

Bed & Bored

No trees were injured in the creation of this zine, but a large number of electrons were terribly inconvenienced.

Bed & Bored #013 is produced for the 64th distribution of SNAPS by Laurie Kunkel (email: ElfKunkel; snail mail: 5359 Nicole; White Lake, MI 48383; 248/742-9118 [for area code 702 denizens: 702/258-4529]). **To all four of you—Typographical Error, Esmerelda, Reepicheep, and Peepiceek—thank you for NOT killing me off, despite trying really hard; may this trend continue.** I'd like to thank The Sanity Quorum—David Allred, Karen Belcher, Woody Bernardi, Kathi Fitzgerald, Ed Garea, Stephen Herte, Dave Skolnick, Shelby Vick (ShelVy)—for generating a variety of topics to explore. **Some of the typos are made by me, and the rest by our my boys and Peep; please use your discretion to determine who typed which.** Unless otherwise noted, all images nicked by ShelVy, who then sent them to me.

Dateline: 31 January 2012

Sunday, 22 January: Today's winner of the Feline Daybreak 500: Typographical Error, by a tail.

Ponderence of the Day: "In an especially bleak track on the 1971 album *Imagine*, John Lennon sang 'One thing you can't hide, is when you're crippled inside.' Yikes. But is it always true? While some do go round with their emotions hanging out, I'm sure there are many more who keep things to themselves. I know I do. In fact sometimes I reckon there must be (at least) two very different Jons. There's the public one, for whom everything appears fine and dandy, then a private one who occasionally sees things through a glass darkly. In the past I've been staggered when I've felt at breaking point inside, yet others I've come into contact with have seemed utterly oblivious to my inner turmoil, often launching into some inconsequential story while a voice inside you is screaming—for God's sake, can't you see how wretched I'm feeling? The trouble is, they can't. They don't know what's going on in your mind. They have absolutely no idea of what you're going through. So how do you handle this? Well sometimes I think you just have to let it go. Make your excuses and move on. But if it's someone who matters to you, now and again it makes sense to open up. Sometimes, it seems, you could be better at hiding it than you imagine."

Goal for the Day: Accept uncertainty as a normal part of life.

Today I'm grateful for: being told I'm moving out of the kitchen into our bedroom.

"drinking tea/the morning fog/drifts away" (Robert Gibson)

Moodscope Score (out of 100): "OK Laurie. This is how it's looking. The score for you today is **21%**, which is 36% less than your highest result to date of 57%. You're probably feeling that things have picked up since the last time you took the test and got a score of 13%. It appears that matters have seen a big improvement, leaving you in substantially more favourable shape. Your mood was not particularly low, but it's clear that you're feeling a lot more positive today. Now is a great time to pin down the cause of your turnaround in order that you could replay it if things are not as good some time in the future. Not only have you got a better score today than you had last time, you are also higher than your average of 15.6%. You're a good bit above your all-time minimum score of 1%. You have travelled quite a way since then."

Karen: Wow! A big improvement! Must be all that sleep you got! :)

Perhaps.

ShelVy: Tha's the way t' go, m' girl! (Been singing Molly Malone...)

"O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?" (Percy Bysshe Shelley)

Reflections on Ponderence: Imagination—or the lack thereof—has been a great discussion topic for ShelVy and me. I need to think about my imagination more.

"There are two seasons in Scotland: June and Winter." (Billy Connolly)

I'm so excited! The plan is to move me into the bedroom this evening!!!

Karen: Hooray!!!!!!! That's great news!!!

ShelVy: Way to GO!!! (I mean that literally as well as physically...<g>)

"Come, ye cold winds, at January's call,/On whistling wings, and with white flakes
bestrew/The earth." (John Ruskin)

In commenting on Stephen's "Dinner and a Movie" offering this week—actually, "A Dinner (Little Basil), A Book (Steven King's *11/22/63*), A Movie (*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*), and A Dinner (The Guilty Goose)—Karen asked an interesting question, presumably, of Stephen:

Karen: Thanks! All great reviews. I wasn't going to try the Tom Hanks film, as the ads make it seem too schmaltzy, but now I will probably give it a shot. On a different topic - what is your favorite cooking show on TV? Right now I'm watching *A Taste of History*, which is one of my favorites. It's more of a history lesson than a cooking show, which is the main reason why I like it so much. It's the chef from Philadelphia's historic City Tavern, and he cooks everything the way they did in Colonial times, in a large fireplace, or sometimes outdoors over an open fire, etc.

I'm reading the book that *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is based on. I also read *11/22/63*, and agree with Stephen's assessment. And, while you didn't ask me, the kids will watch Alton Brown vibrating with excitement, and humor me when we watch *History of Cooking*. They hide if Rachel Ray or Bobby Flay come on.

Karen: Actually, I meant that question for anyone, sorry - should have made that clearer. :) I like Alton Brown, too - he's more fun than most. :)

"There are three reasons for becoming a writer: the first is that you need the money; the second that you have something to say that you think the world should know; the third is that you can't think what to do with the long winter evenings." (Quentin Crisp)

The move: Well, Paige showed up with her mom—original plan was for Quinn—to help. The bed got made with clean sheets, the room vacuumed, and items rearranged. Paige was trying to figure out how to position the mini-fridge and microwave to the best advantage for me.

Getting into the bedroom cannot occur with the wheelchair, however, so contacting Hoveround is top of my list for tomorrow.

Urg ... I called Hoveround; my co-pay is going to be ~\$842. **sigh**

ShelVy: ... and their ad claims they'll practically break their backs making it FREE!
Advertisers and politicians are SO MUCH alike!!! <ig>

"The fog comes/on little cat feet./It sits looking/over harbor and city/on silent haunches/
and then moves on." (Carl Sandburg, "The Fog")

I did get some proofing done for ShelVy, although my audience wasn't pleased when I had to stop.

ShelVy: Problems with **PS** (of course!!!) but NEW ones; sometimes a jpeg won't insert where it's 'sposed to. Had to redo and REdo and REDO before I FINALLY licked it, but there were (of course!!!) other probs as well... Now I'm working at all the proofreading you did. Thanx muchly! I'll get back eventually. NOT a good time for Moodscope! <g>

No, not likely. I'll get more done later. My throat is raw at the moment. Peep keeps putting her paw on my lips to quiet me when I go to correct one of her siblings!

ShelVy: I find it cute, touching, and incredibly intelligent of Peep. ... of course, feline intelligence is well-known thru thousands of years, and documented by the way they convinced Egyptians to worship them.

It is indeed; just finished dinner. Reveling in being in my own bed.

ShelVy: Kinda like coming home after a long trip, hmmm? Enjoy! (Still struggling with **PS**)

"A lot of people like snow. I find it to be an unnecessary freezing of water." (Carl Reiner)

One side effect of the move is that I need to clear out and reprogram the bedroom DVR. That means looking at the living room DVR to see what can be reprogrammed—it turns out to be 15 of 21 programs—into the bedroom and what cannot:

Can Be Transferred:

Numb3rs (Sa/Su; 233)

The Simpsons (Su; 234)

CSI: Miami (Su; 233)

Good Eats (M-F; 197)

TMZ (M-F; 234)

Countdown w/ Keith Olbermann (M-F; 107)

The Daily Show/The Colbert Report (M-R; 248)

Hawaii Five-0 (M; 233)

Criminal Minds (W; 233)

Modern Family (W; 231)

30 Rock (R; 232)

Parks & Recreation (R; 232)

American Horror Story (R; 224)

Grimm (F; 232)

Real Time w/Bill Maher (F; 215)

Cannot Yet Be Transferred:

Allen Gregory (234)
America's Most Wanted (234)
Onion News Network (260)

Penn & Teller: Bullshit (218)
Penn & Teller: To Tell a Lie (218)
Prophets of Science Fiction (211)

23 Jan: Paige's daughter, Quinn, was with her mom this evening to help with some of the moving and shifting. I asked her if she would mind deleting the transferred programs off the living room DVR for me, since I wasn't sure when I would get back out there and, while I knew that while her mom would be willing to make the attempt, the technology factor was a bit overwhelming. Quinn started laughing, and Paige was mildly miffed until I told her that the first step was to keep the iPad on this page. She snorted, looked at Quinn, and replied, "Better you than me!" Well, yeah, that's what I was saying!!!

"We are all treading the vanishing road of a song in the air, the vanishing road of the spring flowers and the winter snows, the vanishing roads of the winds and the streams, the vanishing road of beloved faces." (Richard Le Gallienne)

Karen's turn for a humor bit:

Old Timer's Bar

Four old retired men are walking down a street in Yuma, Arizona. They turn a corner and see a sign that says, "Old Timers Bar—ALL drinks 10 cents." They look at each other and then go in, thinking this is too good to be true. The old bartender says in a voice that carries across the room, "Come on in and let me pour one for you! What'll it be, gentlemen?" There's a fully stocked bar, so each of the men orders a martini. In no time the bartender serves up four iced martinis shaken, not stirred and says, "That'll be 10 cents each, please."

The four guys stare at the bartender for a moment, then at each other. They can't believe their good luck. They pay the 40 cents, finish their martinis, and order another round. Again, four excellent martinis are produced, with the bartender again saying, "That's 40 cents, please."

They pay the 40 cents, but their curiosity gets the better of them. They've each had two martinis and haven't even spent a dollar yet. Finally one of them says, "How can you afford to serve martinis as good as these for a dime apiece?"

"I'm a retired tailor from Phoenix," the bartender says, "and I always wanted to own a bar. Last year I hit the Lottery Jackpot for \$125 million and decided to open this place. Every drink costs a dime. Wine, liquor, beer it's all the same."

"Wow! That's some story!" one of the men says. As the four of them sip at their martinis, they can't help noticing seven other people at the end of the bar who don't have any drinks in front of them and haven't ordered anything the whole time they've been there. Nodding at the seven at the end of the bar, one of the men asks the bartender, "What's with them?"

The bartender says, "They're retired people from Florida. They're waiting for Happy Hour when drinks are half-price ..."

ShelVy: Love it! But here in the Florida Panhandle, those waiting would be Snowbirds...<g>

Karen: LOL!

"Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,/A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;/Blinks but an hour or two;
and then,/A blood-red orange, sets again.//Before the stars have left the skies,/At morning
in the dark I rise;/And shivering in my nakedness,/By the cold candle, bathe and dress.//
Close by the jolly fire I sit/To warm my frozen bones a bit;/Or with a reindeer-sled,
explore/The colder countries round the door.//When to go out, my nurse doth wrap/Me in
my comforter and cap;/The cold wind burns my face, and blows/Its frosty pepper up my
nose.//Black are my steps on silver sod;/Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;/And tree
and house, and hill and lake,/Are frosted like a wedding cake." (Robert Louis Stevenson,
"Winter Time")

Monday, 23 January: Esbat! Happy Chinese New Year! Today's winner of the Feline Daybreak 500: Esmerelda.

Weather Factoid: If January kalends be summerly gay,"Twill be winterly weather to the kalends of May.

Ponderence of the Day: "The other day I was pondering on how great it might be to have a personal mood trainer. In much the same way that people appoint personal trainers to pep up their fitness, I love the idea of having a coach who'd encourage you each day to accomplish the things that can lead to a healthier and happier mind. Any good fitness trainer begins by assessing their 'client', then day by day gets them doing more and more. One more push-up. Another minute of jogging. Another length of the pool. Over time these small steps become large leaps. Bit by bit seems the way to go. I think a mood coach might encourage you to adopt a similar approach. I believe they'd gently push you to take one

more, perhaps small, initiative today than you did yesterday. The same tomorrow. It might be even slower than that, incremental change happening over weeks rather than days. But I reckon that the key focus would be on upping your game a little at a time. So what small step might make you feel the tiniest bit better today? Why not try it? Then just a little more of the same tomorrow."

Goal for the Day: Train your brain to stay calm and collected and to look at life from a more positive perspective.

Today I'm grateful for: a) being in my own bed; b) Bill's pack-rat tendencies; and c) Esmerelda acting more normal.

"Winter dawn is the color of metal,/The trees stiffen into place like burnt nerves." (Sylvia Plath, "Waking in Winter")

Moodscope Score (out of 100): "Here we go Laurie. This is how it's looking. Your score today is **16%**, which is 41% below your all-time maximum of 57%. Things appear to have been fairly steady for you since you took the test last time and got a score of 21%. Your solid mood is likely to have continued, even though your score has dipped a little. It's probably nothing to worry about, but don't forget that you've got the ultimate ability to regulate your state of mind. Take care of yourself and see that things don't slip further. Though your score is a little lower than it was last time, you are doing well compared to your average of 15.6%. You are however above your lowest ever result of 1%. You have progressed since then."

Karen: Down a little today? What happened? I thought it would at least stay level, with you moving to the new bed.

In a word? Bill ...

ShelVy: From what you've said about Bill's stuff, I unnerstand the slight drop

"Thou hast no sorrow in thy song, no winter in thy year." (John A. Logan)

Reflections on Ponderence: I don't know that it was a small step, but moving out of the hospital bed and into the bedroom certainly made me feel better. It would—obviously—have been perfect had Bill been here, but it was nice to have Esme come and lay beside me without looking at me as though I was a stranger. Peep kept looking around waiting for the other shoe to drop.

"January gray is here,/Like a sexton by her grave;/February bears the bier,/March with grief doth howl and rave,/And April weeps—but, O ye hours!/Follow with May's fairest flowers." (Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Dirge for the Year")

Chinese Zodiac Signs: According to legend, many years ago Buddha summoned all the animals to a meeting in which he would designate the first 12 animals arriving, to be signs of a year respectively. On the night before the departure, cat notified his pal, rat, and they agreed that the one waking up first the next morning must awake the other so they can depart for the meeting together. However, rat broke his promise and arrived for the meeting alone. Then, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig arrived one after the other. When cat woke up and hurried there, the meeting was over. It is said that is the reason why the cat kills rats.

Horse: They are hardworking, intelligent and friendly, cheerful and popular, but impatient. Usually they consider themselves superior to others. They have a strong streak of selfishness and sharp cunning and should guard against being egotistical. Adventurer, scientist, poet, or politician will be suitable occupations for them. Horses get well along with Tigers and Dogs instead of Rats.

Interestingly, I didn't know Bill was a Tiger until 1997. **Tiger:** As the fighting animal, those born under tiger's sign are sensitive, aggressive, unpredictable, charming, emotional, courageous, and capable of great love. Often risking themselves, they have a carefree life. Tigers usually will be outstanding as a boss, explorer, race car driver, or matador. A happy marriage can take place with a Horse or a Dog but never a Monkey.

"People hit the sauce in a big way all winter. Amidst blizzards they wrestle unsuccessfully with the dark comedy of their lives, laughter trapped in their frigid gizzards. Meanwhile, the mercury just plummets, like a migrating duck blasted out of the sky by some hunter in a cap with fur earflaps." (Amy Gerstler, *A Severe Lack of Holiday Spirit*)

Today's bit of humor comes from a potential retail therapy purchase: OSTRICH Pocket Pillow for naps, 2011, created by Kawamura-Ganjavian, an architecture and design studio founded in 2000 by Key Portilla-Kawamura and Ali Ganjavian: Working patterns are constantly evolving. We gradually spend more time in our working environments, and this in turn means that we often need to make work and rest fully compatible within the same space. Some cultures have assimilated this concept more naturally than others, but in general the workplace has rarely adapted to this new working-resting paradigm.

OSTRICH offers a micro environment in which to take a warm and comfortable power nap at ease. It is



neither a pillow nor a cushion, nor a bed, nor a garment, but a bit of each at the same time. Its soothing cave-like interior shelters and isolates our head and hands (mind, senses and body) for a few minutes, without needing to leave our desk.

"morning pond/the fog drifts into/a pair of swans" (Rebecca Lilly)

It's a nice foggy day. Paige and I spent some time sorting through some of the detritus in Bill's and my room. I'm torn by amusement and pain by some of the things Bill squirreled away; I'm also realizing how much more pain for which I'm in and I don't know that I'm up for it.

Karen: Well, maybe you should look at it like ripping off a bandaid - it has to be done, so maybe it's best to just do it as fast as possible and get it over with. Just keep the things that bring you happy memories.

ShelVy: Wish I could be there to help ... or, at least, that SOMEbody could... WAIT!!! I've seen something advertised on the internet that's a file organizer! You even get to use it FREE for the first 30 days!!! It's 'sposed to file ANYthing you can scan and make it easy to organize. Have you seen it???

Yes, I have.

Karen: I've seen the ads for those, but don't know anyone who has tried them. But if you can send it back if it doesn't work, might be worth a shot, if you don't already have a scanner. Didn't you mention a scanner?

And I'll be tackling the paper stuff; but this is silly stuff. For example, Bill had found a hand mitten for infants that says "Daddy's Little Buddy"; he would put it on the boys' tail tips and ears. I hadn't seen it in awhile, but it surfaced on Peep's left ear earlier today.

ShelVy: ... It's hard to build up a defense against 'silly stuff', but take it with humor!
REAL humor, not the crying sort ...

Karen: Awww, how sweet! Bill is thinking of you and sent you a greeting to cheer you up!

That's what I was thinking!

"We cling to our own point of view, as though everything depended on it. Yet our opinions have no permanence; like autumn and winter, they gradually pass away." (Zhuangzi)

Wy came over for a quick "What did I do wrong on this test?" review today after arguing with my mom that I really was expecting him.

She called to ask me, and I said I was, but that I needed him to come to the bedroom window over the back steps to get the key. She asked why, and I told her. She actually brought Wy over and came in to see me—first time since the 10th of September that I've seen her. Peep was perfect: crawling all over her, and demanding to be seen, while the older three were pressed up against me just staring at her. When Peep saw Wy, she flew over to him, totally ignoring mom. And when mom leaned over to give me a hug, Esme—her *favorite*—hissed at her. Wy was cracking up, and I was swallowing a grin.

ShelVy: Go, Wyatt!!! Go, Esme!!! LOL!!!

Karen: LMAO!!! Perfect!!! Did you ever find out why she's so "curious" about what room you are in?

Nope, still clueless.

"We build statues out of snow, and weep to see them melt." (Walter Scott)

Job Interview Trick Question

This is supposedly a real question asked in job interviews to find creative thinkers. Before looking at the answer, decide how you would respond.

You are driving down the road in your two-seater sports car on a wild, stormy night, when you pass by a bus stop bench and you see three people stranded in the storm waiting for the bus. All three are in immediate danger because of the ferocious weather. They include:

An old lady who, in your expert opinion, will die without quick medical attention.

An old friend who once saved your life.

The perfect woman you have always dreamed about, and has "that look" on her face like you're her perfect match too.

Here's the question: Which one would you choose to offer a ride to, knowing that there could only be one passenger in your car?

You could pick up the old lady, because she is near death, and thus save her first. Or you could take the old friend because he once saved your life, and this would be the perfect chance to pay him back. However, you may never be able to find your perfect mate again. Or, you could just pretend you didn't see any of them, and drive on past ... which will convince the job interviewer that you're a psychopath, and you'll never get a job again.

Think before you continue reading. Which will you choose?

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The Smartest Man in the World was asked this question in a job interview, and he quickly came up with his answer: "I would give the car keys to my old friend and let him take the lady to the hospital. I would stay behind and wait for the bus with the woman of my dreams."

Sometimes, we gain more if we are able to give up our stubborn thought limitations. Never forget to "Think Outside of the Box"!

However, he didn't get the job! Because the correct answer is to run the old lady over to put her out of her misery since Medicare won't pay for her hospital visit anyway, have sex with the perfect woman on the hood of the car, then drive off with your old friend for a few beers.

After all, the job interviewer is a man.

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"Now winter nights enlarge/  
The number of their hours,  
And clouds their storms discharge/  
Upon the airy towers.  
Let now the chimneys blaze,  
And cups o'erflow with wine;  
Let well-tuned words amaze/  
With harmony divine.  
Now yellow waxen lights/  
Shall wait on honey love,  
While youthful revels, masques, and courtly sights/  
Sleep's leaden spells remove.  
This time doth well dispense/  
With lovers' long discourse;  
Much speech hath some defence,  
Though beauty no remorse.  
All do not all things well;  
Some measures comely tread,  
Some knotted riddles tell,  
Some poems smoothly read.  
The summer hath his joys/  
And winter his delights;  
Though love and all his pleasures are but toys,  
They shorten tedious nights." (Thomas Champion, "Now Winter Nights Enlarge," 1617)

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**Tuesday, 24 January:** Today's winner of the Feline Daybreak 500: not held, due to all participants being curled up with Mom, in the warm bed. (It was a balmy 19°F with windchill factored in, 30°F if it wasn't.)

**Ponderence of the Day:** "The other day we heard from Ali, a Moodscoper with an intriguing take on things, which I'm delighted to pass on. Like a lot of people, Ali loves having a vase of flowers in her home. In her email to us she goes on to say: 'If there are seven in the vase and one dies, I take it out and throw it away so I can carry on enjoying the other six. I wouldn't throw away the whole bunch because one was ruined would I? In the same way, if I have a bad day I write it off as a failure at the end, but I don't give up on the rest of the week. That would be like throwing out all seven flowers at once, wouldn't it?' What a lovely suggestion. When something (or some day) goes wrong, there can be a tendency to catastrophise, to assume that the whole house of cards is crashing down when in reality the damage is generally only limited. Too right, Ali. Better to have a vase which is six-sevenths full rather than an empty one."

**Goal for the Day:** Accept the things you cannot change in yourself or others.

**Today I'm grateful for:** sleep, and lots of it. The kids seem happier also. All four were up on the bed with me all night. It was much needed comfort, and made me feel a little less guilty about being alive.

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"Never take a job where winter winds can blow up your pants." (Geraldo Rivera)

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**Moodscope Score (out of 100):** "Right then Laurie. It's shaping up like this. You have a score today of **21%**, which is 36% less than your highest result to date of 57%. Things appear to have been fairly steady for you since your result last time when you scored 16%. Your life has taken a turn for the better. You were feeling OK but you are stronger now. Hoist the flags and stop for a minute to see if you're able to identify what it is that's been going right, so you can keep the good times coming. Not only has your score risen today, you are also doing well compared to your average of 15.8%. Your score is a good bit higher than you all-time minimum of 1%. You've come quite a way since then."

**ShelVy:** Still moving up! Way to go!!!

**Karen:** Better again today! Yay!!!!

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"The pine stays green in winter ... wisdom in hardship." (Norman Douglas)

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ShelVy's turn for a bit of humor:

### **The Children's Bible in a Nutshell**

In the beginning, which occurred near the start, there was nothing but God, darkness, and some gas. The Bible says, 'The Lord thy God is one', but I think He must be a lot older than that. Anyway, God said, 'Give me a light!' and someone did. Then God made the world. He split the Adam and made Eve. Adam and Eve were naked, but they weren't embarrassed because mirrors hadn't been invented yet. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating one bad apple, so they were driven from the Garden of Eden ... Not sure what they were driven in though, because they didn't have cars. Adam and Eve had a son, Cain, who hated his brother as long as he was Abel. Pretty soon all of the early people died off, except for Methuselah, who lived to be like a million or something. One of the next important people was Noah, who was a good guy, but one of his kids was kind of a Ham. Noah built a large boat and put his family and some animals on it. He asked some other people to join him, but they said they would have to take a rain check. After Noah came Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob was more famous than his brother, Esau, because Esau sold Jacob his birthmark in exchange for some pot roast. Jacob had a son named Joseph who wore a really loud sports coat. Another important Bible guy is Moses, whose real name was Charlton Heston. Moses led the Israel Lights out of Egypt and away from the evil Pharaoh after God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh's people. These plagues included frogs, mice, lice, bowels, and no cable. God fed the Israel Lights every day with manicotti. Then he gave them His Top Ten Commandments. These include: don't lie, cheat, smoke, dance, or covet your neighbour's stuff. Oh, yeah, I just thought of one more: Humour thy father and thy mother. One of Moses' best helpers was Joshua who was the first Bible guy to use spies. Joshua fought the battle of Geritol and the fence fell over on the town. After Joshua came David. He got to be King by killing a giant with a slingshot. He had a son named Solomon

who had about 300 wives and 500 porcupines. My teacher says he was wise, but that doesn't sound very wise to me. After Solomon there were a bunch of major league prophets. One of these was Jonah, who was swallowed by a big whale and then got barfed up on the shore. There were also some minor league prophets, but I guess we don't have to worry about them. After the Old Testament came the New Testament. Jesus is the star of The New. He was born in Bethlehem in a barn. (I wish I had been born in a barn too, because my mom is always saying to me, 'Close the door! Were you born in a barn?' It would be nice to say, 'As a matter of fact, I was!') During His life, Jesus had many arguments with sinners like the Pharisees and the Democrats. Jesus also had twelve opossums. The worst one was Judas Asparagus. Judas was so evil that they named a terrible vegetable after him. Jesus was a great man. He healed many leopards and even preached to some Germans on the Mount. But the Democrats and all those guys put Jesus on trial before Pontius the Pilot. Pilot didn't stick up for Jesus. He just washed his hands instead. Anyways, Jesus died for our sins, then came back to life again. He went up to Heaven but will be back at the end of the Aluminum. His return is foretold in the book of Revolution.

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"An acre of ground contains 43,560 square feet. Consequently, a rainfall of 1 inch over 1 acre of ground could mean a total of 6,272,640 cubic inches of water. This is the equivalent of 3,630 cubic feet. As a cubic foot of pure water weighs about 62.4 pounds, it follows that the weight of a uniform coating of 1 inch of rain over 1 acre of surface would be 226,512 pounds or about 113 short tons. The weight of 1 U.S. gallon of pure water is about 8.345 pounds. Consequently, a rainfall of 1 inch over 1 acre of ground would mean 27,143 gallons of water." (*Farmers' Almanac*)

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**Wednesday, 25 January:** Happy Saint Paul's Day! Happy Burns Night! Today's winner of the Feline Daybreak 500: Mom, who slept through it, and was only awakened by Typo's sneezes while Peep was licking my nose.

**Weather Factoid:** "If Saint Paul's Day be faire and cleare,/It doth betide a happy yeare;/But if by chance it then should rain,/It will make deare all kinds of graine;/And if ye clouds make dark ye skie,/Then neats and fowles this year shall die;/If blustering winds do blow aloft,/Then wars shall trouble ye realm full oft."

**Ponderence of the Day:** "Broadly it seems as though there are two different ways in which a car can go kaput. There's the one in cartoons where all four wheels fall off simultaneously, dumping the vehicle into the dirt. Then there's the other insidiously creeping way where day by day, bit by bit, a squeak turns into a rattle, which turns into a grinding, which ultimately stops your car starting. Moodscope's new graph (which also—hooray—now works on non-Flash devices such as iPads) may just provide you with

the evidence that your own mood can change in a similar style. Whereas we only used to give you a view of each calendar month, you can now conjure up a chart of your data over any period of your choice. This makes it far easier to see the ebbs and flows, and in some cases you may be as astonished as I was to see how glacially slowly mood can change (both for the worse or the better). Although it can sometimes seem that your score mildly oscillates about a fixed mark, longer-term trends can be eye opening. Of course the opposite can also be true. An unexpected misfortune can send you crashing, while some delightful event can make your heart sing. For me, one of my graph's biggest comforts is to show me that no bad time is for ever and, just as scores can go down, so will they also go up."

**Goal for the Day:** Don't expect your symptoms to go away immediately.

**Today I'm grateful for:** a) the status quo in the house; b) FactCheck; c) my Nifty Nabber; d) my small "kitchenette" making me feel slightly more independent; and e) my sense of humor.

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"Many human beings say that they enjoy the winter, but what they really enjoy is feeling proof against it." (Richard Adams)

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**Moodscope Score (out of 100):** "Here we go Laurie. Here's how it looks. You have a score today of **19%**, which is 38% less than your all-time high of 57%. Things have remained pretty level for you since you last took the test and scored 21%. Your mood appears to be sound again, even though your score is a little lower. There's likely nothing to worry about, but don't forget that you've got the ultimate ability to decide how you'll feel. Look after yourself and be sure that there's no more downward movement. Even though your score is a little lower than last time, you're looking good compared to your average of 15.9%. You are however above your lowest ever result of 1%. You have travelled a reasonable way since then."

**Karen:** Hey, no dips allowed! :) Hope the rest of the day goes better for you.

**ShelVy:** ... well, it's still double digits!!! <g>

A 2% dip is manageable. I've currently set my 'uh-oh' line at 16%. Once I can be above 20% for seven consecutive days, I'll reset the line.

**Karen:** Sounds reasonable. I hope you hit that 20% mark soon.

**ShelVy:** Sounds like a plan! Y'know, I started Moodscope with a misunderstandins; I figgered 'Strength' as PHYSICAL strength, but soon realized Strength and Exercise were both MENTAL, not PHYSICAL. Y'know, what was the Strength and Exercise of my MOOD.

Oh man, I hadn't looked at it from that perspective; I bet active doesn't mean *physically* active, either.

**ShelVy:** Oh, I GUARANTEE that!!! Actually, that's why sneaky me brought it up - Just In Case <g> ... or wuz your tongue within yer cheek ...?

Nope, I was quite serious.

**ShelVy:** Your score should shoot up then!!!

Indeed it should.

**ShelVy:** Remember: MOODscope! Active MOOD. Strong MOOD. Sensitive MOOD. And on and on ... <g>

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"People don't notice whether it's winter or summer when they're happy." (Anton Chekhov)

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Survivor guilt. I've been thinking about it a lot. The official medical definition: "feelings of guilt for surviving a tragedy in which others died. In some cases, the person may believe the tragedy occurred because he or she did something bad. In others, the person may feel guilty for not taking proper steps to avert the tragedy. Also called **survival guilt**. [Etymology: OFr, *survivre* + ME, *gilt*, sin]"

What bothers me the most, though, is in learning that survival guilt has been folded into Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Until I re-examined the symptoms, I had downplayed both Bill's and Dr. Marshall's concern that I had enough of the symptoms of PTSD, that a mental evaluation was, likely, in order. Now the survivor guilt is truly overwhelming. Couple that with the anger I was already feeling toward Bill, and, well, maybe the fact that I'm on the edge of a metaphorical ledge, does make sense. *Sigh*.

~~~~~

Dear Karen and ShelVy, Obviously, you may read the whole, but I'd like to suggest particular attention to p. 84. I may well need a shrink more than I thought.

Karen: Thanks for the latest, it's very good. As for page 84, well, if you think you need a shrink, then you do. I don't see how it could hurt to have some sessions with a good therapist - can you get one to visit you?

ShelVy: Don't touch page 84!!!

I didn't, technically, but since this is the top of page 17, in a new numbered ish, well, let's just say, I added stuff.

"The Eskimos had fifty-two names for snow because it was important to them: there ought to be as many for love." (Margaret Atwood)

Bill Burns' suggestion to listen to ShelVy may have been more egoboo than he could handle. But, time to concentrate on an intro for **Bed & Bored** for eFanzines.com. Let's see: *"After years of FanAc, followed by a resettlement GAFIA, and then to break a forced medical GAFIA, the ravings of Laurie Kunkel are back in **Bed & Bored**, a journal started at the suggestion of husband, Bill, days before he headed to The Great Convention in the Sky."*

Nope, definitely needs work. ShelVy?

ShelVy: I disagree; I like it just as it is! I had thot of doing something like: *"In a land far away, when the world was young, and I was still in my ~~fifties~~ [sixties], I knew a couple of intelligent, talented fans named Bill and Laurie Kunkel. With the passage of time, tragedy struck and Laurie became disabled, bedridden, with her ~~laptop~~ [iPad] a constant companion. Bill suggested she write a fanzine titled **Bed & Bored** but, ~~before~~ [right after] she started it, another tragedy happened when Bill died at only 61. A few ~~months~~ [weeks] slid by and Laurie wrote, but feared she was being too 'down' with it. She asked my opinion and I told her, 'Go with it!'"* --But I like yours better!

Bill, I can offer you to options: one mine and one ShelVy's. Either works for me!

ShelVy: Way to go! Thanx for inserting 'sixties' after my inaccurate 'fifties'!

BTW, ShelVy when I saw the subject line of your email "I Lied!!!," I thought you had reread your intro. According to it, you met me with Bill nine years before I met Bill. It's a wonderful time paradox!!

ShelVy: Hmmm? Mebbe it's my math. I have email from you in '95. Lessee, now; 2005 woulda been ten years after ... 2010 woulda been fifteen years after ... wouldn't it??? BUT -- I think I sed I'd been in my FIFTIES. Shoulda been SIXTIES!!! Well, the intro is up to Bill Burns. I'll accept his decision gladly. ... mebbe he'll figger a way to use BOTH??? <g>

I dunno.

26 Jan: Bill Burns: Thanks, Laurie; I went with yours as being a bit more pithy! Page is now online and announced. [Final version: *After years of FanAc, followed by a forced medical GAFIA, the ravings of Laurie Kunkel are back in Bed & Bored, a journal started at the suggestion of husband, Bill, days before he headed to The Great Convention in the Sky.*]

26 Jan: Pithy. ::snort:: Even more amusing: I learned a "new" word today, circa 1931: "mythy."

26 Jan: ShelVy: TOLD you your intro was good!!! <g> Does 'mythy' have any semblance to 'skiffy'?

26 Jan: Sorta ... resembling, of or pertaining to myth; mythical. That means, of course, that our goal for the February SNAPS, will be the last large goal that we can set. I'll miss it, but I bet others won't!

26 Jan: ShelVy: Tha's what I thot it sounded like ... but don't see the connection to **B&B**. You sed you were gonna cut back - is that what you meant? ...I'll find out in the AYEM. 'Bout to get ready for bed. 'Nite.

26 Jan: No, in this case, I wanted to see the real definition of pithy, and Merriam-Webster online, gave as rhyming words "mythy" and "withy." And, **B&B** #013 will be the last one in SNAPS. I'm going to move **B&B** to eFanzines.

26 Jan: ShelVy: ... Okay ... but I don't see the reasoning for dropping outta SNAPS. In efanazines, you will get NO response unless someone sends you a Letter Of Comment. With the hundreds and hundreds of fanzines on efanazines, **B&B** will be hidden, moreorless. Have you just given up? Sounds like you don't wanna hear what others might have to say.

26 Jan: I'm not dropping out of SNAPS. I'm just trying to not bore people.

"Sunshine is delicious, rain is refreshing, wind braces us up, snow is exhilarating; there is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather." (John Ruskin)

From the "Are You Kidding Me" Department: I have way too many questions with this news story, starting with, who puts a rope *there!*?!?!?

Man decapitated when wood chipper sucks up rope

Friday, January 13, 2012 05:13 PST

Nevada City, Calif. (AP) -- A Northern California tree trimmer has been decapitated after an industrial wood chipper apparently sucked up a rope tangled around his neck.

Nevada County sheriff's deputies initially said 50-year-old Martin Lara was feeding brush and was pulled head-first into the wood chipper by the rope.

But coroner's Sgt. Paul Schmidt tells Sacramento's KCRA-TV that something got caught in the wood chipper and got tangled around Lara's neck, decapitating him.

Schmidt couldn't confirm it was a rope that tightened around his neck.

The tree trimming crew says they heard Lara scream at about 8:15 a.m. Thursday while they worked in Nevada City. He was dead when they went to investigate.

Information from: KCRA-TV.

Karen: It's probably a Darwin Award situation, but since no one saw it, I guess we'll never know.

SheIVy: Some people have all the luck ... only it was BAD luck in his case ... <ig>

"Resting on your laurels is as dangerous as resting when you are walking in the snow. You doze off and die in your sleep." (Ludwig Wittgenstein)

With me moving back into our bedroom, the older kids have resumed their 2009 sleeping spots. Typo is on the bed, atop the pillow in Bill's spot. Esme is in the cut-out between the bedroom and bathroom. Reep is either on the cabinet in the bathroom, or by me, especially if Typo has abandoned Bill's pillow, or if he wants to sprawl under the covers. (Tonight, he turned on the electric blanket and hopped up on the bed, snuggling into the warmth. I being already very warm, turned off the blanket, pulled the covers off, and opened the window. He came out of the covers, hopped off the bed, clicked the blanket back on,

and burrowed back under. I moved slightly, and heard a low rumble of protest.) Peep, meanwhile, is on me—be it my chest, arm, lap, or leg.

"Snow and adolescence are the only problems that disappear if you ignore them long enough." (Earl Wilson)

Dr. Idiot's office called twice today. The first call—at 8AM—was to tell me that Dr. Idiot would be in the area on Friday and would it be possible for me to be home for her. I asked what timeframe, and was told between 8-5PM. I'll be called on Friday—or maybe Thursday evening—with the two-hour time window.

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The second call came in at 3:45PM. "Is Mrs. Crumbel there?"

"Could you want Mrs. Kunkel?"

"Oh, yes, that is it! Is she available?"

"This is she."

"Oh, hi! I have paperwork requesting an electric lift and I wondered why you needed a powered one rather than manual."

"Because I'd like to be able to move myself from the bed to the wheelchair and that requires an electric lift."

"Oh, okay. I'll let Doctor know! Thank you, Mrs. Crumbel!"

Guess I won't mention to the office that I've told them this now three times: once in November, once in December, and today.

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"It's a pity one can't imagine what one can't compare to anything. Genius is an African who dreams up snow." (Vladimir Nabokov)

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**ShelVy:** Been absent a lo-o-ong time, thanx to **Planetary Stories**. Every time I think IT'S FINISHED - something else popped up.

I say 'popped' becos That's It!!! Spent hours and HOURS (along with an occasional side trip to a game for a chance to work of frustration<g>) shaping it up. There are still a few things that bother me, but - FORGET IT!!!

I'm ba-a-ack! (Soon as I wipe out a ton of email, that is.)

::snort:: Been there, done that.

**Karen:** Congratulations! :)

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"This morning of the small snow I count the blessings, the leak in the faucet which makes of the sink time, the drop of the water on water." (Charles Olson)

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**ShelVy:** Dumb question, Laurie - 'Dumb' on accounta I haven't asked earlier! Have you applied for gov't disability???

I'm on disability: \$625 per month. Now I have to find a way to supplement that money until 07/21/2015, when Bill would have been 65.

**ShelVy:** But is it Social Security disability???. If so, I'd think Hoveround could do better.

Yes, it is.

**ShelVy:** Did you try The Skooter Store???

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"Earth teach me to forget myself as melted snow forgets its life. Earth teach me resignation as the leaves which die in the fall. Earth teach me courage as the tree which stands all alone. Earth teach me regeneration as the seed which rises in the spring." (William Alexander)

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Em was able to help with testing Chill Willy and asked me to help her find people to vote. So, being the indulgent aunt I am, I told her I would spread the word. Since I sent out the information, the kids have moved from 15th to 12th place.

From the Oxbow LEGO Team: A group of 5th graders from Oxbow are working on an exciting project, and they need your help. During LEGO research this year they invented a product. They learned in their research that sandwiches often come to school and sit in tubs or lockers for several hours. Through extensive testing, both at Oxbow and in association with students from Iowa State University, they learned that sandwiches that reach a temperature of more than 50 degrees for more than 2 hours are considered in the danger zone. All sandwiches without ice packs that we tested were found to be in this zone, and many with ice packs were also.

The solution they came up with is called the Chilly Willy. It is a plastic container the shape of a sandwich, with water filled chambers all around it, much like the mugs you freeze. Just keep it in freezer, and then pop your sandwich in it each morning. Testing showed this container dropped the sandwich temperature 20 degrees and kept it there for 5 hours. These results were confirmed by Iowa State, and published on their website. We wanted to patent and produce this product, but learned quickly that this costs more than \$10,000 (regardless of what you see in ads on TV). Instead we entered a contest called Global Innovations. It is only for LEGO teams. The top 10 vote getters are automatically moved to the semifinals, along with 10 teams chosen by judges for practicality and feasibility. The Oxbow team believes their product will be chosen in the second category, but don't want to leave anything to chance. Winners receive more than \$250,000 in prizes, including a patent and having their product created and marketed. You are allowed to vote once per 24-hour period, per IP address, (so only once per school building). So you could vote once from school, home and cell phone per day. Voting is easy. Just follow the link below where you will the team's picture and a brief write up. On the right hand side of the screen click on the red vote button. We are presently in 15th place and climbing fast. Please help us by voting daily from now until March 1st. How cool would it be to see kids from Huron Valley get an award like this??

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"The pure air and dazzling snow belong to things beyond the reach of all personal feeling, almost beyond the reach of life. Yet such things are a part of our life, neither the least noble nor the most terrible." (Frederick Soddy)

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### **Infidelity**

To My Dear Wife,

You will surely understand that I have certain needs that you with your 54 years can no longer supply. I am very happy with you and value you as a good wife. Therefore after reading this fax, I hope you will not wrongly interpret the fact that I will be spending the evening with my 18 year old secretary at the Ritz Hotel. Please don't be perturbed. I shall be back home before midnight.

Your Loving Husband

When the man came home, he found the following letter on the dining room table:

My Dear Husband,

I received your fax, and thank you for your honesty. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that you are also 54 years old. At the same time, I would like to inform you that while you read this, I will be at the Hotel Fiesta with Michael, my tennis coach, who like your secretary is also 18 years old. As a successful businessman and with your excellent knowledge of Math, you will understand that we

are in the same situation, although there is one small difference: 18 goes into 54 more often than 54 goes into 18. Therefore I will not be back before lunchtime tomorrow.

Your Loving Wife

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"And ye, who have met with Adversity's blast,/And been bow'd to the earth by its fury;/  
To whom the Twelve Months, that have recently pass'd/Were as harsh as a prejudiced jury  
—/Still, fill to the Future! and join in our chime,/The regrets of remembrance to cozen,/  
And having obtained a New Trial of Time,/Shout in hopes of a kindlier dozen." (Thomas Hood)

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**Thursday, 26 January:** Today's winner of the Feline Daybreak 500: race cancelled; all participants sleeping with Mom.

**Ponderence of the Day:** "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. So suggested American educator Thomas Payne in his 'Teacher's Manual' published in the first half of the 19th century. Persistence, he argued, was the name of the game. Stick at things and you'll get there, was his advice. I reckon he was largely right. But only largely. Whilst there are times when tenacity clearly pays off, now and again it can also be the case that a different approach is called for. It'll take you a long time to bang nails in with a screwdriver, for instance, but switch to a hammer and the job will be done in a jiffy. Someone (it may have been the author Rita Mae Brown, although some suggest it could have been dear old Albert Einstein) said that one definition of insanity is doing the same thing day after day and expecting a different result. So which way is best? Well, both probably. Focus and perseverance have a lot going for them. But when things really aren't working, so does stopping, thinking, and adopting a different approach."

**Goal for the Day:** He who laughs, lasts. Improve your laugh life.

**Today I'm grateful for:** a) quiet; b) dark places; c) Wy; and d) Project Gutenberg.

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"January opens/The box of the year/And brings out days/That are bright and clear/And  
brings out days/That are cold and grey/And shouts, "Come see/What I brought  
today!" (Leland B. Jacobs, "January")

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**Moodscope Score (out of 100):** "Right Laurie. This is how it's looking. Your score today is **31%**, which is 26% below your best-ever result of 57%. It appears as though things have picked up for you a fair bit since you last took the test and scored 19%. Life has got better for you. You were feeling okay but you

are stronger now. Applaud yourself then take stock for a moment to try and clarify exactly what has been working well, so the good times keep on coming. Not only has your score gone up today, you are also doing well compared to your average of 16.5%. You've scored a good bit higher than your lowest ever result of 1%. You have travelled quite a way since then."

**Karen:** Wow!! That's a big upturn! Yay!!!!

ShelVy pointed out the obvious to me.

**ShelVy:** There you go! And that's just the start of it!!! Well, it was a mistake I made myself when first starting Moodscope. FINALLY, as they say, I 'saw the error of my ways' and just passed it on ...

Considering I feel like I have a hangover, having spent 2 hours and 17 minutes with Wy and world history, then 45 minutes with Paige, this score was pretty damned good!!

**ShelVy:** Abso-dam-LOOTLY!!!

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"We stand watching the yellow leaves go queer,/flapping in the winter rain,/falling flat and washed. .../I tell you what you'll never really know:/all the medical hypothesis/that explained my brain will never be as true as these/stuck leaves letting go." (Anne Sexton, "The Double Image")

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I had fun last night: I got to deal with a slightly intoxicated Juan who came to see me. Well, actually, I think more than slightly intoxicated Juan, given his fascination with the can tab (It was red: "It's pretty, Aunt Laurie. I'm gonna keep it!! Oh, look: it has a partial crown!"). *sigh* Peep, already stoned on catnip, helped herself to the beer on the top of the can.

I was awoken by a panicked Wy at 11:45AM; apparently I missed his three phone calls. [Wy: "I was really worried; the last time no one answered the phone, Aunt Kathi found you upset and Bill dead, and, boy, I **really**, *really*, **really** didn't want to knock on your window!!!!" So, New Rule: I have to give Wy advanced notice of my demise. Still working on that one!]

So, despite feeling like I have a hangover, I spent 2 hours and 17 minutes with Wy on his world history, then 45 minutes with Paige. My only pondering? Do Juan and Peep feel as miserable as I do?

**ShelVy:** Sounds like you really SLEPT!!! Hooray!

**Karen:** Well it sounds like you at least got some good sleep!

**ShelVy:** Whatcha mean, 'at least'??? <g>

I did. I'm just trying to figure out how *I* have the hangover!

**ShelVy:** Ah, sweet mysteries of life... <g>

**Karen:** Maybe you're just hungry?

**ShelVy:** You might have something there, Karen! But, judging by past performances, it'll be HOURS before Paige gets there!

**Karen:** Yeah, that stinks!

Actually, Wy was here first today. He was amused that I was eating yogurt and Excedrine Migraine once he woke me up. Paige came as Wy was leaving at 1:45PM. Now that I have the refrigerator, it *mostly* doesn't matter when Paige comes.

Given that 4oz of wine gets me totally blitzed, my guess is that my beer-licking daughter passed out as I found her this morning: breathing in my face!! **::LATER::** How bad was Peep's morning breath? Reep moved her to the foot of the bed!!

**Karen:** LOL! Hooray for being near the fridge!

**ShelVy:** Hey, I forgot you now had access to a fridge! Another great thing about your new surroundings, hmmm?

Yes, indeed. And the fridge is now restocked.

**ShelVy:** YAY!!! ... but don't read the ingredients labels ...<g>

"Look into the garden,/Where the grass was green;/Covered by the snowflakes,/Not a blade is seen.//Now the bare black bushes/All look soft and white./Every twig is laden—/  
What a pretty sight!" (Unknown)

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The picture that launched over two dozen emails:



**25 Jan: Karen:** I saw this and thought of Laurie's family. :)

**25 Jan:** I'm missing something ...

**25 Jan: ShelVy:** It shows that 'Family' doesn't mean every member is alike; if a bird can be 'family' to a cat, then cats can be family to us...

**25 Jan:** Okay, now I *know* I'm missing something, as, seriously, all I had in my email were the words Karen wrote.

**25 Jan: ShelVy:** Yup; made little sense without the photo!!! Meanwhile, your stoned felines could care less!!! <g>

**Karen:** Maybe AOL stripped the photo. Maybe ShelVy can send it to you? I already deleted it, sorry.

**ShelVy:** I'll give it a try before I crawl in.

**Karen:** Thanks!

**ShelVy:** See if it comes thru!

[Too late; I'm already out cold.]

**Stephen:** Exactly. The photo didn't come through here either.

**Dave:** Or here.

Now, *this* is becoming entertaining!

**ShelVy:** Lemme know if the photo makes it THIS time!

**Karen:** Thanks, I hope it works this time. :)

**ShelVy:** Tried forwarding it to everyone.

**Dave:** Nope.

**Stephen:** I only got a little gray box.

**ShelVy:** ::sigh:: Ah, well...

**Karen:** Okay, trying one more time - you should look for an attached file. Actually, two, because I'm sending another one that's unrelated :)

**ShelVy:** That oughta do it! ... I especially liked that suggestion for senators ...<g>

**Dave:** I finally got them. First one [Senators] is amusing. Second is a sweet sentiment.

::snort:: Both pictures are perfect! But the Maine Coon and the parrot are adorable! Thank you!!

**Karen:** Glad they finally got through. :) And you're welcome.



**ShelVy:** Y'know, Karen, I've had the same problem. When I finally that I'd figured out how to make a photo/jpeg part of an email and sent it to myself first to verify it, then sent it to others ... and NObody got it!!!

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"Snow provokes responses that reach right back to childhood." (Andy Goldsworthy)

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Okay, I was bored enough to read the ingredient list on my Apple Jacks box. The last item is "BHT for freshness." What the hell is BHT? A quick trip to Wikipedia gave me an answer but also raised a serious question: "Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT), also known as butylhydroxytoluene, is a lipophilic (fat-soluble) organic compound that is primarily used as an antioxidant food additive (E number E321) as well as an antioxidant additive in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, jet fuels, rubber, petroleum products, electrical transformer oil, and embalming fluid." **Embalming Fluid!?!?!?** Really!? Fortunately, consumption of Apple Jacks doesn't reduce the amount of embalming fluid needed in a body. Yes, I looked *that* up, too.

**Karen:** Yeah, those food labels are scary.

**ShelVy:** You made an almost-unforgivable error, Laurie - YOU READ THE INGREDIENTS!!! I learned as a kid (when i found out what hot dogs were made of) that you ENJOY food, you don't READ ABOUT IT!!!

Hey, listen to some of them prescription commercials where they are required to tell you of possible side-effects; if pipple paid attention to THEM, we'd NEVER take medicine! ... of course, that might be a viable option ...! <g>

Wait'll ya find out everything that's in a Pepsi!

Yeah, well, I wasn't amused by the mouse eaten by Mountain Dew story!!

**27 Jan: ShelVy:** Have you ever dropped a small piece of raw meat into a glass of Coke?

**27 Jan:** Uhh ... no, and I do *not* want to think about it.

**27 Jan: ShelVy:** Well, just remind yourself there are dangers from WATER, as well. Y'might drown in it, y'might spill it on your keyboard ... and don't get me started on the dangers of oxygen!!! <g>

**28 Jan: Stephen:** I know this is a late response but my email has been really slow, so it's been hard to keep up. Thumbs up on the refrigerator. As for the Embalming Fluid, I'm a compulsive reader, especially at the table (cereal boxes, wine labels, ingredient lists). When I learned how dramatically the percentages drop as an ingredient list progresses (especially from the first to the second) I stopped being concerned about those at the bottom because the amount be then is insignificant. Still, it is intriguing.

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"It'll work, if God, wind, leads, ice, snow, and all the hells of this damned frozen land are willing." (Matthew Henson)

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ShelVy's turn for a bit of humor: Wife comes home late at night and quietly opens the door to the bedroom. From under the blanket she sees four legs instead of two. She reaches for a baseball bat and starts hitting the blanket as hard as she can. Once she's done, she goes to the kitchen to have a drink. As she enters, she sees her husband there, reading a magazine. "Hi, Darling," he says, "Your parents have come to visit us, so I let them stay in our bedroom. Hope you said hello to them ..."

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"Have you ever noticed a tree standing naked against the sky,/How beautiful it is?/All its branches are outlined, and in its nakedness/There is a poem, there is a song./Every leaf is gone and it is waiting for the spring./When the spring comes, it again fills the tree with/ The music of many leaves,/Which in due season fall and are blown away./And this is the way of life." (Krishnamurti)

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**Friday, 27 January:** Today's winner of the Feline Daybreak 500: race not held; pondering if the Daybreak 500 was held simply because no one was sleeping where the kids thought that they should be.

**Ponderence of the Day:** "The other day the psychologist Richard Wiseman (@RichardWiseman) tweeted that he might plan to start a lecture on Precognition by asking the audience 'Any questions?'. Whether or not you believe that we really can know what's going to happen in advance, there's no doubt that there's a lot of the other 'pre-' type of thinking—preconception—about. All too often we go into situations believing we know how they'll turn out, and of course this sort of attitude easily turns into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Perhaps you're feeling low, but get persuaded to attend some kind of social event. On your way there, you fret that you'll hate it, that you'll feel ignored, that you'll just make your excuses and leave. And nine times out of ten this is exactly what ends up happening. I know how hard it can be to reject the voice of unreason, but life is often a lot sunnier when you do. So here's a thought then. How about making a determined effort to keep an open mind today, whenever that's possible? (I know, I know, you knew I was going to say that.)"

**Goal for the Day:** Live on normal daily routines.

**Today I'm grateful for:** consistent inconsistencies (inconsistent consistencies??).

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"JAN-U-ARY,/I love January./Oh, JAN-U-ARY!/I can spell it, too./ With a J-A here,/And a N-U there./Here an A, there an R,/Everywhere a Y-Y,/Oh, JAN-U-ARY!/I love January!" (unknown; Sung to the tune of "Old McDonald Had a Farm.")

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**Moodscope Score (out of 100):** "Very acceptable Laurie. The score for you today is **40%**, which is 17% less than your highest result to date of 57%. You are likely to be feeling that things have picked up for you since the most recent time you took the test and scored 31%. You're finding life is better. You were feeling okay but you're now in a stronger position. Hoist the flags and stop for a minute to see if you can identify exactly what you've been doing right, so the good times keep on coming. Not only has your score risen today, you're also doing well compared to your average of 17.3%. You're higher than your lowest ever result of 1%. You've travelled a long way since then."

**Karen:** Wow! Hurray!!!

**ShelVy:** Up, up and aWAYYYY! Yay! ... guess I oughta take mine now!

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"The cold was our pride, the snow was our beauty. It fell and fell, lacing day and night together in a milky haze, making everything quieter as it fell, so that winter seemed to partake of religion in a way no other season did, hushed, solemn." (Patricia Hampl)

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**Reflections on Ponderence:** I think having an open mind may have bitten me in the ass. I was, heaven help me, honest with Dr. Idiot. It was stupid. Hell, **I** was stupid. But, the genie is out of the bottle.

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"The snow itself is lonely or, if you prefer, self-sufficient. There is no other time when the whole world seems composed of one thing and one thing only." (Joseph Wood Krutch)

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On the other hand, ShelVy's taking precognition to a new level: Moodscope Support wrote: Shelby Vick is 96% on Moodscope on Jan **28**, 2012.

::snort, chuckle:: Congrats, ShelVy! But, as long as you were predicting how you would feel tomorrow, why didn't you go for the full 100%?

**ShelVy:** Hey, gotta leave room to grow! <g>

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"Snow provokes responses that reach right back to childhood." (Andy Goldsworthy)

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Karen's turn for a bit of humor:

A guy is walking down the street with some chicken wire under his arm. His neighbor sees him and asks what he has.

The guy replies, "It's chicken wire and I'm going to catch some chickens."

His neighbor says, "You fool, you can't catch chickens with chicken wire."

Later that night, he sees the guy walking down the street dragging 12 chickens. The next day he sees him walking down the street with some duct tape under his arm. Once again he asks what the guy is up to.

The guy says he has some duct tape and he is going to catch some ducks.

He replies, "You fool, you can't catch ducks with duct tape."

Sure enough later that night, he sees the guy walking down the street dragging 12 ducks behind him. The next day, he sees the guy walking with something else under his arm. He asks what it is.

The guy replies, "It's pussy willow."

He says, "Hold on, let me get my hat."

**ShelVy:** Yep...<g>

::snort:: Maybe he went looking for felines?

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"It takes between three and six hours to make each snowball, depending on snow quality. Wet snow is quick to work with but also quick to thaw, which can lead to a tense journey to the cold store." (Andy Goldsworthy)

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Dr. Idiot's office called at 7:46AM to tell me that she'll be here between 11AM-2PM.

**Karen:** How considerate of them. This would indicate that she only just decided to visit you - way to plan ahead!

::snort::

**ShelVy:** 'Plan'? DR IDIOT???

::snort::

**Karen:** Yeah, that's more or less what I meant. :)

The office had set the appointment up on Wednesday. The time was actually based on the weather; the forecast called for snow, but, we didn't know if the snow was going to be from the West or the East, which would affect her route. Since the snow was coming from the West, she and her CNA drove out to Howell, and worked their way East.

**ShelVy:** So she really DID Make A Plan. Will wonders never cease!!! <g>

::snort::

**ShelVy:** As late as I slept, she's probably already been there, so I'll just wait for ... results???

You'll be waiting awhile, because I'm still processing everything.

**ShelVy:** It's WA-A-AY past two o'clock. I'm kinda edgy. Laurie, wha' hoppent?

**Karen:** I wouldn't say I'm edgy -- after all, I'm sure Laurie has enough sense not to let Dr. Idiot do anything harmful, but I AM curious. Did she ever even show up? I wouldn't put it past her to have her office call late in the afternoon and say she couldn't make it after all.

**ShelVy:** Quite true! And, this being Friday, no way to check with her until Monday. Sounds like the kinda thing Dr Idiot would pull ...

No, she was here. She just left me with some unappetizing food for thought. I'm still processing that part. In the end—setting aside the thought bites—Dr. Idiot left me confused more than anything. She agreed that I still have the bronchitis cough, but that more medication isn't in my best interest. She didn't talk to Dr. Barna, yet, but said the leg braces looked painfully effective. She said she had found a visiting Pain Management doctor for me (but the PM doctor only takes US Gov't Medicare, or regular Humana insurance—not Humana Medicare.) She did call in my four prescriptions.

**ShelVy:** ... well, at least she did SOMETHing right! <g>

Yes, she did. I just have a lot to think about before Monday.

**Karen:** How can you get Humana Medicare, but not regular Medicare? Sorry to be a nag, but you really need to get busy with the paperwork to get regular Medicare, or Medicaid, whichever you can qualify for.

Actually, what that told me is that they don't want *new* Medicare patients. When I won my disability suit in 2006, it came with US Gov't Medicare. By 2007, the Powers That Be declared, "Damn it, people, we're a government, not a doctor!" and worked to move as many people into third-party programs as possible. My coverage through Humana is solid; they just don't want any HMOs.

**ShelVy:** Then why would anyone object to the fact that you're on Humana Medicare instead of Federal Medicare...?

I believe federal is a PPO, not an HMO. From a medical practice point of view, PPOs are easier.

**Karen:** Yes, PPOs are much better than HMOs. I've had both, and I MUCH prefer the PPO, even though HMOs are sometimes cheaper.

**ShelVy:** I see; Humana is too picky for their tastes, hmmm? <g>

In a word? Yes.

**Karen:** Also, how does she expect you to get over the bronchitis without medication? Has she given you any inhalers, like albuterol or inhaled corticosteroids?

That actually made sense; even after acute bronchitis has cleared, a dry, nagging cough may linger for several weeks. And, given my compromised immune system, giving me anything can be tantamount to malpractice.

**Karen:** Sorry - your immune system is compromised, so they shouldn't give you any treatment at all??? How does THAT make any sense? I can see holding off on antibiotics, possibly, but why no albuterol or guafenisin or inhaled corticosteroids?

Actually, that Dr. Bali gave me any medication was a shock. And, because, in acute bronchitis, an inhaler doesn't seem to be indicated.

**ShelVy:** You mean Dr Idiot did something SENSIBLE??? Wow!!!

Yes, she covered her ass, which is always sensible.

**ShelVy:** Can't argue with that ...

Nope, and I wouldn't even try. I'm trying to figure out what perverse part of me decided the truth was the best option with her.

**ShelVy:** Well, under some circumstances, the truth might be best. Mebbe 'tailored' just a tad ... How's the migraine?

I don't remember saying anything about a migraine, my dear Watson; but I feel like I'm being used as a bad rock jam studio. And no, I ::choke:: went for pure, unadulterated truth. Hence the unappetizing thought bites.

**ShelVy:** Was referring to YESTERDAY's migraine, Laurie. I know they sometimes hang around...<g>

Oh, yeah. I don't know if this is a holdover or a new one, but I am blaming my perversity on it.

**ShelVy:** ... Yeah, ain't it always Laurie's fault? <g>

Well, I did do something unconscionably stupid, so, yes, it is. Frighteningly, I almost think I have to talk with Ed.

**::LATER::**

A seven-minute discussion with my friendly werewolf helped settle my thoughts a lot. It did mean interrupting *The World at War*, but, I did offer to talk with him later.

Where I screwed up the most: clipping Typo's nails before Dr. Idiot arrived. Seeing me with my arms scratched/bleeding was not helpful when discussing a need for both an Effexor XR increase, due to SAD, and honest-to-gosh pain medication. (I also discovered she's afraid of Peep. Of the four rulers of Caer Kunkel, Queen Peep the Loving is not the one to fear. King Reep the ~~Hungry~~ Fair, maybe; King Typo the Just, more probable; and Queen Esme the Victor, most positively. But Queen Peep? **Sigh**)

She counter-offered a voluntary, in-patient mental health check-up. I suspect that removing me from my children, iPad, and WiFi, would push me just that much closer to the ledge edge. I will admit that I'm sitting on a figurative ledge—and have been—consciously—since September 2010; I also admit that Bill dying made the ledge much more narrow, and losing daily interaction with Kacey and the girls, among other things, have caused the ledge to become crumbly. But renewing friendships, adding Peep to the household, and making promises that I must keep, if my word—and thus my life—is to mean anything, has helped to put some support under the ledge.

When will I come in from my figurative ledge? I honestly don't know. But, what I do know, is that—right now—the ledge is firmly under my keister, even as my feet dangle off. (Interesting, that even in my analogies, I'm not able to stand.)

As Ed pointed out, warehousing me someplace isn't going to help. It may even hurt.

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"The problem with winter sports is that—follow me closely here—they generally take place in winter." (Dave Barry)

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### **Men and women really are living on different personality planets**

Mike Swain, *Daily Mirror*  
04/01/2012

Men and women really are living on different planets when it comes to their personalities.

Author John Gray's popular psychology book *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* was one of the most popular books of the 1990s. The book claims many of the difficulties in relationships between the sexes arise because of fundamental differences between the genders.

Many scientists have rejected that, claiming that the differences between men and women are really pretty small. Now, it seems Gray may be right.

A new analysis of personality tests taken by 10,000 men and women in America has found there is only a 10% overlap between the sexes where they share the same kind of personalities.

At the very best there is less than a 25% share and the sex divide has been "consistently underestimated."

Researchers, from Italy and the Manchester Business School, say the reason we think men and women are similar is that we have been using the wrong methods to assess them.

They reckon their "Gold Standard" assessment overturns the established idea "that men and women, as well as boys and girls, are more alike than they are different."

The personality test included 15 scales, collected under five headings:

Extraversion (warmth, liveliness, social boldness, privateness and self reliance.  
Anxiety (emotional stability, vigilance, apprehension and tension.)  
Tough-mindedness (warmth, sensitivity, abstractedness and openness to change).  
Independence (dominance, social boldness, vigilance and openness to change).  
Self Control (liveliness, rule-consciousness and perfectionism.)

When comparing men's and women's overall personality profiles using the new method very large differences between the sexes became apparent.

The sex differences have only looked smaller when each personality trait is considered separately or the differences have been "averaged out."

To show the mistake the researchers use the example of the distance between two towns Hightown and Lowtown. They are three miles apart in an East-West and North-South direction. But Hightown is 3,000 feet above Lowtown.

If you average out the distances you get the wrong answer that they are just 2.2 miles apart. The same mistake has been made when looking at the differences between men and women

Instead the researchers say the personality gaps between the sexes are as big known differences such as aggression.

"The idea that there are only minor differences between the personality profiles of males and females should be rejected as based on inadequate methodology.

"We believe we have made it clear that the true extent of sex differences in human personality has been consistently underestimated."

Women scored higher than men on Sensitivity (sensitive, aesthetic, sentimental), Warmth (warm, outgoing and attentive to others), and Apprehension (apprehensive, self-doubting and worrying.)

Men outscored women on Dominance (dominant, forceful, aggressive) and Emotional Stability (emotionally stable, adaptive, mature).

The current method of calculating personality lumped men's assertiveness in the same category as women's sociability and then averages the score so they appear virtually equal. In fact they are quite different.

Dr Paul Irwing, of Manchester Business School, told *The Mirror* the new method of measuring sex personality differences was "the state of the art at the moment" and had "enormous implications" for job and life choices.

It could explain why very few women decide to go into science careers or become engineers but are better at medical care.

"Personality can pretty much explain these differences in representation."

He said while he was hugely in favour of equal opportunity not recognising the differences between the sexes created a "distorted picture that's quite dangerous."

"Personality is neither good or bad. If people get jobs that suit them that is going to lift their satisfaction with life and performance and productivity."

The researchers published their study called: "The distance between Mars and Venus: Measuring global sex difference in personality" in the journal PLoS One.

**ShelVy:** FASCINATED!!!

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"Sundays too my father got up early/And put his clothes on in the blueback cold,/then with cracked hands that ached/from labor in the weekday weather made/banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him./I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking./When the rooms were warm, he'd call,/and slowly I would rise and dress,/fearing the chronic angers of that house, //Speaking indifferently to him,/who had driven out the cold/and polished my good shoes as well./What did I know, what did I know/of love's austere and lonely offices?" (Robert Hayden, *Those Winter Sundays*)

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**Saturday, 28 January:** Today's winner of the Feline Daybreak 500: Races called on account of weather. In their place, Caer Kunkel Wide World of Feline Sports brings our viewers the results of the "falls count anywhere, King (Queen) of Dad's Pillow" match! After Peep took out Reep and Esme stared down Typo, the two ladies faced off. After a bunch of smack talk, Peep submitted, and Esme reigned supreme! Ultimate winner: Esme!

**Karen:** LOL!

**ShelVy:** <g> Change is the spice of life!

**Ponderence of the Day:** "Setting out just now to write a few lines about kindness, I decided I'd first check the origin of the word 'kind'. Now I probably should have thought about this before, but there's (I suppose obviously) shared heritage between the words 'kind' and 'kin'. 'Kin' meaning family. So technically if I tell you that you've been very kind to me, I'm letting you know that you've treated me as if we were both from the same family—which is all rather heartening, I reckon. Although there's probably not enough kindness in the world, it's a resource that's theoretically unlimited. Unlike coal, oil or gas it needn't necessarily run out, as long as you and I keep generating it. In general, kindness is contagious. If you're kind to me, I'm more likely to be kind to someone else, and they're more likely to pass it on to others too. Even better, kindness is a gift that rewards the giver. When you show kindness to another person, your own reward system is also given a boost. Great acts of kindness are fantastic. But lots of little acts build up to produce a similar effect too. Why not be kind to yourself today, by being kind to others?"

**Goal for the Day:** Avoid adding sugar to your foods. Avoid greasy junk foods.

**Today I'm grateful for:** the built-in entertainment of the Royalty.

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"winter landscape—nothing/but cold" (Issa)

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**Moodscope Score (out of 100):** "Quite good Laurie. Today you have a score of **44%**, which is 13% less than your all-time high of 57%. Things have remained pretty level for you since you took the test most recently and scored 40%. You're finding life is better. You were feeling okay but you're now in a stronger position. Congratulate yourself and pause for a couple of seconds to try and clarify exactly what it is that's been going right, so good things keep happening. Not only is today's score up for you, you're also doing well compared to your average of 18.2%. Your score is above your all-time minimum of 1%. Your progress has been good from there."

**ShelVy:** Onward and upward!!!

**Karen:** Another improvement! Yay!

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"Every winter,/When the great sun has turned his face away,/The earth goes down into a vale of grief,/And fasts, and weeps, and shrouds herself in sables,/Leaving her wedding-garlands to decay—/Then leaps in spring to his returning kisses." (Charles Kingsley)

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Is anyone else—especially, you, Dave, given your proximity—having weird weather today? Typo is hissing at the wind, Esme is snarling at the rain, and the 'eeps are chattering at the snow. Unfortunately, they're all doing it at the same time from the bed.

**Dave:** I just got back from Cleveland, where it snowed like crazy from 6 a.m. to about 2 p.m. and then it stopped. Here, about 60 miles away, it's cold, but no snow on the ground. But nothing weird.

**ShelVy:** Weather is VERY nice here today, especially for mid winter. We did have strong winds last night. There's been weird weather sweeping across the country, Laurie. Tornado destruction, floods, snow - all that kinda thing. We had nearby wind destruction in the panhandle as part of it. Right now, things have calmed and it's sunny and 66. Mebbe your strange weather will sweep by quickly as well.

**Stephen:** New York has been having unseasonably warm temperatures this winter, but I'm not complaining. I still put up my solar curtains today anticipating New York transitions (you know, "wait a few minutes if you don't like the weather")?

Reep is staring out "my" window chattering *still* at the snow. Esme is glaring at the occasional rain hitting "Bill's" window from his pillow, Peep is curled up against my leg, and Typo is curled up, sound asleep next to me, against Bill's pillow.

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"It's not the case, though some might wish it so/Who from a window watch the blizzard blow//White riot through their branches vague and stark,/That they keep snug beneath their pelted bark.//They take affliction in until it jells/To crystal ice between their frozen cells ..."  
(Richard Wilbur, Orchard Trees—January)

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::snort:: "Operation Fool the Royalty Into Drinking Generic Spring Water" is in full swing. When I was ill, my kid brother got Bill hooked on Fiji water. That was fine. What wasn't fine? Bill getting the *trio* hooked on Fiji water. I had told Bill in July that the kids had to be moved to something less expensive; when he put tap water into their fountain, Esme tasted it, looked at Bill, hopped up on the counter, knocked Bill's Fiji water to the floor, and, with her brothers, quickly lapped up *Bill's* water.

"I told you the tap water sucked, " Bill grumbled as he cleaned up the fountain mess.

"And I agreed, and I said to get the generic spring water so we could pull a s-w-i-t-c-h."

"Nope! They'll change over my dead body!"

I suspected the key would be to empty enough Fiji bottles to pour the generic spring water into those. All four of the little ~~terrorists~~ darlings know what the bottles look and feel like, so *those* must stay. The trick is to convince the Royalty that the contents of the bottles is still water that costs \$1.5 million a milli-ounce, rather than water that costs under \$0.01 an ounce.

Today, was day two; day one was Page moving the empty Fiji bottles into the laundry room, as though they were being recycled. She then closed the door, poured, capped, and stacked. She then brought out the filled bottles and popped them in the fridge. Today, we started the actual switch. Esme approached the fountain in here slowly, but promptly began drinking. When Esme gave the 'all clear' signal, the others queued up to partake.

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"Occasionally I have come across a last patch of snow on top of a mountain in late May or June. There's something very powerful about finding snow in summer." (Andy Goldsworthy)

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### **God Vs. Satan**

In the beginning, God covered the earth with broccoli, cauliflower and spinach, with green and yellow and red vegetables of all kinds, so Man and Woman would live long and healthy lives. Then, using God's bountiful gifts, Satan created Ben and Jerry's and Krispy Kreme. And Satan said: "You want hot fudge with that?" And Man said: "Yes!" And Woman said: "I'll have one, too ... with sprinkles." And, lo, they gained 10 pounds. And God created the healthful yogurt that Woman might keep the figure that Man found so fair. And Satan brought forth white flour from the wheat, and sugar from the cane, and combined them. And Woman went from size 2 to size 14. So God said: "Try my fresh green garden salad." And Satan presented crumbled Bleu Cheese dressing and garlic toast on the side. And Man and Woman unfastened their belts following the repast. God then said: "I have sent you heart-healthy vegetables and olive oil in which to cook them." And Satan brought forth deep-fried coconut shrimp butter-dipped lobster chunks, and chicken-fried steak so big it needed its own platter. And Man's cholesterol went through the roof. Then God brought forth the potato, naturally low in fat and brimming with potassium and good nutrition. Then Satan peeled off the healthful skin, sliced the starchy center into chips and deep-fried them in animal fats adding copious quantities of salt, all to be washed down with artificially flavored sodas over-sweetened with huge amounts of high-fructose corn syrup. And Man packed on more pounds. God then brought forth running shoes so that his children might lose those extra pounds. And Satan introduced cable TV with remote control so Man would not have to toil changing the channels. And Man and Woman laughed and cried before the flickering light and started wearing stretchy Lycra jogging suits as they sat on the couch all evening. God then gave lean beef so that Man might consume fewer calories and still satisfy his appetite. And Satan created McDonald's and the 99-cent double cheeseburger, and then asked "Do you want fries with that?" And Man replied: "Yes! And super size 'em!" And Satan said: "It is good." And Man and Woman went into cardiac arrest. God sighed ... and created quadruple by-pass surgery. Satan chuckled and created HMOs.

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"An absolute patience. Trees stand up to their knees in fog. The fog slowly flows uphill. White cobwebs, the grass leaning where deer have looked for apples. The woods from brook to where the top of the hill looks over the fog, send up not one bird. So absolute, it is no other than happiness itself, a breathing, too quiet to hear." (Denise Levertov, "The Breathing")

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**Sunday, 29 January:** Today's winner of the Caer Kunkel Wide World of Feline Sports "King (Queen) of Dad's Pillow" match: Esme!

**Ponderence of the Day:** "As a kid, there's always something to look forward to. Christmas, your birthday, the weekend, summer, winter, spring, autumn. A new bike. Generally a kid's life is one big bubble of anticipation, tinged with the frustration that nothing ever comes as soon as you want it to. But as the years pass by, it can sometimes seem that there's less to look forward to. Life may feel humdrum, with a distinct absence of carrots dangling at the end of the stick. However perhaps there's a little, not unreasonable, trick that you can play on yourself. Often we gain even more pleasure anticipating something than we do actually experiencing it. So if it feels as though there are no big things to look forward to, actively anticipate the smaller. When you're working, imagine how good it will feel when you down tools at the end of the day. Going to speak to a friend over the next few days? Visualise how warming this will be. Reading a good book at the moment? Start to anticipate the pleasure of getting stuck back into it before you actually do. Even when you're not a kid, there's still always something to look forward to. Sometimes, though, you just need to seek it out."

**Goal for the Day:** Be realistic. Don't try to be perfect.

**Today I'm grateful for:** thermometers.

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"Soon will set in the fitful weather, with fierce gales and sullen skies and frosty air, and it will be time to tuck up safely my roses and lilies and the rest for their winter sleep beneath the snow, where I never forget them, but ever dream of their waking in happy summers yet to be." (Celia Thaxter)

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I am really not feeling well. I wish I knew what was wrong with me. The symptoms are all over the place: other than craving bananas and oranges, I'm neither hungry nor thirsty (I had the same Pepsi for 36 hours); nausea; diarrhea; muscle cramps/spasms (right now, **only** my left elbow doesn't hurt); cluster headache, **not** a migraine (!?); my temp—for me—is normal (96.2°F), but body is running from very cold to very hot; and forgetting a lot (both senses of the phrase).

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"An important part in the winter landscape is played by the dead grasses and other herbaceous plants, especially by various members of the composite family, such as the asters, golden rods, and sunflowers. Wreathed in snow or encased in ice, they present a singularly graceful and fantastic appearance. Or perhaps, the slender stalks and branches

armed with naked seed pods trace intricate and delicate shadows on the smooth snow." (Mrs. William Starr Dana)

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**Monday, 30 January:** Today's winner of the Caer Kunkel Wide World of Feline Sports "King (Queen) of Dad's Pillow" match: not held; Mom was sleeping on the pillow!

**Ponderence of the Day:** "I like to think that when someone pauses forlornly at the foot of a long staircase in a railway station, loaded down with suitcases, it won't be too long before some good Samaritan offers help. Perhaps it's an idealistic way of viewing the world, but the bigger point I think is that when people can actually see you have a problem they're more likely to come to your aid. If it's obvious that you're struggling, it's more or less human nature (or jolly well should be) for others to lend their support. But whilst this theory may hold water, it only does so up to a point. What happens, for instance, when you're struggling inside? Heavy baggage doesn't always take the form of suitcases. When your load is mental rather than physical, it may not be evident to those around you. And it's at times like these that you may need to ask for help rather than simply expecting it to be offered on a plate. Don't struggle on alone when you need a hand. Do ask for it."

**Goal for the Day:** Be sure to breathe.

**Today I'm grateful for:** something ... I just cannot focus enough to figure out what the image in my head is.

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"My door was open part of the time, and part of the time I tried to get a nap and their voices annoyed me, and I closed it. I kept it open in summer more or less, and closed in winter." (Lizzie Andrew Borden)

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**Moodscope Score (out of 100):** "Quite good Laurie. You have a score today of **44%**, which is 13% less than your highest result to date of 57%. Things appear to have been fairly steady for you since you last took the test and scored 40%. It seems your life has got better. You were feeling OK but you are stronger now. Pat yourself on the back and take a little time to try and clarify exactly what's been going right, so good things keep happening. Not only have you got a higher score today, you are also doing well compared to your average of 19.1%. Today's score is above your lowest ever result of 1%. You've travelled a long way since then."

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"Remember the rights of the savage, as we call him. Remember that the happiness of his humble home, remember that the sanctity of life in the hill villages of Afghanistan,

among the winter snows, is as inviolable in the eye of Almighty God, as can be your own." (William E. Gladstone)

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I have to remain conscious long enough to go through my email.

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"Even in winter an isolated patch of snow has a special quality." (Andy Goldsworthy)

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### **Infidelity II: The Revenge**

She spent the first day packing her belongings into boxes, crates and suitcases. On the second day, she had the movers come and collect her things. On the third day, she sat down for the last time at their beautiful dining room table by candlelight, put on some soft background music, and feasted on a pound of shrimp, a jar of caviar, and a bottle of Chardonnay.

When she had finished, she went into each and every room and deposited a few half-eaten shrimp shells, dipped in caviar, into the hollow of the curtain rods. She then cleaned up the kitchen and left.

When the husband returned with his new girlfriend, all was bliss for the first few days. Then slowly, the house began to smell. They tried everything; cleaning and mopping and airing the place out. Vents were checked for dead rodents, and carpets were steam cleaned. Air fresheners were hung everywhere. Exterminators were brought in to set off gas canisters, during which they had to move out for a few days, and in the end they even paid to replace the expensive wool carpeting.

Nothing worked. People stopped coming over to visit. Repairmen refused to work in the house. The maid quit. Finally, they could not take the stench any longer and decided to move. A month later, even though they had cut their price in half, they could not find a buyer for their stinky house. Word got out, and eventually, even the local realtors refused to return their calls. Finally, they had to borrow a huge sum of money from the bank to purchase a new place.

The ex-wife called the man, and asked how things were going. He told her the saga of the rotting house. She listened politely, and said that she missed her old home terribly, and would be willing to reduce her divorce settlement in exchange for getting the house back. Knowing his ex-wife had no idea how bad the smell was, he agreed on a price that was about 1/10th of what the house had been worth - but only if she were to sign the papers that very day. She agreed, and within the hour, his lawyers delivered the paperwork.

A week later, the man and his new girlfriend stood smirking as they watched the moving company pack everything to take to their new home. To add insult to the injury he did to his ex-wife, he instructed the movers to take everything—even the curtain rods ....

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"The twelve months:/Snowy, Flowy, Blowy,/Showery, Flowery, Bowery,/Hoppy, Croppy, Droppy,/Breeze, Sneezzy, Freezy." (George Ellis)

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**Tuesday, 31 January:** Today's winner of the Caer Kunkel Wide World of Feline Sports "King (Queen) of Dad's Pillow" match: Typo, but he cheated.

**Weather Factoid:** If January has never a drop, the barn will need an open prop/If in February there be no rain, it is neither good for hay nor grain./March damp and warm, will do the farmer much harm./April cold and wet, fills the barns best yet./Cold May and windy, barn filleth up finely.

**Ponderance of the Day:** "Kermit had a point when he grumbled that it's not easy being green. His argument was that being green made him blend in with so many things, which kind of ignores the evolutionary benefits of camouflage, but we do get what he meant. The big thing of course is that Kermit was, is, and always will be green. You're a frog for goodness' sake, man. It's easy to believe that things would be different for you if they weren't as they are. You'd be happier if you did this or that. You'd be better off if things were different. You'd be more content if only, if only. Sometimes, of course, change is possible. But only sometimes. So if you can't change something, isn't it better to simply accept it? If you're a frog, you're green, and that's the way it's always going to be. Only a muppet could disagree with that."

**Goal for the Day:** Work on building good relationships with people.

**Today I'm grateful for:** a) Dragon; b) Aleve and Ibuprofen; and c) double-A batteries for cat toys.

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"Advice is like snow—the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into the mind." (Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

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**Moodscope Score (out of 100):** "Admirable achievement Laurie. Your score today is **59%**, which is your all-time high on Moodscope. It appears as though things have picked up for you a fair bit since you took the test last time and got 44%. Life is now better for you. You had been feeling okay but you are stronger now. Applaud yourself then take stock for a moment to try and pin down precisely what's been going well, so you can keep the good times coming. Not only has your score gone up today, you're also

doing well in relation to your average of 20.4%. You're higher than your lowest ever result of 1%. You've travelled a long way since then."

**Karen:** You're doing very well! I just finished my taxes, so I'm going to take a rest and read the **B&Bs** later today. :)

**SheIVy:** All RIGHT!!! Pain or not, you're surging forward!

Well, yeah, none of the indicators are for pain.

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"Frozen puddles—/the crack of axes/from four directions./January sun—/puddle after puddle/becomes mud." (Michael P. Garofalo, "Cuttings—January")

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**Reflections on Ponderence:** "So if you can't change something, isn't it better to simply accept it?"

I usually follow Gandhi's advice on change: "You must be the change you want to see in the world. ... As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world—that is the myth of the atomic age—as in being able to remake ourselves." *If* I change myself, then I change my world. If I change how I think, then I change how I feel and how I act. Thus, the world around me changes. Not only because I now view my outer world through new lenses of thoughts and emotions, but also because the change within me allows me to take action in ways I wouldn't have previously. If I change my outer world without changing myself, then I would still be me—with flaws, anger, negativity, self-sabotaging tendencies etc. intact—when I reach that change I for which I have striven. In this new situation, I will still not find what I hoped for since my mind is still seeping with negative stuff. What I feel and how I react to something is always up to me: I choose my thoughts, reactions and emotions to pretty much everything. And as I realize that no-one outside of myself can actually control how I feel, I must incorporate this thinking into my daily life and develop it as a thought habit.

What is most interesting is that I do my best introspection when I'm dealing with mom. Something in her behavior triggers me to want to alter my behavior. I have to think about that some more. Rounding out my top five Gandhi quotes:

"If I had no sense of humor, I would long ago have committed suicide."

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony."

"Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well."

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"The first fall of snow is not only an event, it is a magical event. You go to bed in one kind of a world and wake up in another quite different, and if this is not enchantment then where is it to be found?" (J. B. Priestley)

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I knew the concern button had been pushed, when ShelVy called me yesterday. I told him my symptoms from Sunday, but I noted that the muscle cramps/spasms were my primary concern since I was having a very miserable time with my hands, and I hadn't figured out what to do. Beyond telling myself that I'm not in as much pain as I think I am.

**ShelVy:** Coming along Real Good, Laurie!!! ... I would guess, with the help of Dragon?  
(Hope you're feeling better.)

Yes, Dragon is being very helpful. Without it, I would still be incommunicado. Braces are on both hands finally. It only took me 5.75 hours to loosen the muscles enough to get them on.

**ShelVy:** You get A+ for the effort ... no, A++++!

The bad part: every spasm in my hand causes the braces to readjust, so I have to take it off, readjust it, and then put it back on. It's most frustrating! Since moving back into the bedroom, I realize I've been being tag-teamed. The kids are teaming up—in various combinations—so that I am not alone *and* so that there is always at least two felines on the bed at all times.

**ShelVy:** Good kids! Told you it's well-established since the days of the Egyptians, that cats are smart! (For those Not In The Know, the fact that cats got Egyptians to worship them is the earliest proof of feline genius.)

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"The warrior may fight for gold or for an immediate gain, or for something to take home for the winter to feed the family. The soldier is part of a more complex society. He's fighting for a group ethic of some sort." (C. J. Cherryh)

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**Sigh.** I do understand why Dr. Idiot wants me off all pain medication; she's terrified of the DEA. But this just isn't working for me. So, tomorrow I restart the search for intelligent life. I cannot deal with Dr. Idiot or the pain any more.

## **The War Over Prescription Painkillers**

Radley Balko

Senior Writer and Investigative Reporter, The Huffington Post

Posted: 01/29/2012 11:46 pm

Over the last few months, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and several other government agencies have been issuing some alarming reports about abuse of prescription painkillers, and what the government says has been a dramatic rise in overdose deaths. These reports, along with another recent report by the journalism non-profit ProPublica, have spurred calls for tighter policing of painkillers, instituting digital databases to monitor pain patients and their physicians, and more aggressive tactics to prevent drug diversion.

There's no question that prescriptions for opioid painkillers like Oxycontin and Percocet have soared in recent years. It's also clear that there are some rogue doctors and "pill mills" who unscrupulously hand out prescriptions, sometimes to patients who shouldn't get them, sometimes to drug addicts and drug dealers pretending to be pain patients. But it's also far from certain that the painkiller abuse and overdoses are as dire as the government is making it out to be. And to the extent that there is a problem, it's due more to a decade of aggressive policing, obstinate federal law enforcement agencies, and the encroachment of law enforcement into the practice of medicine than lax government oversight. The DEA in particular has been scaring reputable doctors away from pain management since the late 1990s. People who suffer from chronic pain simply can't find doctors willing to treat them over the long term. The unscrupulous doctors and pill mills in the headlines have sprung up to fill the void.

The issue takes on a particular resonance as the country turns to Florida for tomorrow's Republican primary. Florida was the site of the first big painkiller panic in the early 2000s, and the state has also played a central role in the most recent flare-up. There has been little discussion of the issue in the 2012 presidential campaign. But perhaps there should be. It's a topic that touches on important issues and trends like Medicare, Medicaid and health care; the aging U.S. population; the drug war; and, pain patients would argue, the basic human rights of a large and growing portion of the public.

### **The Problem of Chronic Pain**

Chronic pain is different from short-term or end-of-life pain. It can persist for years, even after the associated injury or condition has gone away. For some patients it can be burdensome, for others it can be debilitating. Chronic pain can also cause depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, and affect decision-making. Because pain is more of a symptom than a disease, it can't really be diagnosed, so it's difficult to come up with a precise number of people affected. But in 1999, the Society for Neuroscience estimated that as many as 100 million Americans will suffer from some sort of chronic pain. The National Center for Health Statistics puts the number closer to 75 million.

Despite the recent headlines about the rise in sales of prescription painkillers, chronic pain is still significantly under-treated in America. There are a number of reasons why. For one, there's no diagnostic test to diagnose pain, so doctors must rely on patient descriptions of what they're feeling. That can be tricky, because tolerance for pain varies widely from person to person. Culturally, pain has also long been viewed as something we encounter and endure as part of the human condition. In many religions, noble suffering is considered pious. Pain treatment is also a relatively new medical specialty; it didn't have its own medical society until the early 1980s.

But the biggest barrier to effective pain treatment continues to be bad public policy, much of it driven by the war on drugs. Opioids—morphine, oxycodone, methadone, and other drugs derived from the opium

plant (or synthetically structured to mimic it)—are the most effective way to treat severe and chronic pain. Emerging (but still controversial) treatments like long-term, high-dose opioid therapy have shown particular promise with chronic pain. Just this month, an article in the journal *Science* described another promising new therapy, in which large doses of the drugs delivered over a short period of time, shortly after an injury, may help prevent chronic pain from developing at all.

But it's also true that opioids can be abused. The potential for abuse has attached to opioids a social and cultural stigma that can make doctors reluctant to prescribe them, and patients reluctant to take them, even in end-of-life care. But pain patients and their advocates say the bigger problem is that drug control has taken priority over ensuring access to effective treatment. To be sure, there is a divide in the medical community over the effectiveness of long-term, high-dose therapy. But what ought to be a research-driven debate among medical professionals has been corrupted by policies aimed at preventing addicts and drug pushers from obtaining painkillers, not what's in the best interest of pain patients. Police and prosecutors now dictate medical policy.

### **Birth of a Crackdown**

To put the current state of the painkiller debate into the proper perspective, it's helpful to look back at how we got here.

In the mid-to-late 1990s, some media outlets were taking note of the frustrations of pain patients. In 1997, both *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report* ran articles about the stigmas attached to opioid narcotics, and the plight of patients who couldn't find doctors to treat them. But within just a few years, law enforcement reports about the new prescription-legal "hillbilly heroin" drugs began to circulate. National publications like Newsweek ran ominous articles about "OxyBabies," which read much like the now-debunked crack baby stories of the 1980s.

In 2003, the Orlando *Sentinel* ran a five-part series titled "OxyContin Under Fire." It wasn't the first article about outbreaks of Oxycontin addiction, but it was likely the most influential. Reporter Doris Bloodworth profiled a number of people she portrayed as "accidental addicts" who suffered fatal overdoses, suicides, and broken families. As Ronald Libby writes in the 2005 Cato Institute paper "Treating Doctors as Drug Dealers: The DEA's War on Prescription Painkillers," the *Sentinel* series had an enormous impact.\* It inspired congressional hearings, protests, and promises from politicians to combat this new epidemic. James McDonough, Florida's chief drug enforcement officer, boasted to Congress a month after the *Sentinel* series that his office had taken "aggressive action" against misbehaving doctors, arresting four since the series ran. Even the venerable Government Accounting Office issued a report, which also cited the *Sentinel's* data.

But in 2004, the *Sentinel* investigation imploded. The anecdotes and numbers the paper used to lay out the alleged epidemic were riddled with errors. Several of the people Bloodworth claimed to be accidental addicts in fact had a long history of drug abuse. In his paper, Libby lays out how the *Sentinel's* overdose statistics were also misguided. Where the paper claimed 570 Oxycontin-related deaths in 2000-2001, there were actually only 71. In February 2004, the *Sentinel* retracted the entire "OxyContin Under Fire" series, and issued a front-page correction. Bloodworth resigned, and the two editors who worked on her series were reassigned.

But the *Sentinel* series just amplified similar scare stories, inspiring national outrage and promises to implement new policies. Libby found that from 2001 to 2004, for example, the DEA on its own launched 400 investigations with its "OxyContin Action Plan," leading to 600 arrests. Medical professionals made up

60 percent of those arrests. The agency also set up hundreds of local task forces across the country, which carried out 9,000 investigations in 1999 alone. In 2001, the DEA also trained more than 64,000 state and local law enforcement personnel in how to fight prescription drug diversion.

Those efforts, which continue today, have cast a chill over the treatment of pain. Candor in the doctor-patient relationship, a critical component of any medical treatment, is especially important in treating pain. Doctors need to develop a feel for each patient's tolerance for pain, as well as for how they're reacting to the drugs and dosages they're taking. The high-profile investigations and prosecutions of doctors have undermined that relationship. Law enforcement agencies send undercover agents and informants into doctors' offices to lure suspected physicians into writing bad prescriptions. Doctors have then been conditioned to be suspicious of patients, to see them as potential addicts or drug dealers. Patients have been conditioned to downplay their pain so they don't appear desperate for narcotics, as an addict might.

The high-profile prosecution of Virginia pain specialist William Hurwitz is a good example. Federal investigators found that of Hurwitz's hundreds of patients, 15 had resold the the drugs he prescribed to them. There was no evidence that Hurwitz was complicit in or knew about the sales. At worst, he was duped by a small percentage of his patients. But instead of working with Hurwitz to catch the dealers posing as patients, investigators cut bargains with the dealers to implicate Hurwitz. Hurwitz was eventually convicted on 15 counts of distributing narcotics. In 2007, U.S. District Judge Leonie M. Brinkema sentenced Hurwitz to 57 months in prison, far less than what prosecutors were asking. Brinkema acknowledged that Hurwitz was a well-intentioned doctor who had made some mistakes, not the drug pusher prosecutors portrayed him to be. Brinkema added, "An increasing body of respectable medical literature and expertise supports those types of high-dosage, opioid medications," and that despite his mistakes, Hurwitz had saved many of his patients' lives.

As more doctors drop out or are forced out of pain treatment, pain patients grow more desperate. Doctors aren't permitted to post-date painkiller prescriptions, and patients can't get refills until their prescription runs out. So they may hoard pills when they can, or seek out multiple doctors, often without telling one doctor that they're seeing others. Perversely, this also makes the patients look more like drug addicts, both in the eyes of law enforcement and the doctors and pharmacists who have bought the government line.

One such patient was Richard Paey, a paraplegic and multiple sclerosis patient who took high-doses of opioids to treat chronic pain brought on by a car accident, a botched back surgery, and his illness. When Paey and his wife moved from New Jersey to Florida in the 1990s, he was unable to find a doctor willing to administer his treatment. Depending on who you believe, Paey's New Jersey doctor either illegally wrote him extra prescriptions, or Paey illegally forged prescriptions himself, but under either scenario, even Paey's prosecutor conceded Paey wasn't selling or distributing the drugs. A pharmacist eventually tipped authorities off to the large quantities of drugs Paey was buying. Paey's home was raided by a SWAT team, he was arrested, jailed, and under Florida drug laws, charged and convicted of drug distribution, based solely on the quantity of pills in his possession. In 2004 he was sentenced to 25 years in prison, effectively a life sentence for someone in his condition. When Paey told his story to John Tierney of the *New York Times*, he was moved to a higher-security prison, further away from his family, and was put into solitary confinement. Florida Gov. Charlie Crist pardoned Paey in 2007.

Prosecutors claimed that no legitimate pain patient could possibly need the amount of medication Paey was taking. But once Paey was in prison, the state of Florida treated him with the same class of painkillers it put him in prison for possessing, and at the same or higher doses. "It became a comedy of bureaucracies," Paey told me in a 2007 interview. "One agency prosecutes me for taking too much medication ... Then I get to prison, and the doctors examine my records and my medical history, and they decide that as doctors, they

have to give me this medication ... It raised a red flag in many peoples' minds that something strange was going on, here."

(This is the first of a three-part series. Coming in Part Two: The New Painkiller Panic.)

*(\*Disclosure: I commissioned and edited Libby's paper while working as a policy analyst for Cato. Neither Purdue Pharma nor any other pharmaceutical company contributed to the commission, publication, funding, or promotion of the paper.)*

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"Around the house flakes fly faster,/And all the berries are now gone/From holly and cotoneaster/Around the house./The flakes fly!—faster/Shutting indoors that crumb-outcaster/We use to see upon the lawn/Around the house./Flakes fly faster/And all the berries are gone now." (Thomas Hardy)

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Today's ear worm makes sense; I think I'm been pondering too much. Simon & Garfunkel's "Sounds Of Silence" has been playing at full volume:

"Hello darkness, my old friend/I've come to talk with you again/Because a vision softly creeping/Left its seeds while I was sleeping/And the vision that was planted in my brain/Still remains/Within the sound of silence//In restless dreams I walked alone/Narrow streets of cobblestone/'Neath the halo of a street lamp/I turned my collar to the cold and damp/When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light/That split the night/And touched the sound of silence//And in the naked light I saw/Ten thousand people, maybe more/People talking without speaking/People hearing without listening/People writing songs that voices never share/And no one dared/Disturb the sound of silence/'Fools,' said I, 'You do not know/Silence like a cancer grows/Hear my words that I might teach you/Take my arms that I might reach you./But my words, like silent raindrops fell/And echoed/In the wells of silence//And the people bowed and prayed/To the neon god they made/And the sign flashed out its warning/In the words that it was forming/And the sign said, 'The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls/And tenement halls'/And whispered in the sounds of silence"

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"Courtesies cannot be borrowed like snow shovels; you must have some of your own." (John Wanamaker)

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### **Grounds For Divorce**

A judge was interviewing a lady regarding her pending divorce, and asked, "What are the grounds for your divorce?"

She replied, "About four acres and a nice little home in the middle of the property with a stream running by."

"No," he said, "I mean what is the foundation of this case?"

"It is made of concrete, brick and mortar," she responded.

"I mean," he continued, "What are your relations like?"

"I have an aunt and uncle living here in town, and so do my husband's parents."

He said, "Do you have a real grudge?"

"No," she replied, "We have a two-car carport and have never really needed one."

"Please," he tried again, "is there any infidelity in your marriage?"

"Yes, both my son and daughter have stereo sets. We don't necessarily like the music, but the answer to your question is 'yes'."

"Ma'am, does your husband ever beat you up?"

"Yes," she responded, "about twice a week he gets up earlier than I do."

Finally, in frustration, the judge asked, "Lady, why do you want a divorce?"

"Oh, I don't want a divorce," she replied. "I've never wanted a divorce. My husband does. He said he can't communicate with me, but I have no idea what he's talking about."

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"January cold and desolate;/February dripping wet;/March wind ranges;/April changes;/  
Birds sing in tune/To flowers of May;/And sunny June/Brings longest day;/In scorched  
July/The storm-clouds fly,/Lightning-torn;/August bears corn;/September fruit;/In rough  
October/Earth must disrobe her;/Stars fall and shoot/In keen November;/And night is  
long/And cold is strong/In bleak December." (Christina Georgina Rossetti, "The Months")

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The goal for this mailing was to hit five hundred pages. I admit that getting sick didn't help. But, I think we're going to make it. Copied over from the 19th of January:

| <u>Zine</u>    | <u>Ish</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Pages</u>                  | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>B&amp;B</b> | #011       | 01-09 Jan   | 93 pp.                        | 379 pp.      |
| <b>B&amp;B</b> | #012       | 10-21 Jan   | 74 pp.                        | 453 pp.      |
| <b>B&amp;B</b> | #013       | 22-31 Jan   | ( <i>must</i> reach 47 pages) |              |

**::Later::**

Well ... the good news and bad news is the same, ShelVy: our joint efforts have pushed the page count of SNAPS 64 to five hundred pages.

You think they might be ready to go back to monthly?!?!

**ShelVy:** LOL!!!

I'm just saying ...

**ShelVy:** "The facts, ma'am; just the facts." <g>

::snort::

**ShelVy:** That's a very In Depth response, I must say...<g>

I was trying to give you the last word; I just wanted the last sound effect!

**ShelVy:** WOW!!! It isn't anywhere NEAR Spring, but things are growing!!! <g> ... I'm busy getting **PS** ready to Go To Press tomorrow and, of cuss, finding more that needs to be done ... Later!

Well, you still have a chance, but in the meantime, we'd better give the OEs a head's up.

Sent: Tue, Jan 31, 2012 7:25 pm

Jacq,

Just an FYI: ShelVy and my challenge for this mailing: hit 500 pages. We did it, btw. Meanwhile, feel free to space out the **B&Bs** so they're not altogether. Number 013 will be in by morning.

**ShelVy:** Now that's the fair thing to do! <g> or ::g::

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"Antisthenes says that in a certain faraway land the cold is so intense that words freeze as soon as they are uttered, and after some time then thaw and become audible, so that words spoken in winter go unheard until the next summer." (Plutarch, *Moralia*)

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# WARNING:

New government regulations require us to HIDE taxes in your fares.

This is not consumer-friendly or in your best interest. It's wrong and you shouldn't stand for it.

Starting January 24, 2012, fares are distorted.

Why? Thanks to the U.S. Department of Transportation's latest fare rules, Spirit must now HIDE the government's taxes and fees in your fares. If the government can hide taxes in your airfares, then they can carry out their hidden agenda and quietly increase their taxes. (Yes, such talks are already underway.)

And if they can do it to the airline industry, what's next?

As the transparency leader and most consumer-friendly airline, Spirit DOES NOT support this new USDOT mandate. We believe the better form of transparency is to break out costs so customers know exactly what they're buying.

What can you do to help stop this injustice? Join Spirit Airlines in keeping government taxes and fees low and transparent by contacting your elected officials.