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DATOS,

— you are on a roll here

— This was an easy read

— Sorry I'm am so exercised  
by Jonet's cringing at  
the dead grouse, but that  
scene reeks of hypocrisy  
to me, because she knows  
her lying is a medium  
that romanticizes violence.  
I am sure she will go

back and create some  
beautiful murder scene to  
sooth us animals.

Cheers  
Jack



About 5135 words

add ref to TV  
in the punch line  
at end of  
parat.

## OCTOBER

[Picture: Aspens or cattails]

LIGHT AND SOUND

MOON AND SUN

DUCKS AND DECOYS

GROUSE ABOVE THE CLOUDS

USE THE FORCE

October

Jack reminds me that disc  
missed by print: TV is  
more violent than life.

Send to Knox. This one  
capture the city/country as lit.



Homer: <sup>When ~~the~~ fingered dawn appeared and flecked</sup>  
<sup>Rosy</sup> the East with Red. <sup>Rosy fingered is rhododactylous</sup>  
 a neat word

LIGHT AND SOUND

A chorus of coyotes swept through in the dark, coming south from Joe Lee's place if I heard them right, then passing through Zora Thompson's and onto our farm, pack in full yodel under the hunter's moon, parents urging the pups here, here, here's the trail. They caught something, from their yipping, and ate it and moved on,

And dawn slid down through a notch in the peaks.

With the sun, in measure as it rose, our world got its color <sup>nice</sup> back. Trees by the window crept out of the night, black first, then gray, brown, bronze, and yellow as the sky lightened. I had known, in some remote way, that colors came from the sun, but in all the mornings outdoors I had not paused long enough to watch it happening. Light seemed a property of aspen leaves, like their veins, till this morning when coyotes woke me up.

And then this afternoon the home pack set out to find what made the coyotes sing or something else worth yipping about. Huck and Tess and I left a yard still in summer, grass green from a good rain, and entered the wild place where streams come together. That's where autumn sneaked up, dark-striped by alder trunks. Summer's slow sugars had <sup>colored?</sup> ~~turned to colors~~ -- cottonwoods ocher, willows copper, and aspens gold, pure gold.

Gold is what came to mind, anyhow. I was looking for a tiger and it turned into a platitude.



Huckleberry found what remained of the coyotes' prey -- skull and scraps of skin from a cat, not the feral kind but someone's soft-living pet, caught before it could climb a tree. The coyotes would have enjoyed their fatty snack. They are omnivores, like us humans, and share our taste for junk food. ++

A nice lady may notice that one of her cats is missing this evening, but she has several more, and the coyotes did nature a good turn by eliminating an unnatural predator of young ducks, pheasants, meadowlarks, sparrows, and other ground-nesting birds. Perhaps the coyotes also taught a useful skill to their pups, which are old enough to run with the pack now, and make their first kill, and yap at the hunter's moon. + + +

Wow! If this goes to press  
you will have "Several less"  
Cajones

Set in a chair  
so script is  
scratched



Means?

MOON AND SUN

... the essence of life is that it lives by  
killing and eating; that's the great mystery that  
the myths have to deal with.

Joseph Campbell<sup>1</sup>

[ There was a time when people took their moons seriously --  
especially the harvest and hunter's moons, which are brightest of  
all, burning the fat of the year. The grain had to be reaped and  
the game hunted in that order, so as not to trample the tame  
harvest in pursuit of the wild.

There are farmers who still believe that the moon has an  
effect on plant life. The changes I notice, however, are driven  
by the sun. Last spring, as days grew longer and warmer, the  
trees budded with all deliberate speed, then sprouted leaves and  
set about storing energy for this brilliant autumn. One green  
thing followed another, tiny and pale at first, then big, dark,  
and strong in the wind. A tree had to be stubborn, in this  
climate, but having grown and leafed out, it would not suffer  
predation as intensive as that in a humid lowland forest, where  
every leaf may show damage. ]

Now comes October with its sudden stripes of color. Frost  
brings out the best of wild rose-bushes, bright-leaved and  
festooned in red hips -- festooned, if you don't mind. We don't



get to say that often, in Montana. Our November will be brown grass, tan stubble, and dun deer, but when it comes time to decorate, our Christmas tree will mimic October.

Calendars today are solar, which makes them better than the old lunar myths as predictors of most natural events -- but not quite all. Eastern woodcock wait till the moon is right before they migrate, and perhaps our local snipe do the same.

*Specify Sandhills?* Cranes, on the other hand, seem to want solar gain to warm them for their staging flights. Early in October, the home pair *should describe the call because it is early preheating* began calling and cruising around the place in late morning, encouraging their single surviving offspring to follow. The orchestra grew larger and circled higher till the middle of the month, by which time the flock numbered about two hundred. And then one day most were gone.

Humans have begun to understand that this is a good show. Some follow the cranes in cars now, keep in touch through cellular telephones, watch through binoculars, record the image through telephoto lenses, catch the music on parabolic microphones, and keep it on tape recorders. *Push the thought they would park the BMW, get out, listen watch smell etc. and simply record it in their heads.* But something different happens when you are in the field, afoot and alone, bare-eyed under that circle calling from the sky. You are a peeping straggler now -- late-born, gangly, and weak of wing. *my point exactly.* [You are not ready for the heights yet, but you are growing up, and] you need flight instruction.



DECOYS

The duck-hunter in his blind and the operatic singer on stage, despite the disparity of their accouterments, are doing the same thing. Each is reviving a play, a drama formerly inherent in daily life. Both are, in the last analysis, esthetic exercises.

Aldo Leopold<sup>2</sup>

Autumn has a desperate sensory intensity. Leaves look best when they lose their chlorophyll and smell best when they have spiraled to earth and lain awhile, fermenting. Perhaps human senses are attuned to such smells because, after all, our food is inclined to be dead when we eat it. In the time before refrigeration, our ancestors learned of necessity to appreciate moldy cheese, venison hung for three weeks, and wine aged for years.

Age has also done wonders for the cattails between our house and the morning sun. Their seeds blew in on the wind, many autumns ago, and took root in a narrow strip of soil between pond and lawn, where the mix of water and oxygen must have been just right. The cattails were too energetic to love in early summer, but they are old folks now -- heads white, stalks bending, skinny arms akimbo. And nothing else could frame the water so well.

Cattails are plants of parts. They are, beyond their beauty, useful in phenology, which is the study of relationships between periodic biological phenomena and climatic conditions. Short



definition: phenology is the science of appearances. Cattails with grey hair, for example, tell us that northern ducks will arrive on the next cold front, flighting in from some place with stirring consonants -- Saskatchewan, say, or Gulf of Alaska.

I could put decoys in our creek on both sides of the horseshoe bend, if I wished, and sit in the marsh, waiting as the big red-legged mallards from the north circle lower and slower, wings whistling around my blind of cattails. <sup>you should intensely believe you the whistling wings and I know well, most of all</sup> We people of the marsh go all squishy over cattails. They <sup>is an unforgettable sound in dim AMOR PM life.</sup> turn mud into wildlife habitat, hide ducklings from predators, tell us when the great flights are coming, and camouflage our duck-blinds. Cattails are flags -- in botany and in art. In times past, we shaped cattails and reeds into duck decoys that remain beautiful, even to humans remote from waterfowl and marshes.

And then in the nineteenth century, our ancestors carved wooden ducks that now auction for shocking prices. These old decoys were a folk art, so they have not gone out of style like, say, landscapes by Corot, who was painting at the same time. The decoys imitated nature and were judged by nature in the form of a mallard. They were bridges between human consciousness and something else. We reached out with our carvings -- called in wild food with the work of our veined hands. Understand this and you know why other humans, many more centuries ago, painted bison and deer on cave walls.

You might not guess it, from the average museum today, but waterfowl did not go extinct with Winslow Homer. We are at the

poor style?



peak of a boom -- in real ducks, chiseled ducks, penciled ducks, and ducks colored in all media. Your state, like all the others, holds competitions to select paintings for the annual stamps that hunters need for waterfowl <sup>MANAGEMENT !!</sup> And one of your neighbors is, even now, whittling ducks for active duty or ceremonial use.

No one <sup>OK</sup> needs wooden decoys today. The plastic kind ~~is~~ cheap and works <sup>for</sup> ducks, but not for you or me. We carve more decoys, with more fervor, than at any time in history or prehistory, then sit in cattail blinds and use hand-made wooden calls <sup>TO TALK TO</sup> ~~to attract~~ the mallards. We still know their language. — Should you <sup>mentioned</sup> "feeding, call back, hi ball etc" ?

- I think your point is some primitive wage mandates carved blocks, so I would not say "No one needs wooden decoys today". I would say: Plastic decoys ~~work for~~ ~~ducks and are cheap~~ are cheap and work for ducks but not for you and me -- I hope I am reading you correctly — or highlighted needs.



WORLD ABOVE CLOUDS

There is a passion for hunting, something deeply  
implanted in the human breast.

Charles Dickens<sup>3</sup>

We were bouncing along an old lumber road, flanked on the left by a cliff and on the right by clouds with gaps through which a brave person might have looked down a thousand feet. Not me. I concentrated on wash-outs in the shoulder while David King craned his neck upward, picking out ridges where blue grouse might live. It would have been a logical way to divide responsibility, <sup>his</sup> him scouting and <sup>my</sup> me staving off disaster, except that David was in the driver's seat. *aint that a gerundive?*

Our companion on this day was Janet, who raised the level of our discourse, and possibly of our terrain. I would not have felt compelled to climb quite so high and might have restrained David from doing so. Janet, however, was a New York television producer, so naturally David wanted to show her the best of Montana. She was wiry and quick -- up to the hike. *what HIKE? should qualify*  
*Hike - "coming like"?*

The ruts under our tires squirmed downhill into a meadow where sun gilded prairie grass. David parked his truck there, jumped out, and trotted to the tailgate for dogs and gear. My gait was closer to a wobble -- no reflection on his skill at the wheel, mind you. I would bet on David to win if he should ever



enter his pickup on our local race-a-wreck oval, which I earnestly hope he won't because he is a physician and the valley can ill afford a crash with him in it. *rose style*

David is as skinny <sup>as</sup> me. He got that way by working sixteen hours ~~a day~~, sleeping four, and then ~~going~~ hunting for blue grouse, which are a vertical species. They climb on foot, like us humans, but then commute down mountainsides on wings, faster than anyone can drive. Even Dr. King.

Janet liked the dogs -- David's Rex, a portly yellow Labrador retriever, and my Huckleberry -- <sup>who met Huckleberry, a GSP</sup> but they ignored her. I tried to explain that they were social animals around the fireplace, but workers out here, with an intensity of focus that a television crew might envy.

~~It was Janet who kept her distance when we uncased our guns.~~ *→ style? How could it be otherwise? Is: just kept her distance. ~ better*  
David tried to show her mine, made in London in 1896 by a James Woodward who, as craftsman, was the equal of Antonio Stradivari. You would agree if you could examine a Stradivarius and a <sup>Jarvis</sup> Woodward side-by-side with a jeweler's loupe. Janet reacted as if David had tried to hand her a rattlesnake. *year from someone who represents a medium devoted to violence*

*PG*  
*CS*  
*just saying*  
*intensity*  
We started hunting where evergreen alpine smells merged with *Here's shit! I would not let this pass, as if he is about to fall.*  
sage and grass creeping up from below. In between the two worlds was a bottom lit by aspens from which the sun's energy was just starting to fade. We may have told Janet that we were following the creek to water our dogs, but the luminous leaves had something to do with our route.

Janet could not know what to expect from our hike but the



rest of us did, slow men and fast dogs, building up merit with each step. A perfectly true-to-life account of this day, or any other day of real hunting, would contain thousands of words of walking for every syllable of shooting.

I am talking about an extremely simple matter: the pursuer cannot pursue if he does not integrate his vision with that of the pursued. That is to say, hunting is an imitation of the animal.

José Ortega y Gasset<sup>4</sup>

Rex covered the brushy bottom while Huck searched the meadow -- a good division of labor for the wrong reasons. Rex liked to hunt close to us humans, and Huck liked to hunt where Rex wasn't. The adrenaline part began when Rex snuffled in the brush, out of sight. We heard the sound of wings and skidded downhill, trying to keep our feet ready. (Not everybody knows this, but you shoot with your feet.)

Rex pushed out a bird in front of David and another flew straight away from me -- not the big blues we were expecting but late-hatched ruffed grouse, too small. Four or five more flushed, and bored into the woods, one at a time. I mounted the Woodward with its safety-slide on, <sup>is this accurate? or blocking the lens?</sup> blocking the firing pins. I imagined exactly when I would take each shot and where each grouse would come down in a flurry of brown feathers and leaves of chokecherry. It was easy, with only my lust engaged.

One bird lit in a lodgepole pine and another dived under a



thick mat of juniper -- a good defense against goshawks, but not against bird dogs. Huckleberry was on scene by then and pointing. I <sup>or "called him off"</sup> pulled him away. But I imagined a dinner-bird in my game vest, warm against the small of my back, better than aspirin for the spinal crick which, I guess, every hunter comes to know after enough time afoot. (It is a reminder of our original sin: standing up.)

*new or next, can't remember the need*

Our dogs would remember the new covert without thinking, but <sup>or: would later remember</sup> David and I paused to fix its landmarks against the time when leaves would fall and the young ruffed grouse would grow a full set of wits. We knew that they would remain in the vicinity, unlike blue grouse -- which nest in the bottoms with ruffs, fly like them, and taste just as good. Early in the fall, however, blue grouse make the backwardest migration in the west, hiking to winter quarters at high altitude.

We followed the blues, or imagined that we were doing so. In reality, they had left no tracks and we humans could not know their trails. Even the trickle of water we followed had to be deduced, hidden as it was by thick turf. A line of willows and alders kept us on line as the clouds thickened, gray walls closing in and moving with us.

Rex joined us humans, but then Rex is a cuddly dog, if you can imagine a tawny teddy bear the size of a lawn tractor. Huckleberry, on the other hand, was a dark blur appearing and vanishing in the mist. His job, he reckoned, was to find birds wherever they might be, and my job would then be to reach his

*beautifull  
done that!*



point before Rex could get involved. If sleep-deprivation is David King's slimming secret, then Huckleberry is mine. His faith pulls me on.

*I understand Ref beats the point  
but most people don't. Elaborate?*

Occupied continually on work which he loves,  
healthy in mind and body, always in close contact  
with nature, the hunter lives a joyful and  
virtuous life and goes straight to paradise when  
he dies.

Prologue to The Master of Game, circa 1405<sup>5</sup>

*late footed feet*

Janet was keeping with us, springy of step as Huckleberry. A hundred-pound person may have felt less gravity than us bull moose.

*In the under there is a  
Song "Wearing the Blue Hat"*

Near the top of the ridge, our heads entered the sun while our feet remained in a cloud stretching flat on both sides of us. Distance became audible again, starting with the whistle of a bull elk on a high knob farther along our route.

*Nice*

Let me leave you with a picture of this savanna in the sky, because no other place will have taught you what to look for. Big male blue grouse live in blue distances -- exactly the places we humans find sublime. You could call this parallel evolution, or you could call it spooky. Imagine, for example, that one day, after years in a grimy city, you meet a gatekeeper who allows you a choice of places in which to recover. You pick spacious openings through which you can see three blue ranges, one after another, floating on a cloud. Soil tilled by pocket gophers is

*Beautiful*



soft under your feet and knee-high grass springs from it. The Douglas firs that frame your view are ancient and cork-barked, with no limbs for the first fifty feet.

Nobody is making places like this anymore, but somebody is still cutting them down. I have visited the big trunks at a lumber company before they turned into trophy houses. The annular rings were knife-edge narrow, coming from those cold ridges with little precipitation in summer, when trees want to grow. The high, arid west is not like the humid country on both sides of it. Out on the wet Pacific coast, you could cut down a thirty-year-old fir and find growth rings half an inch wide. In a place like that, you could do real commercial tree-farming, with a sustained yield. In Montana it takes 250, maybe 400 years to grow a big fir, with a forest fire every few decades to thin the competition. That's eight to thirteen generations of humans. Forever, *but not to the fire.*

We encouraged Janet to look while she had the chance. The old firs on blue-grouse ridges are caught between axe and fire. Indiscriminate logging would remove them. Doing nothing would put them at risk too, because years of <sup>SMOKEY BEAR LECTURE HERE?</sup> fire-suppression have allowed fuel, in the form of small trees, to grow thick. Selective logging would be expensive. But if the small trees are not cut, the next fire could burn too hot.

When we found no road through the grass -- not even a snaky track of motorcycle -- David and I both broke our guns to be sure that we were loaded. Something must have been watching us,



because we heard a shower of fir needles and wings going whortle-whortle-whortle. The bird was diving much faster than we could swing but we shot anyhow, and then watched our first blue of the day plunge into the layer of cloud. Perhaps it landed among the ruffed grouse in the creek-bottom or the sharp-tailed grouse on the bench. Perhaps it kept right on gliding out to the sage-grouse flats. You never know, with blues; they have learned to use more diverse habitats than any other western biped, except humans.

Both dogs sniffed around under another giant fir, but the birds that had left scent were no longer on the ground. Somewhere up high on a limb, we guessed, bright beady eyes were watching us. I tried to flush the grouse with my owl hoot and David did a coyote assembly-call, but nothing happened and we felt foolish. Our audience might have applauded, at least.

This, surely, was the best of all possible arenas. The grouse had us humans to divert them and we had the cloud world to walk upon. I said, just blurting it out, that this was where the angels land, and then I was grateful that Janet did not laugh.

In an open spot below the ridge, Huckleberry the pointer started on a scent-trail. Rex the Lab -- less experienced but catching on -- cut in front of Huck and tried to find the grouse first. Huck paused, sniffed around, and led off over the ridge. Rex saw Huck still apparently on a bird and came along. Both dogs disappeared -- whereupon Huck lost Rex, galloped back, and pointed the bird. He had, however, fooled us humans as well as



Rex, and while we were looking in the wrong direction our grouse slipped out from under an arrowleaf balsamroot and dropped off the ridge. I shot ten feet over its back. (Most game birds rise, and a hunter gets used to swinging the gun upward through the line of flight. With blue grouse plummeting off a ridge, you have to swing down, fast. Part of your brain won't go along with it.)

On the next scent-trail Huckleberry fainted again, but Rex ignored the diversion this time, charged ahead, and flushed two big young blue grouse, one after the other. David missed the first and almost got the second. They were long shots.

We took a water-break then, dogs on the cool earth and humans on a gray log so big that Janet had to boost herself up. Above us stood a living fir of the same diameter, thick with needles <sup>they eat the needles?</sup> -- winter food and shelter for blue grouse. Around our feet, grouse whortleberries dried on their stalks, concentrating flavor. We ate a few and David asked why I had not given Huckleberry the correct name, botanically speaking. I asked him to suggest a good, sharp, one-syllable call-name derived from Whortleberry.

We moved toward the summit, David and I a gunshot apart and Janet behind us, not wanting to watch. In a grove of aspen clones with red leaves, Huckleberry hit scent and started to point, but his grouse flew onto the low limb of a fir. I volunteered to throw the stick and watch David disgrace himself, but he's the better pitcher. His second toss rattled the limb on which the bird perched. It flew over my head. Another dropping shot. I'll



never learn to make one.

The top of the knob was studded with whitebark pines, which produce seeds that grouse and grizzlies like even better than whortleberry raisins. Huck was working scent when, from a distance, came a thumping sound as much like bear as bird. A grouse had flushed from a high limb and was weaving through firs near David. He missed. The bird came on toward me and I took it as an incomer with my tight-choked barrel, using perfect form. When the grouse failed to get the message, I pivoted smoothly (for me) and fired my open barrel ~~too~~. Our trophy bird continued in fast flight with slow strong beats, chuff, chuff, chuff, and was swallowed by the layer of cloud. I stared downhill after the grouse, hoping that it would reconsider my offer of a place on the mantel, and the ridge drifted off on its cloud, cut loose from the world. I don't know what gave me vertigo -- my pivot or that great virtuous bird dropping out of the sunlight.

Having educated the grouse on their skyline, and vice versa, we humans followed them back downhill toward the real world, paying no attention to our dogs. That's when Rex got up a last grouse where no grouse should have been. I got up my gun. The bird swept downslope past me at forty yards with gravity on its side, fast as a falcon's stoop. I swung and squeezed the trigger without thinking. The grouse plummeted on, dead in the air.

The bird Huckleberry brought was a yearling cock. I smoothed its perfect plumage, saw no spot of blood, and handed our game to Janet. She would not touch it. We got back to the truck and eased



in, creaking, and she asked us to put the grouse where it could not fall on her during our bumpy ride back to the world below the clouds.

We were not teasing, understand. The grouse was one thing to her, opposite to us. Corpse and food. Death and life. New York and Montana.

[ Reality and TV  
Z' THE POINT



USE THE FORCE

People are no more rooted in their world and lose their orientation. They just drift. That is very much our condition too. The need for a meaning of their lives remains unanswered, because the rational, biological goals are unable to express the irrational wholeness of human life.

C.G. Jung<sup>6</sup>

This session opens with a movie. I want you to sneak out and rent the videotape of Star Wars, by George Lucas, or borrow it from your teen-ager. It is science fiction drawn from mythology, and, like all mythic thinking, it has a message for the right hemisphere of your brain.

Watch the hero, <sup>Iron Quixote</sup> ~~Luke Skywalker~~, as he is introduced to the weapon called a light-saber. He's clumsy till old <sup>Savetto</sup> ~~Ben Kenobi~~ teaches him to use "the Force" -- a different kind of vision. Later, when Luke is losing the climactic battle with an evil empire, old Ben again whispers "Use the Force!" And Luke does. He turns off his computerized guidance system, flying his <sup>Rocket Ship</sup> ~~spaceship~~ without technology. An odd thing happens, then: the target, an enemy space station, seems to slow down, and the Force guides our hero's two shots precisely where they should go.

Luke has learned to aim with his right brain.

I have a weapon with two shots, like Luke, and I train in a



similar way. Call it a light-saber, or a singing bow. It is, in any case, a weapon that would not be chosen by drug-pushers and gang warriors. Pretend that we are far in the future, if you are more comfortable there, or far in the past. Any time but now will do, any word but gun.

In the world we inhabit, however, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. It is called recoil or kick, in the case of guns, and it has given me an on-again, off-again flinch. A few rounds of clay targets could make it worse. Therefore I practice for bird season with an unloaded shotgun. I mount it a few times every day until stock comes up squarely to cheek, bead centers under right eye, and muzzles point at the stuffed grouse on my mantel. Later I step out on the porch, where I try to mount, swing, and fire -- in one smooth step -- at any target of opportunity. Instead of live ammunition, however, the chamber contains a snap-cap, which is a sort of empty shell with a spring-loaded plunger where the primer ought to be.

This is called dry-firing, and hunters have been doing it ever since guns became capable of hitting moving targets. For that matter, our ancestors must have dry-fired spears at imaginary mastodons. What is new -- for me -- is that I have figured out why the method works. It frees the right hemisphere of my brain to take over my shooting.

There are two sides, or hemispheres, in the brains of many animals. The peculiar feature of the human brain is that the hemispheres do different things. Sometimes they even argue with



each other, as we shall see. (Scientists have by no means figured all this out, but we do know that the brain has different modes of problem-solving. Let's continue to think of them as right- and left-brain behaviors until we learn more.)

Our left-brain functions may have evolved along with our unique language skills, though this is only my guess. Researchers do know that the left brain works with words and numbers, something like Luke's digital computer. The process is analytic, logical, and rational. It is also sequential -- taking one step after another. This is a precise way to reach conclusions, and a hopeless way to swing on a grouse hurtling downhill.

By comparison, the right brain may seem primitive, till you discover that Einstein, Michelangelo, and Luke Skywalker relied on it. It is good at space-relationships, meaning that it sees how you and the trees and the grouse fit together. The right brain is intuitive, too, meaning that it leaps ahead to predict where the target will be when your shot arrive.

*a recurrent  
detail quote  
of great team  
old ideas* And finally, the right brain is holistic, meaning that it "sees the whole picture at once". (You will be wary of holism, if you have been paying attention over the years, but in this case the word means something.)

I am clumsy at the nonverbal language of the right hemisphere. Most of us are. Scientist Roger Sperry writes that modern society discriminates against the right brain. You learned to trust it, nevertheless, if you ever became skilled at bicycle-riding, fly-casting, or drawing pictures. I was surprised

GRETZKY  
FARVE  
JORDAN  
BIRD



to learn that drawing is a right-brain function, but a book by Betty Edwards has convinced thousands, including me.

He will not bag any game ... if he has not dreamed of it, so that he can anticipate it.... The sportsman trains himself, dresses, and watches unweariedly, and loads and primes for his particular game. He prays for it, and so he gets it.

Thoreau<sup>7</sup>

What hunter and artist share is a need to form accurate pictures in the mind. The spear would have come before the brush -- real image before the imaginary. But Thoreau was right about conjuring the prey. We do it today and we did it thirty thousand years ago, (if the cave paintings <sup>discreetly</sup> have been accurately dated.) <sup>what is the point of this? (if...dated)</sup>

Today, experts tell beginners not to aim shotguns, but that is obviously nonsense. We all know that we must guide our guns as carefully as artists guide their brushes. It may be -- I'm not sure -- that the left brain can cope with a sustained lead in front of a target flying a steady course. With an unpredictable grouse, however, only my right hemisphere can call the shot. I will, moreover, get only one split-second chance. In this respect, wing-shooting is more demanding than fly-fishing.

There is something I have avoided mentioning till now: Each hemisphere tries to guide the hand on the opposite side of the body. This means that my right brain, thank goodness, is instructing my left hand, which is out on the forend, swinging



the gun. Unfortunately, the left hemisphere is in charge of my right hand, which is the one with the trigger finger. Right brain says "now!" Left brain wants more time to be sure. Grouse escapes.

When right brain is in full charge, however, the grouse slows down -- like Luke's target. This is magic. You focus on a spot in front of the bird and mount the gun calmly, correcting your aim before stock touches shoulder. Muzzles reach target, still swinging, and the gun seems to shoot itself.

This effect is hard to feel in dry-firing, mind you. Training is dull with any weapon -- shotgun, light-saber, or longbow. Boredom may, however, be a sign that your left brain has wandered off to think about something else. If, when that happens, the gun still comes up pointing where you want, effortlessly, the right brain is in control.

After that, the problem is to make the same moves in the field, when you are excited. It's only easy when it works. If you need to settle your nerves, here's a trick: say something to yourself, calmly, and mount the gun in time with the words.

Try "Use the Force."

*Super (19-23)*



mt Sat 1/3 federal lane.  
(Don Snow)

Writers can take on  
a attitude problem of  
country/city.

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Question is if Shro  
~~own~~ it but what have  
~~to~~ it is managed.



OCTOBER NOTES

- (1) As quoted by Bill Moyers in The Power of Myth. NY: Doubleday, 1988. p.xvi.
- (2) A Sand County Almanac, p.168.
- (3) Oliver Twist, 1839
- (4) Meditations on Hunting. NY: Scribner's, 1972. p.124.
- (5) According to Hills, John Waller. A History of Fly Fishing for Trout. London: Allan, 1921. p.9.
- (6) Letter dated November 12, 1959, to Ruth Topping, a social worker. Published in the New York Times Nov. 19, 1993.
- (7) Journal, November 4, 1858.