Frederick Dawson

CYCLICIST
DREAMS
Cyclist Dreams
Copyright © 2005 by Frederick Dawson

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher, except for brief quotes in reviews.

Dawson, Frederick, 1945--
Cyclist Dreams


Printed in the United States of America.

Cover photomontage by the author (2004).

H. C.

Obscure Publications
307 River Street, Apt. 18
Black River Falls, WI 54615

"Watch out for Obscure Publications"
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting Weighed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Golf Match</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Alien</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punishment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mission</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Sleepy Night</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclicism</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Inter-Lifeform Romance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery Party</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Bedroom</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Art Exhibit</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in an Opera</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Detectives</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness to Yesterday</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting the Pythons</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex in Chicago</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Paintings of Time</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Munitions Factory</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animated Line Drawings</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Lincoln Was Elected</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrified Dinosaurs</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Home Is a Battlefield</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Death of a Nation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Hodgepodge</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back to the Opera</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Ship to Dennis</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simenon's Carnival</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Adams and the Russian</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance With a Portuguese</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trouble in High School. Something I drank in the school laboratory shrunk me, clothes and all, into a dwarf. But no one seems to notice the change. Now I think I'm growing again and head for the nearest restroom to weigh myself and be sure. There's a long line, both boys and girls, extending out the door, so I head to the next one. By this time, I've other reasons for seeking a restroom. But inside, I find our principal, Mr. L., and two gray-haired women. First I try moving into one of the stalls but realize an inspection is going on. So I go outside, heading for the school's last restroom in its far wing. It's dark out and a marching band is passing in the opposite direction. As rain starts to fall, things fade away.

December 12, 1974
The Golf Match

The Family Farm’s become a golf course with no fairways or greens. Here I am playing against James Caan, making twenty- to fifty-dollar bets on each hole. I win the first one at the edge of the woods and a worldly, attractive woman emerges to make my acquaintance. The next hole requires us to hit over a cornfield—a shortfall could mean hours of searching for the ball. But I make it and am greatly encouraged as I go on to the most difficult hole yet. The tee is in the clubhouse and I have to drive the ball out a small window. My cat appears and tries to grab my attention. With much effort, I shoo him away. Then I make my swing and the ball flies straight up to land on a cushion just a few feet in front of me. Realizing the cat is telepathic, I seek his forgiveness but find him involved with an amorous bulldog. Meanwhile, James Caan has found a magazine with peanut-shaped leather pages. This contains the evaluations of all the golfers, he tells me. I look for mine but only find plaster casts of my fingerprints around one border.

December 18, 1974
The Alien

AS A CREWMAN ON the starship Enterprise, I'm searching for the intruder who's left muddy footprints all over the ship. In a corridor, I find an alien about a foot high, its body resembling a hamburger, on what appears to be a snail foot some of the time and insect legs at others. The creature responds curtly to me, and moves away, raising one foot at intervals. At these spots racks appear on the walls complete with towels and washcloths. I follow but lose sight of the alien around a corner. Following, I find my brother sitting alone in a lounge. Something makes me suspect he is really the alien in disguise.

“What have you been doing?” I ask.

“I've become an operatic tenor.”

Knowing my real brother has little interest in music, I ask him to prove it. He sings “Joy to the World” in German, very badly. Unsure what to do next, I slip out and find the alien in his original form at the foot of a staircase.

“I confess!” he cries. “I'm guilty.”

Not certain what he's confessing to. I try to find out.

December 28, 1974
Punishment

A BRITISH COLONIAL policeman stands by my bed, there to punish me for collaborating with the Mau Mau. From a bushel basket he takes human eyeballs and bounces them off the floor toward me. Sooner or later, I know, an eyeball will land in my mouth and choke me.

April 7, 1972
The Mission

I'm a James Bond-type hero, assigned to assassinate a villain named Julius. I find him at a party, sitting on a couch with his back to me, just a few feet away. Should I use the conveniently-placed scissors or the letter opener to kill him? Just as I decide the letter opener is too blunt, my mother walks in. From a refrigerator, she withdraws a tray of butterscotch pudding cups and says, "We won't have the ice cream now. We'll have it tonight."

August 19, 1969
At first I was Humphrey Bogart. That's when the Homosexual and his wife framed me for murder. I managed to escape and now, as myself, am down on Baltimore's notorious Block seeking clues. It's a warm, dark night.

I start by tailing a fat sailor down a side street until he goes into a bar. At the same time, I see a policeman in sinister clown makeup peering out of an alley and polishing his nightstick. Sensing he is part of a raid, I turn away and see the Homosexual.

He's standing in the bar doorway with a hooker, obviously giving her orders. I decide to follow her as she goes into a porno shop around the corner. She speaks to the manager while I pretend to look at the books. Their voices are too low to overhear, except for the words, "waffle iron." When the manager takes the girl into the back room, I head back to the bar.

In the meantime, the raid is in full swing. The cops are taking some kids in black leather jackets and ducktail haircuts into custody. I slip through the door and find, instead of a bar, a multitude of staircases, on which bargirls
sit nursing black eyes. In the midst of the crowd I find Don, a naïve fellow from my college, in short blue pajamas. He greets me quite enthusiastically.

“How'd you escape the raid?” I ask.

Pulling out a pocket chess set, he says, “When the cops came in, I started playing chess with them.”

This place isn't safe, I sense, and head toward an exit sign at the foot of some steps. As I approach, the door becomes a cellar window and I'm barely able to squeeze through. Once again, I become Humphrey Bogart.

Now I'm in a hexagonal, rubble-strewn courtyard with no way out. Around me are boarded-up, plate-glass windows. But there's a light in a second-floor window and handholds which let me climb up to it. In a flash, I'm up there and inside the room. Directly in front is a potted orange tree; beyond is the Homosexual in drag. We have the Big Scene, the Climactic Confrontation.

Later, I become a game warden in the Everglades, speeding through unspoiled wilderness in an airboat. Then I realize I wasn't supposed to have the Big Scene with the Homosexual, but his wife. Instantly, I'm back in her home, having the dramatic confrontation.

March 6, 1970
Cyclicism

It is nearly noon when I finish breakfast, unusual for me. Maybe that's because it's Thanksgiving and several of my brothers' and sisters' families are here on the farm celebrating. For me it's noisy chaos, especially with all the younger children. Inevitably, a crisis develops while we're playing in a patch of honeysuckle—my youngest niece, two months old, has gotten sick eating green apples.

I slip away into an empty but toy-strewn living room. Here a large magazine one of my older nephews brought catches my eye. The cover shows a curly-haired, rosy-cheeked boy peering through an eyepiece. Below is the title, *An Approach to Elementary Cyclicism*.

Opening the book, I find that the boy, Andy, received a microscope from his uncle. What he first saw when he looked through it were black lines writhing like a cluster of snakes. Then Andy adjusted the eyepiece and the lines altered to illustrate several stories.

The first story told of a powerful sorcerer in ancient China who kept a prized magic cube on an elaborately decorated barge anchored miles out at sea. One day a
wily, ugly thief managed to slip aboard and steal the talisman. Almost instantly seen, he used the cube's power to run across the water to the shore. Sea serpents pulled the barge in pursuit. On land, soldiers took up the chase, some leaping through the air and waving scimitars while others flew on motorcycles. The thief downed dozens with the talisman's rays but there were too many for him. Overpowered, he was left naked and senseless in a field of reeds.

Andy knew you didn't normally see such stories through a microscope. Disturbed, he sought guidance from two clean-cut young men wearing ties and Ivy League sweaters. They smiled, showing a white gap instead of teeth. "It's cyclicism," they reassured him and gave examples from their own lives. "When did you last share a medicine cabinet with someone in the next apartment?" one asked. "Not since college," answered the other.

By now, cyclicism has me heartened and enthused. In the back of the magazine, I find places offering jobs in the field. As I read, the scene changes to a roadside with a signpost pointing to different destinations. One is a zoo but I choose another that I think is Cyclicist Headquarters.

March 12, 1975
Our hero was a scientist like many found in remote Arctic substations, middle-aged, balding and mustached. His nearest neighbors, at a larger installation miles across the ice, were the old comic team, Burns and Schreiber.

The scientist's main project was the study of a large carnivorous plant he kept in a '49 Chevy parked in the center of his laboratory. This was no ordinary plant but one which could speak, think intelligently and even cast hallucinations. It seemed eager to reveal its secrets to mankind—as it extended its blossoms to receive meat, the plant showed the scientist how acid bubbled up and digested the food.

The relationship grew closer and closer—when Burns and Schreiber invited the scientist over for Virginia the Prostitute's annual visit, he declined. This encouraged the plant to say it wanted to consummate their love by eating him. But the scientist shrank back and felt terror; he refused to open the car's windows or doors.

The plant took rejection hard and tried making the Chevy appear to be filled with chocolate and strawberry
ice cream. As its appeals grew more elaborate and intense, the scientist realized his life was in danger. To kill the plant, he had only to leave the laboratory door open to the cold outside but it would have to be done quickly.

Even as he approached the door, our hero's vision turned cloudy. He saw a lovable puppy approaching; then it morphed into a beautiful woman with arms extended. Tendrils encircled the scientist as he slid into the acid.

Days later, Burns and Schreiber came to investigate. They found the lab door open and snow drifting fanwise across the floor. The Chevy was a burnt-out shell; only its sealed-off motor remained inside.

April 22, 1975
Mystery Party

A LARGE MANSION surrounded by woods and hills. In a great many different rooms, party guests have gathered, including Boris Karloff. All talk is of the Tragedy.

Twenty years before, I'm told, this was the site of a mass murder. Images of bloody corpses flash by my eyes. Significantly all of the victims have a double at this party, all but Karloff. Another vision shows me his corpse is here too, sitting mummified in a sealed room made of bare rafters.

I find a concealed staircase. It leads to a well-furnished den carpeted by coconut matting. Warm air from the floor causes this carpeting to billow up. One wall is a balcony overlooking the drawing room where most of the guests are.

With visions of the sealed room coming more frequently, I descend to the party and declare that Karloff's double is close by. A man with a pencil moustache suddenly points up at the ceiling. As our faces turn upward, a shower of fragments falls over the crowd. They seem to be bits of wood but I discover teeth embedded, root downward. Could these all be part of a jawbone?

May 3, 1975
In the Bedroom

SMOKERS ANONYMOUS started out as an offshoot of Alcoholics Anonymous but is now the greatest, most sinister, secret society in America. So say the aging college students passing through my bedroom. Many people pass here, kindly women and men of all sorts. Why am I in bed? I am not ill.

From the radio, I hear an opera sung in English, an adaptation of The Merchant of Venice. The bearded villain appears in flamenco costume, belting out that the hero will not get a decent ship when he is finished.

A chill wind blowing through the room prompts me to look outside. There on a small, leafless tree sit woodpeckers, either red or blue with white stars. They are the only birds I ever see at this time of year.

May 22, 1975
The Art Exhibit

In the corner of a small, undistinguished shopping center, I have my first art exhibit. I’m nonplussed to find one painting, showing a man with his jaw in a plaster cast, is selling for one dollar.

A priest happens by and congratulates me on my new religious comic book. I only remember doing these artworks but I follow him into a Woolworth’s store. Then I’m shown the comic and have to admit that there’s a picture of me inside; that is, it shows my head on a Charles Atlas body wearing a leopard-skin loincloth. I’m tempted to steal this comic book but a passing policeman says, “Don’t you think you ought to pay for it this time?” This, even though the price is an outrageous fifty cents.

Returning to the art exhibit, I find several paintings I’ve also forgotten. One, the best of the lot, shows a small boy and girl in the cellar passage of an old castle. I managed to make this scene especially sinister with red and green lighting. It sells for fifteen dollars.

May 25, 1975
Involved in an Opera

My friends and I go to see *Turandot* performed in a large opera house heavily decorated in marble. At the sides and back of the auditorium (where we sit) the seats rise up like bleachers.

From the start, it's obvious great liberties have been taken in this performance. A young blonde with long, straight hair plays the regal empress of China, Turandot, in an ankle-length gown. Then, in the second act, we have a new scene, a forest clearing dominated by a machine made of complex, wooden gears. The aria, "Nessun dorma," gets slipped in here.

I harangue Eric about all this during the second intermission, intending to end with the joke, "I couldn't hear Turandot at all during the first act." (When she doesn't sing.) But the start of Act Three interrupts me.

Stagehands have cleared away the seats in the center of the auditorium. Now they bring out a banquet for the audience as the music begins. At the same time, the spectators in our section have to do high, circular kicks, all entangling my legs. When I get free, I've only time to grab one mayonnaise-covered olive before the opera's finale.
Now the soprano, Carol Neblett, appears on an overhead balcony singing the last act of Gounod's *Faust*. Danny whispers that he'd arranged this part. Originally, the plan was to shoot Carol onto the balcony from a cannon, but they dropped this when they discovered she'd miss the target two times out of three.

*June 4, 1975*
The Detectives

After four hours of hiding in the opera’s scenery, the detectives realize the threat to kill Xiccarph, the Wagnerian soprano, was a ruse. The crooks’ real objective was the manager’s office of a tractor factory, a place no neater, cleaner, or in any other way changed in the last fifty years.

Wearing trench coats and front-brim-down fedoras, the detectives enter the office, noting it has only slightly brighter light than the factory floor beyond and below the glass partition. But their attention focuses mainly on the corpse, a clerkish man sprawled in a swivel chair.

“What’s this?” exhales the smaller ferret-faced detective, spotting a gray residue on the body’s sleeve. As he scrapes some onto a brightly-colored glass rim, his larger mustachioed partner says, “This fellow must’ve been in the office safe originally. Then someone took him out and put him here.” That’s too quick, thinks the first detective as he regards his partner suspiciously.

June 22, 1975
Witness to Yesterday

I make two guest appearances as famous historical figures on the early PBS program, *Witness to Yesterday*, where Danny interviews me. First, I am an 18th-century French cardinal.

"Now just before the Revolution," Danny begins, "you were called upon to save the French economy. How did you find the experience?"

Having not been briefed on this, I answer, "A great bore," to Danny's astonishment. I hurriedly continue with the story how a member of the Tribunal saved me during the Reign of Terror by painting the tricolor on my door. Now the shot of a large, ancient mansion appears.

Next I play one of two famous auto-racing brothers. In the 1950's, we committed a sensational murder.

*July 4, 1975*
Meeting the Pythons

With my friends, I attend the opening of the movie, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, at a mansion with extensive grounds. Here we find the Goodyear blimp, which takes some of the audience for a ride. Others, including myself, get to have one-on-one chats with members of the Monty Python troupe. I meet Eric Idle, who tries engaging me in irrational conversation. He’s confounded when I get tongue-tied. Meanwhile, John Cleese rushes in pursued by Clarence, a high-school friend of mine. This mild-mannered youth and would-be Presbyterian minister routs the comics by pelting them with chocolate ripple ice cream. To save face, they call it a CIA plot.

*July 17, 1975*
Sex in Chicago

IN CHICAGO, streetwalkers are easily identifiable because they all carry orange plastic bags. They charge fifteen dollars a trick unless they are aspiring actresses, in which case the charge is forty-eight dollars. But if the john doesn’t show his money first, he will end up shelling out B and B and more B.

July 21, 1975
The Paintings of Time

I find the Paintings of Time in a boardwalk exhibition at the beach and they tell me this story:

The first painting shows the hero, a square-jawed caveman resembling Rock Hudson in his prime. He emerges from the canvas with an older cave couple, his in-laws. They seek out a pretty but forlorn-looking teenager, the hero's daughter. He introduces her to her grandmother, a woman called Shame because she committed adultery in her youth. Only the older man would marry Shame and only the time-traveling hero would marry their daughter. So he brought the girl to the present century and then went back to the Stone Age. Now the hero has to warn the daughter that she's in danger from the paintings.

Before he can explain further, the hero is pulled into the second painting, which I first think shows a sea monster. Then I see it's really a submarine made to look like a plesiosaur. In the movies, this long-necked creature would pop its head out of any body of water the heroine passed. Here the good time-travelers use it to observe the Age of Dinosaurs. They know a gang of villains is here,
led by a bearded man in a turtleneck sweater and a yachting cap. Which of the nearby dinosaurs is their machine?

Meanwhile, back in the present, the paintings have been moved to a dark mansion. They blur like slide projections as the lens is focused. Most are too vague to make out but I see one shows Napoleon seated at a table honing a knife. The daughter senses that when a picture becomes sharp and clear, something will emerge or go into it. She says it will happen next to a painting suggesting a tic-tac-toe game being played on a yellow field surrounded by brightly colored cobwebs. We try to stop this by hiding the picture under a pile of papers.

August 25, 1975
The Munitions Factory

In the woods near my home, I find a bulldozed construction site where a housing development is destined to be. In the center of the bare earth stand several colonial buildings with brick crumbling at the corners. I enter the largest house and discover a grimy Victorian parlor where the neighboring dairy farmer stands in coveralls and boots exhorting a crowd to save these structures.

He soon takes me on a ride on some farm machine out into the fields, where we go hunting. Holding his rifle pointing upwards, I search unsuccessfully for a deer, seeing only a raccoon disappear into some high grass while a skunk watches us.

Then we arrive at some low, pentagonal, windowless buildings of the same old brick as the houses. Some potbellied men in shirtsleeves tell me this is a world-famous munitions factory and they are its managers. Welcoming me profusely, they lead me down some side steps to a cheaply furnished restaurant in the basement. Here, I'm told, I can get the best club sandwiches in the world.

Some confusion about what happens next—my father comes to place an order with the factory while I go out to
the construction site. Eventually the managers show me some centuries-old guest books. One name, Lollona, sends me back in time to see this dusky African princess in the flesh (and not much else). Pale yellow women, even more naked than their mistress, attend the queen. Mark Antony is here and someone tells me Cleopatra’s in an adjoining room.

At last I must go, leaving the factory by cable car, riding over manicured lawns and an ancient forest. A steel-plated bridge then blocks my view, yielding to an ugly shopping district in downtown Frederick, Maryland.

November 1, 1975
GEORGE WASHINGTON and Andrew Jackson, both appearing in old age, agree to fight a duel. When they meet at dawn, Jackson outlines the rules in incomprehensible doubletalk and finishes by shooting Washington. The dying man gasps, "If Dr. Chichester himself had written that, I wouldn't give it to my son to read." Jackson directs Washington's corpse be taken to his mansion, where the servants drag it through several rooms.

January 4, 1976
How Lincoln Was Elected

ELECTION NIGHT, 1860. Lincoln and Douglas wait in an ornate Victorian hotel for the results. When a clock strikes, Lincoln goes out to a neighboring vacant lot. Here, in a wheelbarrow, he finds a wooden sign saying that Tennessee's vote has given the election to Douglas. Meanwhile back in the hotel, Douglas despairs of his chances. When Lincoln pushes the wheelbarrow up to the front door, Douglas emerges and congratulates his rival on his victory. Lincoln gravely accepts this concession.

January 10, 1976
In a black neighborhood on lower Harford Road in Baltimore, I find a new bookstore, which I must investigate. The inside turns out to cover acres and offers more than books. I pass row upon row of ping-pong tables and come upon some darkened rooms. Here, on closed-circuit TV, a monster-film festival is in progress.

The first set shows Mary Tyler Moore standing on a front porch facing the camera located just inside the doorway. Her toothpaste smile is at its broadest while, behind her, the red oozing mass of the Blob slides off the porch roof to attack her.

The next set offers the opening credits for The Conqueror Worm. First scene: a typical brownstone standing alone in a city block. Out the front door rush a dozen terrified dinosaurs. The camera moves inside, showing us the cause of their fear, a tentacled, fuzzy, wormlike creature, now menacing a white-haired 90-year-old woman with sunken eyes.

January 16, 1976
Our Home Is a Battlefield

MY REPUTATION FOR honesty gets me the task of inspecting the length of Baltimore's Fulton Street. I begin on the balcony of a railroad station where the street commences. Descending to the main floor, I start past a row of benches when a magazine of unusual facts catches my eye, especially one paragraph headed, "To Hitler, a Collier Was Called a Mons." A collier, the story explains, was an artillery shell that didn’t explode on landing until an enemy touched it. For that reason, the enemy considered land mines more dangerous.

An accompanying illustration shows a platoon of American infantry passing a small tree holding a collier in its branches. Instantly, I'm transported to the scene, to find it's a streambed on the old family farm. I'm driving a truck up to the house, hoping to get there before George Wallace and Raquel Welch requisition it for a church. Too late. I make the best of things by bantering with Raquel that I don't mind losing to someone as pretty as she. At the same time I'm wondering where my parents are.

Just then, the phone rings, an old wooden wall instrument that I answer by lifting the mouthpiece off the hook.
The stiff wire threatens to stuff the thing down my throat as I say, "Hello." It's Mom; she and Pop are in Baltimore, at someplace called The Flaming Inn. "You ought to see it," she says suggestively, "There are neon signs everywhere saying 'Take It Off.' So get your ass down here and pick us up." Scandalized, I try to explain that our home is a battlefield.

February 2, 1976
The Death of a Nation

The END OF THE Confederacy is fast approaching, which the ragged gray soldiers know as they flee across Ohio just ahead of the avenging Federals. But the troops are still loyal to General Lee, though he's now little more than a skeleton they have to carry on a stretcher. Men rush where he points his hand, toward a red horizon.

Somehow the scene shifts to my high-school days. Once again I've missed the bus.

March 4, 1976
A Hodgepodge

I'M READING Raymond Roussel's *Impressions of Africa*, which begins on a farm much like my own. Something is ruining the farm's main crop, canned strawberries, and Agatha Christie's Miss Marple comes to investigate. The little old man who is her sidekick falls through a stack of cans into a cave.

Later, a bearded youth is describing his supernatural powers to a student who could be his double. "Let's see you walk through walls," says the student. The youth does so, then continues walking across the ceiling and out of the room through a full-length mirror. But when he re-enters by the main door, the double begins repeating all of this, causing the youth's power to wane. Finally the youth flees through another door, only to fall into a clay pit. A gorilla watches as the remaining student departs.

March 16, 1976
Back to the Opera

Verdi's Aïda is performed in a gymnasium where two sets of bleachers face one another with no space between. The singers, dressed in 1830s costumes, stand up in the audience to sing the "Triumphant March." When the man next to me voices his displeasure, I show off my knowledge by saying the opera opens up in the second act. Then I realize the company entirely omitted "Celeste Aïda."

March 21, 1976
From Ship to Dennis

I'm on shipboard, having just been pulled aboard from the waves. But my story of surviving a naval disaster is not believed; I must seek out a witness who shared my experience. The ship's officers and I enter a metal-walled stable where female grooms are caring for some mules. "There," I say, "that hillbilly in the white shorts and striped halter. She was with me."

Later, I'm at a rodeo, as the bronc busting ends and the bull riding starts. There's controversy because the bulls are white Charolais beef cattle, about twice the size of normal bulls. Next, the cast of All in the Family is center dream. Mike and Gloria have just bought the house next door and everyone is examining the empty wood-paneled rooms.

Finally, I meet Dennis the Menace, context forgotten.

April 6, 1976
As the Georges Simenon carnival winds up, I help empty the brown tents. From plywood tables, I take cans of powder bearing names like Inspector Maigret and The Old Lady. Simenon himself sits wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt and smoking a cigar as he supervises us. His mustache makes him look like Tennessee Ernie Ford as he leans back in the folding chair.

April 7, 1976
Henry Adams and the Russian

HENRY ADAMS SAYS, "My education consisted of thirteen picaresque adventures. I've forgotten the first twelve—the last brought me to a writers' commune, a farmhouse whose whitewashed rooms were almost entirely devoid of furniture. Here I met a bearded, maniacal Russian in a T-shirt—his mistress seemed mentally retarded. He gave me this piece of cardboard with a yellow arrow on it, very important, he claimed. You can see a clear plastic circle on which two straight lines forming a cross have been taped over the arrow. Then I entered this room and found you aspiring writers waiting to hear me. So I began my story..."

April 10, 1976
Romance With a Portuguese

IT WAS AS I WAS crossing the campus that the Portuguese policewoman asked me for directions. Little did I dream the terrain would change as I spoke. As a consequence, she drove down a muddy lane and I had to rush alongside to get her to her destination.

Thus our romance began. Now a movement has been set up to replace all women on campus with robots.

April 12, 1976
The Cat Interrupts

BEFORE THE CAT: In his youth Andrew Jackson learned to make a key with which he stole George Wallace's bicycle from behind Gino's Hamburger Stand...

After the cat: As the much older Andrew Jackson, I'm suffering from backache, which the family doctor is treating with his own invention. He has me lie in bed on a horizontal wheel, which he turns with a crank. He also shows me his pamphlet on my son Bo, who was his club's president and admired by everyone before he died at 30.

April 15, 1976
The Dinosaur

WALT DISNEY’S NEW TV series, Connecticut 976, is about a family in a chaotic future. As each episode begins, we see a ten-story apartment building. Behind stands an even taller, broadly smiling dinosaur. It embraces the building, one hand completely covering a single window. Here is where the family lives. Each time the dinosaur removes his hand, we see the start of a new adventure.

April 17, 1976
The Owl

Something crying HOOO, HOOO, HOOO bothers my sleep. An owl must've gotten into the house. The cat, who is sleeping on my bed, apparently thinks so too. He rushes out the door and, after a while, I get up to check on him. Downstairs, I find my parents talking to several farm families. Yes, they tell me, the cat killed an owl in the kitchen. But when I look, I only find fish parts lying on newspapers strewn about the floor.

April 20, 1976
In the Woods

ERIC TAKES JIM and me out driving in the country. When Eric asks me what's on TV, I tell him, but first we must take the young German student home. Soon we're on a footpath, traveling through a dark wood. It looks like my sister's place in Accokeek and I ask the German if he knows them. Before he can answer, we find a wooden wall with a dog door. I look through this and see some white barracklike buildings around a floodlit courtyard. Several white German shepherds are harnessed to a heavy post in the center.

April 22, 1976
My Life as James Bond

First I battle a villain in the A&P, and only miraculously survive. Then my nephew in college discovers a red rubber ball, the clue that I have been seeking. From a picture he took where he found the ball, I deduce the villain is in one of three college dormitories. I walk to the first and throw the ball against the side of the building. If the villain sees me, he should give himself away. Nothing happens and I go on to the north building. It has a number of windows and my ball hits one, fortunately on the sill. This prompts a man to lean out and swear at me. Not the villain. I leave and wind up on a luxurious private jet accompanied by two gorgeous twins in bikinis.

May 3, 1976
Medieval Election

Our Springhouse is the site for an election. Bearded youths in medieval costumes hand out ballots offering two choices, “Operation Shepherdess” and “Other.” Younger voters generally mark the former but a matronly dowager in mink chooses the latter.

May 6, 1976
As Your Future President

By the end of the decade, much of the United States was underwater. Scuba divers enjoyed the ruins, as seen in a postcard of some tractor tires encrusted with coral. With the decomposed rubber, the effect is truly beautiful.

Meanwhile some odd creatures have taken over the second floor of the White House. No one knows what they are—one rumor speaks of radioactive children, apparently because the intruders have left toy cars at the scene of their raids. I must find out because I am the President.

Before that I was a waiter but my skills in self-defense made me Chief Executive. People don’t know I’m also Spiderman.

I make a foray into the enemy stronghold with a beautiful girl. In the first room I enter, she stands looking frightened as I battle a wild-eyed man in a karate outfit. He runs away after a brief scuffle but I now know the intruders are human.

I question former staff members and an aging man resembling [Watergate conspirator] H. R. Haldeman reveals the secret. Years ago a group of tourists arrived at the
White House and were put on a train to tour the grounds. Something went wrong — once started, the train wouldn't stop and its doors couldn't be opened. The staff reacted with a coverup and pretended nothing had happened. Meanwhile the train rolled on, a scene of horror inside, until the engine wore out right at the White House's back door. The now-insane tourists broke free and rushed up to the second floor.

May 8, 1976
FREDERICK DAWSON was born in 1945 in Laurel, Maryland. In his time he has been a:

- Cab driver
- Child caregiver
- Courier
- Data processor
- Farm hand
- Landlord
- Library technician
- Mail handler
- Social work assistant
- Typesetter
- Word processor
- All of the above

He has been published in Word Ways, Asylum and the Washington Post's Style Invitational column.
This edition is limited to
60 copies.

This is Number 6.

Frederick Dawson