

# I Before Thee, Except After Me

☒ Thirty-odd years ago, my classmates and I were knee-deep in our first lesson on creative writing, when I asked my teacher what the most difficult thing about writing was. Quoted here is his Twain-esque answer to the entire class: “The biggest challenge of creative writing depends on who’s sitting at the typewriter.”

With that cute little quote in mind, some of you might suddenly be wondering which challenge, if any, haunted big-name authors like John Steinbeck and Tom Clancy. (If you’re actually wondering what a typewriter is, please look the #\*\$@% thing up yourself. I’m busy here.) As much as I’d love to be able to guess the breed of monkey that rode bareback on Michael Crichton, I don’t like the idea of speaking for a household name unless it happens to be my pen-name. (I’m trying to come up with one—how does “Harper Lee” sound?)

Anyway, while my writing has been hindered by stuff like chores, my job, and kids who won’t buy the “but you had breakfast yesterday” line, for my money there is no bigger headache than having to describe something that is practically indescribable. And while it isn’t the most serious of subjects, not as profound as the economy, there is no harder task in the entire world than adequately describing the severity of Barack Obama’s narcissism. As far as hard-fought-yet-

inconsequential achievements go, you’re more likely to witness a 4’6 woman join the NBA and beat Wilt Chamberlain’s single-game record on her first night.

We’re talking about the guy (Obama, not Wilt) who wrote two autobiographies before he had achieved anything fit for even a

flier on your windshield; the guy who decided the best gift to send the Queen of England, a woman of the highest-esteem and widespread recognition in at least two continents for decades, was a recording of himself speaking; the guy who found the White House biographies of several of his predecessors rather lacking until various references to him were worked in; the guy who in May 2012 spent about twenty seconds referring to himself five times & saying the military was fighting on *his* behalf.

Does anyone else get the impression that if these and other examples were part of a sci-fi screenplay you're trying to sell to a Hollywood producer, he'd refuse it for its utter lack of believability?

I have a theory: Obama is trying to convince every person on the planet, including those yet to exist, that he is the most self-aggrandizing human being who ever lived. Now, you might argue he's accomplished that, but you'd be wrong. First of all, there are many, many people on this planet, several thousand I seem to recall Joe Biden saying. Second, Obama has only been strutting his ego on a larger scale for a relatively short time.

He's still got some work to do, in all seriousness. I mean, he hasn't yet signed an executive order changing the first calendar month to "Obamuary"...he still hasn't arranged the construction of a giant statue of himself, to be placed standing over Mount Rushmore with a disapproving glare...American schoolchildren haven't been ordered to recite the "Pledge of Admiration" for you-know-who...he hasn't devised any plan to fund the construction of his library by selling off the assets of all the other presidential libraries...Super Bowl champions still receive the Vince Lombardi Trophy and custom rings, not the respective Obama statuette and autographed picture...movies that feature admirable or heroic presidents are still waiting to be digitally altered, with the likes of Harrison Ford and Bill Pullman being replaced by

Obama. I'm assuming he'll get all these plans underway in November, right after signing the executive order to discontinue Election Day.

Sincere thanks to the readers and site management for their patience; I had to put this column on hold until tech services came to repair my #\*\$@% mimeograph machine.