Civilization Begins At Home

Henry James

Foam Women, Rain Women by Ursula K. Le Guin

The foam women are billowy, rolling, tumbling, white and dirty white and yellowish and dun, scudding, heaving, flying, broken. They lie at the longest reach of the waves, rounded and curded, shaking and trembling, shivering hips and quivering buttocks, torn by the stiff, piercing wind, dispersed to nothing, gone. The long wave breaks again and they lie white and dirty white, yellow-ish and dun, billowing, trembling under the wind, flying, gone, till the long wave breaks again.

The rain women are very tall, their heads are in the clouds. Their gait is the pace of the storm-wind, swift and stately. They are tall presences of water and light walking the long sands against the darkness of the forest. They move northward, inland, upward to the hills. They enter the clefts of the hills unresisting, unresisted, light into darkness, mist into forest, rain into earth.

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DATE	A.M.		P.M.			A.M.		P.M.	
	time	ft.	time	ft.	DATE	time	ft.	time	ft
1 Wed	6:18	1.1	6:43	-0.2	1 Wed •	0:17	8.7	12:12	8
2 Thu	7:03	0.8	7:19	0.1	2 Thu 3 Fri	0:54	8.8	1:41	8
3 Fri	7:45	0.6	7:53	0.5	3 Fri 4 Sat	2:01	8.8	2:23	7
4 Sat	8:26 9:06	0.6	8:26	1.1	5 Sun	2:31	8.7	3:07	7
5 Sun 6 Mon	9:47	0.9	9:34	2.2	6 Mon	3:02	8.5	3:54	6
7 Tue	10:33	1.2	10:14	2.7	7 Tue	3:35	8.2	4:48	6
8 Wed	11:27	1.4	11:05	3.2	8 Wed	4:14	7.9	5:52	6
9 Thu			12:32	1.5	9 Thu @		7.6	7:04	5
10 Fri	0:12	3.5	1:42	1.5	10 Fri	6:09	7.4	8:12	6
11 Sat	1:27	3.5	2:45	1.2	111 Sat	7:22	7.3	9:57	6
12 Sun	2:37	3.2	3:37	0.9	12 Sun 13 Mon	8:29 9:28	7.8	10:38	7
13 Mon	3:37	2.8	4:22	0.6	13 Mon 14 Tue	10:20	8.1	11:14	7
14 Tue	4:28 5:14	2.2	5:01	0.3	15 Wed	11:08	8.3	11:49	8
15 Wed 16 Thu 6		1.0	6:14	0.3	16 Thu 6		8.5		
17 Fri	6:40	0.4	6:50	0.4	17 Fri	0:22	8.7	12:40	
18 Sat	7:22	0.0	7:27	0.7	18 Sat	0:55	9.0	1:27	
19 Sun	8:06	-0.3	8:06	1.0	19 Sun	1:30	9.3	2:15	-
20 Mon	8:52	-0.4	8:47	1.5	20 Mon	2:07	9.4	3:07	1
21 Tue	9:43	-0.3	9:35	2.0	21 Tue 22 Wed	3:36	9.0	5:10	1
22 Wed	10:42	0.0	10:33	2.5	23 Thu 3	4:33	8.5	6:24	è
23 Thu 3	11:51	0.3	1:05	0.4	24 Fri	5:45	8.1	7:37	6
24 Fri 25 Sat	1:06	2.9	2:16	0.4	25 Sat	7:05	7.8	8:42	7
26 Sun	2:24	2.5	3:18	0.2	26 Sun	8:22	7.8	9:37	7
27 Mon	3:31	1.9	4:09	0.1	27 Mon	9:28	8.0	10:24	1
28 Tue	4:27	1.2	4:54	0.1	28 Tue	10:25	8.1	11:05	1
29 Wed	5:17	0.7	5:35	0.3	29 Wed	11:15	8.2	11:42	
30 Thu 4	6:02	- 0.0	6:12	0.6	30 Thu (0:16	8.8	12:45	



Before I die, I hope someone somewhere answers me this. Why is it Albert Einstein's birthday isn't a national holiday? I'm serious about this.

If we have a President's Day (lumping the birthdays of two political icons into a national celebration of shopping), if we honor Dr. Martin Luther King (no, not nearly enough), why is it we don't set aside a three day weekend to think about the patent clerk who gave us four dimensional space/time?

Taking nothing away from Washington, Lincoln, and King, this is complete nonsense. Yes, they performed wonderful works. Yes, they deserve to be permanently implanted in the cultural oversoul. No, they did not

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discover, by pure reason, that gravity is a function of the geometry of creation. An idea of this magnitude last occurred three hundred years ago. Listen for a moment to what this man did with nothing more than a pencil.

The theory of relativity is actually two theories, the special and general. The special theory applied Max Planck's quantum hypothesis (the unsettling proof that the universe is discontinuous) to the photo- electric effect (metal bombarded with light emits electrons of certain frequencies) to show that matter and energy are complementary states related by a simple equation: e=mc2. Much has been made of this equation, and rightly so. It shows that energy and mass are interchangeable states. In other terms, that the spirit and the flesh are one. At its best, physics becomes philosophy. Einstein was physics at its best. In another time, he would have been a wizard.

As wonderful as all this was, a seminal moment in the history of human thought, it is if anything eclipsed by the general theory of relativity.

General relativity is our modern theory of gravity. In the Newtonian world (the universe before Einstein), gravity was the mysterious (if not Occult) attraction of mass for mass; a force acting between two bodies. Einstein showed this to be a misunderstanding. Instead of a force between bodies, gravity is the curvature of space/time. It is a property of the geometry of the universe, the shape of creation. Owing to the beauty and simplicity of this idea, and to its experimental verification, physicists now suspect that all of the forces of nature will be seen to rise from the rules of some geometry. Once again, Einstein, 26 at the time, figured this out with a pencil.

And still there is more. It is for his

principle of relativity, the logic underlying the special and general theories, that Einstein deserves most to be remembered. It is the notion that all motion, which is to say all observed reality, is relative. How fast you appear to be going in one direction depends on how fast I am going in another; the only constant that remains is the velocity of light. Space/time becomes the relationship between the observor and the observed. If the observor is removed, the equation (and with it all of creation) no longer exists. With Newton, we are cogs in the clockwork. With Einstein, we are the universe looking at itself.

Which brings us to the final question: When the universe looks at itself all at once what does it see? What is the shape of space/time? Here's where things get almost spooky. Einstein believed the universe is spherical. The case remains unproven but strong evidence suggests he was right. The relationship between the circumference and the diameter of a circle is pi: 3.14. Coincidence being what it is, Einstein's birthday is March 14th: 3/14.

For the record, 116 this year. Happy birthday, Albert. In a saner world, we'd have time to celebrate.

"When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro." H. S. Thompson

He's Back!!! Mr. Baseball returns to The Edge, page 15.



UPPER LEFT EDGE MARCH 1995