

Dear Thomas Pynchon,

Recently, I discovered that *Inherent Vice* was published in 2009. Did you know this? When I read the book—after 2009, of course—I was under the impression that it was quite older than it really was. Actually, until my discovery, I was also under the impression that you were much older than you really are (or, rather, than people claim you are). I'm embarrassed to say it, but I thought you were so old that you were dead.

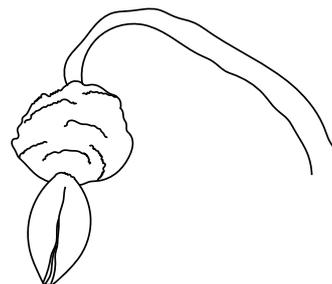
Thank you for still being alive, although it's probably not really up to you.

Due to certain conversational standards imposed on me by my once-living parents, I feel the urge to relate details of my life experience to the topic at hand, but, unfortunately, the academic nature of my profession prevents me from relating my life to anything. I will relate some details of my experience, nonetheless.

In my laboratory, I've clocked *G.Scitelleria* specimens expectorating at speeds exceeding eighty knots. I've also observed a large quantity of scitellerians engaged in coordinated vacillation.



(a) A *G.Scitelleria* blossom. Note the ventral *bubo*; it is toxic.



(b) A *G.Scitelleria* blossom in anting stance. *Scitellerians* are the only plant genus known to ant.

You might be wondering why *G.Scitelleria* expectoration is measured in knots. In 1648 the first recorded scitellerian was sighted in the unpitched deck below the foremast of *Severity*, a large whaler. When a reckless deckhand approached the plant, it spat at him violently. The deckhand exclaimed, "Fucking flower spat in my eye," to which one of his fellows called back, "Fucking spat in your eye it did." The deckhand's name was Knot, so scientists employed their usual humor.

But I don't want to bore you with my work.

Thank you for writing some good books that have helped me pass the time in my lab.

Sincerely,

Tote Hughes