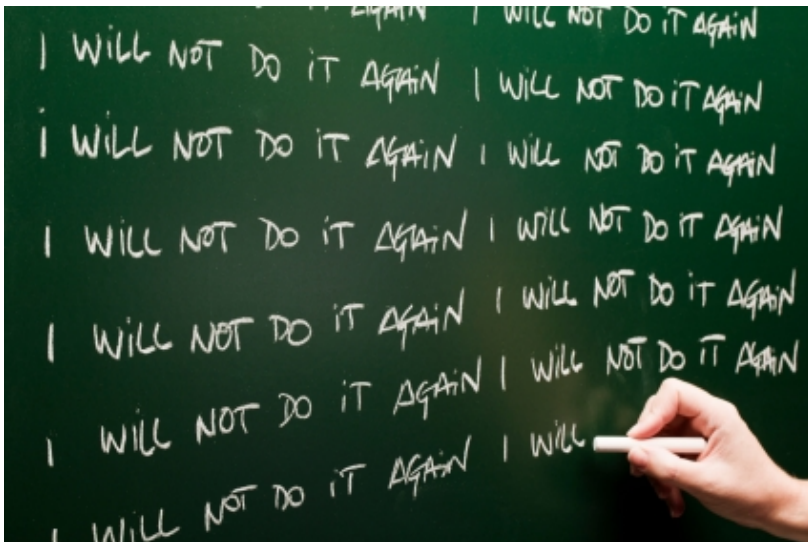


# Please Stand By



The Management Wishes To apologize for the Writer's abject failure to produce words of withering wit. The beatings will continue &c.



So much shame

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# The Dog Ate It



That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Or perhaps this happened again.

Or maybe this happened.



Make it stop.

Oh well. Could be worse...



Could be raining.

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# The Flying Fickle Finger of Fate



The hand of Fate has bony fingers. Cold, too. When it pokes, The Flying Fickle Finger of Fate will not be ignored. Attention must be paid. Nobody puts Fate in the corner, try though we may.

Fate's touch is a harbinger, a moment of reckoning. It could represent an awakening to an essential truth about ourselves. The presence of true love. A recognition of one's duty and obligation to someone/thing else. A growing awareness of our minuscule place in the larger order of things. A glimpse of life's abundant potential or a reminder of fragile mortality. Messages derived from the random associations generated by the gnarly digit's touch drive inspiration and striving. Its touch can serve as a welcome reminder of our vitality, no matter the shiver down the spine.

But comes that moment when the bony digit lays its frosty touch on your shoulder yet again, and all you can say is, "Fk, dude, could you just give it a rest?"

Alas, no, as the FFFoF has no intention, no agency, no recognition of any of us as an anything. It is random and impersonal, and any meaning we may derive is our own doing. There is no task from which it could rest. The Finger, c'est moi, c'est tu, c'est notre. We can no more ignore it than we can ignore ourselves.

Still, I am compelled to exclaim: "Fk, dude, give it a rest already."

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# It's Always Something. Usually.



Last week left us with a thought experiment, predicated on the proposition that, given two pieces of looming news, only one can possibly turn out well.<fn>For me, that qualified as a burst of optimism.</fn>

Well imagine my surprise. The verdict on The Cancer is negative; the verdict on Daughter's acceptance to first-pick U is positive. We have defied the odds. I will live long enough to be bankrupted by my childrens' higher education expenses. And my allegedly data-based pessimism has taken yet another blow, maybe even enough to convert me into one of the smiling optimists of the world.

Ah, pshaw. Go on.

In the aftermath of all the shoes dropping, each in their preferred place, this weekend was an orgy of indolence and self-indulgence. Yeah, ok, I completed taxes and did some real work<fn>My Calvinist streak never far from the surface.</fn>, but we blew off and went to the movies and down to the shore and out to dinner and drank beer in the afternoon and took naps and let the dog hang her head out the car window.

I also stalked an egret for a short conversation, getting within about five feet of this fella.



He didn't have much to say, but he made his words count.

This was part of a jaunt to St Marks Wildlife Refuge, a piece of paradise on this planet. Proof...



That post-bridge, thanks Clarence, George Bailey feeling is getting all up amongst me. Why, I'm downright ungrumpy.

Also, too...I may actually be able to play a guitar for the first time in about 5 months. Not quite, but the wrist seems to be trying to get better. And the guitar anxiety dreams<fn>Picture naked for a final exam, but more fraught.</fn> are kicking in with a vengeance. Dare I express optimism on this score? Dare I not?

Your regularly scheduled dyspepticism will resume next week. Or not. No promises. Maybe I'll be Captain Fucking Cheerful from now on.

Bwahahahahahahahaha.