

## HOROSCOPE

BY SOUP  
CAN SAM  
STAFF  
PSYCHIC

**Capricorn (Dec. 23-Jan. 19)** Soup Can Sam thinks 2009 is going to be a rocky ride rolling down a crooked track with two unknown suitcases and a displaced house cat. Don't forget to layer, and no matter the weather, hold your head high.

**Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)** Nothing lasts forever, unless you let it. One life, one heart, multiple choices. Take it in stride. Do it.

**Pisces (Feb. 20-March 20)** Integrate or dissipate. Take the high road and be down with this. Change is never easy, but it is. And more often than not, it's better in hindsight.

**Aries (March 21-April 19)** I'm not going to say I told you so. But Soup Can told you so. So please don't be so, "Oh, I know what's going to happen..." You can smell it. Taste it.

**Taurus (April 20-May 21)** Perfect. Don't change a thing this week. You, my friend, are on fire. Burn, baby, burn.

**Gemini (May 22-June 22)** You are someone's wind beneath their wings. Fly high, high above... oh, you know the rest. Life is brutal. Deadly. So live.

**Cancer (June 23-July 23)** It's true. Soup Can has been having gender identity issues lately. Swinging from one fruit to another. Swing baby swing.

**Leo (July 24-Aug. 23)** The Milky Way is but one of billions of galaxies in the universe. Who knew Hershey's made so many candy bars? Don't be afraid of chocolate in January.

**Virgo (Aug. 24-Sept. 23)** Being smart and being indifferent makes for some foolish wisdom wrapped in sinister sausages smothered in apple jam and butter.

**Libra (Sept. 24-Oct. 23)** It's so logical it's illogical. Hard being in the game, huh? Better than being on the sidelines.

**Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)** Rest.

**Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 22)** You're no different from the other 6 billion animals dressed in fabric. For Christ's sake, adapt.

## Getting to Eugene

BY JAY THIEMEYER

All my animated new acquaintance knew was vodka. He was going nowhere and content with that. For him, nowhere was where it was happening. Which he decided he would take me to. We travelled express. We already had the bottle. He handed it to me and we began our trip.

It was to a vast vacant lot, apparently set aside for potential development, much bigger than the empty weed-filled lot of the night before, where I'd passed out. The lot of the night before was intriguing in itself, but anonymous and small. A brown garden of unexotic weeds concealing the foundation of a home. Beneath the weeds I could see a floor plan, and gazing at it, I would slowly realize it was exactly like the plan for the home I was raised in on the East Coast — in Virginia, where I'd started my zigzag traverse of the country to get to Oregon. And a new index of circumstances. A new table of contents. A new beginning.

We were at the edge of town, an area more blank than developed; vacant and brown. There were a number of such vacant lots, clotted together into a nowhere land. A few small businesses, notably bars, the only signs of activity. These uninspired taverns — more or less lifeless themselves — that I saw this time of day paved the way to where the kid was leading me. We were escorted by the broad distant sweep of the interstate as it curved around this part of Medford before bolting northward into Oregon.

Where he was taking me, this electron spinning around me, was to an old man he'd met. This was the beginning of July, and the old man, a disabled vet, had just gotten his check.

The old man and the kid were already thoroughly polluted, the check already shrinking from use. It appeared it would be a very short month for the vet. The vet, a money transferral mechanism for the kid, was in a separate world from the kid, for whom the vet's debilitation was merely entertaining. He was just a boy who hadn't been anywhere and saw others' distress as no part of his own.

The damaged old man was, in fact, easy to find. Passed out in the same spot he'd inhabited since obtaining his check a couple days previous, with the kid as his emissary to the liquor store to keep him plied with booze. He lay sprawled beside the railroad tie which had been his home. His bench in the searing sun. His face when I got to him was beet red as were his hands. The rest was covered with filthy clothes. A red sweat-shirt, I remember, with the smeared name of a college on it.

Beside him was his CAT cap. His bald head was red as well. God knows what boiled beneath. I had seen a digital sign earlier, shortly before noon, that read 95 degrees.

The surroundings were largely unmemorable, the sound of the highway was all: a high insect sound. There were no people to be seen anywhere around. No cars parked in front of the handful of bars that populated this section.

The obligatory toss at industrial development, I suppose. The place was baking like bread in an oven. I didn't remember the day before much at all. It would take me some time to recall the clear sky turning white from the heat. My thinking was somewhat addled and would take time in the cool inside, under a roof, to recollect itself.

Humidity was not a problem out here, unlike on the East Coast. The problem here, this early July day, was heat inversion. The compression of the sun's rays and the heat. We had, in short, invested in ideal circumstances for such-

**The vet, a money transferral mechanism for the kid, was in a separate world from the kid, for whom the vet's debilitation was merely entertaining. He was just a boy who hadn't been anywhere and saw others' distress as no part of his own.**

like as what we were doing. To say the least. Healthy lifestyles. In the big drink. Drinking cheap Popov Vodka in the burning brass spittoon of the sun. Intense and inescapable.

Not that we were concerned. We weren't. We had our own little enterprise zone of self-immolation going on.

The old vet had a check and the kid, performing the absolutely indispensable service of keeping us supplied with the booze, and me as beneficiary and observer, were completely indifferent to the sun and our boiling brains. Indifferent to the point of a vague madness or disorientation.

In some receding part of my thought-cage was the concern to get to Eugene. Having come this far from Virginia, I had the feeling that celebrating in Medford was appropriate, but should be kept brief. I was, I figured, only a long day away, once I got a ride. And there was the interstate right over there, singing its siren song.

Looking back, I can only pity that old man (younger than I am now, incidentally. A puppy in reality; probably early 50s. I can feel what he might have felt, as I imagine it) in the unforgiving heat, drinking vodka without any sign or inclination to stop. It was like breathing for him, apparently. Imbibing his oblivion. Blotting out everything but the numbness and utter indifference. Lost in the space of the bottle.

This is the first in a series of reflections by Jay Thiemeyer. Look for the rest of the series in upcoming editions of Street Roots.

Need help  
finding help?  
Dial 2-1-1

211 info ★  
**2-1-1**™

Get Connected. Get Answers.

From your cell phone dial 503-222-5555.



[www.streetroots.wordpress.com](http://www.streetroots.wordpress.com)