

Money-Back Guarantee

SPARROW

June 1

While reading an old news article, I came upon a surprising admission by George W. Bush: he confessed that he is a novelist. In an interview with CBS he said, discussing the struggles of his contested election, "It's been a fascination, as I'm sure you can imagine. I'm not a very good novelist. But it'd make a pretty interesting novel."

Now, suppose I say, "I am a very bad ice skater." This means that at some time I have skated on ice. Otherwise I would have remarked, "I suspect I am not a good ice skater." So if Bush says he is a poor novelist, he must have written novels.

This could explain why so little of Bush's time is accounted for. As a novelist myself, I know how much of my day appears wasted. I spend hours sitting in the kitchen reading four-month-old newspapers. Someone calls me on the phone, and I chat for forty-five minutes. But all this is preparation for the writing of my next chapter.

I know what you're thinking: "Bush is too unintelligent to write novels." First of all, remember what Bush himself said: "I'm not a very good novelist." It's possible that, though he has written many novels, none of them are successes. Besides, you and I know him only as president. Suppose we knew James Joyce only as president. He might appear to us aloof, testy, and muttering. We might be certain that he, too, is an awful writer.

We must await, with ample patience, the eventual publication of Bush's books before we can truly judge his literary gifts. Until then, we can be proud to have our first novelist president.

America: A Prophecy

Americans will grow
stupider and stupider
until they can no longer
read rfe words bh thes
poem.

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eruhj npoli when
fdgikol nmlpwq.

June 6

Recently we had a mouse, here in the house.

At first, we did not see this mouse. (I don't know whether to call the mouse "him" or "her.") We saw only its turds in the morning, on the sponge in the kitchen sink. And we saw the small gouges it made in our food. It ate pears, bread, and soap.

After a few weeks, I sometimes noticed a blur late at night while I did the dishes — a gray streak, almost like a line.

More time passed, and the mouse slowed down. It had a strange way of walking: it leaned forward, with its tail up in the air, like a scholar who walks while reading a book.

Soon the mouse was all around us. At night, I would lie on the futon in the living room, and the mouse would walk up and down the cracks of the floor, searching for grains of rice and millet my daughter had dropped during the day.

I began to worry that mice are unclean. What does my guru say about mice? I tried to remember. He says all animals are either "friends of man" or "enemies of man." Are mice friends or enemies?

One night while I was meditating, I heard a scrambling sound beside me. Then I felt the mouse sitting on my head, like a person standing atop Mount Rushmore. The mouse began to dig in my scalp, looking for food.

I began to think mice are enemies of man.

We tried to catch the mouse. Sylvia placed a plastic container on top of it, but she worried she was pinching its tail. When she lifted the container, the mouse escaped.

Two days later Violet caught the mouse. She took it to Phoenicia Park and set it free.

Afterward the house felt lonely, and smaller.

(end of excerpt)