



The Birth of Tippy Gnu

* MY ADVENTURES IN AND OUT OF THE WOMB *

Tippy
Gnu

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In and Out
Of the Womb

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The Birth of Tippy Gnu. My Adventures In and Out of the Womb. Tippy Gnu, author.

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PREFACE

From a young age, my megalomaniacal ego urged me to write my autobiography. But my pride in my humility always resisted this urge. The two forces battled it out for decades, but finally pride lost. One day I caved into my ego, faced my keyboard, rubbed my hands together, cackling like a madman, and commenced typing.

I didn't get far. For the life of me, I could not get past the time of my birth. I kept drawing a blank. But I persevered, and finally managed to conjure up some memories. These were the highlights of my life. My achievements. But as I pondered these highlights, I felt a powerful lethargy dragging me under. I couldn't stop yawning. And eventually I succumbed to a deep sleep.

Over and over, day after day, I repeated this exercise of reviewing the highlights of my life, only to find myself face first on top of my keyboard, with drool shorting out the circuits beneath.

I learned to buy cheaper and cheaper replacement keyboards. But I couldn't figure out how to prevent losing consciousness, and over time even these cheap keyboards put a strain on my wallet. Finally one day, as I was chucking a fried keyboard into the trash, the truth hit me. I realized I had no interest in the highlights of my life. I was literally boring myself to death.

It occurred to me that what I was most interested in was not the things that happened after I was born, but rather, the events prior to birth.

I felt much more excited about what happened before I exited the womb, than after. Because it seemed to me that one cannot understand the after until one becomes acquainted with the before. The before explains it

all. And then there's no need to discuss the after, and all the monotonous details.

All anybody needs, to understand my life, is to know what was going on with me before I arrived in this world. Before my birth. Before the water broke. Before each trimester. And even before conception. That is where the foundation lies. And the grand design. The blueprint. That is what makes me, me.

Therefore, this autobiography of Tippy Gnu is about the birth of Tippy Gnu. It's about what happened before birth, during, and immediately after. It does not concern itself with the details of my childhood, my schooling, my romances, my various careers, nor any other folderol I may have involved myself in as a human bean.

After the reader learns about my birth, the reader will know as much about me as the reader will need to know.

Birth is the creation of human life. It's as much a spiritual event as it is biological. The two are intertwined, at first loosely, but gradually more and more tightly, like a spool of string reeling in a kite. In this autobiography, I'll provide the spiritual details. But I'll also throw in some biological minutia, for your scientific curiosity. For the former, I spent my research time in meditative reflection. For the latter, I researched on the internet.

I'll take the reader through the biological stages of human gestation, from conception all the way to parturition. And I'll throw my soul, my spirit, the very heart of me, into these stages, and show how they affected my inner core. That is how the reader will learn about me. That is how the reader will come to understand my true essence.

So now, let's go back. Way back. Back to when I was not thought about in this world, nor ever had been. To a time when Earth had been spinning along on its wobbly orbit quite well without me for over four billion years. To a time before conception, when I was but a twinkle in my happy-go-lucky father's eye. For that is where my story starts.

That is the true beginning.

CONCEPTION

There I was with all these other spirits, laughing, kicking it, just having a good time. Then the thrill vibe hit us. That's the vibe that comes from the physical world, when we sense some other creatures are having a good time.

If you know what I mean.

It drew us like mosquitoes to a hemophiliac. The thrill vibe is always a draw. It's a vibe of fun, joy, and delight. It is life itself. Life is what we spirits thrive on. Life is our food. We must have life if we are to have, well, life.

It was a couple of humans humping and moaning away, really going at it. The thrill vibe can come from any creatures getting it on. But I liked the human thrill vibe the most. That's because I was a real twisted fuck.

Humans are the stupidest of all the creatures in the physical realm. And yet they're also the smartest. Humans are just really messed up. Like me. If I had been more mature and developed spiritually, and had not allowed myself to degenerate so badly, the human vibe would not have been my thing. I'd have gone for the rodent vibe, or worm vibe, or, if I was among the most advanced, maybe the bacteria or virus vibe.

One of the stupidest and most biased of human beliefs is that we reincarnate into more and more advanced creatures, in the physical realm, until we finally enjoy the rare opportunity of becoming human. It's supposedly the pinnacle of reincarnative achievement, according to some gurus and other illuminati.

But think about it. The math won't allow it. Consider how many bacteria, plants, insects, and animals populate this world. It's one hell of a lot more than humans, by an astronomical amount. If they were all

advancing toward human life, planet Earth would soon be overwhelmed. It would not be able to sustain the vast numbers of new people being born.

Here's the real truth. We use the physical realm as a kind of school. We must face many dilemmas in the physical realm, and from these we learn many lessons that help us to develop spiritually.

Some dunderheads have to go to remedial education. And so we're born as more advanced, complicated creatures, such as mammals, who have to deal with complicated problems. And the worst of us, like you and me, are born as humans, who are not physically adapted to this world, and thus face the most complex and challenging issues of all.

But the more we advance spiritually, the less we need to learn from the physical realm. And so the most advanced spirits incarnate into the simplest creatures, such as bacteria, which typically have very short life spans and uncomplicated lifestyles. They usually just come here for brief, routine exercise, then quickly get back to their lives on the Other Side.

And that's why we have so much bacteria on our planet. There are a lot of advanced spirits on the Other Side seeking a little tiny bit of spiritual exercise on This Side. You wouldn't believe how many. It's impossible to count them all.

Unfortunately, humans were what I, and all my friends, related to the most on the Other Side. We were in a tiny minority at the very bottom of the spiritual hierarchy. Which, by the way, looks a lot like an inverted pyramid. I once was advanced, but I allowed myself to degenerate badly. And now I was among the lowest of the low. Lower than whale shit, and at the bottom of that upside-down pyramid.

But minority though we were, we formed a pretty large crowd compared to populations in the physical realm. Why, there were more than a billion of us lowly spirits just at this one party alone. And we all dug the human vibe.

So there we all were, our spirits jumping with glee into the balls of this man humping his lady, and fighting over his sperm cells. I got into one successfully and held on for the joy ride.

What always happened in these cases was, I'd be ejaculated into some skanky vagina, and have a fun little adventure swimming up toward the cervix, uterus, and that distant, impossible-to-reach, golden egg.

Things always turned out well, because I never actually got to the egg. Not that I didn't want to reach it. Some sort of mania always took me over and yeah, I'd go delirious as a hound on a fox hunt, trying to find the prey. But I was up against a billion other competitors, and barely stood a chance.

And then someone else would always shout "Bingo!" while all the rest of us cursed "Shit!" then shriveled up and died.

Then in a flash I'd pop back into the spirit world, feeling more electric and alive than ever. What fun I'd had! And the disappointment from not reaching the egg vanished like a cloud in a sunburst.

But not this time. No, fuck no, not this time. This time for some crazy reason, I guess by pure luck, I happened to land in the strongest sperm cell of all. And I swam like Michael Phelps himself. This time, there I was, right at the lead, looking and feeling like a champ. Suddenly, right before my little tadpole eye, loomed the gigantic golden egg itself.

A couple of strong swimmers pulled up beside me, and it was a race to the finish. My delirium swept me into a vicious madness. I tripped up one of my competitors by grabbing its tail, and whipped the other in the face with my own writhing tail. And then, whoosh! I plunged straight into the face of the sun!

But so did a few hundred others. We all started chewing like we were in a pie-eating contest, on this delicious egg, trying to be the first to penetrate the shell.

Suddenly I felt a crunch and a caving in, and the thrill vibe surged through me like a billion volts of alternating current. The biggest orgasm I'd had in eons coursed through my soul, blowing my mind out and dissolving me into a misty field of nothingness.

All faded to white.

I was the first to bust through the egg. I won the race! I was conceived, and became a human embryo.

Damn!

This was not what I expected or wanted. No, not before the delirium overtook me. Because every rational minded spirit knows what birth into the physical realm entails. Especially human birth. It is hell. The worst of hells.

It is the perception of mortality, and a struggle for survival every moment of your existence. It's a bad trip, where your mind grows deluded and desperate. Nothing makes sense, unless you trick yourself into thinking you know everything. You find yourself blindly following a maze, and every direction you attempt to go ends up in a different, unintended vector.

No, the spiritual realm is the best place to be, even for a degenerate like me. A smart spirit only wants to dally with the physical realm. To live for just a few hours or days as an unsuccessful sperm is good enough. It's a momentary joy ride, that breaks up the equanimous bliss of eternity. And it also helps us to advance a little bit spiritually. Not nearly as fast as one advances if born into the physical realm, but eventually, after a hell of a long time and a whole lot of sperm rides, we can get back up there with the most advanced beings.

To get trapped in the physical realm is not what anyone wants. But it does happen from time-to-time. And on this rare occasion it happened to me. I guess it was my turn to be the unlucky lucky one.

The sperm cell roadster I'd carjacked contained an X and Y chromosome. And so, in just nine human months, I was destined to become a baby boy.

FIRST TRIMESTER

Mom and Dad

My dad-to-be smooched my mom-to-be on her lips and cheek, then rolled over and was out in less than 60 seconds. Meanwhile, I'd just begun my journey, racing like a champ up the birth canal, against a host of strong and weak competitors.

He had a mistress, so the last thing he wanted was one of his racers to win the Golden Egg Award. No, he was planning to leave my mom when the time was right, and anymore kids would complicate things. That's why he wore a rubber.

And that's why I have to give credit to the Holy Trojans. If it wasn't for that tiny little, unnoticed puncture, I wouldn't be here right now to write this autobiography.

My mom suspected something was up. She's the one who took a straight pin while he was at work, and poked a hole in the rubber. She connived that if only she could get pregnant and have another kid, maybe it would keep them together. Perhaps it would restore the flaming blue passion they once had for each other, that had gone the way of fading gray-orange coals.

They already had four kids, all born about a year-and-a-half apart. The last to be born was my brother, over two years earlier. By the time I'd open my eyes into this world, it would be over three years since the most recent child expanded this family. I would be the final entry. The afterthought. The last hope my siblings had for an unbroken-home upbringing.

It was 10:07 on a July 4th evening, when my dad-to-be climaxed and shot off his spectacular fireworks. My mom-to-be oohed and aahed, as is expected during a fireworks show. She had planned like a fox for this entire Independence Day holiday. She dropped her four kids, my siblings-to-be, off at the house of my grandparents-to-be. They were delighted for the opportunity to take their grandkids to a fireworks display.

Then she treated my dad-to-be to a candlelit dinner, gave him a back massage, and subserviently followed him to bed for the fulfillment of his wildest fantasies. Except for that fantasy where you have to swallow. That would not satisfy her plan to get pregnant.

They made their own fireworks show that Friday evening, July 4th, 1958.

At 5:00 the next morning, my dad-to-be woke up by force of habit. It was a Saturday, and he was off work for the weekend. He could have stayed in bed, but he knew he couldn't get back to sleep.

So he slowly sat up, rubbed his eyes, slumped his shoulders, and sighed. The drug of sleep gradually lifted from his befogged brain, as a primordial shudder racked his mind. *What challenges, what horrors, what hells awaited him today?* he wondered, as we all sometimes wonder at these first moments of our day. At 5:03 AM, just as he was lugging his tired body up off the bed, to find the toilet and drain his bladder, I won the Golden Egg Award.

My dad blasted a fart after his first step. My sleeping mother briefly awakened, half-opening her eyelids, then dropped back off. Was it the cacophony of the fart that disturbed her awake, or was it the christening of life occurring that moment in her uterus? The romantic in me wants to believe the latter. But I suspect it was probably the former.

But what christening, really? My life has always been, and will always be. There was no new life starting up in her womb. It was old life. Eternal life. Life that had always been, but that was simply taking on a new form, a new direction, a new adventure. That was the only new life going on.

For as far back as I could remember, which was eternally, I had always been alive. That may be hard for mortals to comprehend, but when you're in utero, you're not like other mortals. You still remember the eternity that preceded you. And you possess many of the supernatural powers you had before conception.

The in utero experience is a transitional experience. Over the six to nine months of gestation, you transform from immortal to mortal. And from supernatural to natural. It's a big change, and so it doesn't happen in the blink of an eye. It takes time.

A Farewell

The sperm/egg unification was a mind-blower for me. I felt electric. A bright, warm glow enveloped me, and my mind seemed to expand to the size of the universe. A pleasant pulsation throbbed through my being as I pumped my DNA into the egg. And then my mind imploded, and I felt as if I was sucked into the egg at hyperspeed, through a long, black tunnel. This felt exhilarating.

Once inside the egg, my mind again ballooned out, out, out, then shot away from my mother's body like a missile heading for outer space. It must have traveled a million, billion light years before a tensing force slowed and stopped it, much in the way bungee jumpers are slowed and stopped by their elastic cords.

And there in deep space I dangled, hanging by some sort of mysterious tail. In a void of nothingness my mind floated, while basking in the afterglow of the orgasm of sperm/egg unification.

I serenely floated there for awhile, just relaxing and chilling in the tranquility of nothingness. And then I felt a presence and opened my mind's eye. And there before me floated Scump, Cleeta, and Forchetti. They were my best friends from the Other Side. We used to hang out together and did everything with each other.

"Hey, Spunjee!" Scump called out to me, "Wasn't that frickin' frabjous?!" Spunjee was my Other-Side name. Scump loved the word "frabjous". Anything cool that happened was "frabjous this" and "frabjous that".

"Oh yeahhhh," I sighed. "Better than most times, that's for sure. In fact, I think that was the best I've ever had."

"I don't know about that," Cleeta remonstrated. "I mean, it was okay and all, but I've had better."

“Yeah, same here,” Forchetti joined in, “It was over so damn quick. Gettin’ stuck in a rubber just cuts the pleasure off short. Which reminds me, where have YOU been? We’ve been lookin’ all over for you, bud.”

I guess they hadn’t notice the hole.

“There was a hole in the rubber, didn’t you see it?”

They shook their heads.

“Well there was, and I made it through, along with a bunch of others. And you know what? I got all the way up the vagina and into the uterus. I even found the egg. And if I wasn’t here with you guys right now, I could swear I was the first one to enter the egg. But here I am, so thank god that didn’t happen.”

“Hey!” Cleeta pointed, “What’s that tail thing you got going on?”

Tail thing? Oh yeah, the tail thing.

“I don’t know,” I puzzled, “But I was flying real super fast, and it caught me and stopped me.”

“You got a tail!” Scump shouted, “And you don’t know what it is? Dude, you WERE the first inside the egg! Dude, you’re gonna be a human! Man, there ain’t NUTHIN’ frabjous about that.”

Oh shit. I was suspecting that’s why I had a tail. But I was in denial. Didn’t want to believe it. No, no, no. It couldn’t be. What were the odds? But I looked behind me and sure enough, there that tail was, firmly attached to my spiritual field, and dangling off forever into the distance.

Forchetti blew me a cosmic kiss. “It’s been nice knowing you Spunjee, but you know you’re not supposed to win the race. Now you’re stuck. Look me up when you get back. Don’t worry, it won’t take long. It’ll just seem like it to your fucked-up mortal mind.”

“Hey, it’s been frabjous, dude,” Scump fist-bumped my ether.

“Buh-bye,” waved Cleeta.

Then my three best friends retreated back to the Other Side.

I desperately tried to follow. “Wait! Maybe I can break this thing!” I gathered my cosmic energy, sped up, and threw everything I had into it. But after just one or two light years of stretching my tail as thin as a strand of vermicelli, it stopped me and yanked me back, like the elastic in my dad’s tighty-whities. My tail had its limits, and I’d reached the end of its tether. It was very strong. Too strong to snap. At least for me.

The tail was my connection to my mother. It was my ethereal umbilicus, so to speak. It kept my spirit attached to the egg in my mother's womb, and it formed a bond that was virtually unbreakable.

Oh, there are rare stories of other, much more powerful spirits who've been able to snap the tail. But I simply didn't have it in me. I was way too weak.

After dangling in despair for awhile, I gradually moved to a stage of resignation. I missed my friends, but figured I'd just have to make new friends in the human world. I shrugged my shoulders and surrendered to the situation. Better to just make the most of it, I sighed.

And so I turned around and followed my long, long tail back to the Milky Way, back to Sol's Solar System, back to planet Earth, and then back to the tiny little womb that contained the egg I had so recently fertilized.

The Next Four Weeks

The ethereal umbilicus held me bound to my mother's womb. But it was very long, so I had a lot of freedom. Willpower was my fuel. All I had to do was think about going someplace, and out of the womb I'd bound, soaring off to wherever it was. I was like a tetherball on a long rope. I'd swing off to this galaxy here, or that galaxy there. The physical realm has a lot of galaxies, and I could reach quite a few of them.

But not all of them. The rope had its limits. And gradually, those limits became more and more restrictive. Within a few weeks of my mother's pregnancy I found myself very limited, compared to my first day. But I could still visit Andromeda, M33, the Magellanic Clouds, and a few other neighboring galaxies. I sojourned in their various solar systems and planets, and spied upon the creatures that lived in those worlds. I envied some of them, and wished I could have been conceived on their spheres, rather than on Earth.

Because, you see, the grass is always greener where you ain't.

There were a whole lot of others in the same predicament as me, swinging by their tails, attached to a womb somewhere far away, whether from Earth or some other terrestrial object in the universe. We'd cross paths sometimes, but there was little time for conversation. If we weren't

coming, we were going, our minds agog in exploration, while slowly being reeled in by our mothers.

After three weeks of being reeled in by my own mother, I was limited to the Milky Way only. And after four weeks, I was cut down to just our solar system. My tail was growing shorter and shorter, and stronger and stronger, the longer it held me captive. I suppose its purpose was to draw me closer and closer to my mother, and get me more and more involved in my immediate environment.

This allowed for a gentle transition from the infinite freedom I enjoyed on the Other Side, to the confining strictures of human life.

I rested in the womb, those first few weeks, between my interstellar peregrinations. It felt kind of cozy there. But it also felt claustrophobic. I was in one sense attracted to the coziness, while in another sense repelled by the confinement. I could stand it for a little while, and even enjoy it some. But after a bit I'd get "womb fever" and have to get the hell out of there. So off I'd travel to visit a new star or planet.

The egg was kind of freaky to watch. It fascinated me, but I also hated it. I knew that egg was my prison. My tail was attached to it, and it was the egg that ultimately kept me from escaping back to the Other Side. It was like an anchor with powerful arms, that held onto a long line, and that kept pulling that line shorter and shorter.

I made several attempts to destroy the egg. I'd fling my cosmic body at it with light-speed ferocity. But I always passed through it without causing any harm. I finally gave up and surrendered to my sentence of human life.

When I first fertilized it, the egg was inside a long tube, which dumped it out at the top of the uterus. Then it kind of floated around in the uterus for awhile, like a hot air balloon. But one day, about a week after conception, it brushed up against the wall of the uterus and got stuck there, like an insect on flypaper.

Meanwhile, I could see that it was growing bigger and bigger, inflating like a beachball. And to my trepidation, I watched it elongate and kind of take the shape of a human body. *That would be MY body*, I gulped. I didn't want to think that, but I couldn't evade the truth, either.

My body started forming organs, including a heart and a brain. I could even see the heart in action, pumping fluids around. I was not inside my body. Nor could I get inside of this dreaded thing, even if I wanted. Okay I

must admit that out of curiosity, I did try a few times. But I was relegated to being an outside observer, watching with fascination and horror as this future physical form of mine took shape and developed.

I also observed my mother. She was waking up in the mornings feeling nauseous. A couple of times she even threw up. And she was pissing a lot. And speaking of pissing, she was getting pissed off a lot, too. Any little thing was setting her off. First she'd get mad. Then she'd cry. Then she'd laugh. Then she'd wonder what the heck was going on.

And then she missed her period. And that's when she put two and two together.

Four weeks after she punctured my dad's rubber, and I punctured her egg, I was riding the rings of Saturn while she paid a visit to her doctor.

The News

It was bizarre. She peed in a cup. Her doctor then injected her urine into a frog. The frog subsequently laid some eggs. And that's how my mother's doctor figured out she was pregnant. Because that's how pregnancy tests were done back in the 1950s.

I could see all of that crazy stuff going on, from my perch on Saturn's rings. But I zipped back down for her follow-up visit. I was getting into this drama and wanted a closer view. My mother had set this whole soap opera up, sabotaging the condom to get pregnant on purpose. And now she got her wish.

Her fake look of surprise was laughable. And her protestation was one for the Dissimulation Hall of Fame. "But doctor, my husband used a rubber! How could I possibly have become pregnant?"

Her doctor explained that condoms aren't 100% effective, and that this wouldn't be the first time this form of birth control failed. "It happens all the time," he claimed. Ah, so now she had some ammunition when facing her perplexed and possibly suspicious husband.

The doctor asked her when her last period had occurred. It was June 21st. And so he set that as the start date of her pregnancy, and calculated the expected birth at 40 weeks later, or March 28th.

March 28th. The day I would embark upon my journey through human life. A day to dread. A day I hoped would never come.

Mom had to do some quick thinking. She hadn't really expected her plan to work, but against all odds it bore fruit. I was the fruit. Forbidden fruit. And now she had to figure out some way to present this fruit to Dad, and get him to accept it.

After about an hour of cogitation, she realized it was obvious. She'd just blame this forbidden fruit on the serpent. The one-eyed serpent that was SO BIG it must have busted the condom open. *Yeah, that's it*, she grinned. *Stroke his ego while making him feel responsible.*

His 27th birthday was coming up in just a few days. So she decided to keep me a secret and break the news to him on that day, when he'd be in the best mood to receive it.

She promised him a taco dinner (his favorite). She promised him beer. And she promised him a "very special surprise" after the kids would be in bed. And he was looking forward to all this great stuff. He was even warming back up to her and rethinking his plan to leave her. And when his mistress called him at work to wish him a happy birthday, he didn't encourage much conversation. He cut the call a little short. And after he clocked out, he rushed home to his promising wife.

The tacos were so flavorful, he practically inhaled them. The beer flowed down his throat like a springtime freshet. And then he hastily excused himself to take a shower.

Soon his 6-year-old daughter, 5-year-old daughter, 3-year-old daughter, and 2-year old son were tucked into their beds and nodding off. It was time for that very special surprise. He tossed his bathrobe into a corner, flounced onto the bed, and reclined in an erect manner, anticipating the completion of my mom's shower.

The birthday boy in his birthday suit grinned like a wolf at my mother when she entered the bedroom. She nervously smiled. Seemed a little bashful. Which was kind of strange. And she kept her bathrobe on.

She sat at the foot of the bed and anxiously surveyed his body. She took a deep breath. "Orin," she brightened up, "I have some very special news for you."

Orin, my dad, creased his brow. He'd hoped the special surprise would be oral sex. Now he suspected it was more like oral words. "Okaaay," says he, wary about any kind of surprise news.

“Orin,” my mom widened her eyes and grinned as widely as possible, “you’re going to be a daddy again!”

My dad was guzzling some beer when he heard this, and choked. A paroxysm of coughing ensued. His full staff went to half staff, then toppled over completely and shriveled up. He dropped the can of beer, then reached blindly for it. Finally found it on the soaked bed covers with about four fluid ounces remaining. A few swallows later, tears streaming down his face, he finally regained control of his epiglottis and recovered from his apnea.

He impaled her with murderous eyes. “WHAT did you say?”

“I’m pregnant,” Mom blurted out. “and you’re going to be a daddy again, next spring. Happy birthday!”

He lay there silent for a full minute, and just glared at her. Finally, “How could this be? I’ve been using rubbers!” he pleaded with her, as if she were some sort of arbiter of this fate.

My mom went to her well-rehearsed lines. “I asked the doctor the same thing. Know what he said? He said this sort of thing can happen with big men. Sometimes a man is so big the rubber breaks.” She reached over and stroked his now-tiny toddler. “And you ARE very big. I’ve always had a hard time making room for this thing.”

The birthday boy lowered his eyes and silently mused over the news. He cursed his huge tallywhacker. All that thing had ever done was get him into trouble. And now, yet another kid. And from a woman he wasn’t sure he loved anymore.

Down to Earth

Then it struck him. He was going to be a daddy again. A daddy! A new kid was on its way. And something paternal deep inside began to well up with excitement and pride. Poor bastard, he couldn’t help it. Nature was at work playing with his head, helping to keep the human species alive. The evolutionary work of nature brought out his paternal instinct. It made him love the idea of fathering a child.

He always had mixed feelings about fatherhood. On the one hand, kids were expensive and a pain in the ass. But on the other hand, they were wonderful little companions and fun playtoys.

He looked back at his anxious wife. He fought back a smile, but couldn't help it. Mom smiled back. Then they both began to giggle. Finally they began debating good-naturedly about whether they wanted a boy or a girl. A boy, they agreed. They already had three girls. And they hugged each other and fell back onto the bed and cuddled for awhile.

Mom's plan was working like a charm. The Gnu family got a boost of new life, thanks to me and my misfortune.

I got so involved watching this little dramedy that I didn't notice my limits shrinking further. I tried to return to Saturn, but couldn't even make it past the asteroid belt. I had to settle for Mars.

And then the umbilical pull of my ethereal tail yanked me off the red sand of a crater, and back to outer space, dragging me closer and closer to Earth.

I perched upon the moon and watched the womb. I didn't like the idea of being ensouled inside that growing fetus, because I'd had so much fun on the Other Side. I missed the Other Side terribly. But I noticed that my feelings were becoming more and more ambivalent. I was starting to like my mom and dad and siblings. I was getting involved in their lives, watching their little daily dramas. A part of me looked forward to the day I could interact with them and be a part of all the family action.

But mostly, I wanted to return to the Other Side.

Ten weeks into my mother's pregnancy, the tail that tethered me to her belly gave me a good hard tug, and off the moon I flew. Downward I dove into the Earth's atmosphere. I tried flying left and right to pull myself away, but it kept reeling me in like a five-pound bass on a 50-pound line.

It finally stopped when I was at the upper limits of the troposphere, about five miles above the Earth's surface. I was left with a jumbo jet's eye view of the planet I was fated to inhabit for the next, maybe 70, 80, 90 years, who knows?

I could travel back and forth from the sky to the womb, and I often did. I surveyed the area I would live in. Then I surveyed the body I would live in. I had a lot of morbid curiosity about the whole thing, so I did plenty of exploring. I got to know my neighborhood, the local grocery store where my mom shopped, my dad's place of work, his mistress's house and neighborhood, and all kinds of other places that piqued my interest.

At 12 weeks, the body I would become imprisoned in had grown to fill my mother's entire uterus. It was a disgusting looking thing, with a giant head and tiny, scrunched up, pink body. It was only about two inches long, but it was formed enough to look pretty much like a human. A weird human with a voluminous head.

At 13 weeks, I was up in the clouds relaxing on top of a Mare's Tail, when that other tail, my tail, gave me another hard yank. And down I dropped. The tail zipped me nearly to ground level, through the roof of my family's house. It stopped me about five feet above my mother's belly.

This was traumatic for me. I could live with Saturn, Mars, the moon, and even the troposphere. But now I was like a dog on a leash, closely tethered to its owner. An untrained dog, who didn't like to heal. A dog who wanted to run free, and sniff and explore. But I couldn't do anything like that. I was stuck right there, close to a parent who would keep me under watch and ward for years to come.

I felt panicky. I felt angry. I felt resentful. And most of all, I felt helpless. I needed freedom. I swung around and around my mother, trying to get loose of her. But to no avail.

Finally I grew tired of all the swinging and flying about, and gave up. No amount of struggling did any good, except to drive me crazy. This was it. I had to surrender.

SECOND TRIMESTER

The Aborted Abortion

I had given up all hope for returning to the Other Side. And then a miracle happened.

Mom went in for a routine X-ray, to see how I was doing. The next day, she was called back to visit her obstetrician immediately.

He was a very old dude. A Seventh-Day Adventist. Religious people . . . they're a real trip. They have all these notions about the Other Side that are laughable. They've got no idea. They once knew, but on This Side they've forgotten, and have made up all sorts of hilarious gobbledy-goop about it. My Other Side pals and I used to joke about it all the time.

But anyway, this doc was very old, so he was going to find out for himself about the Other Side, very soon. He had a grave look on his wizened face, that he employed to transfix my mother's eyes and hold her hypnotic. He droned in a slow, steady, extremely serious monotone, "We found a very large tumor on your ovary. It might be cancer. If it is, your life is in danger."

He scheduled my mom for a biopsy. After that bit of surgery, that I watched with interest from a short distance, she went in for another consultation.

"It's cancer," he solemnly proclaimed, with his aged, crackling voice.

My wide-eyed mother fell dead silent for one of the few times of her life. Finally, "Cancer? Are you sure?"

"Yes, we're very sure," the doctor continued. "And it's very advanced. Your life is in danger. You must have surgery immediately to remove

everything. It's more than a full debulking. You need a complete hysterectomy as soon as possible."

"A full deb . . . deb . . ."

"Everything has to go!" old man doctor interrupted, while waving a bony arm. "Including the fetus."

Holy shit! A thrill shot through my cosmic aura, and I lit up like Manhattan at midnight. I was going to be aborted! I could go back to the Other Side after all!

My mother's reaction was different. She closed her eyes. She took a deep breath. And I read her mind. She felt elated! A hint of a smile curled one side of her lips. She then opened her eyes and addressed her doctor.

"No," she slowly and firmly iterated with conviction. "I will not abort my baby. I don't believe in abortion. I'm keeping it, and I'll have to trust in God's will."

Goddamnit! I had a religious fanatic on my hands, who wasn't going to allow me to escape! I was really pissed off. I wanted to shout at this woman that there is no God. But really there is. Kind of. It's just not the sort of God conceived by the mortal clowns on Earth. What people think of God is as laughable as what people think of the Other Side.

Then it occurred to me that religion had little to do with my mom's decision. When I read her thoughts, and read her heart, I detected that she felt delighted at the grim news her doctor gave her. And when I read deeper, I figured out why she felt so elated. She perceived herself as unworthy of love. But with a cancer diagnosis, she could now command sympathy, and get attention from family, friends, and medical professionals. She was about to enter center stage of a great medical drama, and be the star of the show.

She would be the heroine, struggling bravely to save her unborn child. Trying to beat the odds. Garnering sympathy from all quarters. Held up to the attention of the world as someone lovable and respectable.

She didn't give a damn about her fictional God, or me. This was all about her. My mother wanted love. And so because of her selfishness, I wouldn't be aborted.

Well shit, this was going to get ugly. I still hadn't given up hope for escaping from her womb, but now it appeared that she would have to die

before the escape could be effected. And if they took me by C-section, my escape might be prevented, even if she did die.

But there was nothing I could do. I was completely at the mercy of modern medicine and the cancer slowly devouring my mother's body. I could boo and hiss at her doctors, while cheering on the tumor, but my role was relegated to that of spectator.

The Lie

Early on in the second trimester I saw my family jewels form. And that's when I knew I was going to be a boy. If I survived. But this made no difference to me. I had no preference for gender, because I knew how crazy life is for all humans.

Each sex has its own advantages and disadvantages, and it's no more better to be a boy than a girl. No matter what gender you sport between your legs, it's what you carry between your ears that really matters. I hoped that I would be born with a brain smart enough to cut through the craziness of life, and avoid at least some of the misery that so many humans put themselves through.

As the fetus that would house me developed, my supernatural powers deteriorated. I could hover about 5 feet above my mother's belly until late in the fourth month. Then I felt myself drawn in by that damnable tail, closer and closer to her womb. I struggled against the pull, but to no avail.

One day the fetus kicked a little. And with that tiny little movement my spirit was sucked halfway into the fetal body. Now the best I could do for freedom of movement was to poke my head outside the womb and observe what was going on directly in front of my mother.

I could still read minds, and I still retained my fond memories of the Other Side. But I couldn't roam more than a foot away from my mother's belly button. From that vantage, I observed my family. I observed the house I might soon live in, if the doctors had their way. And I observed X-ray machines, and medical probes, and people in white uniforms who put on a good show of caring and kindness toward the owner of my womb. And I felt my mother absorb all that attention like a rising starlet with newfound fame. I heard her heart pound with joy.

Mom got the cancer diagnosis at 15 weeks. At 18 weeks, she saw an oncologist. She sat on the examining table while I poked my head out and watched this specialist. The oncologist seemed immersed in thought, while studying some papers at a desk. After about a minute he looked up, adjusted his glasses, and solemnly announced, “Mrs. Morabundus, this diagnosis is extremely serious. There’s a good chance that you won’t survive if you don’t have an abortion and complete hysterectomy, immediately. And I’m hoping even now that it’s not too late.”

“Mrs. Morabundus?” my mom asked aloud, and I to myself.

The doctor quickly looked back at his papers and studied them for a few seconds, while pressing his finger on the top line of a page. “Yes,” he asserted, “Blanche Moribundus. It says right here. You are Blanche Moribundus, aren’t you?”

My mother furrowed her eyebrows. “Nooo. I’m Savanna Gnu. Savanna Green Gnu.”

The doctor now furrowed his own eyebrows. He returned to the paperwork. He shuffled it about. He examined various pages. He muttered words like, “Hmm,” “Wow,” and “Oh dear.” Then he mumbled, “Excuse me for a minute,” and he picked up all the paperwork and walked out of the office.

For about 10 minutes we heard muffled yelling and scoldings from another room. It sounded exciting, and I so wished I could fly over and watch the action, but my head could travel no further than my mom’s damned bellybutton.

Finally the doctor returned. He bowed his head in shame. His hands trembled. He collected his thoughts. Then he looked up directly into my mom’s eyes. “Mrs. Gnu,” his voice shook, “I’m afraid there’s been a terrible mistake. But-but not-not for you. This is good news for you! Our lab mixed up the medical records and it turns out you do not have cancer after all. Your tumor is benign. It should be removed when you give birth, but at present it poses no danger to you or your fetus.”

My mom was stunned. Her eyes widened, and she sat silent for about 15 seconds. This was another one of the longest periods of silence I’d ever witnessed her go through, except when sleeping.

Mom didn’t like this news, and she resisted. After that quarter minute, she opened her mouth and began arguing with the medico. But he held

firmly to the facts presented in her corrected medical records. Finally she got up and left, feeling disheartened and frustrated. What would she tell everyone who had been giving her so much love and sympathy? How could she deal with no longer being the focus of everyone's attention? It seemed her three weeks of fame was over.

I too, felt disheartened and frustrated. Now it seemed there was no way I could avoid birth. The Other Side seemed further away from me now, than at any other point thus far in this ordeal.

Then my mom did something incredible. She hid this "good" news from her family. She continued on as if the cancer diagnosis was still valid, and let everyone believe she was still waging a heroic battle to save her baby against all odds.

I was the only one who knew it was a lie. But what could I do? I couldn't communicate with anyone. I was stuck in her belly as a passive observer, my ethereal head protruding out, watching, listening, and reading minds to some extent. But I had no power to make others read my mind.

I noticed that the further along my fetus body developed, the weaker my metaphysical powers grew. But my memory of the Other Side remained strong. I longed to return, but knew it was impossible. I didn't want to live in a world so cold and complicated that a person might want to lie in order to be loved. I longed for simpler times, where psychic communication prevented deception, and where beings could not play games and trick each other so easily.

Slumber

At 20 weeks in, I began to feel a strange grogginess. It only happened once in awhile, but it would cloud my mind and I'd go into kind of a trance state. At first these trance states lasted just a few minutes. But as the days and weeks progressed, they extended themselves longer and longer. It felt weird, but also kind of pleasant, to go into these states of mind.

One day my mother was 24 weeks pregnant and on the phone with her mother. My grandma. She was proudly proclaiming how worried she was that she might lose her baby, but had no worry for herself. And I was thinking, *Yeah, yeah, what a farce*, or something along those lines.

She was standing next to a window, and I was looking out the pane from in front of her belly button. I was admiring the beauty of the blue skies, and wishing I could soar through them once again. Soar out, out, and away. Off into space. Off to far distant galaxies. And straight into the long, dark tunnel of a black hole, which would crush me into nothingness and portal me back to the Other Side.

And then I felt the dreaded tugging sensation again. I hadn't felt it in a long time, but when it came on I instantly recognized it. I knew I was going into the womb deeper, and that this might be my last glimpse of the world outside my mom's navel.

And sure enough, I was suddenly sucked inside my mother's body, and all turned to black. I was now in a black hole, but this was a different kind of black hole. It was no portal to the Other Side. It had an exit tunnel, but that tunnel was designed to take me to live, human birth.

I was now completely entrapped within the body of the growing fetus. I was now a brain-body-mind, equipped with wetware for thinking, nerves for feeling, and muscle and tissue for physical functioning. I was now completely human. At least some of the time.

A pregnancy lasts 40 weeks, from the end of the last menstrual period to birth. So at 24 weeks I had only 16 weeks of imprisonment remaining. But my god, how confining! There I was, stuck in this small, dark space, isolated from the outside world.

I could hear the rhythmic beating of my mother's heart, and the borborygmus of her bowels. And I could even hear noises from outside her belly, although muffled.

I could feel the warmth of her body. And I could feel her movements, whenever she walked, stood, or sat down. But I couldn't see anything. I was completely blind in the dark cocoon of her womb.

And I was mostly immobile. But I noticed that with some effort I could slightly move a finger, leg, or toe, and twitch or kick a little. That was the only freedom I had, and believe me I worked hard at exercising it. To just wriggle around a little felt empowering. Freedom is everything to any living being, and we will avail ourselves of every opportunity, now matter how tiny, to live free.

The grogginess became far stronger, just as soon as I was tugged completely into the womb. It often took me away to the Other Side, where

once again I was Spunjee, frolicking with my friends Scump, Cleeta, and Forchetti. And then it would lift and I'd realize I'd only been in some sort of fantasy fog. A dream, actually. For the grogginess was a transitional state of mind that carried me into a new experience for me, known as sleep and dreams.

At first I only slept a few hours a day. And then I'd wake up and my head would pop back out of my mother's belly, and I was a spirit again, with a navel's eye view of the world.

But other times I'd wake up and be stuck inside the belly. It felt different during these occasions. I felt heavy, rather than light. And it was only during these occasions that I could, with great effort, make physical movement, such as wiggle a finger or kick a leg.

These were my physical waking times, when I was a physical being rather than a spiritual being. So I was alternating between the two kinds of beings, sometimes being spiritual and other times being physical.

I slept more and more. I dreamt of the Other Side. I dreamt of This Side. And often I dreamt of nothing at all. All this sleeping and dreaming helped make my incarceration more tolerable. I was spiritually awake more often than not, and I was physically awake for only about an hour or two per day. During these physically awake times I would try out my twitching, wriggling, and kicking.

While physically awake I would grow increasingly claustrophobic. But before I could reach a panic stage, the groggy fog would mercifully overtake me, and off I'd go to slumber land.

THIRD TRIMESTER

Within a few weeks after the sleeping and physical waking episodes began, I merged into the third trimester.

I was growing frustrated, because I was missing out on more and more of the family show. Sleep, and the job of physical being was encroaching into my spiritual awake times. And I wanted to be awake, because I was very much interested in how long my mother could keep up the charade of having cancer, and of heroically risking her life to save mine.

She was fortunate in that her Seventh-Day Adventist doctor was very old, and getting a little senile. This dotard doctor failed to review the report from the oncologist. Instead he took my mother's word for it, when she gave him her own report from her oncology visit.

I felt glad to be awake during that particular medical trip.

"Oh," said my mother to Dr. Senesquez, "the doctor advised me to have an abortion. But I refused. I think that if God wills it, I can survive, and so can my baby. I'm putting myself into God's hands."

Dr. Senesquez smiled with such an angelic look of admiration that I had a hard time not feeling proud of my mother. The doctor was a religious man, and very much against abortion, except when a mother's life was in danger. But even then he felt some moral compunctions, and wondered if even this might be a sin. So when faced with such a brave woman willing to risk her life to avoid violating the Sixth Commandment, he felt appreciation.

"Then I will pray for you," the doctor promised, with his feeble, shaky voice.

Having fooled her obstetrician, it was easy enough to keep the rest of the family in the dark. And so my Munchausen mom kept the spotlight of sympathy and attention upon her, as her pregnancy progressed.

I really wanted to watch the unfolding drama, but I kept getting sleepier and sleepier. And my navel watching time kept getting shorter and shorter, and less and less frequent. I got to where I was sleeping almost all the time. And when awake, I was usually physically awake, stuck inside the dark tomb of the womb.

My last perch on my mother's navel took place at around eight months. She was a big ol' balloon by this time, so I got a good view of up, down, and straight out, from her pooched out bellybutton. Just the same, it wasn't exactly a wonderful view. She was sitting on the toilet taking a big crap.

And that about summed everything up for me. I was about to enter a shitty realm of existence. It was time for me to mentally steel myself for the experience of crap everywhere I turned. The game of life on Earth isn't easy. For every great hand you're dealt, you get about nine or ten shit hands.

On Earth you're constantly wading through swamplands of diarrhea, bullshit, and all other things execrable and stercoraceous. Sometimes through great effort and luck you may find a small patch of dry ground. But then you're constipated.

No matter what, there's a big, shitty price to pay for being human.

But maybe my attitude was shitty also. It's just that when I compared the Other Side with This Side, the contrast was so stark I wanted nothing to do with This Side. You might say I was obsessing with the past, rather than trying to make the best of the present. And maybe that's why I was becoming human. I had a lot of lessons to learn.

I peered dismally at Mom's panties, resting on her feet, and made one final wish for the Other Side. And then for the last time, I felt a pull and was whooshed back into her womb, there to sleep and fidget about until birth.

BIRTH

The Kick

I slept most of the time, during the weeks approaching my birth. And when I was awake I usually felt groggy and cranky.

I didn't like confinement. I kicked and pushed against the womb that imprisoned me. Sometimes I could open my eyes and detect a faint glow of light coming through the skin of my mother's belly. This gave me hope that there was a free world out there that I might one day be able to reach.

My spiritual body could no longer leave my physical body. But once in awhile I'd have lucid moments where memories of the Other Side came back to me, and I could think and plot and plan with clarity. It was as if my spirit was trying to escape, but the only escape it could manage was to separate itself from the primitive functioning of my fetal brain.

When I could think clearly like this, I always wanted to return to the Other Side. And why not? It was such a wonderful place compared to the hardscrabble drudgery of life in the physical realm.

One night, while listening to the muffled sounds of my father snoring, and my mother softly breathing in deep sleep, I hatched a plan. I decided that after I was born I would simply commit suicide. That would be my ticket back to the Other Side.

I knew I'd have to spend a few years on Earth as a human, because babies aren't strong enough to commit suicide. I'd have to wait until I could move around well, and be able to toddle to the edge of a cliff, or tie a noose, or handle a firearm with dexterity, or something of that order. But I vowed that as soon as I was able, I'd end my human life and get back to where I thought I belonged.

This plan gave me such a jolt of delight, I kicked my mother with glee. It woke her up. And not only that, but it jostled me around in her womb much more than I'd ever been able to jostle myself before.

Somehow, that kick loosened things up in my prison.

My mother got out of bed and headed for the bathroom. I knew this from the sound of her peeing, and the feel of her deflating bladder.

When she stood up from the toilet, I felt my feet slide down from below her ribcage. It was a weird thing, this sliding, like the bottom had momentarily dropped out of the womb. I instinctively tried to push myself back up, but to no avail.

I had already turned a few weeks earlier, so that I was hanging upside-down like a bat. These days my head was smashed down against the bottom of the womb. I was basically standing on my head.

Could it be? I wondered, feeling excited. *Could my freedom be coming very soon? Was this bottom going to open up and let me drop out of this prison?*

But then I started feeling that old grogginess return. My spirit let go of its latest escape aspirations and settled back into my fetal brain. And I dropped off to sleep.

I'd like to give you a first-hand account of everything that happened after this. But unfortunately I slept through much of it. And when I was awake, I was in my fetal brain, and not able to comprehend what was going on, in the clear, knowing manner of a spirit mind.

But after I was born and things calmed down, I was able to relax in a reverie that sometimes overtakes newborns. And during these occasions my spirit would sometimes detach from my infant brain, and once again function with clarity. And that's when I'd overhear adults talking to each other, and I'd actually be able to comprehend what they were communicating.

What follows reflects what I overheard them saying about my last days in the womb:

The day after I dropped in the womb was the day I was born. It happened during the small hours of the morning. My mother had already had four children before me, so she well sensed what was going on. She knew, after I dropped, that childbirth was imminent.

She conveyed her suspicions to my father after he woke up. But she was experiencing no painful contractions, no breaking of water, nor any other signs that my emergence into the world was approaching. So my father shrugged it off and advised her to call the doctor if anything changed. Then he shuttled himself off to work.

The Miracle

It was Friday. I was due on Saturday, but doctors don't like to work on weekends, especially Easter weekend, so my mom was scheduled for a C-section and hysterectomy on Monday morning. She crossed her fingers and legs and hoped I'd wait.

Her mood was up. In fact, she felt a strange, placid peace within, while also having an urge to do some housework. So she went about her day tidying things up, and also preparing my baby bed, and making sure all was in order for the big happenings scheduled for Monday.

What she didn't know, but may have realized subconsciously, was that this was all part of Mother Nature's plan as prelude to labor. Just before childbirth, the mother's pituitary gland releases a hormone called oxytocin. The oxy gets busy stretching the cervix and uterus. And it also causes psychological changes. Mood improves, and a "nesting" desire develops, prompting the mother to busy herself with preparing her shelter for the arrival of her newborn.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, the first hard contraction hit. Now Mom made no mistake about what was happening. She picked up the phone and called my dad at work. "Get home now! I'm having the baby! I need you to take me to the hospital!"

Dad went into panic stage, dropping the phone and rushing out of the machine shop, where he worked, while forgetting to clock out or even say anything to his boss. He gunned the car onto the highway and sped up the winding grade to our home in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas.

It had snowed the day before, and this day, approaching my birthday, was very cold. Patches of black ice remained in the shady spots of the highway. And my dad, speeding along, straightening out curves, hit one of those patches and spun out of control.

His car flew off the grade and plummeted down an embankment. An axle broke. A tire blew out. And the surprised engine chugged to a stop with one final blast of black smoke from the tailpipe.

Dad was now stranded and unable to assist my mother.

But if there was anything my mother knew how to do well, it was how to raise an alarm. Because as soon as she hung up the phone with my dad, she called my grandparents. She needed them to come over and babysit my four siblings, while she was at the hospital.

Grandma and Grandpa showed up a half-hour later. Grandma stayed behind to babysit, while Grandpa packed his daughter into their car and headed straight for the hospital.

“I have cancer, and have to have a C-section and hysterectomy,” my mom matter-of-factly informed the emergency room staff.

The hospital contacted her old man Seventh-Day Adventist doctor, who had been preparing for the Sabbath. Dr. Senesquez dropped everything and immediately rushed to the hospital, driving a whole five miles per hour faster than the speed limit. Which was pretty fast for the way this old geezer normally drove.

My mother sat in the emergency room’s waiting room, feeling the contractions gradually increasing in strength and frequency. A little after 6:00 pm, Dr. Senesquez hobbled in and spoke with the staff. He was a little hard of hearing, so everyone had to speak louder than normal. And so everyone in that waiting room, including my mother and my grandfather, overheard this conversation:

Dr. Senesquez: She has cancer, and must have a C-section with hysterectomy. Prepare a room for me. I will do the surgery.

Nurse: Doctor, I looked at her records. She does NOT have cancer. She has a benign tumor.

Dr. Senesquez, after a long pause: Oh yes. It does say that, doesn’t it? (another long pause) I’ve been praying at my bed for this woman, every night. (another long pause) This is a miracle! God has answered my prayers!

Nurse: But doctor, she never did have cancer. See?

Dr. Senesquez: Isn’t that strange? The Lord works in mysterious ways. It seems God has erased all traces of her cancer. Even in the written

record. I've never seen such a wondrous miracle before, in all my years of practice!

Soon after, Dr. Senesquez appeared in the waiting room and conveyed the miraculous news to my mother.

"No doctor, I DO have cancer. I just know it. I feel it. I still want a hysterectomy." Nothing, not even a miracle, could push my mother from her belief in cancer.

Her contractions continued to increase. But now that everyone in the hospital except my mother believed she did not have cancer, nobody was in any great hurry. A C-section and hysterectomy still had to be performed, in order to remove the benign tumor. But this surgery was going to be far less complicated, and much more routine, than cancer surgery.

At around ten o'clock, my dad burst through the emergency room doors, breathlessly asking for my mother. A nurse led him to a room, where Mom was being prepared for surgery. Dr. Senesquez was examining her.

He was filled in on what had happened, what was happening, and what was about to happen. And then he turned to Dr. Senesquez and mentioned the "C" word.

"Oh Mr. Gnu, you will be so happy to know that your wife no longer has cancer!" proclaimed the good and saintly doctor. "She is cured! The Lord and strong prayer have worked a miracle."

Dad was stunned. "How-how do you know this?" he asked.

"It's in her medical records," murmured Dr. Senesquez, with a hushed tone of numinous mystery.

At midnight my mother was wheeled into the operating room and, at 12:31 am, two old hands reached into her opened up belly and yanked me into this world.

And that's when I woke up, kicking and screaming, from a hard slap to my rear end.

AFTER BIRTH

I lost the ability to escape my fetal body, weeks before I was born. But I did not lose the ability for my spiritual mind to occasionally escape from my fetal brain, and remember the Other Side. These were lucid moments that allowed me to think with clarity, and to clearly understand the thoughts of others nearby.

These lucid moments continued beyond birth and through the first four years of my childhood. But they grew weaker and less frequent the older I got. And by the time I reached four years of age, they had ceased completely.

And so did my memory of them. And that dashed my plan to commit suicide. I'd come up with the plan just hours before I was born, and I would occasionally be able to remember it while lying in my cradle, or crawling about in my playpen. I felt excited about it, and wanted to go through with it, so I could get back to my pals on the Other Side.

I even tried suicide a few times. I tried stuff like, holding my breath, crawling off furniture and dropping to the floor, and putting big things in my mouth that could make me choke to death. But I was too weak, too uncoordinated, or too supervised by my mother to succeed with these attempts.

It wasn't impossible. There are other infants who have successfully committed suicide. But it's just very hard to do, and I was never able to pull it off.

Evolution also intervened. Evolution can be a real bastard. It has favored brains that forget the first few years of life. And when you forget the first few years of life, you forget your memories of the Other Side. You also forget any suicide plans you may have made. So when you get big

enough and strong enough to do the act, you have no motivation. Nor can you remember to do it.

Forgetting about the Other Side is what keeps the human species alive. If we could remember how we lived before we were conceived and born, we'd want to go back immediately. But we can't remember. And so, we can never know for sure if an Other Side truly exists.

In fact, we worry that maybe nothing exists after death, and this motivates us to try to stay alive for as long as possible. The annihilation of the soul is a terrible prospect to imagine, and it's something we try to stave off for as long as possible.

That doesn't mean we lose all hope for life after death. Evolution is not all-powerful. The spirit within existed long before we became human, and it remembers. But its memories have a very difficult time overcoming the barrier of the brain, and manifesting to someone occupying a human body.

Still, tiny traces of the spirit's memories can percolate through. And these tiny traces can leave us with a sense that something exists beyond the grave. But it's so vague, and so mysterious, that it's not enough to feel comfortable with suicide.

And so, we lumber on with our lives, gritting our teeth, staving away death for as long as possible, hoping to make it as far as we can into old age, before the inevitable end finally frees us from this mortal coil.

My mother awoke from her anesthesia to see Dr. Senesquez kneeling beside her hospital bed, praying for her recovery. This would be the same doctor who would put me through the horrible torture of circumcision just a few days later. Fuck that son-of-a-bitch for performing such sadistic mutilation!

There he knelt on his old, bony knees, supplicating the Lord Almighty for the health of my mother and me. And we did recover, both of us, to live good, long lives. So maybe a Higher Power answered his prayers. Though I doubt it. It's not that simple.

If you really want to communicate with the Other Side, look inside. That's where the Other Side dwells. That's vague, but I can't explain the Other Side any better than that.

Now you may wonder how it is that I can remember the Other Side, myself. How is it, you may ask, that I can remember my friends, Scump,

Cleeta, and Forchetti? And how can I recall my odyssey to the egg? Or my experiences in the womb? Or my infantile suicide plot?

I know it may seem strange, but it does happen sometimes. Although it's very, very rare. After we die and we're released from our human brain, all our spiritual memories flood back to us. This happens to everyone. But on very, very rare occasions, this can happen to people before they die.

Sometimes the brain's normal pattern of function can be suddenly interrupted. And when this happens, the spirit mind can rush into one's conscious awareness. Memories of the Other Side flood back, and are trapped in the brain. Yes, yes, sometimes this really does happen. Right? Hmm.

Well, did this happen to me?

No, it did not.

Actually, I've been bullshitting. I don't know if memories from the Other Side can ever come back while we're alive. In fact, I don't even know if there really is an Other Side. I hope there is. And I assume there is, because to assume otherwise is damned depressing. But I really don't know if there is, or what it might be like.

This autobiographical tale is the product of introspection, speculation, and imagination.

It's also based on truth, though. For instance, I truly was conceived, carried in the womb, and born. And my stages of development in the womb are based upon the actual stages known to medical science.

And sadly, the "cancer" bit is basically true. My mother has been a hypochondriac and drama queen all her life. And other things I revealed about my family life are also based upon truth, sometimes loosely and sometimes closely.

For instance, my dad really did have a mistress. He divorced my mother when I was about one or two, and married his paramour. Later, he cheated on her and married another. And he cheated on her, too. My dad was a skirt-chaser until nearly the day he died. But aside from that he was a wonderful man, and I loved him.

But as for memories of the Other Side, and all the spiritual descriptions of life in the womb, that is all speculation. Who knows, it could be true. Or maybe I'm way off base.

I wrote this to convey an alternative perspective of how we enter this world. The traditional idea is that life begins at conception, or sometime later in gestational development. But the problem I have with traditional ideas is that I think they are often colored by political views that are for or against abortion. They are wishful thinking, rather than reality.

Truth is, nobody knows when life begins. We are all very ignorant on this subject. The best we can do is speculate, as I have done, with this little tale.

I like to assume that life has never begun. And I like to assume it will never end. I assume we have always had life. To me, that is the most comforting of speculations and assumptions.

So whether I've written a true tale, or work of fiction, remains to be seen. We cannot know. Not as long as we're part of the human condition.

We'll only find out when we leave this life and reach a place where it's impossible to report back to others. That never-never-land place. That place we long for while we suffer, and dread while all is well. That place lurking within the shadow of our doubts. That place we often stake a claim to, while secretly wondering if it truly exists.

That place that lies far beyond this realm, yet remains just one stopped heartbeat away.

That place we vaguely refer to as the Other Side.

About the Author,

Tippy Gnu

The best education is a self-education. But formal education can be useful too, now and then. Like when you want to convince someone that you're smarter than you really are. To that end, I hold a baccalaureate from Regents College (now Excelsior College), University of the State of New York, where I majored in Psychology and Sociology.

I received my degree in 1998. But instead of going on to graduate school and becoming a psychologist, I continued my career as a letter carrier and union steward. The pay was better.

I applied my knowledge of psychology toward protecting myself and others from abusive postal managers. It didn't help much. Not without some good old-fashioned street fighting, to go along with it. As a union steward, I gouged eyes and kicked balls when I had to, but used diplomacy whenever I could. And this kept those cocksuckers barely at bay, like circling sharks, until such time as I was able to retire.

I'm now enjoying a peaceful, low-stress retirement, and all those postal managers can suck my dick.

I'm married to a dog-lover, and she is married to her dogs. We sleep in separate beds and bedrooms, because of the dogs. But somehow we can't stop loving each other. Same-bed sleeping is overrated. I think it's the cause of many divorces.

I've spent more than half my life braving the elements of the Mojave Desert. I've been chased by rapacious roadrunners, gored by a horny toad, and single-handedly fended off a pride of hungry ant lions. I wage constant battles keeping coon-tailed rattlers from raiding my trash cans. I chum for chuckwallas during flash-flood season, and sustain myself through droughts by chewing the fruit of the prickly pear, and spitting out the thorns.

I find the time to write whenever nature leaves me alone.

I've been writing since my high school days, when I attended a creative writing class. Day after day, assignment after assignment, I tortured my creative writing teacher with nonsensical short stories that deviated far from the assignments' guidelines. I figured, you can't be creative if you stay within a box.

She didn't figure it that way though, and always docked my grades. Even after she kind of indirectly and grudgingly told me I had a talent for writing. Or maybe I imagined she said that. But it didn't matter. You see, talent won't get you good grades. Doing as you're told, and acting normal, is what it takes to win recognition from authorities.

But talent or no, I continued to write. At one time I wrote for fun and profit. But when I found that, like good grades, there wasn't much profit, I decided to just write for fun. It's simpler that way, and it frustrates the IRS. And that's why this book is free.

You can read other ex gratia scrivenings of mine at my blog, www.unicorniks.com.

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