

# Of Mice and Moonlandings

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July 19, 1969. Carbondale.

Sometime tomorrow the first *homo sapiens* are going to land on the moon. I don't understand the significance of that, but it must be important. Tonight I went to McDonald's, the usual launching pad for my group. That may seem insignificant. But at least I can relate to it. My group: The local cluster I orbit with because I can't stand to hang out with anyone else. Sometimes I can stand my group. Sometimes. Saw Dillow, Potts and Lewi. Somebody paid somebody for a nickel of pot. They blasted off to "look for chicks and get drunk." VanMeter, Dickerson and LeMedico showed up. They got ahold of some beer and some chicks and took off, too. So, the air traffic controller went to U.D.'s and bought a 49-cent notebook and a 19-cent Bic pen. He's sitting in Spudnut's now. The place has changed. Nobody comes here anymore. I'm alone. And bored. Now that high school has become a past-tense experience, maybe the juvenile cliques we all belong to will just fade away. My group calls itself "The Action Faction." We wear these silly tweed caps and adhere to a nonsense set of bylaws called the Soft Bread Axioms. Oh well. I think I'll take in another vestige of high school adolescence -- a teeniebopper dance. All the snotty bitchy boppers with their over-developed bodies and under-developed minds will probably drive me crazy. See you later.

LATER:

Well, the boppers drove me crazy. The dance was at the Carbondale Teen Town, a reconverted warehouse across the street from its adult counterpart, the Elk's Club. The band tonight, Odds and Ends, was like every other band that plays here. They think loud equals good. The drummer even had the skin off the front of his bass drum. Back to the boppers: The girls who go to Teen Town dances are between 13 and 16 years old. They wear these short skirts and T-shirts that stop about an inch below their breasts. I love, desire, crave, am obsessed with their bodies. The thing is, they aren't overjoyed with mine -- 105 pounds, 5-foot-6, squinty eyes and no "cool." I'd sure like to get down with one of them, but all they seem to be interested in is horses, dancing, tanning, Clearasil and who's going with whom. Sex, pure animal sex, doesn't enter into their heads. This narrative is getting to be a drag. I'll quit for now.

July 20, 1969, 3:17.40 p.m. Central Daylight Saving Time.  
The moment man landed on the moon.

People keep blubbering about how proud they are to be an American, and Walter Cronkite just came out and said it. "God was riding with the astronauts." But it was man, not God, who put an earthling on the moon. And if it weren't for the "godless" Russians and Sputnik, America never would have spent all that money on a space race. If there is a God, I'm not so sure he, she or it really wants us

messing around up there. Though it may have been a paranoid desire for strategic superiority that motivated this country to go to the moon, it was the exact opposite of human nature that actually got us there. It was science, technology and mathematics, fantastic machines and emotionless computers that allowed Neal Armstrong to step on the moon. Men are vulnerable. They make errors, act on impulse and are tempted by earthly desires. It was man without imperfection who landed on the moon, and I'm not sure something wasn't lost in the process.

Well, man is on the moon now. They unveiled a plaque, planted a flag and got a phone call from President Nixon. According to Uncle Walter, they are collecting rocks and stuff now. The moon, a new frontier, the limits of man's ultimate efforts to date. It makes the events of a summer's evening in Carbondale seem trivial and unimportant. Why doesn't everyone just forget about their selfish desires and work for the common good of mankind? Unfortunately, lust, violence and goofing off are a basic, intimate part of the human condition. They are what life is all about. Out of humanity can come superhuman achievements like the moon landing but only if the defects of humans are removed. And let's face it, without the petty human dilemmas such as sex, love and the big date on Saturday night, who really cares?

