

Newboy is a poet, because he makes even less sense than the rest of the characters. Kidd manages to recover by himself and wanders back to the park. Lanya then takes him to a gay leather bar to clean himself up. They encounter Loufer and a new buddy named Jack. Loufer invites them all back to his place. On leaving the bar, they notice there are two moons overhead. One of the moons may be named George. This may be significant.

[Page 100. A mist of confusion hangs over everything. Fractured sentences litter the terrain. The air is still breathable.]

Leaving Loufer's, Kidd and Lanya return to the park where they have sex. Twice. On waking the next morning, Kidd begins writing poetry. Mental deterioration was bound to set in sooner or later. He uses The Notebook to write poetry. He doesn't try any Burma Shave verse.

Madame Brown and her dog Muriel wander into the park. Kidd had encountered them the evening before at the gay leather bar. He and Madame Brown discuss his underwear. She offers him a job cleaning out junk. He decides to take it. That afternoon, he wends his way to a mostly abandoned apartment building. He meets the four members of the Richards Family; Mr. and Mrs. Richards, their daughter June, and their son Bobby. They want to move from the 17<sup>th</sup> floor to the 19<sup>th</sup> floor. They want him to clean out the apartment on the 19<sup>th</sup> floor. This is the most reasonable development so far. Of course, the Richards Family prove to be completely waca-waca. The apartment on the 19<sup>th</sup> floor is filled with all sorts of stuff but nothing resembling a plot. Later, he takes a bath.

On the way back to the park, he stops at the gay leather bar and encounters Earnest Newboy. Newboy wants to see some of Kidd's poetry, so he invites him to the Calkins Mansion the next time the newspaper says it is Tuesday. Later, he returns to Lanya in the park. They encounter two men digging a latrine.

[Page 200. Mutated metaphors peer evilly from every nook and cranny. Similes slither across the ground and disappear into logic holes. Few readers have come this far, and fewer still speak of it.]

Exploring the mostly abandoned apartment building, Kidd finds a crash pad/dope den on the 16<sup>th</sup> floor. The apparent proprietor, a man named Thirteen, invites him inside. Faust, the aging newsboy, and a scorpion named Nightmare are

among those hanging out inside. Everybody sits down and smokes dope for awhile.

Kidd stops by the church with the handleless clocks to get a gay porn poster for June Richards. She wanted it because the model, a big Black dude named George Harrison, had raped her previously. The second moon is apparently named after the same fellow.

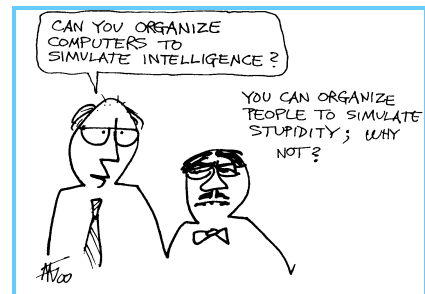
When Kidd returns to the apartment building the next day, Bobby Richards manages to fall down the elevator shaft. This leads to his death and extensive discussion. The body is eventually dumped in an empty apartment, because nobody can think of anything better to do with it.

The newspaper says the following day is Tuesday, so Lanya and Kidd go to visit Earnest Newboy and the Calkins Mansion. The place is heavily vandalized and mostly empty at the moment but otherwise pretty much like the Winchester Mystery House. There are twelve gardens named after the months, but they are arranged in no particular order. Some of them grow nothing more interesting than crabgrass. Some of them don't even grow that. Earnest Newboy talks at great length. He tends to talk in paragraphs which run on for several pages.

[Page 400. I discover the bodies of two dead book reviewers. Their faces are frozen in expressions of ghastly nausea. The air is increasingly purple and difficult to breath.]

Kidd becomes ill. He fears he is either going mad or becoming a character in a Russian novel. He is taken to the gay leather bar. He meets Earnest Newboy again. Newboy tells Kidd that Mr. Calkins may be interested in publishing his poems. Since he suspects he is either dying or going mad, Kidd gives Newboy The Notebook. He and Lanya awaken in the park next morning surrounded by Nightmare and his gang of scorpions. Nightmare gives him a light shield, but batteries aren't included. Light shields require 26<sup>1/2</sup> volt batteries. The next morning he

meets a man named Pepper in the public restroom. Pepper is suffering from some vague but debilitating



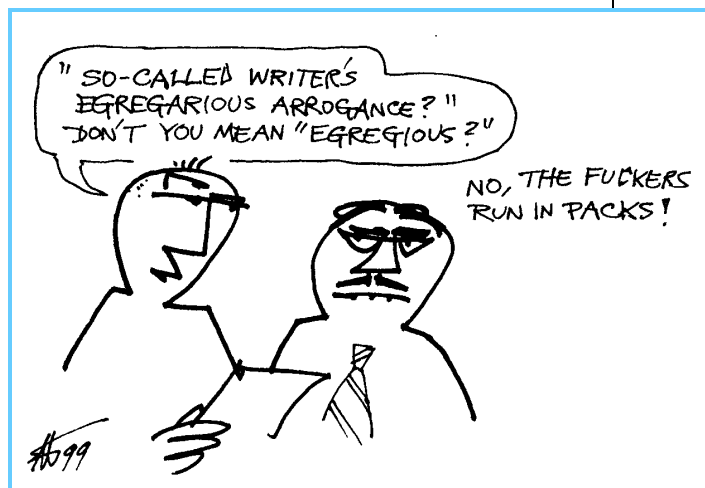
disease which causes falling of the armpits. Together, Kidd and Pepper visit the home of Bunny, the go-go boy from the gay leather bar.

Kidd then catches a bus. The bus is driven by a seven foot tall Black man who wears a black cowl. He probably plays basketball. The Black man intones ominously, "Anaheim, Azusa, and Cuca-monga." The bus takes Kidd to some unknown section of town where he meets Nightmare and a gang of scorpions. They are about to assault a gang of armed Rotarians who have barricaded themselves inside a department store. Kidd is recruited for the assault. They proceed to trash the ground floor of the department store. Kidd wrestles with an armed Rotarian and manages to get control of a rifle. He loses his one sandal and gains a new right sandal. They all flee the department store on the Anaheim, Azusa, and Cucamonga bus while revenge maddened Rotarians fire from the upper floors.

He returns to the church where he is fed by Reverend Amy. Newboy shows him proofs of the forthcoming book of his poems. Kidd decides to title the book *Brass Orchids*. Lanya finds him and tells him he has been missing for five days.

[Page 600. Mad cackling seems to fill the entire universe. It is as if a host of chickens have been driven beyond the limits of sanity.]

While wandering the streets in search of casual sex, Kidd encounters Denny, a man he has previously swapped innuendoes with at the crash pad/dope den. Since their last meeting, Denny has become a scorpion. They decide to go back to the scorpions den and have at it. On the way they encounter Lanya and decide to make it a threesome.



At the den, they engage in numerous sexual acts some of which I can't even spell.

After eventually disentangling himself at the den, Kidd goes to visit Tak Laufer. Laufer gives Kidd a 26<sup>1/2</sup> volt battery. Now Kidd can turn himself on. Since the assault on the department store, Kidd has increasingly been treated as the leader of the scorpions. This causes the novel to progressively read like *Boyz In The Hood At The End Of Time*. Or, possibly, *Boyz In The Hood Practically Any Ol' Time*. As part of his new status, Kidd leads the scorpions on a run to trash a house in a residential neighborhood.

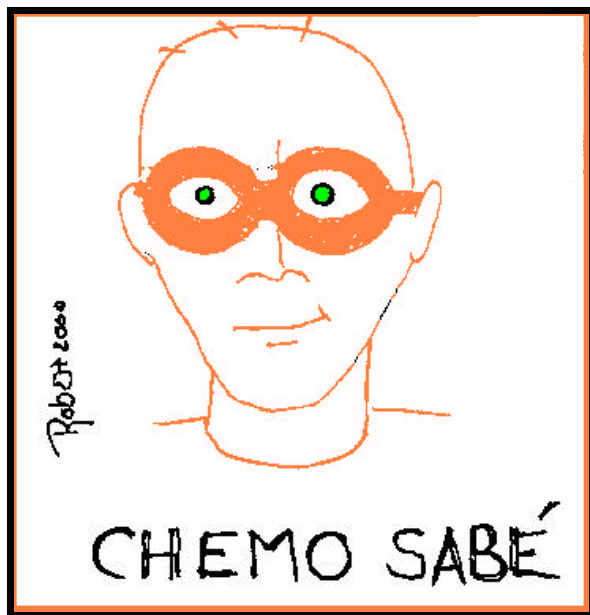
While Kidd and the Scorpions are busy looting and pillaging, the smoke and haze clear from the sky and a gigantic sun hundreds of times larger than the normal sun rises over the horizon. Naturally, everyone runs amok and atwitter. This may mean the end of the world or possibly a supermarket opening. Many have already suspected that time isn't running normally. It may be running backwards or even sideways. The again, it could be running diagonally. Some blame the Republicans, while others suspect an international conspiracy of chickens. After awhile, the giant sun sets, and everybody goes back to their normal business of looting and pillaging.

Later, Kidd meets an astronaut named Captain Kamp at the gay leather bar. Captain Kamp believes he may have seen a cockroach on the Moon.

The next day, Laufer takes Kidd to an abandoned store which he says is a bookstore. All the shelves are empty except for several boxes of Kidd's book of poems, *Brass Orchids*. At the counter, a man sits cross-legged and chants "Om." Kidd asks him why he is chanting "Om." He says it relieves his spastic duodenum. It's a better reason for chanting "Om" than any I've heard previously.

Leaving the bookstore, Kidd meets his gang of scorpions who tell him their den has burned down. It was easier than doing housework. Kidd and his gang break into another house and move in. He receives an invitation from Roger Calkins to a party in honor of the publication of *Brass Orchids*. The party is to occur three Sundays hence. Since the next three days happen to be Sundays, the party is fairly soon.

Kidd and his entourage of scorpions arrive at the party at Calkins Mansion.



Captain Kamp is in charge of the party and the other guests are the usual folks who live at the Calkins Mansion. Most everyone in Bellona seems to be there except for the elusive Mr. Calkins. The scorpions get right into the spirit of the party. They either drink or copulate depending on whether they are vertical or horizontal at the moment. Kidd meets a literary critic. He asks the literary critic what he thinks of *Brass Orchids*. The literary critic beats him savagely.

Days and weeks pass. Kidd is dancing naked at a scorpion orgy when he remembers his name. His name is William Dhalgren. I thought there had to be some explanation for the title of the book. Suddenly, a mighty roar comes out of the sky. Gigantic bolts of lightning cascade across the heavens. The giant idol of Baal wobbles and then collapses on the orgying scorpions. There is a massive explosion in the helium mines. Atlantic City begins to sink beneath the waves. Fire and collapsing buildings are everywhere.

Kidd/Dahlgren and the surviving scorpions beat feet for elsewhere. They head for the bridge leading out of town. With Kidd/Dahlgren in the lead, the gang of flickering scorpions are hauling ass across the bridge when they pass a young woman walking toward The City.

As they pass, she yells, "Is this really Cucamonga?"

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## NET GLEANINGS AND OTHER WISDOM ABOUT EXERCISE

(compiled by  
Marty Cantor)

1. It is well documented that for every mile that you jog..... you add one minute to your life ... This enables you at 95 years old to spend an additional 5 months in a nursing home at \$5,000 per month.
2. The only reason I would take up jogging is so that I could hear heavy breathing again.
3. I joined a health club last year, spent about 400 bucks. Have not lost a pound. Apparently you have to show up.
4. I have to exercise early in the morning before my brain figures out what I am doing.
5. I do not exercise at all. If God meant us to touch our toes, he would have put them further up our body.
6. I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.
7. I have flabby thighs, but fortunately, my stomach covers them.
8. The advantage of exercising every day is that you die healthier.
9. If you are going to try cross-county skiing, start with a small country.
10. And, last but not least-I do not jog, it makes the ice jump right out of my glass.

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## NEW SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

by  
*Leslie  
Norris*

Ernest Hemmingway  
School of Oral Surgery.

Grace Kelly Grand Prix Class.

Jack Ruby School of Jurisprudence.

John Hinckley School of Courtship.

Natalie Wood School of Seamanship.

Dan White School of Civil Disobedience.

John Lennon School of Fan Club  
Management.

Richard Pryor Cooking Academy.

Charles Manson Pediatrics Convocation.

Claudine Longet Biathlon Workshop.

Donner School of Haute Cuisine.

James Jones School of Mixology.

Joplin-Hendrix School of Pharmacology.

Earhardt-Post School of Navigation.

Ted Kennedy School of Life-Saving.

Jimmy Hoffa School of Labor Relations.

Vaughn Bodé School of Meditation.

Karen Carpenter School of Nutrition.

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*I previously liked Nader. In the recent past I  
have come to have a lower opinion of him,  
and as of today I don't just hate his guts, I  
dislike his entire digestive system.*

**D. Gary Grady in Trufen**