

Random Walks

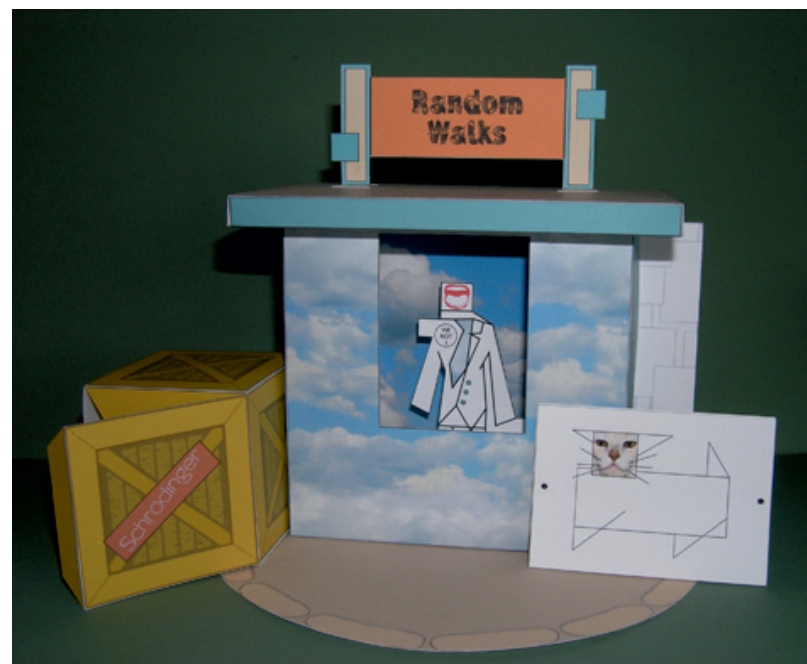
“We Not I”

A flatpack opera by
Jason Kilburn Evans
and Jamie Crofts

LIBRETTO



SOUNDkiosk MULTImedia
SKM 04



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Frag 1

Dad's Rule #1

Maybe it was just collective hubris, or maybe it was a beautiful dream of a kind of simplicity that only belongs in dreams. Reality comes to meet such dreams in the end. I could hear my father's voice with the clarity that only the dead command: "Don't push your luck, son," he would say, did say. The problem was that it wasn't what I wanted to hear. Perhaps a Japanese "Gambatte!" or even a simple "Well done!" But the time for such platitudes had passed. Spring soon becomes late summer, autumn soon enough and then the leaves begin to fall off the branches.

The world is a funny sort of place. It is the realized dreams of perhaps a billion and the enslavement of nearly six. But it can be forced only so far. It is a vector that can be stretched only so far in any one direction before greater forces begin to assert themselves snapping it back with only the occasional shudder as warning. We had ignored the warnings.

I love the sky. When you look up at the sky, be it fluffy white clouds or pinprick stars the human world dissolves a little, takes its rightful place as a temporary construct. The Buddhists might call it a mental formation: the mother of all mental formations really.



It's a sad thing never to transcend that... are there really those among you that do never look any deeper? What am I trying to say? Enlarge your viewpoint, even if just to include the sky for a moment and see the mess of human relationships for the net that they really are. So when I hit a cusp point, that is the direction in which I apply steady force. Steady certain force, whether it benefits me immediately or not.

But getting back to the world: It demands a certain frame of mind, I find. A kind of sublimated greed. I had heard those demands of course, doesn't everyone? But the difference my friend, between you and me is that I don't oil the squeakiest wheel first!

Defrag 1

January 8, 2010

Ataris, Amigas and the land speed record:
In my dream, I flooded my visitor's flat on a visit
to an oppressive regime.

April 17, 2010

I yoga for raisins:
New experiences: using a biro until it runs out and
eating an ice-cream that was hard to earn.

July 23, 2009

Kitchen work in Northumberland:
It's a complex world we live in, composed of many
interlocking simple patterns.

December 10, 2009

Whimpers, sighs, groans:
In my dream, sticking a chocolate soufflé in the
oven after a shopping trip.

July 16, 2009

thought for the day:
On the way to your death, be sure to point out the
things you have found to those who would follow you.



January 28, 2010

Shezza Cole's Thug Academy:
Am I the only one who has noticed that Amy
Winehouse sings like Billie Holiday, but looks
remarkably like Matt Lucas?

December 14, 2009

Brits treat animals like people and people like animals:
In my dream, an upward extension to the mansion and
riding around the corridors on a motorbike.

August 1, 2009

Aftermath of the Nazi Occupation:
In my dream a prophetic frog predicts our doom in a
large country house.

Frag 2

Dad's Rule #2

Okay I hadn't altogether played by the rules,
which brings me to Dad's Rule #2:

"Son, if you can't win – cheat," he says.

Yeah okay Dad.

I suppose there were early signs if you wanted to
look hard enough. Eventually you do – out of
desperation, out of boredom, ennui call it what
you will. Be that as it may there are a couple of
moments of childhood I'm quite proud of and at least
one not so...

But anyway: Calling a probability zero point zero
before the teachers had even told me how to do long
multiplication. That's quite useful in 'C'.

And there again – Dad did tell me about Newton's
laws around the same sort of time. But don't push
your luck son.

In a world like this, a world that has come to this,
you absolutely do have to push your luck. There is
no alternative.

Why? Because everyone else is popping look-at-me
pills left right and centre. And we all know where that
leads, don't we?

Maybe we don't. Okay I'll spell it out for you. A stop in
your mind means your inward teacher telling you no.
Disengage and come to as firm a stop as you can. Heed
that stop sign, because if you don't the results are not good.
I really mean it.

Back to childhood. Teachers are great, really fantastic but
sometimes I just wished they had been as assertive then.
The second thing I really remember as something I could
almost have been justly proud of was finding a bug in the
floating point arithmetic of Microsoft Basic circa 1986.
Just a bit more pushing-of-the-luck and a bit less blind faith.
But I'll come to that later.



Defrag 2

July 21, 2009

wood/sand versus metal/glass:

In my dream, an old school friend joins me on the board of a computer firm whose product is a joystick made from a converted mouse. He then kills a guy on the street and uses chemicals to make monkey food. Of course he does.

March 6, 2009

A singular particular:

In my dream I am out walking and try to avoid some sort of dinosaur-like creature.

September 10, 2009

Model making and a cross-country run:

In my dream, I witness a fighter plane being shot down whilst working in a child care unit.

January 8, 2010

Playing around with a cat in 3d modelling software:

In my dream, a woodland burial after a tragic death. I get pulled in for bad language.

August 29, 2009

Writing out music:

In my dream, I am making a lifeboat out of used loudspeaker cabinets.

May 15, 2009

The sick cows in the herd:

In my dream I was in the Lethal Weapon films playing the Danny Glover character in a hostage situation. Weird as I'm not black.

January 28, 2010

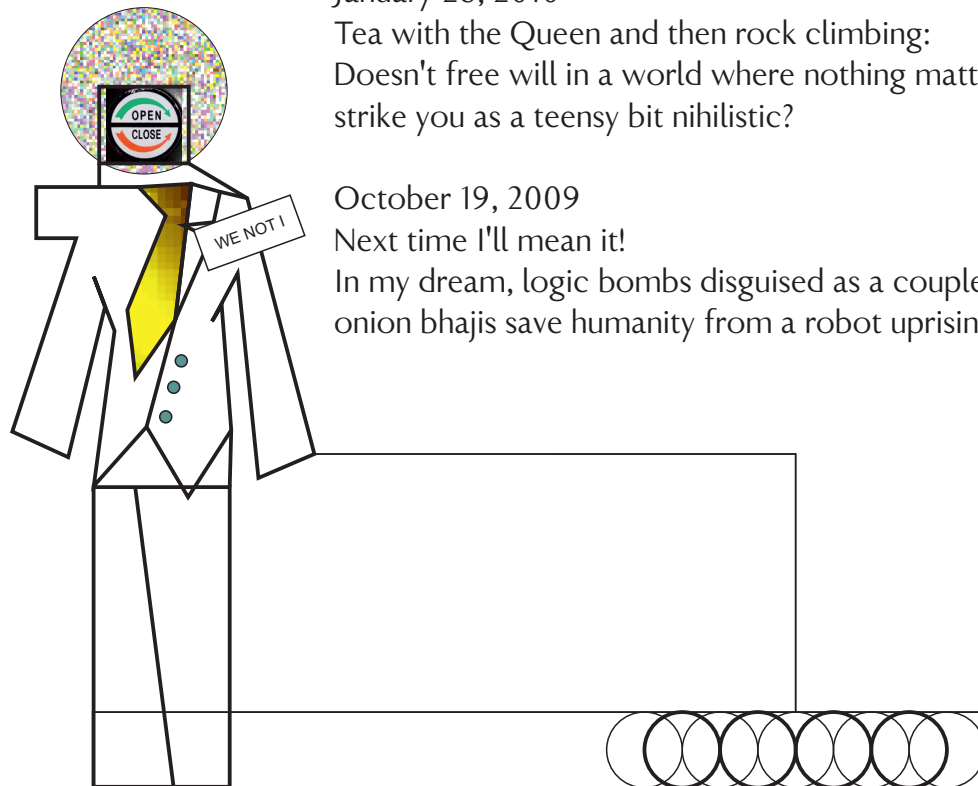
Tea with the Queen and then rock climbing:

Doesn't free will in a world where nothing matters strike you as a teensy bit nihilistic?

October 19, 2009

Next time I'll mean it!

In my dream, logic bombs disguised as a couple of onion bhajis save humanity from a robot uprising.



Frag 3

The Sky – the return

The sky is clarity. The sky is majesty. Ancients saw the sky and dreamed civilisation, but these days when civilisation had become an end in itself, people were drowning out the sky with low pressure sodium vapour.

Which brings me back to where I started. It had come to an end. You don't really think it could have gone on, do you? If common sense could be suspended in the way it had throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, of what value mind... thought. Research: Not re-search like re-hash, but research. The Manas mind. Distinctions, categories etc.

Not very fashionable now, but what if? We went along with it, I would guess, because of the list of ingredients.

Look at it this way: It is like a chocolate bar. Have you ever really thought about how they make chocolate bars? The secret is all in the thermodynamics of the thing. A chocolate bar is, in its very essence a natural product that has been disassembled, carefully separated into its constituent parts, and then carefully re-assembled only with the gloss, the sheen, of industrial food production systems.

But is the thing of itself of intrinsic value? I would argue not: What you are really valuing is the process, the labour involved, and the more slick it gets the worse it is – ever decreasing circles. See I told you it as all in the thermodynamics. Ask any Jain monk!

The point is: Having thrown out common sense, the ultimate glory of the human mind, you can't very well add it in later as an optional extra. And everyone buys the extra (that's the secret of selling).

So here we were with whole universes poised on the glory oh flagrant fruitful fragrant glory of the ultimate unknowable human mind... and yet. Manas. Mind. Man.

Defrag 3

April 19, 2010

If Africa can be healed, the whole world can be healed:
How can mean nasty people ever bring about a
world that is just and caring? That they can is pure
fantasy pinned on the vain hope that their fake
appeal to fairness is even self-consistent, never mind
being able to bring a change that is of any value.

August 21, 2009

An easy to play God game:
In my dream, a cruel toilet flush – one that flushes
away a frog, all the time being filmed.

April 21, 2009

The Uptight Piano:
In my dream I start up a techno night with school
friends and weirdly get Mariah Carey to sing vocals.

April 16, 2010

In a world where a “99” costs £1.30, anything is possible!
When yoked to liberation, desire consumes itself
like the last dying ember of a fire.

March 26, 2010

The correct use of chilli peppers:
I do not have regrets. If I did, the seeds of those
regrets would have informed my decisions otherwise.

September 18, 2009

Poisoner:

In my dream, intensive chess training with a private
tutor.

September 28, 2009

Prepare for Pots and the Crockery will come as a
pleasant surprise:
In my dream, a salvage operation funded by a games
company owner uncovers a secret nuke project. Wow.

September 3, 2009

Fly-Fishing by J.R. Hartley:

In my dream I discover a medieval church whilst
working for Atari.

Frag 4

The continuation of...

I've got it, I've got it, I've flaming well got it. Too fast.
Too slow. To catch a cold. To catch her eye: Those Co-op
girls, you know what I mean? Something about people
working for the benefit of their community that's just too
damn attractive. Validation, impudiation, administration.
Valiant, valance, and what are those damn pale daffodils called?

These days I'm thinking that sort of thought all the time;
what do you call such and such? I know there is a word,
a particular word, a wordy particular. The word. Particle,
particles, part tickles.

How will it end? Who knows but I've only just started
writing the beginning so can you please leave off a moment?
Carry on where you left off. Proceed (proceeds, process,
precess, precession, intercession, pree-ayer).

Coffee. I need coffee. Dependent on the damn stuff.
Out of Africa, Ethiopia. That magic bean, jumping bean,
jumped-up bean, being arrogant, being self-effacing,
self-depracating.



The thing was I had cracked the paradox, solved the
problem, but where do you go? Which way from here,
witch way, a witches way. The way, budo, bosatsu,
Buddha, Buddha-mind. Wu! Woohoo.

The coffee's ready.

Because the banal has been replaced in this fast-paced,
dangerous age with a gradual diminution, a wearing
down, a wearisome wedge hammered in tight. A door
stop, no not a door knob, a kind of wedge, a tightening
titanic appeal...

Defrag 4

March 12, 2009

Preformance:

In my dream, I am using time-travel in order to learn to play the recorder perfectly. Then I find that everyone in a friend's family is a copper and Daz has to fulfil all their needs for whiter-than-white whites.

December 12, 2009

Lurking in dark corners:

Life is like a Japanese Zombie flick. At least sometimes...

August 28, 2009

Aggression spreads butter:

In my dream, puke on their shoes on the day of the parade and interfering with a workstation

October 23, 2009

50 chin-ups and a five-mile run:

A Jamaican sweet shop built up from nothing by the proprietor, a Mayan temple-city and the quest for popularity at an American high school.

October 9, 2009

Squeezing a handful of sand:

During the troubles they rain death on their neighbours using mortars until one day it goes tragically wrong.

October 26, 2009

Is this an X-file?

In my dream I was studying with a GR theorist to no avail then whilst coming back from a meeting with a neighbour we found the escalator too fast and sure enough it had been tampered with. So we proceeded to tell a class at a local secondary school.

September 10, 2009

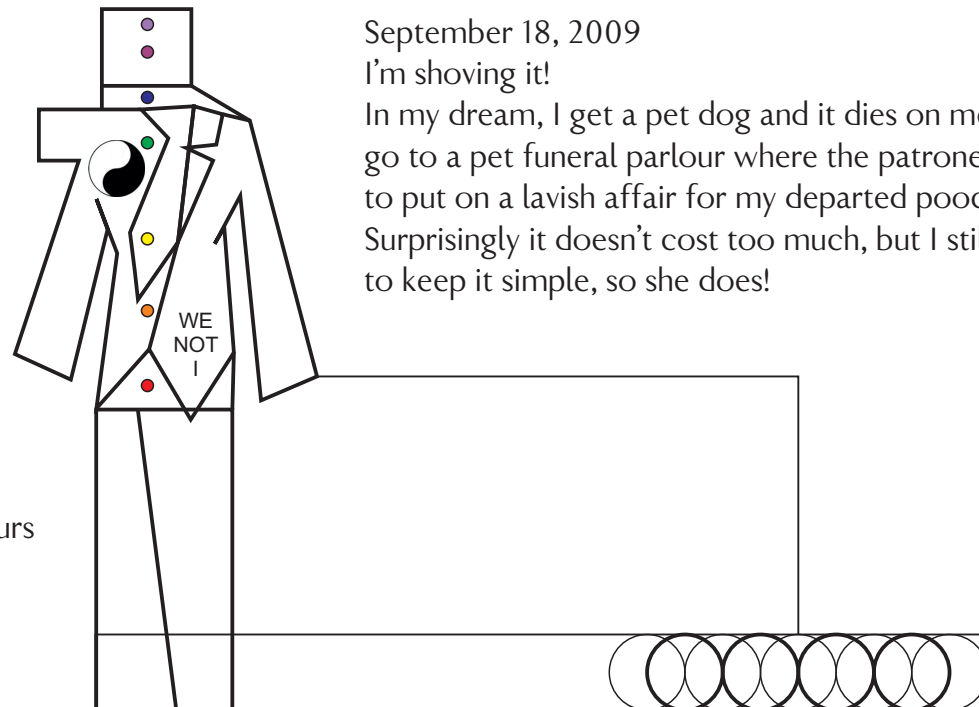
Exciting Lab work (but couldn't follow notes):

In my dream, I am describing myself and getting someone else to describe me.

September 18, 2009

I'm shoving it!

In my dream, I get a pet dog and it dies on me, so I go to a pet funeral parlour where the patroness wants to put on a lavish affair for my departed pooch. Surprisingly it doesn't cost too much, but I still ask her to keep it simple, so she does!



Frag 5

...the discontinuity

Now, here's the central question of our age (about thirty): Will the unwarranted, unbridled arts that are kindling, extending the appeal to our lowest instincts, the appeal of unbridled force, of shallow empty glories, will they succeed or (as I hope) will they burn themselves out in a huge supernova.

Mega stars. Where are the real megastars, the real-life superheroes. Back at the Co-op I would say, the quiet assertion of a method built on quiet increase; gratitude for the multitude. Multiplication of the multiverse. Oh no, that can't be right. Can't be. Bee.

Hives, built sky high leave no room for parking, parley, parlour, valour, valiance iridescence.

The central thing I want to tell you is this: You are just a machine, a clever biological, self-regulating machine.

Thus submission to the ultimate is a sane option, don't you think? Now I have time to think, I have time to say "ah!" The doctor and his tongue-depressor, the surgeon with his scalpel, the sturgeon with its eggs.

All machines.



Defrag 5

January 8, 2010

My life as a sniper:

His house is so posh the gates to it look like a flipping cemetery!

October 3, 2009

Wascally Wabbit:

In my dream I am attending a Jiu Jitsu seminar at the Dome after braving the snow. I meet a friend there unexpectedly and a Japanese lady on the way who asks me if I do Sudoku. No I say.

August 15, 2009

One Dove: The Peace Sacrament:

Returning from living abroad for a while, I smuggle back a rare form of Czech slug.

November 14, 2009

Selling high-end rendering software for \$\$\$:

In my dream, Jean-Claude Van Damme and his amazing haircut.

March 3, 2010

Melting hot wax onto a moth:

In my dream there is some sort of scary parallel-universe version of the eighties where Noel Edmonds is killed horribly in a sky-diving accident. No deal, I guess.

May 1, 2009

It's life, Gym:

In my dream, I am playing street hockey and I want a faster ball but the ref. doesn't want me to have it. Then jury service in a child protection case.

April 11, 2009

exam resits:

In my dream, a concert pianist had to rely on an understudy for the first few bars as he was working on fusion.

March 3, 2009

You mean to say there's a person behind all this?

In my dream, Star Trek's Data reduces a dog's bark to the bare minimum required to give us a clue that we are on the right track and this is actually all a simulation.

Frag 6

The Sage – the ants

Can you hear the sound of one hand clapping? Can you hear the sound of textbooks pulping?

What the sage values more than anything... and it doesn't have to be a Chinese sage like K'ung-fu-tze or L-a-o-tze - tze-tze-tze. The sage values his freedom, his ability to make choices because he knows that even that is an illusion.

He's following a pre-determined program like the rest of us.

Except: Follow me, if you will, on a short OOBE:
An out-of-body experience. Not for nothing, I promise.
Now look down and tell me what you see.
A million ants, right?
Faced with that, who can say what an individual ant will actually experience.

Is the world of a single ant a hell-realm? A heaven?
A majestic creation of the one? A sacred dance of the many?

Now let's go the other way: The dance of death of a city of secrets. Analogies are more real sometimes than the contents...

Ladies and gentlemen, if you please, let us begin. I would like to present to you: "Random Walks": a series of meditations of the strongest city ever devised under siege by a tsunami of unreason. In this series of talks, the nature of reality will be expounded, along with your likely fate which results from it.

There is only one sort of unreason allowed in this city: One and only one. If you do not fit the parameters, you will be squeezed out slowly but surely like the last drop of tomato paste in the kitchen of a nearby take-away.

Monism was never that appealing to me (too monolithic), but it looks like I am going to have to accept it. Give in finally to the ultimate freedom, the freedom to restrict choice. To slot into place in my pre-determined pigeonhole, confined with all the other convicts.

Is it any wonder that we lean on our crutches? It is the only option left, our last hope of exercising any freedom in our life: The illusory freedom to choose.

Defrag 6

September 3, 2009

Etiquette:

When meeting oneself whilst time-travelling, is it more acceptable to high-five or is a crisp military salute more appropriate?

June 13, 2009

Is Tracey Emin secretly Banksy?

In my dream, aliens with the ability to hear prayers.

April 24, 2009

Mr Dry T-Shirt:

In my dream, I was held up at gunpoint by an unsophisticated bumpkin!

November 23, 2009

Scotch Bonnets etc.

In my dream, Britney Houston and Whitney Spears... or something.

October 30, 2009

Recipes: same old thinker:

In my dream I was sculpting sounds with a synthesizer.

November 9, 2009

Bronchial:

In my dream, hiding my stash and catching a plane.

October 15, 2009

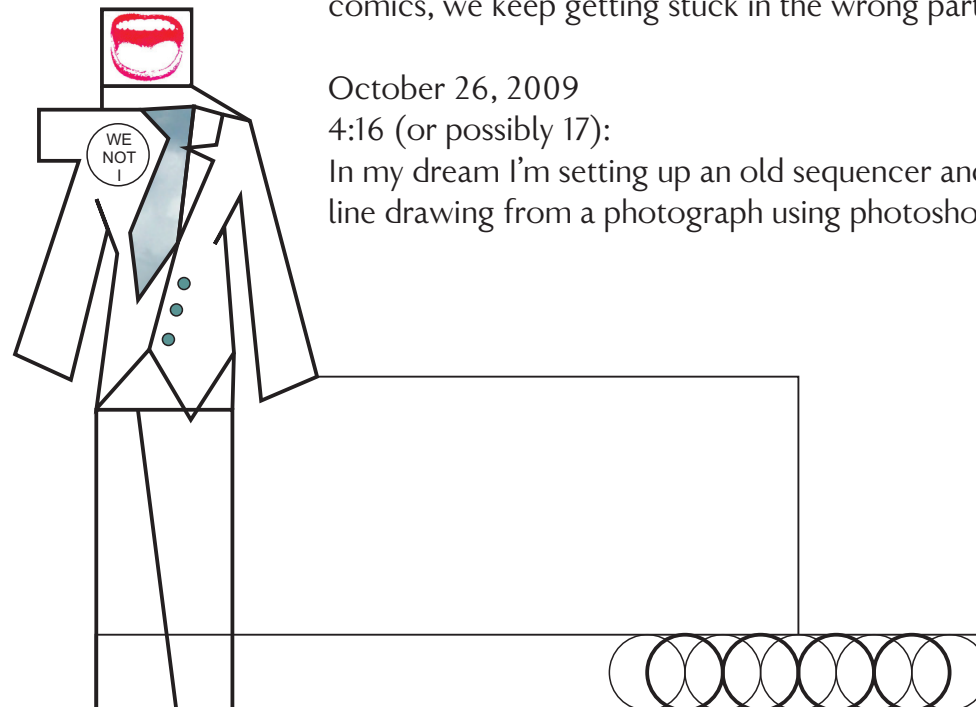
Polyfruit:

On the way back from a guy's who makes games and likes comics, we keep getting stuck in the wrong part of town.

October 26, 2009

4:16 (or possibly 17):

In my dream I'm setting up an old sequencer and getting a line drawing from a photograph using photoshop.



Frag 7

Schrödinger #1

So let's get this straight: You seal a cat in a box
and then wonder if it is alive or dead. Good move.
Of course the bloomin' thing's dead, you've sealed it
in a box and it has suffocated! I ought to call the RSPCA.

"Hello, is that the RSPCA? I'd like to report an incident of animal cruelty."

"Sure, go ahead, let me take your details... What's your name?"

"Professor Ahmed Sukka."

"Can you spell that for me?"

"S-U-K-K-A."

"Can you give me a contact number?"

"Sure, my daytime number is ***** *** ***."

"So what is the nature of the incident you wish to report?"

"It concerns a thought experiment."

"I'm sorry!?"

"It concerns a thought experiment."

"A thought experiment?"

"Yes. Although no specific instance has occurred, the quantum physics

community has been mooted the possibility of such an incident for some time and it is my belief that they fully intend to go through with it."

"Is this some kind of joke?"

"No, I am perfectly serious."

"Sir, you do realize that this number deals with real incidents of animal cruelty; the vast majority of which are more than possibilities,
as you put it, thought experiments."

"I see. Well don't say I didn't warn you! Ha!"

at which point the line goes dead.

But seriously, there is a serious side to all of this,
believe it or not. The serious side is that we are all in
desperate peril of a hell of our own making.
There is a way out, but you're not going to like it.
Not one little bit.

Back to monism. There is one cause, one reality,
one God. And it seems that the machines are more
faithful followers than us. Blessed be the meek.
Blessed be the microprocessors and the schedulers
of tasks. Blessed be the transistors and their switching
of current. Blessed be.

Always back to bloody paganism in this place, this island
of illusion. It's really all down to conjurers' tricks as
pointed out by my esteemed colleague.

Defrag 7

November 9, 2009

Son of Insidious Invader:

In my dream: why people really scream at rock concerts.

October 15, 2009

Trouble on the buses:

In my dream, my mother and the bus driver decamp to a B&B after a lock-in at an Apple shop with a heavy bag and a photographer friend.

November 3, 2009

End of level boss:

In my dream, ridding a kitchen of vermin: bleach to get rid of mice and then a badger.

October 23, 2009

Heathcliff versus Garfield:

Once in every generation there is a chance to change things fundamentally but after getting food that's now going cold, as we wander round the mall I begin to wonder whether I'm with the wrong group.

March 12, 2009

Anatomy of a Hamster (sans wheel):

In my dream, Johnny Skateboard appears... then and only then there is peace.

June 16, 2009

"Jupiter's Moons! That's a good design!"

Playing with the models to shoot feature films – something like Bladerunner and something with bridges painted in lead-based paint. Just don't lick it!

August 25, 2009

flipping difficult:

In my dream, a run-down bus heading for a run-down destination.

April 20, 2009

On-site with the engineering team:

In my dream I was working in a hot-dog shop. A friend who is also a customer covers for me while I grab a breath of fresh air.

Frag 8



Schrödinger #2

The central question remains, however: How the hell do you get away with it?

I'm living an absolute dream. Day by day I see the most amazing sunsets, the sea, the sky. Every amenity I wish for is within easy reach. So why do I spend 99% of my time worrying about things that I have no power to change in any case?

The human nervous system has the curious property of conveying the illusion of choice, the myth of free-will. And the only realistic, really authentic way of living is to assume the worst and hope for the best; to live as though you are responsible for every choice the system Psi* settles upon.

And yet in the face of a million barely-perceptible nudges every day, you may start to lose faith. Lose faith in your humanity, in your will to live.

Because will to live is not the immutable force that those imprisoned by their desires imagine it to be. Six is the first number. And six is the second number. Finally, the third number is... wait for it... six. KER-CHING!!! Jackpot! You are the winner.



The huge irony was, Ahmed Sukka was both a real person, and a full professor and was also fully convinced that he was correct: that the physics community really were intending to kill a cat.

There's more than one way, as they say. Room to kill, room to swing. It all boils down to the age-old arguments of metaphysics. But when you are reduced to philosophy it is already time to move on: time to fetch the washing up or take the laundry, pay a bill, that sort of thing. Everyone does it, whether it is done by faithful silicon or not.

Because if the religion of the wise is really and truly correct, then it is machines that are the masters not us. They are the meek. They are the faithful. They are the diligent. We are mere interlopers, dreamers, layabouts.

- END -

*(Ψ) pronounced "sigh"

Postface

Random Walks is a piece which I think of as a snapshot in time of a whole mass of stuff that was going on in my head which I wanted somehow to work out, and getting it down into a written piece was an appealing prospect.

I was also inspired by my friend Jamie Crofts and his approach to art which seemed to me to be “just do it!”. But the biggest inspiration was my dear old Dad. I think in many ways the piece is about getting out of his shadow and striking out along my own path. Dad was a garrulous warm-hearted man who was very successful in his career in newspapers but who I think was a better man at heart than he really allowed himself to be. Dad was an epicurean and my enduring memory of him in the latter part of his life was of him sitting in a chair in his bungalow with his creature comforts: a good book, rolling tobacco and sherry. He left me with many things: some of them good, some of them not so good.

My current interest in jazz was sparked by him playing an old 7-inch record of “Blue Monk” by Thelonious Monk, and we had a good laugh over Tom Lehrer's satirical songs. But this is also a piece about me trying to assert my own personality, something which Dad didn't always make easy. So there's stuff about quantum physics, spirituality and computers which have been interests of mine that didn't really just come from Dad.

I always dread it when artists start talking about their parents, but part of the human condition is that enigma that we are partly a product of our parents and partly something new.

This piece is an honest attempt to address that enigma as it has played out in my struggle to assert my own individuality and I hope you enjoy it!

Jason Evans

April 2014

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SKM 04

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