

Charlie Brown's Diary: Excerpts

by Sean Lovelace

Tuesday, February 14, 1958: I wake, and hear the birds coughing. Some dog barking. My coal-smudge eyes sting with sleep. In a hotel near a train station, yawning off Lowenbrau fumes in my zig-zag shirt. Or maybe I lie. Maybe just my yellow room. My parents call, but all I hear is breath and breathing, muffled pipes, misunderstandings—another day stripped, routine as the rain. I've come to believe all adults are lost. I swear to God in 1954 I won a bowling trophy. And a free haircut, for my two scraggly hairs. My father is a barber. Why do you play my name, Maker? Blockhead? My head is round, and full of etchings.

Tuesday, March 2, 1969: I wake, and hear the birds coughing. Snoopy flies in today. His goggles scratched, one ear torn and bleeding, but his eyes aglow. "Sex underwater is overrated," he says dryly. "Too much friction." I have no reply. It all adds to my notion: there is a bigger world, outside of mine. *Where is the doorway?* I want to ask Snoopy. *Show me the way, before it's too late.* But he just stands there, opening and closing a silver Zippo, gazing out the window, already far away. The air is filled with sea salt, butane, a hint of almonds, an aroma that lingers for days.

Tuesday, May 9, 1971: I wake, and hear the birds coughing. Under the night blanket. I do the math, in the bowl of my head, and I am not going to lie. Two wins, 930 losses. My responsibility. My team. Starting pitcher, manager—that's me. Two wins. The two games I missed, in January, that long weekend on the ninth floor.

Tuesday, November 4, 1975: I wake, and hear the birds coughing. Sunlight through the window like a train. I took a trip

once, to Kansas. I ate fried steak and visited strip clubs and drank myself silly on three dollar truck-stop Mojitos. I cavorted with red-haired whores. All of this yesterday, or in some lost panel. Waking is a dull ache. Most of me is onionskin. Yesterday I flew a kite, into a waterfall. Yesterday I was invisible. Or was that Chuck?

Tuesday, March 14, 1984: I wake, and hear the birds coughing. Seven, fourteen, twenty-eight times—the phone rings. It's Franklin: Did I hear? Schroeder bought an Acura MDX. What does that mean? Why is everything an *x*, *y*...*z*? All these medications. Spaceship names. Shapes and colors. They want to lift me and soar away. This same musty shirt, 34 years. One dog bowl. One stubby pencil. Drawn. Drawn is my word.

Tuesday, April 2, 2000: I wake, and hear the birds coughing. I can't arise today. Twenty sudden pounds. Sandpaper mouth, itchy head. My thoughts are growing smaller. A dog-house echo. Soggy blanket. Something gnawed. At least the sun is shining. I see a sliver of light, a patch of emerald lawn. My perfectly square window, dusty pane. *Good grief*. An oxymoron, or maybe life. Four panels. And here comes Lucy, so briskly; she seems to float...She's holding a football.

