



# **TRUER WORDS WERE NEVER...**

**(An adult comic book and movie)**

**By Sidney Goldberg**

**Illustrations by**

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## Mama and Papa



*THEIR*  
TRUER WORDS WERE NEVER...

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## Table of Contents

WHERE'S THE T.V.?.....3

THERE'S ONLY ONE DONALD.....7

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE.....9

THE HARDEST THING YOU'LL EVER LEARN.....10

LUCKIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD.....12

LAUGHING.....18

I'M GOING QUACKY.....19

WINNING TICKET.....22

ODE TO FIFL.....24

MOMMY'S JINA.....29

DON'T TELL THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE BLUEJAY STORIES.....30

GO KNOW.....32

SECRETS, WHO NEEDS 'EM.....34

DISGUSTING ANIMAL.....36

THE ANSWER.....39

THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT TIME.....44

HE WHO LAUGHS LAST.....54

KEEP YOUR EYES AND MOUTH SHUT.....57

JEALOUSY, WHY DO YOU TORTURE ME?.....59

TASHLACH.....61

THAT SMILE.....63

## **Where's The T.V.?**

Coming home late from a night out, my wife and I casually got undressed and into bed. Wanting to watch the eleven o'clock news I went to turn the T.V. on. "Where's the T.V., I said?" "You shut it off last night, didn't you?" my wife roared. I screamed, "I shut it off? You shut it off!" After arguing for an hour as to who shut the T.V. off, we realized we were robbed.

## THERE'S ONLY ONE DONALD

One beautiful spring day, I decided to take my four-and-a-half year old son, Lewis to visit the duck pond. He was so excited for it was to be the first time he was to see wild ducks in person.

*"Are they like Donald Duck?"* he asked gleefully as we got into the car.

*"They don't speak English as well as Donald does, but they're definitely related,"* I smiled.

When we arrived, his eyes gleamed as thousands of ducks swarm peacefully in the pond.

*"There they are,"* he screamed with delight, *"I can't wait to play with them and feed them, Dad."*

*"Here's a couple of slices of white bread. When they come up to you, break off a little piece and throw it to them."*

*"Great,"* he bellowed, as he scampered off to the pond.

Perchance, I met a neighbor and a conversation ensued and momentarily I disregarded my precious son. Suddenly, the peace and serenity of the normally tranquil duck pond was destroyed as I heard a chorus of angry quacks. Turning to see what caused all the tumult, I spotted nine million crazed ducks in pursuit of my dear little boy who was still holding the bread in his hand and running for dear life.

*"Throw the bread,"* I shouted, *"Throw the bread."*

Luckily, he threw all the bread and so the ducks forgot about eating him and ate the white bread instead.

*"I forgot,"* he said, with tears in his eyes. I just forgot, Dad. I want to go home, he whimpered. *"And you're wrong, Daddy, they're not like Donald Duck at all."*

## THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

In 1975, when my son Lewis was six years old, we moved from Manhattan to a lily-white suburban community, which shall go unnamed. One day during the spring, my son came home from school, crying hysterically.

"What's the matter?" I asked quite concerned, as I put him on my knee.

"There was this little cute black boy that came to School for the first day, and on the way home, all the kids made a circle around him and started calling him names and laughing at him. He was really crying, Daddy, he was really crying."

Lewis cried as if the entire world had beseeched him.

"Well, why are you crying?" I asked.

"I couldn't leave him all alone, could I Daddy?"

So, I got in the circle, held his hand and said I would be his friend. If I was black or purple and, had lots of pimples, would you still love me, Daddy?" he cried.

"I'll love you forever, no matter how many pimples you get," I said, hugging him.

"I'm very proud of you Lewis, very proud."

## THE HARDEST THING YOU'LL EVER LEARN

After finishing Sunday breakfast with my beloved family, seeing my adorable six year old son wearing yellow shorts and a shirt to match, it triggered me into whistling a song I had always loved; *"The Yellow submarine,"* by my all time favorite group, The Beatles. Halfway through it, I was dismayed to see my precious little son, crying like there was no tomorrow.

*"What's the matter?"* I asked, *"You don't like the song, what's wrong?"*

*"Oh, I like the song, Daddy, it's just that I don't know how to..."*

*"You don't know how to do what?"* I asked.

*"I don't know how to whistle,"* he cried, *"I don't know how to whistle."*

*"Oh, whistling is one of the hardest things you'll ever learn,"* I admonished. *"It takes many years of practice, but I promise, if you keep trying, sooner or later you'll whistle even better than Daddy."*

*"Teach me how to whistle, will you Dad?"* he pleaded, *"I want to whistle just like you."*

*"Remember, it's one of the hardest things you'll ever learn, but if you keep trying, one day, Bingo!"*

*"I know Dad, I know it's very hard, but if you don't teach me right now, I'll probably be too old to learn."*

*"Okay Lew, the first thing you do is put your lips together like this and you blow kind of softly."*

*"Wait a minute, Dad, birds don't have lips and they whistle, don't they?"*

*"Don't be such a wise-guy and do what I say."*

Lewis tried and tried, but to no avail. After perhaps twenty minutes of utter futility,

my forlorn son said he was going to ride his bike with his friends.

*"Don't forget," I said, as he prepared to scoot away. "It's one of the hardest things you'll ever learn"*

*"I know Dad," he sighed. "I'll practice every day, I promise" he said riding off.*

For the next two or three months I made sure not to whistle in his presence and he made sure not to mention it. Soon, it appeared that whistling had become a thing of the past, until one morning, as I was driving my family to visit my parents, when, much to my delight, I suddenly heard whistling emanate from the back of the car. Delighted, I turned to see my proud son whistling his little head off. But, not only was he able to do so by blowing out, he was able to whistle by inhaling.

*"Lewis, how did you ever learn to whistle like that?"*

*"Oh, whistling like that is one of the hardest things you'll ever learn, Dad," he said smiling. "But if you practice everyday, I promise, sooner or later you'll get it and you'll whistle even better than me."*

*"Promise," I asked, wanting to hug him.*

*"Promise, Dad, if I can do it, I'm sure, with a little luck, you'll get it too."*



## The Luckiest Girl in the World

When I took my daughter Carie, who was six years old at the time out of the shower, she began drying her hair. “Did Daddy ever show you how he can make his neck grow?” “Oh, show me daddy, please show me.” (Six pictures showing Daddy first raising his shoulders and lowering his neck and then slowly stretching his neck. Carie sees what happened, laughs and starts to cry.) What are you crying about? Why you’re the luckiest little girl in the whole world.” “Why am I so lucky, Daddy?” “Because most people say they laughed so hard that they peed in their pants, but you were actually lucky enough to laugh so hard that you actually peed in your pants; that’s why you’re the luckiest girl in the world. If I was you, I’d tell all your friends how lucky you are.” “You are my favorite Daddy.” Then she asked me to make my neck grow again and I did and luckily she only laughed.

## LAUGHING

Being a Daddy has always been the most rewarding experience of my life, and being some sort of frustrated comedian, I've strived teaching my children the importance of laughter.

When my daughter Carie was one year old, not only did she understand English, she spoke it beautifully. Despite her verbal prowess, she was so skinny that her diaper was always falling off, because it was just too big for her; thus everything she deposited in it, would fall out. One day, I decided it was time for a laugh. As Carie and I walked to her room, I pointed to all the small brown pellets that appeared to be scattered everywhere. *"What's that?"* I asked, as I stooped and picked up a little brown pellet. *"Sure looks like doody to me."* Then I put it to my nose and smelled it. *"Sure smells like doody to me,"* and my delicious little daughter cringed. Then I tasted it and extolled, for the entire world to hear, *"Oh, my God, it is doody. Here Carie, since you made it, I only think it's fair you taste it too. Come on, open that mouth of yours!"*

Carie looked at me horrified and started to scamper all over the house. When I finally caught her, I grabbed her and made her open her mouth.

*"Please, Daddy, I don't want to."*

*"Taste it!"* I demanded.

*"It's an M & M Daddy,"* she said smiling.

*"What did you think it was doody?"*

## I'M GOING *QUACKY*

When we moved from Manhattan to the suburbs, I suddenly found myself becoming enthralled with nature. The trees never looked more beautiful, and I found myself staring at the squirrels, raccoons, skunks and all the other wild creatures that I had the fortune to observe on my own property. Having been raised in the Bronx, I felt I was blessed to have the privilege to observe Mother Nature's children from my own backyard.

During the summer, I felt even more blessed when we awoke one summery morning to spot two ducks swimming in our pool. At first I was euphoric, but soon as they pooped in my clean pool, suddenly I wasn't that euphoric.

*"Lewis!"* I shouted, *"would you please get those damn ducks out of the pool?!"*

*"Sure, Dad,"* my eleven year old son said and proceeded to flex his scrawny muscles. *"Aaahhhh,"* he bellowed, doing his infamous Tarzan impression and belly-whopped into my once germ free pool.

Those disillusioned quackers must have been petrified, for they flew off into the horizon.

*"Good work Lew,"* I said. *"That'll teach those ducks they can't poop in our pool."*

*"Any time you need me Dad, just call me,"* he smiled.

The following morning, much to my dismay, I found those two ducks swimming and pooping like there was no tomorrow. Once again I summoned my Herculean son and once again he flexed his muscles, repeated Tarzan's mantra and dove into the pool and once again my uninvited guest took off like a shot out of hell.

Those two rotten ducks would appear every morning for the next four years.

Frustrated, as a last resort, I called the nature center and asked for help. They told me if I could catch them, they would gladly transport them up state for a fifty-dollar donation. I figured, what the heck, if my now muscle bound son would catch them, it would be worth the fifty just to get rid of them. "*LEWIS,*" I screamed and he immediately responded by throwing a net over them, which cost me another twenty. Having captured them, he put them in a cardboard box and we took them to the nature center, who, upon receiving my fifty-dollar check, promised I would never see them again.

*"Good riddance and goodbye,"* I said under my breath as we drove home.

I can't tell you how wonderful it felt not having to awaken every morning to those two unwanted guests. For the rest of the summer, I convinced myself everyday that I couldn't have spent fifty dollars any wiser. The following summer, much to my chagrin, they were back, pooping and prancing around as if they were paying the mortgage. There was no way I was going to spend another fifty to get rid of them, no way. I just did my impersonation of Tarzan and screamed and splashed water and eventually they would fly away, but they would return the following morning as if I never screamed at all, and then a miracle; in addition to those two misbegotten son-of-a-ducks, there was now seven little ducklings swimming around as if they owned the place. If they all made in my pool at the same time, I was certain that the Board of Health would condemn it and what would the neighbors think?

*"Lewis,"* I screamed; "*get them out of there before I get a shotgun!*"

Without bothering to flex his muscles, Lewis threw the net and managed to snare all the ducklings as their frightened parents flew away.

*"They're not ducks, they're chickens,"* he said smiling, just as the male duck dive-bombed him.

*"I can't believe it Dad; they're attacking me,"* as the mother duck swooped down

on him. He raced into the garage with the little ducklings and prayed for survival.

Outraged, I called the nature center. Again they informed me that if I could capture them they would gladly transport them up state for a seventy-five dollar donation. *"No thanks,"* I said, *"I think I might just have them for dinner."*

## WINNING TICKET

To celebrate my eighteenth birthday, my beautiful sister, Sonnie and her husband, Eddie took me to Yonkers Raceway.

I was very excited for it was the first time I had ever gone to the track. Since, I didn't know anything about horses, I said, rather embarrassed, *"What should I bet on?"* *"I don't what to bet on either,"* my brother-in-law admitted.

"I got a great idea," my sister chimed in. "Let's bet the one horse in the first race, the two horse in the second race and so on," my sister suggested.

Be it that none of us were real horseplayers, we all agreed to pool our money and do so.

*"Since you're the prettiest,"* I exclaimed, *"Why don't you hold the tickets for good luck?"*

After losing the first six races, I wasn't so sure that she was that pretty or that lucky, since her system of picking winners was such a bust. But, as fate would have it, the number seven horse went off at fifty-to-one odds, and was I excited, when it came in first.

*"We won, we won!"* I screamed.

And just as my sister proudly displayed the winning ticket, a pigeon pooped right on it.

*"Here,"* she beamed, offering me the winning ticket. *"Since I picked the winner, the least you can do is collect the money."*

## ODE TO FIFI

Instead of dedicating his life to his children, like most normal people do, my best friend Bernie, dedicated his life to his French poodle, which, he called Fifi. Like Mary and her little lamb, everywhere Bernie went, Fifi was sure to follow.

*"How much is two and two?"* he'd ask proudly, and Fifi would bark four times.

*"Roll over and play dead,"* he'd demand and Fifi would roll over and play dead.

He'd boast there wasn't a trick in the world that his beloved Fifi couldn't do. He was probably right, but I still hated that dog, because every fifteen minutes that dog had to pee. That's right, like clock work, that dog peed four times an hour, and I figured it out, if that dog was up fifteen hours, that's sixty times a day, over three thousand times a year. Disgusting, you know what I mean? Absolutely revolting.

*"You have to be crazy,"* I'd moan, every time we were together. *"We can't have a descent conversation without being interrupted by this leaking mutt,"* I'd bitch.

Despite it all, we managed to remain friends for the next fourteen years. One day, Bernie's mother took ill and he asked if I would take care of Fifi for a couple of days.

*"Sure,"* I said, *"but don't expect me to walk her every fifteen minutes, like you do. I'll put some paper in a box in the garage and that's where she's going to stay, because I have to go to work and I'm sure if I let her stay in the house, she'll pee all over everything and you know how crazy my wife would get."*

*"I really appreciate this Buddy,"* Bernie said, hugging me. *"I'll be back before you know it. Now take good care of my baby,"* he said with tears in his eyes as he started to depart. *"Come on Fifi, one last time. How much is two and nine,"* he beamed.

And sure enough, Fifi barked eleven times.

*"Be back in a flash,"* Bernie said, leaving. *"She's a regular Einstein, isn't she?"*

At first, I didn't bring her into the garage. Like a fool, I brought her into my sterile house and my children, including my wife immediately started playing with her. They'd roll a ball and Fifi would fetch it. They'd clap their hands and Fifi would do a somersault. That's the one trick that Bernie taught which I admired. Simply because I was always too chicken to do a somersault when I dived, and here this little mutt with some kind of urinary problem had the *chutzpah* to do it at will.

Now, I didn't tell you this, but when Fifi pees, she howls. Where she got that I'll never know. All I know is she howls. Morning, noon or night, she howls. That's why the whole neighborhood knows when she pees. That night, every time she howled, one of my brilliant children would come running into my bedroom smiling and say, "*She peed, right Daddy?*"

*"Yeah, she peed! Now go to sleep! It's one o'clock in the morning!"*

By the third night, with all that howling going on, I thought I was going to lose my mind. It soon appeared that when Fifi howled, all the dogs in the neighborhood began howling in response. I started having nightmares that werewolves were inhabiting my abode.

It was three o'clock in the morning and I had it. I figured, if I muzzled her, it wouldn't stop her from peeing, but it sure would stop that howling and I in turn would get a good night's rest.

*"What are you going to do?"* my wife asked, afraid I was going to do something rash.

*"You'll see,"* I said with determination, as I headed for the garage.

Not only did she, but both my kids, rubbing the sleep from their eyes, accompanied me. When we entered the garage, there was Fifi all sprawled out.

*"There's something wrong with her,"* my daughter cried.



*"She looks like she's dying,"* Lewis wailed.

*"What could it be?"* my wife moaned.

*"How the hell do I know?"* I shouted back. *"I just got here, remember?!"*

And then I suddenly put two and two together. Because raccoons had broken into the garage to get at the garbage, inadvertently, I had put some rat poison down and I realized that dumb leaking mutt must have eaten some. I knew I had to make Fifi throw-up to get rid of the poison or she would die.

*"Go get some salt!"* I said. "She must have eaten some of that rat poison I put down."

Lewis raced to get the salt as my beleaguered wife and daughter whimpered.

*"What are you going to tell Bernie if she dies?"* my wife asked.

*"Oh, Daddy, even though she pees all the time, I really love Fifi, don't you?"*

*"Here's the salt Dad,"* my son said, looking quite apprehensive.

I opened poor Fifi's moth and poured what seemed like a ton of salt into it. Then we waited.

*"Think she's gonna throw up?"* Carie said hopefully.

With that, Fifi closed her eyes and started foaming at the mouth.

*"She's gonna die, Daddy, she's gonna die,"* Carie cried.

"In every Frankenstein movie, whenever they foam at the mouth they die," Lewis squealed.

Unfortunately, he was right. Poor Fifi howled as she peed one last time, then rolled over, and without my best friend Bernie asking her to play dead, died.

*"What are we going to tell Uncle Bernie?"* my daughter asked with tears in her eyes."

*"All he had was Fifi Dad,"* Lewis reminded me.

As usual, I got an idea. *"We'll just have to go and buy him another Fifi"*, I said diabolically.

*"But he'll know,"* my wife said, *"He'll definitely know."*

*"Oh, yeah, well, we'll just have to see about that, won't we?"*

The following morning I went to the kennel and bought a poodle that looked exactly like Fifi, and when Bernie returned and clapped his hands, on cue, the dog jumped right into his arms. Anxious to take his beloved Fifi home, he thanked us for taking such good care of his beloved and quickly departed. About an hour later, he called and sounded quite distressed.

*"What's the matter?"* I asked.

*"Oh, there's nothing the matter. I just called to ask how you did it."*

*"Did what?"* I said rather casually.

*"I don't believe it, but Fifi hasn't peed for an hour."*

*"You're kidding,"* I said, *"That's impossible."*

*"She also doesn't roll over and play dead anymore,"* said Bernie, sounding rather remorseful.

*"Well, she is getting on in age,"* I reminded him.

*"Aren't we all,"* he added, rather remorsefully.

*"Which do you prefer? Her, peeing four times an hour or rolling over and playing dead?"* I asked.

*"I guess you're right buddy, I guess you're right."*

*"Darn tootin' I'm right. We, playing cards Friday night?"*

*"Don't I always play?"* Bernie said.

*"See ya Friday Paly, see ya Friday."*

## MOMMY'S *JINA*

My wife Leslie and her dear friend Sharon boarded a very crowded bus with our four-year old son Lewis and his best friend Jonas. Moments later, Jonas, who was much taller than Lewis suddenly blurted, "I'm much taller than you, 'cause I come up to my Mommy's belly button."

*"Oh, yeah,"* Lewis shouted in response, *"I can reach my Mommy's jina and this is her Jina,"* he beamed, pointing.

Although it was not the stop they were destined for, embarrassed, my wife and dear friend exited.

## DON'T TELL ME THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE BLUE JAY STORIES

It was a beautiful summer day and both my wife and I were busy playing in the backyard. I was planting flowers and my wife was picking up some twigs that had fallen after the rain. Suddenly, a crazed Blue Jay swooped down on her and using its deadly beak stabbed her in the back.

Frightened and in pain, she screamed, *"Help, I've just been stabbed"* and started to cry. I rushed over and was taken aback when I saw the blood ooze through her blouse.

*"What happened?"* I asked, very concerned.

*"I don't know, but I think a Blue Jay just attacked me and flew away. There, there it is."*

*"You must have come pretty close to its nest. It was probably trying to protect its chicks,"* I said, aware that she was bleeding rather profusely.

*"What happens if I get rabies?"* she cried.

And it's killing me, I think I'm going to faint.

With that, she actually fainted in my arms. Panicked, I struggled to put her in the car and racing to the emergency room at the near by hospital, I went through three red lights, when a police car pulled me over.

"Okay, wise guy, what's the big rush?" the belligerent cop asked. "Gimme your driver's license and registration, Buster."

*"My wife was just stabbed and I'm rushing her to the hospital,"* I pleaded.

Without bothering to ask how she was stabbed, seeing my wife sprawled out in the back of the car with blood on her blouse, he announced, *"All right, follow me!"*

With sirens blasting, we went through four red lights and arrived at the emergency

ward in three minutes. He rushed into the hospital and returned with numerous attendants, who put my wife on a stretcher and wheeled her away.

*"So, you want to tell me how it happened?" he smirked. "Want to make a statement before I book you?"*

*"Book me? And, what-do-you-mean, I want to make a statement?"*

*"Hey, I've been involved in a million family squabbles. Sometimes they hit and sometimes they..."*

*"Hey wait a minute," I said rather indignantly. "Are you accusing me of stabbing my wife?"*

*"You got it Buster."*

With that, the attending intern appeared. Before I could open my mouth, the cop interceded.

*"What happened Doc?" he asked rather cockily.*

*"It appears the poor woman received a very severe puncture wound."*

*"How big do you think the knife was?" the officer asked as he proceeded to put handcuffs on me.*

*"Oh, it wasn't a knife," the intern said. "I believe, she said it was some kind of crazed Blue Jay that attacked her," he said.*

*"Why the hell didn't you tell me it was a Blue Jay?" the cop roared.*

*"Because you never asked," I smiled.*

*"Wait until the guys at the station hear this, they'll never believe it, never."*

## GO KNOW

When I was eleven years old, the general consensus was, Mickey, Willie and the Duke were the three greatest center fielders in the game.

They were good all right, but secretly, I knew my father was better all-around because, besides being able to hit, run, throw and steal bases, he knew just about everything.

*"Pick a card," he'd dare, with his eyes twinkling. "Look at it and put it anywhere in the deck!"*

Then he'd shuffle the cards and say, "Ten of hearts," or whatever. He was always right. Playing checkers, he could get a king in six moves, check mate in seven moves. Even though he was starting to gray at the temples and Mickey, Willie and the Duke had retired he still won every game we played.

When I graduated high-school, I was certain that I was supposed to be elated, because all of my friends were jumping for joy as they sent their tasseled hats soaring into the air, but at that particular moment in time, I noticed for the first time, that my Dad was slipping. He had continued to applaud a good ten seconds after all the other parents had stopped.

It suddenly became apparent, that my Dad was losing his timing, which I had always thought was one of his greatest assets. He was always right there, but there was no doubt about it, my father was starting to erode.

When I turned forty-five, a miracle occurred. For some unbeknownst reason, I noticed some of his old sparkle was back. Granted he wasn't the best center fielder any more, but glimpses of his old brilliance and timing made a most welcome appearance.

I told him about my son Lewis, who had just graduated high-school and who was

of the opinion that I knew nothing, for he had become the absolute authority on anything that concerned world affairs. Dad seemed to know exactly what I was going through, I mean exactly. What a guy, come back player of the year.

*“Hey Pop, want to have a catch? There's a few things I'd like to ask you. Thanks Dad, I knew I could count on you.”*

## SECRETS, WHO NEEDS 'EM?

It is widely accepted, that all inventions are a result of man's needs. Galileo wanted to take a peek at the moon, so he invented the telescope, Edison wanted to read a dirty book when his mother went to sleep, so he invented electricity, Einstein always wanted to have a few aunts and uncles so he invented 'Relativity', Salk, who had a kind heart, felt sorry for those kids, so he invented the vaccine, but who the hell invented the secret and why? Who needs it? Secrets are such a drag. They have to weigh fourteen tons.

Unlike the Mets or the big bang, I can't find a thing about that initial secret, not a damn thing, nothing, '*nada*,' '*gornisht*.' In addition to malevolence and lust, there are still a few theoreticians that say it was probably a result of shame, greed or something. Who the hell knows, I don't, do you?

Personally I don't believe them, not one. As far as I'm concerned, far too little has been made of the first secret. Nobody seems to give a damn, including my mother and your aunt Bertha. As far as I'm concerned, it probably had to do with something that wasn't *kosher*. According to my mother, it always does.

I still remember when I secretly went with my friend Bruno to a Chinese restaurant and ate my first spare rib. Of course I couldn't tell my mother I ate something *unkosher*, I couldn't break her heart. I guess that's the thanks you get for being one of the *Chosen*; pure unadulterated guilt, and if we're the *Chosen*, how come the Arabs got the oil and they circumcise us and not them?

A long time ago, I once had this friend that told me this story, 5,000 years ago, just before the father of our people, Abraham, checked into his favorite oasis, when there wasn't a moon to be found and it was very dark, he inadvertently mistook a spare rib for a



piece of *'flanken.'* Sure, it tasted delicious and sure he savored every morsel, but could he tell his mother, could he tell his best friend Moses, who literally thought the world of him? I'm asking you. The man walked across the burning sands of Ur and didn't say a word, not a peep.

That was a pretty good story, but personally I have my own ideas, I think it was one of those Cro-Magnons, who awoke one glorious morning to discover his best friend's hairy mate, thanks to good old evolution, she had suddenly become hairless. It was the first time he ever saw a pair of "*knockers,*" that didn't look like coconuts. The man, or ape, or whatever you want to call him, went out of his mind, not only did he become fascinated, he became horny, and since there was no soap to take a shower with, you remember what you did in the shower when you were sixteen, he found himself coveting his neighbor, and you remember what the Bible says about coveting, I mean the man was absolutely drooling about his best friend's hairless wife. That, in my estimation was probably the first secret. Not that spare rib bit my friend told me about, and by the way, we're no longer friends. You know why? He moved to Tennessee thirteen years ago.

## DISGUSTING ANIMAL

In between innings, I smiled as I looked at my wife Leslie, who was snuggled next to me, reading. Having survived the trials and tribulations of out-and-out warfare; twenty-four years of marriage, I was happy for that moment of tranquility and trust we had finally come to share. It was wonderful and I was thankful.

To compound that moment of momentary bliss, when Strawberry homered to lead off the sixth inning and tie the score, I was ever more grateful.

*"Praise the Lord!"* I shouted.

*"Praise the Lord my ass! You did it again, you disgusting animal!"* my wife, fuming with rage

needlessly reminded me, *"You did it again and I hate you!"*

*"I did what again?"* I asked appearing rather surprised and quite offended.

*"You know what you did you pig! You passed wind,"* she blared with all the venom and anger she could muster. *"I can't take it anymore,"* she sobbed, holding her nose. *"Why don't you go to the bathroom? you, you,"* she *'fumfered,'* ending with a very demonstrative whimper.

With her demeanor suddenly changing from victim to murderer, she pinched her adorable nose and gasped as she opened her unwilling mouth to breathe. Known to use one syllable words when frustrated, my wife's a regular Tallulah, she continued her assault, *"You, you foul...!"*

*"...Foul? It was fair by a mile, look at the instant replay,"* I shouted, hoping to redirect

her nasal focus. *"You didn't even see it. You were too busy reading. How can you*

*call it foul?"* I moaned.

Leslie had that undeniable look of contempt, or was it pity? I can never tell the difference with her anyway, what disturbed me most was I didn't know who she was feeling sorry for, herself or me.

*"Look at the replay. Ya see, they blew another call."*

When she giggled in response, it was really a smirk, but I didn't know it. Interpreting her giggle to be some kind of a hint of forgiveness, I nonchalantly touched her ninth rib, which I knew to be her funny bone. Like Old Faithful, she unwillingly laughed. Knowing how important laughter is to a healthy relationship; twenty four-years, remember? I tickled her ninth rib even harder.

Seeing her filled with the ever-so necessity of merriment, rocking from side to side in the very bed where we have shared a thousand and one nights of such memorable pleasures, sadly I realized that she was still unaware how much she needed me. Just as I sensed an unborn fart hastily signaling, *'ready or not,'* hoping to delay the inevitable, I squeezed with all my might. I promise and for some reason I went at her funny bone with both hands. Inadvertently, I touched her fifth rib, which always turns her giggles into unadulterated guffaws. She started laughing uncontrollably. My dear wife never seemed happier, for she was guffawing like she never guffawed before, as my stomach grumbled in pain, I squeezed even harder.

*"Why so pensive?"* she asked, fighting back her tears of laughter, which were of my doing, whether she chose to admit it or not. Suddenly, in the midst of her uncontrollable hysteria, she let fly a double flutter blast, which in my dictionary means two minuscule pea farts in rapid succession.

Unbeknownst, as a result of the Yankee bean soup I had for lunch, at the exact moment of my beloved's flutter blast, uncontrollably, one of my silent but deadly ones had

come to fruition. The kind that have been known to make a certain individual call me a disgusting animal. After sticking my head under the covers, I surfaced gasping and said, *"What did you have for lunch, Yankee bean soup?"*

*"I've never smelled anything so revolting in my life. Why don't you go to the bathroom, you, you disgusting animal,"* I said holding my nose and gagging.

*"Oh, stop it honey. You know mine don't smell like yours,"* she said coquettishly.

She was right of course, her farts never smell, simply because she doesn't have a rotten stomach like me, and since she wasn't aware of my timely contribution, I thought it was the perfect time to bring her down to where the rest of us disgusting animals resided.

*"Oh, yeah,"* I said rather vehemently. *"You think yours don't smell as bad as mine? Well put your head under the covers and take a deep breath,"* I dared.

With that, she confidently stuck her head, under the covers and took an extra long deep breath, where as you know, we have shared more than one memorable occasion. I know I repeated myself, but certain things are important. With the sweet smell of revenge spread across her beautiful face, she grinned as she resurfaced.

*"I think it smells rather wonderful, don't you?"*

I agreed, what else could I do? I wanted to see the end of the Met game before she started calling me all those names.

## THE ANSWER

At the tender age of almost two, compared to all my friends who were still saying goo-goo and gaga, I could talk up a storm, but being the kind of guy I was, I refused to embarrass them or their mothers.

I soon stopped trying to prove my verbal prowess, even to my own mother, because every time I opened my mouth to ask something, she was there stuffing it feverishly, while mumbling something about me never going hungry like she and her parents had in the old country. Soon, I came to realize that incessant yearning I had for *'The Answer'* was getting me no where, except, save for my diapers, my body was beginning to resemble Mookie, my second favorite teddy bear.

Unfortunately, I still had this question that kept gnawing at me, as I grew and grew, much to the delight of my mother, who's right arm had become quite muscular from lifting the fork as she kept on feeding me.

When my two best friends started calling me *Blimpy* and *Chubs*, I gave all my Captain Marvel comic books to my cousin Murray, who was my hero, for he was the starting quarterback on his high school football team, and I began hounding him for *'The Answer.'* All he'd do was step into the pocket, take three steps and throw me a perfect spiral. Needless to say, he never gave me *'The Answer,'* either. Go know, I should have kept all those comic books, they're worth a fortune today.

In my dauntless pursuit of *'The Answer,'* I drove Murray and anyone else I could corner, crazy. *"What's 'The Answer?'* I'd eagerly ask and each and every one of them would respond, *"What's 'The Answer? You expect me to tell you 'The Answer?' Find out yourself, like everybody does,"* they screamed defiantly. Not even my own mother would tell me. I was sure somebody in the Bronx had to know *'The Answer,'* but obviously, the limited

audience I had to contend with didn't have the vaguest idea, because they all began to avoid me like the plague. Even the school crossing guard turned away whenever he saw me coming and needless to say I was almost hit by a passing Chevy more times than I care to remember.

Relentless in my pursuit, I traveled as far as Nepal and I can't tell you how excited I was when I came face-to-face with the all-knowing, Dahli Lama himself. Not known to waste time, I immediately grasped his cold, spindly hand and filled with the elation of anticipation, I sang, "*Hello Dahli, well hello Dahli,*" *would you please tell me 'The Answer?'*"

He wiped his bony hands on his dark gray dress, then looked in my eyes with his all-knowing steel-gray eyes, shook his head in disgust, turned away like all the rest had and didn't say a word. Sure with the clouds and all it was the most beautiful mountain I ever saw, but let me tell you, after standing on that beautiful mountain and staring at his baldhead for two weeks, besides being disappointed, I was nauseous. Dress or no dress, he was just like all rest. He stopped talking to me the minute I asked him for '*The Answer.*'

Tired and weary, I have come to the conclusion that '*The Answer*' is not love. What the world needs is a *matzo brie*. They'd love it, because deep down in their hearts they know. What else is there? They're not stupid, they know that even though Moses gave us the Ten Commandments, five thousand years ago, man still sins against man. Lincoln freed the slaves and yet, who is not a slave? The world joined forces and defeated Hitler and yet who does not feel persecuted? In the past, our beloved President Reagan, insuring America's just place in heaven, personally place '*The Lord's Prayer*' in all of our nuclear warheads.

You think the highways and the subways are crowded? Wait until you get to heaven. You won't believe the tumult and chaos, when four billion people, pushing and shoving, try

to squeeze through the pearly gates at the same time, each one in a cold sweat, trying to convince themselves that they really belong in heaven, "*I fought for my country didn't I?*"

"*Where are all the sinners?*" a thundering voice asks and once again there is no answer. Pacing nervously on a distant cloud, miraculously, St. Peter appears. Cupping his angelic hands, he announces, "*Because of the enormous demands on reservations, I'm sorry to inform you, but we're out towels and soap. In other words, there's no room left in heaven.*"

Angry and alarmed the people raise their rifles and shout, "*Is this the reward we get for doing all that killing you've asked of us?*"

Now, remember when I mentioned that *matzo brie* and you laughed. Well, let me tell you Buster, nobody ever dropped an Atom bomb or fired a gun while eating a *matzo brie*.

"*It makes sense,*" you say, good, you're finally catching on, but I see you're totally not convinced. All right, try this, Miss America runs up and kisses you liked you've never been kissed before. I mean I'm talking about a real '*Frenchie*.' Then, with her hungry eyes, she looks into your hungry eyes and she says she wants to make mad, passionate love to you. At that particular moment in time, although it's totally not unexpected, your *schmeckle* lets you know that your M16 is not '*The Answer*.' Now look who's asking who for '*The Answer?*'

Still remember what I told you about that '*matzo brie?*' Good, I'm glad somebody's listening. Sure I'll tell you how to make it. Just take your time mister, I know you're in a rush, but these things take time. Now, you take two eggs and you scramble them in a mixing bowl. Then you take three slightly salted matzo and you run them quickly under water. Then you crumble them in the eggs and you stir. With your left hand you pour a little peanut oil in a warmed frying pan, you dump the whole thing in and you stir for about two or three minutes. I don't believe it, but look who's back, Miss America and look how

she's looking at you. What are you some kind of Romeo, mister? Hurry, now you want me to hurry? What's the rush? Somebody might think you never ate a 'matzo brie' before... Oh, you love it, well I'm not surprised. That was about ten years ago. Then much to my dismay, I read somewhere, that the late Golda Meir shared a *matzo brie* with the also late President Lyndon Johnson the day before he sent a half-a-million of our boys to Viet Nam. Well, there goes another one of my brilliant theories. It's not the first time they've been shot down, you know.

Yeah, I'm still searching for *'The Answer.'* What are you gonna do? I know, I know, some people never seem to learn; only this time, I'm not going to act like some beguiled unsophisticated *schmuck* and spend a fortune traveling, all over the world. Screw the Dahli Lama, TranSINdental Meditation, Weight Watchers, Zen, Silva Mind Control, The Forum, EST and West. This time I'm going to ask my wife and kids. They seem to know everything, anyway.

Sitting around the dinner table that night, I waited 'til they finished dessert, I didn't want to ruin their appetite, and then I popped the question.

They all looked at me, shaking their heads like that Dahli Lama had, and then with their outrage becoming quite evident, shouted encores, "*The Answer to what?*"

"*The Answer' to what this whole damn thing is bout,*" I responded in my shot-down voice.

"*You said it was a matzo brie,*" my adorable twelve year old daughter thoughtfully reminded me.

"*I'm sorry sweetheart, but unfortunately I just found out I was wrong.*"

"*You mean to tell me we didn't have to eat all those 'matzo braes?'*" my wife asked with fire



spewing from her eyes.

*"As far as I'm concerned,"* my son growled, pushing his plate away disgustedly. *"I knew you*

*were wrong all the time, but you wouldn't listen."*

*"I'm sorry, Daddy, but I really hate 'matzo bries' too"* my little princess chimed in.

Yeah, it must be a good twelve years since we all shared a *'matzo brie.'* My wife doesn't even buy eggs anymore. She says, too much cholesterol can kill you. My son is busy working for the President and my daughter tells me she's really in love this time. And me, you're right. I'm still looking for *'The Answer,'* only this time, I'm certain that I'm very close, because I can almost taste it. I've eliminated everything but a stuffed cabbage.

## THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT TIME

Last night I had the most startling dream. After waiting almost 2,000 odd years for HIM to show up, you'll never guess where I saw Jesus Christ. Not on PBS mind you, but on Johnny Carson's farewell show: Now, even though Carson had interviewed just about everybody that was anybody, personally I think Jesus should have come when Paar had the show, he was much more sensitive. I guess when it comes to show biz, you never know. Anyway, when the big man made his unannounced appearance, Ed McMahon was just finishing an Alpo commercial. Always trying to be funny, an astounded, trembling, Buddy Hacket offered his pudgy hand and said, "*Vous machst du, Jesus, how are you?*"

*"My hands are a little tired, but all things considered, not bad, considering."*

When McMahon spotted Carson crossing himself feverishly, with both hands no less, he must have thought it was some kind of signal, because he got down on his knees and decided it was time to confess. I never knew he was so kinky. Soon as Hacket got into the act, they all stopped, because they knew they both had something in common, they both were Jewish. Funny, the head of Catholicism was Jewish and someone should have told them during the crusades. Somehow it never made sense to me either. Unbeknownst, the whole country, or at least all the Gentiles were on their knees, smiling and praying euphorically.

With the cameras recording this momentous occasion, that disrespectful, no good dog kept on ravishing his Alpo. Needless to say, the sponsors were delighted.

Wearing a loud plaid blazer, the ever hip Doc Severensen placed a mute on his trusty horn, bowed and began to blow, "*Joshua fit the battle of Jericho,*" which for some reason brought a tear to Christ's eyes after which, HE responded by applauding. With that, the entire country rose and also applauded. At that moment, Doc thought he was in heaven

because, not even Jolson, Sinatra or Louis Armstrong ever received such a round of applause from the MAN himself.

*"Don't tell me the show's over?"* J.C. asked rather disappointed.

*"Not yet,"* Buddy smiled, *"I haven't done my bit about the Chinese restaurant yet."*

By this time, Johnny, a man known for his composure was trying to sip a glass of water as casually as his quivering hands would allow.

*"How shall I address you Lord?"* Carson asked spilling the water as he crossed himself six quick times, trying to score points by ingratiating himself.

*"My friends call me J. C. and Christ was not my last name. The Greeks called me Christoforo and you guys, copycats that you are called me Christ. My last name was Goldstein not that anyone cared, and, I don't know why you keep crossing yourself, but I wish you'd stop, it's very annoying, and besides, you're staining a lovely suit, Armani?"*

*"Thanks for the compliment, J. C. and if I'm not being too inquisitive,"* Johnny said, *"What took you so long?"*

*"If it was up to me, I would've come when the Mets won the Series in '69. I tried, I swear to my Father, I tried, but he wouldn't let me. Believe me, I bugged him everyday but he wouldn't listen. Since he made that mistake with the giraffes, I hate to say it, but sometimes he can be such a drag. He's so stubborn."*

*"You mean God's stubborn?"* Buddy asked, *"I didn't know my wife was actually related."*

*"I've been bugging him to let me come back and, straighten out things for years and you ask me if HE'S stubborn?"*

*"Why wouldn't HE let you come back?"* Ed asked, as he readied himself for the Roto Rooter promo.

*"He was annoyed that I got so much publicity the last time I was here. He keeps*

*reminding me that HE made the whole world in six days, but people still make a bigger deal about me. If I didn't know better, I'd say my father is a little jealous and I wish you'd all stop crossing yourself. It's terribly annoying and what does it mean?"*

*"We were taught to cross ourselves ev'rytime we mention your name," Johnny found himself apologizing.*

*"I don't know whose brilliant idea it was, but do me a favor and forget it... If you were nailed by a Honda as you crossed 57th Street, would you like to see your mother make the sign of a Honda ev'rytime you visited her? Now cut it out."*

*"He told you it was annoying, didn't he?" Buddy cackled.*

*"Wait a second wise guy, how do we know there's really a God?" Carson quipped, smiling.*

*"Take it from me," Jesus added remorsefully, "the man's a regular tyrant. And there's something I still don't understand; The Muslims bless Abraham 17 times a day, how can they hate my people the Jews. I wish they would say that we are all come from the Abraham, the first one that believed there is only one God and then there might be peace on Earth."*

*"I'm sorry to interrupt Your Highness," Ed winced, "but we have to break for a commercial."*

*"In those days, there was no commercials, no William Morris, I had to do it all myself," Christ confided.*

*"What about all those Apostles that helped you?" Severensen asked.*

*"What's Apostles?" Jesus asked.*

*"You know, Peter, Paul, Mathew and....?"*

*"...I must have met thousands of people in those days. Who can remember all their names? I was so busy. And talking about the Gospels; Mark was really the only one I*

*palled around with and he knew my parents and never mentioned one word about my mother Miriam being a virgin. I mean she was sleeping with my father and they weren't playing potsy or watching TV."*

*"Did you say your mother's name was Miriam?" Johnny asked...*

*"Of course her name was Miriam, and Paul's name was Saul. Some Pope who hated us, probably because God called us the chosen, sometime in the 600s decided that Miriam was too Jewish so he changed her name to Mary and Saul to Paul.*

*"You were busy spreading the gospel, weren't you?" Ed asked confidently.*

*"What kind of gospel? I was busy trying to make a living. There was no T.V., no Sunday Times, the Enquirer, nothing. . I ran very fast and I had to yell, 'Get your sandals! The sand is too hot! In those days, sand was sand. It was murder, it was everywhere, up your nose, in your eyes, and everything you ate tasted from sand. Pheh! You can close your eyes and you can shut your mouth, but the sand still burns your feet, and Mathew wrote his apostle 50 years later and Luke 10 years after and they both didn't know me. 200 years later, I believe in 367, the first 27 texts of the New Testament were written. All known copies of the alternate gospel were destroyed. All that work went down the drain."*

*"I thought you made furniture, I didn't know you made sandals," Carson responded.*

*"What else could I make? I was trying to save their soles," Jesus smiled. There was no foot powder, no ointments, what else could I do, but make sandals. And they all thought I was the son of God. Since the 4<sup>th</sup> century you Christians, all the rituals you observe in the Eucharist, the holy day; the most holy day to me is Shabbes, the Sabbath which was changed when that pope also turned Shabbes to Sunday. What a fraud. He made it all up. Rituals and supernatural beliefs were imported from other religions. And according to Nag Hammadi who contradicted the Gospels and the New Testament; I was not a Savior, the Messiah, son of God; I was a religious Rabbi interested in, was spreading that the self and*

*the divine are one and the same. He said I was just a roving wise Rabbi preaching of life's possibilities of the heart's acceptance of fellow human beings. I wasn't there to save you from sin and eternal damnation but to act as a guide, to some kind of spiritual understanding but they said in order to propagate their new religion that I just couldn't be a simple man, I had to be the son of God and to tell you the truth I was flattered, wouldn't you be?"*

*"We're all God's children, aren't we?" Hacket asked hopefully.*

*"I suppose, if you really want to get technical about it," Jesus professed. "And even though it's written in Abie's good book, that I was a carpenter, as you know I was a pretty good sandal maker, but as far as my mother Mary was concerned, it never happened. Nothing ever happened, nothing."*

*"They say you're a maven when it comes to plagues," Hacket chided.*

*"Plagues? You got the wrong guy that was Moses. The closest I ever came to a plague was my friend Hymie, who always bragged how he could beat me in everything, in front of my Father, the Big Guy no less. One day. He must have been bugged about something. I think he made too many stripes on the zebras, anyway, something was really ticking him off because he gave Hymie the first cold in history. When that braggart sneezed for the first time, keeping their distance, everyone thought it odd but cute, except his wife Becky, who wasn't too thrilled about being the first recipient of the first major blooze in history. She thought it was disgusting. Then, like the good father, Hymie was, after his children had finished Dessert, he shared his newfound spritz-fall, by sneezing on each and every one of them.*

*Before you knew it, the whole world was sneezing and there was no Kleenex, not even a hanky, so stop blaming the plague. Poor Hymie died because, he blew his brains out."*

*"Talking about dying," Doc pleaded. "There's this terrible disease called AIDS that's*

*threatening to destroy all of mankind. Please help and give us the cure; the answer to this dreadful disease," Ed pleaded.*

*"Don't you remember what happened the last time I tried to give you the answer?"*

*"Take a chance," Buddy hinted. "What the heck, they say you only live once."*

*"Ever consider sardines?"*

*"Skinless or boneless?" Hacket asked, smiling.*

*"There are more sardines in the ocean than all the people in the world," Jesus said.*

*"Are you saying that sardines can put an end to AIDS?" Doc asked, fondling his horn.*

*"Did you ever see a sardine with AIDS? Forget about that. How do you get AIDS? You fool around, right? If you open a can of sardines, spritz a little lemon on, cut a slice of Bermuda onion, put it on a piece of pumpernickel covered with plenty of slightly salted butter and don't forget the coffee; I'd bet, not only you, but half of Africa would forget about doing it in a minute. And even if you didn't, with that breath your girl wouldn't get near you, and if they don't get near you, how can you get AIDS? Next!"*

*"Can you tell us about your mother, Mary?"*

*"You mean Miriam, don't you? How soon we forget... I guess you can say my mother almost started divorce. She wanted to get paid for doing it. She was sick and tired of looking at the stars. She had a million ideas. She wanted more out of life than taking off her clothes when my father was in the mood and she was sick-and-tired of doing the laundry in the Nile. Those crocodiles were driving her crazy. Besides, she wanted time-and-a-half for doing it on the holidays, not that there were so many in those days. You see, the Rabbis had a good thing, that's why they wanted to get rid of her; she wanted to unionize all the wives."*

*"Are you saying in those days Rabbis were union busters?"*

*"Stop trying to put words in my mouth, please. As far as they were concerned, they thought they were just good businessmen. Except for me, they were the only Rabbis around."*

*"I forgot you were a Rabbi,"* Johnny said as he needlessly crossed himself again.

*"Well don't forget,"* Hacket added. *"Once a Jew, always, and I thought the good Rabbi asked you not to cross yourself? Don't you remember what happened to his friend, Hymie?"*

*"Please forgive Buddy, It won't happen again,"* Johnny promised sarcastically.

Coming to the defense of his beloved friend, McMahon interrupted, *"I have total recall, Lord and I don't mean to be disrespectful, but I don't remember reading about Hymie in the Bible."*

*"You know why?"* Jesus asked sadly, *"Because Abie hated Hymie with a passion. Now, who do you think really wrote the Bible, Abie?"*

*"You mean Abraham, don't you?"* Johnny quipped confidently.

*"Not Abraham, Abie Schwartz. He hated Hymie almost as much as my father did, and besides, he was the only one that was able to write. So, to get even with Hymie, Abie decided to write his own bible, and on spite he left out Hymie's blooze completely. Not even a word, mind you. But I want to tell you something else. Even though most people trusted him, I never did. Personally I always thought he was a little prejudice, because Hymies was a pinch shorter than the rest of us."*

*"Could it be that Hymie is the cause of all the prejudicial conflicts that confront man today?"* Buddy said, smiling.

*"I never thought of it like that. My father says the main problem is there are too many religions. Somebody made a very big mistake and that's why he sent me back. He*



*wants me to put an end to it once and for all."*

*"What type of mistake are you talking About, J.C.?"* asked Johnny.

*"I told you how annoyed my father was when he heard about all the PR I received the last time I was here. Well, it seems my old man has had it up to here. He wants me to tell everyone that HE never intended there to be Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, Nudists, and Schmudists, only Jewish. He told me there should be one religion, between me and you, no Jew, Gentile, Muslim, and Buddhist. Just people praying and believing in him. You know how much money they'd save?"*

*"Are you saying we all have to become Jewish?"* Ed asked with apparent disdain.

*"According to my father, you do, Buster."*

*"Even the Pope?"* asked an incredulous Johnny.

*"I believe he's means all his children, and once he makes up his mind. Remember what happened to Hymie?"*

*"I guess that means everyone has to start eating chopped liver,"* Buddy said hopefully.

Why should *"I should be the only one walking around with heartburn?"* Jesus smiled.

*"I hate chopped liver,"* Doc moaned.

*"I'm sure they'll all have to be circumcised too,"* Hacket said grinning. *"If you all do it at the same time, I'm sure I can get you guys a good deal."*

*"Say it isn't so,"* Doc said fighting back the tears.

*"It's not such a big deal. Ask Buddy,"* Jesus sympathetically responded, *"The whole thing takes less than a minute."*

*"Don't believe him,"* Buddy said, holding his crotch.

*"Maybe we could plant a few trees in Israel instead?"* prayed Johnny.

*"Trees are in addition,"* laughed Buddy.

*"If you don't mind, I'd like to change the subject, and is it true what they say about your immaculate conception?" Doc whimpered as he held himself.*

*"You mean that story about how I was born? My mother Miriam, I just can't get used to Mary, who had so much pride, was so embarrassed because my father, Joseph made her live in a stable. She had these two girl friends, Rebecca and Sylvia who refused to come and visit her because one was allergic to hay and the other to horses. When she would go to the synagogue, she swore that it never happened and they held their noses and laughed at her. One day, she was so annoyed at my father for making her live in that stable, that she told Abie, who she knew was a 'blabbermouth, a yenta' and asked him if he could keep a secret? Then she proceeded to assure Abie that she did the whole pregnancy bit by herself, just to embarrass my father. Abie, who had some gift for words in those days, laughed and immediately called it 'The Immaculate Conception.' And without even bothering to confirm it with my father, wrote it in his bible."*

*"Are you saying we shouldn't take the Bible literally?"*

*"Just Abie's bible," Jesus added, "I'm afraid I must be going."*

As Christ began to depart, Doc started to play *'The Tonight Show's'* theme song.

*"How can you leave?" pleaded Carson. "What about the famine in Somalia and Ethiopia?"*

*"Tell them to eat something."*

As the good Rabbi began to depart, Carson made one last desperate plea, *"It would take us a life-time to tell you about all our problems."*

*"I just don't have the time, and I'm not bragging but, I was the first Reformed Rabbi, I started reformed Judaism, that's why they got rid of me."*

*"I'd like to ask you for a personal favor," McMahan asked.*

*"Me too," Buddy pleaded, "You see, I have this mother in-law..."*

*"Don't you remember how he 'hocked' me the last time I tried to do something for you guys? I'm really sorry, but I have to go... Hey, don't look so disappointed. There's always the next time, right?"* Jesus winked as he departed.

## HE WHO LAUGHS LAST...

Even though I love my brother more than anything, I still call him "*My favorite lunatic*," because since the day he was born, he always did everything not only in excess, but, with great bravado. He laughed more and cried more and took more and gave more than anybody I ever met, and what a pair of "*guillones*," he had. There wasn't anything he couldn't do and wouldn't do for a laugh, like, the time he rented a helicopter and took me to Atlantic City. How two poor kids from the Bronx, who used to be on Home Relief no less, were flying as high as Rockefeller himself. We laughed all the way. My brother had just made a lot of money from his business and he felt like sharing it with *moi*. Despite each of us having a wife and two kids, we loved to pal-around with each other more than anything else, because, one of us always made sure that we'd find something to laugh about. We had to, it was the law.

When we got to Atlantic City, I think we went to The Taj, or one of those new hotels, any way; we walk into the casino and immediately find a \$100 table empty. Just the way we like it; Head-to-head. Lenny was a big roller. Me, a hundred a card was more than enough. After about three hours, together, we were up about fifteen grand and we decide we'd like to eat lunch, so Lenny tells the dealer we'd like to be comped for lunch at their very best restaurant. The dealer says he has to ask the pit boss, who, because he'd just come on the floor and wasn't aware how much money Lenny was betting, looks at us in our Met's sweat shirts and tells the dealer to tell us that they can only comp us in the coffee shop. Even though he was annoyed at how cheap they were treating us, Lenny smiled, as he reminded the pit-boss, that he was sure the big boys that were watching from above, must be aware that collectively, we must have gone through two or three hundred grand the past

couple of hours and you haven't got the good sense to comp us anywhere we want to eat? 'Good luck,' he wishes the pit-boss. He then asks the dealer for two, five-dollar chips. And then we laugh as Lenny announces, last hand, five dollars, and then my good man, please cash us in. Not only was the dealer frustrated, because Lenny must have given him a hundred dollars in tips.

Whenever Lenny won a big hand, he tosses the dealer either a five or ten dollar chip. And the pit boss became paranoid because, he was sure the big boys saw the whole thing through the mirrored ceiling were gonna call him an idiot for making such a big deal about lunch. Counting each and every hundred-dollar bill, Lenny announces, "\$13,000, not bad, and we haven't even eaten lunch yet, mister. How much did you take them for?

*"Two grand," I said. "I believe we should say thank you, Lenny."*

*"Thank you Lenny," Lenny said laughing.*

Departing we headed for their best restaurant. *"Why not?"* we giggled like the cat that just ate the canary.

*"It's on them ain't it?"*

*"It soitenly is mister," Lenny roared, "It most soitenly is. We got'em for fifteen grand!"*

We ordered a bottle of their most expensive red wine, a Caesar salad and King Crab legs, which came with the most delicious sauce. We ate like two little piggies. When the waitress appeared with the check, she asked me if I would like to sign for the check and I said *"No, but my brother will, since I'm older."*

*"My pleasure, but just remember old timer, you're paying for dinner."* Lenny said as he looked at me, winked and laughed. *"May I borrow your pen, good looking, unless you'd like to treat us for lunch?"* he laughed.

The young waitress joined him and so did I, because I thought it was hysterical that

he would actually sign for our lunch. He wasn't a guest at the hotel. He signed "Bruno Bank. Room 1224."

*"It was delicious,"* he said, leaving a twenty-dollar tip in cash for the grateful waitress.

*"I enjoyed it tremendously,"* I added as we departed. Outside we laughed even more.

*"How much was that check?"* I asked.

*"Ninety four bucks and it feels good, doesn't it?"*

*"Delicious. Now I see why Jessie James had such a good time. You're a 'gonnif' just like him,"* I said.

*"And you're my accomplice. The next nun I see pass, I'm gonna give her a C note and tell her to give it to a poor family. He who laughs lasts,"* Lenny smiled, devilishly, *"Laughs."*

*"I suppose you should tell her to thank that pit boss!"* I said, *"Fair's fair."*

*"I suppose I should,"* he concurred as we laughed and ran back to the car. *"Where do you want to go for dinner tonight?"* he asked, *"Some place expensive, I hope."*

There was only one Lenny, my brother.

## KEEP YOUR EYES AND MOUTH SHUT!

There I was *schmeering* away, painting as if I were Picasso himself. “You see Lewis; I make windows on the walls like Grandpa used to do. He was a great schmeerer and so am I. When I was your age I used to paint under the sinks for Grandpa, because he used to say it hurt his back, and that’s how I learned to paint. So what do you think,” I asked my beautiful blonde son Lewis who was staring at daddy in awe, wheeling a brush loaded with dark brown paint on the ladder back and forth like there was no tomorrow

“I like it daddy, that’s a nice big window, but why are you using such dark brown paint?”

“Ask your mother, she picked it out because she wants the foyer in dark brown. Wait, now I’ll fill in the windows and the top of the wall will be finished in dark brown just like she wants it. “I didn’t realize it but I was just a little too far away when I tried to fill in the window and to my horror and utter dismay the ladder tipped and the can of brown paint came tumbling down like London Bridges and hit my beautiful little blonde son Lewis on the top of his head. I panicked because not only was he wearing a brand new expensive outfit that Leslie bought, my luck she always bought expensive outfits for him but his beautiful blonde hair and his face was covered with dark brown paint. I jumped off the fallen ladder and screamed, “KEEP YOUR EYES AND MOUTH SHUT, KEEP YOUR EYES AND MOUTH SHUT! AND DON’T *BLAME ME, BLAME YOUR MOTHER, SHE PICKED DARK BROWN PAINT!*” as I frantically tried to wipe the paint away.

**The end**

## ***Jealousy, why do you torture me?***

My son Lewis was over the other day with his wife Melissa and their beautiful son, my Grandson Elijah. Leslie and I started reminiscing and she asked Lewis did he remember when he pushed Carie in her carriage into the middle of the street? He smiled and said, “*Are you kidding?*” ‘Til this day he won’t admit it, but when I came home from work and Udora told me What he had done to Carie, it was one of the few times I almost gave him a spanking, but I didn’t, because I never hit my children, although looking back, in retrospect, perhaps I shouldn’t have been such a good-guy, namby pamby and gave him a whack, because he deserved it!

Udora told me that she gave Lewis a licking for me because he pushed Carie across Second Avenue in the middle of all the on going traffic while he was pushing her carriage. I think she called me a namby pamby.

At the time beautiful Carie who looked like a Russian Princess with here beautiful brown curly hair, was nine months old and cooing like you’ve never seen and Lewis, dressed as Prince Valiant, his majesty was almost six. He won’t admit it but he was annoyed that she was getting so much attention, when for as long as he could remember He was the sun, the center of mine and Leslie’s universe and suddenly his snot nosed, little



S Goldberg

48 TRUER WORD WERE NEVER...

whining crybaby of a sister was taking all the attention away from him and he thought it was time to put an end to it all.

Now, 29 years later they're best of friends, and he says he never did it, but would our housekeeper Udora lie, I don't think so do you?

**The end**

## *Tashlach*

*Yom Kippur*, the day atonement was a most important day to Mama. Not only did she fast from sundown to sundown, she ate two hours before and thus fasted two more hours than were required. Mama was a *rebbe*, the most devout of all religious Jews. Papa on the other hand, when he would go to *shul*, would act as if he were starving to death, but I knew better because I've caught him *noshing* on an apple or whatever more times than he cared to admit. He'd always wink and say, "*Don't tell Mama,*" as if she didn't know.

In the afternoon my sister Rebecca, my fat kid brother Lenny, Mama and Papa would slowly walk to Indian Lake in Crotona Park to throw our *nivehras*, sins into Indian Lake. How this was accomplished was Mama would take bread crumbs and we'd each throw a handful in as Mama would *shusker*, whisper a prayer asking absolutions for all sins committed the past year.

Arriving at the lake there was a multitude of starving Jews, all there to throw there sins away, thus absolving themselves from past misgivings. Papa would tell me, "*See Morris the butcher? He's the biggest thief, that Sominabitch. See my brother Hymie? He's another crook., they're all crooks, they rob and cheat me all year long and comes Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, they kiss me and say we're best friend, those mean Bestids!?*"

Suddenly everybody started pointing at this scroungy, dirty dog that started howling as if there was no tomorrow. *“Why is that dog howling like a wolf,”* Rebecca asked. *“Boy Papa, that dog is really dirty, I hope he doesn’t come over to me”* Lenny said. The dog started sniffing Aunt Ennie and sniffed Aunt Bertha. They both shrieked, *“Oi gehvalt! Abie, do something!”* With that my father said in a soothing voice that suddenly disarmed the crazed dog, *“Take it easy boy, leave my sisters alone and come to me.”* The dog must of understood Papa, or liked his voice but he came to Papa and started humping his leg. His kids including all the fervent Jews started to laugh and hoot, *“That mutt likes your leg Abie.”* *“Look at that,”* his sister Ennie said, *“My brother has a new friend.”* All the Jews cheered, and hooted and howled, and started singing, *“For he’s a wonderful fella, for he’s a wonderful fella!”* With that my father picked up the mutt and threw it in the Indian Lake, and said to Mama, there, I got rid of another *Nivehra, are you happy* as he walked away to a thunderous round of applause.

**The End**

## That Smile

There we were, in the Museum of Modern Art, Leslie and I looking at the Mona Lisa.

“Next to you, I think the Mona Lisa has the most beautiful smile,” I said to Leslie.

“Personally, if I remember correctly, I think your father has, if not the most beautiful, definitely the most memorable smile I ever saw,” she said and laughed. “Don’t you agree?”

I looked at her and laughed, “You never forget, do you, do you?”

“Why, did you forget?”

Along time ago, when we had been dating for about three months, or should I say fooling around for three months, we awoke one hot Sunday morning and I said to Leslie, “Lets go up to South Fallsburg.”

“What’s in South Fallsburg?” she asked?

“Don’t you remember? That’s where Mama and Papa are staying, Weiss’s Bungalow Colony.”

“And why do you suddenly want to see your parents?” the girl with the most beautiful face asked.

“Because I want them to meet the girl I’m going to marry.” I said kissing her.

“Is that a proposal, mister?” Leslie asked.

“I think so?” I grinned, but don’t tell anyone ‘til I tell my folks.

When we arrived at Weiss’s Bungalow Colony, I instantly spotted Mama walking with one of her friends. “There’s my mother,” I shouted, “There’s my mother!”

“Which one’s you mother.”

“The midget, the pigmy, the one that’s four-foot six and the nicest and sweetest, the most adorable mother there ever was,” I screamed, “Ma, ma!”

My mother turned around, looked at me and started to *Kvell*. “Shaiya, how are you, what a surprise, and who is this? Don’t tell me this is your Leslie. How are you my *buhbala* my *liebshen*, how nice to finally meet you. Why did it take so long to meet your Leslie? Look how beautiful she is. Ennie, do you see how beautiful my son’s girl friend is?”

“She’s certainly a knockout, Anna, just gorgeous.”

“Where’s Papa, Ma, where’s Papa?”

“He’s by the river, go, you’ll find him by the river, but hurry back, I want to talk to Leslie.”

“Come on honey, let’s go find my father.”

As we started walking, I told Leslie as I had warned her before to be prepared, my father is bizarre, and he says and does things that... Nearing the river, about 50 feet away I spotted my father. “That my father.”

“Are you sure??

“He’s the only one I know that’s five-three, real chubby ands been wearing that purple bathing suit for 20 years. Just as we were about to approach Papa, he bent down, and unfortunately he was wearing his bathing suit backwards as per, with the fly in the back and for all the world to see, especially me and Leslie, there was his big fat *touches*, his rear end smiling. Was I embarrassed? “See, I told you he was strange, didn’t I?”

“I like his smile, sort of reminds me of the Mona Lisa’s smile, don’t you think,” Leslie said, laughing. What could I do, I had to agree, she was right as usual and my luck she still is.

**The End**