

Libby Hague's

# **martian odyssey #20**



## Marianne's story: thread 20

Dear Baby Bee - **AMAZING!** She helped us. She brought us to their camp and fed us . We slept. When I woke up we were sitting in the dirt in front of a run down building. There was an explosion and then another miracle! we were sitting in the middle of an open window covered with dust and surrounded by the rubble of a collapsed wall. All the girls were watching. They started to laugh. They discovered “ funny”. It was a new emotion. It felt cosmic. It changed everything!

“He laughed to free his mind  
from his mind's bondage.”

James Joyce, Ulysses, pg. 204,  
Shakespeare + Co., Paris, 1922

see also Freud, “Jokes and their Relation to the  
Unconscious” (1905) for Freud's similar  
arguments.



“Nothing  
can stand the assault of laughter.”

Mark Twain, pg. 20 quoted in Stephen Vizinczey's  
foreword to Twain's autobiography

I don't suffer from  
insanity. I enjoy  
every minute of it.

“ ...and what were swords  
Were turned to doves, a swirl of doves,  
And waltzing out of it, in oyster silk,  
Running her tongue around her strawberry lips  
While repositioning a spaghetti shoulder strap,  
The Queen of Love, Our Lady Aphrodite,  
Touching the massive Greek aside with one  
Pink fingertip... “

Christopher Logue, War Music, Faber and Faber Ltd., pg.124

was also inspired to tell a **joke**.





“How can a mortal  
make God smile?”

...Tell Him his plans...”





martian odyssey: flying, stone lithography with digital output, 20 x 78 in.



**Arthur Koestler**, when considering the connection between humour and art, concluded that the logical patterns of the creative process are the same in humour, art and science: they reflect the discovery of hidden similarities. “The creative act, by connecting previously unrelated dimensions of experience...is a liberation - the defeat of habit by originality. “ ( Act of Creation (1964), p. 96) This often requires seeing a “situation or an idea in two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference“ (ibid. pg. 35). The punchline or surprise is where the two intersect.

The humorous and philosophical/poetic readings of a work can be very close, the latter becoming accessible when humour awakens a sympathetic vibration that cuts through our cynical or sceptical selves.

Because laughter can break the hammer hold of a fixed idea, it has the potential to change us. That’s why I made laughter the pivot point of the MO series - I imagined that when everyone laughed at the same joke they were able to see what they had in common. They could ask why struggle against someone we suddenly like? The best joke I thought would be slapstick - a visual joke that everyone who saw would get. No language issues. The best one I could come up with a scene in a Buster Keaton film where the house falls over but he stands unhurt because a window is open and the house falls around him.

How many installation artists does it take to change a lightbulb?  
I don’t know. I had to leave after five hours.



How do you change a woman’s mind?  
Blow in her ear.

also interesting to read is Bergson, *Laughter: an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, 1911 where the philosopher suggests laughter prevents personal and social rigidity.





We are born naked,  
wet and hungry.  
Then things get  
worse



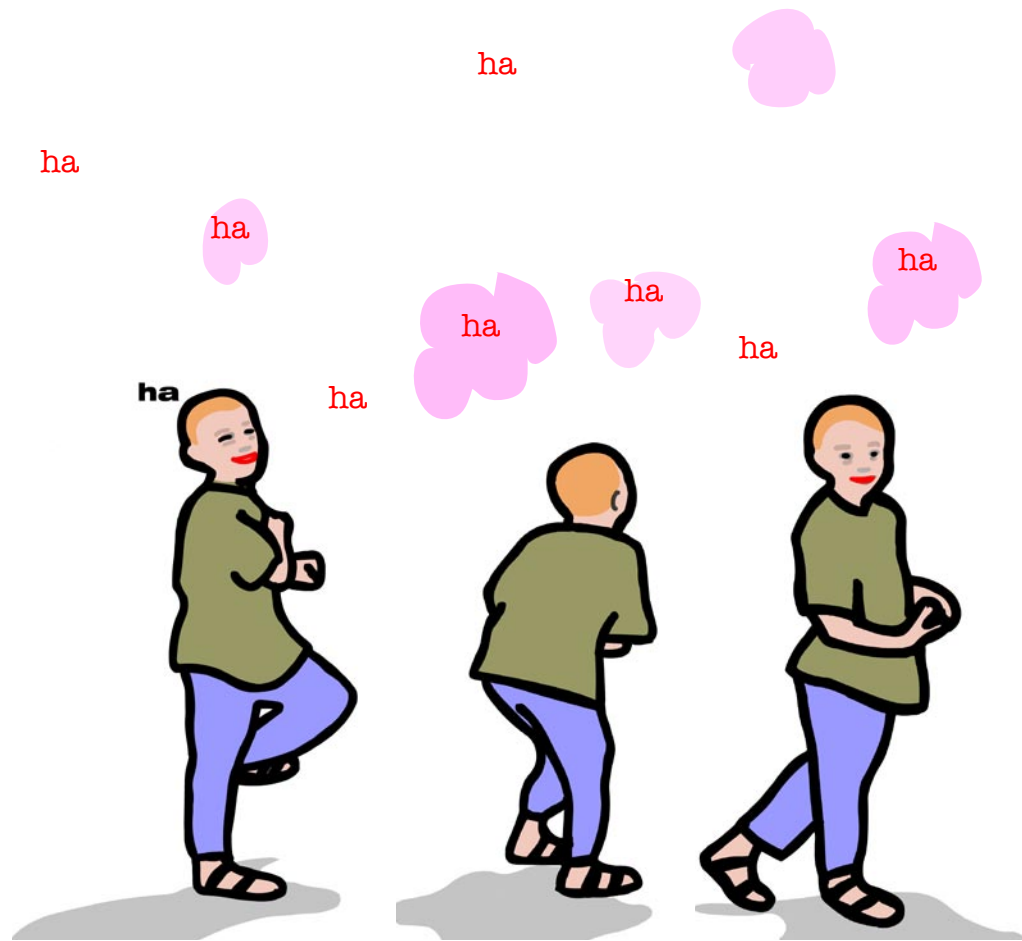
foreground characters from the Netherlands' Theatre Gajes performance  
of Alice in Wonderland in Nathan Philips Square, Toronto, 2008

The Washington Post published the winning submissions to its yearly contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternate meanings for common word. And the winners are!

1. **Coffee** , n. The person upon whom one coughs.
2. **Flabbergasted** , adj. Appalled by discovering how much weight one has gained.
3. **Abdicate** , v. To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
4. **Esplanade** , v. To attempt an explanation while drunk.
5. **Willy-nilly** , adj. Impotent.
6. **Negligent** , adj. Absentmindedly answering the door when wearing only a nightgown.
7. **Lymph** , v. To walk with a lisp.
8. **Gargoyle** , n. Olive-flavored mouthwash.
9. **Flatulence** , n. Emergency vehicle that picks up someone who has been run over by a steamroller.
10. **Balderdash** , n. A rapidly receding hairline.
11. **Testicle** , n. A humorous question on an exam.
12. **Rectitude** , n. The formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists.
13. **Pokemon** , n. A Rastafarian proctologist.
14. **Oyster** , n. A person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms.
15. **Frisbeetarianism** , n. The belief that, after death, the soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.
16. **Circumvent** , n. An opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men.







### Thanks to:

Phil Anisman  
 my parents  
 \*Djivan Gasparyan for his song title  
 Sally McKay, # 6, 8, 10, 14, 15,19, 26,  
 27, 28, 30, 19, 21,  
 Harry Glasbeek # 5  
 Smadar Peretz # 23, 24  
 Sasha Pierce # 7

and the many authors quoted in these books

### Brief project description:

This web /pdf edition of 30 booklets, connect and complicate the individual artworks in the Martian Odyssey series previously exhibited at Loop in Toronto. These booklets are intended to serve as a basis for comments on the artwork and their themes. If you want to have your comments considered for a web edition you can respond by sending an email to [libbylibby@sympatico.ca](mailto:libbylibby@sympatico.ca) with a subject heading of Martian Odyssey. I will be regularly updating the pdf's.

### Martian Odyssey titles:

1. luck
2. riddles
3. the animals
4. translation
5. corps de ballet
6. The Girls
7. weave
8. net
9. slow motion
10. Big Bang
11. alouette
12. the wrong boat
13. the disaster
14. RAGE
15. white arms
16. plague
17. amnesia
18. ah..
19. string theory
20. laughter
21. dreams
22. Rules
23. justice
24. forgiveness
25. day after peace
26. un-rebuilding
27. blue-sky-blue
28. play again
29. stars are wide
30. sing



**Libby Hague** is a printmaker + installation artist exploring themes of disaster, rescue and hope. [full cv](#)

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