

As Everyone Stands on Two Asteroids

By Adam J. Edelman

Half of everyone in the world is on one asteroid. The other half is on another asteroid. The moon is in the middle. Some say that it is waxing, and some say that it is waning, but what is really important is that we all see a moon. More on that later...

Wednesday. People move around campus like blood in a partially clogged artery. They move in groups, sharing a common direction, but a different destination. Some walk past each other like amateur drug dealers, pretending not to notice anyone, distracting themselves with music or trees or girls' breasts.

I heard a white Iowa kid speak about racial profiling, and how it will save the nation. He spoke bravely, standing on his soapbox with his clean, upper middle class polo shirt and Gap kaki pants. I stood in the crowd next to people with dark skin.

The speaker got torn apart. He was verbally crucified like his god Jesus who tells him to be afraid of people who are different and that it is okay to go to war. The crowd divided his remains amongst them and fed their egos. It is human nature. I partook in the crucifixion, and when my ego was full, I left.

Then I moved to an area where some were asleep, some were reading, and some were whispering. I heard the clank sound of metal objects hitting the marble floor. It was silverware, or, more likely, steelware, striking the ground as they fell out of a human teenager's backpack. He looked around nervously and picked up his steelware and placed it back in his still unzipped bag.

This incident confused the hell out of me. Could this situation be explained by rational thought or were the circumstances surrounding the teen and his fork and spoon too complex for me to deduce given the lack of information that I possessed? Oh, of course, sweet epiphany. He stole

the steelware from one of the various dining halls on campus and planned to smuggle the contraband back to his dorm room for personal use. I then realized that my taxes and tuition paid for those utensils, so I killed him, but only in my thoughts. It is difficult for even the best prosecution attorney to make a case against a thought crime such as this, since there is a major lack of evidence.

I moved through time, but not space, finding myself in the same designated studying area a few weeks later on a

Friday. The faces have changed, more x's in the squares of the calendar, but the game remains the same. The constricted arteries pump live eighteen to twenty somethings through the cardiovascular system of campus. The undistracted, underestimated, undeserving, youth of America. Follow your parents. It almost feels like they are just in front of you, just out of sight, hidden by the lush pine trees of central campus, grown in a nursery hundreds of miles away in the 1970s. Damn it, my cell phone died, I need a plug in. Damn it, my Ipod died, I need another plug in. Damn it, my laptop died, I need a surge proof power strip.

So as I sit here, blinking away the passing days, I am face to face with my reflection silently existing in the window to the autumn afternoon outside. I can feel the whole beast of my generation breathing, thinking, and I feel myself in it, no separation between me and the beast. What will define us as a collective beast? Will it be terrorism? Gay rights? Abortion? Rush to the ballots to make your decision. For or against. Black or white. Republican or Democrat. Liberal or Conservative. East or West. Us or them. To vote, completely fill in the oval next to your choice.

I am haunted by the poltergeists of John Lennon and Hunter S. Thompson, they whisper to me when I am on the bus, or walking to work, speaking from a distant time. They were there, when everyone could see the bodhi tree, when they could feel it, be it. They were on to something, but it is gone now, dead. Dead as the dried leaves that blanket the fields of mud where the grounds keepers struggle to get grass to grow. Shot dead

with a bullet, just like John, just like Hunter. Post modernism has taken sway. Taxes for the poor, European cars for the rich. Shit rolls down hill, profits do the same. Just ask Herbert Hoover, he'll tell you.

Now, to me it's a shame that Herbert Hoover is the only President to come from Iowa. I, being born and raised in the great Hawkeye state, respect the commitment that Iowa has to the working class, and I'm sure that many Iowans would disapprove of Hoover's disregard of the po' folk.

When he was president, the United States had a chance to start over after the stock market crash. The economy obviously wasn't working well for us at the time. Bankers were leaping out of monstrous skyscrapers, preferring the unknown face of death over the increasingly dire financial circumstances that their households faced. The Joad family and the Okies were packing up everything and moving west in search of farm land that wouldn't blow away, while loosing lives of loved ones along the road to California.

At first, Hoover went with the laissez-faire approach, keeping libertarians everywhere happy. Government has no place meddling with things like the working conditions of their constituents. The invisible arm of the market would be sure to solve problems like that.

Every major politician at the time had his own idea of a way to get America out of the depression. Huebert Pierce Long, Jr., or Huey Long as we know him from our history class textbooks, was no different. The Senator from Louisiana created the "Share Our Wealth" program in 1934, proposing income redistribution by taxing large corporations and rich individuals to curb the poverty resulting from the Great Depression. Long gained immense popularity, and he was thinking about running for president. He was shot on September 8, 1935, once by Dr. Carl Austin Weiss, and again by a bullet fired by one of Long's bodyguards which was meant for Dr. Weiss. I saw the bullet holes in the wall of the Louisiana state capital when I was on a choir trip there. Just like, John, just like Hunter.

Now, as everyone stands on two asteroids, the events of the world

transpire and there is much to do. Our judgments and choices are made based on our position in relationship to the moon. So as the blood flows through the vanes, creeks move to tributaries which move through rivers, and rivers become oceans. The beast is ever changing, but the game remains the same. It breathes, feels, moves. Who will it devour, and who will it save? Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* did little for the working conditions of poor immigrants in meat packing plants. Mostly it forced the government to have more strict health codes with meat products.

“I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach,” Sinclair said.