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BEST WISHES, OR SORTES BUSHIANAE

Dennis Finnell

Some of us wish we were smarter and better looking and rich and were younger.

Here few birds mornings sing. Mostly mockingbirds, starlings.

Do starlings sing? Maybe they're songbirds—goldfinches? Mandelstam's psychic singer.

Do birds wish they were younger, rich, stronger? To fly to the farthest of Saturn's rings?

Learn from goldfinches. Don't worry about *not*.

Think *is*. We can't be more than the world permits. We're earthlings.

What will happen to us? Who will fill the potholes?

Who will defend us against our many enemies? Will we be rich enough to buy
the stuff we need?

How high will the oceans rise? Will each of us shrivel into islands? Will each
have his own high spot?

Whose thumbs will plug the levees?

To find out some people throw grass in the air. For example, baseball players.

Others butcher goats and read their intestines. Some buy Chevys.

Some have used chickens or espy the way crows fly.

We know friends who've paid fortune tellers.

We love surfaces. Our theory: Dig things up, *voilà* becomes *voici*.

Is the inverse true? In days gone by those lucky bastards who could read

Opened a revered papyrus at random to see the future.

Nowadays the sayings

Of the President of the United States shall help us ready

Tomorrow. An English child asked him, "What is the White House like?"

He said, "It is white." Some people think that means

Our future is Caucasian. Others say it strikes

Against global warming—it's a new ice age, totally white. Or we'll be pure,

Living in paradise seeing God's face, or if it's a Muslim world the muezzin at the mic

Will sing perpetual mourning.

The new world is more than ice and white people, more than paradise mourning.
In this future we'll run out of national debt.
Economists worry we won't have bills. Debt is value. Morning
Is evening. In the red is in the black. We'll just glance at the headlines
To get a flavor of what's moving because our assistants
Read the (*whole*) news that very morning.
They'll brief us, then we can sound like we haven't made mistakes
Even though we're confident we have, although we haven't.

We will have no deficit unless we hit the trifecta.
We will trust God speaks through us and teach children to read so that
He or her will pass a literacy test. The first shall be first.
Oh no, we're not going to have any casualties in any war, not even casual ones.
Ticket counters will fly out of airports so many enemies of the Homeland
Shall be slain. Speaking of slaughter, what will quench our thirst
Will be the acceptable ratio of fatal shootings to non-fatal.
We will have done something about it,
All because "It is white," this seeming tautology, this completely total,
Apparent *reductio ad absurdum*. Black shall be white, and white shall be white.

We'll give money to rich people. The last shall be last.
We shall continue to think we cannot win it. Tomorrow they will be wrong.
Finally. Tomorrow we will find the weapons, albeit teeth and fingernails of the past.

Nevertheless we will suffer a great sadness. The White House track is small.
We can't run more, can't get stronger.
It shall be one of our saddest things about being President.
We won't spend a lot of time thinking about why we do things, not any longer.
We won't be very analytical. It would set a bad precedent.
We won't think everything to death. We will master the comedy of inductive reasoning:
Those weapons have got to be somewhere, check every spider hole and pup tent.

Next slide please. It shows our number one priority: We won't be resting
Until we find Osama. We will all be very tired but right.
The slide show shall go on without us, running one big loop.
This foreign policy stuff will be a little frustrating. It will not be white

Enough. Next slide please: Mission Accomplished.

We promise we will listen to what's been said here even though we won't be here, right?

Wink wink. It will be one of our strengths. *Ipsa facto*, a wish

To involve Saddam in the war on terror because he has been willing to terrorize himself.

Saddam shall strike terror in himself. We shall aid him.

Who else shall we aid? The rich. We shall be compassionate.

We shall pass an energy bill encouraging consumption.

Some people might think that's insane, that the future will be us thumbless peons

Waiting in long lines for gas but remember debt is in the black,

Our empty tank is another's full tank.

We shall stare the future in his face and say, "Bring them on,"

All those tomorrow's camouflaged as roadside bombs, but don't you worry now—

We'll be out of gas. The waters shall rise, our enemies shall drown.

They can't even dog paddle. Their IUDs will fizzle.

Our mornings shall rise brightly, a big Caucasian face

Smiling providentially upon us making our new papyrus high and dry on little islands.

We dare not disturb the surface, for therein lies water

And no one will have reinvented the sump pump, much less electricity.

Tripe shall be our national dish, inasmuch as farm animals will have been bred

With gigantic intestines, the better to tell our futures,

The poorer to gauge our past. A past of broken levees—

Since stoppered with the superfluous digits of immigrants—

And potholes—dittoed. We shall prize starlings at last

For three things: their ideal of congregating behavior,

Their skill at eating tripe, their morning song which we shall believe

Sounds like: there is here, there is here.