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"Most of all, I will miss Bill Rotsler"

So there I was, just like always, behind the *SaFari* desk pounding out the last issue of my FAPAZine. And, while I was at it, I said good-bye to FAPA as well, declaring myself "deadwood" and resigning forever more. That's when I said, "Most of all, I will miss Bill Rotsler" and truer words were never written.

I miss him still.

Just goes to show how long that is in real time or street prices, whichever is legal in your zone.

But, guess again...I'm baaaaccckk...!

Ever since I fell into MemoryHole, now Fmzfen, Robert Lichtman has been after me with the ridiculous proposition that it was my duty to fill one of the gaping holes on the FAPA waiting list. I beat him off for almost two years before surrendering.

I hope to hell I get my \$12 worth; otherwise you guys (no offense meant) are really in for it.

During that time, I haven't been entirely retired. Bill Burns talked me into producing an ezine for eFanzines.com and for a year and a half I've been regularly producing *el*, my memoir zine, housing only Great Thoughts and Wild Aspirations. Feel free to click in at <http://eFanzines.com/EK/index.html>

Or send me email at earlkemp@citlink.net

Besides that, my last issue of *SaFari*, February 1965, was one hell of a long time ago almost like yesterday. There's something else that's odd about that issue of *SaFari*: I've reprinted everything in the issue except the Sidney Coleman 37X piece and it is scheduled to appear in *el* 10 October. I hope that says something about time, and the things that stand up a bit as it passes rapidly.

What I was doing when I resigned from FAPA in 1965 was leaving home (Chicago) to seek my fortune, and damn if it didn't grab me by the unsqueezables and clamp down like it really meant it or at least wanted me to sit up and pay attention to something that was going around.

I found Fortune and Thrills Galore and adulation and shame and despair...all just parts of Getting Along...

But through all the decades I was away, I was never completely away. I tried, but parts of science fiction and fandom wouldn't let me go and held on dearly. Otherwise, I might never have resurfaced at all the way I did, through email discussion groups.

Right back where it all started, at the keyboard, working on my next FAPAZine.

What you get is what I got here and now...a real mixed bag.

I hope you find something that will amaze or entertain you.

--Earl Kemp July 13, 2003
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A Memory: Let's Do the *Time Warp* Again

For the last few days I've been going through a strange sort of *deja vu*ing, and I've been wallowing in it so extensively I thought I'd share a bit of it.

Some time ago my daughter Elaine and son-in-law Steve gave me a DVD player and, since then, they have been inundating me with DVD disks. I have begun trying to watch a different film each night. Recently, an accident of selection happened and that's what set me *deja vu*ing.

On Monday night I watched the Mel Brooks gem, *Young Frankenstein*. It had been a very long time since I last watched it, the exact right length of time in fact. It was very fresh and new and the old gags made me laugh out loud again.

And sent me on a nostalgic trip through my youth when Frankenstein's monster, along with Count Dracula, the Wolf Man, the Mummy, the _____...was my best friend. I loved the sets in *Young Frankenstein*, and the wonderful way Brooks arranged everything throughout the film.

On Tuesday night, without regard to what I had seen on Monday, I watched *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. It was the UK version, digitized and cleaned up wonderfully, with a new THX soundtrack. I had never seen the film so clearly before, nor heard the soundtrack like this. It, also was a wonderful surprise, coming directly as it did behind *Young Frankenstein*.

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Some decades ago, Mike Resnick gave me a VHS tape copy of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, a copy of one he had made off a television broadcast. There was quite a drop in quality, and it took the help of your imagination to follow the music, but what the hell, they were all old friends by that time and we enjoyed our visits together.

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After I was released from prison and when everything was disintegrating right before my very eyes, I acquired a gaggle of showgirls. To be truthful, I thought of them much more as being a twitter of titshakers, but they would have objected to that for sure.

They came by way of some of my newly acquired friends and some of the very old ones...to cheer me up. They would drop by the house in El Cajon, accidentally, drop their clothes, and frolic around the swimming pool for a while. Just like regular.

For some reason they really pissed off my wife. They diverted and amused me.

As my existence further disintegrated, and moved into legal separation and prolonged divorce hassles, those friends, and those

showgirls, moved right along with me and accelerated their efforts to Frankenstein-like reanimate me back from limbo.

They used me shamelessly. I was the one they came for whenever they needed a show escort for any thing they felt they needed "protection" from. And, just for no reason at all, they would take me out now and then, to dinner, a show, that kind of thing. Without exception, on those trips out in public, they would cling to me and look up to me like I was Daddy Warbucks with the biggest bank account in town...or the biggest dick. I know for sure it wasn't the bank account.

They made me feel like a million bucks with everyone staring at us and wondering who the hell I was and how was it that they were mine and not theirs.

These girls worked at places like Dirty Dan's (two locations in town and one about to open in Tijuana), Le Girls, the Perfect Fox, and Etc. They were really a tight-knit group of around a dozen extremely good friends.

For a very long time I was in love with one of them, but it was all wasted effort.

One of them, an extremely popular showgirl, had the biggest dick I've ever seen for real, but you'd never guess it watching her on stage.

Another one of them, the best of the lot, became my lover for eight praiseworthy years.

I would go with them to private bookings where, at bachelor parties or the like, they would give very private performances up close and personal like. At those affairs it was my duty to look properly Mafia-like and keep sending out the vibrations that "she's mine; keep your hands off. She goes home with me...!" I scored some pretty impressive brownie points that way.

One of the things those girls were really into was *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. In fact, some of them wouldn't work on Saturday nights, their very best night of the week, so they could attend the late-night picture show showing of the then classic movie.

In full Rocky-inspired drag. And they insisted that I accompany them. And I did. Every weekend for a minimum of a year, with

frequent viewings in other years as well. There was a time when I could have recited every word of the USA version, complete with facial expressions and body movements. I could do every one of the dance steps.

Talk about doing the Time Warp again.

On one occasion when I was speaking with my probation officer, who was a friend, a helper, and a protector, I complained about the hectic state of my existence.

He knew everything there was to know about me including a bunch of things that I didn't even know about myself.

He laughed. "I think you've died and gone to Heaven," he said. "Only you don't know it yet."

That was the first day of the rest of my life.

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Reviewing the cleaned up version (that doesn't mean censored) of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* allowed me to relive quite a few wonderful memories, and a whole bunch of painful ones, but the film didn't cause even one of them to happen in the first place.

I felt that I became part of the film, the life, the daily routines of Brad and Janet were mine and the nights were unbelievable.

"Don't dream it, be it" became, for me, a clear and present reality. I was right there in the center of that RKO swimming pool fighting for position within the swirling Esther Williams-like choreography.

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On Wednesday night, I watched the Rocky Horror special second disk in the two-disk cleaned-up 30th Anniversary edition of the classic spoof.

I didn't know what to expect, but I enjoyed all of it.

There were many outtakes from the film, musical numbers that had been cut (rightly so, thank God), and alternate angle shots for many of the familiar scenes in the film. Theatrical trailers. Music videos, etc., all winding up with a long, fascinating

documentary called *The Rocky Horror Double-Feature Video Show*.

This documentary traced Rocky from his very beginnings through a small group of players in a little bar to a bigger group in a bigger bar, etc. It spanned many years with views of some of the cast all the way through the process in London, Los Angeles, New York, and in the film, notably Tim Curry, who literally was the movie.

One thing that was a standout in this documentary was the concentration on science fiction elements, and where they originated, and why they were selected for use in this picture.

Other things they concentrated on were the sociological aspects of the time period and the far-reaching affect of Rocky Horror as a vehicle for some of that sociological changing that went on.

Particular emphasis was placed on the song "Don't Dream It, Be It!" that apparently affected many more people than just me.

It was a lucky day for me when I went up into the lab to see what was on the slab....

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A Book Review: *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison

(The title is a misnomer. There are two, not one, blue eyes involved in the book.)

I read it. Once I started into it I felt as if I wanted to finish reading it. I hurried to find time in which to read it. I am not sure I did this because the book was recommended and lent to me for that purpose or not.

Before I list the things I discovered within the book, I need to explain that I do not read books as others read books. I read from a highly critical professional viewpoint. I look for things within books that most people don't even know are things to begin with in the first place.

I check to see how well the writer learned his lessons in school, and how far a field they dare

to try to reach. I take into consideration other people's opinions of the book, the writer's overall output and evident goals, etc.

I almost never read for entertainment purposes and I am always pleasantly surprised to discover that I have been entertained if I have.

I was not necessarily entertained by *Eye*. To begin with, I had read it too many times before. In too many different versions. In too many different settings. (James T. Farrell's shanty Irish stuff. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. *I Remember Mama*. On and on endlessly.)

And, also, *Eye* is meant to be and designed as a tearjerker dredging up all manner of quaint "memories" from our (black, beaten down, put upon) past. The clichés of everyone's common-shared existence. The bottom line boredom of existence at the subsistence level. Welfare fodder. Trailer trash food.

Harlequin romances. Greenleaf Classic sleaze beat-off books.

Not an original moment in a carload of them... and we're going to homogenize them all down into The Great All-American Subjected Black Experience and Kiddiefuck Book?

The only single thing different this time was that all the characters are black. The only single original factor. Everything else is over used.

The story itself, a commonplace coming-of-age tale about an uneducated teenage girl that takes place over less than two year's time wherein she becomes pregnant by her own father is so ancient as to be boring. And, it would have helped had Morrison not telegraphed all of that story so noisily right from the very beginning...she left the reader nothing to look forward to.

And, too, the fact that she was an outsider brought into the family only for the purpose of having this sex not be incest...and then having her father be so drunk he didn't know what he was doing...these are the ultimate copout. Morrison couldn't write it like it is...incest pure and simple...she had to "remove" it for moral (?) reasons, to make the story more acceptable?

Shame!

There were long, rambling, boring complete asides to this story (check the 60 or so book pages devoted to one Soaphead Church who was so totally unrelated to the story as to be banal) as for example the concluding section of the whole book. In this, and in Soaphead, all Morrison is doing is using up extra words to pad out the overall length of the project to make it look like a book when it's printed. Or she is trying to explain herself to herself. The reader is turned off.

The significant thing about this is that she is doing it on the reader's time. She is robbing the reader of his joy in his interpretation of whatever is ongoing by these dumb, personal, noodlings around inside her own head and struggling to use even more words thereby.

In the profession it is known as "word fat" and is every editor's nightmare.

This brings up another significant fault with this book. There was no editor working on it. It could very well be that Morrison has arrived at a point in her life where she feels she does not need editing. Clearly there are critics who praise her, institutions that honor her (Can you imagine what I would do for a Pulitzer, a Nobel?), but they are all wrong...or they are doing something for other, ulterior reasons... and there is a great deal of that at work with regard to this book.

Oprah and her book club don't come cheaply, and she wields a great amount of influence over the vast masses of jellied minds out there...especially the upward mobile ones trying to "be with it" and *de rigueur* at all times. The millions and millions of them out there who buy a book simply because they are told to buy it and never read it but keep it visible for others to see.

The majority of the population of the USA, the majority of the buying power. The blacks.

Also an editor would not have allowed Morrison (again, power really corrupts. Otherwise there would be no abominations like Stephen King selling books anywhere. Heinlein. *You may not touch one single word of my perfectness.*) to write anything in italics. I wouldn't even have allowed her to use first person.

The first rule one learns in writing class is that one is never allowed to write in dialect. A writer implies dialect, and conveys to his readers that the character is speaking in dialect, but the writer may never ever write in dialect.

Morrison's use of dialect almost makes me want to think that she thinks it's cute.

What she had forgotten, or never learned, is that she is writing FOR her readers, not for herself. In this book she ignores the reader totally.

As an editor I would require Morrison to soften some of her personal words considerably. (They are all cutting words, with sharp points and edges. She intends to do real harm.) She, personally, the writer, not the narrator or the protagonist, wears her hates too much out into the open. She hates first whites. Second black men. Third all other men. Fourth herself.

She hates men to such an extent that they are only cocks to be punished with, semen to provide a mandatory child, and flesh to be abhorred otherwise. Children, for instance, are never "ours" or "his" but absolutely always "mine" alone and unaided and get the fuck far away from me.

She has not one moment of compassion, not one accidentally fleeting word about empathy with ANY OTHER PERSON OF ANY OTHER RACE OR ANY OTHER GENDER IN THE ENTIRE WORLD. To Morrison everyone is disposable crap and she really lays it out there hard and heavy. The preached message interferes considerably with the reader's attempt to retain any story, simple as it might be.

She will not even allow herself to feel pleasure or goodness associated with anything or any person or any action...including her personal sexual gratification that has to be so subjected in order to prevent anyone else's sexual gratification from becoming a reality.

Too bad she hates herself so much...and humanity in general. To me, there is nothing but humanity and it isn't really broken up by centuries long racial hatred that is perpetuated and harped upon endlessly until we in the USA begin to sound much more like Israelis and Palestinians fighting over

something that should have been settled *thousands* of years ago.

And, this book says this woman is an instructor at Princeton University in "humanities" and she has so many of them herself to spare?

One other thing...as a professional book publisher I would never have allowed this book to be produced in the format it exists in.

For much the same reason as I would have required that it be edited.

This book, physically, is very disruptive to the reader. Physically it interferes with the reader's chain of thought almost as much as Morrison's strivings for uniqueness and originality in a mass of derivative borrowings.

I would have required that it be presented in one uniform style. There would be no sections of rag right. There would absolutely be no sections of italics.

And, most pathetic of all, there would not be any distinction (certainly in type style) between the two sides of the same person's conversation...exactly as it is in real life.

The more anyone attempts to hokey up...do something unique...stylistic garbage...the worse any product becomes.

I wonder about the history of this book, because the copyright dates cover such a wide span of time. I wonder about any book that takes so many years to produce that is so bad as this one. Why bother?

But then that takes us back to Morrison and acquired power. She is clearly riding the crest of the wave of sociological evolution. She is here at the right time saying the right words to appeal to the buying masses.

If her other works are anyway comparable to this book, then the people who present those Nobel and Pulitzer prizes have fallen as far short of the mark as today's book buyers.

In the end, the best part about reading *The Bluest Eye* is writing this rant about it. (The book should have ended with the birth of the blue-eyed bastard.)

A Story: "Mobius 360"

Jangling noises vibrated through him right down to his toes... *Damned alarm...already?*

#

She came again last night, about the same time she usually arrives. She's been doing it for a long time.

Late nighttime when everything's real quiet, nothing moving, no noise, but her. Almost magically I can feel her presence inside the room. I think it's her perfume, or something in her hair. Those beautiful long legs move closer and the scent of her rushes into my nostrils and down inside my lungs in big gulps of expected joy. Gladiola...white blossoms... *virginal*.

She couldn't be seen by anyone as she dropped her uniform and kicked off her shoes. She lifted the bedcovers gently and slid in beside me. The bed hardly moved at all from her weight, she was that gentle in her movements, in the way she just wrapped herself around me, those beautiful long legs locking behind me and pulling me closer and closer.

At first, when she came, I didn't know what to expect. I didn't even want what she offered, and certainly from someone I didn't even know, didn't love.

Only now I do know her, well, and I do love her. She has become part of me and I couldn't make it without her, without her help, without her encouragement and her rewards. She taught me everything I didn't know, I had never known, would never have known...without her...she whose name I still do not know and without whose love I could not survive. I can savor her to my heart's content, alone, by my tongue on my lips.

And here she is again and we will spend the rest of the night together just like this. The way her breasts push into my chest drives me wild as she nibbles at my earlobes and pulls on me there...my hair.... The ecstasy just goes on and on that way, endlessly it seems...as if I could somehow continue my orgasm forever....

I sleep now and then. She sleeps also. I awake and she is ready, and she has me again and I

am riding yet another wave until early morning time. We both know when it is time to stop, before things start for the day, before the rising sun brightens my bedroom. And she leaves as quickly and as quietly as she had arrived in the first place, with a warm, promising kiss on my lips.

It is morning again. Another wonderful night; I revel in enjoyment and stretch my overworked muscles, writing between the sheets stained in our honor.

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The door hissed open quietly on hydraulic hinges. Two of them walked in just then. He knew the regular one, the one with the beautiful long legs. It was the other one that attracted his attention. She had full, pouty lips covered with heavy red lipstick. They walked along the row of numbers, talking.

When they reached him, floating there about head-level, they stopped.

"This is 360," the regular one said, the one with the beautiful long legs. "It's been here for a very long time. Years and years even."

The new one leaned in closer and looked at 360 floating inside that solution with all those hundreds and hundreds of tiny little wires running in and out of it from every direction. "Yech!" she said, backing away from the heavy-duty laboratory glass bottled brain. "Does it do something? Or what?"

"I doubt it," legs said. *His heart skipped a beat at the memory.*

As they walked on to the next number, the new girl brushed against a stainless steel tray and it fell noisily to the hard tile floor, reverberating again and again.

Jangling noises vibrated through him right down to his toes... *Damned alarm...Already?*

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She came again last night, about the same time she usually arrives. She's been doing it for a long time. She had full, pouty lips covered with heavy red lipstick.

Late nighttime when everything's real quiet....
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