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# e editorial

## **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

Few men have done as much for the world as Benjamin Franklin.

Although he was always proud to call himself a printer, Franklin had many other talents as well. He was a diplomat, a scientist, an inventor, a philosopher, an educator, and a public servant.

Any one of Franklin's many accomplishments would have been enough to make him famous. He organized the first library in America. He invented many things, including the lightning rod. Franklin amazed scientists throughout the world with his experiments in electricity.

In Europe, Benjamin Franklin was the most famous American of his time. It was he who persuaded the English to repeal the hated Stamp Act. It was also he who convinced the French to aid in the American Revolution. Franklin helped draft both the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution.

### **Early Childhood**

Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston on Jan. 17, 1706. His father, Josiah, was a poor soap-and-candlemaker. His mother, Abiah, was Josiah's second wife. Benjamin was the youngest son and the 15th of 17 children.

At the age of 10 Benjamin began to help in his father's shop, cutting candlewicks and filling molds. Although he went to school only two years, Ben was fond of books and spent much of his spare time reading. He also became an expert swimmer. One

of his first inventions was a set of paddles to give him greater swimming speed.

### **An Apprentice Printer**

When Ben was 12 he went to work as an apprentice in the print shop of his half-brother James. He studied every night after work, reading the great classic authors and the writers of his own time. He also studied arithmetic, navigation, and grammar. He especially enjoyed the *Spectator* papers by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. Young Franklin would study one of the *Spectator* essays and rewrite it in his own style. He then compared his essay with the original to find his mistakes. In this way he developed an accomplished style of writing.

Ben soon became an expert printer, but he was not happy in his brother's shop. An apprentice made very little money and was forced to sign a contract promising to stay on the job for nine years. Ben soon became discontented and wanted to be on his own. Furthermore, James was impatient and quick-tempered.

### **How Ben Broke His Contract**

When James started a weekly newspaper called *The New England Courant*, Ben secretly wrote a series of humorous letters and sent them to the paper. He signed them Mrs. Silence Dogood. In these letters young Ben poked fun at Harvard College boys, at silly girls, and at bad poets. The letters amused many

people in Boston, and everyone wondered who the clever author was.

James Franklin angered the city magistrates by printing articles with which they disapproved, and he was forbidden to publish his newspaper. He decided to print the *Courant* in the name of Benjamin Franklin. James canceled Ben's contract so that the officials could not accuse him of using an apprentice as a front. They secretly signed another contract.

James then discovered the truth about the "Dogood" papers and was furious to have been tricked into printing letters by his 16-year-old brother. Quarrels between the two became violent and James sometimes beat the boy. The print shop became more unpleasant than ever for the young apprentice.


Ben took advantage of the canceled contract to leave, knowing that James would not dare to reveal the secret agreement they had made. In later life Benjamin Franklin admitted that this was not fair, but he felt there was nothing else he could have done. In September 1723, this advertisement appeared in the *Courant*: "James Franklin, printer in Queen's Street, wants a likely lad for an apprentice."

### **Arrival in Philadelphia**

Benjamin first went to New York City, which was then a smaller town than Boston. He could find no work. In October he went on







to Philadelphia. When Franklin arrived in the city where he was to become famous, he was a hungry, tired 17-year-old boy with only one silver dollar in his pocket.

He soon found a job in the print shop of Samuel Keimer. Because of Franklin's skill at typesetting Keimer paid him well. The governor of Pennsylvania soon took an interest in young Franklin and advised the boy to open a shop of his own. He sent him to London, England, to buy a printing press and type. The governor promised to pay the expenses. He did not keep his promise, however, and in 1724 Ben was stranded in London with no money.

Franklin found a job as a printer and saved enough money to

return to Philadelphia in October 1726. There he worked for a time as a sales clerk but soon went back to Keimer's print shop.

#### **In Business for Himself**

In 1728, when Franklin was 22, he started his own print shop with a partner, Hugh Meredith. The two of them published a weekly newspaper called *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. In 1730 Franklin bought Meredith's share of the business.

Franklin married Deborah Read, the daughter of his first landlady, in 1730. She was an uneducated woman who did not share Franklin's interest in books and science. She was devoted to him, however, and was a cheerful and thrifty wife. Franklin had three children: Francis Folger, who died in childhood of smallpox; Sarah,

who married a merchant; and William, who became governor of New Jersey.

From 1730 to 1748 Franklin worked hard in the printing business and became very successful. He was made official printer for Pennsylvania. By 1734 he was public printer for New Jersey and Delaware as well. Later he became Maryland's official printer.

Franklin's most popular publication was 'Poor Richard's Almanack', which first appeared in 1732. The 'Almanack' was a calendar and weather forecast for the year, and it contained amusing stories, jokes, and proverbs. The homely sayings, which Franklin published under the pen name Richard Saunders, made him famous as a rustic

philosopher. It was "Poor Richard" who said:

*Early to bed, early to rise Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.*

Other examples of Poor Richard's simple wisdom are: "Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead" and "Fish and visitors smell in three days." Soon 10,000 copies were sold every year.

#### **Franklin Serves Philadelphia**

Hard-working Franklin ignored his own advice about going to bed early. He taught himself several languages and was awake late every night studying English, French, and German scientific books. He enjoyed good conversation and in 1727 organized a debating club called the Junto, which in 1743 became

the American Philosophical Society. The club was made up of young men interested in new ideas. Backed by this group, Franklin started, in 1731, the first circulating library in America.

At Franklin's insistence Philadelphia's streets were paved and kept clean and better lighted. He formed Philadelphia's first volunteer fire company. He used the editorial columns of the *Gazette* to raise the money for organizing the first hospital in America.

Franklin believed the schools of his time were out of date. They taught only the classical languages, theology, and preparation for the ministry. Franklin thought that a more practical education would be better. He printed a booklet

presenting this view, 'Proposals Relative to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania'. The suggestions that he made in this booklet brought about the founding of an academy, which later became the University of Pennsylvania.

#### **Retires as a Printer**

By 1748 Franklin had earned enough money to leave his printing business. He bought a 300-acre farm near Burlington, N.J., and retired to give his time to science and public service.

Franklin filled many public offices. He was a clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly from 1736 to 1751 and a member of the Assembly from 1751 to 1764. From 1737 to 1753 he served as deputy postmaster of Philadelphia.



### Franklin as Postmaster

Before stamps were used a person had to collect his mail at the post office and pay for it. Franklin stopped the money loss on unclaimed mail in Philadelphia by printing in his paper the names of persons who had mail awaiting them. He also developed a simple, accurate way of keeping post-office accounts.

In 1753 Franklin was made deputy postmaster general for all the colonies. At the time he took office weeks were required for mail to travel by stagecoach from one part of the country to another. Postage fees were set by weight and distance, and clerks and customers frequently argued about the distance between towns. Franklin ended these arguments. He invented a machine that, attached to the hub of a carriage, measured distance.

He drove over all the main roads of the colonies, followed by carts that were loaded with stones. At each mile the men driving the carts set up a stone. In this manner the entire highway was accurately measured and marked with milestones.

Franklin visited post offices throughout the colonies. He put his bookkeeping system into every post office, hired more postboys, and made them feel that carrying mail was an important job.

Letters had been delivered from town to town only twice during the winter. Franklin had mail delivered every week. Franklin, more than any man before him, drew the colonies together. In four years he made the postal service pay. For the first time the British government made a profit on the system.

### Inventor and Scientist

Benjamin Franklin was an active inventor all his adult life. One of the most famous of his many inventions was the Franklin stove. Houses in his time were poorly heated by drafty open fireplaces. Franklin's stove stood in the

fireplace, but its grate extended out into the room. This heater cast warmth in all directions. As Franklin said, the stove prevented a person "being scorched before, and, as it were, froze behind." (See also Stove and Fireplace.)

Pennsylvania's governor urged Franklin to patent his invention, but he refused. He wanted the stoves to be made cheaply so that many people could buy and use them. For more than a hundred years the Franklin stove brought comfort to thousands of families. The stove became popular again in the 1980s. Franklin patented none of his inventions.

In his lifetime Franklin was recognized as one of the great scientific thinkers of the world. His contributions included pioneer studies of heat conduction and the origin of storms. His most important work, however, was done with electricity.

When a European scientist found a way to store electricity in a special tube, Franklin ordered some of the tubes and set up a laboratory in his house. He conducted many experiments and published a book about electricity. This was one of the most widely reprinted scientific books of the time. The principles he set forth in the book formed the basis for modern electrical theory. In 1752 he sent an account of his experiments to the Royal Society of scientists in London and to French scientists. The foreign scholars were so impressed with his work that he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1756 and awarded its Copley Medal. In 1773 he was elected one of the eight foreign associates of the Royal Academy of Science in Paris.

### The Lightning Experiment

Franklin realized that lightning must be a discharge of electricity from the clouds. In his book he had suggested an experiment to test this. With the help of his son William, Franklin made the experiment in 1752.

The two went to a shed in a meadow during a thunderstorm, flew a kite high in the air, and brought a charge of electricity down the kite's wet string. Franklin noticed the loose threads of the kite string standing up. He put his knuckle to a key at his end of the string and saw an electric spark. This proved his theory that lightning is electricity. Similar experiments had been done earlier by the French scientists to whom Franklin had sent the results of his early experiments. In honor of his scientific accomplishments Yale, Harvard, and the College of William and Mary gave Franklin honorary degrees.

Franklin was a practical man as well as a brilliant scientific theorist. He followed up his discovery by inventing the lightning rod to protect buildings from lightning bolts.

### The French and Indian War

Quarrels between Britain and France brought war to America in the 1750s (see French and Indian War). French hunters, trappers, and soldiers moving down from Canada had built forts along the Ohio River and had made friends with Indian tribes.

Northern colonists had long feared Indian raids. As early as 1748 Franklin had warned Pennsylvanians of danger from the Indians. He organized companies of volunteer soldiers and had guns placed along the Delaware River. When British troops landed in Virginia in the summer of 1755, Franklin hired wagons for them to carry supplies. The Pennsylvania Assembly sent him into the frontier to direct the building of forts and to raise troops.

### Franklin Goes to England

All taxpayers in Pennsylvania were helping to pay for the war expenses except the owners of the largest tracts of land. These were the sons of William Penn, founder of the colony. They lived in London and cared little about





the fate of the colony as long as the rent money reached England.

Franklin was sent, in 1757, by the Pennsylvania Assembly to London to persuade the Penns to pay their share of war expenses. In Britain he was rewarded with honors from the University of Edinburgh and Oxford. He helped put the Penns on the Penn family's side.

For five years Franklin was in England, meeting with the most important international politics. He returned to Pennsylvania in 1762. England declared war on France in 1763. Trouble with the Indians continued, however, and a fresh quarrel broke out between Pennsylvania and the Penns.

Many members of the Assembly believed that the colony should be governed by the king rather than by the Penns. They asked Franklin to go back to England late in 1764 and present their petition to King George III.

#### **The Stamp Act Repeal**

In 1765, shortly after Franklin again landed in England, Parliament passed the Stamp Act. Never before had England laid a direct tax upon the colonists without giving them a chance to vote on it in their assemblies. A fury of protest broke out, and Americans refused to buy the stamps.

Franklin was called before the English House of Commons for questioning. He presented the American position so clearly and reasonably that Parliament was persuaded to repeal the Stamp Act. Franklin was hailed as a great statesman for this accomplishment.

#### **Franklin's Fight for Peace**

For the next ten years Franklin was the most important American representative in England. He was made the London agent of several American colonies. By talks and in pamphlets and newspaper articles, he tried to show that if the colonists were granted rights equal to those of Englishmen, peace could be

made. He teased Britishers about their ignorance of America by writing witty, exaggerated stories. He now became famous in Europe as a wit and a champion of liberty as well as a scientist.

Many Englishmen in power, however, refused to listen to Franklin's good advice. Open rebellion broke out in America.

Franklin returned to Philadelphia in 1775, landing just after the battle of Lexington and Concord had been fought. His wife had died in 1774. Although Franklin was nearly 70 years old, he plunged into the work of the Revolution. "I am but a fag end," he said, "and you may have me for what you please."

At once he was made the first postmaster general of the colonies and a member of the Second Continental Congress. In the autumn of 1775 Congress appointed Franklin one of three men to go to Washington's headquarters at Cambridge, Mass., to confer on problems of the Continental Army. He helped draft the Declaration of Independence and later the Articles of Confederation.

#### **Franklin's Mission to France**

In 1776 Congress sent Franklin on his most important diplomatic mission. He was asked to persuade France to help America in its fight for independence. Before he left he lent Congress about 4,000 pounds of his own money to help carry on the war. He reached Paris just before Christmas.

"The Dr. Franklin," as he was called in Paris, was very popular. His simple dignity appealed to everyone. People even paid for seats in windows to watch him ride past in his coach.

Franklin enjoyed the parties given in his honor and made many close friends among the French people. He also worked very hard. First he had to secure formal recognition for his country. Then he had to persuade the

French that an alliance would be helpful to them. He was successful, and the Treaty of Paris was signed Feb. 6, 1778.

In the celebration of the treaty at the royal palace Franklin was the outstanding figure. There King Louis XVI told all the world that France was the friend of the American Colonies and would help them in their fight for independence. Franklin was hailed as the champion of liberty. Jacques Turgot, the French statesman, said of him, "He snatched the lightning from the sky and the scepter from tyrants."

#### **The Long Stay in France**

Franklin remained in France as a representative of America. In 1781 he was named one of the commissioners to negotiate peace with Great Britain. When the Revolution was won, Franklin was one of the signers of the peace treaty.

Franklin kept up his scientific interests. He was fascinated to see the first free balloon flight of humans, which took place in November 1783. When someone who was also watching the event questioned the usefulness of this new invention, Franklin replied with a question, "Of what use is a newborn baby?"

Franklin was by this time an old man, and he was ill. He wrote in a letter that he wondered if he would live to get home. Franklin left for America in 1785 with tender farewell messages from his French friends, many of whom begged him to stay. He received a gift from the king and warm praise from French leaders.

On the voyage home Franklin, still fascinated with scientific experiments, measured ocean currents and water temperature. He believed that his public life was over and that he would finally be able to give all his time to science.

#### **Triumphant Return Home**

When Franklin arrived in Philadelphia on Sept. 14, 1785, he discovered that a great

welcome awaited him. Cannons were fired and bells were rung. For an entire week the welcoming ceremonies went on as the city celebrated his return.

Old and frail as he was, Franklin became president of the Pennsylvania Assembly, a post equal to that of governor. Crippled with gout and a kidney stone, he served as president for three years.

Franklin was also a member of the Constitutional Convention. Often members of the convention disagreed strongly. A word

from Benjamin Franklin always calmed them. His own plan of government, which was rejected, called for an executive committee instead of a president and for a one-house legislature instead of two. Franklin was one of the signers of the Constitution.

#### **Franklin's Last Years**

Franklin spent the last five years of his life in Philadelphia. Even then the old inventor and statesman was not idle. He made a device for getting books down from high shelves. He wrote letters to many friends

and political leaders. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, and many other important Americans came to call at Franklin's house. In his last years the statesman wrote newspaper articles and his famous autobiography. His final public act was to sign a memorial to the state legislature as president of the Pennsylvania society for the abolition of black slavery.

Benjamin Franklin died at the age of 84 on April 17, 1790. After an impressive public funeral



FOR PEDRO VELEZ



***The Architecture  
of Ghosts with:  
Roberto Clemente.***  
*the abduction of Ann Lee.*  
***Candy White. 'a coral reef.***  
***Freddie Mercado.***  
***Los Rayos Gamma. curated  
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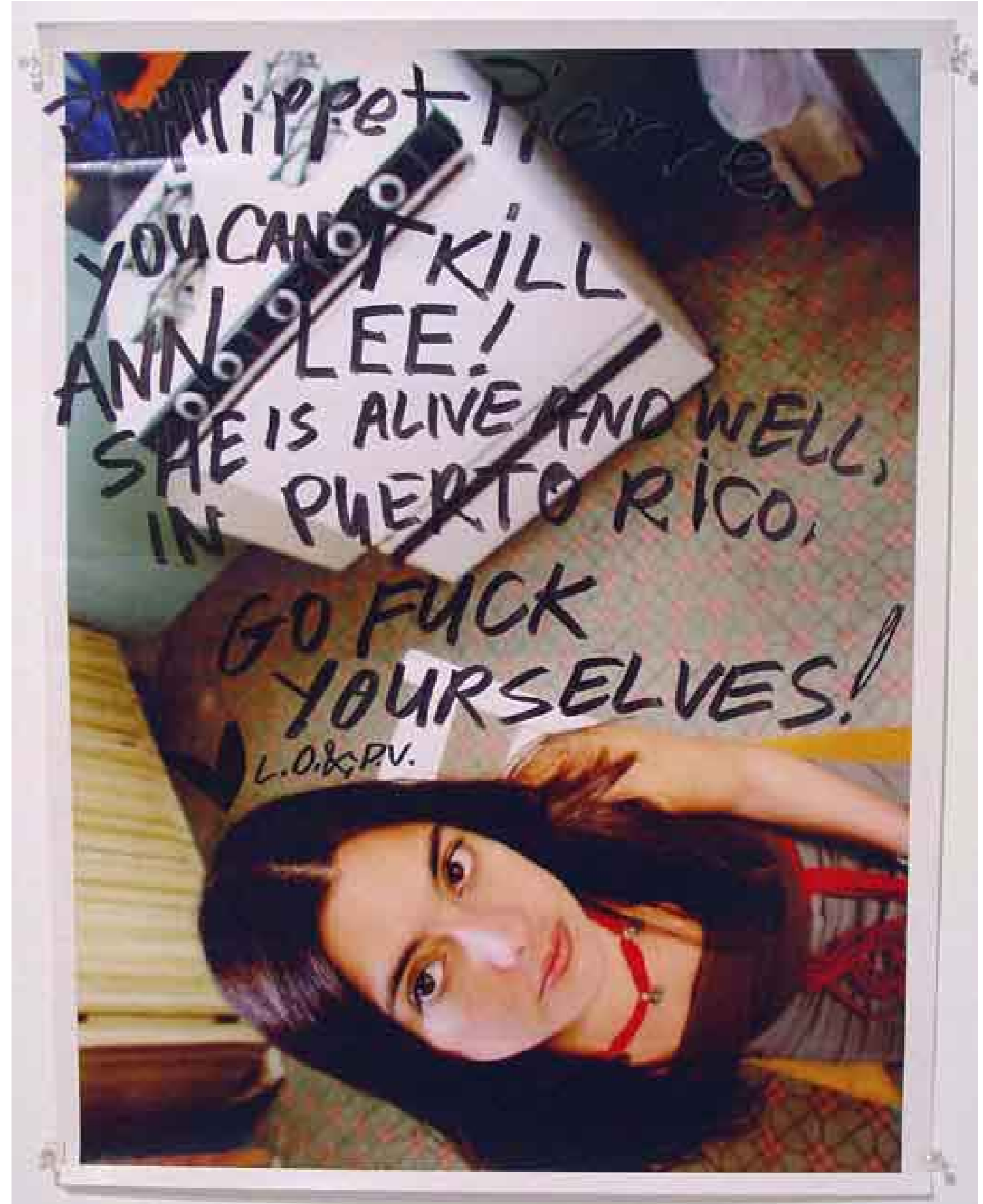
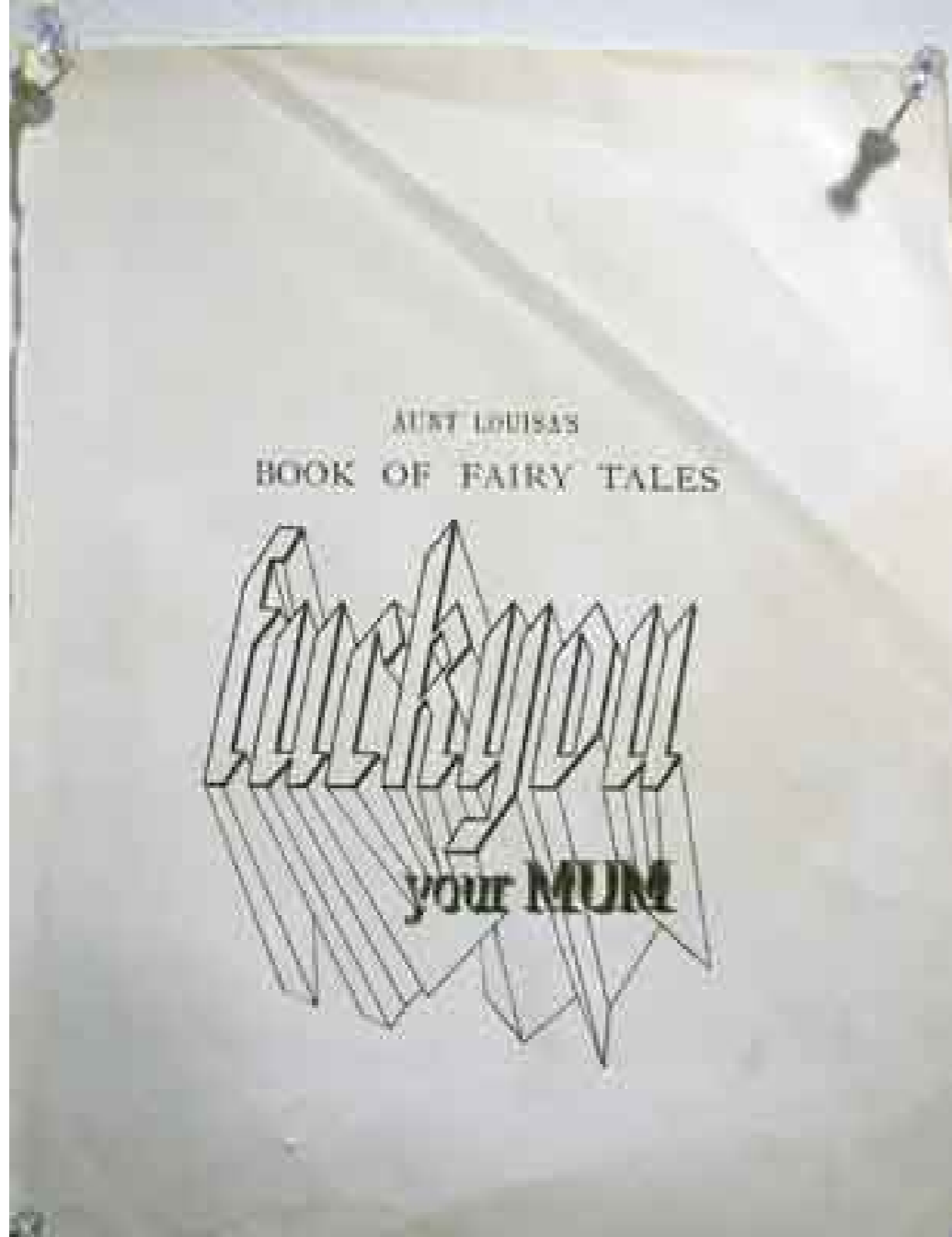
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# STOMACH

by Donald V. Radcliffe  
ph. Dennis Bellone



**STOMACH.** The saclike expansion of the alimentary canal between the esophagus and the small intestine is called the stomach. It is a hollow, muscular organ that stores food and passes it along in small amounts to the intestines for digestion. In some animals the stomach also partially digests the food.

## The Human Stomach

The human stomach is roughly J-shaped and is located in the upper left side of the abdomen. The stomach of an adult is about 10 inches (25 centimeters) long and can easily expand to hold as much as 1 quart (0.9 liter) of food. The wall of the stomach is composed of four layers. The innermost layer, called the mucosa, is honeycombed with millions of glands that secrete mucus, acid, and enzymes. The mucus forms a mucous lining that protects the stomach from the corrosive action of the gastric juices, which break down food. The second layer of the stomach, called the submucosa, is composed of connective and elastic tissue

containing nerves and blood and lymph vessels. The third layer contains longitudinal, circular, and oblique sets of smooth muscles that enable the stomach to churn, mix, and move food. The fourth layer, known as the serosa, connects the muscles to the peritoneum, the outer covering of the stomach.

The stomach is subdivided into four regions: the cardia (so named because it is nearest the heart), an opening leading down from the esophagus; the fundus, an expanded area curving up above the cardiac opening; the body, or intermediate, region, which is the central and largest portion of the stomach; and the pylorus, a narrowing where the stomach joins the small intestine. Circular muscles, or sphincters, close off the openings at the esophagus and small intestine, except when food is passing through. In this manner food is enclosed by the stomach until it is ready for final digestion. (See also Digestive System.)

The wavelike pumping action that moves food from the esophagus through the rest of the

digestive system is called peristalsis. Periodic contractions of the stomach muscles occur about three times a minute and churn and knead the food into a semiliquid mixture of food and gastric juice called chyme. The secretions and movements are controlled by the vagus nerve and the sympathetic nervous system (see Nervous System). The amount of time that food remains in the stomach varies: an hour or two for starches and sugars, three to five hours for proteins, and even longer for fats. After the stomach empties, the contractions persist and increase with time and may cause hunger pangs.

The stomach is subject to a number of disorders, including hyperacidity (excessive acid secretion), gastritis (inflammation of the stomach lining), peptic ulcer (a lesion of the mucous membrane), and cancer. Medications can be used to regulate the production of acid, but surgery may be needed to correct other conditions. Persons who have had their stomachs removed are still able to live by ingesting small quantities of special foods many

times a day.

## Stomachs of Other Animals

The stomachs of some animals are multichambered organs or have special adaptations. The stomachs of cows and most other cud-chewing animals, or ruminants, are divided into four separate parts. Camels and llamas have three-chambered stomachs and can regurgitate the contents and spit at offenders. Birds also have stomachs with three chambers: the crop, the true stomach, and the gizzard, which contains stones or toothlike structures that grind food.

Rodents have only one stomach area, and many must eat their food twice before absorption occurs. The starfish is able to turn its stomach inside out and extend it partially outside its body. (See also Birds; Camel; Ruminants; Starfish and Sea Urchin.)

Donald V. Radcliffe



# Manhattan Memories

## (163)

Manhattan Memories  
(163)

by michael jay dvorkin  
images stefano pasquini

Waves crash upon the pebbles and they rustle as the water returns to its sea.

I shall not know if it was an accident or intention when my car veered downward off the road, leading me to near death. Nothing of the experience has remained in my memory, having lost numerous gilded goblets of recollection. I have no remembrance of the past eight months and five days. Now sewn back together like my childhood ragged doll and one time best friend Mickey Mouse -from whom I repeatedly insisted to gently tear and rip off arms and head to liberate from his corpse hidden imbedded bells and hurdy-gurdy (the woman I called mother consistently replaced these features and mended Mickey's wounds; perhaps to teach me some things should be not altered or maybe to just annoy me)- I am returning to my once home - New York.

It had been 15 years since my departure. But home is no longer. My family is now dead, (this seemed of great importance during my bed bound and heavily sedated weeks in the hospital - for they insisted to remind me of this every day with different articles, fotos, and recorded television reports over the slaughter of these now inanimate people); my money is gone, my friends are distant memories. I have lived up to every expectation they had for me. I have lived as a playboy, a thief, a common hobo, a prostitute, and a murderer of truths. I have never made any efforts in life other than to fail. At this I have always been quite successful. Home - the word causes me great nausea always stirring vomitous desires. Its scent is stale. Its structure

is ghost-like. I have returned to walk within its skeleton and free it from its grave. Or perhaps I should be honest- admit my desires to free myself. My only possessions accompanying me: the clothes garnishing my body, a subway token, and a key to my inheritance - my past.

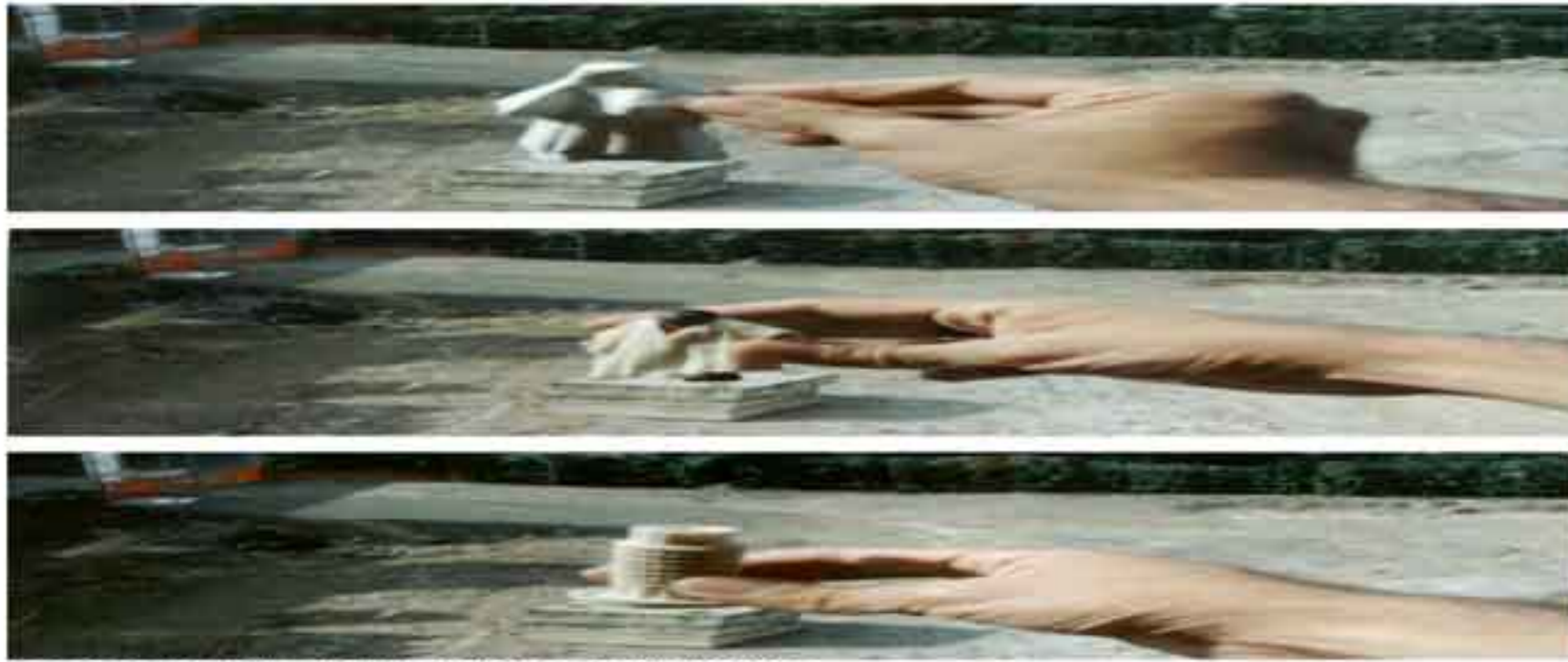
All I have is the present now- with only expectations of future memories. I hope. Strange to hear myself think such a word - HOPE.

I have never understood reality. Have confined myself within dreams. And now, again I use the word NOW, I am being forced to recognise a reality - including my own existence.

A woman I did not recall called asking how I am coping? I was too stunned to ask what role she played when she had said, 'I love you.' She says her name is Verginique. 'Hi darling. It's Verginique. I loOove you.' From her accent I noted that she was obviously french. 'I LOVE YOU?' bewilderingly was repeated - though this time it was my voice I heard 'TOO?' Supposedly she has been waiting for me in Bali and apologised for her angry actions - having slept with the majority of the isolated australian population and pleaded for my forgiveness. She had heard of my recent losses and inheritance; and I was to expect her arrival the day after tomorrow.

In New York, with no courage and sober, I was unable to enter the door to my family's home. Instinctively I called Kirsi





"Serenity, 2002-2003, C-Type Prints."

Mikkola - an amazing artist capable of creating unimaginable potential beauty- and her talented mate Jan Peterson. We randomly wandered upon the Manhattan streets, occasionally splashing in the Chelsea art galleries in order to sustain a certain level of humour and banality to our conversations. After many hours we parted ways. The sky chose to rid itself of its wet weight. I ducked out of the rain and in to a glass structure where I washed myself with red wine. I met a woman short with Asian eyes and a familiar smile which repeatedly kissed my lips- her tongue was strong and sweet. Verginique?

I woke the next morning in pain. Something to which I am becoming overly easily accustomed. Though still not conscious of where I was - questions of why I was there began already bouncing within my head. I saw that the nudity of Verginique was upon me. My vision was too blurred to note her detailed beauty. I felt nothing but the desire to drink from the bottle of Chaos '97 that was situated below the sofa where we laid. The woman easily slid to the floor. I emptied the remainder of the luscious merlot, Montepulciano and Syrah mix of red Chaos within me, while gliding to the mirrored bathroom. A window framed the lacking presence of the Twin Towers. Echoes of my piss surrounded me. Reflected, I saw my naked body scarred and bruised, clumps of hair still missing from my head where now there were sewn lines.

I do not know anything, I thought. And it was true. I felt empty. All my life I have been waiting for someone. To find me. To hold me. Tell me I was needed. Tell me their secrets. Ask me mine. To see me. SAVE me. But save me from what? Myself? I was flying, falling, standing naked in a mirrored bathroom somewhere in Manhattan - for no reason. I had no reasons - no reasonings in my life. I woke each morning only because I had woken. Simple. This is life. My life. And I was filling my days doing what? What was I doing? What now should I do?

My name is Palinurus. I am 33, potentially an alcoholic, and fastly becoming a drug addict. My painkillers I like a lot. I do nothing. I no longer have dreams - having lived them all at a young age - and obviously no ambitions. Perhaps it is a good moment to have children and live their dreams. With whom? Verginique? She did have a cute ass- nevertheless I did not feel secure this feature sufficient logic to bare child with a woman I did not truly know -well, did not remember knowing.

A wave flushed and the shadow of Verginique approached me. She kissed me in gratitude of my toilet etiquette having placed the lid to its down position. We dressed and brunchted at my favorite childhood breakfast spot on Elizabeth and Houston, strangely sharing steamed mussel and a delicious bottle of Il Marroneto, Brunello di Montalcino '97. We discussed books read, past moments (some supposedly shared), the difficulties to create new statements in techno music, and the beauties of the unexpected. As she spoke the curls of her mouth spiraled into my heart. Maybe because of my sensations of loneliness - I was alone, very confused, without directions - or perhaps it was the lucid mix of painkillers and alcohol. Regardless, I knew why at this MOMENT- a now - why she was there with me. I had always the basics of life, and more - but no guidance- no wisdom- and never happiness; yet now, I saw in her sparkling orange flecked green eyes this possibility. Freedom to dream is a luxury. To breathe is a necessity. And to love and be loved is not always enough. However, it is nice. It's nice.

Remembering. Forgetting. Maybe never knowing. We all believe in our own self importance. I hope. I have a hole in my head from which thoughts escape in a non sequiturian manner. WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF, INTERIORS, MY

SEX LIFE or a reason for discourse, NIGHT OF THE IGUANA, STARDUST MEMORIES, HURLYBURLY, UNE LIASON PORNOGRAPHIQUE - a few of my favorite films. I don't know you. I do not know myself. Sometimes mountains move.

I was not going to be afraid- but I was filled with fear. I sat at the steps of my parents' home for 7 hours, singing to myself. Sometimes I lay upside-down watching the silly rhythms of how people walked upon the reversed gravity. Unexpectedly, thankfully - since my accident I often have sensations of being thankful and the strange habit of hearing waves crash upon the pebbled coast within my head- a now aged and curly haired, childhood friend, artist-boxer Dennis Bellone came to my rescue. He had seen me from the comfort of his heated abode across the street. He removed the key that was dangling from the index finger of my left hand without saying a word, and unlocked, and opened the door that we so often avoided in our youth. 'Come on,' he casually insisted. I followed his demand.

There was a tremendously loud silence. The house was filled with emptiness except for a few photographs from my past and that of my adopted family. Dennis danced within the white walls and ate a few mushrooms growing from them. I glanced around not capable of concentrating upon any object without impossible repeatable memories of when we were here all together.

I thanked my old friend for holding my hand. However I needed urgently to be held in entirety. Biting time, I ran toward Verginique's location. As I approached her hotel entrance a voice screamed from within - 'DON'T STOP!' I didn't. I continued to walk upon the street until destiny brought me to a pub titled in red, glowing - NO ENDS. Behind the midget bartender were the words 'Self-Destruction is Victory!' A film with Elvis Presley and Hope Lange was being projected upon the opposite wall- and a song by the unknown artist/musician Stefano Pasquini was blaring the words 'the heart is home.' Having bought drinks for everyone that passed, the patrons were very friendly. One fellow, (tragically named Meaulnes), adopted me as his brother for the evening. He had lost his true sibling in a recent war. We staggered to numerous locations. Each stop we doubled our intoxications and abandonment of the real. Just before separating, his inebriation departed. He spoke to me in his charming Bosnian accent, 'I have my entire life been fighting against tradition while unavoidably contributing towards it.' Drunkenness returned. Now he slurred, 'For s' so long, I thought of myself- self as I thought I should be. For years and years I had lied to myself and others. En and now I'm practically meeting myself for the first time. En. And do you know what I think? What I think? Of myself? My tru-trues self?' I responded with a simple, gentle grin. 'WHAT AN ASS!!!' he screamed, laughing, jumped in a taxi and disappeared.

My head hurt. Not only thought but blood began streaming. I fell.

Alone in the night, horizontal upon the street, I look up into the blackness. How amazing to just look up in to nothingness - and just Breathe - inhale - feeling the oxygen enter my corpse, transform and excrete from my every pore. I close my eyes, seeing life - FEELING LIFE - heightened.

Yet before me, there is only darkness. I am alive! I am home in Manhattan. And I have decided to bring light to my unknown. A future...

Mine...

end - that's it

