

The AMERICAN
BYSTANDER



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The **AMERICAN**
BYSTANDER
The Comedy Magazine

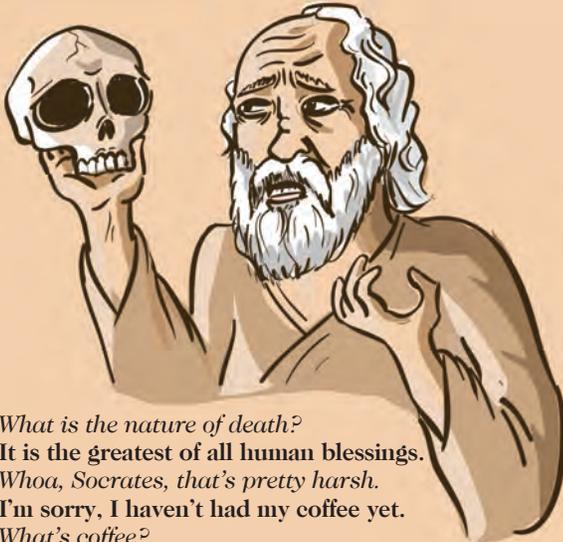


No Coffee

Coffee wasn't invented until the 15th century. This explains a lot of famous things people said.



Athens, 399 BC



*What is the nature of death?
It is the greatest of all human blessings.
Whoa, Socrates, that's pretty harsh.
I'm sorry, I haven't had my coffee yet.
What's coffee?
It won't be invented for thousands of years.
Life is a nightmare and I'm going to kill myself.*



Rome, 50 AD



*Sometimes even to live is an act of courage.
Whoa, Seneca, that's nuts. Are you okay?
No, I'm really hungover, and I need some fucking coffee.
What is coffee?
Just please don't talk to me right now. I have that thing where everything is spinning around. Just don't talk. Nobody say anything. I just need to be totally still and not talk for hours.*



China, 8th Century AD



*Life slips away, a dream of little joy and mean content.
Yikes, Li Bai, that's bleak. What's with you?
Sorry. I just need coffee.
I don't know what coffee is.
No one does, it's not around yet. We have like tea and shit but it sucks. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go write more sad poems and then blow my goddamn fucking brains out. I'm serious, I'm going kill myself.*



London, 16th Century



*Life is a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.
Whoa.
Sorry, I haven't had my coffee yet. I don't even know what coffee is because it's 15 hundred and something.
But wait, coffee was invented in the last century. You should know about coffee by now. It's around.
Yeah, but I haven't tried it.
Here's some.
(takes a sip) So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, so long lives this and this gives life to thee!
Nice line! You should put that in a sonnet.
Indeed I shall! But right now, all of a sudden, I have to take a shit.*

B

BY LARS KENSETH

GIVE YOURSELF A PAT ON THE MIND!

Chances are, you've heard of Psychology. Maybe you've seen the word used in self-help books, or in the glossy pages of *Extraordinary Rendition* magazine. It's a field of unparalleled depth and breadth, which is why it's often called "The Mall of America of sciences." But did you know Psychology can help you lose weight?

I've struggled with weight my whole life, and thought it was because I was *no darn good*. But now I know that it's not my fault—it's just that my brain is one big Gordian knot of bad habits and adverse associations. No diet, cleanse or exercise belt would make a lick of difference until I fixed what's up *here*. I'm tapping on my head now.

Psychology says, the easiest way to lose weight is by substituting healthy options for your unhealthy cravings. I know it sounds counterintuitive, but if you're clever enough about mimicking your favorite foods with wholesome ingredients, you will *trick your mind* into forming healthier habits. Don't believe me? Check out these examples:

- Tummy rumbling for chicken wings? Try some tasty "cauliflower wings" instead. Delicious, right?
 - Instead of pizza, treat yourself to some portobello mushroom caps with tomatoes and a light dusting of low-flavor, part-skim Mozzarella. Mm-MMMM—my mouth is watering already.
 - Hankering for a double cheeseburger? Satisfy that urge by stacking rice cake "patties" on rice cake "buns." Where do I back up the yum truck?
- "But Lars," you say, "these seem like pretty lazy facsimiles. I'm paying ten dollars a month for this weight-loss app you basically forced on me. I expect better." A challenge? I accept! Here are some recipes that are sure to light up your taste buds—and *your mind buds*.
- Everybody loves cheesecake. But know what's just as satisfying? Chia seeds poured into a springform pan with a quart of non-fat Greek yogurt. Boom goes the flavor-mite!
 - Eyyyyy, who wants-a da pizza? More like, eyyy, who wants-a da rice flour lavash smothered in cilantro, agar agar and one cherry tomato. That's-a spicy health ball!
 - Wondering whether you'll be able to make it another day without French fries? Why not jam an unripe avocado in your eye?

"Lars, jamming an avocado in your eye is not a recipe," you whine. And you're right, whiner—but it is Psychology.

It's called "negative reinforcement," but you can think of it as Psychology's "bad cop." Whenever you've got a hostile witness (French fries), sometimes it's best to put out a cigarette on his tongue (eye-avocado) and find out what he knows. *We're not messing around here, asshole!* (that was me talking to your unhealthy habits) I'm sorry, what did you say? You want your lawyer? I can't understand you because I just burned your tongue! (figuratively)

I see you're walking out of the room and now I'm just talking to myself. This is what psychologists call "giving up"—one of the many challenges you'll encounter while trying to lose weight. Friends will peer pressure you, co-workers will badger you and loved ones will intervene, concerned for your mental health. Obviously, the smart thing to do is to cut them out of your life and change your name. But for a lot of people that's just not an option. If that's you, avail yourself of one of these hot tips:

- Going to the movies? Skip the large butter popcorn with the hot dog crown. Instead, bring a head of broccoli from home in a lunchpail full of wheat germ. All hail the new King Popcorn!
- Does a buddy want to meet up for happy hour appetizers? Instead, convince them to put on some eye black and sprint through a state forest. Afterwards, reward yourselves with some plump, juicy pine cones. Can I get an *mmm-mmm*?
- Feel like drowning your sorrows in bourbon after alienating everyone you love? Consider an alternative: running into the night with no phone or wallet until your legs give out, forcing you to crawl to the nearest gas station for help. [*chef's kiss*]

Remember, the key to re-shaping your body is re-shaping your mind. If you're anything like me, after a couple weeks that seem like years, you'll wake up in a cabin that isn't yours with the lock jimmed and tire tracks that stop in the dirt driveway — but with no signs of a car—and realize that you did it! Give yourself a pat on the back—or should I say, a pat on the mind? **B**



LARS KENSETH

(@larskenseth) is a cartoonist for *The New Yorker*, a Sundance Fellow and is currently baking a big loaf of weird for Adult Swim. Feel free to troll him on Instagram.

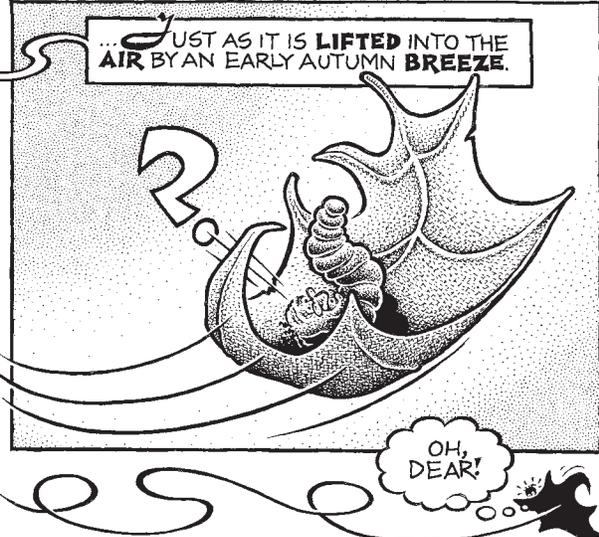
Brother Worm's Revelation

by Howard Cruse



HIS SAGA BEGINS WITH AN **ACCIDENT** OF **TIMING.**

WHILE ENJOYING HIS MORNING **PERAMBULATION**, BROTHER WORM CRAWLS ONTO A BRITTLE LEAF...



...JUST AS IT IS **LIFTED** INTO THE AIR BY AN EARLY AUTUMN **BREEZE.**

OH, DEAR!



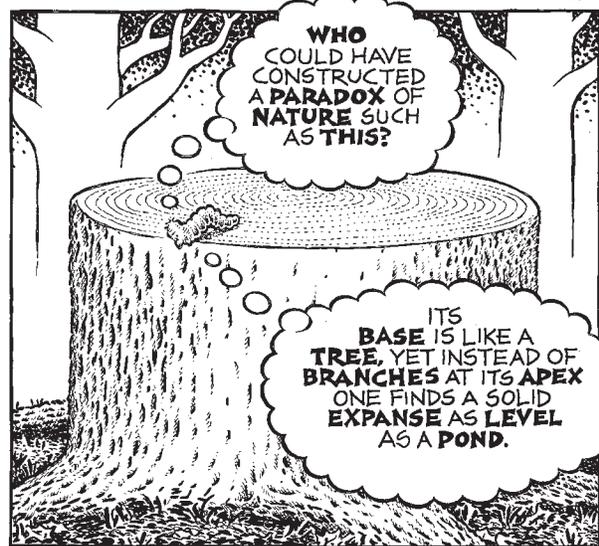
HE IS EVENTUALLY DEPOSITED ONTO A STRANGE, CIRCULAR WOODEN **SURFACE** SOME DISTANCE ABOVE THE **FOREST FLOOR.**

COF!

CAN THIS BE REAL?

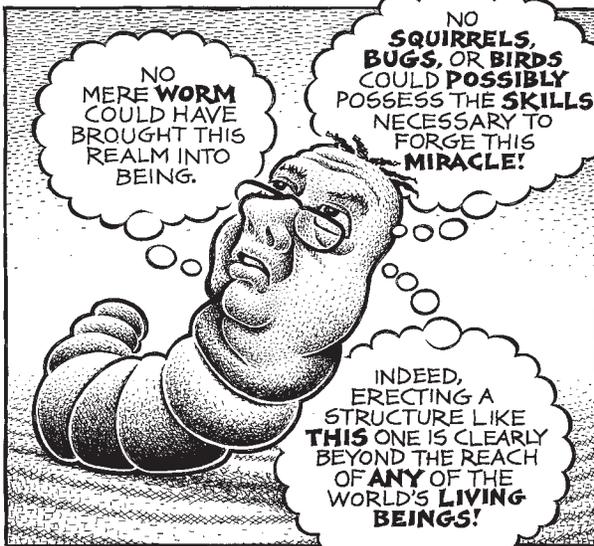
RECOVERING FROM HIS **DESCENT**, BROTHER WORM SURVEYS THIS UNFAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT IN **AMAZEMENT.**

© 2012 by H. Cruse



WHO COULD HAVE CONSTRUCTED A **PARADOX** OF NATURE SUCH AS THIS?

ITS **BASE** IS LIKE A **TREE**, YET INSTEAD OF **BRANCHES** AT ITS **APEX** ONE FINDS A **SOLID EXPANSE** AS **LEVEL** AS A **POND.**



NO **MERE WORM** COULD HAVE BROUGHT THIS REALM INTO BEING.

NO **SQUIRRELS, BUGS, OR BIRDS** COULD POSSIBLY POSSESS THE **SKILLS** NECESSARY TO FORGE THIS **MIRACLE!**

INDEED, ERECTING A STRUCTURE LIKE **THIS ONE** IS CLEARLY BEYOND THE REACH OF **ANY OF THE WORLD'S LIVING BEINGS!**



IT CAN ONLY HAVE BEEN CREATED BY **GOD HIMSELF!!!**

BROTHER WORM DOESN'T GET OUT OF THE **FOREST** MUCH.

B

SIX OF THE BEST

BY DAN VEBBER

SPOTLIGHT

May you avoid New-Age Enlightenment



"CAN I GET YOU SOME OXYGEN WHILE YOU'RE WAITING?"



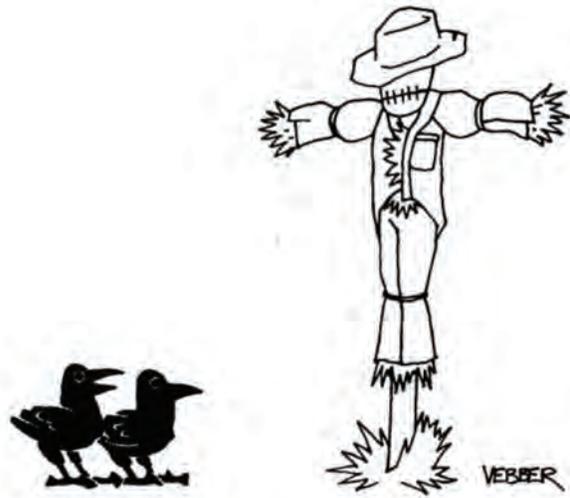
"WE CAN'T LET ANYONE AT WORK FIND OUT ABOUT US."



"YOUR HONOR, MOVE TO STRIKE THE PHRASE
'A RIVALRY AS ANCIENT AS THE SEAS.'"



"DID YOU KNOW THE NON-ESKIMOS HAVE OVER 40 WORDS FOR ERECTILE-DYSFUNCTION MEDICATION?"



"WITH THIS LATEST WORK, THE FARMER HAS CEMENTED HIS REPUTATION AS THE MODERN MASTER OF HORROR."



DAN VEBBER lives in Los Angeles and writes for The Simpsons.

