

The Odyssey of Theodore Thinkmore

(Adapted from Argus)

"Pardon me," said the girl at the Blue Parrot bar, "but I couldn't help noticing that enormous shaft protruding from your chest, and since my glass is now empty, I thought I'd ask you just how the hell it got there."

"Indeed I am glad you inquired, ma'am — fill up her glass with chocolate milk will you bartender? — for you are looking at a student from Faint Dunstan's who has been shafted by the administration."

"Ah, look not so shocked, good woman, but take a goodly draught of the chocolate milk, it will help steady your nerves."

My name is Theodore Thinkmore, and I have been blighted from birth with a horrible curse. My tale, or at least a good piece of it, began before I did, and that is the origin of my terrible curse."

"Now as you have probably read in magazines such as BLUESWEEK, STRIFE and GRIME, the creation of another human life is an intricate, complex and beautiful process. That is, babies are found under blueberry bushes given a name, and fired off into the education system to learn how to obey."

"My beginning was evident. I was created in a manner most vile. I will not go into details; suffice it to say that I began life in bed with a lady, naked, and have never fully recovered from this disgusting depraved and horrendous fact."

"Oh look not on me with heavy eye, fair lady, this shame I bear is not entirely my own fault. Consider my tender age—I was immature, easily led by others, I knew not what was what nor even what was not what. Yes, I was just a little sucker, moist putty in the hands of my parents. Many a million million times I have regretted the whole affair and dreamed I was like other babies, and not brought into existence in this horrible unique way."

"Another chocolate milk for madam's nerves, bartender—and make this one a double."

"Such an unusual problem demanded an unusual prober, so my fairy godfather was sent for. Appearing in a puff of cigar smoke (as was his wont) he took one look and threw up his hands."

"Aha, a real live birth in the family, how naughty, naughty, naughty of you—and to think that something of this kind has been going on under my very nose, so to speak, for some time."

"Well, well, well young fellow, you do have a novel navel, don't you? (Fairy godfathers are quite sweet fellows really.)"

"But the rules of the game have to be followed, and I have no choice but to lay a curse on you."

"And there, right in the middle of the room, with my mother and father present, in a manner I shall not describe, he laid a curse before our horrified eyes. Yes, it was at that time, stroking and thrusting a magic blond at me, he said the words that changed my life."

"All decent people are found under blueberry bushes. Therefore you are not decent. Therefore you will have horrible thought whenever you see girls' legs. Therefore your thoughts will be led onto higher things. Therefore you must spend your whole life seeking Truth."

"In a pool of fag smoke the demon disappeared."

"Now I lived in the town of Charlottetown, in a land called Prince Edward Island, far, far to the East and quite removed from any hint of civilization. And also, all my parents ever read was READER'S DISGUST, and GRIME, and all they watched was American T.V. Consequently they didn't know what Truth was."

"However, it didn't sound too bad, and when I came of age, at three months, I said goodbye to my dear old mother, shook my father's hand, dynamited the house, and set out into the world to make my fortune and seek some Truth."

"For many years I roamed the world, working in the spaghetti fields of British Columbia, hunting the long toothed pickle in Northern Manitoba, and shooting the bull about Toronto. But nowhere could I find Truth."

"I drove a bull-dozer, a brown-noser, a Volkswagen, and three women mad, but nowhere could I find Truth."

"I roamed around, exploring rooming houses in Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver and as far away as Europe (a place off the coast of England) but nowhere could I find Truth."

The following poem was handed in to a teacher in Regina by a Grade 12 student. Although it is not known if he actually wrote the poem himself, it is known that he committed suicide a few weeks later. The poem originally appeared in *Generation*, a Saskatoon-based magazine.

Reprinted from *The Uniter*

He always wated to explain things.
But no one cared.
So he drew.
Sometimes he would draw and it wasn't anything.
He wanted to carve it in stone or write it in the sky.
He would lie out on the grass and look up in the sky.
And it would be only him and the sky and the things inside him that needed saying.
And it was after that he drew the picture.
It was a beautiful picture.
He kept it under his pillow and would let no one see it.
And he would look at it every night and think about it.
And when it was dark, and his eyes were closed, he could still see it.
And it was all of him.
And he loved it.
When he started school he brought it with him.
Not to show anyone, but just to have with him like a friend.
It was funny about school.
He sat in a square, brown desk
Like all the other square, brown desks
And he thought it should be red.
And his room was a square brown room.
Like all the others rooms.
And it was tight and close.
And stiff.
He hated to hold the pencil and chalk,

With his arm stiff and his feet flat on the floor,
Stiff,
With the teacher watching and watching.
The teacher came and spoke to him.
She told him to wear a tie like all the other boys.
He said he didn't like them.
And she said it didn't matter!
After that they drew.
And he drew all yellow and it was the way he felt about morning.
And it was beautiful.
The teacher came and smiled at him.
'What's this?' she said 'Why don't you draw something like Ken's drawing?'
'Isn't that beautiful?'
After that his mother bought him a tie.
And he always drew airplanes and rocket ships like everyone else.
And he threw the old picture away.
And when he lay alone looking at the sky,
It was big and blue and all of everything.
But he wasn't anymore.
He was square inside
And brown,
And his hands were stiff.
And he was like everyone else.
And the things inside him that needed saying didn't need it anymore.
It had stopped pushing.
It was crushed.
Stiff.
Like everything else.

"Finally I was given a lucky brake from an old Red Indian, the Ancient Marooner."

"Takum brake stolen from Iron Horse. Maybe givum plenty luck. Maybe not. Go to Faint Dunstan's off the coast of Canada. There find plenty Truth, heh, heh, heh."

Faint Dunstan's I learned, was the most fantastic place in the whole world. It was so large they were forced to make two cities out of it, and was so rich in administrative organisms that the streets were paved with mould. In fact, so many people wanted to move to Faint Dunstan's they were forced to build a Halitosis factory there."

"That is why only the toughest, purest, finest people can live in Faint Dunstan's."

"Once in Faint Dunstan's I attached myself to a young innocent-eyed type with books and went up Ovulation Rd. with her to the University. You could tell it was University because the whole area was lit up with Truth."

"Once inside, I stood in awe as tal bronzed youths, eyes burning with desire for knowledge, and beautiful girls, eyes also burning with desire, rushed past in their frantic rush to get to classes and catch the pearls of wisdom said to be given out by professors."

"I went to Raaugh! the student newspaper that came out weakly, to ask where the University kept their Truth."

"The Raaugh! staff, strange creatures, each with a large green moustache, except for the men, who were bald, rushed up and tried to push me out."

"Perhaps he brings good news," said another.

"But if he brings any news," they said all together, "we don't want him in here!"

"And the hurled me bodily from the office."

"Realizing this was their way of showing affection, (and all newspaper men are affected to some degree) I persisted and gained entrance."

"They were gathered around an enormous tub, which was filled with a vile red liquid and labled "Whynne" on one side, and "Whynnot?" on the other."

"This is our objectivity fluid," explained the editor. When we feel we are not reporting the news up to our normal standards, we drink this and soon all is back to our normal level of objectivity."

If this were true they were the most objective crew under the sun. Two of them were so objective they couldn't move."

"Where does the University keep all its Truth?" I asked.

"Truth?" They screamed, falling into a heap writhing in the middle of the room. "No Truth shall ever see the pages of the Raaugh! If we ever told the Truth of what goes on in the SDUSU people wouldn't believe us! Get thee to the Administration."

"Of course! It all added up!

"Why was the road paved just up to the administration parking lot? Why did the administration parking lot have snow shovelled constantly instead of 50% of the time like the rest of the University? Why did administration offices have new IBM typewriters and all the desk lights and fans you can think of—and the rest of the University hardly any at all?"

"Obviously the administration held all the Truth in the University. I spoke to an administrator, a tall fine fellow, calm of hand and stern of eye, and he ushered me into his office."

"So you want Truth, eh? Well I'll give you some—you may kneel there and address me as Uncle Charlie."

"I kneeled, and indeed, the carpet was soft and thick and good for kneeling."

"You might think that because the students are the largest part of the University, because University is set up for the purpose of providing them with knowledge, and because it is their lives that are being moulded, that they would have a large say in what is being done here, wouldn't you?"

I admitted that at first glance it did seem that way."

"Well that is wrong. The administration is the most important part of the University. That is why when the decision was made to have exams after Xmas, and then re-made, the students were not consulted. That is why students and faculty, against their interest, will be forced to put up with larger classes next year. And that is why we will not allow students to have any say in the decisions that affect them."

"Because this University belongs to the Administration, dig it."

"Now get out."

"Well, there was no escaping the logic of his words. I was instantly won over to his position by the sheer overwhelming reason with which he presented his case. And yet... a certain doubt remained... for suddenly, as soon as I had accepted his basic premises, I felt a sharp pain in my chest, looked down, and yet — I had been shafted. So I wandered over to the Raaugh! again, to have another word with the vile creatures there and..."

At this point the intrepid shafted Truth-seeker noticed that his long-haired listener was no longer listening. She had passed out cold and fallen to the floor, arms and legs and breasts and belly-button all pointing skyward in the classical pose of one stoned on chocolate milk."

"Kindly fill my flask with the brownish brew, bartender, and I shall see this young lady safely home. No, no, no need to help me, I can lift her off the floor myself, thank you. You see this is really part of my cursed education, for the people at the Raaugh! told me I could only find Truth if I picked up a fallen woman in a bar and took her home to bed."

"And I think I shall take their advice."