

OR MAYBE AMBROSE BIERCE

one of the deans posted a notice
in the elevators cautioning us to make
sure the building doors were locked
behind us on weekends since there
had been reports of "suspicious traffic."

the notices were taken down before i
returned from my trip, but i'm
told that someone scrawled above the
accusatory phrase,

"not to worry — that's only gerry locklin."

THEY'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND

she says, "i just got back from scoring hundreds
of essays on a sports topic, and it was really
depressing to read how much pleasure so many
of these high school football players had taken
in inflicting pain upon opponents who were
presumably smaller or weaker than themselves."

i remember a game in sophomore year when john
button, jim clapp, and i all converged upon
and simultaneously popped this poor little
punt returner and left him curled up and
coughing up bile as we recovered his fumble.

the others at the table are shaking their
heads at the inexplicable cruelty of teenage boys,
when i mutter, "it is a great feeling."

LIKE SON, LIKE FATHER

near her death, under the influence
of erroneously prescribed
synergistic drugs,

my mother would lapse into talking
about me,
to me,
as if i were my father.

"ivan," she would say, "do you remember
when jodie came home from second grade
and said ... "

or, "ivan, do you remember when we took jodie to quebec and how he loved the chateau frontenac and the plains of abraham ..."

or, "ivan, he's teaching out in california now ..."

it was strange, but i didn't mind, and no terribly embarrassing revelations emerged from it.

the circuits of the mind are as easily crossed as any other circuitry:

when a number of my children are in proximity i'll invariably begin to interchange their names, although i never do it when dealing with them individually.

eventually, my mother would come back to the present and say, "oh, you are jodie, aren't you? ... i thought for a moment there you were your father ..."

and i realized that she must have actually missed him all these years, which, having observed them for seventeen years, i had never really believed,

and i also saw how right i had been to flee and stay flown from

the role for which i had been understudy.

WAITING FOR ANYTHING

when my students deride how many millions of dollars arnold schwartzenegger got paid for speaking so few lines in terminator: 2, i

say, "he puts people in the seats. the film isn't losing money, is it?"

and i wonder if it is really stupider to sit through, say, professional wrestling than, say, waiting for godot.