

HOROSCOPE

BY SOUP
CAN SAM
STAFF
PSYCHIC

Leo (July 24-Aug. 23) Football - American style - is revving up. So should your team spirit. Soup Can recommends Green Bay, Indianapolis and the occasional Chicago event. Of course, Soup Can's been known as somewhat of a fair-weather fan.

Don't let your loyalties flap in the wind!

Virgo (Aug. 24-Sept. 23) Somewhere, between telling people what they already know, or saying that which is better left unsaid, you bleat out the perfect little pearl of wisdom that keeps us listening a little more closely with each passing day. Don't abuse the gift.

Libra (Sept. 24-Oct. 23) Sometimes a yellow feather is just a yellow feather. There is no giant yellow bird out there, just a man in a giant yellow bird costume. But the kids can't tell the difference. You can choose to skip along in time, or realize that you know better.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) The campaign is on, the one that purports downtown P-town as the wild west of hooligans and hoodlums, hell bent on jaywalking and lounging their way behind the reins of our stagecoach to New Jack City. Soup Can thinks they doth protest too much, because if you need binoculars, a surveillance perch and walkie-talkies to nail down litterers as the bane of good livin' downtown, then maybe whoever is steering this coach needs replacing anyhow.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 22) There's an island of trash of our making floating in the Atlantic. Make this a plastic-free month.

Capricorn (Dec. 23-Jan. 19) Contrary to what you've been thinking of late, you don't have to either build up or tear down. You can bridge.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) Far from the madding crowds is a patch of grass with your name on it. You won't be seeing it for a while, but a nice groundskeeper will be taking care of it for you until you get there. Thank him when you arrive.

Pisces (Feb. 20-March 20) Doubt is an incredibly healthy emotion, and one you will have no need for in the coming weeks. You need all of your brain waves concentrating on the people right in front of you. They will be a cagey lot until mid-September.

Aries (March 21-April 19) Your moons are messed up. You have many options for restoring order, but Soup Can recommends taking a moment of silence ever day for the next two weeks. It's simply the cheapest way to deal with anything. Try it.

Taurus (April 20-May 21) The mayor will not be recalled, not on this effort. Sadly, that's the best information the stars are coughing up right now. Slackers. You too, Pluto.

Gemini (May 22-June 22) Eyes in the sky are watching you, and you're paying for it. Give them a close look back.

Cancer (June 23-July 23) This isn't the time to be shy, Cancer. Sing. Sing a song. Make it happy to last the whole day long. Don't worry if it's not good enough for anyone else to hear. Just sing, and bang a gong.

What to do when you turn the light on and discover a closet

BY JAY THIEMEYER

In 1979, in melting Hotlanta, I met up with my friend who worked in the nearby plasma joint to help pay her way through Atlanta University's master's program in social work, the one she'd traveled to from Alabama where she'd gotten her baccalaureate (a concept I don't associate with Birmingham, then or now, but she addressed racism her own way) by way of her upbringing. She had a beautiful upbringing as the daughter of a single mother outside Portland, Maine, in Gorham (her brother was a gardener for the university there). And she would meet me occasionally at the bench I colonized, presided over, wound up in, at the end of similar drunken-"Country Club 800"-besotted-malt-liquor days in Atlanta's famed Piedmont Park by the smallish, cruddy lake.

As it grew dark, and finishing my twelfth or so "Country Club 800" 16-ouncer, I would grow absorbed in the herringbone wake of ducks that would invariably appear to slowly make their way across the water, their traipse lighted by a streetlight opposite me across the lake. It was something from "Lumiere," a prototypic rough-hewn film that captured the spirit of my days then; days both free and tired to the point of discovery and dismissal. Days mounting in number, directionless, or so I assumed. They were in fact headed somewhere that was of little account (but freedom), amounting to little but empty mirrors, empty squats, and memories hard to communicate and not easy to forget.

It looked timeless, there on the lake, and this particular night, when my friend from Alabama by way of Gorham, Maine, found me, I was sitting in the mesmer of those ducks once again telling time for me. They made their passage just after twilight dimmed to darkness every night, as though they knew I was watching; would be watching.

She sat down, said a simple angelic "Hey," and we got up to go. The night's day was bound to begin now she was here.

I suggested we check out Cha Gio again, the Vietnamese restaurant up the street from the park. The woman who owned it and, with her extended family, ran it, had been an interpreter for Sen. Teddy Kennedy when he visited her country during the war. This was '79; I don't have any idea when Teddy visited Saigon during the war. But her translation translated to a free ride out just ahead of the collapse several years before.

I had moved out of my former squat, where I'd last seen Elizabeth, into an old Victorian house with multiple floors and squeaking doors and boards beneath. It was near Colonial Square, a newly rising tower, some 80 stories high; a prototype and magnet for new development for residents who loved the High Art Museum, extended like a cinder block across the intersection on Peachtree and Fourteenth. Fourteenth

was the end of the now-dead "strip." Haunted Fourteenth.

The original renters of my squat had left just ahead of the law. An official paper still stuck to the door explained it all in faded print that I couldn't read, but no one ever came round, and I'd rarely been there except to sleep, so I had been safe. By this time I was staying on a piece of cardboard laid out on the dirt of the abandoned boiler room in an abandoned apartment building which sat in its growing idleness on Piedmont Avenue across from the park. It looked like what it had once been, a building cheap to live in and so inhabited largely by students. Students living on the cheap, working and going to school on

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cheap tuition. Some of them I'd known at the beginning of the '70s. An apartment like they would have had or myself back then, would have cost no more than \$100 with a \$50 deposit - and that would have been approaching affluence. Rents were still so cheap back then. Gas was 35 cents per gallon; miles per gallon in the teens. The place next door to where I'm currently living in St Johns here in Portland is being advertised as renting for \$1,599 a month with a deposit of \$799.

When I stayed on the cardboard, the building was completely vacant and in disuse, waiting for the wrecking ball.

Things have changed in the brief spread of time between then and now. But I imagine for a certain turn of mind, the sight of a trio of ducks moving across water after dark, their dark forms staged by a streetlight, their wake a subtle serration reflecting the light still has appeal. Some things don't change. And approach being free. I remember sitting on the bench late in the day, reading Steve Biko's "Last Testament" of all things, a review copy from the Atlanta Constitution, and finding myself anticipating the ducks. It was clearly a different time. Time told by ducks.

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