

# Burt's Brain

by Jim Gold

What's in the dueling hemispheres of Burt's brain?  
Yesterday I examined it.

Here's what I found:

Fires are burning in Burt's brain. Mostly in the right side. Giant fires, thousands of feet tall. Flames are shooting into the sky, incinerating planets, galaxies, and even the Milky way.

On Burt's left side, in the other hemisphere, lies a great lake filled with pure, clear water. Peaceful and calm, it sits in silence, absorbing the sun.

One day, one of the fires in Burt's brain had an idea. "I'm dynamic, creative, adventurous, and smart," it boasted. "I like to try new things." Considering his options, fire lowered his flame. "My finances are zero. I hate penury, I need some money." The he crackled "How should I get it? Borrowing is so boring." He thought a moment. "I know. I'll steal it! That's exciting, especially if I don't get caught. First, I'll steal a dollar. I'll use it to buy a slice of pizza. After that, I'll steal ten dollars, then twenty, thirty, a hundred! Soon I'll be the richest fire in the world! I'll steal and steal until I steal the whole world. And what will I do with the world once I steal it? I'll burn it! That's what fires do!"

Fire laughed diabolically and burned for twenty-six more days. Finally, only embers lay around him, he consulted with the one near a stone. "Wait a minute," he stuttered, "I'm part of the world. If I burn up it up, I'll destroy myself! Maybe burning up the world isn't such a good idea. I like to have fun, but I don't want to die having it!"

Fire sat down on a hot stump to think it over.

Meanwhile Great Lake heard that Fire wanted to steal money. She realized that with funds he could burn down the world. "That hothead!" she sputtered. "I'm part of the world, too. I don't want to be destroyed. I don't want to die. Sometimes Fire gets carried away with himself, He doesn't know what to do with all that extra energy. I'll stop him before it's too late.

Beneath her surface, Lake started making waves. "I'll dump my water on his hot stupid head! I'll dampen him real good! He won't destroy me!"

Lake splashed fifty million buckets of water on Fire. A great SSSS sounded through the universe. Soon Fire's desire to steal millions of dollars fizzled to a thousand, a hundred,

twenty, ten, one, and finally to none. Fire's flames relaxed.

"Thanks, Great Lake," he said. "I'm feeling much better. I don't know what came over me. I just got too hot."

Fire smiled at Great Lake. Then he took her by the hand, and they went out for a pizza.

from *Carlos the Cloud*

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