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# The Man from Earth

By Jerome Bixby

Hey, buddy.  
You don't waste time, do you?  
I try not to.  
Well, you need help?  
Sure.  
Would you like to tell us...  
what the hell that was all about?  
I don't like good-byes.  
Kind of the point of  
a goodbye party, John.  
Went to a certain amount  
of trouble, you know?  
Could've at least stayed  
a few minutes, huh?  
Eaten some of the food  
we so feverishly prepared?  
I apologize, Harry.  
But why are you moving so quickly?  
You only resigned a couple of days ago.  
You got the history chair at Stanford.  
I wish.  
Well, taquitos, chicken wings,  
Roastie-toasties and beer.  
If we'd had more time,  
We'd have done something  
a little more grandiose.  
Candlelight dinner at Mcdonald's.  
Strippers.  
Taquitos are fine.  
A'right.  
Art's gonna be along, too.  
He's, uh, talking to a student. Pfft.  
Is George taking over for you?  
George or Trimbell - Has  
the Dean made up his mind?  
He hasn't called.  
My god!  
Wh-What is this?  
It looks like a Van Gogh,  
But I've never seen it before.  
Is that an original, John?  
No, it's just a gift someone gave me.  
Still, it's a superb copy.  
Contemporaneous, I think,

May I take a closer look?  
Please, yeah.  
Yeah, it's the same  
stretcher as Van Gogh used.  
Yeah, there's writing  
on the back in french.  
Oh, "To my friend Jacque Borne."  
Wonder who that was?  
Someone he knew, I guess.  
Brilliant deduction, sherlock.  
Surely you'll have this  
looked at, appraised?  
Well, maybe sometime,  
But I wouldn't really want money for it.  
That does it.  
Put that stuff in the kitchen.  
No, I'm gonna put it  
in the bathroom, John.  
Gas is off, electricity's on.  
Get comfortable while you can.  
The furniture's going this afternoon.  
It's been years since I sat on a floor.  
Heh. I can't remember her name.  
Eh, it's good for the back.  
Can we do yoga exercises?  
Tantric yoga, we can.  
( Chuckles )  
So you're leaving good old "We teach you"?  
Rather suddenly, you must admit.  
Truth time, John.  
Is there a problem?  
No.  
Oh, come on, you know we wanna help.  
That's appreciated,  
but really--  
There's no problem.  
Well, now I am curious.  
Where are you going?  
Givin' up tenure...  
a decade of professorship,  
In line to chair the department,  
And you don't know where you're going?  
Call it cabin fever.  
After a while, I get itchy feet.

I've done this before.  
No, no, no, you're too young  
to have done this before.  
And he hasn't aged a day in ten years.  
Every woman on the faculty  
Would give anything to have that secret.  
Is that what they're after, Edith?  
Oh, stop, Harry.  
( Giggles )  
Wow, can you pull this?  
What the hell?  
What do you hunt?  
Deer, mostly.  
Around big bear.  
With a bow and arrow?  
Most people can't bag a deer  
With a rifle and a telescopic sight.  
Though, good eatin'.  
The best wild game.  
Lives naturally, eats naturally.  
Well, it's beautiful.  
( Motor hums )  
Art.  
Ah.  
So, can I get an "a" for awesome?  
Oh, my gosh.  
( Chuckles )  
That was fun.  
Hey, John.  
You know Linda. You  
had her last semester.  
Hi. Hey.  
She's one of my victims  
now. I'm taking her home.  
She wanted to come by  
and say hello goodbye.  
Is Art as tough as I hear?  
Oh, archaeology's tough.  
Dr. Jenkins is a fine teacher.  
Oh, that's very politic.  
It's very true. Uh-huh.  
Something for you to  
read on the road, pal.  
"Shadows of the cave:

parallels to early man."

**Author:**

Publish or perish.

I'd rather read

Than write another one.

Thank you.

Hi.

Oh, everybody, this is Linda.

Linda, this is everybody.

Linda. Hi.

So.

Where you going, John,

like we give a damn?

We've already covered that.

John's got itchy feet.

There are over-the-counter

remedies for that, John.

( Laughs )

So there is a problem.

No.

I just like to move on now and then.

It's a personal thing.

Well, not to pry.

I'm sorry I don't

have more to offer you.

Got conversation, some

seats for your behinds,

And, uh...

Is he ducking out on us again?

...I do have this.

Oh ho ho! Johnny Walker Green!

( Laughs ) didn't even

know they made it in green.

What do they pay you?

Nothing is too good for my friends.

But I'm sorry-- We are

down to plastic cups now.

That's a sacrilege I'll tolerate.

I will do the honors.

Oh, come to papa.

Ooh! Here, cups, cups.

There we go.

Step on in here.

There ya go...  
one for the birthday  
boy-- Excuse me. Art?  
No, not for me.  
Oh, no, I don't drink.  
( Laughs ) we're not  
gonna card you, darling.  
All right, here, join  
the circle at least.  
Well, to long life and good fortune  
To our esteemed friend  
And colleague, John Oldman.  
May he find undeserved bliss  
Wherever he goes.  
Here, here.  
Skael. Na zdorovye.  
One off the top, John.  
Mm! Oh, that's good.  
Excuse me.  
John, we're all sorry to see you go.  
Truly.  
Okay. Now we're done with that,  
What do we do for the  
rest of the afternoon?  
Anyone got a good topic?  
Like this, maybe? Heh.  
What is that?  
It's a burin of a parrot beak.  
Inclined chisel point...  
probably early magdalenian.  
May I see that? Sure.  
Yes indeed, that's what it is.  
What's a burin?  
A burin is a flint tool  
For grooving wood and  
bone, antlers especially,  
To make spear and harpoon points.  
Magdalenians weren't  
noted for flint work,  
So this is a very nice specimen.  
Okay, what's a magdalenian?  
A later Cro-magnon,  
Without gettin' technical.  
It's the final culture

of the upper paleolithic.  
If stones could speak, eh, Art?  
So where'd you get that, John?  
Believe it or not, from  
a thrift shop-- A quarter.  
You lucky dog!  
I gotta go digging  
for this kind of stuff.  
Can I, uh...?  
Yeah.  
Huh.  
Maybe...  
I'm glad you did this.  
Did what? You mean come over?  
Maybe?  
Definitely.  
Gee, thanks.  
Well, so are we.  
So are we.  
We couldn't let you just run off.  
Thanks.  
John, what is up, huh?  
Are you on america's most wanted?  
We won't turn you in.  
Yeah, come on, out with it.  
You're among friends.  
Snoopy friends.  
Forget it.  
You are creating the mystery here.  
Obviously, you have something  
you'd like to say. Say it!  
Well, maybe I...  
ten, nine, eight, seven...  
Harry, stop.  
There is something I'm  
tempted to tell you, I think.  
I've never done this before,  
and I wonder how it'll pan out.  
( Harry chuckles )  
I wonder if I could ask  
you a silly question.  
John, we're teachers.  
We answer silly questions all the time.  
Hey!

What if a man from the upper paleolithic  
Survived until the present day?  
What do you mean, survived?  
Never died?  
Yes. What would he be like?  
Well, I know some guys.  
You ever been to the ozarks?  
It's an interesting idea.  
What, are you working on  
a science fiction story?  
Say I am. What would he be like?  
Pretty tired.  
( Laughter )  
Well, seriously,  
As Art's book title suggests,  
He might be like any of us.  
Dan. A caveman?  
Well, there's no anatomical difference  
Between, say, a Cro-magnon and us.  
Except that as a rule,  
we've grown taller.  
What's the selective  
advantage of height?  
Better to see predators  
in tall grass, my dear.  
Actually, tall and skinny  
Radiates heat more  
effectively in warmer climates.  
And as for neanderthals,  
I mean, we've all seen apish people.  
That strain's still with us.  
But he'd be a caveman.  
No, he wouldn't.  
John's hypothetical man  
Would have lived  
through 140 centuries...  
yeah, roughly.  
...and changed with every one of them.  
I mean, assuming normal intelligence.  
Well, we think men of  
the upper paleolithic  
Were as intelligent as we are.  
They just didn't know as much.  
John's man would have

learned as the race learned.  
In fact, if he had an inquiring mind,  
His knowledge might be astonishing.  
If you do write that,  
let me have a look at it.  
I'm sure you'll make some  
anthropological boners.  
It's a deal.  
What would keep him alive?  
What does the biologist say?  
Cigarettes.  
And ice cream. ( Laughs )  
All right, all right, I'll play.  
All right, um, in science fiction terms,  
I would say...  
perfect regeneration  
of the body's cells,  
Especially in the vital organs.  
Actually, the human  
body appears designed  
To live about 190 years.  
Most of us just die of slow poisoning.  
Maybe he did something right,  
Something everybody else  
in history had done wrong.  
What, like eat the food,  
Drink the water, and breathe the air?  
Prior to modern times,  
Those were pristine.  
We've extended our lifespan  
in a world that's, uh...  
not fit to live in.  
You know, it could happen.  
The pancreas turns over  
cells every 24 hours,  
The stomach lining in three days,  
The entire body in seven years,  
But the process falters.  
Waste accumulates, eventually  
proves fatal to function.  
Now if a quirk in his immune system  
Led to perfect detox,  
Perfect renewal, then yeah.  
He could duck decay.

Mm, that's a secret  
we'd all love to have.  
Would you really want to do that?  
Live 14,000 years?  
Well, if I could stay  
healthy and I didn't age,  
I mean, why not?  
Yeah. What a chance to learn.  
Is anyone hungry?  
You know, the more I think  
about it, yeah, it's possible.  
Anything is possible, right?  
After all, one century's magic,  
another century's science.  
They thought Columbus  
was a nut job, right?  
Pasteur, Copernicus?  
Aristarchus long before that.  
Right.  
I had a chance to sail with columbus,  
Only I'm not the adventurous type.  
I was pretty sure the earth was round,  
But at that point, I still thought  
He might fall off an edge someplace...  
look around, John.  
We just did.  
I suppose there's a  
joke in there somewhere,  
But I don't get it.  
There's nothing to get.  
What are we talking about?  
We were just talking about a caveman  
Who survives until the present time.  
As you said, what a chance to learn,  
Once I learned to learn.  
Did you start the whiskey  
before we got here?  
Pretend it's science fiction.  
Figure it out.  
Okay, a--( Laughs )--  
Very old Cro-magnon  
Living until the present.  
( Grunts loudly )  
Oh!

( Laughing )

What?

John just confided that  
he's 14,000 years old.

Oh, John, you don't look a day over 900.

Okay, okay.

All right, spock, I'll  
play your little game.

What do you want? What's the punch line?

Every ten years or so, when people start  
To notice I don't age, I move on.

That's very good,  
that's very quick, John.

I wanna read that  
story when you're done.

You want more?

By all means. This is great.

All right, now...

( laughs )

So you think that you are a...

a, uh, Cro-magnon.

Well, I didn't learn it in school.

That's my best guess,

Based on archaeological data,  
maps, anthropological research.

Since mesopotamia,  
I've got the last...

You're ahead of most  
people, so please, go on.

Well, you know the background stuff,

So I'll make it brief.

In what I call my first lifetime,  
I aged to about 35...

what you see.

I ended up leading my group.

They saw me as magical.

I didn't even have to fight for it.

Then fear came, and they chased me away.

They thought that I was

Stealing their lives away to stay young.

The prehistoric origin  
of the vampire myth.

That is good!

First thousand years,

I didn't know up from sideways.

How do you know the  
first thousand years?

An informed guess, based on what  
I've learned in my memories.

Most people can scarcely  
remember their childhood,  
But you have memories of that time?

Like yours, selective.

You know, the high points,  
the low points, traumas.  
They stick in the mind forever.

Put down at 3 or 35,  
you still feel a twinge.

Go on.

I kept getting chased  
because I wouldn't die,  
So I got the hang of  
joining new groups I found.

I also got the idea of  
periodically moving on.

We were semi-Nomadic, of course,  
Following the weather  
and the game we hunted.

The first 2,000 years were cold.

We learned it was warmer  
at lower elevations.

Late glacial period, I assume.

What was the terrain like?

Mountainous.

Vast plains to the west.

West--Something you  
learned in school.

Towards the setting sun.

I suspect I saw the british isles  
From what is now the french coast.

Huge mountains...

on the other side of  
an enormous deep valley

That was shadowed by the setting sun.

This is before they were separated

From the continent by rising  
seas, as glaciers melted.

That happened?

Yes, the end of the pleistocene.  
So far, what he says fits.  
Oh, yeah, into any textbook.  
And that's where I found it.  
How can I have knowledgeable recall  
If I didn't have knowledge?  
It's all retrospective.  
All I can do is  
integrate my recollections  
With modern findings.  
Caveman, you gonna hit me  
over the head with a club  
And drag me into the bedroom?  
You'd be more fun conscious.  
Oh, John.  
Let me get this straight.  
We're not talking about reincarnation.  
You're not saying that you remember  
Whatever the hell it would be,  
And being born again and yada yada?  
One lifetime.  
Some lifetime.  
Wow.  
Maybe there is something  
to this reincarnation thing.  
You're supposed to come back  
Again and again, learn and learn,  
And somehow, John, you just managed  
To bypass all the other bodies.  
Well, what's the point?  
What about oceans?  
Didn't see them till much later.  
So how would you know  
an ocean from a lake?  
Big waves--  
Something else  
I can only surmise in retrospect.  
Were you curious about  
where it all came from?  
We would look up at the sky and wonder.  
"There's gotta be  
some big guys up there.  
What else made all this down here?"  
At first I thought

There was something  
wrong with me--  
Maybe I was a bad guy for not dying.  
Then I began to wonder if I was cursed  
Or perhaps blessed.  
Then I thought maybe I had a mission.  
Do you still think you do?  
God works in mysterious ways.  
I think I just happened.  
( Phone ringing )  
( Laughs )  
Wow.  
Hello?  
Yes, ellie?  
What's wrong?  
Sandy?  
Coming.  
Yeah?  
Do we have ellie's midterm here?  
Yeah, sorry.  
I picked it up with the periodicals.  
Got it.  
No, you're worried about your parents?  
Don't--Don't  
worry.  
You passed, c+.  
Take care of yourself.  
Good kid.  
What does pre-Med need with history?  
Got it.  
Thank you.  
Sorry, guys.  
John, please continue.  
Come on, I thought we  
were done with that.  
No! Let's go on with it.  
It's interesting.  
Besides, I think he's making  
a certain amount of sense.  
Like hegel-- Logic  
from absurd premises.  
That Van Gogh?  
He gave it to me.  
I was, uh, jacque bourne at the time,

A pig farmer.  
A pig farmer?  
( Laughing )  
I like to work with my hands.  
He would come out to the place, paint.  
We talked about capturing nature in Art.  
Turner, cezanne, pissarro.  
Oh, the nolde landscapes.  
Not in Van Gogh's time.  
He would have loved them, though.  
Yes.  
Well, I don't understand  
Why you can't remember  
where you're from.  
Geography hasn't changed.  
I learned  
that in--  
Professor hensen's tepid lectures.  
But you're right.  
Where did you live when  
you were five years old?  
Little rock.  
Your mother, she took you to the market?  
Mm-hmm. What direction was it?  
From your house.  
I don't know.  
How far?  
Um, three blocks.  
Were there any references  
That stuck in your mind?  
Well, there was a gas station  
And a big field.  
I was told I could never go there alone.  
And if you went back there today,  
Would it be the same?  
No. I'm sure it's all  
different and built up.  
Thus the saying-- "You  
can't go home again"  
Because it isn't there anymore.  
Picture it  
on my scale--  
I migrated through an endless flat space  
Full of endless

new things--  
Forests, mountains, tundra, canyons.  
My memory sees what I saw then.  
My eye sees freeways, urban sprawl,  
Big macs under the eiffel tower.  
Early on, the world  
got bigger and bigger,  
And then...  
think what I've had to unlearn.  
And now you're moving on.  
As you've said, there's  
talk of my not aging,  
And when that happens, I move on.  
Well, it might make sense  
to set up your next identity,  
Your next ten years, and  
then just drop into it.  
I've done that a few times,  
Even passed as my own son.  
"Oh, you're an engineer, too?  
You're ben's son. He was a good man."  
Saves trouble with  
credentials and references.  
On the other hand, I've  
been busted a few times.  
Spent a year in  
jail, Belgium, 1862--  
I won't  
forget that--  
For faking a government application.  
When'd you come to america?  
With some french immigrants...  
moving on.  
An answer for every question.  
Except one, John.  
Why're you doing this?  
A whim. Maybe not such a good idea.  
I...  
wanted to say goodbye to you as me,  
Not what you thought I was.  
Well, since this isn't funny,  
We think you might have a problem.  
A very serious problem.  
I've got boxes to move.

I'll give you a hand.  
Wouldn't you have  
some relic, an artifact  
To remind you of your early life?  
Like this, maybe?  
Thrift shop.  
Really.  
If you lived 100... 1,000 years...  
would you still have this?  
What would cause you to keep it?  
As a memento to your beginnings,  
Even if you didn't have  
The concept of beginnings?  
It would be gone, lost.  
No.  
I don't have artifacts.  
Keep that.  
Interesting.  
You could have lied about that.  
Don't talk about me while I'm gone.  
Is he serious?  
If he is, I'm sorry to say he's...  
oh, how could he have  
concealed that for ten years?  
Least he doesn't appear to be dangerous.  
What are you doing?  
Checkin' for a hidden mic.  
Candid camera.  
He's fabricating these wild stories.  
I've never seen him acting like this.  
Oh, it's crazy.  
All right, all right,  
as soon as you can, then.  
I love you, you know.  
I know.  
Since my first week at the office.  
And?  
I care very much about you,  
But now you know what  
you'd be getting into.  
Do you really think you're a caveman?  
Do you?  
Could you love me,  
Or don't you believe in that anymore?

I've gotten over it too many times.  
Fond of you...  
certainly attracted to you.  
That's it?  
I can work with that.  
If what I'm saying is true,  
You and any children will age.  
I won't.  
And one day I'll leave.  
You'll go back to your  
May-December romances.  
The simple fact is  
That I can't give you forever.  
How long's forever?  
Who ever really has it?  
My parents split up before I was born,  
And then my mom's next marriage lasted  
What, a whole three years?  
Then there's death,  
illness, acts of god...  
no one knows how long they have.  
Or how little.  
I love you.  
Take whatever you can get.  
Like ten years?  
Ah! Ha ha ha!  
( Yells )  
Uhn!  
Oh.  
Why did you do that?  
I wanted to see how fast you  
were. Check your reflexes.  
I don't have eyes in  
the back of my head,  
I can't hear a flea walking,  
I am not in any way superman.  
Well, I'm a second-degree black belt.  
Give it another thousand years.  
Well. I got it, I got it, I got it.  
Jesus.  
Smooth demonstration, Harry.  
Sit on it, Dan.  
I still have questions.  
I-I do too, John.

I mean, are we done with prehistory yet?  
Remember any of your original language?  
A little. One thing  
hasn't changed much...  
( wolf whistles )  
Did you ever do any cave Art?  
Do you know the rock Art at les eyzies?  
Mm-hmm.  
It was the work of a man named...  
giraud.  
He did a pretty good job.  
He would draw the animals  
That we hoped to find to eat.  
One day after a fruitless hunt,  
Our chief stomped his teeth out  
Because his magic had failed him.  
After that, someone had  
to chew his food for him.  
Finally, he  
got-- I suspect--  
An infected jaw,  
And he was abandoned.  
That's awful.  
You have to know what to kill.  
Is this why all your students  
Say your knowledge of history is...  
so amazing?  
No, that's mostly based on study.  
Remember, it's one man,  
one place at a time,  
My solitary viewpoint  
Of a world I knew almost nothing about.  
Well, let's talk about  
What you say you  
do know about--  
Historical times.  
Don't encourage him.  
Edith.  
Next few thousand years, it got warmer.  
A few thousand  
years--  
See, now, I know you're guessing.  
You can't get there from here, Art.  
Well then, pray, continue.

We hunted  
reindeer, mammoths--  
Bison, horses,  
The game retreated northward  
As the climate changed,  
You got the idea of growing food  
Rather than gathering it,  
Raising animals rather  
than hunting them.  
Am--Am I getting  
warm, here?  
I bet I am.  
Lakeside living becomes commonplace,  
Fishing,  
fowling-- Come on!  
John, this is out of any textbook.  
Even yours.  
You got most of it right.  
Eventually I headed to the east.  
I'd grown curious about the world.  
I'd gotten the hang of going it alone,  
Learning how to fit in when I wanted to.  
East.  
Towards the rising sun?  
Yes. I thought it might be warmer there.  
That's when I saw an ocean.  
The mediterranean, probably.  
It was around the  
beginning of the bronze age,  
So I followed the trade  
routes from the east,  
Copper, tin,  
Learning languages as I went.  
Everywhere, creation myths,  
New gods, so many, so different.  
I finally realized that it was...  
probably all hogwash,  
So I was sumerian for 2,000 years,  
Then finally babylonian under hammurabi.  
Great man.  
And I sailed as a phoenician for a time.  
See, moving on had been  
easier as a Hunter-Gatherer...  
difficult when villages emerged,

Tougher still in city states  
where authority was centralized.  
Strangers were suspect.  
It seemed as though I  
was always moving on.  
I learned some  
new tricks--  
Even faked my death a couple of times.  
I continued east  
To india,  
Luckily at the time of the Buddha.  
Luckily.  
Most extraordinary man I've ever known.  
He taught me things  
I'd never thought about before.  
You studied... with the Buddha?  
Until he died.  
He knew there was something  
different about me.  
I never told him.  
This is fascinating.  
I almost wish it were true.  
Yeah, if it was true,  
why are you telling us?  
I mean, we might leave here today,  
Go out there, tell everybody.  
It would vanish in disbelief.  
A story that goes around the room.  
No credibility.  
Even if I could make you believe me,  
In a month, you wouldn't.  
Some of you would call me a psychopath,  
Others would be angry  
at a pointless joke.  
Some of us are angry now.  
This--This  
was a bad idea.  
Uh, I love you all, and I do not want  
To put you through anything.  
Then why are you doing it?  
'Cause I wanted  
to say goodbye--  
As yourself.  
I think you've done that,

Whoever that self is.  
Easy, Edith.  
We're just grading his homework.  
I see what's going on. You're  
playing the good cop, Dan.  
That's fine. Just enjoy it.  
All right, I think this  
whole thing is just a crock!  
I should leave, but I'm gonna stay.  
You know why? 'Cause I wanna  
see what this is all about.  
So do I. What is this all about?  
Let's ask Dr. Freud,  
who's just arrived.  
Hey, will! Will!  
Art. Hey.  
John!  
I'm glad I caught you.  
Someone mentioned  
that you were leaving--  
Called you, told you that I've lost it.  
Glad you're here. Things are  
going in unexpected directions.  
Yes, so I hear.  
Hi.  
Are you hungry?  
Uh, thank you, no.  
Whiskey? Johnny walker green.  
Oh, yes.  
( Closes door )  
You look very familiar,  
my dear. Linda murphy.  
I'm in your tuesday  
psych 1 class, Dr. Gruber.  
Ah, well, this lesson may be something  
I could not have imagined.  
I regret being so  
obvious about this, John,  
But these people are all  
very concerned for you.  
Yes, I'm cutting out paper dinosaurs.  
I really wish I'd been  
here from the beginning.  
Me too.

Let me just say something right now.  
There's absolutely no  
way in the whole world  
For John to prove this story to us,  
Just like there's no way  
for us to disprove it.  
No matter how outrageous we think it is,  
No matter how highly trained  
some of us think we are,  
There's absolutely  
no way to disprove it.  
Our friend is either a  
caveman, a liar, or a nut.  
So while we're thinking about that,  
Why don't we just go with it?  
I mean, hell, who knows,  
He might jolt us into believing him,  
Or we might jolt him back to reality.  
Believing? Whose reality?  
So... you're a caveman.  
Yes. Uh...  
uh, I was a Cro-magnon, I think.  
You don't know if  
you're a caveman or not?  
No, I'm sure about that.  
A Cro-magnon, then.  
When did you first realize this?  
When the Cro-magnon  
was first identified,  
When anthropology gave them a name,  
I had mine.  
Well, please continue.  
I'm sure you must have more to say.  
Would you like me to lie on the couch?  
( Laughs ) as you wish.  
As a physician, I'm curious.  
In this enormous lifetime you describe,  
Have you ever been ill?  
Sure, as much as anyone.  
Seriously ill?  
Sometimes.  
Of what? Do you know?  
In prehistory, I can't tell you.  
Maybe pneumonia once or twice.

Last few hundred years,  
I've gotten over typhoid, yellow fever,  
Smallpox...I survived the black plague.  
Bubonic?  
Oh, that's terrible.  
More so than history describes.  
And smallpox-- But  
you're not scarred.  
I don't scar.  
No, John, that is not possible.  
Please, let's take John's story  
At face value and explore  
it from that perspective.  
If he doesn't scar, it's  
no stranger than the rest.  
John, would you please stop by my lab,  
Suffer a few tests from  
Your friendly neighborhood biologist.  
I'm leery of labs.  
Afraid I might go in and  
stay for a thousand years  
While cigarette smoking  
men try to figure me out.  
You don't think that I would betray you?  
Walls have ears.  
Medical tests might be a  
way of proving what you say.  
I don't wanna prove it.  
So you're telling us this,  
The yarn of the century,  
And you don't care if  
we believe it or not?  
I guess I shouldn't  
have expected you to.  
You're not as crazy as you think I am.  
Amen.  
I've always liked you.  
Why, thank you, dear.  
Now that's changing.  
Surely you don't believe this nonsense.  
I think we should remain  
courteous to someone  
Who we've known and trusted, Edith.  
Here you sit--You

can't break his story.  
All you can do is thumb your nose at it.  
Is that what you're doing, John?  
Are you laughing at us inside?  
I wish you didn't feel that way.  
What you're saying--  
It offends common sense.  
So does relativity,  
quantum mechanics--  
That's the way nature works.  
But your story doesn't fit  
into nature as we know it.  
But we know so little, Dan.  
We know so little.  
How many of you know  
Five geniuses in your field  
That you disagree with...  
one you would like to strangle?  
Strangle them all.  
It's bad enough we have to listen  
To Harry's idiotic jokes.  
Thank you very much, Edith.  
Maybe when I'm 110, I'll  
be as smart as you are.  
If you lived as long as John did,  
You still wouldn't grow up.  
Come on, guys. Take it easy.  
How often do we get to meet someone  
Who says he's a stone age man?  
Well, once is enough.  
Edith.  
All right. A guy  
with your mind--  
You'd have studied a great deal.  
I have ten degrees,  
including all of yours...  
except yours, will.  
That makes me feel a trifle lilliputian.  
That's over the span of 170 years.  
I got my biology degree  
at oxford in 1840,  
So I'm a little behind the times.  
The same in  
other areas--

I can't keep up with the  
new stuff that comes along.  
No one can.  
Not even in their specialty.  
So much for the myth  
Of the super-wise,  
all-knowing immortal.  
I see your point, John.  
No matter how long a man lives,  
He can't be in advance of his times.  
He can't know more than  
the best of the race knows,  
If that--I mean, when the  
world learned it was round,  
You learned it.  
It took some time.  
News traveled slowly  
Before communications were fancy.  
There were social obstacles,  
Preconceptions, screams from the church.  
Ten doctorates.  
That's impressive,  
John. Did you teach them?  
Some.  
You might have all done the same.  
Living 14,000 years  
didn't make me a genius.  
I just had time.  
Time.  
We can't see it, we can't hear it,  
We can't weigh it, we can't  
measure it in a laboratory.  
It's a subjective sense of becoming  
What we are instead of what  
we were a nanosecond ago,  
Becoming what we will  
be in another nanosecond.  
The hopis see time as a landscape,  
Existing before and behind us,  
And we move-- We  
move through it,  
Slice by slice.  
Clocks measure time.  
No, they measure themselves.

The objective referent  
of clock is another clock.  
How very interesting. What  
has it got to do with John?  
Oh, he--He  
might be a man  
Who lives outside of time as we know it.  
Yes, uh, well.  
People do go around armed these days.  
If I shot you, John--  
You're immortal?  
Would you survive this?  
I never said I was immortal, just old.  
I might die.  
And then you could wonder  
The rest of your incarcerated  
life what you shot.  
Well, uh, may I?  
( Sighs )  
Preferable to a gun.  
Will, that was a bit much.  
Ooh. Books.  
Doctorates.  
Yes, you have grown and changed.  
But there is always innate nature.  
Wouldn't you be more comfortable  
Squatting in the backyard?  
Sometimes I do, will.  
Look up at the stars.  
Wonder.  
And what did primitive man make of them?  
A great mystery.  
There were gods up there then.  
Shamans who knew about them told us.  
They still do.  
Have you ever wished it would end?  
No.  
Fourteen thousand years.  
Injuries, illness, disasters.  
You've survived them all.  
You're a very lucky man.  
( Knocks )  
Come in.  
John Oldman?

Yes.  
Charity now. We're here  
to pick up the furniture.  
It's all yours.  
Here, take this chair.  
I'm gonna go drink in the corner.  
You're, uh... you're donating it?  
Everything?  
I'll get more.  
Do you always travel this light?  
It's the only way to move.  
Oh, you--  
You've talked a good deal  
About your extraordinary  
amount of living.  
What do you think of dying, John?  
Do you fear death?  
Who wouldn't?  
How did primitive man regard death?  
Well, we had the practical concept.  
You know, we stopped,  
Fell down, didn't get up,  
Started to smell bad, come apart.  
Injuries we  
could understand--  
If someone's insides  
were all over the ground.  
Infections...  
they were, uh, mysterious.  
Aging...  
the biggest mystery of all.  
You realized you were different.  
Longer to realize how I was different,  
To find a way to synthesize  
My experience into a view of myself.  
At first, I thought everybody had  
Something wrong with them.  
They got old and they  
died, animals, too...  
but not me.  
( Coughs pointedly )  
Oh, forgive me, my dear.  
You live simply.  
I've owned castles, but why leave a lot

If you're always leaving?  
I have money.  
What, you get into  
at&t at 50 cents, John?  
As one grows older,  
The days, weeks, months  
go by more quickly.  
What does a day or a year  
Or a century mean to you?  
The birth-death cycle?  
Turbulence.  
I meet someone,  
Learn their name, say  
a word, they're gone.  
Others come like waves. Rise, fall.  
Ripples in a wheat  
field, blown by the wind.  
Do you ever get tired of it all?  
I get bored now and then.  
They keep making the same  
stupid mistakes over and over.  
Hey.  
Then you see yourself  
As separate from the rest of humanity.  
I didn't mean it that way.  
But of course...  
I am.  
( Chuckles )  
Are you comfortable  
knowing that you have lived  
While everyone you knew--  
Everyone you knew, John!--  
Has died?  
I've regretted losing people...  
often.  
Have you ever felt  
guilt about that--  
Something akin to survivor's guilt?  
In the strict psychological sense?  
I suppose I have.  
Yeah.  
But what can I do about it?  
Indeed.  
I'm sorry, ma'am.

Gentlemen,  
I'm--  
I'm gonna keep the couch.  
Thanks.  
Ladies? Will? Oh, no...  
you've got a heart condition.  
Don't grump about it.  
Hey, how about changing  
the subject, will?  
Enough with the--  
With the dying.  
But this is the flip  
side of his coin, Harry.  
I'm very curious to know his feelings.  
Would you prefer I asked  
him about his father?  
I thought you always started with  
"Tell me about your mother."  
Yes, but prehistory was  
strongly patriarchal.  
Surely you remember your father.  
I seem to remember a figure,  
Perhaps an older brother,  
a social father, maybe.  
Well, no matter.  
I can scarcely remember mine.  
Do you feel a vacancy  
In your life about that, John,  
Something you wish could be filled  
By a face, a voice, an image?  
Not at this late date.  
There must be someone--  
Probably many--  
That you valued intensely.  
Loved.  
You saw them  
age and die--  
A friend, a colleague, a wife.  
Certainly you've had wives and children?  
I'd move on.  
I had to move on.  
Making him history's biggest bigamist.  
( Chuckles softly )  
Have you ever in your life thought

"It should have been me"?  
Maybe.  
Yeah, Art has told me  
That some of your early fellows  
Feared you were stealing their lives.  
Have you thought that perhaps you were?  
Perhaps you are!  
There have always been  
legends of such a thing,  
A creature not quite human  
Taking not the blood,  
but the life force itself?  
My god, will.  
Unconsciously, perhaps,  
By some biological or psychic mechanism  
That we can only guess at.  
I'm not saying you would do  
such a thing deliberately.  
I'm not saying that you  
would even know how to...  
would you?  
But would such a thing be fair?  
So you believe me now?  
I'm only exploring what you have said.  
Whether I believe it or  
not is of no importance.  
We will die...  
you will live.  
Will you come to my funeral, John?  
Hey, will...  
you've gone too far.  
John didn't ask to be what he is.  
And we did not ask to hear about it.  
But if it were true,  
Is there one among us  
who would not feel envy,  
Even perhaps a touch of hatred?  
You told us of yourself, John.  
Can you imagine how we feel?  
I never thought of that.  
Since you may not die,  
While we most assuredly will...  
there must be a reason for that, no?  
Perhaps you are an expert.

Uh, that's it, Mr.  
Oldman. Have a good one.  
Thank you. You too.  
Or are you a vampire, John?  
Even an unknowing one.  
Do you stand alive and tall  
In a graveyard that you helped to fill?  
That's going too far.  
Bored, perhaps lonely,  
because your heart  
Cannot keep its treasures.  
Is that what you're doing?  
Have you led a wrongful life?  
Well, then, perhaps...  
it is time to die.  
Wait a minute, now.  
Look, I don't know what John is doing,  
But I sure as hell don't  
like what you're doing.  
Give me that gun or I'm  
gonna break your goddamn arm.  
You sound like our football coach, Dan.  
What do you think, John?  
A shot to the arm?  
Perhaps we could watch it heal.  
A bullet in  
the head--  
What exactly will happen?  
I have papers to correct.  
As much as I dislike that job,  
It'll be preferable to this.  
I leave you with it.  
Jesus Christ.  
What the hell was that all about?  
Where'd he get a gun?  
He had you on the ropes, John.  
Are you really so damn smart?  
It's not like will.  
Mary passed away yesterday.  
Who?  
His wife.  
She had, uh, pancreatic cancer.  
Will!  
I didn't know about mary.

I'm sorry. I can see how  
this might have hit you.  
Please, permit me to  
be infantile by myself.  
Will, please.  
( Starts car )  
What the hell were you thinking, Art?  
Oh, come on. Something had to be done.  
I have to say I agree.  
And he's our friend.  
Whatever else on earth is going on,  
He's our friend!  
You sure about that?  
Why are you being so hard on him?  
One of my favorite  
people has disappeared.  
Can you get alzheimer's at 35?  
Maybe I'm trying to wake him up.  
Maybe I'm too sad to cry.  
What I said about myself hurt him.  
He struck  
back expertly--  
That stuff about stealing life forces?  
I've always wondered about the reasons.  
Well, we still have an  
afternoon to kill, right?  
Charades?  
No. John?  
I have a charade, and  
it is just for you.  
Sandy, come here.  
Come on, come on, come on.  
Okay, this one's for you.  
Ready?  
( Grunts like ape )  
( Wolf whistles )  
( Grunting )  
Ooh!  
Uhn.  
My first wedding?  
There you go.  
There you go!  
Very good, and I bet at least one of us  
Is your direct descendent.

And I didn't even send a christmas card.  
Christmas card? What  
about a birthday card?  
And don't even get me  
started on the candles...  
with the blowing and the ( huffs )  
For years with the blowing.  
Yeah, all right. I tried.  
Well, uh, call me underdeveloped,  
But I'd like to hear more.  
Me too.  
More.  
You double-damn swear  
this isn't some cockamamie  
Science fiction story or...  
you're pulling on us?  
Next question.  
You--You--You  
realize  
This is an invitation  
To men in white suits with happy pills.  
Think about it--  
A mechanism allowing survival  
For thousands of years?  
Run out of room even faster.  
Then we'd have to go to mars as a colony  
As we expanded, as we'd have to.  
I'd like that.  
On a planet of another star.  
I envy you.  
Did you have a pet dinosaur?  
They were a little bit before my time.  
At least something is.  
No doubt you could give us  
a thousand details, John,  
Corroborating your story,  
From the magdalene to the Buddha to now.  
Ten thousand,  
And you could stay out of the books.  
Oh, it's getting chilly.  
Here, come over here. Join me.  
That, uh, raises an  
interesting question, John.  
Could there be others like you

Who escaped the aging  
process as you have?  
Representing something terrific  
We don't even know about biology.  
We're learning all the time.  
Yeah, but how would he know?  
He doesn't wear an I.D. Badge  
saying "yabba dabba doo."  
There was a man in the 1600s.  
Where were you in 1292 a.D.?  
Where were you a year ago on this date?  
Anyway, it was the  
And I had a hunch that he was...  
like me, so I told him.  
Ah. See, you said this was a first.  
I forgot.  
A crack in your story, John?  
A touch of senility.  
Anyway, he said yes,  
But from another time, another place.  
We talked for two days.  
It was all pretty convincing,  
But we couldn't be sure.  
We each confirmed what the other said,  
But how do we know if the confirmation  
Was genuine or an echo?  
I knew I was kosher,  
But I thought, "maybe  
he's playing a game on me."  
You know, a scholar  
of all we spoke about.  
He said he was inclined  
with the same reservation.  
Now, that's interesting.  
Just as we can never be sure,  
Even if we  
wanted to--  
I mean, if we were sure,  
You couldn't be sure of that.  
We parted, agreeing  
to keep in touch--  
Of course,  
we didn't--  
And 200 years later I thought I saw him

In a train station in brussels.  
Lost him in the crowd.  
Oh, what a shame.  
I--I mean, if  
it were true.  
Okay, here's one for you.  
What do you do in your spare time?  
( Laughs )  
Every 50 years or so,  
When I wanna get away from the rush,  
I go down to a primitive  
tribe in new guinea  
Where I'm worshipped as an immortal god,  
And they have a huge statue of me.  
It's a big party.  
Yeah, I've got a lot of pictures of it,  
But I've already packed  
them up. I'm sorry.  
I won't make the obvious nasty  
crack about more unwashed cavemen.  
Actually, bathing was the style  
Until the middle ages  
when the church told us  
It was sinful to wash away god's dirt,  
So people were sewn  
Into their underwear in october  
And they popped out in april.  
You said you just happened.  
I don't believe that.  
If your story's true,  
Why did god allow you to happen?  
That makes an interesting point.  
Are you religious, John?  
I don't follow a known religion. No.  
Ever.  
Long time ago I did,  
Like most people.  
Some just never get over it.  
Do you believe in god?  
As laplace said,  
"I have no need of that hypothesis."  
He may be around, though.  
He's everywhere. We just can't see him.  
Pfft. If this was the best I could do,

I'd be hiding, too.  
And creation...  
it's here--I'm not so  
sure it was created.  
What then?  
Maybe it's just accumulated,  
fields affecting fields.  
What about the source  
of the field energies?  
Wouldn't that imply a prime mover?  
I'd wonder about the  
source of the prime mover,  
Infinite regress, but that  
doesn't imply anything to me.  
Back to the mystery.  
It's a very old question,  
But there's no answer  
except in religious terms.  
If you have faith, it's answered.  
Did you ever meet any person  
from our religious history?  
A biblical figure?  
In a way.  
Who?  
We should skip this one.  
No, no, no skipping. Come on.  
Next question.  
No, come on!  
( Clamoring )  
Come on, spit it out!  
Good lord! You were one of them!  
This is going in a direction  
that I--I didn't expect.  
I hoped it wouldn't--  
We...call it a night.  
Come on! You were someone  
in religious history?  
Yes.  
In the bible?  
Yes.  
Someone we know?  
How could we not know  
someone in the bible?  
I mean somebody important.

You may think you know him,  
But it's mostly myth.  
The entire bible is  
mostly myth and allegory  
With maybe some basis  
in historical events.  
You were part of that history?  
Yes.  
Moses.  
Moses was based on misis, a syrian myth,  
And there are  
earlier versions--  
All found floating on water,  
The staff that changed to a snake,  
Waters that were parted so followers  
Could be led to freedom  
And even receive laws  
On stone or wooden tablets.  
One of the apostles.  
They weren't really apostles.  
They didn't do any real teaching.  
Peter the fisherman learned  
a little more about fishing.  
How do you know that?  
The mythical overlay is so enormous...  
and not good.  
The truth is so, so simple.  
The new testament in 100  
words or less. You ready?  
I don't think I wanna hear this.  
Harry, will you take me home?  
No, not right now. I  
do want to hear this.  
Sit down, Edith. You  
act like you believe him.  
It's sacrilege.  
How can it be sacrilege?  
He hasn't said anything yet.  
The new new testament is sacrilege.  
There are a dozen new new testaments,  
From hebrew to greek  
to latin to tyndale,  
All the way to king james,  
All revisionist,

And all called revealed truth.  
I mean a new new testament in 100 words.  
I can give you the ten  
commandments in ten words.  
Don't. Don't, don't, don't,  
Don't, don't, don't,  
don't, don't, don't.  
( Laughs ) Don't.  
The commandments are just modern  
updates of more ancient laws.  
Hammurabi's code.  
That's right, they  
weren't the first, right?  
Edith, I was raised on the torah...  
my wife, on the koran.  
My oldest son is an atheist.  
My youngest is a scientologist.  
My daughter is studying hinduism.  
I imagine that there is room there  
for a holy war in my living room,  
But we practice live and let live.  
Why don't you sit down.  
What is your preferred  
version of the bible?  
The King James, of course.  
It's the most modern, the  
work of great scholars.  
Modern is good.  
All right, John, hit  
us with the short form.  
Guy met the Buddha, liked what he heard,  
Thought about  
it for a while--  
Say 500 years, while he returned  
To the Mediterranean,  
Became an etruscan.  
Seeped into the roman empire.  
He didn't like  
what they became--  
A giant killing machine.  
He went to the near east thinking,  
"Why not pass the Buddha's  
teachings on in a modern form."  
So he tried.

One dissident against rome?  
Rome won.  
The rest is history.  
Well, sort of. Lot of  
fairy tales mixed in.  
I knew it.  
He's saying he was Christ.  
Oh, no. That's the medal  
They pinned on Jesus  
to fulfill prophecy.  
The crucifixion.  
He blocked the pain  
as he had learned to do  
In tibet and india.  
He also learned to  
slow his body processes  
Down to the point where  
they were undetectable.  
They thought he was dead.  
So his followers pulled him  
From the cross, placed him in a cave...  
his body normalized as  
he had trained it to...  
he attempted to go away undetected,  
But some devotees were standing watch.  
Tried to explain.  
They were ecstatic.  
Thus, I was resurrected,  
And I ascended to central europe  
To get away as far as possible.  
You don't mean a word of this, John.  
My god, why are you doing this?  
Let me see your wrists.  
I don't scar.  
Besides, they tied me...  
but nails and blood make  
better religious Art.  
( Laughs ) all the  
speculations about Jesus.  
He was black, he was asian,  
He was a blue-eyed  
Aryan with a golden beard  
And hair straight out  
of vidal sassoon's,

He was a benevolent alien,  
he never existed at all.  
Now he's a caveman.  
The Christ figure goes all  
the way back to Krishna--  
Hercules, of course.  
Hercules?  
Born of a virgin, Alcmene.  
A god for a father, Zeus.  
The only begotten.  
The savior--  
The greek? Soter.  
The good shepherd, the prince of peace,  
Bringing gentle persuasion  
and divine wisdom.  
He died, joined his father on olympus  
A thousand years before gethsemane.  
How can you compare pagan  
mythology to the true word?  
Pretty damn closely, I'd say.  
The early Christian leaders,  
They threw away hebrew manuscripts  
And borrowed from pagan  
sources all over the place.  
Do you realize how...  
inconsiderately you're  
treating my feelings?  
About as inconsiderately  
as we're treating John's.  
Well, he doesn't  
believe what he's saying!  
Do you believe literally  
everything in the bible, Edith?  
Yes!  
Before you say it,  
I know it's undergone a lot of changes,  
But god has spoken through man  
To make his word clearer.  
He couldn't get it right the first time?  
We're imperfect! He had to  
work to make us understand.  
He couldn't get us right  
the first time, Edith?  
Taken alone, the

philosophical teachings of Jesus  
Are buddhism with  
a hebrew accent--  
Kindness, tolerance, brotherhood, love,  
A ruthless realism acknowledging  
That life is as it is here  
on earth, here and now.  
The kingdom of god, meaning goodness,  
Is right here, where it should be.  
"I am what I am becoming."  
That's what the Buddha brought in.  
And that's what I taught.  
But a talking snake  
make a lady eat an apple,  
So we're screwed.  
Heaven and hell were peddled  
So priests could rule  
through seduction and terror,  
Save our souls that we never  
lost in the first place.  
I threw a clean pass...  
they ran it out of the ballpark.  
This is blasphemy.  
It's horrible! Who else were you?  
Solomon, elvis, jack the ripper?  
It's been said that Buddha and Jesus  
Would laugh or cry if they'd known  
What was done in their name.  
And if there is a creator,  
He'd probably feel the same way.  
I see ceremony, ritual, processions,  
Genuflecting, moaning, intoning,  
Venerating cookies and wine,  
And I think...  
it's not what I had in mind.  
But that's vatican flapdoodle.  
It doesn't have a thing to do with god.  
As you said, John,  
everywhere, religions...  
from exalting life to  
purging joy as a sin.  
Rome does it as grand opera.  
A simple path to goodness needs  
A supernatural roadmap.

Supernatural...

a stupid word, I mean...

anything that happens,

happens within nature,

Whether we believe in it or not.

Like a 14,000-year-old

caveman.

( Car approaching )

I--I--I drove

for a while,

And then I sat for a while.

I'm so ashamed.

( Shivering ) and I'm freezing.

Well, come inside.

I still don't believe you, of course.

You need help.

Everybody needs help.

Yes, well, some more than others.

From the Buddha to the cross,

I have always imagined

both as entirely mythic--

But I would like to hear more.

May I lie on the couch for a moment?

I'm not as young as I used to be.

Ohh!

( Laughs )

So, you were Jesus.

Well, perhaps somebody had to

be, for better or for worse.

The jury is still out.

When did you begin to

believe you were Jesus?

When did you begin to believe

you were a psychiatrist?

Since I graduated harvard medical school

And finished my residency,

I've had that feeling.

Oh, I sometimes dream about it.

Have you acted upon this belief?

I had a private practice for a while,

And then I taught.

Nothing unusual--

Oh, until one day, I met a caveman

Who thought he was Jesus.

Do you find that unusual?  
Very. I would stake my reputation  
He as sane as I am,  
So why does he persist in such a story?  
There must be a reason, though.  
Unless I imagined it all?  
Is that possible?  
I think you're as sane as he is.  
Oh, god, I--  
( Laughs ) no.  
Did you ever find it  
prudent to worship yourself  
Rather than be thought a heretic?  
That would be something.  
Other times, christianity  
was considered heresy.  
I had to pretend other faiths.  
And what does Jesus have  
to say to those present  
Who find it difficult to believe in him?  
Believe in what he tried to teach,  
Without rigmarole.  
Piety is not what the  
lessons bring to people.  
It's the mistake they  
bring to the lessons.  
Well, it's getting to be night.  
I still have stuff to carry  
And a long drive.  
I'll help.  
John, do you have a  
destination in mind?  
Never mind.  
I won't ask.  
Thank you.  
Anyone mentally ill can imagine  
A fantastic background--  
Even an entire life--  
And sincerely believe it.  
The man who thinks he is napoleon  
Does believe it.  
His true identity has taken a backseat  
To his delusion and the need for it.  
If that's the case with John,

There is a grave disorder.  
Organized brilliantly.  
He's got an answer for everything.  
It might involve  
rejection of his father,  
Of his entire early past,  
Replaced by this fantasy.  
He says he can't remember his father.  
Precisely why?  
You said he was sane.  
Did I?  
Do you think that perhaps our caveman  
Has a monkey on his back?  
Drugs?  
No, no, no, no.  
I've done a lot of consulting  
work with narcotics.  
I've seen people  
tripping, strung out--  
Whatever's up with John, it isn't that.  
I've looked  
for signs--None.  
Could cavemen really talk?  
We think that language  
came into existence  
The structure of stone age culture  
Is evidence of the  
ability to communicate--  
Verbally.  
( Wolf whistles; clicks )  
Oh, shut up.  
Maybe it'd be easier if I were.  
Crazy?  
No.  
( Coyote howls )  
That is fascinating, isn't it,  
A brave attempt to teach  
buddhism in the west.  
It's no wonder he failed.  
We're not ready for it.  
You're talking  
as if you believed him.  
Well, it is possible, isn't it?  
I mean, anything is possible.

Look, we have two simple choices.  
We can get all bent out of shape  
Intellectualizing or  
bench-pressing logic,  
Or we can simply relax and enjoy it.  
I can listen critically,  
But I don't have to make  
up my mind about anything.  
But you think you do?  
Well, unfortunately, there's  
no authorities on prehistory,  
So we couldn't stop him there.  
There are experts on the bible.  
Dream on.  
Yeah, thus the lost years of Jesus.  
He didn't exist until John put on a hat.  
I don't believe in angels and the  
nativity and the star in the east,  
But there are stories about  
the childhood of Jesus.  
History hates a vacuum.  
Improvisation, some of it very sincere,  
Fills the gaps.  
It would have been easy  
To falsify a  
past back then--  
A few words, credulity--  
Time would do the rest.  
Now you're talking as  
if you believed him.  
Well, look at the  
popular myths surrounding  
The Kennedy assassination  
in a few short years--  
You had, uh,  
conspiracy, Mafia, CIA--  
That's a mystique that'll never go away.  
It's always been a small step  
from a fallen leader to a god.  
I don't think anybody  
will deify Kennedy.  
We're more sophisticated than that.  
We are?  
We are.

Well, you're finally fulfilling  
One prophecy about the millennium, John.  
What's that?  
Here you are again.  
You like the fire, John.  
Everywhere I've lived,  
I've had a fireplace.  
Childhood fixation, I guess.  
Helps me to feel secure.  
There are predators out there.  
One thing I didn't pack...  
I thought I might need it.  
( Plays beethoven's 7th symphony )  
Wouldn't sacre du printemps  
be more appropriate?  
What?  
You've got...  
four men of science  
completely baffled, my friend.  
We--We don't know  
what to make of you.  
Did you know voltaire  
was the first to suggest  
That the universe was created  
by a gigantic explosion?  
I think paul would agree.  
And then goethe was the first to suggest  
That spiral nebulae were  
swirling masses of stars.  
We now call them galaxies.  
It's kind of funny how  
often new concepts of science  
Find their first tentative  
forms of expression in the arts.  
So did beethoven do physics on the side?  
He spent most of his  
time lying on the floor  
In front of his legless piano  
Surrounded by orange  
peels and apple cores.  
Now we're on the floor  
listening to beethoven.  
Full circle.  
Did you have, um...

any religious beliefs,  
Or did you give it much thought?  
You can't get there with thought.  
You have faith?  
In a lot of things.  
Do you have faith in  
the future of the race?  
I've seen species come and go.  
Depends on their balance  
with the environment.  
We've made a mess of it.  
There's still time,  
If we use it well.  
Christianity has been a worldwide belief  
For 2,000 years.  
How long did the egyptians worship isis  
Or the sumerians ishtar?  
In india, sacred cows wandered freely  
As reincarnated souls.  
In a thousand years,  
they'll be barbecued  
And their souls will be in squirrels.  
You weren't Jesus!  
Oh, Edith.  
( Clears throat ) if  
it rains... it won't.  
How do you know that?  
I don't smell it.  
Were you...  
I guess... a medicine man?  
I was a shaman a few times.  
I revealed some truths  
to eat a little better.  
You think that's all  
religion is about...  
selling hope and survival?  
The old testament sells fear and guilt.  
The new testament is  
a good code of ethics,  
Put into my mouth by  
poets and philosophers  
That are much smarter than I am.  
The message is never practiced.  
Fairy tales build churches.

What about the name "Jesus"?

Did you pull that out of a hat?

I called myself John.

I almost always do.

As tales of the resurrection spread,  
The name was confused  
with the hebrew "yochanan,"  
Meaning "god is gracious."  
My stay on earth was seen  
As divine proof of immortality.  
That led to "god is salvation"  
Or hebrew "yahshua,"  
Which in translation  
became my proper name,  
Changing to late greek, "iesous,"  
Then to late latin, "iesus,"  
And finally medieval latin, "Jesus,"  
And it was a wonder  
to watch it all happen.  
Then you didn't claim  
to be the son of god?  
Began as a schoolhouse  
and ended as a temple.  
I said I had a master that  
was greater than myself.  
I never said he was my father.  
I wanted to teach what I learned.  
I never claimed to be king of the jews,  
I never walked on water,  
I never raised the dead.  
I never spoke of divine  
except in the sense  
Of human goodness on earth.  
No wise men came from the  
east to worship at a manger.  
I did do a little healing  
With some eastern medicine I'd learned.  
That's it.  
The three wise men began as a myth  
About the birth of the Buddha.  
John, I should be home,  
uh, kissing my wife.  
We're all here, trapped by your story...  
hoping for a...revolution? I don't know.

Are there any, uh...  
more revelations for us?  
It's just like old times.  
You weren't Jesus.  
Quote the sermon on the mount.  
Which one?  
Darby, King James,  
New American Standard?  
Do you know them all?  
No one knows the one, not even me.  
I...  
I did some teaching on a hill one day.  
Not that many people stayed.  
But you...  
biblical Jesus said,  
"Who do you think I am?"  
He gave them a choice.  
I'm giving you one.  
Were you?  
If I said no, could you ever be sure?  
( Sobs )  
Turn that off.  
Please.  
This has gone far enough.  
It's gone much too far.  
These people are very upset.  
I don't believe you're mad,  
But what you're saying is not true.  
That leaves only one explanation.  
The time has come when you must admit  
This is a hoax...  
a lie.  
Isn't that true, John?  
If you don't drop  
this now-- If you can--  
I'll be convinced  
That you need a great deal of attention.  
I can have you committed  
for observation.  
You know that.  
I ask  
you now--  
I demand  
it--

That you tell these people the truth.  
Give them closure.  
It's time, John.  
Please.  
End of the line. Everybody off.  
What?!  
It was a story.  
It was all a story.  
( Sobs )  
Good god!  
Another fairy tale?  
All of it?  
But what--  
What in the name of heaven...  
John, you had us wondering  
whether you were sane or not,  
And it's just a story!  
Where'd you come off with such  
a half-baked, asinine idea?  
At least you're relieved I'm not a nut.  
I'd prefer you were!  
You gave me the idea.  
All of you.  
Come again?  
Edith saw my fake Van Gogh.  
You could have just told me.  
You commented that I never age.  
You gave me the book on early man.  
Dan, you spotted the burin  
And you said, "if stones could speak."  
I knew it.  
I got the notion, I ran it past you  
To check your reactions,  
and I took it too far.  
Too far?  
Check my reaction.  
You asked if I was a figure  
from religious history,  
If there were others like me,  
If I'd created future identities.  
We were chasing our  
tails around the maypole,  
Enjoying the mystery,  
the analytical stretch.

You were playing my game!  
I was playing yours.  
Oh, man, you know, you  
had us going, right?  
You were good, man.  
You know those chinese boxes,  
One inside the other inside  
the other inside the other--  
I feel like I'm in the last box.  
You son of a...  
bitch!  
How could you do this to us?  
I was worried about you.  
I know, I was tempted  
to cop out many times,  
But I couldn't resist  
seeing whether or not  
You could refute what I was saying.  
I had the  
perfect audience--  
Anthropologist, archaeologist,  
Christian literalist...  
a psychologist.  
Okay, I've had enough of this.  
I'm outta here. You  
wanna come? Let's go.  
So, John.  
Are you gonna write the story?  
If I do, I'll send you copies.  
Don't bother with mine, okay?  
You are absolutely certifiable.  
I don't know you!  
It was nice seeing  
you again, Dr. Oldman.  
Your name's a pun, isn't it?  
Old man?  
Did that help you with your story?  
Linda!  
Bye.  
Well, Art was half right.  
( Laughs )  
Which half?  
Well, at least I don't  
have to throw away half

Of what I know about biology.  
Which half?  
( Chuckles )  
It's a beautiful idea,  
So rich, so full of possibilities.  
Perhaps you should write  
a paper on it, doctor.  
Maybe I will.  
I'll interview you in the rubber room  
For further details.  
You may still need help, my friend.  
My ass.  
I thought it sounded pretty good.  
They believe you because they have to.  
But the one thing that I know about you  
Is that you would never use people  
Or abuse their goodwill and intelligence  
Like they think you've  
just done to them.  
Psych 101?  
No, it's woman,  
one-on-one.  
So you're a pretty fast liar, Mr. Ugg,  
But I wanna know--  
What's your real name?  
Believe it or not, the  
sound was always John.  
Why'd you cave to Gruber?  
What happened was enough.  
Just--Just  
needed to stop.  
I shouldn't have expected it to work.  
Fourteen thousand years old.  
I bet that's a lot of women.  
Are we counting?  
Maybe.  
Well, I'm taking Edith home.  
Sandy?  
I'm gonna stay.  
Are you sorry for some  
of those things you said?  
I'm sorry I said them.  
Well.  
Like a good Christian,

I...oh, John.  
Oh! Well.  
You did a terrible thing,  
But we're all so  
thankful you're all right.  
Even Art--He just hates  
things he can't understand.  
You're a sadist, John,  
But I admit I got a kick out of  
Chasing my tail around your maypole...  
even if that is all I caught.  
Good luck to you.  
Wish you the best. Thank you.  
Ready?  
- Later on.  
- Okay, good night.  
Mm-hmm.  
Mmm.  
I don't know, man.  
Something about this...  
something about you, John.  
The more I think about it,  
The more I'm no longer  
in that chinese box.  
( Inhaling deeply )  
I sense...space.  
A kinda latitude of what  
we happily call reality,  
In which, as everybody keeps saying...  
anything's possible.  
Yes. No, no. No, no.  
No--No  
more words.  
I'm gonna go home,  
And I'm gonna watch star trek  
For a dose of sanity.  
Good luck to you, man,  
Wherever this may lead you.  
You drop me a line sometime.  
Let me know how you're making out.  
I will.  
Mm. Mwah.  
So, John Oldman.  
What other pun names have you used?

Lots.  
John Paley for John Paleolithic,  
John Savage--  
Got really crazy about 60 years ago.  
When I was teaching at harvard,  
I was John Thomas Partee.  
John T. Partee--  
Boston tea party--  
I get it.  
Yeah, I know.  
Wait, wait, wait.  
Boston?  
J-John Partee?  
You did not teach chemistry!  
I do not believe you!  
Your mother's name was Nola.  
No. Yeah.  
No.  
Yes, Nola.  
( Crying ) my mother!  
I reject this!  
My--My--My  
dog's name.  
We had him before I was born.  
Woofie.  
Woof, woof, woofie...  
Gruber. She remarried?  
She said you abandoned us.  
Sorry, I had to move on.  
You know that. I left enough.  
I left enough. I'm cold.  
Chilly willy, always cold.  
Never could stand the cold.  
( Sobs ) wait, you--  
You had a beard.  
Yeah, you used to tug on it  
To see if it was real.  
Agh! Will!  
God.  
( Gruber gasps )  
Come on, Will.  
Will.  
Come on, buddy.  
( Siren blaring )

You'll stay in touch, Dr. Oldman.  
In case there are any questions.  
I'll be back for the funeral.  
Miss.

You never saw a grown child die.  
No.

Chantelle duncan: I've seen rivers rise  
seen mountains fall  
seen endless vistas coming to an end  
I've seen stars collide  
heard oceans roar  
I know what it means  
to lose your only friend  
nothing lasts forever  
that's what I've always heard  
all things good must esnd  
you know it's true  
nothing lasts forever  
but maybe some things do  
forever is the way I feel for you  
forever is the way I feel for you  
I've seen men take  
the world into their hands  
and change it, mold it,  
to their point of view  
I've felt the earth shake  
seen men take a stand  
and fight when it's  
the one thing left to do  
nothing lasts forever  
that's what I've always heard  
all things good must end  
you know it's true  
nothing lasts forever  
but maybe some things do  
forever is the way I feel for you  
forever is the way I feel for you  
nothing lasts forever  
that's what I've always heard  
all things good must end  
you know it's true  
nothing lasts forever  
but maybe some things do  
forever is the way I feel for you

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