

first per·son plu·ral, im·per·fect

by

ma·i·a

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Dedication

In the hope that later *is* really better than never, even when it's clearly *too* late, I must dedicate this second most important collection of my life's work (the *first* is my children) to my two late husbands, fathers of those much loved seven offspring of mine/ours, in thanks for making me the best of all the things that I could possibly be, a mother. *Their* mother.

And especially to the man who *made* himself the father of not just the two we created together, but of *all* of them, his birth children and "stepchildren" alike, going so far as to make the oldest five *legally* his, by adopting them. Something he never had to do, but chose to, and for which I don't think I ever thanked him as much as I should have.

Most importantly of all, George, you loved all of my children. And provided for them a secure life and limitless future few children are fortunate enough to have.

So, thank you, Verne Dragoo and George Von Tobel, wherever you now may be! You were gifts who gifted me with the most precious things life has to offer. I wish I had let you know it, while you were still here, among us.

Love *still*,

Janet (Jan) Fay Dragoo-Von Tobel
(Since 1996, just "maia")

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first per·son plu·ral, im·per·fect

What you're about to "step into" is a blunt world of random personal observations, opinions, often outrageously outspoken conclusions of a writer-cum-philosopher who would rather be anything *but* human. In essays and poems that are all about my view of us and the world we live in, no one is excused, least of all myself, as I point to all we do, have done, and could be doing *instead*, if we're as "superior" a species as we like to think we are.

The beauty of our earthly habitat is occasionally noted, along with the countless scars we've inflicted upon it, in the relatively short time we've been on the scene. As I've traveled the world 'round (literally), peeks also are provided into the lives of some indigenous peoples and others residing in the less developed parts of the planet whom I've had the privilege of knowing and living among.

Although it will be clear that I have little or no hope for significant improvement, nevertheless, simple-to-drastic steps are suggested here and there, that can be taken individually or *en masse* to bring about the changes that are so badly needed to make this a more workable and livable world for all.

So, welcome to my world.....

love and hugs,

maia

con-tents

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1. past tense plu * ral

stuff that made me the me you see...some of it imposed at birth, the rest accumulated, thanks to my seeming inability to ignore what I could never pretend I didn't see

Body Parts

This mind dares not ignore the truth
that dwells in my woman's heart
nor blind myself to all I've lost...
torn apart, as we part...

and we part.

My soul feels every little bit
of their dance to get away
and instead of locking all the doors,
I cry, "Stay!" and *I* stay...

and I stay.

I stay behind, as I must,
while those I've loved put an end to "we"
so they won't have to deal with all
the foolishness of me.

And still so far away they are...
and I sob in despair, my heart a scar,
for those parts of me to return one day
just long enough for them to say,
"I really *did* love you... *anyway*."



Nothin' New Newsflashes:

June, 1996: "In only a decade, volcanic activity has 'resurfaced' on Jupiter's moon, Io, with elements not previously known to be part of its genetic makeup. Comparing latest photos to Voyager's of 10 years ago, astronomers were shocked to discover things going on that they never expected." Welcome to the inscrutable universe, guys...you only *think* you know so much!

"Also in the last ten years, men's sperm count has nose-dived—down 25%." Blame us girls and our image resurgence all you will, fellas, but if you really *were* so superior would you let the little woman get to you THAT way? Besides, we only use one at a time, y'know... and we've plenty on ice, just in case. Feel better?

In the same week as the above additions were made to mankind's store of knowledge, the following took place in his custom-tailored world:

230 die as plane to Paris was bomb or missile-blown out of sky
7 crew dead, 70+ passengers injured in cruise ship fire off Alaska
300 massacred in Burundi/Rwanda by one group hating another
12 dead, many hunger-striking to protest Turkey's hideous prisons
2 dead, 111 wounded in bombing of Olympic Park
2 die, 200 Indonesians jailed protesting dissenters' abuse by military
6 dead, score injured by Kashmir bomb
attacks on Paris & Sri Lanka, civilians by religious/political groups
1,500 dead from floods in China
dozens die, thousands homeless in Korea, Central/S Amer. floods
tornado wiped out most of small town in US

I submit that if mankind was a Hong Kong tailor, nobody's suit would fit and most suit-wearers would be strangled to death by their own bargain haberdashery. Survivors would kill each other off to be the only one privileged to wear it.

Wed. 17 July 1996: Dennis Rodman, basketball's self-designed "price is no object" must-have, mentions his pay-'n-play bottom line is now in the annual 8-figure range. How far beyond astronomical starting point of 10 million his ego demands, wasn't specified. Sport? *What* sport?

Fort Bragg, NC: Army base hit by hate-spreaders spraying red paint swastikas on 6 black soldiers' doors. Who but soldiers could've done the deed? Our nation's protectors? Better hire your *own*.

Ted Turner, Time-Warner/TCI merge, with Rupert Murdoch's megalomaniac slurping up more major TV channels for a billion or 2 makes him owner of more American eyeballs than all the rest of the media put together. The 3 T's? They'll just own the world's minds, that's all.

Teenaged boy, ordered to mow lawn at 6AM rebelled, slept on. So Pop rolls gas-powered noise-polluter into kid's room, fires it up, mows his wall-to-wall plush. Kid threw a fan at mower, called cops, charged dad with "assault with deadly weapon." Neighbors must've cheered!

86 more bodies dug up in Bosnian town where all men slaughtered for believing in wrong version of a loving, male God.

Beer—Bud—sponsors Olympics. Greed and gluttony get the gold.

10-yr-old girl sexually used as live video feed to "real time" kid porn ring operating as "Orchid Club" online in Net...13 men in US & abroad indicted, face long prison terms. Some're of an age to've been raised on Mickey Mouse Club! The other definition of "club"? When will we *use* it!

NY-Paris TWA flt 800 explodes with 230 aboard—no survivors. Media, officials all doing backbends to avoid facing obvious fact planes don't blow up w/o human help! Olympics open just hours away, virtually all taking ostrich view of things. 16 French students age 14-16, left small PA town for dream trip to "City of Lights"—nightmare end of their young lives an all-too familiar part of Dark Ages we live in. Have a nice day!

What's wrong with these pictures?



From weeping, wailing, suffering women & children driven from their homes, their men taken away from them—10's of thousands of 'em!—in Bosnia, CNN Morning News goes to the latest in women's fashion. The focus is on "how to look sexy" Fat lot of good, looking sexy did all those raped, then man-deprived Bosnian women!!!

Clinton delivers his 3-part assessment of US role in the "situation"—parts 1 & 2 are political/geographical, #3, "humanitarian concerns."

Following this, a "rescued" airman is honored personally by the Prez—meanwhile a country that can retrieve not only 1 downed pilot, but cosmonauts in mid-space, seemingly can't deliver tents, food, water & portable johns to a country located smack in the middle of modern Europe to save women & kids, the elderly & wounded from certain (immediate) suffering & death from heat, dehydration, starvation and deadly disease, cholera being sure-fire certain w/ no sanitary facilities. "*Humanitarian,*" huh. *What* "concern"?

"A teenage girl who 'claimed' to have been raped—hanged herself this morning." Remorse, I suppose, for not having just lay back, relaxed & enjoyed it!? We're just not raising our girls *right*, anymore, *are we?*

Most pressing issue before & after the above reports: "Was Nicole Brown really killed by her abusive ex-husband or was she the victim of Columbian hitmen? Judge Ito rules out hitmen defense." Next... the cut on OJ's finger. Stay tuned, folks!

10 September 1996: Aboard a rusty hulk of a riverboat plying Zaire's murky N-to-S waters, a CNN team pass on all the gory details of a despairing way of life. Sharing them with viewers whose worst problems can't match their boatmates' best 5 minutes in the past 5 years. News anchor's obligatory "How sad!" look, only half-said out loud, is followed too swiftly by an unfunny crack about lady co-anchor's imaginary "eagle claw" necklace. She's black, too...and reacted as if his inanity was *cute*. I couldn't laugh even if it was. I was crying too hard at what I'd seen of "life" in Zaire.

Next up was hurricane Hortense's death count—so far...followed by an hour's chat on "IS beauty *really* important?" by Debra Norville & Co. Answer seems to be "yes"—& "no." Or really, "no," but "yes."

Commercial breaks between these gems included one that made me laugh after I'd run out of tears—it was for a Broomvac, the latest labor-saving, energy-wasting electric marvel. It promised relief from "back-breaking work." The guilty torture devices—a broom & dustpan—were displayed to ominous music! Can I have my parents arrested (posthumously) for subjecting me to same throughout child & teen-hood? My back really hurts...right down *there*.

Promised for later..."Music For The Unborn." And this is the *serious* news channel. So, what the heck're you *unserious* folks interested in?

Rats, cats & wildcats in Ojibway school—no \$, tho'. Like all rezzes in US, new *casinos* are built with no \$-problem at all. And they bring in huge amounts—where's it go? "Indian" *kids* get none of it!

The *other* kids in this great nation of ours? "Families sacrifice to get sports shirts priced at \$75 for 6 year olds, with the Brady Bunch look and this or that designer logo"! Give up good food & nice stuff for somebody else's name on your kids' backs? You're all nuts!

Hottest new item: Internet TV @ \$3,000 per—target market 40-50's can check E-mail, buy from shopping channels, while watching soaps & sitcoms. In 10 years no one'll walk anymore!(sooner maybe?)

Spring '97: From a CNN reporter on the flood scene in Grand Forks—"My home town is now the Venice of the Plains...with a little bit of downtown Beirut thrown in." Great line. Made me realize it's high time smug Americans find out what 2/3 of the people of this world've *always* know!

12 July '97: Kids're now OD-ing on octane booster—that stuff you put in your gas tank so you can buy the cheap kind. *Fifth* graders! That's *10-year olds*, in case you can't figure it out, folks. Are small coffins any cheaper?



Latest new TV commercial: "Now you can convert your winning lawsuit or lottery ticket's future payments into an instant loan!" Isn't that just wonderful, kids? You don't have to wait and work hard to squander your wrongful gains anymore. You can flush 'em down the john *in advance!* It gives even the "luckiest" among us the chance to turn good luck into bad in the wink of an eye, not to mention getting more money in your hot li'l hands before you've even got it, so to speak. Nobody mentioned the fact that loans have to be repaid...& with the money you ain't got yet *gone*, what'll you repay it *with?* P.T. Barnum's alive & well in America, folks— he's working for some TV ad agency via a different kind of "medium."

Kids' TV soon on tap: Their versions of Wheel of Fortune & Jeopardy *really* puts kids in jeopardy. When're we gonna stop being such, jerks?!

August '97: TV ad—"Adversary Air" & "Eject! Eject!" —two more gory treats for ghouls. Non-stop parades of people being blown out of the sky by other people, or being torn to bits as their craft crashes. *What*, besides disgustingly perverted minds & sick souls could get pleasure out of watching these and their many clones? And don't try to tell me none of you buy/watch that schmiss, 'cause the videos sell like hotcakes & Direct TV makes a mint!

We're not the only ones: 6 "real crime" shows on Moscow TV this season are so explicit, US channels wouldn't show it. A Muscovite viewer: "It's scary, but I can't help watching it...I don't know why." *I* know!

Another one: "It's fun to watch. Scary? No...it's about *other people*, not *me*." Wish it *was* him! If all the viewers of this sadistic, voyeuristic fare would become victims, it wouldn't be so popular, would it?

Flash! "Religious theme park planned for Mesquite, Nevada." God in all His neon glory—all denominations to be represented! Was it put near Vegas so all the poor losers could go blame their own personal flavor Supreme Dealer? It's bound to fail—a gambler's only god is his/her "system."

H'wood flash #1: heroin/coke-high Christian Slater (blood alc. level @.024!) pulls a Tyson, bites guy at party then battles arresting cop—today's teen idol par excellence!

#2: "porn industry hard hit by UPS strike." Call Bill Clinton, quick! Now he's got grounds for intervention—gotta keep that merde flowin' or face grave consequences for Americans who need a little help in that department (like a cigar and handy intern)!

13 August '97: JonBenet Ramsey coroner's report out...here are some questions no one but me asks and details I haven't heard questioned or commented on thus far:

- = little girls don't get put to bed in pony tails!!!
- = no innocent, loving (un-carnally, that is) parent lays daughter's body on the floor in living room full of soft sofas, cushions 'n such!
- = ditto above...& if he *did*, wouldn't leave her arms up over her head, but wd put her in a more "comfortable" position (& under the Xmas tree?! for crysakes, how pervertedly ritualistic can one get this side of Hollywood porn?)
- = no innocent parent's gonna move an obviously murdered child, cause he'd want cops to catch & punish the murderer & any moron knows to move body mucks up the case!
- = re the handwriting "samples" put out by prime suspects—clearly left-handed writing by a right-handed person (try it and see for yourself)—easiest way to camouflage writing & hardest for experts to prove
- = a mom of six daughters, none o' mine ever had "vaginal wall" inflammation, it's only the *outer* parts down there that can get that way—innocently!

Black man doused w/ gasoline, burned alive, then beheaded (overkilled?) in happily integrated rural W. Virginia—victim was an ex-Marine, 2 suspects charged are white, grubby (to put it kindly) types, one of which said he'd downed Valium, Xanax, beer & moonshine in un-rememberable amounts that night. Officials say "maybe" wasn't a hate crime (!). So, if that's how they treat folks they *don't* hate...???

Various dates 1997 - 2000:

Alcohol/drug abusers are 12x more often murdered; account for 16x more suicides; those living with them 11x more likely to be involved in homicide—either as the victim or killer of their abuser

110 lives lost because no fire alarms/extinguishers in cargo holds!!!
Airlines given till 2001 to put anti-fire systems in all planes of US airlines—why?!? Valujet trying to avoid inspection shutdown, put oxygen canisters on a plane to get them out of storage—losing plane and all aboard in Florida swamp crash. Great CYA move!

Indian Removal Act of 1830's forced them to resettle in western territories—only to be forcibly removed from there later and sent back east again, when stuff the whites wanted was found on those previously unwanted lands where they'd stashed the unwanted tribes.

By age 16, average the American kid has seen 200,000 acts of violence on TV—if there's an error here, it's on the *down* side!



Duke U: Men who are pushy die sooner than laid-back ones—based on the damage that dominating males' need to be in control all the time does to their body parts—re "link between drive to control and early death." The item fails to add that the behavior often causes fatalities brought on by those who *don't want* to be controlled and dominated!

Gov't studying whether Abner Louima's "civil rights were violated" (*whether!!?*). Damage to bladder and gut will probably leave him w/ bags for rest of life! Has a young, beautiful wife and kid—great sex for them after all that, huh? \$55mil not near enough compensation for the stupidly obscene acts! Some people get that much or more just for spilling hot coffee on *themselves!*

1.2 million pounds of potentially sick-making beef recalled, new ways to test for contamination have to be designed—none now good enough to catch e coli—wake up and notice the signs, people!! Us animals are *not supposed to* eat each other! Jeanne Meserve: "What does this mean for the meat packing industry?" My answer: "It means *we shouldn't eat meat*, dummies!"

2 nuke power plants okayed for N. Korea and most of their babies are starving! \$4.5 billion, to be built by an int'l consortium that couldn't even enter N. Korean waters by ship w/o first taking down S. Korean flag of the ship that brought them! The plants will be able to produce weapons-grade plutonium—enough to make 40 nuclear bombs—and they have million-strong army, the largest in the world

News show ranking what Americans are afraid of most:

1. car crash
2. cancer
3. not enough Soc. Sec.
4. not enough \$ to retire on
5. food poisoning from a meal

Plane crash, war, starvation, rape, murder, were way down on the list. Ask folks in most of the rest of the world and see what you get!

So, Chris Slater bites a big chunk and grabs cop's gun after taking "the big H" as he called it; NYPD skates on hideous treatment of Louima; Texas brutality in a privately owned/run prison, w/ dog-biting, stun guns, etc. goes on unchecked, and so on and on and on—when our idols and the supposed good guys are such good teachers of how to be bad, how can we be so surprised and outraged at the results, like Tim McVeigh & OJ?

Quote in Nat'l Enquirer, by Dr. Lawrence Balter: "If a child has too many toys he will never learn how to play." Big news for guys like him maybe, but not for any mom! True for today's *adults*, too!

Jean-Charles de Castelbajac designs new robes for Pope John Paul III! While the poor, the homeless, the pursued and persecuted faithful go naked! He could clothe, feed and house them all from the Church's pocket change, if he really *lived* the life of Saint Peter, whom he's supposed to be the living incarnation of.

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