## Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp snips
- 14 snails and/or slugs
- 1/2 cup puppy dog tails
- 1 sperm (human)
- 1 egg (human)
- Luck and/or access to a good health plan

Step 1: To make a human child from scratch, first you must create the universe.

Step 2: Bake in entropy for ~14 billion years, or until warm to touch.

Step 3: Exist.

Step 4: Through fate, planning, passion, accident, or tragedy, combine all ingredients.

Step 5: Want fresh donuts. SO BAD.

Step 6: Invest in a 529 plan.

Step 7: Don't fuck up.

Step 8: Attempt acceptance.

Repeat once per generation.

# The Revolution Will Be Civilized\*

by Shrewd

When it happens—whatever it's shape—it won't be us bearing the pitchforks or storming the Bastille. I don't say this out of cowardice or cynicism, but just generational heuristics. True change will always spring from the young, and our membership to that fickle clan quietly expired the moment we first judged the taste or demeanor of those younger than us.

And in our greatest fears, the world burns as we wash dishes. By what selfish audacity do we carry on, dare to create something? By what asthenia do we imagine when so much must be torn down?

The word calls out creaking and croaking and toying with our image of ourselves: “settle”.

I just want to offer: that instinct is not resignation. It is the second adolescence, that awkward awakening to the fact that each generation and age group carries it's own responsibilities. I understand the siren song of the fault-line, but for most of us starting to count our grays, our impact will not be measured by molotovs hurled or sovereignty upended, but by the seeds we plant now. Our art, our community, our families, our attempts to prove a better equilibrium, to opt-out of the most flagrantly broken aspects of the system we live within and preserve what is most valuable—these things will shape the world to come. These are things that must be done, and that can't be done by the youth who will actually instigate the change.

The spark will catch. Don't kick yourself for not being the kindling; not everything must burn, but some of us must begin building the world we want to see emerge from the flames of the old.

\* except where it isn't



# My Mother Floated as a Cloud

An airplane was a HUGE thing — a HUGE thing  
That flew

She knew about airplanes —  
Her mother left in an airplane  
Her father did too

    Though she didn't remember him anymore  
Now they lived somewhere                      else

Her mother had always carried a little bit of magic  
Between her fingers,  
Her mother \*the magician\* one day had turned  
Herself into a cloud

Warm and paperwhite  
She floated

She flew — flyed — found herself flung  
Across the Pacific  
Over an ocean of unknowable depth  
She drew the cover of the sky over her face  
And turned the horizon  
Away

Then her mother, transmorgified,  
Rained faintly down on the land beyond the sea  
Until she was herself again:  
Warm as warmest thing  
You could imagine,  
Warmer than rain  
Warmer than smell of her clothes

In fact, she was forgetting how warm her mother was,  
Her mother was going the way of her father  
Who had faded from the crispness  
Of that afternoon in the yard in the summer  
When the dandelions crowned into moons.

Then, one day a long time later, they said:  
“You’ll be going  
Going on an airplane, and you’ll see your parents, when you  
Land.”

An airplane was a huge thing, she thought,  
A HUGE thing, that passes over the night (no, she could not  
Have thought this, she was too little to have known the words)

An airplane was a bird,  
She slept under its burnished wing, and the world moved under her  
Under

under

under

Until she was transmorgified  
Not a little girl anymore, but a foreign thing

And then she saw her mother,  
A soft stranger, with firm hands and shards  
for fingernails,

As for her father, he might always be a stranger,  
(so let’s not talk about him here; remember  
him smiling in the yard with the dandelions  
under the crisp sun of a city that does not  
see the sun these days)  
He was a memory snipped from her memory  
And lived in a box of photographs  
He forgot to be remembered at all.

—

Then I saw my mother, it became clear  
Over a long time

Suddenly.

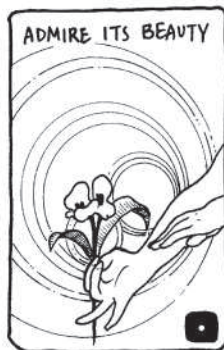
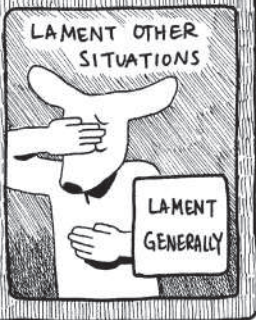
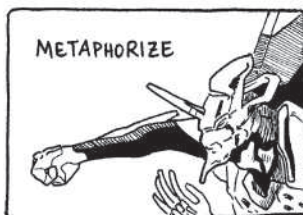
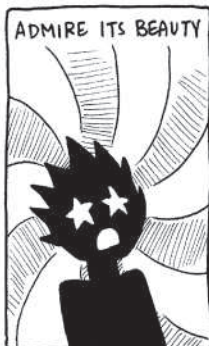
**by Grim**



# HOW TO APPROACH A MONUMENT

by Kat

SOME PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS



by Kat Tuesday