

He is lying on the bed with his eyes closed. His three grown sons are at his side. He doesn't look appreciably different, except for the slight flatness and lack of focus that are signs of delirium. "How are you today?" I ask.

Mr. Smith smiles a distant smile. "Fine, doctor. Better, I think."

One of the sons gives me a look. "Dad," says another, "tell her about the teeth."

"What about the teeth, Mr. Smith?"

"Oh." Mr. Smith opens his mouth to show me. "There is another set of teeth

lying over my own. Do you see them? No, of course you don't. They're made out of glass, that's why. I'm not able to eat anything for fear they will splinter and cut my mouth." He runs a shaking finger over his teeth. "I can feel them, though."

The eldest son clears his throat. "Dad ..."

"They are there, I tell you," he snaps. Even through the delirium, he exerts his will. Abashed, his son falls silent.

I will have to have another look at

Mr. Smith's chart to see if there is anything else I can suggest. What would it feel like, I wonder, to have my teeth encased in glass? Would it cause my speech to slur? Would every word carry a danger of breakage? Would I still have the courage to bite and snap at my grown sons, or would I fall silent, resigned to my fate, defeated, toothless?

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## One thousand words



of choice. You could opt in, or out. Likewise with the march.

The only vandalism I happened to see involved scratched car paint when the march cut through a parking lot, the classic territory of urban crime. *Whose cars? Devil's cars*, the perpetrator cried, the world being raw material, undifferentiated by ownership, for his anger (if that's what it was) to work on. Other marchers objected. But the "diversity of tactics" philosophy of the Take the Capital organizers appeared ready to validate any act, as if all violence were merely commentary.

A snake march asserts an impulse to deviate within the grid of the real, the order contained by office towers and city blocks built by the fathers of commerce. It is decentralized, elusive, a metaphor that resists (or mirrors?) unseen, unelected control. There is no target — except maybe everything: the interconnectedness of trade, equity, privilege, aggression, globalization, consumption and foreign aid. NEOLIBERALISM IS A TRAP, one banner said, and these words were paraded through streets mapped out like a maze, not quite directionless, but without a centre.

In the garden mazes drawn by privet hedges on ancient estates, there is an exit called a fool's gate: a way for the claustrophobic or impatient or lazy or bewildered to get out without having to solve the puzzle. Personally, I prefer the maze to giving up on the confusions of politics and dissent altogether. — *Anne Marie Todkill*

**Snake march.** The point is to assert liberty at will or whim in any street. This is an annoyance to keepers of the peace, who want a predictable route for their surveillance. The response to the unpredictability of the anti-G8 protest march in Ottawa on June 26 was to position four police officers (carrying gas masks) at every corner along a deeply residential part of town, where the marchers never went. The response was also a spy plane, a helicopter, cordons of police at intersections, busloads of officers in riot gear (so one heard) tucked away unconfrontationally on side streets, and officers on bicycles, wearing short pants, flak jackets and sporty hel-

met — a dress code with a mixed, just-in-case, Baden-Powell kind of message. Walking amid the protestors, officers with palm-size videocams put faces on the record.

Judging from the morning radio you'd have thought all of downtown Ottawa was in a lock-down. Not so. A Laura Secord, icon of all things Canadian and nice, was boarded up, along with (I was told) a McDonald's. A sporting-goods store had plywood over every window; sales staff the same age as most of the protestors posted "Open for business" signs and tied balloons to parking metres. Starbucks, a target in Seattle, appeared unperturbed. It seemed that protestor-fear was a matter