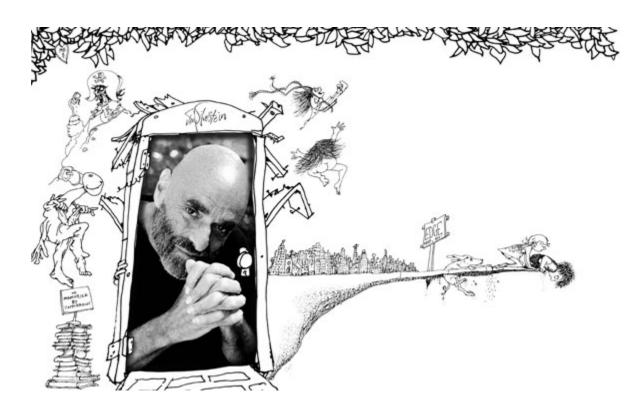


The Perfect High

by Shel Silverstein

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There once was a boy named Gimmesome Roy. He was nothing like me or you.

'Cause laying back and getting high was all he cared to do.

As a kid, he sat in the cellar, sniffing airplane glue.

And then he smoked bananas – which was then the thing to do.

He tried aspirin in Coca-Cola, breathed helium on the sly,

And his life was just one endless search to find that perfect high.

But grass just made him want to lay back and eat chocolate-chip pizza all night,

And the great things he wrote while he was stoned looked like shit in the morning light.

And speed just made him rap all day, reds just laid him back,

And Cocaine Rose was sweet to his nose, but the price nearly broke his back.

He tried PCP and THC, but they didn't quite do the trick,

And poppers nearly blew his heart and mushrooms made him sick.

Acid made him see the light, but he couldn't remember it long.

And hashish was just a little too weak, and smack was a lot too strong,

And Quaaludes made him stumble, and booze just made him cry,

Till he heard of a cat named Baba Fats who knew of the perfect high.

Now, Baba Fats was a hermit cat who lived up in Nepal, High on a craggy mountaintop, up a sheer and icy wall.

"But hell," says Roy, "I'm a healthy boy, and I'll crawl or climb or fly,

But I'll find that guru who'll give me the clue as to what's the perfect high."

So out and off goes Gimmesome Roy to the land that knows no time,

Up a trail no man could conquer to a cliff no man could climb.



For fourteen years he tries that cliff, then back down again he slides Then sits – and cries – and climbs again, pursuing the perfect high. He's grinding his teeth, he's coughing blood, he's aching and shaking and weak, As starving and sore and bleeding and tore, he reaches the mountain peak. And his eyes blink red like a snow-blind wolf, and he snarls the snarl of a rat, As there in perfect repose and wearing no clothes – sits the godlike Baba Fats.

"What's happening, Fats?" says Roy with joy, "I've come to state my biz. I hear you're hip to the perfect trip. Please tell me what it is. For you can see," says Roy to he, "that I'm about to die, So for my last ride, Fats, how can I achieve the perfect high?" "Well, dog my cats!" says Baba Fats. "here's one more burnt-out soul, Who's looking for some alchemist to turn his trip to gold. But you won't find it in no dealer's stash, or on no druggist's shelf. Son, if you would seek the perfect high – find it in yourself."

"Why, you jive motherfucker!" screamed Gimmesome Roy, "I've climbed through rain and sleet, I've lost three fingers off my hands and four toes off my feet!
I've braved the lair of the polar bear and tasted the maggot's kiss.
Now, you tell me the high is in myself. What kind of shit is this?
My ears 'fore they froze off," says Roy, "had heard all kind of crap,
But I didn't climb for fourteen years to listen to that sophomore rap.
And I didn't crawl up here to hear that the high is on the natch,
So you tell me where the real stuff is or I'll kill your guru ass!"

"Ok, OK," says Baba Fats, "you're forcing it out of me. There is a land beyond the sun that's known as Zaboli. A wretched land of stone and sand where snakes and buzzards scream, And in this devil's garden blooms the mystic Tzu-Tzu tree. And every ten years it blooms one flower as white as the Key West sky, And he who eats of the Tzu-Tzu flower will know the perfect high. For the rush comes on like a tidal wave and it hits like the blazing sun. And the high, it lasts a lifetime and the down don't ever come. But the Zaboli land is ruled by a giant who stands twelve cubits high. With eyes of red in his hundred heads, he waits for the passers-by. And you must slay the red-eyed giant, and swim the River of Slime, Where the mucous beasts, they wait to feast on those who journey by. And if you survive the giant and the beasts and swim that slimy sea, There's a blood-drinking witch who sharpens her teeth as she guards that Tzu-Tzu tree." "To hell with your witches and giants," laughs Roy. "To hell with the beasts of the sea. As long as the Tzu-Tzu flower blooms, some hope still blooms for me." And with tears of joy in his snow-blind eye, Roy hands the guru a five, Then back down the icy mountain he crawls, pursuing that perfect high.

"Well, that is that," says Baba Fats, sitting back down on his stone, Facing another thousand years of talking to God alone.
"It seems, Lord", says Fats, "it's always the same, old men or bright-eyed youth, It's always easier to sell them some shit than it is to give them the truth."

