

Hystation: He Wasn't There

by Jim Gold

Is hystation a preventable disease or a natural part of the life cycle? This question was proposed by Dr. Kinnewhat at the opening meeting of the Society of Invertebrates in the Salt Marsh Estuary, Massachusetts. Several frogs in the audience croaked when he proposed his theory of cyclic indifference, but the cheering tadpoles drowned them out.

A generational split over the issue was taking place.

As the commotion subsided, the doctor pulled up his shirt, revealing a large gurg on his chest. "This is what happens when you're at the bottom of your cycle," he said, fondling the gurg. "The energy just drains out of you. You feel like a shell of your former self."

As he spoke, you could see his body beginning to unravel. His energy was draining fast. His inverted brain began pouring its contents down his spinal chord and collecting in fetid hystation pools. It looked as if someone was pulling the threads of his skin apart. His legs grew shorter, his torso shriveled, his arms fell off, and his face collapsed.

As the symposium beheld the hystation taking place, one of the frogs tried saving the doctor's brain. He hopped to the lectern and reached for it with his tongue but was too late. Only the thought of the doctor remained.

"Where is he?" shrieked the frog's wife.

An after-image flashed behind the lectern, and a frog shouted, "There he is!" The audience turned to look. . .but he wasn't there.

from Carlos the Cloud

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