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## A Year with the Bipeds

Gerald Narmore  
*American Public University System*

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## A Year with the Bipeds By Gerald Narmore

A year ago today, I was snatched by wicked hands and incarcerated in this...this...hovel. It happened while I feasted on blessings from the gods at the temple of the Golden Arches. Oh, how I fondly remember those golden-brown, delectable staves scattered all over the blackened ground of the temple square! Oh! how we feasted when the gods choose to bestow their favor! Oh! how we screeched our gratefulness to Leotabby and Felinico, the providential ones, once our stomachs were surfeited with oleic goodness! But, alas, those days are no more, perhaps forevermore, for I languish here, a prisoner of the bipeds.

The day my ordeal began, I was curled up in our communal den, enjoying my favorite pastime: napping. It was a spring afternoon; the clean smell of life hung in the air, the birds were singing, and a gentle breeze washed over my coat. Life was most pleasant.

It was a long time in coming, I might add. The winter was brutal. Our den flooded during the fall rains and then froze solid as granite during winter. We had to sleep in a pile for warmth. Can you imagine trying to sleep while fifty other hairy bodies crush you from all sides?

And don't get me started on those jolly-joker flatulent types. Without fail, as soon as enough warmth was generated by the mass of bodies to allow for sleep, the Jolly-Joker Ragtime Farting Band would begin playing a tune. The resulting noxious fumes offended the senses and curled my whiskers on several occasions. For the life of me, I can not understand how the misery of others can produce cacophonous hilarity in the jolly-jokers. Indeed, I would have assassinated the whole lot, but my strength failed me.

I did receive a measure of recompense, though, on a bitterly cold night in February, when Fats Dynamite, the leader of the jolly-jokers, left the den to relieve his engorged bladder. He never returned. We found him the next day frozen solid as a brick, in full squat. Fats' horn had, thankfully, been forever plugged.

The other jolly-jokers mourned the passing of their leader. Indeed, they blubbered and carried on like drunken sailors for what seemed an eternity. In his honor, they swore they would never play again, and for three nights the rest of us enjoyed malodorous-free peace. On the fourth night, however, the band struck up again and with renewed vigor. Loathsome creatures!

Forgive me. Where was I? Oh yeah...napping...birds singing...gentle breeze...life was pleasant...Okay. I was lying there somewhere between consciousness and deep sleep. You know, that period of existence where you're almost asleep but not quite there yet? Right. Anyway, Leopardo Pudge, a gentle but absolutely psychotic soul, came bursting into the den like a Rottweiler at a cat farm. I bolted ten-feet into the air, screeching like a demon, claws extended, teeth bared, hackles up, ready to defend my life once I returned to the ground. After I realized that it was Pudge who scared the sh...I mean...who disturbed my repose, I calmly enquired, "Must you always do that!!"

Pudge was acting typically. He was as jittery as a crack-head looking for a fix, jumping up and down, turning in violent circles, and shouting, "Golden! Leotabby! Crunchy! Gods! Felinico! Now!"

Nothing in the imbecile's demeanor caused me to believe that something extraordinary was afoot, so I determined to resume my restful bliss. "Be off with you, simpleton," said I. "Go suffer your delirium tremors elsewhere."

"You don't understand! Blessings! Blessings!" Pudge blabbered.

"From the gods?"

"Yes! Yes!"

"At the temple?"

"Yes! At the temple! Let's go!"

After a long, cold, and hungry winter, the gods had awakened and remembered we still existed. Pudge and I set off for the temple forthwith and at a blistering pace.

The smallest biped just ran into the room. He is furless at the moment and fascinated with the object that dangles between his legs. He calls it a "pee-pee." The female biped is in hot pursuit. She mumbles, "What is it with men and their..." Sorry, I didn't catch that last part.

Anyway, these bipeds are indeed strange creatures. Besides walking upright, they can remove their fur. No doubt you assume I'm jesting; however, I would counter that such is beneath me. Rest assured; I've seen them do it. The two little ones are forever removing their fur and running throughout the den cackling like a couple of amorous hens. This activity causes the larger bipeds much consternation, although I don't know why, for they seem to enjoy removing their fur too.

Unlike the little ones, though, the larger bipeds always remove their fur behind barred doors. Once furless, these two inevitably end up wallowing all over each other in the sleeping apparatus. They participate in this macabre ado often, so they must enjoy it, but the way they carry on one would think they were engaging in mutual massacre.

Without fail, as soon as the parental bipeds begin their ritual romp, the little ones appear at the door demanding entrance. Said demands are then promptly refused, at least until the larger ones cease the strange ritual and put their fur back on. Once admitted, the little ones invariably ask the larger bipeds what they were doing. The male biped always answers—rather sheepishly, I might add—"rasslin."

As Pudge and I sped towards the temple, Gehenna appeared in the way. She always materialized at the most inopportune moments and never in a friendly humor. Oh, she masqueraded as the friendliest being alive for the first few moments of each encounter, always inquiring about our health and calling us "sweetie," "love," or "darling," but her portentous smile and the ravaged carcasses of several thousand of my acquaintances exposed her hypocrisy. The bipeds call her type "Pit Bull." I call her the foulest creature alive. Pudge calls her "delicious."

Here comes the male biped. He stops briefly to scratch my ears. I am sure he means this gesture as some form of torture, but I must admit that it feels quite nice. This one calls me "Damncat." I came by this moniker on one of the many occasions I tried to escape soon after my capture.

It was late at night and bitterly cold. One of the child bipeds stood contemplating the back door, as I lounged on a cushion near the fire. By the look in his eye, I could tell he was considering something that would cause the parental bipeds much agitation. I was, of course, correct. The child removed his fur, opened the door, stepped out into the frigid night, and began shouting gleefully, "It's col, it's col!" He instantly turned a deep shade of blue. Amazing.

Just as the female biped entered the room to ascertain what juvenile shenanigans were afoot, I bolted out the door. As I cleared the threshold, she let out a howl that caused my follicles to stiffen.

She shouted, "My baby! My baby! My baby has run away!"

The alarm had been raised! I knew that if my escape was to be a success, I would have to act quickly, calmly, and decisively. I made it to the shrubbery at the rear of the biped den and hunkered down underneath the foliage to acquire a bearing that would lead me back to my longed-for home and the companions of my youth.

Soon, the male biped was in the yard searching for me. He was wearing his thickest fur and carrying a portable lighting device. As he passed my hide, I heard him mumble something like, "I can't believe I am out here in ten-degree weather looking for Damncat!"

Occasionally, the female biped would open the door and ask the male, "Have you found him yet?"

After about a hundred of these questions, the male biped answered, "You'll know I have found him when you hear a gunshot or I bring him in the house!"

This answer seemed to agitate the female. She responded, "If you hurt my baby, you'll be the one to hear a gunshot!"

As the male combed the grounds for my whereabouts, I began to shiver in the cold. My chattering teeth reminded me of the many arctic nights spent in my ancestral den. Then I was reminded of the jolly-jokers. Gehenna also came to mind. I shook the bush.

The male found me and carried me back into the biped den. The little ones jumped up and down, ran in circles, shouted incoherently, and generally acted the fool, as they always do. The female biped rocked me in her arms and leaked fluid from her eyes. What monsters, these bipeds.

After the excitement waned, I curled up on my cushion next to the fire, determined to make good my escape sometime in the future. Next time, though, I would wait until the weather was more conducive to supporting life.

Pudge is in love with Gehenna. I have tried on many occasions to explain to him the finer points of interspecies intercourse, but to no avail. Even the ear Gehenna wears attached to the spiked chain that festoons her enormous neck cannot convince Pudge that his amorous sentiments are not reciprocated by the devil-hound. The ear once belonged to Pudge, but it was removed by Gehenna during one of her regular thrashings of the dimwit. She wears it as a trophy; he believes it is a symbol of her affection.

As I was saying, Gehenna barred the path to the Golden Temple, and she was in no hurry to let us pass. She eyed me through yellow, malevolent eyes and said, “ello love, ready for another ride?”

Gehenna fancied throwing me as high as possible into the air to see if I would land on my feet. That is what she meant by “ride.”

“Well, if it is all the same to you, I would rather not,” I responded. “You see, I have this crick in my neck from the last ride, and I would prefer that it heal first before enjoying another.”

“Sorry, love. You don’t have a choice in the matter. I want to beat my record.”

Gehenna’s record was throwing me over a house. I shuddered to think of what she was determined to throw me over to beat that.

Pudge stepped forward and through love-sick eyes said, “Hey, babyyyy! Wow! your haunches look fantastic! Have you been working-out?”

“Well, well, if it isn’t my good friend Pudge,” Gehenna snarled. “I can see you haven’t learned any manners since my last mauling of your despicable carcass. Perhaps I should remove your other ear and add it to my chain. Maybe then you’ll learn your proper place.”

“Ooh, I love it when you talk dirty, you sexy mutt,” Pudge cooed. “You can have my ear, my heart, even my life! I’m all yours!”

The surgery began instantaneously.

The events of my capture were traumatic, and my memory of that day is imprecise. Suffice to know that I made it past the mangling in progress and reached the temple square. One minute I was feasting on the god’s goodness, and the next minute I was in a transportation apparatus headed to the den of the bipeds. Since then I have been trapped within these four walls of constant temperature, cushions near the fire, and never ending nourishment.

From the first day of my capture, I have attempted to escape the clutches of these strange beings. In fact, I plan to flee this very day. But first, I will enjoy a nap by the fire, then a meal, and then a belly massage. I hope I will not dream about Gehenna.

**About Gerald Brett Narmore:**

Gerald Narmore is an undergraduate English major at American Military University. He developed a passion for poetry while taking British Poetry as a student of Professor Everett Corum. Although Gerald sometimes struggles with “strained” end-rhymes, he is ardently pursuing improvement as a poet.

His interests include: reading, writing, history, and the insane brutality of CrossFit.

Originally from North Alabama, Gerald now lives in Akron, Ohio with his wife, Joy, and two sons, Isaiah and Ben.

