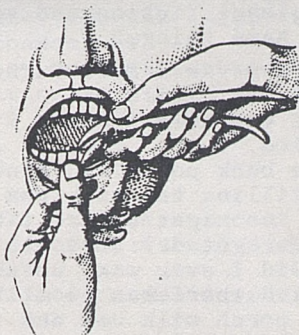


US-ISSN: 0043-9401; Editor: Marvin Malone; Art Editor: Ernest Stranger; Copyright © 1995, Wormwood Books and Magazines, P.O. Box 4698, Stockton CA 95204-0698, USA.



MORTALITY TOES

I saw my 72-year-old uncle's feet in sandals the other day and now I know why a lot of old guys wear socks when they wear sandals. He has thick, cracked, yellow and black nails that hang over the end of each toe.

I saw Mother Teresa's feet the other day in a photograph (it was her birthday) and her toes were all crammed together and pointing at a 45 degree angle away from the main part of the foot. My theory used to be that restrictive shoes ruin feet. But Mother Teresa always wore sandals in every photograph I ever saw of her. So maybe that's just what happens to feet.

Except, of course, in Hollywood, where ugliness equals death. I'm sure they have some sort of cosmetic surgery there for feet to keep them straight and as beautiful as feet can look.

Maybe that's why all those wacky religions and practices come from Hollywood. You know, Scientology, and past life regressions, and est, and the thing with the crystals: it's like people in Hollywood think they have some say in the matter of death; that people don't really die, or if they do they're only a phone call away from their agents

and swimming pools and next big break. They can't face gnarled, bent, sagging body parts and appendages: Toes holding little, cracked, yellow and black billboards advertising mortality; Toes bending as signposts toward the unknown.

SCIENCE FICTION AND NOSTALGIA

"Whatever happened to the guy walking down the street with his hands in his pockets whistling a tune? Science fiction and nostalgia have become the same thing."

-- T Bone Burnett, The Wild Truth

Whatever happened to the whistling milkman on his white-uniformed, bow-tied, 4 a.m. route? I remember, as a little kid, going to the back porch and finding clear glass bottles of milk filling the milk box and the old bottles that we left out the night before taken away. Did I dream this? Did milk ever get delivered to houses in shapely glass bottles? Did I ever wake up and look in the refrigerator and find there was no milk for my cereal, then look in the back porch milk box and find it full with glass bottles of milk? Did I ever hear the whistling milkman clanging the empties into the back of his truck and driving off? Weren't people afraid of having their bottles of milk stolen off of their back porches and smashed in the street by vandals — all that white goodness left to spoil in the wreckage and dirt on that hard, hard pavement?

SQUANDERED

I don't know how TV works, but I know it's a miracle: I could be watching something in China or Australia in my living room as it happens.

Today, in my living room, a group of models are in a round-table discussion. One model says to the moderator, Cindy, The Model of the Moment, "I think you opened a lot of doors, with the, you know, mole on your upper lip. It said that we didn't have to look a certain way to be considered beautiful."

All the models nod and clap.

The show is called "The House of Style." Someone produced it, photographed it, wrote it, edited it, directed it, and bankrolled it. Thousands of people made it possible.