

## Ilan's path to the Dark Side.

### Pie From the Sky -

Sweet Words of Pie and Gravy From Your Admins

Captain's Log, Stardate  
60834.7

I seem to have landed on a planet inhabited by middle aged Caucasians parents sporting baseball caps and escorting children of various ages to baseball games. Some of these children hit the ball off what is known here as a 'tee', while others have implemented actual pitching into their game plan. These parents are easily offended and overly uptight, especially when discovering that the team your child is playing on is kicking the ass of the team their child is playing on, although no one admits to keeping score.

Yes, yes dear members of LiteraryMary spring has sprung in the United States of America and it is marked by the outdoor sport of baseball, or softball depending on your child's gender. It's all fun and games until someone gets an eye poked out, non? No, actually. I'm waiting for one of the parents to lose it and start a fist fight, or at least burn some rubber out of the parking lot in their Yukon.

I'd like to remind people about the Announcement section of the forum. Contrary to other sites which you may or may not have used, our Announcement section is there for the members as well as the staff. If you've got something to announce, go for it. Say you're getting married, having a baby, decided

you'll never have children, you got published, or you're coming out of the closet- anything you might need to announce to the internet- we'd love to host it.

I notice we've gotten a few new members since I've been gone. I want to give kudos to our established members for being as danged friendly as you all have been. I often get comments from people who are shocked at how welcome they have been made to feel since joining. That's squishy awesome.

For those who missed my post in Sausage, I would really like to encourage our members to take part in The [Guerilla Poetics Project](#). It's very much on my 'things to take part in this coming Wednesday which is payday and when I will have some extra money' list. If spring is the season for romance, there's really nothing I can think of which is more romantic than the covert smuggling of broadside poems into the backs of well known books. Become a Special Operative and spread the poetry. You can do it hand in hand with the one you love.

As I sit and type this, I'm not quite back in the Captain's chair. But I'm looking forward to it. Oh how I long to crack the whip on Ilan's ass and whine ceaselessly like so many ill-played violins to Ruben

about things which aren't working correctly. Which reminds me, we are most likely going to be switching to phpBB (<http://www.phpbb.com/>) format over the summer. Doing so will allow us to implement more of the features which members have requested and will also be easier for Ruben to work with. I'm not sure when exactly we will be doing this, and I understand nothing whatsoever about the process, but that's why we have our ever secksy boy wonder admin supreme.

Oh and one more thing before I go. I wanted to remind everyone about the IRC feature Ruben installed a while back. For anyone who isn't aware, IRC stands for Internet Relay Chat and it's a really cool feature that allows our forum members to talk to each other in real time, sort of like MSN but it's connected to the forum and you don't have to add anybody or download anything or any such nonsense as that. If you're on the forum and you have some time and you're into cyber- JOKING- give it a try. You never know. As my uncle used to say, 'Somethin' a bit differen't guy, you might get off on it.'

Back in Black,

*ms. vodka*

Issue 4  
June 2007

#### Special points of interest:

- *Sexy Hodge on Ilan...or is it Ilan on Hodge... action in this month's Ping Pong*
- *Find out why Hawke thinks dragonfruit can be linked to writing.*
- *Strangedaze talks about his three-day novel journey in "Three Day Road"*

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## Hot Cakes

### "Everything Changes when You're Married..."

Bull.

Before I got married, I was told numerous times getting married changes everything. In fact, I more or less grew up on the statement. I remember back in middle school (year seven and eight for the Aussies) when I heard people who live together before marriage have a slightly higher divorce rate, I asked:

"Wouldn't living together before you get married be a good idea? You get to know each other and stuff before you make the commitment."

I got a "tsk tsk" look and shake of the head accompanied with, "No, everything changes when you're married."

Throughout my life, I asked many married women about this mysterious statement, and each would gaze off and nod, saying, "It does."

However, no one would enlighten me as to the ways it does change, if it's good, bad, or both, or if it's some marriage cult-ish secret not even the divorcees talk about.

Sometimes I would get, "Marriage is... Well, marriage is... Well, when you're married, you don't wake up every morning com-

pletely in love with the person you wake up to in the morning."

I thought that was a bit depressing but entirely realistic. There's a deeper bond there that is there every day, but it's not the 'butterflies in my stomach, take me now on the table' kind of lust every day.

I understand that.

But that still didn't tell me why or in what ways "marriage changes everything".

Before the wedding, I admitted to my husband that I was glad to finally find out what this seemingly catastrophic change in our lives would be like. Having never been married before, he didn't have much to say on the matter, instead just shifting slightly nervously.

The wedding day came and went. We had a simple ceremony with about twenty people in a gazebo over the lake in the middle of our local park.

We wrote our own vows and both almost cried when we recited them. The reception was simple, fun, and had a lot of good music and good food. The honeymoon was much the same.

When we came back from our honeymoon, unpacked, relaxed, and caught up on our correspondence, I found myself looking at my ring.

Then looking at the flat.

Then looking at my husband.

Nothing was different.

I told myself we were still in the honeymoon phase and the "big change" would happen when we got back into "real life."

He went back to work that Monday, I went back to newsletters, blog posts, and cleaning our mess of a flat. (Pressies, unpacked clothing, etc everywhere. Oy.)

Still nothing.

With our one-month anniversary coming up on June 5th (already?!), you could say we're still too new a married couple for the "big change" to happen, but I'm of the opinion it's never going to come.

Maybe it's the year of relying on communication alone to keep our relationship going. Maybe it's that we learned a bit more about each other with pre-marital classes.

Either way, not all that much has changed. Marriage is not the atomic bomb I thought it might be. The only thing it has changed is our relationship status and my last name. (And soon my country of residence.)

Maybe babies change everything... That has to be it...

(I know what you're thinking, and the answer is NO.)

## Ping Pong!

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**Hodge:** So we've gotta do this Ping Pong thing, now. After perusing the other ping pongs, I've come to the conclusion that we lack sufficient wit and have far too much brevity to do it well, so let's just concentrate on *doing* it.

One thing I've always wondered about you is why you like sonnets so much. In particular, Shakespearean sonnets. I remember writing sonnets in high school and doing better than everyone else in class, but still sucking like Paris Hilton on any given week night. What's your secret? Does it come in pill form? Can I be on your infomercial?

**Ilan:** I was going to suggest that we make up for the lack of wit by filling our dialogue with informative content and counteract the brevity by addressing complex questions, but the readers don't want any of that crap. They just want crude sexual innuendo. Well, I'll give them something *crude* and... uh... *sexual*!

....No, but seriously, you're not chick enough—and I'm not drunk enough—for me to flirt with you, Josh. If we lack originality and really have to return to rehashed jokes (and you can be certain that we will), we'll just have to direct our lewd comments towards Jen.

The Shakespearean sonnet is, to me, one of the finest forms of poetry one can find. It has all the composure of a rigid poetry form yet the flexibility to provide ample manipulation. Concise

but not limiting; it offers all sorts of variation in rhyme scheme and meter, and it just sounds great to read aloud. It is the panther of the poetry world, and although the cat's got claws, if you can tame the beast, the ride is worth it. Italian sonnets are ok, but they lack the punch of a closing couplet, and without that little gimmick I'd have to resort to a greater quality of writing, and, frankly, no one notices a hack if he speaks in

*“Naw, man, poetry doesn't suck. Poetry is not about logic or reason—it's about the exact opposite, actually. The surrendering of emotion and idea to the beautiful precision of language. You can't debate it or subjugate it.” - Ilan*

Iambic Pentameter, so why bother? The secret, like every other secret, is in the sauce. Add a bit of flair to an otherwise simple message, fit some themed wordplay in, if you can, and people will eat it up like Ethiopians at a Chinese buffet. And lock away all the awful sonnets far from public eye like they were a child you were ashamed—or, in keeping with my earlier analogy, keep those suckas out of sight like they were General Tso's Low-Fat Tofu.

But what about your writing? In the past three years, I've only seen a single piece of yours, and it... sucked (i.e. used symbolism—that sort of thing is above me). What sort of writ-

ing do you stick to? Specific genres? Ever thought about experimenting a little? Everyone else is doing it. And for chrissake, why don't you ever post any of it up? You think you're too good for us or something? Well, you're not too good for anyone. And neither are we. Where is the love, man?

**Hodge:** I once tried to do a sonnet. It didn't turn out so well, although now I know why: poetry sucks. Yes, I said it. And even though my only published piece is a poem, I'll *never* admit to being a poet. Neva.

I know I've posted up a good many pieces. Not on LM, but over on WF I've posted a dozen or so. Maybe less. I don't remember any symbolism, but the thing about symbolism is that no one consciously does it -- oh no! A writer writes the piece and then someone else says "yo, nice symbolism!" and the writer gives a sort of sheepish grin and says, "yeah... I totally meant to do that."

Oh, and I experiment *all the time, baby*. I've got stuff from all different kinds of genres (but most of it's also literary because I'm too smart to do anything but), although I particularly like writing surrealist fiction and post-modern mind-fucks. I also have some poetry, but since I'm not a poet I've disowned all of it. Most of it was written when I was in middle and high school, anyway... Angsty crap.

I know you've been writing since you were at least 14 or 15, because that's when you first joined Writingforums.com, but when did you really start? What was your first finished

## Hodge vs. Ilan

piece? Are you proud of it? Does it make you cringe? Could I blackmail you if I got ahold of it?

**Ilan:** Naw, man, poetry doesn't suck. Poetry is not about logic or reason—it's about the exact opposite, actually. The surrendering of emotion and idea to the beautiful precision of language. You can't debate it or subjugate it. 😊

On an aside, would you consider writing and reciting a rap for the good people of LiteraryMary? (I could beat-box.) (I can't, actually, beat-box. You're on your own, mate.)

I've been writing all my life, really— isn't that too cliché for classy fellas like us? But if I do use that answer, the first piece I wrote was when I was five or so and aptly titled "The Adventures of Smiley Man," which, I suppose, would be considered fiction. I know my dad has it saved somewhere; I'll scan it and post it up if I ever come across it.

But I started considering myself a writer when I was twelve, I think— maybe thirteen. At the time, I wrote the most horrid poetry ever produced, although I must admit I could never evoke as much emotion from readers now as from those works (assuming the desire to punch a poet, and then oneself, in the neck is an emotion). At that time, actually, I ran a blog with about fifteen other friends, titled The Blog (and the creativity of the name was an indication of our

writing, I think), where we'd post our works. More drama was settled, and created, on that blog than anywhere else in my life, but it was still plenty of fun for the two years it lasted.

It really did take me at least a year of writing before I started writing for myself, and stopped showing every single piece I wrote to my friends; that's why I can't bring myself to tell fledging writers *why* they should write. The desire and interest in writing came later; it began as an easy way of preening my ego. Since then, of course, I've learned that there are much more effective ways of doing so, freeing up the writing to become an interest, and only a little bit of an ego booster.

But I digress. Tell me the best line, or segment of writing, you've ever read! And tell me why! Then develop some unrelated tangent involving me. And then tell me and the readers something you have never revealed to the internet ever before! (And remember, the readers want sauce. *Sauce.*)

**Hodge:** Subjugation indeed! Poetry is emotion, yes, but it must be tempered with a reasonable eye afterwards or you end up with stuff like this:

"Pain"

The darkness consumes my very soul  
And I want to escape but I can't  
Because the demons pull me under  
*So I cut myself.*

That's where your "emotion" gets you!

Sure, I'll rap if you beatbox. I can't rap, actually, so you're on *your* own.

You young'ns and your "blogs"... When I was 12 or 13, a 56k modem was hella fast, and "blogs" didn't exist yet. We had internet forums, I believe, but I spent most of my time looking up porn, not knowing what to do with it, and hoping I didn't get caught.

That's about where I decided I was a writer, though. Starting in 8th grade (okay, so I was 14, not 13), I began to seriously consider a writing career. I'd always written for fun before that, but I wanted to be a scientist of some sort. When I realized I didn't like math anymore, I decided against the scientist route and began to write an epic fantasy novel with no humans in it. I won't mention anymore, save that I got to about 100,000 words before I realized it was embarrassing and scrapped it. An earlier copy of it escaped onto a computer disk, however, and its whereabouts are currently unknown...

The best piece of writing I've read? That would have to be, "the disassociative properties of the Halstatt-2 group set it completely apart from the La Tene-1 group, and further transfigure the gap between the Celtiberians and Gauls. While human sacrifice is not entirely out of the question, it is certainly more likely that these bodies were already dead when buried!"

Amazing, no? I can't even *begin* to

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explain the magnificent magnificence of this little quote I've pulled from a book on the Celts. Actually, I just pulled it from my ass... I don't know what the best piece line or segment of writing is, so I'll just ignore your question.

But reveal something unique I can do! Let's see, I've never told anyone that I don't have a third nipple...

Here's a question for you: why writing? You're a bright young lad, and I know you're athletic, so why aren't you entertaining delusions of professional sports and such? Writing certainly isn't the most lucrative career, and even if it's something you love, it's still hard work to actually do anything with it. Enlighten us, please, and if you have a third nipple, I want to hear about it.

**Ilan:** Referring to your impromptu poem... uh... 3.5/5 stars.

So, a scientist, eh? What sort would you be, then? (And if it weren't for the Scientific Method—which pretty much ensures every experiment ever will be really, really boring—I would seriously consider a career in genetics.

And as titillating as your bit about a third nipple may be, I was hoping for something a bit more scandalous. Like maybe, "I've never told anyone that I don't have a second nipple."

Professional sports don't interest me. Save for rock climbing and some casual ultimate frisbee, I don't really participate in sports anyway (and running is not a sport, no matter what anyone says), and I'm not good enough at either of those to make anything of myself through them. As for writing, it's a hobby first, and a professional means to an end, second.

I've never been published and I probably won't attempt to be until I have something publishable, but I'll probably always write poetry or fiddle around with short stories. Right now, I have three requirements for my profession: It has to be physically challenging and/or dangerous, mentally challenging and/or dangerous, and it has to be a civil service. But then, I'm sure all of that will change by the time it matters.

What are your highest aspirations (both feasible and unfeasible)? If you could live in any time period, which would it be? If you could make one insignificant change to the world, what would it be? What theories have you developed that you steadfastly assert are correct, but that no one will believe?

**Hodge:** Science rox0rs your cox0rs. I originally wanted to be an astronomer, then a geologist, then I wanted to be an astrophysicist, then I wanted to be a psychologist, then a sociologist, then a biologist, then an everythingologist. Because science rox0rs your cox0rs. Instead I decided to just read

up on all of it and be an idea man.

I have the perfect profession for you: drug lord. Think Tony Montana. First you have to be in good enough shape to keep those assassins and Columbian death squads from killing you, and then you have to have a strong enough will to deal with the death of your sister, your wife divorcing you, and killing your best friend, and it's civil service because you're helping people get their fix. Perfect job.

My highest aspirations... Well, I'd like to be a god, which leads me to my theory that few will believe: if you could escape the universe, you'd be a god, because inside of it you are bound by all these silly physical laws that dictate you can't do certain things. But outside of the universe, none of those exist—your only limit is your mind. Inside your head you can think of anything, no matter how impossible it is. Outside the universe, there is no line between this abstract, "imaginary" world and the "real" world.

So that's my feasible aspiration. My unfeasible aspiration would be winning a hot dog eating contest. And an insignificant change to the world? I'd like to pee in a vat of soda at a Coca-Cola bottling plant.

Now let's hear about these crackpot notions of yours. This may be the only chance you'll get to do so without me arguing incessantly with you. Also, would you like to be a pimp? If so, would you prefer purple or maroon? Velvet or vinyl? If a ho is coming towards you from the east at 5 mph with \$150, and another ho is coming from the west at 7 mph with

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\$95, which one do you smack?

**Ilan:** Dude, it's like you're reading my mind. You're the second person in like three days to seriously suggest drug lord as a profession to me, and last summer I looked into it briefly, and ended up funding an \$80 purchase of weed, which I was never in direct contact with, but gave me a return of \$150 or so. The guy I was funding ripped me off, and I almost killed him, but I realized I still took a profit (as small as it was), and that I didn't have to front the time or risk in getting the money back. Anyway, the point is that I wouldn't make a great drug lord, because drugs aren't really where the hap' is happenin', 'n'a'mean?

Josh-boy, you don't think the mind has limitations? For example, no matter how hard I imagine it, I just can't picture myself with shaved legs. It would look eery; hell, this week someone commented on my beautiful, muscular, sculpted calves and mentioned that their hair was essential in maintaining their allure. Paradoxically, maybe the mind's limitations include being unable to see said limitations, eh?

My insignificant change to the world would be to bring fedora hats back into style. Their time has come, baby. My unfeasible aspiration is to buy Antarctica and use it for commercial enterprise (in fact, about a year after I had this idea initially, someone bought Canada's portion of Antarctica for \$1 and turned it into a \$1 billion per year profitable investment, by dredging it and creating ports and

strafes for ships). My other unfeasible aspiration is to own Lenin's body, and turn the glass case he's kept in into a coffee table. My feasible aspiration (three years' in the making, by this summer, although at this point all

*“The only limitation the mind has (besides practical limitations like processing speeds and protection against blunt trauma force) is imperfect information. If you knew everything, you'd be able to imagine anything. Oh yes.” - Hodge*

I really need is time and inspiration to get it done) is to make a machine that will beat the keyless remote entries on car doors. I've probably spent a good ten hours of research on the topic and it's definitely possible. My other feasible aspiration is to enlighten the American masses as to the evils of Santa Claus—in fact, I'll probably post up a short essay I wrote on the subject soon enough, for the good people of LiteraryMary (and this way I'll get to hear more of your incessant arguing, which brings me close to climax as it is). This paragraph could probably go on forever, but I think I've already made myself appear crazy enough, and technically I was answering my own questions throughout, and one of my unfeasible aspirations is to avoid appearing megalomaniacal, so I figure while I've already made my longest paragraph all about me, I can probably deflect people's attention away via some clever misdirection. Uh... what's that behind your

ear? A coin?

And if I can iterate the bit about your reading my mind, I did look into pimping as a part-time job once I started college. My plan was to be a benevolent pimp—I'd treat my hos with respect and serve as a guardian against rape or bails, and I'd pass most of my profits on to them. I was totally psyched about it and started recruiting my bitches until I discovered that pimping is a sex crime, and it seemed to me that if I were to commit a sex crime, I should at least derive sexual pleasure out of it, so that was the end of that idea.

I think I've rambled enough, at this point, so: a look into your childhood! Where did you grow up? What was it like? Was there a turning point that led you to become the bitter, disillusioned bastard we all know and love (and/or hate) today? Who was your first crush?

**Hodge:** The only limitation the mind has (besides practical limitations like processing speeds and protection against blunt trauma force) is imperfect information. If you knew everything, you'd be able to imagine *anything*. Oh yes.

Dude, fedoras rock. I've actually been looking for one lately because I figure I can call up Wyndstar for a whip and my buddy Ryan for a brown leather jacket and I can be Indiana Jones! And coffee table Lenin? Brilliant. Simply brilliant. You do sound 100% crazy, but in regards to deflecting people's thoughts, sometimes I'll act like people around me are reading my mind and I'll think things to them like,

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"I'm on to you." Perhaps it's because I *can* read your mind?

I can totally see you as a benevolent pimp. I mean, not everyone wants to smack women and treat them like shit, but who *doesn't* want crushed velvet and a cane?

### "Uh... boobs." - Ilan

I grew up in Juneau, Alaska, which is where I still live. Early on, after having been indoctrinated into believing adults were infallible and better than me, I found out it wasn't true. What followed was the realization that I didn't have to be the religion my parents were (it's just statistically how it works out), and then the realization that I was smarter than my parents in many areas. It totally rocked, especially when I'd get sent to the office at school for mouthing off to teachers. My first crush was a girl in kindergarten, actually. I don't really remember much about it except that her name was either "Cat" or "Cathy," and I thought it was "Catty," which I then wanted to name the new cat we got that same year.

Okay, Ilan, I think if anyone reads this far they deserve a medal. I'll leave the last words to you: what's your favorite book? What author do you despise? What poet reminds you most of grandma's home cooking?

**Ilan:** Like I said, though: Isn't it possible the mind is incapable of understanding it's own limitations? It lacks

its own perspective. Maybe someone can start a debate on this, eventually.



I *hate* Anna Quindlen... it's rare I don't finish a novel, even if I don't like it, but I was nothing less than thankful to put down *One True Thing* towards its final chapters. I have no favorite book; my favorites are frequently changing, based on whatever's going on in my life, and which books I connect to. At the moment it's J.D. Laing's *Knots* and Yamamoto Tsunetomo's *Hagakure*, but before that it was Herman Hesse's *Narcissus and Goldmund* and Shakespeare's sonnets. Herman Hesse, nevertheless, is my favorite author—his writing style is classical but not overbearing, like that of many classics. Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry reminds me of my grandma's cooking; not totally used to it, pretty good, and overall comfortable to read (and, in the latter case, eat).



I get the final word, eh? That's quite a

responsibility. Is it not, after all, the last, resounding message that will summarize our dialogue, the closing idea to put forth towards the readers as an inspirational conglomerate of our now-public exchange of ideas?

Uh... boobs.



## Hawke's Sweet Slice What's in a Name?



Summer is finally here, and because of it, I decided to invade the produce section and corner the market on all things fruit. I'm a huge fruit fan. In fact, I could easily become a very bad fruitarian, were it not for my love of poached eggs and veggies (mainly spinach) and if I only had a decent memory. But I don't. You see, one needs a decent memory to remember to take vitamins and supplements to replace those missing from such a radical dietary change. Since I don't happen to possess one, I'd likely die of malnutrition or some related issue. (Perhaps I should have invaded the fish a la brain food section instead.)

You know, trying something new is a lot like trying a new author or genre (and yes, my thought always go back to writing). At least, it is for me. Either I love it or I put it down—there seems no middle ground. But anyway, back to the fruit... thing.

Funny that adults will try almost anything, but kids won't eat anything that doesn't look right, or rather, doesn't look right after it's *cooked*. Take broccoli. Or spinach. Or turnips. Or, horror of horrors, Brussels Sprouts. Heck, take me and mushrooms for instance. I still remember the sight of my first cooked mushroom. Pan-fried slugs, I thought. No way am I eating that, I thought. Mom's finally

flipped out.

After mom served it numerous times, always with the threat that I'd "never leave the table" until I try it (and after an hour each time of making gag noises and facial expressions that would make Calvin of *Calvin and Hobbes* proud—ones that made my mom beg me to go outside), I finally tried one—*just one*.

See, as a kid you have to build up to these things as dramatically and as vocally as possible, and that means letting your audience (the same one who'd inadvertently turned herself into a captive audience via my captivity; after all, someone had to actually *watch* me eat the mushroom you know) wait. Let the suspense mount. Let the battle of wills play out. David and Goliath, good and evil, unknown veggie and kid. The mushroom was excellent by the way. A little cold though...

So as I was saying, I loaded up on all things fruit: Red Delicious apples, huge oranges, bananas, cantaloupe, strawberries, watermelon... and low and behold, what did I come across, but *this*:



I know—revolting, isn't it. You betcha. It's so ugly it almost screamed to be looked at and then dared you to look away. Sort of like a car accident. Almost... alien, really.

Okay, so that's a bit of a stretch. But never in my life have I seen anything that so reminded me of the musical "Little Shop of Horrors" or maybe a pod from the movie "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" before, especially not for sale in the produce section of my lowly supermarket. Heck, I half expected 'It' to start singing or maybe crawling toward me. I did... until a very well dressed, middle-aged woman wandered over with a plastic bag in hand and started going through the stack of them.

"I just love these!" she said to no one in particular, holding one up like she was an archaeologist who'd just unearthed the long lost Egyptian "Book of the Living."

Obviously, I wasn't seeing what she was seeing.

"Don't you?"

"What it is?" I asked, still partly expecting a tongue or harpoon-like appendage to fire out the top and

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### What's in a Name?

adhere to her face.

“It’s Dragon Fruit!”

Okay then, so that name made sense. I mean, it definitely looked like something a dragon might eat. Or lay. Or... something. And the name certainly intrigued me.

Then again, an intriguing title or a well-known author has often influenced my reading choices. And that very thing has disappointed me more than not, too. Same with fruit... which made me wonder if perhaps they (whoever ‘they’ are) purposely gave the hideous-looking thing a good name in order to sell it to those of us whose palates lean toward something at least

slightly aesthetically pleasing. (Prime example: I will not eat liver. End of discussion.)

“You should try one!” she said, shoving the precious what’s-it in the bag and depositing it in my cart. “Just peel off the red. The flesh inside is white-ish grey, sweet, and really seedy.”

I didn’t want to eat any of it, and I certainly didn’t want it in my cart.

“Okay,” I said. “And thanks.”

“And remember—don’t eat the red.”

For a moment, I thought to ask what would happen if I ate the red but let it drop. Besides, my eyes were glued to the “thing” now in my cart and my mind was stuck on three key words (*flesh*, *white-ish* and *grey*), which to me sounded about as appealing as raw squid (no knock against raw squid lovers intended).

For those of you dying to know what it tasted like, I’m not going to tell you, anymore than I’d tell you about a novel you’ve just purchased or an author you’ve just heard about. What I will say from one writer to another, however, is never to be afraid to try new styles, new genres, new voices. New... things. You never know. You may be pleasantly surprised.





## Drewcicle Pie—Three Day Road

(Or, How To Inflict a High Degree of Suffering Upon Yourself Without Unsightly Bruises or Open Wounds)

Last weekend, I did this:

[www.3daynovel.com](http://www.3daynovel.com)

Unofficially, since it wasn't labour day weekend and because I didn't want to blow \$50 on a contest that I wasn't even going to finish.

The details: write a novel over a period of 72 hours. For those of you who can count past ten (I had to get someone else to do it for me; hey, if I wanted to play with numbers, I'd be a freakin' mathematician!), that's 28,000 words or so. A hundred pages double spaced. So more like a novella, but that sounds so much dinkier than 'novel.'

*“With L, my luscious bisexual lover, out of the picture (and in Toronto with some skateboarding strumpet from California), I woke up Saturday morning, outline in hand.”*

Why? Why would I not only subject myself to such literary chicanery, but do it on my own, without being motivated by the publishing-deal grand prize? Well, I'm glad you asked.

I've never gone underground and devoted my entire life to writing.

I've never just said, it's go time, and let 'er rip. Keyboard and crayons blazing. Second, I had this absurd plan to do the official one come Labour Day weekend, so I wanted to do a trial run to see if it would be a worthwhile investment. Third, it gave me an excuse to let dishes pile up, to boot the significant other out of the house, to lounge around the house in my underwear, and to basically shirk any and all responsibility / sense of human dignity.

With L, my luscious bisexual lover, out of the picture (and in Toronto with some skateboarding strumpet from California), I woke up Saturday morning, outline in hand.

Stop right there. I should mention that I was having problems before I even started. To outline or not to outline, that is the question. Most of you know that when I'm not enfeebling the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune Hamlet style, I'm pecking away at one short story or another. Usually I have two or three on the go. Sometimes I finish them, sometimes not, but I usually have an idea of where I'm going - a mental outline, so to speak, that my brain can easily accommodate. Sure, most of the time it'll change, but the final destination is there, so I feel comfortable

running with it.

In a perfect world, a novel(la) would be just like a short story. I could go into the whole ordeal knowing that I've written dozens of short stories and came out relatively unscathed. In this bizarro place of writerly production, I would only have to extend a short story, add a few stylistic flourishes and some painstakingly crafted descriptions of butterflies, and voila - one magnificently coherent novel.

No. No no no. First, I made copious notes, drew a mindmap, thought of my characters while masturbating, and generally had the whole fucking thing planned out. After 2,046 words, that outline, despite its good intentions, went to the toilet. From there, it was writing on the fly. 21,000 words later I called it quits. Yes, I'm aware that I came up around 7,000 words so short.

But it's not all about the destination, right? That journey, it must mean something. I thought I'd share some insights I had during my foray into masochism, and some strategies that one might use for a similarly suicidal exile.

1. You can't edit something that isn't there.

## Three Day Road

Buh? Basically, turn off your inner editor. It is your enemy. If you always thought that the voice in your head belonged to the ghost of Aunt Myrtle, think again. 'You can't write, who do you think you are? Where's this story going? Christ Almighty, die already.' Yes, we all have doubts, though they might not be quite that colorful. The bottom line is this: you're going to have plenty of people doubting you. If you add yourself to that list, you're fucked. There's an old zen saying that I stole from a magnet on my friend's fridge that I've subsequently been passing off as my own. It goes: Leap and the net will appear. That doesn't mean you can plunge from your balcony safely. What it does mean is write fearlessly. Some strategies for churning it out include writing hardcopy (carpul tunnel, here we come!), turning the font white so you can't read what you've written, and drinking a few shots of your favorite booze to take the edge off things.

2. Caffeine is only the answer on the final night.

Out of all the substances available for abuse, caffeine seems the most benign. Come on now, how many of us use a cup of joe (or several Red Bulls with vodka on the rocks

chasers) to get that extra boost of mental acuity? Lots, I'm sure, and your humble narrator is no exception. The problem is that you can't be juiced ALL THE TIME. And when you come down, you come down hard. So a word to the wise: go clean until it's absolutely necessary.

3. Comfort.

No, that doesn't mean alternating bouts at the keyboard and the local rub n' tug. Write where you're going to be comfortable. If you can pull a Hemingway and churn it out in some cabin in bumfuck, Alaska (whoops, sorry Hodge;), then by all means. But keep in mind that you're going to get bored, get hungry, and generally want to take a temporary leave of your novel. Try doing that in the boons.

4. Plot n' Character.

Choose one.

5. 'But why write something that you're just going to toss anyway? Where's the art?'

It ain't about art, sweetheart, it's about getting the job done. You can't sculpt thin air - you need clay. Take this opportunity to get the juices flowing, to find your voice, and to discover something

about yourself and your own personal wailing wall. Oh, and *Candide* was written in three days. So there.

Personal Thoughts About the Experience

Yes, most of what I wrote was crap. But a lot wasn't, and the power of the imagination under fire impressed me. I've never been a sit down and write kind of guy, so writing 20,000 words in three days made me work muscles that were gravely underused. I learned a lot about what style I'm most comfortable using, and what I need to work on. Etc. I'm sure you'll have similar epiphanies.

Besides the 3day, there's nanowrimo.org, the National Novel Writing Month in November. The word count is steeper (50,000 words), but you have a whole month. After squeezing out over a third of that in three days, that doesn't seem too daunting.

I encourage all you LM goons to give one of these a try. I'm going to be doing the official 3day at the end of August, although time (and finances) will tell me if I'm actually going to enter whatever I write for judging. Every entry gets a sticker. Really, what more could you ask for?

## Party Pie and Other Time-Wasting Goodness

### **Silent**

[Bar Code Yourself](#)  
[Cartoon Laws of Physics](#)  
[Computer Stupidities](#)  
[Dark Side of Oz](#)  
[Dots](#)  
[Falling Sand](#)  
[Fucking, Austria](#)  
[Look-alikes](#)  
[Mouse Mirrors](#)  
[Name Decoder](#)  
[Paper Planes](#)

### [Philosopher Jokes](#)

[The Dialectizer](#)  
[Things People Said](#)  
[Weird Facts](#)  
[World Mysteries](#)

### [Circolo](#)

[Cockroach](#)  
[eBaum's World](#)  
[If you like Stomp...](#)  
[Major Films in 30 Seconds with Bunnies](#)  
[Mansion Impossible](#)  
[Mario Twins](#)  
[Micheal Jackson Quest III](#)  
[Planet Defense](#)  
[Sorry, Gotta Go.com](#)  
[Work It](#)

### **Not Silent**

[Boomshine](#) (beat level 12/score 198)  
[Bouncing Lady](#)  
[Cannon Bods](#)  
[Christopher Walkin and Weapon of Choice](#)

## Member Websites and Blogs

\*listed alphabetically

[Blogs from the War Room](#)—ckm's blog commenting on everything from movies, people, and literature, to what should be the next line of Hallmark cards.

[Dog-eared Notebook](#)—Cearo's blog filled with poems, thoughts on life, television, controversial issues, and more.

[Fiction Scribe](#)—Silver's site with the 451press network all about anything and everything to do with writing.

[Gasbagging](#)—Silver's group blog for women.

[Hawke's View](#)—Hawke's personal blog. A blog about this, that, and the other thing. Oh, and writing too.

[I've laid my dreams...](#)—Kagechaos' blog documenting the day-to-day of life and the evil of Wal-Mart and working there.

[I've laid my dreams...\(site\)](#)—Kagechaos' website with links to all his spaces around the web as well as his comic Black vs. Pencil.



**Ilan's path to the Dark Side.**

<http://www.literarymary.com>

[Murderous Musings](#)—Murdershewrote's blogs filled with her ever amusing ponderings about life.

[Mythica](#)—Cearo's second blog all about myths, urban legends, ghost stories, and folklore.

[The New Australian](#)—Silver's new blog about living in Australia, writing, and life in general.

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