

JULY BUTTERFLY

2020



Illustration by Wendy Gibbs, *A year in the Luberon*, 2019

Robert Middleton

My much regretted old friend Robert G. was an accomplished linguist, but was never really happy in German, although he certainly understood it well. He would pretend to complain about the hardness in German intonation, comparing it with the Romance languages, most of which he spoke perfectly: "*Papillon, Mariposa, Farfalla, Borboleta* - all sounds that evoke the gossamer nature of the creature. In German: SCHMETTERLING!"

However, once you know that *Schmetter* relates to the Slavic "*smetana*" (= cream), things look a bit different. According to folk belief, witches transformed themselves into butterflies and stole cream from milkmaids (*cf* *Butterfly* and the Low German, *Botterlicker/Bottervigel/Molkenklauer*).

What's in a name? - if you try hard, you can also pronounce "*Schmetterling*" *sotto voce*. But it was a good joke. Nice to know also that, in Swiss German, often more guttural than High German, the butterfly is a *Sommervogel* (= summer bird). Also good to note that one of the most evocative quotations about butterflies is in German, by Erich Maria Remarque (1898-1970): "Schmetterlinge taumeln heran, so sehr dem Wind hingegeben, als schwämmen sie auf ihm, weiße und goldene Segel der zärtlichen Luft."¹

Not only the Romance languages have "onomatopoeic" names - the website <http://insecta.pro/community/8299> offers "*butterfly*" in 300 languages. I particularly like: *fifoldara* (Anglo Saxon), *flutura* (Albanian), *vlindervlinder* (Dutch), *kupukupu* (Balinese), *pinpilinpauxa* (Basque), *olookolombooka* (Ibu - Nigeria), *barabulella* (Corsican), *mariavolavola* (Sardinia) and *alibangbang* (Cebuano - Philippines).²

On a much more mundane level, my generation swung in the swinging sixties and seventies to the swing band of James Last - in particular his version of *Butterfly* (enjoy it on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSkngr2BAiw>). So whether you are still swinging to James Last, or just watching the July butterflies flutter by, enjoy this companion to *Easter Egg Nuts in May* and *June Moon*.

~ Robert Middleton 2020

Cartoons from *The New Yorker*

e-mail robert@middleton.ch

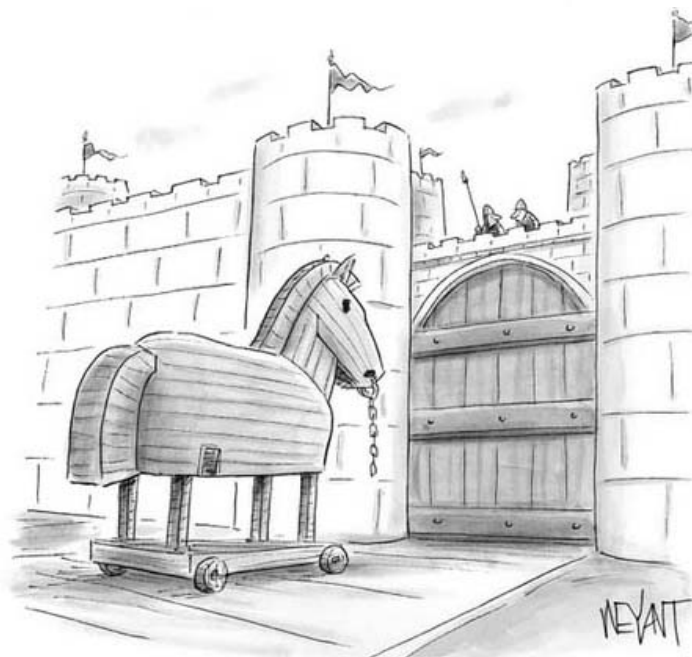
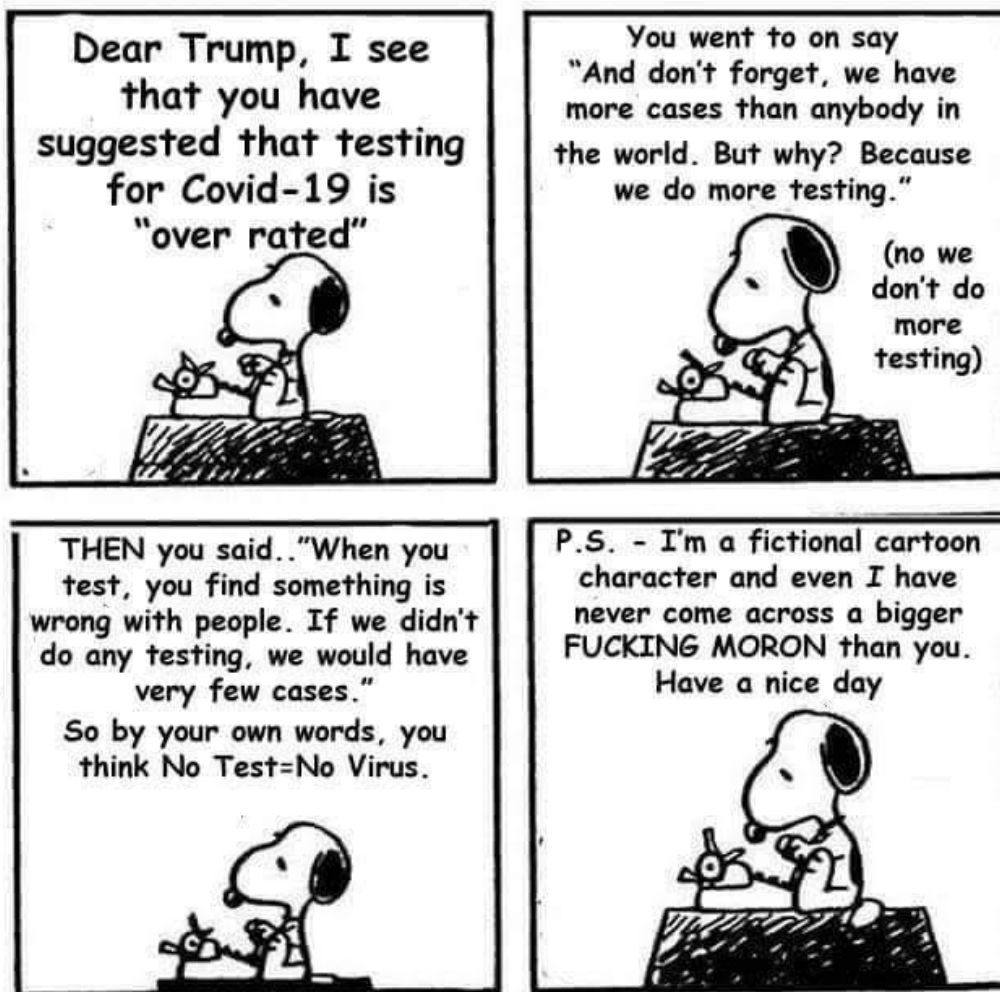
Visit my website www.pamirs.org

All editions of Christmas Pudding etc. can be found on
<http://www.pamirs.org/Christmas-Pudding.htm>

¹ *Der Weg zurück*, (1931) Remarque's novel set during the first World War, the sequel to *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

² I now also know that my Swiss diplomat friend, Andrej Motyl, born in Czechoslovakia, is a butterfly.

Confinement confusion³



"Who cares what it is. I'm just happy we still get delivery."

³ Snoopy not from *The New Yorker* - Thanks Hazel



"Quick! Does somebody have a Clorox wipe?"

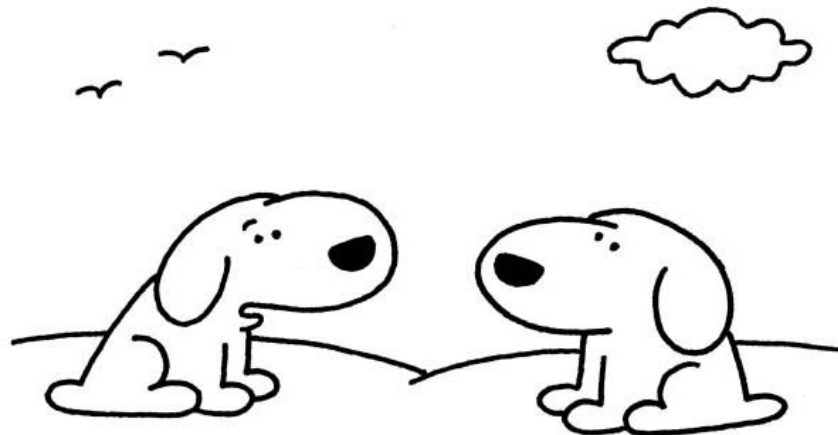


"Hey, the experts are saying it's safe to go outside again."

Animal Antics

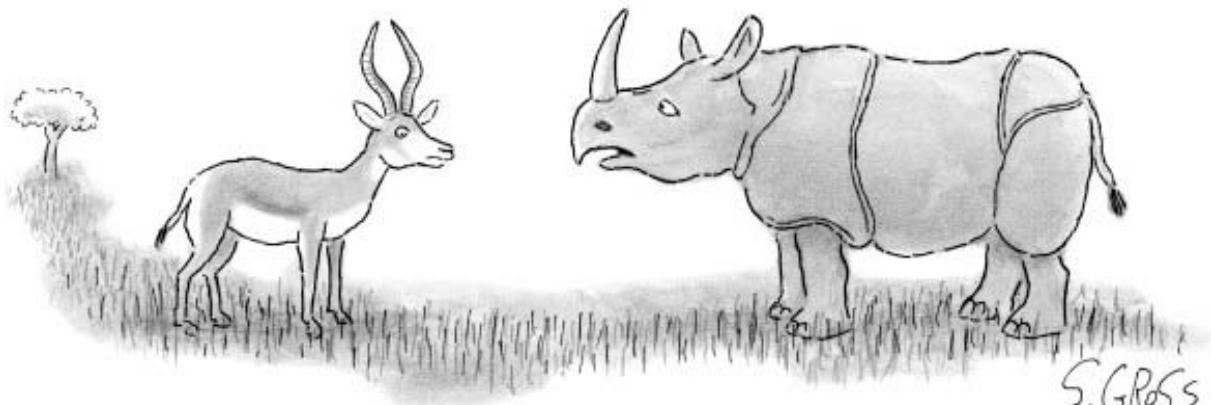


"Every day I live in fear that our jobs will be replaced by pillows."



C. Berrotti

"My bark is worse than my bite, and my bark is a sort of yap."



"Just because I have a thick skin doesn't mean I'm not sensitive."



"Listen, buster, I didn't sit on your hard little egg in the blazing sun for six weeks just to hear you say, 'Ewww, I don't like regurgitated yak carcass.'"



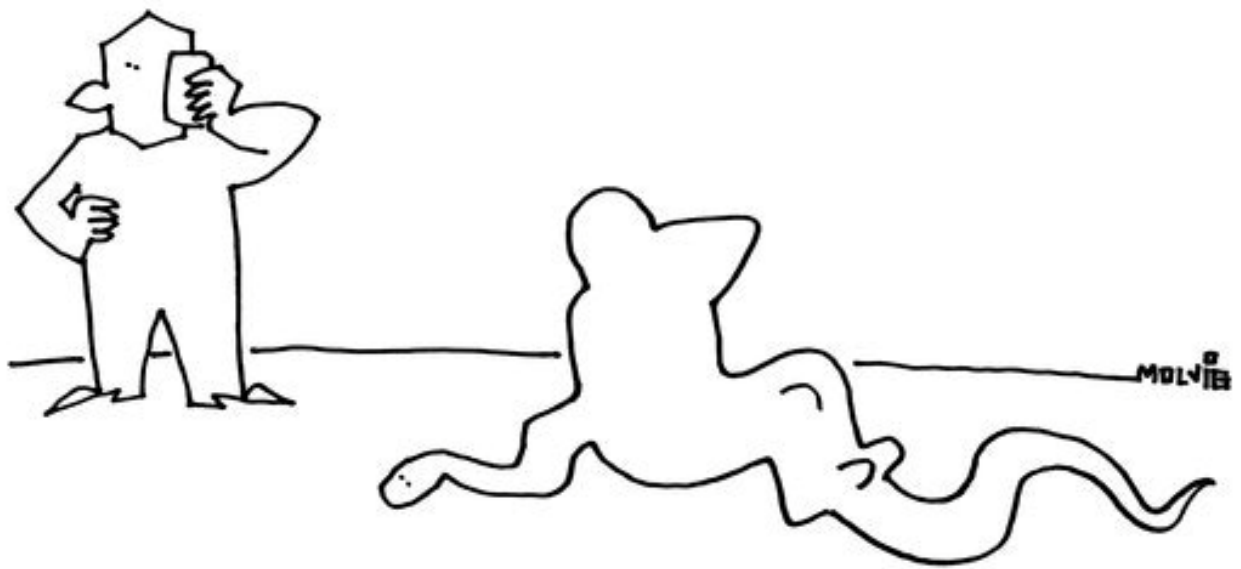
"I realize how helpless and needy they are, but I'm afraid you still can't claim a human as a dependent."



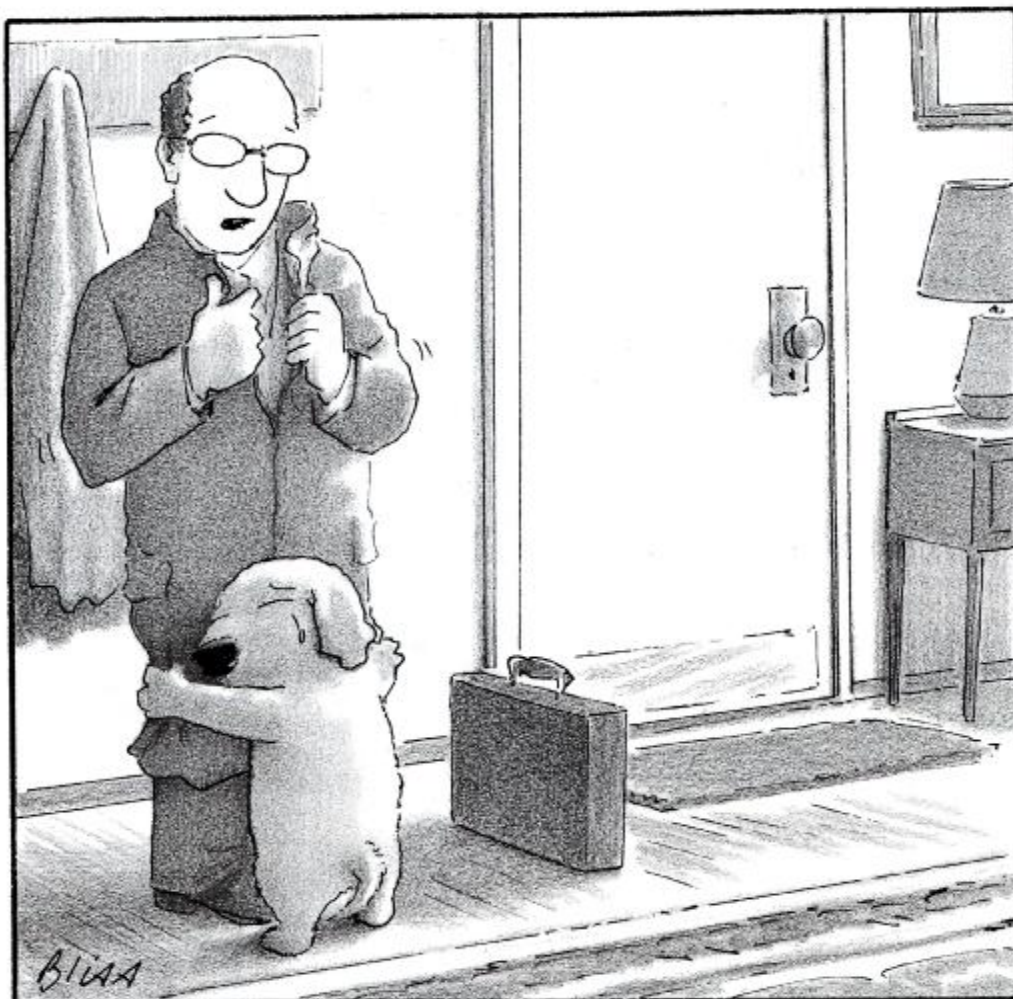
"After you've wished once for food, you can stop using your other wishes on food."



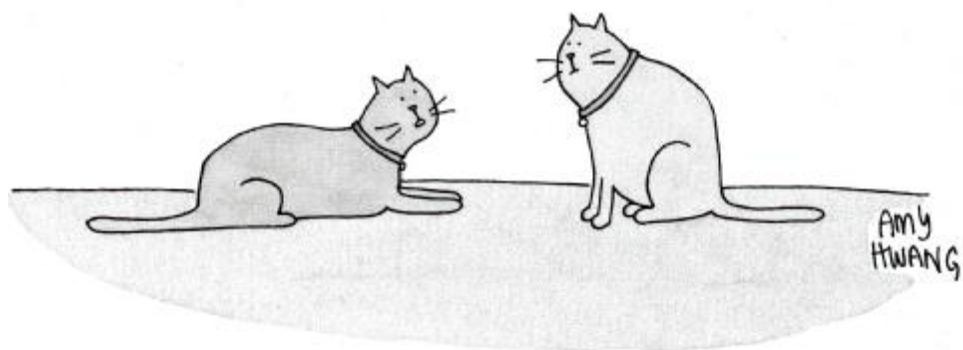
"Police! Nobody moo!"



"O.K., now do you see a giant snake? I'm inside the snake."



"Yes, I came back, I always come back."



"Do you think oversleeping is a real thing?"



"That's it - the cat has to go."

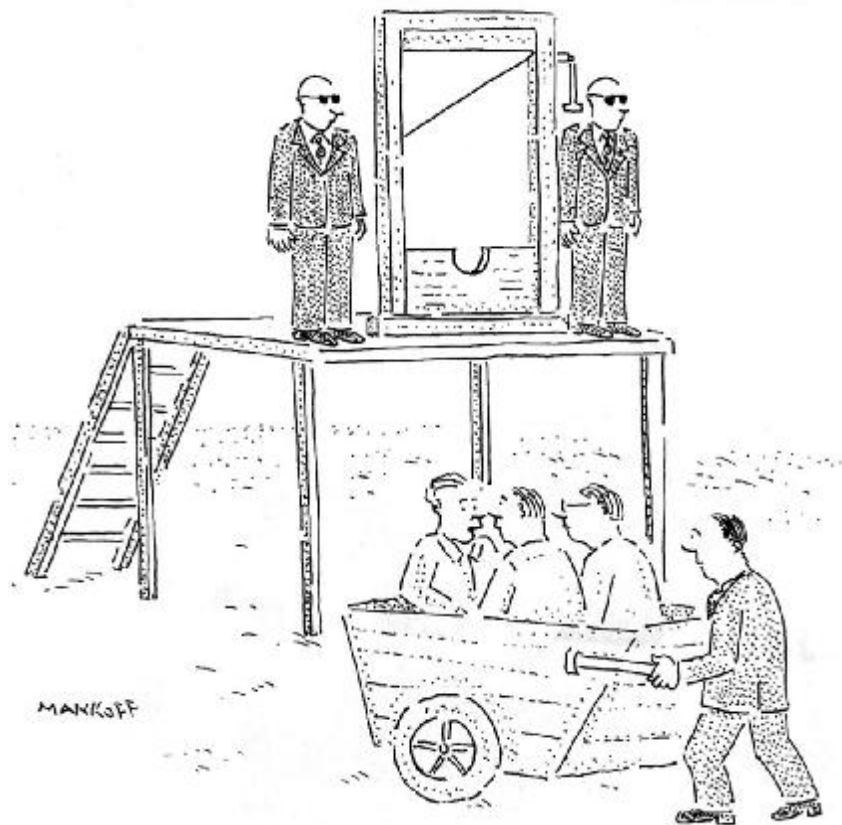
Office Life - didn't you miss it?



"Remember, 'accounting' and 'accountability': nothing in common."



"Nice—what do you charge?"



"I don't know about you guys, but I'm very disappointed in the severance package."



"Wider."



"Mr. Hambel isn't available—is there anyone else who might want to avoid you?"



"Your résumé is remarkably similar to our C.E.O.'s."



"From nine to one, you will be answering e-mails. From one to two, you will be out to lunch. From two to five, you will be answering the e-mails that came in while you were out to lunch."



"In recognition of your many years of service, we'd like to offer you a salary."



"A low-level person who doesn't mean anything will see you now."



"When examining these new contracts, gentlemen, please note that in Paragraph 48 the word 'golden' has been replaced by 'plywood' and 'parachute' is now 'toboggan.'"

Doctors (please stay healthy)



"We're running a little behind, but we'd be happy to have our anesthesiologist put you under for a few hours, until the doctor is ready to see you."



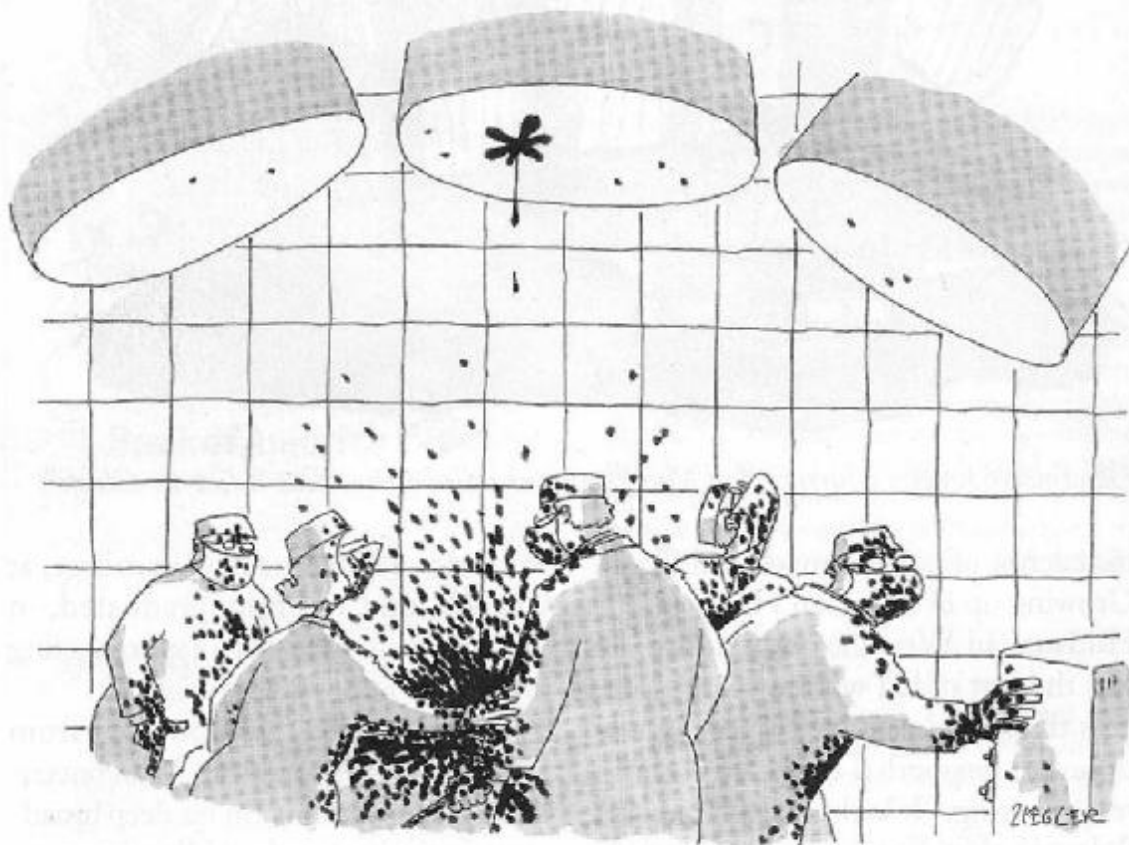
"I'm not actually doing anything—this is just punishment for not flossing."



"And when did you first realize you weren't like other precipitation?"



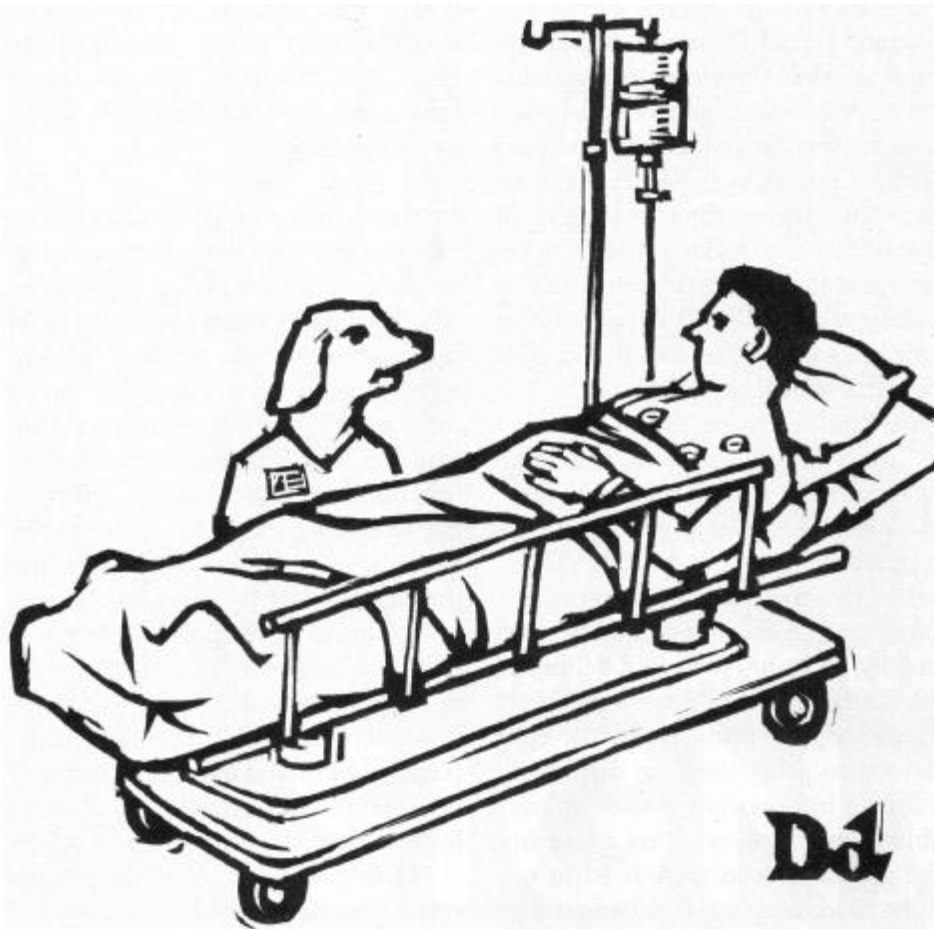
"But living longer may not be right for you."



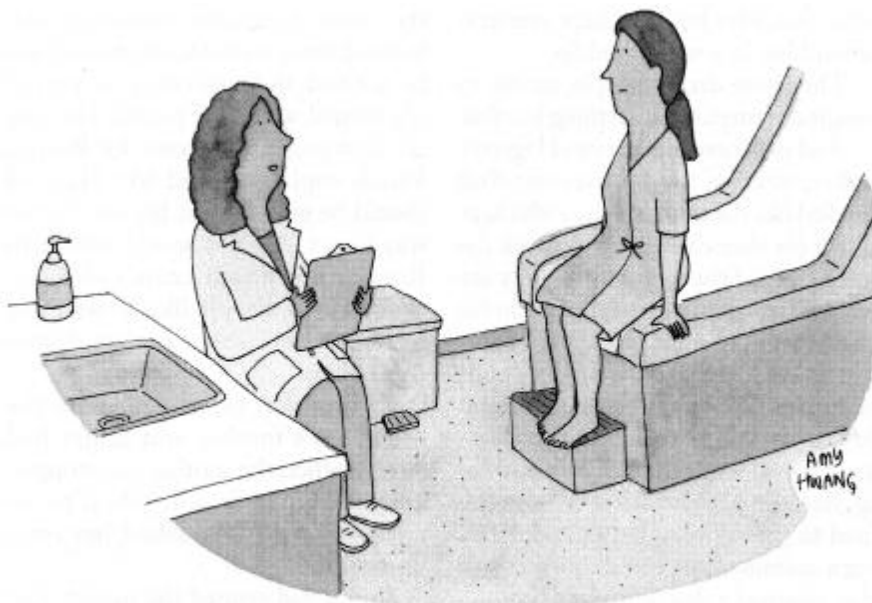
"Yee-ouch! That's gotta hurt."



"I can't make you look younger, but I can make you look like you've had a lot of expensive plastic surgery."



"Under your plan, the cute dogs do the surgery and the robots comfort you in the recovery room."



"You will live a long and healthy life if you abstain from anything that brings you joy."



"Because when it actually works they just call it medicine."



"There is no cure, Mrs. Handler. That's because there's nothing wrong with you."

Food and Drink - Enjoy (with as much moderation as you can manage)



"Swim across the moat but keep the pizza dry."



"Goodness, if that clock's right I gotta be going!"



"Well, now, hold on, Jed. I think this is a Malbec."



"It's a magic potion that makes everything you say interesting."



"I recommend the white and the red—your fish might have swallowed a duck."



"I'm getting red fruits, earth tones, and oak. Amen."

But
NoH

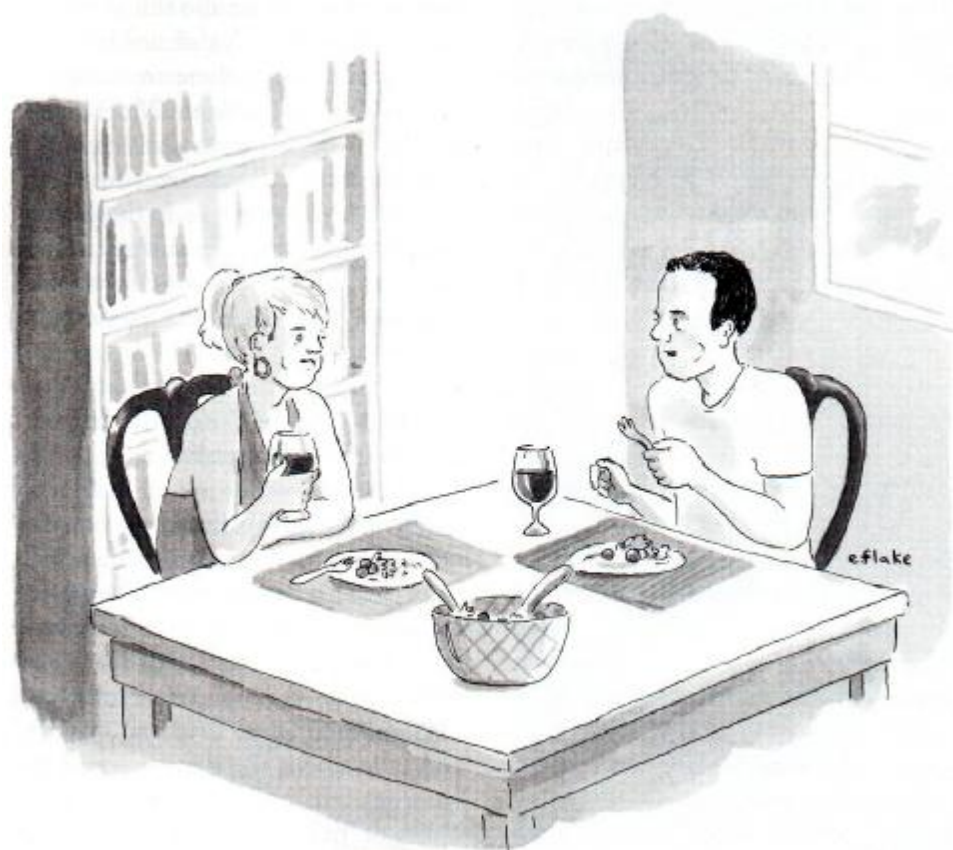
Blinn



- ← "MMM, CAN YOU TASTE THAT?"
- ← "I LOVE THAT DRESS ON YOU."
- ← "WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE AUTHOR?"
- ← "TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR WORK — I FIND IT FASCINATING."
- ← "OH, I'M SO SORRY... I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT WAS YOUR LEG."
- ← "HAVE YOU EVER BEEN WITH ANOTHER WOMAN?"
- ← "JUST TO SLEEP, I SWEAR!"
- ← "SHOULD WE ORDER ANOTHER BOTTLE?"



"I don't remember the name, but it had a taste that I liked."



"Is this from the community garden? It tastes sanctimonious."



"Just a glass of wine with breakfast, officer."

BILLY



"No more for me, thanks—I have to denigrate his driving."



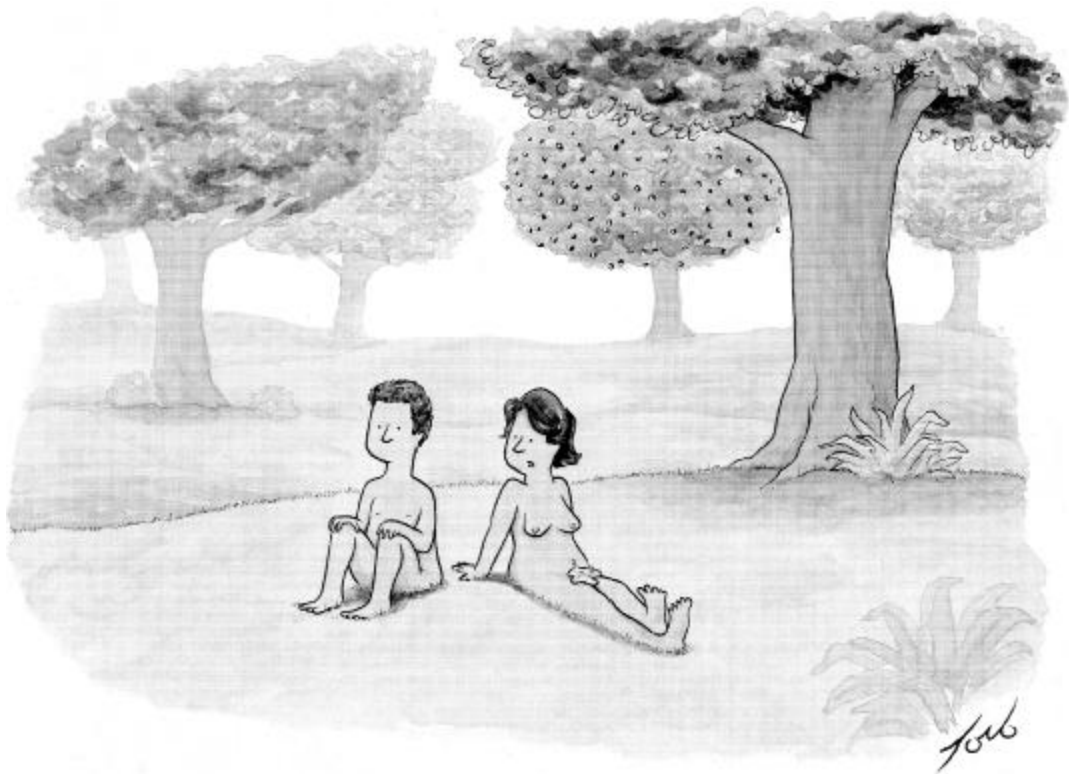
SIPRESS

"Is this the wine you selected at random?"

God and Co.



*"When you get a chance, remember to ask God
the meaning of life—it's a riot."*



*"Which is better—to eat from the Tree of Knowledge and get kicked
out or to stick around here with nothing to talk about?"*



McNAMEE

"Pretty good. The ending was a bit predictable."



B. S m a l l e r

"I'm just afraid if I die and go to Heaven there won't be anyone I know."



"You're quitting school? After everything we sacrificed for you?"



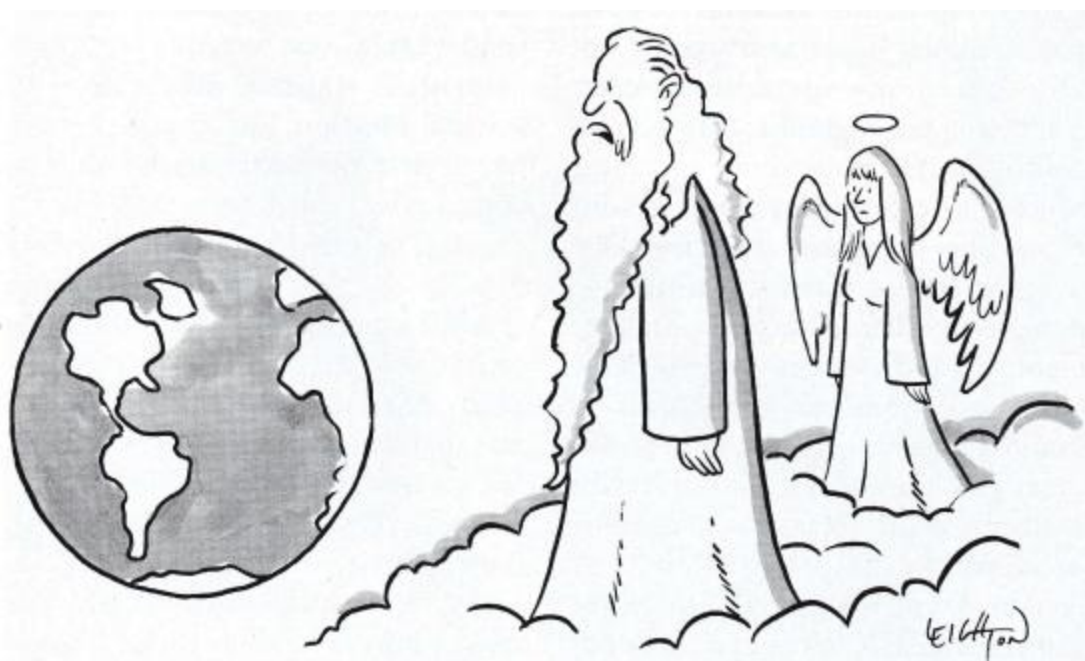
"And here are those family photos you thought you lost in the cloud."



"For future reference, when God starts talking about how messed up the world is, he's really just fishing for compliments."



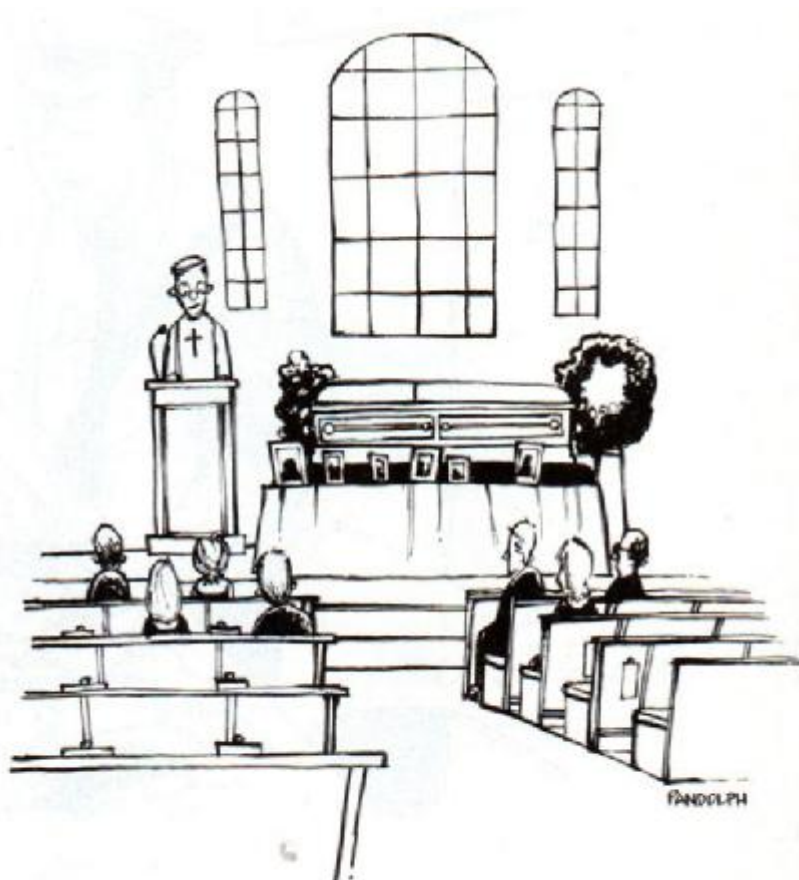
"Unfortunately, my evil deeds attracted media attention."



"I'm starting to prefer the ones who don't believe in me."

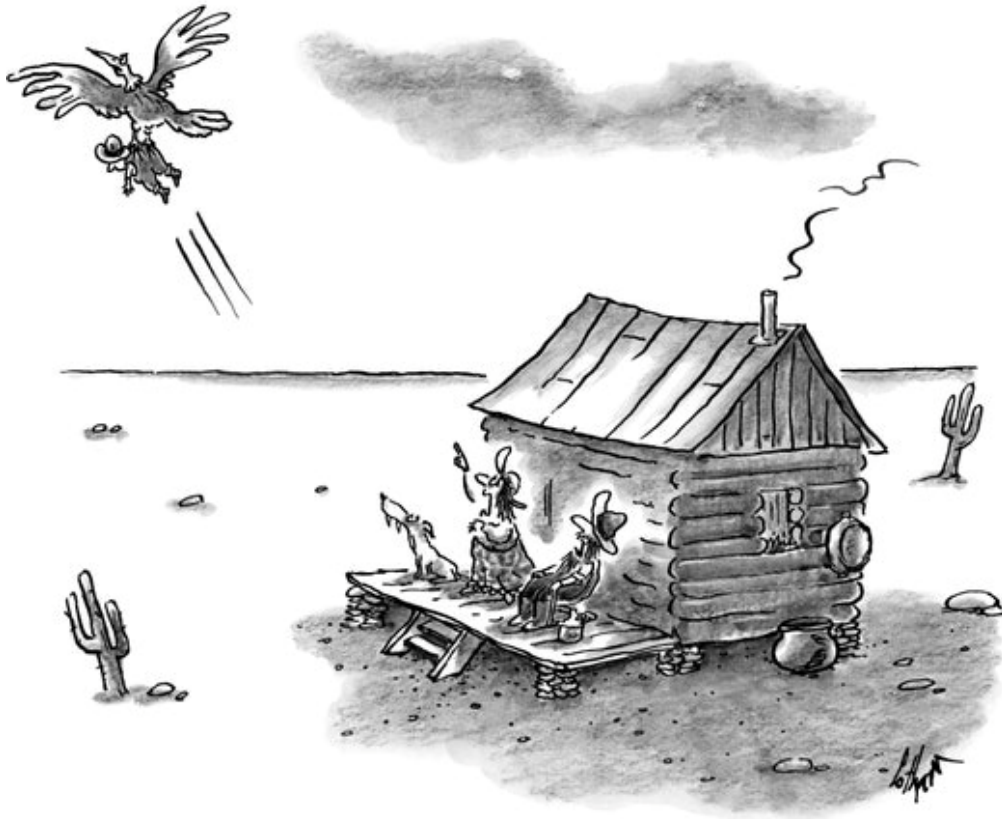


"My parents will come to church again if you switch to rosé."



*"Today's service will be
using the hashtag '#Jerrysdead.'"*

Kids (did you get used to them being at home?)



"You were the one who thought it was too dangerous to raise a child in the big city."



"Just wait until my autobiographical one-woman show."



"Remember when we used to have to fatten the kids up first?"



"I'm focussing less on girls and more on accumulating the things girls will eventually want."



"It was your first day—why not give it another twelve years?"



"I'll find you some candy, but first tell me how you got past the Secret Service."



"Nope, no monsters under here."



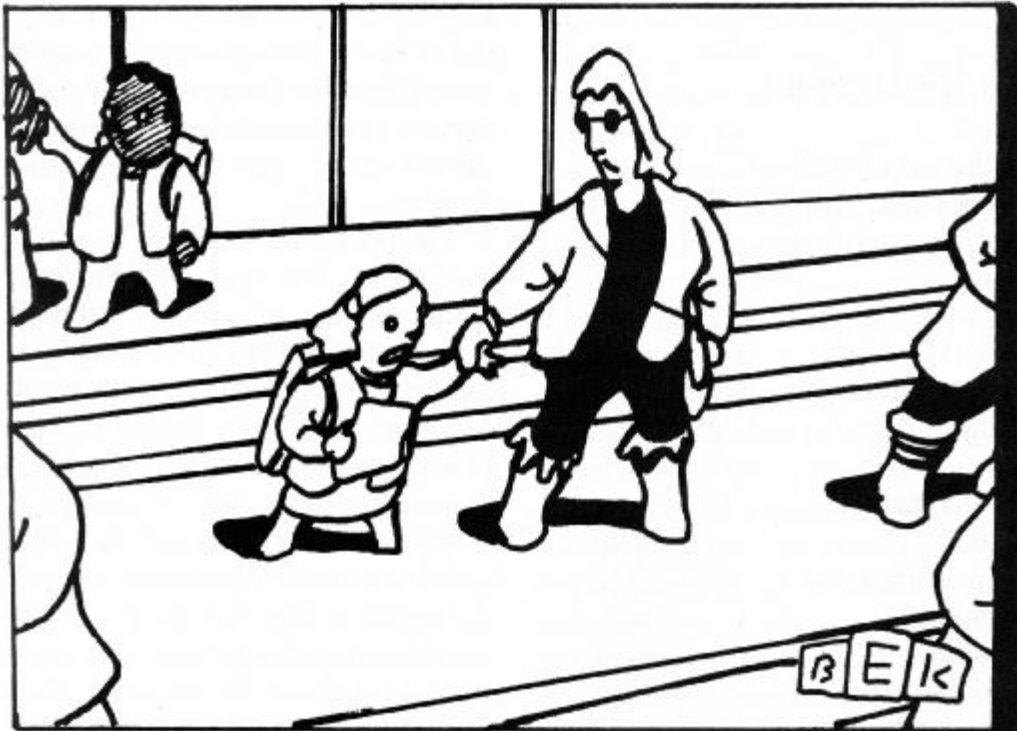
"Use your inside scream."



"Sarah has two mommies and both of them are good cooks."



"When I was your age, things were hard for my dad when he was my age."



"The school wants all the mothers who come to pick up in tights and crazy boots to dress better."



"A hug? I thought you needed tech support."

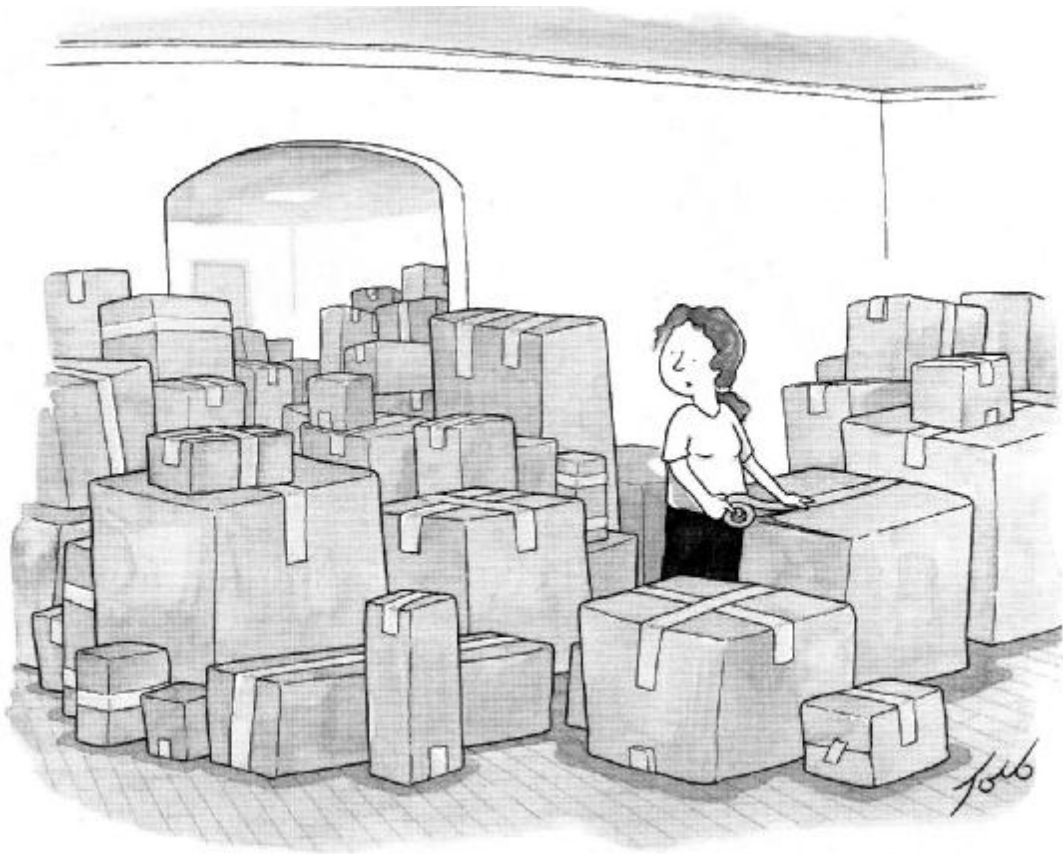
Marriage and Love (we need all we can get)



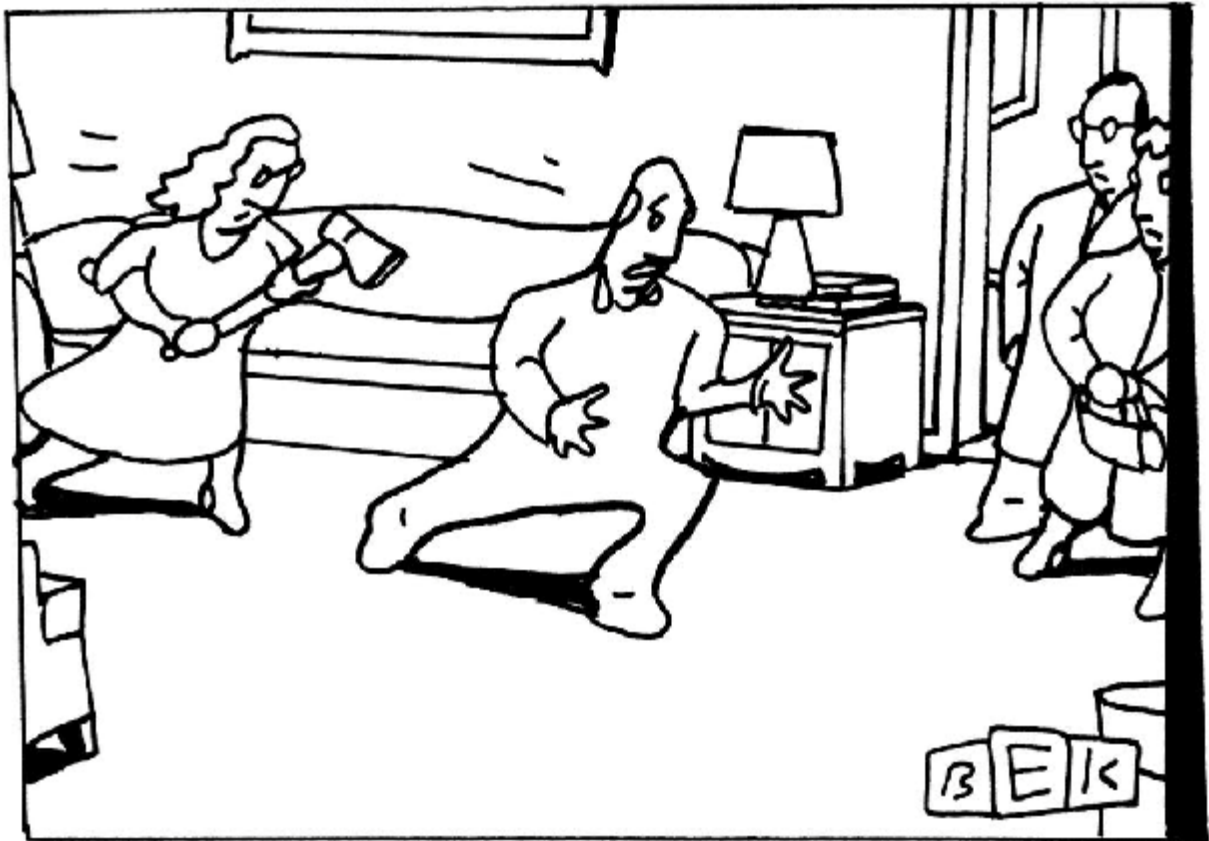
"Marry you? But I haven't even finished my dessert."



"Actually, I'm not shovelling her out—I'm shovelling her in."



"Frank?"



"It's part of our process."



"What happens in Marvin stays in Marvin."



noel

*"Can you believe it, Marlow—our little girl
is finally getting divorced."*



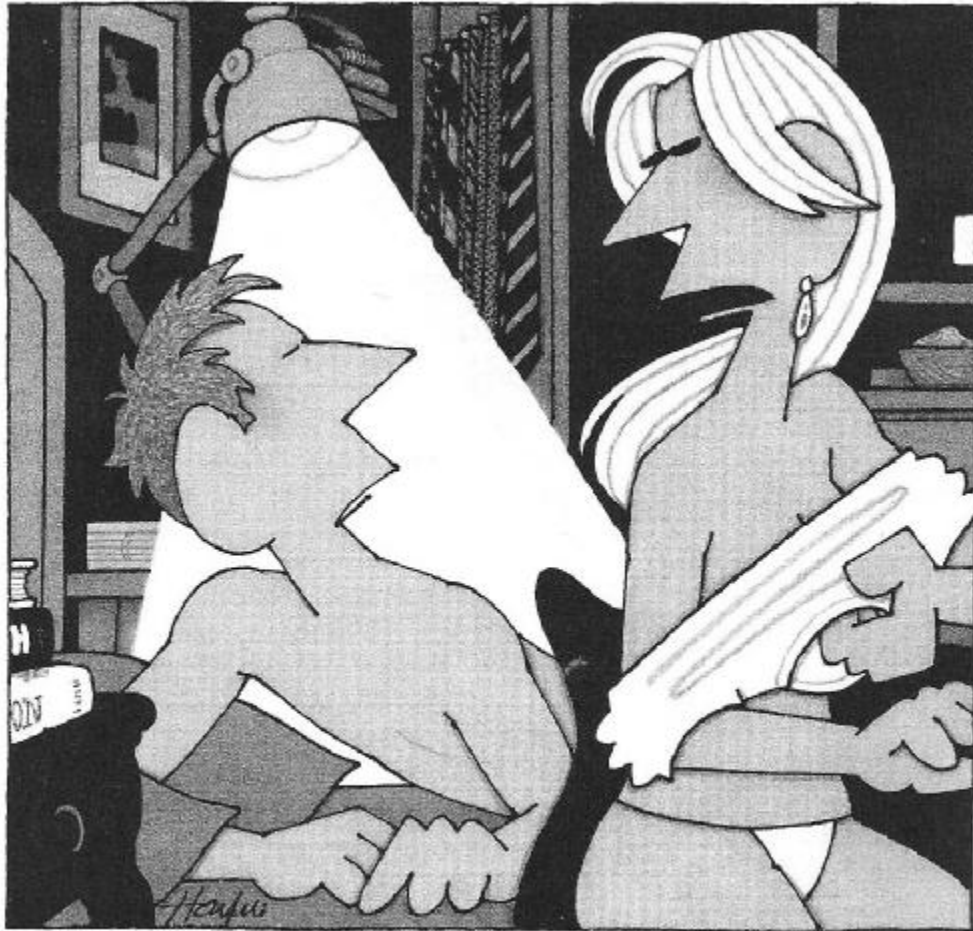
"Your dad and I are getting a divorce."



"It may surprise you to know that, contrary to your experience, you're actually very happily married."



"No, but I do think there should be a law against no-sex marriages."



*"If I were sleeping with other men, would I waste
my time sleeping with you?"*



Not *The New Yorker* - Thanks Philip

Modern Living - we need a reboot



"Hey, would you mind taking a quick sculpture of me and my family?"





"It's a baby. Federal regulations prohibit our mentioning its race, age, or gender."



"It will take longer than we thought to go digital."



"Can you hang on a sec? I think I just took another picture of my ear."



*"I hope you don't think that music
while I waited soothed me."*

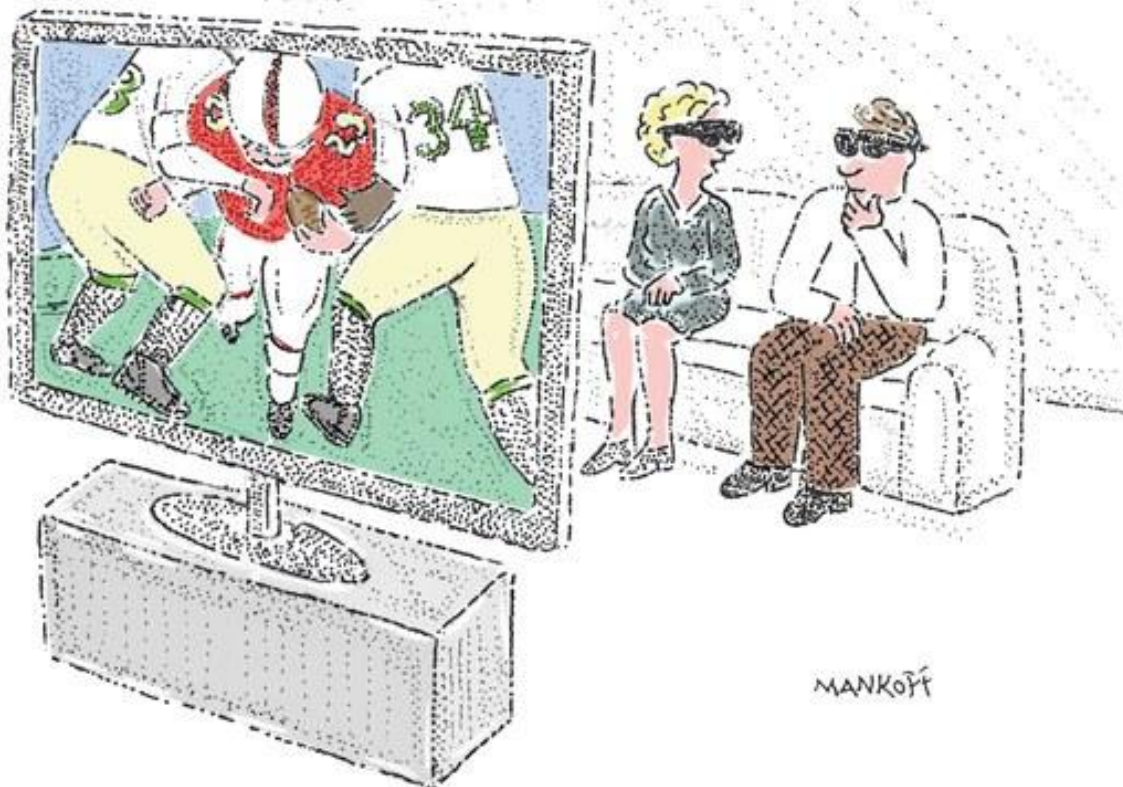


"Home is the place where, when you go there, they have to take you in—unless they've moved to a one-bedroom condo in Boca Raton."





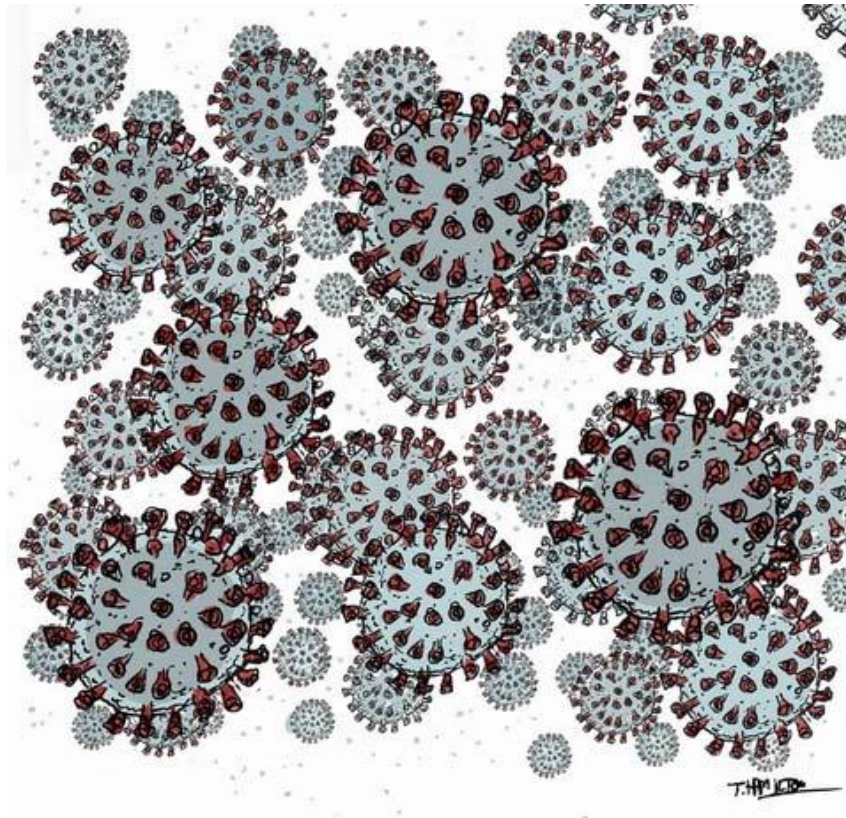
"Let me just tap this in, Greg, then you can putt out."



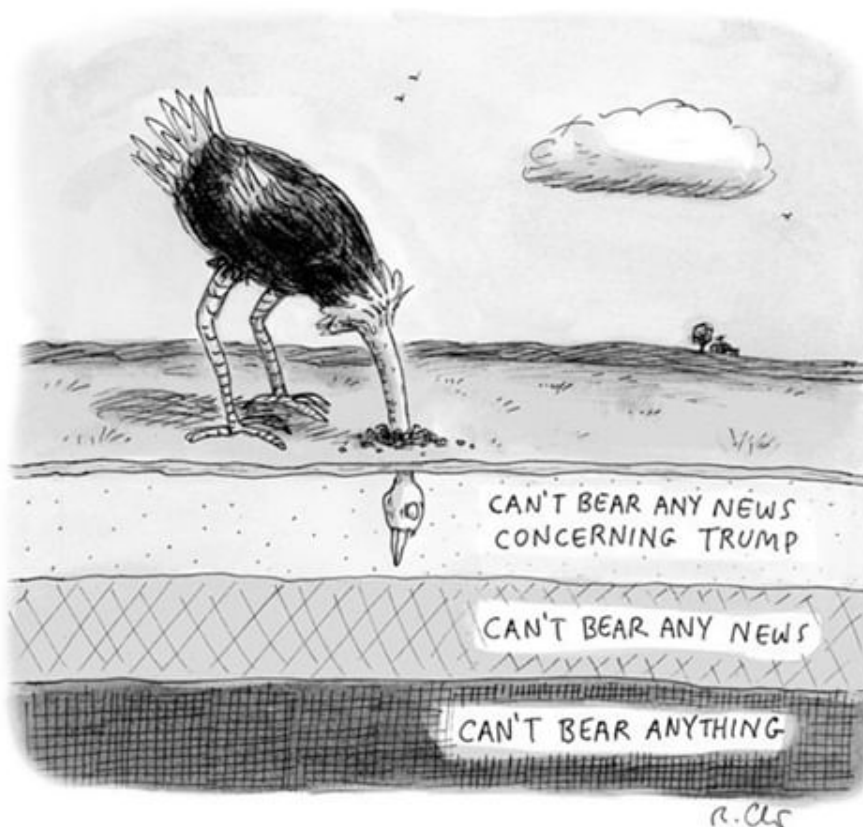
MANKOFF

"Maybe you set it up wrong."

Politics - heaven help us



"Whoa! This Trump rally is really packed!"



Some Good Advice

1. Stay in touch and be healthy.
2. Send *July Butterfly* to all your friends; there will be no print edition.
3. Look up back numbers of *Christmas Pudding Easter Egg Nuts in May and June Moon* on <http://www.pamirs.org/Christmas-Pudding.htm>
4. Greet everyone with a wave and a smile.
5. Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty.
6. And don't forget to take a subscription to *The New Yorker*:
<https://www.newyorker.com/>



Thalia Middleton, "Butterflies"