

The Krishman Cube

by Bruce Holland Rogers

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Dr. John Quist
Department of English
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721

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Dear Dr. Quist,

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This office recently obtained information to the effect that you know something about the cause of the recent disturbances which have been designated as the "Spinshift Manifestation." Ordinarily, we do not follow up such tips -- our office is flooded with letters from self-declared prophets and the like. In fact, we have taken to following up only the leads we develop ourselves, admitting certain rare exceptions.

An anonymous phone call made from Zurich indicated that you could give us some assistance; the caller also predicted Phase Two almost to the hour. We cannot ignore such a coincidence, hence, this letter.

Please take the time to send us any information you may have regarding the Spinshift's causality, and forgive us for disturbing you should it turn out that the call was a hoax and that you know nothing that would help us.

Thank you.

Cordially,

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Donald Hammond
Spinshift Investigation Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20009

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Donald Hammond
Spinshift Investigation Bureau

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Dear Mr. Hammond,

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I'd like to help, but I'm afraid you just wouldn't believe me.

Sincerely,
John Quist

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Dear Dr. Quist,

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Your reply leads me to believe that you do indeed know something about the Spinshift, or else you are attempting to have a little fun at our expense by perpetuating a hoax. I'd like to point out two things to you. The first is that federal penalties for withholding information pertinent to the functioning of this office, or for providing false information, include fines of between \$50,000 and \$500,000 and/or prison terms not to exceed twenty years. We are very anxious to get any valid information we can, and we are not above employing a little intimidation to get it. Until now, none of our leads have worked out; I suspect this one won't either, but I must insist that you give us a straightforward reply. Second, if your story checks out, you could no doubt sell the book rights for several million dollars. After all, the public is almost as anxious to know what caused the Spinshift as we are.

I'd hate for my next letter to arrive in the hands of a federal investigator.

Sincerely,
Donald Hammond

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Dear Mr. Hammond,

I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I just teach English. I am not a physicist. If you want information on the Spinshift, I suggest you consult this university's own Dr. Colin Urvater in the physics department. He is generally recognized as the nation's foremost authority on the event. Your letters are a waste of your time and mine.

Sincerely,
John Quist

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Dear Mr. Hammond,

I must assume you didn't take my last letter seriously. There is nothing I haven't told you. I simply don't have the information you want. I have noticed that my house and office are under surveillance 24 hours a day, and I assume that you are behind this intrusion into my private life. Please call off your dogs; I've broken no laws.

Sincerely,
John Quist

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Dear Mr. Hammond.

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This has really gone too far. Both my home and my office have been broken into and carefully searched. Nothing was stolen, so I assume it was the work of your investigators.

For the sanctity of my home, I will give you what information I have, but as I indicated before, you are not likely to believe me. My credentials are impeccable, but they are in American literature. There is one person who could confirm my story, but I am certain that no matter how hard you might look for her, you wouldn't be able to find her unless she wanted to be found. With her abilities, she could be anywhere. This letter probably won't change your mind about anything; Colin Urvater will continue to be hailed as the chief Spinshift theorist and will continue in the role of unwilling pope for the Church of the Divine Prankster. I fully expect you to file this as another crackpot letter.

I am tempted to give you the facts all at once, but my version of these recent events will seem more plausible if I unravel all of this gradually.

A fire in the building which houses my department forced me and several of my colleagues to accept temporary offices elsewhere on the campus. I arrived at dawn on a Monday morning to inspect the space I had been assigned: an office in the physics building, which I was to share with a graduate teaching assistant (of physics). When I stepped into the room -- the door had been unlocked -- the sun's first yellow rays fell through the open blinds. A young woman in blue jeans and a lettered T-shirt stood over an enormous oak desk which was piled with open books. Her shirt read: WOMEN WHO SEEK EQUALITY LACK IMAGINATION. She smiled and extended her hand.

"You must be John Quist," she said.

"Dr. Quist," I corrected.

She grinned wider still. "Karen Krishman," she said, "or, as you're into titles, Pariah Krishman. That's pretty much how I'm regarded in the department."

I nodded absently. The room was incredible. Bookshelves lined two walls, and volumes of all sizes were crammed into them every which way or else stacked on the floor near that monolithic desk. Near the door were a small, two-drawer desk and an unstable-looking chair, toward which Krishman waved. My new office. She apologized for this poor substitute for an office of my own. We chatted about my research, about the two years' work I had lost in the fire. I explained my project, a critique I was writing on previous critiques of criticism of Melville. When I felt she was sufficiently impressed, I told her that she, too, would have some project of great import to work on someday, as soon as she advanced to my level of erudition.

And then I attempted to start off my morning by grading a few composition papers at the diminutive desk.

I say, attempted. Krishman immediately went back to doing what she must have been doing before I came in. She moved back and forth from her desk to the bookshelves, pulling volumes out at random, it seemed, and then thumping them down before her. In the midst of that frenetic activity, I was unable to concentrate. So I turned around and watched her.

Krishman devoured the pages she held open on the desktop, tracing the margins of each page with a fingertip and thwapping the page whenever she seemed to find something of value. Then, from time to time, she scribbled notes onto a pad of yellow paper before reaching for another book. This furious pace was nerve-racking, like watching a mouse that was hyped on amphetamines scrabble madly about its cage. I gazed at the bookshelves and, for the first time, noted the titles of the books. Only a few were what I would expect of a physics student: monographs and texts like *Quantum Mechanics* or *Radio Spectrometry: A Handbook for Analysis*. Among the others were *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, *Visionary Aspects of the Peyote Cult*, *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg*, and biographies of Karl Popper, Karl Marx, and William Carlos Williams.

Ostentatiously, I cleared my throat.

She kept on working.

I tried again.

She looked up from her reading. "Oh," she said. "I hope I'm not distracting you."

"As a matter of fact..."

"You see now," she said, "why I have an office of my own. I drove the students who used to share this area with me up the wall. I'm sorry. I just don't know of any other way to work."

A pair of large volumes in front of her caught my eye. One was the Bible and the other, as near as I could guess, was the Vedas in the original Sanskrit. So, naturally, I couldn't resist asking her what she was working on.

She swept a few strings of brown hair out of her eyes and said, "Do you really want to know?"

"I've never seen such a diverse range of references used for a single project," I told her.

"That's because most projects are limited in their scope. I'm trying to assess the fabric of the universe, and so my sources have to reflect the nature, well, of everything, of the whole universe."

I turned my chair around and moved it before her desk. "Fabric of the universe?" I said, just a bit skeptical.

"Since you teach literature," she said, "I'll start with this." She fetched a book from a stack near the window. It was Robert Bly's *Sleepers Joining Hands*. "Have you read it?"

I shook my head. I knew something about Bly, though. He was an aging hippie poet who lived in some snowy woods somewhere. Wisconsin or Minnesota, I thought.

"Well, then," Krishman told me, "you ought to read it now. The essay in the middle of all these fine poems deals with an important archetype, that of the Great Mother. You see, there's a great deal of evidence that the earth was once dominated by matriarchies."

I must have looked incredulous, because she grabbed two other books, *Primacy of the Mother* and *The First Sex*, and handed them to me.

"Maybe that's the wrong place to start. What do you know about quantum mechanics?"

At the time, my knowledge of subatomic physics was limited to knowing that certain particles, quarks, had taken their name from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. I confessed this to her, and she reacted by giving me yet another book to study, an elementary physics text. I wish I could duplicate the exchange that then followed, but at that time I only understood part of what she told me. So I can't recall much of the discussion verbatim.

She talked about nuclear energy and its evolution. She told me how, just a century ago, the only energies we knew of were mechanical, thermal, electrical, gravitational, luminous, and chemical. The leap from chemical to atomic energies had been an enormous advancement, but atomic energy was by no means the last frontier for the physicist. Atoms contain substructures, systems of smaller particles, and each of those particles represents an energy potential. Now, if such substructures continue to be made of even smaller structures, then each atom is a tremendous potential powerhouse of energy that might be derived by tapping into quantum mechanical fluctuations. In other words, there exists a zero-point energy for all matter, the energy that would be freed were the matter totally unmade. Krishman told me that a cubic centimeter of virtually any substance represents an energy potential of 10^{38} ergs. I had to tell her that I didn't know what an erg was. I felt uncomfortable confessing my ignorance to her. I'm a Harvard Ph.D., and she was, after all, just a master's candidate.

Krishman rummaged through the top drawer of her desk and pulled out an eraser, a ruler, and several handfuls of stubby pencils before she found what she was after. She tossed me a tiny black wooden cube. "That's one cubic centimeter," she said. "Translating the figure I just gave you into more familiar terms, the zero-point energy potential of that cube is equivalent to one hundred billion tons of uranium. Fission is terribly inefficient compared to unmaking matter."

"And getting at this energy, that's your project?"

"Yes. But I'm trying a unique approach."

"Which is?"

And she revealed to me the key to her inquiry. Since, in her view, traditional science (she called it male-structured science) didn't offer any answers, she was trying to approach this problem through what she called a "gestalt matriarchal mindset," which was so much gibberish to me. She gave me yet another book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* by Thomas S. Kuhn. She explained how science works like a stairway. That is, science usually progresses horizontally, within the accepted paradigms of the era, expanding on a basic, sound foundation. Then, inevitably, it runs into some problem that can't be solved with "normal" science, or else it hits some snag, some kind of theoretic contradiction. Then, it abandons the old system, more or less, and adopts a new one in which the problem can be solved. That is, in a crisis, science makes a vertical leap. An example of such a leap would be the switch from a Newtonian base to an Einsteinian one.

"I'm trying to latch onto a process of obtaining knowledge which is rational, but not logical. Basically, that's what's wrong with the patriarchy: Too much rigidity and not enough magic or emotion."

I asked her what she would do with so much energy if she could get at it.

"I haven't decided," she grinned. "But it would be something spectacular."

I figured she was either a genius or a nut.

The latter possibility seemed likely after I had spoken with Urvater. I had met him in the hallway that afternoon just as I started out the door of the office.

"Dr. Colin Urvater," he introduced himself. He was a terribly respectable looking gentleman; his hair was greying, but neat, as mine is; and he had excellent conservative taste in clothes. In fact, our suits matched. "You're Dr. Quist?"

"John," I said.

"Look," he said, "I'm quite sorry about this." He walked me down the hall.

"About the fire, you mean?"

"Well, that too, certainly. But mostly about where we put you. One of the receptionists assigned you the space, though I tried to explain to her about Krishman, how it was best to isolate her from the saner elements of the world."

"She is a bit eccentric," I observed.

"Eccentric? She's crazy! I've been working on getting her fired, but the department chairman thinks she's 'insightful.' Hell, she's a crackpot, a terrible lecturer, and a threat to the other grad students. I had to move several of them out of her office to keep them from being corrupted."

And he promised to try to get me moved.

"Even her undergraduate students complain about her," he told me as we parted. "She can't ever stay on the subject."

Near the end of the second day in her office, I decided that Karen Krishman was indeed off the wall, especially after I had watched, for another whole morning, and for most of an afternoon, her frantic journeys to and from the bookshelves. I had been unable to get anything done at my desk all day, and that frustrated me increasingly. But toward four o'clock, Krishman stopped working for a moment and stood over my desk.

"Yes?" I said, looking up.

"Dr. Quist, I was wondering if you'd be able to help me with something? It's beginning to look as though I may be called onto the carpet because of my lecture methods."

"And?"

"Well, you've been teaching for quite a few years, and I'd imagine that qualifies you as something of an expert."

Ah, flattery. What could she ask that I could turn down after that?

"Would you sit in on my lecture in ten minutes and tell me what I ought to change?"

I agreed.

* * *

She began, just as the last stragglers took their seats, with the following:

"I want to preface what I'm teaching today with something you've all heard from me before. This is a basic, elementary course, and your text concisely explains everything you'll need to know in order to pass the exams. If you have questions about any formulae or concepts, I'm almost always in my office and available. The purpose of these lectures is not to teach you physics, per se, but to teach you that physics, religion, poetry, history, and the rest of the so-called subjects you are studying here are not separate, dividable entities. Everything in this universe fits together with everything else, and if you want to break experience down into artificial components, I suggest you transfer to another section."

And then she was off. That fifty minute lecture still whirls like a delightful mental circus as I try to recall it. She spoke about the Hindu Genesis, coral atolls, magic, druids, Charles Dickens, Chinese poetry, and the relationship between science and religion. I can't remember a word of what she actually said, but I had the impression that ideas, charged with wonder and delight, danced forth from her as colors. Krishman's lecture was a kaleidoscope of sun-yellow, circus-red, apple-green ideas. The world not only made sense for those fifty minutes, it was fun as well.

What surprised me the most -- though it shouldn't have after I had heard the music of her mind -- was that only five or six of her students left when the class was over. These were probably the ones who had complained to Urvater. The rest of the students stayed behind to ask Krishman questions. This shocked my sensibilities somewhat, as I was accustomed to seeing students stampede the exits after my own lectures.

Once again, Krishman's mind was in flight.

She answered question after question about a myriad of topics. At one point, she began to speak about black holes and how, to an outside observer, an object falling into one would, at a certain point, seem to slow down and stop, frozen in time.

A student asked, "How do we know you're not making all this up?"

She smiled and said, "I didn't, I assure you. But someone did, just as someone made up energy and atoms."

"Discovered, you mean," said another student.

"No, I mean invented. Actually, the distinctions between invention and discovery are tenuous, at best."

A physicist named Feinberg, who was dissatisfied with Einstein's absolute speed limit, that is, the speed of light, decided to invent his way around that little inconvenience and substituted imaginary numbers for Einstein's real ones. He was thus able to postulate faster-than-light particles, which he named tachyons. Four universities are presently building machines which may detect these entities; if they succeed, did Feinberg discover something that was there all along, or did he cause tachyons to exist by looking for them? Remember when Tinkerbell is dying and Peter Pan tells the audience that if they'll only believe in fairies, Tinkerbell will live? Same principle. Invention, or discovery, by means of mentally re-ordered reality."

"Ridiculous," said one student.

"Perhaps. But we had named quarks before we found them. We ought to ask: Were quarks around before we had a name for them? And besides, Tinkerbell lives, doesn't she?"

Another student, a burly guy in a football jersey, raised his hand from the front row.

"Yes," Krishman said.

"Ms. Krishman, how many downs are there in Canadian football?" he asked.

"Three," she laughed. "Why?"

"I just wondered if there was anything you didn't know."

"Oh." She sobered some. "There's a hell of a lot. Someone whom I admire a great deal used to talk often about how important it was to always be amazed, to admit your ignorance. He also said that anyone who could no longer stand 'rapt with wonder' at the world's many mysteries was as good as dead. I don't suppose any of you know who I'm talking about, do you?"

No one ventured a guess.

"Albert Einstein," she said. And with that, Krishman decided to end their discussion. I had never before seen students actually leave a lecture hall reluctantly, but more than a few of them dragged their feet as they departed.

I admitted to Krishman that her lecture wasn't half-bad. Actually, I knew it was the kind of talk every professor wants to give at least once: a visionary, spiritual chautauqua, a field trip to see God. But I didn't tell her that. After all, I had my Ph.D. from Harvard and, well, I think I've gone into this once before. Basically, I was jealous.

I began to attend her lectures regularly and, without telling her about it, I wrote several letters to the head of her department to praise her in spite of her desultory speaking style, or perhaps because of it. Though I tried to conceal my admiration for her, I believe Krishman must have discovered what I was doing for her; in everything she did in my presence, she seemed to be trying to express gratitude. She began to confide in me, to tell me about advances or setbacks in her research. Half the time, I couldn't follow what she was talking about, but she spoke so well that I always listened very carefully, nonetheless. Anyway, I was certain that because of my patronage, Urvater would fail in his attempts to have her dismissed.

And, then, she seemed to blow it all, to intentionally give everything up.

Three weeks before final exams, I found a note, written in her almost illegible script, on my desk. It read: "Off to see the wizard and sundry Amazons. Please find someone to take my lecture section. I wouldn't be so irresponsible, except that I feel very close to finding what I am after. -- KK."

Dr. Urvater was only too happy to take up the challenge of repairing the "damaged minds" that Krishman had left behind. I attended one of the dry anesthetic lectures which he delivered to what had been Krishman's class. In trying to describe Urvater's oratorical style, I can think of only one valid phrase: Kurtz's last words in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," which were, "The horror, the horror." At the end of the lecture, the students made the kind of rush for the exits that I had been accustomed to in other classes.

Karen Krishman was dismissed in absentia.

I received three postcards from her, and they led me to consider how fine a line separated genius and madness. The first, with a local postmark and a picture of a saguaro silhouetted in the sunset, read: "Searching for a Doña Juana. See Castaneda's works but as you read him, keep in mind the fact that women always make better necromancers than men do."

The next card came ten days later, from Brazil. The picture was of a fierce Jivaro, his spear raised menacingly. "Guess what I'm doing on the Amazon?" she wrote. "They don't really cut off their right breast, but they are tough mamas. I'm picking up a few rites of purification."

The last card was on plain white cardboard. It had been canceled in China, but read: "I'm in Nepal illegally. Having a wonderful time, wish you were here, etc. I have found the gates to the golden pavilion. Now if I can just find a hairpin and pick the lock...."

On the day that I was going to move back into my own reconstructed office, I saw Krishman for what I assumed would be the last time. I was walking across the parking lot when I happened to glance up and see the light was on in the office.

And, then, I thought I saw Krishman. Her back was to me, and she sat in what I now know is the lotus asana. She appeared to be floating several feet above the floor. Of course, by the time I had dashed across the parking lot and up two flights of stairs, I realized that, no, that couldn't have been what I had seen. Perhaps she had been sitting on top of that huge desk of hers. I had been up late the night before, grading comparison/contrast papers. So perhaps the illusion had been brought on by fatigue. By the time my hand was on the doorknob, I had caught my breath and convinced myself that what I had seen must have indeed been Krishman sitting on her desk. That was the only sound explanation I could muster, but it seemed quite reasonable. I opened the door.

"Well, hi," Krishman said. Her arms were full of books. She was standing in the middle of the room, where her oak desk used to be. I must have paled a bit, because she asked me, "What's wrong?"

"Where's your desk?"

"Out in the pickup truck, with half of my books. Why?" And she grinned like a Cheshire cat.

I didn't mention what I had seen. At the time, I believed that some of her worst traits had rubbed off on me, that I was going a little crazy myself. She had come to retrieve her books and furniture, so I helped her carry them out to the truck she had borrowed. Neither of us spoke. She seemed very tired, and I was preoccupied with watching myself for further signs of psychosis.

We came back to the office for one last load, and I picked up the books she had handed to me on that first day when she had tried to explain zero-point energy to me; they had lain on my desk all that time. She told me to put them down.

"I want you to keep those, and a few others that I'll have sent to you."

"Why?" I said, but she didn't answer. Instead, she set a stack of her scribbled notes on my desk beside the books.

"Everything essential is right there. Provided I can goad you into looking in the first place, you won't have to search as far as I did. You'll have to learn to think a little less rigidly, a little more in step with the moon."

"What are you talking about?" I asked, but she was already on her way out of the room. A week later, a courier service delivered about fifty books to my office. I stacked them, still sealed in their boxes, out of the way in a corner.

And that was that.

Well, not quite.

No one who was awake during the Spinshift, I am sure, will ever forget what they were doing when it happened. In my case, it was late afternoon, close to sunset. I was grading some composition papers and was about halfway through my second peanut butter sandwich when my head was filled with an annoying buzz and I jolted forward onto my desk. As I peeled the sandwich from my nose, I had a strange intimation of nausea that told me, somehow, that what I had just experienced had been no ordinary earthquake.

The fellow who works in the office across from mine, Wayne Tremblay, appeared in my doorway. Now, Wayne is a poet, so I wasn't sure how to react when he said, "God is either pissed or having some fun at my expense."

How does one respond to that? I said what I usually say in response Wayne: "Oh?"

He motioned me into his office and pointed at the orange, western sky.

"I was watching the sunset," he told me. "Then there was that tremor. And then... Well, tell me if you

see what I see."

"What's that?"

"Watch the sun."

I did.

It was rising.

The sun was rising in the west.

I won't detail what followed then, Mr. Hammond. No doubt, you know more about the accusations that we exchanged with the Soviets, the tense hours when hands were poised above the buttons of holocaust (forgive me if I sound melodramatic). The papers were never very clearly about why both sides suddenly calmed down, but I suspect that someone must have pointed out to them that if the other side did indeed have the ability to reverse the earth's spin, that an attack might well be suicide; who knows what other powers the enemy might possess? And you probably know considerably more than I about most of the religious revivals, the mass conversions to every faith, the rise of new churches that took place in Communist states during those first few months. Then everyone finally got used to having the sun rise in the west and set in the east. The world returned to business as usual. You must admit, it's surprising what we can adjust to.

Something you probably haven't been as close to, however, is the birth and development of the Church of the Divine Prankster. As I'm sure you know, Dr. Urvater, Krishman's nemesis in the physics department, had been one of the few scientists in the world to offer even a remotely reasonable explanation for what had happened and how it was that we weren't hurled into space because of our own momentum. It must have been the only creative thought the man had had in his career, because he delighted so in speaking about it. The idea was simple enough. Since molecules constantly vibrate, the Spinshift was a matter of every atom in and on the earth vibrating, in unison, in the same direction for a heartbeat or two. That is, all molecules, due to an incredibly unlikely synchronization of their motions, moved simultaneously in the direction counter to the earth's spin; we survived the event only through the happy accident that all things happened to change gears at the same time. It doesn't sound like much of a theory, but in cases like this one, you take what you can get.

A television reporter asked Urvater once if he meant by all this that the Spinshift was a fluke in the universal plan, that God was playing a practical joke. Urvater said that, no, the matter was more complicated than that. But one or two impressionable minds latched on to the reporter's question, disregarding Urvater's reply. Since people were ready to buy any idea that attempted to explain the Spinshift, Urvater soon had two followings. The first consisted of scientists who were grateful for an explanation that at least sounded something like rational science. The second was a cult of crazies who wore squirting flowers and joy buzzers as the insignia of the Church of the Divine Prankster. The latter entourage followed him around and called him their "prophet of pranksterism, message bearer for our giddy God."

To which Urvater would reply, "If you don't buzz off, I'm calling the campus police."

But they stuck with him, and when he did call the police, the best they could do was cite the cult for trespass. In a day or so, Urvater's unwanted followers would be back, and the police had other things to do than chase off harmless, if annoying, worshippers.

The church grew. There was something about its name that appealed to the disoriented, and there were very few people whom the Spinshift had not disoriented. When the CDP boasted a world-wide membership of five hundred thousand, Urvater called an evening press conference/lecture and invited several well-known theorists to come and help him explain the hard science behind his theory and dispel the mysticism that had grown up around it. He wanted to be a scientist, not a pope.

It was at that press conference, held in an auditorium on the campus and under heavy security (intended to keep the Divine Prankster devotees out) that I again saw Karen Krishman. She was wearing the same T-shirt and jeans that I had first seen her in, and from her neck there dangled a golden pendant with unrecognizable inscriptions. I wondered how she had managed to get in -- passes were specially arranged for by the university, and Urvater had personally screened the guest list. I knew he'd never knowingly admit Krishman. But I didn't have time to ask her about that, or anything else, for that matter. I

ran into her just before Urvater's first defender began his address, and we exchanged only enough words to agree to sit together. Her only words to me as she smiled through the first six speakers were: "What these people need is another good dose of doubt to open up their minds."

Then Urvater himself stepped on-stage to explicate his ideas. As he began to speak, I noticed Krishman was shaking violently. She was struggling hard to keep from laughing aloud. And I felt sure, now, that I had final proof that she had cracked. Eventually she regained her composure and listened to the rest of Urvater's proclamation, occasionally trying unsuccessfully to suppress a titter.

Urvater wound up with these words: "The phenomenon we have called the Spinshift was the result of pure chance, and I can say in all certainty that, due to the tremendous unlikelihood of its ever having happened in the first place, it will never happen again."

And Karen Krishman muttered, barely loud enough for me to hear her, "You wanna bet?"

My head buzzed and I was thrown, as was everyone else in the auditorium, into the seat in front of me. No one in the building moved or spoke. We were stunned. We all knew what had happened; it had happened once before. By the time I stood up to look for Krishman, she was gone. I tried the lobby, the parking lot, until I realized that she could be anywhere. Nepal or Brazil, for example.

Or securely ensconced on Mars.

I walked toward my car. I didn't feel too astounded by this second phase of the Spinshift. You get used to things, you see. And, besides, I had the rare honor of knowing what had caused the earth to resume its old course. As I reached for my car keys, I found, at the bottom of my pocket, a tiny black wooden cube.

I held that cube in my open palm and watched the stars make their gradual westward sweep. I thought of black holes, Tinkerbelle, Canadian football, and little black cubes. Then I remembered the books and notes that Krishman had give me. I turned toward my office.

And, so, there it is. Since then, I've been reading, thinking, and experimenting. I don't know if I'll be able to overcome my stuffy masculine orientation enough to piece together the clues Krishman left for me. I believe I at least know why she picked me as her apprentice; you see, if I can learn to accept the idea of matriarchal thought as a vital element to freeing my mind, then anyone can. And I've at least recognized what an old pedant I've always been, which is a pretty good start. I just may be able to repeat Krishman's stunt or, perhaps, do something more creative.

I hope this satisfies your curiosity enough to keep you out of my office and home in the future.

Cordially,

John Quist

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Dr. Quist,

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Are you going to give us a straight story or not?

Donald Hammond

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Dear Mr. Hammond,

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Regarding your inquiries about Dr. John Quist, I am afraid he is no longer with our faculty. Two weeks ago, he asked that his classes be assigned to someone else, and he disappeared. I wish I could be of more help. The gentlemen from your Bureau who came here seemed very anxious to find him. Unfortunately, this is all the information I have.

Sincerely,
Hamilton Campbell, Chairman
Department of English
University of Arizona

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