

# Gloom Cupboard

## Close your eyes, reach inside...

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### #84

March 16, 2009 by [thewinkisonfire](#)

*Jess Kroll*

#### **And they shall rule with an iron hoof**

The warnings had been there all along; on the walls on Lascaux, Chauvent-Pont-d'Arc, and others. We never knew what they meant. Until it was too late.

What follows is my attempt at the story of humanity's swift and brutal annihilation, pieced together through a combination of witness accounts and personal speculation, so that perhaps, when humans once again gain our rightful place as the alpha omnivore, we may learn from the mistakes of previous generations and never again allow them to pass.

No one can ever know for certain when the Cow Conquest began. Some among our tribe believe it came out of the blue, that as a species the Cows had enough of being food and clothing and rose up as one, signalled by a pheromone shift, into deadly action. Others hypothesize that it was a natural, cyclical process, like ice ages or global warming, developing over thousands of years. That humans and Cows are destined to trade dominance until the end of time. There are still others of us, myself included, who point to the first warning of the coming overthrow as the outbreak of the so-called "Mad Cow Disease" in 15 BCE (Before Cows Era). However, the meaning of this specific warning, like the motivation behind the uprising, can never be absolutely known. What we do know, regardless of how hard we may try to forget, was the massacre that followed.

The mushroom cloud came in the form of a far more aggressive strain of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. Instead of spreading through a relatively small portion of the Cow population and waiting dormant for several years before taking effect, this vicious malady, dubbed Rubius Pentenciarius Carnificium Disease, or RPCD, or Really Pissed Cow Disease, took immediate action. It decimated the human population, leaving those who remained scarred, frightened and so ill-prepared for what followed that humanity posed no threat to the brutal efficiency of the Cows.

RPCD spread through all parts of every Cow in the world, perhaps as a form of species-wide righteous vengeance, or as a side effect of the abundance of steroids in their feed. The outbreak tainted all beef, dairy, and even leather products across every nation. The disease itself had an incubation period of five months, as though specifically evolved to allow enough time for anyone who would consume or use Cow products to do so. Beginning in the contact area, be it the mouth and digestive track or absorbed through the epidermis, RPCD spread throughout the circulatory system, permeating into every vein, vessel and organ in the human body. At the end of the incubation period, like the chime of a bell tower, each organ would simultaneously liquefy. Death was instant, painful, and gruesome.

The entire population of Houston, Texas, everyone on the Atkins diet, and McDonald's one billion served were killed on the first day. There were more the next day, and the next. The worst part of it all was the waiting, knowing that the disease was there, festering, building, unstoppable. The bodies piled up, internal organs overflowing as fluids from every orifice, too many to bury. The stench was ungodly, perhaps even worse than the waiting. The smell alone was enough to crush our spirit, making us little more than cattle awaiting slaughter.

Death herds stampeded through cities, destroying our communication and electrical grids, killing all in their path. They tracked us like bloodhounds, nation-wide running of the destructive bulls. Without our technology humans were defenseless, wandering empty fields aimlessly, nearly passive in stupefied shock. Even our guns, once an essential protection against possible overthrow, proved of little effect facing thousands upon thousands of 'rioted and raging Cows. The neurological effects of RPCD caused alterations in the Cow's consumption habits. Those who survived the stampede were eaten alive. Their screams a whisper beneath the mooing; a mixture of primeval intensity and feral glee.

In the United States the days following the initial discovery of RPCD presence in soupy corpses, after those who remained secured shelters in their panic rooms and left over Cold War bomb shelters, were wasted on massive class action lawsuits. Customers of every fast food chain, including those which only served chicken, filed wrongful death complaints. However, before reaching trial each of the millions of plaintiffs were dead, thus proving their case. The fast food corporations filed a countersuit, claiming that the plaintiffs' deaths constituted a defamation of their corporate character. The expedited case reached the Supreme Court where the remaining justices issued a 2-1 ruling along party lines in favor of the fast food corporations, just as the doors of the judicial building were splintered by a mob of outraged bovine.

Meanwhile, in India and other areas of high Hindu populations, the people amassed to join their divine creatures on a righteous march against the heathens. Of course, the Cows held no such distinction, and the irony of a Cow eating a Hindu was not lost on the rest of the world. Jainists, vegans, and other groups that had sworn off harm of animals were treated the same, although a lack of natural fats in their diets did cause the Cows a good deal of suffering through lingering, violent diarrhoea.

Then, almost as quickly as the malevolence began, calm descended upon the Cow forces. They stopped their death raids and indiscriminate mutilations. Instead they packed the lingering humans into outdoor containment, feeding them, letting them wander their confines. Until the day came when they were lead one-by-one into a small, darkened hallway, unable to see even a few feet before them, proceeding further into the black, until a Cow kicked their head in. There are those who claim to have seen these slaughterhouses, but in the end it is all speculation.

My own story, the only I may pledge is true, is a miracle of circumstance. Twelve years old and overweight, according to the Body Mass Index, my parents placed me on a strict no red meat, no dairy diet. In solidarity my mother and father committed to eating only the items that I could. That which I

first saw as an unjust punishment turned into my salvation. Yet my parents weren't so lucky as the designer leather jackets they purchased for each other six weeks later lead to their ultimate demise. All around, it was probably the worst Christmas ever.

I spent years roaming from place to place, living on what I could scrounge from abandoned houses and shops. Initially my youth, solitude and physical condition lead the Cows to leave me alone, figuring the elements would kill me off and I'd be too fatty to make a decent meal. Finally, after wandering what I could vaguely describe as north, I came upon a cave along the coast, the surrounding terrain too rocky for Cows to descend, where a small band of wild humans welcomed me into their makeshift society. And here we have remained, never attempted contact with the outside world, for fear that the Cows may be near.

Occasionally a nomadic tribe will share their stories of the Cow Conquest, or bring rumors of a rising human civilization in some other part of the land. While we offer them shelter and an understanding ear, we are happy with our small life. Estimates of remaining humans run as low as tens of thousands, to as high as several million, but no one can be sure. Recently there has been fear that the explosion in Cow population is forcing them to migrate closer and closer into wild human lands. This expansion may eventually drive even our small number away. Or that the cumulative effect of perhaps a billion Cows releasing methane into the air may gradually destroy the environment.

In the meantime I and my family are content here, reconnecting with humankind's primitive roots. I taught myself to make ink from fish oils and berry juices and began writing my story on these walls. When they are found, in some distant day, may those who look upon them understand their meaning clearer than the images of Lascaux and Chauvent-Pont-d'Arc: Beware the Cows.

*Robert Laughlin*

**As Harry S said to e e:**

As Harry S said to e e:  
If you can't take the heat,  
Go to the universe next door.

*Janie Hofmann*

**Who Can Make me Leave**

I can and did once  
patty-cake fire  
loved that bowl  
of bedrock we call  
life  
To this day  
I'm still the bootlegger  
pretty as the piebald

dog in the pet shop  
window  
Sharp  
and flighty  
as pigeon nails.

*Dan Ruhrmanty*

### **Elements**



Elements

*Grady McShane*

### **Mom and Dad**

Apart, some pairs make no sense,  
But when they're combined they are genius.

He was a pool of bubbling tar,  
She was a thousand galvanized nails,  
Their love fanned out like brand new shingles,  
And they put a decent roof over our lives.

His voice was a beer-soaked cigarette,  
Hers was a thoughtful prayer,  
Their beliefs bridged the human spectrum,  
We watched the construction and learned.

He worked harder than the tools he manoeuvred,  
She changed lives with precious deeds,  
An ox and a hummingbird formed a team,  
We were their spring flowers and brick loads.

Now I see beauty in churches and barrooms,  
I spin no harsh judgments of my human thread,  
She is my scripture; he is my hammer,  
And I'm building my own understanding.

*Tim Goldstone*

## The Power of Love

I remember her standing there, aloof, motionless under the freezing winter moonlight, except for a slight tremble. I still couldn't believe this elegant, sophisticated creature was all mine. I removed the furs and strings of pearls I had draped over her. I smiled as she began to hum our song. I gazed at her, enchanted: never had an electricity generator looked more beautiful. I whispered tenderly, "I have the welder," and wept as the sudden blue flame shot into the frosted night air.

*Andrea DeAngelis*

### A house of dreams

I remember a house of dreams  
I remember all the jack-o-lanterns in a row  
laughing disconcertingly, their mouths collapsing inward  
minds exposed.

Landscape of long ago,  
I remember how you used to talk to me  
and now it seems eternities upon eternities.

The days of long letters are over  
for you have omitted me  
the past has been left unfinished.

All I have is the October moon to harvest my memories  
all I have is an ill-lit house to set my escape by  
and the heavy heavy night sky.

*Denis Sheehan*

### Slowly Lonely

above the salty lick of the underneath ocean  
it guided visitors enjoying  
cotton candy, ice cream, popcorn  
and the occasional camouflaged  
beer  
its footings covered with  
periwinkles  
barnacles  
and many other  
sea critters  
spanning far into the waves  
its height tapered by the tides

first kisses and broken hearts were plenty within its stretch  
its image adorned keepsake  
postcards  
calendars  
and filled countless rolls of  
amateur film  
that evolved from black and white to color  
times changed and  
maintenance failed  
and paint chipped and paint peeled  
now it cries soft and soaked dull splinters  
that barely splash into the welcoming sea  
only to wash ashore with the waves  
rusty nails drop, eventually corroding on the sandy ocean floor  
visitors disappeared  
choking murky waters evicted the sea critters from their homes  
piece by piece it fades  
its past facade lives alone in old  
dust covered photo albums  
unopened attic trunks  
and the dying memories of those from its heyday  
other than the fleeting wannabe art photographer  
whose drudgery is destined to fail with unsightly content  
nobody cares  
about this once proud  
but now  
lonely  
Pier

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yassir!

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