

CONTENTS***The Beautifully Garnished Zero***

—word count: 21,700—

(I decide to write about my early years,  
from conception to high school graduation)

*“I was born on my side looking towards the floor. My mother was on her back looking between her legs. It amazed me how a mother and son can have such different points of view.”*

*“Hundreds of times every Monday through Friday for six years, there it was: the confounding desire to hurt—the confounding desire to inflict as much pain as possible without being physical—made manifest by facial expression, tone of voice, and body language...the result, apparently, of their deciding that being a prick is a tough job but somebody has to do it.”*

***Have It Yahweh***

—word count: 2,400—

(I imagine a date that ends with her wanting me to role-play as God)

*“I’m too shy and awkward to play God. No one would buy it. Whoever heard of a shy and awkward God? Sure, God tends not to show “Himself”, but no one thinks that’s because “He’s” shy and awkward.”*

***Don’t Not Panic***

—word count: 3,000—

(I imagine giving a lecture about how to survive in the wilderness, despite my not knowing anything about wilderness survival—my 21 rules for survival)

*“Rule number one: Don’t not panic. The stress of trying not to panic can kill you. And if you die out in the wilderness, your chances of survival are next to nothing. In fact, you might as well be dead.”*

***Chicken Amein***

—word count: 3,800—

(I imagine dressing up like God and entering a classroom after the teacher announces they have a surprise guest,

and fielding the 4<sup>th</sup>-graders’ questions)

*“During soccer matches, opposing players would point to my son and complain that he “tried for my shins”.”*

***I Don’t Want to Lose My Tan***

—word count: 6,900—

(I imagine I’m an adult, male Homo habilis trying to convince an adult, male Homo habilis to come down from the trees, despite all the dangers)

*“I don’t want to die! I don’t want to die! I don’t want to lose my tan! I worked so hard to get it!... Also, my name would be removed from the phone book, throwing the whole thing off!”*

***Goin’ for Old***

—word count: 2,100—

(I imagine a yelling-and-screaming type of (track-and-field) coach has called me into his office to talk about my poor performance)

*—“It took you five hours and fifty-two minutes to complete the one-hundred-meter dash!”*

*—“Using Tai-Chi as a training method was probably a mistake.”*

***George Jefferson***

—word count: 2,600—

(I imagine I’m a professor giving a highly inaccurate lecture on George Washington—a lecture that could be entitled “Iconoclasm”)

*“In 1789, in Philadelphia, the Continental Congress chose George Washington to be our nation’s first president despite the fact that he was an adult man who had to wear shoes that buckled.”*

***86’d on 89<sup>th</sup>***

—word count: 7,400—

(I imagine being hit by a taxi and dying minutes later)

*“Some died trying to circumnavigate the globe. Some died to defeat Hitler. Me? I forgot to look both ways.”*