

In those dark years I ate my dinner regularly with 9 people: my Father, Mother, Two Sisters, Brother, Brother-in law, Nephew, Grandmother, and myself. Where was joy? For a few months no matter what I said, and what I usually said were things like, "Virginia Dare was the first white person born in America. Why didn't George Gershwin ever get married? The Queen Elizabeth's as tall as the Empire State Building. The Empire State Building is ugly. It looks just like King Kong's penis," all of them would laugh, jeer, mutter, scream or moan the name, "Chaim Yonkel! Chaim Yonkel!" (Chaim Yonkel is a Yiddish expression for An Asshole, A Joe Blow, A Nobody, A Loser, A Nonentity.) After a few months I asked, "What does yelling 'Chaim Yonkel!' mean." They would snort and sneer at my naiveté. Finally my mother laughed, sneered, jeered, and lied all at once as she smirked, "Chaim Yonkel means Fetteh Chaim." I asked, "What is Fetteh Chaim." "It means Uncle Life," my mother smirked, sneered, and lied all at once, "Tell him!" she ordered her stooge, my father. "No you tell him," my father said, knowing my mother's cruelty would be far more venomous than his matter of fact deadpannedious brief. My mother proclaimed conscientiously:

Jack Tabatchnick's old Delicate ssen under  
its sign, "If it grows we have it," and a usual asked  
Jack Tabatchnick if he had an elephant. Out on the sidewalk in front  
of Tabatchnick's, a little bit later, Fetteh Chaim ran into Schmuel Gruel, the  
Weequahic Section rubber erection fool. "I know what you had for dinner last night!"  
Schmuel twinkled, on seeing quite a few lentil beans in Fetteh Chaim's beard, "Lentil soup."  
"Wrong!" snapped Fetteh Chaim like a twig of birch frozen, "It was maybe two, or three weeks ago!"  
"So how is your son, Schlongdrek," Schmuel asked hoping for a rumor. "He is doctor." Fetteh Chaim  
snapped like an April icicle, "And let me tell you he is quite a gorgeous sturgeon. Let me tell you just  
the other day he operated on an almost dead sick man with a strange mystery disease. He opened  
him up. He took out his sticky heart. He looked at it. He saw it was good. He kissed it. He put  
it back. He took out his puffy stomach. He looked at it. He saw that it was good. He kissed  
it. He put it back. He took out his juicy lung. He looked at it. He saw it was good. He kissed  
kissed it. He put it back. He took out his wobbly liver. He looked at it. He saw  
it was good. He kissed it. He put it back. He took out his fruity beachballs.  
He kissed them. He put them back. He took out his bulgy brain.  
He looked at it. He saw a dead cockroach in it. "Of course!  
No wonder this man is sick! His engineer is dead!"  
Fetteh Chaim snapped like a July rye. He put  
in a new cockroach. He kissed it. He put  
it back in the man's brain. He kissed  
the man's brain. He put it back.  
He sewed the man up. And  
for as long as he lived  
the man always  
was never  
sick not  
obviously,  
bitch.

"He's a liar, just like you!" they all laughed. "Why is it a lie to love life?" I begged. "What's wrong with loving life? Telling stories? Is that bad?" They jeered loudly, "He's a liar like you! HE'S A LIAR!" I was tougher and sharper than all of them put together. I threw my crying, buried face up, looked all of them in the eye and said slowly and surely like a cross between an untongued Moses and a shouting pigeon: "I'd rather be a liar than a hyena cage full of body temperature IQ's like you." "You're a liar!" they jeered, tears coming to their eyes, as they smirked, roared, and screamed falling all over the dinner table. "Fetteh Chaim! Fetteh Chaim!" they jeered and for the rest of my youth this is what all of them replied to any thing I said. I could say: "1+1 = 2, or, In the beginning god created the heavens and the earth, or E= MC<sup>2</sup>, or Baruch Attau Adonai Eluheyadoo Meluch Au Lum, or hell o" and always came in return from the stupid fools like a gang of Nazi swine trying to kill any precious idea the bizarre vituperation, "Fetteh Chaim! Fetteh Chaim! Fetteh Chaim! Fetteh Chaim!" It all became so ridiculous that if I wanted proof that anything at all were true, I would say the thing, and if Fetteh Chaim were muttered, I would know it was true. And so I became Uncle Life and came to love Uncle Life with all my mind, with all my body and with all my heart unto well after most of the unfortunate lunatic child soul killer baboons lied moldering in their cheap, sniveling, crass, over embellished graves. I had only one heart and when the fools tried to crush mine: it rivered as fast as the fabled jeweled light messengers deep in King Solomon's mine.