

## BOOK STUFF

#40

*'A book is not supposed to be a mirror. It's supposed to be a door.'* Fran Lebowitz

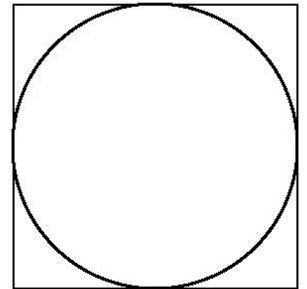


### The Dalliance of the Eagles by Walt Whitman

Skirting the river road, (my forenoon walk, my rest,) Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the dalliance of the eagles, The rushing amorous contact high in space together, The clinching interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyrating wheel, Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight grappling, In tumbling turning clustering loops, straight downward falling, Till o'er the river pois'd, the twain yet one, a moment's lull, A motionless still balance in the air, then parting, talons loosing, Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting, their separate diverse flight, She hers, he his, pursuing.

### An Easter Quiz

1. How many cream eggs does Cadbury sell each year?
2. What goes on top of a simnel cake?
3. When is Easter?
4. What meat is traditionally eaten at Easter?
5. What animal is most commonly associated with Easter?
6. What is the Polynesian (and now restored) name of Easter Island?
7. What is the island famous for?
8. Which famous jewellery firm is famous for designing jewel-encrusted eggs?
9. What is the name given to the Sunday before Easter?
10. What is the religious name for the 40 days before Easter?
11. What food is traditionally cooked on Shrove Tuesday?
12. Which part of a chocolate bunny do 76% of people eat first?



### Squaring the circle

And the Lord spake unto the philosopher, 'I am the Lord thy God, and I am all-powerful. There is nothing that you can say that can't be done. It's easy!'  
And the philosopher spake unto the Lord. 'OK, your mightiness. Turn everything that is blue red and everything that is red blue.'  
The Lord spake, 'Let there be colour inversion!' And there was colour inversion, much to the confusion of the flag-bearers of Poland and San Marino.  
And the philosopher then spake unto the Lord, 'You want to impress me: make a square circle.'  
The Lord spake, 'Let there be a square circle,' And there was.  
But the philosopher protesteth, 'That's not a square circle. It's a square.'  
The Lord grew angry. 'If I say it's a circle, it's a circle. Watch your impertinence or else I shall smite thee very roughly indeed.'  
But the philosopher insisteth, 'I didn't ask you to change the meaning of the word 'circle' so it just means 'square'. I wanted a genuinely square circle. Admit it – that's one thing you can't do.'  
The Lord thought a short while, and then decided to answer by unleashing his mighty vengeance on the philosopher's smart little arse.

If you believe in an all-powerful God, can you also believe in rationality?

From Julian Baggini, *The Pig that Wants to be Eaten and 99 Other Thought Experiments*

## A Chronicler's Sin

Once upon a time, during the reign of terror, mass arrests became the order of the day. Most often they took place at night: a group of hooded men would knock at the front door and order the sleepy host to get dressed, and then take him to one of the many small prisons mushrooming all over the town. Sometimes the policemen would arrest whole families, including the children and grandmothers who slept on the hearth.

The population of the town was shrinking and all night long sabre-rattling patrols could be heard leading the people away through the streets,

from many great houses. Many people began to spend their nights fully clothed, dozing with bundles under their heads as if travelling, expecting to be arrested. People were amazed that there was so

much room in prisons, but then one house after another was

turned into a prison, and one person would languish in another's house as if in jail: the rich in poor people's quarters and the other way round, soldiers in schools, priests in barracks, doctors and patients in brothels, debauchees in convents.

There was an increasing shortage of labour, and prisoners did most of the jobs. Since they were dressed like other people and their numbers were kept secret, it was difficult to know who was a prisoner and who was free. The prisoners were even employed to make arrests: they carried sabres although they were prisoners.

The number of arrests was rising – among the next victims were members of the notorious City Authorities. Priests, merchants, chiefs of staff, sentries, clerks and others were taken away. In the end they were all made prisoners, even the members of the Administration themselves. Everybody spied on each other, everybody was a prisoner and nobody knew who was actually in charge, issuing these orders and arrest warrants. Everybody had the feeling that he was taking part in the running of the town, in the arrests and in the serving of time in prison. And as all of them were dressed alike and enjoyed the same rights – all of them being under arrest – they went on doing their jobs as if nothing had happened. They lived their ordinary lives, and if someone had asked them, they would probably have said they were happy.

Several years later they would deny that any arrests had been made at all and claim that it was all a fabrication of an inadequately censored, and undoubtedly malicious, chronicler.



Pavao Pavlicic

Answers  
1. 200 million  
2. marzipan  
3. The first Sunday after the Spring equinox (the day on which night and day are of equal length)  
4. lamb  
5. bunny / rabbit  
6. Rapa Nui  
7. 900 giant stone heads  
8. Faberge  
9. Palm Sunday  
10. Lent  
11. pancakes  
12. ears

[www.giveabook.org.uk](http://www.giveabook.org.uk)  
[www.prisonreadinggroups.org.uk](http://www.prisonreadinggroups.org.uk)







