



CONFUCIUS SAYS: JADE IS VIRTUOUS

The 6th century B.C. philosopher Confucius saw no less than 10 virtues in jade. Its bright polish reflects purity; its hardness, a sure intelligence; its angles, defined but not cutting sharp, are akin to justice. Confucius peered into jade's

milky flaws and saw sincerity, and then tapped on the stone to hear the pure, sustained tone of its music. He saw loyalty in its color and heaven in its iridescent sheen, grounded in an agreeable heaviness suggestive of earth. Beautiful even without carving



or adornment, it reminded him of chastity, and its universally high price he perceived as representing truth ... all of which can be boiled down to the fortune-cookie saying, common among Chinese, "Gold is valuable, jade is invaluable."

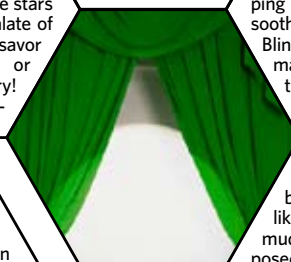
GOOD LUCK & FELICITY

Never big on recordingsuperstition, the Oxford English Dictionary tersely defines *green room* as "a room in a theatre provided for the accommodation of actors ... when not required on the stage, probably ... originally painted green." A thin account,

indeed, for that antechamber of wonders, that place of concentrating energy, the great maw of the creative that spits would-be stars out onto the waiting palate of the audience, ready to savor winsome emotions or chew the scenery! While the major-

ity of us who are familiar with *The Tonight Show* will recall this term (a space where all sorts of activities have been said to occur), acting lore is rife with theories to explain its origin. It's said to evoke Shakespeare's green—i.e., lawn or meadow—where

actors strutted on the grass below the audience in bleachers. Or was it a room filled with dripping plants, whose humidity soothed performers' throats? Blinded by limelights, actors may have stumbled into the green room to recover their sight,



TO THE GREEN ROOM WITH YOU!

In a 1777 classic of Persian poetry, "The Conference of the Birds," by Farid ud-Din Attar, a hoopoe bird leads a group of other birds to enlightenment. Swooping across seven green valleys, struggling to keep up, 30 of the birds finally alight in the promised

land of *Simorgh*, a clever pun suggesting both a mystical Sufi bird similar to a phoenix and the phrase *si morgh* in Persian, "30 birds." As they gaze at their own reflections in a lake, they see the Sufi moral: God is the totality of existence, 30 birds, themselves

with slow green spots swimming before their eyes. Or, like starlets in emerald mud-masks, actors supposedly let wet stage makeup shade from livid, wet green to lovely, dry pink there. A place of invention, of sprouting, in more ways than one.

transfigured by their journey. The poem's most famous lines are: "Come you lost Atoms to your Centre draw/ And be the Eternal Mirror that you saw:/ Rays that have wander'd into Darkness wide/ Return and back into your Sun subside"

tors. For relief, he passed hours roaming between a steamy bath and his bedroom, curtains drawn, the jungle-hot green interiors oddly resonant with the tropics outside. Humidity begat mold, which converted the "Scheele's green" pigment

in the wallpaper from copper arsenite to a gaseous form called trimethyl arsine, a vapor toxic enough to finish *le petit caporal* off. Sadly for the speculators, in 2008 a gaggle of Italian scientists armed with a nuclear reactor cut right through the

romantic nonsense and demonstrated that, in fact, everyone in Napoleon's day was plumb-full of arsenic compared to now. Stomach cancer won, but a sturdy little Napoleon cursing fate in the poisonous vapors of his bath holds a certain allure.



MORE BIRDS CONVERSING GREENLY

THE LANGUAGES OF GREEN

When the gods talk, it was once thought, they speak a green language. Mystics, occultists and alchemists throughout history have awaited the moment of transformation when "the green language," also known as the "language of the

birds," finally becomes intelligible. Both terms recall the notion of *logos*, an unmediated stream of pure information straight from the heart of creation. Many mythological figures across a broad swath of Eurasia spoke green



with the birds, from the Swedish king Dag the Wise conversing with his house sparrow, to the Talmudic version of Solomon, to the French troubadours ... even Russian Futurists with their 20th-century birdy argot known as *Zaum*.

In a twist with an oddly sinister cast, the U.S. Defense Department in 1978 developed its very own Green Language, later to be known as *Ada*, a computer software code developed to manage avionics under battle conditions.