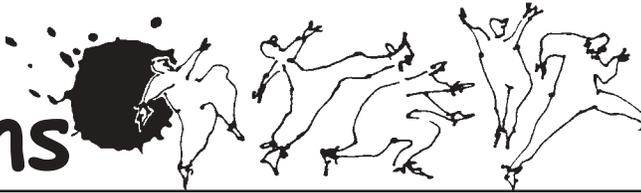


# Deanotations



Issue 103

August 2001

Dear Reader,

This is an issue full of silliness, so I think I can chance a melancholy overture. After all, postage has gone up again (but not my subscription rates). Hard to imagine how little postage cost when I began mailing out “Deanotations”. I feel like the Rock of Gibraltar.

Besides the postage, “everything has changed since Sept. 11.” I wish it were so. I wish each morning I could open my eyes and say “Everything has changed.” I wish I could do that now — any now — and have it be so. What we’ve had, most of us, since Sept. 11 is too much more of the same. America has been “losing its innocence” loudly for more than 200 years, poor hysterical virgin land. To lose our innocence so many times, we must be extra virgin, like olive oil. (Remember Vietnam? The Civil War?) Killing people does change the killers and the killed: It makes them more of the same. A spiral always looks like a spiral, no matter how tight within its coils you twist.

I wish I could say something that would change us, not that I don’t like us as we are, but I wish that we were what we are. I wish we were capable of play. By play, I don’t mean frantic escape from serious matters. Serious matters are the stuff of play, the solid masses we move, elude, play hide and seek among, write graffiti on, bat out of the park. By play I don’t mean the gleeful monotonous natter of mockers, who, unable to play, sit on the sidelines and point and smirk. Play brings out how much we love to be with each other, how quick we are to perceive, to understand, to create, flashing moves and signals faster than the speed of mockery.

It is sad that the buildings fell, sadder that we didn’t think to knock them down ourselves for the fun of it and the fun of building them anew (remember building blocks?). It is sad that people died, sadder that we value each other so little that we kill, sadder still that we value each other so little that we confuse those we love with bodies and are shattered when bodies are damaged.

Little kids derive great pleasure from going BOOM! as if exploding or making airplane engine noises (EEEYOWMMM!) while looping and swooping and crashing their toy planes. Or they used to. Probably now the world is too serious to tolerate that.

Things changed on Sept. 11: A serious world got more serious. To hell with that. Can you come out and play?

Sin-seriously and Censoriously and soaringly,  
Searingly Yours,

Two days of rain — feeling better now,  
sky?



Today I have so little to say that  
if I said it all, and a fly squatted over it,  
there would be only silence.

This forest stirs me to such keenness  
that no mere complexity of leaf, branch,  
shadow and breeze could escape me,  
were not these mosquitoes dancing boldly  
in and out of my ticklish attention  
to distract me and cover the escape  
of all this intricate beauty.

Flash: Mental Health experts announce  
that abusive priests suffer from  
a psychiatric diocese.

## Chased by a Hare

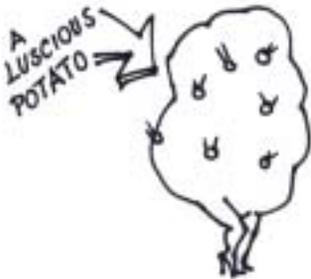
Naked, all rosy, beside him she curls,  
Having slaked with her lips his lust  
Warily;  
Chaste...by a hair! — her half pout a good girl’s,  
She sleeps the sleep of the just  
Barely.

## Adult, Are We?

There’s just one little drawback to sin, to wit:  
Just suppose that you really get into it,  
And your wife, who’s not blind, starts to intuit —  
Can you fool her, put some subtle spin to it?  
Or play innocent, swear that you din’ do it,  
While you find covert ways to continue it?  
Or head north to hide with the Inuit?  
Or...  
suppose you decide not to sin, you nit!

## Lettuce Go—We'll Turnip Again Somewhere

"We pulled the plug—he was just a vegetable."  
Understandable, if regrettable—  
Yet I myself, when Late Shows segue soporifically  
to Late Later Shows, do not hesitate  
To vegetate,  
And we don't uproot our cucumbers and tomatoes  
Just for being vegetaters.  
But, unlike cabbages & beets (leaves and roots),  
Cucumbers and tomatoes aren't really vegetables—  
they are fruits.  
Vegetables are what when you don't want to you're  
made to for your own good or else! eat,  
While fruits are a treat,  
And unlike a vegetable, a fruit  
Is cute.



For example, you might call a pretty girl in whole  
or in part a peach or plum or tomato,  
But you would never say, "Wow! Look at the great  
broccoli on that parsnip!" or "She's a real  
luscious potato!"  
(But I wish I could disencumber  
My example of the cucumber,  
Which, though a cute little number  
May be said to be as cool as a cucumber,  
Yet to view as cute these blunt warty pickles  
Is ridiculous!  
But if deemed the exception that proves the rule,  
With me that's as a cucumber cool.)  
This cuteness of fruitness explains why no one  
ever wants to put a fruit out of its misery,  
Though for some reason only females are supposed to  
be fruity, so fruity males are said to have  
mixed up their hers and hisery,  
And some consider it their sacred duty  
To put the unduly fruity  
Out of their gaiety  
In the name of a very serious and wholesome daiety,  
More a what's good for you whether you like it or  
not God than a cute God,  
A vegetable God, not a fruit God,  
One who tramples upon vintage grapes, extracting  
tears and trembling from us like a raw onion,  
Not at all Dionysian, purely Apollonian,  
Which is perhaps why many prefer to think that God  
is dead,  
The idea being Better Dead Than A Potatohead or a  
Bible Belt Prodistead,

Though I hasten to assure one and all that I myself  
would never cast aspersions or asparagus  
On anyone's fundamentals of faith or to undermine  
that live and let live those that our God loves  
philosophy that is (as preachers and politicians  
endlessly harague us)  
So purely Ameraga's.  
But all this begs, yea, **implores** the question:  
Are vegetables indeed miserable or do we project  
upon them our **own** misery at having them thrust  
overcooked down our infant instant sweet  
demanding abysses of digestion? —  
So that we remember our green salad days  
As limp and bitter and pallid days  
And ever after, the idea of doing away with spinach  
Is greeted with pinache.  
Which may be why the sight of the body of a dear  
one still breathing but with no other sign  
of anyone there  
Reminds us of a boiled carrot, not a juicy pear,  
Because as a child, tarrying over our tepid peas  
in vegetarriance vile,  
We begged our loving Mom and Dad, as they  
metamorphosed into parients riled,  
"Please can't I just have my dessert now! PLEASE!!"  
And our mother intoned, "That's enough! I mean it!  
Now EAT YOUR PEAS!"  
And to all further entreaties turned a countenance  
of stone,  
So that we stared at the peas and they didn't  
answer us either and we knew we were alone,



Which is exactly the way you feel standing beside  
the intensive care unit,  
Knowing that something is keeping that body going,  
but no one you love is doin' it,  
The point being, not that you should pull the  
plug on it —  
Though if ever **my** body develops a vacancy, please,  
someone, put a rug on it! —  
But don't, because of your childhood traumas,  
Slander crisp juicy string beans, broccoli and  
brussels sprouts, which, though they don't  
wink at you, are hardly in caumas,  
Not to mention an elm or oak or pine, which is also,  
broadly speaking, a vegetable,  
(Though not — unless you are a beaver or  
drinker of bark flavored beverage — edible),  
And surely you would not, merely for its being a  
vegetable, chop down a tree,  
As which I think that I shall never see

[continued]

A poem expansive, branching out in all directions,  
 twisting to catch a theme that is as elusive  
 as sunlight,  
 Which is why fools like me try to write  
 Poems that hint at something in us as in the  
 reaching of a tree that is neverending  
 That dwells but a while in a body before elsewhere  
 wending,  
 That, having no form itself, needs a body so that  
 it can hug us and we can hug it,  
 And just to hug and be huggable, it drags the body  
 along wherever it can lug it,  
 But there comes a time when it has gone or is  
 struggling to go where its body can't, but the  
 body keeps growing hair and toenails the way  
 carrots and potatoes left too long in the  
 refrigerator sprout roots, and its eyes don't  
 move and it's smelly and clammy and, FUG it!  
 You want to unplug it—  
 Well, I say do it and don't rue it, but shrug it  
 Off, because it takes a being to illumine  
 The human,  
 And if you take the being out of human being,  
 What's left isn't worth a bloomin' bean.



### He's Found His Nietzsche in Life

Hear that screeching rooster?  
 He's Dawn's greatest booster;  
 Again he's introduced her  
 (It SOUNDS like he just goosed her);  
 HE thinks he's produced her,  
 With his fanfare (all in "Rooster")  
 Out of "Thus Spake Zarathooster."

### Through Rose Colored Spektrosopes

They are everywhere, but we notice them most  
 in stark bathroom light cast on white tile  
 and porcelain: specks, tiny, but naked eyable,  
 which, sometimes, as one is about to flick them  
 onto the floor or wash them down the drain,  
 begin to move all by themselves,

slowly, as if grazing, or in sudden leaps  
 (Shit! We've got fleas!); one can almost  
 envision their fanged and legged and antennae  
 intricate beauty and hideousness beneath  
 a microscope; and perhaps one wonders  
 how many of these have I crushed, drowned,  
 inhaled, eaten without knowing it?

[continued]

Other specks do not move, but are as mysterious:  
 Fiber? Hair? Dead critters? (Or playing dead?)  
 Scraps of dust (partly bits of our skin).

We live in a world of unidentified particles —  
 unless we are Crime Scene Investigators,  
 in which case, upon entering a large room  
 (says my TV), we instantly stride 15 paces  
 to halt at the key particle, the killer clue! —  
 pick it up with tweezers (never damaging it  
 or having to make two stabs at it), hold it  
 to the light or spray it to make it glow purple,  
 and say crisply, "A spore: this mushroom grows  
 only within a 20 mile circle around Hackensack."



But for those of us who are not at once aware  
 of sperm traces on a pubic hair and oblivious  
 to the electronic snow that fills our flat world —  
 that is, for those of us who do not live on TV,  
 who must inhabit day after day the scenes of crimes  
 we don't know we are committing or even that we live  
 in "scenes" — for us someone please invent  
 a Hypertext Spektroscope for speck inspection —

a simple enough device in concept:  
 You see a speck, you focus your scope on it,  
 press a button, and PRESTO, on screen appears  
 (text with illustrations) an explanation  
 of the speck: "One joint of the left anterior leg  
 of a cockroach wrapped in spider thread from..."  
 "Orlon, synthetic fiber, formula..." "dandruff flake  
 from the head of..." "bit of beef cartilage flecked  
 with dental floss wax..." —

(but NEVER focus your scope on a beloved's neck  
 or nipple or eye twinkle — bad manners...and  
 some things we are better off not knowing)

and by repeated presses of the button, one could get  
 more layers of information (a zoom process),  
 branching out on an increasingly divided screen:  
 One component of the synthetic fiber would be traced  
 to a coal mine in Kentucky (& how many presses more  
 to herb and dinosaur?), another to the root  
 of a beet from Sri Lanka. Typically a few layers in,  
 the complexity would be overwhelming, but there'd be  
 that rare particle of millennial integrity,  
 that piece of lint, one's own sloughed off skin,

[continued]

that in six presses (a record!) would take us back to the skin between Cleopatra's breasts (which, unthinking, she fretted off, covertly scratching, while hearing out a boring petitioner); Caesar's spit (all those T's in "Et tu, Brute?"), Christ's tear.

Someone whose hand I've touched once touched the hand of someone (etc.) who shook hands with Abraham Lincoln. I'm told the odds of this connection existing are hard to beat, and that, for most of us, only a few links are required. We go through a lifetime rubbing off on each other and furniture, polluting the water supply and flaking into the air, squirting, farting, spitting, molting, exhaling, depositing, charring to air wafted ash, leaving something — a film with a cast of quadrillions — on everyone and everything we encounter,



all that we think we are becoming eventually specks on someone's counter, who, seeing what's left of us, thinks, "No matter how hard I scrub, I can never get this place clean!"

We are as dispersed as strawberries and bananas in a blender, no reassembly conceivable, no returning to the scene of the crime. What is buried or burned is only "the remains," most of our substance having vanished long before.

*[continued]*



In the room where I write, a sunbeam reveals a zillion dancing particles, the fluff we breathe, the not so amorphous air, each puff a mix of molecules by the trillion, some that anyone or anything you can think of once inhaled or exhaled or was made of. Whoever you are, some part of you is here with me. I think I just inhaled a probability.

The sunbeam drives my imaginary device nuts with beeps, flashes and a barrage of error messages: Divide Overflow! Insufficient memory! Reboot! (My text grows hyper!)

Friends, let us applaud ourselves, for we are doing our duty: conserving, recycling, patching together new bodies, generation after generation, from old molecules and older atoms (and don't we know each other from atoms?), life after life after life — Friends, we overflow our cells! We are specktaclar!

Trust is not blindness, but the creation of a space in which it becomes possible for you not to betray me.

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