

“What now then bright boy?” yelled Alphonse over the racket from the engine, which was a trifle noisy due to the missing exhaust baffles and most of the rest of the exhaust system as well. “We must have been over most of your friggin $\pi/12 \times 60^2$ miles by now, and I’d have thought anyone stuck out in this little lot would have tried to thumb a lift when they heard this load of effin’ old scrap approaching.”

“An another thing — you can shove that guessingbox right where it hurts most.”

Herbert looked up from the calculator, map and compass with which he was attempting to navigate with a pained

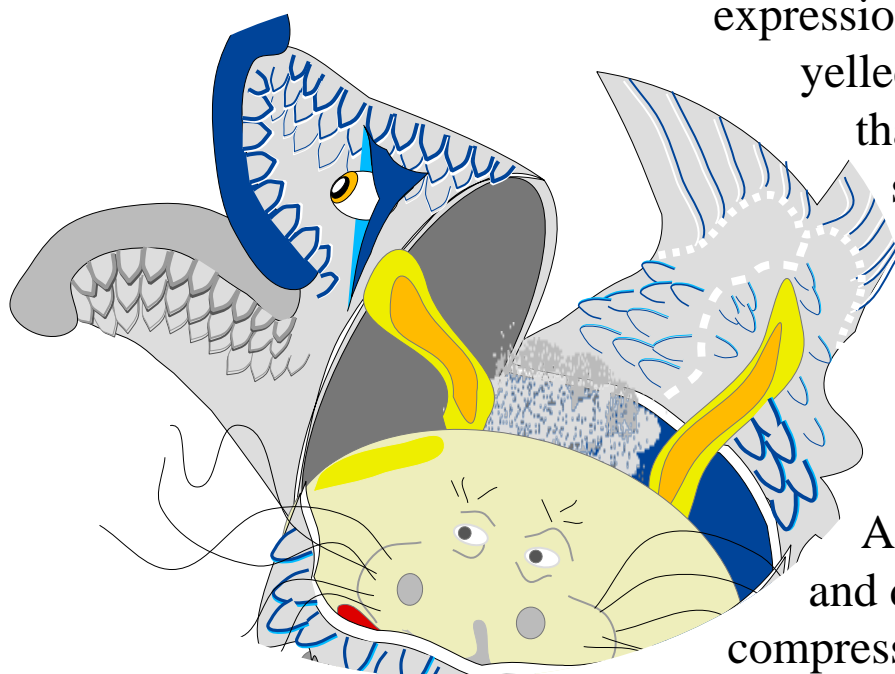
expression. After a moment, he yelled back “ok! I give up!

that’s it!” and then

slumped down in the

chair, giving every

appearance of going to sleep.



Alphonse shut the throttle, and drew to a halt, hit the compression release lever and relaxed for a moment in the blessed

silence after hours of blaring bedlam and bone shaking jolting over rutted lanes and farm tracks.

The rain and wind had both abated now, leaving a fairly clear night, with about an hour left before dawn.

“Hey man!” (now in a much less aggressive tone), “we gotta find them y’know, else they may suss it and put some kind of bite on us”.

A pair of blood shot eyes glared back from the ‘thing’ under the carrier bag in the side-car that looked just a bit like Herbert about to get

mean again.

Alphonse decided almost immediately that there might never be a better time for nipping over the fence into the trees for a moment to have a quick drain, a cigarette and maybe make a start on writing his last will and testament. It was mighty dark in the wood, even on the edge, with a lot of drips still falling from the sodden forest canopy, and he could have sworn that he saw a flash of phosphorescence in the light of the match as he applied it to the inevitable dandelion roolly. What he did fail to see until too late was either the trip wire or the group of grotesque party jelly-like creatures, and the other group of tatty-looking cod and haddock with whiskers and rabbit ears that were working it.

He managed one yell, and then took a blow behind the ear from an object that would, if he had had time to appreciate it, have felt very like a short length of lead pipe.

Exhibit 'A'



Strangely enough, Herbert had a very similar experience just a few moments later, when he came rushing to find out what stupid thing Alphonse was up to now. The only real difference was that He had to have three hits from the very same bit of pipe, which does show that one should indeed avoid crossing a badger if at all possible.

Exhibit 'B'



"Right!" Eustace stepped back and handed the lead pipe back to Simon, "that's the difficult bit over I think, Whew! we only just managed Herbert! - what a hard case he is eh? far worse than his mate over there!"

Lemme ask Y' jest one thing shuun, wuz Yevver drygulched? Ah mean, effn some kinda ornery crittur with a 44 or similar 'z a-layin fer Y' nd then rekens mebbe Y' ain't wuth th' lead, (what with the cost a' bullets bei'n 'z much 'z mebbe a whole dollar apiece hereabouts). So what's he do then? dun hits Y' ovver th' head with th' gun barrel thet's what! (t'ain't funny sonny an' ah' cain't see why yer laughin')! Y' gotta know thet a 44 weighs in at over five pound, an' thet's w—u—n h-e-l-l-u-

drygulch shur'nuff! an' Ah

here pheenomnon or

in them west coast

where some dude

dang me effen

minnits he

drunk a

red-eye, in

outta town

varmint

chasin

better

much that

Fact is,

what ah's

now), Y'

see? an'

sumthin in

wood atop 'a

What wuz ah a-

is, thet speakin'

('an bitter

might add), errr..

danged lucky t' git up th'

mebbe. Yessir! 'n when Y' deew

wust head thet evver wuz! Fer a spell Y' may evven wish thet he had dun shot Y' 'stead 'v

whackin Y' an' all..... Tooken me a solid week 't git over th' lest one an' thats th' gospel

truth, 'nd the doc 'an th' howtel room 'an all 'th ice 'nd stuff cost me considerable much.

Now! see thissyer dent in mah stetson, that's the verry same as ah had on at th' time.. Lemme

see... yeah! Middensville, Arkansas near fall '87.....



v- a whack! yesshiree! That's a

hev t' say jest this 'bout this

expeerience. It ain't like

movies yuh seen,

gits gulched and

after lessn' 5

ain't up agin,

glass r two o'

th' saddle, 'nd

jest 'z if all the

otta hell wuz a-

him. Nope!, Y'

beeleeve 'ta'int

way nowhow.

('nd ah knows

a talkin' 'bout

lissen close

mebbe learn

that block 'a

Y' sholders.

sayin? oh yeah, fact

outta expeerience

expeerience tew ah

yeah, fact is, thet yez

same day 'r evven th' nex' day

git up, Lordy! effen Y' ain't got the

Herbert awoke to the sound of this song but could not see who it was that was singing.

He had just decided that the melody must be a subliminal component of the overall verbo-acoustic dynamism (a crap singer to you chief), when two other forceful considerations interrupted him.

Heat congealed embryo in melted pig fat,
slices of pig muscle, on the plate, lying flat.
Heat dried fermented paste of crushed seeds,
with seperated milk fat is all that anybody needs.

I'm talking about breakfast, so don't leave yet!
I'm talking 'bout reality 'case you might forget.

So! Next time you buy yerself a glass of yeast piss,
or , like it or not, a bit of cheese ; that's just old
milk

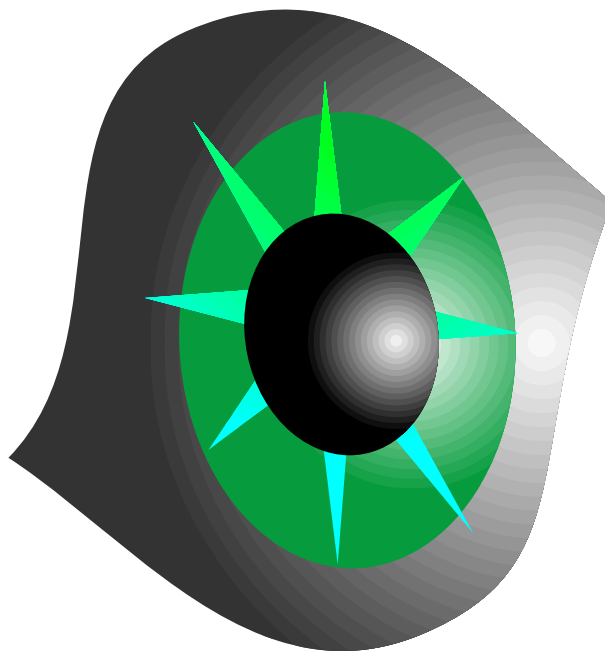
left out to rot.

You can't escape,
no place to hide,
your'e worse than that yourself

——— inside.

The first was:

When I wake up normally, it isn't to face a pile of pine needles about three inches (7 cm) from the end of my nose, and anyway, I am then accustomed to getting up which I can't do now'.



The second continued straight on:

Why do I have such a throbbing head that my eye-balls are likely to pop out any minute, what was I doing last night, and was it worth it?

Groan! —— Is that you Alph?