

Ethan Streeter

Mrs. Frampton & Mrs. Martinez

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### The Perplexities and Purported Problems of a Sponge

A relatively short time ago, while I was listlessly engaging in activities of the counterproductive nature, I was confronted by a fellow human being and given an unwelcome - and unwarranted - lecture. This person had decided to bestow upon me the one gift I have been offered so frequently, yet never been able to receive. Knowledge. Specifically, I was given a long and tedious lesson on the characteristics of a semi-dormant, yellow sea sponge. My auditory recollection is as follows, quote: “The yellow sea sponge, of the semi-dormant variety, is an organism which consumes and attracts various forms of bacteria, parasites, and other such off-putting substances. Its motor functionality is subpar at best, which leads to the sponge’s unfortunate habit of staying in the exact same spot and eating perpetually. Yellow sponges, although classified as animals, have an apparent lack of pragmatic brain activity. This can be explained by the simple fact that these sponges do not appear to have any brains.” Close quote. I stared perplexedly at this learned speaker, (or rather, had the inclination to do so, but was unable to muster the effort to lift my eyelids), and eventually replied “You seem to have (unknowingly, I’m sure) swapped the definition of this sponge with the definition of the average high-school adolescent.’ It was only after the fact that I realized my cataclysmic mistake. I was not given this seemingly useless piece of information by a random fellow nothing-doer, but by my own mother. This sneaky, conniving matriarch had once again laid bare my inadequacies and deflated my ego faster than a middle schooler running to the microwave ovens at lunch time. I had inadvertently

been soundly reminded of a terrible truth. I was (and to an extent still am) nearly as semi-dormant, bacteria culturing, and brainless as one of those sea sponges.

The events of that day were emblazoned on my memory to an extent never before seen in the neuroscientist community. That experience was so impactful that I actually started to think. I started to blink. And slowly, but surely, I started to... slink around my house, abandoning my beloved couch cushion and the distractions that awaited me there. As the underdeveloped and nigh unused gears in my mind began to grind together, I created something completely new, and very strange. My mother calls it a thought, and says I should try and make more, though in her words: "You're more likely to gain weight than you are intelligence." I consider that blow to be the lowest of the low. But I digress. The thought that had thunked into my lethargic thinking process was this - my mother is a being of wisdom and kindness far beyond the scope of my (obviously limited) comprehension. Both of my parents are such beings, in fact. Therefore, if they're to be there to give their son a 'there there' pat on the head, which had heretofore and will theretofore be unheard of and unseen, they would have done it, there and then, then and there. But that's not what they gave me. They gave me the most brutal hypothetical lashing to have ever graced this good earth. So I took what I got, and what I was given, *no one can take*. If both my parents, and even I, for that matter, can relate myself so closely to a sedentary sea sponge, change is in order. And I'm willing to bet that I'm not the only sponge-like sapient in this spacious expanse. So my challenge, and my heavenbound prayer for you, is this - be not a sponge.

Thank You.