Unlike these men-- Gandalf, Dumbledore, Obiwan Kenobi, Papa Smurf, Santa Claus

I cannot grow a beard.

9/21/2021

Phil bought records (good deal) and new kitchen appliances. And they are doing all right. And they are coming through fine. Yeah! No really, that is a good thing and his kids are doing well.

Meat???? And then the Whale poem and then Sociopath and then the poems and the fuck Trump!!!

07/27/2021

Chicago, Illinois

Dear Phil & Heather,

Has been a gorgeous blue sky and billowy, pillow cloud kind of day, Helena— now 2 and a robust towheaded brute— and I are out in the yard and she is ambling over inquisitively toward our small garden plot, bee-lining, in fact, straight at a recently planted maroon and forest-green shock of leaf-blades.

“Do NOT pick my Chard!” I preemptively scold, nearly adding “or I will spank your bottom,” though I do not ultimately add that last part because I realize how deadly serious I am, and I sense how deeply uncomfortable it would feel to threaten a child with violence over a salad.

Little backstory— recently she has been insisting on picking the buds and leaves off all of our botanicals almost as fast as we plant them. I, being somewhat more experienced with these kinds of things, find this approach to gardening messy and self-defeating.

We had a similar difference of opinion just the other day about whether or not it was appropriate to re-pot a goodly amount of loamy topsoil into my tantalizingly sweating mason jar of chilled water.

Years ago, before I had kids, at a brunch get-together at your place off Montrose, I observed Nathan Nordlund, who was already the father of three, being a little short with one of his girls over some issue with a cup of orange juice or something. At the time I remember feeling kind of surprised at how impatient or even almost unkindly he was addressing his angelic little Tomte. Maybe, he’s having a particularly stressful day I had thought at the time. Now I realize he definitely was having at least a partially stressful day because, you know, he had children and he was likely not being mean to his child at all, but was, in fact, exerting incredible, if not saintlike-level patience, artfully teasing out and expanding just a bit more his reservoir of that most precious of parental commodities, that greedily gobbled up resource that well before that cup of juice or even that very morning had been pulled and stretched as thin as a gossamer shroud though still somehow holding— together and true— by some miraculous act of superhuman effort. Love?

I also now realize that our children are in essence sociopaths that we have been charged with by fate to reform as penance, perhaps, for our own past, if not present, sociopathic behavior. Which is all just to say, I am glad you are both well and that your kids are well and that everyone seems to be keeping the sociopathy to a loving minimum. In fact, I would go so far to say that you guys are killing it. Your children are so sweet and kind to one another and others. The love is present, palpable, simply lovely.

Speaking of sociopaths, though. Remember these definitions I sent you, Phil, a while back on election day (*Brewer’s Book of Phrase and Fable).* They are still so good.

***Trump*** The word in such phrases as a *trumped up affair*, *trumpery*, etc., is the same words as *trumpet*; from Fr. *trompe*, a trumpet, whence *tromper* which, originally meaning “to play on a trumpet,” came to mean to beguile, deceive, impose upon.

***The last trump*** The final end of all things earthly; the Day of Judgement.

*We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. – 1 Cor. Xv, 51,52.*

***To play one’s last trump*** To be reduced to one’s last expedient: a phrase from cardplaying.

***Trumpet*** *See* Trump *above*.

***To blow one’s own trumpet*** To publish one’s own praises, good deeds, etc. The allusion is to heralds, who used to announce with a flourish of trumpets the knights who entered a list. Similarly, *your trumpeter* *is dead* means that you are obliged to sound your own praised because no one will do it for you.

And this quote somehow really has been settling me down when I start to let all the ramped up apocalyptic hyperbole of the day begin to grate on me. It is from Ralph Waldo Emerson circa December 9th, **1841**—

“The two parties which divide the state, the party of Conservatism and that of Innovation, are very old, and have disputed the possession of the world ever since it was made. This quarrel is the subject of civil history. The conservative party established the reverend hierarchies and monarchies of the most ancient world. The battle of patrician and plebeian, of parent state and colony, of old usage and accommodation to new facts, of the rich and the poor, reappears in all countries and times. The war rages not only in battle-fields, in national councils, and ecclesiastical synods, but agitates every man's bosom with opposing advantages every hour. On rolls the old world meantime, and now one, now the other gets the day, and still the fight renews itself as if for the first time, under ***new names*** and ***hot personalities***.”

And lastly, if you will indulge me, here are exactly two poems:

***A Nutcracker***

A nutcracker came to town,

in a burlap cloak and a foil crown—

gilded-spanner in his well-clung grip:

trumpets to blare,

pigeons to seed,

juris doctors to dispatch

to the queen: 4-2C.

And she way out on her balcony—

sniffling and swaying

a babe’s crib-cage,

bellowing below

to the hounds of late day,

who lull and lick thick grasses

grown over graves

dug deep down with the peanuts

in the blood-red clay.

While an eye in a mien

regards all with calm—

a Georgia peach in each palm,

a Georgia peach in each palm.

***Salad Dressing***

Was awoken

by a snarling visage—

would be remiss

not to admit

that I don’t miss him.

But if you do

just happen to

run into

you know who…

Take a kiss for me,

or more explicitly—

my ass.

In fact,

don’t ask—

just grab hold of his genitals.

Then! Dive right in all lecherously fumbling.

Shove your old Gene Simmons

directly down his gullet!

Savor the moment in full,

then blissfully, drooly let go.

Thank him for his service,

his oh-so-precious time,

for whipping up a miracle—

salad dressing from ancestral wine.

Good seeing you all at the Longroom! Hope the rest of your summer goes well and that your trip out east is a great one— smooth sailing(flying) et al!

All the best,

07/26/2021

Met up with Phil and Heather and fam at the Longroom.

American wild ale fermented with blackberry and lemon

Dark sour ale fermented with peanut butter, concord grape and vanilla bean.

04/16/2021

Meet Phil at Hubbard’s Cave. Toured brewery. Beer barrels and stainless steel drums. Beer selections written in sliver marker on black tile behind the bar. Borwn and black boot treads on the sidewalk between the building and the green heavy sod back lot where the picnic tables and triangular ten pavilions are. Phil was wearing Brown boots and a black T-Shirt. He had some Korean characters added to his left arm above the solid bands that he had wrapping around his arm.

Two decades. I cannot contain it all. How do you pull it all together without it coming out as manic? How do you pin bliss down next to the hardest disappointment. Drain. Energy. Where does it come from? Effort where is it born. Desire? Longing? How can we deal with it without blowing our fucking selves up!

Clean Pils in sun. Under blue skies clear and warming the land. Flat Niles. Flat Skokie. 50s flat. Boozy Floridians on 50s balconies. The sadness in the night. Out into the sadness of the night. Thank you for sharing Pete’s music and the Red Vinegar project. Music. It has always been the interface. It has always been the common thread, bond, never-ending conversation. Ever unfolding. A pursuit that travels with you. Aural landscapes. DJing lives.

It tasted like sweat and kid vomit.

Your partisan rage reaches me like warm dog breath in the dark.

I am glad you’re your back is giving treating you well. Having struggled through some shoulder tightness this year and off and on neck and upper back tension, I have a new appreciation for just baseline spine health. This probably more than anything has gotten me off jogging as my go to fitness routine and made stretching a much bigger piece of my daily pie. I’ve also had some intimations over the year that my family in addition to rigid thinking is also prone to physical stiffness and generally unimpressive flexibility. Given many of the other disagreements I have with these people, it seems like falling on the more flexible divide of whatever politic smoke they want to blow at me seems, for many reasons, exactly they place I would like to be. And so I stretch.

Snap of bitter fragrance from hops.

Dark, sweet malts