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# **Did we Vote our Rights Away? or should we force Christianity on the United States**

The Election has passed.

Apparently the people spoke: after hearing MTV and rap stars plead to the youth to get Bush out of the office after not finding Bin Laden and pulling the wool over the country's eyes to fight a man his dad couldn't kill when Bush I was in office over a decade ago, Republicans (probably via talk radio) had every conservative in their cars listening to the radio get pumped up to help them keep their religious demigod in office for another term. Don't think I'm right? Listen to MTV. Listen to talk radio.

Well, people listened to the rap stars, saying "Bush is Bad," and people listen on the radio say that we have to stay with this Republican leader. If you're a Democrat, it doesn't matter if you *like* Kerry (I heard someone interviewed on *the Daily Show* say that 'Although Kerry is a douche bag, he's better than Bush'), just vote for the Democrat party. And any Republican listening to talk radio heard only of the perils of what Kerry would do to this country if he were elected, and people nowadays don't understand what war is like (no, we've had a different image of war ever since we let reporters in for live action coverage of war situations, starting with Viet Nam, we've been able to see the gore of it and we want out). And everyone listening to talk radio heard conservative radio hosts like Shawn Hannity calling every military veteran and every supporter of his beliefs "a good American" (because letting the government tell you it's okay to kill a lot of people people makes you a good American, that's the standard they're going by...). Those listeners to the radio shows don't need to agree with everything Bush ever says, but it is

good for the American people to keep him in for another four years.

Great. But what does this mean for us *now*?

The first thing I heard Bush say to select people in his cabinet after he knew he won reelection was that now that he won, ‘now we can work on getting everything done in my plan.’

He said my plan? Bush’s plan? What plan does he exactly *have* for America?

And I know he talked to Kerry in that next-morning phone call, and Kerry told him that this was a divided nation, and he has to work on uniting everyone, so the country doesn’t continue to segregate itself along political lines.

And yes, Bush’s acceptance speech talked about bringing this country together so we could all get what we wanted. And yes, when Colin Powell, the first black man in the Secretary of State position, retired (which he claimed he would do before the election ended), Bush asked Dr. Condoleezza Rice to take over as the Secretary of State (and people don’t mention that she is the first woman — let me correct that, the first black woman, ever in this cabinet position). And yes, for attorney general Bush nominated Alberto Gonzales, a son of migrant workers. I’m sure that if a Democrat was president and this happened, the media would be all over the wonderful things this president is doing for equality, but its never mentioned in a Republican is president.

Well, I suppose *some* points sound good for him. And I don’t know what the people in the military would say, that we still have forces in harms way in Iraq. I’m sure that all are proud, but I’m sure that some still think it’s right they are there, while some think it’s wrong and want their loved ones to come home.

And depending on what news station you’re listening to with live feed from the military stationed there, you’ll hear the same diversity in answers from our military there. I know that some don’t want to be there any longer, but they signed up for the military and they won’t go against their Commander in Chief.

So is the answer to bring them back? Or would bringing them home prematurely prove to the Middle East that we *will* back down prematurely, allowing the country to fall to ruin again so that their forces can become stronger again to attack us?

”””

I suppose I could start talking about improving the economy now, but

what I see now in my colleagues and friends now more than anything else are worries about religion and losing our rights because Bush was reelected. Now, I know they want to expand powers under the Patriot Act, which includes:

Outside view: Patriot Act problems:

- ...Like the “sneak-and-peek” provision, allowing secret search warrants that do not require the police to notify the person being searched.
- Another provision allows the government to obtain secret intelligence court orders, without any probable cause linking the target of the order to suspected criminal activity (that makes me personally feel safe).

You think they’ll only use the Patriot Act for terrorism-related crimes? Don’t be so naive: the administration has been using the Patriot Act to prosecute cases that have nothing whatsoever to do with terrorism.

- By eliminating the notion of “due process,” the Government can now attack people in **non**-terrorism crimes.

The library book you rented can be monitored by your precious government. Angel Stewart, writing for <http://www.houseofconfusion.com>, even stated that “The Patriot Act makes the Thought Police a real possibility... A crucial part of the checks and balances of the American system has been disabled.”

The Patriot Act has allowed the unnecessary surveillance of innocent people. Did you hear John Kerry saying in one of the Presidential debates that thousands of hours of surveillance tapes that have never been watched? Well, if the government is undermanned for these innocent-people-surveillance tapes, who can we get to watch us in private?

I think the Patriot Act can even legislate against anyone distributing information that is outside of the norm - which means that if **Children, Churches and Daddies** doesn’t watch it’s back, we could be violating the Patriot Act by producing this magazine.

Wow, I feel so safe now. I can go to sleep with comfort and ease now.

I suppose I shouldn’t get on my soap box about the Patriot Act, but I should be thinking about friends I have talked to who have considered leaving the country because Bush was reelected. They considered it because they are sure now that rights as their same-sex partner will not be granted to them.

I know, I know, I heard Bush say that he believes there should be rights given to same-sex partners, even if it is not by considering their union a “marriage.” But when my friends heard that Republicans wanted to make

a Constitutional Amendment to make marriages *only* between a man and a woman, and when they heard that I think 14 states made state laws defining a marriage as only between a man and a woman, their worries escalated. When one of them is ill and hospitalized, they need permission from anyone else to be with the one they love in their time of need.

My friends considered Canada when considering leaving the country, and John (cc&d's web language master for Perl Scripts, and the author of last month's editorial) noted that hits to Canada's web sites for immigration skyrocketed after the election results came in.

Hell, I even heard of a web site that would find a country you could defect to, depending on what political views you held.

John knew someone in the military — a lesbian in the Navy, more precisely — and she stressed that the white man (people like John) have no idea of what discrimination is. That cards are stacked against you when you love someone that is not what God defines as a proper mate. Hell, the cards are stacked against you when you're a woman, or if you are anything other than Anglo-Saxon (sorry Black, Latinos, sorry Chinese, Native Americans...), and the way this country is now being run, the cards are stacked against you if you don't believe in a Christian God (sorry Jews, Hindis, Muslims, sorry atheists... you're screwed too, because you don't fit our perfect mold).

All of these things that are expected of people, they're starting to sound like we're looking for our Arian state.

You know, I've heard people say that Bush is like Hitler, and that seems ludicrous to me. But when looking at definitions, I wonder how close to a fascist he actually is.

»»

I don't suppose I helped answer any questions about what to think now that a President has been chosen. Maybe we'll remain as confused about how we can get ahead in our world as we did *before* the election. Is there a way we can find our answers ourselves and not rely on the president to do our thinking for us?



*Janet Kuypers*

Janet Kuypers  
Editor-In-Chief

## info you can use

# **Rome's Syllabus Of Condemned Opinions: The Last Blast Of The Catholic Church's Medieval Trumpet** by Joseph McCabe

Here they are: The Syllabus of Condemned Propositions

1. There is no supreme, omniscient, all foreseeing Deity distinct from the universe. God is the same thing as Nature and therefore subject to change. He becomes God in the world and man; all things are God and have the very substance of God. God is one and the same thing as the world; therefore spirit is the same thing as matter, necessity the same thing as liberty, truth the same as falseness, good the same is evil, justice the same as injustice.

2. That God acts upon man and the world is to be denied.

Human reason is the sole judge of truth and falseness, good and evil. It is a law unto itself and suffices, by its natural resources, to promote the welfare of nations.

3. All truths of religion have their origin in the natural use of human reason. Hence reason is the chief means by which we can and ought to acquire a knowledge of all truth. Divine revelation is imperfect and therefore subject to continual and indefinite progress, and this corresponds to the advance of human reason.

4. The faith of Christ is opposed to human reason, and divine revelation is not merely useless but injurious to man's interests.

5. The prophesies and miracles that are contained in Holy Writ are poetic fiction, and the mysteries of the Christian faith are the outcome of philosophic inquiries; the contents of both Old and New Testaments are fiction, and Jesus Christ himself is a mythical figure.

6. Since human reason is as valuable as religion, theological matters are to be treated in the same way as philosophy.

7. All the dogmas, without exception, of the Christian religion are the subject of natural science or philosophy.

8. Human reason can in the course of time be so developed that by its natural force and principles it can attain all knowledge, even the more profound, provided that these, dogmas have been submitted to reason as its subject.

9. Since the philosopher is one thing and philosophy another, the former has the, right and the duty to submit to authority which he believes to be sound, but philosophy neither can nor ought to bow to authority.

10. The Church not only must never pass judgment on philosophy but must tolerate its errors and leave it to correct them itself.

11. The decrees of the Apostolic See and the Roman Congregations are an impediment to the free advance of science.

12. The methods and principle which the older Scholastic doctors used in studying theology are not in the least in harmony with the needs of our time and the progress of the sciences.

13. Philosophy must be studied without regard to supernatural revelation.

14. Every man is free to adopt and profess any religion which, under the guidance of reason, he believes to be true.

15. Men can find the way to eternal salvation and attain it in any religion.

16. At least we have good ground to hope for the eternal salvation of men who do not belong to the true Church of Christ.

17. Protestantism is only another form of the one true Christian religion, and God is just as pleased for men to join it as to join the Catholic Church.

18. The Church is not a true, perfect, and entirely free body, and it cannot decide in virtue of the rights conferred upon it by its divine founder what are the limited times within which it can exercise its rights, but must leave this decision to the civil power.

19. Ecclesiastical authority must not use its powers without the permission and consent of the civil government.

20. The Church has no power to lay down dogmatically that the religion of the Catholic Church is the one true religion. The obligations which strictly bind Catholic teachers and writers are confined to matters which have been declared by the infallible judgment of the Church to be dogmas of the faith to be believed by everybody.

21. Roman Pontiffs and Ecumenical Councils have exceeded their powers, usurped the rights of princes, and erred even in defining questions of faith and morals.

22. The Church has no power to use force or any temporal power, direct or indirect. Apart from the authority which is inherent in the office of bishop, any secular power is conferred upon him expressly or tacitly by the civil power and may therefore be withdrawn by that power when it pleases.

23. The Church has no native and legitimate right to acquire and hold property. The sacred ministry of the Church and the Roman Pontiff must be entirely excluded from concern about ownership and secular things.

24. Bishops cannot be allowed to publish even the Pope's letters without permission of the government.

25. Privileges conferred by the Roman Pontiff must be regarded as null unless they were asked for through the government.

26. The immunity of the Church and of ecclesiastical persons has its origin in civil law.

27. The ecclesiastical court for hearing secular charges, either civil or criminal, against clerics must be entirely abolished, without consulting or even against the protest of the Apostolic see.

28. The personal immunity from the duty of military service which clerics enjoy may be revoked without any violation of national law and equality, and this revocation is necessary for social progress, especially in countries with a more liberal constitution.

29. It is not the exclusive right of ecclesiastical jurisdiction to regulate the teaching of theological matters.

30. The idea that the Roman Pontiff may be compared to a free prince acting in the universal Church is medieval.

31. There is no reason why the Supreme Pontificate should not be transferred by the decision of a General Council or the action of all nations from the Bishop of the city of Rome to some other bishop and city.

32. The decision of a National Congress is not subject to further discussion, and the civil administration may demand this.

33. It is lawful to establish National Churches that are not subject to the authority of the Roman Pontiff and are, in fact, entirely separated.

34. The arbitrary action of the Roman Pontiffs is in part responsible for the division of the Church into Eastern and Western.

35. A republic, as the origin and power of all rights, has an unlimited power.

36. The teaching of the Catholic Church is opposed to the welfare of human society.



37. The civil power, even if the ruler be an infidel, has an indirect negative right to interfere in sacred things, and it therefore had the right which is called *exequatur* (permission to carry out an ecclesiastical order) and what is called the right to appeal against abuses.

38. In a conflict of law between the two powers the civil law takes precedence.

39. The lay government has the power to rescind or to declare null and void the solemn agreements usually called *Concordats* about the use of rights pertaining to ecclesiastical immunity entered upon with the Apostolic See without the consent or even against the protest of Rome.

40. The civil authority may intervene in matters that refer to religion, morals and the spiritual order. Hence it has the right to criticise the instructions which the Church gives to priests for the guidance of consciences and even to lay down rules for the administration of the divine sacraments or the disposition required for receiving them.

41. Public schools in which the youth of a republic are trained with the exception of Episcopal seminaries to some extent, are and ought to be controlled by the civil authority; and to such an extent that no other authority has the right to interfere in the curriculum, the discipline, the awarding of degrees, or in the choice and approval of masters. Even in seminaries for the priesthood the arrangement of the studies is subject to the civil authority.

42. The best interests of society demand that public schools, which are open to all children of every class, and public institutions generally that give higher education and train youths, shall be free from all clerical authority, control, or interference and shall be left entirely to the dictates of the civil political authority as the rulers and the general opinion of the public shall decide.

43. Catholic men may approve of a kind of education that is separated from the Catholic faith and the power of the Church and that looks only, or at least primarily, to the interests of the natural sciences and the social welfare.

44. The civil authority may prevent prelates and the Catholic laity from communicating freely with the Roman Pontiff.

45. The secular authority has the intrinsic right of appointing bishops and it may demand of them that they visit their dioceses before they themselves receive canonical institution and Letters from the Holy See. Moreover the secular government has the right to deprive Bishops of the

exercise of their pastoral ministry and is not bound to obey the Roman Pontiff in matters concerning the office of bishops.

46. The government has the right to change the age fixed by the Church for entering the religious orders of both men and women; and to forbid these orders to admit anybody to take the solemn vows without its permission.

47. Laws that protect the status of religious communities and relate to their rights and duties should be abrogated; the secular government may assist all who wish to abandon the religious life and break their solemn vows; it may suppress religious communities as well as collegiate and parish churches and hand over their property and revenue to the administration and disposal of the secular authority.

48. Kings and princes are not only exempt from the jurisdiction of the Church but in deciding questions of jurisdiction they are above the Church.

49. The Church must be separated from the State and the State from the Church.

50. Moral law does not need a divine sanction, it is not at all necessary that human laws should conform to the Law of Nature or derive their binding force from God.

51. Philosophy, the science of ethics, and human laws may or ought to be independent of divine and ecclesiastical authority.

52. No forces are to be recognized which are not inherent in matter, and all moral and decent effort ought to be expended in accumulating wealth and procuring pleasure in any way.

53. Right consists of a material fact, "duties of man" is an empty phrase, and all man's acts have the force of right. Authority is merely the sum of numbers and material farces.

54. A fortunate outcome of an unjust act does no harm to the sanctity of right.

55. The principle of Non-intervention is to be recommended and observed.

56. It is lawful to refuse to obey and even rebel against legitimate princes.

57. The violation of the most sacred oaths and any criminal and disgraceful action in violation of the eternal law are not to be censured but are entirely lawful and worthy of the highest praise if they are done out of love of one's country.

58. It must by no means be admitted that Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. The sacrament of matrimony is something added to the contract and Separable from it, and the sacrament consists

in a single nuptial blessing. By natural law the bond of matrimony is not indissoluble and on various grounds the civil authority may grant divorce.

59. The Church has no power to create nullifying impediments to marriage; that power belongs to the civil authority, and it must abolish existing impediments. In earlier ages the Church began to create nullifying impediments by the powers entrusted to it by the civil authority, not by any power of its own.

60. The canons of the Council of Trent which impose the censure of anathema on those who dare to deny that the Church has the right to create nullifying impediments are either not dogmatic or are to be understood as deriving force from this delegated authority.

61. The Tridentine formula with its penalties is not binding when the civil authority provides a different form and insists that if this is followed the marriage is valid.

62. Boniface VIII was the first to lay down that the vow of chastity taken at ordination invalidates a marriage.

63. There can be true marriage for Christians on the strength of the civil contract alone; and it is false to say either that between Christians the contract of marriage is always a sacrament, or that the contract is null if there is no sacrament.

64. Matrimonial and espousal cases belong by their very nature to the civil court.

65. Whether the secular power can be reconciled with the spiritual is disputed in Christian and Catholic circles.

66. The destruction of the temporal power that the Apostolic See holds would greatly promote the freedom of the Church.

67. In our age it is no longer expedient to have the Catholic faith as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all others. Hence it is rightly provided by law in certain nominally Catholic countries that men who migrate to them shall be allowed the public practice of the religion of each. For it is false to say that the civil liberty of all cults and the concession of full power to men to discuss in public any sort of opinion and ideas leads to the corruption of the minds and morals of the people and the spread of the pest of indifferentism.

68. The Roman Pontiff can and ought to be reconciled and come to terms with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization.

**(made available by the Bank Of Wisdom and the Internet Infidels for The Freethought Web)**

poetry  
why we don't quit our day job

# Overfed

**Michelle Greenblatt**

1.

trudging thru the greenery, the sodden remembrance  
of you, the stagnant puddles and old leaves muted brown,  
the weight of the forest on my stomach.

I am full. what can I say?  
I was overfed.

2.

twisted beams of darkness: a crumbling statue leaning  
towards a sliver of sunlight, burning embers of twilight  
in her eyes / the statue is me / but not the eyes

3.

I am with you  
I have watched you sleep  
I have heard our hearts pound  
together as one organ

drowning in the same blood.

# 6th Shot of Cuervo

**Michelle Greenblatt**

wind licks the pavement  
scuffs the earth with its sandpaper  
tongue  
the fossils stir  
deep w/in the soil  
the bells ring  
in silent harmony  
the music weeps  
for your solo departures.

I'm drinking at 3:49 p.m.  
I've been erased  
& it hasn't been easy

now your hands  
are on her  
I wonder  
if she cries  
like I did  
when you touched me

I am not drunk yet  
but I am on my  
sixth shot  
of Cuervo, always  
Cuervo

no salt no lim

# Before You Know It

**John Carr**

8 months from now she'll call me crying.

6 months from now on an ice cloaked Saturday I'll hang up on her. She'll call back in 12 minutes, but I won't answer. By then I'll be sitting in my dingy 1984 Chevy Celebrity at the top of Irish Hill, staring past the Philadelphia skyline, entertaining suicide.

4 months from now she'll start seeing someone else.

3 months from now we'll go to the Ritz on a Wednesday to see Almost Famous. The movie makes her cry. Afterward we'll sit in my car for hours, I'll try to make her come back, sometimes deceptively, often begging, while she'll tell me that I'm the only guy who ever made her feel worthy of love, but she's not ready to go back yet.

7 weeks from now she'll say she needs some time apart.

5 weeks from now we'll stand in the Deptford Mall parking lot arguing about whether I need to find a new job. I'll tell her I'm happy where I am (for now), and she'll respond that's my problem, I've got no ambition. I'll tell her she's just being spiteful because she can't find a job she keeps for more than a month. I won't tell her I'm afraid she's right about my ambition.

4 weeks from now we'll play "Laser Tag" on a friend's farm near Elmer.

3 weeks from now we'll make love again, quick and anxious at first, but then she'll slow me down. When we're done she'll get up and go into the bathroom.

I'll hear her crying through the door, but she won't answer when I ask what's wrong. I'll go back in my room and sit down on the bed, alone.

2 weeks from now we'll find out she's just over a month pregnant, and get the abortion.

Right now we're lying naked in the grass on an insignificant island in the middle of the Susquehanna River. She's watching a common musk turtle crawl around on a rock while my hand languidly runs up and down her pale thigh. She's asking me if I'll love her forever, and I'm telling her that of course

I will. She's asking, "Will you still love me even when I'm bloated and my boobs are sagging down to my knees and I'm wheezing from too many years smoking and I'm wearing a stained 'I'm With Stupid' t-shirt and I'm surrounded by screaming kids with pudding smeared on their faces?" I'm grinning and saying, "Yes, even then."

# **Love Thy Enemy** **or a fundamentalists foreign policy**

How do you make a friend  
out of an arch enemy who views  
you as the evil spawn of the Devil?  
If you are quite a bit stronger  
you declare a Holy Crusade and  
you kill him before he kills you.  
Then, his friendship is irrelevant.  
If you are not stronger or if your faith  
gets in the way you wage an all out  
peace campaign, keeping in mind  
what is your ultimate goal, the utter  
and complete destruction of this  
alien non-christian culture. Using  
the weight of your whole society, you  
undermine his position with love,  
christian goodness and humility.  
After a couple years being spent using  
this posture in an effort to achieve your  
goal, this nation is still adamant in  
their hatred of you and your corrupt  
society, hell bent on your complete  
destruction as their chief goal, you do  
not hesitate to visit God's wrath upon them.  
Wipe these strange tribes from the face  
of the Earth, totally. Do so with alacrity  
and Christian love. "Love thy enemy as thy  
love thyself." If by luck some of these  
non-christian people survive, by all means do  
so by clasping them to your heart and allowing  
them to share in the one true religion of  
our Lord Jesus. Voila! Now they are one  
of us and none are left to rise again because  
of your loving friendship and Christian resolve.

**Bob Papcsy**



# Breakup

**Eric Obame**

The moon moves away from the Earth a little every year  
In a few billion spins it will be a speck  
Of the nightlight we hold dear  
And the planets move away from the sun  
And the galaxies from themselves  
Once everything was one  
Then hell blew up and well  
Everything has been hectic ever since  
The universe keeps expanding  
No one wants to get back together  
They like their freedom  
And so do I  
I realize now that like all space matter  
I am better off on my own  
Or at least without you  
So cheer up  
The star clusters keep spinning away from each other  
And so must we  
It is universal law  
So goodbye  
Have a nice life  
I hope that someday you will waltz into some other galaxy and blend  
But that family won't be mine

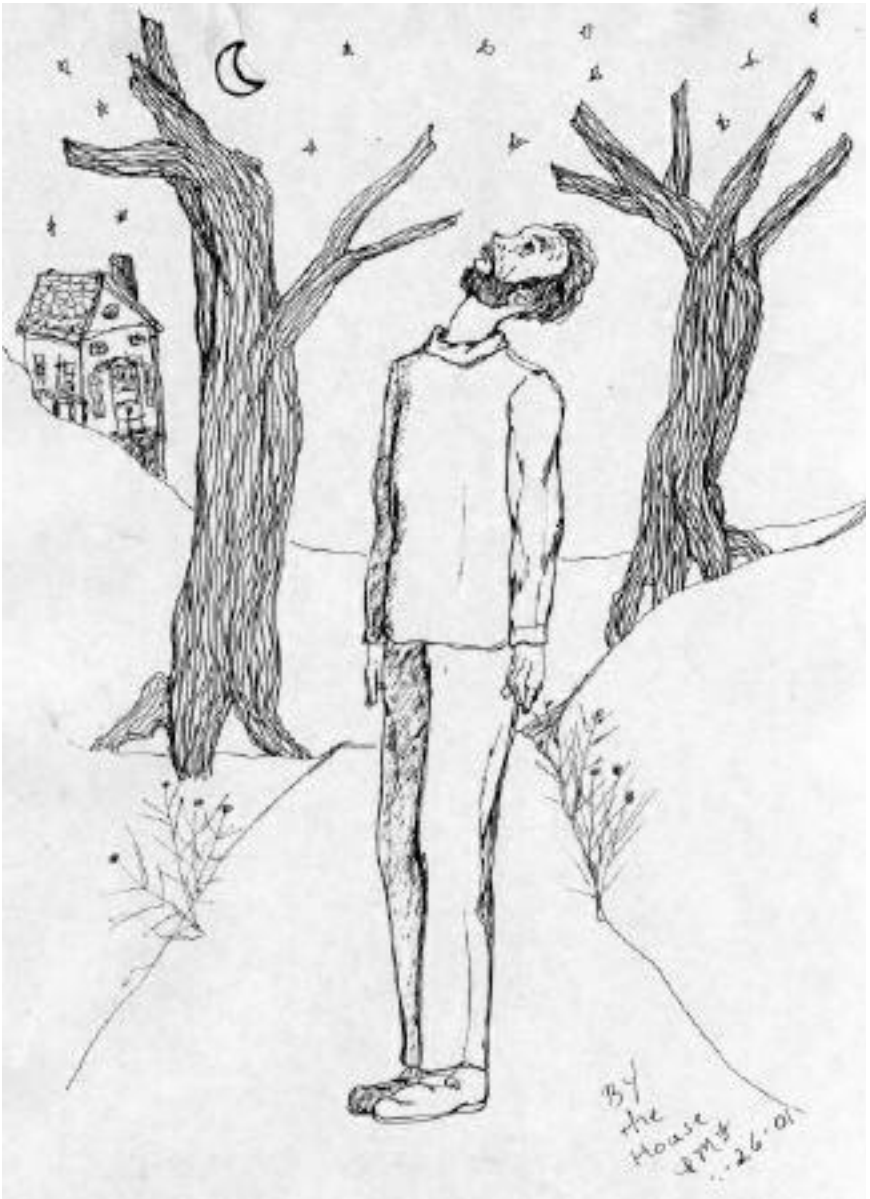
art  
that makes you think



**painting by Dave Jarvie**



## **Cactus by Dr. Deborah FerBer**



## **“By The House,” by Irene Ferraro**



## **Trellis, by John Yotko**



**art by Louis Faber**



**“Breathing the Water,”  
art by Mark Graham**



**“March of 2002,”  
art by Nicole Aimee macaluso**

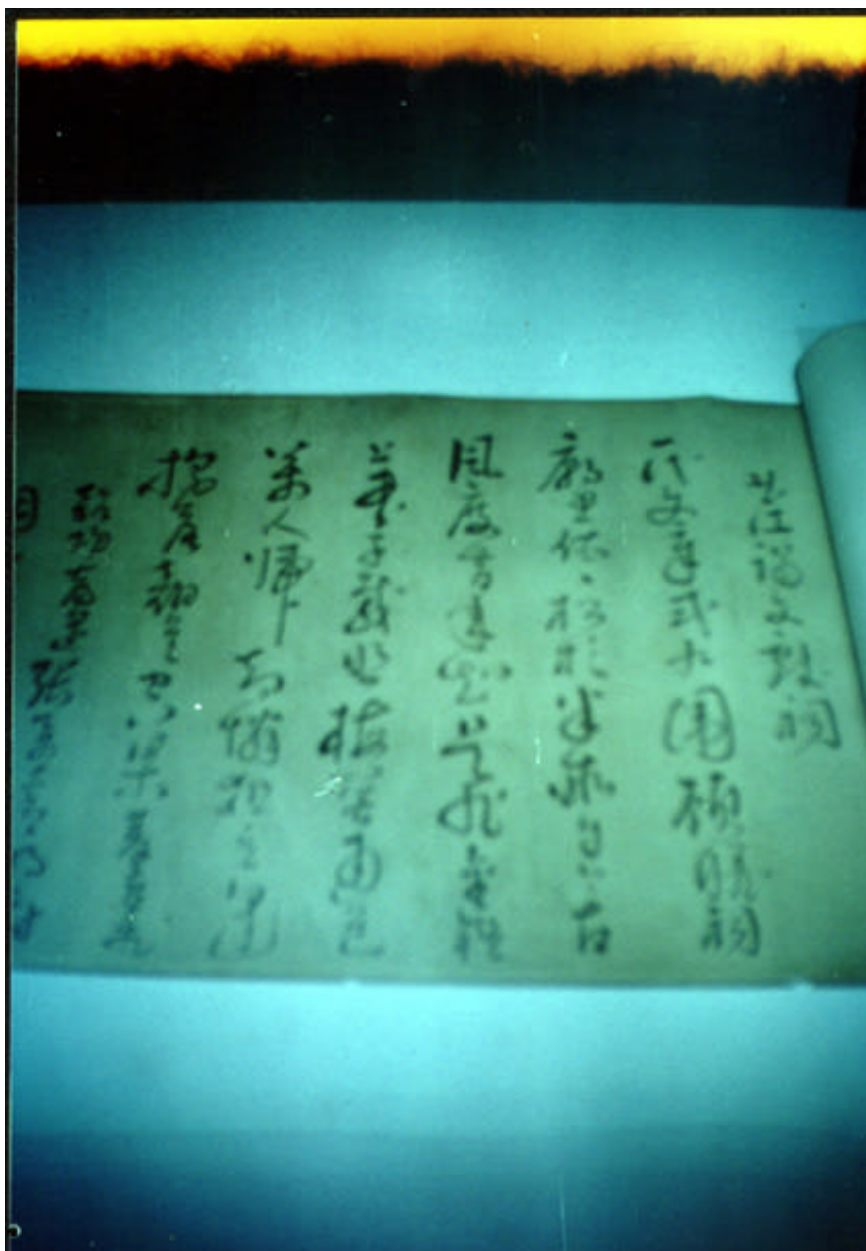


Lament, la mer, an Appollonian  
Laocoon this, of the adrift  
Castaways, Poseiden, Hades, Zeus,  
Lambent and lucent  
With the lessons of regret  
Which their own throats  
Became the serpents of,  
Barnacled lode stones,  
Lagun lodestars of the froth  
Circumstance depicts

The tragedy of, vortex fixed  
For all time, unless,  
Man saves  
Man saves  
Man saves



**an image  
from the  
Sea of  
Myths, by  
Stephen  
Mead**



**art by Xanadu**



## “Stockton,” by Mike Hovancek



## “I See 1,” by Rose E. Grier



**“All Too Real,” by Edward  
Michael O’Durr Supranowicz**



**a caramel martini glass photo  
from Alexandria Rand**

## philosophy monthly

# **The Republic of Dreams**

**Gary Beck**

The future of the American republic was frequently sustained by the timely appearance of notable leaders, who faced difficult issues that threatened the security and stability of the nation. Great presidents rose to the challenges that menaced the country, serving the people with desperately needed abilities. After their tenure, scholars and populist historians interpreted the significant events that led to wars, foreign interventions, or domestic crises, from the perspective of intellectual detachment, academic security and too often, indifference to the passions, doubts and confusions that shaped decision-making. Coincidental to the rise of globalism, with its traumatic impact on the American economy, may be the decline in the quality of our leadership, which is most tested in periods of extreme turmoil.

From pre-colonial times through World War II, the wars of America involved most of the citizenry, whether in combat, concern for loved ones, production of equipment and supplies, fund raising, civil defense, or countless other contributions to the war effort. Those who lost loved ones were pitied and respected, even by opponents of the war. And each war had its dissenters. Those who resisted the summons to arms out of high principle and protested the use of force from moral certitude, strengthened the fiber of the nation, since democracy requires the questioning of purpose, as long as it does not inhibit the need for necessary action for the survival of the nation.

Starting with Herodotus, recorded history reveals the perilous state of existence for nations and peoples, whose fate has invariably been decided by war. The clash of civilizations was inevitably resolved in battle. Empires were rarely dismantled peacefully and were traditionally dismembered by violence. The expansion of any nation was characterized by encroachment on another nation. Helpless peoples became slaves, or victims of exploitation. Pacifism was a condition of weakness, rather than moral virtue.

Everything changed in America after World War II. We righteously defeated totalitarianism and were ready to receive the fruits of victory; education, prosperity, the good life only previously envisioned by philosophers. But the world had contracted, due to a vast global confrontation that left fortress America vulnerably exposed to unprecedented threats. A terrible new enemy emerged, communism, potentially even more dangerous and menacing than fascism, with an ideology that had attracted many liberal westerners in the 1930's, who were dissatisfied with the shortcomings of democracy.

The United Nations, formed with the same high ideals as the League of Nations, became the public forum for two opposing blocs, as well as third world, supposedly unaligned, nations. Although World War III seemed inevitable, large stocks of nuclear weapons assured mutual destruction and tenuous accommodations were reached with the adversary. The greatest accomplishment of the twentieth century was the absence of a nuclear exchange between America and the Soviet Union. Wars of necessity became limited and the triumph of American arms was a relic of the past. People's wars of liberation, despite mostly being communist inspired, appealed to liberal intellectuals, who perceived a righteous cause and shut their eyes to mass liquidations and Gulags. At the same time, when America committed abuses, we were automatically judged guilty and condemned, because the world in general, and our citizens in particular, insisted we should behave better than others.

For various reasons spanning the gamut from egotism to ignorance, the liberal media, northeast intelligentsia and Hollywood leftists concluded that America was an aggressive oppressor, manipulated by an exploitative oligarchy for the benefit of a privileged few. Our policies were depicted as the major destructive force on the world stage. Whether these vociferous groups were correct in their sweeping judgments, or paranoid victims of delusion, is immaterial. Americans who accuse America of evil, do so from the bulwark provided by the security of democracy, a

fundamental American institution. They demand a level of morality far more rigorous than applied to other nations, and refuse to recognize the need for real politik in a ferocious world. This arbitrary double standard may have birthed a great confusion in our youth.

However simplistic it may have been perceived by hyper-critical intellectuals, young Americans once aspired to the principles of a nation that were characterized by patriotism, loyalty and service. The Korean War, never explicated in a meaningful way to the public, left most of the country unaffected by the death of our men far away, except for those families who lost loved ones. There was no higher call to duty, no noble cause, no clear goals, only the defense of half an Asian people far away, from the other half of their countrymen, arbitrarily divided by cold war circumstances that made it normal to cut countries in half, to appease conflicting blocs. The intervention of communist China in Korea barely disturbed a nation already detaching itself from concern with the well-being of its military.

The Korean War ended in a stalemate, just about where it began, after the loss of thousands of American lives, with no clear result and for the first time in our wars, no victory. As the tensions of the cold war increased in the late 1950's, the dread of nuclear conflict permeated the American psyche. This created a schizoid personality in many young people, who were threatened by possible annihilation that they knew they were powerless to prevent, while at the same time they were encouraged to lead "normal" lives. Despite our nation's material prosperity, inconceivable in ages past, there was an unease underlying our way of life, a constant of the atomic age, that made us more stressed than previous generations.

The children who came of age in the 'sixties' were more dramatically divided into haves and have-nots than ever before. The haves, although amply provided with higher education and economic security, were not encouraged to develop traditional values by their parents, who were too absorbed in the pursuit of hitherto unattainable luxuries. Many young men from the blue collar class joined the military out of patriotism, opportunities for education, or even economic advancement. Regardless of their motivation, they served their country. Have-nots from the poverty communities were mostly drafted or joined to escape the harsh streets. Too many of the children of privilege evaded the draft, because they no longer esteemed our military and disdained military service.

The civil rights movement of the early sixties particularly stirred our college youth with a clear cut call to action in the struggle for equality.



Moral virtue could hardly be disputed when it was opposed by hatred and discrimination. Then the Movement wound down and was replaced by the war in Vietnam as the national challenge. The youngsters who had felt empowered in a righteous cause, then thoughtlessly applied the same simple principles of right and wrong to a highly complex political and military conflict that was an integral facet of the Cold War.

In an irresponsible process of neglect, or deliberate mis-instruction, the best educated generation of young people in our history were left virtually ignorant of our appalling dependence on oil, the vast scope of the Cold War, the consequences of displaying weakness on the world stage and the historic fragility of the existence of democracy. Many young people felt that war was evil, and under the influence of sincere pacifists, fervent poets, hysteric entertainers, and raucous attention getters, they decided that America was evil, because of our assault on a distant peasant nation that imposed no threat to our well-being.

So while have-nots were fighting, bleeding and dying in remote Asian jungles and rice paddies, the haves were vigorously protesting our brutalities in our cities and campuses, until it was time to go home, or resume classes, or seek whatever diversion or entertainment appealed to them. The youth in combat had no choices. When the portable tv camera brought the Vietnam War, live and in color, into the living rooms and dorms of America, it made the horrors of war even more unpalatable to inexperienced youth. At the same time, the cameras, live and in color, brought anti-war demonstrations into living rooms, dorms, G.I. barracks and foreign countries, presenting a pageant of venomous dissent that hadn't been seen in America since the Civil War. Rabid opposition to 'Lyndon's War' actually ended his presidency.

When the Vietnam War finally concluded in our ignominious defeat, many Americans gloated at our discomfiture, further alienating an already bitter military, who felt they had been forsaken by the nation, while they were fighting far away. At the same time, our universities, erstwhile providers of knowledge, seemed to be more concerned with the accumulation of real estate and amassing of assets. Instead of requiring courses in the harsh realities of the world, and more math and science to continue our technology, they offered more fine arts. They did not inform gullible students that the sword decides the fate of nations more often than the pen. It was another sign that our society was becoming too comfortable to struggle against the vicissitudes of life, except part-time. The lessons of natural

tragedies; earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, disease, as well as man-made disasters; war, train crashes, auto accidents, hand gun violence, occurrences that should remind us that life is fragile, perilous, fraught with risk, were softened for too many of us by the protective cocoon of amenities.

After the fall of Saigon in 1975, America retreated into its shell for the rest of the decade, opting for diplomacy and trade, in preference to military adventure. The Reagan administration advocated a strong military and resistance to the 'Evil Empire' of the Soviet Union that confronted us globally. This challenge of the 'eighties' saw the resurgence of the struggle between the 'hawks' and the 'doves'. President Reagan's urgency for the Strategic Defense Initiative, 'Star Wars', provoked opposition from the same type of anti-war groups that had protested in the 'sixties', without their previous vigor and clarity of purpose. The scientific complexities of 'Star Wars' precluded the involvement of most actors and poets, who were ill-equipped to dispute the issues. Since 'Star Wars' was mostly research, few instances for volatile confrontation and insufficient publicity discouraged many attention-seeking radicals from active protest.

The collapse of the Soviet Union ended a competition that fortuitously never erupted in horrendous nuclear war. Proxy wars had replaced direct conflict and the culture of war in America was in disrepute. Any consideration of military options was instantly opposed by anti-war elements, regardless of circumstances. This vocal resistance was echoed by several allies in NATO, no longer dependant on the United States for protection from the big, bad Russian bear. While our economy boomed in the 'nineties' and enriched the world, resentment for our power and culture became condition normal, especially in the Moslem world. Somehow, despite helping the world more than any country in history, we were losing our friends and making new enemies. At the same time, the nation that was founded on continuous conflict had lost its appetite for war.

Although we forged a broad alliance in the first Gulf War and achieved the first notable military victory in two generations, the situation of America did not change significantly for the better. In fact, the rise of the Euro-Union fostered an economic rivalry between two great industrialized blocs that created growing differences between them. Conflicts of interest, suppressed during the apprehensions of the Cold War, surfaced with increasing regularity. All the doubts that had distressed America in the 'sixties', reemerged as our economy spiraled down and we couldn't seem to do anything right on the world stage. Businesses

were taking their capital abroad. Jobs were being outsourced, especially high paying industrial and technical positions, leaving bleaker opportunities for discontented workers in lower paying security and service jobs.

The dot.com collapse assailed an economy struggling with massive trade deficits, disappearing industries and growing apprehensions that America's time in the sun was winding down. Public confidence in our leaders was stretched thin and media second-guessing of every event further extended the plagues of doubt and confusion. Politics had virtually become ossified in a two party system. In the 2000 election, democrats actually blamed a third party candidate for the loss of the presidency for their party. Slightly reminiscent of the decadence of ancient Rome, when 'Blues' and 'Greens' struggled for power, the two major parties frowned on alternatives, abrogating the people's right to a candidate of their choice.

9/11 changed the emotional landscape of America, presenting us with a moral crusade against terror. Among other results, this distracted us from difficult or unsolvable problems that would not go away, but were suddenly less threatening. However distressed we might be by diminishing incomes and fewer opportunities, the menace of terror became our overwhelming priority. Domestic security was suddenly so important that it eclipsed other vital concerns for the long term future. Our scientific and technical lead over the rest of the world was rapidly evaporating. More than half of the ph.d candidates in our graduate school programs are foreigners, studying math, physics and other sciences. They will return to their countries and help advance development. Many of our ph.d candidates are in the arts, soft sciences and physical education. The disparity for the future is alarming.

We cannot suppose that our nation is at crossroads. That would presume clear choices. We may be facing the most perilous time in the history of the republic. A time of industrial, technical, scientific, perhaps even moral decline, that leaves our vulnerable citizens apprehensive, our aware citizens uneasy. Our ailing system indicates that we cannot resurrect obsolete industries and compete in the world market in manufacturing products that are produced cheaper and better abroad. It has not been determined if our advanced technical industries can sustain a nation. The gulf between haves and have-nots keeps widening to the point of creating a de facto oligarchy. It is uncertain if the wounded giant can regenerate itself. We urgently need great leadership to steer us through these ominous pitfalls. New directions and new horizons must be found, before the republic of dreams dwindles to a second world reality.

## **from How Does Eating Meat Harm the Planet, from PETA**

### **Resources**

In the U.S., animals raised for food are fed 70% of the corn, wheat and other grains we grow. The world's cattle alone consume a quantity of food equal to the caloric needs of 8.7 billion people — more than the entire human population on Earth.

### **Pollution**

Animals raised for food produce 130 times the excrement of the entire human population — 87,000 pounds per second.

### **Deforestation**

The tropical rain forests are being decimated to create grazing land for cattle. The space equivalent to seven football fields is destroyed every minute. Fifty-five square feet of land may be razed to produce just one quarter-pound burger.

*answer these questions:*

### **Isn't fish a health food?**

Anyone who eats fish for "health" reasons should reconsider: the flesh of fish can accumulate toxins up to 9 million times as concentrated as the waters they live in. And the flesh of some sea animals, like shrimps and scallops, contain *more* cholesterol than beef.

### **What's wrong with milk and eggs?**

Well, consider that no species naturally drinks milk beyond infancy, and no species would naturally drink the milk of a different species. We guess we should ask: What's wrong with drinking milk after infancy, *from another species*.