

## In the Beginning

In the beginning God created the heaven and the Earth. And the Earth was without form, and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

And the devil said, "It doesn't get any better than this."

God said, "Let there be light" and there was light. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit," and God saw that it was good.

And the devil said, "There goes the neighborhood."

And God said, "Let us make Man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth." And so God created Man in his own image; male and female created He them. And God looked upon Man and Woman and saw that they were lean and fit.

And the devil said, "I know how I can get back in this game.

And God populated the earth with broccoli and cauliflower and spinach and green and yellow vegetables of all kinds, so Man and Woman would live long and healthy lives.

And the devil created McDonald's. And McDonald's brought forth the 99-cent double cheeseburger. And the devil said to Man: "You want fries with that?"

And Man said: "Super size them, and gimme a Coke." And Man gained five pounds.

And God taught the man and the woman that eating lean meat and fish and chicken, was a great goodness. Of the goodness of cheeses he taught them, and of green leafy salads He taught them.

And the devil brought forth chocolate. And Woman gained five pounds.

And God said, "Try these lovely strawberries and blueberries."

And the devil brought forth Ben and Jerry's. And Woman gained 10 pounds.

And God said, "I have sent thee heart-healthy vegetables, and lean meats, and olive oil and sunflower seeds. I have sent thee all manner of good things to eat."

And the devil brought forth Kentucky Fried Chicken, sugar, and hot fudge sundaes. And Man gained 10 pounds and his bad cholesterol went through the roof.

And God brought forth running shoes and Man resolved to begin at least walking, and to raise himself up to running, to lose those extra pounds.

And the devil brought forth cable TV with the holy remote control so Man would not have to toil to change channels between Sky Sports and Sky Sports 2. And Man gained another 20 pounds.

And God said, "You're running up the score, devil." And God brought forth all manner of good things from the land and the sea, and plants from the earth, and even herbs and spices to make all this bounty flavorful.

And the devil brought forth starches, and taught the sacred tradition of munching. He brought forth white flour, and potatoes, and from the potato peeled off the healthful skin and sliced the starchy center into chips and deep-fat fried them. And the Devil created dip.

Then God showed Woman how to create beautiful omelets, and to stir fry her lean meats and vegetables, and within the man, created a deep yearning for barbecue.

And the devil created light beer so Man could poison his body with alcohol while feeling righteous because he had to drink twice as much of the now-insipid brew to get the same buzz. The devil whispered into the ear of the man, and when he would have eaten lovely crunchy vegetables, the devil taught him to make macaroni and potato salad, and baked beans laced with sugar and molasses, and created a new tradition, that these and only

these, were appropriate at picnics.

And Man gained another 10 pounds.

And Woman ventured forth into the land of Godiva Chocolate and upon returning asked Man: "Do I look fat?" And the devil said, "Always tell the truth." And Man did. And Woman went out from the presence of man and dwelt in the Land of the Divorce Lawyer, east of the Land of the Marriage Counselor. And Woman put aside the gifts of the earth and sea, and took unto herself the all consuming Law of The Comfort Food. And God brought forth Weight Watchers. And it didn't help. And God brought forth Richard Simmons. And people decided he was goofy. And God brought forth Dr. Atkins, and he was ridiculed. And God brought forth the Eades, and they were ignored. And the devil rejoiced!

And God created health clubs. And the devil whispered into the ear of the woman, and told her that everyone at those clubs were already slender and toned and beautiful. And she cringed within her soul, and never crossed the threshold.

So God brought forth exercise tapes, and exercise machines for the home, with easy payments.

And Man brought forth his Visa at 18 percent. And the exercise machine went to dwell in the closet of Nod, east of the polyester leisure suit.

And in the fullness of time, the man had put on so many pounds that he now shopped the dungeons of the Big Man stores, and the woman realized that she was trapped in the Woman's Plus department of doom. And the Man and the Woman no longer walked life's path hand in hand, side by side, for they no longer fit side by side on the sidewalk. Nor could they walk very far, whether together or apart, for their ankles hurt, and their legs ached, and their breathing was harsh whenever they walked, for their poundage was now extreme.

And Man clutched his remote control seeking his salvation, surfing the infomercials and the Food Network, and ate the potato chips swaddled in salt.

And the devil saw and said, "It is good." And Man went into cardiac arrest.

And God created quadruple bypass surgery.

And the Devil created HMO's and insurance companies.