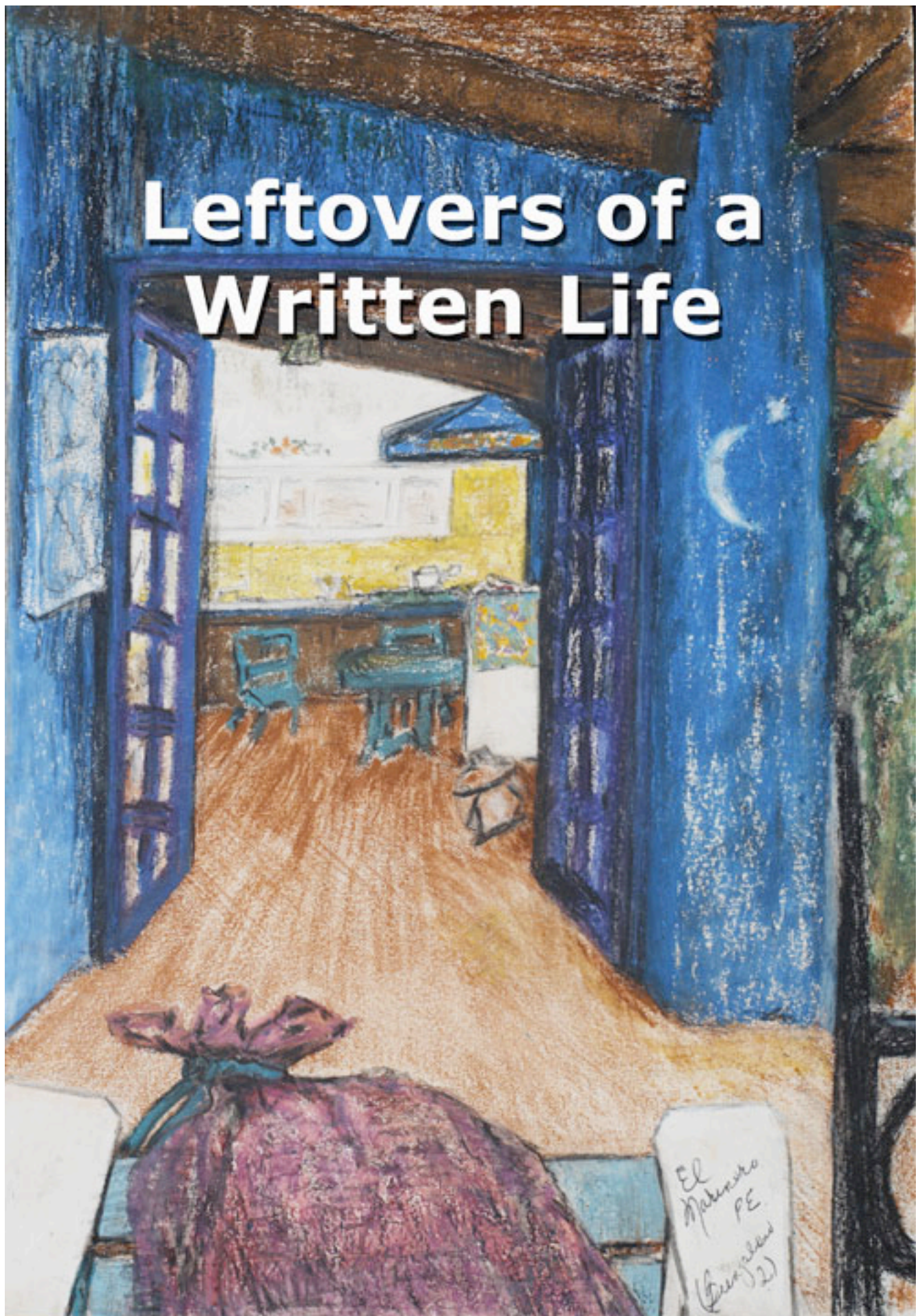


Leftovers of a Written Life



El
Madrero
PE
(Gonzalez 2)

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HEART OF CONSCIOUSNESS

I didn't record the program date, of an interview of Barbara Marx Hubbard by Jeffrey Mishlove, on National Public Radio's "Thinking Allowed." Ms. Hubbard is a proponent of "Conscious Evolution." Now, I'm an advocate of what I call "Evolution of Consciousness;" and I wondered if Hubbard and I were 'on the same page', as I began to review my notes.

"Self-actualization," I read, "is self-rewarding work--the reward is 'the giving'. 'Ethically conscious evolution' [posits] penetration of human intellect into matter, [toward] birth into universal consciousness--"

Universal consciousness? That sounded a bit far out....

The next note said "progression to 'evolutionary psychology' and referred to Abraham Maslow's Transpersonal Psychology. Having researched Maslow, I recalled nothing mystical in his posited stages of human needs and motivations: a five-level psychological pyramid, each successive stage reachable only if lower ones satisfactorily were met.

Maslow's hierarchical model seemed reasonable: (1) *physiological level*: breath, food, sex; (2) *safety level*: seeking justice in an orderly world of secure job, finances, and health; (3) *social/emotional*: sound communication, support of family, friendship, intimacy, loving, and being loved; (4) *well-derived self-esteem*: being valued for worthy efforts that returned self-respect, acceptance, and recognition; (5) *self-actualization*: maximum motivation toward realization of one's potential. Maslow, toward the end of his career, proposed a 'sixth' level--*self-transcendence*: possessing sharp cognition of *one's being in the world* (possibly consequent to an 'illuminating' peak experience which in some cases might appear mystical).

Maslow expounded various psychological difficulties with failing different levels; but of special interest are characteristics he noted in persons who professed themselves 'self-transcended' individuals: "loners" that exhibited intelligence, divergent thinking, and responsible feelings for others' misfortunes, but otherwise quite normal and capable of deep relationships.¹ Maslow brings to mind the French physician and philosopher, Henry Laborit (1914-1995), and his ideas in the area called "evolutionary psychology." A 1980 Alain Resnais film, *Mon oncle d'Amérique*, in which Laborit appeared, explored relativity of self to self and self to society.

The upshot of "Evolutionary Psychology" ("EP") is that Consciousness resides in Mind, and evolution of the former redounds in better operation of the latter. The term embraces a large number of hypotheses aimed at applying evolutionary theory to Mind in the same way it is to physical evolution of body. It considers that 'psychological adaptations' lead to evolution of cognition through the standard evolutionary process of 'natural selection'--that is, organisms with requisite psychological survival traits reproductively perpetuate them, toward eventual genetic reconfiguration of neural circuits.

EP would raise Psychology to a Science *per se*, comprising the whole of human experience and forming all natural sciences and their disciplines, with Physics as the foundation. Posing Physics as the 'rock' of all sciences would accord well with interconnectedness of Humankind in a 'closed' cosmological system, *i.e.* no such thing as empty space.² However, with respect to psychical evolution, the trait of *altruism* has been seen as taking a back seat. While individual altruism may benefit the social group, it is theorized that its cost can disadvantage its contributor, in that--if altruism renders his or her resources less desirable, a potential *trait-enforcing* mate may choose a selfish mate, instead.

The goals and intent of Hubbard's organization, which are impressive, stress *conscious individual application* toward evolving consciousness. However, although other consciousness-bearing entities of

¹ Maslow estimated that perhaps only two percent of the population might be capable of the sixth level.

² Cf. "A Child's Book of Light," this domain.

a state of being surpassing ours may exist in our universe, the suggestion that there is some *ultimate* ‘universal consciousness’ is problematic for me. Certainly recent astronomy allows the possibility of other life-inhabited planets; but advanced consciousness on one planet simply could result from it not having experienced interrupting geological or other of Earth’s setbacks and accompanying collective losses.

Doctor and Psychiatrist Maurice Bucke (1857-1902) was a firm believer in advanced individual consciousness. From 1877 to his death Bucke was head of the London, Ontario Asylum for the Insane.³ A founder of the University of Western Ontario Medical School, Bucke's studies partly founded *transpersonal psychology*.

Progressive in his thought,⁴ Bucke wrote professionally on the theory of “evolution of Intelligence,” in some respects a precursor of EP. His work drew historical trends also, albeit slow, toward emergence of collectively advanced consciousness. In his book, *Cosmic Consciousness*, he detailed lives of persons he saw as having possessed it.⁵ Such persons (here ringing in Maslow) were marked by elevated intellectual and moral illumination and an integral sensing of universal life. (Bucke also explored the possibility of causative ‘illuminating’ peak experiences.)

The ultimate question appears to be whether consistently favoring input via sensory reception, education, and experience--entrenched in brains/minds over time—*can* result in biophysical evolution of brain, thus mind, thus consciousness. That conjecture sparks the timeless debate whether ‘human nature’ is fixed or alterable. A society’s behaviors, which include governance, reflect a composite of all

³ After adventurous travels (the U.S. from Ohio to California, fighting Shoshone attacks along the way; and, as last survivor of a silver mining party, losing a foot and several toes to exposure in frigid mountains), Bucke completed medical studies with honors at McGill University, interned in London, and specialized in psychiatry.

⁴ For some time he endorsed the ‘positivist’ philosophy of Auguste Comte, which also ties in to theses here discussed.

⁵ Individuals included: Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Plotinus, Muhammad, Dante, Francis Bacon, and William Blake.

the individual consciousnesses constituting its Collective Consciousness. In that regard, the following Sigmund Freud quote from the EP website is thought-provoking:

“Would not the diagnosis be justified, that many systems of civilization or epochs of it, possibly even the whole of humanity, have [or can] become neurotic under the pressure of ‘civilizing’ trends? ... Diagnosis of collective neurosis...will be confronted by a special difficulty.... In the neurosis of an individual we can use as a starting-point the contrast presented to us between the patient and his environment, which latter we assume to be ‘normal’. No such background would be available for society similarly affected; it would have to be supplied in some other way.... In spite of difficulties we may expect that one day someone will venture upon this research into the pathology of civilized communities.”

Here in the “Leftovers” file, beneath EP, I find notes from Ezra Pound’s 1951 *Confucius* translation and commentary. *Toss them out?* I ask myself; but a sun/moon, light/intelligence ideogram catches my eye. Reading them instead, I discover that ‘transcendent’ qualities observed by Maslow and the work of Henri Laborit echo the Confucius model of conscious self-development:

“I. Make clear the intelligence by looking straight into the heart and then acting; clarify the intelligence in straight action. [*But what is meant by “straight” action?*”]

“II. Renew the people. [*Ah, couldn’t we use that now....*]

“III. Be at ease in total rectitude, whether cutting up hunted game or astronomically measuring different slices of moon. [*Looking up “rectitude”—“straightness; moral integrity; correct judgment or procedure”—sheds light on “straight action”....*]

“IV. Know the root which branches into effects. [*An ill-chosen word can cause undesired effects....*]

“V. Complete cognition. [*“Cognition: The act or process of knowing, which includes both awareness and judgment.”*]

“VI. Self-discipline is rooted in rectifying the heart, for mind cannot attain precision, or form sound judgment if the heart feels enduring rancor, sorrow, anxiety, etc. [*Eminently reasonable....*]

“VII. The tone of heart is to be looked into straightly by the eye even when alone, to find precise verbal expression for inarticulate thoughts. [*Difficult, that!*]

“VIII. Regulation of family is rooted in self-discipline; an undisciplined individual cannot bring order into the home. [*Home being where the heart is....*]

“IX. The government of the state is rooted in family order, which embraces relationships and harmony. Put order in the home in order to govern the country. [*Begging the question, has the impetus of this era’s society crippled family order?*]

“X. Honesty is the treasure of states; a state does not provide by profits—equity is the treasure of the states. [*“Honesty”--how absent from the mirror of our current financial crises is that!*]

“To conclude: Discipline on the Individual level leads to good government on the Collective, which leads back down to benefit the Individual, redounding in success of the Nation....

All that’s needed now is a fully disciplined, altruistic popular majority. However, given Humankind history to date, collective altruistic behavior could take another millennium to evolve, dependent as necessarily it must be upon equality of individual material resources and opportunities. It *is* nice to believe, however--despite not of any solace at present--that Humankind consciousness one day *will* evolve beyond the tenacious view that facets of human nature, thus the “human condition,” are unchangeable. As “Salome” proposed to the protagonista of *Journey With JC*:⁶

“If evolution is real, isn’t it logical that the farther Humankind gets beyond the animal state—that is, the higher developed that Consciousness becomes--the more It *would be* moved, to exercise control over ‘Instinct’? Imagine thought as *genderlessness*--unstrained by form. For example, Woman’s psychical nature classically was conceived as *Eros*, Greek for love and desire, fundamentally intuitive and romantic; Man’s, one of *Logos*, reasoning--labels that obviously bear updating! Androgeny of Mind must precede unity of Psyche--”

"In evolution of *collective* consciousness!" exclaimed her friend.

“Exactly. But only when enlightenment has filtered down long enough to lodge in the Collective Unconscious. And it *is* reasonable, isn’t it?--civilized changes in opinion and belief, penetrating and modifying individual psyches over time, *will* be incorporated collectively.”

“Evolution from *two* directions! Body’s through matter and its adaptation, but also *Psyche’s*, via ‘The Word’—*reasoning!*”.... * * *

⁶ An as-yet-unpublished autobiography by this author.

FLINGS WITH TAROT

Taroc...Tarok...Tarot: an ancient game played with a deck of 78 cards. My first deck, bought on a lark, lay unopened in a drawer 10 years. I happened across it a desultory Sunday afternoon the summer of 1978--a "New Color Deluxe Edition" by Frankie Albano, copyrighted 1968 by Tarot Productions, Inc., Los Angeles, CA—and instantly was absorbed by the wonderful art.

Extraordinary images and symbols called into play a great arena wherein one might imagine lived universal truths. Each of four suits had 14-cards--Ace to 10 and four "Court" cards of Page, Knight, Queen and King--comprising the "Lesser Arcana." Twenty-two "trump" cards, the "Greater Arcana," portrayed the Magician I; High Priestess II, Empress III, Emperor IV, Hierophant V, Lovers VI, Chariot VII, Fortitude VIII, Hermit IX, Fortune X, Justice XI, Hanged Man XII, Death XIII, Temperance XIV, Devil XV, Tower XVI, Star XVII, Moon XVIII, Sun XIX, Judgment XX, World XXI, and the unnumbered Fool.

The cards, larger than ordinary, measured 2-3/4 x 4-3/4 inches. On their back was a stylized gold-embossed fusion/fission design derived from trump card XIX. Suit symbols, I later learned, vary between decks. My four were "Swords," "Wands," "Cups" and "Pentacles."

Entranced at first by the sheer scale of imagination portrayed, I didn't ponder the deck's potential for touching some supreme arena of Consciousness wherein abides that universal spirit called 'God.' My interest has been fixed not on an 'eternal mind' but in quantum mechanics, which seems to be leading inexorably to a fully interconnected universe, manifested by and through an omnipresent, omniconstant energetic medium that permeates our very being.

A quantum universal cosmology, in which every action and reaction is also a cause--nothing lost in unassigned 'space'; that is, individual characteristics influenced by point in time and where incarnated ("put in orbit," so to speak)--also could explain seeming astrological effects. In that view I envisioned

Nature's all-directing, impersonal forces absent a supreme consciousness able (or caring to!) direct personal "divinations."

In my hands that Sunday afternoon, however, was something to distract me from my troubles. A major life change in my material world was a leaden ball in my breast; and--*who could say?*-- some direction might be taken away from personal woes.

Later I would seek the origin of "Tarot," two syllables of sound born in the dark of time where rocked the cradle of history. Later too I would discover that the ancient game is still played in a few parts of Egypt, with modified versions in central Europe ; wonder if it predated papyrus; and try to imagine 78 clay tablets on the sand.

On that 1978 day of desperation, however, I was seized by the mystical hope that often is Misery's last resort. Happening on mysterious Tarot of itself seemed like *synchronism*--a feeling of risky excitement, as if 'unwittingly' finding the cards might change my state of being. Perhaps a great benevolent hand *did* hold me above the world, after all!

I opened the small instruction booklet tucked in the deck and set to the task....

I had the immediate certain thought that the "Lesser Arcana" embraced the body and material world; the "Greater Arcana," the spirit and cosmos. That view surely came from my reliance on laws of Physics, the belief it must be part and parcel to any model of the workings of "Spirit:" that the same force that works in the tangible arena of reality must operate in the intangible, all encompassed in the confines of matter and energy....

Arcana, from the Latin *arcanum*—a secret, a mystery. *What of further back, before Latin?* I wondered, and stopped to research the word's etymology. The farthest back I traced the word was its use by Ovid the poet and by Livius, a historian about the time of the birth of the mother of Jesus.

A secret...a mystery.... I pressed on, looking for an older root--perhaps something similar in a Sanskrit reader, bought spontaneously at a flea market several years ago for no--*until now?*--intended

reason. Surprised, after following a chained search, I was led to two syllables in two letters, which in turn led directly to the *Rig Veda*!

I returned to the cards. Now, it appeared that all qualities of existence definitely were divided into two sub-groups, each occupying its own arena of secrets or mysteries--the separately grouped 'lesser' ever subjects to the 'greater'. I confess to feeling a bit edgy. My mind had been whisked into a whirlwind of speculations of body versus spirit. Ego, caught between, was being moved to accept Tarot legends in a play of existence on a grand scale: terrestrial and celestial, material and aetherial, physical and emotional.

Subjective attachments to varying of Tarot's hierarchy seemed to range everywhere from complexion to personas—softer to heavier, lighter to darker, male or female. As I read further, a vast potential for interpretive variations became obvious. One card could be assigned different readings, often the reverse of each other. The Hanged Man, for example, could signify on one hand *wisdom, circumspection, sacrifice and intuition*, while on the other, *selfishness, the crowd, the body politic*. At the same time, wide room existed for differing interpretations depending on the *order* in which a card came up.

I theorized that an individual's combined physical and psychical associations--the Conscious and The Unconscious—most likely accounted for Tarot's purportedly accurate interpretations of or reflections on the human condition. Despite not being prone to believe a supreme force could intervene in my petty human affairs, *why not give it a whirl?* I thought. What might I **think** the cards showed in my Future? Nothing for it but to run a 'test!

First, as instructed, I selected as my "Significator" the Queen of Pentacles [hereinafter denoted S]—which seized relation to, or representation of me (I had been dealing with various crystal shapes in the study of physics).

I placed S face up on the table.⁷ Then, continuing the instructions, I:

a) Shuffled the remaining cards three times and held the stack face down.

b) Lifted cards off the top, keeping their faces down, and placed them one by one on the table, in the numerical order and positions shown below (parenthetical descriptions of a card's effect/potential interpretation is almost verbatim from the booklet):⁸

3			
5	S	6	10
	1, covers S		9
	2, crosswise S and 1		8
			7
4			

(c) Turned each card face up in the following order, saying, in turn:

1. *This covers you.* (Affecting influences on the person or matter of inquiry, generally the atmosphere in which the other currents work.)

2. *This crosses you.* (The nature of obstacles in the matter:: If it is a favorable card, the opposing forces will not be serious, or may indicate something good in itself will not be productive of good in the particular situation.")

3. *This crowns you.* (Represents querent's aim or ideal in the matter, or, the best that can be achieved under the circumstances but that which has not yet been made actual.)

4. *This is beneath you.* (Shows the foundation or basis of the matter--that which already has passed into actuality, which the S has made his/her/its own.)

5. *This is behind you.* (Gives the influence that is just-passed or is now passing away.)

6. *This is before you.* (Waxing influences--those coming into action and which will operate in the near future.)

7. [nothing said] (Signifies the S, whether person or thing, and shows its position or attitude in the circumstances.)

⁷ If the face on the S doesn't itself naturally face right or left, one must decide in which direction it will be taken as facing, for the directed placement of ensuing cards.

⁸ In cases where another person is doing the reading for the "Querent," the cards would be placed with respect to the view of the Querent, not the diviner.

8. [nothing said] (Signifies the S's "house:" environment and tendencies at work therein which affect the matter--for instance, the S's position in life, influence of immediate friends, etc.)

9. [nothing said] (Gives the S's hopes and fears in the matter.)

10. [nothing said] (What will come, the final result, the culmination which is brought about by the influences shown by the other cards. "It is on this card that the Diviner should especially concentrate his/her intuitive faculties and his memory in respect of the official divinatory meanings attached thereto. It should embody whatsoever may have been divined from the other cards on the table, including the S itself...not excepting such lights upon higher significance as might fall like sparks from heaven if the card which serves for the oracle, the card for reading, should happen to be a Trump Major.")

"The operation is now completed; but should it happen that the last card is of a dubious nature, from which no final decision can be drawn, or which does not appear to indicate the ultimate conclusion of the affair, it may be well to repeat the operation taking the 10th card as [S].... By this a more detailed account of 'What will come' may be obtained. If...the 10th card should be a Court Card, it shows that the subject of the divination falls ultimately into the hands of a person represented by that card, and its end depends mainly on him/her. In this event also it is useful to take the Court card in question as the [S] in a fresh operation, and discover what is the nature of his/her influence in the matter and to what issue he/she will bring it."

Two prime factors appeared at play: first, the specific cards and their order of appearance--intervention of a divine force or chance? That depended on one's disposition. Second, interpretation--who or what does it? The answer had to be Psyche. In the case of a reading by a second person, two minds are at work. There, the sensitivity of the 'medium'--his or her combined subconscious and conscious mind, in concert with what is intuited of the querent--naturally can appear to contribute some conclusionary 'guidance'. Nonetheless, the divinee's Unconscious must be the determinant of what his or her Consciousness accepts from what is suggested.

The psychical constellation of my history *vis a vis* my nature is mine alone, I reasoned. All private experience and knowledge held in my Unconscious would act uniquely on my own mind, with or without conscious cognition, to influence what I infer from the cards. Once those associations were made, Time might see confirmation of an outcome; but such would be predetermined, I considered, by truths of preceding factors and associations influencing the reading.

Although I didn't record that first, 1978 throw, over the next several years one card repeatedly *would* be recalled--a woman sitting abjectedly, hands over her face, in what I interpreted as despair. That I *did* in the future find myself closeted thus in my room, due to some personal problem, did not mean that it had been prophesied!

My next whirl with Tarot, however, proved quite different....

By the summer of 1986 I had recovered from the trauma of divorce, worked my way back up in a civil service job, and the would-be-author finally had a few solid items in draft. I took a two-week vacation, what I anticipated would be an exciting writing sojourn in Oaxaca, Mexico..

I was at the Posada Margarita (Margarita's Rest), on an historical little street called La Bastida across from a small park, where woman weavers congregated and sold their work. It was Sunday, two days into the trip. I was sitting on the bed in my room staring at (of all things!) a box of Tarot cards. This is how I happened on *it*.

The room was not the one I had expected to occupy. In December of 1979 on a post-divorce escape-- deep in struggle with the conditioned wife, mother and secretary side of me--the writer-persona had stayed in the Posada's "artist's garret." It was an old, romantic room overlooking the laundry yard. *This* visit, however, Dona Margarita hadn't let me know that the artist's garret had been gutted! When I arrived, the last of its rafters lay on the roof above the laundry tubs; and beyond where its walls had stood Santo Domingo's blue and white tiled dome loomed greater than ever.

Dona M. had readied, instead, one of the prosaic rooms off of the courtyard, where "I" unpacked, hung the few articles of clothing in the armoire, took the Royal portable from its case, set it with notes and books on the small table by the window, and sat down. Meanwhile, 'She'--the would-be-successful-author--went into a small state of shock. 'She' had thought 'we' had a plan--rent a car, see the Mayan ruins at Tulum and Bonampak, write at least one main scene of a new story.

Even as psychologists at war with each other know, neither of a split-self can accomplish anything without command of Mind's one Ego. 'She' and 'I' still shared the same one, and neither of us had anticipated mutual burnout. Here 'her' fragile Ego-identity was rent by the garret's demolition as surely as the veils of the Temple, and 'I' was barely in view.

Tiredness of body seeped into the vacuum. No urge to put on a long, flowing skirt; no desire to stroll the sunlit zocalo of memory. There I sat two days, one thought hammering Mind: "What in the hell am 'I' *doing* here?," while 'she' mooned as only 'she' could, over the loss of her garret. It would have served us both well at that point, could we have contemplated together Jung's theory of synchronicity, to which in the past we had paid much lip service.

The destruction of the garret was the trumpet call for a new renunciation....

Next morning Dona M. told me, "Tengo nuevo nino. Fue abandonado por sus madre." The boy abandoned by his mother was Carlos, another in the string of homeless boys she took in, disciplined with work, and sent to school. Carlos needed a pair of pants. "If you would be so kind?" she said, leaving the suggestion hanging, as was her way.

It was while Carlos and I hiked down Alcala's new hand-hewn, tourist-enthraling cobblestones to the clothing store that I finally accepted it. Something definitely was amiss in Psyche. A full day after the shopping trip, 'I' still was waiting for the writer-persona to come to life from the colorful past—'she' who in '79 had tripped the heavy fantastic with "the Countryman," a ne'er-do-well preacher turned smuggler.

It was beginning to register: both personas were there not to write, to learn to co-exist or both die. The tall doors stood open to the courtyard. I moved our stupified middle-aged body onto the bed and looked out to the patio. Not a plant or pot different, but less determination in Dona M's step; things not as tight as they used to be. Lucy was gone, no decent cook to replace her. Nattie had another

fatherless baby and smiled less over the laundry tubs; everywhere was the smell of the latest peso devaluation.

Suddenly a blond-headed woman stuck her head in the door. "Hi!--heard there was another American here." Her name was Judith and her backpack held a unique Tarot deck--a "hippie" version, designed by, as she described him, a highly unusual man named Morgan. "Maybe you'd be interested in looking it over? I'll get it back from you later."

More synchronism?--that at this particular time, this Sunday in Oaxaca, a stranger--as if by second-thought--thrust into her bag and handed me a Tarot deck? Well, at that point, what would anyone do?

All of Morgan's unusual cards bore black-on-white illustrations with statements in words. I didn't record what I chose as the Significator, in retrospect unimportant since naturally I would choose something that Ego felt represented me. The pictures were interesting, but it was the words the revealed cards spoke that seemed to speak directly to my circumstances!

Card 1--that which "covered" me--depicted a battle between Atlantis and Mu ,and said, "The war has reached a critical point." *Okaaay!*

Card 2--crossing me--said, "Who Am I?" *Indeed!*--I couldn't imagine a simpler phrase to capture the atmosphere in which 'all currents were working'....

Card 3 "crowned" me with the statement, "Nobody here but us folk." *Definitely*, I thought; *the best that might be achieved under existing circumstances would be a consolidated Ego grasping that its dueling occupants, who think so much of themselves, are nothing but commoners!....*

Card 4--the foundation; that which already had passed into actuality--was pictured by the eternal kharmic wheel, shown as a simple circle surrounded by little matchstick feet. *Absolutely?*--*material body had carried 'us' witlessly along, thought going 'round and 'round, getting nowhere. And*

wasn't it time that 'we' acknowledged? 'We' had not one thing to do with the wheel's endlessly predetermined turning!

Card 5--waning influences--a blank card! *Hateful truth!* 'We' had overcome *nothin*, yet.

Card 6--waxing influences--merged hearts, the words: "Baba--my heart is empty unless merged with thine." *Oh, hope maybe here? A bit of consolation? Whatever the near future did bring, perhaps my spirit at times could count on solace near the breast of Brahmin?*

Card 7. The *Fool* card! "Tee Hee, Ha Ha," it said contemptuously. Well certainly that I felt like a fool there was no doubt; *accepting* I had been one, however, wasn't funny. *Except* at that moment a different Self seemed to separate, and *did* laugh ironically--perhaps humor *was* the most reasonable attitude!

Card 8--my "house"--a street scene, signs standing out, one of which grabbed me: LUST. *Right on!* How better to capture the environs and influencing individuals 'I' "chose" during the would-be-Writer's Mexico travels, and evolution of the first book all about the mind/body/persona struggle 'I' believed 'I' had conquered! As the old Tarot guidebook had commented, "This card, initially read as compassion, is changed by the Moon Goddess to passion;" and I recalled the many Ego-determinations 'I' had forced by way of a prideful swath of "*bhakti*"....

Card 9--hope or fear? I turned the card up. "NO TRIP WITHOUT THE TRIPPER"—

Good Lord! I glanced over at the Royal. Its operator, The Tripper, had vaporized. That 'Self', now seen in *bas relief* in the mind's aging eye, was gone, flitting eternally around the zocalo, no longer capturable in body...

The fanciful creation part, I accepted, was *over!* I had tomes of editing to do back in the states, for which I *should have used* these precious two weeks from my day-in, day-out secretarial job. But the transcended I-Self only was beginning to emerge. Would I be able to finish the work which 'she' had

used 'me' to cut out? *Precious little time left to do it!* What would follow Consciousness's cognation of the present state of affairs?—

I reached for card 10. MESSAGES MONDAY, it said; and next day—Monday--the sky fell....

The unseasonal storm was of such magnitude it rendered hundreds homeless in the poor neighborhoods on the fringes of town. It caught me lunching at a restaurant at the zocalo, the sky so heavy it was like night.

Impatient after an hour crowded in with many others seeking refuge, I decided to strike out for the Posada. I lost my shoes wading the rushing intersection. Pushing up Alcala against the drenching torrent, cracks of lightening over Santo Domingo pitched its blue and white tiles into daylight relief.

"Don't you think you should take a shower," Dona M's young niece asked worriedly, when I sloshed in. "When it rains like this *muy feo*--much evil--descends." Fortuitous advice, for it was the last of hot water. Moreover, the next day the storm's damage was everywhere; no running water at all; no flushing toilets. Tuesday, sick with dysentery for the first time in all "our" wanderings, a feeble I visited the airline office and Wednesday, flew home.

I shied away from Tarot divination a long while after that, only once being moved to take out my deck in the presence of two highly sensitive, spiritual people I loved a lot. The man was someone I thought I might make a new life with, and the woman was a dependent friend of mine who would be greatly affected by such a relationship. Our respective choices of Significators frightened me. We three unwittingly had selected the top three cards of the Greater Arcana: he, The Magician; my friend, The Empress; myself, The High Priestess. I didn't *want* to be given to imagine any subjective speculations about our co-relationship! To the others' consternation I abruptly put the cards away, and made a decision never to do Tarot with anyone.

My cards lay fallow until Mother's day 1989. Before that toss, some personal history is in order.

My aspiration to be a writer, known since I was a girl, was arrested by teen-aged marriage, aborted higher education, young motherhood, and 25 years as a working mother and wife, while my husband successfully pursued his career. In retrospect, I saw how our marriage embraced *four* personas. I married the Altar Boy and awoke next to The Cowboy; he, the Altar Girl and, the would-be-Writer.

When motherhood duties ended some 25 years into our marriage, the writer in Psyche began to butt head against the domestic. The proverbial writing was on the wall, and we divorced. Living singly from 1978 to 1988, I devoted every spare moment to writing and had several works in final stages. At that point my husband's and my path crossed again, and he began to pursue remarriage.

I had been in an unmarried but monogamous relationship with a man who filled the 'chauvinistic' bill that my domestic persona succumbed to naturally, but I knew marriage between us would be torture. On the other hand, regardless my ex-husband never could play the "Father Knows Best" role, he was a perfect match for the Writer-vagabonda. Spring of 1990 he and I succumbed to the same invisible force of Nature that brought us together the first time. We sought out the County Clerk and remarried.

I had wondered that Mother's Day, before our reunion, whether we *could* achieve a reasoned, guilt-free understanding, based on solid psychological grounds, of our past selves and actions. Would we be able to perfect eternal friendship, blamelessly and objectively, to our deaths?

Here is how the cards then fell:

That which covered me, *the Hierophant....* Once again I was struck by how thought stifled in Psyche can be pricked into Consciousness by association. Two of the Hierophant's possible interpretations were *capacity for alliance* or captivity; servitude. As I placed the Hierophant in his red robe face down on my self-perception--the High Priestess in blue and white; a virgin Mary with the

crown of a nordress on her head—I had to accept that **the** I *might* get lost again in domesticity; but *marriage with mercy and goodness* also was there!

That which crossed me, *the Lovers* card--a man and woman naked beneath a purple-robed, many-winged spirit.... A half-buried fear was that sex could spoil matters. How differently might we need to deal with it, a second time around in our sixth decades? But I framed a favorable interpretation; I would bank on a man with whom I might walk eternally *psychically* naked.

Crowned by *the Ace of Cups*--the dove's overflowing chalice; it also permitted positive interpretation, which I chose: I could realize my ideal in the matter, my "house of the true heart, with felicity."

The Moon beneath me....*the established foundation of the matter, which already had passed into actuality.* Did this pertain to it being established already, that we originally were a good match by and through blind material Nature, which isn't responsible for individual *psychologies'* adaptations to its evolutionary decrees?

MY GOD! The next card--*what was behind me*--the Queen of Pentacles!--*a circle within a star within a circle.* All that was missing was Newton's box within a sphere within a box, etc.; and only someone familiar with my studies for, and writing of "A Child's Book of Light" could appreciate what that card's appearance evoked in me. Yet, of its positive or negative interpretations, I refused to assume either. Time alone would tell whether I would achieve *security and liberty*; but what a blessing, to think that, where our union was concerned, that mind-strangling preoccupation with physics was over....

The X of Cups--*what was before me*: upon it, a row of curving chalices in a rainbow, under which a clothed man and woman each extended an arm up to the rainbow. The other of the man's arm was around the woman's waist, while at her side two small children held hands and danced. It was coincidental of course, that we had two children who might be advantaged by their parents' reunion;

but the positive here was what I most desired: *contented repose of the entire heart; perfection of human love and friendship.*

And next was...*good Lord*, the IX of Swords--that recollected card of my first Tarot reading! It *signified the person, and showed position or attitude in the circumstances.* Here Psyche was forced to acknowledge that Life always has attached to it the fear of the unknown. No matter how much I rationalized, there could be dreaded results. *Then*, the *next* card was,

DEATH! What?--it couldn't mean mine; two cards were left! The little book had said that the Death card could reflect *failure of marriage prospects* and, for a woman, *many contrarities*. The latter would not surprise me; I was not the same persona of JC's (as I refer to my husband) and my first marriage. On the other hand, it could mean *environment and influencing tendencies*—did that mean, death, itself as such?

The card definitely was unnerving, but I forced myself to study its portrayal: black-armored, skeleton-faced, on a gorgeous white horse, Death was being extended a hand by a golden-clothed priest in a green-meadowed, blue-laked mountain valley leading to a setting sun. Beneath the horse's belly a selfless sleeping body lay disappearing into the grass. I laid Death aside and uncovered the next card....

The *Hanged Man*, the situation's hopes and fears--*wisdom, circumspection, discernment, trials, sacrifice, intuition*, or the reverse—*selfishness, the crowd, the body politic*. Obviously, *all* of that could come into play!

Lastly, *Justice!* What better culmination for which to ask! Isn't *justice* what the pure, nameless self in everyone first and foremost craves? If Life confers justice, then it confers all. Gratefully would I accept *equity, rightness, triumph of the deserving side*, as I refused to contemplate the reverse--to which you will say, "*Aha!--only Time will tell!*" To which in return I now respond, "If Time proves Psyche wrong, I'll let you know."

Finished?...but, no. The ever-curious I was prompted to do something the little book did not suggest: total the numbers of the cards that fell.

*Let's see...*the High Priestess, II; The Hierophant, V; The Lovers, VI; Ace of Cups, 0; The Moon, XVIII; Queen of Pentacles, 0; Chalice X; Swords IX; Death XIII; Hanged Man, XII;⁹ and Justice, XI. Total = 86. Was I to consider that a prediction of my lifespan? If so, it was acceptable; but I had played with *self*-perception enough. Remembering the feeling when I saw Death staring me in the face, I made a last vow: *I'll never do Tarot again--not ever, ever, ever....*¹⁰

*What better?
Than a morning of Strauss in the garden
a cup of Tully's in one hand
and a pencil in the other.
The two small floral and herb plots still in color,
lavender and verbena,
African daisies and rosemary.
Nearest my shadow, imperturbable Society Garlic
overlooks white azaleas.
All that's missing
after all the years of working toward it
Is your presence
In my garden....*

* * *

⁹ Strange. I looked at the Hanged Man right side up, saw the number XII as IIX, and thought, "What a curious way to write **8**," before realizing the card was upside down. (Eight always has been my very own no-one-else-knows mysterious number.)

¹⁰ As to how our 17-year remarriage went, it all can be read about in *Journey With JC*—if, that is, it ever finds a publisher. You see, I am waiting, still, for *justice*. (And no, it wasn't my death; but it was interesting that the Death card came two cards before the last....)

RAYA YOGA'S NOT FOR NINNIES¹¹

Obeisant to Petrul Rimpoche's admonition quoted in Chogyam Trungpa's *Mudra*, that "preaching without firsthand knowledge of a subject is like dancing on books," this is *not* a guide to Yoga. It is a personal account, relating certain dramatic personal experiences not discussed in common literature, experiences to which others also unwittingly may find themselves subject.

Beyond the everyday gate of *hatha* yoga lie the nebulous precincts of "advanced teachings," which, Trungpa remarks, "are what are called *self-secret*--that is, one cannot understand what one is not ready for." Difficulty understanding the meaning of "self-secrets," however, as I subsequently discovered, is not equal to being *prepared* for them.

Persons with a mystical bent are sure believers in 'synchronicity,' that there is a hidden program to existence. We run into a particular person or event at a privately significant moment or a particular book comes to hand, as happened to me, when my quarter-century marriage ended. Added to the separation was the fact that, just when single income became critical, I was denied a promotion that my job duties warranted. Outwardly I appeared to be doing just fine; privately I was desperate. Mind, riddled with worry and uncertainties, felt on the brink. My future wasn't just bleak; it was *blank*. I needed *something*, to keep myself together.

About a month into the separation I was drawn on my lunch hour to a bookstore across the street; and the first book to stop the wearisome stream of consciousness was *Fundamentals of Yoga*, by a doctor named Rammurti Mishra. "Now you are unhappy and full of anxiety," I read. *How true!* I leafed further....

¹¹See Glossary for definitions of terms. (Portions of this account are excerpts from the autobiographical volume, *Journey With JC*, as yet unpublished; and this essay also is an enlargement of and replaces an earlier version of itself.)

“*Samkhya* Yoga does not recognize physics without metaphysics and, vice versa, metaphysics without physics. It is the missing link between the two sciences...knowledge through experience. It is the king of all Yogas; therefore it is called *Raja* Yoga. As mathematics is the root of all physical sciences, so the *samkhya* system is the root of metaphysical science.”

“Yoga is freedom of spirit...and permanent victory of consciousness over ignorance. ... Our present life is the result of suggestions during our previous life, and our future life will be the result of present suggestions. ... The body and the mind are interdependent. ... The science of Yoga...prescribes exercises for both the body and the mind, so that they may develop themselves in psycho-physiological equilibrium. ... Never doubt your ability to control your mind. ... Although modern science and Yoga travel different roads, their goals are similar.”

“[T]here are many books on Yoga being sold in the market today. Many of these books are supposed to be instructive as textbooks to teach you ‘How to go into the state of *samadhi* and how to attain enlightenment and perfection.’ Most of these books...do not ‘teach you how,’ because they present a great number of useless theories, dogmas and various other window dressings.” “...[T]he material on the eternal science of Yoga perhaps form[s] the greatest library on any single subject....but you are not interested in useless verbiage to waste your valuable time. You want to know ‘how.’”¹²

Mishra’s straightforward words appealed to my need *to do*, not ponder; and I recalled a comment of Carl Jung, from a long-ago course in Psychology. I looked it up.

There were times, Jung said, when he felt that he “stood helpless before an alien world:”

“I was frequently so wrought up that I had to do certain yoga exercises in order to hold my emotions in check. I would do these exercises only until I had calmed myself enough to resume my work...”¹³

That decided me. I commenced a self-prescribed program of *asanas*, in private, as one would any personal physical exercise routine.

The second book that ‘found me’ was *Mudra*. I remember how I clung to the Rinpoche poem, memorizing it as a *mantra*. Addressed to a friend named Abrushi, when I substituted my name it spoke directly to me: ***Listen, Tosca!—you miserable, daydreaming fool. Remember how delusion confused you in the past? Watch out for delusions in the present, and don’t lead a hypocritical life....***

¹² Pages xii, xxii, xxvii, 2, 76, 120, 188.

¹³ *Memories, etc.*, page 177.

I spent a lot of time contemplating the word *delusion*, the meaning of which I before would have said I knew. A dictionary definition is handwritten in the book's margin: *misleading of the mind, deceptions/trickeries*. At the time I to childhood admonishments by the nuns of de Paul--that allowing 'self-deception' when confessing 'sins' to the priest (*i.e.* 'subconsciously' omitting something embarrassing) invalidated God's "absolution."

Although spirituality can weave strongly through it yoga can serve undogmatic agnosticism, as well as subjectivities from various religious realms. "One's innermost aspiration is reflected in the model chosen," comments Mishra, choice of path subject to individual conditioned disposition. A religiously emotional person finds his or her path through love of a personified god.

Fundamental tenets of yoga--terse reiterations of the meters of the golden rule--were easier to accept than my old religion: *I pledge to reform my life. I shall always speak the truth. I shall not injure another by thought, word, or deed*. Further, Mishra reassured, yoga "was not a branch of religion but can help every religion in the right way." Moreover, yoga did not deny genetics, because *prakriti* determines the substance of being. *Prakriti* yields *inheritance*; inheritance yields *inborn disposition*; *conditioning* determines character. All three are necessary, it is said, for mastering perception and emotions that bar knowledge of 'true' reality and know *purusa*, piercing through the three cognates of existence—form, substance, and experience ("the three veils of Maya").

Initially I simply undertook *yamas* (silent pledges), *niyamas* (observances), and *asanas*—the latter several self-prescribed, easy *hatha* postures morning and evening, and added a half hour of meditated relaxation at noon if my job allowed. I had only two aims: the physical--straighten the spine and thus the spinal cord; simplify diet; curtail meat consumption; develop breathing to purify the nervous system; and the mental—"silence of mouth, mind, and will" into one-pointed concentration on life at hand.

Gradually, however, I began to explore Mishra's methods to focus mental energy and self-hypnotizing the subconscious. During *pranayama* I 'told myself' to *forget* self-quests, *forget* family, *forget* everything that ordinarily encumbered thought, strongly bidding Mind to send energy through the *cakras*. Pranayama was followed with *pratyahara*: first, *dharana* ("health and strength to all parts of my body"), concentrating on sending impulses from brain down spinal cord to every centimeter of flesh and nerve; second, *dyana*, 'reversing' the process, concentrating on withdrawing all sensing up to brain.

Body relaxed, I lost clear sensation of legs, then torso. Behind closed eyes it was as if all self-awareness *was* contained by Mind. As Mishra instructed, I had ready certain things ready to impress on my subconscious. "*Listen* my subconscious!" I would think forcefully. "Tomorrow you will *not*..," and here I would recite the things I wanted *not* to bug me, *not* to depress me, *not* to interfere with my desired efforts. Next I would think, "Tomorrow you *will*..," and there list the tasks or duties I was to perform, without doubt and disturbing stream of consciousness.

Continuing in the meditative state, afterwards I would experience a period of completely 'thoughtless' time that could be called "blissful," absent even awareness of breathing, absorbed by various light and shadow effects against an imageless backdrop of Consciousness. On some occasions I would 'come to' with a sharp insight of myself or some situation. *Always*, however, I emerged fully rested and with sureness of action.

I cared not whether the process had a real basis or was a panacea; all I knew was that my pre-sleep 'meditation' helped keep me sanely on schedule. The benefits--capacity to work dedicatedly, increased production, positive disposition—all commented by family and friends--privately seemed a remarkable saving grace. Along with it were improvements in posture and weight (an impetus to amend

and improve diet), and healthy strength overall.¹⁴ In short, I was content to remain as I was and would have, *but for...*

A few months later, again on a noon break and without forethought, I visited the bookstore. In the interim I had been drawn to and spent an inexplicable amount of time studying light. Thus, the first book to stop my eyes was irresistible: *The Yoga of Light!*—an English translation of the Sanskrit *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* of Swami Svatmarama. The Yogi's writings consisted of a number of *slokas* leading to *raja yoga*....

"Yoga is a refuge for all those who are scorched by the three fires. ... There is only one germ of evolution, and that is Om;...only one duty: to become independent from everything...." ... "[S]He who recognizes the true meaning of raja yoga can by the grace of the guru achieve realization, liberation, [and] inner steadfastness...."¹⁵

The "three fires" were sufferings caused by one's self, by others, and by Fate. I felt myself victim of all three simultaneously, and I had found my second literary guru.

Mishra discussed raja yoga and the potential of gaining extra-natural powers, through development of and mastering mental waves. Such if obtained would be secondary byproducts; a pursuit of yoga simply for attaining them, however, would be contrary to "the true form of Yoga" and the main difference between a student of Yoga and other mystics." As he states, in his preface to the chapter on the subject:

"Really, there is not such a thing as supernatural or supernormal power, because there is nothing beyond nature. This term is used, not from the point of view of nature, but from the viewpoint of man, his normal state, and his nature or capacity. Knowledge is the real power. When it is manifested beyond the limit of unenlightened man, it is called supernormal. This is really a relative term. Relatively, everyone has a few supernormal powers and qualities that are not found in others."¹⁶

¹⁴ As acknowledged by Mishra, however, entrenched habits don't succumb directly, to which I can testify, having tried to use self-hypnosis to overcome cigarette addiction.

¹⁵ Pages 26, 119, 146.

¹⁶ This and preceding, pages 2-3, 150. (Perhaps the scarcity of solid details of the nebulosity of precincts one might enter, in the quest of "conquering Mind," is writers' knowledge of their very sounding as magically unreal.)

While working my way through Mishra's "lessons," I had not dwelled, however, on the discussion of *raja* yoga. I had no grand intuitive moral or intellectual aspirations (*sila*), no aim toward complete absorption of mind in Brahman (*nirvanam*), nor even to reach *samahdi*.

Truly, I did not believe in an ultimate state of complete liberation. The fact that I in meditation may have experienced mind absent its usual stream of consciousness--the "I" a brief time oblivious to worldly elements and personal identity--any suggestion that my mind in *samadhi* could "take the form of supreme, omnipotent, and omnipresent mind" was too magnanimous for me. That, together with the fact that true yoga masters disdained pursuing yoga for supranormal results, led me to eschew expecting any. Had I known more, however, I might have given deserved serious credence to the admonition, *do not undertake practice without guidance from authority!* I had been drawn to yoga for maintenance of body and normal mind. Now however, as I review my notes and library, it is so obvious how blithely I continued into a personal program of intensified breathing and meditation methods. At the same time, my thought was gathering into a magnificent obsession that seemed to be converging on the very generator of it....

Saturday night, alone in the apartment—ideal for practice...

I spread the soft white cotton mat and commenced my chosen mental recitation. Mind, which could not accept a personified god, reworked the words of a prayer from childhood....

*In the beginning was the Word—
In the beginning was the Logos....
In the beginning was the worded thought—
In the beginning was Reason!
In IT was Life, the light of Humankind....*

This particular evening I chose a triangular standing posture, in which legs are spread widely apart, torso twisted, one palm flat on the floor next to its corresponding foot, and the other arm raised

perpendicularly toward the ceiling, to which the face is turned. I was concentrating on balance in the pose—

*In the beginning was Reason,
Reason was toward godness,
And Reason is a god--*

when all of a sudden awareness, which had been withdrawn from perception, returned as if belonging to an identityless consciousness, which ‘noticed’ each eye’s *different* receipt of the visual field. Yes, reflections of it were being captured *thoughtlessly* by the eyes, but *who or what* was this *detached*, persona-less observer?--this *wonderer* who yet *knew*, were any part of body’s visual faculty altered to admit different perception of the field, It *nonetheless would retain its certainty of existence? Was that perceiver the bearer of “the third eye?”*

I lay myself down with closed eyes. ‘Photon’ energy, causer of sensations of light and color, continued outside my closed lids; but consciousness was withdrawn completely behind focus: pure thought--timelessness and feelinglessness devoid of history, race, or religion; a primal awareness that knew no parents, children, or lovers, and could wear exponential incarnated identities.

Then, without warning, the lids lifted; and I saw light!—racingly criss-crossing all of what usually appears as ‘space;’ an energetic medium obeying natural laws, the interaction and relativity of which instantly would be revealed, were it possible to freeze its action. The sighting diminished as focus returned toward normal, but perception had been altered drastically, permanently. Every inch of what once appeared empty space now was filled with constant motion....

What was it that Mishra said?

“Mind suspended, the student reaches the state of realization of truth in the form of radiating light which is the source of all things, and the highest objective to be reached.”

But I did not *delude* myself that I had reached some high level! I simply was learning that one stage seemed to lead inexorably to another, and that there ever was more to learn.¹⁷ Next came the day when I began to emit an *AUM* spontaneously, which seemed to be caused by some ‘centered’ joining of consciousness with body. *Oh*, I thought, matter-of-factly accepting it, *this must be one of those mysterious “self-secrets.”* Then the same thing happened in a group at a May Day conference, at a Vedanta retreat, where at its invocation the audience was bid to meditate briefly together. The ensuing three or four minute silence ended abruptly in a *joined* spontaneous *AUM*.

If advanced discipline does cause material changes in Body it had to follow, I reasoned, that physiological thus neurological functions would be affected. Yet nowhere had I seen discussed the possibility of that worded sound that could thrust unbidden from one’s core. *Why the mystery?* I wondered, mildly annoyed. *Why nothing said about it?*

Svatmarama details some esoteric practices (which Dr. Mishra doesn’t include), that I definitely eschewed (I could not imagine undertaking those any more than some described, over time, of dogmatic religious devotees). I simply merrily continued to working through the acceptable of Svatomarama’s ancient written *slokas*; but one (“self-secret?”) unexpected revelation threatened to do me in....

The Goddess Kundalini, serpentlike in form, resides at the mouth of the Great Sushumna at the foot of Mount Meru. When awakened through yogic discipline she uncoils upwards; the currents of the tributaries of the stream of life unite—BUT BEWARE THE KUNDALINI! DO NOT UNDERTAKE PRACTICE WITHOUT GUIDANCE FROM AUTHORITY!

Here there obviously was some warning--*not elaborated*, however, was the potential for intensification of bioenergy ordinarily balanced by sexual release--needless to say, human nature’s most private subject.¹⁸ I was left hanging in the breech after Svatomarama sloka 83, by the translator’s comment:

¹⁷ There would come, for example, a brief period when I believed I’d achieved *renouncement*, only to discover the hard way that the *bhakti* path is easy to *assume*-- *if* one has money in one’s pocket!

¹⁸ Some of the coping with which is explored in the aforementioned *Journey With JC*.

“The following slokas, 84-103, describe...[certain there named]...*mudras*. ... The purpose of such practices is clear: to enjoy all the benefits of yoga without sacrificing any of the worldly pleasures. In leaving out these passages, we merely bypass the descriptions of a few obscure and repugnant practices that are followed by only those yogis who lack the will power to reach their goal otherwise. ... Any technique that enables a yogi to submit...virility...within his[/her] organism merits approval. Whatever he[/she] does outside his[/her] organism cannot be called yoga[!] ... So let us take a detour around Orcus into the purer fields....”

Good grief, I reacted. It put me in mind of how, like with Scripture, ‘the Word’ can be lost in translation simply because it contradicts a conveyor’s platform. Again, no authority to which to turn, the only comfort I was able to find was Gopi Krishna’s personal account of unwitting effects of intense yogic discipline, which he prefaced with:

“There was a passing reference to Kundalini Yoga--a couple of pages or a small chapter was all that the authors thought sufficient for describing this most difficult and least known form of Yoga. It was stated that Kundalini represents the cosmic vital energy lying dormant in the human body, coiled [at] the base of the spine a little below the sexual organ....”

Yet he too refrained from giving private details:

“There was no doubt an extraordinary change in my nervous equipment, and a new type of force was now racing through my system connected unmistakably with the sexual parts. ... To the best of my knowledge the weird phenomena following the awakening of Kundalini have so far never been revealed in detail or made the subject of analytical study...shrouded in mystery not only because of the extreme rarity and astounding nature of the manifestation but...also because certain...features...are closely bound up with the intimate life and private parts of the individual who has the experiences. ... I am compelled for reasons of prudence to keep back much that should have found a place in this work....”¹⁹

Yoga had appealed to my fundamentally sensitive nature, but I had no clue how facets of that nature--psychical constellations forged by early religious training, and the deep examination of Conscience conditioned--would combine with material nervous system changes.

¹⁹ This and the quotation above, pages 59, 88, 113, 115. (Later it struck me: according to Svatmarama, Siva enunciated the raja yoga method for “his wife, Parvati;” and subsequently I pondered a strange rumor, that some male kundalini aspirants found it necessary to imagine that they had a vagina!)

Through studied raising of *kundalini*, the readings allowed, one could achieve conscious sublimation--not only become a true child of "Brahman" but *like* Brahman, "know all minds." How lofty that sounded; how otherwise it could be!--as, in a subsequent meditation I 'became' *everyone!*... *"I" was my mother: orphaned; raised in a cocoon (understandable, her inability to speak explicitly of matters physical or emotional!) "I" was the refugee, the alien resident, coping with foreign tongue and manners. "I" was everywoman: the welfare mother, born and bred in a slum, missing education, coping with roaches at home and the vermin of prejudiced society; the working mother, saying, "Yes, sir," "No, Sir," serving from a cramped space superiors in roomy offices who were where they were simply because they had the good fortune not to have been where "I" had been. Cleopatra!--a girl when she met Caesar, a loving mother, no less noble a monarch than any man, remembered only by man for her imagined body, her imagined lusting--*

*More even that that! "I" was my father, who stood firm on individual principles-- not those proclaimed by any organized religion or governmental entity, those principles that live in the souls of fair-minded, hard-working laborers everywhere. "I" was the surgeon who moved the knife in good faith before the maturity of its science; the priest, who began when he believed, now struggling in the business of Religion; the seamstress, the mechanic, the murderer! And this insignificant "I" no longer would be able to condemn anyone, for every other person was "Me." Thou art that, is the saying; and 'god'-consciousness is *that* and *that* and *that*!*

'Liberation,' I was discovering, was not so grand the term initially might give one to think; nonetheless yoga *had* become *my* 'religion.' By it I could construct a 'faith' incorporating possibilities of self and scientific determination against outside forces. Every action having an equal and opposite action I could apply to psychical operation as well, a vein of thought supported by yogic distinctions of *prakriti* and *purusha/purusa*--that is, willed delay of immediate reactions yielding sounder judgments in action.

When I next *felt general* pratyahara, the entire body aware of electromagnetic waves around and through it, I saw my entire being as a matter of sheer physics--capturable by $E=mc^2$, wherein all-pervasive, substantive energy is manifested as matter and some, not. The better 'centered' I became, I reasoned, the less susceptible to the pull of recognized forces. I *did* need to cope for some time, however, with a heightened flow of energy through my nervous system, which only could be attributed to anatomical and physiological adjustments, possibly intensified also by mid-life biological changes. But if I thought then that dealing with "the Goddess Kundalini" might do me in, I was unprepared totally to experience Consciousness captured in 'waking' dreams.

Mishra can't be blamed. He emphatically cautioned *never* strive for the meditative state *while lying down*. Well, I thought, suspended Mind while supine might yield new perceptions but what can be wrong with that? Even had he added, *you might fall asleep*, it wouldn't have stopped me; however, to fall asleep is perchance to *dream....*

There was only an handful of things needed for the larder—bran, yogurt, apples, coffee...I'm taking them from the bag, placing them one by one in the refrigerator and cupboard, but!—of a sudden darkness is descending, rapidly! Yet I have no thought of questioning it; I only wish to place the last item away before it becomes total, but there isn't time—

No matter! '*IT*' told me. YOU are going to come to ME, and there is nothing YOU can do about it. *Instantly I know—I'm going to fly! Who cares if the last items are left sitting on the side board? I am going to be allowed to fly and quite happy at the prospect! I relax, am lifted up..., up..., and—oh, dear!--through the window? But before I can flinch I realize it is not my body which is to pass through, and 'I' am out and sailing, sailing into the void....*

It's so wonderful, this flying, a sensation of a smile upon nonexistent lips; a song from childhood tinkling softly—"over the river and through the woods"—and 'I' am going unthinkingly, with lovely feelings--

JUST A MINUTE HERE, LADY. WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?--SELF-INDULGENT, KICKING-UP-YOUR-HEELS, COMPLACENT LADY? YOU'VE NOT REACHED PERFECTION YET--FAR FROM IT!

Wham!

Oh, Jesus--

Zap!

TIME FOR A LESSON!--

Pinned down faster than a turned-out light, back in the body, tormentingly helpless! I cannot open my eyes or move a muscle. I am like a rock conscious in a hurricane, as all around howls a silent torrent, as if all ordinary human insulation from earth's forceful whirl through gravity has been removed. I am allowed to open one eye, but only enough, just enough—oh, terrible sight!—to see my hair swirling with might away from the side of my face. That's all! Enough! I don't want to see more! Then 'IT' pounds against me, rhythmically, rapingly--Incubus? Horror of horrors; is all myth real after all? But...wait...

My fingers.... I begin to feel the tips of my fingers as part of me and I can make them move! Ah, if my fingers can move then--perhaps, perhaps—there is a chance to escape. I begin to pinch at the 'body' upon me; but is there a body upon me? I do not know. I do not know! And the pinching seems to have no effect. So far I have been only thought, only 'mind' and finger tips; then--miracles of miracles--I am allowed to move my hands—

LEARN WHAT IS TO BE LEARNED!--

*I have the use of my hands. These hands!-- that have peeled eggs, braided hair, tied birthday bows, cooked stews, typed one hundred million billion words, moved rocks, dug holes, pulled weeds, planted seeds.... These hands!—which, had they been larger, wider, might have laid asphalt, raised bridges, pulled anchors. These wonderful extensions of the soul, second only to my eyes! And with them I push against the 'force', against the body of its weight, against the weight of its body. But then I feel-- oh, lord, tell me that's not what I feel? **Another's** hands?? What creature is this?—*

NONE...None...no one; for, as soon as I feel those alien hands, I am released--released, reprieved and returned....

I awaken. The room is alive with energy...buzzing, swarming...I can see its supercharged movement. I lie there, captivated by the streaming infinitesimal points of light, more certain than ever that I am built within and around and welded as one with it—that it exists; that I do see and feel it; that it is eternal, unchanging, impersonal and real, real, real--and that I am not crazy in the experiencing of it. And I wonder how many persons, for whatever causes of nature and constitution, unwittingly have had the experience and *been* deemed insane.

Yet *still* I persisted to meditate while lying down, telling myself I would not fall asleep, but did....

Again it is as if the state that normally inures body to the gravitational field is withdrawn. No matter how much I yearn to understand it, I cannot help initially reacting defensively, the sensation so profound that fear is evoked instinctively. I summon a Mishra recitation—

I shall obtain the ultimate truth and ultimate reality in this world,
whether my body remains with me or it goes into pieces—

It feels as if my body supermagnetically is pinned not just to the surface beneath but to and within all-surrounding energy, with no humanly willed exertion possible against it. It penetrates my skin, a billion invisible needles attack the flesh from all sides, and there is that hand on me again! It clutches after me, at my legs and back, and I know terror. I keep pushing it away even though I am in horror touching it, while Consciousness--helpless, hapless prisoner in a static piercing medium—realizes itself separate from the vulnerably penetrated body containing it. The sensations are accompanied by an increasingly intensifying, feverish humming, buzzing vibration.

I cannot turn my head; trying to move is like trying to make one's way free from the bottom of a silo of grain. No, it's worse than that, far worse; but I am determined to deal with it. Somehow, with all might I manage to slide across and off the bed onto my feet, for I decided long ago that when I die I wish

it to be in my tracks. I make my way to the living room but there is no feeling of 'walking', all of 'me' contained in a continuing stream of thought, wondering what is this thing that is happening to me?

My eyes are permitted open only half-way. Strive as I try to lift the lids they are held down, as if usual human-perceived reception of reality is limited purposely, so that I might learn fully how limitedly fixed it is. Consciousness resides now behind two reclining half-moon portholes seared into blackness, their outlines etched in fiery glowing gold of the burning sun. And 'I', this thinking nothingness, know; and 'I', this non-thinking identity, am following them as one awakened to find oneself flung into some pitch black underground labyrinth would chase the only two lights visible...

I stop before the full length living room mirror, which casts no reflection. But 'I' am interested in the conveyor of images;²⁰ and beyond 'me' (ME?) and those two burning apertures hangs a flowered kimono on one of the mirror's hooks. 'I' lift my hands (not questioning that 'I' am able to do so), and shake them fiercely between those two portholes and the kimono's approaching image. 'I' apprehend a shattering of the oncoming image in the 'field', at the same time aware of the intact kimono beyond—

Suddenly I understand! It is a "concrete" visualization of the omnipresence of reflecting images of which human perception intersects only the one correspondent to and seized by the focus dictated by its specific visual modality....

This time when I awaken the energy in the room is tremendous, with that peculiarly unfocusable speed that makes it almost motionless. The sound inside my head is an even steady hum like an open radio receiver. I vaguely recall a line—another of Rinpoche's--you may have recited the set number of mantras, but you still haven't mastered the concrete visualizations....

Is it possible that a brain stem disconnect of consciousness normal to sleep can only partially? Does the involved brain region shield us, when awake, from experiencing the forces of physics ever

²⁰This is only one of several dreams experienced during work on light and physics (culminated in an abstract, *A Child's Book of Light*), which are being assembled in a 30-year collection of dreams, their relation to life events at their times, and exposition on dreaming in general.

acting unsensed upon us--the press of gravity and whirring of the heavens, to which undeniably we are constantly unwittingly subject? That deep 'meditation' *can* dislodge demagnetization of fully natural sleep, for an in-between state where one is neither asleep nor awake?

Finally, *are* we headed for a New Physics--a system wherein cause and effect will be found sealed, predeterminedly relative? There is a yogic saying that when one dies it is like air leaving a vase. When Jung died, an unseasonal storm occurred over Kusnacht, and the tree under which he used to sit was struck and scarred by lightening--a seeming founded synchronism but, as Jung himself would say, not by a personifiable god's mighty hand.

I do not recall who said *meditate upon the effulgent light, which is beyond all sorrows*. I know only that I am in it, that it is in me. When the force left Jung the heavens shook. Into the vacuum created by my expiration, perhaps a single weed will nod its head.

(And oh, yes—lesson learned! The reticular formation is nothing to play around with....

GLOSSARY

The following offers some Yoga terminology, but in no way is it to be taken as a guide for yogic practice, the subject of voluminous exposition.

Aum: Like the Latin word 'Omne', the Sanskrit word 'Aum' means 'all' and conveys concepts of 'Omniscience', 'Omnipresence', and 'Omnipotence' (*Iyengar*, page 314).

That sound in the human range of pronunciation chosen to represent the true sound of *anahat(a) nad(a)* [see *Nadam*], or, *Brahman* as manifested by the *nad* sound. Mishra discusses representations of its three syllables.

[Sometimes found as "Om."]

Akasa: Primordial nature, pervasive substratum. Its most subtle manifestation is in the prenuclear state of matter (*Mishra*, page 196).

Asanas (postures): The third of the eight procedures (stages) which comprise Yoga. In *Raja Yoga*, the term means any comfortable position for meditation (*loc cit.*; giving internal references).

Atman: Divine soul; dormant; but able to be manifested to its fullest in man by the practice of meditation (*Mishra*, pages 203, 205).

Bhakti: Complete devotion to and love for all beings because of the divine principle perceived in them through meditation, strongly adoring emotion. (*ibid*, page 197; giving internal references).

Brahmacharyan: Leader of a life of conscious self-restraint; may be physically celibate, but celibacy is emphasized as a state of mind. (Marriage actually is recommended--it being posed that one cannot come to know divinity without knowing human love and happiness.)

Brahman: The eternal, omnipresent, omniscient principle the realization of which is the goal of meditation. It is sometimes called Ultimate Reality because, although all is dependent upon it for existence, it is without relation, independent (*loc. cit.*; giving internal references).

Cakras[/Chakras/Cakram]: Seven subtle centers for consciousness symbolized in the human body in the areas of the (1) spine, (2) lumbar region, (3) solar plexus, (4) heart, (5) throat, (6) thalamus, and (7) cerebral cortex (*ibid*, page 198; giving internal references).

Cittam: A technical term which means "seat of consciousness" and as such includes the conscious, subconscious, and superconscious minds. Yoga gives knowledge and control of the first two facets of *cittam* so that the third may manifest (*loc. cit.*)

Dharana: The sixth procedure of the eight-fold system of *Raja* Yoga. It consists of fixation upon the object of meditation and, as such, is the beginning of internal stages (*loc. cit.*). Concentration or complete attention (*Iyengar*, page 317).

Dhyana: The seventh procedure, intermediate internal process where the power of attention becomes so fixed on the object of meditation that other thoughts do not enter the mind at the time (*Mishra*, page 199). The seventh stage (*Iyengar*, page 317).

Eight-fold Yoga "Limbs:" *Yama*, first; *niyama*, second; *asana*, third; *pranayama*, fourth; *pratyahara*, fifth; *darana*, sixth; *dhyana*, seventh; *samadhi*, eighth.

"Eight sets of practices which together comprise the science of Yoga. *Yama* and *niyama*, the first two steps, comprise the ethical foundation of Yoga; *asana*, *pranayam[a]*, and *pratyahara* comprise means of physical preparation for the final internal practices of *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *Samadhi* (*Op cit.*, page 199).

Gunas: Three cosmic principles of which the entire material universe is composed in varying proportions. (1) *SatoSatva/Sattva guna* manifests as life, light, strength, courage, freshness, resolution, good moral qualities, and, in the nuclear sphere, the proton. (2) *Rajo guna* is characterized by activity and the electron. (3) The characteristics of *Tamo guna* are sleep, dullness, decay and the neutron (*Mishra*, pages 199, 207).

Guna, a quality, an ingredient or constituent of nature. *Sattva guna*, the illuminating, pure and good quality of everything in nature; *Rajo*, quality of mobility or activity; *Tamo*, quality of darkness or ignorance (*Iyengar*, pages 328, 326, 329).

Guru: *gu*=darkness, *ru*=light; a teacher who transmits knowledge, removes darkness and brings enlightenment (*ibid*, page 30).

Hatha: force or determined effort.

Hatha Yoga: Opposing distinction is not so, as sometimes made between Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* as dealing with spiritual discipline, and Svātmarama's *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, solely with physical discipline; *Hatha Yoga* and *Raja Yoga* complement each other and form a single approach to Liberation (*ibid*, page 24).

A system of Yoga developed later than *Raja Yoga*, in which the various parts of the body [are] employed to effect control of the mind (*Mishra*, page 200; giving internal references).

Ida and Pingala: Yogic terminology respectively for the parasympathetic (ascending) and sympathetic (descending) tracts of the autonomic nervous system.

Parisariya nadi mandalam: Term for the peripheral nervous system which connects the central nervous system with bodily tissues (*ibid*, pages 101, 200, 204).

Isvara: That conscious principle governing the entire physical universe (*ibid*, page 200). The Supreme Being, God (*Iyengar*, page 319).

Jnana: Pursuit of intelligence through knowledge.

Karma: (1) Cause and effect operating inexorably throughout the material universe; (2) Yogic discipline in which one does all work and action unselfishly without concern for "the fruits of one's actions." (*Mishra*, page 200; with internal references).

Kundalini, Kundalini sakti: Magnetic force that circulates body. The so-called "coiled power" of the central nervous system [the "Susumna"] (*ibid*, pages 8, 201). Latent energy in the lowest nerve center (*Iyengar*, page 322). The discharge of psychic energy through the *kundalini* path or *susumna* (central nervous system) manifests waking consciousness, and this state of mind is called conscious mind. The principal aim of concentration is to awaken *kundalini*. In the ordinary states it is operating partially. In educated and trained persons it operates moderately. In the state of *samadhi* it operates fully and perfectly (*Mishra*, pages 23, 89, 96.)

Kumbhaka: Controlled intake, retention, circulation, and expulsion of breath. (Hebrew "ruahh," Greek "pneuma"...to breathe, to blow; when used with reference to god, the 'Holy Spirit.' Latin "spirare"...to breathe, from which came "spirit;" literally speaking, all Scripture--words accepted as emanating from 'God' considered 'god'-breathed--as written in the second letter of *Timothy*, translating the compound Greek word, *theopneustos*, "All of The Word is inspired by god.")

Mantras/Mantram: Strong suggestions which anyone may give to his or her mind by repetition (*Op cit.*; giving internal references). A sacred thought or a prayer (*Iyengar*, page 323).

Meru, Mount: The mountain supporting the world; symbolizes *sushumna*. (*Svātmarama*, page 198.)

Nadam [/anahat(a) (nad(a))]: Sound manifestation of the highest psychic energy (*prana*) which may be heard in one form within the human body where it manifests at first close to the right ear.

Primary state, *vaikhari*, may manifest over time in differing sounds, all of which may be meditated upon, e.g. *ghanta nadam*, ringing of a bell; *megha nadam*, roll of thunder at a distance; *mridamga*, sound of bass or kettle drum; *venu nadam*, sound of a flute.

In a semi-advanced stage of *nad* meditation, *madhyama*--electromagnetic pulsation/magnetic sensations--may be perceived within the body. (*Mishra*, pages 195, 199, 201, 202, 209; giving internal references.)

Nada: Inner mystical sound (*Iyengar*, page 324).

Nadis: Nerve channels through which nervous energy passes through the human body, of which there are estimated 72,000. Junctions of the *nadis* are known as *chakras* or fly-wheels which regulate the body mechanism (*ibid*, pages 90, 316).

Nirvana, Nirvanam: Extinction of the flame; final emancipation (*Svatmarama*, page 199). The state of complete liberation obtained when OM [AUM] or *nad* [nadam] is completely manifested in the mind. To obtain this ultimate state is the goal of all meditation and *Samadhi* (*Mishra*, page 178.)

Niyamas: Five observances performed continually: physical and internal purity, contentment with one's material state, austerity, study and self-surrender (*Mishra*, page 203).

The second stage of Yoga mentioned by Patanjali. *Niyama's* five rules listed by Patanjali: purity, contentment, ardour or austerity, study of the Self, dedication to the 'Lord' (*Iyengar*, page 324, 38).

Ojas: Hormonal energy which may be developed by the practice of Yoga. Such development brings increased health, longer life, mental power and control of nervous system. There are two kinds of *ojas*: *para ojas*, which supplies the heart...and *apara ojas*, which circulates constantly through the blood vessels to nourish the entire body, to heal mental and physical diseases (*Mishra*, pages 203, 104).

Om: See Aum.

Patanjali Yoga: Patanjali yoga does not recognize physics without metaphysics and, vice versa, metaphysics without physics. It is the missing link between the two sciences, hence the name is *Samkhya* yoga (Vedanta with practice, knowledge through experience). It is the king of all Yogas; therefore it is called *Raja* Yoga. (*Mishra*, page xxii-iii.)

Prakriti: Cosmic matter or substance; Nature; the original source of the material world, consisting of three qualities [*gunas*], etc. (*Iyengar*, pages 325-6, 329). The most subtle form of nature according to the *Samkhya*, which, when in combination with Consciousness, produces the infinite universe of names and forms; characterized by the three *gunas* (*Mishra*, page 204).

Prajna: Individual consciousness or intelligence as contrasted with universal intelligence, or *isvara*. It also may mean wisdom or intuition (*loc. cit.*; giving internal references). Intelligence, wisdom (*Iyengar*, page 325).

Prana: The sum total of all energy which resides within the universe, both the unmanifested nuclear state and in the manifested states [and travels the *kundalini* paths and tributaries] (*Mishra*, page 204; giving internal references). Breath, respiration, life, vitality, wind, energy, strength. It also connotes the soul (*Iyengar*, page 326).

Pranayama: The fourth of the eight [procedures, sub-] systems—various breathing exercises for gradual control of prana and transferring the breathing function to the internal metabolism (*Mishra*, page 204, giving internal references; *Iyengar*, page 45). An important center of concentration during *pranayama* is

the medulla oblongata because it contains the center which controls respiration (*Mishra*, page 201). Rhythmic control of breath. The fourth stage of yoga. (*Iyengar*, page 326).

“In breathing exercises, with every expiration in succession, impurities of the body are removed through the lungs, skin, and kidneys, and with every inspiration in succession, universal energy, life and light of knowledge are drawn into the body through the lungs and skin.” “Energy of the sun operates freely in the body...the inner light continually increases until it reaches full freedom or salvation.” (*Mishra*, page 133).

Pratyahara, Local: The fifth procedure, withdrawal of consciousness from contact with the senses and turning it inward for concentration (*ibid*, page 205; giving internal references). Withdrawal and emancipation of the mind from the domination of the senses and sensual objects. The fifth stage of yoga. (*Iyengar*, page 326).

General: See Yoganidra.

Purusa[/purusha]: A *Samkhya* term designating Consciousness *per se*, a non-identity with which is born, undefiled and unlimited by contact with *prakriti* or matter (*Mishra*, page 205)--before modification by circumstances, associations, and conditioning via the force of *prakriti*.

Raja Yoga: “Royal yoga” for *raja* yoga apparently is a misnomer, in that *raja* means “to shine.” Thus, more correctly, *raja yoga* is “the yoga of radiating light.”

The most ancient form of Yoga in which many of the physical aids to practice, such as complicated *asanas*, and even physical methods of *pranayam* are not employed. Rather, mind already developed to a high degree is used as the sole controller of the physical functions. (*Mishra*, page 205.)

Renunciation: As *Mishra* stated, *renunciation* is the most difficult concept to apprehend. Initially, one thinks that one can escape mundane obligations and achieve the peace necessary for true contemplation and certain success. As he also pointed out, however, wherever one goes, even into a cave on the most remote of mountains, one’s mind goes with one.

Samadhi: That state in which the individual mind, freed for a time from all material limits...gains enlightenment (*loc. cit.*). Where there is a feeling of unutterable joy and peace (*Iyengar*, page 327).

The possibility of permanence of *samadhi* is mitigated by *Mishra*’s comment, that it is a state, “of which there are various grades, in which the individual mind [is] freed *for a time* from material limits...and gains enlightenment.”

Samkhya: (See Patanjali.) The philosophic basis of the Yoga system; *i.e.* that system of classification of the states of mind and spirit which evolved from and is continually reverified by yoga practice (*Mishra*, page 206).

Sloka: A terse teaching of method.

Susumna[/Sushumna]: The central nervous system, of which the principal part is the spinal cord (*ibid*, page 208; giving internal references). The main channel situated inside the spinal column (*Iyengar*, page 329). [See also, *Ida*, *Pingala*, *Nadis*.]

Tatvamasi[/Tat twam asi]: The foremost of the great Vedic suggestions. It means literally “That art thou.” (*Mishra*, page 208). The realization of the real nature of man as being part of the divine; “That thou art.” (*Iyengar*, page 330). [Also heard as “Thou art that.”]

Third eye [“*divya dristi*”]: Located in the sixth *cakram* [cakra/chakra/“*anja*”], between the eyebrows, the seat of intuition (*Mishra*, page 199; giving internal references).

Vedanta: Direct knowledge of supreme consciousness which although formulated into a philosophy must be realized through practice (*ibid*, page 209).

Yama: The first limb [of the eight-fold procedures of the Yoga system], its ethical disciplines being non-violence, truth, non-stealing, continence and non-coveting (universal moral commandments) (*Iyengar*, pages 23, 33).

Five vows [governors of behavior]—noninjury, renunciation of untruth in life, nonstealing, continence, and noncovetousness—observed by aspirants after Yoga (*Mishra*, page 210; giving internal references).

Yama also is the name of the god of death (*Iyengar*, page 333).

Yoga: That scientific system for transforming the weak, untrained, material mind of a human individual into the eternal, omnipotent, blissful mind of supreme, universal consciousness [giving page references in the text for its related religion, eight systems, aims of, physical endurance necessary for, training body, ‘psychic’ powers as byproducts of, and foundation of ethical and moral life] (*Mishra*, page 210).

“**yoga** \ yo-ga\ *n.* [Skt. lit. yoking, fr. *yunakti* he yokes; akin to L. *jungere* to join – more at yoke]. **1 cap** : a Hindu theistic philosophy teaching the suppression of all activity of body, mind and will in order that the self may realize its distinction from them and attain liberation **2** : a system of exercises for attaining bodily or mental control and well-being – **yogic** \ -gik \ *adj.* *Often cap.* [*Webster dict.*]

“The material on the eternal science of Yoga perhaps forms the greatest library on any single subject...but you are not interested in useless verbiage to waste your valuable time. You want to know ‘how’... The Patanjali Yoga in its original form is free from these vagaries. Therefore, the name of the Patanjali Yoga is *Samkhya* Yoga. It does not recognize physics without metaphysics and, vice versa, metaphysics without physics. It is the missing link between the two sciences...knowledge through experience. It is the king of all Yogas; therefore it is called *Raja* Yoga. As mathematics is the root of all physical sciences, so the *samkhya* system is the root of metaphysical science.” (*Mishra*, page xii.)

As I have understood the yogic path, one can find it traveled singly or combinedly through *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana*.

Yoga, Foundation of: Iyengar in *Light on Yoga* gives some detail on the foundations of Yoga philosophy:

“The word Yoga is derived from the sanskrit root *yug* meaning to bind, attach and yoke.... ... Yoga is one of six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy collated, coordinated, and systemized by Patanjali in his classical work, *Yoga Sutras*, which consists of 185 terse aphorisms [concise statements of principle]. Patanjali describes Yoga as restraint of mental modifications or as suppression of the fluctuations of consciousness [sanskrit terms omitted here]. ... “The *Kathopanishad* describes Yoga as

steady control of the senses and mind. ... "The *Bhagavad Gita* also gives other explanations of the term *yoga* and lays stress upon Karma Yoga (Yoga by action). The sixth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* explains the meaning of Yoga as a deliverance from contact with pain and sorrow. ... There is not one but different paths for realization in the same system. (*Iyengar*, pages 21-22, 24)

Lingpa comments in *Mudra* that, for receipt of understandings, single-minded devotion and faith are necessary to connect with a teacher "who holds Thought Lineage Transmission."²¹

Yoganidra: State of complete bodily relaxation and magnetization...awake, yet calm and free of all distraction (*loc. cit.*).

Yoga psychology: That system of mental analysis which has been formulated through centuries as the result of insight received and repeatedly vivified by yoga practice. A major premise of this system is that the chief property of mind is identification of itself with the objects of its contact (*loc cit.*).

Drawing Trungpa from the Shelf
at Kusulu's mudra a poem falls out,
'The I' not remembering having written....

*The hatch of Vajrayana opens to shining rungs;
eyes catching pure light
I long to tarry mesmerized in Kriya--
then,
VAM!--*

*forced to a higher rung.
Long are my feet glued to it, eyes downcast--
distasteful knowledge!:-
the end of every creation is destruction.
But miracles of the Past mean more can come?*

Look up!
Another rung...
give it all up—
and another...
give it all up—
"loosen the tight grip of the Ego!"
Clinging is only temporary;
the placid ocean is in sight.
Glide up...diffuse Mahamudra...see the portal of Ati...
*Seeping joy of Intellect strains away the
virtual projections, the mirror images....*
Up! UP!--
*Into perfect union of wisdom with insight?
But, ho! The ladder is disappearing....*

²¹ Another point I skipped over. Where in the world would I find such a personage? (And I was not disposed to consider some 'supranatural' thought transmission.)

Quickly—before it does—reach!
Seize Ultimate Reality's goggles hanging there.
Look squarely into the Dharma Kaya.

* * *

HOUSECLEANING WITH OSCAR WILDE

“Dang it all!” Domestic cursed, wiping up the last of a tribal ant trail. It had run all the way from the front door along the living room wall, around the corner into the kitchen, up over the refrigerator, along the stove and *on*, to a few drops of watermelon juice left on sideboard last night--

(At least when you die you won't need to do any more housework,” piped Writer. God! What a thought! Did ‘I’ really hate housework that much? (Well almost!)

“Men ought to need to *use* and then *clean* their inventions before they go to market!” Domestic continued, as JC nonchalantly edged past to pour a second cup of coffee—

(He's not much interested, is he; but then why need he be?--take the eight-year-old blender, for example. JC's a weight-lifting nut, and those muscles need to be fed. That means a daily whip-up of protein powder with other healthy ingredients; and those cute little ridges around the blender just love to have ‘gunge’—his own word!--nestle in them. New, pricey stainless steel ones aren't something that retiree grandparents on a modest fixed income are likely to have sitting around. (“If it ain't broke, don't fix it,” right?)

Domestic, ignoring Writer's stream of consciousness, proceeded, knife point under a little cloth *(damn those little ridges!)*, to clean out some on the stove, and while at it around the door of the refrigerator—

(Pray tell me! Who can be a great writer when there's housework always to do? I doubt that Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde ever cleaned house, not that I love him any less for expressing some feelings better than we could ourselves, my favorite one being, “There is no secret to Life. Life's aim, if it has one, is simply to be always looking for temptations, and there are not nearly enough of them. Why, I

sometimes pass a whole day without coming across a single one. It is quite dreadful--it makes one so nervous about the future “....)

Needless to say Writer was cranky, having expected today to resume manuscript editing; but Domestic had laundry to do and dinner to think about, and—

(And Psychology hasn't told yet?--how to hold Thought and Action--Mind and Body-- oblivious of mundanities, to say nothing of death--)

[DEATH! How we hate it!--deservedly so, because hate is opposite the state of Love, which (regardless what 'First Cause' one conceives), forms the greatest attraction to living, and is far greater the lesser cause of misery within....]

Whoops! Not infrequently Writer gets overtaken by “Cleric,” a tertiary persona who hyperbolically can take subjects to the *nth* degree—

[Ever notice how Wilde's pithy observations often are given unwarranted exclamation points? Oh, what a tragedy is inapprehension of Great Wit's seriousness be its editors too casually deleterious! However, one oughtn't stoop to bore or clutter with repetitions. In truth is anything left to say, that over time already hasn't been made tangible to reading eyes? Most 'new' thoughts are but restatements of old ones, re-voiced in and against their scene of emanation. Indeed all history we have, of Time that we didn't live, has come through Thought of those who lived it. Epigrams might capture imbedded truths of existence, as Wilde embodied perfectly. Unfortunately, however, over time they dwindle into clichés--“History repeats itself” being one, itself!

[Now, going back over Humankind history's records, don't our current political and economical conditions seem to have been predictable? Salient are the records of all prior 'empires' (using the term generically, not as a title)--entities which, as a result of concentrated knowledge and initial wealth, became world powers only to reach, at the end of accelerated growth to excess, insufficient resources to sustain itself and its commitments. Can we not imagine?--how the minds of our ancient human kin had to have registered

thoughts similar to ours?—such as preceding the falling of Assyria to Babylonia; it's, to Cyrus the Great; illustrious Persia's to Alexander the Great; the Ptolemaic and Hasmonaean entities to Rome and the latter's eventual crumbling? Doesn't the need now appear, not to remember what followed falls but to assess what was not done to preclude them? Let's recall Oscar again here: "For, he, to whom the present is the only thing that is present, knows nothing of the age in which he lives."]

Cleric's garrulousness aside, obviously 'she' has some big worries about the seemingly ignorant, current Collective's re-subjection to ancestral experiences, and dwindling supply of 'coin of the realm', due to egoistic indulgence in luxuries and commodities siphoned off far-flung 'slave' labors—

(meanwhile, realities of Humankind's joint ancient Past's experiences are reduced to embroidered, heroic cinematic tales, as if principles themselves are mere stories--)

[Right! Territorial borders have changed repeatedly since recorded Time's beginning while--still occurring!--formerly good-neighboring groups choicelessly divided under new 'names'. We might take some confidence, that at least two-thirds of our nation is encircled by waters; nonetheless, how can we not feel threatened?]

(Well, then, what is there in History that we might learn, and for a first time possibly prevent a repetition of all of itself?)

[Recognize, more than just in words, the determined aim of collective evolutionary forces, now working on the global scale parallel with the "known world" in earlier times--as examples, the former British and Spanish empires: gradual incapacity to manage and support extended extra-territorial involvements....]

It's not that Cleric thinks herself any different from the average citizen, subject to expecting his or her common sense trumped by supposed greater wisdom of leaders who, themselves, are subjects of the extant Collective. She knows our President cannot withdraw immediately all military forces from current warrings in other lands, that many more of our youth will be killed or maimed, with all misery endured by their citizen families—

[We citizens know we need to cultivate resources for intelligent immigration management, reinforce national infrastructure, restore the 'liquidity' siphoning into winless wars, stabilize industry and production, re-found education and labor models that reflect a civilized society's true needs. We know that solid family--irrespective configuration!--is the primary entity of good governance of civilization, and that adequate family resources determine sound development of the future's generations. Based on History, there are two extremes of outcome of our present state: either we collectively and individually tighten our belts and apply past lessons, or experience breakdown of internal 'borders,' with families keeping rifles by the door to ward off the hungry--]

Wait, that's enough from both Cleric and Writer, neither being more consumed by concern for the future than this 74-year-old Domestic.... War.... WARS!--how many centuries has Collective Consciousness tolerated the very concept of them? Oh, not everyone...not those who have survived them; not, certainly, anyone who has read Dexter Filkins 2008 book, *Forever War*.

Mr. Filkins began covering the Afghanistan and Iraq wars in 2001, as a foreign correspondent for the New York Times; and reviews deemed *Forever War* a "classic of all great war literature." "Fearless, compassionate and brutally honest" Mr. Filkins was an imbedded journalist who accompanied troops through many heated battles. His writing presents firsthand the unbelievabilities of war's material destruction and torturous aftermaths of 'collateral damage', not least the damaged children. Above all, Mr. Filkins suffered repeated losses of his comradeship with American youth, as they fought, were mangled and died, caught in the middle of both tribal turf and civil wars.

I could read only a little bit at a time of *Forever War*. I'd be reading in the bedroom easy chair JC bought for me at the Thrift Store (originally covered with worn sheepskin, now wearing a lovely floral I fashioned). I'd look up and see the perfect harmony of the room before me. The house was quiet, the neighborhood safe and peaceful; beyond closed drapes the garden rested tranquilly beneath a waxing moon....

My life! What great value I have attached to it--been able to attach to it, solely by dint of circumstances of birth. Given a poor immigrant descendancy and lower-class youth, had I been born male I would have been in Korea along with the boys from San Rafael High, who wound up in Company C and of whom only a few came home.

I would need to set the book aside, Mind not knowing quite what to do with passages it just had read of Mr. Filkins various encounters--some with Bravo Company in Falluja but also in Baghdad, Ramadi, and numerous other places along the way--of which the following are but a small sample:²²

"By then, a week into the thing, nearly a quarter of Bravo was wounded or dead: Romulo, Nick, Nathan, Lonny. Bradley Parker, 19, from Marion, West Virginia. Jake, the mouthless mangled face; he was still alive. There were others. But we had gone forward anyway, rolling.... ... 'Have you ever seen what a 2,000-pound bomb does to a person?' an American officer asked me once...the victims had been American soldiers.five guys. 'We put the remains in a sandwich bag.'"

Miller's "face was opened in a large V, split like meat, fish maybe, with the two sides jiggling ."

"There was the matter of going to the bathroom. This was no small thing for 6,000 marines moving through a city on foot. ... At the Grand Mosque, one of the places we stopped for a day, the marines used the storage room for the Korans, not out of disrespect of the Koran but for the privacy of the room. The marines put down a bunch of cardboard boxes in there, which were the toilets, and hauled them out when they were overflowing. Enormous, dripping cardboard boxes filled with human shit."

"The third platoon turned into a walled compound. ... Through the windows I followed their flashlights as they moved upstairs. Then came an enormous boom, a bright flash and a scream. A grenade. "My face! My face!" a marine yelled. "No! No! No!" ... One of them was Jake Knospler, a kid from Pennsylvania, and he was silent as if he were dead. Jake's cot had been next to mine in a barracks before the battle. He was the platoon's official disc jockey. On a large boom box he kept next to his cot, Jake played mostly Johnny Cash, "Ring of Fire" his favorite. Jake even sort of looked like Johnny Cash, big, square jaw. Which was blown off by the grenade."

"Omar's family, ten in all, were driving together to get out of the fighting in Baghdad. ... In the confusion, the truth was elusive...it seemed...Omar's family had not understood [a major problem being the "barrier of language itself;" while suicide bombers in vehicles were everywhere]. ... In all, six members of Omar's family were dead, covered by blankets on the roadside. Among them were Omar's father, mother, brother and sister. A two-year-old boy, Ali, had been shot in the face. 'My whole family is dead,' muttered

²² Pages 206, 210, 196, 194, 116, 109.

Aleya, one of the survivors, careening between hysteria and grief. ‘How can I grieve for so many people?’”

“‘Hey this guy’s legs have been blown off!’ a soldier yelled as he ran behind an armored car. Two more soldiers came in crouched behind him, dragging the bloody mess.”

Initially I thought, *Forever War* ought to be compulsory reading for every high school freshman--that on reading it they would think, “No way!--no way do I want to know any of that,” and that students who otherwise might tend toward the military consciously would seek another course. Mind quickly conceded, however, that Military as a means of support goes as far back as History, with war a seeming method of overpopulation ‘attrition’--that low income and its consequences (which could be abetted by absence of birth control) explain the source of an empire’s or nation’s soldiers--the “fodder” [*“that which is to be consumed”!*] by wars. The process feeds on itself like with birth control--impossible for the collective emotional machine, overnight, to write off already-invoked needless miseries of irrational destinies, whether of unjustifiable deaths or unrequited lives.

Persons who have raised children can’t deny the potential for aggressiveness, predominantly in males, that adheres to weaponry in general. Its assessment as being hormonal in nature does appear to be substantiated; and two related elements are self-evident: proliferation of toys and games that reinforce aggressiveness by feeding impulses, and an influencing fear fathers may have of possible ‘feminization’ of sons). In all instances we are returned to the formidable fortress of Psychology, specifically psychological evolution: are traits permanent, or changeable?

Naturally altruistic individuals can make no headway with a sub-collective of mentality that commands its possessors to behead another human being in cold blood (and, what’s more, make a video of it), burn faces with acid, exercise an electric drill on a living body or drive nails into its head. Yet is it not to escape corrosive mental helplessness and deprivation that explains a recruited terrorist, or tortured Intelligence and Reason, soldier suicide--both choiceless subjects of leaders that employ them?

But is it possible?--that, over time, altruism *will* be able to pervade Collective Consciousness? Given the rate of evolution *per se*, and as dependent as a sea-change need be upon a fully individually resourced, educated Collective, centuries would be required for genetic mental 'rewirings'. Those of us given to reflect deeply on perennial stupidities of human existence can't stay there long, however. There is only one station to which that train of thought can take one--that there is no hope for a dramatic leap in the overall human condition in this lifetime. No matter how clearly the dilemma is perceived, no matter how much one's mind and heart would have it otherwise, what remains for us is to answer daily life and livelihood as best we can.

Beleaguered mind asks, *what good one sacrifice*, which History has proved may be celebrated with a holiday but scarcely dimples the Collective? *And who are you, to think even to address a subject that has called to itself some of History's greatest minds, to no conclusion?* Oh, I will vote; I will give what contributions I can to pacifistically empathetic parties and persons, the few who exist. The most I can be, however, in the time I have left, is to be *she* who now will proceed to turn the half-bath into a bathroom for Bruno, our 19-year-old cat, who needs to rest more of each day now with a toilet nearby. Age, you see, is getting to him, too.

Finally, tonight I will place my head upon the pillow with thanks that I was not *there* today; the horrors were not mine to bear--

[Excuse me; may I end this on a lighter note? Did you know that Oscar's second name came from a mythological Celtic giant?]. . .

There are three tapes within my mind;
at different rates do they unwind.
Rarely is their play purely harmonic,
usually it's quite cacaphonic--
so.....
one does the Body's bid;
that one Freud called the Id.
*One is smart but tends toward fat;
we all know the Ego's that.*
Call Superego it that writes this rhyme,

Mind over matter, joined in Time.
(But there's a fourth, Turiya, a spirited girl,
who dances in the cosmic swirl
and whispers, another!—a mute fifth, above--
exists on nothing but all-encompassing love....

* * *

PROCREATION WITH REASON

A daughter of European immigrants, I was baptized Catholic seven decades ago at St. Peter and Paul Church in North Beach, San Francisco. Although my religious training was a *pro forma* given, there was a distinct family secularism that it took some time for me to appreciate.

The first indication I received was on a Sunday morning when I was 11. I came home from mass to find Mother hunched over the chopping board, arm in perpetual motion above a heavy cleaver. (One doesn't know what "chopped fine" means, cooking the Pelosi-Bernardini –Lenci way.)

Soon Dad would preside over the regular Sunday extended family feast, the kind of meal with relatives and friends where adults stay at table another two hours: coffee with a little brandy and lemon peel in it, and the radio tuned in to the opera.

Mother was in the process of assembling a stuffing mixture. "You know?--" I timidly addressed her, "It's a mortal sin to miss Sunday mass." She, despite teen years in a convent, never went.

Mother kept on working while she answered. "Well..., you see, it's like this. Your father works for us from morning to night six days a week, and Sunday is his special day. You know how he loves having a big dinner with everyone, and it takes a lot of time for me to be ready." She didn't need to describe why: dishes, flatware, and seating for whatever final number of guests might appear, one by one, to be received by four presentable children and an impeccably clean house --forget the food preparation! She paused then to look directly at me, and said, "I think God understands."

My father was to echo similar words when, at age 14, Mother informed him that I had told her I no longer could practice institutionalized religion. "What's this I hear?" he of rare speech asked, looking to me at a subsequent dinner. "You're not going to church anymore?"

As best I could (my Italian not up to philosophical discourse), I explained how I simply could not say I believed everything that I was supposed to.

"I understand," was all Father replied; and that was *that*.

As a formerly working wife and public servant, now grandmother, I resent the implication my claim to faith is obviated by holding family, and civilization of its environment, above particular ecclesiastical 'laws'. In 1958, during the reign of Pius XII, the 'law' about it being a 'mortal' sin to eat meat on Fridays was 'deleted'—not in time, however, to have prevented a grave effect on my little girl mind.

The 23-year-old mind receiving the news (via a little article inside the Seattle Times) went into a bit of a spin. No matter I then was distanced from doctrinal teachings. No matter, my studies revealed other such instances of 'change'. The trusting little girl still was in me to ask, *how can a 'God-decreed' law be changed??*

But changed they can be—changed, *Reason* decrees, some *should* be. Meanwhile, the birth control issue is like being in a protracted, never-winning war: how dare change something, the adherence to which so many have subjected their very lives. Yet I believe it would not be denied to others by most parents who have had large families. The global need for birth control has been evident long enough; and I know Mother and Father would agree that it ought intelligently to be acknowledged. Indeed, it came very near being so for Catholics, but for the 1978 post-election demise (after only 33 days in office) of Albino Luciani, the "smiling Pope John Paul I."

The smiling Pope's very selection was surprising ("observers have suggested, linked to rumored divisions between rival camps within the College of Cardinals"²³). John Paul, scarcely remembered son of a bricklayer and a skilled orator known for remarkable humility, is believed to have had a progressive stance on birth control, possibly influenced by poverty he witnessed in a brother's large family. His

²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_I.

“moral theology has been described by some as being liberal to the extent that it may have stood a chance of reversing the Church's opposition to birth control, if he had lived longer.”²⁴

Compatible with that view is evidence of John Paul I's interests in “humanizing” the papacy. He was the first modern pope to speak in singular form ('I' instead of 'royal we'); first to refuse the traditional papal coronation (choosing an "investiture" to commence his tenure; declining to wear the papal tiara; and remarking that God should be seen not only as Father but also as Mother.

Although allowance of birth control would redound to some reduction in abortions, obviously it would not eradicate it. Eradication perforce will take a long while, requiring as it must the development of Collective Consciousness beyond Instinct. That, in turn, will require not only expansion of objective sexual education but resourced livelihoods, achieving elevation of *individual* consciousnesses to the degree requisite to benefit thereby.

The beginning of the fourth gospel book (*John*) commonly is translated as, “In the Beginning was *The Word*.” Properly from the Greek, from which all English versions derive, it more correctly should be, “In the Beginning was *Reason*.” Whereas, servants of religion may ease many psychological burdens for their flocks, to be a totally responsible parent and householder makes for a different life with one's God, for there is where havoc reigns if Reason does not prevail. As it is with individual families, so is it with the whole Human one.

When Consciousness is fully awakened to Reason, it cannot avoid the assertion that, before one considers whether in good standing with institutionalized religion, one must determine *one's Self* in good standing with God. Since, as it is advanced, God has made us in God's image, that must include Consciousness. Would God not expect us to strive to bring reasoning *within* our consciousness to its

²⁴ *Ibid.* (65-year old John Paul I was found dead, 9/29/1978, it being reported caused by a heart attack. Concerning uncertainty, non-performance of autopsy, etc., and ensuing theories about manner of death (coupled with rumors of his plans to deal with alleged organizational corruption, and sweeping changes he already had penned), interested readers are referred to the site given in fn. 1 and links from it.)

highest level? Why not is it proclaimed from temple tops?--*we human beings are no closer to any god conceivable, than when we create another living being.*

As Kafka engraved, the elders of human society—*be they children of God--own their duty to attain the goodness of the 'Father', kind parent to all Humanity. As such, ought we to force Consciousness into Life when resources and intelligence, which we so rightfully claim are its due, are not there to feed it?*

How fortunate was I to have, as living's supreme authority, my own parents....

*Giving up church was like
giving up a palace.
Giving up church was like
giving up all hope of being the Chosen Princess,
the Beneficent Queen,
and live forever sight unseen
beneath those vaunting arches,
colored light going, organ music going
through brilliant stains,
straining wordlessness to Heaven.
Oh to belong,
oh to belong,
oh to be able to believe....*

* * *

THE MUCH-APPARELED SELF

Yesterday--“the dream day”-- by telephone, I described to a friend how my father treated the minds of his four daughters, as possibly explaining my formed consciousness. More like a grandfather by age, appearance, and demeanor, he civilly transmitted expectation of his daughters’ reasoning no different than he would, males. I also revealed to my friend a private memory, about a small carton box of my personal history up to age 18 and marriage. It was the only possession I had left behind, stored back of the hall closet. Mother, who could not tolerate ‘unnecessary’ items taking up space, tossed it out. I understood: with six persons living in a small house, organization was paramount.

Coincidentally after the telephone conversation, a totally forgotten journal note *about* boxes surfaced. Written at the height of a fetish that began after my divorce, it betrayed the obsession never again to be caught unprepared for a sudden life change. Determined, I assembled items of my core existence—manuscripts, sewing kit, art supplies and accessories-- in their own wooden boxes, some with handles, ready to grab at a moment’s notice.

At the same time, my writings began to express different states of mind, as if they were individual ‘entities’. Ultimately they were reduced to two in the (as-yet unpublished) autobiography, *Journey with JC*. It was startling now, years afterward, to come across notes in the “Leftovers” file of a third old journal figure....

Agnes is terrified! What she needed for her work she had, but again she had to work twice as fast to do it; and, with continuing employment for financial support part of her was dying in the marketplace. All of her research and journals are cleanly boxed, but she had seen boxes destroyed before—gigantic boxes, boxes so big a person could live in one, tossed over by the whim of Man. Now she can’t work fast enough, can’t stop collecting boxes; every single one that her path crosses has to be examined carefully for its worth-- if of old wood but incredibly hewn then it must be restored in solidity of its own historical atomic energy. But save the patina of the ages! Save the boxes!

Agnes is terrified because all--everyone around her-- lives as if boxes can be destroyed like poorer clay tablets from the edges of the potter's oven, as if there is an end to universal symmetry. But sometimes in late evening when the day's chores are done because the light is too dim--and she, grateful down to her fingertips that it is--relaxing a while before sleep wipes away even gratitude, knowing the morrow will be yet another day of saving boxes, she comes near to being able to joke about it. Who can imagine a day without boxes?....

The medical doctor and yogi, Rammurti Mishra, described Identity as putting on and taking off clothes; and it seems the same can be said for Mind. *It* has written plenty of gagging pages over the years: the good domestic wife and mother --she who (in Missouri days, when He was at the beginning of his career) was un-self-remarkably satisfied wearing cotton house dresses, and the 'career' business woman, whose matching shoes and handbag never quite smothered the domestic, versus the unclothed Thinker 'twixt Conscious and Unconscious.

As Jung wrote in *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*:

"...[A] person faced with a conflict of duties, [who] undertakes to deal with them absolutely on his or her own responsibility...may well find himself or herself in an isolated position. ...[H]e or she is involved in an endless trial in which he or she is his or her own counsel and ruthless examiner." However, "Nothing so promotes the growth of consciousness as this inner confrontation of opposites.[T]he once unequivocal ego loses the prerogative of being merely the prosecutor; it must also learn the role of defendant...become ambivalent and ambiguous, caught between the hammer and the anvil."²⁵

"[J]ust as our...will clashes with necessity in the outside world, so also it finds limits outside the field of consciousness in the subjective inner world, where it comes into conflict with the facts of the self. And just as circumstances or outside events 'happen' to us and limit our freedom, so the self acts upon the ego like an *objective occurrence* which...will can do very little to alter. It is, indeed, well known that the ego not only can do nothing against the self, but is sometimes actually assimilated by unconscious components of the personality that are in the process of development...."²⁶

Proceeding to transcribe this morning's shorthand notes of last night's dreaming, I realize how much more I'd had to learn back then--the much I did not know about Psyche. Lately, specifically yesterday/"the dream day," a certain 'constellation' of thought has orbited mine--contemplation of a

²⁵ Page 345. (The female gender has been added.)

²⁶ Pages 142-43.

radical change in appearance a la George Sands, beginning with cropping my long hair. *Then, perhaps, I considered, my voice can be heard in the land.* And so I dreamed....

"I" am wafting in and out of gender, responsible for clearing out the abode of a seemingly young 'ditz' of a girl who suddenly has taken off. "I" give some instruction about a particular box in which her things are to be placed. An assertive male somehow involved in the proceedings is hovering near me at the computer keyboard. When asked how or where he can be contacted he good-naturedly replies, "I'm the man at 'man-on-the-dot, dot-com!'" "I" was confounded at first but then felt it quite humorous....

A woman is in the bed and "I" am to get in; but she, maintaining a smilingly playful attitude, won't move over. "I" say, "If you don't, I'm going to get on top of you." She thinks that's funny and languorously stays where she is. Then "I" do put my body over hers but not sexually, as if to 'smother' her into compliance....

My father is standing off to the right in a paneled, formal-looking 'lobby' of what looks like an important building. "I" go to him to tell him that "she" is in court; but "I" don't know how to say "court" in Italian. Instead, I say "place of justice," and he understands. He is pleased about "her" being admitted there....

Reviewing the dreams, I felt they offered insight to Freud's "The I." To say that someone is a "latent" anything simply is to say that the person manifests *qualities* which, in the extant 'system of things' (still dominating Collective thought), are ascribed *labels*, which have to do with appearance and mannerisms but *nothing* to do with fundamentally a-sexual Psyche, which can manifest all.

In the non-canonized *Gospel of Thomas*, a 'living Jesus' speaks in sayings as cryptic and compelling as Zen *koans* (as well as ringing in yogic teachings and Confucius' model of self-examination). Perhaps the patristic nature and symbols of early (and continuing) Christianity--i.e. the male "Father" and "Son" and the genderless etymology of the [Holy] "Spirit"--is all that is intended, in the following testamentary remark. However, given an objectively drawn historical Jesus,²⁷ I am not so certain:

"Simon Peter said to them [the disciples]: 'Let Mary [Magdalene] leave us, for women are not worthy of [eternal?] Life.' Jesus said, 'I myself shall lead her, in order to make her [']male['], so that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males."

²⁷ Cf. *Children of Logos*, this domain.

The Collective's bonding of sex to gender is a stubborn one. Most of common western attention to Freud still focused on his psycho-sexual theories. It isn't rare, however, that dedicated work is influenced by an individual's personal history. As Jung noted,

"Freud never asked himself why he was compelled to talk continually of sex...unaware that his 'monotony of interpretation' expressed a flight from himself. ... a tragic figure, for he was a great man, and what is more, a man in the grip of his daemon."

Jung credited Freud nonetheless, for his pioneering work on dreaming and contribution to Jung's own work on the Unconscious, acknowledging Freud's prime place in the wider arena of human development:

"Freud's psychology [w]as...an adroit move on the part of intellectual history, compensating for Nietzsche's deification of the power principle."²⁸

Based on his own findings, however, Jung could not accept "that all neuroses [function/action-paralyzing or inhibiting stases in psyche] were caused by sexual repression or sexual traumata," having determined in his own practice "numerous cases of neurosis in which the question of sexuality played a subordinate part, other factors standing in the foreground—for example, the problem of social adaptation, of oppression by tragic circumstances of life, prestige considerations, and so on."²⁹ I am reminded of Dr. Wilhelm Reich's remark that, while the affluent could afford psychoanalysis, it was the disadvantaged masses truly in need of help.

Despite extensive study and 'self-analyses' for, and writing of *Journey*, I would not be a bit surprised if some readers were to believe that it reveals more to them of my psyche than, to me—for, as dreams witness the fact and Jung remarked, there is no end to fathoming the marriage between Unconscious and Conscious. No matter the numerous biographies advanced about a person after his or her death, it is impossible to know with any certainty the truth of another human being's soul; and the

²⁸ *Ibid*, pages 152-153.

²⁹ *Ibid*, pages 147-148.

subject is unable to return to dispute conjectures. It is reported that Freud, aware of arbitrary conclusions, carefully culled his files himself in anticipation of his death.

All my life of self-concept as female has felt a natural one; nor does Mind receive any hint from the Unconscious now, that the internal "I" could be any different a "Self" were I externally perceived as describable with 'masculine' labels. Regardless any body's appearance and mannerisms, Psyche simply causes Mind to yearn for acceptance of what "The I" *feels* itself to *be*: a genderlessly conscious, thinking self.

*For A. Turing, R. Montague and all my brothers....
I awakened in the middle of dreaming last night;
one thought remained: a story I should write
about certain boys who didn't get to grow old
while beneficiaries of their genius got oversold.
Bright young men with some 'feminine' nature,
subjects of social legislature--
private genius wherein Psyche, lost,
half a lifetime was its cost.
An essay, perhaps, might serve better to confess
material beauty versus loneliness;
but inadequate words exist to tell their story
and how paltry in Time, their deserved glory.*

* * *

UNDER OMAR'S BOUGH

I had a small, crumbling-leather-bound book to savor with my morning coffee this morning. As one of its verses admonishes, it bid me flavor all of today:

*Come, fill the cup, and as with fire of spring
Winter's garment of repentance fling!
The Bird of Time has but a little way to fly,
And, lo, the bird is on the wing.*

Not all of my generation may recognize that quatrain. Most will, however, this next:

*A book of verses underneath the bough,
a jug of wine, a loaf of bread and Thou
singing beside me in the Wilderness.
Oh but Wilderness were Paradise enow!*

The *Rubaiyat*³⁰--of course!

Published in 1932 in New York by Walter J. Black, Inc., my little treasure proffers three different translations from the Persian verses of Ghiyath al-Din Abu'l-Fath Umar ibn Ibrahim al-Nishapuri al-Khayyami--commonly known as Omar Khayyam. Scholars have disputed precisely how many surviving verses are authentic Khayyam, but at least 1,000 are accepted. The best known, in English, are 100 verses initially recomposed by Edward FitzGerald and published in 1859. A whole library could be filled to the brim, with ensuing renditions of quatrains (*rubaiyat*³¹) in more than 22 languages, as well as additional ones in English--some using prose rather than rhyme.

Translating poetical nuances between languages, demands far more than simple replacement of words. FitzGerald, himself, acknowledged applying his own creativity:

³⁰ Khayyam, Omar, *The Rubaiyat*, FitzGerald, Edward F. and Whinfield, E.H., Trans., New York, NY:Walter J. Black, Inc. 1932.

³¹ Derived from the Arabic root word for 4. FitzGerald employed the word, *rubaiyat*, as a description of the rhyming format he used in his translation.

"I suppose very few people have ever taken such pains in translation as I have: though certainly not to be literal. But at all cost, a thing must live: with a transfusion of one's own worse life, if one can't retain the original's better. Better a live sparrow than a stuffed eagle."

Thus another small library could be stocked, with scholarly expositions analyzing or disputing modes and fidelity of transmission. A number of them have sought Khayyam's private beliefs. Some verses appear to express devotion, such as,

*I cannot reach the Road to join with Thee;
I cannot bear one breath apart from Thee;
I dare not tell this grief to any man;
Ah, hard! Ah, strange! Ah longing sweet for Thee;*

and

*Oh, God grant my wounded heart Thy rest;
be merciful unto my grief-torn breast.*

Conversely, a preponderance of verses suggests a fatalist who, although longing to hope, is inclined to blame human suffering upon the god that created the circumstances. When quatrains began to circulate, nineteenth century religionists were alienated especially by lines like:

*Why should I strive my erring ways to mend?
'Tis Thine, oh God, and not mine, the blame!*

*Some, for the pleasures here below;
others yearn for the Prophet's Paradise to come.
Ah, take the cash and let the credit go,
nor heed the rumble of a distant drum.*

Verses which apparently extol the virtues of wine (described by some as "bacchanalian") swelled another vat of speculation, that Khayyam's true nature was to reject religious dogma--such as,

*Why, be this juice the growth of God,
who dare blaspheme the twisted tendril as a snare?
A blessing, we should use it, should we not?
And if a curse—why then, who set it there?*

It cannot be known at what times of Khayyam's life the various quatrains were written. It has been suggested that the more 'irreligious' were written in youth and the devotional, in later years; but

the reverse, of course, also is suggestible, while some verses have been attributed wrongly to him. Undeniably, however, a great majority certainly to him do stress laws of nature rather than of religion.

Dramatic differences in renditions have yielded assessments of Khayyam's nature that range from a Platonic-influenced, mystical poet to an agnostic hedonist. Yet hovering over all is a sense of a duality of mind, the debating of exigencies of existence that few human beings have not known (not unlike, perhaps, *Bildad* and *Job*).

An individual's own nature can't be divested from producing translations; and FitzGerald's efforts convey a gentle character confirmed by his contemporaries. That, in concert with obvious great love for the original creation, moved him to give it the highest presentation. There are many differences between FitzGerald's versions and those of subsequent translators, some of them substantial. The following are mild ones:

By FitzGerald:

*With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
and with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
and this was all the harvest that I reap'd—
"I came like water, and like wind I go."*

*And much as wine has play'd the infidel,
and robb'd me of my robe of honor—well,
I wonder often what the vintners buy
one half so precious as the stuff they sell.*

By E. H. Whinfield:

*I studied with the masters long ago,
and long ago did master all they know;
hear now the end and issue of it all,
from earth I came, and like the wind I go!*

*While Moon and Venus in the sky shall dwell,
none shall see aught red grape-juice to excel:
O foolish publicans, what can you buy
one half so precious as the goods you sell?*

Precisely who was this “Omar Khayyam”--born 1048 in Nishapur, Khorasan (presently, northeast Iran)—a man with whose name all we connect is a verse or two? This, I decided, obviously was a job for *Wikipedia!*...

Omar undoubtedly would find amusing, the many popular uses made of his lines, such as the 1945 movie, “The Picture of Dorian Gray” (*I sent my soul through the invisible, etc.*); Agatha Christie’s “The Moving Finger” (*--writes; and having writ, moves on: nor all your piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all your tears wash out a word of it*); and that the *Rubaiyat* was the source for derivation of The Grateful Dead musical group’s skull-and-roses poster!

He surely would feel the opposite, however, in that--far over and above ‘some ancient Persian’s memorable little verses’--he was a major medieval mathematician , astronomer, and scientist. His life’s real work was immortalized, if silently, in contributions through his treatises to advancement of those fields. Among those achievements were *Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra* (principles and methods ultimately making their way to Europe); *Explanations of the Difficulties in the Postulates of Euclid’s Elements* (including a first attempt at a non-Euclidean postulate alternative to the “parallel postulate”); and an untitled writing, discovered only in the 20th century, involving method toward geometric solution of cubic equations (including a stated impossibility of method, for which plausible proof did not emerge until some 700 years after his death).

As a builder of an observatory at the behest of his then Sultan, his and his colleagues’ measurement of the length of the solar year yielded a more accurate calendar than the Gregorian. It also is reported that Khayyam heralded the heliocentric theory (quoting here directly from *Wikipedia*): “By constructing a revolving platform and simple arrangement of the star charts lit by candles around the circular walls of the room, he demonstrated that earth revolves on its axis, bringing into view constellations through the night and day.”

And how mystical might we make it?—that this humble record of mine marks the 150th anniversary of Edward FitzGerald's birth! And that it should have *been* this particular morning that his *Rubaiyat* was taken from the shelf, where it unobtrusively sat neglected since its find in an old-book store, years ago. I know it is coincidence, only; but I shall leave off with a favorite of mine:

*Would you that spangle of Existence spend,
about THE SECRET—quick about it, Friend!
A hair, perhaps, divides False and True—
and upon what, prithee, may Life depend?*

*Where Rome evermore meets Byzantium
as betwixt sea and sea
where from South pressed Grecian;
North, Germanic humanity--
old centers of containment
pushing for parity.
Others mixed in: Italic...Croat...
and down the hills of Montenegro
as from Galicia and shores of Dalmatia
overspilling into Prussia and Asia.
The Ottoman Empire so long dead,
still all comes down to a fight over bread
as many twixt rivers Drina and Rzav
have never lived long enough not to dread....*

* * *

SAN FRANCISCO SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

Maybe it was the postcard skyline seen between bridge cables, or possibly the startling seagull welcome that hit my windshield when the Cherokee slowed in traffic, crossing the Golden Gate.

Whatever the cause this afternoon, by the time I took a right off Lombard onto Steiner, circled Union Street and found a parking place, I was on a true sentimental journey--San Francisco, Herb Caen's "City by the Bay"....

"The City," as natives refer to it, holds a special place in my life; but not just because I was born there. In 1952 when I was 16, San Francisco's Press and Union League Club sponsored a high school journalism contest. As a lucky winner in the creative writing division, I was luckier still. I landed a seminar with the Chronicle's most beloved columnist.

Mr. Cain remains forever in my memory, as I politely waited at his office's open door. I (then an aspiring columnist) was timid about interrupting him; but I also wanted to prolong first sight of an idol in action. There he was--head tilted, absorbed completely, writing for eternity....

I sat at a window table in a Union Street café--not far from the site of my dad's old butcher shop at Fillmore and Greenwich--and ordered prosciutto and melted jack on a croissant. The prosciutto was thick and dry; Father wouldn't have approved, but what do tourists know? Across from the café, Lafayette Bakery was one of only two landmarks left from the neighborhood village days, before Union Street donned the colorful raiment of tourism. The sidewalk underfoot of passersby was the same my brown oxfords regularly had plodded up to Saint Vincent's, the main incentive for Sunday eight a.m. mass being a jelly donut waiting in Lafayette's glass case....

Decades gone, since all time was embraced by the handful of city blocks from here to Pierce, the Marina up to Green--decades! I was thinking, since the would-be-writer slid into the hands of an aged midwife, in an upstairs flat at Chestnut and Pierce. Now hot coffee turns her nose red! I laughed, and lifted the gourmet cup of it to my lips....

The waitress brought change from my ten; I left three quarters for a tip. Glancing right from the café doorway I saw the Metro Theater, the second remaining landmark: "the Met," my older sister and I called it. There at Saturday matinees we watched World War II happen Hollywood style. How it pained me, to sit through perennial coward-turned-hero Richard Jaekell's last letter to Mom, before he took enemy mortar to save a friend. But our side always won, and squinting against the daylight I could go forth reassured.

I turned left from the café. I already had decided my next stop would be Saint Vincent de Paul Church....

During the war, my family lived in yet another upstairs flat. Now, at the Union/Steiner corner, the scene down telescoping hills to the Bay evoked more memories: war machine factories along the Sausalito harbor; the lonesome hush that descended over the city as blackout curtains were lowered, and I in my bed beside a low sash window. Before the war, I fell to sleep gauging the turn of the lights on the Golden Gate towers. In wartime, lifting the curtain a little, I peered into pure blackness. Missing, too, was the huge neon Bank of America sign that previously blazed bright red over the Marina. Old enough to know the fear of enemy ships potentially off the coast, I would lie back, wondering, *what would bomb sound like, falling toward me overhead?*

At Yerba Buena Elementary School we grew a Victory Garden on the then empty lot at the Lombard and Webster corner. Mrs. McNerny taught our fourth grade class (girls *and* boys) how to knit, and patiently saw that everyone finished at least one square. Then she assembled them into a grand crooked blanket that we sent to "our boys at the front."

At the Met after war's end, The March of Time showed emaciated concentration camp survivors and, behind them, a hill of skeletons. I recall my child-thought: *the world's safe now; things like that never can happen again--not ever; not anywhere!* I learned differently, of course, no matter how much I would have liked to stay in the warm blanket of that mild ghetto near the Bay.

Turning up the Steiner hill toward the church, thought moved forward again in time to the naïve butcher's daughter, sure now of so much less; the butcher's daughter on her way to becoming a vegetarian! The prosciutto had been in memory of father's white apron-clad figure standing soulfully in his shop window, as often I found him on my way home from Marina Junior High. He waited, a smile on his face--waiting, eventually in vain, for old customers who began not to come, as post-war supermarkets changed the economic scene. What did come ultimately were heart attack, forced retirement, and death--perhaps not too early for him; way too early for me.

Saint Vincent's stained-glass windows still were to me the world's most glorious. Nothing inside seemed altered--the Virgin in her alcove, robe bluer than blue; the high altar linens whiter than white. But a plaque now beneath St. Joseph read, "Pray for the soul of James H. Long, fond Pastor of St. Vincent's, who died August 25, 1960." It made me feel bad, because I remembered how I would pray that something would cause a different priest than Father Long to take Saturday confession. His very name spelled how much time it would take, and I had friends waiting for our exhilarating weekly softball game on the breeze-whipped green of Funston Park. But I knew Father Long would forgive me it today, like he'd forgiven everything before.

Back along Union Street again toward the parked car, my eyes searched the buildings' high porticoes for one of the cement gargoyles that once perched on high. The old Catechism had taught me, should I die with a 'mortal' sin on my Soul, I'd go straight to Hell unless I recited a sincere "Act of Contrition" prayer right before I died. I also had been instructed that eating meat on a Friday was a mortal sin. One Saturday on the way to confession--inadvertently having tasted a bit of mother's ravioli

meat filling after Thursday midnight--I thought, *what if one of those gargoyles was to fall on my head? I wouldn't know it, before I was dead!* I walked in the gutter instead....

Was I right?—Herb Caen surely could say, that it was the “F” streetcar that clanged along Chestnut Street and took me to North Beach, then back balancing a roll of Lucca Factory ravioli dough for Mother to fill and shape for the Easter feast. First I’d visit my aunt’s bakery, circle past the oven, and smell Calegari French bread at its best, picking up a warm roll on the way.

Rarely, however, would I climb the stairs to the top flat over the bakery for an extra visit to my paternal grandmother. Regular Sunday visits to my grandmother were enough for me. I never saw her smile before she died, in the shadow of that local sun dial known as Coit Tower. She had lost the home of her soul. Cut off by the outbreak of World War II, while visiting the nine of her 11 children that had emigrated from Italy, she never was able to return.

From lively talk among aunts, uncles, and cousins, at those open family, Sunday dinners we had no matter how strapped my parents were, I conjured colorful images of grandmother’s life in Italy. I envisioned her hearty and happy, in the family’s bustling manor in the sunny Tuscan countryside, complete with coat of arms on the gate. There (I was told) she designed corsets for local gentry; and every day she oversaw a midday meal for as many as 20 persons—seamstresses, field workers, and her many children, who appeared at table one by one, when weaned of the wet nurses with whom they passed the forgetful hours of infancy.

My grandmother had had a formal education in Europe, remarkable for a woman in the latter part of the 19th century. My father’s deep respect for his mother’s intellect translated to me and my three sisters as honor of female consciousness *per se*. Altogether, the mental image I wove of my grandmother forged an intimate bond with my psyche, a vital counter-influence on otherwise traditionally old-world conditioning.

City-bred daughters of immigrants of my era rarely made it into college. I did manage myself into a second year at San Francisco State, but very soon I was a typical 20th century working spouse and parent. Privately, for enough years, I flailed Life's circumstances of birth and conditioning against heart's desires. Now, back on Union Street, pumps clacking the pavement, Mind tasted its own bread—not Calegari's best nor Sunday St. Vincent wafers; a bread formed of grains of words steeped in immigrant spirit: Civility and Reason, exercised not because of imposed dictates, as duty and right of the individual soul.

I hadn't planned a "Vernal Equinox" pilgrimage but of a sudden realized it *was* the season of Passovers and Easters, orthodox and unconventional; and I experienced a surge of synchronistic awe. Specters of war were hovering again in guises of religious and cultural differences. Yet concepts of a God-image and modes of religious observance in reality were of little import, between neighbors of equally fair resources and livelihoods.

I recalled Franz Kafka's remark: *The 'Messiah' will come only when the most unbridled individualism of faith becomes possible.* About my youth's harmony in San Francisco amid various and sundry skin colors and faiths, I felt like Leila Ahmed about her girlhood in Egypt: "They were people my parents knew and saw...my brothers' friends and my sister's and my own."

Unlocking the Cherokee's door I thought, *I can sum up that which fueled the writer in me in two words--San Francisco.* So, too, might Herb Caen, although never could I be him or write what he wrote. San Francisco lived in Herb Caen. He gave voice to it, the people and the events along all of its walks. I simply lived in it, climbed its hills, muffled against the mist, listening to the fog horns on the bay. But in time it gave voice to me.

The same year that I stopped formal practice of religion (just after my freshman term at Galileo High School) we moved to Marin County, into a society so different than that from which I had come. 'She'--who lived once in Pixley Alley, rented a bike for 25 cents an hour, and streaked along the Marina

Green vowing, *Life's never going to get me!*—she found herself awkwardly placed, in the County's cultural spectrum. She never fit in, really; however, 'we' did okay—

(But then you know those 'City girls'--they're indestructible....)

Mazat 2004...

"It's not a wasp; it's a bee," said JC.

*A rather large one it was, trapped indoors longer than a day
when we discovered it drowning this morning
in the toilet bowl.*

*I scooped it up and drained the cup on the last step leading to the sand
although I couldn't say as it crawled away if its parts all were intact;
but in a little while, if it didn't come back! It gave a turn around us,
I certain it was the same bee; but not, JC.*

*(If there is a dream state between life and death, through which
a female soul must pass on its way to Ephrath,
let it be this, I thought—*

*a cup of coffee at the wood table on the tile floor;
sounds of surf through The Place in the Sun's open door;
on the unmade bed, the straw hat he bought for me,
after we started out this second time—together; free).*

*I close my journal, lay down my pen,
to rejoin him out there on the steps again.
I know he'll bark, "What took you so long after all?"
I smile at the crescent moon on the sky blue wall....*

* * *

DOWN AND UP IN SMOKE

Why some people take to, while others instantly are repelled by tobacco, has been nearly a lifelong interest of mine. No-smoking literature asking the question, “Remember how *awful* that first taste of tobacco was?” is meaningless to me. I actually *liked* the ‘taste’ of mild tobacco, and seem to have been destined to be (for want of better words) a ‘naturally- inclined’ smoker.

I now am 73 years old, and I clearly recall my first cigarette at age 15. My father, an occasional smoker, preferred cigars; but he kept a pack of Lucky Strikes in a small basement room that was his ‘retreat.’ One afternoon, curiosity caused me to give one a try. I was not put off a whit by taste or process, and immediately sensed what I would call an agreeable ‘sharpening’ of perception.

Smoking didn’t become habitual, however, until after I was a wife and mother working in high-paced, deadline jobs. Smoking was allowed everywhere then, and it definitely became both an on-the-job anxiety control and an off-the-job relaxant. The late ‘60’s and early ‘70’s saw a reduction from the pack or more a day I smoked in those prior years, due to prohibition of on-the-job smoking in later jobs; and I was grateful for the enforced reduction.

By the time I was 39 accumulating statistics of smoking’s effects on health were fully impressed me; I accepted it reasonable that I try to quit altogether. Unlike my husband’s employer and city schools, the agency for which I worked in 1974 had Veteran’s Day as an official holiday—one day a year that I had home all to myself! On that November day, I decided to treat myself. I would eschew domestic duties and devote the solitude to a long-arrested need to write. And as my journal topic I chose quitting smoking.

I had learned that niacin was a derivative of nicotinic acid, and a few weeks before had bought a bottle of 100-milligram tablets as a possible dietary supplement. My first cigarette of the day, smoked at 6:45 a.m., was the last in my last package. Within a half-hour I had the urge for another, but making breakfast and bag lunches kept me busy until the family was off. I would not go to the store for more. Still in my robe, I sat myself in an easy chair along with notebook, pen, a large mug of coffee, and a chemistry book I wanted to study. I would wait until the smoking urge became undeniable, and then I would commence a “niacin treatment”....

8:30 a.m. *After reading and making notes for one and one-half hours I was interrupted by a chatty neighbor who stayed until nine o’clock.*

9:05 *Attempting to resume my train of thought, I was aware of a small ‘internal gnaw’ in the area of my solar plexus: “I” definitely “wanted” a cigarette. I placed a tablet of niacin on my tongue and allowed it to dissolve.*

9:35 *The predicted flushing of skin by niacin did not occur, which I found interesting--did that happen less in smokers? I did feel a slight ‘burning’ at the sides of my neck, and pondered whether absorption from the smoke occurred as it passed the region of thyroid and parathyroid glands before reaching the lungs.*

I assigned feelings and intensity levels to smoking urges, as follows:

Feelings:

[A] = times that the Ego encountered anxious hesitation due to doubt about my writing efforts, thinking myself foolish to pursue them.

[B] = times of unexpected interruptions that called for disassociation.

[C] = times of losing concentration due to mentally interrupting thoughts relative to "what I should be doing"-- domestic chores-- instead of studying and writing.

Intensity Levels: 1 to 10, 10 being highest.

10:00

My younger daughter returned home from school with a stomach upset [B-10]. I tended to her and, once she was settled comfortably, attempted to return to writing [A-5]. On the way, I was distracted by the disorder I left in kitchen, etc. [C-5].

10:25

I still was distracted by racing thoughts relative to 'disorganization', the usual 'me' being a compulsive domestic.

10:30

I placed another niacin tablet in my mouth. This time within 15 minutes my face, neck and upper chest became mildly flushed. The sensations seemed strongest at the sides of the neck. I did feel calmer, without the internal gnawing.

11:00-11:30

I was reading peacefully; my daughter was likewise peacefully occupied.

11:30 Break to fix lunch for us.

12:30 p.m.

Back at reading and writing, my husband telephoned and informed me that he had invited his department chairman to dinner at our house! [B and C 10]. I calculated that, if I wanted to persist, I had perhaps one hour left to 'fritter' away. Instantly I was searching for a cigarette. I went out to the car to see if one may have fallen behind the seat. I thought, perhaps I could go to the neighbor's.

1:10

I placed another niacin tablet and a 10-grain kelp tablet in my mouth. There was no flushing but I felt my forehead warm while at the same time a bit of an all-over chilling effect. I recalled feeling the 'outer' chilling with the two prior doses, and it occurred to me I ought to have included taking my temperature in the experiment. But I am sensitive to cold in general, was dressed lightly for a deep fall day, and had been physically inactive. (However, although I was not able to consider the 'chilling effect' as solid data, I was aware that it is said that smoking causes capillary constriction.)

1:30

For a brief period I felt in a cheerier state of mind, to the point where I chuckled over this 'record'; but [A-5] 'the writer's freedom' could not continue....

1:40

Time was a-wasting [C-10]!—shopping and house and food preparations, and my person to ready before guest arrival! I threw on some levis and a shirt and was off to the store—not only for dinner needs....

2:40

Lighting up in the car on the way back from the store, I pondered what conclusions I might draw from my 'experiment'.

What?--I asked myself-- allowed me to live seven full hours without a cigarette? But there was no way to separate influences—the actual niacin; it as a placebo; either or both those possibilities; my choice of self-occupation; or a combination of all. I was left only to speculate the effects—psychological in concern with physiological--of nicotine absorption, whether also through tissues the smoke traverses before reaching the lungs, as well as via lungs into the bloodstream.

I vowed to continue efforts to become a non-smoker, as the following reflects....

1975

I went seven months without a cigarette this year—mainly, I believe, because my husband was trying to quit and it was only right that I join him. One might say, *if you were able to do without a cigarette that long, you ought to be able to, permanently*; but the amount of mental effort it took was extreme. Truthfully, control used up mind time I would have preferred ‘using better’.

My falling off the wagon came after a large dinner party for my husband’s associates. Sitting at table, everything having gone perfectly, I was conscious how that cigarette felt like a ‘reward’, adding to the feelings of self-satisfaction.

Alas, once again, I became *at least* a half-a-pack-a-day smoker, how much depending on circumstances.

1989

I had been divorced for 10 years, living and working as a single mother (my younger daughter not yet emancipated). Meanwhile I was devoting every moment of carved-out time to pursue serious writings. Only one note was added to the smoking journal:

Just like a baby, a feeding at regular intervals.... Nicotine... It offsets the adrenalization that occurs every time Psyche is attacked by doubt, fear, despair, or anger-- doubt, that I will prevail; fear, lack of money or death waiting to do me in; despair, never to finish what one’s heart desires; anger, much against the corporate body that has me in its grip again (10 hours of work a day for less wage than fair for eight; barely any time for my own creations...

1993

January 9, 2:30 p.m.

It may be the weekend but there’s housework, cooking, and gardening to do. Moreover, I haven’t dressed properly yet (hating revealing ‘humanness’ is a strong character trait). I light a cigarette but put it out after two drags. Certain facts from my amateur research seem screaming for proper assembly. I am no scientist [B-9,] but something in my bones (in which cigarette smoking undoubtedly is causing degeneration) forces me to keep a record--hoping, if nothing else, it may be solace for others, for I doubt the addiction will see me live long enough to benefit from Science’s future revelations....

Meanwhile, as an additional control, I adopted not buying a supply package ahead of time, and began a daily record of cigarette consumption. The following examples from the record are of a ‘good’ day and a ‘bad’ day:

<u>Cigarette</u>	<u>Time of Day</u>	<u>Comment</u>
<u>April 2</u>		
1	7:50 a.m.	Typical first one. In between, visit from non-smoking friend; dental appt.
1	11:00	Back home ‘relaxer.’
1	2:00	‘Preparatory’ smoke before study at library.
1	3:00	‘Relaxer’ back from library.
1	4:30	‘Focuser’ while researching.
<u>1</u>	5:00	‘Reward.’
<u>6</u>		
<u>April 3</u>		
1	7:00 a.m.	Typical first one.
1	8:30	Researching.

1	9:00	"
1	11:00	"
1	11:45	Telephone call, family member.
1	Noon	Before beginning yard work.
1	3:40 p.m.	Resumption of research and manuscript work.
1	5:05	Family member problem.
1	7:00	"Stressed...."
<u>1</u>	9:40	Relaxer.
10		

It was becoming clearer from similar entries for this period that hand-occupying chores correlated with longer time between smokes, while writing and manuscript work, less.

1997

February 3

At 8:30 a.m., one hour after awakening, I light the last cigarette in my pack. "This is going to be my last cigarette!" (Now, wonder how many times I've thought that?). Last night, my husband (we are remarried) said, "We need to stop smoking; we have too much to live for now." True!—but tell that to my addiction! Of one thing I'm certain: I cannot overcome it by conscious will alone....

The general pattern, repeated this year, showed that the time between cigarettes varied between one to two hours, depending on the type of day, reflected by the following days:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Cigarettes</u>	
<u>April 7</u>	8.	A note during two hours of writing said: <i>Misery trying to stay with the writing project.)</i>
<u>April 8</u>	9 or 10.	Noted: <i>Continuing private stress and depression; couldn't stay on schedule.)</i>
<u>April 9</u>	"	
<u>April 10</u>	"	
<u>April 12</u>	?--	4 by 1 p.m.-- heavy family business day; "I give up!"
<u>April 13</u>	9 to 10	Heavy scheduling.
<u>April 14</u>	"	" "
<u>April 15</u>	"	" "
<u>April 19</u>	8	
<u>Intervening week:</u> <i>Completed last review of a manuscript and sent off a proposal-- didn't do too bad on cigarettes but didn't do especially well, either.</i>		
<u>April 23</u>	7	
<u>May 20</u>	The thought to try quitting 'cold turkey' bombed', as follows:	
	8:15 a.m.	"Desired one."
	8:40 a.m.	Reminded of desire by seeing ash tray.
	9:10 a.m.	Reminded of desire both by smell of coffee and seeing ash tray.
	9:30 a.m.	Dialogue commenced with needy friend.
	10:45 a.m.	Dialogue continuing.
	11:30, 11:45...	dialogue persisted; gave up
	For the day, ?	

1998

I changed to a brand of cigarettes with no additives (*American Spirit Blue*). The new brand didn't seem to deliver the same 'hit' but was satisfying enough. I no longer took a cigarette package with me when going out (unless during care giving periods for my mother, when I would smoke one

outside). It was obvious that a decrease in a day's smoking occurred in non-emotional times away from home; but the following days revealed that I *could* achieve a limited number even if under emotional stress.

January 22

Purposely let myself run out of cigarettes yesterday at 8 p.m.; had first cup of coffee this morning without a smoke; did some chores before going to store; delayed first cigarette until:

1	10:15 a.m.	
1	10:45	Telephone conversation with aged mother re needs, etc.
1	11:00	Forced accounting before I could begin editing.
1	11:15	"Gathering thoughts."
2	Between 11 and 3:30;	"better"—considering that I was editing.
1/2	5:30 p.m.	In car on way to computer class.
1	8:00	Home from class.
<u>1</u>	9:00	Relaxer.
8 ½		

January 23 Up at 7:30:

1	8:00 a.m.	No time for writing today, despite much waiting to be done on it.
1	Mid-morn	On way to doctor appt. <i>Maybe my recent mental hyperactivity is due to max on thyroid deficiency?</i>
1	1:00 p.m.	Preparing for care giving at Mother's later today. (<i>Missing the Vantage cigarettes I smoked for years; body must become accustomed to a certain mix.</i>)
1	4:30	Outdoors at mother's; <i>patience-controlling.</i>
1	6:30	Watching t.v.; <i>relaxing while dinner cooks.</i>
<u>1</u>	8:00	After supper.
6		

August 6 Only three by 7:30 p.m.; but I was going to work all evening on an (ego-pricking) writing submittal. It seemed an ideal time to try "K-77" (cost, \$20 for 60 gel capsules; dosage on bottle says, one to three capsules between meals and at bedtime). I took a K-77 at 7:30 and still smoked five cigarettes between then and 11 p.m., noting the following:

Interrupted twice by mind-jerking family calls that caused me to think about a cigarette, but I didn't feel that 'tugging' at the 'adrenal core'. At 8:30 I lighted one without thinking, something it seems I do only when mind, totally absorbed with material, is distanced from physiological sensations that accompany the impulsive act. At 9:10 I stuck one in my mouth, definitely an ego/doubt-related registration, that is, something to do with my hands as I move thought past it.

August 7 Today's total was **8**, spaced about as usual, the K-77 [subsequently aborted] not making a noted difference....

I believe that by now I have achieved some weaning of pure nicotine craving, and have isolated the act of smoking, which appears equally physically and psychologically influenced (or rather, psychical metabolism's influence on the physical?). As noted thus far, the desire to smoke is most apparent when I have thoughts related to specific psychical constellations-- doubts vis-à-vis need to write vs. potential worth; time constraints of domestic duties (and the ever-constant hovering specter of my own time running out!)....

1999

April 11 Try for definite two-hour intervals, I tell myself, i.e. work on diminishing physical addiction even if it seems that psychological stimuli are as great a force. Resumed substance studies. Reviewed quitting procedure in Ferguson book--have done steps up to Stage Four. Next steps

suggested: adopt an incompatible activity (this would require time I don't feel I have); pinpoint/focus on more of the triggers to control—especially environmental; postpone every third one; brush teeth more times a day...

I now assigned “triggers,” as follows:

<u>Trigger</u>	<u>Feelings</u>
T-A	The usual familiar need to ‘break’ feelings/thoughts of urgency about manuscript work underway vis-à-vis domestic demands.
T-B	Overall discomfiture from reminder of my circumstances.
T-C	Compounded satisfaction of ‘crave’ plus heightened enjoyment of a relaxation period, such as favorite t.v. show.

It's obvious from the following how little success I had, but it was a heavy day of combined project work and family requirements:

6	Smoked by 6 p.m., triggers varying.
1	6:40 T-A
1	8:00 T-B.
<u>1</u>	9:40 T-C
9	

April 12

0	7:30 a.m.	“Thinking about it.”
0	7:50	Ditto; began work.
0	7:55	Ditto; kept working.
1	8:05	Telephone call from mother/she had a break-in last night.
1	8:35	T-A; to alleviate worry and keep me working.
1	8:55	Ditto.
1	9:00	T-A
0	10:00	“
0	10:10	“
1	10:20	T-A + T-B--gave up.
0	1:10 p.m.	Not a strong urge.
		[The next two-hour period was broken by an unexpected visitor.]
0	1:12	T-A and T-B.
1	1:25	“
1	3:30	Visitor gone but attention given to theft, etc.
1	4:30	“What-the-hell” feeling.
		[Rested and got ready afterwards for part of evening out.]
1	9:20	T-C; <i>relaxer</i> .
<u>1</u>	11:35	T-C; <i>for sheer pleasure</i> .
10!		

April 13

8: 8:25 a.m., typical morning cigarette; 9:25, T-A, T-B--*can't get started; received business telephone call; consciously delayed smoke; began again to study and make research notes*; 9:40, T-A; 10:40, T-A; 2:10 p.m., T-A; 3:30, T-A; 6:00, *sheer pleasure /relaxation*; 8:00, T-C; 9:10, T-A, B, C! *This day was too much!—still, didn't do too badly?*

The month intensified, as the next records show (also giving up on assigning triggers):

April 14

10: 7:40 a.m., typical; 8:30, *feel like I'm giving up*; 10:00, appointment with a needy friend, also a smoker; 10:30, still at friend's; 10:45 - 11:15, 2 cigarettes, still at friend's; 12:20 p.m., after lunch with

friend; 2:00, *lit this one absentmindedly; [in-between here and next, rested, meditated, errands, light supper]; 6:45, pure reward—make a note to examine this ‘reward’ thing; 8:00, relaxation.*

April 15

11: 8:00 a.m., usual with coffee, newspaper; 9:15, to get to work on domestic accounting (*ugh!—also noted, desire to have taste*); 10:15, working on accounting; *calms my breathing*; 11:45, “break time;” 12:30 p.m., after lunch; 1:30, going over inventories; 1:48, with friend, *indulging in my ego-self*; 2:15, *ditto*; 5:00, after errands and dealing with mother’s security system; 6:45—*need to take a rest!—being driven! Must do some work on project!* 9:10, project in good shape for time being; end of day; reward.

April 16th, **8**; a typical mildly-pressured day; *gardening in afternoon helped avoid more.*

April 17, **6-1/2**; less-pressured day; *seems I am beginning to put some of them out after only half-smoked?*

April 18, **7-1/2**; *ditto yesterday, lots of yard work done.*

April 19, **11!** Working on “History;” computer went down; family accounting; took mother to do her shopping; lots of time on telephone dealing with family issues. “Not a good day!”

April 20, again **11!** Computer repair; family needs; needy friend visit; “another unsuccessful day.”

April 21, four cigarettes by 1 p.m.; *unable to maintain record due to heavy domestic demands.*

June

Decided to try (a) smoking ‘half-cigarettes’ as needed (although I am aware that it is said that relighting a cigarette somehow concentrates tar?); (b) total number of cigarettes over longer periods and draw averages. However, as shown, those efforts didn’t last long:

5:50 pm. 6/9 to 8:50 a.m. 6/11, **40 hours, 14 cigarettes: average, 1 every 2 hours.** Took 2 puffs (about 1/3 cigarette) at some intervals; *the causes were typical ones.*

June 12, **8-1/2**; “puff” experiment abandoned!

June 13, **9--4** before 2:30 p.m.; 5 between then and bedtime (*included telephone call with needy friend*).

August 17, 1999

Twenty-five years since that 1974 little niacin experiment and I’m still in the ring, although there have been some little changes. (I’m reminded of Ringo: it appears I do “still need it,” do “still weed it,” at 64!) Worked through last night until 5:00 a.m.; three cigarettes smoked between 2 a.m. and 5 a.m. were the last in the house. Took a bite of niacin and made it to this moment--1:00 p.m. today. Curious phenomenon?-- I feel hungry but will go to the store first, instead, to buy a pack. Now I recognize!--how often I have put off eating with a cigarette, and how it literally has contributed to weight control....

I am continuing the combo of tricks: keeping only one covered ashtray to avoid seeing butts; buying one pack at a time; letting cigarettes run out (because it’s HELL taking time out to go to the store); deep-breathing exercises; Yoga meditation and auto-suggestion; plenty of vitamin C along with my other supplements; keeping drinking water bottles in kitchen and bathroom and drinking from them several times a day....

It starts in my head: a springing of frustration, private fear, remorse, doubt, anxiety, etc. If I can think myself past that, the next strike is somewhere in the vicinity of my solar plexus—that little ‘gnawing’ sensation craving to be calmed, as if the psychical ‘metabolism’ sets off a physical one, which I have it at this moment. Against it I try to do two things: remember to remember that if I turn attention to something else—like making these notes—there can be a delayed period when I will become less aware of the urge. So long as I’m able to concentrate and be productive, I’m ahead; but stream of consciousness gets me!... Death is death!--whether by natural causes or self-annihilation by overdosing

on poppy powder or clogging one's aveolaries with carcinogens—and no way to know whether the Self continues afterwards....

Some may think that physiological- or mind-altering substances are means of achieving permanent freedom from the impediment of self-consciousness. True, one can obtain a respite from one's particular psychical wars—a fleeting truce between Subconscious and Ego. Artists of all types have made use of various substances to free mind and denude self, from which many immortal creations have come. However, although some eastern masters acknowledge 'drugged' states can be enlightening, they emphasize that such cannot substitute for nor yield ultimate self-realization, which demands consistent striving for purity, discipline and practice...

Thoughts from dead ancestresses have been claiming writer recognition. Why is it that Man readily can believe it non-fictional, that one or more Roman cut off Hasdrubal's head, which Claudius dropped on brother Hannibal, but, cannot, that a woman named Judith cut off Holofernes' and had her fellow governors hang it on their city wall?...

Cigarettes get me over the hump of seeing myself but a cog in a vast atomically interacting Universe Machine, It's and my parts all moving at the highest of Its contained speed--held by what?... coming from where? Surely it is possible to break through that invisible crystal! At times 'the I' thinks it glimpses it; but then the veil drops, and one must edit away most of what has been wrote...and reach for a cigarette....

2003

2003 Summer: *I took three puffs off a butt before leaving for the Poet's Café. Three months since I last participated there. I realized when I parked the car that I had hurdled one small milestone: I had come away without cigarettes, on an occasion when definitely I surely would have smoked one before entering--contemplating a public reading without my trusty pack at hand? Previously impossible! What's more, this day I've had only five 'coffin nails,' a new record...*

2004: *Still averaging 6 to 8 on a typical non-stressed day, but I did smoke only five on two days recorded this year.*

2005

This year I began occasionally to indulge in some modest "THC" smoking³² with a friend, which will be recorded when it occurs. I resumed smoking only parts of a nicotine cigarette at a time.

January 1 through January 4

Four to five nicotine cigarettes a day, smoked in parts.

January 5

Nicotine 'hits': 10 a.m., 2; 11:15, 4; 3:50 p.m., 3; 4:40, 3; 5:10, 3; 6:10, 4; 7:30, 1 = approximately 4 full nicotine cigarettes.

THC hits: 3:30 p.m., 3.

"This was an unusually easy day."

January 6

Nicotine hits: 7:15 a.m., 2; 10:40, 4; noon, a whole cigarette; 2:30, a whole cigarette; 3:40, 3 hits; 4:30, 3 hits; 6:30, a whole cigarette; 10:15, a whole cigarette (*worked on writing from 2:30 to bedtime*) = approximately 6 full nicotine cigarettes.

January 7

Nicotine hits: 8 a.m., 2; 9:30, 4; 12:30 p.m., whole cigarette ("reward"); 2:30, 3; 4:10, 3; 6:30, whole cigarette = approximately 4 full nicotine cigarettes.

(Lower numbers also reflect added time away from home.)

January 9

³² Tetrahydrocannabinol, see Glossary at end of this chapter.

A day of stressful family telephone business calls throughout day; somewhat depressed, but managed to keep it to 7-1/2 cigarettes, a couple in parts, spaced 8:00 a.m., 10:05, 10:45, 11:30, 2:10 p.m., 3:50, 5:45, 7:15, 8:45.

January 10

6, spaced much as usual; lower number because of necessary time away from home.

January 11

4, plus 3 THC hits with friend at midday.

January 12

6 ½, plus 3 THC hits with friend at midday.

January 13

5 ½, two being smoked half-each, plus 3 THC hits with friend at midday.

January 14

7 spaced 8:55 a.m., 10:20, 11:50, 4:30 p.m., 4:45 (“frustrated; need to stop writing to cook”), 6:00, 7:10; plus shared 4 THC hits with friend.

January 15

6 ½, two smoked by halves.

Early February: *Health examination (age, 69 and 3 months) Per tread mill heart stress test, heart is strong. Lung x-ray showed lungs slightly ‘elongated--“possibly” [according to doctor] a very early precursor of emphysema, but no bad spots on lungs. Doctor suggested trying the “patch.” (Lots of stress recently connected with care giving as well as History project.)*

I decided to hold off on the patch for the time being.

Late February: *A fall has dislocated the well-worn, all-important vertebra between lumbar and sacral parts of my spine. Resulting pain both is in the area of the herniated disks and down buttocks and backs of legs.*

March: *Pain from the back injury has increased, bad especially in the morning. Consulted physician and had tests--“severe arthritis from L4 to S5.” I did not take advantage of offered prescription drugs; attended a physical therapy session; amended personal weekly Yoga session to avoid back stress but continue to strengthen stomach muscles; had shoe inserts made to straighten torso.*

April 5: *Re-consulted doctor due to spine-related pain. Prescribed, 500 mg. Naproxen painkiller/inflammation reliever, 750 mg. Methocarbamol muscle relaxant. Blood pressure found elevated (unusual for me)--10 mg. daily dose of Lisinopril prescribed. (I also have been taking a daily dose of Levothyroid for some years to correct low thyroid condition. There is a family history of endocrine system problems on my paternal side.)*

Muscle relaxant at bedtime seemed to help a bit, but I delayed using Naproxen because of my general aversion to taking medications.

May 10: *Back pain was heavy this morning even when sitting. THC finitely helps with the chronic pain; my friend is willing to supply me with a home-grown source if/as I may need it....*

8:30 a.m., 3 THC hits (“medium grade).

4 nicotine cigarettes smoked partially, puffs spaced 8:45 a.m., 10:10, 10:50; 12:45 p.m., plus one and a half cigarettes between 12:45 p.m. and bedtime.

My focus today in a Yoga session was drawn several times to breathing. Tried Naproxen once but don’t like the ‘vagueness’ it produces in me. Am using focus on posture and avoidance of strain to minimize back pain.

May 20: *Care giving responsibilities have increased on two sides—my husband is growingly disabled; mother now requires 24/7 care. Not much time for record-keeping, but I believe cigarette quantity doesn’t exceed prior recent ranges. Increased pain convinced me to try the Naproxen again, which does cut off pain a goodly degree for perhaps two to three hours per pill. Once again, however, I don’t like the somewhat ‘drugged’ side effects it seems to have on me—a lethargy which, although not unpleasant,*

cuts back on ambition and energy. I now am able thanks to my friend to have a few puffs of THC each morning, which I find more agreeable.

June 30: No detailed notes in interim but nicotine cigarettes remained about **6-7** with an occasional high of **9** depending on circumstances. *Morning THC dose continues in place of Naproxen.*

September 14: *I've resorted only some dozen times in my life to using alcohol as a self-prescribed 'medicine,' having no 'taste' at all for it--even wine, as my family well can testify. This evening I did consciously indulge in a small amount (one of those tiny bottles like handed out on airplanes; probably two to three tablespoons?)-- a Glenlivet single malt scotch, which I drank fully witted on an empty stomach, just enough to quiet mind and slow down body in the midst of turmoil of recent days of intense care giving, the depression it causes, and an exhausting time schedule. (It would be of great interest to me, should Science discover of individual bodies precisely what it is that makes for constitutional differences in tastes for 'addictive' substances....)*

September 28: *I believe I am getting ready to try 'the patch.'" Today however, unusually free of domestic or project scheduling, I shall try using will power, alone, to go without nicotine while giving mind up totally to "the Writer"....*

Got through the day with only a few "puffs" but accomplished nothing of value: wound up making practically nonstop shorthand notes (that 'hand thing'), 90 percent of it boring stream of consciousness.

For the remainder of 2005 and January of 2006 I neither used Naproxen or the muscle relaxant, while nicotine and THC use continued in the same ranges.

2006

February 23 through March 1

*This record keeping is getting wearisome (as reading it undoubtedly also is becoming, should anyone still be with it!) Over the past **eight days**, I smoked **18 cigarettes**, two or three puffs at a time, which works out to about 2-1/4 cigarettes a day--exceptional in that my husband and I were on vacation, usually a time when my smoking increases due to greater 'leisure' time.*

One observation is that my lungs seem reluctant to draw in smoke as much as they used to—I find myself at times blowing out smoke instead of inhaling and then taking a deep breath, instead. Sometimes I even blow the smoke out in a puff without an inhale. I'm aware now how I have had the habit of 'arresting'(holding) breath, and wonder what is the cause of that (psychological?). I'm reminded of the mother in the TV series, All in the Family, repeatedly told to "stifle" herself, and do know I have used cigarettes in that way (perhaps also 'stifling mind' as well as mouth?). I especially recall one day in the 7th grade, when I unwittingly expelled a long-held breath at the end of an algebra problem—so loud the teacher (who I think was somewhat menopausally tense) shouted angrily, "Who did that?!" She sounded so unstrung, no one answered, and she kept all of us after school because of it....

March 28: *The experienced alleviation of spine-related discomfort by THC (thanks to my friend) finally caused me to submit to a physical by a doctor who prescribed it medically. The Physician's Statement certifies me to buy "cannabis" at regional dispensaries for six months, after which I would need another appointment for assessment as to benefit and recertification (and pay another fee!)....*

I employ three inhalations of marijuana twice a day, shortly after arising and in the latter part of the afternoon. It is very effective in distancing physical pain, so that I comfortably pass the day. The morning dose is especially welcomed (more so after an unwisely strenuous previous day in the garden. One journal note says, "Barely made it from bed this morning due to back; had to crawl part of the way.") After the THC dose, pain at times went 100 percent unnoticed.

Nicotine smoking over the ensuing six months stayed within recent ranges.

September: *I've decided not to incur the doctor fee for cannabis recertification—admittedly because my friend will supply me when needed, and truthfully because I am not comfortable with the quality of some of the bought supply. Because of the non-legalization/standardization controls, one cannot have the certainties of cultivation and handling that are provided by my friend's carefully tended and cured organic.*

I consulted my Primary Care Physician about “the patch.” She suggested I begin with the “Step Two” dose, 14 mg.

September 28 – October 6

The first patch went on the left shoulder after I arose from bed September 28. That day I smoked no nicotine cigarettes and had 3 THC hits at 9 a.m. and 4 at 5 p.m. Some random notes were made:

Watching the raindrops puddle outside the kitchen door, perfect little repeating concentric circles widening into each other and then cancelling each other out at their outer rims bids me ponder the subject of light--“This is a time when a cigarette would be nice,” I think, dwelling instead on Rammurti Mishra’s admonition to distinguish between impulse and compulse—“another time when a cigarette would taste so good, I think, Ego believing it has grasped some wonderful insight, pondering the psychological effects of childhood development and long-lasting effects of parenting—there’s that urge, again!....

Having made it through the first day, I decided not to wear the patch overnight because I’m an excellent sleeper, never getting up to have a smoke.

The patch seemed to have no effect toward oral quiescence. I thought about (and frequently went for) a snack or meal more often/sooner than usually I would. (I had tried oral pacifiers in the past: a fake cigarette with menthol inside in the early ‘80’s; a short-lived try with nicotine gum in ‘89, chewing myself silly into a sore mouth; and in ‘92 chewing on licorice root bought from an herbalist.)

Patch next on the right shoulder, I did feel I noticed some mental calmness. Thoughts of a cigarette arose at about the same intervals as before and by the same triggers; however, it did seem I got by them easier. There were three urges in the a.m.; and I recognized the *emotional* push behind whatever is the biochemical they release that creates the condition that nicotine assuages. There seemed to be differing degrees of emotional stimulation (the one I noted most being psychical ‘revulsion’ at knowing most of the day would be eaten by domestic chores).

However, despite some perceived mental calmness the patch seemed to provide, I was experiencing a very obvious, disconcerting increase in need to get up and move about at far more numerous intervals than usual. That caused me to wonder how much nicotine the patch actually was delivering compared with my self-doses of nicotine which, after all, is a stimulant.

I still took the morning and afternoon doses of THC. One note reported that *inhalations of ‘above-average’ grade of a small THC cigarette provides total forgetfulness of body pain, along with increased ‘clarity’ of consciousness.*

I decided to research cigarette nicotine content on-line and was astounded. The second-stage patch steadily delivered much *greater* an amount of nicotine than did my ordinary amount of cigarette smoke. Even the third-step, lower-dose patch would steadily deliver more! ³³

I decided to abandon the patch.

October 21, 3 p.m. to 23, 7 p.m.: Averaged one cigarette every 1.9 waking hours. (*“Mother still in hospital but keeping hold on myself.”*) THC doses continued in same amounts.

October 23, 7 p.m. to October 26, a total of 67 hours: Over the 67 hours I smoked one pack (= 20 cigarettes; 67 hours less 24 hours of sleep = 43 waking hours divided by 20 =) 1 cigarette every 2+ hours, a small improvement. THC doses continue in same amounts.

³³ See www.ErowidTobaccoVault, online.)

October 27, 2006 to January 13, 2007 : Number of cigarettes smoked daily stayed at an average of one every two hours or two-plus hours (*that standard 'self-dosing' has become obvious*). THC doses continued in same amounts through December but ceased thereafter due to unavailability. I missed it for pain alleviation but still did not start a daily prescribed drug regimen, continuing to employ practical methods for pain control.

2007

July 3 *My life totally changed this past January; only today do I try to return to writing. A surgery on my spine scheduled for late March was abandoned when my husband was struck with a fatal illness. During his long hospitalization naturally I smoked less than usual, being full days and nights in circumstances where I could and would not. In the aftermath months of his February 14th death, I know that my smoking re-increased, probably to at least a half-a-pack or more every day. It was summer before I began to regain some control...*

2009

As of now, September 2009, a pack of cigarettes lasts almost all the way through a third day. I no longer keep monitoring notes. I have not resumed access to THC and 'live with' the back and leg pain, and use Naproxen very rarely, such as for a day that involves unusual walking. I think I safely can say that I'm smoking an average of seven nicotine cigarettes a day, less depending on a day's activities. I don't expect that to change, except as Time may dictate by circumstances.

What Do I Think I Learned from this History?

I do believe that the non-additive brand I have been smoking for 10 years has made a difference—one especially noted is never a morning with even a bit of coughed-up, colored 'catarhh'. Whether that is due to the non-additives in the brand, I'm unable to confirm.

Personally, I would sum my conclusions as follows:

Nicotine chemistry assuages a psychologically-caused, physiological biochemical reaction.

Varying psychical constellations and their silently provoked emotions are involved. Stopping to smoke a cigarette while working on writings (if typing stops either to consider wording, or to fend off distracting thoughts (e.g. care giving/aging *vis-à-vis* worthiness of self-goals, pending domestic chores) differs from lighting up at other times (to exert patience; a break in householding tasks; troublesome conversations). But the fact that I do have days when I smoke only six, and can go longer hours without thinking of having a smoke, offers some belief that there has been diminishment of a purely physiological 'addiction.' In that regard, whereas psychologically I am moved to light a cigarette, often I find myself putting it out after only a couple of puffs. I am comforted by something said to me several years ago by an 80-something-year-old woman who finally had quit. As her habit reached its end, she was smoking only one-half a cigarette every Saturday morning!

There is a decided nexus between smoking and one's breathing habit, although I have no idea as to what initially determines one's breathing habit. My focus on breathing has been influenced strongly by practice of Yoga. It does seem that I have a large lung capacity. (I can be a very long-winded talker, having a penchant to preface points with many long clauses, especially on esoteric subjects of great interest to me, which I know frequently exasperates listeners. A story from my childhood is that once I began to talk, neighbors bolted into their houses if they saw me coming. Further, in retrospect I realize that I always have been a 'breath-holder' of sorts during mental concentration.)

Circumstances combined with personality affect the number of cigarettes 'needed' in a day.

Three elements are involved:

(1) *Occupation of hands* (--the very *holding* of the cigarette is like 'multi-tasking,' a working-life inculcated trait of mine. Yesterday I got out the door to the car with a pencil still between my fingers;

and the thought occurred that, maybe if I kept a pencil between those two fingers whenever they weren't involved in something else, it might inhibit the habit.).

(2) *Environment, including company* (the more of a day that I am away from home and desk, or in the presence of non-smokers, the less I smoke, indicating a reduction in 'addiction.')

(3) *'Orality'-- as a 'pacifier'--* eating being another form of physiologically assuaging nerves? (If I let myself eat malted milk balls with gay abandon I surely could smoke less! And there have been times when I've been carrying a pencil and absentmindedly taken it to my mouth as if it were a cigarette.)

I've become assiduous at planning and spacing enjoyable meals and snacks, Then last night I had a very deep dream that only resurfaced a little while ago: *I was commencing to explain my habit to some invisible party. The scene of the dream focused on a pencil with a hard chew out of its side—and then, on awakening, I remembered! When I was a girl I chewed pencils so hard they sometimes broke in half!*

Now, I don't expect holding a pencil between fingers more of the time is going to affect Habit much; however, the dream leads me straight back to the 'mouth-thing'--you know, Psychology's once-reasoned-cause being too-early weaning. But what good would confirmation of that do for me now? All I know is that, for 35 years (when the statistics began to accumulate), there have been few times that I haven't been acutely aware of each smoking cigarette, watching my own fingers trip it to and from lips until crushed to death, always aware at the edge of consciousness that I probably was hastening a bit my own.

Cigarettes once often were referred to as "coffin nails;" if they really were, my coffin wouldn't have room in it for me. I'd say the number of butts I have stamped out over the years is somewhere around 200,000+. While I feel my smoking is not an unconscious suicidal bent, I confess moreover I am susceptible to self-denying thoughts such as, "Well, one must die of something;" or, "God won't let it be too bad for me, because God has important things for me still to do"—surely typical self-assurances.

Public anti-smoking campaigns largely appear administered by never-smokers. Tobacco is portrayed as addicting in and of itself, not at all as alcohol is portrayed. Never in admonitions about conserving health and longevity where smoking is concerned does one hear *cut back, cut down*; yet I do believe I have benefited from those efforts. (My most recent chest x-ray was clear; but that I know does not guarantee my body free from other effects. I understand the pancreas and bladder are vulnerable, in addition to arteries.) There appears to be much science still to be done on the physiology and metabiology of smoking for nicotine absorption. Tidbit notes I have made over the years are teasing:

"A sign of nitrogen poisoning is fluid in the lungs"--fluid in the lungs is involved in emphysema...the brain interprets nitrogen as oxygen?

Investigate carbon dioxide; withheld breath increases it in the blood? Conversely, autonomic nervous system increases rate of breathing to decrease/release more carbon dioxide under what circumstances?

Check out electro-physiological effects of nitrogen and "Psychobiological Consequences of Chronic Nicotization" (find author's name and journal); find article that quoted, "The study of the neurophysiological effects of nitrogen is part of the more general study of neurotransmitters," which becomes more complex day after day, involving the brain's "closed loop feedback systems, possibilities of reciprocal interactions, and discovery of new types of receptors"...

Other notes said, *of two types of postsynaptic receptors in the mammalian nervous system, the nicotinic type is so named because it is stimulated by nicotine, and a large number of the brain's nerve receptors is sensitive to nicotine.*³⁴ *Where and how is the body's 'natural' nicotine manufactured?*

The [average?] body needs one-two-thousandth of niacin a day. Niacin is essential for hormones, cortisone, thyroxine and insulin. (I've wondered about my inherited endocrine system:

³⁴ See Nicotine and Niacin in Glossary at end of this chapter.

thyroid problems have been prevalent--father and sisters; father developed adult diabetes). What is the 'tryptophan' connection, if any? Does any of the related chemistry involve the adrenals? Much has been said about release of adrenalin when physically threatened; what about 'psychologically threatened?'

I always have been obsessively cautious about drugs *per se*. My husband was fond of kidding me that the number of aspirin I've taken in my life wouldn't fill a bottle, and I've exasperated more than one doctor with questions about treatments and dosages. So it's odd that in my distant past my life did occasion experience with other 'mind-expanding' substances.³⁵

I was a naïve 16 year old when I began the one and one-half years of college that I had. During the second semester at San Francisco State, I lived in a boarding house. One night my roommate and I took an ogling stroll along the blocks that once formed North Beach's 'Barbary Coast', and we stopped to peer into a famous (or infamous) bar, the Black Cat. When its doorman/bouncer tried to cajol us into some "bennies," we moved quickly on. A couple of years later I learned what "bennies" were.

An aunt-by-marriage was using benzedrine, an *amphetamine*, for weight control; and, on a visit, she blithely passed some to me. (I, being inclined to carry fat, always was concerned about keeping it within reason.) I was working my first legal secretary job at the time and popped a benzedrine pill one morning before work. I became so hyper I barely made it through the day, vowing never to touch that stuff again.

As elsewhere elaborated,³⁶ I also on some long-ago occasions experienced effects of other "mind-altering" substances, none of which I cared to repeat--chalk those up to the original armchair-scientist in me). While those experiences may have provided some writing material, it wasn't until I became acquainted with THC that comparison brought home the dangers that persist by government categorization of marijuana as a "Schedule 1" drug alongside substances such as heroin.

Use of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol³⁷ as outlined above for my *spondylolisthesis* condition (forward displacement of fourth and fifth lumbar vertebrae) was medically efficacious. I may be only a statistic of one, but that use was not addictive. Meanwhile, I understood how lack of unprejudiced adult education toward, and intelligent governance and control of marijuana is maintaining children in harm's way.³⁸

I naturally cannot claim that the *smoking* itself is deleterious where THC is concerned; but non-smoking methods do exist for absorbing the medical essence (*e.g.* vaporizing devices and food stuffs). Meanwhile, the contribution of alcohol to certain carcinomas scarcely has been acknowledged, to say nothing of to common violence, crime, family upheavals, and road deaths. (The only THC-related driving citation of which I've heard was because someone was driving too slowly.)

What then, would I (an admitted confessed statistic only of one) say are the effects of THC, marijuana's active agent? I would summarize them in three categories, with relevant notes:

(1) As a physical pain alleviator/'distancer', and (2) as a psychological stress palliative:

A body impairment insists its condition on consciousness. For example, my slipped vertebrae, in conjunction with aging, makes it necessary for mind to overcome depressive thought--*how am I to manage ongoing day-to-day life and its duties? What will I do if I become chair-bound? How will I manage my own aging along with the care needed by the aging woes of those I love?* THC definitely distanced pain, most often to non-awareness of it. Further, like many prescription drugs, it calmed

³⁵ Explored in the as-yet-unpublished autobiography, *Journey With JC*.

³⁶ See preceding footnote.

³⁷ See Glossary that follows.

³⁸ Not only by being coerced to into a truly dangerous drug ("Why not try some of *this*, instead?); but because unscrupulous dealers lie about what's being bought—see Glossary under Cannabinol and THC.

mental activity, which, in turn, further relaxed body to overcome anticipation of and 'armoring resistance' to pain.

While much literature and personal accounts are available as to THC's aiding depressed appetite in certain medical conditions, etc., and alleviation of debilitating mental stress, its potential as a simple, natural medication has yet to be commonly, completely neutrally explored. As a controlled, medically prescribed substance, possibilities of its abuse would be no greater than that of any other medically prescribed drugs, which, in their abuse, are far more dangerous. Many persons, fully educated on the subject, affirm that one ought to be free to grow the herb on one's own land for personal use--just as one is free to do so with wine grapes, for example. Being a person of civilized self-control, I agree with that, but I would forego it if necessary to see reasonably governed medical advancement.

(3) As an intensifier of spirit: Huston Smith's term for substances that enhance spiritual nature is "entheogens."³⁹ I would be neglectful not to mention that the effect of THC was to make me even more likely to respond to, and accept the interconnectedness of existence. I comprehended why, as a medication, it can cause solace and peace for persons succumbing to terminal illness, and human grace in a self-understanding way....

For the moment, "that's 30" as the old news reporters used to say--

Except....

Except!--never having gone panting after 'Mary Jane,' I nonetheless now am off to the store to buy-- guess what? "Well, one has to die from something," a barmaid once said to me. So I ask myself, "If you could have chosen never to have smoked nicotine cigarettes and live longer, but--absent that 'crutch'-- not have seen accomplished what has been, would you have?"

A BRIEF GLOSSARY

[***Nota bene***: These are only brief definitions. Refer to reliable published texts and studies for full discussions of substances and their effects.]

Cannabinoid -- A chemical compound; *tetrahydrocannabinol* (THC) is a cannabinoid.

Cannabinol -- Generic term for substances in hemp plants that share a similar chemical structure. ("Next time a 'friendly' dealer tells you he can get some cannabinol...[know that] cannabinol doesn't even exist...a cover name for PCP, which dealers try to pass off as pure THC." Young, Lawrence, *et al.*, *Everything You Need to Know...*, New York, Berkley Books, 1977, pp. 211 and 53.

Cannabis -- The genus name for all THC-producing weeds--dioecious⁴⁰ annual plants. Also another name for hemp, different effects depending on the plant parts used. (*Cannabis sativa* is native to central Asia; *Cannabis indica* is Indian hemp.) See Marijuana and THC.

Cannabis sativa -- See *cannabinol*.

LSD -- lysergic acid diethylamide:

"Odorless, colorless, and tasteless, LSD is...the most powerful drug known [at the time of publication of this reference]. A crystalline solid in pure form, it also can be produced as a liquid. ...It is five thousand times as potent as mescaline and two hundred times as potent as psilocybin...

"LSD is a semi-synthetic derivative of lysergic acid, an alkaloid found in ergot...a fungus that grows as a rust on rye...

"LSD is considered a psychomimetic drug...." Young, pages 127-128.

(The most potent substance experienced in a young year, it was very interesting to learn that LSD molecular structure reflects what is called an "indole ring" akin to serotonin, one of our brain's primary

³⁹ The literal meaning of the word is "that which causes God to be within an individual."

⁴⁰ Staminate and pistillate flowers (different 'genders') borne on different plants.

synaptic neurotransmitters. Not only does LSD bear the indole ring, its entire molecule is a precise mirror-image of serotonin.)

“Magic” Mushrooms -- See Psilocybin.

Marijuana -- “Marijuana comes from various of the hemp plants.... [I]n texture it resembles small granules of oregano or the larger leaves of tea. When smoked it smells like sweet, burned rope or dried grasses. The active ingredient...found in the gooey, yellow, fragrant resin of the upper leaves and flowers, is the tongue-twisting delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol...known as THC. ... Depending on the quality... ‘joints’ [slang for cigarettes of it] average about 4 to 40 mg of THC each.” Young, p. 137.

Commonly marijuana is referred to as “*Cannabis* [L. hemp, fr. Gk *kannabis*, fr. the source of OE *haenep* hemp]: the dried flowering spikes of the pistillate plants of the hemp.” (Webster.) Its active agent is *tetrahydrocannabinol*, or THC.⁴¹

Mescaline -- Chemical name, *3,4,5-trimethoxyphenylethylamine*. “Mescaline is the hallucinatory heart of peyote, excised from the scrubby peyote cactus, *Lophorhiza williamsii*...in its natural state as peyote buttons, or...extracted as organic mescaline.... Synthetic mescaline sulfate comes in white needlepoint crystals... True mescaline is rarely, if ever, sold on the street.--what usually is passed off as mescaline is either PCP, LSD, a combination of LSD/PCP, amphetamines, STP, belladonna alkaloids, or improperly synthesized contaminants.” Young, p. 152.

NICOTINE

NICOTINE, AN ALKALOID naturally occurring chemical compounds containing basic nitrogen atoms. **NICOTINE IS A CHEMICAL, $C_{10}H_{14}N_2$, WHICH IS FOUND IN THE TOBACCO PLANT, FOUND ALSO IN NIGHTSHADE FAMILY OF PLANTS (*SOLANACEAE*) constituting APPROX 0.6–3.0% OF DRY WEIGHT OF TOBACCO; also found in several other members of *Solanaceae* family, small amounts present in species such as Egg plant and Tomato.**

NICOTINE CONTENT IN CIGARETTES HAS SLOWLY INCREASED OVER THE YEARS, AND ONE STUDY FOUND AN AVERAGE INCREASE OF 1.6% PER YEAR BETWEEN 1998 AND 2005, FOR ALL MAJOR MARKET CATEGORIES OF CIGARETTES--MOST CIGARETTES IN THE SMOKE INHALED CONTAIN 1 TO 3 MILLIGRAMS OF NICOTINE. NICOTINE GUM HAS USUALLY 2-MG OR 4-MG DOSES.

NICOTINE IS DISTRIBUTED QUICKLY THROUGH BLOODSTREAM; CROSSES BLOOD-BRAIN BARRIER.

ON AVERAGE WHEN INHALED TAKES ABOUT SEVEN SECONDS FOR SUBSTANCE TO REACH THE BRAIN; HALF LIFE IN THE BODY IS AROUND 2 HOURS (or 1-2 hours). NICOTINE-RICH BLOOD PASSES FROM THE LUNGS TO THE BRAIN WITHIN SEVEN SECONDS AND IMMEDIATELY STIMULATES THE RELEASE OF MANY CHEMICAL MESSENGERS, WHICH RELEASE OF NEUROTRANSMITTERS AND HORMONES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST OF NICOTINE’S EFFECTS.

Optically active : “(-) nicotine (requires higher dose for same effects) is *levorotatory*; “(+) nicotine salts are *dextrorotatory*.)

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM ACTIVITY

ACTS UPON AND INCREASES ACTIVITY OF NICOTINIC ACETYLCHOLINE RECEPTORS, SPECIFICALLY THE GANGLION TYPE NICOTINIC RECEPTOR (PRESENT IN ADRENAL MEDULLA, AND UPON ONE NICOTINE RECEPTOR PRESENT IN CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM, EFFECTING A VARIETY OF OTHER NEUROTRANSMITTERS THROUGH LESS DIRECT MECHANISMS.

IT IS THOUGHT THAT INCREASED LEVELS OF DOPAMINE IN BRAIN’S REWARD CIRCUITS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR RELAXATION AND EVENTUAL DEPENDENCY.

⁴¹ There are a great number of serious professional books on all aspects of the chemistry, cultivation, medical, and analyses of effects, among the latter evidence of better, rather than poorer automobile driving.

DOPAMINE is one of the key neurotransmitters actively involved in the brain. Net effect of increasing levels of dopamine within the reward circuits is **increase in reward pathway sensitivity, opposite of other drugs of abuse such as cocaine and heroin, which reduce reward pathway sensitivity**. Nicotine withdrawal is relatively mild compared to alcohol or heroin withdrawal.

IN ADRENAL MEDULLA

BINDING TO GANGLION TYPE NICOTINIC RECEPTORS INCREASES FLOW OF STIMULATING HORMONE AND NEUROTRANSMITTER ADRENALINE (EPINEPHRINE).

(Release of epinephrine/adrenaline cause increase in heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, higher blood glucose.

SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM ACTIVITY

ACTIVATES THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM (via splanchnic nerves to adrenal medulla); **RELEASE OF ACETYLCHOLINE** (by preganglionic sympathetic fibers of the nerves) **ACTS ON NICOTINIC ACETYLCHOLINE RECEPTORS, CAUSING RELEASE OF EPINEPHRINE AND NOREPINEPHRINE INTO BLOODSTREAM.**

PSYCHOACTIVE EFFECTS

UNIQUE COMPARED TO MOST DRUGS AS TO BEING BOTH A STIMULANT AND A RELAXANT (LOW DOSES ENHANCING BRAIN ACTIONS OF NOREPINEPHRINE AND DOPAMINE; stimulation first by release of glucose from the liver and epinephrine [adrenaline] from the adrenal medulla); HIGHER DOSES ENHANCE EFFECT OF SEROTONIN AND OPIATE ACTIVITY to produce calming, pain-killing effects. **USERS REPORT FEELINGS OF RELAXATION, SHARPNESS, CALMNESS, ALERTNESS.**

APPEARS TO ENHANCE: CONCENTRATION AND MEMORY (due to the increase of acetylcholine), **SHARPNESS/ALERTNESS** (due to increases of acetylcholine and norepinephrine); **PAIN REDUCTION** (BY INCREASES OF ACETYLCHOLINE AND BETA-ENDORPHIN); **REDUCTION OF ANXIETY** (by increase of beta-endorphin; **EXTENSION OF DURATION OF POSITIVE EFFECTS OF DOPAMINE; INCREASES OF SENSITIVITY IN BRAIN REWARD SYSTEMS.** (Some lose weight as a consequence of reducing appetite and raising metabolism.)

RESEARCH SUGGESTS: SMOKERS TAKE SHORT QUICK PUFFS FOR STIMULATING EFFECT (LOW LEVEL OF BLOOD NICOTINE); DEEP PUFFS TO RELAX (HIGHER LEVEL OF BLOOD NICOTINE (depressing passage of nerve impulses and producing a mild sedative effect).

TECHNICALLY, NICOTINE IS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY ADDICTIVE--ADMINISTERED ALONE NICOTINE DOES NOT PRODUCE SIGNIFICANT REINFORCING PROPERTIES. RECENT STUDIES reported by the National Institute on Drug Addiction (NIDA) suggest that tobacco contains a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (=MAOI's being anti-depressants that work by increasing serotonin levels in the brain. They are used in medicine to treat Parkinson's disease, which may explain why a number of studies have shown that smokers have a far lower rate of Parkinson's than non-smokers. In any event, the MAOI in tobacco smoke may play as great a role in smoking as nicotine. ONLY AFTER NICOTINE COADMINISTRATION WITH AN MAOI, SUCH AS THOSE FOUND IN TOBACCO, ARE SIGNIFICANT BEHAVIORAL SENSITIZATION IS PRODUCED.

MEDICAL INDICATIONS

APPARENTLY OF THERAPEUTIC VALUE (situations (referred to as "Smoker's Paradoxes,"; actual mechanism understood poorly or not at all; but **ADMINISTRATION OF NICOTINE WITHOUT SMOKING MAY YIELD SAME BENEFITS AS SMOKING WITHOUT THE HIGHER HEALTH RISKS** due to tar and other ingredients found in tobacco.

Risk of ulcerative colitis has been frequently shown to be reduced by smokers/effect is eliminated if the individual stops smoking; also appears to interfere with development of Kaposi's sarcoma, breast cancer among women carrying the very high risk BRCA gene, preeclampsia, and atopic disorders such as allergic asthma; plausible mechanism in these cases may be nicotine acting as an anti-inflammatory agent interfering with inflammation-related disease process, since nicotine has vasoconstrictive effects.

Tobacco smoke has been shown to contain compounds capable of inhibiting MAO/Monoamine oxidase, responsible for degradation of brain's dopamine--when broken down by MAO-B, formation of neurotoxic by-products possibly contribute to Parkinson's and Alzheimers disease (any papers published). **Recent studies find no beneficial link to Alzheimer's but nicotine shown to delay onset of Parkinson's disease in studies involving monkeys and humans.** Other studies indicate nicotine can be used to help adults suffering from autosomal dominant nocturnal frontal lobe epilepsy--**the same areas that cause seizures in that form of epilepsy are responsible for processing nicotine in the brain.** Correlation of tobacco smoking with **schizophrenia sufferers** (noted, 75-90% are smokers), has suggested that it may be self-medication with nicotine, but only in mild not highly dependent use. **NICOTINE APPEARS TO IMPROVE ADHD SYMPTOMS**, some studies focusing on its benefits in adults with ADHD; nicotine as chewing gum or transdermal patch being explored **ALSO AS AN EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT FOR OCD**; small studies show some success.

Must be recognized these studies are only on observation, no interventional (randomized) studies have been done; research on nicotine as administered through a patch or gum is ongoing.

QUESTION REMAINING, is nicotine really the active ingredient in tobacco smoke? Anti-smokers quick to point out pure nicotine is poison used as a pesticide—true; however, to kill a 180 lb man would require drinking 80 mg, while many other common substances also have minimum lethal doses--according to some sources, ingesting a gram of caffeine is fatal.

Most of the nicotine in tobacco is lost in the process of smoking; only a little finds its way into the smoker's bloodstream, which may account for effects such as improved mental concentration. (Fine Havana cigars when they were available contained only 2% nicotine.) If nicotine was the active ingredient in tobacco, would not nicotine patches satisfy the craving? Yet, In prisons when smoking is forbidden, inmates take to smoking corn silk, paper, string, etc., none of which contain any nicotine.

Recently, anti-smoking forces have suggested taking nicotine out of cigarettes. In their book, "Life Extension", health writers Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw, take a different approach--believing smoke is bad for health but nicotine is not, they suggest cigarettes be spiked with extra nicotine, so that smokers will consume fewer.

NIACIN (Also known as vitamin b₃, nicotinic acid and vitamin PP)

AN ORGANIC COMPOUND with the formula C₅H₄NCO₂H and, depending on the definition used, one of the between 40 to 80 essential human nutrients. The terms niacin, nicotinamide, and vitamin B₃ are often used interchangeably to refer to any member of this family of compounds, since they have the same biochemical activity. **Niacin is a precursor to compounds that play essential metabolic roles in living cell; it is involved in both DNA repair, and the production of steroid hormones in the adrenal gland.** It is found in variety of foods including liver, chicken, beef, fish, cereal, peanuts and legumes and is also synthesized from tryptophan, which is found in meat, dairy and eggs.

Peyote -- See Mescaline.

Psilocybin -- “At least twenty types of mushrooms contain the psychoactive ingredients psilocybin and psilocin... ... difficult and expensive to produce synthetically and store properly, and only one in a thousand street samples [can be] genuine. The rest are either LSD or an LSD/PCP combination. ...”
“...Relatively unstable, psilocybin is converted to psilocin by the body. The LSD-like effects attributed to psilocybin are actually the work of psilocin.” Psilocybin is “known formally as ortho-phosphoryl-r-hydroxy-N-di-methyltryptamine....” Young, pages 194-195.

Pyridine -- A colorless liquid, nitrogenous base of pungent odor obtained in distillation of bone oil, coal tar, etc. and by decomposition of certain alkaloids; parent of many organic compounds; as nicotine, used for denaturing alcohol, as a solvent, germicide, remedy for asthma.

THC -- “THC is the primary active ingredient in every cannabis preparation, from marijuana to ‘hashish’ to ‘hash oil’. Its chemical name, delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, defines its status as one of the chemical substances found in the hemp plant. ...

“THC was first synthesized in 1966. The extremely delicate and costly equipment needed to manufacture it synthetically has left it solely in the hands of professional laboratories, under regulated contract to a limited number of bona-fide drug researchers. ...

“An average marijuana [cigarette/‘joint’] has about 1 percent THC content, while hash oil, at the other end of the scale, may have as much as 30 percent THC. PCP has no THC content. ... Unfortunately, nine times out of ten, the unsuspecting consumer [being told the substance is synthetic THC] will buy a dose of the...dangerous drug PCP [or] combination of whatever leftovers [the] dealer can scrape together—LSD, mescaline, or occasionally amphetamines.” Young, pages 211, 212.

THC is known to stimulate appetite, perhaps better described as capacity to make food and eating more attractive (e.g. the “munchies,” the object of much joking), it being known also of its usefulness for persons suffering from potential malnutrition due to disease.

Tobacco -- “Although tobacco smoke consists of nearly five hundred compounds in its particles, it is nicotine, an alkaloid in the plant’s leaves, that causes the most acute effects of smoking. ... Cigarette tobacco contains about 1.5 percent nicotine; the smoke from an average cigarette yields about 6 to 8 mg of the drug. Cigars contain appreciably more nicotine, averaging 120 mg each, twice the amount needed to kill a normal human adult if he chose to eat it. ... In addition to nicotine, a variety of other toxic substances can be found in cigarette smoke, including cyanide, ‘tar,’ and carbon monoxide. None can be completely removed or isolated... Cigarette smoke contains about 1 percent carbon monoxide—cigars about 6 percent—by volume...” Young, p. 215.

Tryptophane -- Amino acid; precursor to nicotinic acid; a crystalline product of “trystic” digestion essential to animal life.

[Suggested readings, see Bibliography at end of volume, including Garron, pp 99-107; Grinspoon, pp 89-97]

*Pen between fingers of one hand, a burning cigarette, the other,
each helps to break the electromagnetic band
wherein those incorrigible in-between forces hover.
Some people call it 'horniness,' a term without emotion--
what's in a name? The current's the same,
with or without devotion.
And all the time and formulas utilized to deduct it,
have not, thus far, reduced one bit the impulse to conduct it...*

* * *

PITY OUR ANCIENT MOTHERS

Everett Dirksen (*I know, "who's he?"*) once called the U. S. national budget "the book no one knows;" but I think that the *Old Testament* tops that, with the *New Testament* not far behind. Our knowledge of the eras and global events therein embraced consist essentially of a handful of surface summaries, shaped and embroidered over time by subjective interpretations and notions--especially as reconstituted from the ancient languages (Greek and Hebrew) in arbitrarily varying English versions.

That, however, is bound to change.

It may take a full century; but public interest in the *literary* value of the ancient texts is moving, beyond religious and theological purview, into the world history arena, where objectively may be understood ancient co-relationships that still hinder civilized progression today. Enlightenment will be a credit to scholarship by women, increasing by the decade in the field where, for four millennia, all translations and interpretations have come via the mind, mouth, and hands of men. *Especially*—in those our most ancient written records--the time has come to *cherchez la femme!*

Females who received any detail in testamentary literature are of two types--either a woman 'grandmothered-in' to allow transmission of patriarchal lineage, or/and a woman of notorious behavior. (Motherblood, as the absolute determinant of transmission of 'legitimate' genealogy, is found advanced only obliquely in the texts.) Of interest in the lengthy patriarchal listings (betrayed by gaps or vagueness of text and/or also obliquity ⁴²), is that a child of a woman of lineage with a man that was not, took the surname of the mother's father.

⁴² Naturally open to interpreted derivations, such as the differing listings by *Matthew* and *Luke* as to Jesus' *immediate* parent (*Luke's* by Jesus' *mother*), and also in the post-Babylonian listings at Zerubbabel, involving parentage of "Shealtiel" and "Neri."

Considering the vast number of *daughters* born throughout the history, the rarity of ‘established’ female names is remarkable, in the many centuries and generations after Sarah’s appearance with Abraham.⁴³ Ruth, Rahab, Abigail, Jezebel, Bath-sheba—such names are familiar, even if their stories have been a-politicized and/or romanticized. Never, however, does one hear of Milcah, Azubah, Abiah or Ephratah; Mahalath, Basemath, or Oholibamah.

One may recall the great, first Miriamne/“Miriam”—she who tried to counsel Moses and got in trouble for it. There was a later Miriam, the last flower of the dynasty of Asamoneus ; but for her story, as well as other salient data, we must read first-century historian, Josephus.

The second Miriam was the great-great-great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter of an [unnamed] daughter of that Asamoneus who was progenitor of the ‘hellenized’ dynasty known as “Hasmonaeon,” which embraced the famous independence-winning “Maccabees.” That dynasty’s power ended with Herod the Great’s Rome-supported rise to king, whose territory increased to equal that of King David’s almost a millennium before.

It was not unusual for a new potentate to cement his position and acquire ‘legitimacy’ to it, with a wife from the previous monarchy.⁴⁴ The “Idumaeon” Herod the Great repudiated the wife he had and took Miriam, the last Hasmonaeon princess, to wife; and the extent of misery and grief endured by her and her mother, Alexandra II, is beyond imagining.

Poor sagacious queen-mother Alexandra II! She had a staunch ally in Cleopatra VII (“the Great”), certain informants advising Herod that Alexandra actually was co-conspiring with Cleopatra (who also hated him) to oust Herod from the throne. Alexandra believed that her son, Aristobulus III (Miriam’s

⁴³ Sarah, as the *OT* text relates, being Abraham’s half-sister (“who became also my wife,” as Abraham says on the record)—neither of their mothers being given. [[Resource for the within discussion: *History of the Daughters*, this domain.](#)]

⁴⁴ Or, conversely, to dispose of wives alien to one’s scheme (as did Herod the Great’s son, Herod Antipas, who, to secure Herodias as an allied wife, divorced the daughter of King Aretas of Arabia, who then warred with him). Another heroine that got widely ‘distributed’ (between the Antiochans and Ptolemies) and ultimately got axed, was Cleopatra /VI/Selene, “The Syrian Queen.”

younger brother), legitimately should be High Priest, as would be natural under 'the Law' and in its milieu.

Alexandra tried all within her power to save her family, at one point sending drawings of Miriam and Aristobulus III to Mark Antony in Egypt. Antony wrote to Herod to send Aristobulus to him, but Herod refused; instead he removed his appointed ('illegitimate') High Priest and did appoint Aristobulus, whose tenure, however, would be cruelly brief.

Aristobulus' popularity was a great threat to Herod. Alexandra II, herself virtually a prisoner, read 'the handwriting on the wall' and communicated with Cleopatra. On Cleopatra's advice, Alexandra secretly prepared to have herself and Aristobulus smuggled out in coffins by night. The plan, however, was foiled by an unspecified informant (Herod's household, amid his wives and their competitive children, being fraught with animosity). Herod refrained from punishing Alexandra, knowing Cleopatra would not have borne it. However, after 18-year-old Aristobulus III's enthusiastic reception by the populace, at his first formal appearance, Herod had him drowned.

Cleopatra VII pressed Antony to punish Herod. Antony summoned Herod; but as matters developed Herod retained Antony's favor, gifting him and even accompanying him on an expedition. Meanwhile, the royal Hyrcanus, Alexandra's father, had been offered refuge for himself and his family by Arabia's governor, Malchus. Then, however--following Antony's fall to Caesar Octavian/"Augustus"--Herod, fearing Rome would replace him with Hyrcanus put him to death.

Miriam was the next to succumb to Herod's paranoia. Trapped falsely by conspiracies of the portion of Herod's harem descended from his Idumaeans roots, Miriam was put on trial, condemned to death, and executed. Now her two sons and her mother remained, to complete the tragedy.

Miriam's sons by Herod, Alexander III and Aristobulus IV, openly and fearlessly opposed their father. The Great--learning Alexandra hoped to take over Jerusalem fortifications, and give them over

to her grandsons—first had her slain (*circa* 27 b.c.). Soon, Miriam’s sons—having wide public sympathy and support—fell also to palace intrigues, were condemned by their father, and strangled.

It was interesting, discovering that the great Cleopatra (seventh of that name!) was of Macedonian, not Egyptian descent. There, one must go back to Philip II of Macedonia (who, in fourth century b.c., consolidated power over mainland Greece), and to his son, Alexander III “the Great” (to whom, within a year of his father’s death, every Greek state except Sparta submitted).

Alexander III was Philip II’s son by Olympias, daughter of the King of Molossi. In command of both the Grecian League of Corinth and Macedonia, Alexander proceeded on his notable conquests, not all of which required warring. In 332 b.c., leaving Persia’s Darius III temporarily on the run, Alexander made his way through Palestine, where then-High Priest Jaddua at Jerusalem also peaceably converted from Persian to Macedonian hegemony.

When Alexander died in 323 b.c.e., control of his territories fell immediately to his generals in the field, Lagos being in Egypt.⁴⁵ Arsinoe (a first so-named), one of the wives of Alexander’s father, Philip II, had given birth after Philip’s death to a posthumous son of his named Ptolemy I *Soter*. Subsequently Lagos took Arsinoe to wife. It is reported that Lagos adopted Ptolemy I *Soter*, from whom the Macedonian/Grecian dynasty that ended with Cleopatra VII flowed in Egypt.

There is a dearth of matriarchal data in Cleopatra VII’s lineage. There are some uncertainties, as well, in patriarchal, due to several other Cleopatras not always well identified, and some being taken to wife more than once by one or another supervening power figure. Apart from oblique references, Cleopatra VII the Great’s bloodline on the male side began with Ptolemy I *Soter*-Lagos, whose later wife Berenice [Philip’s first wife⁴⁶] was mother of Ptolemy II *Philadelphus*, the line continuing then as follows: Ptolemy II *Philadelphus* + [uncertain] = Ptolemy III *Euergetes* + [uncertain] = Ptolemy IV *Philopater* +

⁴⁵ Jockeying and warring for positions and control by and between Alexander’s various territorial generals ensued for some long time following his death.

⁴⁶ Philip’s first wife. She, after becoming lady-in-waiting to, supplanted Eurydice, Ptolemy I’s wife.

[unknown] = Ptolemy V *Epiphanes* + Cleopatra I (daughter of Laodice and Antiochus III the Great, of the line of Seleucus, Alexander III's general in Syrian regions) = Ptolemy VI *Philometer* + Cleopatra II (daughter of Cleopatra I and Ptolemy V *Epiphanes*) = Cleopatra III + Ptolemy VIII *Euergetes/Physcon* (son of Cleopatra I and Ptolemy V *Epiphanes*) = Cleopatra VI/Selene 'A'⁴⁷ + *apparently*⁴⁸ Ptolemy IX *Lathryus/Lathurus* (son of Cleopatra III [or IV?] and Ptolemy VIII *Euergetes/Physcon*) = Ptolemy XIII *Auletes* + Cleopatra V *Tryphaena* (daughter of Cleopatra VI/Selene 'A' and [uncertain] Ptolemy IX *Lathryus/Lathurus*) = **Cleopatra VII the Great** (born some 1900 years after Sarah).

A myriad of personal tales lay buried beneath all of History's recorded time. What, really, do we know of those who peopled it? If one could hope for anything after death (besides being in the presence again of beloved family), it would be to 'shoot the breeze' with notable persons from all arenas of Humankind's existence—Helen of Troy, for example: what really went down *there*? And perhaps to hear Plato say (Socrates also being present), "Well, imagine how *we* feel-- all that 'b.s.' about my having an affair with Zantippe (Socrates' wife), and the perpetuated confusion as to who was whose pupil!"

I would not, however, see Herod the Great. He would remain in, not a hallowed place but the private 'Hell' into which he was fated to descend. Still, were we to perceive his private strivings and struggles, all perhaps would be quite explainable, psychologically?—*forgiveness...such a loaded word....*

There may be no forgiveness for *actions*; but acts committed are the legacy of acts withstood, private or public, which leaves us human beings (per Shakespeare) mere *actors*, of whom those who are doomed to follow evil scripts must also invite forgiveness. So at least we must imagine *one* historical man alleging?--he known by varying forms of one name,⁴⁹ upon whom in his time and place

⁴⁷ Records related to this female's checkered life defy certainty in many instances. (She is to be distinguished from Cleopatra VII's later daughter, Cleopatra Selene.)

⁴⁸ Circuitous inferences from ancient records/archeological inscriptions cause a problem; also, varying numberings and identifications of Cleopatras vary according to expositions.

⁴⁹ the following being only some: Eesho, Yehohshua/Yehosua/Yahushua/Yahusa/Yeshua/Yeshu, Isa/Issa, Joshua, Ihesus/Iesous, Jesu, Jesus.

motherblood, alone, bestowed both--monarchical and ecclesiastical birthright--but who refused to let history repeat itself.

Oh you Woman of those front lines--
queens, princesses, concubines--
mother-imbued intelligence comprehends
knowledge before fact, of its progeny's ends!
Let this be eulogy and pledge to thee--
slaves to mediocre masculinity--
and all stereotypes then and hence,
travailleurs in beds of ignorance.
New daughters will take beyond mundane norm,
Consciousness separate from visible form....

* * *

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS

Poor little Salome of the region roughly called 'Palestine'! Not Salome I, Herod the Great's sister. Not Salome, Herod the Great daughter by Elpis, one of his many spouses. Not (Salome-) Alexandra I, first recorded queen of the *Asmonean* (aka Hasmonean or Maccabean) dynasty. And not the Salome who saw Mother Mary and Jesus right after his birth⁵⁰: *Salome II the girl*, last known flower of the Asamoneans, to this very day commonly believed responsible for the beheading of John (Yohanan) "the baptizer."

Six hundred years of regional history preceded Salome II's presence, 31 a.d./c.e., at Machaerus castle fortress where the heinous deed was done. Between 586 and 168 b.c.e. her home regions were ruled by, consecutively, Babylonia 48 years; Persia 206; Macedonia/Greece 9; Egypt under the Ptolemies⁵¹ 125; and Seleucid 'Syria'⁵² 30. Then, in 167 b.c.e., her great⁸-grandfather, Mattathais of the line of Asamoneus,⁵³ rebelled against the Seleucids. His five sons, best known as Maccabees,⁵⁴ took up the fight, eventually captured Jerusalem, and achieved religious freedom and independence in 143 b.c.e. in a peace treaty signed by Simon, last surviving Mattathais son. Simon served as Governor and High Priest at Jerusalem in the province of Judah until in 134 b.c.e., when he was assassinated (possibly by a Ptolemaic foe).

⁵⁰ Who also may have been Salome mother of apostles James and John and Salome among women who went to Jesus' tomb.

⁵¹ The dynasty begun by Alexander the Great's commanding general in Egypt after Alexander died.

⁵² " " " " " in the region roughly extending south of the Taurus mountains between Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates River. (Boundaries of "Syria," shortened from Assyria/Ashur, are not clearly anciently defined.)

⁵³ "Mattathais, the son of John, the son of Simeon, the son of Asamoneus of the Order of Joiarib." *Josephus, A.J. XII.VI.1.*

⁵⁴ Of whom Judas, "the Hammer," is the one most known.

Simon was succeeded as King and High Priest by son John Hyrcanus I. During Hyrcanus' 30-year tenure, he fended off external aggressors and extended territorial frontiers, annexing the Galilee and Idumea to the Hasmonean⁵⁵ kingdom. His last will was that his (unnamed) widow be ruling Queen and his brother Aristobulus I, High Priest. Aristobulus Instead controverted his father's will and made himself King and High Priest.

When Aristobulus I died within a year (104/103 b.c.e., of undescribed illness), his widow, (Salome-) Alexandra I,⁵⁶ married Alexander I Jannaeus, another Hyrcanus I son whom Aristobulus I had kept locked up. Jannaeus also served as both King and High Priest and further extended kingdom borders; but his reign was fraught by strife between the Pharisaic and Sadducee political parties.⁵⁷ A related civil war was complicated by territorial overruns of ongoing battles between Egypt and Syria, as well as Janneus' battling with Arabian Nabataea.

Janneus ultimately supervened; but he was hated to the extreme by the people, having inflicted enormous retribution on his internal foes. After he died in 78 b.c.e., Queen Alexandra I followed Janneus' dying instructions, endorsed the Pharisaic party as the best way to keep the nation united, and made their son John Hyrcanus II High Priest.

Queen Alexandra I obviously was a formidable person, sagacious and diplomatically savvy. She adroitly held the kingdom for a nine-year "golden age" of social reforms and effective military development, which she used wisely. Weakened with age, her designation of Hyrcanus II as legal heir to the kingdom was opposed by his brother, Aristobulus II, a Sadducee. In 67 b.c.e. civil war erupted. Aristobulus II, reportedly far superior to a vacillating Hyrcanus II, amassed a large following that secured him 22 fortresses even before his mother's death.

⁵⁵ The later, now common version of *Asamonean*.

⁵⁶ Daughter of one Absalom.

⁵⁷ Essentially divided over how much of Macedonian/Greek—*Hellenistic*—practices and beliefs should be accepted.

The battle for the crown was met at Jericho, where most of Hyrcanus II's men defected to Aristobulus II. As fate would have it, the kingdom's disunion coincided with Roman general Pompey's conquest of Syria, leaving Pompey and his legion standing at its very borders. Pompey seized the advantage, marched in, ordered Hyrcanus off the throne, and supported Aristobulus.

Hyrcanus petitioned Pompey for reinstatement. While the brothers argued their respective cases, lead citizens plead that the nation be returned from a monarchic to Temple/Chief Priest governance. Pompey, after temporarily shelving the issue, answered none of the prayers and assumed military rule. By 64/63 b.c.e., he had annexed and also made tributary cities of "Coele-Syria," placing that province and Judea province under a General Scaurus with two supporting legions.⁵⁸ After 76 years of independence, the Hasmoneans' break had destroyed their nation's freedom.

Waiting in the wings, meanwhile, was one Antipater II, who back in 87 b.c.e. Jannaeus and Alexandra I had made General and Regional Governor of the province of Idumea in the south/southeast. Antipater II had cultivated strong alliances, not least being that his wife, Cypros II, was from an eminent Arabian family. Two of their children were Herod—later, "the Great"—and Salome I. Pompey permitted the malleable Hyrcanus II to serve as High Priest but made Antipater II "political advisor" to Hyrcanus.

Some 92 more years would pass before Salome II's presence at Machaerus, but the stage was set for Hasmonean dynasty's replacement by the Herodian. Over that time, the Hasmoneans would become all but completely lost in a maze of Herodian subterfuge and contending Roman emperors. The process would reveal how very little royal females (even ultimately Cleopatra⁵⁹) were able to dictate as to their fates

⁵⁸ *Coele-Syria* = southern Syria and northern Palestine, previously subdued by the Hasmonean kingdom; *Judea*, Latinized version of Judah. (It is to be noted that governing generals, besides collecting "tributes," exacted personal prosperity.)

⁵⁹ "the Great," VII to bear that name, being of Macedonian/Grecian, not Egyptian descent.

Julius Caesar defeated Pompey to become Roman emperor in 48 b.c.e. Pompey fled into Egypt, was followed and killed, but not before his supporters killed Aristobulus II; and, on Pompey's orders, General Scipio had Alexander II, Aristobulus II's son, beheaded.

Julius allowed Hyrcanus II to remain as High Priest but made Antipater II Administrator of Judea. In turn Antipater made his son Phasaleus Governor of Jerusalem and parts about it, and sent son Herod to the Galilee with equal authority. Julius proceeded to invade Egypt and ally with Queen Cleopatra.

Aristobulus II's other son Antigonus II and his Hebrew supporters allied with Parthia. Regional battling continued on all fronts--Roman factions against each other under various generals, Herod siding with Rome's Mark Antony, and all of them versus the Parthians (who for a while 'Syria' subdued). Antigonus II with his supporters and Parthians managed to invade Judea, seize Jerusalem, and depose Hyrcanus II.

Herod the Great, however, would not be denied in his personal quest. Hyrcanus II initially sided with him; and (in the words of first century c.e. historian, *Josephus*) Herod "contracted an affinity with the family of Hyrcanus II" and "espoused" Miriamne/Miriam, the Hasmonean princess, daughter of Alexandra II and Alexander II. At one point, on a temporary run from Parthian forces, Herod had with him "the armed men whom he had...his wives...his mother [Cypros I] and sister [Salome I], and her [Miriam I] whom he was about to marry⁶⁰...with her mother...and the rest of the multitude that was with him; and without the enemy's privy pursued his way to Idumea...while the women drew along their infant children."

In 44 b.c.e. Julius was assassinated, leaving Mark Antony ostensible head of government. The following year, Antipater II died (poisoned at a family feast!), and Herod succeeded his father in Judea. In 41 b.c.e. Herod went to Antony at Rome, gifted and brought him fully to his cause--a Senate convocation declared Antigonus II an enemy and passed Antony's proposal that Herod be declared King,

⁶⁰ It was not unusual for a new potentate to cement his position by acquiring 'legitimacy' with a wife from the previous monarchy (or, conversely, to dispose of wives alien to one's scheme).

provided he ousted Antigonus.⁶¹ Herod also had favor of Octavian, Rome's second in power, because Antipater II had helped Julius Caesar conquer Egypt for Rome. (The following year, Cleopatra gave birth to twins by Mark Antony.)

By the time Herod returned from Rome he had assembled a vast force--his own supporters, foreign mercenaries, and a large number of the Galilee who hoped "of getting somewhat from him afterward." Herod sojourned briefly in Samaria, where he had transferred his household, and there he consummated his marriage with Miriamne/Miriam I.⁶²

Battling resumed after the wedding.⁶³ By 38 b.c.e. Herod had conquered the force of Parthian general Pappus, and Antigonus II's outlying forces were decimated. Antony sent a large company to join Herod's 30,000 at Jerusalem's walls. The end for Antigonus II was in sight.

The citadel's defending Hebrews fought a five-month siege tirelessly despite the war engines against it.⁶⁴ Antigonus II, who had held on some three years, finally descended, surrendered, and was taken captive as mayhem and slaughter, at the hands of Roman and mercenary forces, filled city streets. Herod--fearing that, were Antigonus taken captive to Rome he still might prevail--contrived (reportedly paid) to have Antigonus beheaded on Antony's order. "Thus" c. 37 b.c.e., as reported by *Josephus*, "did the government by Asamoneans cease [completely] 126 years after it was first set up...[and] came to Herod."

For some time Antony's actions had been seen to abrogate Senate authority; when Julius' former legions joined Octavian's, Roman civil war was on.⁶⁵ In 31 b.c.e. Octavian defeated Antony at the "Battle of Actium." Despite Herod's former alliance with Antony he smoothly won Octavian's

⁶¹ Contrary to the normal Roman custom, when involved, of bestowing kingship on a person of local royal family.

⁶² One may recall here the great Miriamne/Miriam who first bore the name--she who tried to counsel Moses and got in trouble for it.

⁶³ This brief recap no way reflects complex alliances and maneuvers during the periods summarized.

⁶⁴ It took 40 days to scale the first wall and 15 the second.

⁶⁵ The ultimate issue being whether the seat of the Roman Empire was brooking change to Alexandria, Egypt.

endorsement. Herod's power, as a client-king of Rome, now was absolute, a reign over territory equal to that of ancient King David. He would cause impressive public works projects, pander to Rome and be held in esteem by it. As his 35-year reign progressed so did his harem and progeny, spawning maternal competitions and sibling rivalries that outstrip convolutions within any monarchy before or since.⁶⁶

The year of the Great's death has been estimated, at the earliest c. 4 b.c.e. and latest 1 b.c.e. to 1 a.d./c.e. He had assigned Rome to administrate his (last altered) Last Will and Testament, which stipulated that kingdom lands, with their respective revenues/tributes, be divided among the following of his three sons, Archelaus being king-designee:

Malthace ("a Samaritan) + Herod the Great

Cleopatra "of Jerusalem"⁶⁷ + Herod the Great

/
Archelaus

/
Antipas

/
Philip

Salome I's contingent strongly backed Antipas in opposition to Archelaus, but he was confirmed and the following distribution made:⁶⁸

Octavian removed certain "Grecian" previously subject to the Great to Roman provinces of Syria.

Antipas, titled "Tetrarch," received the regions/provinces of Galilee and Perea.

Philip, titled "Tetrarch," received the regions/provinces of Trachonitis, Auranitis, Gaulonitis and Paneas.

Archelaus, titled "Ethnarch," received all regions/provinces not bestowed on the others, including Judea, Samaria and Idumea.

Circa 6 a.d./c.e. Archelaus was accused at Rome "by both his brethren and the principal men of Judea and Samaria" of immoderate rule. Caesar Octavian (/Augustus) summoned Archelaus to Rome,

⁶⁶ Herod the Great had 11 known wives (eight of them named); and, at best count, 16 children. For his increasing paranoia intensified by pre-death jockeying of family members (he had one son killed only five days before his own death), and various tortures and murders in reaction to actual or perceived castle conspiracies, *see History of the Daughters*.

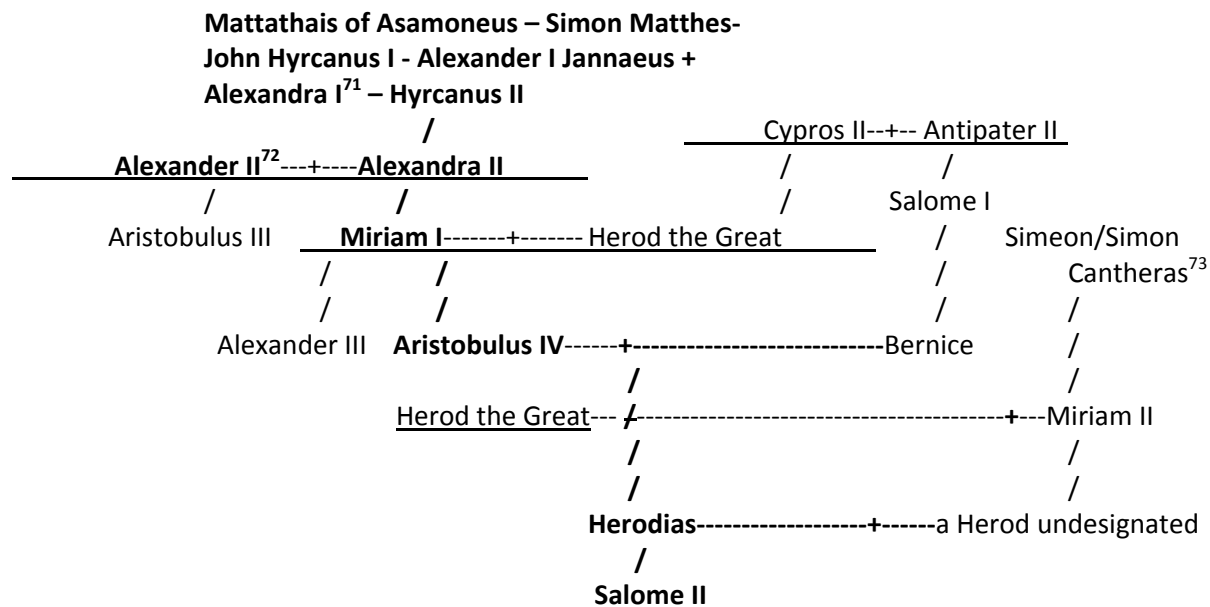
⁶⁷ Of whom there is no data.

⁶⁸ Despite a large embassy from home pleading that the monarchy be dissolved--fury having erupted in a factioned revolt over the Great's prior murders of rabbins and their supporters, and his arrest of "all the principal men" of the nation from every village. Meanwhile, Rome's interim procurator Sabinus used his legion to further oppress the people and search for the kingdom's money. Refer to *History of the Daughters* for Roman Varus' battling of rebels ("at one point crucified 2000") and other details of the "great and wild fury spread over the nation."

held a hearing, banished him, took his money, and laid his territory to the Roman province of Syria.⁶⁹

Octavian died in 14 c.e., succeeded by Tiberius. Meanwhile, Antipas and Philip continued in their tetrarchies.

The record doesn't give years of birth or ages of individuals. Based on best calculations, taking into account the tender age at ancient women were married and became mothers,⁷⁰ Salome II would have been born sometime within Tiberius' first year. She was of the following lineage:



Hebrews had tolerated Herod the Great's reign, in that his marriage to Miriam I and her two sons by him offered hope of eventual return to a Hasmonean monarchy. Little had they or the

⁶⁹ Which province, including Judea, thenceforth was administered by a progression of procurators, leading to the Pontius Pilate of the *New Testament*.

⁷⁰ E.g., Jesus' mother reportedly was 14 or 15.

⁷¹ Aristobulus I's widow.

⁷² Salome's great-great-grandfather—recalling as previously related his beheading on Pompey's order, being son of her great-great-great-grand uncle Aristobulus II killed on Pompey's order, who was father of her great-great-grand uncle Antigonus II beheaded at Herod the Great's request.

⁷³ Aka Boethus, whose marriage to Miriam II (after Miriam I's execution) coincided with Cantheras' appt. as High Priest by Herod.

Hasmonean descendants themselves anticipated the horrors, by which the Great would obliterate that hope.⁷⁴ One only can wonder whether or how much Salome II may have known, that:

Before the Great gained Octavian's confirmation as King, he had her great-great-grandfather Hyrcanus II put to death. (The Great had intercepted a letter from Arabia's Governor Malthus granting Hyrcanus II's request for family refuge, and feared Caesar Octavian would find Hyrcanus the more logical kingdom successor.)

Circa 40 b.c.e., the Great had his henchmen drown her 18-year-old grand uncle Aristobulus III. (Aristobulus III had proved too popular, after the Great allowed him briefly to be High Priest to pacify Alexandra II, who rightfully insisted her son was the legitimate candidate.)

Circa 29/28 b.c.e., the Great tried her great-grandmother Miriam I on trumped-up charges and put her to death (after which he married the daughter of Cantheras, whom he made High Priest).

Circa 27 b.c.e., the Great had her great-great-grandmother Alexandra II slain (upon learning she was garnering support to take over Jerusalem fortifications, and give them over to her grandsons.)

Circa 11/10 b.c.e., the Great had Miriam I's (and his own!) sons, Salome II's grandfather and grand uncle, Aristobulus IV and Alexander III, strangled to death. (Publically very popular, their enmity against their father was sealed by their mother's fate.)

Salome II would have been about 15 years old that fateful 31 c.e. evening at Machaerus, "on the borders of the dominions of [Arabian king] Aretas and Antipas," east of the Dead Sea near its northern shore. The presiding Herod was not, as often is mistaken, the Great, but (Herod-) Antipas who, like his father before him, was in sound graces of Rome.

After "John, the son of Zechariah, had come into all country around the Jordan, preaching" the people had gone "in crowds about him." Because "the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion,"⁷⁵ Antipas' had John arrested and "sent as a prisoner to Machaerus."

⁷⁴For greatest detail (the beyond-imagining extent of misery and grief endured by Miriam II and her mother, Alexandra II—including Alexandra II's desperate efforts to save her progeny through her friendship with Cleopatra VII), see *History of the Daughters*, available at this domain.

⁷⁵Antipas, after entering his tetrarchy already had experience with a revolt, led by "a certain Galilean, Judas."

The common report, however, omits the fact that originally Salome II had been “married[/betrothed] to Philip, the son of Herod [and Cleopatra of Jerusalem], Tetrarch of Trachontis [etc.].”⁷⁶

Antipas at some point had “ventured to talk to” Salome’s mother Herodias “about a marriage between them;”⁷⁷ and it was agreed that “she should change her habitation.” “One article of this marriage...was that he [Antipas] should divorce [his then wife--Arabian king] Aretas’ [unnamed] daughter,” who learned of the conspiracy and fled to her father. An ensuing battle between Aretas and Antipas generals was won by Aretas’ force, which, ‘coincidentally’, was joined by men of Philip’s tetrarchy.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, John publically had castigated Antipas’ and Herodias’ actions.⁷⁹ It is to be remembered, that Jesus, John’s cousin, was now amassing and adding to the following that had been John’s.

So we are left with the common anecdote perpetuated for John’s murder--a teen-aged Salome II, in return for ‘anything her heart desired’ from Antipas to dance for him, coldly asked for John’s severed head on a silver plate!—*versus*, his extermination by Antipas, with Herodias’ encouragement; and, as far more reasonably can be imagined, the mother’s influence on the daughter....

Synchronicity... It touched me today at the local library book sale--boxes and boxes of books the shelves no longer can hold, sold for a pittance. I had two bags full--one for my grandson held an 1800’s copy of *Bob, Son of Battle*; mine, a 1919 *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*.

⁷⁶Josephus, AJ, XVIII.V.4 (refer to *History of the Daughters*, page 837).

⁷⁷Whereabouts at the time of Salome II’s father (Antipas’ half brother; son of Miriam II and the Great) not given.

⁷⁸A full-scale war against Aretas ordered by Tiberius was aborted both by his death and his general Vitellius’ information that to try to enter Petra was suicidal.

⁷⁹“...was saying for the John to the Herod that not it is lawful for you to be having the woman of the brother of you. ...Herodias...was willing him to kill....” *Mark* 6:18. “Herod [Antipas] the district ruler being reproved by him about Herodias the woman of the [half-] brother of him....” *Luke* 3:19. (Here one may wish to explore the original import of ‘adultery’--*adulteration of bloodline*.)

I had all the books I needed and thought I was ready to leave; there still was that nursing home visit to make. Instead I insistently kept plowing through some last boxes in the foyer, and, there—*there!* I could not believe it: *Daughter of Time!* Probably 60 years since I first read it, the tale had stayed with me, would come to mind often--a recollection carrying something stronger than just liking a book....

The synchronism? Well, I was in the process of completing this essay, through all of details proceeding Salome II's bad rap; and now, here, I had in hand Josephine Tey's in-depth vindication of Richard III, of the reputed murder of his two young nephews.

Tey's Inspector Grant "had dealt too long," with acceptance as truth "someone's report of someone's report of what that someone remembered to have seen or been told." Too often, he mused, historians saw "history like a peepshow with two -dimensional figures against a distant background." The name of Richard II, unjustly saddled with elimination of two nephews, also had become "a synonym for evil."⁸⁰

John was gone. Still out there, however, was his beloved cousin--he who by all-determinant mother blood alone was known, by the people of "The Law," as legitimate heir of both High Priesthood and Throne. Out there, yes--but not for long, should Herod Antipas be successful in putting Pontius Pilate on the spot. Nor would Salome II know a future of marriage to Philip; he himself would be dead within months of Jesus' crucifixion....

*Poor sorry fuckers, I feel like I'm carrying all of them...
Arius--was he poisoned? Socrates--he drank it on his own,
and Jesus!--
was it really a stave, like that drawing in the cave?*

* * *

⁸⁰ Pages 81, 151, 204. ("Josephine Tey" was one of two pseudonyms used by Elizabeth MacIntosh; the other was Gordon Daviot.)

ORCHESTRATING THOUGHTS

There's something I once called a 'Beethoven moment': a suspended state in which is born a new and captivating thought. One's being is captured so totally by it, the experience can't be spoken or written at the time, nor can it be described clearly afterward.

I called such moments 'Beethoven' because of a story I thought I'd heard about the composer of that name. According to the story, a precious child asked his composer father how he came to conceive such wonderful melodies. The father replied that an unlimited quantity danced 'round him every morning as soon as he arose from bed. My own child imagination, when I heard the story, drew a picture of a happy artist surrounded by near-magical good fortune, and the time to embrace it.

In contrast, I termed a 'Mozart moment' a thought that came at the end of a string of associations--a 'conclusion' instead of an 'origination'. Mozart moments potentially could be spoken of or written after the fact. Some years passed, during which 'I', would-be-writer, awakened daily to assaults of potentially artistic Mozart thoughts; but circumstances prevented their written composition. I would strive, instead, to summon Beethoven moments, as I dipped diapers in and out of toilet water before balancing them on the pail's lid, to tote all out to the back porch's mortar tub.

I would think of Beethoven later too, as I turned my secretarial chair to yet a new stack of papers of countless words, none mine, that I would process through the typewriter that day. Sometimes, tossing the carriage for the two hundred and fiftieth time of a morning, rolling in the twenty-fifth sheet of paper, my fingers would begin to type Mozart thoughts instead. However, foregoing lunch, I'd wind up with just another puzzle piece to take home and put in one folder or another....

As I got older and found time for my arrested calling, I did suspect there had been more to Beethoven's job than whisking around a butterfly net a couple of hours each morning. Then, with great chagrin, I learned how much personal and family tragedy Beethoven had had in his life! He could not have *been* the man of the story. What, then, to call the moments tagged with his name?

Artists often have been known to die prematurely from injurious methods used, to take their demiurge into the sublime creative realm. On a few occasions I, myself, under the influence of a brain-altering substance had had glimpses of an all-encompassing symphony of knowledge and words. But I was not given to addiction, and a few notes a symphony do not make.

Finally, during my forties--years from where the religion of my childhood had left off--I found myself at the base camp of Raja Yoga. There I began to learn how to eschew self's stubborn grieving (that it hadn't had educational opportunities; that, before I could write, I had to give best attention and labor to the draining details of living). Gradually with practice, not only could 'Rajic moments', once labeled 'Beethoven', willfully be attained. So, too, could concentration be made one-pointed and able to lasso a 'Mozart' thought as well. Above all, I strove to make Time *my* servant.

Rajic thoughts could not exist, obviously, without the workings of Nature through Body. Yet conscious discipline *can* subject Body to Mind, and conscious mental repetition *can* reconfigure paths along Brain's motherboard.⁸¹ The ultimate state of unadulterated awareness is greater than love alone, for in complete forgetfulness of Self in form, time, and place, one becomes an integral part of, and works within the whole.

True yogic masters warn of the futility of shortcuts, that each *sadhaka*, pupil, must learn for her or himself through clean practice and experience. As I continued to fight the psychic war of identity and purpose, roles and personas, others of true yogic masters' admonitions gained in meaning. Initially I had glossed over one teaching, that the quest for 'liberation', pursued long enough changes from a 'positive'

⁸¹ Cf. "Heart of Consciousness" above, page 3 ("psychological evolution").

to a 'negative' approach. After some eight years, I recognized a 'negative' attitude *was* developing in me...*all that meditation!* while all I had, still, were constantly burgeoning files of notes. Self began to insist, *I don't want to sit in bliss! I want to see something finished!*

I began coming back from 'Rajic' moments with one thought. *No matter what there might be 'over there,' it's just a pleasant little dream unless it fuels action in the here-and-now.* "The pages are endless," one sage remarked, but "forget about copying, unless you get a *fee* for it!"

Getting a fee meant getting something published, which meant seeing it *done*, all by my Self. To compose for composition's sake no longer was necessary--that had been the first part, of a journey which now I intuited was to be laboriously far longer than I before could bear believing. The sentences already existed; all pages potentially manifestative in reality, already composed.

It was the duality in my own Psyche that had been impeding the task. One might vacation from the conflict in meditation, but one had to return for the next assault; *Spirit* cannot be loosened from the "tight grip of the Ego" until either Self can seize itself objectively to its labors or Body dies. That 'The I' may never get a fee for it, can have nothing to do with *Me*. As a final teaching admonishes, one is to give Self to Its work absent any consideration of "the fruits of one's actions."

I was far enough along to distinguish *and use*, the two dominantly competitive psychical entities 'heard' by Consciousness—the public workaday one and the publically mute writer. But it wasn't until a presentation to a writer's group that I discovered each had its own unique emotional life.

Preparing for the presentation, I asked myself, what of true value in a presentation *could* one writer offer another? I did know one thing I definitely wanted to say. Regardless age, a Writer's current state of development has nothing to do with potential's ultimate achievements. On the physical side, obviously one needed command of language and skill to compose it. One can write a good piece, have it published, and be identified as a "writer;" but that public persona is the least that a person *born* to write

craves to be, that is, like Hemingway a weaver of words which without describing evoke understandings, between-the-lines soul imprints that marry with the reader's.

I also could relate, how I saw my writing experience as passage through specific stages, to which could be given trades-person labels: "the novice"--exploring the Self; "the apprentice"—journaling, hatching big ideas, creating great beginnings (which I didn't begin until my forties); then "the journeyman" stage, when daydreaming funneled into 100 percent effort. The way I came to see it, a developing writer didn't move through a "writing process;" *it*—the process—moved through the individual. *WE* become 'processed', in a tension between unconscious determination and agonizingly conscious capitulation, from which the only *escape* is to write.

"The Writer" is but one, a nameless, identity, eternal subject to the same slave-driving force--whether a mystical Muse or a psychical constellation--the deeply feeling, expansively thinking driver of literary art. Processing begins the first moment that that anonymous dictator awakes in one; diverging from it exist as many writers' paths as there are persons born to write. The processor's workings through a myriad of individual material and emotional lives yields the endlessly rich banquet of words, which nourishes Humankind with joy, relief, solace, hope, and humor—in short, beauty. Perhaps I could demonstrate that matrix of processing and path to the group, using some of my own material.

I chose three journal entries left over from those that fed my first, an autobiographical book. I hadn't read them for some years; each had been composed during that neuroticized state barely described as "low point," with which writers often deal. The laments, I believed, were perfect examples of how processing and path associate from their separate mental arenas—the striving writer versus life specifics of the person putting words to paper. I utterly failed to note, giving the items cursory review, that the words didn't draw me into the misery of their moments as in the past they never failed to do.

The night of the presentation was a processing epiphany of my own. As I began reading the excerpts, they elicited hearty laughter! At first I was flabbergasted. Then, as I continued reading, "The

I" found *itself* irrevocably severed from the words' experiential emotions, the Self receiving them as if for the first time. Now my journals were available objectively, words that could issue in minds or through mouths of oh-so-real-sounding, but fictional personalities.

"'Autobiographical fiction' is the highest form of art," the New York Times Literary Review once remarked. Writers referencing their own battles between Self and Ego can appreciate the following excerpt from an essay by David Huddle:

"'How much of that story is true?' is what I'm likely to be asked.... My own response to it recently has been '84 percent,' '79 percent,' or something like that.... What's peculiar is that the interrogation stops there; the percentage answer almost always satisfies both the questioner and the rest of the audience. I never get the seemingly inevitable follow-up, 'Which parts are true and which aren't?'"

*Path and processing...*how uniquely they combine to yield the Author, the one that the Unconscious always knew and unflaggingly determined its doubting servant would be....

*Why is writing like going fishing? I guess because it keeps one wishing,
absorbed in that wonderfully painful fun of sitting in a patch of sun
with a cup of coffee or a glass of red
waiting for the tug along the thread
to a shiny word or phrasing skein
and the glorious feeling of reeling it in....*

GREENSPAN-NING MEMORIES

"That's about where *my* mesmerization would have ended, too," JC responded when I said I only could watch 12 minutes of Greenspan's last summary before escaping into t.v. surf. 146 *Period of 'recovery'*

"Do I have that word right?" I trailed back to ask JC, thought rebounding from an intervening telephone call related to (some would think callous my calling it) 'Care Giving Ancients'. It wasn't that I believed High Finance vocabulary insurmountable; but, as I remarked, "It's a lexicon unto itself! And," I continued, "being child of an earlier 'recovery'--as I understand the word—economic national news is making me very nervous."

"You mean?" JC teased, "like 'recovery' might be understood, by one who grew up in an inner city, all of whose toys could fit inside a shoe box?"

Guess I'll never live down that little old lament, I thought, but I let it go; said nicely, instead, "First off, I wouldn't call the 1940's San Francisco quarter from Bay to Green and Steiner to Van Ness streets *inner city* exactly. True, tenth grade at Galileo High *was* a bit like 'Blackboard Jungle'; and at Marina Junior High, before 'turf' competitions calmed down we even had a stabbing in a hallway, when total interracial integration happened in one fell swoop with closure of Mission High."

All of that was secondary, however, to what the word 'recovery' *had* put me in mind. It took six full years before post-World War II 'recovery' finally redounded on my butcher father, and our family got its first own home. *Are we not seeing the forest, for the trees?* I wondered. *Irrespective locales and weaponry methods, isn't the 'warring' underway a world war-- of 'parties' if not territorial nations?*

No, it wasn't personal socio-economic s that the word provoked in me. It was a vague but wide awareness, pressing upward against memory....

Let's see.... Born in 1935, what I was able to dredge from Memory--'nationally', 'politically' and 'globally'--dated only back to World War II itself. I recalled practical matters like food stamps for primary staples (a yellow tablet for coloring margarine, so it looked like butter), the corner Texaco gasoline station closing, and a victory garden at the elementary school. Mostly for me between six and eight years old, however, it was relatives worrying for loved ones in the military, listening sadly to radio reports; myself in bed (as noted elsewhere), in the blackout-curtained bedroom in the blacked-out city, speculating whether the airplane overhead was the enemy; and my innocent belief, when the Saturday afternoon matinee News Reel reported 'victory,' that World War II had been *the* war that ended *all* wars. Certainly I thought then, *unequivocally!*--not knowing that word but with belief of a child equal to it--Humankind never need endure such horrible things again....

It would be natural that experience of 'poverty' in childhood could result in obsessive adult, financial caution. Imposing events may not be recalled; but, cognated or not, feelings lodge to later resurge and influence our actions. Perhaps one day we'll acquire proof, how incarnated psyche from its beginning absorbs subtleties which, despite non-recall to Consciousness, are imprinted before language develops to describe it even to Mind. Now I only could ask questions of myself that it could not answer....

Were there any correlations *today*, with what happened between 1938 and 1941? What *are* the distribution circumstances extant, of the world's currencies? *Are* 'sub'-population groups being pushed from one territory to another? To what degree *have* monetary powers debilitated common stabilities through channels of unprincipled greed?....

Except....

Except!—that was all *this* commoner, like the legion of her, could offer to The Past or The Future. It was time to move: decide again what's for dinner, go shop for it; first maybe take a look at my face and comb my hair, then decide which bills to pay and write them, before we leave to pick up JC's prescription at the pharmacy this afternoon....

Stop at the economical Fruit Basket on the way home... Ground round in the freezer? (although JC and Bruno the Cat would prefer steak!).... What with the ground round—salad?... Oh, forgot--there's some leftover pasta in the freezer....

Yes, unremitting hands-on daily life's demands explains in a nutshell why we common folk are forced subjects of persons in ivory towers, especially when in the eighth decade one also must be carried around by one's own increasingly beleaguered skeleton. Those for whom it takes everything just to keep hearth, home *and* body together haven't time or energy for Higher Economics, to say nothing of capital. But should I resent those who not only understand the lingo well, they've enough money to buy more of Time as well as goods?—

Synchronistically (if not completely serendipitously), my horoscope today seemed on-point:
"After all, even if it is better to have than to want, you can be happy exactly as things are."

WE know those out there, who need to corral their speech. WE know The Principles, which we long to see them reach. But like Dickens asked, "Supposing" they all did? And World heard The Voice-of-The-People? (like 'God's', still hid!) Then, supposing they can't--can't perceive the true emergency. Or might it be, they choose to see a visibly established plutocracy? With the common economy being smothered by usury, WE see repeat looming, of that little piece of old history....

But let us dream on, as has sustained our every season. Dream of a new epoch-- Humankind ruled by REASON! And let's suppose such Consciousness did collectively descend--an old era's end but an epoch's, tambien! Could the globe pull back from that sucking 'dark hole', and let more of The People for once escape whole? Would enlightenment of prior epochs re-emerge--the foremother of humankind, Wisdom, resurge?

Well, Two Thousand Nine's over; good riddance, I say!--'twixt jokers and crooks who took exorbitant pay. Things may get better, but then, maybe not. Still WE hold the Ace that gives Life its best shot. Of all we might have there's one sure thing we've got:

*money never bought knowing one is loved a lot. More years may beckon; we're captives
in Time. But it's my good fortune, to have you part of mine....*

* * *

WHAT'S IN A WORD

I met a “fascist” a couple of months ago and ran into the guy a second time the other day, a little way up the street at the café across from the Plaza’s west side. You know, the one with that delightful back garden—

Except it’s been changed to attract non-resident Plaza strollers, and really crowded at tourist times. Now there’s an outdoor bar, and the little private corner where I used to smoke a cigarette over coffee is occupied by a family-sized booth--

Yes, well...as I was about to say, I first met the man at the mall at the Sonoma Market, as I was coming back from the shoemaker—

Thank goodness for shoemakers, I say, we having dealt with that right foot’s wounded little toe since Thanksgiving. I hope you learned no one at our age with arthritic feet should be on them so much. I can’t believe you actually cut holes in our shoes, to keep going over the ‘holidays’!

Tch, tch--it was worth it; didn’t we have a really good family Christmas? Anyhow, to continue, both times the man struck up a conversation. His appearance, demeanor and speech all reflected a substantially self-contented individual with (as he took much time to relate!) all kinds of influential friends and resources. Now, all the goods and graces of which he and his wife were recipients he attributed to Divine Providence’s response to their religious faith—

Which faith you might have noted from the card he handed you, except you tossed it in the wastebasket.

But I can retrieve it...here--a lovely photo of the two of them. Happy smiling faces; she, pretty; he, handsome; and beneath, names, address, telephone, e-mail . Oh, on the back, quotes from John 3.16, Romans 10:9, 10 and John 3.3. So we know their faith is ‘Christian’ if not its sect.

I'm glad you had me retrieve this card; I want to compare the quotes here given in English with the literal *New Testament* wordings. You know hard it is to convey original meanings when translating. There's determining grammar and punctuation, but especially words that transmit true meanings, all complicated by varying forms and tenses of the Greek language. There are as many sentence reconstructions as there are biblical versions. Wait 'til I get my interlinear Greek to English bible....

Let's see.... *John 3.16* reports the secret night meeting between Jesus and Nicodemus, a Pharisee member of the Sanhedrin, the Temple governing body.... Okay--, here already is one example. Nicodemus is said to be "a ruler of the 'Jews', which more correctly would be a *Judaean ruler*.

And the difference is?

Take the term, 'Jews,' which has come to be used for Hebrews in general but wasn't, at the time. By that time the province of *Judaea* was occupied by Rome, under a procurator; but the provinces of Galilee and Perea remained under "Tetrarch" Antipas Herod, a son of the dead Herod the Great. Some four or five years after Jesus' death, Rome would banish Antipas and make Agrippa king overall, which is what Antipas had been hoping to become.

But to return to the story involved in the quotation, Jesus just had given his descriptions of *Spirit* and of salvation; and Nicodemus was having trouble comprehending the ideas. The card's quotation occurs in a long dissertation ascribed to Jesus:

Per the card: "For God so loved the World that He gave His *only begotten* Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Per unreconstituted text: *Thus, for loved the God the world [Gr. Kosmos] as-and [so, that] the son, the only begotten, he gave in order that everyone the believing into him not might be destroyed but may have life everlasting.* Tomes of exposition have been written alone on translation of the Greek *monogenes* as "only begotten."

Interesting there, the definition of *monogenes* in the Greek dictionary⁸² is, “born from one and the same mother”! (I’m sure I’ve mentioned before that, under Temple law, kingly and chief priesthood legitimacy required ‘legal’ motherblood above all, and how Jesus’ mother possessed not just the chief priesthood blood of Aaron but the royal Davidic blood as well. In other words, Jesus didn’t *need* any father blood to substantiate his rights of succession.)

Moving on, the quote at *Romans 10:9, 10* is ascribed to Paul after Jesus’ death. It’s preceded by Paul saying he is a Greek *doulos* of Jesus. *Doulos* had been rendered “slave;” but another possible Greek definition of Greek *doulos* is *subject*. The quote in question, per the card: Per the card: “Thus if you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and will believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Interlinearly unreconstituted it reads [showing alternative Greek definitions]: (10:9) *That if ever you should [acknowledge] confess the saying in the mouth of you that Lord [and master] Jesus and you should believe in the heart of you that the God him [assembled] raised up [out] of dead you will be saved; (10:10) to heart for it is being believed into righteousness, to mouth but it is being confessed into [deliverance] salvation.* There the use of the same meaning—*saved* and *salvation*—doesn’t make sense, given an intended contrast.

Straightforwardly, then, we could have, “If by mouth you acknowledge Jesus as lord and master, and in your heart believe that God assembled him out of dead [matter?], you will be saved in that it is righteously believed by heart; but to acknowledge it by mouth is to be delivered.”

Remember that none of the record was made at the time that words were spoken. Words like *assembled* rather than “raised up” and *out* rather than “from dead” make one wonder how much of

⁸²*Classic Greek Dictionary*; for this entire text, pages researched and possibly referenced include 74, 114, 128, 140, 142, 212, 301, 400, 451; Index 4, 30, 45. Interested readers are referred to the Greek words as they biblically appear in verses here discussed.

what Jesus may have attempted to convey—in *his time*—‘scientifically’ and philosophically has been lost. For example, here’s what he said later to Nicodemus, unreconstituted: *If the earthly I said to you and not you are believing, how if ever I should say to you the heavenly you will believe?* Restated?: “If you can’t believe the earthly things I’ve told you about, how, ever, if I should tell you, will you believe the cosmological?” If I’m not mistaken, “heaven” didn’t come into use until around the year 1000—

And *hey!* Here’s another ‘scientific’ touch, in the last quote, *John. 3.3*--from earlier in the meeting with Nicodemus. Nicodemus began by saying, unreconstituted, *Rabbi, we have known that from God you have come teacher; no one for is able these the signs to be doing which you are doing, if ever not may be the God with him.* But, per the card: “Verily, Verily, I say unto you. Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God”--the *signs* portion omitted.

Talk about lost words! It wasn’t in either of two later of my Webster dictionaries, but the heavy 9” x 11” x 2-3/4” 1952 edition had it: “**semiography** [Gr. *semeion*, a sign, and *grapho*, to write]. The doctrine of signs; *pathol.* a description of the marks or symptoms of diseases. --**semeiology** [Gr. *semeion* and *logos*, discourse]. The doctrine of signs.”

Jesus’ curing of the “blind” man comes to mind, which recalls in turn the account in the *Book of Tobit*, of the ‘messenger’⁸³ Rafael instructing Tobit how to cure Tobit’s father’s obstructed vision.

Jesus’ response to the full Nicodemus quote offers more considerations. Unreconstituted [showing alternative definitions]: *Answered Jesus and said to him amen, amen I am saying to you if ever not anyone should be [born] generated from above, not he is able to see* [“see” has many possibilities, e.g. “perceive”] *the [dominion] kingdom of God—*

My, my...you do carry matters to the extreme--

Admitted; but you can see my obsession *to see* the person called Jesus recognized for what he was--*first and foremost* a man --of *his* time and of *his* history, who refused to pay lip service to outdated

⁸³ This word in the Greek usually being translated “angel!”

or hypocritical (or mistranslated spins!), as he invoked God to substantiate *Reason*. Jesus' *living* character and actions warrant the highest *human* regard, so deplorably negated once and for all at Constantine I's 325 b.c. council, which saw excommunication of Arius—

Arius?

A Christian presbyter in the bishopric of Alexander at Alexandria, Egypt. You can read all about him on *Wikipedia*, from which comes my information here. Arius and his followers⁸⁴ were proponents that God's son incarnate in Jesus was not consubstantial or coeternal with the Father, as opposed to "Trinitarian *homoousion*"-- belief "that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are of the same substance and co-equally God."

Prominent church fathers had been debating the issue for a couple of generations. It didn't begin with Arius; but fueled by his writings, matters reached the point where Emperor Constantine the First saw it necessary to formally define Christianity's beliefs and doctrine, to solidify Church power important in control of his dominions. Thus, in 325 b.c., he called at Nicaea, and personally presided over the First Ecumenical Council of bishops, its decisions since unchanged.

On the central issue, whether Jesus literally was the son of God or a 'son' figuratively, like other 'sons of God' in scripture, all but two of an estimated 250–318 in attendance voted against Arius and excommunicated him, his writings ordered burned by Constantine. Initially exiled and a refugee in Palestine, Arius was allowed to return; and, provided he abandoned his stance, he would be readmitted to the church. One day before the scheduled event, however, he suddenly died. Obviously, on securing Jesus to his rightful manhood so to speak, I stand with the true Arius--

And you don't believe that the Magdalene saw a God-resurrected Jesus?

Look at it. Did Jesus not *stress* a fundamental godly *essence* recognizable in and between individuals? I believe a lot of quotation marks are missing from the texts--times when Jesus (who it can't

⁸⁴ "Arians/Arianism" not to be confused with Naziistic "Aryanism."

be denied considered himself a child of God like everyone else) spoke what he *believed* God would say, or was on the record as having been said by God. In response to how one so ‘unschooled’ could possess such knowledge, he said (unreconstituted): “My teaching not is mine but of the [no pronoun here, “one” is added] having sent me. ... If ever anyone may be willing the will of him to be doing will know about the teaching whether out of the God it is or I from myself am speaking. The [one] from himself speaking the glory the own is seeking; the [one] but seeking the glory of the [one] having sent him this [one] true is and unrighteousness in him not is.” (*John 7:16ff.*)

Even more telling is his response when, upon being stoned at the temple and accused of “...blasphemy...because you, being man, are making yourself god,” he answered (unreconstituted): “Not is it having been written in the law of you, that ‘*I said gods you are?*’” (*John 34*; italics supplied) If one *correctly* believes, would one not perceive “God” by *qualities* that constitute that *living* spirit?

Yet let’s face it, how many human beings are capable of being ‘christian’ in all Jesus’ expressed tenets?

Ah, the man after whom they are named *understood* what it is, to be human! *Forgiveness*—remember?

So you don’t believe Jesus could perform godly miracles.

All I can point to is when he started two baskets of a little fish and bread, along a crowd of four or five thousand that came out with full families, to hear him speak. Expecting a wait, wouldn’t they bring along their own picnic baskets? And can’t you see how food reasonably would have been *added*, by those who could, as the baskets circulated?

Well why don’t you just rewrite the whole thing the way you’d like it to be.

Touche! No; the best that can be done is ‘ratiocination’ (to use old Dupin’s term); and all that’s for another century. But imagine, viewing that most ancient of Humankind’s *literature*, to divide fact from myth as in the ancient Greek legends--Jesus as the last vestige of belief in gods creating earthly

beings through human women. Removing that element from his existence can't reduce by one iota his historical worldly influence and spiritual example. But all that's for another century....

Can we get back to the 'fascist' thing now?

Okay; first follow this: The Webster definition of *fascism* (after denoting followers [*Fascisti*] of Mussolini): "...a political philosophy, movement, or regime that exalts nation and race and stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition." Moving that language from territorial to ethereal, couldn't it be said?-- that a kingdom of God (1) is formed on the *Old Testament* god's exaltation of emanation from specific individuals; (2) is governed by a centralized, 'dictatorial' leader of unlimited authority; and (3) includes laws which orthodoxically require strict economic and social regimentation (tithing, provision for widows, etc.)--

I hope you'll pardon me, but I'm weary of the whole subject of reconciling religious beliefs—too many words and most of them debatable. Maybe certain Eastern sages have it right that thoughts-- those things that constitute human Consciousness—are like the overlapping and retreating action of waves; so History repeats itself because human beings repeat themselves, absent Wisdom of their Ages. Tell me!—can any more complete description of Psyche's endurance of aging-to-illness-to death be written, after Tolstoy's Death of Ivan Ilych? And, in this new Epoch of Quantum Reality, is any more concrete summary of human existence in Reality possible, than Ovid's capture of the teachings of Pythagoras?

Finally, the way I feel about jawing religion is what I once said, about the concept of "Hell": a refuse dump, an indigents' graveyard—you know, the original meaning of 'Hell'--"get thee to Sheol and Gehenna," "get thee to Hell!" Well, keep me out of graveyards and dumps if you will; keep me in gardens colored in frills....

* * *

THROUGH THE GLASS CEILING DARKLY

Initially, this tale might seem merely one of obstructed fair advancement faced by female workers of my era. What it summarized, however, is beyond time *and* gender--an example of how management by totalitarian personas sabotages government efficacy, irrespective cost to the commonweal...

Year One

I began tenure as a Department Secretary with the "Organization" (a pseudonym for a governmental agency). Three other women of the same classification worked in other major departments.

Year Two

I assumed presidency of the employee Association. As president, I would be chief wage and benefits negotiator.

A neat folder of proposals was presented to management for the upcoming meetings. The first and foremost was for an across-the-board wage increase for all worker classes, whose salaries had dragged behind the cost of living for several years. Naturally I expected that would be the primary issue, and had researched it in-depth.

However, as soon as we were seated at the first session, the chief officer (hereinafter referred to as CO) immediately flipped to the folder's *last* page--a proposed substitution of experience for a B.A. degree in the entry level Administrative Assistant specification, to enable promotions of knowledgeable, proved clerical workers.

"Does this mean all the way up to *my* position?" the CO asked.

I was taken aback!--the thought never had *occurred* to me!

The Association became more tight and self-respecting with each passing day. As management saw its strong unity, assemblies were a sight to behold: the orange and green shirts of maintenance workers, the bright white of foremen and clericals. The light had gone on--I actually saw it do so, in the eyes of our 'Sergeant-at-Arms'. *Go strictly by the book?—hey!* He could play the semantic game, too; and he brought to his study all the unbridled confidence one otherwise might expect possessed, by someone who had a shocking-pink-tanked, mirrored-chrome Harley parked in the middle of his living room. He quickly digested personnel rules, overtime regulations, and general overall 'policy' guidelines, finding quirky outs in the lingo even management's attorney hadn't bothered with.....

Yes, as can happen when a Polyanna ventures where even devils fear to tread, the coming alive of the Association that spring didn't make friends of me and the main men upstairs-- the CO and his second-in-chief (hereinafter referred to as SIC). I think they truly believed that our Sergeant-at-Arms, due to a somewhat menacing appearance, was capable of just about anything; and I was the one who had unleashed him. But in front of the crossbones insignia on the back of his leather jacket beat the

heart of a pussy cat; it only appeared to pump pure oil. The Association had no intention of striking, although to its 'opponents' way of thinking such must have looked possible.

I had gone over the preceding five years' budgets with a fine-toothed comb and found what could be taken as serious accounting discrepancies between funds--which, if released to the news, could have yielded a 'scandal.' I was certain, however, that there had been no ill intent on the part of the Finance division, during what had been a complicated, exponential increase in demands on that department. My accounting notes, however, disappeared from my desk, only to resurface several days later at an outlying location. If a report I received was accurate, they had been seen in management's possession.

The Association's solidarity finally forced matters to a hearing before the governing board, at which was won that long-delayed pay adjustment for all worker classes. An experience substitute for a college degree, however, was not included for any appropriately promotable class.

As time went on, my job duties increasingly absorbed tasks handled by Administrative Assistant positions that were paid \$300-\$400 more per month than a Department Secretary. So, during an organization-wide Salary Survey by a corporate agency, I petitioned for reclassification to Administrative Assistant. The petition was denied. I then initiated an appeal to the governing board for establishment of substitution of experience for formal degree in the Administrative Assistant job specification. The other three Department Secretaries, also consistently having absorbed excesses of job duties, joined the appeal, based on Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1971 Supreme Court decision in Griggs v. Duke Power Co. The governing board found in our favor, and it was ordered that the Department Secretary specification be so amended.

Years Three through Four

Opportunity arose for the major department for which I worked to apply for a grant. The application process, to which I was a major contributor, was complex; but it was completed and submitted in time, and the grant was awarded. The grant fully funded construction of a new, practical department facility at a location away from the main headquarters. It was a far more taxpayer-cost-efficient solution to the overcrowding of the primary building; however!--it obviated a management-favored bond proposal for a whole new central edifice, planned for the coming election's ballot.

Winter of year four, yet another personnel specification survey was commissioned; and, once again, I submitted a case for reclassification to Administrative Assistant--this time, under the experience substitute earlier successfully won. When the proposed new classification plan was released, every class except that of Administrative Assistant allowed for experience equivalent to a college degree! Moreover, the survey based those changes on the same Supreme Court case used in the earlier appeal!

At that point I thought that I just might lose sanity. I accosted the survey representative. I asked him point-blank: "*How was it? How could it be, that the survey included an experience substitute in all job specifications, even for such as Engineer!--but not for Administrative Assistant??*"

The language, he informed me (*impossible to believe!*) had been directed by management!

Year Five

The department in its brand new quarters, and with two able managers, had become most efficient of all, especially in the dramatic change to computerization. A department of 70-plus employees, dozens of divisions, and hundreds of programs, its coworkers had nailed the intricate numbering systems; morale was unbeatable.

Personally I remained sane enough. In March I filed a request for review of the last reclassification denial. By that time the SIC's competitive disfavor had extended to the entire department, whose head was a highly able, popularly respected, degreed man who well *could* rise to the organization's chief position, and whose effectiveness had become ever greater due to department relocation.

I was to become aware in the most shocking manner of the potential degree of retaliation.

SIC was in charge of production of next year's organization budget-- a monstrous computerized document, scheduled for imminent delivery to the governing board. The final master was receiving last inputs by a pool of word processors at the main building. It was Friday afternoon, a short time before five. The CO had left for the weekend, as had my department head. My department head particularly had informed me that he had informed both CO and SIC that he would be gone the entire afternoon.

Late in the afternoon SIC telephoned for my department head. My first thought was to ask, *why are you calling for him when he told you he wouldn't be here?* Instead I did what SIC instructed: "Just leave him a note to call me Monday about just a couple of number changes in your department budget." I wrote the note and put it on my department head's desk.

At day's end I went to the main building to deliver mail. On impulse I went to visit the pool frantically finishing the budget master. The one in charge took me aside: could I make sense of why SIC, before himself leaving for the weekend, had instructed that *every program number in my department's budget be changed one or two digits?*

Aghast, I hurried back to the department thinking then I *would* go crazy. What *conceivable purpose* could there be *for* the changes except the chaos it would cause in department operations! *And* the resultant time and labor costs to taxpayers?--staggering!

When told, the second-in-command in our department (who had spearheaded its successful mastering of computer numbering) nearly went apoplectic. He left immediately for the very home of the CO who, claiming no knowledge of the attempted sabotage, reversed the order. Our department head, on his return, likewise was appalled; but the matter was kept private among the three of us.

In November my current survey appeal was heard before the governing board. The appeal covered, in sections: I, applicable personnel rules; II-III, affirmative action codes and policies; and IV-X, my 'case'. It 'prayed' that the survey conclusion relative to the Department Secretary specification be determined invalid, and that I be reclassified to Administrative Assistant. (In the interim, there had been at least one Administrative Assistant position opening, from which, because of the standing exception, I was barred applying.)

I had consulted a lawyer once (\$100), but could not afford legal representation. Of the five-person board, four voted no; one, yes. What the board did do, for me and the other three women of my classification, was to retitle our job specification as *Administrative* secretary, with a small raise in pay. But the wording in the Administrative Assistant specification now read, "experience equivalent to a Bachelor's degree."

Year Six

February saw the end of my long marriage. Emotionally I was exhausted, but I was able to continue to meet on-the-job demands and made it successfully to the end of the year. In December, I used vacation time for a constitutional retreat and, by the time I returned to work, had decided to change the course of my life.

Year Seven

I announced my resignation as of the end of July. A couple of weeks prior I received from my director a last regular performance evaluation. Its “outstanding” marks were followed by, “Her skills go far beyond those required to do a good job. Her sensitiveness to the needs of people, when combined with a dedication to the job at hand, brings a dimension to work not often found in public service.”

August through December, I resided out of the country. Then, on my return to the same city, I learned that the position from which I had resigned had been divided into two—one classified merely “Secretary;” one, Administrative Assistant! I immediately contacted my former department head, for the personnel rules provided that a former employee, who left in good standing and returned within a year of resignation, had right of rehire—making me eligible, I reasoned, for the Administrative Assistant position. (I knew of at least one former employee who had been returned to his position under the rehire provision.)

My former department head said he would consult ‘upstairs.’ A week later, “despite the ludicrousness of the situation--” he reported back to me, “despite you’d been doing the same work that is expected of the new Administrative Assistant position--the official response is that you would need to submit to the open recruitment.” SIC being still in personnel power, my only prayer meant a legal battle, an expense beyond what I could handle. I let the matter go and sought other employment....⁸⁵

Years Eight to Twelve

First I did a stint with a County social agency (humorous, in that the responsible position with very low pay was titled “Administrative Assistant”); secondly, I worked for a former board member in his private profession, the salary being quite modest. Then, toward the end of year eleven, I was approached by a past coworker who asked if I would join in organizing a corporate branch office. I did, with another increase in wages. Sixteen months later, the former board member enticed me back with a more generous pay increase; but I still was no way near receiving my former organization’s Administrative Assistant pay, and importantly, benefits.

Year Fourteen

In August I received a telephone call from the organization’s prior personnel *assistant*, who had been promoted to personnel *officer*. Circumstances had changed drastically! The former CO had retired; SIC, who had expected to succeed, instead had been passed over by the then governing board. A new CO had been openly recruited, and he and the governing board were in need of a secretary. The new personnel officer’s call was to suggest that I might want to apply for the position, which was to be filled through open recruitment.

⁸⁵One of my former coworkers forwarded me a piece of simplistic correspondence, composed by the person hired in the AA position, with a tongue-in-cheek note: “Think you could have handled this?”

I was 51 years old. Gaining the position would mean I'd have health insurance again, and a salary that allowed for a bit more than just life's necessities. Irrespective my work history, however, I would need to take shorthand and typing tests! My knees shook—and I do mean, *shook* under the typing table, in the room where the testing took place. *Forget it*, I thought, *I'm sunk*. But a thing extraordinary happened when the bell went off. It was as if there were two of me—one, typing rapidly, the other, suspended beside me. Whoever or what it was typed 103 wpm with 2 errors. I wrote on the test results, *this is the last typing test I ever shall take*; and I was appointed to the position.

The political atmosphere in the organization's top office, I discovered, was acutely factioned. The platform of the new CO contrasted greatly with the prior regime, and he had brought in his own right hand man. Meanwhile SIC in his office was isolated between them, vital duties diminished. The other two female clerics had been and remained his staunch supporters; but I did have willing assistance of a clerical trainee, fortunately as adept as she was beautiful. Working nine to 10 hours a day, there were no failures and much success in operations.

Year Seventeen

In Spring a rumor began to circulate: the CO that had hired me was looking for a job elsewhere! 'The writing was on the wall': once he found a new position, SIC would rise to interim CO and—given the existing political makeup of the governing board—possibly receive permanent appointment.

Not long after the rumor began circulating the present CO summoned me apologetically to his office. He was completely happy with my performance, etc., but it was his duty, he explained, to explore a complaint conveyed to him by SIC, that I was doing personal business on the job! I responded truthfully. I did make an occasional necessary family telephone call, but those occasions were rare and I always debited such against my substantial overtime. That ended the matter for him; but I was incensed, for I always have had the highest regard for public service and my responsibilities as a public *servant*. Well, "incensed" doesn't describe it exactly; subconsciously, I was potentially *incendiary*.

I *felt* calm, deciding to go into SIC's office and ask who ostensibly had observed and communicated to him my purported abuse he then reported to the CO. When he responded that he could not reveal his source, I—overcome by recollection of the past vengeful, demolitional budget attempt—I lost my temper in a fashion I never believed possible in public. In a loud voice (the CO in his room next door slammed shut his door), I vented all my indignation.... *What iniquity!—putting me on the carpet for a purported iota of what he would have seen wrought against an entire department, to say nothing of taxpayers!...*

When I exited his office I was a shaking, red-faced mess, the other staff like frozen statues, staring at me. Staring back for a few moments, I knew how I looked: all the world like a menopausal woman ready to go 'round the bend; then I fled and went for a walk, wondering whether I was going to have a heart attack....

Come August—*horrors of horrors*—my superior announced he was moving on. While the governing board deliberated filling the CO position, my nemesis indeed became my superior; and very quickly, with him as acting CO, things began to change. First, my loyal clerical aide was transferred to another department. Next, acting CO denied my request for a one month leave of absence, in a long letter that ended as follows: "During this time... I temporarily have deferred addressing and resolving several longstanding clerical assignment/working relationship problems in our office. Now... it is time to address and resolve these problems." I also was asked to provide a daily log of my work.

In anticipation of what might come, I had begun keeping logs in spring. At October's end I presented logs covering all weeks since April. I closed my transmitting memo with, "I appreciated the opportunity to consolidate this information. It has corroborated for me the fact that what an individual accomplishes in a day directly is related to the individual's knowledge and experience, which, in turn, is determined by accuracy and speed." (I could not resist adding, tongue-in-cheek, "I have a vast appreciation for the quantity and complexity of the subject matters which you must directly administer. As the attached logs testify, you maintain a remarkable and challenging pace." The minutes-by-minutes logs totaled 22 pages.

During ensuing staff 'reconfigurations,' I managed with diplomacy to train new hires in Administrative Assistant positions, as they were assigned tasks previously performed by me. In one respect, however, I could not submit. Acting CO, prior to leaving on a vacation, dictated an unearned negative memo to the personnel file of a long-term, dedicated organization worker who had borne long-standing differences with him. I was so distressed by the words that I could not keep myself from softening the language, when I typed the dictated memo. It was returned to me unsigned, without comment; but it had been re-edited by hand to precisely as it was dictated, with instructions that I retype it, sign it in his absence, and forward it on. (I confess: I re-re-edited it as I had it before, signed and sent it on. If my 'transgression' was discovered, it never was mentioned.)

Year Eighteen

The governing board still had not agreed on a permanent appointment to the CO position. Meanwhile, another personnel survey (by the same company as before) was commissioned and underway. On the "Job Analysis Questionnaire" for my position, under the question, "Are there any new important functions/ responsibilities," I answered, "Please see attachment"--an elaboration of the extraordinary tasks routinely performed, together with again minutes-by-minutes daily logs. Unilaterally, I adopted and began to use a new title on memos, "Secretary to the CO and Governing Board," in that I all along had served and continued to serve all.

In the ensuing interim, acting CO removed from me my three major functions and assigned them to the position formerly under my supervision. Then he conducted an "Immediate Supervisor Review" of me, in which he stated I no longer was involved in the three main duties or in supervision, and designated me a 'team member.' I submitted a proposed 'amendment'. He re-filed the review without change, merely adding acknowledgement of receipt of the proposed amendment. By April his determination to remove me was unflagging. He suggested I move from the head clerical desk to the farthest removed desk, where my clerical trainee once sat. I refused; but I fully was aware that, if I wanted to continue working for the organization, so long as he headed it I must accept a reduced, isolated position.

At that point, my personal life intervened (it could be said, to save me?). My ex-husband long had wanted us to remarry. I could retire, he insisted; have time to become the writer I always wanted to be. The combination—having my family back together again, and the end of my tolerance to witness how individual 'vendettas' undermined government—tipped the scale. I gave notice that my employment would terminate at the end of June. At the same time I filed a formal grievance under the Personnel Rules, for payment of a five percent "differential" salary for the two-year period preceding the change in my duties.

Mid-June I received a memorandum from SIC denying the differential.

The governing board, meanwhile, continued in inside factioning as to whether to appoint SIC as permanent CO. I was invited to a 'going away' lunch by one member, at which I was asked for my opinion. I responded that I did not believe it was my place, then, to impact judgment of the issue—that there were others in higher positions he would be best interviewing, meaning especially the superiors in my old department. I left the office for the last time on the 30th of June.

I wasn't prepared yet, however, to 'say uncle.' Early July—no longer an employee, but in accord with required procedures—I filed with the governing board a Verified Claim Form, repeating the grievance request for payment of the 5 percent "differential" salary (as specified by the personnel rules, when warranted); beaucoup attachments were included to substantiate the claim. Judiciously calculated on hours worked, the claim came to a modest \$2,862. On the 19th I received a letter from the organization attorney denying the claim and advising I had six months to file a court action.

Year Nineteen

In early January I filed an action in the local Municipal Court, Small Claims Division. The filing, with exhibits, measured 2 inches of stacked sheets. The proceedings, both in Municipal Court and subsequently Superior Court, would occupy 10 months, in which cases I was claimant/plaintiff/petitioner and the organization, defendant/respondent, as follows:

Justice Court Case, Municipal Court Small Claims Division

1/18 Filing of Notice of Small Claims Court to defendant of plaintiff's suit for \$2,862.00 (not including court costs), representing 5 percent salary differential for temporary special assignments of complexity and responsibility performed during the [stated 20-month] period, as provided by the personnel rules.

2/2 Filing of Plaintiff's Response to Defendant's 2/1 Letter to Clerk Alleging Jurisdictional Impropriety, in which response I cited state Code of Civil Procedure and case law in support of my having complied priorly with all available administrative remedies, and that my "small and straightforward case is properly filed in this court."

I also filed supporting Declarations of coworkers, including the CO who had hired me, two department directors, a former governing board member, and local citizens for whom I had been liaison in certain matters. (Along with testifying with respect to extraordinary duties, one department head detailed my intervention with acting CO to release a needed report being withheld from that director contrary to policy).

2/19 Ruling of the Judge of the Municipal Court, giving notice to all parties "that the claim was properly filed in Small Claims in this jurisdiction; therefore, the matter is continued to April 1 at 1:30 p.m. for court trial. If the defendant wishes to file a Writ in Superior Court, it must be filed before that date." I had the Municipal Court issue several Civil Subpoenas for supporting witnesses to appear at the trial.

3/19 There was filed in Superior Court a Declaration of Attorney for [Organization] and Points and Authorities for application to the Superior Court, for issuance of an Alternative Writ of Prohibition and Stay Order to prohibit the Municipal Court from going forward with the scheduled trial, contending that in doing so the Municipal Court would exceed its legal authority. (This stack of paper, with exhibits, was three inches high.)

Superior Court Case

3/21 I was served with Petition for Writ of Prohibition and Stay Order.

3/22 I filed a Response to Petition for Writ of Prohibition and Stay Order, praying that the Writ and Stay be denied; and I included a Supplemental Response concerning the inappropriateness of “mandamus proceedings.”

3/26 The Superior Court entered an Order Directing Issuance of Alternative Writ of Prohibition and a Stay Order, directing Respondent Municipal Court, Small Claims Division, to vacate its ruling that the claim was properly filed and setting the matter for trial, and that it refrain from any further proceedings. If it did not comply it was to show cause in Superior Court on April 15 why it would not. (It had not been helpful, apparently, that the Superior Court judge had been a former governing board member unsupportive of me!)

I wasn’t ignorant that the organization would go to considerable lengths to avoid setting a precedent for other employees; by this time it probably had spent twenty times the amount of my claim. But I was at the end of the independent legal ‘expertise’ I could muster and, on April 8, signed a Dismissal. Although I was embarked on a new chapter of life, to which I better would give my time, giving up the principle of the thing wasn’t easy. And I wondered: had I had the funds to employ my own law firm, would I ultimately have won that measly \$2,862?

(P.S. The organization rebounded and, for me, some solace was to be had, as subsequently heard. The permanent CO finally appointed by the governing board was the right hand man of the CO who had hired me.)

[P.P.S. After finishing this summary I measured the stack of records--more than a solid foot high. There had been some humor going through them, recalling, for instance, how in those old battles it was emphasized to me that Administrative Assistants didn’t *type*, while since the onset of computers *everybody* does.

The slipped vertebrae in my spine may have winced a bit, as I took the brimming recycle basket out and emptied it into my city’s container; but altogether it was a great feeling. Can’t say why, precisely. Maybe just knowing all that paper might go to some good use after all, as certainly would that extra space now in my cupboard....]

Nasty Thinking...

Yes, what a gigantic web she might weave;
did he believe that she was a fool?
She may not have spent much time in school;
however, intellect’s spawned by instinct too.
She’d dance before him shamelessly
like no female even after she was wed;
while he imagined her body soft as mink
and amorous pirouettes in the old shed.
His forelegs would reach around--but, *alas!*--
though he planned just to take her to bed--
that eager embrace would be his last
as it touched upon an hourglass red.

* * *

DIO DE LOS MUERTOS MEMOIR

It's a dreary Friday evening; after-dinner coffee's good but the news continues as bad as it's been, for more months now than one cares to recall....

The local 'rag' (as JC calls newspapers) now informs us that, due to depleted state financing, Sonoma's landmark Historic Park, which includes "Lachryma Montis,"⁸⁶ for the time being will be open one day less a week, as well as suffer reduced staff and maintenance....

Sonomaites are well acquainted with that decorative Victorian at the end of a long, stately cottonwood tree-lined driveway, just a short walk west of the city square. In the 1800's Lachryma Montis was home of Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, whose father Ignacio came arrived in 1774. Ignacio was part of a Mexican colonial army contingent that accompanied church father Junipero Serra, to found the first presidio mission. Many personal effects and historic documents of the family and of Mariano, himself destined to be a player in California history, are on museum display at the site.

Mariano Vallejo derived the Latin name Lachryma Montis (*Mountain Tear*) from a spring called Crying Mountain (*Chiucuyem*), which used to flow around the property. He spared no expense outfitting the family residence, including imported European crystal chandeliers and white marble fireplaces in every room. Nor did he ignore gracing its grounds, with grape vines, abundant fruit trees of every type, and decorative fountains.

Some 110 years after Mariano's death I was preparing a side dish for a "Dia de los Muertos" event, to be held at Lachryma Montis by the then Sonoma Poetry Collective . *I should know more about the place!* I thought; and—well, thanks to the Internet—I not only learned about Mariano Vallejo; I

⁸⁶Reference sources for this segment: *Wikipedia*, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo; *Shadows of the Past*, Copyright 1984-2009, www.stpddog.com/sotp/isaac1.html; www.noehill.com/sonoma/ca10004.asp.

discovered (incredible, at my age!) how little in general I had known about the founding of my own native state....

In the early 1800's "Alta California," the territory ultimately to become the State of California, was a forlorn isolated colony of the crumbling Spanish Empire. I had learned about the famous missionary, Junipero Serra, at Yerba Buena Elementary School in San Francisco. The picture I drew was a great *solitary* hero--oblivious as I then was, of army-accompanied stagings of missionary colonization.

When Alta California fell under Mexico's rule, following Mexico's 1822 independence from Spain, three to four thousand "Californios"--Spanish colonialists--remained on the land; and the next years were turbulent ones, as Mexican Governor Manuel Victoria ruled with a heavy hand. When he refused to secularize church-held lands, some Californios rebelled. A draw of a battle in 1833 led to Victoria's recall and appointment of Governor Jose Figueroa. Figueroa died September 1835; and 1836 saw Acting Governor Jose Castro replaced by Acting Governor Nicolás Gutiérrez, before appointment of Governor Mariano Chico.

Chico, likewise unpopular and anticipating a revolt, went to Mexico to gather troops. Instead, he was penalized for leaving his post. Military Commander Gutierrez returned as Acting Governor. Despite release having commenced, of mission lands and assets to Californios and mission-connected Indians, Gutierrez faced continuing unrest. Californio Spaniards were gaining possession of large tracts of land, as most Indian recipients gradually either sold or abandoned their holdings.

Meanwhile, Juan Bautista Alvarado (Mariano Vallejo's nephew), Jose Castro (Alvarado's cousin), Andres "Pio" Pico, and, in the south, Carlos Carillo, openly were assailing Alta California control by Mexico's central government. In 1836 (a year after America's battle for Texas), with Gutierrez in power again, insurrection in the province was smoldering. The fuse was lit when Alvarado, Secretary of Territorial Deputation, confronted Gutierrez over collection and management of taxes, at Mexico's

northern Alta California capitol at Monterey. Alvarado was hoping for support from Uncle Mariano. Vallejo, however, did not believe the time for an overthrow was ripe.

Enter Isaac Graham....

Graham, Virginia-born in 1800 but raised in Kentucky, at age 18 had become a full-time trapper and mountain man. Three of the next 10 years he spent with Daniel Boone in Missouri, another three with Kit Carson, and the rest with different beaver trapping parties. Powerful of frame, a crack rifleman and horseman, Graham reportedly was a “naturally brave man” of forceful personality. He had spanned America’s territory and rivers from the east over the Rockies into New Mexico, working Canadian, Arkansas, Platte, Green, and Humboldt Rivers. More than once he had to fight Indian bandits; if Pawnees had not decided to aid his party in an attack by Arapaho, Graham would have lost his life along with others that did. In 1929 he joined a trapping expedition to the great Northwest.

Graham arrived in Alta California around 1833 or ’34 from Oregon, reportedly in pursuit of debtor. Failing to collect and temporarily destitute, he settled at Yerba Buena (San Francisco). Migrant ‘foreigners’ (American and European) hoping to subsist in Alta California had to conform to Californio administration. To obtain a simple letter of naturalization, a man had to complete one year of residence, be known honest and respectable, provide three citizen letters certifying he was of Roman Catholic religion, and possess proved income of \$1,000/year. Legal holding of land, however, required marriage to a native Mexican.

Graham, contemptible of a dictated way of life, remained what was called an “extranjero.” He moved to Navidad, near Monterey, and the first thing he did was establish a distillery. Freely generous among peers, the rag-tail clientele that grew around him became the nexus of a private army.

It’s not known when Graham and Alvarado formed a sympathizers’ relationship--only that, civil strife rampant in 1836, Graham pledged at a meeting between them to assemble a force to make the

foe “tremble.” Alvarado, In exchange, promised institution of fair government, equal rights with Californios, tracts of land, and \$3.00 a day for service.

Besides Alvarado’s own force of “paisanos” and those of cousin Castro, Alvarado now could count on “Ace in the hole” Graham’s 50-man force of “rifleros.” At Monterey he strategically placed forces so their numbers seemed greater than they were. Sending ultimatums, he hoped for a diplomatic resolution. Besieged Gutierrez held fast, despite three merchant ships in the harbor lending ammunition aid to the insurgents.

Graham proposed sending his own ultimatum. If not yielded to, he would make an attack of his own. Alvarado forcefully declined, but Graham was not to be denied. Gutierrez’s surrender came quickly after the first unleashed, four-pound cannonball landed directly on his roof.

Graham used the same tactic a while later at mission San Fernando, against some southern Californios opposed to ‘northern’ control. That time, with the two contingents facing each other, Alvarado well knew that Graham *would* attack on his own. Alvarado joined in the advance and reportedly submission was won without one shot fired.

At the Monterey presidio, Alta California was declared a sovereign state of the Mexican Republic with Alvarado as governor, while Gutierrez and other officials were deported. Alvarado sent notice to Uncle Mariano that he had claimed to have acted under Mariano’s orders, and summoned his uncle to Monterey to take part in the new government.

A provisional government was created: six resolutions declared Alta California a self-governing state with its own congress and free of religious persecution, although Catholicism would remain its main religion. On November 29, 1836 Mariano swore an oath of allegiance and accepted rank of Colonel of the Cavalry.

Mariano had risen to prominence in Alta California through an illustrious career: age 15, Cadet , Mexican Provincial Army at Monterey; age 19, Sergeant and delegate to Mexican Provincial Legislature

at Monterey; ages 20- 21, mid-commissioned Officer over a force containing renegade Indian chiefs (notable during this time, a three-day battle contra the Miwoks, who fled to refuge at Mission San Jose); age 23, a participant in the emergency installation of governor Pico (1832); age 25 (after Mexico's 1833 decree of secularization of mission lands and assets) Mariano became Commander of the San Francisco Presidio and overseer of Sonoma's Mission San Francisco Solano. Finally, in 1834, under Figueroa, Mariano was made Commander of the 4th District, and Director of Colonization of the Northern Frontier.

At the Monterey convention, Mariano Vallejo, of proud Spanish heritage, superior intellect, and military and diplomatic skills, finally emerged from the wings to play a key role in events to come. A troop formed by him and Alvarado, commanded by Mariano's brother Salvador, was victorious in a battle near Los Angeles.

Alvarado appeared wont to reduce Graham involvement. One time when Alvarado was absent from the Monterey garrison, it was taken over by some opponents. Graham got word of it at Navidad and rode to the rescue. His strategic surrounding of the fort routed the invaders, despite their having heavily reinforced it. Meanwhile, prominent southern Californios at Santa Barbara under Carlos Antonio Carrillo and his brother united themselves to form a government, and during 1837 Carlos took the gubernatorial lead.

Whether or not Alvarado's attitude toward Graham was out of concern for Graham's competitive popularity, without his backing Alvarado was in difficult straits contra the southern Californios. Castro was sent to Mexico to secure sanction of Alvarado as governor. Mexico President Bustamente, whose forces still were depleted from the fight over Texas, was incapable of trying to regain Alta California. August of 1838 he quickly confirmed both Alvarado as governor and Mariano Vallejo as commander, making Mariano the most powerful military man in the territory.

Albeit there had been gain in Alta California autonomy, the revolution failed the reforms promised those who had begun it. Whereas "Americanos" like Graham had wanted full independence,

Alvarado preferred statehood under Mexico. Many of the coup's original leaders felt betrayed; some, Isaac Graham notable among them, were slated for far worse.

Threats had been circulating that the Californios were of a mind to drive out all extranjeros/foreigners. April 6, 1840, a group led by Castro circled Graham's house several times. When Graham asked what was up, Castro replied they were going to march against Commander General Viejo at San Francisco. According to Graham, Alvarado feared Viejo, while Castro had ambitions on Viejo's post.

In the middle of that night Graham, his partner, and associates were savagely attacked by henchmen and dragged to Castro on a hill behind the house. Graham, alive only because of a misfire, was taken in chains to Monterey, while his partner (Henry Naile, stabbed several times) was left by the road. Jails in the province filled with "foreigners." Some never associated with Graham eventually would be released; but many others would join him tortuously confined in one small adobe cell.

Trial of the jail-weakened men was held April 23, 1840 at Alvarado's home. None were able to produce a passport, and it was decreed they had no right to remain in Alta California. Each then was questioned as to a revolutionary movement under Graham. Alvarado reportedly was responsible for trumped-up evidence that Graham led a foreign conspiracy (one testimony was by a Graham enemy named Garner; another testimony, extracted on threat of being hanged).

In the end, 46 persons were found guilty—interestingly, an even 23 each American and English. Orders issued for confiscation of all property belonging to Graham and the other prisoners. Lawyer Thomas Jefferson Farnham had pled that, if not released the prisoners be tried quickly, arguing that America and/or England well could become involved over the treatment of its citizens on foreign soil. Also telling is that the convicted all were part of Graham's circle of men who, since 1836, had been questioning Alvarado about money owed and promises made.

Both America and England had a consul at Sandwich Island, but Alvarado bypassed suggestion the convicted men be sent there by a Vallejo ship, insisting they be conveyed to Mexico authority, via San Blas, with Castrol to “protect” them. Shackled in cramped quarters in tropical heat, thirsty and barely fed, the prisoners kept up spirits singing the Star-Spangled Banner, Rule Britannia and Hail Columbia—until, that is, Castro issued orders to stab the next man that sang.

A 60-mile overland trek to Tepic followed three-weeks at sea. Initially shoeless and in chains, lawyer Farnham came to their rescue with philanthropic aid—a few donkeys to share rides, and one night of lodging. (Castro had talked openly about doing away with Farnham but never followed through.)

Mexico’s Minister of the Interior had some praise for Alvarado, but it was overshadowed by a warning that, to avoid problems with other countries, *legal* proof of conspiracy had to accompany any such future remandings. Meanwhile, Farnham persuaded Thomas A. Larkin to get out the word to American authorities; surely they would welcome excuse to show a force of arms to Mexico.

The U.S. wasted no time sending and permanently stationing the ship St. Louis to Monterey Bay. Alvarado took a powder (claiming interior Indian trouble), while the St. Louis’ captain questioned Californio officials about the entire affair. At the same time, Powhatan Ellis, U. S. Minister to Mexico, demanded better treatment and immediate release at Tepic. Mariano Vallejo, however, remained loyal to Alvarado for the time being.

Between 1840 and 1841 the Mexican government held a full investigation, but tread softly. A later accusation and Mexican court martial of Castro for cruelty was considered a scam, to demonstrate even-handedness in the matter. Castro pled innocence; Manuel Micheltorena, Castro’s lawyer, arguing that Castrol merely had followed orders. Castro was released with no blight on his record, and returned to Alta California.

Trial of Graham and 19 others before Mexico's highest tribunal lasted until June of 1841 (some men having been released for insufficient evidence). The only proof of treason Alvarado could offer was an informal statement from Graham's avowed enemy, Garner, who had led the nighttime apprehension. Whether or not it was Mexico's paranoia over giving the U.S. cause to increase its focus on Alta California, all the prisoners were found not guilty.

Graham returned to Alta California. Joseph L. Majors, a naturalized Mexican citizen, effected purchase in his own name of a rancho for Graham and Naile, who had survived the attack. At "Zayante," nine miles north of Santa Cruz, Graham and Naile began a lumber operation, operated another distillery, and eventually would build a road (still in use), down the Santa Cruz mountains through Branciforte.

Mariano Vallejo, in the interim, had removed his command post from San Francisco to Sonoma. His relative isolation at the Sonoma garrison allowed him to act decisively as a foreign minister. Yet, although commanding at Sonoma with full authority, he still ultimately was directly answerable to Mexico's central government. He believed, however, that Mexico could not maintain control of Alta California--more and more he had become convinced that regional prosperity and security would rest with the enterprising character and political ideals of its settled people.

As the mission system closed down, Mariano's adroitness secured an ally for life in the imposing Suisunes' Chief, Solano (aka Sem-Yeto, "Mighty Arm"). Mariano and brother Salvador (commander of field operations), both patrons and friends of Chief Solano, thus had 3,000 friendly Suisunes supporting the Sonoma garrison against hostile groups.

Mariano had spent some ten thousand dollars of his own money, to establish and maintain the northern frontier troops and Sonoma Presidio as a counter to Russian presence at Fort Ross. He sent Chief Solano with 80 well-armed Suisunes to Monterey, in a dramatic demonstration of his

effectiveness. Then he himself arrived, and forced Alvarado to send a commission to present a \$10,000 claim to the Mexican government.

Mexico's response in 1842 (the year following Graham's release) was to send Manuel Micheltorena, leading a force of "cholos" (former convicts) against Alvarado. Alvarado was forced to surrender, and Micheltorena became governor. Mariano, at his own request, was discharged as army commander. He received land grants in excess of 150,000 acres, additional grants of 80,000 acres (circa Suisun and Pablo Bay land, now occupied by the cities of Vallejo and Benicia; and some in Santa Rosa), plus confirmation of the Petaluma Ranch and Temblec Ranch in Sonoma. Brother Salvador, whose service to the Mexican cause often meant stiff hand-to-hand combat against hostile tribes, also received some thousands of acres of land.

Then in 1845, three years into Micheltorena's governorship, Californios under Alvarado and Castro rose to battle again. A defeated Micheltorena retired to Mexico with his army and Mexico appointed Andres "Pio" Picos as governor, serving at Los Angeles.

Enter John Fremont....

Large numbers of "Anglos" had continued to emigrate to, some marrying Californios, and settle on Alta California land. When a "survey" expedition led by U. S. military officer John C. Fremont arrived in 1845, Fremont assured field commander Castro that he only would confine his troop to San Joaquin Valley for the winter then head to Oregon. Unknown to locals, however, the U.S. and Mexico were on the brink of war.

Fremont loitered also around Santa Clara Valley; then, instead, he led his men toward Monterey, congregating on Gavilan Peak overlooking San Juan. Castro marshaled a volunteer army and demanded that Fremont keep his word. Fremont grumblingly withdrew after a three-day standoff, but not for long.

Local turmoil followed Fremont's departure--wild rumors again, that Castro forcibly was going to evict all Anglos, and possibly induce Indian pillaging and killings. Fremont doubled back. He convinced a group of American settlers near Marysville Buttes to oppose Castro. Not known by Fremont, however, was that another group of settlers were planning decisive action of their own....

The Vallejo brothers freely gave kindness, food, and sometimes land to arriving immigrants. For all practical purposes, they had settled down to ranching--Salvador at Napa and Mariano at Sonoma--when the sun went down on June 13, 1846.

Dawn of June 14 armed "Americanos" assembled at Mariano's home, demanding that he surrender his Sonoma fortress. The group included members of the "Grigsby-Ide" settlers' party, mountain men, and explorers. Robert Semple of the group later noted it was "as rough- looking set of men as one could imagine."

Mariano, undaunted, invited three representatives from the group for breakfast and wine. He told them to consider him one of them, but the group was wary. They respectfully informed him he nonetheless was to be detained. Mariano was hopeful of U. S. annexation of Alta California, knowing Mexican rule was inadequate to manage its large and rich area. Relieved of his trust to the Mexican government, he graciously accepted arrest.

The 'Bear Flaggers' seized the Sonoma presidio. Creation of the Bear Flag Republic was declared, with William B. Ide as Commander and Chief; and Mariano was imprisoned at Sutter's Fort. Having won such a surprisingly effortless, apparent victory, the 24 Americans were at a temporary loss. Some suggested looting the adobe arsenal; but Ide made an impassioned plea for restraint, "Choose ye this day what you will be! We are robbers, or we must be conquerors!"

To legitimize their conquest, the rebels decided to raise a new flag over the plaza. By most accounts, the making of this flag was overseen by William L. Todd, a nephew of Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of the future president. A Californio woman donated a rectangular piece of very light brown muslin. The

wife of John Sears, one of the Grigsby-Ide party, tore a four-inch wide strip from a red petticoat and sewed it to the muslin, a stripe along the bottom reminiscent of the stripes on the American flag.

Todd then drew a star in the upper left corner (some say in solidarity with Texas, then also at war with Mexico) and, next to it, a crude rendition of a grizzly bear, using a brownish mixture of brick dust, linseed oil, and Venetian Red paint. The words CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC were written in black in the middle, to the right of the star.

A few days after the Bear Flag was raised, Ide issued a proclamation setting forth the goals of the new California Republic, words obviously heavily influenced by both the U. S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution:

"...to establish and perpetuate a liberal, a just and honorable Government, which shall secure to all, civil, religious and personal liberty; which shall insure the security of life and property; which shall encourage industry, virtue and literature...relying on love of Liberty and hatred of Tyranny. And further promises that a Government...must originate among its people: its officers should be its servants..."

Castro thought to turn the tide; but near the town of Olompai his force was defeated by a Bear Flagger company half the size of Castro's, and his numbers fell away. Things were going well for the new Republic; on July 5, however, Fremont showed up again, at Sonoma. He seized control, forced Ide to concede to Fremont as Commander and Chief, and likewise forced the Republic's military to join his unit, naming it the "California Battalion."

On July 7, 1846--following outbreak of the Mexico/U. S. war--Commodore Sloat and his troops landed at Monterey and claimed California for the United States, raising the 28-star American flag over the capitol. On the 9th, U.S. Navy Lt. Joseph Warren Revere, Paul Revere's grandson, arrived in Sonoma and hauled down the Bear Flag and ran up the Stars and Stripes there. Revere handed the Bear Flag to Midshipman John E. Montgomery. Montgomery later would write in a letter to his mother that "Cuffy" (his nickname for the bear) "came down growling," because the flag snagged a few times as it was lowered.

Fremont, now a U. S. Army lieutenant colonel, took his now 428-man California Battalion to San Juan Bautista. He ultimately achieved a meeting with Pico (not without some difficulties); and on November 28, 1846 achieved signing of the Treaty of Cahuenga, ending armed hostilities between the U.S. and the Californians.

Mariano Vallejo had been released from jail by September of 1846, and his aid was sought against resistant Walla Wallans. Mariano, not feeling strong enough for command, appointed Salvador; but instead of an attack, the unarmed Walla Wallans voluntarily went with their families to Sutter's Fort. Mariano's land grants over time totaled some 150,000 acres: 80,000 acres in the Suisun and San Pablo Bay region (area now occupied by Vallejo and Benicia, the latter named after his wife); the Petaluma Ranch, Sonoma's Temblec Ranch, and some holdings in the Santa Rosa valley.

In 1911 the Bear Flag was adopted as California's official flag (its present design, the last of several makeovers, by California historian and artist Donald Kelley in 1953). As to the original choice of the bear symbol, some believe it was a play on Californios' great fear of the grizzly bears; others, that the flaggers identified with the animal's fierce determination as a fighter. General Vallejo In his memoirs, the *Recuerdos* (Recollections), refers to the flag's design as "strange," saying, "the bear looked more like a pig." It's uncertain what the original looked like, in that it was destroyed in the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906.

As to Isaac Graham, although much has been written suggesting his support during the Bear Flag Revolt, that appears not so. His last decades were marked by the outright murder of Henry Naile, his partner and adoptive son, which deed went unpunished, and in litigious divorce and custody battles with his ex-(second) wife. One bright note was reunion and time spent with grown son Jesse, from his first marriage. Graham died November 3, 1863.

Mariano Vallejo's brother Salvador, commissioned in 1863, organized the First Battalion of Native Cavalry, serving as far east as Arizona. Platon, Mariano's son, was a doctor on front lines of the later Civil War.

Mariano's generosity continued unchanged, and he stayed in regional politics for the rest of his life. He went on to serve as a delegate to the California Constitutional Convention in Monterey in 1849, and later as a State Senator. He met President Lincoln on a White House visit arranged by U. S. Generals Sheridan, Sherman, and Grant. He also spent considerable time in his 12,000-book library, where he wrote a five-volume History of California. Mariano's death at age 82, in 1890, was much lamented. The Sonoma Plaza was circled by a funeral procession of hundreds of mourners for the man who had earned the dignity of being among California's first founding fathers....

More than a century later, the Dia de los Muertos invitation to Vallejo's beloved home advised, "Although General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo will be one of the dead poets, his spirit will be very much alive at Lachryma Montis, both at the Live Poets' Dinner and the Dead Poets' Readings." Guests were to bring a poem to read, written by their favorite dead poet. We live poets were treated to roast goose-- just as had guests of Mariano at a January 1870 dinner. Ours was prepared by local poet Bill Churchill and his assistants. Mariano, in a January 29, 1870 letter to son Platon, had captured the pleasures of shared food, wine, and comradery in the valley environs he loved:

"The afternoon and dusk have been particularly beautiful, indescribably lovely. We dined--your uncle Salvador, Ignacio Soberanes and Juan Angula--on goose, very well stuffed with red chile, good bread, a bottle of wine, and, for dessert, a frying pan full of excellent beans a la Mexicana. As soon as we had risen from table, a fire was lit in front of the staircase, two benches were placed near it and I drew near in a white armchair.... The guitar was brought and the song and dance began. In the big green door of the storehouse a group of Italians applauded the singing. The night calm but very dark; the driveway, the fountain playing, truly it seemed the place of a pastoral scene...."

After our marvelous feast, which was held in the old storehouse, poetry readings were held between the villa's front porch and garden fountain, where all sat comfortably on chairs. A lovely, balmy pre-Halloween evening, it was as if we were surrounded by the spirits of General Vallejo and his friends. His letter ended as if written in the moment:

"The singing and music continue; your uncle regales us, the spectators, with a thousand stories, salty little lies to lighten the fiesta. ... I enjoy everything, half silent; Juan laughs without a care, and Jef does too. Now at nine o'clock at night they are going to dance the jarabe!"

The poem that I chose to read was in Italian, written by my father who had died in 1963. Given the contribution of Italians to Sonoma's vineyards, it seemed fitting:

*Si como soffio d'olezzanti venti, o dolce nota d'arpa vespertina,
a te Colombo, mi affetto e rammenti, ch'io sempre amai tua maestà divina.
Sorridente come mamma il ciel e aulenti di San Francisco,
la ricca collina ti manda i fiori suoi festa, e concetti risonan lungo la marina.
Ma più che il fior del clivo e il sereno California ciel,
su t'è--qual stella che non è terrena.
Mondo t'irrisce e io t'accolgo in seno, e tua catena bacio, e sì bella,
dove poi gloria nasce in large piena....*

My Italian vocabulary is very small and when it comes to literary material, far smaller. I recalled with what difficulty translators of Omar Khayyam tried to express his poetical nuances in English. Nonetheless, with a large Italian dictionary I translated Dad's poem, only for myself, as best I could. With apologies to him,

*Like a breath of perfume on the air or sweet note of harp at Vespers time,
to you, Columbus, affection, and remembrance of my constant love
of your mastery divine.
The sky smiles down like a mother would upon the royal court of San Francisco;
the wealthy hill sending you flowery praise as merry melodies along the Marina go.
But greater than the blossoming slope and the serene California night are you--
that star above shining an extraterrestrial light.
World makes its mirth and I?—in my breast I welcome you with pleasure,
your fetters I kiss, and there we spar
where glory is born in widest measure....*

* * *

ANOTHER JOHN OF THE WORD

When I said I “was going to be a writer,” I had no idea what it would be like. Here in my seventies (still no best-seller, to put it mildly!) near the end of these last notes I arrive at a drawing. Not one of mine; it’s all left to me of “Black John.” I was working intensely on the subject of Perception, and the cosmos that enabled it, when Black John entered my life. Recalling how our friendship seemed ineffably purposed in existence, once more I’m intrigued by *synchronicity*....

I doubt ever knowing if that young man--briefly like a surrogate son of mine--is alive or dead. Ghetto-born of an alcoholic father in a highly industrialized city, his abused mother supported the family with the lowest of domestic labor. I call him “John” only, now, although he had no objection to the color appellation.

Had John’s intelligence, of the highest, been born into decent circumstances, a god alone could tell what he might have achieved in the material world. My natural bent may have begun its literary quest with much to hurdle; but John’s pursuit of 21st century geometry began in a wasteland. As it was, he supported his homeless life buying and selling foreign artifacts--on occasion, small quantities of marijuana.

Our paths crossed in 1980-81 in Oaxaca, Mexico while I was working on a play.⁸⁷ Fueled by *bhakti* aspirations, I imagined myself approaching a selflessly-governed, promethean consciousness, capable of acting truly as any brother’s keeper no matter the cost. Whenever John and I met, our dialogues were filled with the talk and walk of ‘the Spirit’.

It was fall of 1982 that a tap-tap-tap came at my apartment door, John on a seasonal trip between Hawaii and the States. He had visited in the same unexpected fashion the prior spring, staying

⁸⁷ *Renacimiento*, this domain.

a couple of days. He gave no reason why this time he first had hitchhiked north from San Francisco's airport to my home city, when his ultimate destination was Los Angeles. I sensed that it was hunger for some creature security.

Each day I returned home from work to find dinner on the stove--tasty, all-nourishing concoctions; and he did the dishes. But his mind was one of sentient insatiability. Daytime, in the in-between world of a peaceful home, he labored over geometric drawings. Evenings he played over and over an end-game of the '81 chess world championship, in which Karpov for a second time overshadowed grandmaster Korchnoi.

"You know?...there's a wonderful timelessness in this room," he said from the hearth, in front of a cheery fire, more than a week having passed since his arrival.

I sat under the red glow of the shade I'd hand-fashioned for a thrift store lamp, working a small piece of needlepoint--the latest hand-occupation in my unending quest for mind control.

"I've been thinking..." he continued, "maybe it's time I settled down. I've been watching the local Want Ads, and I've found a couple of possibilities."

The signs were too easy to recognize; he wanted to stay! I tugged hard and miserably at a thread, as mind snapped against a suddenly chilled heart--*aren't you the one who thought yourself headed for sainthood?*

After my silence he took a new tack. "You know?—my father and mother took turns running shotgun on rats in the tenement where we lived, so that my eight brothers and sisters and me could sleep. Then, when my parents had their last big fight—just before he left for good—I mean, *man*, they were *fighting*. All the other kids were wailing, *scared*.... And my mother picked up a chest and threw it at my father; and I thought, *someone's going to get killed! Someone's got to do something!* So I called the police."

Each of us went to our respective beds that night beginning to breathe the last gasps of our respective fantasies—his, new and short-lived, of maybe building a solid material character with my help; mine, old and overlong, of becoming a pseudo-Mother Teresa.

A few days later I returned to the upstairs apartment to find him sitting on the top step, watching his freshly-washed tennis shoes dry in the afternoon sun. I did love the boy, for ‘boy’ is what that young man was, to 47-year-old me. Each recurring thought of ‘adopting’ him, however, merely added acid to the brain’s drying basin of self-faith. I was in the process of working my way up to a livable wage again, with a teen-aged daughter of my own still being raised. Next morning, a small pool of blood had broken through the corner of my right eye. That little embolism gave the push I needed, to tell him the time had come to leave.

The next night he came and knelt by my bed, the full moonlight creating a remarkable image of his face. I had *mea culpas* to do. “When you pointed out the job possibilities in the paper..,” I began, “well...I knew, if I were perfect in my so-called ‘faith’, I would have said, ‘Wonderful! Go for it—you just stay with me as long as you need to.’ A few years ago, I would have. Now, I who once dared to think I willfully willingly could give all help even to a stranger, finally face the truth. Presumed capacity for selflessness is as great an emotional greed as any potential beneficiary’s actual need.”

How could that black, black face, which should have absorbed fully the moon’s light through the pane, reflect it so brightly? I tried to focus on some feature but none would emerge.

“Don’t torture yourself,” he responded quietly, “You didn’t ask me here. I came to you. And you need to do what *you* are meant to do. Listen to me!--**this** is why I came: so that you could give to my compass and pencil a place where they and I, no one of us less an instrument of God than the other, could draw the geometrical solution to the Riddle of the Oracle of Delphi, and lift me from the burden of my inexplicable offer of a draw to *The Man*. Let me in return lift from you any burden of wounded faith.”

The next morning I drove him to a suitable ramp for hitching rides back to L.A. That evening the telephone rang. No ride yet, but he had one arranged with a trucker for the following day. When I went by car to retrieve him he was *sans* jacket, having given his to some other colder, less-resourcefully broke young man.

Next morning I returned him to the designated site. *That* evening, another call; “the planned ride had fallen through.” I retrieved him again. Meanwhile, he had bought dinner for another lost stranger; and, when I stopped to buy milk, I watched him give the last of the dollars I’d given him that morning to yet another hapless soul, who appeared at the window asking for fifty cents.

The third morning John sat in the same kitchen sunlit spot my last lost “loner”⁸⁸ had sat in, I making breakfast now just as I had then. John talked about going back to his home city, maybe getting into school, somehow gather threads of study that he loved. The air felt clear between us, and I was able to listen without crying on the inside. Not potential mother and son, we simply were subjects of mysteriously-drawn love, ageless friends of bygone days on the road when he, Countryman and I for a while had been three.

I mused aloud, as I handed John half an omelet and toast on a plate. “It seems more than *co-incident*--” I spoke the word as John used it, a pause at the hyphen.

“What does?”

“That the very day you arrived, I was working on *The Word*—specifically, the passage about ‘a messenger sent from God whose name was John’. You know--he ‘who was *not* The Light, but sent to bear witness of it.’ Can’t help but wonder, how different I might have felt if my former zealous spirit had been drawn upon first by you, instead of....” I paused; he knew, of course, who I meant. “Instead,” I resumed, “*you, ‘John,’ came after--*”

“And in the opposite color, even!” he finished with a grin.

⁸⁸ “The Countryman” (an individual in as-yet unpublished *Journey with JC*).

Days later, at the typewriter, I uttered a cry of anguished disbelieving belief--*gritando*, the Mexicans call it. As I recalled the light that was in his face I realized that at that moment I had been as near to pure human-held Spirit as ever one might be, seeing as much of it as can be seen, and that 'It' always is "JC!"

Certain items were left in my care, a precious compass and a work done during the stay; and several years went by. It only was then, as my study of physics and perception neared completion, that I intuited what was represented, by the hypnotizing geometric John left me. Its visual expression 'just happened' to put the cap on the Cosmos as I conceived it: an unseeable, everywhere-present, 'particled' solid-state--the conclusion of QM; the beginning of something yet to be named.....

Saturday Epilogue:

Synchronism...I've talked little but thought much about "chance" encounters or contacts, which make us wonder, *is* there some ordained order to destiny? Sometimes a book that finds its way to us seems more than "coincidentally" to fit precisely with our present thought processes—such as happened to me tonight, when I casually resumed reading *The Oxford Murders* by Guillermo Martinez.⁸⁹

I'm a known fan of mysteries, so it wasn't unusual that I had been handed one or, I guess, that it happened to have reached the top of the stack by my chair. Remarkable, however (at least to me!), were how its scholarly discussions, of problems applying normal human-world mathematics and logic to subatomic regions, married (again, "intuitively" as with John's work) with the view of a 'spaceless' cosmos, and infinitesimally multidirectionally point-on-point energy connections theorized within it.

Martinez referenced Mandelbrot's paradox of reaching ultimate boundaries where edges "remain elusive, break up at each new attempt into ever more projections and inlets." He also related "Cusa's geometrical metaphor—truth as a circumference and human attempts to approach it as a series of inscribed *polygons*, with more and more sides, coming close in the end to a[n apparent?] circular

⁸⁹Pages 51, 141.

form.” Words spoken by Martinez’s fictional logician strike a chord of intuited ‘comprehension’ even in a non-physicist:

“The indeterminable propositions that Godel had found must correspond to a subatomic world, of infinitesimal magnitudes, invisible to normal mathematics. ... If a mathematical question can be formulated within the same ‘scale’ as the axioms, it must belong to mathematicians’ usual world and be possible to prove or refute. But if writing it out requires a different scale, then it risks belonging to the [macroscopic] world—submerged, infinitesimal, but latent in everything—of what can neither be proved nor refuted.

Further, that the same kind of thing happens in both mathematics and quantum physics, that is, “formulas governing physical phenomena on a large scale [*e.g.* planetary motions] no longer are valid in the subatomic world of the infinitesimal.... ...that everything [is], basically, a question of scale.”

I still can feel John’s fervor, see the excitement in his eyes as he tried to explain how his intricate geometrics encompassed the fundamental All--mystic words seemingly incomprehensible; yet, like the words of Martinez’s logician, touching understanding in some unconscious depths. Almost three decades have passed since his precious items were left with me. The Spirit has not returned, yet, to reclaim them....

A mosquito bats against the south sunlit window pane
and I think, it can’t get out. Wonder when it last ate?
Or, is it just working off a meal of invisible mites
with whom I undoubtedly cohabitate?
*(A mother’s thoughts
from Psyche’s half where they run
ever since Nature decreed that she be one....)*
*But Time has been with me;
never have I wanted.*
*It bade me lie down in green pastures,
It led me beside still waters,
It restored my soul.*
*Although I walk through the valley of shadows of death
and fear every evil,
Time stays with me;
Its ebb and flow comfort me.*
*It leads me in paths of righteousness for its future’s sake,
preparing tables before me in the presence of its enemies.*
*May goodness follow all the days of the persons I love,
and may we abide in the house of Time forever...-*

*The Word also has been with me;
Never have I wanted.
It bade me lie down in green pastures,
It led me beside still waters,
It restored my soul.
Although I walk through the valley of shadows of death
And fear every evil,
The Word stays with me;
Its sounds and meanings comfort me.
It leads me in paths of righteousness for Its truth's sake,
preparing tables before me in the presence of Its enemies.
May goodness follow all the days of the persons I love,
and may we abide in the house of The Word together...*

** * **

A NIGHT WITH THE DEAD

The sun dropped below the grandstand behind JC and me but it would be two or three hours before dark....

From the plaza level of the Oakland Coliseum (first tier, three rows from top rail) I try to count the people. They're all in their individualized costumes, every imaginable combination, and lots of long hair still. Some room's left on the field for the young to dance between blankets, food bags, and other paraphernalia; but the stadium's not full yet for the May 27, 1989 benefit concert for AIDS. It's early; The Dead are yet to come....

The crowd screams as Los Lobos finishes the first set, leaving me wanting to hear "La Bamba;" but then all hands including mine go up at once as Fogarty breaks into "Bad Moon on the Rise." Most of the crowd down on the field has been waiting since three this afternoon, tailgating in the vast north parking lot—people who have covered *two* generations, gathering here with the best musicians of their era. *How they love this freedom--and the music expressing it*, I think. I watch an absolutely beautiful, dancing young blond woman in tight levis and black halter; and I wonder, *will JC and I live to see another cycle?*—I hope so!

We had arrived about five. Perseverance (the enabling patience of middle age) got us a parking space right out front the stadium's south side. Seven o'clock, down on the field handfuls of strings are let loose, and pink and magenta balloons float high over the bleachers that shake wildly, as Fogarty returns for his encore. At the first chord I'm anticipating "House of Blue Lights"...except, no; that was from the 'first'--"Suzie Q's"--generation. *This* was "Good Golly Miss Molly"....

During intermission, before Tracy Chapman gives her guitar its first strike, I take a walk around the Coliseum and down to the field, around to where the last of the sun's rays are climbing the proscenium. I stroll through the youngest and most energetic, the ones to whom each cause always is

greatest. They press nearer and nearer the stage, where at concert's peak they will join in a fellowship far exceeding any known even in church.

A yard-high sign hangs across the arch, announcing "In Concert against AIDS," spectrum tones of red to blue to green. It makes me think again of how much Humankind misery readily would be conquered, if our resources everywhere weren't eaten up consistently by stupidities. *It'll be perfection, when the lights and The Dead come on*, I think; and I remember—*god*, how well I remember: black light coming on at the old Winterland, creating fantastic images of white alive in the dark....

The field itself--all but the hallowed A's diamond--is covered with thick protective carpeting. The initially neatly spread blankets have been kicked aside because almost everyone, as I walk through, is on his or her feet, as retreating sunlight now hits only the top edge of the mammoth elevated screen, and gives a last lighting to patches of yellow flowers above the Coliseum's east side. Above it all, at center, the U.S. national flag and the California republic flag, while rising twice their mastheads' heights are rows and rows of spotlights and, stage-side, towers of speakers. I try to count them but get lost in their intricate stacking.

Tracy Chapman wasn't one of JC's and my 'hip' days, while naturally just about every other female in the crowd was her familiar. Behind us, at the top of the tier a woman all alone sings her heart out along with Chapman, concluding "All That You Have Is a Soul." The clapping just won't stop, as I decide it's time for a hot dog refueling....

At 10 minutes past nine the first of the lights come on. The mass of bodies, packed between second base and stage front, change under colored spots into a collage of metallic red and blue. Both of two, now working lower monitor screens show Garcia, looking all the world like Ben Franklin might have, as he chides, "Rumors are spreading faster than AIDS—I kid you not!"

A vendor of licorice strips (good curb to nicotine smoking) stops on the steps between our row and the next and swings five lengths around his head, singing "We will get by" along with Jerry, as is

almost everyone. Then, *oh dear*, I think, *this second number's one of The Dead's more recent ones too!* I'm a bit dismayed, 'cause I'm waiting for my old familiar favorites, the ones that the 'third' generation will *re-discover* and love; the ones that their grandparents will sing to them, like my all-time favorite, *Ripple....*

As The Dead go into the fourth of four-by-me-unrecognized tunes—a Bayou foot-stomper—I look around. Everyone is dancing in his or her place, and it seems *everyone* knows the words and where, right in the middle, two claps come. *Uh, uh*, I think with a smile that feels “rueful,” *no denying the thing called generation!*

Garcia on the fifth number takes backseat to Bob, new to me. I had been missing Gottschalk, and Pig Pen, and melancholy a bit, a few moments. Then I tuned back in only again to betray my ignorance, thinking, *how much like Dylan's syntax Weir is sounding*--it becoming clear that it *was* a Dylan song, “Stuck Inside of Mobile with Those Memphis Blues, Again.”

The Dead's next piece, a jamming instrumental, challenged the tympanum of the ear. Down below, children with fluorescent tubes were turning them in circles to the music; in the aisles, girls dancing, some with young men dancing behind but each totally absorbed in self. There revives in me, although I cannot describe what it *is*, that which happens to the soul, times like this...*Winterland... Poco... “Sweet, Sweet Love”....*

Lights from the stage play directly to our eyes—bright white, gold-green--as The Dead take a break. *This isn't a concert just against AIDS*, I think. *It's against heroin, cocaine and crack; alcohol not sold or allowed--how would baseball fans stand for that?* But, intermission over, The Dead smack-dabs into “Fire on the Mountain;” and I feel like, maybe.... Maybe Humankind *can* move ‘forward’ a little, to Once-Upon-A-Time....

Leaves fill the thorny locust's limbs;
soon white racemes will snow upon the lawn and
float south past the window to spring-green fields.

Pen awaits Thought like machete poised above labyrinthine growth,
Psyche insistently singing tangled songs,
Mind halted between two-tongued throngs...
(Useless journals she's been keeping? Ceaseless dialogues, awake and sleeping!
Ultimately what good Thought's thoughts?)
Yet some do live to be used anew!--
"God helps those who help themselves;" "This above all to thy own self, be true."
All that Writer wished to say was what The I wanted to,
sitting in line with the sun with you--
sun on the water, sun on the beach; seen with both eyes, seen by each;
while us under it feeling its pinch, the most our eyes covered was less than an inch,
The I pondering many lines for our children to illumine in other times--
counting, you see, on Einsteinian time connecting eternity through our minds--
believing in words to leave a sign
for our daughters to light in Future's time...

* * *

WHAT PRICE LONGEVITY

"I guess we're going to eat out tonight," Mother said for the third time as I sat next to her wheelchair. We were waiting for the nursing home's afternoon musicale--almost-90-year-old Nick at the piano, 92-year-old Fred on the washtub base, and younger Phyllis with the lilting voice....

I girded myself. "No.., but tomorrow we'll be eating lunch out there," I repeated my response a third time, pointing toward the nursing facility's garden beyond the window. Except this time I didn't add, "Remember? We're having your 99th birthday party!" Instead I thought about other "non compos mentes" I had come to know at the home, and the umpteenth time asked myself, *why is it? What causes some of us to age that way, not like Nick and Fred?*

Wikipedia tells that the rule of *non compos mentis* was used in English law most commonly when defendants invoked religious or magical explanations for their behaviors. But the state of consciousness Mother now reflected was the result of age-deteriorated brain 'wiring', not filtered superstition. The mind whose solid credo once was, "Where there's a will, there's a way," no longer could be both its own dictator and servant.

Tuesdays are the nursing home's regular musicale days, the repertoire always the same. My voice sings "San Francisco here I come, right back where I started from" heartily, feignedly joyous, as if it hasn't a dozen times previously, while Mind thinks *I shall go crazy, this time*, knowing too tortuously well the line that comes next, *and next, and next....*

One must accept it finally when a loved one's mind is anchored and lists only from moment to moment, no longer able to navigate *befores* and *beyonds* of Consciousness's streaming sea. Make each moment pleasurable, is all that can be done; doesn't matter, not remembered....

Saturday, it's Bingo time. I count the women around the table--exactly 12, not one man. As far as I can tell, the ratio of females to males in the 80-plus facility is about 20 to 2; and I think of my Father,

dead 40 years. *Does the ratio reflect Mother's generational era?* I wonder: women of it not subjected to the same physiological and psychological stresses as men? Will time see a shift in the ratio of gender longevities as the result of Woman's changed roles in society? Or, do females simply have more formidable constitutions?

Some persons seem able to care-give the aged without identifying with their circumstances. I, however, can't avoid speculating my own last days. Meanwhile, Mother--third from top on the right side of the bingo table--doesn't know yet that I have arrived. Her back is toward me as I take a seat near the wall. I'm wearing the colorful lapel pin that says, "I [heart] Bingo"--a gift from Mom's bed-ridden but fully sentient roommate. The pin reflects a private joke between us, the giver aware how much patience it takes for me to sit through a Bingo session. Like with Nick and Fred, the pin is a sign of the difference between Mother, who has no clue, and the sentience of her roommate.

Potential for artificialities in child/parent relations has been true between Mother and me. I have shown her only one face of the coin of my persona--that of a dutiful, domestically secure daughter, which the concomitantly aging writer persona finds increasingly difficult to reflect. *Yet I do not want these days to end!--*

End, however, they did. And I know what Donne wanted, but he was wrong.

Mom never drove a car. By 1994, about the time she turned 86, her incredible natural strengths began to diminish. She no longer could make the bus shopping trips that she previously enjoyed, nor could she maintain the small garden of her mobile home as she had loved doing. Medical appointments began to multiply; housekeeping became difficult. My sisters and I took turns supplying all that was needed to allow Mother to stay in her home as naturally she so very much wanted to do. Besides transportation we increasingly shared property maintenance and repair, business matters, and household safety.

Mother also was growing forgetful, such as when one day I left her determined to roast a chicken. I called later, to ask whether she had turned off the oven, and she assured me she had. But when I returned anyway in late evening I found the oven still on, at 450 degrees.

Then she had her first fall.

Late summer of 2004, on a visit to a farm, Mother--then 96--sat on a stack of folded carton boxes and slid down to the ground. By September, the fall's full effect, on an already severely painful arthritic spine, was evident. Simply being on her feet was excruciating. On the 23rd we insisted on hospitalization, where she was transported on a stretcher. X-rays revealed that the vertebrae of Mother's lower spine were cascaded into an indistinguishable pyramid.

We took shifts at the hospital; and by the time of discharge October 8 we had her home equipped for recuperative living, arranged therapy visits, established a Lifeline telephone monitor, and drew a schedule for daily attendance by us for meal preparations, prescription monitoring, and all other necessary chores.

Medical appointments were numerous and medications complicated with frequent changes. Besides outpatient therapy for the spinal damage, there were skin sores, visits by home nurses, a bleeding bladder episode (involving a "urodynamics test,"), surgery deliberations, a 'pessary' appliance that required regular review by the gynecologist, an emergency room visit for a questionable leg bruise, glaucoma exams and regular eye drops; foot and shoe problems; pressure stockings to reduce leg edema; sessions with a pain management doctor, and meetings with social workers.

My life and my sisters' lives now were fully involved with maintaining Mother's life. Like parents, worry was constant even when not with her. Meanwhile, of course, we were sustaining our families and coping with aging demands of ourselves and our spouses, two of whom were partially handicapped. How fortunate for us, however, that Mother had *four* advocates. How impossible it must be, we thought, for an only child! And what in the world did an aged person who had *none* do?

As time moved on we accepted that we needed help. How much harder it would have been to meet worsening circumstances, had Mother not qualified for and received some financial aid from our county In-Home Support Services division (a service which deplorably now is facing extinction in the State's current fiscal dilemma). We were able to hire a part-time care giver with whom we alternated a few shift hours, and who helped with showering and light housekeeping. Our added accounting and payroll tasks were well worth it.

We kept a daily calendar, for there was much to remember. Eventually two large binders were filled with doctor, Medicare, Social Security and "advanced directives" paperwork, equipment and medication data, and resource information, together with detailed logs which, before leaving a 'shift,' each of us left for the next person. Pages and pages read like medical records in themselves.

Mother displayed more and more forgetfulness; the number of hours needing someone with her crept up with each passing day. Come the following March it was time for 24/7 care. Supplementing In-Home aid with personal dollars, we then employed two care givers, various of the six of us taking daytime and overnight shifts. Our personal time fully was dictated by Mother's needs; between April 9 and May 1, for example, there were 12 medical appointments.

So it went into autumn, as yet another binder filled with medical and business records, coordinating calendars, and care giver communications. Then, on October 4, Mother spontaneously left her recliner without her cane, walked a matter of 10 steps to the front door, opened it to check the mailbox there and, turning, had her second fall. Her right femur bone broke in three places.

The next day she was taken to the operating room at 12:30 p.m. A large loss of blood at the time of the incision put her in cardiac arrest. The incision temporarily was reclosed and Mother was resuscitated, after which implantation was completed of a 12-inch plate to the femur. In ICU the full following week, Mother was unconscious the first three days. As she regained consciousness she suffered several hallucinatory episodes, perhaps due to the strong narcotic drugs for pain; but mind

never returned to its prior state. Before, although suffering short-term forgetfulness, she could recall memories of her own and her family's life events. Following the surgery, she could not summon memory even our father's death, and wondered why he was not in attendance.

After another week in the main hospital (one or more of us in attendance daily, helping with feedings and vigilantly monitoring), Mother was transferred to the Skilled Nursing Facility for recuperation, therapy and evaluation. The initial stated goal was to bring her back to 75 percent of her former disabled functioning. However, at a November 21 family meeting with staff, we learned that *perhaps* some 50 percent was achievable, that she would be discharged on November 28, and that she would need full-time nursing care. Mother, now 97, was unable to move her body between bed, chair and toilet.

Mother's monthly income (Federal social security and a State supplement) was \$833, far beneath the \$4-5,000 cost for private assisted living for an incontinent, wheelchair-bound person. Nonetheless we hopefully visited some in our area before accepting placing her in a Social Security funded bed, in a local home. Mother was transferred directly to the nursing residence from the hospital.

So fortunate again were we! The home probably was the best of its kind available anywhere—airy, clean, and with a staff deserving of medals; and we were only a few minutes away. Mother's Social Security stipend went directly to the facility, except \$30 allowed kept for incidentals. That \$30 did not cover incontinence underwear, telephone, clothing, or other personal incidentals; but we were far from complaining about *that*.

We eased Mother into her new residence, letting her believe in her cogent moments that it would be only until she was 'fully recovered.' In her three-person room, Mother was given the space near the slider door, which looked out on the lovely back garden. We brought in her familiar night table,

bureau, casual chair, and television, and placed favored items and photos on the shelf and wall. And another two full binders and assorted folders of records were closed.

December 2006 through March 2008 one of us was at the home daily, either at mealtimes or for one of its 'recreational' events. We treated Mother as if she was 'at home,' she often speaking as if she were. "I could fix you a cup of coffee," she would say, moving as if she could arise from her wheelchair. Her hallway was her 'block;' the dining room was a 'restaurant.'

It was fascinating to witness how our fundamental nature is the last vestige to leave us. Despite Mother's condition, hers automatically responded with clarity in times of another's need. When one of her roommates was in trouble, Mother would wheel herself to the door and call out, "We need help here!" Otherwise, she lived in the very moment, hours of the day passing unregistered so that even the morning meal was not recallable at noon. Yet, absent remembrances about us, our families, or her own past, she well remembered how to play Bingo, regularly attending the three-times-a-week games.

Mother didn't remember what her last real home looked like, or where it was. However, although unable to miss it *per se*, there lasted in her that nebulous memory which longs for that which is embraced by the meaning of "home"--a sense of independent being to which the spirit ever wishes to return. If Time is measured by painful thoughts, it was inevitable that ours were the greater in doubled emotions--identifying our own futures with, while deeply suffering sympathy for beloved Mother's present one.

Come April 2008 Mother to be confined totally to bed. But she had been endowed with formidably strong heart and lungs, and we expected that she well would live past her next, her 100th birthday the coming month. The evening of April 11 we all visited her together, and joined afterward for supper at my home.

For such a long time our hearts had jumped with each ring of the telephone--minds thinking, *oh god, must this be it?* Yet, so strangely this evening, worry about Mother seemed lodged in the cosmos.

Later we would marvel at how unusually ‘free’ and joyful we had felt, recounting stories of our childhoods and youthful lives in our humble but so loving family home. One sister left for home at about 11:30 p.m, and when the telephone did ring at quarter of midnight I had no thought of Mother. *Sister must have forgotten something...but, no!*—Mother had breathed her last. It seemed as if she was able to, then—as if she had received some assurance that she, who had no benefit of siblings, was leaving us as she so much strove to make us: loving sisters....

A few days later, the pain of loss needing no associative reminders, I awakened after a first solid night’s sleep determined that, on the morrow, I would see not one leftover of the life of the woman who brought me into it--*not* the freshly washed fleece blankets bright orange and blue; *not* the delicately crocheted shawl--a long-ago handiwork of her own that warmed fragile legs once so strongly quick to lift her to our needs. *Not* the wide, Velcro-strapped shoes old feet must wear, which she had needed what now seemed so brief (*so relatively brief!*) a time. *Someone at the home might use them....*

Nor do I wish to write of thickly-veined hands and sentimental thoughts; *not*, of the self-sacrifices and family care unstintingly made and given. Enough sad prose already has been written by countless others. Neither is more needed about the aging industry and its costs, the burden on families, and the dilemmas faced by persons of meager means. What remains is how society will meet it all. How strange is it?—that our modern quest for longevity failed to anticipate its ultimate meanings.

“Well she had a good, long life,” everyone says. Yes; nearly 100 years old that body, when it gave the last sigh it could. Some Eastern-world sages claim that Body is the temple of Spirit--of the breath, the *pneuma*; and we do accept that death occurs when body ceases to breathe. But it seems that a time can come when not Body or Breath but Mind stops; and isn’t *that* the real point of death?

*Death doth have dominion
no amount of sweet prose can change,
its silent smothering nearly done;
breaths mark time for the listener,
whose own desire to live*

*can surge stronger than compassion.
Take me from this place,
out into the fading star lights of morning tide,
under the moon now waning,
where surf waves roar still
and youth meets the sun's rise;
or let clear cool lake waters
drain the redness from my eyes,
break the thought
love wishes itself absent binds
of Life's strongest ties.*

A GARDEN FOR JC

I recall a legend....

Then Helen, daughter of Zeus, turned to new thoughts. Presently she cast a drug into the wine whereof they drank, a drug to lull all pain and anger, and bring forgetfulness of every sorrow. ... Medicines of such virtue and so helpful had the daughter of Zeus, which Polydamna, the wife of Thor, had given her--

and I think, *drugs--how few prescribed ones I've taken in my life*; so naturally it brings to mind memories of non-prescribed ones. But then I'm 74 years old, have been a good parent, worker, and citizen—a commoner who feels no compunction discussing an old acquaintance.

It was during impetuous, academic arena explorations in the late 60's into the 70's that I first met Mary Jane, via occasional gifts received by JC. In the last old notes I find a post-divorce journal entry when he and I went our first separate ways in 1978, and the future lay blank ahead of me. I had come across a little memento of Mary Jane he left behind:

"I can't do it again!" I scream out; "I can't do it again!" I yell it a third time as I reach into the carmel-colored, soft leather pouch and draw from it a small, flat blue box and a fine Bambu roller. I imagine that I am a 90-year-old Indian woman who knows Don Juan, as I lay a fresh white paper from the little box upon the roller. Respectfully I crumble dry leaves upon the paper and distribute the matter along its length, leaving less in the center to ensure an even roll. Carefully holding the roller horizontal between thumbs and back fingertips, I gently roll its bottom band up and over the back to form a thin cigarette. Before removing the roller I insert my tongue into the crevice of the open end, wet the paper's gummed edge and roll to a close. Lastly I twist closed the less perfect end, saving the other for my mouth, and strike a match....

Whether it is a small amount of essence the leaves held or merely panaceaic tracings of motions, I feel a small release of psychical resistance and...soon...I am thinking, "I can do it again!" Moreover, in the unfingerable center of me is the knowledge that I will--start again at the bottom of my salary class and, minute by minute, day by day, week by week, month by month reprove my worth and inch up again to a livable salary. Now, blithe spirit, ache not for freedom!

Having read the entry, Writer interrupted: *You're a witch, you know; but then so are and were all women we love and loved, alive and dead; and right now I'd give anything to have one of them knock on the door, because I need some distraction. So why don't we write more about Mary Jane?*

Because confession's good for the soul?

Also generally edifying.

Writer knows well, you see, the "Story That Begins with an End" (*which starts when JC began dying--*)

Almost three years past! (*It might have been yesterday, for the void still felt....*)

Well...anyway.., for a couple of years of JC's illness, he had medical permission to and did cultivate his own Mary Jane, until he was too infirm to do so.⁹⁰ At the last, right before he was hospitalized, he had bought a small amount at a clinic, of two strains--one called 'Purple'; the other (*most cruelly*), 'Widow.'

During his long stay in hospital (*a second tormenting surgery immediately followed the first*) I confess I did turn to that Mary Jane for relief, a couple of times. It allowed Body to relax and Brain to cry, so that thought could rein itself to his silent side during his last, unconscious 12 days and nights, until the intensive care monitors beeped into irreversible silence....

Some days after that February 14th, I called a mutual acquaintance deeply involved with standardizing legalization. Did he know some ill person who could use the remainder of JC's legally acquired Mary Jane? He was reluctant, however, and I understood. For him to pass it along would be against principles. So, what *was* I to do with it?

I wrestled with the issue a while until finally, one Saturday, I seemed to go on automatic pilot and proceeded to do what JC would have thought absolutely crazy. I got into Big Red, our '95 Jeep, and with the little bag on the seat beside me went for a ride through the Sonoma hills.

⁹⁰ For the first year I also had had a Mary Jane prescription, for pain from dislocated spinal vertebrae, as recorded in "Down and Up in Smoke," this domain.

It was a beautiful day; the surrounding scenery seemed sharper than usual. As I drove, I took bits from the bag and, grinding them between my fingers, distributed them out the open window along the countryside. Arriving home I wrote on my calendar, "Jennie Appleseed Day."

(The story, however, doesn't end there!)

To continue! It was the following year that I discovered a small collection of seeds JC had saved from old harvests. Immediately I thought, *I'll try growing some in his honor!* I didn't sprout the seeds first as I'd seen him do, on a paper plate with a damp covering. I simply lightly buried a dozen in the herb bed and *(lo and behold!)* three seedlings were born between the rosemary and sage.

I had such good feelings, planting JC's seeds; and those three sisters seemed to like it a lot, there in the herb bed. I imagined him warmly watching my novice effort, how undoubtedly he would say, "Now you're learning just how professional *my* cultivation was!"

I used wire tomato plant protectors to keep Bruno the cat from trampling over en route to the living catnip, but the seeds had been planted late. Come October, the plants barely were reaching for my midriff. Nonetheless (I having no medical certification) family members worried about them in full view. But those three precious little plants were so innocuous looking! And it seemed most reasonable to me, that a person be *entitled* to have a little private herb garden. Besides, who in the world would notice?

Well, a repairman that came to work on the property did. "Hmmm," he hummed, and then said with a knowing grin, "Those plants look pretty puny to me."

"You're not going to turn me *in*?" this little gray-haired lady exclaimed. But he just laughed at that, the kind of laugh that says, "You've got no worry from *me*, kid." Yet it was too true: despite consulting JC's reference library, my results were definitely amateurish; and I again acknowledged to JC's spirit the much there was to know about nurturing Mary Jane. If I had deciphered his code correctly

off the little seed container, the plants were a seedless strain (*sensimilla*); but for all I knew, their failure to produce seeds simply was due to lack of maturation.

As the weather worsened, and the sun in its move toward winter passed behind the oak tree, I recalled too late JC's remarks on the importance of specific light durations for correct growth. The buds by November still were immature, with only a beginning coating of resin, and serious rain had begun. I 'bit the bullet', harvested the plants, and let the small 'buds' (*collas*) and leaves dry, like he did, in an open brown paper bag near the heat register in the t.v. room, the warmest in the house.

When I finally tested the dried harvest, the efficacy of its essence was mild and short-lived. If, as is reported, a typical such cigarette can have from 4 to 40 mg of "THC" (Mary Jane's essence, *tetrahydrocannabinol*⁹¹), those poor little things couldn't have had more than one! Yet I was grateful for the relief, albeit brief, that it offered on a couple of occasions, when grieving (*--it always the same strength--*) overwhelmed me.

I've been obsessively cautious, always, about drugs *per se*. JC was fond of kidding me that the number of aspirin taken in my life wouldn't fill a bottle, and I've exasperated more than one doctor questioning treatments and prescribed dosages. So, in retrospect, it definitely is odd that my life occasioned a temporary friendship with Mary Jane, for which I've never gone looking. On the other hand, witness my addiction battle with nicotine, and the many times and ways I've tried to quit. Why, at this very moment as I type--despite *years* studying *that* pernicious habit-- with only one cigarette left in the pack, I soon will be making for the corner store.

Never have I denied the dangers of *smoking* itself, there being other non-injurious methods for Mary Jane treatment; and my experiences leave me convinced. I wholeheartedly (any reasonable individual would) deplore inclusion of THC with substances referable as *hallucinogenic* and *psychedelic* (to say nothing of cocaine and heroin). Obstruction of medical standardization of Mary Jane--absence of

⁹¹ See Glossary following "Down and Up In Smoke," page 72.

regulated production, governance and distribution--redound in keeping it 'on the street' and our youth needlessly in true harm's way.

It's incredible that, while contribution of alcohol to common violence and tragedy is so far from adequately addressed, *cannabis sativa* continues to fall victim to powerful lobby strangleholds on uninformed paranoia. Meanwhile, among other medical uses, Mary Jane's efficacy as an appetite aid has been evidenced in cases of ill persons threatened by malnutrition. As to THC's effects as I've known them, I would summarize them in two main categories: (1) an alleviating 'distancer of'/tranquilizer against physical pain, and (2) a palliator of psychological stress. But I would be remiss to neglect it as an (a) enhancer of love and creativity, and especially (b) intensifier of one's 'spiritual' nature.

As examples of (a), in those long-ago academic years we'd be planning a *small* dinner party but, if THC got involved in the invitation process, I'd invite a houseful. *Why not?--what's a few more dollars anyway?* I'd say to myself; *the more the merrier!* Or, I'd think I was going to buy a simple birthday present for a sister. Then, enter THC and the intense release of love would result in a double expenditure--*think how she'll just adore getting not just a blouse but a skirt too!*

Then there were a couple of times I definitely wound up over-burdening myself. Briefly mentally relieved of domestic obsessions, I'd start some ambitious art project which--once initiated--later meant I had to work double-time to cover everything 'on my plate'. Speaking of plates recalls appetite enhancement. In the low lighting at a Berkeley party in the late sixties I ate half a cube of butter on crackers, thinking it was the best cheese I'd ever tasted.

It is with 'spirituality', however, that I noted remarkably sharpened awe of the inter-connectedness of existence. Studies suggest that the discrete brain's environmentally-sensed receptions (perception, hearing, etc.) are heightened by chemical effects at synapses. I'm ignorant as to THC's molecular involvement there; but it brings to mind how the molecular structure of LSD is a mirror-image of the neurotransmitter, serotonin.

In 1979 a group of ethnobotanists (the famous R. Gordon Wasson of LSD fame being one) and scholars of mythology coined the term “entheogen” from two ancient Greek words--*entheos* and *genesthai*. *Entheos* translates to "full of the god, inspired, possessed" (the root of English "enthusiasm"); *genesthai*, "to come into being." The expression, which sometimes is given as “creating the Divine within,” emphasizes plant substance enhancement of spiritual nature in religious contexts, as anthropologically is known both of ancients and some modern sects,⁹² as opposed to recreational use.

(And now is the time that JC springs into the void, and again she wonders why.... What is it lodged in brain?--that causes this little burst from the eyes of bodily fluid of a particular composition--)

But now is a time I know: what I miss is not of Body but a companion of The Conscious--like that of my Father, who made love known wordlessly by his eyes. The Father and The Son....how comforting it would be to believe that they are together--*not* one entity, together each fully in their *individual* spirits, and that eventually my consciousness could join the company. Yet this also is the moment I can accept!--it is enough to know that, **while alive** between us was struck the best balance that our respective consciousnesses would allow.

How surprisingly relieving; no more need I cry. Now, I can work free, do that which I can to further our mutual beliefs. I want to be the seed of awareness, knowing that I am. My Palestine is now, here, every moment, even as hand runs the scrub brush around the toilet for the nth time of this one

⁹² E.g. *Native American* (*north*, peyote; *south*, ayahuasca); *Greek*, kykeon; *African*, iboga; *Vedic*, soma (“pressed juice”); 8000 b.c. Tassili, Algeria cave painting of a ‘mushroom man’; archeologically discovered hemp seeds suggesting Scythian practices, 5th to 2nd centuries b.c. (confirming *Herodotus* reports); datura, *Odyssey*; the herb *kaneh-bosm* (Hebrew: קנהב-בוסם), mentioned several times in the *Old Testament*, it being etymologically argued that the Aramaic word for hemp can be read as *kannabos*, the root *kan* = *reed or hemp*; *bosm* = *fragrant*; ancient Egypt, “blue lotus,” *nymphaea caerulea*; peyote cactus (*lophophora williamsii*), mescal bean (*sophora secundiflora*), psilocybin mushrooms (*teonanácatl*), various morning glories; (wine and strong tobacco—*nicotine*--also figuring anciently). The foregoing and “entheogen” data in this essay is derived from *Wikipedia*; the interested reader is referred to the numerous reliable sources there for details on the many areas, substances and uses *not* included here.

lifetime (*--lots better than being forced to walk to the corner and dig a proper hole!--even Bruno doesn't need to do that, she can hear JC saying*)....

I am content to be temporal human pure and simple; but I am not standing in my body, I'm riding in it—carried, held, protected, and preserved by it. Somewhere along the line, Body will need to go through a thing called 'dying' and I will cease to exist. Not, however (Time, not 'god' willing!) before I uncover more of the adulterated Word....

The Aged Cow's last confession...
*She loves to be asleep—
never more grateful a time of day
than, duty done, Body's spirited away.
On retiring she reads as she is wont,
another story by deMaupassant,
prepared fully for that welcoming sleep.
Last night, however, oblivion refused to creep.
So she decided to give old meditation a try
and floated a while behind the third eye;
but "nadam," so hypnotic in its resting state,
like quivering cymbals kept her awake.*

*Now in accordance with the Masters' decree
(more correctly, of the one who elevated **Me**),
when in the State of Bliss, Mind cannot write it;
when one is without, wordless Emotion can't describe it.
But he neglected to say (more correctly, I hadn't cognated)
that the opposite equally is to be appreciated:
in the State of Misery, Mind writes every word wrung;
and when Duty whisps one out, Emotion grows its tongue....*

*She saw then how bright was the light through the pane;
it summoned her outdoors; and leaving where she had lain,
for a long while beneath the full moon she stayed
contemplating all of the roles she had played.
Continuing to reflect upon that moon,
Mind piped "the Winter Solstice!" But wasn't it too soon?
(Yet how old, our daily accounting?—keep Cosmology in mind:
in the Universe's 'expansion'--blah, blah, blah--
our calendar just might be three days behind!)*

*Afterward, blessedly in sleep's deep bowl,
dreaming drew the last straw from her soul.*

*Two ways to think of death: one, there's a Heaven to go
(be good and we'll get there) or, this is all any of us will know.
Best, neither in mind and to recall how that feels:
 alive all in one, not split between reels--
 dinner in the oven, the months 'til Winter three;
 everyone you love safe, both in Time and Memory.
 Soon Thanksgiving's candles will be burning;
 then family Christmas will be returning....
 Live!--eschewing Consciousness after death,
 don't rely on its existence without breath.
Give up questioning what has been or will be faced;
what is said stays said but what is written can be erased.
 Would but that Humankind on earthly sod
 equal what it places in the mind of its god.*

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