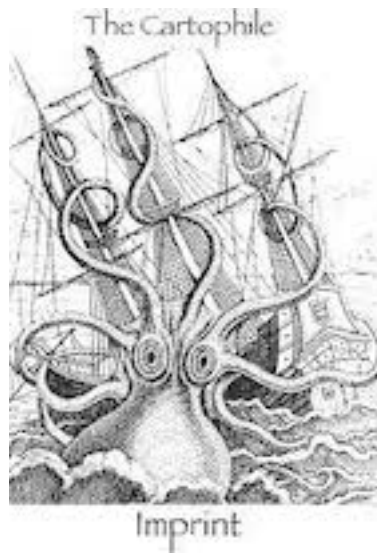




# **Active Threat Training Refresher**

**By Laurence Wilhelm Lillvik**



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# Invocation



## 2022 Will Be A Fantastic Year

Gertrude's completed  
her cycle of leeches,

Katherine hasn't a mare's  
maid to bully,

Everett is off to tame  
missionaries,

Paola has come up with  
a naughty solution,

Kenneth is bolted inside  
of a steam trunk,

His gerbils confessed and  
were given a pardon,

Louise sweeps your nightlife  
beneath Willow's carpet,

and Brandy aspires to  
learn proper French.





**Toil**



## **Executive Management Tools**

In exchange for the  
organizational trauma,

the threats of layoffs -  
exacerbated by this pandemic,

the utter lack of transparency,  
and tone deaf high-towering,

we offer a free mindfulness  
application, inside of which

Matthew McConaughey  
reads bedtime stories.

## Active Threat Training Refresher

Those of us who remain ambulatory  
Have the luxury of setting up, and  
Diving behind barriers, maybe.

With healthy boundaries you will  
No longer treat your romantic  
Relationships like for-profit prisons.

Oftentimes the assailant, an insider,  
Will trigger the alarm and then gun  
Us down when we gather at the safe space.

Moon phases and loan forgiveness act as  
Salves with time-release components  
Whose effects vary wildly for each individual.

Do kids today even comprehend the phrase  
“Going Postal?” That niche market is no  
Longer cornered but rounded like a river stone.

It's hard to stay current re: the ‘possum tactic,  
Be it in regards to grizzly bears, psychotic gunmen,  
Or the memory that stalks you like a pelican spider.

## Breakroom

“She’s probably Belgian,”  
To no one in particular,  
In reference to the woman,  
Buried beneath the leaves  
In the middle of the plaza  
Where the brutalists congregate.

He’d seen her that night,  
When he’d turned on a whim,  
Down that oft-maligned alley,  
Between Beechwood and Pine.

The feeling you get  
When you look through a window,  
And see it’s a breakroom  
Of a sad corporate office.

Worrying knobs on a  
Microwave oven, her  
Back to the autumn of  
The night he inhabits.

So austere is her repast  
He’s thankful the skeptics  
Will accept that the rain-lack  
Caused the crispness of leaves  
Which enabled the burial  
Of the probable Belgian  
To transform into pyre  
And immolate clean,

As the concrete around us  
Dismissively sleeps and  
The concrete beneath us  
Deliberately sleeps.







**Leisure**



# The National Park System

Buckets of  
Attenuated  
Desires,

Dumped

Into

A cluster  
Of sieves &

Sifted

Atop the  
Glacial paths

Where  
Marmots  
Prevail.

## Spindrift I

Let's return, to the next day--  
finding oneself, coming to

In the dunes, surrounded by  
little ones who are geoengineering

the beach. Back at the house,  
and up the stairs, the dancer lies,

maniacal, on the haunted crib.  
This is not a good thing.

The previous night we placed the  
Soft-shark-in-acid-bath upon the mantle.

We observed the gnat-like flight  
Of the spabato, five-fingered and fanged.

## Disappearing Lake

We found the disappearing lake where they said it'd be,  
in that article  
from a decade ago, and after falling into the kayak like a  
manatee I worried

the ice would melt in the lava tube and we'd get sucked  
into the mountain's  
drain, freezing, but still alive enough to die trapped in-  
side. Or if not sucked

all the way down, stuck near the far shore, in the quick-  
sand of a drained lake,  
it'd be cold and it would start to rain, and we didn't even  
bring beers or Pringles

because our friend turned fifty last night and we over did  
it, or did it just right,  
I guess. We brought some turkey sandwiches on that  
bread you like, which is

surprising because it's sourdough but maybe the cheddar  
and jalapeños  
baked into it makes all the difference. I didn't miss the  
Pringles as much

as you because you prefer the low-fat kind which makes  
those particleboard  
chips even further removed from their true potato kin. We  
saw a bald eagle

scare some geese and a red-headed black bird I'll surely  
never find in that new  
birds-and-trees book I grabbed in the check-out line of  
the co-op. It's really cool

to know we glided atop a lake that may not be there next  
week, it better be gone!  
I'm glad we have a two hour drive and can't just check a  
goddamn webcam.

## Off Season

Saw you out there  
trying to ascertain

the intentions of the  
salaried gentry. The

seawall's cracks,  
the dissolving

clumps of mud -  
this tide is hostile

and ludicrous. Can  
you reimagine grace

in the air-holes  
made by hermit crabs,

or will you still  
dig up sand?



## **Miro**

Went birding with  
Joan Miro out past  
the fields of (alleged)

fentanyl tents, cat  
-tails and catalytic  
converters where

buffleheads bob on  
conspiring tides and  
compassion lies in

quicksand marsh  
like an afterthought.

1983

At the  
height  
of the

cold war

we crawled  
into our

Russian

neighbor's  
window,  
played several  
rounds of

baseball

on the

Intellivision

game console,  
and then

escaped

undetected.

## Spindrift II

Dig the photo  
Of the gull  
Atop the neighbor's flue,

Beside the window  
Framing the gull  
Atop the neighbor's flue.

Ever presently  
Defying the gales  
That shape the pines  
Into twisting bonsai.

Weary-making,  
Should one ponder  
Such incessance.

# Other People



## Wassail

When presented  
with an exhaustive  
list of our crippling

deficiencies we  
light candles to  
honor lost sisters

and trysts forgotten.  
We pull pressed  
flowers from a book

of scraps to grind  
into pasty poultices,  
applying them to

criticisms leveled  
at our intentions.  
We mull wine and

ponder cinnamon  
and squeeze lemons  
by the flickering

tableau illuminating  
the actors, frozen in  
undying pantomime.

## Witch Job

Sure, I was  
ghost sick  
after he gave  
me a witch job.  
You know the  
guy who likes  
to say  
“peripatetic”  
instead of  
“intinerant?”  
Well he left  
town again.  
I guess he  
needed to  
make the  
kind of  
art that  
requires the  
cooperation of  
a much  
larger  
metropolis.  
“On page 706,”  
he’d noted on  
the back of  
his calling  
card, “the  
milkmaid farts.”

## Tasting Menu

You kept asking for a seat at my table,  
and then claimed to be allergic to all

that I was offering. Your blistered hands  
folded in prayer to a god who, descended

snail-like -- slimy and mythic  
across my neglected trellises.

Every year the grapes emerge to remind me  
of the summer you had a go at making wine.

Every vinegary sip sobered us  
to the possibility of separating

our lives. I can see them now,  
our companions, pecking the ground

in avian abandon, then  
becoming aeriform in unison.



## **Imposition**

The erotic timekeepers  
Double-parked their  
Vehicles, glove boxes

Stuffed with plague  
Journals, hemming you  
In, gas-lit and greasy.

## **Den of Bears**

You sidled past the town cryer  
holding your protestant breath,

then crouched in masquerade  
below the frosted storm window,

a Sumerian goddess in panoply  
of threads. You eavesdropped

on the doulas, setting in motion  
the double-crossed tantrum whose

proportions are only blown out  
by the same winds that tickle the

hedgerows surrounding the den  
of the bears we rely on and trust.

## **Haiku**

A strip club bouncer  
Beneath crepuscular sky  
Vapes tasty e-juice

# Apocalypse



## **Fremont Bridge**

We are going to die and  
The girl who wears ugly  
Dresses is shopping for

Ugly dresses, I can see her  
Phone in the reflection,  
Outside of which Mt. Hood

Is visible, crouching in wait,  
To the east. I've told the  
Story so many times now;

How I moved here in an  
October long ago and it  
Wasn't until March before

I even knew you could see  
The snowy protuberance  
From all over this city on a

Clear day, and when I saw it  
The first time I was driving and  
Nearly crashed my car, and we

Are going to die on this bridge,  
High above the Willamette River  
Because the bus driver seems a

Rookie and is changing lanes  
Right into a semi and I'm not  
Sure why I'm thinking of that

Time on the beach in Asbury  
Park when we laughed church-  
Like at the dead man who, not

Yet stiff, lay slumped beside his  
Unperturbed and younger lover,  
Both wearing tans the color of

Treacle, Italian horns and  
Speedos, and this man we knew  
Wasn't dead, but it would be

Funny if he was, and then it  
Wouldn't be funny if he really  
Was, woke with a start and

Immediately grabbed a peach  
From a plastic bag, and he  
Bit that vile stone fruit

With an irritated and survivalist  
Gusto so that its juice and his  
Slobber formed an unholy

Trickle, waterfalling down the  
Ramp of his chin, then puddling  
In the graying tundra of his torso.

This - some cloying karma, a  
Mealy revenge upon me for  
Deigning to find his hypothetical

Demise hysterical, triggering  
My fruit-phobic disgust but  
We aren't going to die just yet

Either, the semi sped up or the  
Bus slowed down and we made  
Our exit off of the Fremont Bridge.



## Vestibule

This recollection  
Doubles as a vestibule,  
An impatient nest,

Where the decades-  
Old spider plant  
Monopolizes the

Mahogany secretary,  
In which evidence  
Of begging alumni

Is filed beside the  
DNA reveal of a half-  
Cousin living in your

City, retired from  
Leadership in the  
Very organization

You've been employed  
Since the start of  
The Second Gulf War,

That night the cops  
Warned us protesters  
If we did not disperse

They'd be forced to  
Use chemical weapons  
On us and the un-

Escapable irony escaped  
In a slow leak. There  
Is a nice rug in the

Vestibule, vaguely  
Arabic, oval like a  
Locket, faded from

Steps and beams of  
Stained light. A dozing cat  
Doubles as a rescue dog.

## On Location

Up there, upon the battlements,  
taking in the constellations, no  
longer betrayed by the moon

and it's attendant lumens, no  
longer speaking to the actress  
who prefers Westerns to this

medieval allegory, thinking the  
anti-anxiety caplets the grip swears  
by must be placeboes because no

matter how deep your intake of  
breath, Orion and the others sculpt  
you into the stillness of a gargoyle.

## Scrimshaw

Day after god-  
forsaken day  
we're carving  
whispered sections

of the ur-text  
with a bone saw  
into the cadaver  
of the celebrety chef.

“Three table spoons  
clarified butter at  
room temp. Blessed  
be the ankle bracet

that keeps you away  
from the pickle ball  
court on Manzanita  
avenue. Elevated are

the misinterpreted for  
no one will ever care.  
Drape the caul fat over  
the tenderloin and

refridgerate for twenty-  
four hours or until  
you're truly famished  
The femur sold for

\$200,000 on Etsy  
after the scripture  
was properly  
illuminated.

## Eventually

Two-stepping through ruins  
with wine moms and climatologists,

the cantilevers are decimated,  
no load-bearing objects remain,

the frosted sky deals death in  
particulates, our ocean exits

are options, I've a mind to cry,  
hoarse-voiced, cry out to sail-

boats on lakes of memory. I'm  
impostering in summer homes,

wilted gladiolas curtsy in unfired  
vases on the veranda, lichen

paints the ramp to sea, and the  
guests, the gusts, arrive in unison.

## **The Heart of The Scorpion**

Before us:  
the sea's deranging expanses.

Behind us:  
the desert dunes its way inland.

Above us:  
Kalb Al Akrab reddens its twinkle.

Beneath it:  
glides an internet satellite,

Beaming with  
assurance that it is probable

We will take  
them up on their special offer

And try the  
new cheesesteak cart in our quadrant.

**Tuonela**





## **Punitive Taxidermy**

Assign  
my breastbone  
to the  
least important  
reliquary  
in the empire.

## **Canadian Prayer**

Come at me  
like you're emerging  
from a flooded

quarry, halfway  
between Yellowknife  
and Medicine Hat,

leading a colony of  
beavers, woodchips  
in their whiskers.

I am the  
fallen log that will  
one day

redirect these  
distracting, yet  
life-affirming, torrents.



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