

(LSWC)

# The Broke-Bottle Summation

*A Very Short Story*

*By Cadbury, The Beaver Who Lacked.*

*"I was upstairs when I saw it. I shouted to my wife. 'Karen, Karen! Look outside! There's a thing in the sky!' And we ran outside, and there it was. This long green thing in the sky. And everyone was coming out of their houses -- must have been 200 people -- pointing at this big green thing in the sky.*

*'Look, up there!*

*'Yes, I see it!'*

*'Ah, there it is!'*

*Then someone said, 'that's not the sky, it's the ground.' And it was. It... it was the ground. We were all just looking at a little green bottle on the ground."*

-- A Blue Jam sketch.

*"There is a beginning. There is not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is being. There is non-being. There is not yet beginning to be a non-being. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be non-being. Suddenly there is non-being. But I do not not know, when it comes to non-being, which is really being and which is non-being. Now I have just said something. But I do not not know whether what I have said has really said something or whether it hasn't said something."*

-- Chuang-Tzu

## The Broke-Bottle Summation

Brooding, he sat there, hunched over within his float. I hate my stupid ruddy well job and I hate my life, he thought to himself as he scowled at some nearby houses. He punched at the steering and shouted aloud "why can't I have any excitement? *I hate everything!*" He was the milkman, and he had become aggravated about that on this particular morning. As he began moving off down a street to continue along his delivery route, the milkman, still foul, began pondering every single type of exhilaration he could conceive of. "Yes!" he shouted. That's it. "Full speed, *now!*" He increased the velocity of his vehicle to a pathetic maximum, shut his eyes, carelessly, and then flew off the road straight into an Oak.

"I think we should have chosen a different milk person," one of three strange men in stealthy observance whispered to the others. "This one has the madness about him. Look, he has destroyed most of the produce he is to deliver and he has injured his face."

"We are only here to commandeer his milk float," a second man uttered softly in return.

"Agreed," said the third. "So let us do just that and then start the next phase of our mission. The important phase."

The milkman sat rocking back and forth in his suddenly halted machine, laughing gaily – maniacally, whilst gurgling through his bloodied nose. The men in the trees shook their heads. Then, as he spontaneously rose and started running around in circles aimlessly in the road, they emerged from concealment behind the trees and shot him in the chest with a blow-gun dart. "Argh, *fuck!*" he cried out. "What the..." A second dart sailed into the opposite arm.

"Quickly, get his truck!" instructed the attacker. "He can't move."

"I... I... I can't understand... erm... I can't understand what you're saying," the milkman forced out – the paralyses already gripping him. And he couldn't understand them, either. Because they were speaking Spanish.

“Load up the special deliveries,” the first Peruvian barked.

They all did – broken glass sloshing about in milk as they worked.

“What shall we do with him?” asked the second man, also a Peruvian.

“Give him a drink and leave him there. He'll be as rigid as a post for several hours.” replied the third, who, coincidentally, was just as Peruvian as almost everyone else in this story so far.

“But he's standing in the middle of the road” the first two protested in perfect unison.

“Don't worry about him, he'll be fine” replied three as he forced the milkman's mouth wide open and poured in a thick, dark liquid, before closing it again. “Let's go.”

The delivery driver watched them steal his float and drive off out of sight. He could feel the huge globs of the foul, acrid tasting gunk trickling down his throat and he was powerless to stop it. He was paralysed standing and couldn't even open his mouth to spit out. A nausea swept over him – and the vomit, unable to escape by its usual means, sprayed powerfully out of his nose until it was blocked shut by breakfasts. Hardly able to breathe, he felt poisoned and he wanted to die. Oh god, I'm going to die he wailed to himself internally.

And then came the bus.

Its driver had inexplicably fallen asleep and the large vehicle ploughed straight into the milkman, who budged not an inch. Then everyone disappeared and the bus just sort of fell in half, broken and burning like Iraq.

“Just what madness is this?” the Chief Constable demanded of the Officer. “Just what in the hell kind of madness is this?”

“I don't know Sir. Reports are coming in from all over the place. Hundreds of what have been described as Peruvian Rainforest Shamans have hijacked delivery vehicles all over the country and are distributing bottles of a black liquid – often disguised as something else, like milk. We don't know what it is, but thousands upon thousands of people have somehow managed to ingest it and it's only 7:33 A.M. It's chaos Sir. They're Terrorists!”

“*What?* Terrorists? And how can they disguise a black liquid as milk? Milk is *white*, you idiot! Black is not white! Oh, Christ above, I really don't need this this morning.” The Chief Constable's voice began to whine as he finished his sentence – his bottom lip wobbling despite his best efforts to contain it.

“Erm, Sir... speaking of white. You've got some just above your top lip.”

“Oh Christ, help me!” The chief fell to the ground and started rolling around on there with pent-up despair. “I was out all night partying. I haven't slept or anything. I came straight here. Oh god forgive me” he jabbered at the furniture.

“Sir, we were all out last night partying with you, *remember?* We all came straight here this morning. You came in with us. We do it most nights, especially if we're on duty.”

“I can't remember. I think I'm going to throw up. Make me a cup of tea, won't you please. I need to phone my Dad.”

“Your Dad died five years ago,” the officer reminded softly.

“Oh, right.” The Chief Constable stood up, completely straight faced, and sat down with a “phone.” “I think I'll call him anyway. Just to make sure.”

“Good plan, Sir. One can never be *too* sure.”

“Make the tea. This is a personal call.”

Officer went away to do as was asked, and the Chief Constable dialled a number into the “keypad” at random. “Hello dad, it's mum. What's that, there? I can't hear you very well, it's this bloody phone. It's too loud. Anyway, listen, I was just wondering if you're still alive? That's why I'm calling. I can't remember. Look, you're really going to have to speak up because I can barely hear what you're saying.” He felt a tap on his shoulder and turned around to find half the local police force staring at him.

He hung up his strange phone and attempted to put it inside his jacket pocket, but failed. A concerned looking colleague enquired; “Cone-geoff, what are you doing? Why are you shouting

into that stereo with it on full blast amid a national crisis of never before encountered proportions?"

At this point Officer returned with the tea and an assortment of small, sugar coated biscuits.

"It's not a stereo it's a mobile phone you fucking stupid woman. And I was calling my son, not that it's any business of yours. Look, shut up. What's the current situation, do we have time to order Cantonese food? I'm starving."

"Skynet reports that an estimated 82% of the country has been assimilated by the Peruvians. They've already destroyed half of London and started construction on a disproportionately massive green house. MI5 intelligence reports hint that the construction will be capable of storing and maintaining a full sized rainforest by the month of 2012" announced somebody who wasn't in the room moments ago – somebody nobody had ever seen before.

"How will the rain get in?" enquired another stranger.

"Look, this is all very good and well, but who the hell are you two and how did you get in here?" the Chief Constable asked, seemingly unconcerned -- downing his mug of milky tea in one sip.

"And whoever made this tea should be beaten to death on the spot. It tastes like a rotting grapefruit. *Blah!*" The chief fell to the ground then for the second time in one morning. And this time he didn't get back up.

"Anyone else for a cup of tea?" asked Officer, before falling to the ground himself.

Three sat chortling to himself on the bulldozer. He had just single-handedly demolished Hackney.

One appeared.

"Do you think we should have just killed them all?" three asked him, in all seriousness.

"Probably. But they did not know. It would not have been right."

"Well, they know now."

"Indeed they do."

The two men looked at each other and understood the implications of what was just said, then they turned and went their separate ways.