

Ponderables

Selected from "Thinker's Daily Ponderable"



by Alan Harris

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at www.alharris.com/ponderables

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Ponderables

**Original Observations
by Alan Harris**

The New Year is like a perfectly clean new house into which
we all stagger with good intentions and muddy boots.



We all have free will. In fact, our will is so free
that we sometimes have little control over it.



No separateness, no crowds.



Buy now, and forever comes free.



Well-timed silence is the purest speech.



I cry out into the silence to let me hear it.
No reply but silence.



If you would hear the song of the infinite,
listen quietly through the ends of your toes.



Fate remains wonderfully poised when gamblers tempt it.



Human motives are so complex that a judge
can only be a poet of sentences.



Work, and the world works with you.
Shirk, and the world ignores you.



Everyone contributes to society—
some by serving as horrible examples.



Anything you hide is perfectly safe until found.



Infatuation: love so intense, beautiful, and brief
as to be unachievable by the secure.



Leaving a few stones unturned in a marriage
or a minefield can be downright healthy.



A society lady's best snub is no match
for that of a summoned house cat.



You get the most free financial advice
from people who are in your pocket.



Nobody scolds like a coward.



Whoever first said "Hey, man!" was to become
the most widely quoted dude in modern times.



A stitch in time saves the theory of relativity.



Music is evidence that beauty, mathematics,
and time all live in the same neighborhood.



When wealth speaks, greed listens.



When you're down in the dumps, incoming
advice becomes excruciatingly abundant.



Moment: an infinitely expandable unit of time,
used often in situations of love or airline delays.



Even with its hassles, life seems to be
the best thing they've come up with yet.



Occasionally necessity takes its jackhammer
to our expectations to make way for what
the chief architect really wants.



People you have to interrupt so they
can see your side, won't.



Getting your hair clipped tends to make
your secrets fall out of your mouth.



To marry for happiness may end up
stretching both words a little.



If every discarded corporate goal in America could be
changed into a muffin, world hunger might be ended.



"I don't mind dying," the old-timer mused,
"but I'm sure going to miss myself."



The road to hell is littered with the manuscripts
of church sermons written late on Saturday.



The cause of anything is no less than everything.



Every new human being is an impossibility
become inevitable.



In truest love, giving and taking become moot.



At the end of a day, is there one less day
in your life or one more day in your life?



Intolerance leads to suffering leads to
investigation leads to compassion.



Friendships with others bring us heaven before heaven.



Brilliance uses fine words; character, pauses.



Anything you can get away with, you can't.



Nothing deepens character like a firmly balanced dilemma.



Rumors are disagreeable to many;
but then, so is the truth.



Silence is golden, like wedding rings only much scarcer.



Lecture: a verbal dance between voice and attention,
sometimes accompanied by meaning.



We are most strengthened, over time, by our weaknesses.



Consensus usually belongs to the first one
who dares to ahem and summarize.



Businessman's Prayer

God grant me the ingenuity
to escape the things I cannot change,
money to change the things I can,
and lawyers to know the difference.



Need we be terribly surprised at the shortcomings
of a world that is substantially run by the
personalities who dominate meetings?



The Kindest Safe

Thieves will fail,
try as they may,
to steal any money
you've given away.



A suture in time saves the future.



To find big mistakes, look for big egos.



Perhaps the only infallible way to detect
a lie is to be the liar.



The kindly man in the mountain cave spoke but briefly:
"Search for a way to stop searching."



Poetry works best when you ignore the words.



To find order in chaos, stop looking there.



If we only have enough presence of mind to reach out,
someone may put just the right thing into our hand.



Much knowledge is belief wearing a top hat.



To nurse a few grudges is forgivable if you
try not to breast-feed them.



Since last century, computers have been enabling
business offices to proceed much faster
from one emergency to the next.



Can a fountain be robbed?



The flower hides a seed, and the seed hides a flower.



There's nothing new beneath the sun,
but luckily, what's old is fun.



Visualization can be important to one's advancement
in a large company, especially the ability to see
clothing on naked emperors.



Where would a poet be without an angst to grind?



A loving thought is deeper than the night sky.



Leave the past behind you, but if parts of it
get back in front of you, ask them why.



The teeth of adversity grow directly
behind the smile of fortune.



The wall that protects you also confines you.



As surely as a bud, given water, will become a flower,
the office sycophant, given power, will become an autocrat.



But for your past calamities, your virtues might be fewer.



When the irresistible meets the immovable,
a telephone rings somewhere.



"Smile" is an anagram of "slime"—
and also a path through it.



A newborn's first thought: "Now what?"



Our commencement speaker revealed at length
his firm grasp of the obvious.



An important factor in technology's
dramatic progress may be coffee.



When you work for yourself, both of you work.



Love is the key that unlocks the door of the visible
to reveal a magnificent invisible.



When light is shining within, no darkness
from without can penetrate it.



Everyone, even vegetarians, can benefit
by occasionally eating crow.



We spend our first forty years making mistakes,
and our next forty years making more mistakes.



Wherever there's new ointment, can a fly be far away?



Moderation in all things, including moderation.



Friends have love without vows,
faithfulness without reasons.



The palate can murder the colon.



How can we be sure that infinity is all there?



In a selfish society, the word "free"
is the most successful pickpocket.



All of life is a near-death experience.



A teardrop is a liqueur to the future.



Those who choose bravely learn deeply.



Earth is unsure footing
and wealth is insecure,
but how you've loved and given
will deathlessly endure.



Exits from the freeway of truth begin at a small angle.



We can't really break the universal laws,
but if we ignore them, they'll break us.



The intelligent are wary of the smart.



Two invisible antagonists animate nearly every
board meeting. They are quality and quantity.



He traveled the world, carrying vast
unexplored territories within.



If life gives us a load,
a great honor's bestowed.
Life knows, if we don't,
that we can when we won't.



Dogs offer you humility. Cats invite it.



Do: a verb sprinkled liberally into airline
announcements to create the illusion of intense caring.



After 80, the best thing about a birthday is having it.



Pain doesn't enjoy us, either, but it's got a job to do.



"You have mastered it, my disciple. Next week
we will explore the sound of one hand NOT clapping."



If a cat could speak, it probably wouldn't.



After a motivational seminar you feel like
new frosting on an old cake.



Walk where your feet are.



The hell you feel is the one that's real.



Every person we meet is both a wonderland and a curriculum.



Hell provides a room
for people who assume,
which gets some ventilation,
but my, what a population!



Kind acts never die, and what is kind in yourself
was waiting for you.



It's easy to be critical, but it's even easier to be
bureaucratic, which is why bureaucracy is always
ahead of its critics.



To know who you are, observe what you do.



A sure way to learn is by ignoring good advice.



Reality is what's left to us after
all of our failures to find it.



One inevitable can overturn thousands of impossibles.



Even when things are all in place,
they're very close to being out of place.



Sometimes we get an urge to do some great thing, and we'd
really do it if someone could just tell us what it is.



The bad news is that you are the slave of your past.
The good news is that you are the master of your future.



You know you're getting old when you notice that your
first name is not being given to babies anymore.



History is kept exciting by humanity's
continuous influx of fresh ignorance.



Computers won't ever become minds
until they can cry—and mean it.



Taste makes waist.



If such great people have labored so diligently for so long,
why is there still so much more to do?



Creativity leads to crisis, which leads to creativity.



American work ethic: busy is good, frantic is excellent,
and burnt-out is sublime.



Our deepest wound may heal to become our greatest strength.



An opinion without self-interest is as rare
as self-interest without an opinion.



Sooner or later one's purpose in life comes pushing up
through one's mistakes like a delicate flower blooming
in a trash heap.



Rainbows are around us all the time, but it may take
a very dark cloud to make one appear.



Nice days are more made than had.



For later flowers, if we but endure,
misfortune makes a good manure.



Random silences deepen a conversation
and add force to an argument.



A guru said to his gathered disciples:
"There are two kinds of people:
those who don't know, and those
who don't know that they don't know.
A disciple asked, "How do you know?"



To refuse free goods and sold enlightenment
can prevent a lot of complications.



The moon and computers remain similarly aloof
when confronted with anger.



Life brings situations in which we feel like Jonah or Noah, who were each stuck inside something that moved slowly, smelled bad, and couldn't be steered.



A quarter for expertise buys a dollar's worth of peace.



Each human life is like a new symphony heard for the first time. It can't be understood or fully appreciated until after the final cadence.



When it is time to cry, you do. No volcano is more irresistible than a sobbing whose time has come.



When prophets turn to profits, wisdom turns within.



Until we understand silence,
we only partially understand words.



Is the universe a mindless collection of spinning dirt, or does it know what it's doing?
That is the question of the ages. If the former, why are we so intelligent? If the latter, why are we so ignorant?



Stumbling blocks make wonderful
starting blocks for the next race.



A kind act is worth a dozen beliefs.



Mankind's three deepest imponderables are
infinity, eternity, and stupidity.



A secret, if whispered carefully, will spread
faster than the ten o'clock news.



About half of humanity have ego problems,
while the other half seem proud not to have any.



The spouse who loved the caterpillar
may hate the butterfly.



Progress entails thinking outside of the box to create
fresh boxes for the unimaginative to think inside of.



Our enemies teach us lessons that our admirers never can.



Calendar: a device for scheduling the unpredictable.



Many newcomers in hell are soon put to work
designing phone menus.



Sooner or later we get what we want, which would
be fine if we only knew how to want correctly.



Eternity isn't something we wait for—
it's what we breathe.



Ecstasy may have to sweep the floor tomorrow
and hate it. Joy works long and lightly.



Tomorrow holds rewards
for thoughtfulness today
distilled from painful errors
in endless yesterday.



The silence in an elevator full of strangers is
different from that in a forest on a summer evening.
The former silence screams of crowded separateness,
while the latter whispers of sequestered unity.



Even perfection has its limitations. For example,
a perfect square can hardly roll.



A deed of love pulls a hidden string
that makes a bell in heaven ring.



When one sits to meditate, the mind may at first sound
like a jukebox in a cathedral.



The small angers the small.



Each ballot is a bullet unshot.



I, the thinnest word in the dictionary, easily slips
into most of our thoughts.



Every day is more evidence of forever.



A good friendship, like a good river,
comes back together after hitting a rock.



Uterior motives may be invisible, but oh, the smell.



Pain kindly wakes up stupidity
lest it slumber through eternity.



Thank God if your car breaks down oftener
than your body. Some bodies are lemons.



You may wish on a star, but you get what you are.



Higher education trains your mind to feel
good later by making it feel terrible now.



We age in years, but we mature in moments.



We depend upon each other for our independence.



Undone tasks quickly have children and grandchildren.



Months come disguised as days,
and swindle us sweetly of years.



Business office survivors learn to distinguish
bluster from need, and anxiety from importance.



Truest gifts cannot be wrapped.



Scrooge no longer hates Christmas,
now that he's acquired it.



Seeing believes, wisdom knows, and love is.



What God has put asunder, let no man paste together.



Time is all we have, and most of what we don't have.



As Santa comes down the spine from the head
to the heart, everything seems a gift.



Christmas and a minimum universe both ask for only
one star and some generosity.



Happy are the wantless, whatever they have or lack.



Like milestones on a journey, our mistakes
show us right where we are.



The main trouble with living as if there's no tomorrow
is that there nearly always is one.



Crying makes an inner rainbow.



To find eternity, lift up the minute.



Guilt is a little prison that keeps you out of big ones.



Does the Star of Bethlehem not shine from every eye?



Gifts given give gifts.



In a nutshell, be a nut.



New Year's resolutions divide the resolver into master and oppressed, and history usually favors the oppressed.



The law of track and caregiving:
when you jump one hurdle,
the next one is not far ahead.



Your body is clothing
for the soul that is you;
your house is a suitcase
for traveling through.



The thickest jungle to hack through
is people's ulterior motives,
including one's own.



There are two sides to every coin,
and there are far too many coins.



Life is wonderful, but it's awfully time-consuming.



Clichés certainly take it on the chin.



Was yesterday's forever a day longer than today's?



Dandelions bring comic relief to the more serious lawns.



You know it's going to be a bad day when you look
in the bathroom mirror and there's nobody there.



Cities happen.



Perhaps the airlines hire men with deep,
confident voices and teach them how to fly.



Few men are unmoved by a gentle look,
whether from a devoted dog,
a pretty girl, a contented cow,
or their mother.



A body gone wild is a temple defiled.



His dark blue business suit has yes written all over it.



When whales can take flight in the air
and birds can fly under the sea,
executives then will be fair
and doctors won't charge any fee.



God hells those who hell themselves.



Ye armies, take up golf.



To retain his professorship, he published a cemetery
of dead ideas with footnotes for headstones.



Marry money:
days are sunny,
life is funny,
sweet as honey.

Markets crash:
no more cash,
tempers clash,
life is trash.

Once we're burned,
much is learned.
What's discerned?
Bliss is earned.



He labored so hard to establish his wealth
that he had no time left for his family's health.
Now his fortune's divided, his body is numb,
and his soul can afford but a heavenly slum.



Some force, like a magnet
that cannot be spurned,
ever brings us those lessons
which haven't been learned.



So many good deeds,
costing no one a dime,
are done by the people
who have the least time.



Happiness may come in waves separated by generous troughs.



In life no law's known
to prevent hurtful words,
as in death one's gravestone
is wide open to birds.



Everyone is said to be unique, but many people
seem unique in remarkably similar ways.



We pay for our comforts
while hardships come free,
but our hardships pay debts
that we no longer see.



Voice your choice,
make your break,
work your quirk,
reap your heap.

Pay your way,
stash your cash,
gain your cane,
sleep your sleep.

