



THE THERAPY PAGE

Dear Uncle Mike,

Do you know anything about birds? I want to get one but I don't know what kind. My mom reads your column and thinks you're pretty smart. She said to ask you. I'm eight. Thank you.

Julie T., SE Portland

Dear Julie,

Uncle Mike is glad you wrote. He hates to see children make the mistake of their life before they've reached puberty. Does Uncle Mike know anything about birds? More than enough to keep him from sharing his home with them.

Listen very carefully, Julie. Underneath the bright feathers and fluff, birds are winged reptiles. They are, in fact, direct descendants of dinosaurs. Did you see 'Jurassic Park', Julie? To birds, those were the good old days.

What kind of bird should you get? Uncle Mike recommends a stuffed one. At least then you'll be able to sleep without a scatter gun.

Don't be fooled by canaries or parakeets. They may not seem like much but, in their dreams, they stand forty feet at the shoulder and see you as part of their food chain. When push comes to shove, and one day it will, you'll find your little tweetie has all the compassion of a cobra.

Single canaries are okay as long as the cage is welded steel, but never keep them in pairs. The small breeds are twisted little sociopaths who tend to egg each other on. As bird experts have pointed out: if lovebirds were thirty feet tall, no one would call them lovebirds.

Uncle Mike thinks if you're going to get a bird at all, you should go for the real deal and get a raptor. Eagles and hawks are what parakeets and finches would be if they had access to steroids -- vicious, winged predators who would kill before bursting into song. If you're looking for a real bird experience, nothing quite compares to watching your barn owl launch itself from the mantel in another try for the cat.

As Uncle Mike's grandmother once told him, "Say what you want about vultures, at least they're honest."

Dear Uncle Mike,

My husband and I have been married for five years. I don't think he's ever been faithful. He's made "stupid mistakes" three times with "women who mean nothing" to him and I suspect there are some affairs I don't know about. I knew he was a womanizer when I married him but I thought he'd change. I'm writing because I think he's playing around again. I don't want to leave him -- in a lot of ways, he's the perfect man for me -- but I can't take this much longer. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Sleepless in Tigard

Dear Sleepless,

Uncle Mike's first suggestion is that you get your head examined. You're married to a philanderer who doesn't give a rat's rump for your feelings. Ditch the bum.

Who cares if he's a victim of the Peter Pan syndrome? Who cares what wounded him as a child and arrested his emotional development? Who cares if his ego needs gratification as part of the healing process? Aside from Oprah, no one.

What do you think, there's some magic potion you can give him? Some mantra that will keep his trousers on? Wake up and smell the garbage, dear. You obviously can't trust the man. Without trust, there's nothing that can properly be called a marriage. On Uncle Mike's block, it's not even a friendship.

If one has affairs, and Uncle Mike is not entirely divorced from the real world, one at least owes his or her partner discretion. Violating terms of endearment is one thing, rubbing someone's nose in it is another. Your husband is either a hopeless bungler or he just doesn't care.

Your husband is who he is, you're who you are, and life, as they say, is short. Unless you're willing to live out the status quo for the rest of your life, let the man know you're serious. Give him one more chance. When he trips over his libido, and Uncle Mike is willing to bet he will, cut your losses and carve him out of your life like the wart he is.

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Paws composed of fog
Kneading Neahkahnie's back,
Making it bristle.



Crystal shapes thrusting
Seaward out from the mountain.
Crashing waves of salt.



Young gods in the rocks.
Spirals weathered to the core.
Old heads emerging.

Haiku of Satbodi by Dan Lissy

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