

# God

A Handbook for the Disbeliever

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**NY**  
**Q** Books™

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The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc.  
New York, New York

NYQ Books™ is an imprint of The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc.

The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc.  
P. O. Box 2015  
Old Chelsea Station  
New York, NY 10113

[www.nyq.org](http://www.nyq.org)

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First Edition

Set in New Baskerville

Layout by Raymond P. Hammond

Cover Design by Raymond P. Hammond

Cover Art: "St. Peter's in Rome: Explosion of Mystical Faith," used with permission  
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Cover Art Source: Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí

Author Photo by Shari Katz

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017947377

ISBN: 978-1-63045-033-5

# VII.

Kids gather in cottage blistering  
Under sun. One kid bosses.  
They confer, scrawl figures:  
Bizarre relationships  
Of non-sexual nature  
Only they, uniquely bonded, comprehend.  
Something piratical, subversive,  
Monumental  
In clubhouse devoid of authority.  
Unimaginable power!  
Pubertal omnipotence!  
Behind them into infinite distances  
Rise mountainous commodiousness—  
Animals, plants, minerals, fire  
To bend to god-like fantasies  
By kids  
Sand-grit small, microscopically infinitesimal,  
Insignificant.  
One ejaculates: Yes! Absolutely!  
Another with violent flourish annihilates optimism.  
Another says, “Gentlemen, see here....!”  
None heed the tiny external squeak, “sandwiches!”  
None crave lemonade.  
One takes leak in enormous toilet. Incompletely washes.

The diagram! The equation!  
The anointed formula!  
(Not sexual, concupiscent.)  
Oddly thick vaults,  
For such inchoate organisms  
Contain intense exhilaration.  
One wears scarlet khaki shorts,  
Another aqua cotton blouse,  
Another, inexplicably, necktie.  
Fourth seems almost naked.  
One, disobediently, drags cigarette.  
Another, equally Satanic, produces vodka.  
This post of outlaws, secreted,  
Oblivious and yet  
Insularly crucial, and  
As if through magical incantation, produce God.  
One shouts: “Huzza, we are there!”

Another: "Colleagues! Friends!"  
Another: "There it is!"  
And as they all sing  
The sacred nursery rhyme  
A massive fireball incinerates thousands.

# XIII.

Dear god, I am good. I have neither lied nor deceived. I am honorable, faithful. I love only one, never waver. I am clever, steady. I have cultivated art, am charitable. I am pleasant, exude optimism. I love my children, am devoted dad. I support them, engender self-esteem, they repay me in kindness. I am temperate, sober, level-headed, do not smoke, do not gorge sugar. I am strong, energetic, work like mule. One will not discover me loitering. I am self-motivated, tenacious at desk, even in knowledge of mediocrity. I am rowing, always rowing, enduringly. I loved my parents who expired in my arms. I weep for suffering of humankind. Empathy walks with me. I am kind to animals without whose presence I would suffer. I am incapable of envy—those ultra-talented, or jealousy—those who betray me for rival. I am magnanimous, unable to possess by duress: the un-caged bird. Ostentation repulses me. I am more mendicant than prig. Humble in imperfection, tummy sags, I am non-titanic. Comprehending futility, I struggle not against my limitation, neither grand nor heroic. Few will remember me after death. The man writing this is parsimonious, pleased with left-overs, Goodwill pants. I heal none. Emotionally, I have cast off everything, am free, nothing is me. I am naked on blank disk, courageous. One must, I accept, biologically expire. I am already dead. I know one must die daily to live fully. All things depart my hand as dust. Dear God, take me when ready. I am unafraid. Until then I shall be grateful for my life, and smile.

# XVIII.

God rents beach house, unpacks, monumental light, sandwiches, station wagon, rubber raft. God sips scotch bourbon while watching collegiate football. He is married, going broke. He loves dramatic surf, seafood: snapper, blackened trout. Thick sultry air swells his cock which flops like ship rope. His two young offspring of opposite genders migrate through rooms like fatuous siroccos humming Bobby Vinton. Early fifties just past Hiroshima. God's best friend has rented adjacent Hutment, things are hot, sloppy—humidity, heat, grit, mosquitoes. God is undetectably desperate for money-bump, He boat-fishes with buddy in glittering slough, rips treble out croaking throat. Shot weight, swivel. Flicks wrist, pops cork. God's wife, children, buddy, His children swim in hot froth, saltwater washing mouth. Rise, fall in sensual undulation, toes leaving ground. This is love, paradise. Diamond ring glitters. Youth. Creamy thighs. Slender hips. Lips like couch pillows. L & M cigarette. Self-destructive ideations slice God's brain camouflaged by bravado. Nobody suspects. Frontal lobe conceals inwardly cocked pistol. God slurps claw meat through hot drawn butter, swigs Jax, brags—one table among many. God's frog son zaps butter pat. We showed those Japs. American ingenuity. And yet...How? Where? Moans "Jesus Christ" in bait stand lavatory. Children have blast. God's wife despises him.

5.

You think I'm King of Kings? You think you're central, core, You think on human lap I loll? Let me dis-abuse. I never consider you. Rather be dead. I hear your plea for courage, strength, for hospitalized Judy. You beseech believing I see. Fool. You'll contract cancer without intervention. I'm happy up here with jigsaw puzzle. Weather's Jake. Lake's sweet. Buzz off with your catastrophe. You miniscule soft-bellied dirt-walkers, you think I'm yours with your Eucharist. And that parable of the single footprint in sand, Gotta laugh. What egocentrism. Your blathering religion, righteousness. Oh, I do intermittently pity with your coitus, alcohol, Pulitzer Prize. Die giggling. And ritualized tearful funeral. Fragile thin-skinned mendicant. And money: what brutality. Take my advice: embrace star-smear, infinities heaped upon infinities like soap bubble mansion. Take my advice: marry, procreate, possess, celebrate, pretend you matter. I've got sunset to catch on Cigar Galaxy. Sure, I empathize, you're in French trench, death's popping skull-skittles. Scared, you pray. You think I'm attentive. Consider billions of petitions simultaneously gushing out world's rooftops, syllable-inundation billion miles thick and assess your significance. Nutball. I'm hauling on shoulder dead stag I bow-killed to slaughter for winter, I'm ax-splitting heartwood for raging hearth fire, sharp palpable reality against the simpering obsequious butler you think I am.

# LXII.

Oblong bald tuber above seatback,  
I sit in church like Mr. Potato Head ready to play.  
Hymn 321 affixes to face my shiny white lips.  
Scriptural reading clicks in red nose.  
Everybody notices, outrageous.  
“Insult!” “Mockery!”  
Coherent sermon sticks black derby atop pink pate.  
“Blasphemous infiltrator!”  
“Who invited him?”  
I swivel, smile.  
Rouge grins back.  
Otherworldly gazes conjoin worshippers.  
Love in distillation.  
I without antecedent, referent.  
What is love? Who is love?  
My russet head protrudes like Idaho.  
Why here with my conspicuous machinery?  
Beauty swells. Everyone fuses into single spirit.  
Collectivity against malevolence. Interdiction against frail.  
I am mass produced polymer potato with one-piece boots.  
Number 31 in Voices of Praise Hymn Book,  
*“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchas’d by God,  
Born of his spirit, Wash’d in his blood”*  
Punches into me gleaming ears, gloved hands,  
Moustache, gaping eyes like shiny hard candy.  
I am fully assembled  
Planted on pew  
In legless un-grace,  
Disassociated  
From smooth blended mixture—  
The poured malted frappe  
Of religious compassion.  
Lacquered plated alien, I clack to reception  
For tollhouse and cider.