11/05/2020

Digital Family archive with Aunt Karen: slow, no timeline, or some basic bench marks, come up with the design. Get Karen’s input.

Set up a family email list to connect regarding photos and materials and announcements about the site.

02/15/2021

You are amazing. The fact checking sister. The stalwart love shall lead the way. Haven’t had the wherewithal or headspace or time—kids, wife, sanity, career shift—to do interweb battle. Thank you for fighting some of these battles. For responding with facts. If fact checking is “disrespectful” in our culture then we are in trouble…

Chicago, Illinois

02/19/2021

Thank you for showing me up close and personal that just cause you don’t find you forever job straight out the gate that you won’t at some point if you just keep looking. We have lived aspirationally, not materially, but experientially. This of course has limitations, as material means drive the management of your experiences much of the time. We have made key decisions from an experiential standpoint and have lived with the benefits and consequences of those decisions. For example, having betsy stay home has put certain restrictions on our financial abundance (perhaps), but has been everything in allowing us the wherewithal to build the home life that we desire. betsy is such a wonderful homemaker and nuturure and tutor. Both girls are thriving under her tutelage, late February cabin-madness notwithstanding. Despite not having founded great careers, betsy and I have through our personal endeavors and interests built these incredible elementary, secondary and post-secondary teaching skills. Education was our first career path and I think teaching comes naturally to us both. We enjoy it. We enjoy learning. We are curious. We try to be open minded, whatever that means, but does it mean that we have walked away from the kneejerk reaction to make every unsettling musk into an attack on our core belief system. And yes, your core belief system is under attack. Their a million intellectual velociraptors out there prodding your fence for weak points. Entropy is seeking to undue the glue that has held the center through the millennia and the glue is also slipping, dripping out, renewing, regenerating, cycle, cycle, sun and moon, Laughing Buddha, Child sun retire, holy ghost, smoke from a

funeral pyre, can you hold my baggage as I step on through the gyre. There are certain back issues we’d certainly prefer to retire. And yet the swirling whirling mass. The churning water short, the wake from the cult leaders good yacht as it meanders out at sea. His newest acolyte mixing evil concoctions down below, churning water, my good man, churning water far from land.

06/14/2021

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 know 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, I was once at a brunch get-together where I observed one of my friends, 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 you were addressing your 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 your reservoir of that most precious of parental commodities, that greedily gobbled up resource that well before this cup of juice or even this very morning had been pulled and stretched as thin as a gossamer shroud though still somehow holding— together and true through 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 for our own past, if not present, sociopathic behavior. Which is certainly not to say don’t have children, but just, you know, brace yourself… for love.

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.

All the best,