

# **Beginning Again:**

## Meditations Between Relationships

by

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# Beginning Again: Meditations Between Relationship

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*What we have chosen.*

*What we choose next.*

*In between, the mirror.*

## Beginning Again:

### Meditations Between Relationships

**A marriage ends. A life begins. In between is my story.**

#### ***Foreword***

The emotional and personal details of this unraveling are beyond what I can discreetly relate. My former partner . . . you might say my ex, but since we were together under common law, let's just say she left me for X\_\_\_\_ . . . is best known, for our purposes, as Z\_\_\_\_. I can only attempt to sketch here my own role in this drama, a prelude to the larger journey I was given to undertake. Along the way I fell into a black well in a white desert; but rose out to walk the mountains again.

On the day Z\_\_\_\_ and I “officially” split up, the enormity of what this meant in every aspect of my life overwhelmed me. I'd had everything in this all-too-domestic realm finally figured out; I was set for life. I had even plotted the end of [my autobiography](#). It was all about not needing any more to seek perfection in outward terms, but only to fine-tune one's attitude, one's aesthetic enjoyment of life – which meant, in my case, perhaps only the life story itself. There was nothing left to do, really, but write about the life-cycle of a human male coming to an early (mid-forties) dormancy. I should have guessed something was missing in this gray vision.

I knew why and how it happened, of course. I couldn't give Z\_\_\_\_ enough; and for that deficiency, there were sufficient reasons. For too long I'd focused on work and the desire for worldly success, and had learned too well to temper whatever emotions I brought to the arrangement. When it came to the business of loving, I was found lacking in passion – though with passion enough for someone else along the way.

My fate in the game of [sexual chess](#) seemed to be nearing a bitter conclusion. You could say I was in a state of checkmate, after some questionable plays.

Was this normal behavior, or some chaotic karma of my own blind choosing? I looked back and began to feel the fallen hero of a new kind of memoir, Confessions of a Don Juan Wannabe. Now the tale was made longer . . .

Before this decade-and-a-half flirtation with disaster, came a similarly plotted comi-tragedy starring my first wife, K\_\_\_\_. The details were various and ended with her

running off to New York with a lesbian lover, and me discovering “true love” with a new age gypsy who I believed might rescue me from that disconsolate abandonment. Of course then K\_\_\_\_\_ returned. Six months of indecisive hell followed, landing me in the arms of a number of other lovers. One of these was Z\_\_\_\_\_, a girl under twenty whom I thought was the answer to my lifelong quest for . . . [the Lasting Relationship](#).

### ***Prelude: Starting Over***

The ides of March: Caesar's death. On this day, after a week of protracted agony, Z\_\_\_\_, my partner of fourteen years, has decided she will be lovers with another man.

The house we built together, the truck we bought, our bed . . . the garden, the firewood, even the stupid kitchenware; and oh yes, our thirteen-year old daughter Nellie . . . all are suddenly thrown open to question.

The last thing in my life I want right now is to have to figure out the basics, all this physical and emotional stuff, all over again. How did I let this perfection I've worked so long and hard to achieve fall apart like last year's rotting fence?

Now it feels as if I am imprisoned: with no positive choices before me.

I could just wait it out, for instance, while Z\_\_\_\_ turns the screws by beginning her sexual relationship with X\_\_\_\_ . . .

No way – better to fast-forward the split and get the painful necessities over with.

Then I am left to find my freedom elsewhere. What shape could this possibly take? Other lovers? Like who? L\_\_\_\_ from the summer workshop four years ago comes to mind. Can I still find her and try it out with her, for real this time? How about M\_\_\_\_, my boss? N\_\_\_\_, if she would have me? These are all absurd in their way.

I see here my ultimate loneliness driving me from one expedient and insufficient relationship to the next. Maybe I need to get serious instead with my own healing.

Yeah, and then what?

The more I think of it, maybe that cosmic connection with L\_\_\_\_ is the one beacon that's been calling me all this time. Maybe I never really gave her up. Now finally I have my chance to find out for sure.

But I can see this firefly already self-extinguishing, my chance coming too late: another of life's tragedies.

Or, maybe the timing is perfect, because there are compelling reasons it had to wait: to let Z\_\_\_\_ make the choice, for her own best interests and in her own time. To let our daughter grow up a little more. To let me become more secure in the world. To let L\_\_\_\_ do whatever she has needed to do in the meantime.

What about carrying on my creative work, or my business? The prospects aren't appealing, in my present state. And I thought I was so diligent with all this personal growth stuff. Yeah, right. The trouble is, it was too personal. It didn't allow room for my partner to grow with me, for me to grow with her. Now, of course, it's too late.

Will I suffer like this, as in mourning, for a whole year? Possibly. Will I, like N\_\_\_\_, take a vow of freedom from plans for a year, and see what happens? Maybe what happens is we get together.

It's funny how synchronistic things are. N\_\_\_\_ showed up for supper Thursday night, after encountering Z\_\_\_\_ on a random walk through the woods. And M\_\_\_\_ called the next day, asking, "How are you doing?"

"Oh, all right," I lied.

"Just all right?"

"Yeah." We went on to talk a little business. She could tell something wasn't right, my heart wasn't in it.

She could be my sponsor into the world of success – just as R\_\_\_\_ was, a quarter-century ago. Where did that sexual compromise get me? Am I ready now, can I stand on my own two feet yet? I don't know. R\_\_\_\_ had an earlier crush on a guy named Jimi. Jimi had a word for me: "Driftin'."

The computer hums. The clouds drift low, stuck actually, over the crown of Mt. Cooper: where Z\_\_\_\_ and I went climbing together . . . with X\_\_\_\_. This scene doesn't work anymore. This scene is incompatible. I need to take Z\_\_\_\_'s picture down from my website, and off my picture of the waterfall in Nepal. A floating face: ungrounded.

I feel a strange sense of freedom despite my loss. I could still go to Nepal if I wanted – or not, as my whim dictates. I'm now more free than ever to do my networking business, my creative writing. Without expectations tailored for somebody else, my life could be, at last, my own.

If I could simply therapize myself out of depression about it all, I could be free to enjoy what I still enjoy living for. That's what it's all about, right? "Ultimate Freedom," my business slogan? I asked for it; now I've got it.

If I can master my own loneliness, that's the key. It is normal, natural, to feel loneliness, I think. Yet my mission now is to come to terms with it, to be honest with myself and with any prospective partner. Loneliness is clearly contrary to my own self-interest. I want to protect my internal passions, for success, for creative activity. I have a chance now to get in touch with who and how I really am and want to be.

And how would I describe it? It's difficult. Maybe no more than being ready to move into change for change's sake. And that's not a bad thing. It's in keeping with the spirit of water: flowing on, changing state.

A long deep river – fourteen years long – is drying up, but a new spring is opening. I don't have to judge my situation, my options as all negative. This is a test: a major life lesson. Do I truly believe, as my mother always said with an ironically resigned sigh, that "everything happens for the best?" Do I believe with the tribe of



affirmative sinus sufferers that there is a reason for our affliction and that it might be healed (or at least prevented, next time) if only we remembered to sing our mantra, “Everything Happens in Perfect Time”? If I don’t believe these truisms, I have nothing to go on. But I do believe them, and I can use this core understanding to bring me new enthusiasm, new passion, new growth, and the excitement of new experiences.

Z\_\_\_\_\_ was “terrified” to make the decision she did, but felt compelled to make it anyway. Of course: how else to grow, but to move in directions that are scary?

16 March

I start looking out for singles. Isn’t this the way it goes?

*Dream on, brother. There is another way. There is a snowy path to the high peaks.*

I will not go there, though – too stuck in my ways.

*All right, then: more relationship. It can be done. You ought to know.*

The question is why, how, with whom, when?

*Every day, every moment is an adventure now.*

When I said that to Z\_\_\_\_\_ last night, she said her whole life has been like that.

*Maybe she’ll change her mind about you, today?*

I don’t think so. The path is fixed now. Committed – for the first and last time.

I will arrange payment when I figure out what’s what. This year, my income should be considered as . . . mine? . . . shared? It’s hard to reconcile with any consistent logic.

K\_\_\_\_\_ was sympathetic, by email: “It’s so very sad.”

*Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee*: reading last night, by Crow Dog.

I haven’t really lost that much in work time, after all the turmoil of the past week. Am I selfish even to consider carrying on in a normal fashion now? There just seems to be no choice. And meanwhile to salve my wounds in sexual fantasy, boyish baseball . . . and schemes for making money.

Yes, my dear K\_\_\_\_\_, it is sad, isn’t it? We both remember.

And do I once again look forward to some nubile creature to share my bed?

Not quite yet: I could still come home to find Z\_\_\_\_\_ in it with her new lover.

This is all too painful. When will the main shock come? Today, tonight? Now I understand how it happens.

But how is it that Z\_\_\_\_\_ and I are still sharing a bed? It’s weird. As if both of us are still holding on: stuck. Neither of us wants to make the move, to pull the actual trigger.

Z\_\_\_\_'s face was shining last night with the certainty of who she wants to be, and with the integrity of all her feelings. She was full of love for my replacement, it was evident. According to her she was also filled with love for me, but I could not perceive it.

It occurs to me now that a mind can be divided, but a heart cannot.

I lay a long time beside her in bed last night, and again this morning, with the dread of the train going off the cliff, the catastrophe of actual separation still yet to come. It is a useful lesson which Z\_\_\_\_ has recently learned from dealing with headaches: to be with the pain, to feel the pain. That way the dread itself becomes less over time, so that it will not in itself bring the next headache on.

Therefore I will, like Z\_\_\_\_, take refuge in being at one with my honest feelings. Not shoving the pain aside, or denying it, or wishing it away. This feeling is not the future, it is the present. I do not need to dread the future if I can already experience the pain in the present.

When does the actual break come? I don't know.

In some ways the worst has come already. The rest is detail: manifestation. Once the intention is laid, the rest unfolds. This is also the wisdom of the Bible's admonition about adultery, which happens first and foremost in the heart.

Which is worse? – the first time, the second time, or the last time with me before the first time with someone else?

This has already happened.

I am the frog still alive in the soup pot, warming finally to a boil.

Two days later, I wrote:

"I want to get back to work. Is this escape or capture?"

I recalled a poem I wrote at the time I was getting together with K\_\_\_\_, nearly twenty-five years earlier:

Is this escape or capture?

My thumbs remember trees.

We walk inside these old deep woods toward new springs . . .

And I was filled with more questions: as in the days and weeks and months and years since L\_\_\_\_. L\_\_\_\_ stood for this whole situation. Maybe she created it – or as Z\_\_\_\_ would put it, she was a symptom of the underlying conditions.

Yet, I found myself not so uncomfortable with those very conditions:

“If this is the way to die, I want to die with my boots on: still at work, the daily routine, in touch with my preferences and comfortable habits. My mission, in the contentment I have built for myself painstakingly over years, is now to change as little as possible in my immediate environment, so that I can focus my precious energy on improvements in my career ventures.”

So much for new resolutions: change for change’s sake, lessons to be learned. I wanted business as usual. And I proceeded to work hard to get it. But there kept being this new bunch of work to be done. Unfamiliar, emotional work. Oh God, not this *feelings* business again. K\_\_\_\_, maybe you were right.

In the afternoon I met with Z\_\_\_\_ at the ridge lookout over the lakehead, finalizing the end of the marriage: like that hot summer day in the dust by the woodshed, when K\_\_\_\_ and I decided we were no longer married.

Closer to the end: a one-way trail. I walked home alone through the woods, into the house I’d planned with K\_\_\_\_ and built with Z\_\_\_\_, and picked up a book I had been reading, *High Energy*. The new chapter I began moved immediately from diet to stress, raising the issue of emotional attachment due to the influence of the “negative ego.”

And I thought I was maybe just down on myself for getting stuck in the role of the old [rogue male](#) put out to pasture while the younger stud got his licks in . . .

I was advised to make a two-column chart in order to examine first my starting place and, in contrast, an alternative worldview:

**Limiting, attachment-based, negative ego beliefs:**

X\_\_\_\_ has got the better of him: the young buck triumphant!

The old fool couldn’t keep her satisfied.

He sabotaged his own desire for success by neglecting the most important area: relationship.

He approached success in relationship as in other areas: mechanically, from the outside in, without true passion. Of course this ambition was doomed to failure.

**Empowering, empathetic beliefs:**

Z\_\_\_\_ is getting what she most needs in her life now.

I’m getting the freedom I have been craving, while empowering Z\_\_\_\_ to grow where she needs to.

Each of us are being honest about what the relationship can offer us and what it can’t.

This end to one relationship is a temporary setback, but also a step forward toward greater fulfillment and growth for all concerned, and expression

	of honest passions.
It is immoral to have sex outside of a given sexual relationship.	It is most moral for each person to act on the feelings which are most honest and present and persistent within us.
It is immoral to have sexual intentions to replace or break up a given relationship and family.	The life force, the force of growth and change and fulfillment, must have its way over stagnation and convention.
It is weakness to accept cuckolding without a fight.	It is strength to rise above one's limiting attachments, honoring the path of greatest mutual fulfillment in the larger picture of an unfolding future.
Animal nature, the reality of jealousy and bitterness and loss, must take precedence over ideals of free love.	Animal nature and spiritual freedom go hand in hand, if we are to be spontaneous, and real, and to let passion flow fully where it is most genuinely attracted.
It is impossible to successfully coexist in a relationship with outside sexual contact.	Every relationship is unique and fluid, and therefore adaptable to suit the highest purpose of all concerned.
It is humiliating to have one's partner sleeping with someone else. Better to save face by severing the relationship altogether.	A relationship may or may not work well with outside partners; the right form must be found to suit the emotional needs of all concerned.
To move from a sexual relationship to a nonsexual one is too difficult and messy with emotion to work in the long run.	Moving from a sexual to a nonsexual or non-monogamous relationship requires freedom from the attachments of limiting, negative-ego beliefs.
There is no point in continuing a relationship which is no longer sexual.	Relationship does not end, it simply changes, and we have the choice and power to create the changes that match our true needs and desires.

Other people's opinions matter and must be catered to.

Other peoples' opinions are an abstraction and carry less weight than real and honest feelings in one's relationships.

The nuclear family is the only model of living arrangement that I can function well in.

I can function best in a relationship and living arrangement that honors my needs and desires, that gives me freedom and space, and that gives me love, acceptance and respect for who I am and what I feel.

So proud of myself for the bootstrap therapy this chart provided me, I danced merrily with Z\_\_\_\_ all evening at Susan's party, crowing to X\_\_\_\_'s bitter ex about the importance of replacing those nasty negative ego beliefs, and how easy it was. I was blind of course, to the black moods that would dog me within days of my enlightenment.

I awoke radiant to see Mt. Cooper shining in a new dawn, with a clear blue sky above it. I lit the woodstove in the study and basked in the warm glow of the fire at my back. Here was the solitude, the separation I had sought within relationship. Now I had it, all to myself.

I picked an angel card, and began writing,

*The blank angel card gives way to . . . humor: release into the grace of the moment. Letting grief pass, and anxiety slide away: as in sharing understanding in a quick instant with another . . . but who? For the moment, it doesn't seem to matter.*

*All is possible now: no entanglement. I am ready to go forward into the world with the good news, the gospel, of emotional and therefore physical health. Already my rash, which was much worse after a stressful couple of days, feels healed. My energy feels prime and flowing.*

Did it seem odd to me that on my filing cabinet wall I had pictures of only Nellie and myself, and not Z\_\_\_\_, next to the pink paper heart saying "Vision Becomes Reality"? I had envisioned travel to Africa with Z\_\_\_\_ and Nellie, but would have to trade in my imagined ticket now for the inner voyage, a solo one.

*The world is new, already. We are traveling in a new world now, seeing new sights for the first time, free to come and go as we please, to mingle with new people. The world is now open to all of us without restriction of our own relationship patterns and habits and predispositions.*

*What contacts will I have, or will I make, today?*

*Will I really contact L\_\_\_\_, or is it too soon?*

*Whatever I do, I must do it from the movement of my heart, not my mind.*

Yes, Vision Becomes Reality. But not in the form that we may imagine. The form like water takes its own path. The form takes the path most in consistency with the intent of the spirit. For relationship to take priority and flower in success, it needs to be utterly in tune with the deepest needs and truest expressions of all concerned.

I had more work to do yet.

23 March

Today Z\_\_\_\_ moves to O\_\_\_\_'s to house-sit. Waking up at 4, I gave her one last hug, with my pelvis kept discreetly off to the side, getting up to do my exercises and light the fire and proceed with my Internet research. Now I find myself clacking the keys, the same as ever. Is this change painful? Maybe so, but there are ways around it . . .

Finally – I can look at it like this, can feel it like this if I choose – I'm getting free. This is the first day of the rest of my life.

Contemplating a new moniker: Now.

In this now, the fog drifts deep in the forest. The wet firewood stews at my back, cooling. I go on into the future, less a man and every bit more a spirit.

*The dream goes on.*

Rehashing the memories with K\_\_\_\_; I should have given her back her cruddy albums . . .

*Retreating into loneliness?*

No matter. Another end is near.

*And so what will become of you, Now?*

Stewed in my own juices: this morning, up an hour and a half already, to what effect? A little yoga, meditation, affirmation, email and sports news. Onward to the rest of the day: setting up the website, ready to do business. Notes and tips, always flooding in . . .

*A life without passion . . . is that what this so-called freedom is supposed to be about?*

Still bitter over yesterday's time wasted in the kitchen – I should have known, two rounds of whipped cream consumed by the women, and a whole pie gone already, my domestic duties in vain. I'm not really looking forward to this. But, whatever. A lame duck. A rogue male.

This carburetor needs to find the right mix, the right flow of air. I need to learn the ropes, get with the new program. First, okay, dealing with the chores, the basics. Doing the right thing. Meanwhile I am waiting for . . . my redemption song.

*"Dream on, dreamer, life gets in the way . . ."*

Fire at my back, rise and take off. I sit with wings folded in my chair, waiting for the fog to lift.

*How poignant.*

Am I becoming bitter and cynical? I need new love to lift my hope.

*And what for? Are you really capable of being devoted to anyone but yourself?*

This is the real legacy I learned from my father: addiction to self.

*Your honesty is brutal. What is your purpose in being?*

I need love in my life, but in a balance that suits me.

*To wonder in bed every morning where she's going to go? To regret not keeping a perfect love? The form you thought suited you became too expensive, too hardened by habit. There is mercy in the movement of forms in time. She was ready to move, to grow past the form.*

I am ready too, now, to accept whatever has come. There is room to grow now. I go on into the future, believing that everything I desire is possible. Linked to the past by my emotion – but not regretting: that is not useful.

*Dreaming, breathing. In, out.*

This life, this fog lifts, leaving the dream to come. I dream of the cool beach . . .

*And what will you do there, contemplate nature?*

Z\_\_\_\_\_ was a poor fit, after all: too intense, playful, kidlike for me. I'm more relaxed, subdued. She calls it my style.

*So, she's getting free: give her credit: and yourself as well.*

I go on into my own chosen night.

*On into the fog, but remember to breathe slowly to make up for the time you didn't meditate very well, and for the multitasking obstinacy of the left brain still humming its business-as-usual, honing the details of its latest online offer. What will you choose now to fill your chosen night, your first night alone?*

Cool jazz . . . email inbox empty . . . credit card researches underway . . . an updated phone number for L\_\_\_\_\_ . . . new music CDs on the way . . . in good health . . . new Web domain now open for business . . . new homepage created and designed yesterday and ready to go . . . Internet marketing research coming together for sales-information-and-promotion campaign . . . no special needs around relationship now . . . just enjoying being alone with the novelty of freedom applied to what is important to me, my interests in leisure and work, self-expression and creativity, sharing and inspiration, doing useful work in the world, communicating and publishing, getting the hits up and adding technical proficiency to the website, it's just a matter of commitment and ongoing maintenance, daily, like everything else; I suppose I could even get back into drumming and writing again, but the truth is that my current priorities are website and computer and business, so that relationship and nature and spirituality and community and creativity can just suffer. C'est la vie.

*Sexual frustration lingers underneath, all the while, hissing this truth: you need to master the serpent Kundalini.*

24 March

Most of the morning I lost to sleeping in, and doing extra chores like dishwashing. But it was not time wasted: I realized then how much I needed to be true to myself.

I enjoyed the feeling of not having to relate to anyone (Z\_\_\_\_\_ in particular) with any pressure from them (real or imagined) of expectation or dissatisfaction or unfulfilled need. This was an aspect of our co-dependence that was poisonous to me. It was a no-win situation, because if I didn't make the effort and time for Z\_\_\_\_\_, her particular brand of neediness emerged; and if I did make some sort of sacrifice or deference to her wishes (as I perceived them), then I seemed to resent it, and she resented my resentment, and of course that didn't work either.

Now I could value, without conflict, my independence and my interests, however prosaically male (baseball, computers, business, philosophy, career, intellect, abstractions of language and reality). Where was I headed, though, and what was the nature of the person I most wanted to become? What did I really want to do with this new-found freedom?

I was already embarked on that quest and so the answer was familiar: To build up my resources, in terms of a financial cushion and greater social confidence, in order to move more freely and creatively through the world – enjoying freedom for its own sake, and glorying in the sense of achievement and accomplishment.

But I also knew, in that “down-time” of washing dishes, that I needed to learn something different: to enjoy what I'm doing while I'm doing it. So that it's not just a chore in the service of some remote objective.

I did like the process of writing, for instance . . . .

After the dishes I went to sit in comfort in my warm study on that gray March day, plugged in to hot jazz of my choosing, relishing the snug sense of food in the pantry and money in the bank and gas in the truck and ice cream in the freezer and . . . L\_\_\_\_\_’s updated phone number in my address book.

“Cloudy haze,” I recorded, “obscuring the peaks. I feel ready for revelation, whether it comes or not. There is a new calendar page to be turned. I am awash again in the sea of the possible. I go into the void of the day, the next moment. I am not too sad; only a little bitter. Why did Z\_\_\_\_\_ and I spend so many years together? Because it was convenient. We were, in the end, just friends. And now, hardly that.”

I decided the time was right: no time like the present. I called L\_\_\_\_\_ at her new number in Arizona. She was shocked to hear from me – after a lapse in communications



of three years. But she sounded pleased, and that familiar huskiness in her voice warmed my heart as if I'd never left her side. I told her I'd looked up her number on the Internet. She said she was surprised I was into computers: she'd known me only as drummer and beach boy.

I asked her how she was doing. She told me she was dealing with the breakup of a recent relationship – someone who was too needy – and the impending death of her first lover.

I told her of my recent breakup, and said that after some further time had passed – for us both to have a chance to ground from these present disturbances – maybe we could get together again for a visit.

It was all rather sudden, she said. She was seriously preoccupied with grieving, and with the work of her teaching load and writing project. But she said that she would enjoy keeping in touch.

I hung up in a cloud of elation, which buoyed me for a day or two, before the inevitable letdown. She loves me . . . she loves me not. My emotional space became frazzled; my daily work declined into a mishmash of chores, miscellany, eruptions of skin rash and disruptions of sleep, emotional needs still coming from Z\_\_\_\_ and tugging me back to my own negative ego-beliefs. She says on the phone that she wants to remain in close relationship with me, but meanwhile has begun a blissful sexual relationship with X\_\_\_\_. How is this possible? For me right now, it's not.

I go on to fill my days with easier stuff: email, Internet, planning, files, taxes, photocopies, dump run, schoolwork with Nellie, chicken feed, computer troubleshooting, orchard work, napping, website updates, reading . . .

I realize I may not be quite ready for another relationship yet.

2 April

I lay in bed late this morning, reading and browsing and finishing a number of self-help books: *You Can Heal Your Life*, *Reinventing Your Life*, and *Healing the Child Within*. For these I was finally ready.

C\_\_\_\_ phoned twice to talk about the flyer project. It's up in the air now because she's having to relocate, with her large trailer. I was moved by the texture of her voice, and began to fantasize in a benevolent way about inviting her to move here. Is this compassion or reacting to my own loneliness? I felt 60% clear about it, but on her second call, offered only to take calls for her business, as she has a place to stay for another month and then a spot to move to around Beaton. A couple more days may give me more time to think about it. I don't like the idea of a couple of small kids around, but I do like C\_\_\_\_ and her energy.

Isn't this too much like a repeat of the E\_\_\_\_ scenario? I can see Z\_\_\_\_ reacting just as K\_\_\_\_ did. C\_\_\_\_ is like E\_\_\_\_ in some ways, only mellower. I could use someone who's not uptight (like both K\_\_\_\_ and Z\_\_\_\_ were).

I also can see myself falling into the old trap of multiple possibilities: having L\_\_\_\_ on a long line, and C\_\_\_\_ close at hand, Z\_\_\_\_ resentful and vindictive and clingy. And it could get worse. As others saw me playing the field, they might decide to enter: N\_\_\_\_, for instance. My God I can see how it wouldn't take much encouragement from anyone to get me going. While I could tell myself now and in the foreseeable future that I'm a happy hermit – a stable bachelor engaged to my own ambitions and projects – really I'm a soft touch when it comes to getting some acceptance and encouragement and affection. I could be drawn into practically anyone's orbit, at this rate. No, it won't be long, this exile from womankind. I know the limits of money and fame, and the price of loneliness which I'm unwilling to pay. For the moment I'm fine with it.

"Fine" – that overused word as in, How're you; how're you doing.

Fine, thanks. That's the answer, the formula my parents taught me to say.

To escape, withdraw, deny.

How's everything in that rotten dysfunctional abusive corrupt alcoholic angry and unloving family of yours?

Fine, thank you.

In fact, I may simply be too lazy or shy or afraid of rejection to put myself out very far, in terms of showing interest. I'm such a believer in spontaneity and cosmic flow . . . like the timing of the death of L\_\_\_\_'s other relationships right now; or the need of C\_\_\_\_ for a new place to live.

Who knows, O\_\_\_\_ could enter the fray, at the end of her rope with her husband of twenty-two years. And it's not like we're starting from scratch. How long ago was it – twelve years? – when I stood by the door and told her I loved her?

I was in my thirty-fifth year: the year of the true "midlife" crisis, according to Yeats's lunar-cycle allegory for the human life. We knew it wouldn't do to indulge in a flat-out love affair: so we tried to cultivate a "special friendship" instead. Z\_\_\_\_ and I survived that experiment with a long soreness in our love. My desire itself came into question and was dampened thereafter with a blanket of ashes: a vaguely stated commitment, a provisional formula of stability.

Ever since then, I insulated myself from feeling or showing feelings for anyone else, for fear of jeopardizing my relationship with Z\_\_\_\_. And now, that fear has a new object: fear of commitment to any other bounded relationship, with its inevitable expectations and nagging incompatibilities.

Yes, I am enjoying "the flow" for now. But flow has a way of solidifying over time. What do I really want? It's time, I think, to figure this out first, for a change.

Time to put on those self-help boots and learn to walk. But do they fit me?

My journal entry tells the tale:

*The therapists all argue the merits of their own training. Thus the self-help cadre assumes, as a given, that to live in a pattern of not acknowledging and feeling and expressing feelings to others freezes us at a low level of growth. We have become inadequate in the possible human experience.*

*So here we come to the more “correct” ethic of people like Z\_\_\_\_\_ and X\_\_\_\_\_:*

*. . . we begin to explore and to experience our feelings at a deeper or “gut” level. Here we are able to tell others as feelings come up for us how we really feel. By doing so we can have much interpersonal interaction with people who are important to us and can experience our life more. We thereby grow mentally, emotionally and spiritually . . . we are better able to experience intimacy with another. (Healing the Child Within)*

*Reading this brings up feelings in me that I feel worthwhile expressing, but only in print. Does this make me less human? Apparently. Do I feel the need to deny this? Not necessarily. It’s just that I feel uncomfortable being judged. I can be more open to advice if I feel my own need to change, than if I am being presented with the criticism that I am unfeeling..*

*Perhaps I should take that criticism as constructive. Run with that. Why do I feel the need to be defensive around this? Why do I seek instead to escape from the minefield of emotion, and why do I refer to it as a minefield?*

*The theory points in my case to alcoholism in my home environment. I learned that it’s better to run away, or to overcome depression through sober work.*

I had to pause in writing further, with a persistent difficulty in breathing, a well of unresolved feelings.

Despite my discomfort with the dogma of the self-help gurus, I had decided to enlist the help of a good friend who was also a hypnotherapist. Ellen specialized in inner child work, an area that seemed more and more relevant to my needs. Before our first session I had talked with her about my discomfort with the unvarying prescription of intimacy and “sharing of feelings.” Even in the safety of her support, I felt myself reacting with defensiveness, and it was but a short leap for both of us to realize that I felt under a familiar kind of attack.

The authors I’d been reading, I complained, sounded just like Z\_\_\_\_\_ comparing me to X\_\_\_\_\_ – with me coming up short. I was also reminded of my relationship with K\_\_\_\_\_, who had roasted me well over the flames of radical feminism.

Ellen affirmed for me the value of doing things my own way. She wisely also gave me the space to consider if opening to feelings was something that could be helpful and desirable for me. I could do this safely, for example, by sharing more with friends.

She also helped me to realize that I could identify powerful feelings by noticing tightness in my breath. As a gateway to somatic awareness, breath could be a key to accessing feeling states, including long-buried emotions.

I began to see how breath could be far more than a vehicle to spiritual awareness, as I had once thought. It could form, rather, a bridge between the spiritual and emotional realms. Fourteen years earlier, caught in unbearable turmoil between K\_\_\_\_ and E\_\_\_\_, I had thought of spirituality more as separate from the emotional realm – and a preferable one, at that. I went on a week-long retreat with a Tibetan lama in order to sort out, or escape from, that particularly hellish triangle of confusion – without success. With the spiritual and the emotional linked through the breath, I had to learn that there is no escape. There is nothing to be done but to breathe into and through the pain, in order to come out the other side.. Ellen provided the additional insight that emotion is energy, and therefore provides access to the universe, to universal energy.

3 April

The cat woke me up this morning crying at both closed doors, endlessly, his emotions stirred by Nellie's return. Last night at storytime he cuddled with us on Nellie's bed with the most utterly contented look on his face.

Back to business: the work on the self. As Z\_\_\_\_ has been doing for a year now: full-time work.

I really would prefer another kind of work. Not psychology, with its endless untangling of knotted threads of personal history, but literature, for instance, or even a more dependable basis of income such as business administration or computer science.

Aren't these all forms of escape from emotional reality?

Literature like music can be a valid inroad to the realm of emotion, unless it is – as I need to beware – over-intellectual. That's why I like the African drum, because it's such a body-instrument. It's for the dance and part of the dance, and also part of the body, using the body and the full flow of body energy and awareness; and its beat sends vibrations into all the cells of the body.

As for the literary path to enlightenment, I am interested in exploring the self – but more as a matter of consciousness, than of emotional expression. I'm interested in the transforming of emotion. This self-help business is, I'm glad to discover, more than just an exchange of intimacy; it's an exercise in consciousness-raising, through language.

*Is my goal, then, my core feeling, more about exploring and explaining consciousness, or developing intimate relationship?*

This is a big key question, and one I don't have a ready answer for. I am forced to consider it, though, after yesterday, when C\_\_\_\_ phoned, and suddenly I remembered that I am still subject to the emotional sway of connection with another person. I am not as surely committed to personal paths of achievement and success as I thought. Have I been using these techniques as escapes from intimacy with Z\_\_\_\_, all along? Probably. It's not what I wanted to believe: but experience shows otherwise.

Why was I avoiding greater intimacy with Z\_\_\_\_?

Was she just a stopgap for something else I was missing?

It's all too complicated to answer simply. Our whole history was, in simplest terms, an exercise in the arbitrariness of love, of married happiness . . . and a good example of the limitations of that kind of arrangement. Of course it fell against the threat of an outside force of greater passion and spontaneity and connection.

Which brings me to: have I done anything with this empty feeling still gnawing at my gut? Perhaps. There is this reality: it isn't going to be wished or affirmed away, by telling myself or other people that I'm "fine, thanks" or even "doing great."

"Mostly good" is more accurate. Sometimes we have only a few words to use. Sometimes we can only say yes or no.

"Do you love me or not?"

"Yes."

That doesn't quite say it all, however.

Life, the ongoing experiment.

Every morning, these days, I awake to find my hands clasped over my heart, like a mummy.

My vision is to do all the things I want to do. It is also to grow in the capacity to enjoy the non-doing form of being, enjoying the grace of sharing creation in the present moment.

I saw a tree in perfect clarity last Tuesday after a visit to Kenneth's, an ordinary small fir leaning over, perhaps dead, near the bottom of the trail down to Creek Corner. My consciousness was filled with wonder at the simple yet all-encompassing spectacle of the bark, with its pattern and texture and complexity of fungi and lichens, the intricacy of color even of the basic light gray as it swirled into odd shapes and was twisted by fissures and stippled by odd bits of other organic forms or merely pocked by pigments of its own nature.

5 April

On this day I found great consolation from Pema Chödrön's book, *When Things Fall Apart*. It confirmed my recent learning about spiritual awareness – that it's accessed not by going away from but by going through the direct experience of emotional pain. And it struck a timely balance for me between the negative feelings of loss, blame, revenge, anger, depression, loneliness . . . and the positive ones of acceptance, freedom, independence, clarity.

Prone to swinging back and forth, first blinded by the positive and then blindsided by the negative, I needed most at this time, an understanding of the inevitability of loss, and of the need to integrate it through acceptance. The unconscious, in harmony with the laws of nature, knows this balance is necessary, and so will bring both sides to bear, one way or another. It will even intervene when necessary, to provide (through the timely connection of a good friend) just the right book at just the right time.

In breathing, quiet meditation, reflection and contemplation, I could begin to see all sides of my condition. And so while still experiencing both pain and elation, I could begin to avoid the real pain, which is the attachment to these emotions. I was starting to learn that even attachment to positives like freedom or clarity is inherently unsafe, as these are as prone to dissolution as the creamiest wedding cake).

In this moment, it strikes me what I have to do in my life: Be true to this present moment and every moment to come, one by one.

Yes, there are obligations and connections to keep up: with daily chores, my family, community, business contacts, all the projects I undertake. There is also a freedom in not having to stop breathing for any of these; rather, to relax into the moment and see what the next moment brings.

If there is any lesson to be learned from all of this (from life itself), it is that nothing is firmly fixed as a single answer. There is always a next, in the movement of time.

I look at what I need to face. My loneliness, I can live with. I am a crab with a soft nature inside my hard shell. That's okay. I can live with it. Meditation makes me strong, allows me to observe and accept.

How can I feel "great" after splitting up?

How can I not feel great: looking at Cooper, cloud on snow. There is so much beyond the human, that I am humbled in its presence. How insignificant my emotional struggles, how narrow and transitory.

There is more to be done, if I but get on with the work. So I continue, going through the list, doing what needs to be done. Uploading files, perusing the Organization Chart from the Business Task Sequence, merging To-Do Priorities with the Website Worksheet: these all subsist on the substratum of mind changes and emotional novelty.

Now clouds pass quickly over the sky which a short time ago was clear. So it goes, all in flux.

In California, in Arizona where I imagine L\_\_\_\_\_ now waits tanned and self-contained, you can let go of emotional climates of past life dramas. In the all-shimmering heat, bedazzled, you can forget.

Still here in my valley of the interior rain forest, I can remember. There is time enough here to heal. In the fertile, dreaming mind all is forgiven, and new starts can be made.

From the standpoint of present time, all is possible. Retreating from the future and from anxiety about it, I return to present potential. So powerful, all possible. There will be ways open.

I can run, walk, do another dance.

There is reason to dream, reason to run.

14 April

Up, down, up, down. This week I'm due to go down, and sure enough, when Z\_\_\_\_\_ came by yesterday, my mood blackened.

Now I can breathe again. There's only so much mileage I can get out of blame and resentment. She's so strong in her independence and commitment only to present time, and always has been. This is to her credit. So I can't really complain. She gave me fourteen years and I have to let her go now. Like a daughter: I can't hang on forever.

*Giving her away to another man.*

That's life. It's all a matter of expectation. What did I expect? What do I expect of myself, of life itself, now?

Back to the job: the all-night shift. Up at 1:48, on to work. Keeping the fires burning. The bright moon rides high in the sky outside: surrounded by a small smoldering rainbow circle of starfire.

I can eat with Z\_\_\_\_\_, no problem, on Thursday. I can keep a straight face. I can forgive her and move on.

Still, I disagree about friendship. To me, it's black and white: friends, or lovers. She proved that herself, with X\_\_\_\_\_. It's a phase change: from solid to liquid, or vice versa. There is a tendency, a movement: but really only one state or the other. Are you making love or not? Are you giving yourself to him, or to me?

But I suppose there are all kinds. With L\_\_\_\_\_, for instance, I can accept the role of one in many. Why with her, and not with Z\_\_\_\_\_? Because I still love Z\_\_\_\_\_ more? Because I still want to possess her, like a daughter?

The moon rides high in the midnight sky.

There is time for love.

I have a sense of the infinite, of timelessness and agelessness. So the libido is a little subdued now, in the twilight years. Still, there is grace in the slow seduction. Years to burn, there is no hurry. All of time awaits us . . . the long exploration of who we are. In wonderment I welcome again this odd adolescence of courtship, the long slow dance.

I await you, with infinite patience, L\_\_\_\_\_.

*And what did you want with Z\_\_\_\_\_; what long-term vision brought you forward fourteen years?*

We both wanted it just to flow.

*Does anything happen, just by flowing?*

Yes, and you never know what you get.

Definite intention is required for definite results. Otherwise, pot luck. It might happen, and it might not.

There is wisdom in the flow, because flow is impermanence. Definite intention is just a little more applied gamesmanship: like getting up at two in the morning, to get a head start on the day: surfing, writing, warming up to the tasks ahead. Building up steam, caffeine in the blood. There is more to be said, on every subject. I want to bathe, to luxuriate, to experience sensual pleasure. I want to travel, with my feet free. I could look up flights to Arizona . . .

First, I have to come out of this emotional trough. But I think after a bad day and night, I'm close to feeling free and loose and confident again – or for the first time? I can let it all go, now. Chödrön is a friend indeed with advice like that. Yes, easy to say for a Buddhist nun. Yet that is the essential condition of us all. Brides and bridegrooms, for a day.

The sun is coming, and in turn will pass. The moon is turning. In present phase, charming, moved significantly since I arose two hours ago. Moving across the sky, providing a pattern for fixing sights:

I have many friends to keep, more to make. I cannot be bound by the sadness of a past expectation. There is more to experience along the way. More room to move across the sky.

16 April

Bitterness and loss, the dregs of an evening with Z\_\_\_\_\_. In which I am at least able to move from blaming her to having compassion; and to shift the blame to myself for keeping her in an unsatisfying relationship so long. Of course she also can take her own responsibility for that; and so I am left with simple sadness for our shared limitation in doing what we did for so long.



Today I am severely depressed, feeling that sadness for us, that compassion for her, and my own inability to satisfy her . . . though perhaps I should realize that it just wasn't meant to be and that the odds were never in our favor. In the beginning, I was not absolutely struck to the core with love for her . . . only maybe a burning lust that passed and left the underlying lukewarm love, and the colder-blooded arbitrary choice of that relationship for many reasons other than passionate love.

What is to be learned from this experience, for future relationship? That love needs to be the key and the core, that passion has to reign?

That's one model. The other is the one shown by Z\_\_\_\_ and X\_\_\_\_, building a relationship from friendship and deepening it over time into passion that grows out of closeness.

In the meantime I am left in the desolation of solitude, of being unable or unwilling to have that kind of closeness with anyone in my life right now. I am holding myself back for . . . business success, music, writing, personal insulation, protection of my aesthetic sense of what can work with someone, or of what I deserve.

Am I a slave to my own worship of superficial beauty? I don't need to figure this out: when I see Kelsey and Morgan, their innate physical similarity, or X\_\_\_\_ and Z\_\_\_\_, I see something deeper at work, something more unconscious. Where each person can see their own likeness in another person. With Z\_\_\_\_ I saw something foreign, alien, profoundly different. This too was attractive but not in the sense of identification. I saw only the lure of the exotic, the other. With L\_\_\_\_ I see a more similar body type, facial type, intellectual orientation, emotional resonance, aura. It just happens, it doesn't have to be chosen, or forced. It chooses me. She chooses me. I respond, wholeheartedly.

In my range of choices now, nothing else stands out. Though I am buffeted by the breezes of the passing roadside attractions.

I am left with Nellie . . . myself . . . a dream of L\_\_\_\_ . . . friends . . . various writing projects . . . a joy of being outdoors in the sunshine . . . of travelling . . . of playing music for people. I want most of all to go into life enjoying what I enjoy, Charlie's jazz or my keyboard tapping, the rhythms of my drum or the grooves of the group: that's what we must do when we're desperate for connection with other people . . . just play.

Swimming, walking, running, eating and drinking, throwing the I Ching. Taking notes on what it is to cultivate a Real Self.

I want and need all of these things and more:

To return to the clarity of what is.

To know more about the nature of the world by experiencing it. To go from depression to the depth and purity at the bottom of it all, boddhichitta, noble self-acceptance. Is that what it is? To go not up and away from all the tormenting stuff into mountaintop transcendence, but into the earth through the demon forms and come out shining.

To undertake the shaman's journey, into the heart of what is.

Money can obscure all this, and so can love, and so can fame and addiction and friendship, and even apparent clarity such as the shared earth-vision last Sunday with the men's group on the beach. Men, or giggling boys? In the sunshine, as in the days of old. Tapping on the skins, as with the primitives. Is this the way of our consciousness forward? Or, rather, through the virtual worlds of computer network and long-distance chat?

I go out into the sunshine again, because there is something sacred there, in which the transcendence and the delving all merge, as with plants that feed on both compost and sunshine. I too need to grow in openness to all of it: the subsurface shit and garbage and worms and microbes and recycled life-matter of the past; along with present water and sunshine. In so doing my energy is directed to the future: to bearing fruit, to generating growth for the benefit of other organisms. In this middle world I take my stand in the present light of day, and by turns I take my dark rest.

## ***A Different Slant***

### **Stanzas**

This is right brain music: living spontaneously, instead of Plan and Plod: doing what I love, instead of trying to love what I do.

Enjoying, getting deeply into something, instead of skating on the surface thinking about whether it's going to work, what I'm going to do next, why I didn't do this earlier, whether someone else will like it, whether I should be doing that or something else, why nobody loves me, where it went wrong, who was my father, why my mother died . . .  
. . . in the end a different music altogether.

Not just playing to fill in the practice session, or working to punch the clock. But to be, to lose myself and all these thoughts in the wonder of the music, to fall into the pattern of the beat, to slip into the upper windows of that observatory car and ride it down the line.

Not to be afraid to experiment, out of disapproval paranoia. Or to worry that I'm letting down my guard. I've got myself back into the straight-arrow achievement mindset of high school . . . and become an out-of-date nerd. A sales type, a business-man, a computer geek, a workaholic headed for the edge.

Now this is a softer, rounder turning around, to face the other direction: or at least 90 degrees off. A different slant. Who will approve, if I only live my life for approval? It doesn't work that way – as Z\_\_\_\_\_ 's been telling me for years. Can I finally listen, and extrapolate it to my life beyond that failed relationship? It's no accident that the novel manuscript came back in the same time period when we were splitting up, or that the business is stagnating now: it's like, yeah maybe try harder, or maybe wait longer . . . but equally possible is, back off a little, stop trying in order just to have the superficial result, the object of desire, the "relationship," the "published book" or the "successful business."

The trouble with affirmations, or visualizations, especially of concrete goals – and the problem for that matter with language-based thinking – is a material focus that reduces phenomena to the concepts or even just to the words themselves. I tell myself so much that I want a good relationship, or financial success, that all my activity, whether

physical or mental, revolves around those words or concepts which are materially-based. These are the left-brain quadrants and I have been stuck there for a long time.

The emotional-spiritual quadrants have been relegated to their own discreet spheres of activity, pigeonholed according to the concepts “emotional” and “spiritual” so that my activity or vibration in these areas is defined by the specific items on the lists under those categories: toning, drumming, relationship processing, time in nature, meditation, writing. These are activities which are diminished to hollow shells when I do them in the spirit of “doing things on my list” or “following my schedule.”

I have been programming myself for “success” for a long time now, particularly in the past year. But the trouble is, I have been too greedy about focusing on material definitions for that success. Understanding that there is more to it, nevertheless I have been focusing my energy in learning techniques, more than in sheer joy and enthusiasm, which really is the main ingredient that makes a business, or any other endeavor, truly work.

Drab, dull, flat, depressed, boring, plodding, trying, working, should, accomplish . . . been there done that.

Sensual, groovy, far-out, cool, rasta, hangin, blowing, rapping, cynical, world-weary . . . been there done that too.

There is a third way: creative, spontaneous, in touch, in choice, real-self, beyond words, in the moment, free, joyful, in love.

Getting in touch.

Step by step, day by day. The point isn't what I don't accomplish, it's what progress I do make. This is a significant, all-important attitude shift (the half-empty vs. half-full paradigm).

So, I only worked on firewood two days instead of three: three hours instead of six. That's okay, because I feel great about how much wood I collected. I was probably twice as productive as I expected. What's the point of the activity?

- to fill in the time schedule?
- to collect a certain quota of wood?
- to make progress and feel good about it?

All three are important in some way, but really the third is most important, at this time in the spring.

There doesn't need to be this quota pressure, this anxiety, this blaming and guilt and obsession to produce; all that comes from family history and the culture I grew up in.

## Affirmations

*"I want to become . . . "*

*Changes to: "I want to be . . . "*

*Changes to: "I am . . . "*

I am ready for the radical changes in our planetary history ripe for blooming now.

I am in touch with the emotional needs and joys of my good friends.

I am content with the progress I am able to achieve in my long-term goals day by day.

I am able to maintain an even emotional keel while being fully in touch with my emotions and able to express them spontaneously at all times.

I am always conscious of my breath and thereby my higher spiritual nature, my physical health and vitality, and my emotional state.

I am cognizant of true priorities that hold meaning for me, and able to choose activities well and freely in time-frames of whatever scale, in the spirit of the best balance.

I am able to be spontaneous and playful, rising out of my conditioned and protective shell.

I am able to share freely who I am and what I feel about myself and others.

I am fully forgiving, accepting and loving of myself, so that I don't crave these supports from others, but can enjoy them when they come from others freely.

I am able to love other people without expectation of getting anything in return from them.

I am trusting and able to act on my intuition, not holding myself hostage to rational goals or preconceptions.

I am able to be vulnerable without hiding from it.

I am able to take comfort in my unity and oneness with others.

I am free to become new and to open myself to growth beyond my conditioned patterns of behavior and belief.

When I start to feel uncomfortable, I can create a safe boundary for myself, giving myself the love and attention I needed as a child, so I don't feel compelled to act out for others.

## Dreamings on Emptiness

Today, another clear blue sky, warm weather: the best weather of a Kootenay year. I will be sure to get out and enjoy it. In the meantime . . .

Dreaming of Z\_\_\_\_: in anger. Mad at her about something, intense and protracted. Told her about it afterwards . . . still in a dream.

Yesterday, doing feeling-sharing-exchange with Ellen. Visualizing myself at 10-12 years old, alone from friends and family, bony, fragile, skeletal, metallic, lonely and resigned to a big room with myself, books, model cars. Wanting a father, a brother, a mother, an older me to be there for support and love and validation. Lacking that, I had to try to prove myself . . . and still do. A gnawing emptiness in my gut. A hitch in my breathing, a stuck diaphragm.

Made ten 3-way calls with K\_\_\_\_ last night; a positive step for both of us. It went pretty well, though not perfectly; of course, that is to be expected. We learn, as we knew we would, and move on. More Thursday.

Something happening every night this week: 3-ways, conference call, drumming, more 3-ways, jam. Open Saturday night: a date? Ha. On to work, or solitude: a date with my destiny. And what is it?

I called Paul Erickson last night to make an appointment for counseling on the 6th in Nelson. Scott Erickson went the distance in a 3-1 loss to the Angels, with four Oriole home runs blown back by the wind.

A raven escaped yesterday with an egg, flying overhead to the west, then returned; I saw it and went out to investigate, as it was coming out of the chicken coop alleyway. Today I have the sprinklers on, my eyes alerted, and the guns loaded.

I have my week's schedule outlined, after a week and a half of pretty diligent progress on Web content creation, firewood, reading and relaxation. I feel more ready to work hard now. The key as always is to break the work down into manageable chunks.

Yesterday with Ellen I was able to access feeling states in my body with awareness of breathing difficulty, and tingling under the eyes. This is positive; I can have this awareness and not simply be absorbed in intellectual talk.

Today, right now, I feel stable, though aware of underlying emptiness and loneliness issues. The temptation to cycling addictions is always there. It's interesting

that I have the wherewithal to resist addictions to any one substance or behavior, but instead, trade off or cycle through the list of them: work, coffee, computer, marijuana, sexual fantasy, chocolate, sugar, spending, reading, writing, relationships, email, baseball, blue-green algae . . .

So I continue: filling the empty middle, the center of my soul, with a circle of small comforts, creaturely addictions or dependencies: that is, I depend on them to distract me from the essential emptiness of my existence.

The key is to become friends with that emptiness, with myself. To realize it's normal, and in fact in the nature of human existence: the bare core of meaninglessness and cold stark being, in an uncaring universe. The thing is, that's okay, the way it is. There is joy to be had despite this essential condition, if we only make friends with it and embrace it rather than trying to cover it up or deny it, or feeling like it's bad or abnormal or antisocial. It is what is, the nature of reality. I am what I am, inside, the nature of me. My awareness and consciousness is what it is, and my values and talents and personalities continue despite or alongside.

It is all perfect, says the vajrayana.

Even the 3-1 loss in a windy Camden Yards.

The trees tower above, offering mute testimony to the same truths: essential emptiness must be the same (death) for them; yet they just continue, doing their life thing.

I go on to my work or play, my reading or writing, my coffee or chocolate, my marijuana or algae, my fantasy or work, my spending or email, my sugar or baseball, my computer or relationship. These serial addictions cycle in pairs, two a day for the seven-day week. Every day has a different focus, a different distraction. This balance brings health even to unhealthy practices . . . as none of these are inherently unhealthy: just the daily compulsion, or the compulsion at any moment to cover the emptiness.

The emptiness is real: my parents and siblings are gone. My brother cares, and that helps warm the coldness within. There is also a warmth within, that comes from the other image of myself, the companion reality: the social self, browned and rounded and happy out in the sun on the ballfield with friends, just doing life the way it's supposed to be done, the natural way: in the body, alive, in nature, in activity, with others. There is something primally vital and necessary here, and something I still identify with: on the beach with the men, drumming in the sun, laughing, talking, being comfortable.

L\_\_\_\_\_ seems to be holding off; or will I get a letter today? Who knows? My breath lightens, my pulse quickens. There is a way in which I crave the close connection with another – especially L\_\_\_\_\_, for whom I have a gut response of love and positive sensuality . . . even the sound of her voice. If we had spent another day kayaking, loving in the sun . . . but I didn't, too cheap to spring for more money for another day, a plane

ticket . . . too scared to fall deeper in love. All this could have happened days earlier . . . but everything in its own time – I wasn't ready.

Past nine, I continue writing; this is okay. The schedule is a framework. I am lazy. I want to go to the mail today, right now; to eat chocolate, to visit M\_\_\_\_. I think that was another part of my dream last night: falling in love with her, and witnessing the conflict arising already with L\_\_\_\_. This I want to avoid.

One thing at a time. Or, I can let it happen of its own accord . . . and then end up as I did in '83, with five women on a string . . . which led me into a premature decision with Z\_\_\_\_. That was all for the best, I suppose . . . but not something I want to repeat. It resulted, I now know, in fourteen years of pain and frustration for her.

On to the next; to the day at hand, to new life.

*Just keep breathing.*

So, I continue.

## **Jamming Fulltime Now**

A sunny day today, and an evening of great drumming with Joel, Mylen, Rivers and Janet at Mylen's. Next week we'll play again at Joel's. A summer of music and drumming, on the beach and at festivals; hanging loose and grooving. This is what I want: jamming fulltime now.

Meanwhile the personal life continues with mixed results. I feel pretty good but challenged when Z\_\_\_\_'s around. It's disconcerting to have her across the table at a meal. On the surface it's just like always; but it feels so different underneath. Is this "my choice" to feel it so differently? Maybe; but the fact is, it is fundamentally different . . . at least I feel it to be so. Is this choice or acceptance? It is acceptance of how I feel.

My reaction has been to feel it as a loss more than as an opportunity to relate differently; though I do accept the newness of how we may relate. She wants there to be a positive vibration – though of course she would never use that term. My positive feelings for her are interrupted by my own sense of loss and by the lingering patterns of negativity that persist: her not wanting me to do what I don't feel like doing, etc. It just goes on and on.



Interesting patterns:

I am now in the position of “the other man” in Z\_\_\_\_’s life, dealing with the sticky stuff: but on the way out, instead of the way in. That makes all the difference in my motivation to be part of it. What’s in it for me? Not the same as the hopefulness or open-ended future first glimpsed by X\_\_\_\_, or Z\_\_\_\_ in relation to him. This is the other way: a foreclosure of possible future outcomes; and a resistance in me to giving up any more of my life. When I enjoy sharing with friends, it is to be part of enjoyable conversation or activity, such as music or writing or sports, or supporting each other in emotional issues in our lives. I have little activity to enjoy doing with Z\_\_\_\_, though with gardening or other practical work it can and does happen. The mutual support part is also possible, but tricky, because of my woundedness and her patterns of wanting me to behave differently or more positively than I sometimes am able.

That’s the current state of affairs. What more can be said? A whole novel, perhaps . . . but this isn’t that. I could go more into the devious twists and turns. But that is Z\_\_\_\_’s way – to dwell in mystery, to seek companionship with sticky emotions to wrestle with, to justify ideals and theories of relationship by trying them out in real life with real people. Which is fine; it’s just not something I want to remain too enmeshed with. If that disinclination of mine is a prime reason why Z\_\_\_\_ became too frustrated with me to stay in primary relationship, that’s fine too; and I need to recognize that and move on in my life into areas that are more in accord with my “priorities and preferences”: business, computer, music, nature, writing, networking, exploring consciousness and cultural evolution. Not so much delving into the world of personal attachment, mystery, clinging, gnawing away at feelings and causes and effects, etc. I want to do only so much of that as to come to peace with myself. I don’t want to wrangle it out with her very much; just to understand each other simply, where we’re coming from. Not necessarily to agree; not to fit into any preconceived form; not to try to capture anything from the past; not to dream of any form to substitute for the one that is gone. Can I write this better than speak it, to her? Maybe.

What do I want?

I want exactly what is.

I want to enjoy feeling what I am feeling, accepting my addictions and mourning and discomfort as it comes, just understanding; and through that, and my expression of it, to heal naturally. I don’t want to struggle with it or with anyone else over it. I just want to live through it fully, and for it to transform as I evolve through living fully each day and each moment, each week and each month, each year from here forward, looking at the gifts we all share and enjoying the confidence and consciousness I have.

I want to know myself and accept myself fully. This is my mission of the moment. The rest is superficial activity.

I want to be ever more open to divine and compassionate energy. Divine means I can transcend the human turmoil with a channel of peacefulness and calm acceptance. My detachment does not mean denial or escape, but rather full understanding and acceptance. Similarly my distance from Z\_\_\_\_\_ is a simple fact, not a contrivance. It is a fact of long standing, that we tried to overcome, unsuccessfully in the end. That's okay; it's how things were between us, and still are. We can smile and laugh and cry and be distant. We can be what we are.

There is no struggle, no eventuality to overcome or be anxious about. We live our lives making choices at every moment, and drifting with what feelings arise. We go into the future living fully with what is now.

I am in rapture with the beauty of the days, the sun and sky and wind and leaves, the brilliance of the deep green of the grass; still having desires to be productive, to work at the computer, to read or do firewood . . . not wanting to simply melt into the background. To be part of the grass, with the grass, of the grass.

Moon tide . . . on the way forward. Calibrated to make me jump; new moon for setting new intentions. Where is L\_\_\_\_\_? Probably in mourning; letting me mourn. Having the understanding to know more about me than I know myself. Letting there be an understanding of caution and distance . . . that's okay too. Maybe there's too much there to even mess with. What do I really want from her? Maybe I just want to hang out with the flower children on the beach banging drums. Maybe I have dreams of the stage, of festivals, of merging with the tribe. But don't I need then to brush up on my rhythms? Maybe. But it's more a matter of, as I learned in the first assignment in that music appreciation course in 1970, to listen to nature.

This is a good occupation: listen to nature and enter the pulse of it, expressing what I perceive and transforming it with positive emotion. We can go forward with this: to make a band . . .

A childish dream of ego, perhaps, but it can work. The work is done in the moment. Jam on.

Horoscope:

*Building a solid new foundation finds you looking ahead to the future. The more you know what you want for the long term, the better able will you be to make sound choices and decisions now. Entertain all possibilities by writing a pro and con list before committing yourself, especially in legal terms. Remain true to whatever choice you make. This will pose a test to others. Through it you may discover who is a real friend.*

Pro:

music, drumming, sunshine, nature, adventure, spontaneity, flow, evolution, culture, travel, writing, publishing, steady income, freedom

Con:

habit, anxiety, depression, loneliness, introversion, worry, doubt, routine, addiction, unconsciousness, unbreathing, past, history

*And so it continues, I continue, jamming on the keyboard today with the O's online, another incredibly perfect day which I will enjoy again a bit out in the garden yes even with Z\_\_\_\_, I need to breathe out the negative energy and expectations and figuring out and just flow with it, Cooper in the light breeze pleasant as the announcer says, I just got in from nice fluffy ginger pancakes and coffee on the deck, Erickson starts by giving up two hits, what is this a play-by-play, yes because you see this is simply the tape recorder running while life plays on by.*

This word-jamming comes after a great session at the Landing reminiscent of "the golden days" last night with Walkin, Dick, Richard, me, plus Rivers, Susan and A\_\_\_\_ the WOOFer, and X\_\_\_\_, and Jenny. Nine in all, and it all worked in a nice groove full of smoke and mirrors, jazz and many voices, miked, fluted, drummed and strummed. There is a turning here, in my own life, inward to the flow.

Adventure, says my angel card, as I plod forward in website upgrading, checking mail on the fly, and in the fluttering breeze I consider the option, the fork in the road, the easy way that I took this weekend staying around and playing for adventure here at hand, the everyday and the local, instead of packing up for the Tonasket Barter Fair, as I may have if I had cared to venture out of the Kootenay womb. No one in their right mind can leave this magical place when the weather is like this, when this classic sky blue in May is so seductive.

*Every day I subsist on my work and my music, baseball and my private hall of fame, the glimmer of gold in the jams Friday and Wednesday and Monday, now three music nights a week and suddenly everything is opening, to where I want to go: to play music with people, evolving naturally, free and committed to that side of me, the other side of life.*

William's song, "Otro Mundo": a different slant, in deed.

And there is more music on the way. This is life. Music: life as it should be lived. Communication, harmony, vitality and spontaneity, all in the flow so that it doesn't matter if I go to the Okanagan or not, build my business or not, play with other djembe players en masse or not, because we have to play with who we have where we are.

This is a group relationship, and we make it work because we have to, because we have chosen this bowl this tribe for our own, we have built our homes here for the long haul and wouldn't give it up for the world; why would any of us want to move to anywhere else? This is family, congenial nature, bears and ravens and all, mosquitoes and all, warts and all.

*The O's strike back in their half, a quick couple of doubles, so on they go into their future, my past, this present time. This game is about the way to go on, pitch by pitch, game by game, day by day, relationship by relationship. Every jam is new, precious, a new lovemaking by communication each with another, listening, playing, virtuosity for all together. It's all okay, in other words, because I've still got my drum – and connection with other people, in commitment to making the music and having it work: Rivers and Alden and Madrone, Kaia, the jammers, Mylen and Joel and Janet, Gail, all the cross-hybridization, Jenny with her big round drum . . . Joe Carter with his solid black bat, and Cal Ripken with a full count as the go-ahead run. So I continue, jamming at the board, bases loaded for Baines.*

A matter of timing . . . of remembering . . . and letting go, moving on.

A matter of being always in the moment, open to the vibes that are.

Wanting to go forward in the high of the moment . . . being sensitive to what is fully real. Last night I got understanding from Walkin and X\_\_\_\_\_ when they asked "How's it going," and I said, "Alone, fine; but troublesome with Z\_\_\_\_\_." So I go grudgingly to the garden today, to embrace that jam and that music which is every relationship, every encounter.

What do we say, in what rhythms and with what energy?

Joel's a virtuoso but maybe out of the mix – the problem of the hot young drummer. The older ones want to work together, to be team players: but maybe too safe?

I noticed last night a transformation after I did my minute or so of Taiko simulation, opening up and releasing the expressivity for everyone. That statement said that we were all allowed to play, there was more space to be explored. Yet the common vocabulary and tone needs to be respected, so no one person takes over the defining mode. Or if so, to trade off, either within a song or between songs in the round. It's all a perfect theater for life.

Is it also escape from life? We do engage in other activities, some with each other. The jam is where we play at life, expressing what we have learned with the voices we are still learning to use. More than human voices, perhaps. It's all part of the mix.

Walkin: "It's all good."

*Ready for lunch and gardening already?*

I go forward into the future.

## Too Many Lovers, Not Enough Love

Another night of long sleep – ten hours, after twelve the night before. Dealing with feelings of loneliness and worthlessness. I dreamt of N\_\_\_\_ last night, and woke wanting to speak with her about how she manages living alone – feeling useful to the world, or unloved?

The days continue in bright perfect-sky splendor.

I am ready for love . . . but wary of it: because it seems that love, a relationship, can easily be used to cover up one's own, my own loneliness. Or at least it can seem to. And then when it doesn't, really, I am left in a shell that is a mockery of real love.

What is love? What is the purpose of life? This is a paradox, a riddle, that life is empty without love, and yet if love is attained, the resulting relationship is a little suspect, as an arrangement for co-dependency. This is normal, I suppose . . . but healthy? What is healthy?

We all do what we can.

No word from L\_\_\_\_; I will probably speak with M\_\_\_\_ today; B\_\_\_\_ phoned to invite me to supper on Friday.

I remember the early seventies, and again the early eighties, being in such a mood. There was P\_\_\_\_, R\_\_\_\_, P\_\_\_\_'s friend visiting from Ohio, and our other roommate whose name I've forgot . . . not to mention the Filipino manicurist; then K\_\_\_\_, E\_\_\_\_, F\_\_\_\_, Z\_\_\_\_, . . .

Now what?

Life goes on, I go with the flow. Music keeps me moving, salves all wounds and fills emptiness with sound vibration.

With the friends I have to relate to, there is harmony without attachment; coming and going, sexless yet sensual.

I feel centered, without direction. Insubstantial, waving in the wind. Am I lovesick, or loveless? Empty of love, or full of love to give? Can love exist without a loved one?

All the career and personal achievement paths are suspect now. I finished my webpage upgrading and submission yesterday; now ready for more. But I see the business and the networking and the writing, as all flawed attempts to achieve public recognition, sublimated love which itself is really a craving on my part for acceptance, affection, approval. To know that someone values me. Substituting for what I didn't get enough of as an infant. How pathetic. Yet, "normal" . . .

In a few minutes the wheels will start rolling, for a fateful week:  
N\_\_\_\_, M\_\_\_\_, L\_\_\_\_, B\_\_\_\_. Always new ones come into the mix. Maybe this time it hasn't even begun yet; maybe those four are all phantoms of the pre-dawn, and my final day is yet to come with a bevy of other dream-babes. Maybe my obsession to choose is misconceived: instead I could do more of a Bob Marley friend-in-every-town sort of thing . . .

The thing is to be strong enough not to throw myself away in the rush of being accepted by someone, thinking that this is it. I need to think of how it will turn out in the end – if we're just two needy people, or rather two strong people joining for greater strength and celebration. Yet, doesn't love always have a sort of sick desperation to it?

That's the romantic variety, at least.

Is there any other kind?

The work I'm doing on emotional resilience is important in helping me to understand where I and others, another, are coming from, so that what occurs between us is not totally blind, but has a higher purpose.

What does that mean? I don't know. I'm really quite lost in this mystery.

I am still raw, vulnerable, open to suggestion. I finished *Emotional Resilience* last night, after a marathon of reading it all afternoon and evening, following visits to N\_\_\_\_ and Ellen. N\_\_\_\_ talked to me about her experiences living alone – with a strength purely her own, and yet in relationship to Howard still, giving her another kind of basic strength.

Another gorgeous day . . . unbelievable. Yesterday I could only lay basking out in it, in the end rolling up in the yellow blanket like the boy pupa I felt like in session with Ellen.

Being in the gap between the raw pithy 8-year old within, and the husk I wear as an adult.

Being done with reaching out to B\_\_\_\_, N\_\_\_\_, M\_\_\_\_, and L\_\_\_\_ yesterday.

Being done with everything except finding the new me . . . the old me, and dealing with the pain that comes up every time.

Healing a little more each time, with understanding.

Moving on.

Doing the things I want to do . . . for the right reasons. Mourning my losses fully. Understanding what I have missed:

A normal birth, breastfeeding, nurturing from my mother.

Having a father around during the early years.

Caring and relaxed acceptance from my father throughout the time growing up.

I have to hold them in my memory fully, and then forgive them. They did the best they could. It was not ideal. Coming from their history . . .

The thing is, what do I do with it now?

But first I have to deal with it.

I have to feel the pain. Again.

This is part of my life, my duty. Maybe I can express it through art, or music, and thus deal with the past and the present/future at the same time. That would be efficient. But maybe not the best for my “audience” to see. I still need to do it privately, and with trusted accepted friends.

Where is this pain coming from?

Abandonment, by all my lovers and by my mother.

It comes down to this.

J\_\_\_\_, D\_\_\_\_, K\_\_\_\_, Z\_\_\_\_ . . . all my “steadies” . . . deserting me: at ages 14, 20, 32, 47. T\_\_\_\_ and E\_\_\_\_ belong in this list as well, though not so steady. Then there are the ones I left, and all the ones in between. Notably L\_\_\_\_, F\_\_\_\_, Jill . . .

Enough escapades. It comes down to repeating the pattern of abandonment. And somehow I reenact their fathers and my father neglecting them, and put them in the role of my mother abandoning me . . . knowing also how my mother abandoned her first husband. It’s all very complex and interesting, if distasteful.

I’m left in a state of a prolonged adolescence: unsure of where I’m going in the world. But I don’t need a woman at this stage of my life in order to figure it out. I need to figure it out myself, and somehow claim the strength I’m missing to go forward. To know and forgive past abandonment. To know that it’s all fine. Not to expect that someone else is going to fix it. Just to become one with the nature of life. Abandonment is part of the deal. So is nurture. There is a balance in between. This understanding does give me comfort. The overview, the cosmic perspective allows me to breathe. I can feel what it was like for the women in my life, and understand why they had to let me go. Everyone has their own issues to deal with and does the best they can. I can’t get out of the negative victim feelings very well unless I get that overview. I can use retroactive astral projection right now, to comfort the infant in the incubation cocoon, to let him know that he has my and all universal love, even mother-love, to bring him forward. He will be nurtured into this life, one way or another. He was early, the love was late. That’s life. Nothing perfect, according to schedule.

As for my father, first there’s the forgiveness of his hellish history. Doomed from the outset, a doomed generation – a generation in hell. Depression, World War, Atomic Age, Consumerism. The circles of hell. No wonder they drank, smoked, were preoccupied, unfulfilled.

One unhealthiness leads by karma to another. That's part of my responsibility: a global sense. Me is them. We are all part of the same history and gene pool, the same generational twisted strand of human life-stuff, evolving moment by moment. I bring these things to share: bring first to light in my awareness and then out to the world, to symbolize the healing in store for us all. I look to the greater awakening: the new age. This is not poppycock, it's here and now. Look around, look within. It's all happening, for all of us. We can look beyond ourselves, identifying with the larger Self.

There is grace in every moment, every insect buzzing past, every birdsong, every cloud which isn't even in sight yet, amazing change in store, in continuous motion.

So what do I do next? Free of the pain, for now, I can tune into my passion again. I can write, drum, conduct business and networking, learn music, walk in the woods. I can create my own reality. I can move freely into the forest of words, of sounds. I don't need to prove my success or my talent or my worthiness to anyone. I can prove it to myself in identification beyond my self. In empathy for my parents, for my brothers and sisters, for all my relations and for everyone else I know and care about, and beyond to compassion for all sentient beings.

"My purpose is to open myself to divine and compassionate energy."

This is meaningless as a simple phrase, but worth everything when I put flesh and blood behind it. When I can use it to forgive my parents and myself. When I can forgive the lovers I resented for resenting my weaknesses. I need to rise above all that and simply do my best, play my best, find my best areas of talent and expertise. To refine my gifts with craft and grace. There doesn't need to be a fully clean slate, a new set of skills to acquire, a new body, mind or spirit. Just to come to a new state of grace through forgiveness and acceptance.

## **Hard Times and Heart Light**

After sleep, walking, chores (food and dishes and getting ready for town), I'm open, opening, still empty at times, filling up with feeling, ready for more, unfulfilled.

Hard times are here again. Why is that?

Too much dope?

Nellie moving out?

A flubbed rhythm during the sacred music rite Saturday night – coming out of my separateness and desire to compete and control? The drifting away of half the musicians then, the dirty look by Walkin at the end of it, cut me to the core ever since. I feel remorse about that gaffe; it was similar to the flubbed grounder with the bases loaded in



the softball tournament . . . letting my teammates down, because I wanted to do too much, to be a star . . . to make up for my father's failure. Instead of just being myself, part of the gang, invisible . . . just letting it flow, freely conscious of the whole and of my part in it.

It will all come out in the wash . . .

Except that as I wound myself further, I lose my confidence and my ability to contribute freely and creatively. Rebounding from trying to do too much, I become timid and pathetic, contributing too little and thus drawing attention to myself in that way.

Now, I am doing nothing: just keeping house, keeping books, making the connections I agreed on. Tending the garden; not doing any more than necessary. Meanwhile, I stew over career choices, habits and talents, relationships, vehicles and housing, garden and budget, desires to be free.

I recognize now that this pattern of negativity, lack of confidence and initiative, is directly related to marijuana consumption. Is it worth it, for the sense of communion and magic and natural connection, the sense of musical and linguistic flow and insight, the carpet of magic and the sense of oneness, the sacramental unity? Yet these were achieved Saturday without the herb . . . and when it came in, we became less vibrant, more tentative, more self-conscious and critical.

So I continue, mooning and moaning over my own condition, forgetting to celebrate what I can contribute, what I enjoy, and my freedom to . . .

To what?

What do I really want?

"To be open to divine and compassionate energy."

That's all very fine; but what does it mean right now?

I'm waiting for Dan Fewster to show up; waiting to meet with Ellen later. What can she do for me?

I don't know; this is a deep funk. And it's not about relationship. I see so clearly now that that was a crutch, a mask to hide my fear of self. Now I have me, no one else, to look at in the mirror. I don't like what I see. Why not? And how to fix. Well, getting back to the why is useful too. Just to bring it all forward to consciousness. The awareness makes all the difference.

I need to get clean; that's part of the deal. To clear out the bad habits, and take back the good ones, in order to set my life on the path I desire. Which is . . .

To befriend myself, my family; knock the chip off, just get on with life. Exercise, nature, music, business, networking, whatever . . . but without the pressure, the quest, the mission. Or rather, to do it, but to do it so that it can benefit others. To bring what I have for the benefit of all. That's the lesson of the weekend: far beyond any calls of personal glory or shame: to use what happened for the future betterment of the music scene, say, or whatever: myself.

In the meantime, I continue seeking the avenue of my truest, my most valuable possession and talent. What do I have to offer?

My enthusiasm, my passion for music, for jamming . . . the thing is, if I believe in it enough, I will attract the following I desire. If I believe enough in it myself, the rest will follow. This is the key. First I have to commit, to prioritize my own set of values and behaviors.

I need to get more in touch with what I truly feel and desire. The rest is action, detail, publicity. Learning the ropes, logistics. Execution. For now, it's a matter of dreaming, visioning, getting my emotional roller coaster back on track. To resume breathing. To resume everything I have believed in – except my relationship with my family. That's gone now: father, mother, grandparents, sisters and brother far removed, Z\_\_\_\_ and Nellie moved out. I am left with friends and community, especially of musicians: and even them I have alienated by my selfish thoughtlessness. What is to be done with this adolescent self?

I return to the patterns of healthful living. Sleep, diet, exercise, fresh air, music practice, reading and writing, contacting for business, website upgrading, and so on. Doing the necessary work. Catching up. Socializing, gardening, working for friends; doing the best I can under the circumstances. All this, and then also floating free. Channeling the higher wisdom. Remembering, again, to breathe. Increasing awareness, with every moment, into the future.

Remembering, forgiving, in awareness.

Accepting, myself and my full responsibility. This means acknowledging my errors, and also forgiving myself for them. The same for other people in my life. Accepting their transgressions; acknowledging how they have hurt me, and forgiving them for that.

To bring the music scene into the foreground; yet without undue hassle with professionalism or critiquing, or reputation or publicity. Just doing the thing the way it's supposed to be done. Jamming it up, wherever. To bring the songs to the people. To write new songs, to bring them all forward.

River songs, earth songs, songs of the people.

Let freedom ring through the beauty of our spontaneous creations. There is wonder and magic in the moments of our creation.

For now I rest within my darkness, my knowing of what has gone wrong. Healing, in solitude. Going into the dark passages, coming out whole to join the next shindig or ritual clean and in pure spirit.

Not to get diverted by too much distracting substance, longing for sex, addiction to personal gratification, too much food and drink, too much money and comfort, the “temptations of the devil”: because they cause separation. The new morality I embrace calls for unity consciousness, and networking both interpersonal and communal. I am

ready, though I am still healing. We are all in healing. I have to offer what I have learned; also what I am discovering. Especially my willingness to share, while still growing. This is helpful to all on the path. And we all are.

To mourn my weaknesses, openly. Not to whine, though, but to mourn magnanimously and selflessly. To bring my struggles universally to the fore. To do this well, in feeling expression through the craft of art: or even more directly, if I can in a way that works and is true to my spirit.

To carry on the fight: which is life, against the darkness. Actually, to not fight, but embrace the darkness. To not use *but* or *not*; to include all, dark and light and all together. To bring what I must do to the fore. To bring it all forward lovingly, and in good conscience. To bring what I can to the group and to the betterment of the group experience. If I do this poorly I will suffer. Therefore I will continue doing the best I can with what I have to offer.

I need to be open to the beauty and to appreciate my own gifts selflessly. Removing my smaller self from the equation, I can better appreciate my talents objectively and offer them without worry of either aggrandizement or negative judgment. I need to take out of it the self-critical nature, and to be more objective. To say, that does or doesn't work, rather than I am bad or good.

For now, I still feel bad. I need to be able to learn from mistakes, without feeling so bad from taking on the hurtfulness of it all. This is the long-standing issue in my life, with falling short of perfection: to go easier on myself.

So if my career, my public face is tarnished, or is invisible? That's okay; get rid of it, come back with something from a lower chakra, the heart.

## Sharing the Gift

What is important is to share the gift: but how to do it? What to do, in this next, this present free moment? Do I have something to share, to give?

It is this: to ask what comes next, in this moment together, when we all choose freely.

What will happen after the end? When is the end?

It is now. Now I am the clouds roiling yellow over Mt. Cooper, the buzz on the radio, the still shimmering of the leaves.

Love means sharing the gift, the gift we each have, and accepting it, opening enough to accept it from another. We are love.

Being happy, or not, is truly a state of mind. Is this simple and beautiful, or trite? To ask is to receive.

So I continue . . . being strong only in my commitment to freedom, and choice.

## **Letter to My Father**

I want you to know what it's like for me now and how it was to grow up as your son. First of all I want to say that I forgive you – for everything I may have criticized you for then, and everything that I still feel critical about. I have these feelings, yet I also can understand how it was hard for you to do anything other than what you did, to be anyone other than who you were.

I still suffer from not having a father who gave me a good clear model of how to be an adult male successfully in the world. I felt you were a failure: because you sank into your own world of dependency on alcohol, because you lost the good job and career track you were on, because you gave up at the end. At the same time I can appreciate your resilience in surviving through all the hardships you faced in your life, many of them not of your own making. I can appreciate everything you provided for me, including an inheritance that makes it easier for me to live in the world now in ways that I choose. For this gift of freedom I am thankful for your sacrifice. In some way you sacrificed your life for mine.

The way you did it was a kind of indirect form of loving. I know you did love and care for me, and we spent memorable times together: fishing, playing catch, going to the races. These times were few, however, and for the most part you didn't give me direct and caring attention and love. We played games, ping pong, dice, cards. It was party time and it was sometimes fun until the drinking got in the way, but it wasn't enough for what I needed. Maybe I needed more when I was very small and you were in Korea. I don't remember and you couldn't help that. Anyway I wish now that you had been more real with yourself, my mother, and with me. To face the truth of your life and the world and to be straight with me about what it took to live well. You did your best with what you knew; but the best wasn't good enough. What you knew was suspect; and you didn't know anything else, except the farm life of your youth. You were caught in a bind and fell through the trap.

I could only witness the results, to make my own decisions. You couldn't help me because you were a victim. I needed loving help then, not a role as a helpless witness. Maybe you needed loving help too, and didn't get it. That makes me sad for you, and for all of us who had to live through your pain. Your pain is still with me. By acknowledging it and expressing it I want to be free of it, to live my own conflicts and struggles as my own, not leftovers from your weaknesses.

It's funny, I don't even feel comfortable emulating your successful traits. Your gruffness, your businesslike manner, your independent thinking, all seem like liabilities in me. I guess because they were part of your package which in the end did not help you or anyone.

The bottom line is, I cannot look to you or your effect on me as positive in hardly any way. My judgment of you is tainted by your giving your life over so completely to the oblivion of alcohol. This was not life-affirming but life-denying, and for this reason I question your whole being. It's a hard act to follow, when I needed a mentor I could trust. Trusting myself, or other men, is much more difficult. For me I have to start from scratch, always questioning my own judgment or if it will make any difference. Looking to others, there is the bridge to cross, of trust and judgment about what is relevant to me. You left me at sea without a compass. Now I have only the stars to go by, and it gets pretty chilly at night. I guess if I have to paint my picture of the world, that's what it will contain: faint starlight, from distant and cold sources eons removed . . . yet better than nothing. You have given me at least the freedom to learn that way.

The sunny day belongs to other men, other men's sons.

## **Family Addictions**

In another session with Ellen, I got in touch with being in the house on Wickford Road with my mom and dad. I saw my mother as hyper, the social and verbal wheels always spinning, and my dad withdrawn as a reaction to it. Neither paying me much attention. My mother smiling and calling me to dinner, but it was all superficial. My dad being friendly but not truly attentive. Neither being fully there, focussed and loving, facing me. Neither seeing or being beyond the materialistic worldview, the preoccupation with appearance and duty and habit, and self. When I could explain to them my spiritual leanings when I was twelve, and I decided to stop going to confirmation classes at the church, they understood and supported me. But the emotional presence, the loving attention and focus, was missing; the potentially spiritual attitude toward life and other people was lost in the shuffle for money, success, material comfort and superficial appearances of happiness.

This is all not to blame them but to understand how my needs were not being met.

Drumming at S\_\_\_\_'s, after, I declined a toke. I'd had enough of it the past week or two, to get out of it what was valuable. I'd seen enough of the dark side of it and myself; and this led to too much sleeping, too much feeling bad about my prospects to get and to give myself what I need, and too much shame and unworthiness, feeling

unapproved by others. These feelings are important to experience and explore, but I need more balance of supporting myself with clarity, physical and mental energy, time not lost in sleep, confidence in dealing with other people and in pursuing my own long-term projects. Marijuana gives me a great number of fresh new ideas that are sometimes creative and insightful, but makes it difficult to follow through on any of them. Once the high passes, I've lost the original vision for their completion, and I their value to others seems questionable.

It's going to rain now so I'm leaving to clean out the Co-op waterbox.

## **Rainy Day Monday in May**

On a rainy day Monday in May, there is nothing left to do. I can only drum, and blow the didge. And that's okay.

If there's anything else, I can write about it.

Like the rain, my fingers are fluid, on deerskin or plastic keys, drumming the pulse of my life.

Strumming and thrumming, there is no other but the one before me now. I peer out of the green screen of branches glowing in the morning light pale with rain, and I see my life opening to a void of possibility, cluttered with specifics.

I can get to work at any time, forgetting.

Or I can breathe. This life is an experimenting in what works and doesn't work, what is comfortable, what is new, what remains to be seen.

Friday I was so high: a card from L\_\_\_\_, a note from Rick about webspace, an appointment from a cold call.

Today, I am back to my own resources: sleep and longing.

To pick up the drum, briefly, and to blow the didge.

There is ritual yet to be played out this day, as I go on to the cave to celebrate. To enter my new life one breath at a time, open to each inspiration as it comes.

There is nothing left in baseball, sex or sugar. Marijuana holds a sacred connection to music and magic, so competes still with meditation for my drug of choice. I continue, learning to refine my technique. Tincture, for instance, over smoke. To clarify the mind and heart. To go deeper, through the deepness to what comes next.

In every writing there is this magic movement from word to word. For some, perhaps, there is a logical construction to follow a pre-hatched plan. For me, at least now, there is rather the inspiration of second upon second, to see what happens next, to find where my heart holds sway, to seek my niche in the fabric of time.

[Future.Con](#) is the novel of the seeking carried to madness, but it has not come to fruition yet. Meanwhile I stoke the fire, take the walk. Begin to dream the dream of the future. Now.

In the times when my fingers are nimble, they will speak my thoughts, in words or drum beats. Drum beats are only another code for the language of the heart, of the body and soul. I begin to see how breath too brings the soul forward into the world. This is magic work for which the world is hungry. Don't forget it, Now: bring it forward.

A new name for myself:

[Jammin Fulltime Now.](#)

This is revolutionary. What would my big brother, my big sister think? But they're only half-siblings, after all.

Where do I go next? To the cave, to the shore?

To the ocean of breath.

To my lover in the desert . . . except that she has gone to the other coast. We wait for each other, a half a world apart. She knows this is my trial period – my exile in training, like the time I first came with K\_\_\_\_\_ to Argenta, 1976, then had to go away to make money and practice partnership, before I was ready in 1980. Now I met L\_\_\_\_\_ in 1994, and it may be 1999 before I am ready for her.

In the meantime, I'm engaged in an apprenticeship of building my esteem and confidence and craft in the world, of becoming and accepting fully who I am. Jammin Fulltime Now . . . until I can meet with her again on her own terms, as equals ready for each other. This is the purification: to become whole in myself, so I can join wholly with another.

So I continue, visiting these pages to check in, punching this time card, entering my logs of inner accomplishments and sadnesses, past and to come.

In this wild time I am new in every moment.

I have ambitions but discard them in a moment for the pleasure or the numbness of the present. I want to work on this numbness, to purge it from my system. In the meantime my sex throbs gently. How long can it wait? This is part of my struggle: to tame it for the sake of my next lover. Instead of letting it always have its way, dominating.

This is also the human challenge, on a planet overrun by our children.

So we continue.

I will get in touch with the movement of the new millennium, as we bring our planet to a crash. This is a reality – like fried ice-cream. Funkadelica lives.

There is a way out: through the breath, awareness, forgiveness. Music, magic and meditation. Drum, flute and didgeridoo. Maybe also keyboard, bass, percussion.

Strumming the time of the universe: of outer and inner rhythms. Honoring the circle. This is happening with Abo Fusion; now we need to take it to the next level. How

to package and market the product? We need to fit into the package. There is discussion ongoing. We will work it out. We will jam till the break of dusk. We will make love in all the ways that are possible musically – harmonizing, melodizing, communicating, listening, opening.

Giving and receiving.

There is a way forward in this movement . . . to the cave, to the sunshine, to people in need. We will offer what we can feel, in this time of our hearts to share, following our intuition, the way of the universe and of creative life force. Will, intuition, magic, moving breath forward. Sharing our breath. Moving air in, out. Driving our engine of joy, of sadness, of feeling up and down and in and out of the magic of our joining. We are made for loving: for crying our needs to each other and laughing our weaknesses, also smiling our strengths and holding in joy each other to each other's hearts. There is no holding back in this except in the details of wise restraint, for better channeling of energy forward in greater harmony, of ourselves to each other and the whole.

## **Pulling the Threads Forward**

My mom and dad birthed me in emotional chaos  
Her womb, even, a smoke-filled room.

I can imagine a different scene – can go there  
In rescue to comfort and suckle the little guy.

I bring him forward, to feel love and acceptance  
That heals botched relationships, loneliness, career inadequacies.

What is past, what is present?  
What is the real work?

Energy in motion = emotion  
The past is recorded in body, mind and spirit.

Let's try it all again: installing a different memory –  
A figmentary fragment of present time.

Today is a new day.



Yesterday I was in the grip still of numbing pain and heartache for the lost love I missed as an infant and small child. I tried to get through that, by being with it and playing music . . . blowing the didge and sucking air like the nipple I missed, blowing air back out and keeping the circle going. Still, I need to feel more solidly this sense I have more today, of recovery.

In a way I feel there is nothing more to say now . . . just to get back to work. There is much discipline to be learned here. Another day will pass so quickly: like Monday and Tuesday with B\_\_\_\_\_ and Ellen and family, Wednesday with music and sun and writing here alone, and today Thursday with more indoors work on computer, under cloudy skies. There is balance following nature's balance.

I need only to believe in myself.

This only takes love.

To love myself only takes acting consciously, with awareness and acceptance and love for all beings, at all times.

## ***Current Wisdom: Fractal Essays on the Growth of the Soul***

### **Foreword**

25 May

I begin where I am. If this in the future becomes edited out or an epilogue or a middle chapter, that's okay. For now, I proceed on the principle of first things first. I am filled with one impulse at the moment: to heal my life. Coming from two months of ups and downs following the breakup of a fourteen-year relationship, and an especially rough week filled with feelings of worthlessness, emptiness and despair, I awoke this morning early for the first time, ready to get back to business: the business of living. And more than that, I didn't and don't want to return to going through the motions of chasing success and happiness by worldly standards that I've internalized. I want to do what works for me; and that is to state the truth of the full situation in the present moment.

This is a great challenge. The present moment is full of possibility, potential, leftover dreams and dreams not yet dreamed. There are a dozen things I could do as a priority today; let alone the thousand tasks implied by these top-shelf items. I'm not joking: my current (that is to say, pending) to-do list is running at thirty-five pages, and I have yet to incorporate two more planning files which will double its length. Many of those items are simply project names that stand for years of work to final accomplishment.

So I'm taking a break – a break from my former life, a break from my future life – to live, what will it be, a year? in the present.

Of course, there will continue to be distractions and demands at every point along the way: ravens stealing eggs, a neighbor wanting help with email, a group jam in preparation for a gig next month. And I do remember that I awoke today with the determination to resume my business activity after several weeks of emotional downtime.

This particular writing project is precipitated from looking at a wish list of books covering current wisdom from the "Branches of Light" catalog from Banyen Books in Vancouver. I feel like somewhat of an authority in this area since winning their contest a couple of years ago which involved an essay about my encounters with Banyen's offerings over the years. In that essay entitled "Light in the Static Attic," I spoke about how the annual selection of current wisdom had been a catalyst for my own learning and growth jumps. At the present time, in a classic midlife crisis of relationship breakdown

and personal reassessment, I list sixty or seventy titles that could help me move ahead now; an impossible task in terms of time and money investment required.

(A side note: how can Jack Kornfield and Joan Borysenko manage not only to write a new book a year but also to read and offer testimonials for so many others?)

So I made a short list, numbering twenty titles in core areas of need or interest in my life right now. Still a daunting investment: \$400 and months or years of commitment to reading, let alone time to do all the meditations and exercises suggested.

Here is the list of topics I considered “priority”:

1. kabbalah and self-love
2. self-forgiveness
  3. the power of now
  4. a vipassana autobiography
  5. synchronicity
  6. the art of dharma
7. emotional brain
8. brainwaves
  9. drum circles
  10. dance/movement
  11. tune your body string
  12. Tantra
  13. the future of love
14. balance
15. time
16. choice theory
  17. midlife
  18. finding flow
  19. personal transformation
  20. co-creative evolution

As you see I have already used my conscious and subconscious mind somewhat creatively to organize the list spatially by invisible categories, as follows:

healing the past  
    being present now  
        being open to life’s possibilities

– or –

balancing different priorities and desires  
    confronting the challenge of my current life

transforming myself and the world around me

Is this a tall order or what?

Here's my solution.

I know that within me is the power of truth, knowledge, wisdom, love, perfection. I know that I have a lifelong skill and training in writing. I am committed above all other values and beliefs to the ultimate sanctity of living dynamically in the flow of present time: free from past attachments and open to the unfolding of the present and future into the moving moment of now. I find writing (and music) to be perfect vehicles for riding this philosophy into practice in the world.

The problem with either one of these crafts is that we can become over-analytical and attached to form (or for that matter, to the form of relationship, that other "perfect vehicle" for demonstrating life's flow). So in conceiving the present project to write about "Current Wisdom," I am tempted to organize the material in any of a number of logical ways. But I recognize my past weakness in such matters: to over-organize, to over-analyze, to create some kind of massive mind-game out of it, relying on expanding research which by nature can never truly end. In other words, to exhaust the topic and, in the process, myself and any hapless reader who encounters the enterprise.

Therefore my solution in present time preaches and practices simplicity: to follow primarily the single message and creative design, which is following the flow of inspiration in the present moment. I recognize that fairness to the reader also allows future editing for final clarity of form and purpose.

I may as well stow my excess baggage here at the gate. This tale could include my life story, ongoing journal entries, essays past present and future, balance sheets, anecdotes, manifestoes, novel fragments, regressions into despair and disillusionment – though I hear the inner critic say that these last negativities will not do. My basic message is one of hope and healing, because that is my motive in sharing this work in the first place: to offer hope and healing. Along the way I will necessarily refer to pain and problems because there is no solution without the problem, no progress without struggle. But I intend not to dwell or get stuck in it, nor to burden the reader with lengthy visits to my private circles of hell. I want to offer a pathway to the joyous light of the stars, by finding it as I go, a step at a time, sharing that journey in real time.

Now, on to business.

## **Dreaming the Dream**

Vehicles for manifesting flow of universal energy include writing, music, relationships, walking . . . these are my favorites. Add your own.

This is a self-help book, meaning, help yourself to whatever is useful or applicable to your life, your interests, your needs and your situation.

Today marks a watershed in my own life, coming to realize that focus and balance can be attained not through selecting one of many possible vehicles or occupations, not by specializing within the world of externals, not by choosing one among infinite forms, but rather, by centering in the principle of universal mind. Which is to say, identifying self as a channel for universal mind or creative energy. Being a hologram for the wider universe. Co-creating on a human scale, with the universe working alongside on a larger scale.

Where the scales meet, the boundary is called present time. Where the co-created worlds overlap, the events that transpire are called, when noticed, synchronicity. This is the meeting ground of choice and fate, of individual will and service to others. The unifying principle around which all life activities swirl, in relative balance, is joyful creative spirit that seeks expression through them in a manner consistent with its own unfolding wholeness.

Nature does this automatically, without thinking. We can think about it if we choose; and thinking can be helpful in the sense of pre-visioning what we want, evaluating past performance, or even simply appreciating the miracle of present existence. Thinking can also become a liability; witness my agonizing through much of my life up to this point about my career choices, my success relative to this or that worldly or emotionally-determined standard, my social status, my relationship security, my income, and so on. When thinking is able to subside to the spontaneous, transparent state of nature, or even better, to enhance the natural state with joyful awareness and enthusiastic co-creation of unfolding participation and desire-manifestation, then it changes from a liability to a blessing. Without attachment to the lower motivations of selfish ego or money or negative belief systems, our participation in the ongoing miracle of existence can accept life's gifts gracefully, and with equal grace accept the limitations inherent in our material form: death, disease, conflict, suffering, delayed gratification of desire. All of these difficult things will still come to us however enlightened we may be; but with the right attitude – a centeredness in the principle of identification with higher consciousness, present flow and universal mind – we can take in stride the natural limitations of our existence, grateful for the unique opportunity we have been given through this life to play the game, act in the drama, dream the dream.

## Levitation 101

I feel as if I have truly arrived now, to occupy this husk of a body, to fill the gap between my inner child and my outer skin. I have now the self-confidence born of letting go of that needy self, the need to hide, the missing of early or recent love.

This feels like a religious conversion, as if I have found Jesus – which is to say, I have found a guiding light, in my own devotion to a spiritual grounding to substitute for the insufficiencies of my human father and mother. Did they not give me enough love, affection, attention, positive affirmation, modeling for adulthood? What they did give was substantial, but that was a me I had to grow from. I had to be reborn; and to do that, to die. How did I die?

I can review a difficult week, beginning with a session with Ellen going down the tunnel from residual relationship pain to root pain of isolation from mother-love, as an infant. I rocked on the floor, fetally, crying with the reality of it. This was helpful, as it was supposed to be. At the end of the week, at X\_\_\_\_'s after *Dancing with Wolves*, I sat beside Z\_\_\_\_ and cried the rest of my heart out dry. She supported me in that, knowing the wisdom of the process. That day I had felt better: strong and powerful in fixing things (grease gun, tire chain mechanism, stovepipe, trail clearing) before succumbing to “feeling funny” again at X\_\_\_\_'s house watching X\_\_\_\_ and Z\_\_\_\_ (in clownface paint) approach together.

There was also the Tuesday group child work on the beach: everyone sharing tales of pain and inadequacy as children. From that I learned I was not alone in this journey. Also this week I wrote poems, played the didge, researched the Banyen list, wrote in my journal. I read a website called “Universal Mind.”

X\_\_\_\_ told me how happy he was, and Z\_\_\_\_ too, but I didn't want to hear it. We had been four people half-happy; now V\_\_\_\_ and I completely unhappy, and X\_\_\_\_ and Z\_\_\_\_ totally happy. Was this fair? Maybe not, but V\_\_\_\_ and I had some growing to do.

I don't like being left behind. I have decided to be totally happy too, so that my happiness does not depend on the whims of another person. How easy to dismiss the emotional connection of fourteen years . . . but not easy at all. I have had a lot of resentment and anger to express, and cleared more with Z\_\_\_\_ in the garden on Sunday morning after my long cry. How, I wondered, could I still be prey to such negativity, and such lack of self-love, when I knew better, when I could tap into higher consciousness and understand where it was I was supposed to go. I was capable, in theory, but my lower self, my ego attachments and residual pain, was dragging me down. It helped for Z\_\_\_\_ to finally acknowledge without reservation that fundamentally the situation was about her leaving me.

I have been working steadily at the exercises in *Recreating Yourself*. Halfway through, after coming to an impasse over the Banyen list options, I reached for a title rejected by Z\_\_\_\_\_ but seeming appropriate for my wit's end: *The Last Self Help Book*. It dovetailed perfectly with the other book, so much so that I was picking one up and losing track of which one it was, who had said what – this overlap applies to the Universal Mind website as well.

Along the way I had a visit Sunday afternoon from Rick and Julie Zammuto. I got a great energizing hug from the queen of the devas, Glada, and had a socially confirming visit with Rick and Julie, before the fateful Monday in which this chapter began.

How can I say for certain that I have arrived at the state of grace I so desperately needed and wanted? Is my searching over, for life? I doubt it. And yet, I have definitely moved up a quantum leap, to a fundamentally higher plateau or stage of life. I have grown up, or outgrown my blindness to peace, my absolute attachment to externals, my victimization by early denial of love and later denial of male leadership. That was the boy pupa stage. Now I am a butterfly.

The test of constancy is in the flow of time. In the meantime there is continually refinement of definition, clarity of understanding and application and perhaps above all, communication. If this is more meaningful than a passing drug trip, than it is integrated fully into a life pattern, into the awareness of every breath, into a constancy of forgiveness and acceptance, into the dedication to service and healing for others.

I have re-kindled, or kindled for the first time, a truly central and abiding inner light which cannot now be extinguished by pain or loss or the strivings of limited ego. I confirm and strengthen my gains of understanding and strength by so stating it, by telling others, by defining myself thus to the world. This runs the danger of externalizing what is fundamentally an internal and ineffable orientation; but it all happens with the natural unfolding of universal creative process, which knows no other activity, really, than this transformation of energy to form (and vice versa).

I am experiencing now an unveiling, where I can hide no longer from the world or my own light which is not mine but the spirit's. No longer is the wall of my self-limitation able to stand between and block the communication between my light and the light of the world. I have come home. I have gone out of the house of my parents into my home in the world and the world beyond, which is the world through all things and the same as the world within me. My walls are transparent now. I am a cell of ocean water, with fluid osmosis through my permeable membrane as I float in the larger ocean.

Keywords in this realm are *acceptance, flow, openness*.

With the difference being that now, they are more than words, concepts, signposts and directions. They are living realities in this very moment. I have fully integrated them into my being, so that I manifest them and no longer manifest the leftover deficiencies of the past, the distractions of the present, or the external strivings for the future. I am here

now, just like Ram Dass said all those years ago, and now I can mean it because I have finally arrived. Will I stay for longer than this moment, or will I slide back? Being human, the latter is the likely outcome. That probable future, however, does not diminish the fresh grace of the present.

How, then, do I suppose this communication can help you? Maybe it's just words for you too, if you are on a different path of development. Or maybe my story can help to remind you of where you're going.

If all this sounds patronizing or sanctimonious, I should point out: Look how long it took me in my life! Nearly forty-eight years. And being human, I will forget, I will cry again, I will lust again, I will worry about money and what my friends and detractors think of me. Yet I will have gained a foothold in this new territory that I will never truly forget. And having once been accepted for membership, my passwords should serve me well to reenter. *Acceptance, Flow, Openness* . . .

Let this book provide – as the various self-help books, therapy sessions, relationships and other learning experiences of my life have provided for me – a contribution to readiness. They are all tools, catalysts for progressive evolution. Some work to move us along horizontally. Some, when we get stuck at the bottom of a cliff, can build up enough energy to elevate us quite magically (we wake up Monday morning to find ourselves a thousand feet higher, standing on a new plateau). Who says levitation doesn't exist?

## On Symbolic Dying

I believe this concept, well fleshed out in myth and religion, is central to the difference between my recent arrival to a higher plateau, and earlier understandings of what I wanted but could not achieve. The difference lies in my experience in recent days, weeks and months of dying a symbolic death.

It began perhaps in February-March, when I undertook a complete cleansing fast for two weeks. The first week involved a strict diet of fruit and vegetables, potatoes and millet. The second week I ate no food, but took only juice and broth, psyllium husk and bitter herb, and blue-green algae. I also took enemas twice daily the second week, and purged my intestines of much residual mucous that had been attached to the intestinal walls. The result emotionally was a strange wasting away of my sense of self, of ego, of personal identity. I lost all sexual desire. I felt with other people, and even with Z\_\_\_\_, that I had nothing to contribute to conversation. I was empty in all respects. By the end



of that week I felt physically light and clear, and psychically as if I had been reduced to a zero-state.

Within a week or two after this, Z\_\_\_\_\_ told me that she was ready to leave. The death of this relationship dealt the final blow to my former identity, which itself lingered toward death only over the next couple of months. By the end of that period of time, crying in the chair at X\_\_\_\_\_’s and on the floor at Ellen’s, the pain and loss of my recent life had merged with the pain and loss of my teen years and my infancy, and I felt reduced to a state of worthlessness, without anything to offer anyone. I wasn’t exactly suicidal: no, not even that. Just numb, blank, or sad, or tired. In effect, I was already dead.

I believe that it is no coincidence that I arose in the space of the next 36 hours to realize the possibility of a new life centered in universal life energy, grounded in the principles of acceptance, flow and openness. These may still sound like mere concepts to you, even after hearing my story. That’s the way it is, until you yourself have undergone enough pain and suffering and loss to cause your symbolic or psychic death. As long as you have hope of success with your present identity, with your past baggage included, your future hopes and expectations will pull you forward without significant change in the realm of spirit. You may attain your goals or you may not; but either way, I don’t think your basic attitudes, or your basic chemistry of happiness/unhappiness, will change. If you give up enough hope through demonstrated failure, however, if you succumb to enough suffering and loss, you may, like Job or the crucified Christ, then be granted the grace to ascend to a higher realm freed of your earlier attachments to dreams and liabilities, free to dwell in the all-forgiving and all-fulfilling perfection of the present moment.

*Wait a minute, you may say, the present moment isn’t all that perfect for me . . .*

Good point. From this perspective it’s perfect, because I have given an empty self over to that awareness. From your perspective it’s not perfect because you are still limited by negative self-beliefs and appealing external goals not yet achieved. The potential of the present moment, however, remains as perfect, awaiting your surrender to it. This you will do at whichever time you choose (or is chosen for you) to discard your present or former identity; that is to say, whenever you symbolically die.

Please understand I am not comparing myself to you in order to pump myself up or put you down. I am assuming that you are reading this book because you are seeking understanding about improving your state of happiness. I am also writing this from the standpoint of the understanding I have glimpsed briefly so far in my own journey. I make no claim to saintliness, to the final judgment of the goodness of my actions or the truthfulness of my own perceptions. I only offer what I see, flawed or biased as it may be, from my perspective at the present moment of my life in my forty-eighth year, and I can only hope that you may benefit from it as I feel I have.

Meanwhile I know that I will be speaking from new conditions of pain all too soon, and asking for condolence and advice from you or another. The ironic thing about the wisdom of flow and openness, is that they bring change, not only from the painful past but also from the happy plateau of the present. I am moved not to hold too tightly even to these new truths, or this new identity, too fondly. I am bound to keep moving beyond, to new truths and discoveries, to fresh experiences, risks, and vulnerabilities.

## **Straight Talk**

If this were a proper self-help book, I would do as the advertisers say and talk only about you, you, you. Your problems, your potential. If this were a proper work of fiction or autobiography, I would stick to my story, and leave you out of it. As it is, I prefer to share my story with you directly, offering my lessons for your benefit without hiding behind the anonymity of your readerness.

Let this be a conversation among equals. The roles aren't the same – I'm doing all the talking up front – but our status as citizens of the universe, our progress relative to our own growth paths, is equally valid and perfect. I am no more or less an authority on this subject – my own evolving awareness – than you are an authority on your corresponding node on the net of consciousness.

Another honest bit of self-revelation here: I'm feeling some of that old self-doubt today. Why is it? Because I only got four hours' sleep last night trying to tie up some last minute budget figures before today's town trip? Did I go too far down those old tunnels of worldly attachment, skimping on the necessary restorative rest for my unconscious connection to source energy?

The luster on the new love affair seems to be fading already. Who or what have I fallen in love with? Myself? My own quest for happiness or enlightenment?

Or, lacking all love for myself, have I given over my love to the world, to everything that is not myself? Have I become enamored with a vision of reality in which the concept of self has no lasting or fixed meaning?

That feels closer to it. To describe it thus gives me more confidence in it even as I speak. I can better recall now the face of my beloved. Without conscious recall it's like waiting for the archived image to appear in its own time in a dream. Thanks to the power of language I can run a search of those archives to call it up, in at least a recognizable format if not the original. There is no original, anyway, in fixed memory: only a fluid constellation of meaning and purpose and understanding that must shift to incorporate the flow of ever-freshening time.

Here, now, have I talked myself and you out of an incipient bad mood?

I must remember the lesson about incorporating the “negative” feelings that arise, as they must, in the ongoing journey through this “vale of tears.” They are part of the deal – like the wart discovered on my new lover after the first night together. There – behind the ear – as she lies on the pillow beside me half asleep in the half light of dawn. Why didn’t I see it before? But does it really matter? I will love her, ear-wart and all. In fact her wart, all things considered, has a certain unique charm . . .

## Session Notes

Centered. Saying goodbye to my second family, opening to a third. Not denying or running from the past (as my older sister implied in her recent email to me) but accepting the past and a new present – relating to X\_\_\_\_, Z\_\_\_\_ and Nellie as people.

Grounded solidly in the feet (feelings that will still arise); and also in the higher self (head, upper body, Chi area). Both realms are accessible simultaneously, and I am able to move fluidly between them.

Ongoing: with recognition that I don’t have the final answer or permanent enlightenment. This too will pass. I will have old and new challenges to meet, valleys to cross, new heights to discover in time, as my path unfolds.

The Mayan Oracle, for this session, was Realm Shift.

Ellen as hypnotherapist in this session modeled well the principle of organic flow – improvising, knowing her tools. She could sense my resistance to move into past feeling, and so allowed instead my move to a future scenario, and brought me finally back to present-time body awareness, the feeling state, where I was centered between the transparent fluid upper body and crossed solid stuck feet.

Flow brings about its own completions in its own time. As the flow progresses, ever more connections arise with new possibilities to pursue – to schedule, to plan, to act on.

I must be ever-discriminating about choices of external activity, retaining a core sense of spirit and evaluating choices according to their ability to enhance rather than restrict further flow.

For each of us, our sense of flow and our path within it will differ. I can only attempt to be true to that current of flow within myself, and to suggest to others to do the same. As Ellen said of my ability as a co-counseling listener, I do best not trying to do it by the book, but as I am, as myself.



## Appointment with Paul Erickson

Changing direction: to look back to, ready to embrace on an ongoing basis, the pain of the past.

The process is one of healing, “unraveling” of hurt, entanglement, loss, need, etc. But it’s not the past relationship which dissipates, rather our attachment to it and its power over my consciousness and mood.

Yes, I can let myself sink there again, and let the wave pass through me – and no, I needn’t feel stuck or overcome there, because I can simultaneously remember my higher consciousness . . . as I could Sunday morning with Z\_\_\_\_\_ in the garden, expressing my anger and resentment over her happiness at my expense, while also forgiving and validating her.

The voice of my higher consciousness is my real awareness – not the nagging, judging voice that is impatient with my stuff, hard on myself for “slipping back,” and fixated on the goal of staying in the heavenly realm free of all past pain forever. This harsh master is actually a lesser being than the more self-forgiving one which is not threatened by more layers of feeling that I uncover in my journey to my humanity.

In town today I see everyone on this same path – stuck, learning, growing, in pain, doing the best we can. I am one of the crowd.

A hitchhiker I picked up, Sonya, reminded me of the North American propensity to do this journey in our head, instead of with our feet or belly.

Let me remember not to get too heady with the ideas of my own “enlightenment.” Because enlightenment which turns away from darkness is blank, in denial and self-delusion . . . because I am still human, and my lifelong conditioning does affect me and has a lasting influence. The issue is then not one of what I contain, but what controls me and what I have the grace to acknowledge.

In the hypothetical case of actually clearing away all susceptibility to my own fears and losses, I still then have to deal with new losses (as of loved ones). Even if I became free of such attachment, my life is richer if I can feel compassion and empathy for others’ suffering and loss. This goal of empathy – a way to feel pain from a safe distance, removed to a degree from another’s direct suffering – serves as a useful model and reminder for how I can relate to my own pain and sufferings.

Because it’s a state of experience in a “lower” realm on the chain of chakras or along the path of spiritual evolution, I do not seek to disown it. Because my inner child, the actual child I was in the past, cried for lack of love, I do not turn coldly away for clearer skies. I move toward that being’s experience, offering care, support, acceptance and unconditional love. I am both he and I.

Looking at and feeling anew the being of wholeness means including and embracing my own past selves and presently deeply layered hurts and needs. Whether these are a part of the past or the present me is an interesting psycho-philosophical speculation but beside the point. What is more relevant is a truly comprehensive wholeness, a human wholeness, a grounded fact. It can be found in the belly and still be considered “universal” – probably moreso than if limited to ideas and concepts only. Wholeness isn’t threatened by the existence and experience and expression of painful emotion, whatever its origin and time-place of residence. Past, present, in me, in another – I can allow myself to feel it without needing the protection or defense of emotional boundaries, self-definitions, evolutionary paradigms, re-birthing metaphors, games of consciousness.

Paul told the story of Milarepa in his cave inviting the demons in for tea. The spiritual work and emotional work go hand in hand, and in essence are the same work, as they are the work of human being and becoming. We don’t seek to become other than human, super-human or beyond-human. We seek simply to become more fully human.

And the desired state is not a place to stay in; it is a process to stay with. The process (of continual learning and growth) is what stays the same; while the experiential content is always changing and reoccurring.

## **Group Session Notes**

I feel a little “wrong” for not keeping my attention clear and awake during the visualization exercise. I don’t even remember Ellen getting specifically into scenes of family emotion. For that matter I can’t recall what she said or where I went. It was lost time, though it was relaxing after just arriving from town.

I feel glad to realize that my parents’ patterns have been reproduced in my attitudes toward myself. By recognizing this, maybe I can save myself from the emotional trouble of being stuck in it. The pattern I clicked on was my mother being angrily critical of my father for drinking, especially after he lost a good job, when the upward direction of his career took a dive. He reacted with defensiveness and denial and, more and more, with withdrawal, yet without changing his behavior.

I feel sad that both of them locked into this pattern for the rest of their lives. I feel angry at my father for doing that to himself, and to us – removing his positive energy and example from our lives. I feel angry at myself and also sad and finally, forgiving and compassionate, for falling into the same trap of self-criticism for years, and responding with denial, escape, and persistence in patterns which were not helpful or insightful. I

feel frustrated with myself when I fall into the trap of reacting to my parents' limitations by trying so hard to be different, and not seeing how this is counterproductive and only perpetuates their failure.

I feel sad for all the years of wasted life and energy and potential, in their lives and mine, and in the lives of people I've been in relationship with – and for all the people for whom I've been unavailable. I feel stupid for having fallen into the withdrawal trap while thinking I was going to be different from my father.

I feel grateful for realizing now that I can forgive them . . . and more importantly, that I can forgive myself. I feel an obligation now to live and apply this awareness; and when I forget and fall prey to the old patterns of criticism and escapist activity, I feel a compassionate forgiveness and gentleness toward myself, which comes in present time in my deep breath flowing.

30 May

After Friday night at Q\_\_\_\_\_’s Five Rhythms dance workshop in Nelson, I’m brought back to facing my stuff again – self-consciousness in a crowd; sadness and negative self-judgment about my aloneness, my unworthiness, my relative brilliance or patheticness – all of which Q\_\_\_\_\_ brings out for everyone there. Still I feel for some reason as if I’ve got it worse than most . . . or worse than her . . . or worse than I want it to be.

I know that this being hard on myself is part of the problem, and is unnecessary – or is it? It’s happening. Maybe the word “unnecessary” is unfair, an implied judgment. The thing to do is accept that also.

I’m impatient with myself in not having the exercises of “release” truly work to release these feelings as they are designed to do. But maybe I’m not supposed to expect instant cure – rather to use this as an ongoing practice. And to let go, gradually, of my feeling bad also about being so impatient.

Whatever I am, however deeply rooted, is ultimately, potentially fluid and subject to release. Not complete release, probably, but release by an increasing forgiveness and higher grace which can grow in me in time, with continued practice.

The “art of dharma” is not something achieved in a workshop or two, but acquired gently over a lifetime of attention, compassion for self and others, faith in the process and appreciation of its working every moment I choose. Even the lessons earned by unconscious pain contribute to learning and growth with eventual awareness and processing, insight and perspective.

Always it is helpful to seek the wider, more complete context.

As I peel away the layers to uncover core feelings, the layers of higher consciousness increase. It's a process of unraveling by which, layer by layer, unconscious patterns are transformed into frames of consciousness, progressively nested one into another.

The wave form continues. Health means riding the wave. Not getting stuck in the troughs, or thinking that the crests are where to be. Just riding the waves smoothly, with grace, with full appreciation that this is what life consists of – in fact this is the nature and form of all reality in the universe. It is the very definition of reality, as we can know it. We might speculate on a “purer” form of existence or aspect of universal life . . . a final frame akin to an EEG of death – flat endless waveform beyond waving. But that's not for us to live. Living is to partake fully in the electromagnetic reality we experience directly, and this means surfing, crashing, floating, diving, splashing in the spray.

Onward, another day.

In the crowd, anonymous, alone on the city street – I realize I'm no better or worse than others – everyone has stuff, consciously or not. We are all in this flow.

Acceptance of my own stuff is hard. I wait to be free of it. To say this, helps me sense and enjoy and reach that freedom. Naming the demon disempowers it, empowers me.

I don't need to be joyful – only real, so that joy can flow through me freely at the right time, when it will.

Being in love with L\_\_\_\_ (am I?) but with a year's delay, is an excellent and appropriate discipline for me now – whatever the eventual outcome. Even if she is a figment of my imagination (is she?) her own strength in independence symbolizes and serves to keep me honest, true to myself and my needs, with the need to strengthen my own bearings in the world.

At some point before that rather indefinite “next year,” it makes sense to just flow with present relationship developments. Meanwhile it helps me to have an objective excuse (“L\_\_\_\_”) to prevent me from falling too precipitously into engagements based on lust and loneliness, filling my needs for love and approval from outside myself, through someone else (a woman). I need to be clear with prospective partners about my caution and reserve, because L\_\_\_\_ or not, it is in my best interest (i.e., faithful to my actual intent) to not make promises, commitments, or deep entanglements yet.

Though – who knows – maybe I will find someone for whom I am convinced that is the right approach. The key is to do it with full honest awareness, and not blindly out of habit, “need” or deference to their need and love.



In the meantime . . . gentleness toward self in my learning.

31 May

*Today I'm having to use this journal as attempted therapy. I feel so low, again, back to rock bottom. Can I look forward to another high? Do I need to cry deeply, this time again, first?*

Today Z\_\_\_\_\_ challenged me with the idea she might want to live here with X\_\_\_\_\_ someday – exercising her right to part-ownership. I felt that was unfair, since she chose to end our relationship, and now I wanted at least to reserve my decision power on this part of what we shared. Otherwise I am left with nothing, while she gets another relationship *and* our home.

Nellie moved back today – suddenly, without warning. A knock on the door as I was doing yoga naked on the rug, having indulged my inertia in bed all morning, writing lyrics and music for two songs and feeling otherwise . . . inert.

I am physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually drained. Back to zero point, without hope, without love, without anything to give or receive. How far does friendship and community love go? Not far enough. How far would a private relationship go? Not far enough. I don't even want to inflict myself on anyone else. I would find them too ugly or too beautiful for me, and that would ruin it. Maybe I just need a goldilocks, just right. Someone to grow with, someone like me, someone who is hard on herself and gentle on another someone with great potential and little to show for it so far. Someone who understands hiding and holding oneself, from the inside.

1 June

Another stormy time, following the workshop with Q\_\_\_\_\_ on Friday and Saturday. I thought I saw V\_\_\_\_\_ warming up – attractive like her – but it was someone else. Two other women I found attractive in body but not face, though with interesting, seductive expressions. I fall prey to those who see me as more attractive than they are, while being spurned by those more attractive than I: a fatal dualism.

Q\_\_\_\_\_ of course was the exception, openly looking at me through much of her talking, and extremely attractive to me . . . though I assumed unavailable. Was I wrong? Saturday she revealed going through some of her own stuff, and announced she was not up for a third class Sunday. The two of us danced briefly near the end, face to face, light

to light, then I turned away, afraid to go deeper, and she crouched low and recoiled after that, as if in pain. My tragedy. The one who saw and danced my essence, another plain one with a knowing eye and steady gaze, mirrored me reaching starry-eyed to the heavens, then blindly groping, finally holding myself. A grim picture. In the parking lot after, one of the two great bodies with plain faces and appealing eyes stood like me, leaning lonely against the vehicles. Back in our individual fears, we were playing out our stories.

What would I have to offer someone like Q\_\_\_\_, or someone like the lonely one, or someone like L\_\_\_\_ . . . indeed anyone?

Actually, something only for the lonely ones: a chance to share our loneliness. Is this what I want – again? It will be my fate unless I improve my foundation in self-love. A long road ahead. I spent the ride home exhausted emotionally, absorbing wisdom and love from A\_\_\_\_ – another dancer with great body and plain face but compelling eyes. How easy to receive her abundant love . . . and give her back . . . what? My reservations?

This dark page is at odds with the burning light I began with. It's part of the process: going back. Nellie moved back suddenly on Sunday. I spent the afternoon in the garden with Z\_\_\_\_, squabbling about rights to the house, at the end.

I spent a rough night alone, after Nellie gruffly ordered me out of her bed when she returned from the computer (I was nearly asleep there after reading to her, *Flowers for Algernon*). Storm and wind, rain and thunder, were crashing around in the world, while I (in the words of a juvenile poem of mine in another time of relationship struggle) “tossed and turned and burned inside to a frenzied pop – turned inside out to an ocean of cloud.”

Back to the present moment; and to this morning, when I finally released, in a session with Ellen, sobs of loneliness and dilemma around my relationship bind: too good or not good enough; no right match conceivable; or if so, so scarce and unpredictable. Or all a mind game, to figure out in advance. Or if not, to fall into the trap of the first lover who comes along and snaps me up. Or to save it all for L\_\_\_\_, the dream of a perfect love . . . when how could that be, realistically? Ah, the gnarly hands of fate . . .

How perfect myself and imperfect, how beautiful yet ugly – especially when I cry. Releasing did help; as did the latest exercise in *The Last Self Help Book*, which I dipped into when I got home. That led me toward “accessing universal mind power” once again . . . accepting what is meant to be, as perfect. “Everything is happening for the best,” (my mother’s saying) and “in perfect time” (the mantra of my holistic doctor). These maxims are true; and they include trusting my intuition in making choices, not simply taking whatever comes my way. Deep intuition in turn is based on belief in self. In short, I need to grow up, with my inner child healed enough to be an adult.

I'm on shaky ground in the meantime, however, still hating myself for not being able to love freely and well. Instead of self-forgiveness I apply self-critical judgment and come up short. I do this to both myself and the person I'm with, using standards of perfection impossible to meet, instead of the perfection of all that is.

So it doesn't matter what works or doesn't, or for how long; because whether I follow my intuition wisely or not, all is as it has to be . . .

Is this just a trick of philosophy?

I need to ask Rivers, perhaps, with more formal training in such matters than I. Wouldn't you trust your life path to a man named Shining Rivers?

There was a moment of truth and clarity and understanding and grace at the end of my tearful session with Ellen, in which I saw that my reliance on external standards of beauty and perfection was an illusion; and just as much an illusion was my feeling of inadequacy and unworthiness or sick inability to enjoy the gifts and powers at my command. The only reality was the present moment – with Ellen – who understood so poignantly that I was rejecting her too, unable to savor the shared moment fully as I quickly retreated to the stroke of noon, midnight for the soul, into my rejection of her on external grounds. But not really, as I reflect now, because again I was following my intuitive sense. All was as it should be: our understanding, our unity, our separation, with the position of hands on the clock coming together only in passing at the stroke of noon, then parting again . . .

I just need to believe in myself and follow my heart. No, I was not yet ready for Q\_\_\_\_, nor ready to commit to the waif in the parking lot. There are no mistakes: just the continuation of the dance. Perhaps I will dance again with those partners.

Or with W\_\_\_\_: the most sensual moment of my life, in union in the dance of Flow. We were even somewhat flirting afterward, with a foot massage, dinner at the Rice Bowl with Rivers and A\_\_\_\_ and Ellen, and a slow walk down the sidewalk talking of teaching. The “world's most beautiful woman” in Steven's opinion, marred by a dark-haired lip, large teeth (like L\_\_\_\_'s) and a deformed little toenail. Doesn't everyone have unique beauty, unique flaws, both inner and outer?

Truly. Therefore there is no standard, only the feeling of love and natural attraction. I too used to think of W\_\_\_\_, fifteen years ago when I first met her, as the most beautiful woman imaginable. Even now she has a wild gypsy appeal, like a spirited horse. But not perfect. Q\_\_\_\_ must have flaws, as well: perhaps a wart on the back of her ear, or a dislike of men in green shirts and beards.

We are all in this together. I need before anything else to give up those false dreams of perfection, and to go on flirting happily with B\_\_\_\_, and O\_\_\_\_, and A\_\_\_\_

with her most radiant smile and eyes and bubbly intelligence and pendulous breasts and crooked teeth, and Y\_\_\_\_\_ with the witch nose sideview and angel aura face-on, and cosmic spirit and elfish breasts . . .

There is no end to our uniqueness and need not to be judged; we are all so unique and powerful and beautiful and lonely and humanly limited, and we must simply dance together in love.

2 June

And now I must sully this document not with wisdom but with anger. Or must I? I choose to, because it is there. The current wisdom says to see it, accept it and feel it, express it. Very well . . .

I'm angry at Z\_\_\_\_\_ for making me give up so much of my life.

I'm angry for controlling my anger for so long for her sake.

I'm angry to have given her so much of my time and life, and Nellie in the early years, because Z\_\_\_\_\_ wanted me to when I didn't.

I'm angry that I sacrificed my relationships with other women to protect Z\_\_\_\_\_.

I'm angry that Z\_\_\_\_\_ laid such a heavy trip on me for my attractions to other women and then left me for another man.

I'm angry that Z\_\_\_\_\_ has put me in such a position of anger now that I still have to deal with it.

I'm angry that she's not here for me to express this too.

I'm angry that this anger saps all my energy and joy in life.

I'm angry that Z\_\_\_\_\_ reminds me so much of my mother in demanding my behavior to conform to her standards.

I'm angry that I gave in so meekly to Z\_\_\_\_\_ as I did to my mother.

I'm angry that I let my own insecurity control me so that I gave up so much of who I wanted to be and how I wanted to spend my time, for Z\_\_\_\_\_ 's sake.

I'm angry that I give in now to the anger instead of allowing forgiveness and grace.

I'm angry that I repressed my anger so much in the past for Z\_\_\_\_\_ 's sake, and for the sake of protecting our fragile communication and relationship.

I'm angry that I ever got together with Z\_\_\_\_\_, except for having produced Nellie.

I'm angry that Z\_\_\_\_\_ is still making demands of me, expecting me to conform to her expectations and standards, and still expecting me to give up what I care about for her sake and her interests.

I'm angry at myself for falling into the same trap of selfishness for which I accuse Z\_\_\_\_\_.

I'm angry at my own blindness in having expectations in this relationship beyond what Z\_\_\_\_\_ ever expected or promised and beyond what was and ever could have been realistic.

*Just found out O\_\_\_\_\_ and Edward are "officially" split up now, too. The dominoes continue to fall.*

3 June

Waiting for the computer to start:  
"not enough extended memory":

only the memory of loss, of pain  
but the clear blue sky forgives

the grinding of the brain disk in motion  
to restore its switches of sanity

uninstalling: a multi-stage process:  
even when the visible program is removed

its traces and settings remain in the registry  
and even the cleanup utility fails

to root out the corruption  
meaning back up to a previous workable state

and start again

In the group session on the beach today I had a positive experience with my inner infant, going back to the womb – a toxic room – shielded in my own maroon light, taking responsibility in leaving early, come what may. I was learning to protect myself, to survive.

The visit from the adult me helped, too: I could see that where I ended up wasn't so bad, in fact I'd done pretty well for myself, with many happy childhood experiences along the way. My presence provided the adult male role model I missed with my father.

The result felt good – finally learning life’s ultimate lesson, to be able to stand free in the world and universe, taking care of oneself and setting one’s own standards , with a family of supportive loved ones standing by.

When I got home I discovered the head on my drum had split at the rim: the end of an era. I had bought this drum to take to the Hollyhock workshop with Olatunji where I met L\_\_\_\_\_ . . . and now I had split up with Z \_\_\_\_\_.

4 June

I’m feeling somewhat neutral today, clear and open, though a little fatigued, under close cloud and drizzling skies. I have only yesterday and today glimpsed a key concept, and come to an underlying feeling of sufficiency and validation in the world, as I am. I don’t need to prove anything to myself or anyone anymore. I have already established for my inner infant that the adult life I have led up to this point is a positive constellation of achievements and talents, fit for a decent role model for the child I was. I have no regrets, really, all things considered (Nellie for instance validating my relationship with Z\_\_\_\_\_).

More telling, I think, is the sense that I don’t need to heal myself or come to clarity and contentment in order to qualify for some new successes or relationship of the future. Up till now I have had a sometimes hidden agenda in all my personal growth work, that by doing this work and healing myself to feel better about myself in the world, I would then do better at all the things I’ve been trying to do – business, writing, music and so on. And after my relationship breakup, I’ve been healing with a tacit assumption that if I did a good job of it, I would be more attractive and comfortable in my next relationship. Now I question that motive as a means to an end.

The end is better viewed as the process itself, and the state of contentment and healing that allows me to feel comfortable already without relationship, and successful without further achievements. Paradoxically it is precisely this giving up of ulterior motives and external goals that allows them to come to fruition naturally. It’s not appropriate for me to take credit for life’s abundance; the lesson is to allow the universe to keep the credit for its own abundance and for me to be simply grateful.

It’s actually much easier, energetically, to live like that, in a state of gratitude – to simply get out of the way, allow and accept. But it’s not so easy for the ego to allow this, because it means giving up its relentless quest for self-recognition and animal status.

6 June

I had a visit from Howard today, after a good jam last night with him, Dick Pollard and neighbors. We talked about “love” and what it means . . .

- He thinks it needs to be a noun, not a verb (he's into Beethoven, not jazz).
  - We have to be willing to “make the right mistakes.”
  - Love's wisdom begins with realizing that we know nothing.
  - Don't think about attractiveness and beauty too much; but don't fall too easily into the other trap of not discriminating enough. If intentions are not serious, however, then standards can “soften.”
  - His personal advice to me: be open now, be ready. Why did he say that? Is he truly concerned about my falling into despair, loneliness, going to seed? Or is he afraid I might discover something he won't, by taking the opportunity to fully explore freedom and self-grounding with an extended break from relationships?
- We agreed on the wisdom of strengthening self independently of relationship, which tends to reflect our weakness and become a substitute for giving ourselves self-worth.

7 June

Today I am aware of the necessity to deal with unfinished business before taking on new initiatives. The way to growth is through pruning, not more planting. Clean out the old, to make way for the new. The new will come naturally.

Life is like this, life and death. On our deathbed I imagine we will want most of all to have done what we wanted to do. To reclaim what is past, so as to be done with it.

For me, fifty is a watershed – just over two years from now. My goal now is to arrive at fifty with all past and present aspirations achieved, so that I can be fully open to what may arrive of its own bidding.

Is this too neat, arbitrary? Of course. It is only a general principle, a guideline. In the meantime, in the daily process of living, in the choosing of each possible word, or meal, or lover, the flow of the future will continually intrude, adding to the backlog as fast as I can remove the old. But with intention I do have a say. I can elect to finish old novels before beginning new ones. I can undertake a cleansing fast at will. I can save myself from the automatic rebound in relationships, if I choose to focus on self-healing for now.

It's not an all-or-nothing affair, but rather a matter of discrimination and degree. The liberal compromise between stagnation and revolution: measured change. For now I want to minimize new input so as to process as much backlogged output as possible. This means culling, sorting, finishing or simply discarding . . .

- ⇒ anger, fear, worry, guilt, and negative belief systems
- ⇒ clothes, books, tapes, tools, miscellaneous material junk
- ⇒ files, notes, lists, computer tasks
- ⇒ habits, routines, chores

- ⇒ obsolete expectations, priorities and activities
- ⇒ past writing projects, music resources and plans
- ⇒ business and networking agendas
- ⇒ past relationship processing, overdue self-help work

Last night's dream:

*A figure like Frankenstein's monster is holding the ends of battery cables, generating or conducting electricity to the grid that goes up the mountain. The effect is too powerful, setting trees to crackling afire.*

*Quickly it spreads down the other side of the mountain, and I see the raging conflagration – sparking explosions and flashes of light and flame – racing down the mountain toward us. I run to the culvert under the snow-covered bridge, and crawl rapidly on naked hands and knees up the long ice-tunnel deep into the protected bowels of the earth. Friendly people from Idaho join me. There is a cupboard stocked with food, a series of small rooms, a circular corridor where a black man accosts me and asks for dope. I see he already has, in a large dark green leaf, nearly as much as I have.*

Today, this morning running through the forest in the clear fresh rain-washed air, I felt so free and easy. Even in bed, waking slowly, the heavy self-absorption I've been used to was missing. The weight is lifted. Life is simple. I am I, without guilt or shame, with a stronger sense of solidity than usual but also a lightness, unencumbered by deep-rooted, unsatisfied needs. The strength is in the absence of hidden desires, the peace in what is and who I am. Neither am I weighted down by unmet aspirations, though I have a few. They are merely the field of my endeavor, the substance of my chosen play.

Lund: It is not change that causes stress, but the fear of change. Change is what life is all about. What needs to be changed is our attitude.

8 June

Awaking rather neutral and objective, after a night of music rehearsal for the Abo Fusion band (Rivers, Kaia, A\_\_\_\_\_ and me, featuring the new song "Matters of the Heart"), I'm feeling clear and present for the rest of my life. Still a little reluctant at first to get out of bed and do the chores and chip away at the ever-formidable to-do list, in actually doing my day I have been pretty laid back, enjoying most of all the glorious sunshine while it's here. That really jumps to top spot on the priority list, by default.

Otherwise it's been like this: up at 7:30, empty pee bucket and feed chickens and ducks, make crepes for Nellie; download and read and answer email, and read sports



pages, and visit a site for reports on my .gif images (more work to add to my list). A while spent planning my week and day, scanning my to-do list for priorities, reading over my goals sheet and connection to universal mind.

Then outside: a walk up into the forest, a quick Merkaba meditation sitting on a stump in the sun-streamed glade, on to B\_\_\_\_'s to deliver a chick waterer. Back down to the garden: weeding paths and rows, picking a couple of new strawberries, and a feed bag full of greens: spinach, bok choy, beet, lettuce. Home to lunch of duck, toast, salad. Out again to sunbathe, and read. Melting in the all-uniting radiance of the hot sun. Tanning to a toasty golden light brown. Inside finally at 2:30, to the cool of the house and the jobs to do on the computer: reciprocal links, etcetera.

I'm fascinated with this idea of getting rid of the old to make way for the new. It keeps cropping up in my reading: Maslow's hierarchy of needs, for example, demanding satisfaction of one level before we can move on to the next.

This undoing can happen by momentary impulse as well as by planned intention. Clip the mustache before writing the next sentence. Weed the garden bed so as to allow the good plants to grow. Let out old habits to allow room for better ones. End a present relationship completely before flirting with a new one. Discard the old identity and self-baggage, perhaps even the name that went with it, and take on a new one. Shed the skin, o snaky self, and be reborn into the new world!

The King is dead, long live the King. Even if the new self is much like the old one (did we really unearth and retool all that past conditioning? probably not), there is a refreshing openness possible with the very attitude that this is a fresh start. Then there are more details to address.

Wiping clean my Windows directory and doing a re-install, it didn't really help, after all, because the problem was elsewhere, and had to be addressed locally, specifically, directly.

Where does that leave me? Back in the same old journal mode, now, but with the new twist of a name, "Current Wisdom"? Will these pages, removed already of current emotional news and turmoil and revelation, revert to the all-too-familiar and sadly monotonous refrain, "And so I continue . . ."?

No. I will take a new tack now. I will hereby banish that old habit, except in the cloaked protection of quotation marks: a curiosity from the past, on display to present company. I hope that to as great an extent possible I will spot and root out such cliches and grammatical carpetbags. It will be difficult because my very style is rooted in a learning of the language and literature of past usage. Thus it is arcane, ornate, rhetorically overblown and stilted: the language of literature past, not of contemporary speech. In this I am probably not unique, as most academics are similarly steeped in the

traditional vernacular and continue in that mode perhaps largely unaware (especially outside of the sectors of litcrit specializing in irony), of their own bondage to outward and class-ridden rhetorical habits of diction. Does my own confession and awareness of the illness redeem and heal it? Likely not, as I will in this direct address offend the only class of reader who can relate to it: the aforesaid academics. I will be naming the illness we breathe in common.

Interesting to contemplate where I may be headed next, emotionally. Having plumbed the depths of pain and ascended to the heights of transcendence into universal mind, I am back on the ground now, reasonably content with my lot in life. Sunbathing on the lawn, weeding in the garden, walking and meditating in the forest today, I could have been in paradise. I had no pressing ambitions to be living any differently; or to be with anyone else while doing it. When I do have those desires, I will simply act on them and be open to the results that come.

I found B\_\_\_\_\_ fairly attractive today on seeing her; as I usually do. Yet not quite attractive enough, with her large hips and legs, to make me lust after her with unqualified desire. Desire and lust, yes; but tempered with unwillingness to get too involved; at least the way things stand now.

Here is the advice of Frank Richard Faller, author of *Re-Create Yourself*:

It is often a case of sights being set too high, or conversely, of being too indiscriminate and acting before thinking at all. Both courses lead to trouble. . . . there is an element of self-motivated destiny in meeting the *right* person, rather than *one that will do!* [Howard says here to be clear about what the relationship is for, with a given person.] The best partnerships generally evolve from mutual attraction, *shared values* and a growing state of harmony. The ideal relationship is . . . totally individual and personal. Write a goal to achieve the relationship you dream of.

9 June

*After a slow sunny afternoon, I worked late into the night to finish some rhythm file notes, struggling with Rivers' mistranslation of S\_\_\_\_\_ 's stick rhythm. In the meantime I managed to finish some website promotion tasks, and made another round of Kaslo cold calls (now shooting for 60 per week) until on the last one I hit an enthusiastic prospect who was sick of drywalling and into health products. I played my drum with its new head, muffled the over-ringing with the application of a few small tape strips underneath, and practiced didge on the deck at dusk.*

So much for the pat summary, the loveless to-do list. It was rather more like this:

Too cold in bed at 1:20 A.M., with the full moon riding high in sky, I tossed and turned and finally took a hot shower and read for awhile before falling asleep. Awake again at seven, I went to the mail and picked up milk and strawberries for breakfast. I met David Ealing at the Post Office putting up a poster about his friend who drums and tells stories, with a potluck scheduled at the Johnson's Landing beach for six tonight.

Once more I would need to reschedule. Where is all this activity heading? I wondered. Where is the relevant current wisdom?

Walking back up the hill, I did the Merkaba mediation in my head, until Steven drove by in his car and offered me a ride. I declined, as I was almost at S\_\_\_\_'s driveway. We paused to chat for a minute, then I went on to see S\_\_\_\_ about that problematic rhythm. Another thing came in to occupy my thoughts then . . .

*What sort of relationship do I desire? If I desire one at all . . .*

*Who is this Karen, a former "roommate" of Steven's? Did I see a light open in his eyes when we spoke of her . . . a connection for me? The universe will decide; I will decide by being open to what I actually feel most truly and deeply inside, as it happens. Like P\_\_\_\_'s eyes as I returned to the house in Walnut Creek . . .*

*Of course I have that desire: someone to share a mutual attraction; someone with shared values; someone with whom I can be honest and communicate well . . .*

*That sounds good enough. I see L\_\_\_\_ here. No kids: that helps. And yet I have one, so . . .*

*And I need to be careful not to be so specific. I need to stay open to the mystery of the dance that goes on . . .*

Going down the driveway through the mossy woods to go to S\_\_\_\_'s, I realized that she might like to know about this event. And that crazy rhythm was still driving my steps, but coming out as fifteen. S\_\_\_\_ was still in bed, and came to the door bare-breasted, svelte. We practiced a bit; she taught me a new simple nine.

Steven had made the salient observation that everyone is dealing with the same stuff, consciously or not. What a realization: a lesson worth all the work so far, just by itself.

I stopped by the garden finally, where O\_\_\_\_ was. I asked her how the horoscope was for her. She told me it reinforced her current life re-assessment – "of everything."

"Join the club," I said. I told her of the sharing group and the evening's event in the Landing. I saw some huge artichokes we could share, from last year's plants. I gave

her a hug; she returned a very strong one. I hugged her harder: feeling the beginnings of an erection already. Could she feel it? Perhaps . . .

Back at home I call Dave Hunter for some help on computer problems, the reinstall procedure. He asks, so what are you up to these days?

- Lots of music . . . and writing about what’s been happening in my life.
- ”Lots of shit to get out, eh?”

10 June

The value of noticing . . .

– *subtle feelings*: last night during storytelling on the beach, the tale about the old man and his son who wants to throw him out of the house, I feel that old gnawing at the pit of my stomach about my father’s worthlessness and my anger towards him.

– *my own self-criticism and impatience*: with my schedule of the last couple of days, working and staying up too late and then not being able to get to sleep, getting too cold or too wired on caffeine; trying to do too much in the day and making it impossible to achieve; getting frustrated at my own inadequacy in reaching those impossible standards.

I notice in general a willingness to look at my issues more deeply, and to come to peace with them. This implies acting on my stated priority to take care of backlogged jobs instead of moving on to new goals and tasks, which are endless proliferating and so intrinsically frustrating. So while I’ve continued to fill my day planner and to-do lists with too many website and business promotional tasks, actually I’ve only had the time to clear the deck of older list items such as compiling my rhythm notes, and transcribing and coping journal entries and email messages relating to this document. My active priorities have also included daily maintenance like homestead chores and music practice, as well as “going with the flow” of talking with people, or attending the event in the Landing.

The image is of a funnel. The wider area covers all the possible tasks and activities I can engage in, which multiply exponentially with distance from the present and the past. The one cone pours and then opens outward again to another cone: like Yeats’s gyres. In the “still point of the turning world” (I think that’s Eliot) is the present moment where there is only one point of focus, one accomplishment, one activity at a time, one breath, one connection with the totality of the holographic universal mind. The key is to feel the holographic power of this single choice – like monogamy in relationship

– rather than to decry the lack of totality. Totality is here: but only in the one form possible in the present moment.

11 June

*Starting the day slow: long sleep after early bed, reading prologue to Gabrielle Roth's book: great stuff, core stuff, wisdom in the moment.*

*At the moment I am fatigued: humid weather, caffeine withdrawal, so much to do and so little time. This is a syndrome I want to uproot. How to start, dealing with leftovers from previous days' bad habits?*

I had a private session with Ellen yesterday, plus a group session with only Ellen and Y\_\_\_\_. The issue I worked on in the forty-five minute first session, which passed like the twinkling of an eye, was dealing with my parents, the dynamic of my mother's criticism, my father's drinking. I passed from anger to sadness, and finally was able to give him up and release him as a lost cause, lost in his cloud of self-trouble and insulated self-justification: bounded by an eggshell, a giant egg on the way already, by the time I was fifteen, to the next life.

That release left me feeling different, but still wanting to clear the residue of smoke and cloud from all around and within me, with no boundary, no shell. This required smudging and washing it away, blowing and dancing it out. Ellen helped, dancing and laughing with me, moving through it. I felt young again, twenty or so, when I first let my father go as I began to feel more independent. I was ready then to start my life as I wanted, not getting caught up anymore in a losing cause, a losing battle.

Later, in the group session, we reverted to early school memories. I entered the room, feeling like I didn't belong there; this wasn't for me. It was a prison; with no room for creative growth or energy. It meant a life doomed to the straightjacket of formula and rule, standard expectations. But again, objectifying the situation enabled me to tap into a youthful desire and energy and freedom that I could begin from. I could reprogram myself to come from that fresh place instead of from the old place of inhibition and public expectation.

A caution came, however, in Y\_\_\_\_'s sharing of a dream she had. She said she was in a bathroom stall "trying to hide her balls of shit" from me. Then the stalls were no longer there; other people had molded their shit into artistic shapes and sculptures; she hadn't and felt bad about that. Hearing this, I had to take another look at this project of mine: is it just that, an artistic shaping of shit, and is it therefore just as disagreeable as such "art" would be? Perhaps. Do I need to deodorize it somehow, or apologize for the smell? This is interesting in light of Dave's comment the evening before: "Lots of shit to get out."

“Dealing with my stuff.” “Getting my shit together.” Wading through the swamp. The valley, the trough, the deep, the dark. The shadow. The negative, the emotional, the difficult, the yucky, the uncomfortable, the threatening. The painful. The stuff that makes me cry and weep and shout and hit innocent teddy bears, that makes me curl up tight and squeeze my face together in ugliness, that curves my mouth down in a monster mask, that reddens my eyes and cracks my voice and sends me into inertia for hours or days or weeks or months. Depression, anger, self-hatred, unworthiness, despair. Hopelessness, lack and emptiness. The unconscious, the animal past, the realm of reptilian life.

Yet, with all of this coming to the empty state, it passes through that zero portal of neutrality out the other side: to the positive, to the side of light and joy. The zero point is the magic portal that allows us to move back and forth. The shamanic journey passes us into and through the shadow realm, the underground, the dream time, and brings us back. We move deeply, fully through and come back again, through the point between the toxic outbreath and the cleansing inbreath. The gyres of life and death are spinning concurrently around us like Merkabas, constantly in our dance. The still point in the center is the instant of now. The way to move forward is from there, which is here. Not from a place in the surface of the infinite funnel of things to come, nor the opposite funnel of things past. The only rescue from the infinitude of future possibility and past unrecoverability is the finite solution of now. The tiniest step forward is the only one that works. It only works from the starting point of zero, from the very center, and it only works if it is so tiny and measured as to move at the speed of now, so that in movement it remains at rest with the motion of time forward. Our rhythm harmonizes with the rhythm of time itself . . . not so fast as to become frustrating with lack of progress toward the infinitude of possibility; not so slow as to get sucked into the maelstrom of past unrecoverable facts and events; instead, ever increasing in collective energy gathering more into itself forever. Just right, this now is the goldilocks key to the train of movement forward only just right, on the beat. The beat of now is the one of the heartbeat, the conscious breath, the walking meditation. It’s the running pulse, the music we play together. In this tempo of present grace, we reach the Zero Train and ride home together. We capture the moment, or it captures us, or we capture ourselves and are captured together in the motion of oneness, in unity with time, in harmony with nature and the universe, in and out of time, blessed. Alive.

Ellen told of a time in her early schooling when there was a fire drill and there was real smoke – exciting! – and everyone went outside, and the kids were all dancing and singing as the school went up in flames.

14 June

Friday night's party was a kind of laid-back affair, folk singers and guitars around the fire. No place for black man's, red man's music there: it was a white man's, cowboy's scene.

I was up the next day just in time for the memorial service for Chuck. It was memorable indeed for the slides and stories. I came back home mid-afternoon in time to do engage in the mundane details of ongoing life (some more reciprocal linking), then crashed at five for three hours while Nell and friends went to the square dance (more cowboy music, no thanks). Then I lay in bed motionless, slow in thought for a while, pondering the significance of the Y2K dilemma for my future.

It was a mood where, with so little energy and motivation, I previously might have felt bad about myself, or depressed, or lonely. Now it was okay, smooth if deep, slow yet subtly pleasant.

Breathing steadily: by choice. Doing nothing: by choice.

Similarly, last week when stressed by a self-imposed and impossible schedule, I moved into flow-mode instead. More time outside, reflecting and reordering priorities: ranking and arranging first things first . . . beginning with flow itself.

That new focus has stayed with me: something I've known before but wasn't able to stick with. I've been too addicted to accomplishment. The Y2K issue reinforces my doubts about traditional areas of success: business, finances, publishing, computer work. It brings me back to appreciation for what I have already established: a home base, community, a garden and orchard, deer on the hoof and in the freezer, basic survival skills in terms of food, shelter, warmth, transportation.

Desolation Sound (kayaking with L\_\_\_\_) may be a fitting last fling in summer '99.

I heard from L\_\_\_\_ by post card Friday. Her writing voice sounded muted, busy, distantly supportive. The long wait continues.

15 June

Long sleep, then counseling with Paul Erickson. We discussed relationship from a number of angles.

*The woman who danced me told me in her dance that I was blind to her beauty, holding myself.*

*Relationship means . . . opening to the love, the oneness . . .*

Paul himself searched for words to say, not knowing. He agrees, not-knowing aids openness. Keep it moving, he says.

*Open to love: and also be aware of where to set boundaries, and why.*

*Why – why do I need boundaries?*

*Because sex can be messy, molecular.*

*The women know it too. The women of Z\_\_\_\_'s family especially.*

*Learning to love: not too little, not too much.*

*Awareness and communication are the key.*

*Self-confidence helps, too: the more the better: so as not to fall into the trap of inadequacy, abandonment, fear – at least, not so easily.*

It will help simply to feel good about myself, and to feel worthy of the Q\_\_\_\_s, the L\_\_\_\_s of the world. My worldly success is like their beauty: both worldly standards. Romantic love is conditional – where we agree to accept what the other brings us of those standards. But more important, is what we allow ourselves to feel, open ourselves to feel, from the heart. I want to give myself fully to . . . a woman such as L\_\_\_\_, or Q\_\_\_\_. And to accept what they can give me.

I want to be ready for this mature love, this full engagement. Not just a promise, but a full openness and giving in the now. I want to experience this mystery of life, embodied most eloquently, most beautifully, most completely as flow, in action.

On the drive home, I stop for a breath of the rushing, laughing, dancing waters, the spray of Coffee Creek. And the stillness of the rocks beside.

17 June

Suddenly my life seems on the verge of drastic change again. I've invited A\_\_\_\_ to come stay at my house as early as tomorrow. The invitation is so open-ended, both explicitly and implicitly, that I'm already imagining doing a dance of relationship and life-sharing together, at one degree or another. The boundaries are so far undefined: my house her body my space sharing food sharing kitchen sharing bathroom, her in bedroom



or floorspace or Nell's room or bed, rain or shine or tent or playhouse, lawn or forest, it's all up for grabs and all part of the dance . . .

19 June

Yesterday I went drumming at S\_\_\_\_'s, and met A\_\_\_\_ on the way in just as I was leaving. I stayed longer to talk, then came home with her and her stuff in the dank dripping forest, and stayed up till 1:30 trading life stories.

What did we speak of, and how did it feel?

I told her of how my relationship went wrong, and something of what I felt for L\_\_\_\_. From her I heard of her challenge to celibacy, in a recently ended relationship. There was much about that B-word again, boundaries, and a few P's as well: personal space, protection auras, astral parasites and whatever.

I was left feeling once again that it's all about here and now and the chakra energy flowing as it might in whatever way. Meanwhile I sensed dark clouds looming over the dank nugs in my brain and body cells, and felt my present life drawn forward to the Rainbow Gathering.

With her clarity around "celibacy" at least established, I realized that having A\_\_\_\_ around would be like Nellie, or Z\_\_\_\_ living with me again. But it was someone to learn from, with her spiritual understandings, and clear communication, and otherwise open agenda.

*Now I sit in my gray T-shirt, at my gray computer screen, with my house as cancer shell with someone else residing here . . . still waiting for the world to resolve itself.*

On the question of relation, free of the limits of ship, we dance forward: choosing neither the old-model package of nuclear couple, nor perhaps the New Age ideal of total free love without boundaries, because both are ships and packages; but following instead the meat and baseball of my identity. I remain free to choose what feels best and what I need most in relation to another, rather than blindly following a particular model or pattern or role or habit, or expectation from peers, or even necessarily what works best for a partner or prospective partner. I remain committed to being true to myself, in who I am and what I want, which may be always changing; and that's okay too, since that's who I am, an identity current with what I want.

As to the present moment, it may even be indefinable and that's okay too. Part of what I want, in fact perhaps the main thing I want, is creative freedom from fixed decisions or desires. Sometimes I want a sexual connection, sometimes spiritual, domestic, musical, conversational, companionable, intellectual, playful. To expect a

person in one body to fill all these roles, forever? That's a package of expectations with deep roots in our culture, and in my life. It's the dream of the "Lasting Relationship," "La Mujer Ideale," and so on. That's the myth, to imagine the total essence contained in the form of one character in the drama, the archetypal mate. The archetype might work fine in the myth, but the myth is merely symbolic when it comes to a person's real life. As in the theory that says that other people in our dreams are merely aspects of ourselves, it's important to recognize each other person reflects only our partial essence. We are the real archetype, the central character in our drama.

We dream and fantasize about the mythical perfect mate, but in reality we find her taking many forms, many other bodies. Each one in her own right is a central character giving rise to many dream aspects of herself, and having her own collection of partially perfect mates, of which I am one. As in a hologram, each part is a capsule version of the whole. If I am the center of my universe, then what's around me is peripheral – partial fragments unified by my consciousness, centered around my point of view – peripheral relative to my centeredness. If another person is in my field of reference, then the roles reverse with a change of perspective. They become the figure, and I become a satellite, one of many, circulating around their energy.

Another metaphor would be the nodes in a network, as webpages and links on the Internet. My self is analogous to my page, with some personal text and then a collection of links to other whole selves. On my page they are simply links. Each link represents another page, a whole person, which contains its own field of links, of which I might be one (or might not). A brain cell is another useful picture, with its own central role in a constellation of connections and strands and pathways; each connecting cell having a similar place in its own web of relation.

It's all a matter of perspective, with each unit, in all of these examples, having the integrity and power and value as the center of a web of relation and connection and association; with the label "center" applying to each and every one in turn depending on our subjective point of observation and which we determine is the object of our focus, the center of our attention.

Then there's the overview, in which we see all the nodes at once, the whole net, as the hologram itself . . . or more intriguing, as a unit in the next higher level of organization. The cells all become parts of one body, which takes its place as a unit in a social web composed of other like bodies. That social web becomes a single organic unit in relation to other societies, or groups. We all coalesce to form the life of a single planet, revolving in an energetic balance with other planets and stars. In a galaxy with other systems, co-evolving . . . in a universe that perhaps occupies a single life place, a single lifetime, in a succession or collection of possible universes: maybe at this point the physical realm gives way to the realm of possibility, potential, imagination, or mathematical probability. At the other end of the spectrum of scales in the universe, we

already know this to be true: with the cell, composed of tinier components bound in relation, each the subject of a molecular and atomic conspiracy in turn, until we reach the particle-wave which has definition only as a probability, a number designating how it might or might not exist in a given place and time . . . a number which, as always, varies according to the presence of the observing eye.

19 June

I'm still left with a bad mood that came over me after a Tarot reading from A\_\_\_\_, where I drew the Tower and the High Priestess. Now I'm back in my funk, alone, as when Z\_\_\_\_ would be away and I'd be left with my own inadequacy. Does this mood stem from A\_\_\_\_'s implicitly teasing celibacy? My own feelings of inadequacy for her? It's the stereotypical male response, made worse by my own particular weakness: if she doesn't fall for me or sleep with me then there's something wrong with me; and if she does, there's something wrong with her, or she's doing it out of pity. This is the same stuff I went through with L\_\_\_\_ at Hollyhock – a dangerous sign both for the present and for my relationship with L\_\_\_\_.

This is a no-win situation. How do I get out of it?

By recognizing it – so far so good – and by choosing other attitudes . . .

*So what is this – a little deeper – that I feel in this situation? What do I really want and what am I acting as if I want, in the meantime?*

I'm trying to be open and honest with A\_\_\_\_. In two days we've shared life stories, current personal issues, relationship dynamics, intellectual and creative and cultural excitements, philosophies and resumes and lineages. Aspirations and obstructions. So intense, and on the surface, positive.

What then is this heavy and fogged negativity all about?

Feelings of self-worth on a dive; inadequacy, uselessness, abandonment on the rise again; trust and openness short-circuited.

The fact is, I do have a sexual drive that is challenged by being close to an attractive woman that I resonate with on the other levels. I don't even feel the sexual urge necessarily for her. It's not for her, it's for me. How does that make me feel? Driven, in the power of lust, motivated by lower-chakra energy.

But "lower chakra" is not valued as less – or is it?

The movement is always upward, implying evolutionary direction and therefore judgment. I have to question this. If emotions need to be acknowledged and accepted, then so too does sexuality have a place in healthy spiritual development. Or do we

simply use the chakra energy and transform it upward? Can we transform it, can I transform it upward, without expressing it directly?

Sexual union is so powerful. A\_\_\_\_\_ is not really the issue. She can do what she likes. I don't need to react or emote negatively based on her orientation or preference or values. At the same time, I can accept my issue around attraction for her. It is simply a matter of burning lust, and it is real and needs to be reckoned with. I can control it or not; I can direct it to her or someone else or wait an indefinite period of time until circumstances are more magically right to express it.

This in the meantime is a valuable and necessary learning experience for me. Abstinence from sex is like abstinence from marijuana. Yes, sex makes relationship richer, fuller, more magical. Yes, dope makes music richer, fuller, more magical. Each one, though, clouds the experience in its own vapors, takes over. Dependency on that factor replaces devotion to the whole experience, and even directs energy away from the clear and full enhancement of the whole.

Or at least, these things can be true, tend to be true for me. My lesson is to realize this and beware. Some people can use high Tantric sexual practice to reach greater spiritual fulfillment in relationship. Some people can use marijuana to reach union with Jah through music. Can I? It's a challenge. It takes grounding, and strength, and commitment to the heartbeat at the core of union. It takes maturity, and temperance, and discipline to use these practices sacramentally and not abusively. Total abstinence can be as seductive a form as unfettered indulgence. The danger comes in attachment to the form, replacing the flowing energy of creative freedom, the relaxed energy of unity.

I do feel better now, understanding all this. I have a higher self of awareness to thank for letting me see into my dark side, my issues, my emotional pulls and attractions. I do best when I can shed light on which parts of myself are operating, and when I can understand emotional stuckness – not by avoiding it or acting it out (sexing, smoking, working doggedly) but by feeling it in words and breathing and expressing to another.

Awareness is intrinsically liberating, because the “I am” consciousness then shifts to the observing and accepting plane, instead of the plane of the material and emotional body caught in a pattern of repetitive acting-out. While seeing the pattern is better than acting on the pattern, both modes of living involve feeling the pattern. The difference is that only by seeing it can I feel it consciously, rather than unconsciously. Acting consciously produces better relationships, clearer and freer for all concerned. Sex is “messy” because we tend to engage in it on the basis of acting out feelings rather than seeing and understanding them. I suppose that once I can see and understand the emotional drive motivating my actions (sexing, smoking), then I can engage in them if I choose, as tools for enhancement, rather than being a tool of them. This lesson applies similarly to the use of machines, which are other forms of material-plane allies or masters, depending on how we engage with them.

So now that I understand more of my present emotional dynamic and psychic constitution, what do I do?

More writing exploration, transcendental meditation, return to work, engage in intentional sexuality with the purpose of higher energy creation, intentional drug use with the purpose of enhanced creative union?

*Just flowing. Just flowing works best in the conscious realm.*

Just flowing in unconsciousness produces messy relationship through blind action. Just flowing in consciousness produces harmony with universal energy and with others' conscious energies. To say the words, *Just flow*, doesn't say enough. It's more to say, *Be Conscious and Flow . . .* combining the vertical dimension with the horizontal. Conscious ascension and channeling of universal energy occurs vertically through the spine, and then it can be directed, via the differential engine of the body, into forward motion and creative action.

The whole equation for conscious action requires both body and spirit. I like to use both; thus, not to avoid sex in the interest of spiritual purity; nor to engage in it at the expense of spiritual connection. Neither to avoid musical entrancement in the interest of "straightness"; nor, on the other hand, to trip out and lose the common beat, the common pulse and purpose.

In either case it's an individual decision, so I do best to act clearly from my own conscious intention without taking on emotional complications arising from an expectation of others' behavior. I don't need to react negatively, or at all, to A\_\_\_\_'s stance of celibacy. I can accept whatever she offers me as a gift – whether spiritual, sexual, conversational, or even domestic challenges. I don't need to care whether the other jam musicians or drummers are smoking or not, as long as I can appreciate their contribution to the group sound and relate with them on that basis.

In terms of setting and pursuing common goals together, communication is key; because then the conscious intention can be shared, and synergistic creation can bring us further along in the path of unity energy.

In the musical group we can talk about what combinations of practices and offerings work best. Fixed policy is not the necessary solution, involving a forced unity of method. For example, smoking can remain a matter of individual choice (though with feedback from others about what works best from each given participant, for the group purpose).

In the case of sex, it's less open to this kind of flexibility, because it's a two-way practice. In this new form of relationship with A\_\_\_\_, I can decide with her what we would like to share together, and how.

This question brings to mind the connection I had with L\_\_\_\_, the brief experiment in how to make the fullest connection possible but with conscious limits set because of my orientation of having an agreement of “monogamy” with Z\_\_\_\_. The boundaries and definitions were blurred and stretched to the utmost, and the repercussions continue to this day. At that time I was in the power of my unconscious desire complicated by my emotional needs around the issue of worthiness. We did act with conscious intention, awareness and communication, however, to create together what could work best for us in the circumstances. For instance, I recall, still vividly . . .

- L\_\_\_\_ going off to her tent for her own pleasure, rather than have me do it for her, given my own “policy” restrictions on orgasm, for Z\_\_\_\_’s sake
- days of abstinence (before succumbing to an irresistible desire for greater and physical intimacy)
- using the sexual energy between us to reach closer union, yet without full sexual bonding and release
- physical and intimate connection without sexual entry
- relaxed and loving intimacy without sexual excitement (we tried and failed at this one)

Ultimately the situation left us, and still leaves us, with a sense of unfinished business. It was all part of the karmic plan, I suppose. The way things worked out, Z\_\_\_\_ ended up taking the responsibility for ending our relationship for good, because I was not strong enough to take it four years ago based on that one week’s experience, despite how compelling it was. This may or may not have been a good choice of mine . . .

But of course it was, because I chose what I felt I had to at the time. Except that, the one choice I still regret was not spending the extra day with L\_\_\_\_ when the airline strike provided an opening. Sometimes being in tune with one’s flow requires opening wider, to the support the universe is providing.

*Writing this enables me to realize one thing: I’m still desperately in love with L\_\_\_\_.*

Can I trust this as fact, or am I still mistaking the emotional fallout of my issues of worthiness and attraction, for real love?

What is real love?

I can only trust my feelings, and my feelings of faithfulness to L\_\_\_\_ at this point, in not wanting to foreclose that option if it is still possible. I wonder if she considers my

choice to stay with Z\_\_\_\_\_ as a mortal wound to our love, still, as she must have then . . . or if that killed love can somehow rise from the ashes. Can she make up for her own abandonment by resonating with respect for my principled allegiance to Z\_\_\_\_\_? Hard to say.

My answer, an hour later, to all of this cogitating about transmuting sexual energy and creating union with cosmos?

Drumming . . . in the greenhouse.

22 June

New group music session, with new material: the birth of a new culture? Many things are happening at once. I was drumming before supper at the solstice party with Dan and Chris, who later joined another guitar-vocalist for a hot dance set. The Arizona Rainbow Gathering beckons ahead, an opening. I'm working out a new rhythm: "Rainbow Bridge." Hendrix's dream . . . Greenpeace's boat. I passed up the previous opportunities I had to go to the national Rainbow Gatherings, in '82 and '83, in Idaho and Michigan. Enough of missed boats. Time to catch one.

*Meanwhile issues remain unresolved: self-definition, relationship . . .*

I take a break from figuring out trip dates, with a chocolate, peanut butter, honey and butter sandwich of toasted desam barley and rye, with Inka. Enough . . . no . . . more. Would flying to Phoenix and taking the shuttle remind me too much of L\_\_\_\_, the trip to Hollyhock?

I had been worrying about catching my return flight . . . even when that option was divinely interceded with the airline strike, and I had the gift of an extra day, which I turned down, because I wasn't ready. Now, she makes me pay an extra year, to wait my turn. She already has mourned me dead. If so, that's her trip. I have compassion, though. I also had to do what my path was for me, and to that point, I had only so much wisdom. Always more later.

Do I have clarity about anything now? Standing alone on the desert, my own arms around me. Going on my vision quest, alone. A deja vu in four-wheel mode, to [earlier times of transition, '76, '73](#). This time the cosmic mother says, you only have a few chances left. Maybe only one. Make this one good.

Is that too much pressure, too artificial?

I need to be open, simply open.

My exercise is to turn the photo down, to black or white it out. Go instead with the feeling, the kiss. My feeling is to drive. Flying feels too . . . ungrounded. And yet . . . it would allow four more days to be where I want to be. Though, I also want to be on the road. Is this true? Partly I want the experience of getting there, slowly, to sink in. To assimilate, before and after, gradually. Closer to the old culture, arrival by horse or foot. Traveling by plane is more alien.

Things are happening fast. I have everything I need already. All the information has been accessed. The wheels are already in motion, manifesting: a house sitter, garden resting, pack and tent, truck insurance, sufficient funds, checks on the way, Nell here for three days beforehand. I have various work-related loose ends to tie up next week. And strawberries to freeze.

As for relationship . . . how to figure it out?



Did I just overdo it by eating that second sandwich?

Self-sabotage . . . no, maybe I'm just not ready. It's all about boundaries. I need to be clear and comfortable with them in space, and to be flexible about them in time: when to use them and when to open myself up . . . for the exchange of sexual energy.

A nineties lexicon for those raised in the sixties and fifties: "courtship" becomes "leaking sexual energy."

Whatever.

I return to that image of my self-definition in standing, temporarily at least, in the desert, alone . . . or in the mountains with thirty thousand others. Should I treat this trip as a journalistic assignment, hot news, with a deadline?

Come on. There are other Hunter S. Thompsons around with more of the required chutzpah to pull it off. I'm writing as a neo-literary nobody. Which is fine, it takes me off the hook. Nevertheless . . . and besides . . . I'm looking for . . . am I? . . . more relationship experience. This journey might be about that. My eyes will be peeled. The pick of the Rainbow crop.

Truly? I already botched my first chance. Judging it hastily . . . "not quite compatible." Or judging correctly, as the play of fantasy, manipulation; the tricky hand of fate: Julianne, coming up to me at the solstice gathering, looking for a ride. My dream come true, or another nightmare? Whatever.

*So, I continue . . .* Whoops, I wasn't supposed to say that. Is it the dope, the pull of sex? Simply the uncontrolled, undirected libido, steadily leaking out? Perhaps. I have to deal with it, L\_\_\_\_ or no L\_\_\_\_. There will be some solution, someday. Maybe I will write to her. Maybe I will call her . . . this moment.

I just did. It was a great clearing, with memories shared of our week together, and sharing what we're doing now . . . her book, my process. She wishes me well, whatever else happens. Maybe a visit in October-November, while she finishes her book . . . and I work on mine? I need a laptop . . . whatever.

She wishes me well to fall in love, that's okay too. She says she's tough, resilient, and doesn't really have much to go on to lose me; yet will welcome me being with her in the fall if that happens. As for other sexual encounters, she says that we are both adults and can make our own choices. The potential emotional/psychic conflict is not a problem unless it gets "mucky," in which case she drops out. Her main concern is AIDS and another unpronounceable but also evil disease. Her bottom-line advice: "Just use a condom."

She says we can eat and sleep together, while working on our books, in the fall. What an invitation! It takes some of the pressure off me, to wait for her only another three or four months instead of twelve.

She sounded wise, compassionate, centered. A woman of substance.

She remembers me in Hollyhock as being aloof, for a couple of days. I told her (after my session with Ellen earlier today) that this was my defense for feeling or showing neediness. She got over me pretty quickly at the end; she was open, and ripe for love, after kayaking there alone. After I left she was so radiant with love that four or five men gathered around her, wanting in. She went to her tent alone.

I do not need to mourn that lost day, if she learned something there. It's not about selfishness. The present moment is all. I disturbed her peace; she needs to get back to her writing. My memory was of being obsessed; partly with my own neediness; partly with her and who she was and is.

I still am. Is this a love to last? It could be. She is still with me. Perhaps always. I will have to see. To be . . . very careful.

## **Rainbow Journal**

### **Exodus**

Day 1 – 27 June

I'm waiting in the parking lot at Cottonwood Falls, for the rest of our caravan to show. Rivers was late for our noon rendezvous. Just the two of us are going from Argenta, as S\_\_\_\_ is in town only quickly on Wednesday then out Friday, with a ride to Victoria instead, bound for busking and island-hopping.

Walkin last night, as I stopped into the jam, pointed a finger at me and said, "You should go to the Earth First Rendezvous instead. It's happening at the same time, in Oregon. Those Rainbow folks are, I don't know, not grounded. They don't do anything, but just hang out. The Earth First gathering would be way more fun." I almost talked him into coming along with us instead, but he has no money and wouldn't be able to leave this soon. C'est la vie . . .

Yesterday I bought Tabitha's drum for \$200. It has a great, sweet, earthy tone, and will be lovely to have along on the journey to Rainbow.

It was a hectic week of preparations for leaving, mostly wrapping up loose ends with my Internet marketing campaigns; but I managed to do everything I wanted to with four hours of sleep last night, as I saved packing for last. I had to survive three days of encounters with Z\_\_\_\_ and X\_\_\_\_, working through our core stuff. The first day was difficult over there, and the next day talking about it at my house again. The difficulty centered around my disagreement with what she did to me and how. I was angry, and I told her that what she had done felt like a pulling tree out of my center; or cutting down a

fourteen-year old tree (our relationship); or clearcutting a watershed, then wanting community harmony, or forgiveness. I allowed that she was blind too, not entirely willful in her uncaring actions.

The next day she was cold and suspicious, though I had cleared my anger and didn't need to unload more on her. We managed to work our way down to some deep forgiveness and compassion for each other, telling of how it was for each of us over the years; but this was done in her slow, methodical, ponderous style – like swimming through molasses. This time I finally reacted by simply leaving, when communication came to a standstill. I left this time with the revelation that it was her stuff to deal with now, her expectation of something more from me, as always; her father issue to deal with. I could be strong, and stop trying to fill her need for more, the old pattern.

The third day I shared that with her, in a way that worked because I felt strong in my own sense of a communication style – more direct and spontaneous and verbal – that felt comfortable for me. That sense of clarity helped to keep us from getting tangled up in the cycle of “What do you want right now?” “Well, what do you want?” I was determined just to share my truth in my way. If that worked with her, great; if not, I could go away and deal with the frustration more simply on my own.

I met Axel in the park at Cottonwood Falls, and connected well with him. He's in a great space, doing similar emotional/spiritual work with three others on his land near the Northern Lights [primitive skills gathering site](#). He's been “channeling pure energy” with 2 ½-hour solo drum sessions, group healing sessions, [Bob Frissell books](#), and has fine tales to tell of busking in Seattle with two drums and two didges just jamming, thereby financing their trip to the music festival there.

Axel tells us that [the Hopi](#) elders are going to speak at the Rainbow Gathering – the first year ever. This should be significant. On the Art Bell Show the elders said events have sped up since the India-Pakistan nuclear tests. We'll see . . .

Two and a half hours later . . . after a Celtic funk jam in the park with Duncan and Vanessa, Dan and Chris and Rivers and Harold, then a live foods picnic and map study . . . we're on our way – almost – via Nelson downtown again for US cash and Chris's errand.

## Day 2 – 28 June

We are camped in a wheat field on the way to Spokane. It was an anxious border crossing – in the midst of a long talk with Chris about spirit, universal mind, and getting past beliefs (positive or negative) to having the knowledge here and now.

The border was strange. We'd meant to be staggered with the van that was traveling with our friends from the Slocan Valley, and to rendezvous with them further south. We left first but had another long pit stop in Rossland to clean up. During which

Andy, whom we'd passed hitching at the Slocan junction, walked past us on the highway: Tortoise and Hare. The van must have passed us then because they were at the border right in front of us. They were stopped and being asked to come in to the office. The customs inspector came back to us and immediately asked us if we were with them.

Paranoid – owing maybe to the vibe around stashing our stuff a few clicks back (Rivers and Chris planting their pipe and fixings in the dirt by a roadside pullout) – I answered, “No.”

Rivers shrugged.

Chris said, “We know them, they're friends of ours, but we're in separate vehicles.”

Then we watched as they started unpacking stuff from both the van and my truck. Sniffing through vials, asking about the theatrical bird masks, checking out the sprout trays.

Finally turning their attention back to us, they asked us to come in and sign forms and unpack some more stuff. I was worried they'd give us 3-day visas, or worse, turn us back. But they just ran the routine check and then sent us on our way.

It was a good feeling of release. On meeting up with the other van down the road, we compared notes. They'd been asked if they were traveling with us, and everyone froze – then someone said no, then hedged and said they'd met us at the market. They also said they were going camping in Idaho; in our story it was Arizona.

When our music instruments came into view, the inspector had asked me if we were entertainers. I'd said “We just entertain ourselves. We're all committed to music and bring our instruments to play wherever and whenever possible.” As we left he observed to his buddy that the other van had had masks . . . They were still trying to figure us out.

*Meanwhile, I'm still free – on my path – in the moment.*

We had a good group supper together, chilling out, having great salad with fresh sprouts, a little music and talk, a healing circle. The Rainbow spirit was with us already. It was all about, is all about, manifesting our spirit-light-body now. The spirit that moves in all things.

I wonder, about relationship, if “wanting” some specific form of it is like “belief” – limited in comparison to having knowledge and connection and unity and love in the now. Perfection now and always. In the meantime, we are just dancing, acting out our part in creative spirit, recreating in the spirit of the whole.

## Scarce Ganja and Bad Brown Acid

We didn't bring any drugs over the border – except for the mushrooms that Rivers suddenly “remembered” were in his food supplies. But since everyone was a user – from occasional to chronic – there was a constant edge to our situation, once we'd crossed over the line.

Somehow, though, it always managed to appear from somewhere: a hitchhiker here, a casual contact in the health food store there. Once at the gathering, the good green stuff was around but not much openly . . . more in discreet sharings among old and new friends. A typical sight along the byways of the funky-suburbia set up in the forest, was a young hempster holding a stick like a fishing pole out to the walking crowd, with an empty pipe dangling from a string.

Otherwise we got by with a couple of sessions of mushrooms, and a prudent avoidance of anything more exotic – notably some “bad brown acid” reminiscent of the Woodstock soundtrack and said to be composed of horse tranquilizer, causing convulsions when mixed with alcohol.

The mushrooms fit well with the general ambience but not with our group's ambitions to perform on stage. There was a half-hatched plan afoot to bring the Phoenix Rising birds into play, with drums, didges and some talk about our watershed issues back home. But by the time we arrived in the dark to the Granola Funk stage, we wore ear-to-ear grins and our skins were but permeable membranes to the throbbing night. On stage the real performers were drumming up a storm, and we children of our own dreams shrank to see our small illusions flicker like the torchlamps that illuminated such excellence of practiced craft.

## Bringing the Rain

Our theatre was the far meadow at the other end of the gathering, where we practiced spontaneous ritual under the direction of our kinsman and shaman, Jeremiah of the flowing red hair and pierced nose. It hadn't rained in Arizona, we were told, for eight months. Jeremiah was obviously practiced in the shamanistic arts, as he wore the flowing robe, held aloft the proper talismans, chanted and intoned to lead us in the proper harmonies of universal nature. We drummed and rattled and droned to the heavens and the fire. It was not a matter of belief or non-belief. It was all in the practice, the doing of the ritual, the full dance of human and fire and music and sacred words, which is to say present magic, between earth and sky.

The next day the heavens roiled with heavy gray clouds, and by evening, large raindrops were pattering the dust and ashes of the fire circle. It rained, we found out later, only on this mountain.

We said to the rain what the mountain and its tribe of twenty thousand had said to us on arriving:

“Welcome Home.”

### Jammin Fulltime

There was always good music to be found, along the trails snaking through the National Forest land, along which Flintstone shelters had been constructed, complete with rock-and-stick fences. There was no Rockville TV here, however: entertainment was home-grown. It didn't matter if you carried a saxophone, a flute, a djembe or a tin pot, you could always find a few mellow fellows jamming it up outside by the campfire, or under the plastic tarp. Beverly Hillbillies was more the theme, with a heavier dose of jazz and drums.

### The Ghetto Acid Drum Fire

For the many hand drummers among the twenty thousand revelers, the highlight of the Rainbow Gathering was the nightly bonfire. While the flames rose twenty feet into the air, stoked by devoted fire-tenders whose soot-streaked passion was to serve in that way, the drummers came by the score, and dancers by the dozen, to cavort by the fire and join the vortex of rising, swirling, pounding, raging energy. It was music of the tribes, of Africa and America and India, of the ghettos of our repressed hearts in our childhood pasts. It was the culmination of our drug dreams and alcohol frenzies, our sensual lusts and our spiritual yearnings. The rhythms flew around and rose and fell and raced and roared. The drum voices were many and they were one, always on the move.

### The Sedona Vortex

We found an idyllic swimming hole up the river winding past Cathedral Rock: complete with rope swing over the cool pools of red-rocked water. Local lore has it that this spot is a vortex, as is the mountain itself, or parts of it higher up toward the summit. It's a gigantic butte, actually: a core of an ancient volcano, still standing after the rest has eroded away. The New Age shops in Sedona are full of books about these vortices. The main effect I see is that we are unable to leave once we get there.

At the swimming hole the second time there, we meet a local – or at least someone who's been around here before. He says he knows a shortcut to go back out to

the highway. We head out with him: Rivers, Jivan, Angela and me. But it seems to me as if we're going up the canyon instead of down, and around the back of the mountain instead of the front. Indeed, we end up after a long walk through dry gulches and thorn bushes, sage and mesquite, up and over rock and red earth, way the hell out in the middle of nowhere. Our guide is lost, and he's lost us in the process. We trek across the desert looking for familiar bearings, a highway, any sign of a promising direction. Rivers, impatient with the whole business, sets off alone on his own tangent, barefoot, carrying his didge and wearing his sarong, dreaded and browned like the most ancient aborigine on his desert walkabout. We go off further to the right where it looks like there might be a highway. Eventually we do come to a highway, where we can hitch and ask directions. It turns out that we've gone off course, measured by road, some thirty miles from our starting place where the van is parked on the other side of the mountain.

The couple who picks us up in a rented car is very nice to talk to, in the air-conditioned comfort of the smooth road. They haven't minded putting my backpack full of wet laundry into their trunk, or our sweaty, dusty bodies into the back seats. He's from New York, she's from L.A. They have a long-distance relationship: getting together by cross-country flight once every two months, for a week's getaway like this one. It's the perfect solution: careers intact, independence from domesticity, and a honeymoon aroma to every new encounter. I am inspired to think of L\_\_\_\_\_ and me this way. In fact this meeting seems fated to provide me with this model of a successful alternative to the dysfunctional, co-dependent mess that consumed the last fourteen years of my life.

## Free Flow

Cosmic connections, a list of topics a mile long . . . how do I feel? Chris chattering, Wings channeling, Jivan digging, Angela crying at the altar . . . Rivers chanting, Shanoon speaking and laughing freely, Andrew working, Now . . . floating silent.

Who and what is this man, this being, this greater self called Rainbow?

The time has gone, days here 30 1 2 3 4 5 6 7, so far from day 1. So many brief spontaneous jams, some excellent, some botched, and everywhere in between.

Now Sedona, here we come. This daily Kootenay-like cold rain is getting us down. We asked for it; we brought it on ourselves.

*How do I feel?*

Alone? Not bad –

Excited? Not really –

Mellow? Pretty much –

Content in flow mode; without deep disappointment, yet without great joy except in moments: jamming, laughing, in good conversation, walking, swimming. Not loveless, really. Exploring more the need to walk without personal love. Not crying from this condition – for the first time. Not “leaking sexual energy,” not needing. Self-sufficient, without romance, sex, expectation.

Yet not really aloof, either, I don’t believe. Open, not shut – I believe. Am I accurate in this self-assessment? Am I hiding my need, my love, from others and myself without realizing it? I am breathing freely. I didn’t really need to play with or even see the Dun Dun Village Afro-Cuban drummers, or to sleep with a lush babe. The women here my age are dry, aged, wrinkled. I’m young at heart – that’s what counts.

Parking lot at my back, camp site below me, I sit alone in the cold rainy woods, Kootenay-style; but without mosquitoes – one large blessing.

As for self-definition, identity?

I am too distracted by present space, dogs barking, guitar singers bawling, laughter from the parking lot, coughs, hoots, engines, birds, chattering squirrels.

Overall impressions:

It’s about flowing without schedule, into the right connection at the right time. Everything happens here at the right time, because the basis of our time here is relationship, in flow together. It’s an experiment in living.

Thus my identity is given a reality check when I see the virtuoso drum performers on Granola Funk Stage, and when I jam smoothly and quietly with the Jesus Song Thrasher and blind drum basher at the Bread of Life’s long lineup.

Cruising. A couple of songs, and on. Yes, a floater . . .

Only a couple of minutes each time in passing, at the holy serious Aloha fire, with its earnest firelit faces and careful guitars and thin voices singing. The right place maybe, but the wrong time. I have to do my style: silence or raging drums. Yet also the lounge style around our BC kitchen works, Lizard Lounge on the road.

I missed the sweat lodge yesterday, but caught Freedom Tribe finally at the pageant – and realized I’d already heard the stars, Aprielle and Sasha, at our own sprout salad circle a few nights earlier. Even there, it was evident they were pros.

My identity? It seems unimportant here. Maybe this reevaluation will last. Babylon (everything not-Rainbow?) demands fixed identities, specialized skills, fixed itineraries and agendas. Here there is organization behind the scenes, practiced talent. That’s my work, to identify not myself in the eyes of Babylon, but my natural talents, and to practice them: didge working well when I’m straight, flute when I’m confident, drum when anonymous in the dark or in the company of others of similar or greater talent.

Writing? I’ve been saving that one – for now.



This eight-day sacrifice of that muse has to do with using the new experience instead – or living it without ulterior use. I have not wanted to play reporter, but to play life straight. Not to cry or even to play too much. While I haven't written much, I have reserved myself – been somewhat careful with my energy and sleep, my risks with music and with people. Floating: making short small connections, and moving on.

Perhaps this is aloofness. I have valued my connection with the Slocan friends, up to a point. Yesterday I found myself in more solitude, even there amid the group conversation. I withdrew, just at the point of real bonding. Why, for what? Fear of greater connection, loss of individuality? Fear of self-revelation, or needs for greater love exposed? Fear of bringing up my own darkness, of hard times in the general glee?

It's easier to talk in general terms of the integration of personal and collective darkness (as with Wings yesterday at Aloha camp waiting for the pageant) than to experience and express it directly. But it's all part of the jam. And the public jam, even here, seems to demand togetherness – self-togetherness and supporting a positive vibration. This is valuable, and also we have made space for each other's emotional stillnesses and upsets. My way is calm, my strength a consistent acceptance of all: a stoic nature. I don't really take this as a compliment, but it is accurate.

What is the nature of stoicism? I don't even want to know. It reeks of puritan grim-faced repression, joyless duty to some ideal or fixed habit of inertia. I want to break out more freely from this mode to spontaneous expression and change, yet not to succumb totally to the pain of change. I want neither to be stuck in the vibration of the chaotic sand particles, nor simply to observe them coming together in a pattern of harmony; I want to do both, simultaneously.

To bring just enough awareness to the dance to keep it high and bright – or to bring just enough dance to the awareness to keep it grounded and alive.

Now I feel tears, sadness. Because I am aloof, alone, unconnected. Allowing myself to feel this, I do. I don't have to hide within awareness. I can bring myself to feeling, to mourning, to knowing the fact of my own aging away from attractiveness to young beautiful women, to acknowledging my own limitations of talent in music or conversation, or my own blocks to limitless potential. Hearing Aprielle sing, I felt I too could sing like that (we all could) if only the blocks were dissolved. What then is my issue here?

*Focus . . . focus . . . focus . . .*

It's not about missing the Dun Dun drummers, or yesterday's sweat, or the desert sun. It's about missing close and personal love.

*A wave of recognition passes over me. The parking lot crowd grows louder. My stomach churns.*

I'm afraid of love . . . because I'm not worthy . . . because I'm afraid of love . . .  
And I can let this feeling go, once I identify and experience it . . . and express it.  
This is simple reality therapy.

Beyond money, there is only basic food, shelter, connection. Connection with earth, I savor now. My mother is here and loves me. My inner anima I love and loves me. This is enough and not enough. To the extent that it is enough, it consoles me for the rest. To the extent that it is not enough, I cry for my real closeness, and wait patiently for L\_\_\_\_\_ – or another. Why has it taken so long for her name to appear in this log of the Rainbow wedge of running time? Do I really love and miss her . . . or another as yet unfound?

Do I keep her as protection from other connection?

It is good to ask questions. They don't even need answers.

Asking them is enough.

Merely reporting the facts of the gathering is a Babylonian practice, like snapshots or flashlights (which are called here "hippie mace"). The true Rainbow or spiritual path is to integrate the personal feelings, the inner journey – along with the grounding of fact, earth-reference, real events and relationships.

Now I'm hungry, and I want to sweat.

## The Red Road: Going Home

11 July – near Kenab, Utah on the sage desert; after a bowl of granola funk: granola, pumpkin seeds, raw oats, raisins, mung sprouts, water.

We are a gentle tribe of eight now, with Brian, Sola, Nacim and Wings gone, and Jim aboard from Long Island, joining Sea (Chris), Rivers, Jivan, Angela, Shanoon, Andrew and me. This tribe makes no headlines – just a quiet presence – though page one of yesterday's *Arizona Republic* featured the Shanti Sena capture of a Florida murder suspect, where they bound him in a blanket and then called in authorities to deal with him. Police had alerted the Rainbow tribe via the website.

I've been stewing slightly over my treats bag emptying during one group snack break, and over the interminable parking lot vortices. How long does it take eight hippies to use the restroom and buy munchies? I had to breathe slowly, lower my vibration to harmonize, adjust to the group pattern – like dolphins, like having a baby, like hiking

with a seven-year-old – Pod-mind. Today's adjustment with the food was a ritualistic clearing with arms from overhead swinging down three times, and trusting that it all evens out over the trip, and eating the bowl of granola I needed this morning, alone. Writing, similarly, is a separating activity – but helpful in the full context of individual and group health and balance.

Everyone was separate this morning: Shanoon sitting still upright from bed, Jim prone but writing or thinking, Chris smoking, Angela doing yoga, Rivers wandering slowly among the sage, Andrew gathering plants, Jivan disappeared.

We picked Jim up yesterday when he signaled beside the road where the vehicle he'd been riding in was stalled with a dead battery and chronic bickering among his travel mates. At the Colorado River at Marble Canyon he treated us to some hefty bud sprinkled with kief crystal, and displayed balls of hash to drool over afterwards, before a quick lively jazz jam with Rivers and Chris and me, and a sprout salad feast with guacamole sauce in roll-up chappatis, and sourdough bread. Group food cooperation is a fluid art, jamming in the key of life.

Under the hot sun beating down, we linger in the desert.

We are not yet ready to boogie. Solo travelers stranded, we take space to ground on the earth and in solitude and stillness, under the peace of a big sky, far horizons. Pink coral crystals shine up from fine soft sand underfoot – the van is actually stuck.

Where am I? Floating. There were numerous attractive women at the party on Cathedral Rock . . . dim faces, sultry bodies dancing in the moonlight. A vortex of sexual energy, amid the throbbing drums. One or two hundred people there . . . one got bitten by a rattlesnake.

Today's mood, today's report is uninspiring, uninspired. Just – life as it is. Me alone, us alone, in a mellow group, travelling on the land. In the parking lot in Flagstaff, after a toke of a providential gift appearing suddenly in Shanoon's hand, I observed the loose body language, the laughing casual banter as among the Inuit, or any other tribe enjoying one another's familiar company. This is profound. Human interest, not headlines, though.

## Almost Headlines

We detoured through Zion National Park, leaving my truck parked outside, and all piling into the van to save paying the extra entrance fee. At one of the steep canyons above the river we stopped for a hike down to the water, and the latest in a long line of

ritual swims that marked our passage through the desert. The scenery was captivating. Andrew picked a cactus flower and carried it back up the trail, twirling it under his nose.

We got to the van and were standing outside it when a ranger drove by, then pulled over and got out. She walked up to Andrew and said, "Did you know it's illegal to pick cactus flowers in this park?"

Jivan snickered. Shanoon sighed loudly. "Oh please," said Rivers, who'd gone to jail for protesting legal clearcutting of trees.

The ranger looked around at us and glared. "I'm going to give you a citation. The fine is \$100, and you will have to pay it before leaving the state. I advise you –"

"Wait a minute," Andrew said, looking at the flower. "It's just one flower. Is it that big a deal to get so upset about?"

"I am not upset, sir, but are you trying to give me trouble?" She looked around at us again, uneasiness showing in the strained expression on her face.

"Maybe we can just talk about it," Jivan offered.

"The law is clear, and I'm writing this man a citation."

"Ma'am," Rivers said, approaching her with his dready locks and baleful eyes.

She backed away and pulled out her pager, speaking into it. "I want some backup here, a mile into the canyon, please. Do you copy?"

A collective sigh came from the group and we tried to soothe her, but she would have none of it. We called on our nonviolence training to ground as a group in a circle of breathing, reminding ourselves to be chill and there was nothing to worry about.

The help showed up shortly, two cops packing conspicuous sidearms. "What's the problem here?" the first said politely. He was a thin man with slick black hair.

When it was established that the problem was contraband foliage, the question of his portlier partner in a ten-gallon hat was, "What do you have in the van?"

Shanoon had the prescience at that moment to slip by everyone into the front seat and cover the open baggie of buds on the dashboard with a hollowed-out avocado shell. When the search was carried out nothing, miraculously, was discovered.

"Are you traveling with any other vehicles?"

I told them about my truck parked outside. I didn't mention the softball-sized ball of hash that our new friend Jim had left in it. I held my breath. Again miraculously, the matter of a second search was forgotten as attention returned to Andrew's citation.

"Okay, fine," he said. He had no intention of paying it.

We left Zion, having somehow avoided the prospect of rotting for years in a Utah jail.

## Names for Truck

The Red Road  
Flipper  
Rajamataj  
Ricos Suenos (Rich Dreams)

## Images and Signs

Flying J  
The Stinker  
Jumpup Joes  
Plastic Paradise Sweepstakes  
“Make a scary Rasputin face” – directions on a scrap of paper in the desert at  
Petrified Forest National Park  
Porfie’s Thrift Shop: “A Little Bit of Everything” – including a Love belt, and Bill  
Munroe and the Bluegrass Boys, Orange Blossom Special

## Rainbow on the Road: A Total Experience Tea Party

12 July

After an all-night marathon of driving to kill Utah, the dead heart of Babylon – with its giant factory-church-prisons flying hundred-foot US flags, and highways in gauntlet corridors squeezing us between shoulder and pylons – we are stopped in Boise, sitting in the grass outside the health food store and devouring overripe watermelon for breakfast, when a stylish woman in blue top and shades walks by and says, “Looks like the Rainbow comes to Boise, Idaho.”

“You got it,” I say.

She continues down the sidewalk, but a half block later she returns to offer showers. My hair’s a mess.

“Sure, why not? Sounds good, thanks.”

We trooped over to her house two blocks away, a shady old duplex with a narrow grassy yard beside it. After showers she serves us tea on the porch, where we lounge and chat. She’s been to Rainbow herself, once. “Boise’s a pretty funky town, actually.” Chris has brought along a guitar and starts to strum. The reggae pulse is in the air – and, we start to wonder, possibly the tea. I sniff it more closely. “Mushroom?”

She smiles.

The jam started to take off into some funky James Brown, and then I’m not sure how it happened, it was just one of those flowing things, but we ended up on the grass, in some kind of dancing ritual circle, with this host in the middle, and then she was lying

down and we had the didges going over her, and massaging hands, and deep toning chants, and a gently throbbing drum, and a shamanic rattle, and the bare feet were circling

...

The neighbor was clipping his hedges. Every few moments he'd look over again, trying to process just what in heaven's name was going on in the yard next door.

## Welcome Home

*Let the candle flame be the judge  
By how it lives, dancing from its root*

My sex is a heat-seeking missile.  
It may help to begin like that, like this,  
about how sex ran my life – calling Tantra,  
self-confession and celibacy into question.

To fuck or not is the question.  
Beyond comes monogamy, nuclear solitude.  
Meantime dreams and hot baths in winters, like this  
Melt me down.

I am leaden in the arms of my newest lover.  
In the Now, I resent . . . nothing.  
My fingers and hands dance the shape of my desires,  
myself – auras and energy fields, grounded in water.

My plant grew to seven feet while I was gone,  
the corn near to chest height.  
I swam in the ruddy Colorado, and canyon streams;  
almost got arrested six times.

Call me Rainbow, call me Now. In this realm,  
There is no deletion – but completion  
in the widening vortex of love  
of unity in mind and earth.

Heart-breaker, art-maker, sing us a song

in hard harmony, subtle flavors.  
We will make a party of this gathering  
despite ourselves. Welcome home.

20 July

*Okay, four months now, and I've done it . . .*

I sit motionless, alone, in the dressing room at Ainsworth Hot Springs after a relaxing soak, with the blissful torpor of it all . . . having finished a last session with Paul Erickson this morning, and . . . making love with O\_\_\_\_\_ yesterday, and spending the night with her.

So easy to say, and to do, when all is said and done.

I collect my towel and walk upstairs to the restaurant for lunch, still basking in the glow of it all, “integrating” . . . and committing, in my own way, to the path of no-commitment.

On that touchy subject, Paul’s parting advice was that of the numerous spiritual masters including the great Goethe, to the tune of commitment bringing enlightenment. (Since Paul’s a married man, is this a bias, a vested interest?) He used a metaphor to illustrate his point: to dig a well, don’t keep starting holes five feet away.

But do I want a deep grave?

Maybe I’m strip mining, instead.

I’m North American, of the twentieth century and beyond. Maybe spiritual mastery can be redefined – must be redefined – by and for myself. Not blindly, of course. But now I feel I’m operating in full consciousness, communicating clearly and well and spontaneously . . .

Yet, while “in the flow” of these current events, I’m not acting with complete perfection. There is the little matter of a failed erection, and the accompanying tension in our lovemaking. This is still my field of learning.

So I’m doing it.

Is this all warmup for L\_\_\_\_\_? O\_\_\_\_\_’s cool now too – not wanting commitment at this point either – in fact joyfully embracing both me and my hypothetical departure for L\_\_\_\_\_ in the fall. What grace!

*How did this all unfold, so suddenly?*

I jammed till dawn on Friday, with more mushrooms, Chris and Walkin and Richard and me. There followed a picnic on Saturday, and a square dance in Johnson’s

Landing Saturday night, where I connected with Nell, and danced with her and sat with her and gave her the bracelet and stones from the desert. She objected, however, to my “hippie” friends, not “decent” folks.

Sunday morning I awoke in clarity of desire for O\_\_\_\_. I had a sentiment, or pre-sentiment, that I might see her in the garden if I went there in the morning – and that if I did, it would be significant given that she knew of my possible plan to pick peas then.

Sure enough, she showed up – admitting later she’d considered dressing up for the occasion. She decided against that, but did show up. I said hello. I noticed that she moved closer with her hoe, moving down the row in my direction. I said it was good to connect again, that I’d been wanting to make time to spend with her, and that “maybe we could garden together, anyway.”

“Sure, why not?” she said cheerily, and then added with a sly smile, “We could take turns working on your beds and mine.”

We talked at length about everything under the sun, moved on to her beets, then abruptly stopped talking. We had opened the subject already of our many years’ distance, and she said she felt fearful of that “murky” attraction we had for each other in those bygone days, when Nell was just a toddler.

I confessed to feeling a nervous gnawing in my stomach, and said I was curious to hear more about this murkiness.

She continued her hoeing, without addressing my question, and then said a few minutes later that her fingers too were trembling as she worked.

Another hug was in order. At this point my feeling was strong enough to have to mention: I felt like making love with her.

This was a replay of our encounter twelve years before when I’d taken the plunge by telling her “I love you.” Only now my bold confession came with the added dimension of being more specific, more honest and direct – something I’d only recently learned to contact and express from a bodily feeling state.

As we walked down the unpaved driveway from the garden to my house, a snake slithered across our path. With a knowing smile to one another, arm in arm, we didn’t miss the irony; but neither did we heed the warning.

I’ve been moving today in slow motion. Fully engaging with the present, in this present, means slowing down . . . just as from 8 to 9 o’clock this morning it meant speeding down the highway (in fluid control) to make my appointment, fifty minutes from Argenta, right on the dot.

Paul says I need a practice, a consistent discipline. I cited meditation, yoga, didge and drum, running and walking . . . writing.

*I sense that for me if there is a path, that one, this one, is it.*



At this moment the waitress comes to fill my glass. My food sits half-eaten on my plate, as I can't stop writing.

She asks, "Are you a writer?"

"Yes," I say. "I can't stop."

This interchange seems a cosmic confirmation. Another small working of synchronicity, flow . . . the reason I decided so clearly and irrationally to eat here instead of in the truck. Ketchup bottle and all – thanks, Natalie (*Writing Down the Bones*). O\_\_\_\_, L\_\_\_\_, I've come home. Welcome home, Now.

Being in love again (did I say that?!) has given me the grace, and courage, and grounding, to most be myself. To find myself – and find myself attractive enough to love myself again, to commit to myself, to who and what I am and what I want to do and be and have.

I find myself lingering long over the luncheon plate, as in the hot pool on the rocks in back where the primal earth-art enchants, even in the cold plunge much longer and more relaxed than usual – like standing in the cold rain outside with O\_\_\_\_ as we prepared to take a hot shower together.

In the back of the cave there I lounged with a hand in a hollow in the rock, my whole body meanwhile cradled in the larger womb-cavity, and my upper hand channeling flow from the water rushing into the cavern and mixing with equal parts air over the flesh of my fingers, into the stream running under me, through me.

Before me was the placid pool of two streams forked together – O\_\_\_\_ and L\_\_\_\_, their love for me and mine for them . . . a fork to take sometime in future. For now, there was just the bliss of being in repose on the brown-striped rock above where the waters meet.

Only now, halfway through my Ainsworth Burger, do I give my awareness to the savor of bacon, smoky meat, mushroom. Finally, being present – not all polyphasic in my writing-while-eating. One bite, a few sentences . . .

Today I will convert my US currency to Canadian. Is this significant? It is symbolic of my commitment to the present need. Not necessarily to O\_\_\_\_ in preference to L\_\_\_\_, but to present needs and desires as they are present.

It's encouraging to have Paul's support in this adventure called Now. It takes courage and letting go of fear, for allowing the future to be unknown, and knowing only the Present. "The more I experience, the less I know."

Another instructive quote from Paul sends a warning sign:

*"There's no such thing as casual sex."*

Communication is key, he notes.

He also gives me hope for negotiating the prospect of future "murk" or "messiness," in terms of using sexual *energy* for connection, but not necessarily in a sexual form of expression. In this way there might be a way to gently release O\_\_\_\_\_ if I'm moved to, while still holding a special friendship between us.

I have "unfinished business" to conduct with both of these women presently in my love-life. I am still free now to explore and discover the outcome of both; and because they are two, I also need to consider the danger of repeating the uncomfortable part of the pattern with each, of having a conflicting relationship. Though now with Z\_\_\_\_\_ gone, I'm pairing them off against each other. I don't want to do this – at least not unconsciously, as I may be doing. I need to stay clear and conscious with both of them – and myself.

To avoid pain on all fronts, will take being present, being honest and open – open to new and fresh and present experience, and open in communication of feeling and insight and intention with both, and myself, at all times. Fortunately they both (so far) are incredibly understanding, forgiving and accepting, and open to possibility as I and we can determine it, in the flow and fullness of time together and separately, our three life-journeys.

21 July

At Lakeside Park in Nelson I run into Gabor, Tommy Stevenson, I\_\_\_\_\_, and Joanne from Lofstedt. Interactions with them are "normal"; but inside I'm feeling confused, at sea . . .

It's as if we were riding an ocean liner, and O\_\_\_\_\_ and I decided to jump ship and "go for a swim."

We're treading water now . . .

Do we want a desert island? Probably not.

Do we want the liner to return and rescue us? Maybe.

To learn to swim? Definitely. It's all in the breathing.

These days I concern myself with condoms and KY jelly, books and tapes on Tantra. M\_\_\_\_\_ told me of a shaman she knows, in his fifties, who called her for help

because he couldn't get it up for a lover in her twenties, who laughed at him. M\_\_\_\_  
echoed Paul in telling me that stress and ideas draw energy to the head; guys need to let  
go of that, and of performance anxiety.

I'm coughing now from inhaling algae powder from an edible-pod pea.

Should I go to Cottonwood Falls and jam?

Buy Madonna's *Ray of Light*?

I'm confused now; not simply "in love."

Should I be?

I've (she's) rocked my world.

I was just feeling stable, centered – and then jumped instead of enjoying it. Now I  
want that center back.

Can I return?

At any breath.

Also I have to be aware of sabotage, of revenge against Z\_\_\_\_; and of creating  
competition for Nellie (not to mention L\_\_\_\_, M\_\_\_\_, N\_\_\_\_ . . .).

How can I retreat?

By communicating. Anything is possible. To remain open. At all times to be  
open, honest, clear, direct.

There is a peace in independence. The sexual drive, the impulse to orgasm, is  
seemingly all-powerful. The challenge is to use it consciously, not to be controlled by it,  
driven to it.

The sacred path of love is my desired path of learning now, and I want to fully  
enter into it. I want love to be a ground of learning – sexual education in practice, in  
daily awareness. I want to continue using the experiences I channel clearly, for full self-  
education.

As I breathe, independent here in my space and time, I am free again. I need to  
insure this boundary, while choosing to open at times to another. Having learned many –  
not all – lessons of aloneness, I have felt ready – too quickly? – to move on. That was, is  
true – but not too fast. With care, great care.

How do I feel about M\_\_\_\_? She saw the love-opening in my eyes, my posture,  
my chest. Just when she asked me I relaxed into shy laughter – then she asked if I had  
anything to smoke, and when I got it, her friend the protest lawyer drove up. So we  
smoked all together and covered the crime beat.

M\_\_\_\_ seems over my head – mothering, goddess, worldly-wise, noble, self-  
centered, judgmental and critical (yet not in a negative but in a penetrating way, and from  
the stance of opinion rather than dogma about what is right, correct, successful).

I had hoped again to spend time with her. Instead she spent all night up talking with Ben at his place, then the next day was occupied by a visit from Marcel and others.

She put me in the Epsom salts bath and green-sheeted bed. I slept well, awoke torpid with love-ache and confused identity. Love is big . . . too big? I'm still learning – day by day. L\_\_\_\_ I still feel has an inside track, unfinished business in my heart.

When asked for direction for me over breakfast, M\_\_\_\_ provided the obvious answer:

*“Feel free, but don’t set her up for heart-sharing.”*

That is now my challenge. Moment-to-moment I now have to resonate with longer-term considerations . . . juggling present desires with more long-term waveforms. I need it all to harmonize.

I realize the lesson of all this now – my present dis-ease – may be really a manifestation and trigger of the real depth of my feelings for, my need for L\_\_\_\_ – still looking for the “Lasting Relationship” and thinking of her as my best bet – and feeling her to be the one, more than O\_\_\_\_. Maybe I need to experience first my love for O\_\_\_\_ to get in closer touch with my love for L\_\_\_\_ . . . or M\_\_\_\_, I\_\_\_\_, U\_\_\_\_ . . .

There I go again. Freshly satisfied, my desire is still for everyone I meet.

The path of no-commitment is a challenge. But the way is marked clearly: honoring all the choices.

Sex one day a week?

. . . with each?

After blowing my didge by the water’s edge at Cottonwood Falls, with visions of lounging at a Tantra video screen with O\_\_\_\_, I decide to buy a TV. For some time I have vaguely known that I have work to do with Tantra, and now with someone to practice with, it has become my new passion; finally the time is right to begin. This is a proper focus – and a new chapter in my Life-Book-Journal.

## **Tantric TV and Other Reality Shows**

*Once you know something, you become free of it.*

*--Osho, Tantra, Spirituality and Sex*

While making love to a woman, you are really making love to existence itself. The woman is just a door, the man is just a door. The other is just a door for the whole; but you are in such a hurry you never feel it. If you remain in communion, in deep

embrace for hours together, you will forget the other and the other will just become an extension of the whole.

Once known, you can use this technique alone. And when you can use it alone, it gives you a new freedom – freedom from the other. (p. 69)

23 July

Back from the Rainbow Gathering a week and a half, and I'm still in the flow. But it's a slow flow of linear time, instead of an all-pervasive deepening into the present. The clock still ticks as I putter in the garden, in the kitchen, or in my study, in this new era of my life. Three more months to wait for L\_\_\_\_ seems now too long, and I succumb to feelings driving me into clarity and openness of purpose and will and perhaps even love for O\_\_\_\_.

On that first occasion of our coming together I spent the afternoon and evening and night with her, with little sleep, and much great heart-sharing and continued lovemaking, marred only by my repeatedly wilting erections. That situation was resolved only at our second get-together, last night around 2 A.M.

In the interval I spent three days in town at the drum workshops I'd signed up for before going to Rainbow. It was difficult reuniting with O\_\_\_\_ after my time in town. While there I had come to a realization that my sexual dysfunction with her was likely related to my conflicting feelings of love for L\_\_\_\_; these had been stirred up and re-opened by my active experience of love with O\_\_\_\_. I didn't tell O\_\_\_\_ this exactly, but I did give her the full history of my contacts with L\_\_\_\_ including my still-active intention to go there in the fall or next summer. Before, lacking these details, she'd seemed fine with the idea that I was vaguely still interested in someone else from my past. Now, especially after the deepening of our own connection, this was hugely difficult for O\_\_\_\_ to hear, producing, eerie keening sobs. Releasing these emotions in turn allowed her to move on to the part of her that was still committed to risking further involvement with me.

Where did I stand?

*Where do I stand?*

I vacillate, inconsistent in my commitment both to present flow and to honoring the distant connection I have and want to reserve for L\_\_\_\_. How can I do this? I am doing it, is the simple fact. Of course by default, continuing this arrangement will void the possibility of my connecting with L\_\_\_\_ later, the longer it continues. The only way now that I can honor the space and time I have reserved for L\_\_\_\_, is to carefully and

quickly extricate myself from falling more deeply in love with O\_\_\_\_. A classic dilemma, worthy of the continuing novel of my life . . .

And just why do I need to live out this kind of drama? Is it for art's sake – to create the most compelling story I can imagine? Yet it is all just happening. Or is it?

I need to take full responsibility for all of it. I create my own experiment in living. My dreams are becoming manifest. It is within my power . . .

Here I need to beware, be careful of assuming too much power. There is that mysterious and completely wedded interplay between fate and choice (which we might also call “will” or “character”) – and other characters with desires and wills to complicate the predictability of it all. I can not simply will a relationship to grow. But I can take steps to facilitate it: by remaining celibate for L\_\_\_\_, for instance, if that is my truest desire. This is an ironic option in the light of my previous commitment of that nature in which I left L\_\_\_\_ at our first meeting unsatisfied, for the sake of Z\_\_\_\_.

What is my truest desire? At any moment, I can be clear as I imagine . . . but is my next intuition of desire just another temptation? Making food, cleaning up, having another date with O\_\_\_\_, attending another drum workshop . . . moving on to the next clever novel idea, or career focus, or jam or party or sunny day, another coffee or toke or sexual fantasy . . . each one can be “clear” in its appearance, but now I think, is not necessarily sacred by that appearance.

What is the deeper truth, that will have more consistency in my life?

Is this the missing practice or spiritual discipline that Paul spoke of as lacking for me? The deeper commitment beyond my floating from temptation to temptation, from casual practice to casual practice (flute, didge, drum, walk, run, breathe, meditate, yoga, write, shower . . . ) What is more lasting? What is my true nature, the anchor that keeps my breathing strong and powerful, the activity or attitude that keeps me in joy? Is it truly to give myself up to surface currents?

Or is it better than that, to feel and act on vertical upwellings and plumbings of depths within me?

Can these be changeable, and still uniformly satisfying because of my underlying commitment to this process of opening, of exploring, of giving myself to the full flow of life?

Who am I, really? What is my longer-term intention in relationship? With whom would I rather be falling in love?

This question must be answered, because the choice is here now. If I procrastinate, it will be all the harder to decide – harder on everybody. That protracted suffering no one needs; I've done that already, too, back in '82-'83 with K\_\_\_\_ and E\_\_\_\_.

I need then to incorporate my preferred future as part of my present. If I had done this more fully a week ago, I may have prevented my precipitous slide into a valley of love where I may or may not want to be, come October.

So, the lesson I need to bring to this equation, is that not only the past feelings and experiences need to be integrated into my all-sacred present, but also future considerations. It's not simply a matter of the future arriving unannounced, to feed the present blindly by grace and luck. It's also a matter of favoring probability, of manifesting desire with effort and intention that can serve as a vehicle and vessel, a moving vessel, to receive that abundant grace from the universe. Some graces (L\_\_\_\_) are announced in advance, with advertising signs left in the past. Will I continue to be open to receive them in their own time, or will I prevent their manifestation by my closure in a walled present, choosing instead to open my future in another route (O\_\_\_\_), another walled valley winding in a different direction.

There is no shortage of different directions possible, for that matter. There is also M\_\_\_\_, for instance, B\_\_\_\_, N\_\_\_\_ . . . As in the world of atomic physics, the outcomes of these possibilities, their journey through purgatorial limbo probability, is affected by the presence of the observer (me). I cannot deny my role, as long as I observe. Seeing is biting the apple of knowledge, and it banishes me from the blissful ignorance of present-only Flow. In this greater Flow inclusive of past and now future, I need to continue embracing pain and loss, and to appreciate the tragic limits of the present, while also still somehow letting go of the pain of loss and limitation, so as to dwell again in spontaneous joy.

This occurred last night with O\_\_\_\_, through full expression and sharing of these feelings and thoughts (though we didn't speak in such philosophical and metaphorical terms). The full sharing both made it possible to acknowledge and integrate past and future pains (all around the same issue of her rejection by me and my continued distraction from her with other women), and to transcend this knowledge with reimmersion in present bliss, exploded open into unbelievably rich and full landscapes of love and interpersonal union and sharing of our respective individualities.

Returning to the question, then: Where do I stand?

In considering the future, the danger for me is to let it go too far into left-brain planning and scheming. This is an old imbalanced pattern of mine, one I attempt to escape by my jumping forward into the rushing stream of the present. So I need to learn how to do it with the right brain and with emotion: with intuition and feelings evoked.

How can the future give rise to feelings? The past is wired there, especially in childhood. Does the future do it more through our natural fear of old age, which takes us backward through stages of abandonment and separation to the womb of mother earth?

Maybe there are intermediate levels of birth and rebirth and death along the way to an ultimate cosmic womb from which I will never have to be born or torn away again; and meanwhile, along the way, these events in future time can leave an emotional mark just as strong as the chronologically past traumas of childhood. Working back from this theoretical model to my present circumstance, I see then that feelings can stem from the future; that maybe it is my rebirth from this world, a.k.a. death, that feeds my anxiety about my impending choice. The trouble is that the aging process is one-pointed and linear, and one-way in its motion, despite the theoretical simultaneity of past and future.

And so the sand continues to glide through the hourglass, and I ponder once again, briefly, before the next episode of “Life,” the specific feelings and needs still flowing from the underground river of the past. One obvious leftover of this kind is the unfinished business and “appointment” I tentatively made with L\_\_\_\_. This is real, and rooted as it is in both the past and the future, is a part of my present flow.

Present flow in my case now is not blissfully narrow; though at times (in passion or love-opening with O\_\_\_\_) it is. I need, again, to check the reliability of this state, to watch my retreats from her at times alone, and to wonder honestly about the cause and desired direction of all this present emotional uncertainty. I need to continue to investigate further – both by outward action (a trip to see L\_\_\_\_ in Arizona?) and inward contemplation – what this pull to L\_\_\_\_ is all about. Yes, it’s because she is part of my life and I am still attracted to her. Why am I compelled to escalate the stakes of this drama, however, in perhaps blindly and foolishly stepping into the unknown?

The picture of the fool in the Tarot is clear enough, and if I were to throw the I Ching I’m certain the same configuration would appear. I know this, yet I persist in my folly . . . so far.

But how far?

Quickly I am taking a serious reevaluation of my direction . . . even as I plummet. Is it too late to sprout wings and save myself from death on the rocks? Have I gone the way I must go, and do I need not fear a harsh landing, embracing my fall (as I did after rolling my truck when courting Z\_\_\_\_) and accepting the fate I have taken to myself?

Or can I simply turn back the clock a week, or five years, and erase O\_\_\_\_ or L\_\_\_\_ from the equation?

I did erase O\_\_\_\_ for twelve years, and L\_\_\_\_ for four. Now they’re still around.

Z\_\_\_\_ erased me completely, as did K\_\_\_\_. Or did they? Z\_\_\_\_ still wants me now (in some sense that is still unclear to me), as K\_\_\_\_ appears to also with her recent offer of a room at a conference she’s attending in Minneapolis (this last is conjecture).

Nothing can be erased. I can make choices to put or keep in the recycled bin, however. What is my choice? “Active” status, “archived,” or what? The earlier I choose, while keeping abreast of my present feelings, the better.



I can and do make choices easily enough; the trouble is that I am inconsistent; I keep changing my mind. What's the bottom line here?

*I am in love with both.*

This is tragic; or is it? Perhaps it is just another immense challenge. But L\_\_\_\_\_ doesn't want it. O\_\_\_\_\_ doesn't want it. And I don't want it . . . or do I?

This is the question I must answer, and the sooner the better.

### **A Wanting, a Wondering**

I want nothing less than absolute bliss at every moment. I want my attention to be all inclusive, yet relaxed. I want the "it's all good" and "Be here now" philosophies to permeate the world. I want every word to be right, and in its rightness to show the way. I want forward motion to be our natural cycle, spiraling upward and downward simultaneously forever. I want intuition and rationality to replace extortion and nationality, and to provide a means for me to unite with the world. In so wanting all of these things it is done.

I want without pretension to achieve what I set out before us, to be truthful and open while also respecting the mystery, and the manifold mysteries arising from our engagement in this live multi-mutual drama. I want the trivial, the Persian shaved ice, to stand and to dance with the profound, the love of living deeply. I want the heart songs of emptiness to ring out in a chosen meadow, where we gather to gaze at stars and share dreamtime.

I want the punchlines to punch out, leaving whispers and frog trills to bring on the night. I want the summer heat to walk me down the stone steps to meet you, where a garden in moonlight reclines. Somewhere day dawns brightly, again already now. We awake to the wonder of it, our lives becoming ever more whole.

28 July

Awaking this morning early when O\_\_\_\_\_ left, I felt depressed . . . why? Was it just my stuff, about personality and career, or was it about relationship? I felt a lot better later, tuned in, when playing and then working on my two djembes: accomplishing. Feeling good about myself.

*I am afraid of relationship, of falling in love: losing identity, trying to be something to somebody else.*

It seems to mean somehow taking on the expectation that I have to be someone, have to have done something great, or be doing it. Meanwhile my day consists of very little accomplishment in the conventional sense: after the drums, walking to the mail, going by Uli's to swim in the pond and sex ducks, then by the garden to pick veggies, and home to a little unsatisfying reading from a potentially great book, a little meal of millet and nuts and green beans and tomato, and a short nap. Now I want to clean out my house, get through my to-do list, organize and start writing in numerous projects – all at once.

Part of my flow is to find out what I can actually accomplish, day by day. The trouble is, I hardly have time for work, being so much in the flow. Being in the flow is a full time job.

When I stay up half the night with O\_\_\_\_\_ and sleep in half the morning, that leaves time for little else but meals and chores, going to the mail or beach in the afternoon, and maybe doing some small thing to catch up or get a little ahead. I can find no focus now for anything major. I bore myself now, as I have bored O\_\_\_\_\_ with this repetitive theme, harping on my self-definition and illusory/elusive ambitions . . . and as I bored Z\_\_\_\_\_. Will I bore L\_\_\_\_\_ too?

It's a lot easier to be in the flow of relationship and not worry about accomplishments and time conflicts and so on, when I feel good about myself – which means, it seems, either not worrying, or if worrying, to do something about it in the nature of accomplishing: doing, not stewing. Doing what needs to be done, whether for my physical situation or my peace of mind. And if that means lounging in the sun, so be it. So I need to accept that. To make choices and accept them. To use and savor my freedom. To accept and create the right mix of balance and creative focus in my life, as I need both. To balance the balance with focus, and to focus the balance toward priorities.

This year does contain a large portion of down time, as per the advice of my career counselor. It's a mode that's consistent with making large relationship decisions. So it's appropriate now to keep relationships in the forefront, but also to maintain my solitude and my work and play as an individual, as part of my personal exploration and evolution. These paths are not divergent, but connected in a circle: the solo path brings me back to relationship, to meet my needs for affection and sexuality and connection; and I'm exploring that realm, in turn, as part of my ongoing personal journey. It's all happening together as it should, in work and play and flow.

## A Tale of Two Drums

I acquired my cord-strung drum the day before leaving for Rainbow in Arizona. Maybe it was the sash woven in rainbow colors that drew me to it. I fell in love also with its warm red-yellow mango-wood colors, as with its sweet natural tone. Yesterday I tightened the lacing to improve the tone, and rubbed the skin clean with goat milk. Previously it was restrung at Cathedral Rock in Sedona, by a fellow Marylander. When I bought it from Tabitha she told me she bought it originally in Arizona, and that it was made in Ghana. The Ghanian drummer Tettey enjoyed playing it at the workshop in Nelson the week after my return from Arizona. There was a bit more magic involved there: as on arriving early I'd been sitting alone in the workshop room, spontaneously pattering away with some random rhythm to warm up; and when Tettey arrived and began teaching, it was that same rhythm, which he called "Fume Fume."

This drum lifted my spirits yesterday when I played it while disturbed about seeing O\_\_\_\_ again, not at peace. I played it again today after feeling like I've fallen far deeper in love with her.

I picked out the bolt-tightened djembe from Duncan's workshop just before going to Olatunji's workshop at Hollyhock four years ago . . . where I met L\_\_\_\_, from Arizona. I played it jamming on the grass while L\_\_\_\_ danced.

The skin broke just before the Rainbow trip to AZ, motivating me to find another drum to take in its place, the one Tabitha had to sell. The replacement drum skin I got from Richard was no good; it was a poor fit and too ringy, too thin. I went to Duncan's to get a new skin while in town for the workshop with Tettey.

Yesterday the new skin sat soaking overnight while I fell in love with O\_\_\_\_. I put it on today, and it is drying as I write.

This is a drum made in and for the Kootenays, where I live. It's larger, deeper-toned, more technically tunable and has perhaps a faster response for hands on skin.

There is beauty in having two drums I love, and no conflict, except the simple choice of which one I feel like playing in the moment. I don't have to decide, once and for all (though I may want or need to in the future). The drums don't resent (as far as I am aware) my leaving one idle to play the other.

I recall the line from Hendrix's "Red House," underlying my life-drama with Z\_\_\_\_ and O\_\_\_\_: "Maybe her sister will." Another lyric in the same song inspires me day by day: "That's okay, I still got my guitar [drum]."

In the end, will I be left with no women, and two drums?

## **Dreaming at the Edge of Magic**

As the dream continues, the images change. In their reporting in this journalistic flow, the words too pass by ever moving, like leaves in the stream caught by a camera, captured momentarily and instantaneously cast free again, like miniscule lovers gained and lost.

In considering what I am left with, in this scrapbook of collected experience, I am struck with the dual nature of life, and life's choices, in the pregnant moment: empty and full.

Giving up any substance, or behavior, can simply be turned on that perspective: easier than giving up the substance, give up the lack of the substance, the feeling of lack. Lose the feeling of loss. Losing the lack, find happiness with the present, satisfaction with what is.

If health demands a change to take in another hit of our favorite substance or move into another familiar behavior, so be it, go with it, again or again . . . with the emphasis on health. Reality eludes if health loses priority to substance or behavior . . . which is the material path.

"Being straight" has nothing to do with drugs, for or against. It's rather a matter of telling it is the way it is inside, because inside from a human point of view is all-important. The rest is the scene of our journey. If we are stagnant or content with a familiar scene and routine, the journey must go even more inward, as we seek to understand, to survive, to forget, to improve, to numb, to embellish, to share, and finally to merge with, which is a true form of escape. The result is oneness, within a more or less identifiable boundary: clan or town, globe or cosmos.

"Who am I?" is discovered by letting go of all the things I am not – including my current to-do-list items, and any of my past or future selves. Though, I am all of those in a larger sense. In gathering myself in the whole, the single ego expires, along with all of its attachments and identifying characteristics, habits, preferential opinions. I do still carry my past in my memory, my physical and emotional body. That's okay. I am present possibility bringing forward my uniquely conditioned potential, best released by my continued jettisoning of what is not relevant now. I am, in fact, Now.

Being single is being honest. Being together is bringing honesty to a new level of intensity, a force capable of creating life or bringing it into this plane. In either mode, a simple formula for living is: paying attention to present feeling, and acting on it.

Now that's tricky: always acting on present feeling?

With discrimination, I say, understanding by feel whether it's coming from higher self-guidance or mere creaturely habit. Are these two different? It's another choice of perspective. I can determine, for instance, freely and arbitrarily at any point, whether my whole life up to this point is a living lesson to myself and others no matter what content and particular choices it contains, no matter how confused my motivations along the way. In the higher perspective, it all came from or for my higher self; it's all good (Walkin), it all coheres (Pound: *Cantos*), everything happens for the best (my mother), everything happens in perfect time (Ivker: *Sinus Survival*), vajrayana reality is perfection (Buddha).

Does this create a moral dilemma about sanctioning behavior that "feels good" and maybe even "feels right" and yet triggers difficulties and suffering for others?

Thus, in evaluating my action of courting O\_\_\_\_\_ based on my clear and present feeling that fateful Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> of July, exactly two weeks ago today, I wonder, was it really right and good and harmless in retrospect, though it felt so at the time? Who's to judge? Can I properly evaluate? Can anyone? Does it depend on outcomes not yet determined, choices not yet made?

All evaluation is subject to the karma of the future, the higher or ultimate purposes not yet known. To know all of purpose and judgment in advance is to be in the position of the traditional "God." Meanwhile as limited humans we must simply proceed with a true feeling of goodness, and rightness, which may or may not lead to unintended consequences. However the path of relationship continues in my case, is right and good if I stay true to my trust in present feeling, not challenging myself too harshly on the assumption of habit, nor forgetting that possibility, but also having faith, as it were, in the higher self manifesting. This I allow by opening and getting out of the way, and not blocking by addictive distractions and unconscious patterns.

I am only grateful that I can glimpse and communicate a basis for change, which is to trust, to open, to acknowledge, to forgive, to accept, to move on, to keep flowing, to be and act and dwell in the present moving moment, fully human and fully guided too by the grace of immersion – wherein I can still breathe, if I have learned to swim.

This is my quest, my mission, my metaphor, my practice, and my analogue for these life paths braiding together, the writing and drumming and business, this homestead and community life, this spiritual and material life, this untrained human form and this multidimensional master, all co-conspiring to breathe new life into a dying and hungry world-self, small and large.

Let my words be food for spirits hungering for support, for companionship, for guidance by resonance, for jamming together.

Happy dreaming at the edge of this fine magic, our life together.

8 August

I said I needed to leave.

She said, after a long and painful pause, come let's sit and talk about it.

It doesn't make sense, I said, when I stop and think about it.

Why are we doing this, then? She leaned on one elbow.

Four reasons, it seems: I came out of a bad relationship, and want better. I am attracted to you. I want a close, intimate relationship to be part of my life right now. And at times, I get glimpses of a vision of the long term, what it would be like with you.

She listened so calm, so strong, so patient and loving. Where am I at? Where am I coming from, where going?

All over the map. There are so many pieces to fit together.

Do I delight in doing this to another?

No . . .

And she says it's all better than not to do it at all, where we might have stayed safe and not taken the risk. Now we are at the edge, in the everyday adventure.

Later, I cried on her while my gatekeeper slept, about how cruel he was to keep me from her.

We came together heart to heart.

Sweet love followed.

Love is not easy, I told Nellie. Though it seems it should be, or we want it to be simple, a total giving of oneself.

Even if it does start that way, it tends to get complicated.

At the party: "Tell us about penile numbness, men." We struck up a barbecue society: a burial rite before death, wherein we are lowered in our shroud into our self-made grave – and lifted out again. Or wherein we stalk a party ghostlike while the guests (all men, for lack of other rites?) help themselves to potato salad, country-style (long) spare ribs, and gin-and-tonics. Viking ships, pyramids, cannibalism anyone? I propose a living sacrifice: for my dearest friend – or my bitterest enemy – to cut out my heart.

It does help, in avoiding pain, to know what I want in advance. Or does it? There's always the turning of the wheel. Pain now, or pain later. It just goes with the territory; I remember now, it's a given. Though the balance can be a little more . . . well-considered, before mixing powerful chemicals.

We are two halves of a fragile egg, fertilized and growing. Ahem; let us hope the fertilizer part is strictly metaphorical. Or perhaps, yes, it does tend to go with the picture. Does the one imply the other: a fully developed relationship like the stewardship of a child, more or less “forever”?

I continue to study the figures, to ground in water, to breathe consciously in hard times and to know nothing more than Now.

An idea for a novel: woman wants man to love her. He does, but is impotent/troubled/fearful/at loose ends/coming out of a bad relationship. They screw up, slightly, screwing: or enough that, though she knows fairly well for certain that she couldn't have got pregnant by that stray drop, he could later believe it (if he remembered well enough). She, afraid of losing him just around then, prostitutes herself on some hapless stud so as to become actually pregnant at the approaching ovulation time, and later presents the hub-to-be with the fact of her pregnancy. She knows, of course, that he's not the type to back away, and in fact will maybe have enough guilt and amorous vision to come her way, off the edge of his indecision. Though it is a risk; as he could go off the other way and then she'd really be stuck. Her risk is the primary struggle of the book, though the dynamics of their interplay is solid, and of course he has a matching choice of his own. Balanced against her one-night stand with the stud is his attraction for another woman, an old flame based on a night in paradise; this has created some additional resistance to his giving himself to our heroine.

Moments of truth: walking down O\_\_\_\_'s driveway this morning, away from her, with a great sense of release, of freedom, even with her close to my heart . . . but thinking of L\_\_\_\_, of going to Arizona, of being on my own. Yes, I am not ready for this relationship right now and what it requires. Even though O\_\_\_\_ is so forgiving, and accepting, and patient . . .

Through the ensuing day, in my sleepless fatigue, I carry this sense of release with a certain heaviness, under the closely humid sun.

9 August

Today is about getting in touch with what I need to do. Am I committed to O\_\_\_\_, or L\_\_\_\_, or not? I was committed to Z\_\_\_\_ – as long as it didn't require sustained, dependable passion. But that was in the past. For now, I need to find my center and stick to it. If flow is it, so be it. Yet in relationship, it's so difficult. I struggle with O\_\_\_\_ each night. To love or not to love. To give myself or not: and how much, with how much release and passion? Sometimes, yes. Just not . . . enough.

This pattern is the story of my life. It relates, no doubt, to moving around so much when I was a kid. Never sinking roots. Always a provisional giving, a holding back, a reserved judgment. Waiting for the next city, the next love to come, down the road. I can accept this path perhaps, giving myself to the superficial flow. Yet, geographically, I have discovered new richness in my stability here in Argentina. Finally I feel grounded, rooted, in this home.

Yet still in the emotional realm there is this deep-seated reserve, this holding back from permanence. This needn't be seen as a problem, however. I can look at it rather with appreciation and even joy, as simply my personality, my gift. My holding back can be a blessing, not a tease. Another way to love, in tune with non-attachment.

Is this naïve?

Perhaps. I do what I know best. I can choose to believe that my best is good enough.

With Z\_\_\_\_ I attempted to ground myself in relationship. It didn't work . . . or did it? Again the judgment is subjective. We did have Nellie. We did split up when we had to. We did give it our best shot. Not good enough? Perhaps. In some ways, though, it was all perfect. Vajrayana teaches that it's not only all good, it's all perfect.

*Thus it is possible to move with joy in every moment.*

Is this true?

Maybe not: tragedy demands something other than joy: compassion. Yet joy in living is the groundwork, the foundation for the other emotions. Life, creation is founded on joy – a deep joy in the fundamental fact of existence, not only one's individual being but the interconnectedness of all things.

My own agenda matters, and it doesn't matter. So, I can choose my own agenda, can express and act on my preferences, and encourage everyone else, including those who are closest to me, to do likewise with their own pattern of joy.

When these paths and preferences conflict? Look at our expectations of another. We must leave each other free. If I want to be with L\_\_\_\_ but she's unavailable, I can apply no pressure but only express how I feel. She has no duty but to honor the path of her joy, her fulfillment. She decides, and she alone, how I may fit into her equation.

Likewise, I and only I can determine how much I am ready to give to O\_\_\_\_. I need to be at peace with that, not to take on too much of her pain, by second-guessing with guilt my own actions. To evaluate, yes. And to give myself credit.

Yes, I might have waited, not reached out. Would that have been better, because safer? It would have been easier, on the surface. Life would have been, in a way, simpler. Yet, Life doesn't care. O\_\_\_\_ embraced the risk; so did I. So what's the problem with the consequences further down that path?



*Love demands more.*

In this mystery I am especially cautious. Caution, in this case, creates tension, which is natural to the situation. So are the struggle and honesty and sharing we have to do around it. Still, I will not necessarily choose to continue the way we are: because to give myself deeper to love at this point is too much in conflict with the pattern of my life that gives me greater joy and integrity. Love at this point is too overwhelming for me: love with one person, that is. Too much like what I came out of; too soon for my own freedom and identity quest. This needs to be primary right now. Exploring with L\_\_\_\_ is compatible with that quest. Exploring with O\_\_\_\_ has limits, because it challenges all the rest, those other primary explorations.

And yet . . . it has its own necessities, its own logic and compulsion, its own momentum and validation. This I respect, with caution . . . needing then to breathe slowly, through the tension. To integrate this path with the others, with which it's in conflict, is a heady art. It takes concentration and commitment to the process, time and energy. It has been worth it so far. But like any art, it demands choices too. In the context of my life choices as a whole right now, I need to honor this creative process with some measure of planned intention. To use, to lose myself in the great power . . . to some extent.

*To find the right extent.*

Not to lose myself totally in this process of involvement right now. Yes, the ocean is wonderful: it doesn't mean I need to decide to drown in it.

I can choose to go for a swim. Then, perhaps it is time for summer to end.

## ***Songs of the Divided Heart***

### **Some of my Favorite Drugs**

exercise, sunshine, blue tomatoes  
heartsick romance, live  
swimming in the wide oceanic bosom of my mountain lake  
soymilk, cocoa, coffee, algae, ginger, coconut, raw egg: smooth  
drum, didge, keyboard, bass, Sioux love flute: a jazz combo  
naps, baseball, lists  
red crystals  
dialogue  
getting in tune with my sex drive  
intricate plots  
alternate futures, dreams, rumination  
fate marrying choice  
I Ching and the Mayan Oracle  
dank shrooms

*It's all in the vibes, mon.*

*No change without struggle.*

*Timing is everything.*

### **After *Contact***

Would you woo an earth librarian  
make it your last salvo?

Leadership comes from beyond  
and all ways within.

Remain open to the message

we are not alone.

## On the Lookout

*not a problem with a woman again –*  
– Ziggy Marley

alone as in Berkeley, 1972  
I settle for my flute, notebook  
and meditating  
on the lookout

entertaining thoughts  
of taking advantage  
of the clear blue sky, the warm lake  
being here now

a hawk coasts on the updraft  
back and forth fly invocations  
flute songs, sunlight and shadow

do I let the seasons, the weatherman  
call the shots?  
the plan is in the unfolding

from here long distances  
lie within reach  
at any moment, I can be  
with alpine, lake, or drumming around fire

and this, this my momentary salve  
is to bring the music home  
it's about being content  
to be alone – or with another, or others

but today, I am discontent  
does it mean I'm in love?  
hemmed in by liaisons and expectations,

imagined or real?

when I was with her  
I wanted out, to my lonely cliff.  
I stayed hung there in the balance  
today I wait expectantly for a sign

I have the strong impulse – yes!  
to take off up the Earl Grey Trail,  
or to Poplar Lakes, or the Valhallas

to boat down the lake, to fish, to camp on the island  
to drive far away, to sit here  
in the sun and shade all day

to know it doesn't matter, and it does.  
fear and inertia and confusion  
and uncertainty are okay, too

being myself is okay  
more than okay, it's a gift

### **Advice from a Buddhist Monk**

*If you can't make up your mind,  
Someone else may decide for you.*

This leaves me in the hot seat.  
Yet, I can decide, am deciding  
not to decide.

My path is the path of no path  
To flow into stillness:  
a mountain lake.

The high land calls: wide and trackless.  
The sun lures me up, sends me down.

I remember it all

And remain, motionless.  
On a ridge  
contemplating karma

the path before me, the path behind  
white light  
and a gold fly come calling

### **Images of L\_\_\_\_\_**

in tears holding up her skirt:  
the last I saw of her

the quality of her voice:  
indescribable

myself in rapture for a week  
learning the drums of passion

talking together naked on the beach  
she in her kayak, me in the warm waves

enriching the dinner table with her grace  
a laughing entry to the hot tub

our artful embracing: cool skin, warm skin  
tanned like Arizona sand

I've loved her another layer  
deeper down each passing year

then, I wasn't ready  
now it is my quest to be

## Images of O\_\_\_\_\_

Scene 1: "I love you"  
by the funky washer.

It was "inappropriate"  
in retrospect.

We both shut it down.

Z\_\_\_\_\_ went quietly after her rage.  
Edward never forgave.

Three kids grew,  
twelve years.

Z\_\_\_\_\_ left me.  
O\_\_\_\_\_ left Edward.

We became lovers,  
meeting in the garden  
one Sunday morning  
a week after my conversion  
to the religion of flow.

Our passion caught, peaking  
at the August full moon,  
now waning.

Where am I in this  
vision of sacred wholeness  
holding out for L\_\_\_\_\_?  
O\_\_\_\_\_’s eyes holding black love  
of all my deepest self

## Immersion

– to L\_\_\_\_\_

I go fully into love  
letting the rush of cool-warm water  
massage my whole body skin

I go swimming stroke by stroke  
southward, toward the open end of the lake  
so far from you

I am in the water of love already  
this far away  
but now I tire and go back to shore

Hungry for you,  
I settle for a sandwich  
another lover

Its honey soothes me  
in your absence  
though it's not enough

On this shore the sun burns us both  
I will swim again searching for you  
while someone else cries a lake of tears

– to O\_\_\_\_\_

I need to make it difficult. This challenge matches  
my need for growth. I hope it does for you as well.  
Suffering is not fun. What is its purpose?  
To cut through to the core. To show us who we are.

### **Advice from a Father**

Take it son, this is the heaviest shit there is.  
War, drugs, love for real

In the end you will have to eat it too.  
Take my word for it, I survived through the generations.

There is nothing but dialogue, I say, I've been there.  
You know nothing. I can only tell you what I know.  
Red felt pen marked on the spine of *The Inner Lover*,  
Closed on the shelf beside the bed I write from  
Notwithstanding.

Free speech I say, style, some manners  
You tell them your story. In your own words.  
Do what I do not what I say  
Your honor. Just play the game.

Son. You will have no understanding  
Of me until you are ready. Don't try  
To rewrite the rule book. Tell my  
Daughters to try harder. Whether

To worship women or not  
Is a question I leave to you  
Your only clues  
The details of your passing days – so  
Look deep and sleep well, my son  
Tonight.



## **Transitions**

### **On My Own**

I know what I am doing, I watch what I am doing, with absolute freedom. I can choose to unplug the phone, if I want. To take a nap, to watch *Heat*. I just returned from the day's errands: getting propane, gas and the video: opting for the home entertainment package instead of a windy afternoon under clouds at the beach. A swim would have been wise. Carrot delivery to Dick in exchange for milk, freezer stop for ice-cream and duck.

Three people asking for items on sale . . .

Do I let my life be determined by others' desires of me – a buyer, a lover, a hungry cat? Wind in the clouds, the gas gauge on the truck?

I say I flow. This means nothing except in the attitude, the details, the composition.

Mere drifting is . . . one way. So is directed action in a plan of intention. "Flow" is pretty general.

Is it getting through all the demands of the day, though they surface like rocks in the driveway, weeds in the garden?

By necessity, yes. Beyond that discriminatory line or zone of survival and comfort, come the "higher pursuits": art, politics, literature. Mutual empowerment via relationship. Spiritual discipline. All these are paths of flow in one form or another.

So what's my line?

Another nap, video, milkshake or toke, cooked meat?

I sound to myself cynical, judgmental, bitter. Why not celebrate, exactly what my every choice is?

I can transmute, if I desire. Release, rechannel, give in to love.

Intention needs clearing at every moment. As in baseball, every pitch counts.

What are my expectations of this moment? A higher income, progress toward fame? A perfect lover? They are all within reach. I have everything, even starting with nothing. I have nothing, even starting with everything. What duality!

Excitement creeps into my haunted house.

The autumn wind stirs. My path unfolds in mystery, trust, grace, confidence, slow breaths.

## The Mystical Path

Smaller and smaller actions  
yielding greater and greater results  
daily errands taking on epic proportions:  
collecting goat milk, delivering carrots . . .

The next moment is the Big Bang  
the zero point, all time and space  
and when I continue to breathe, I live  
with nothing more than this music to dance by  
nothing less

There is a shining in every moment  
after the moment I realize I have the choice  
I can do what most needs to be done  
or what arrives, or what I imagine I love the most  
in this time, after all the rest, and with so much  
to explore for the first time or again.

When I come to words I see the light I live by  
come to grips with the tools of intention  
and understand what it is to take the wheel of the train.

Tunnels, hair-raising curves, every forked path  
the head engineer has designed  
karmic mystery, coincidence  
are here revealed, bled into motion now  
in this river of life, this bandwidth where I run

Dreams shatter on the rocks with fine and glorious spray  
every moment here, on interminably complex shorelines  
where back eddies remain, the vortex I'm in,  
a spiraling galaxy of thought, and feeling, and interaction  
with every butterfly wandering near Hong Kong  
every beat of pistons, street bands, butterfly wings

When verbs and nouns are married into one  
vast motion, collecting debris of modification, degrees

categories and properties of function, form and impulse,  
dread happenstance calls time out and brings the whole thing to a halt.

I breathe again. The baton falls, swinging into  
descant, wailing surrender, the same knowledge  
I came by. Born here and dying here, I come to know  
who we are, by other names. My leaves and branches  
frame the mountains of you, call our sky down and swim us up  
fluttering, hungry for the song of ultimate freedom.  
Flowers flow by gently, floating

in unmoored bliss  
umbilicus severed

for the next part

of the journey

## **Cross-Currents**

My intention and desire is clear, as I look forward to a fall rendezvous with L\_\_\_\_ in Arizona. I am ready to explore relationship with her. I am eager to get to know her better; for the chance for both of us to get to know each other better. I want to have fun being together; to enjoy sex together; to resume our mutual intellectual stimulation. I want us both to be able to continue our focus on writing. And I look forward to the opportunity to enjoy Arizona again, this time in L\_\_\_\_'s company.

Then . . .

O\_\_\_\_ walks in the door  
and everything changes  
I say the right thing at the wrong time  
and it changes again

I could paint you a picture  
instead you get words  
I get tears, a candle flame

and fall rain tonight

## Imagination and Commitment

To be successful requires imagination plus commitment. All decisions need not be made at once: witness the making of *Apocalypse Now* (or, for that matter, the Vietnam War). But commitment implies imagination projected into time and space, in the form of a living face. In the case of loving, commitment requires the visualization of the joyful countenance of one person, the beloved. In my loving O\_\_\_\_, she in the role of beloved deserves my commitment – which means, say yes or no: Are you or are you not my beloved? In the case of the writer, commitment to the act of writing requires at least an imaginary audience, a market, a trusted listener. Beyond and underlying commitment is judgment, trusting myself as my best listener. Yet also I must lose myself in what I imagine, in order to give my love to another.

## Ritual and Freedom: A Meditation

This is how I start my morning:

- Lie in bed with hands on heart, reflecting on dreams and the emptiness of all forms
- Arise to yoga, a brief sitting meditation on the Merkaba, or light-spirit-body
- Shower and dress
- Empty pee bucket, feed chickens and ducks, and collect eggs
- Make breakfast; eat while reading baseball news
- Begin the day's writing . . .

Life is ritual: rituals within rituals. The seasons, the water cycle, evolved behavior, computer programs: all function by habit, by regularity, by tested procedure. A monk's life gives room for maximum spiritual exploration, by containing the waking hours within a predetermined frameworks. There is no energy needed to "decide what to do." The commitment is already made, and efficiency gained by the common discipline. A solitary monk has greater freedom in determining the shape of the structures, and greater responsibility in the same task.

Freedom carries with it a grim responsibility. It means being able to know what is best use of one's time on earth. Wrong choices based on poor self-knowledge lead to frustrating lives. Too much energy can go to anxiety around past or future choices; or the power of decision can be left to fate, to apparent necessity, to automatic conditioning, or to the whims of others acting out of innocence or manipulation.

To be inspired: that is the light necessary to lead the life of freedom. The paradox is that the inspiration then leads one to create a new ritual, in order to contain the commitment to the freely chosen path, to continue the given inspiration.

In some cases, as I usually find, the inspiration fades with that container of commitment, that ritual of continued practice. I want to play the bass guitar: fine, but it ain't gonna happen unless I commit to an hour of practice every day. Writing is the same, professionals agree. The young whippersnapper who has a great idea is a common figure: more rare is the one to stick by the keyboard every morning, rain or shine.

Life is lived by ritual. Food is a great example. How many people have the same breakfast every morning, for years? Right, there aren't a lot of choices – in our tradition, whatever it is. It takes too much thought that early in the morning, to be creative. So we get by with the easy food until the coffee takes hold. The cereal, the eggs. This morning I used a little extra creativity in chopping a handy tomato and garlic clove and sprig of basil into my scrambled eggs; added coconut to the toast and honey.

Inspiration: sometimes it doesn't take a lot to follow it. Sometimes it's good to play the bass, or try learning Java, in an afternoon – to get a taste. This is the stuff of adolescence. Passing inspirations, explorations, brief love affairs.

Why am I living like this in middle age?

Yes, I have my morning rituals. After that? It's been wide open for six months now. Ever since the big walls came down, the relationship I'd been in for fourteen years. Was that all another ritual; two go-rounds of the seven-year urge? Now, I wonder. Who am I, what am I here for, am I meant to be with someone else or alone? What is my truest work in the world? How best to spend my day, my week, my month, my summer, my year of transition . . . to what?

Or I can simply commit to writing again, and none of the rest matters anymore.

I've already got to that point: that none of it really matters. In that space I can join the drug-users who revel instead in the full sensual experience of it all. Wherein emptiness becomes fullness of the moment.

Abstracted from that experience, as from all my chosen activities as I lie in bed between sleep and daytime activity, I wonder, what is it that could excite me? Attitude, like timing, is everything. I can think the same thought in a negative, cynical frame of mind and emotion, bitter that life has given me everything, but nothing I can call my own; or I can open forward in a sense of joy and spontaneity, determined to savor the

unpredictable and unique flow of my serendipitous path unfolding. The dilettante-by-default, or the carefree gypsy?

In between is the working man, the creature of habit. Like animals pacing zoo fences, these unfortunates make do with newspapers on the train, three hours each evening in front of the TV. Gotta make a living – true. But how? There are lots of choices to be made, talents to assess. Ultimately the question of lifestyle is crucial, and for this the entire philosophical ballgame begins.

I hereby commit. Yet in writing this piece, at this moment, I am silently debating: do I represent this act as part of an ongoing practice, a *fait accompli*? Or do I leave the question open for the next five minutes or hours or days, my ritual being my pursuit of freedom, my work the exploration of the meaning of freedom, my path the avoidance of all ritual?

Shall I arrange the comfortable ritual of a day filled with predetermined activities, with none, or with a mixture, a balance? Even this question implies my freedom to decide. I have evidently decided, up till now, to continue experimenting: to partake of a dynamic balance of these variables: ritual, freedom.

For a time I worked, worked hard, at many things. In writing alone I have had the discipline in my life to publish, to compile, to create: a wide and long endeavor comprising many novels, stories, poems, essays. I can do it; have done it. Do I wish to continue that ritual, that practice? I’m finding out, in the moment.

What about other involvements: relationships of fourteen, seven, two years. Is the next one for life? Twenty-one years, or one? None? All is possible: nothing totally predictable. I could have tripped on the way into the study with my breakfast. I’ve tried the rigorous schedule and it always fails.

As for the Rainbow Way . . . it seems to be working. But is that direction enough to satisfy my ego, my desire for measurable accomplishment, the statue in the desert for Ozymandias, King of Kings?

I generated, or found, a great deal of energy this morning – in the shower after my triple toke which I neglected to mention earlier for fear of invoking a dismissal of my controversial enterprise – in the inspiration for this essay as a virtual container for all of the experiment which is my life; and also a solution to the agonizing problem of choice of all the other activities of my life. To choose to write has a special status, in that not only can I escape, through this commitment and focus, entanglements in all the other possible “distractions,” but this magical vehicle can meanwhile contain them all. I can have my cake and eat it too.

And, as a bonus, even when indulging or succumbing to said distractions, I can live them knowing they have a purpose, a role to play in my “real work” (as even the macho Hemingway called writing). Likewise the writing is redeemed not only in its

intrinsic worth, and the participatory pleasure it facilitates, and as a form of service, but also in the focus and shape and direction it gives to my life as a whole. By being a focus it doesn't have to substitute for everything else. It can substitute to a degree I desire: and more, it provides a balance to life by giving life the desired degree of structure; giving me a craft, a form of service, a calling, an identity card. "Yes, I'm a writer."

Choosing the writing life is an elegant solution to my ritual-freedom problem. It may be that this discussion has turned inward, therapeutic. If so, so be it. It may never need to see the light of day. Or, it may. My issue is not around that, really, but around what I want actually to do. Right now at least, I know I want and am comfortable and secure in the container of my commitment to this beloved: my muse, my writing, this writing, this practice, this form of schedule (the morning as ritual). There can truly be only one beloved. My relationship life is like my career life: I'm still in adolescence. Knowing myself means knowing my center of gravity: my truest craft, my one main container that I create and maintain every morning. Without the "every morning" sort of commitment to one's career craft, the result is similar to a relationship that lacks an "every night."

The "every afternoon" belongs to me, and freedom.

But to call myself "Now" and totally commit to "absolute freedom" without ritual? I may not have the courage required to commit to *that* beloved. Because it is a life of monkhood in the religion of the Now. What woman wants to give herself to a priest of the Moment? Where's the cash except in the carnival huckster stage, the marketing angle? Do I really feel content without plans, reliable income, fulfilled lovers or ego-identity tags comfortable to most? I can do it, for a while: go by "Now," jammin fulltime, open to . . . what?

Without the tribe, the Rainbow gathering, spontaneous jam or wild food to browse, it becomes a compromising situation. Alone, what's the point? Wandering from book to flute to TV to garden to friend's house to bed, is this a soulful existence? Better to pray all day, or hike, or swim? Not in winter. August rain and cold closing down, I wonder: how long to live the Rainbow vision, alone and without sun?

Can I then be qualified to write a book about living this vision, without having done more than flirt with it briefly? Well, whatever. Many a journalist has reported on phenomena with less than six months' journey.

Anyway, back to the redemption of those free afternoons . . . and even the structured rituals, from rising till sleep, can contain a spirit of freedom within each. An hour to meditate: fine, run free in there! Four hours of writing? Wow, what can be created there! An afternoon free to drum or swim, or learn computer programs . . .

So, in relationship. Committing, giving oneself to one beloved, gives rise to new possibility: what shall we do together? Sex as ritual similarly is full of potential: Tantric bliss, unbounded universal union. There is freedom within ritual within freedom within

ritual . . . layers within layers, boundaries contained within other boundaries, space in between.

In this paradox is the solution to the problem of degree (how much ritual, how much freedom).

Step number one, for either purpose: unplug the phone.

The requirement for how strictly to keep to the commitment or the schedule is: how does it feel? Yes, the activity in question (writing, say) can be draggy at times. Give in to it and push past it? Yes, and, what about the competing inspirations? I would say, go with the greatest, most exciting inspiration of the moment. Every moment. If the streak is bad and the moments continue to be unexciting, then that too is a signal to go through the boredom to find a deeper level of involvement. Both these kinds of commitments, to a chosen activity or to the principle of flow, are disciplines.

Balanced against discipline is an openness: relating with it the way the anima-animus pair does within each soul.

*So positive energy might flow the most freely, in the most creative and inspired way possible, as much as possible: this is the goal I feel is paramount.*

In stating it I have a focus of intention for each moment. In this present focus is the channel of my whole life energy now directed outward, through the thin stream of pixels resulting.

In this light the sacredness of every act becomes apparent. Potentiality condenses into creation, becoming part of the visible spectrum: an honor bestowed to all material bodies. In common language, to get to the big leagues, every pitch counts. Once there, it counts even more. And beyond . . .

I decide: what is most inspiring: to continue, or to try something different. I don't mean, sweep the kitchen instead of write . . . or do I? Hell, why not? It is easy to ask, and almost to assume, What is really most inspiring? But you have to take the bigger picture into account. Yeah get into the sweeping. And, it likely doesn't take three hours. So, what's the major task in the available three-hour morning chunk of time?

The usual tendencies flock to the call: to answer phones, run errands, entertain visitors, grab another snack, go for a walk, read a book . . .

But again, what will be most satisfying, as a channel for positive energy? Not you or I are the channel; we are not enough; it is what we do. Now, later, how does it, how will it look? To me, to you, to what's around it? Is it appropriate, in harmony?

Timing is everything, and so is spacing. Well proportioned: balanced: a life of grace and equipoise. Did I come yet to the tea ceremony, the archer? Every act, I say. The appearance of the leaves outside the window. The slow sure way that Autumn stalks August's heels.



So: do I have to decide, about this relationship stuff? Does “Current Wisdom” have anything to offer in this regard?

At the moment, we have a loving lady close at hand. In the far corner, we have a lightweight blonde, the lovely L\_\_\_\_.

What do I do?

In “Current Wisdom” I postulate that I must follow the most inspiring act of the moment, while keeping in mind the deeper inspiration of a chosen path. How does this apply to my relationship dilemma? Writing offers the model of balance, a morning a week: that loose, for now. In afternoons: freedom, at all costs. And now, for the nighttime lineup . . . did I expect an unrehearsed appearance by one of the principals?

Here is the simple approach: a spontaneously inspired response to the longer-term vision of living with . . .

L\_\_\_\_? Yes.

O\_\_\_\_? Too painful, is what I read.

What do I want? L\_\_\_\_.

Why?

*Think first what kind of relationship I want.*

*Or – give into love.*

L\_\_\_\_. I want her, no question.

What is it about her I want?

A lifestyle, a beautiful appearance, a soothing voice? A focus: life, writing, relationship. No distractions. No phones for me. Build a business too? Maybe on the side. A little travel, drumming: go fast and go slow, but enjoy.

Who needs an oracle?

At home, here with O\_\_\_\_, it would be . . . drab Novembers, a long winter ahead. Loving arms and searching eyes: where are you, gone again?

This pattern reveals . . .

Not really being there for O\_\_\_\_, in either case. Not really giving of myself.

The third option, and fourth, come into play.

That I give myself to my writing, on a part-time but committed basis . . .  
Or I give myself to nothing, only myself, no distractions from jamming fulltime  
now.

The writing path I align most harmoniously with L\_\_\_\_.  
The flow path I am most familiar with following with O\_\_\_\_.

Would flow work well with L\_\_\_\_? Not really. I'd seem bored, and I would be.  
Would writing work well with O\_\_\_\_? Not really. Too many kid demands,  
weekend vacations. A family type. I want out.

Am I just scared, of relationship (as offered already by O\_\_\_\_) in a deep and  
committed way?

No, but I cling to the need of partial security for my writing muse by partnering  
with a fellow writer. Wherein we both respect and thoroughly understand and share the  
associated boundaries.

Is this a cold-hearted decision?  
Yes.

I go elsewhere now, to reflect.

## August Reflections

Today without love or any other drug, I return to the basics. Me and the word.  
It's you and me, babe. Still I feel a coldness in my heart. Shutting down to spontaneity,  
in service of an idea. Is this life? I continue trying to make the best of it. I can still  
breathe. I can dedicate my efforts to general service, art for an audience, business for a  
network, cool professionalism.

Gone is my boyish, adolescent fantasy, my way of falling into love.

I look wistfully back on the quickness in my step, my starry-eyed plans. Is it all  
over, and do I end this way with no harmonious companion? Is this my path of choice?  
The sterile world of a kiss on the cheek, a brisk hug. My life is departing. I walk away  
and down the long tunnel to the end. Is this the way it goes?

How morbid. I can go to the bottom of this tunnel and then back up again. This  
is not a symptom of death but of birth, residual loneliness whose barriers I re-enact in the

form of faithful hopes for my hometown team . . . a miracle finish in the wild card race by the beginning of September?

Shades of '83, or '82, with comebacks to match my last time out of relationship?  
One game, one pitch at a time.  
One breath, one life.  
One love.

If I am cold in this breakdown of bodyheat after my short run, if my bowels want to move in death's anticipation, if my heart closes further in cold determination, I am at least aware. Am I choosing to die in this way, to close to love so present and compelling? Am I sure about what I'm reserving myself for? Clear what I want?

In truth, no.

Those lush green vines beside me are not long for this visible world, but destined for compost. The long winter beckons. And yes, perhaps there will be another spring to come, another season of love. This pain could be temporary, and in that case, bearable.

I feel lighter already. Being glum is not where it's at. I need to be able to be joyful even without the ready prospect of love. My horoscope this week says, however:

Getting in touch with what you truly desire most is prompting you to look to the future. A passionate charge forward is held in check only by a lack of clear definition. This is partly so because you want to share your vision with others you love and trust. This is serving to remind you that the solo route is not really your style. Harmonious companionship is a core element of your being. With this in mind, are you doing everything you can to achieve this core desire?

I need to get in touch with this, the long view. Home life with O\_\_\_\_ instead of Z\_\_\_\_? Maybe . . . but not yet. Professional life at long distance or partial distance with L\_\_\_\_? Maybe, and maybe more. This could suit me well. I need to go to Arizona to find out. Can doing that compute with doing this? Not easily. I need to choose already, and I am: to plan to go, whatever the cost?

Again the core question remains, from which all else flows:

*Who am I and what do I want?*

Everything, and nothing. Check that.

*Everything.*

That includes the errands, the cleanups, all the backs and forths on love. It's all part of the flow, chum. Get with it.

I am in motion forward. I want . . . adventure, options, exploration. I don't want to settle for closure until I am sure. Yet to explore either path any further at this point, seems to demand closure – at least, provisionally – from where I now stand. I don't really believe in closure except as a practical convention. It's like the related issue of attraction: it does not go away, but we learn how to deal with it. I can go either way on this one. Dealing with O\_\_\_\_'s hurt feelings is more difficult, on the surface; but ending or further postponing my options with L\_\_\_\_ . . . that's just too painful for me in the long run. It's too restrictive at this point.

Why?

Forget the analysis. How do I feel?

Resolved. I need to find the strength to do what I must do. The strength to tell O\_\_\_\_ no, and to go on with my life. Can I do this? In full disclosure and truth. The provisional closure clause . . .

Writing, before all else: this my restored practice.

Am I any further ahead?

I have new experiences to digest, wordwise.

Is this wise?

It is my path. I come back to my muse; entertaining love for myself, in full communication, in this manner. Life herein has meaning.

I go on to dream of a different way, for variety. Flowing this way is safe. I can trust myself, as listener.

Where does the pain come from; where does it go? Before breakfast, after breakfast . . .

Always there are more chores to be done.

Is a side trip a distraction or a true event?

It's all subjective. Timing is everything. With two weeks left to play, I can savor that 3-2 victory yesterday, with Boston idle, and the gap down to 6.5. It could be five by tonight, 0 by month's end.

As for me, what do I want? I still haven't answered the question in specific terms. Or maybe I have: To fill out my three pages of journal, to do my errands for the day . . . as well as: listen to the next ball game, get on the next conference call . . .

All of this one-pitch-at-a-time stuff works great, if “the ring” is the clear visionary goal. One-step programs work with end goals clearly in mind: otherwise they are treadmills.

What’s the goal of a non-goal oriented person, an aboriginal?

To be part of the circle. The cycle, the circle: not the spiral but the closed circle. This is Eliade’s contribution which I still find fascinating. As against [Fukuyama’s drive to liberal democracy](#), the satisfaction of desires and individual recognition. Yet these too played a part in the aboriginal psyche. Harvesting buffalo . . . counting coup. Playing the love flute melody for one’s beloved.

Eagle’s roof arrives. I have errands to run. A meeting with one of my beloveds. This is true, for now. I must live with the reality. L\_\_\_\_\_ doesn’t want to be part of a triangle – who does? For me she is already part of it, but from her point of view she is removed.

Enough analysis, I say again. How do I feel? Good, as I told Eagle. This is true. Clear enough, in my own being.

*I must act on the premise of going to L\_\_\_\_\_.*

To ask “why” again risks repetition. I am aware already of it all. Yet by discussing this further I bring more into awareness. Not circling wider, but spiraling deeper. My purpose is . . .

To go vertically down the page, by compiling horizontal lines one at a time . . .

To go deeper.

This is the nature of written language, as of life lived a day at a time: exploring thought line by line,  
going deeper.

## **Walking Light: A Dialogue Between Man and Nature**

(occurring during a “solo” 60 km trek through the wilderness, over the Earl Grey Trail from Argenta to Invermere)

Day 1

– What’s the purpose of your trip, Mr. Now?

– To argue the vagaries of existence with one who understands.

- I see. Is that why you brought a smaller, lighter notebook but two days' too much food?
- Yes, I thought I might stay awhile.
- You mean, until your food runs out.
- Are you badgering me?
- Sorry, sir. Back to the questions. Just what are you doing here?
- Following my footsteps.
- One at a time . . .
- What my heart says.
- At the moment. What about tomorrow, when the food runs out?
- You mean, five days from now?
- Whenever. It will happen.
- That's all right, I still got my pen and pad.
- Till that runs out. Then what?
- I'll swim in the creek.
- Get serious. Weren't you going to become a lawyer once?
- To get back to your original question, I just felt inspired to go.
- Just like that. No plan?
- I did pack a little too much food – just in case.
- In case you might be inspired to extend your visit, when the time comes . . .
- Yeah.
- By the way, who was that pretty lady I saw by the bridge you crossed coming this way?

- Is that part of the interview?
- Absolutely. Our readers want to hear everything. Especially that part.
- I thought I'd set out on a solo adventure. Now. Does that answer all your questions?
- Not by a long shot. But I can see you're ready for a break. Why don't you walk awhile, and I'll see you at the next stop. Don't be late.

## Day 2

- Well, Mr. Now? You look different.
- I turned back. Spent the night at home.
- Alone?
- Yes. Dropped half my stuff off: the sleeping bag, tent, food . . . too many options, it was a burden. And so unnecessary.
- We learn from our mistakes.
- You said it.
- So what have you decided to carry with you now? Do you mind my prying?
- No problem. You've noticed my different pack: a standard mid-sized Outbound daypack with its top pocket zipper replaced by Velcro which is too worn to rely on anymore . . .
- Go on . . .
- All right. Item: one dog-scratched mouse-chewed twenty-six year old ensolite pad, which I got for my first camping trip in the west, when I came to California in 1972 . . .
- Are you planning to give me the whole story?
- You want the whole story?
- Uh . . . does this mean for every item? We're only on the first.
- We've got 2 days.

– Save it for later. What’s next?

– Okay:

- one mini-bungie for a chest strap
- one pair Tevas strapped to the outside of the pack
- one canister pepper spray for bears, strapped around my waist
- in my left pocket, one handkerchief and a basic pocket knife combo
- in my right, a trail map and whistle
- on my body, one knit polo shirt from GAP, one pair seersucker bathing trunks, both hand-me-downs from my older brother
- a \$5 watch on a \$7 leather band
- poly socks under medium heavy wool
- cheapest (\$23 Cdn) Sears running shoes
- my father’s leather notebook, 6-ring 4X6, two pens

You want the contents of the pack, too?

– Absolutely. Our readers are hungry for information.

– Okay. You want the food bag first?

– Your choice.

– Let me put on these Tevas first.

– Is this an ad or what?

– Ad, plug, hyperlink, they’re just comfortable around camp after a long day’s hike.

– And I’m paying for this?

– No – I am.



- Oh? What are you bringing?
- Poetry and philosophy. Flute music.
- Names, titles?
- Huh? Oh, just my own stuff. You know.
- Hmm. I really don't think I have any use right now for . . .
- Not even the flute?
- It sounded like no bird I ever heard.
- Fine. I'll just be quiet.
- Could we have another few moments? I believe you were starting in on the food.
- All right. So far, what's already gone, a cheese and pickle sandwich, two carrots, a tahini and honey sandwich, a butter and honey sandwich with chocolate chips, a nutritional meal bar and raspberry chew, a couple of handfuls of trail mix –
- Consisting of? This is key.
- Filberts, raisins, sunflower seeds, coconut. I think I brought too much food still. Could have left the trail mix home, along with the signal mirror, the fat candle . . .
- What else have you eaten already?
- Several crackers. Four hard-boiled eggs.
- This is in addition to breakfast at home, I believe.
- That was a small meal. Toast and tahini and honey, peppers and onion and garlic sautéed in olive oil . . .
- And what's on the menu for tomorrow, if I may be so bold –
- More crackers, cheese, trail mix, a tahini-honey sandwich, chocolate chips, algae treats, dried apples . . .
- Let's just hear the breakfast.

- Probably the sandwich. Whatever else. Oh – and coffee and chocolate soymilk, from home.
- You mean you made the coffee and carried it all day?
- It’s very small and powerful.
- Whatever you say. Go on . . .
- Clothing: silk undershirt with long sleeves, polypropylene undershirt with long sleeves, a red fleece saying “Canada North” on the breast, a down vest –
- No ads, please.
- Each one has a story.
- Like every citizen in “The Naked City.”
- You got it. There’s a yellow double-layered treeplanter’s polyurethane rain jacket, hand-knitted wool cap –
- The lady by the bridge?
- How did you know?
- Everything’s connected.
- Hmm. Even my spare underwear?
- Everything. No exceptions.
- Well, at least you’re clear. Shall I go on?
- Proceed.
- One pair spare poly socks and one pair of heavy wool, one short 5/8-inch rope and carabiner, one box moleskin, one bundle of six lengths of baling twine –
- Orange or black?
- Orange. God, you’re picky.

- I don't like being called that.
- What, picky?
- No – God.
- Why the hell not? What's the difference?
- It carries too many connotations.
- Like what?
- Like the old man with the beard.
- I get it. You don't want to be confused with me. I can see your point. On the other hand . . .
- We need specifics.
- I'm giving them, all right? Colors, smells, history –
- Calm down. Just a descriptive tag or two will do, this time through.
- Fine. Wait a minute, what do you mean, "this time"?
- Your privileges here aren't unlimited, you know.
- So we have to go through this every time now? It wasn't like this before.
- Yes, I know. In 1972 . . . well, then my pet cat did the talking. Today, it's my turn. I wanted to meet you personally. To get to know you. To understand better. About you and the things you carry around you . . . and what you leave behind.
- Humph. Are you ready for more?
- Always.
- Okay. One hand-carved Sioux love flute of cedar, with cougar head mounted –
- That's your totem?
- Yeah. There are a couple more stories behind that one.

– Later.

– Maps, wallet and – brown leather wallet – and truck key on blue plastic key chain, for the trip home. Toilet paper –

– What’s the toilet paper for? We don’t have toilets here.

– I think your readers can figure that one out. To continue: webbed work gloves for the cable crossings. Ace bandage.

– An ex-Boy Scout, I can tell.

– ”Be prepared,” right? But, I think I still brought too much food. You know, I was thinking. There are basically three levels of lifestyle: survival, comfort and luxury. Luxury is excess. But it’s all in degrees. I already cut my load in half, and it did make a big difference, but now I see I’m still in the “excess” range.

– We forgive slight lapses. You don’t want to mess around too much at the “survival” end of things, now, do you?

– No kidding. A “slight lapse” there can be fatal.

– No kidding. You’re still smarting from that “close scrape” on the boulder slide up Poplar Creek, aren’t you?

– I put some chaparral ointment on it.

– What else is in your kit?

– This really is a border crossing routine, isn’t it?

– You’re in another country now. Open it up.

– Needle and thread, gauze and bandages, Traumeel, waterproof matches, Chinese wooden comb, floss fork, floss, toothbrush . . . whoops.

– You forgot toothpaste. What an idiot.

– I guess with the tube of Traumeel, I thought –

– You thought . . .

- Maybe my brain misfired, okay?
- Sorry. We don't have to bicker like old lovers, now do we?
- Sigh.
- You're acting like one anyway. What went wrong?
- Save it for the next guy, will ya?
- Oh, tough talk now. You used to watch "The Untouchables" when you were a kid, am I right?
- My favorite show was "The Twilight Zone."
- Like every other kid on the block. Anything else? Anything . . . unique?
- I forgot to tell you about my supplements.
- All that food and you need "supplements"?
- Yes, you see, in today's mineral-depleted soils –
- Here we go.
- What?
- Oh nothing. Just tell me, what's in the white box.
- Blue-green algae, sprout tablets, bifidus.
- You forgot the bug screen and bug repellent, citronella.
- No, they're right here.
- I meant, you forgot to declare them.
- I wasn't finished yet.
- Okay. I see one blue-labeled small plastic bottle. More algae?
- Those are electrolyte tablets. And – hey, a mosquito just bit me.

- Be prepared . . . I see one pound heavy plastic. I thought I told you it wasn't going to rain.
- Chalk it up to experience. In any event: one roll birchbark for starting a fire . . .
- Let's come back to that. I don't know about this second pen.
- In case I lost one, or it ran out.
- You've done the weight-benefit-risk analysis.
- In this case, yes.
- Tell me, Mr. Now. Where did you get your unusual name?
- Let's just say it's a shortcut to who I am. In the meantime, I'd like to report a small rubberized flashlight, 2 spare AA batteries, and a plastic disposable lighter.
- Fire again. Tell me about fire – in your opinion.
- It is my power over you.
- Oh, really?
- It gives me an edge.
- I see. Into the comfort zone, eh?
- I'm talking survival, too.
- Though in this case, perhaps a luxury?
- It could be anywhere in there. I'll admit, the definitions are fluid. I haven't really done this before.
- You mean, the analysis, or the experience?
- Well, both. Except . . .
- Except the time you got eaten alive by mosquitoes all night, sleeping in your half-pound of open plastic. 1972, was it?

– I was a raw youth. Then there was the campsite on the ridge by Crater Lake with the wolves howling, and a cougar hissing so close I prepared to fight for my life . . .

– With your two-inch pocket knife.

– It was all I had. And incense to mask my smell.

– So how is it now?

– Similar, in some ways.

– Starting over, are you?

– Just continuing.

– Step by step.

– Yeah. Half done now already.

– What's next for you?

– You mean after the hike?

– Yeah. Between now and, say, the winter.

– I've started to think about that. I mean, to imagine steps along the way.

– Whether to go it alone . . .

– I have other options. I'll see what develops.

– Your passion for inspired "argument" has given way to a certain terseness, I believe. Tell me, are you really planning on wearing those Tevas through the mud on the other side of the pass all afternoon tomorrow?

– It'll depend on the condition of my feet by then, and the trail. We'll see how it goes.

– Tell me about your friend by the bridge.

– You can talk to her yourself.

– I realize that. I'm asking you.

- I plead the fifth.
- You’re sure it’s not the fourth?
- I’ll bet on it.
- How much?
- Loser pays for lunch?
- In the meantime, you were saying . . .
- Watching fire is better than television.
- I’m glad you think so. I agree. Much more primal.
- Yeah, and ever-changing. Ever-fascinating.
- And yet, you only use its light to write by.
- I try to keep a balance.
- And to top it off, you also resort to writing by flashlight, don’t you?
- Just for this last bit, before bed.
- And now, what’s all this poking, prodding . . .
- Just tending to the cinders. I want to be careful not to leave any, any dormant coals.
- You’re afraid of hurting me?
- Well, I’d feel guilty, if I caused a huge forest fire by my negligence.
- But in the realm of relationships, you’re a little more happy-go-lucky?
- Low blow. Can’t we move on from that subject?
- You’d better tend those coals. I’ll go talk to your lady friend.



### Day 3

- Pleasant dreams?
- I hardly slept. It was kind of restful, anyway, just being out under the sky and trees, curled by the fire.
- You relit it?
- Had to. My legs were too cold.
- She said something about that. Tell me, what sort of philosophical poetry do you write, Mr. Now?
- Oh, before I forget again, I forgot to mention: the Silvicool® tree sac, foil-lined and polyurethane coated, with a nice drawstring, 8 bucks from Bushpro. I bought it the first day of that horrendous 1 ½ day misadventure with Suzanna from Germany who went from there to the U.S. Marines. It was the worst paying contract of my treeplanting career. Plus a two-hour drive, a ferry ride each way; and supper at a schwag Nakusp restaurant. They served us pasta with a dollop of tomato sauce, a puny green salad and 2 slices of white bread. The mangy hash-addled highballers ate like wolves and called for more. Now about this rain –
- I only gave you one mosquito. Things could be worse.
- How much snow is going to be in the pass?
- You never know.
- No. I suppose not. There's no arguing with you, really. I can see that now.
- My fault, is it? Do you like the view?
- I do appreciate that pound of plastic coming into play for a while this morning. It wasn't much help for warmth, though.
- You should have brought wool pants.

– I know. By the way, that sharp peak across the valley reminds me of that first camping trip in the west, to Glacier National Park, also in the rain, Wolf Mountain, I made an enlargement 8X10. Black and white – no thanks to you.

– Hey, it's an art form. Just like your little parade in blue ink.

– Pass the chocolate chips.

– Please.

– Thank you.

– Tell me something. Are you going to clean me up before publication?

– Minor housecleaning only. I love you as you are. I accept and support you in your journey.

– My journey. That's rich. Natural fires and all? I am bringing the blue sky back, you'll notice.

– I appreciate that. I feel that editing is like living. We can't really cut the past. We can re-vision it, for therapeutic purposes. But it's better, I feel, to accrete than to delete. Revision moving forward rather than backward, means integrating past mistakes into present learning, always keeping the whole in mind.

– The growing whole.

– Your trick.

– You mention wolves. Were you afraid of bears last night? It's all right – you can tell me.

– Only a few visions in the dark. A grizzly swiping at me with its six-inch long, razor sharp claws. Maybe sitting hard on me, batting me around a bit. Or a black bear, hungry for a few large chunks of thigh meat.

– I wondered if they might react to your flute playing.

– React?

– Mm, the shrill sounds of a small animal in distress?

- That reminds me of another story, my last east-west crossing of these mountains. Jumbo, Dewar, Earl Grey II; it could be a trilogy.
- You say you hear voices in your head, and you write them down.
- I don't recall saying so, but yes, that's true.
- You make your living doing this?
- Actually I'm in the nutrition business, as I may have mentioned.
- I don't recall. Do you think that Pepsi pays Stephen King every time he mentions their brand?
- I'm confident we can work something out. Oh, and, I also partake in the investment sector.
- I see. And after the year 2000 worldwide computer economy collapse –
- I'm going to buy more matches soon.
- Good plan. Time to brush up on all your bushcraft, bush pro. I've been thinking about this concept of excess. I'm glad you brought it up, in fact. It might be time for a few large fires – you know, earthquakes, volcanoes, pole shifts.
- I'm sure you'll find a way.
- Hey, I've enjoyed having you here. You're still comfortable, right?
- On the edge. Keep that blue sky coming.
- You really may be better off in Arizona, come to think of it. Since you seem to like traveling fast and light. A regular moving target, you are.
- "Keep on walkin'. Don't look back." Marley and Jagger can't both be wrong.
- No more searching for "The Lasting Relationship"?
- I'm a wandering monk now.
- Indeed. And what is your practice, noble sage?

– I’m going to begin as soon as I get back home. Four hours a day of writing, Monday through Friday. Morning by default, otherwise squeeze it in. I might like to garden some sunny morning, or play my drum.

– You’re clear on your priorities, are you?

– Absolutely. Music practice an hour a day. The rest free.

– And weekends?

– Saturday off. Sunday, four hours for business and writing, mostly planning.

– That’s enough to sustain your business?

– I’ll throw in four more hours a week, anytime that makes sense. I’ll plan that by the week, according to the needs of the time.

– Good luck. It’s getting into fall, you know. I’ve seen these sorts of good intentions before. You’re sure about the garden, firewood, fall chores, town trips, social events . . . it’s all covered in the time I’ve allowed you before snow?

– Yeah, well, as far as relationship goes . . . I’m gonna have to cut way back there. A monk’s life, you understand.

– As I say, good luck. Someone still loves you, you know.

– She’ll have to love me as I am.

– Do you know that to love is to recognize those qualities that attract you to another, and to nurture them in yourself?

– Is that why when I come to this lovely shaded golden-pebbled brook, having just told myself, “No words, now, no words” – the words came to me, “Drink of this water”?

– We’re having a conversation, right?

– But I wanted to put you on hold.

– You do it to everyone, and everyone does it to me.

– You have my sympathy and affection.

- Nice words. What do they mean?
- I’d rather not talk about it anymore. I want to be alone.
- Go for it. I’m always here. You can report when you get back home. About the purpose of your trip.
- I’m going now. It’s been real.

Later . . .

- I’ve been thinking about that “happy-go-lucky.” I’d like to change it to “devil-may-care.”
- Oh, you’re back, are you? How was the pass?
- A little too much of myself. Nice view, though. The classic towering mountain over its glacier and flanked by two subordinates like breasts with their peaks hard with desire, or the upraised knees of a lover with the river running between her thighs . . .
- And to the left?
- A wondrous broad and verdant valley.
- And you stayed awhile, and then walked on.
- Yes, and I do care. Even though to others, what I do and how I am may seem hurtful, or even evil.
- And like a devil, you may – or may not, as your whim dictates – care.
- I tried to go without words, without you, but the voices, the words wouldn’t stop. They did become the clang of a street car, pounding with my steps and the beat of my heart, offset by chirring squirrels and brush gently rubbing past my leg as I walked – then the chimes of a meditation retreat, calling me to the breath, the breath alone. But I didn’t want to go there.
- Why not?
- Not today.

- What do you want, today?
- A feeling of harmony with you.
- I'm touched.
- Is commitment an issue with you?
- Do you mean my commitment, or yours?
- Mine.
- You're free. Always absolutely free.
- That sounds pretty open-ended.
- Oh, I'm nothing if not that. Certain cosmological finalities notwithstanding.
- The Big Bang, in reverse?
- Let's go beyond time, shall we? Say, can I get you another sandwich? How about a thunderclap or two?
- I see you have your sore points too.
- It's easy to be abused in the area you give the most.
- You're talking to one who understands.
- I feel safe with you.
- I like hangin' out with you too and all, but uh, time to get moving again. There's things I gotta do.
- Like what? Just for discussion's sake. I could care less, personally.
- I have to do some thinking.
- This sounds serious.
- I'm just feeling antsy about entering "society" again. And I can't take you with me.

– Why not?

– They’d run me out of town. Anyhow, that’s one thunderclap too many. I’m outta here. Catch you back at the truck. If you have any last questions, save ‘em.

– Oh I will. But I’m not going anywhere. You know where to find me.

## On the Road Solo

Day 4 – 21 August

I retrieved my truck at the end of the trail, left conveniently there by X\_\_\_\_\_ and Z\_\_\_\_\_. They had driven it around to Invermere and hiked with Nell in the opposite direction. Their party of three passed me briefly and cordially as I hiked down from the pass, saying they heard the sounds of my flute from far down the trail.

Halcyon Hot Springs was closed, so I stayed in Radium with pizza before and ice cream after a soak, and spent an unplanned late night at the Piccadilly Motel watching a spellbinding drama with the young Humphrey Bogart and a sweet young blonde (Hedy Lamar?) stuck in a gas station café in Black Mesa, Arizona with a British-speaking intellectual who says a relationship with a failed novelist gets old fast, and a galoot halfback from Mulvey Tech, two henchmen and two “colored guys,” and a woman who wasted her life on a rich man.

Day 5 - August 22

I’m still on the road – at a crossroads, stopped at the point of a decision.

Do I go on to an imagined Rainbow rendezvous in “Planet Winlaw,” to improvise or discover or abandon all expectations, this almost final Saturday Night in August, without drum sleeping bag or any assurance – or turn rather back west to home, to three predictable days of ball scores, vegetables to pick, a lonely cat?

I can write anywhere. To live is to be on the road.

I did head down Highway 23 a little way, toward the Slocan, then came back to 31, and now am poised in limbo. I’m filled with doubts about the Rainbow option, when not doing it. Always undercutting.

Do I get beneath these conflicting thoughts and hopes by breathing deeply and waiting for vibrations of what is to be, a current pushing me further into flow?

The trouble with Rainbow – and this is why it’s such a powerful teacher – is that you can’t pin it down. Whether an event is “scheduled” or not doesn’t really determine

its chances of happening. To schedule may seem to increase the chances – but you never know what’ll happen along the way. This includes the National Gathering scale, or within it, on the way to the Granola Funk Theatre.

So here I am . . . flowing only in the form of ink. The decision still swirls, waiting more psychic input or an attitude change by revelation.

The linear ink-flow resolves it all, since it’s all just grist for the ink-mill anyway.

In the meantime, what’s present is what counts.

So the next step?

Rainbow country . . .

I keep wondering: is it worth the risk of two and a quarter extra hours’ drive home tomorrow, for the benefit of a possible party tonight?

Am I a Rainbow warrior, a party animal, a would-be novelist, a cat’s companion . . . or what?

The traffic from the ferry swishes past, behind me. My truck faces into the woods, on a gravel road flanked by twisted, rusted scrap metal: corrugated culverts, a broken cat tread.

The sun dips down into the treetops. Evening approaches.

What to do?

It all matters so much – and not at all.

Am I fit to go calling on friends serendipitously?

The Rainbow calls . . .

*Go for it!*

I linger. Tired. Wanting to go home and write, drum alone.

To wait prudently for others to act in concert? Good luck.

This is a propitious time to learn a lesson of openness, trust, intention.

*Timing is everything.* Beware of the result, “I was in the right place, but it must have been the wrong time.” Because truly, everywhere is the right place. And *everything happens in perfect time.*

This delay of mine has happened for a reason. I’m still meant to go there – but now, without expectation.

That’s a contradiction; but it’s resolved by trust – that “being called” to others is significant and deserves present action. To honor the call of the self is also valid. But for now, I feel to grow a bit more.

A final Rainbow twist before turning novelist?

Like a last fling before L\_\_\_\_\_?

My calling for O\_\_\_\_\_ was clearer.

At this moment, I still don’t know.

*Head for home.*



Last night the ferry was open till midnight; I could have come all the way home and been home by ten. Instead I had a hot soak, a late movie, a shopping stop for Nell's birthday presents in Golden, and a new-old choice, still alive . . .

For what?

I was tired, now recovered: a second wind.

The plan . . .

Go for it.

No, too tired. Rest, my son.

Burn out, recover.

Who am I?

Who else is important in my life?

What is important to me right now?

*Sleep. Reading. Solitude. Rest.*

Post-game recap:

– In going I would have been too attached to expectation, too disappointed if nothing connected well – trying to force the flow, to mesh my timing with that of the cosmos. This one was marginal. Why go with the marginal flows instead of using the greater energy of full flow? It's always available when doubts are finally laid aside.

– In coming home I reaffirm the solo path, the path of the writer. My writing, furthermore, is more akin to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* than to *On the Road*. This impulse, even as I now engage in it (4:55 P.M., 6 km south on Highway 31) is the natural closure to my journey.

– I choose this time not to enact the “one last fling” scenario. This way is, again, the exploration of the solo path. It parallels my choice to stick with L\_\_\_\_ and call an end to sexual intimacy with O\_\_\_\_. It has also a retrospective effect; where I choose to live as if our mutual seduction – which felt so clearly destined and necessary for our respective and joint growth – had not occurred and instead I had stuck with the solitude appropriate for my longer-term interest in L\_\_\_\_.

Thus far down the highway I have no more doubts, no regrets about either minor or major decision.

Another crossroads passed forever.

This is good. I can create, or life can present me with, an infinite number of others.

Some are special, unique opportunities. Some call out with perfect timing. Where conflicts exist, the crossroads are true 4-way stops or roundabouts. So . . . following the clearest calling, imagining the best and least painful method by any route, choosing survival and comfort without excess, wherever possible, plus adventure and openness, true openness, not just practice: this takes discrimination, and focus. And commitment to one thing – truth as the deepest clearest portrait of the soul, universal and also uniquely colored, in rainbow hue . . .

Do I still hesitate?

No, I've found my party. The rest is just decoration, favors, guests who decide to drop in, those I choose to dance with. For now, I watch from the shadows. For now, I dance alone. Becoming more familiar with all the voices within me.

## Going Deeper

24 August

*Writing: my prison or my liberation?*

I begin the day, Monday, after a day in which I devoted seven hours to O\_\_\_\_, ironing out a new way to be in relationship without sex; sharing stories and journal entries from the “archives” (she pointed out that this term belongs with my reference to a honeymoon as a “sabbatical”), coloring together and using crayons in a dance on paper, sharing a ritual meal of olives and pecans in the playhouse in the woods, by candlelight in the rain . . . after a spell on the lookout in the gathering storm, with O\_\_\_\_ plunging a knife into the earth and digging so deep it hurt; then spreading out the animal totem cards, wolf for anger, bear for what is, ant for working hard, weasel for clarity, frog for life, sprinkled with water.

Today I awake fully aware of the multitude of tasks I could set for myself to do. Including beginning with a return to a writing schedule, 2-4 hours to begin each weekday. Am I committed enough to this path to remain constant in my practice? To remain happy that this is more important to me than everything else? Against it I weigh: clipping the grass, freezing corn, cutting firewood, talking to a neighbor, planning another trip to the Slocan for fishing or visiting friends, computer and business work, drum rhythms . . . all of these things will be done, of course, anyway, and the real question is the greater urgency of my life, the real work, what I am most called to do and most fulfilled in doing and having done.

Cleanout, backlog, piles of files . . . rows of books to get rid of and to read, drugs to smoke, a jungle in the greenhouse to wade through and rip out . . . where is the real reality for me? In the wilderness (if a hiking trail can be said to be part of wilderness) I

could only follow dialogue in my head and on the page. Words, thoughts, my own stuff, the stuff of universal mind . . . channeling through. In the house now, am I removed so far from that purity of environment, that it all becomes artificial, contrived, filtered through the illusions of human works? Or is my hesitation from the press of the welter of human activities that are set up here to distract into more complete states of comfort and excess?

Sitting comfortable indoors on a cool and rainy morning, at a computer to register every pixel of thought, my world has prepared itself for this act of creation. But is the purity of inspiration lost in the preparation? When it becomes so easy to say, is there nothing left to say?

Out there, I had only my own stuff to work out. Here, really, it is the same. I have many lifetimes set before me to weed and recapitulate, needing discrimination at every moment to continue the discipline, to intuit what is most needed or most satisfying. At every sentence I pause to consider the next step, among the sheer avalanche of choices I can make: and these already are selected from among the more infinite number of possibilities open to me as a human. I have already determined the limits, the boundaries of my interests. Music, literature, homesteading, computing, baseball . . . there are really only a dozen or less, among the thousands or billions of possibilities or categories to choose from. Internet access provides the overview to what's possible. Every thread goes out infinitely to a web of links. Here offline, I limit myself to the chosen few: with these already far too much. I am in the position of the beginning of the trail, knowing I carry too much on my back.

This morning I am lighter by virtue of dealing with the O\_\_\_\_ question, by limiting the relationship to its non-sexual aspects. I am light still in relation to L\_\_\_\_ by virtue of not having heard from her in months, with the tentative plan to visit still in abeyance.

I have kicked my bad habits, for now, that might distract me from the work I most am drawn to accomplish: success in writing, business, music.

Somehow I need to continue paring the world of possibilities down further, so that I can better focus, travel light, be freely myself with what I most enjoy doing. Walking on a trail is easy, with a minimum load. Somehow I must accomplish the same in my life as a whole.

In terms of writing, maybe this too is the key principle: As well as accreting more (analogous to walking more miles) I need to cut much of what I think is necessary as part of my portfolio. Or, I need to figure out the streamlined way to access it (the hyperlink method). This approach appeals to me, and perhaps the thing to do to allow this to work is to pare all the other areas of my life. To return to the analogy, I need to look at the possible needs I bring to the trip, and to rank them. There are all the items of safety and comfort and contingency to consider: and that includes the comfort of walking as well as

the comfort of camping. In the overall picture I saw walking for fifteen hours, camping (sleeping) for half that. I had to weigh the gain in comfort by travelling light for fifteen hours, against the loss in comfort by sleeping in the open for eight. It was a clear tradeoff: I hardly slept at all. But I still rested enough to thoroughly enjoy the lightness I carried on the trail. I made the right decision.

In my life, I have the balance of comfort and details and income and socialization to consider . . . against the satisfaction of focus and accomplishment in the writing sphere. Still I hesitate: because over the last decade I have already put much dedication and effort and discipline into the goals of publishing and achieved very little for it.

What matters more; which is the more substantial progress? To freeze more vegetables, cut more grass and wood, play more music and visit with more friends, hike more trails and catch more fish, entertain more lovers . . . or write and publish more stories, poems, dialogues, essays, novels, plays, webpages . . . or to make more money by making more people healthy and wealthy? The truth is, my heart sings from all of these things, and so I need to honor the balance. Certainly I honor the value of this morning's exercise, the discipline of these pages at least, maybe also the 2-3 hour commitment, the missing chunk of time I call my craft, my vocation. This could also be time devoted to business, but that too has failed to grow as I anticipated.

How do I anticipate the quality of my life when trimmed to writing and relationship and perhaps a little drumming, in Arizona? It will be a good experiment. Will it cause the loss of my friendship with O\_\_\_\_, or the loss of my fantasy that a life with her can be the answer to my loneliness? Likely so. In trade for another fantasy, of kayaking with L\_\_\_\_, of entering that world of publishing, of words and ideas, of arts and culture and nature. Or maybe she'll end up coming here?

Who knows . . .

There's more to write here: what attracts me in O\_\_\_\_:

- her creativity with words, weaving, ritual, magic
- her devotion to me as a person, a lover, a companion
- her connection with earth, flowers, vegetables
- her strength of positive life-affirming spirit
- her communication skill and dedication to depth, honesty, truth, good process

Bringing: gold plums, cedar flute and fingering chart, large and small notebooks, *The Power of Flow*.

Knowing: what I want most is to know and do most what I most feel.

On deer trails: less restricted flow. More options, departures from the path. Freedom. "Being on the path" is not necessarily "being here." I am on an inner path: and it too has departures, diversions, dead ends. It continues, weblike, through all creation.

What does it matter whether I sit at a desk for four hours every weekday morning and maybe a weekend too? I can write on the deep path as well, or on my path perched on the shale overlooking the broad and verdant valley.

What is important, with this overview? River, highway, slough and lake, cloud-rich sky and wilderness of trees? The pathways of the air. Ground, sky, no boundary fixed, but life inreaching.

It's not the amount or location of time, but its quality, depth, how full it is of the present.

Fiction: That too is a descent, into a present well.

The straw of grass that points my way spins back and forth until I take it upright rotating as a spindle in the now, the always centered. The compass too can work this way if it spins fast enough to loosen the expectation that it might stop somewhere, pointing to one direction only.

Relationship? It has to begin here, with the twirling self, content and whole, grounded and inspired, in its dance of light. Like the Merkaba – but that's another story.

Overwhelmed by choice, my compass spins madly, stuck on its axis, achieving nothing – except practicing insight . . . and now writing about it. This is win-win, when even inaction, “contemplating one's navel,” can become an item on an action list, a kind of accomplishment. “It's all good.” “Believe in yourself.” “Trust thyself.” Flow.

Vertical flow: light energy from above and below, meeting in center space. Again the Merkaba meditation provides the focal image. The crayon, last night, pausing in its work of making tracks, to stand upright on the page: a flagpole, a human, a vertical compass to fall then to its task again and dance.

I rise and return to my field of action. What to choose? Working through the day's most pressing needs from the array of seven categories, arranged by chakra . . .

1. cleaning up, chores, firewood
2. sexual education, workshops, business
3. baseball, hiking, social
4. website, relationships, personal development
5. drum practice, files, other instrument practice
6. literary agents, novel, Current Wisdom
7. breath, flow, disciplined intention

25 August

*What do I want in relationship?*

(The new business model merges with the personal growth model in suggesting affirmations, worded in present tense, implying that given desires are already fulfilled. Thus . . . )

I have the freedom to be who I am, to live in my independent space and time, to come and go as I want, to be a whole and single being.

I have also the harmonious companionship of one who loves me for all that I am.

I have a sexual desire and delight for the person I am with: not necessarily exclusive, though I can live with that if it is important to both of us. Sexual fidelity has some practical value (disease, contraception, jealousy and confusion) but also some pitfalls (complacency, routine, limitation, overattachment). None of these are absolutes, but to be avoided in either case.

I have a rich relationship that is comprised of many elements of common understanding and joy: common interests (arts, philosophy, spirituality and mysticism, nature, music and literature, language), common and complementary skills (communication, sexuality, cooking, bushcraft and travel, publishing and networking, homesteading).

I share a joy in living, a positive spirit, a forgiving nature, a gentle ease with my partner.

I have a partner who appreciates commitment as a natural fact of our closeness; a friend who can be counted on for support and love always. Commitment is not a blank promise or a fixed expectation of the future, rather the reality of a strong bond of affinity. At this point in my life I am unprepared to enter into a full-scale domestic living arrangement with someone; though I could begin such a venture one step at a time as it felt good between us. I would be wary of creating strong expectations and dependencies, routines and decisions of long-lasting implication at this point.

I have a good friend who I am also attracted to as a lover: which doesn't necessarily mean every night having sex, or having sex on demand; we are easy, casual, occasional with sex more than regular, routine. Our physical intimacy is more holistic, more broad in its expression than intercourse and foreplay.

We enjoy free association together. We are creative and fresh in our expressions of love and affection for each other.

*What do I want from relationship with L\_\_\_\_\_?*

With L\_\_\_\_\_ I have all of the above attributes. I see us happily engaging in outdoor play and journey in the form of a kayak trip. In Arizona there is an important step to cover in seeing how we relate with our more domestic, working side, our writing side. "Writing, eating, and sleeping together," she said. That sounds good to me: sharing in many ways.

Being supportive of each other in our respective career paths. Finding out more about each other, who we really are, by living in contact with that part of our lives which is important to each of us.

Letting the daily details of how we eat, sleep, live in a household, and relate to the world come to the fore and be the stuff of our interaction. Also to let our deeper nature show through that simplicity; sharing feelings, hopes and dreams and failings, freely and fully. Giving each other the love and support to be who we are without undue attachment and expectation; yet being open to further growth together if that seems natural and positive.

Getting to know each other, at first, as if for the first time. That will be an adventure in itself, an exploration. Seeing each other in the changing light of every day and night. Appreciating each other's beauty and blemishes, accepting each other for who and what we are. If during or after this time we know that there are limits and obstacles to our close sharing, we can accept that too and move apart gracefully. Or we can be so inspired by the positive love and closeness we feel for each other, that obstacles fade away, or become challenges to overcome toward greater love and intimacy. It is always our choice.

In L\_\_\_\_ I see someone who touched me once with a feeling so strong I cannot easily put it away. Do I idealize her unfairly now? I want a strong dose of reality to replace the fleeting vision I have in my memory. I want this person I have imagined to become real, the person she really is . . . enabling me to grow into the person I really am, the person I may become.

*What do I want from relationship with O\_\_\_\_?*

With O\_\_\_\_ I have a friend, a "special friend," an occasional lover. I enjoy our intimacy, our physical love, which has grown naturally out of our attraction and interaction with each other, and which begins not as an idea or a habit, but as a spontaneous impulse that is real and undeniable each time.

I enjoy the forgiveness and acceptance she brings to me, and the creativity of expression which gives me a taste of the delight for life that she feels. I enjoy the strength she brings to hardship, the indomitable spirit of positive life force, joy, innocence, worthy struggle.

I like her eagerness to learn what I have to offer; her loyalty to me through my own weaknesses and indecision; her readiness to give all of herself at every moment.

I enjoy her eyes, the way she holds her head, the strong way in which she strides forward, her sure and clever hands, the firm set of her full lips.

I like the mole on her cheek, the fullness of her breasts, the power of her thighs. I enjoy her laughter and the readiness of her tears.

I like the full calmness of her eyes, deep and open to share everything.

I enjoy the creative expression she brings to many media: color, words, cloth, growing things, food, ritual objects, music.

I see us hand in hand, playing house with the delight of children.

I see us encountering the world fresh; travelling the world with delight in all the various forms of expression that the world's people use to enjoy life in simple glory. I see us encountering and savoring the beauty of the natural world on every scale, from the tiny to the immense.

I see us nurturing our respective children together, giving them full care and attention and love, engaging with them in their own joyful exploration of the joys that life has to offer in infinite abundance.

Together we are adults, children, teenagers.

We are perfectly at home in Argenta, with its gardens and orchards, its congenial community and family life, its seasons of sunshine and cloud and work and play, its ongoing celebration of life.

We have found each other as harmonious companions, intimate partners, free spirits who nurture each other through our love and loyalty to each other. That loyalty includes respect for the separate elements of our journeys, for our needs for space and other friends. We give each other both.

26 August

I am most inspired by last night's reading of Sondra Ray and Leonard Orr, on rebirthing, immortality, the power of creative thought. English (or anyone's language) can be a programming language: with the power to create reality. Happiness is the goal, I believe. Why not, and what else is there to live for? Of course happiness takes many forms, to suit individual tastes.

For me, happiness takes the form of . . .

being content in the present moment

being content with the contents of my life at this point

being confident that I can continue to create what I desire.

Yesterday talking with O\_\_\_\_\_ I realized that in terms of relationship, I already have everything I desire. Expressing my wants in terms of affirmation, as if those qualities were present, I realized later that they are present already. I was describing, manifesting as I brought the words into being, what I already had but didn't fully realize.

And now?

It is all a matter of thought, belief, attitude. Are my thoughts, beliefs and attitudes positive, or negative? Do they give me happiness or unhappiness?

Sondra Ray says of Elana, "she feels the highest service is to be totally free, happy, and master of the universe because then you can be totally giving."



We can all be our own gurus: descending past birth trauma, parental disapproval, specific negatives, unconscious death urge (belief in its inevitability), and past lifetimes.

The death urge/belief basically boils down to the point that spiritual truth means holding to the positive attitude in face of all the negatives. Life, death. Which do we use to guide our thoughts, beliefs, actions, attitudes? It is a choice. Therefore choose life.

For my own path, I have not experienced the bells and whistles of rebirthing or any other single kind of experience leading me to say, this is the way, the path, the vehicle to enlightenment. My approach is eclectic. Yes, I do use writing. Yes, freewriting, channeling, improvising. This is true, though I do not have the official accreditation or experience or group work as a teacher, to allow me to charge money for this skill; or do I? Actually I could just as well say that I am qualified. Why not use the freewriting technique, for instance, which Sondra quoting Leonard says is the “most powerful because it involves all the senses”?

What is my own purpose in writing?

*To educate and entertain.*

To educate about how to live, what’s important. The issues get structured as themes, or they flow naturally, as I trust the unconscious.

What is important to share with the world at this point in time?

It is important to have a sense of world drift, of “overview.” Where it’s all going, how it feels. So, I point to: being efficient. Letting lots of old, useless stuff go. Flowing with the present, and emptying, so that future presents can flow more clearly and cleanly.

What about my habit of culling sentences from the compost heap, to appear in the museum of my past thoughts? From hard drive, file box or unconscious brain link, doesn’t really matter. What matters is what’s relevant now, what fits in an entertaining and pleasing aesthetic form. Positive creative thought isn’t necessarily just affirmation, self-help. It can also be playful fiction, poetry or music, all mirrors of our past-present selves.

On to the next moment: what do I have to give to this moment? Can I see before me a pathway to my own happiness . . . and so inspire you to find yours? How to describe it without my whole life history? It is my job to build a container, an order, a structure, a pleasing whole: a narrative, a poem, an essay around a central idea, a chain of association: but really, it always for me comes back to this: a surrender to present flow.

My whole history is contained in this now, this moment, this flow. Why bother to give the whole story? Holographically, the whole story is embodied, symbolized, accessed through every, especially the most present, moment. So this is good enough to stand for it all. If there is a history irrelevant to this present moment, why bother with it

except out of archival interest? If the present moment is irrelevant to a whole history . . . but that is impossible. The present moment must only flow out of the conditions that created it. This brings up the old free-will debate, that I remember chewing over with Richard Gross, at Howard's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday bash: Can we really have true freedom of choice if the moment grows only out of past causation?

These speculations are interesting but . . . why do I presently flee from them to a new paragraph?

Because I need to demonstrate that, choice or no choice, there is always newness possible. Is this departure true newness, or in the judgment of retrospect, will this too blend imperceptibly into the weight of past sameness, of conditional unity?

*So I continue . . .*

My left brain wants so much to achieve closure. My right brain will not allow it: like Penelope or Sheherezade, it will keep the string from being tied up forever under the stitched horsehide. In this way the game must go on. In this set of rules, the ball may not be manufactured complete, ever, because the strand that must be wrapped never comes to an end. It is my delight not to wrap it cut it and send it to a conventional game field, but to follow its true nature onward into the present-future forever. Baseball history, for that matter, also is ongoing, even in its off-season moves and ruminations. So, the well-stitched ball itself is only a pawn in the larger skein of events that goes on without stop: even through player strikes, umpire strikes, world wars.

What events are salient in your life? Are you a prisoner of this or that oppression which keeps you from believing you have free choice at any moment?

You may be a child of an ancient country, bound by tradition; or of a modern one, by governmental decree. Slave, sharecropper, soldier. The plight of the nigger of any color, through history: and yet, there is freedom – at least in one's inner response. Can I believe in such luxuries as free choice, free action, free thought, free of my own privilege, my given inheritance whether monetary or intangible?

Granted, no; yet we all have some inheritance which can bind or free us, depending on our choice. The slave has a choice to wait, to look for a chance to escape, to live or die; and what attitude to take while doing either one. The Christian message was perhaps perverted to make slaves willing in their servitude, seeking the freedom of heaven after this life. I say the freedom comes in this life, in attitude. And the attitude may or may not coincide with external reality conforming to greater freedom. The main point, though, is the inner freedom. And there is a correspondence, if the belief is true and strong. The will is strengthened by belief to the point that action will follow: either self-initiated action, or action by the universe (or a combination of both), to achieve in outward terms what the inner attitude has created first by its vision.

27 August

I caught two fish yesterday on the first try, first pass up the river: a Kokanee and a small Dolly. Peter said the fishing this summer has been terrible. There is a week of good sunny weather coming up. What do I want to do with it?

In the distant haze I see Mt. Cooper looming up. No restrictions: I can go hiking if I like. I can go to the coast if I like. I can . . . dream about anything I like, make any money I like, write any novels I like . . .

Is it only the birth trauma I need to get past? And the rest: parental disapproval syndromes, negative beliefs, belief in death, past life limitations? Is rebirthing the one answer, beyond religion, dope, caffeine, money, sex?

*Under cloudy skies, I really just want to write.*

Which means . . . more of this, all day long, sent out across the planet?

What does the planet want, need to hear?

Its people will be guided by their own agendas, their own past traumas and hangups. I can only hope to help bring us or sing us further along: along my neural pathways, out of my traumas, to the light of present perfection. Vajrayana: the jewel in the lotus of life.

There is much to be done, in terms of cleanup. My life feels cleaner, fresher, when I sweep the decks of detritus, obligations, errands, backlogged desires. There could be a day or month spent just cleaning up in the material realm, months or years cleaning up files, writing projects.

There is only one reason to do it all, really, and that is to be of service. As the sales gurus preach: Benefits, solving problems.

Do people know they have problems? Many do. But it's so easy to mask, distract, not face the pain.

*Come on, let's have a closer look at that nasty wound. Yes, it might hurt a bit, but . . .*

Like the lion whose thorn is removed from the throbbing paw, some know it's going to be good to go through with it: that it must be done.

In my case, what must be done?

Look deeply:

The desire for womb, breast, breath: true enough. But there is more to see than the sexual representation of the primal mother, isn't there?

*By breathing deeply enough . . . there is always the answer.*

All the yogas teach this, by whatever new age rebirthing technique or ancient yoga: to deepen the breath, to bring attention to present joy in life outside the womb, through the breath. This world is another womb: safe and warm as we can make it, yet also with the vast freedom to move, to play, to breathe freely, to interact with others, to participate in the rhythm . . .

I feel this now simply by letting my breath move deeply and freely within my lungs. Caffeine, dope, sex, money, all have peripheral effects: as does sleep, work, exercise, absence of fear. Of all these things then there is just letting go, until there is only the breath. As one breath leads to the next, there is only the remaining discipline of tracking the breath, and letting it come and go; of tracking the thoughts along with it, and letting them go; and finally, since I so choose, of recording the words that come: in this case, a description of the practice itself.

At this depth the familiar question,

*What do I want to have, do, be?*

partners with a simple answer:

*To breathe deeply and fully.*

As that is enough, the rest falls into place, or not, as the universe and I will. When that is enough, the boundary between *universe* and *I* is immaterial.

The breatharians have it: there is nothing more precious than that primal need: even more, even before, the desire for milk, or breast. The urge to breathe is really our last stop on the journey back to the vagina, the womb. There is no going back that far, except as the peace of breath or death takes us there. So we must be content with the breath itself as our resting place on earth. This most basic impulse comes before and beyond all other distractions. To live in essence is simply to breathe, to breathe deeply, to reenact that first necessity of life. The cord will stop pulsing. The mouth will need to take in milk. But for now, the main step is this: to clear the lungs, to get in that first delicious lungful of clear, pure, fresh and freeing air. Then the cord can be cut, milk can come or go, love can flow.

I continue in this vein, knowing that all needs to “do, be and have” are satisfied.

What do I want to do? Breathe deeply. The rest will follow, or not, and it doesn't really matter.

What do I want to be like? Someone who is content, joyful, happy, satisfied, in touch with feelings and thoughts and sensations within me and around me and in others . . . someone, in other words, who breathes deeply, fully, naturally . . . all the time.

What do I want to have? Nothing and everything, because everything is secondary to this life impulse, this expression of godhood or spirit, this gift of the universe, this life force which is activated only by breath. That is why fire, smoke, is sacred. Somewhat polluting and environmentally degrading, true: yet also cleansing, purifying, rendering all else as mere fuel in the service of flame.

What is this state of lucid awareness which I wish to achieve, and which I have at this moment to describe?

*Being absolutely comfortable and confident of my place, the integrity of my being, my openness to whatever experience brings.*

Or is it also the wishing for “the next level”: beyond contentment, beyond absolute wholeness! There is always something more to reach for: a whole which increases, through time, effort, exploration, risk, creation.

I see the luminous green-yellow lichens standing out in the sunlight from the craggy gray bark of the fir beside me – hear the chattering squirrels in the forest, a raven, traffic, and the river. A bird chirp, the wind in the treetops. The haze of the hills on the other side of the valley; the placid blue lake. Branches before me to shade the sun – a last burst of summer before September.

Some know this as the vision of the mushroom god, the absolute fullness of what is, with empty laughter as part of the natural scene . . . or is that human fear? – not if it feels good, part of the whole without self-consciousness. This state is both altered and ultimately straight, comprising thought, feeling, contentment, and bliss – not the shallow bliss of secondary activity, but the primary bliss of breathing deeply, fully.

Now. Nothing more to say of perfection, at this level, so I go to the next . . . content in the measure of discontent that motivates me to present what I have found to someone else, saying, “Here, a little piece of me.”

What if it’s the heart?

Without that, nothing. Deadwood limbs, refuse piles. The squirrels scurry into their burrows, calling down winter.

This heart is not about radiating sunshine: the sun is perfect for that job already. Glee is covered by children . . . sadness by monks and widows. That leaves, for me, a

heartsong of all of that is. The radiance and glee, the sadness and hurt, subsumed in a greater range. Heart becomes a definition of reality, of perfection beyond single purpose, of wholeness completing itself, a never-ending love affair with life, a breath that includes all creation.

This heart holds magic, intuition, self-help, random flavors, choice, freedom, sex, nature, ceremony, heritage, karma, the present, truth, addiction, food, money, democracy, personal wisdom and endless knowledge . . .

*So I continue . . .* giving the rest up to a busy day: stringing the drum (and having it fail a third and final time with the copper ring, but learning finally how to do the stringing), addressing mail, digging out waterbars, doing laundry and dishes and making supper (garbanzos, popcorn, millet, salad of tomato, onion and cucumber). Watching a video at O\_\_\_\_'s: *My Best Friend's Wedding* with its bittersweet ending. Walking home under a brilliant starry sky to lie alone on clean cyan sheets, puff on a fresh large roach, and read a chapter in *The Power of Flow* on intuition, after a page of the novel *On Love*.

28 August

A cloudless blue sky graces this last Friday in August. Where do I want to go to take advantage of this unmatched weather? A four or five day window opens . . . but do I want to pack my shelter and food somewhere again, or freeze in the cold? Canoe down the lake? It's all a wordless void out there in the wilderness, and now that I've taken this morning's straight plunge into the sea of my own words, my own thoughts and feelings, I am comfortable here. I am secure in the knowledge that words are my friends. Here I can create my own reality. I can imagine the wilderness outing of my choice, and imagining is enough: like my grandfather who told me he always dreamed of, but never actually needed to go to BC. I did, instead . . . so maybe the end result of his imagining was my life-journey.

The comfort with one's chosen surroundings could be considered as a common form of addiction. Within every addiction, whether substance or behavior, the line is the same about everything *else*: "So what, who needs it, what's the point? I've still got my . . ." (fill in the blank) . . . guitar, fix, children, fridge full of food, money in the bank. My God. My understanding of the world that makes it all make sense. My video rental card. My greenhouse. My cat. My degree, or my sense of humor. My my.

The leaves turn yellow. All with unfold in its proper time. Whether I go away or stay home, I still have: nature, wilderness, beauty, the world I live in.

Is it all about attitude?

What attitude can I adopt for myself that is emblematic of my survival, my joy, my success? Persistence, stoicism, innocence, pluck, wry humor, irony, dogged

determination? Whatever occurs in the moment. I don't need to label what I am, what I feel. Being analytical about it is okay up to a point; then I just have to let it rip. Most successful pro baseball players agree: Just relax and have fun. Of course, this is after staying up half the night studying video. Do the homework, then perform freely and in confidence. Get in shape, then do what comes natural. Stick to the routine and discipline, then let it fly.

My problem is, I tend to get stalled after half of the required task. To want to quit already. To get lazy and lose heart. Instead of pushing through to the greater sense of accomplishment.

I dream of a sweet snack now; of a caffeine hit, of a smoking herb, of a hike up a lost valley into a high pass . . . but I've already done these things . . . and so I want more to put my energy into something I haven't done yet.

Aren't I content, perfectly content with everything as it is? Yes, and as I continue breathing, I do not simply remain in the static present, waiting for newness to arrive in the turning of the seasons; I also feel the present impulse to go out into the world and make my mark, engaging in new experiences that attract me. To try a new relationship; to take the spiritual understanding I have and apply it in different circumstances in the world.

Whatever the circumstances, it is necessary to breathe. Therefore breathe fully. After that, everything is choice.

Even food, water, death, taxes? Taxes, certainly are optional: though a hard path through the maze to avoid. Death? Optional according to Orr; dependent on one's state of mind. Water and food: there are also reports on certain yogis who have freed themselves from these necessities. This brings us to absolute freedom, where everything but breath is choice. It also raises the question: if the yogi has attained absolute freedom of choice, will he have any desires left to actually exercise such choices? Paradoxically, no. Is it important to not choose water, food, death and taxes? Of these, I'd definitely say avoiding death is worth exploring. Water, food, taxes can then take their place as elements of a long and freely chosen life. I like water and food. I don't like taxes but I also don't like the insecurity of dwelling and procuring that comes with living totally off the taxable grid. I suppose death too is desirable in the context of a limited earth carrying capacity; doing my part.

Meanwhile, back on my ranch, I await the next inspiration. My day is outlined forward: writing, editing, revising, marketing. But the blue sky, sunshine calls. How am I best to use this time? Camping with Nellie? Going alone again? Fishing? Visiting K\_\_\_\_? Another Friday night unpredictable jam? In that regard, what is my expectation, my state of health? And what will I do to improve the situation?

The situation is already perfect. I don't have to do anything more, but to be comfortable in this flow. I have chosen; I still believe in a present array of life choices: nature, literature, music, networking, business, homesteading, family . . . however they may be ranked in the scheme of chakras. And, there is light to channel yet.

*Later . . .*

The worm turns. The positive thoughts and energy, confidence and contentment of this week is gone. I'm left with a depression, a discontent, an inability to sustain work on any focussed project. Ironically my anxiety increases with the sunshiney perfection of the outside world. When it was cloudy, mixed cloud and sun, wind and thunderstorm, I could retreat to the womb of words in good conscience. Now it's a battle: my self-directed will against the call of the uniqueness of the weather, which demands to "be taken advantage of."

The breath always brings me back home. These other thoughts, survival against hunger or death, how to make a killing on this or that market, pleasing Mother: these are secondary, incendiary material. The primary job is already done. I compete, in complete harmony, against all that. I only breathe here, and record the madness that surrounds and then dissipates. Thunderstorms gone, I can relax into the clarity, the openness, the radiance. I don't have to do anything with it, be in it, or even record it as I am now doing. But I choose to do at least this, paying my homage to the one who knows and accepts me irregardless – nor do I care if that's a "proper" word, because the writing's not for them, it's for you.

Who's *you* but my own, your own ego? That's fine too.

Here we are again, jamming. If there is no second voice you can plug in over there.

The point is, to enjoy. After breathing . . . whatever.

For example, as current options:

- Breathe only
  - Lie in bed recreating womb
  - Get out the to-do list and begin
  - Read Nietzsche
  - Practice keyboard
  - Go for a walk in the trees
- etc.

For now, what is new and therefore necessary is simply this: to be at the screen and the capturing keys and to appreciate the absolute value of choosing this most minor of motions: breathing plus typing, eyes moving gently, computer fan humming . . . There is a simplicity in it all that allows my plans to hike or publish be secondary. Because I've done all that.



I've done this kind of writing, too, but each time it is new. *This* I have never quite done before. The same is true of teethbrushing, or hiking a familiar trail: each time new. Not much to report from the former; but the latter is a full live occasion in the same way as the present moment. Writing is like life, only simpler: one line, one word at a time. Not the stormy chaos of thought, or events intertangled and webbed: but the fine squeezed icing through a tube that can decorate the cake.

Breathing, writing. It's so simple. Walking is good too, but really it's only breathing in motion. Writing is breathing in motion that accesses the parallel universe of thought, and feeling, and spirit, and by putting these aspects of our humanity into order, shape and pleasing form, can transfer their energy to another living being, in time.

I surrender to the writing as I surrender to the breath. The publishing and marketing is beside the point . . . that's just business. My niche is my place in the moment. It is not an abstraction of marketing logic or database configuration. It is where I am, what I am doing, feeling, thinking, writing, at this exact moment. What more nichier than that?

*So I continue* . . . in full gratification for the positive, now, and not the negative value of this recurrent phrase. "So I continue": this is life-affirming, ultimately, though not of the bell-and-whistle camp.

*So I continue* . . . placid in the blue of August day, sundry as the leaves yellowing on the maple. There is rust on one branch of fir, a patch of snow on Cooper.

Yet still discontent, by my own insistence on self-reflection, stasis?

Thoughts jar; energy jams shut; my breathing has become shallow.

I lift it up again. The eyes are heavier now; the smoke in lungs reaping its negative side-effect. I can minimize it. I can use this as a lesson. I can learn how to notice, and to go further deep into the nature of it. When the secondary stuff is already banned from importance, the focus can quickly and easily turn back to the breath. For me such lessons are priceless – while someone is yelling on the stock exchange floor as the confetti of millions made and lost drifts through the smoky air.

As I continue, there will be rough patches in the road; dangers from within and without. The turning of the blood; a stray thought.

Back to breathing, this life becomes a meditation. All else fades, the stray thoughts pass. Whatever the circumstances, secondary. Even love: though it can be marvelously seductive. Love is consonant with breath. Everything is consonant with it. Not in conflict, at least from the breath's point of view. If we can only remember, we can be content as servants of the breath: our actions, our food, our desires, our pleasures. The fearful and negative elements conflict: but these are not ours, not necessary. These are taken on and harbored like parasites and can be released, by the breath.

So, a Buddha or an Orr, someone only has to say these things. Friendly neighbor guru. Friend to friend, self to self. The words as they come, with the breath.

Is a focus needed? What better place to start and end, but the breath.

*So I continue.* Enlightenment – meaning deep and lasting happiness, contentment – comes by working through pain, fear, doubt, back to the breath. On the motion of the breath we rise again, our energy released to joy and confidence in being the only necessary way to be: alive and breathing.

I’m biased, of course: I’m alive. My philosophy is nothing but a philosophy of living. It is not a philosophy of dying. Anyone can do that topic if they like: can sign up for funerals, chant the names of the dead. Not me. I live for me and for life, the living. If this is short-sighted I’ll take it. [I’ve come close enough to death on a number of occasions](#) and prefer to stay where I am. There will be time enough to explore the other side if I let down my guard. In the meantime I can only imagine it, and quite easily might say that death is only an attitude, or the absence of an attitude. An absence of breath.

Daylog:

7	breakfast, chores
8	journal
9	sports news, email, marketing
10	journal
11	drum practice, composition
12	mail
1	garden, lunch, carrot juice
2	sunbathing
3	pack for fishing-hike
4	supper: corn, rice, venison

## The Simple Life (Walking Light: Reprise)

29 August

I awake at dawn in the field by the Johnson’s Landing Hall, having slept under stars and a beam of light like a new galaxy in the sky, after a hot jam – “California Drumming” – with Richard, Jonathan, Fred and Mark (from Quebec and Ontario) and Chris on electric guitar; Susan on flute and Cheryl vocals, and later Rowin and Sabina dancing a storm . . .

Items to do:

- put sleeping bag and thermarest away

- soak meusli while doing yoga (5 Tibetans) and meditation (Merkaba, Flower of Life)
- finish a fat roach
- make coffee and add soymilk
- brush teeth

Hey this is really interesting . . .

Beware cynicism, sarcasm, and the finer left-brain arts.

Bewared the excesses of ego establishment during guided musical ecstasy.

The point is, that's all there is . . . so far. For the day, a plan to hike up Fry Canyon, fishing. In the glorious blue of a perfect August day, a crown to a golden summer.

The living is easy – fish are jumpin into my boat, and the cotton pickers are high . . .

The point is: breathing. The science of mind, heart and breath, the art of heart opening, these are contained and achieved in the simplest of momentary acts – in full consciousness – as any act would be but most of all, because most necessary and fundamental and also strangely subject to both unconscious and conscious control . . . breathing.

If dolphin breathing is even more conscious, imagine what their state of fundamental awareness is.

This is a system of no system: a path to enlightenment which follows no path and uses all. Its focus – on the flow of time within each moment's breath, on the emptiness and fullness of present awareness – paints no more ritual or dogma, no certain visualizations or mantras, no guidebook or guru. I am not it and this book is not it, because so many other approaches say the same thing in their own individual ways. I am another voice in the chorus, a friend along the way. Here is my story of the journey home, as it happens breath by breath.

It's not breath-taking, but breath-making. It brings me – you – always back. It rides us forward forever. Did I say forever? Only to indicate the fullness of time, the completion in the now even as now expands like the next lungful of air. Spirit, river, stars and day, guide me on this road of oneness, of harmony within all creation. This prayer is my music my practice my heartsong my one love.

My endless fascination: a rhythm that puts a 24-hour drum jam in its proper perspective: a day out of every day's dance, a beat to walk and write and feel and think by.

There is a justice in the discipline of writing these pages. Because after one or two, the impulse may be to stop, to question, to wonder if that's all there is to know, to

say. That can be true, temporarily: then there's always more to say: like waves on the shore, spraying differently every one . . . or the sunset forever variable ("forever," granted, subject in this frame to the life of Sol).

The discipline milks out of reality the expression of itself, ongoing. To continue is to affirm, confirm, acknowledge and celebrate.

This dance goes on. Fingers and feet can rest; but while the invisible song is sung, the picture paints itself. For the duration: a life-cycle, a breath cycle, year or day, sun or galaxy: always a turning, and a gently turning inside out.

In breath I ride wind and wave, constant in change, tossed in starwash, squeezed in peristaltic bliss. Lesser conundrums of the echelons of control part like Red Seas before this Moses of reiteration, this exodus of life-force in motion to the homeland.

This my hymn of no more captivity, no slaves in bondage. My prayer that all people be freed, to the first knowledge, the oneness we share, the primal gift. Easy, joyful, we cry in oxygen, our common noble carrier.

Now for me it is time to move again, out into the world. Dark walls to leave behind, clothing of comfort and warmth – to the house our body, breathing fire and walking light.

## **Magic**

Music, Magic, Meditation:  
they come together in this moment:  
water over smooth mossed rock,  
the pulse in my ears, a waterfall

dancing surf, pounding chaotic  
thunder, laughing, explodes constantly  
changing, flying, dissolving in rapid spray  
and gusts of mist white like snow in  
light of brilliant sun, more water comes  
in pale jade green glory of all,  
foamed surface boils splendorously downstream

## Sunshine

In cloudy weather I become bored. In cool weather, restless. On a fine August day I like nothing better than to light out for the woods, or a trail to the high country. July, early August, to swim in a vast deep lake in the summer heat.

Now, September three days off, I become dispirited, listless. Like the plants who have gone to seed: playing's done. Have I worn out my second adolescence this easily?

Four inches further over out of that cloud screen, the sun would pour forth a glorious day once again.

For now, food; plans for heading home.

Already past noon, the day, the season, the life has turned. A leaf falls beside me, brushing my wrist as I write.

Closing time: coming soon?

Maybe all that's just Hollywood.

Death and destruction addicts unite in their admiration of certain common tragedies. Why not choose life? So easy to say – hard to persist on a cloudy winter's day.

All depends on a California forecast.

Here the season has turned into . . . what?

“Old age”; practice for being a monk?

Or perpetual adolescence, perpetual motion?

The song of youth: *Won't you try try try, try Jah love?*

A religion of no religion: self-help, reggae music. *It's all in the vibes, mon. Feel the pulse.*

Play play play . . .

What I get: an email message from my ex.

What I am left to do:

Reading my angel cards

Tooting my love flute

Composing poetry and rhythms

I wander through the rooms I have built, these boxes and trail corridors, waiting for a sign saying *stop*. It never comes. So I keep running, walking, breathing like the rock wall sighing over its reflection off the water – finding solace in that refracted light, marked by a shadow in the vortex of now.

Building a religion = creating a distinctive vocabulary = business marketing, novels, languages, academic disciplines, species intercourse, law . . .

Going in, like this, happens anyway – wherever I write or walk in a sea of words.

The difference is, on a cloudy day nothing else seems quite as appropriate.

On a sunny day, my eyes are opened too wide to the wonder of the natural world out there; my skin warms to its touch like a lover; I hanker for the water and the sand and the high trail, the cooling forest.

Spoiled by California? Perhaps. Some just like it perfect. (Too many, in fact: too bad).

Here, Kootenay style, we are in retreat. Cultivating the inner arts, the refractions and back eddies that crawl vaingloriously against the onrushing stream.

Gray sun, muted mosses. Drab lichens pasted on stone. I sit, content enough to forge no grimmer enterprise.

Instead I think of the office, the fall interiors, the work which poor light compels me to do, in search of sister sun.

The task, the challenge, the choice:  
to bring the practice  
back to the world –  
This is called service: value added.

## **Lifestyle Architecture**

Do like this:

attic: yoga, meditation  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor bedroom: sleep, eat, relax, socialize  
center: love  
downstairs: lit salon  
sections: business office with secretary-telemarketer  
basement: music: compose, arrange, practice

## **The Other Side**

30 August

Back to lying in bed long with hands crossed over heart. Fighting successfully the cold bug trying to interfere. Uninspired today to do anything much but household purge; though a half-day is scheduled with O\_\_\_\_, and Anni wants to go huckleberry picking.

Maybe I'm just feeling the symptoms of a dope hangover – clammy mouth, dead eyes, compacted jaw muscles: distasteful. Like more Oriole losses, in a now-doomed season. But there's always the Arizona fall league . . .

*Now Billy . . .*

But really, the dope itself was a reaction to uninspiration.

After my readings on rebirthing, I feel that the negative now is always inappropriate. But I can't be in denial of it. I need to go down through it, deeper. Not necessarily in analysis, but in true feeling. Feel through it, breathe through it and let it go. The analysis only need go as far as birth trauma, parental disapproval, specific negatives, death belief, past lives. That's a large plateful! All released in present time, present breathing.

Do I need to read more? No, just breathe more.

Another week of Arizona/California weather ahead here to kick off September. It looks like I will want to spring for some major or minor hike. If only I had a light tent; but maybe only the bag and plastic are needed, and thermarest or ensolite.

I go back to basics.

I do enjoy writing, always available with fresh white space like clear blue sky ahead, no clouds ever. There is always that pure freedom, that security of unclouded possibility, temperature controlled, no expectations, no time limits, summer forever, dry season provided with clear water at hand, no pressure because it's unlimited, dependable, clean, cheap . . .

Like solar energy, or wind: renewable on a constant basis. No shortage, or problem of earth's reserves running out.

Sun rising outside again today: and I feel the pressure to conform. The clear blue sky is so seductive, mystifying, alluring, magnetic. Witness the hordes in Southern California, Victoria. People flock to good weather; it's not just me. Down to beach, out to lake, up to alpine, along trail or to woods: when sun is beaming, I seem to want always to be outside.

*Come on, Billy . . . go out there –*

But when it's cold and wet, it's uncomfortable; life-threatening. This pressure and sensitivity that I feel is all about the natural survival instinct, especially for one who, with birth trauma lingering, feels generally unsafe and unnurtured in the big bad world, and so wants always to retreat to the solitude of the womb, of the house, of the office, of the computer brain. And thus as winter looms, I seek the comfort of one relationship: back to the mother.

My time at this screen section of blue sky is suddenly limited now by Nell starting breakfast, and me as parent recreating my mother's role and feeling responsible to take a hand in it; meanwhile the sun is rising ever higher in the sky demanding my participation or I will "miss my chance," as O\_\_\_\_\_ is already booked for the afternoon, and then there

is another plan or three in the works for later this week in the sun picking berries, fishing, making music, visiting with K\_\_\_\_, going to hot springs . . .

The beat of the sun goes on. The summer melody. The jazz festival of clouds mirrored in glacier, of leaves falling on leaky greenhouse thermopane.

## **Moth in Wax**

A tragic death – a moth  
attracted by the flame that burns  
so brightly, giving light for  
these words, and I remember counsel  
to watch the images that come:

moth mired in clear hot wax  
its last feeble flutter before stillness  
while the semi-transparent flame  
dances, mourns purely and suddenly  
brighter as the wax drains down  
too late for the fast flier stuck  
now, plastered to the white crater  
embossed forever – saying  
I could have flown free.

Another circles, wider, wiser.

Which is greater, sun or candle  
dialog or witches' art?  
A moment still as this,  
or the rushing horses of battle?

History has no heroes, only the dead  
Breathing no victors forever.  
A container so large  
it fits inside the world

braincase, oil pan  
Sunday night fever



So what was I going to do  
loses all significance

before the drama of a destiny  
unfolding blind, or in various lights  
flashing knowing, not knowing, open  
to a waking dream of our own creation

## **Climbing to Valhalla**

2 September

At the site of the primitive skills gathering . . . sunrise.

I'm camped in a beautiful meadow beside Mulvey Creek and Perry's Ridge, at the foot of the Valhallas Park – ready to hike into Mulvey Basin with Rivers and Jivan. Yesterday I delivered ducks to Denis and shopped in Kaslo for food; arrived in Winlaw and then spent some time on the land here looking at a yurt, talking about community, playing flute and didge and drums . . .

Three communities have started up on this broad bench, side by side. Calvin, the “spiritual leader” of one of them, is hard at work with excavator and truck, but everyone else in that group is leaving.

I sit on a luminous army blanket, with the sound of rushing creeks on two sides, the sunlight becoming ever more brilliant.

The forecast: Indian summer, a cold, snowy winter. Better get in the rest of that firewood . . .

Or maybe I can just heat the study and move in there . . . or Nell's room.

The grass shines, the trees stand, I write, the creek rushes.

Sounds of gloom and doom are heard from the computer industry, and a survivalist store in Nelson is doing a booming business in wall-tents, hunting knives and nitrogen-packed wheat.

I've been through it all before. I'm so set up I don't even know it.

But the publishing industry?

Belly up.

Paper to write on?

Words around the fires.

Trees will still burn.

It should be a good show.

I guess the Internet may go down too?

No, but some nasty traffic jams.  
Everyone trying to get out of town?  
There is no getting out.  
We're in it.  
We channel light now, words of light and sounds of rushing streams.  
The sun climbs higher.  
We ascend to the alpine today, into the valley of the northern gods.  
I have Odin's script with me, a plan to visit L\_\_\_\_\_ in the Grand Canyon in a month – maybe. Why not? Money is no object, any more. Time to invest in useful things: a tent, backpack, matches, extra grain and beans. They'll probably be sold out, this year's crop.  
The doom and gloom business is booming.  
But we'll all be in it together, brothers and sisters. Sharing what we have.  
Primitive skills, coming back to the fore.  
Deer meat, ducks, potatoes. Maybe I'll keep those chickens after all.  
Ready to take stock, reassess.  
Travel light, buy more tires or a car with better mileage?  
But there's still firewood to bring, a rough road to navigate. I've been through it all already.  
Moving on to vertical time: the deadline has been moved up.  
These words are the beginning of the end. The opening to love and light, hard times for the material security game, good times for the growth of the soul.  
Heavy snows. Antarctica breaking up. I've known all about this for a long time.  
Do I remember what it's all about?  
Bushcraft matches fuel food tools  
Community.  
Still, there is value in flow.  
Keeping things simple, mobile, useable, shareable.  
A bike in good working order. New bearings.  
Okay, renovations, overhaul. Bring to Nelson . . .  
I will. To do: bike maintenance, repack.  
Look at the skills inventory, the identification of wild plants.  
Seminars after the fall. Time for music, writing, the fine arts? Ragnarok is upon us, Fenrir the Hungry Wolf chafing at his chains, Loki the outcast glaring from the other valley.

3 September  
9 A.M., Mulvey Basin, Valhallas

Sleeping in with rising sun.

The view: east toward the Rockies over three ranges – Perry’s Ridge, the Selkirks, the Purcells.

Breakfast: coffee, algae, glacier water; and a puff of holy smoke to east and west.

Merkaba meditation, body awareness, breathing, Five-Tibetan yoga . . . then dance down to the waterfall brook to wash dishes.

Yesterday, a “serious mountaineer” descent from the rock rim ringing this bowl of life, packs lowered with ropes and then following onto steep icy snow over deadly rocks, step by step kicked in and tested, with rock pick in hand.

Wolf Ears, Gimli, Ragnarok . . .

Jivan, Shining Rivers, Odin Now.

Our morning rituals: scattered, alone, among solitary picas chirping . . . one slow rhythm like our chants last night or rattles and didge, around our silent bright center, voice tones blending harmonies like everything in and around us . . .

The practice is everywhere.

Celebrate the unifying principle: God, Spirit, Oneness, the Higher Self – we can give capitals to everything we believe in, when Belief itself holds us together, affirming Life which contains us. In this celebration we offer soup and trail mix to the gods and goddesses in our Body.

We relax into the Flow of all in each, streaming together like water everywhere in its part of the cycle, even Ocean part of a more encompassing Ocean of Flow, overviews expanding likewise through time to all Time, within no further container than All in Change.

All in Change unifies without collecting energy to an end-point in itself. It brings all available energy in and sends it back out, breathing the existence of everything that was and is, and the will-be allows it to change still further, each new breath unique in all existence while adding to the whole.

All the wisdom of these rocks is acquired, and revealed; layer by thin layer, grain by tiniest grain.

The ritual continues: water trickling, wind sighing, haze obscuring distant peaks.

These jagged walls around my back give me liberation within their prison, as I face the way out – one way. Or the walls can be scaled, the way we came in, putting life and patience and comradeship to the test.

Deeper, slower breathing . . . controlled or joyous, with music or laughter or chant or groan . . . comes to voice the quality of this present vibration. What I hear, I breathe back. This voiced vision embraces each footstep, the tuft of heather I sit on, and the ragged branches of the alpine spruce, dwarves of perfect beauty enchanting this house.

Our hostesses are dainty white-fluff-footed ptarmigan, the color of the rocks, trusting us to walk here, to walk away.

4 September

10 A.M., Mulvey Basin

Hanging out in meadows, meditating, swimming, toning, eating, talking, playing flute and didge and rattles, smoking a little and drinking some ceremonial mushroom tea, going for a way to the edge of this world, a drop 3000 feet to the valley bottom, rock guardian walls of sheer scoured granite going down 5000 feet from peaks to valley floor, this sacred hall of gods, Gladsheim's face framed in lion mane and marked in symbols of alien intelligence . . .

Last night a fire with congenial and sometimes serious talk, a little music, much reflection in the dance of flames, the most changeable of elements, therefore the most spiritual. But like chakras, in hierarchy of frequency and evolutionary development, fire air water and earth are still all equal. Earth showing, for instance, through these rock masses, great scales of change but oh so slow, in human terms.

The waterfall offering constancy in change, a divinely balanced Gaiaic homeostasis.

I awake in rosy dawn groggy from dreams of N\_\_\_\_\_ coming to me asking, "Do you know what you want with me?", and I answer, "Of course not" but proceed to kiss madly, though without satisfaction as my upper lip is dry and puckered and she pulls her mouth just out of reach.

[Note: on re-typing this 16 December, I am fresh from a visit from Z\_\_\_\_\_ who demanded of me an answer to, "What do you want with me, do you want anything from me?" and I could not relate even to the question and so answered only, "I don't think in those terms," and she flew off in a storm of tears saying, "Then the answer is No."]

Lives in the balance: a dream of ocean surf, under the roar of the waterfall; O\_\_\_\_\_ wanting more, L\_\_\_\_\_ less.

Today we may climb Asgard, the pointed peak of the pyramid crowning this vortex of snow and sun and water and life intelligence.

Breathing deep enough to keep the cold confined to the outer layers of sensation: a breakthrough yesterday in my tolerance of cold water, diving in five times and the last one lingering, soaking in the sensation of immersion, comfort in cold. This morning, after one quick dive in and out, meditating on the white rock nearby in the cooling breeze, warmed by inner radiance of relaxation, deep breath of slow fire.

There is no going home from this place, no going back to past restrictions. The way is forward, deeper, to more relaxation, a deeper center in nonrestrictive love, maybe not given in total release to this or that one lover, but a series of releases, to myself and to the world, to life.

Submerging self and ego and special desire in the more transcendent, unifying process we all share, giving energy back to the cycle, through full breath, prana in all molecules of shared spirit.

7 September

This Monday afternoon I'm back at "Valhalla Village," the site of the Northern Lights Primitive Skills Gathering, on the way to a sweat in Gray Creek, or jam at a Slocan Rainbow gathering, before meeting with the theatre group in Kaslo at 6.

In the morning after sleeping in the forest at Ricardo's following a big party there, I went to the Hungry Wolf Café and Earth Spirit Bookstore in Planet Winlaw. At Al's bookstore I bought *Synchronicity*, telling Al about my bad decision-making skills, but also my trust that the right person appears at the right time; and I'm thinking . . . like H\_\_\_\_ appearing to welcome me at the end of the trail at the end of the party –appearing, but maybe only that – a test of my true desires, intentions, and ability to communicate with and open to another. I was tongue-tied, unprepared, self-conscious, and I passed up whatever opportunity may have been presented there, except to reaffirm my solo path, or my path of destiny toward L\_\_\_\_, still unconfirmed.

I used Al's phone to contact K\_\_\_\_, whom I'd called unsuccessfully on Saturday. Then I walked out of the store and saw Declan unexpectedly in the parking lot, so was able to arrange tonight's meeting about his play, despite my inability to reach him by phone earlier in the weekend.

Still stewing over the H\_\_\_\_ conundrum, and inspired by the propitious connections with K\_\_\_\_ and Declan, I resolved to call L\_\_\_\_ to try to get an update on our plans for a possible meeting in a month or two. For this I wanted a more private setting and so went to Jivan's cabin to borrow his phone.

I was able to speak with L\_\_\_\_; but the results were disappointing, frustrating, mystifying. When I said I was calling to confirm her invitation for me to come visit her – remembering our June conversation about "writing, eating and sleeping together" – she said she was "shocked" at our "miscommunication" and wanted to back away from such a visit, feeling I was "on a different planet" regarding what I seemed to want or expect from relationship with her now.

Ironically, she seems to be perceiving me as I am O\_\_\_\_. And now I can feel what O\_\_\_\_ must feel in the position of one who is told – you're not the only one for me. You are one of many.

So easy to put this message out to another; so much harder to accept it from another.

So I go back to my books, my music, baseball, firewood, Hopi and Maya prophecies, peyote meetings and harvest fairs, hikes and fishing trips.

Setting my life in order.

Have I spent my whole adult life preparing for apocalypse? – denying the writing life its due, practicing instead survival arts, music, community?

I am what I am. I still write, play, love and feel growth and sadness.

Maybe now I just (like L\_\_\_\_) “want to be alone.”

## **Human Being, Not Doing**

11 September – in Nelson, after a presentation on Hopi prophecy

Many re-evaluations are now possible, regarding transportation, travel, rebirthing, food and camping supplies, clothing, firewood, Fall Faire . . . with much opportunity to be busy: being, doing, writing, breathing.

In this moment, I rest in a centering of all these things.

In the Sidewinder Café, a turning inward, before stores open, sipping coffee.

There's a clear September sky, after another night sleeping outside.

With L\_\_\_\_ now out of the picture, I consider the swirling currents of elements remaining in my life, present or potential: Tantra, tires, meditation, tools, talents, people connecting in heart-space.

There is always time for the next breath.

The future is now. The apocalypse is only frightening when compressed as a vision all at once.

When it happens, it always happens in the now.

Earthquakes, solar flares, breaking up of Antarctica: not one planetary cataclysm but a series of events: already begun.

The long chain neither starts nor stops here. This is but a link: each word, each line, each breath. One life in the circle: a droplet in the sea. The whole change to the Fifth World of the Hopi vision, contained in each small change of preparation, of consciousness, of heart-contact.

Others are moving this way. My preparedness is for them, us.

Family is the basic unit. All our relations. We are reflections, aspects of each other. The pool balls clack, the morning sun glows in crystal light over the eastern hill.

There is time enough to shop, another day.

Money is no object: but an energy source, stored and non-renewable, in my case a form of the oil that was mined once and forever, the last vestige or vibration of the dinosaur world; now it flutters in digital limbo tending toward the zero state, double zero.

Who am I?

A writer: wondering what good it does, in the larger scheme of things . . .

Parchment, voice, digital tracks subject to instant erasure? Anticipating an electroshock therapy of the planetary memory. Will the DNA code be intact? Likely not even that. All memory is corruptible.

But the Hopi collective memory-check each year is a good preventative maintenance.

To keep the past, the future alive. Because both are contained in the continuity of present practice, yearly rituals, the cycle and sacred circle honored.

What can take the place of this old tradition?

Markings and drawings do have a place: on rock, cave walls. Manuscripts tend to be burned: Alexandria, Guatemala. Let us rely instead on Sphinxes and Pyramids, and encoded oral traditions.

Memories, rhythms.

The medium *is* the message. Enduring stone, collective understanding.

There is a code in our continuity: winding cotton thread on the feathers for all beings, dancing the steps of the coming rain.

The breath continues. The words invoke, bring into creation.

This vision and re-vision is ritual practice, honing the edge of the mind to the tuned frequency of the present moment, constant and ever-changing.

The magic plant at home awaits harvest.

There will be a consistent basis for renewal. Freedom now has no bounds in the society or government of the day – but only in nature, earth's cycles. Even these details will be variable: ice caps, pole shifts, droughts and floods. Yet the overview, the spinning ball, will continue. Will earth shake us from our dreams of high-tech literal star travel? The way out is the way in. We are meant to learn that traveling is in the mind, thought is manifest possibility. Time and space compress now in consciousness of all in one, imagination preceding reality, all variables in play, our will free to roam, to explore, to rest content for a moment in what and where and who we are, I am.

12 September

It's been a hectic two days, two weeks away from home: last week hiking and hanging out in the Slocan, this week hiking with O\_\_\_\_\_ and shopping and workshopping in Nelson: along with the Hopi prophecy presentation, a Michael O'Connor horoscope consultation.

His message in this week's generic horoscope addressed the two topics I asked about at the end of the personal consultation: prophecies and predictions, and travel. Short trips are okay, as in short in distance or duration, well prepared with space. He takes the optimistic view regarding predictions, feeling it's all about probability and choice.

Meanwhile I've got to go to Eagle's workday today, after a late slow morning restoring order, answering phone calls, cutting cheese and bread, eating, washing dishes, changing propane, putting away miscellaneous kitchen purchases, and big ticket items: boots, shoes, pack and tent totaling \$900; I also bought new tires for \$550. This after an algae order of \$500; but I ran into Eloise and Steven who both want small amounts of algae powder. Now as fall presents itself, at last I'm prepared to go hiking – at the end of hiking season. It's poor timing, except for the necessity to convert cash to useful things ASAP.

Awash in more lists, appointments, new books, and other possessions to deal with, I feel pressured and still lacking, from the Hopi workshop. It seems that I need to spend all the money I have fast before it loses its value, and I need to convert it to useful material. I still have shortages of most food supplies, and am hoping I can get much of it in bulk in this week's food co-op order.

There is so much going on: journals and emails and sleep and garden are seriously backlogged, and still two full days to go with workdays and meetings, land co-op tonight and Kaslo play again tomorrow; and I still want to connect with O\_\_\_\_ again soon too, and Y\_\_\_\_; and everything is still in motion with my play commitments, and Hawaii reservations to check out, and a rebirthing workshop also conflicting in early November. That one is too bad, as today I realized how much I want the deep breathing release . . . maybe the exercise of walking to the workday will do it, for today at least.

The jam last night was okay, mellow, but lacking in drive, energy, confidence. We started late, people were tired, Chris wasn't there. But as if in compensation for the music, the conversation on the porch was more engaging. Rivers spoke about a discussion he heard of Sagan's theories of the universe, that there was just as much potential exploring inner space, the microcosmic, as the larger scale of the physical universe. What is that potential? Are we to be time-travelers instead of space travelers? Is the cultural renaissance of the jam, which is a positive version of the compressed time of an apocalyptic era unnoticeable in our daily immersive participation, only a superficial element in a greater exploration of time and space through music, a way into the nature of reality going inward . . . ?

I don't know, because I'm too busy with my day-to-day involvement in community and seasonal land-based living, as well as trying to write. Michael has counseled me to focus, with a year of preparation, going inward but also being interested



primarily in other people's experience with the same spiritual issues I'm working on. There is always so much to do, so much prioritizing, so much travel in time and space and imagination; and such abundance in this life, I had better be going, there is no time any more to waste, there is another world to explore, there is a need to be real, to come together, to ride the tires and new boots and ways to love and books and scholarly researches and ripe fruit being stolen by squirrels with not enough cones, they are eating also squashes, money being lost and gained every day in exchange, are we to eat squash-fed and plum-fed squirrel instead? Do I order much grain to get my share in, and then lock it up? Reasons for concern.

I move on down the road, new watch ticking, and I'm afraid to wear new boots, new watch, afraid to flaunt my wealth of material goods bought for my personal comfort and amusement. What then am I meant to do instead with this amount of money? To steward it in reserve, and then judge parcel by parcel how to distribute it? The long days march forward, and there is little cause for bringing the waves crashing on the surf forward too, for I hear them sounding in the background, too much memory being eaten by the material plane, the personal survival mode, no wonder I have so much trouble breathing.

Now the printer wants to gum every thing up, and I have to consider the dying of the literary arts. The medium is the message and if the medium is corporate tree murder, how can I be a part of it? Rather soy ink on hemp paper? That's a step. In the meantime, it's fiction, legend, mysticism, doing my duty for myself now, following my art my heart my head my hearth, setting out now into the wider world for a short time.

September sun still pounding, I need to go, to bring light to this situation, to go dreaming into the next world which is the future planet which is now, inspiring and automatically applicable to the nth degree, all about feeling, what I'm feeling and what others are feeling, this is the entry mode into the future the past all time and possibility, all connection. Feeling and thinking connect us and so does the mechanical aspect, interconnectivity, through hyperlinked modes of communication we can invent or reinvent or discover; we bring all these things into play, synchronistically, running into the right people at the right time when intention is well tuned in, listening, in the pulse, to what is the general and particular feeling, who wants a free ticket to Hawaii with me?

13 September

Feeling, Being, Doing: How am I?

Discombobulated by a beauty named G\_\_\_\_\_ – my prediction about some lovely young ladies at the drama involvement coming true. Beautiful eyes: the key to my soul. Looking at each other across the circle many times . . . me looking away quickly, unable

to hold that power. With how few people do we offer our eyes unflinchingly? Precious few.

I return home early, with my chocolate ice-cream from Mystic, my fall harvest, my baseball results. I sit eating a sandwich of sunflower butter and honey at 9 P.M., with hot chocolate soymilk, bypassing the jam that Jesus said would be at Joel's . . . because, partly, he also told me Marty would be there but Marty said, "Jam? What jam?"

Meanwhile, at the first play reading, two-thirds of the thirty-person cast never showed up. I was the first there, ten minutes late after waiting for Jeff; most showed up half an hour late. G\_\_\_\_ – with dark hair, beautiful eyes and smile, born in '72 – she's 26.

I pass up drumming to write: burned out by people-events and town for two solid weeks – most of the summer, really. Fall Faire coming . . . cob all week; I'll have to balance it by going as low-key as possible. Otherwise to burn out, get sick . . . oh yes, and Nell's birthday as well, last but not least. Buying truck tomorrow, and splitting up garden with Z\_\_\_\_?

Dreaming of Hawaii, rebirthing, contacting agents. Building my algae business, reading, writing more. This unfulfilled desire . . .

O\_\_\_\_ with me all morning, watching *Ground Hog Day*.

Cuddling in bed, fun, but not ultimate.

Something is lacking – a passionate, whole-hearted intensity. Or – two-hearted on my part. Or – just what it is.

My desire to love, retreat, write, read, do, is so intensified these days, that it leads to dissatisfaction with the present. I need to relax into non-doing perfection, for a change. To watch desires come and go, rise and fall, pass.

To feel good, breathing consciously, through all activities, and through non-activity.

14 September

Today I concern myself with reestablishing free choice, in a week with no obligations till Thursday; that is, Tuesday and Wednesday are free if Jivan doesn't come to hike Willet and if there's no men's group . . . in other words, busy-ness as usual, with the garden, plans to make, etc.; but at least freely chosen each by each.

I look ahead to travel to Hawaii, getting in firewood and food supplies.

I need to be centered more in the now, though, and open to love.

I have visions of G\_\_\_\_ after yesterday's play practice, feeling that this could lead to something. But already this is not now-consciousness; only projection of past need, from infancy. Or what is love, in human form? Ever a mystery. What is healthy attraction? Doesn't it rightly include fantasy, romantic obsession, dreams of living and

travelling together, or whatever? Desire: the very name smacks of neediness, yet is normal and natural: I desire to continue living. The key is positive energy, nonattachment.

So, game by game, day by day, breath by breath. To do: I want to try rebirthing breaths, clean the freezer, make my food order, order vegies from Vince and Glada, clean up piles of lists and notes.

To get on with Life. To write, play music, concentrate. To go into travel and motion, getting with the program of mystical transcendence from all that is habitual, even right now the pattern of practice that I so revere. Whatever is my negativity about this, I hereby release and cleanse, simply with a drink of pure water. This is my meditation, and though the September sky is cloudy with haze and smoke and thin cloud, I go forward slowly knowing that this is where I am and where I want to be, and my lists of doing and dreaming and wishes for possession all represent a desire to be possessed, to enter the dream of life again, to start new episodes, to be distracted by food and sex and books and clothes and travel itineraries and landscapes and breasts and vaginas and romantic eye-gazing over plates of scrumptious food . . . and yet in the meantime to simply breathe, to walk in nature, to type on keys, to sleep and know and moan and talk and enter into contemplative bliss, to know the rhythm of my first breath and have that be enough; as I have no deadlines really, I am on the way to my day, there is no fixed deadline but what I create. There is so much to do, true, but so much time to do it in, that this anxiety about being efficient and not forgetting anything and sorting through priorities and schedules is all bullshit. What do the avatars of the ages care about my accomplishments? I just need to pick vegetables, and to hang up the wash.

In this case I sort through the piles quickly, efficiently, knowing what must be done, trusting my intuitive sense of what is most important, enjoying the process along the way. So I buy a truck today, so I have some backlogged email, there is always a way to get around it, there is so much to be alive for, not always busy but sometimes contemplative, as in this hour without an active presence, without my taking care and pains to plan and do, but only to do so in the context of this dream, this flow which is my inner life, my compass and landscape, my travel map by which I am my own pioneer, forging the way through this light into the darkness of my human condition, knowing that in the effort this is a picture of a life . . . moment by moment, day by day.

There are larger combinations: paragraphs, hours, years, volumes, that can be gathered into larger increments of meaning: the great year cycle of precession, 26,800 years, or five baktuns of 5,125 years each, or thirteen twenties or whatever the ancient astrologers have predicted.

In the meantime, there is nothing else that needs to be said. With leaves withering on the vine, there is only stratospheric meandering that needs to be done, and it's just play.

Liberated from obligation to do anything else, my lists and errands and appointments lose their anxiety in my anticipation of them: at least some of it. I do want to honor their expectations, to merge my plans with others. Not to live in total isolation, or with O\_\_\_\_ in the Yukon on moosemeat and spuds.

Cooper points the way. I could call it Copper Mountain, but that would be changing geologic history. I don't think I have that prerogative: or rather, I don't think that I want it. Rather, to write a screenplay? We will see. The play must go on. To reorganize my lists, my freezer stocks: a long winter coming, meat on display for all to like: but most don't eat meat.

There is butter, ice cream, fruit, oil, bread.

Shoes and boots.

A timeline of no external relevance. A field of dreams, in which to play.

I go on nattering, breathing, knowing that love will come. Love is in the eyes, in the natural conversation, in dates at the right time. Lovemaking is natural, in its own rhythm of fate and coming together freely, giving ourselves to its necessity. If G\_\_\_\_ feels the same way I do, that energy from both sides will bear fruit. With H\_\_\_\_, it was a bit murky, choppy, confused, drugged. This time, there is more time. Or with H\_\_\_\_, we may meet again. Or I am just fantasizing, which is okay too. There will be more opportunities yet. I need to follow the course of fate, doubting perhaps where necessary to learn the ways of the world, what to expect and what to enjoy regardless of outcome: the jam at Joel's, the Rainbow gathering at Halfway River, the play schedule, the parties at Ricardo's or the Little Slocan, videos with O\_\_\_\_, the Fall Faire, Tonasket, L\_\_\_\_, Hawaii, rebirthing. So much more to explore, the mundane in the meantime to enjoy. Paths of steps along the way, love in every breath. There is no golden way of assured happiness, it is in the making each step. The way is the way is the way. *So I continue*, in a positive way because enjoying, welcoming each breath as the first, rebirthing with each breath, entering new life each time. This mystic vibration now has me in its thrall, and I give thanks for the opportunity to walk here.

15 September

Yesterday was one of those days that seemed like a key transition time: a galactic portal, if you will. Z\_\_\_\_ and I finally settled on a price for the Toyota to revert to me: half a share of \$10000 value, a rule of thumb figure we both had arrived at from the beginning by intuition, and later confirmed after research on the Internet, and by comparing ads. We also agreed on how the garden was to be split up, with an adjustment made in carrots already harvested, and onions yet to go. Since then I've been busy with spinach, beans, eggplant, broccoli, peppers and tomatoes, also corn, basil, potatoes. It's getting closer to being closed down for the season.

Today I spent stewing vegetables and stewing over travel plans to Hawaii, and budget figures. After walking to the mail and finding out there was no cobbing, I came back and relaxed in the sun, read a bit, and finally decided to cast the I Ching for a prognosis on the plan to go in November-December for two weeks. The outlook was ambivalent: Cosmic Harmony changing to Coming to Meet. Just as I was about to throw it, Jivan called. I was already thinking how his advice would be helpful before booking the trip. He did say a month or three weeks would be much better, or I would get there and immediately wish I didn't have to come back home so soon. I could get the extra two weeks for \$150 more, plus expenses, plus a higher fare to Vancouver . . . so I might consider that extension. He also said it depends on what I want . . . always a tricky question for me. Kauai is a little small, he said. So a smaller time might be enough there . . . but it is the Garden Island, and does have some places to camp on the beach free.

It all comes down to . . . the feeling. All is perfect now. I don't have to feel frantic about time deadlines. But I am concerned once again about my decision-making problems . . . traced to knowing myself very poorly – or maybe, knowing too many things about myself all at once. Today, for instance, dipping into the Mayan calendar, considering the possibility of being alone or with someone, working or relaxing, getting on to business or enjoying myself, committed only to the magic of Jivan's call . . . what more of a clear signal could I want, combined with the clearly negative message of the I Ching part two, showing how it would feel in reality after the first flush of paradise high, when the clock kept ticking . . . and doing it this way I come to the return flight, and regrets, and thoughts of L\_\_\_\_, and thoughts of what it was like after getting involved with O\_\_\_\_ when I similarly just jumped in without much forethought; and yes it's okay now, but probably not ideal – and what is ideal? I need to know how to develop and work with sexual energy better; or is that the issue, maybe the cause; and it's all okay, but once again the question really is what do I really want, and where is the world really heading, and how is it all shaking down, and when do I want to be in Hawaii if at all, and is March too late, in which case is the motivation for an earlier trip coming out of panicked impatience, that if I don't go soon I will miss my only chance, because after that the crash is coming, and do I want to be away from Argenta in March when the world economy crashes (first quarter lead-up to Y2K), or holed up in my decaying root cellar with my moldy beets and blighted potatoes?

*What is my vision of the future?*

I did have an inspiration recently, that we, I, can create whatever future we desire, starting right now. Next, to determine more what my role is: what I enjoy doing. Is it really working in the kitchen, messing with minor decisions and budget figures, or is it

just going for it? But yes, both. I like to make well-considered decisions, and the living oracle, Michael O'Connor, suggested as much in advising on travel plans. Make it not hectic but well-prepared. Maybe I only want a two-week vision solo retreat on the garden isle, so that in the spring O\_\_\_\_\_ and I can watch the apocalypse from close range in the Mediterranean, say Greece. Is there another way? From a ski cabin, where I can invest my \$1000 travel budget in a final fling at telemarketing and a paradise of snow? But no: rather a two-week fling in potentially warm paradisiacal sands . . . I need to check climate predictions on the Internet. But nothing is predictable. Again, I need rather the attitude of creating what I want. In this respect the advice of the *Mayan Oracle* is perhaps more relevant, to creatively dream this life, the dreamed being the product of the dreamer.

While dreaming, the body lies comatose, like Roderick's sister in *The House of Usher*, whose memory even now sends chills all over my skin in this darkened house in the mountains, where save for my cat, my occasional lover, my daughter on random visits, and the legacy of my former mate, I stay alone.

What do I want, out of this complex panorama of dreams called life? What meaning can I read into Jivan's call at the moment of my casting the oracle on a trip to Kauai? My vision quest is now. My dream-seeking is now. My method is this. My consciousness is going nowhere other than this . . . with continuing revelations. I am getting too tired to work much longer. This is a prophetic statement. Every statement is prophetic. Everybody must get stoned. What does that mean? Alcohol, drugs, the real thing: heroin, rocks. At the hands of the mob. They are coming, somewhere. As for my own paltry self, I would like nothing better than:

To lie on a sunny beach somewhere with nothing better to do than to read and write.

To have the run of a beautiful island to hike on, camp in, perhaps also bike and fish. What do I take . . . camping gear, fishing rod, bicycle, drum, laptop, a week's worth of books, notebooks, sunglasses, snorkeling gear? Do I go for workshops, interviews, packing tape recorders, journalist's agenda? Or open to experience like the rainbow? Do I just go instead to the Rainbow Gathering, the Jamaican Cell Tech fest, Costa Rica, Greece, Africa, Sumatra? The tropics are the same year round. Do I start making a list of world addresses or do I simply take off? Timing is everything. So is placement, but it's all about time. So time, in my reference, is what I need now, each moment. I need to look forward to taking my power, creating my dream. Does this happen in the word realm primarily; or in travel, the outer world? Some of both. Some great writers go by what they see, where they go. If I can just feel comfortable, trusting myself. Maybe I do just move twice as fast as Jivan, and so two weeks would match fine with his four or five.

The I Ching . . . it's all on how to interpret. In the meantime, as I stew over the future, I'm losing present time that could be spent . . .

16 September

The mind is the ultimate travel agent, space wanderer, explorer, creative artist. On a perfect summery day past mid-September, I sit at the computer in shorts, bare feet, T-shirt at 9:41, delaying by a bit more my real work of approaching agents for publication of my first novel, still a kid, still playing at life, still mulling over a possible two-week jaunt to Hawaii in Nov-Dec, still awaiting the real rebirthing experience, enjoying a day and night off THC, enjoying the garden planet from my window and in the open air of my front deck, ready to celebrate Nellie's fourteenth birthday, only a couple hours away from that time I should really be celebrating with Z\_\_\_\_ in the deep heartspace.

Affirmations from Mayan Calendar ready to program into Word Basic, more money to blow on books and incremental camping gear improvements, money to burn in this world, my business not really going anywhere or my career, but I'm just flowing, knowing that all it takes is a little focus, dedication, trust, faith, perseverance, patience, belief in self, etc. etc.

November: a time when I usually just cast about, shuffling files, searching for focus: might as well just disappear . . . for a month or two.

Mexico, the world . . . what do I want? Just a place to write. A place in a world at war with itself, a journal of a traveler. Do I need an advance for this? Who else does such a project – a world at the edge of millennium? Forget my own aloneness, attractiveness or not. I am a disembodied observer. Is this possible? No, it always gets into it, makes it human and interesting. My tendency is to make myself the all-important center of attention.

As therapy, I can draw back, in greater humility. I am only a channel, to see and say what comes, what is. It is my consciousness that is worth communicating, not my personality and the struggles I go through: though that is more the stuff of the novel. Who is my readership, and what do they want: a tour of the world well done and well told, or a novel of character study, a psychology? Is this current affairs, environmental geography? Into what niche does it fall? Page two, Paul said.

I go wandering with my eyes up the snow-scarred slopes of Cooper, still brown-gray against the hazy blue sky so clear there seems no threat of winter ever.

In another part of my world, the tapes sit unplayed on the shelf, the speakers silent.

My filing cabinet is stuffed with old paper, the bookshelves wide with books read and unread, while my mysticism drives me on to sunnier climes. The tropical disease has

entered Canada this summer, the torpor of the tropics, the languor of primitive and savage life fully embracing nature. This is unusual for us Northern Hemisphere intellectuals, used to clutching our books against our scarves in the bracing wind from library to cozy home.

Tobacco smoke, in close quarters instead of by open air fire. Do we do a rain dance ceremony at the Fall Faire this year? Maybe with a few mushrooms . . .

It all connects in the natural world, when filled as a whole with all the elements of the ritual that is our natural life and connection. Full of boots and travel vouchers, notebooks and stories to tell, we lapse into humanness, and the drought continues. I have chosen this mode of sunny timelessness as my home.

To go out into the wider world, over the Pacific, is an irresistible "Temptation" as the I Ching says. Tempted by the seductive planet, the garden island, more languor and tropical ease. The volcano may wait awhile, the market crash, while I plan my trip through the rubble.

There is nothing more to do but to co-create in fullest consciousness of what is desirable.

In full consciousness, what do I desire? Full consciousness negates desire, because in full consciousness perfection already exists. In full consciousness I am already in Hawaii, or Sirius, or at my daughter's birth or fourteenth birthday party, or fortieth in Hawaii. Are we privileged, am I privileged, to enjoy and appreciate this infinite power and beauty, this godlike omnipresence, omniscience, omnibenevolence? Are these all contradictory of personality? Somewhat. Yet the process is dynamic: my evolution intentional beyond my own small selfness to the larger Selfness of all that is. We are coexistent, the different scales of being. I am a holographic perfection already within the perfect whole.

There is no stress involved about going to Hawaii or not, because the only second-guessing has to do with the ego's agenda of whether the trip is long enough, whether the weather is good enough, whether the time leads me or prevents me from entering into to this or that synchronistic encounter with this or that potential partner or friend or inspiration, this or that clean or dirty or crowded or lonely beach, expensive or free . . .

These considerations make up the minutiae of every day anyway, as I jockey through the nine worlds, seeking peace which is at hand every moment if I only cease jockeying.

This equanimity is inconsistent with my striving, yet I continue to strive because that too is part of the perfect equation. Being human I feel compelled to play the game to the utmost. Toward survival, comfort, luxury. Is luxury equated with Fukuyama's liberal urge, the promise of democratic abundance? Is comfort the Maoist limitation, impossible



for Western Man to accept? I am comfortable here in the Canadian winter . . . barely. Do I think I'm getting old, that I deserve more?

I can settle for anything: anything this side of survival. I'm not going to get too neurotic about that, either, as times get tough. But part of the human imperative is the genetic conditioning we have to work the gears of survival. Spiritual grace has a part in this for humans as for all forms of life, in that we are all given a place. Species and individuals do die: this at odds with Orr's hypothesis.

So I wander, hoping and knowing that all is well – even the eventuality of death, come or go. I have been by it a few times already, this mystery. Until it really happens, we live forever. How do we know when forever ends? At that time we know that forever doesn't end. It goes on forever.

Minds in motion, bodies at rest. We sit together, contemplating ends and beginnings of worlds, getting ready to party, doing the work we feel will make us more comfortable, more luxurious even at times, if we think we deserve it. Do we all deserve luxury? In some measure. Hawaii may show me how much is really laid out to enjoy. It might be tempting to live there . . .

And this just in . . .

## REBIRTH

Breathing,  
reading about  
Rebirthing,  
and listening to Bach . . .  
online, surfing

It's all and only  
about doing this  
the best  
thing to do at the time  
this time  
the all and only  
time  
available now  
at lungs near you

immortality  
in the moment

available only  
if thoughts stop  
for breath  
and breath doesn't  
and gobbles them  
up, leaves  
them in dust,  
belly,  
invisible light  
time of awakening

now time to move on  
still breathing  
new life  
still dreaming  
kindness and mercy  
of each other  
love for all and  
only all, one  
and one by  
one

It's funny how excited I am today: Nellie's birthday. Also I cleared \$5000 to transfer into my account tomorrow, so I can pay for the year's food I ordered and a trip to Hawaii this fall or winter; and for the rebirthing sessions I plan to take.

Funny how prosperity consciousness is such an integral part of Leonard Orr's work and that of the rebirthers he's trained: along with physical immortality, and the anti-aging nutrition field. Currently I'm high on present breathing, the promise of travel to a paradise I've always wanted to go to, independence in the world, new love, having the past behind me and the future open ahead in the form of right now.

I'm excited to realize there's nowhere else to go; nowhere else I've been, really, deep inside: but at that place of raw excitement for entering the world in human form to begin a magic journey; and nowhere else but here because here is everywhere and now is the center of my and all total experiences, those I have lived consciously and everything and everyone connected with me through the living, breathing web of existence.

Existence exciting? Sartre found the rock simply boring.

Maybe he just needed to loosen up, breathe deeply of sea air instead of Gauloises. Or, maybe it was his choice to stew over deadness when the world was crying out to be alive in him . . . in me, in you.

Will it last? As long as I remember well, and breathe cleanly, and consciously, honoring the oxygen that fuels and the carbon dioxide that releases me as I release it.

Which CD to pick? Each is a treasure. I go for James Brown, to follow Bach. A hunch.

*“I feel good . . . I knew that I would.”*

17 September

Excitement – the dominant impulse at present. Hawaii, lovemaking, a perfect summer and September, I come more and more now to appreciate who and where I am, what I know and do well enough, Merkaba and mountains, rebirthing and cosmology, not an expert in anything, still, but living truly and freely.

Drumming, writing, and I know baseball, swimming in alpine lakes, buying seminal books, enjoying Tantric friends high on community and sharing feelings . . . paradise is in the making by breathing it so.

Excitement comes in the dawning realization that this paradise state is available every moment and is ever-renewable, is essentially non-commercial (though spinoffs are perhaps inevitable), and thus qualifies as semi-religious. Even the standard disclaimer comes with acceptance of gifts. But it’s not the big deal because the energy it supports is not primarily self-directed, but just circulates all the more completely.

Prosperity reflects abundance which describes the all that is. In unity with the all there is no lack. Only in separation, which comes early from attitude, is there shortage and limitation.

My own abundance and gifts are by no means unique or prodigal and only illustrate my example – because I can transform from ordinary, stressed, self-doubting, to exceptional, gifted, blissed, simply by belief, perspective, attitude.

And ever continuing, in accumulating practice: deeper, fuller, more relaxed yet ever-more conscious breathing. All the rest of the blessings follow.

At the hall, I find I’m still getting used to Kootenay time: 30 minutes late. Last week it was the play practice. It’s frustrating, but I can let it go. I’m here now, writing this and learning more each day. This week I didn’t hike because of cobbing, sales conference call, birthday, and this workshop. In other words, “It’s okay, I still got my” . . . notebook.

Feeling otherwise, great and charged, each day now more. Excited about . . . Hawaii decision, money in the bank, truck bought, freezer and garden divided up and caught up (I did accomplish this stuff too this week); and I'm relaxed, made love with O\_\_\_\_, feel grounded and centered at home, and got off the first wave of agent queries.

I need not to depend on other people or be depended on. I would rather write – like this – than “hang out.”

I need to adjust my Kootenay-Rainbow appointment schedule default to +30 minutes across the board.

I need to breathe now to release all expectation to cosmic flow. I *could* virtually skip this Fall Faire. But it's all okay too. This A.M. walking down the road I marveled at Mt. Willet looming up in clear morning haze like any Hawaii destination; yesterday at Chris's I could enjoy the mellow gathering on the back porch like any solo fishing retreat.

Breathing in the moment makes every moment special, exciting. The only requirement is to do it!

Simple . . .

Now on to my appointment, is everyone waiting? Whatever, it will all unfold.

I am free, independent, happy, expectant only of life's excitement.

I can do what I want to manifest, enjoying freedom also not to do – to flow freely – The Wanderer of one-point focus – through the nine worlds and beyond.

There is always something more to say, more to breathe.

This is the end of time, the beginning of timeless continuity, rhythmic and alive. The pulse brings life into heart and lungs, out into the world, prana too pulsing in from above and below.

I go.

18 September

Getting ready to book for Hawaii; having already ordered my big book parcels from Banyen and Daedalus, indulging . . . yet holding off on MEC until the new catalog arrives today and until I decide whether or not to go solo on my trip or to invite O\_\_\_\_ or Nellie. The I Ching warns about temptation, which could mean anything: the trip as a whole, either “maiden” in question, or a maiden yet to appear in the situation, or Kauai itself.

The question returns, as always, to what I want. This is the great unknown. Is it everything, or nothing? It's all so arbitrary. How does one with higher consciousness choose any path in the middle worlds, when they are all so perfect or imperfect depending on the attitude, and with correct attitude are all perfect? When every choice and no choice are equally perfect, what basis is there then to choose? The primal intuitive force,

the sense of grounding, of gravity, of full-breathed knowing . . . these are missing now, for me, as I contemplate the imminence of my decision: alone, with O\_\_\_\_, with Nellie, not at all, later, what?

There is nothing more I can do to alter the balance of indecision, except to throw the I Ching again: more complication. It still comes down to what I want, what I am afraid of, what I desire.

What I want is freedom, indulgence, humility, solitude.

What I am afraid of is loneliness, judgment from others, second-guessing myself.

What I desire is companionship, sharing, ease and comfort in what I feel and what I decide.

In the coming time there will be no time for such luxurious anxieties.

I will hole up with my books, and await spring?

I cannot delay much longer with seats going fast.

I need to act now one way or another: fall winds blowing, Fall Faire brewing, literary agent waiting, I need to get on with my life.

In the meantime I can affirm the wisdom of this full deliberation, getting into the self-inflicted pain as a choice for future peace of mind, as an exercise in fullest self-knowledge and manifesting the dream I dream.

In the full page view of all considered, by the end it will have been . . . a good occasion. But I cannot predict everything. Love along the trail? Perhaps not. The track record shows mixed results: Hollyhock yes, Rainbow no. Now there are changes in the wind. Am I to avoid temptation of all kinds, remaining aloof and true to myself?

*What is the purpose of your trip?*

In this case, it is:

To fulfill a lifelong dream.

To catch some southern waves, salt air, paradise.

To hike in tropical fruit jungle, awed by waterfalls.

To hang out in lava caves, centering in the ancient sea world.

To become one with the Pacific.

To come into being as my own person, comfortable in my travels in the world. A companion may or may not ease this transition.

In my heart I long for peace and security: the womblike solitude of Argenta, this house: but that too is not enough. I need, rather, harmonious companionship.

Meanwhile I have a long list of things to do after booking, or not booking, this trip.

I need to do this first, to get it out of my system. The I Ching's counsel is all-embracing, and accurate. Trifles become internal conflicts. I need to find a way out. A clear light forward. By asking O\_\_\_\_, Nell and seeing what they say?

But what do I want? This comes back to a basic question about aloneness, freedom, companionship, sharing with others. My heart sings in both places: connected with nature, connected with people. The basic dichotomy, of Nature vs. Culture? More to investigate.

For now, I am so uneasy, concerned about making the "right" decision. The key is this: any decision is "right." Will I make it better by simply making it? Not necessarily. There is always second-guessing. The key is: only make a decision I can be sure about. Yet, I still need to act, or nothing will happen.

So, I continue stalling, while the seats get snapped up by those more willing to risk, to commit. I need to get off my butt and run to the nearest phone; or to go ask these potential companions if they will share my life with me. Will O\_\_\_\_ be in that garden again? Will I stumble on the way wondering if it was a wise choice? I could deliberate forever. There are better things to do with my life.

*Are there?*

I can only breathe. At the end of these pages, I can delay too long, or I can act. The pressure is getting to me. Will I choke, once I am in the field where what I do matters? Do I not have the self-love, the self-trust, the higher faith, that will guide me forward? I need to do this with a clean conscience. I need to act freely in the process of breathing, knowing it will all be learning, and an experiment in living. I can only do the best that I can do.

The best that I can do now is a last minute offer – with the cautions of the I Ching haunting me . . .

and leave the rest of the blank space to meditate: how fast will I finish this page? Will I leave it, like Rumpelstiltskin's poor maiden, or Ulysses' Penelope, till too late?

I need to act. These others, they don't need to share my karma of indecision. For O\_\_\_\_ it would be a sublime torture. For Nellie a moral, a practical dilemma. For both I need to make more of a plan with them in mind from the beginning.

Creative alternatives include another trip, planned with them from the beginning.

*This is my baby.* What does that mean? Everything. Time and space are running out. Fall is on the verge. Am I ready? Money is no object; this is my life. Who will I share it with? Nellie's a given: the easy path. I want to offer this to someone. Anyone. Yet I will be content on my own.

Will I? Will it only be bitter loneliness? Will I regret having passed my chance?

It's all too dreamlike, this nightmarish indecision: my greatest weakness. I need to simply act, to simply act, to simply act, to go with what I know, to go with the time it will take to make this decision in the intoxication of being dreamed, yet fully conscious. Yet how can I be conscious enough until after the act? I need only to pick up the phone, to walk next door, to stop halfway, to go to the garden to make love to come home to make peace to be myself, to act freely to go fully and in motion with what I know; this stagnation is okay, is building energy within me and now I must run out to make a phone call to invite . . .

## **The Squirrels**

The squirrels interrupt my luxury with their chattering, as I sit to drink my custom chocolate shake in the warm sunny grass this first day of fall.

The fact that this year they have raided my orchard raises a lot of issues: murder, the life force in plants and animals, territory, possessiveness, greed, poverty vs. abundance as a governing belief, the coming "hard times." For the squirrels the response is obvious and automatic; for humans not so cut and dried. We are challenged to let go of the materialistic worldview precisely at the time when material resources become scarce, and to restore weighted value to the spirit side: love, union with the whole, safety of the individual within the womb of Mother Time.

## **Mother Time**

I confess that I killed another squirrel today – and three more came to take its place in the orchard, scouring the plum trees. They are all around. They are desperate for food. The cones didn't produce well this year, of all years a good one for swimming, the hottest July on record in the hottest year in the last six hundred.

*Braveheart*, which I watched with O\_\_\_\_\_ last night, was a little different story of war for power and land. It's so often a matter of who was there first. I'm the classic white settler, fending off the wild cougars, coyotes, hawks and owls, martens and skunks. But why would they come to me for food? This isn't a primordial larder: it's a veritable mini-mart on the forest trails. Meat that can't fly away, fruit for the picking. The ravens come for daily eggs; the bluejays, for blackberries. I sit and watch over my delicately

transparent stockade, farm wire and single strand to eleven feet. I'm selling the electric fencer – the bears come and go as they please regardless.

A classic fall day: bright, cool, hot, shortening. I did laundry, dishes, picked apples and plums, then went to the garden to do the main harvest: potatoes, corn, basil, celery, eggplant, tomatoes, artichokes, squash, spinach. These I will store securely inside. Secure, that is, but for mice and the freezer thieves. I will have to procure a lock.

In this stock response – tighten up, shoot to kill – I am following an entrenched pattern: the way of the ego, of the individual against the world. “A man's home is his castle” expresses a dominant paradigm of western, post-tribal society. Mother Time allows no such conflict because she brings her sons and daughters together in the sharing of her infinite nourishment. As Mother Earth she provides. If I shoot the squirrel it dies now; if I don't plant fruit trees then it may die tomorrow. But it is not for me to decide – only to offer to share what I have, if I dare. “Don't feed the bears” is another venerable maxim which makes sense in the parks, but here, in the forest? “My” cat feeds from the store bag as well as from the grass and trees. What if I hunger for silence, can I silence the chattering with one loud shot, as the symphony closes in?

Waiter – another chocolate shake, please.

What, the boy has quit and gone home? Why, this is an outrage . . .

Shut up, you obnoxious rodent, or you will go the way of the roosters.

*How to resolve this conflict?*

24 September

In this guise I come to you, the wanderer in a time of transition.

This week: harvest, food processing: picking plums and drying them, picking apples, digging potatoes like mining in the earth, picking tomatoes and peppers and making hot sauce with lots of onion and garlic, picking basil and making pesto, picking spinach and freezing it, baking bread and cookies.

Watching *Braveheart*, *Richard III*, and *Sphere*.

Printing and packaging up my novel manuscript, for my new agent.

Solidifying my routine of yoga and meditation in the mornings, and exercise every day.

Becoming ever more deeply appreciative and loving of O\_\_\_\_\_.

Learning most of my lines in the play; preparing for an extra practice tonight.

Finishing Ram Dass's *Journey of Awakening, a Meditator's Guidebook*. Reading that book helps me get perspective on my current life journey and this work of exploration.

Today I have my first rebirthing session, at Eric's.



All the prominent themes come together: flow, momentary consciousness, discipline and routine, eclectic balance of wisdom applied in any situation, breath awareness.

Do I also fill out my application for a passport today? Move on to vacuuming, firewood?

Reading more books? Starting more business activity? Applying myself to the next novels to finish writing, or nonfiction works?

I continue, breathing in this moment, happy finally to have a few moments free of the crush of fall harvest activities, ready to focus next on what next needs doing.

*Perhaps one primary focus at a time suffices.*

The next one, firewood, would seal my security for the winter. With the basics procured, I have then the comfort and luxury to advance my finer creativity, my writing and music. Then there's networking, and business . . .

So, I go on to the next thing that presents itself. Also striving for overview . . . but without undue attachment.

*Nor with undue detachment.*

The implication of Ram Dass's book is that enlightenment is a one-way road up and then back down again: like the circular movement of kundalini breath and energy. Am I ready for that journey? There really is no other direction, but further into the belly of the world-snake. This is not descent in the negative sense, but increase of deep awareness. My involvement in the world is not the issue . . . though it helps in the interim to know the benefits of relaxation, of stillness, of contemplation; because personally I still fall prey to anxieties, disappointments, impatience, indecision, and attacks of worthlessness. In the case of my relationship with O\_\_\_\_, for instance, I notice that as I open to the possibility of love for her, I expose myself to the issue of worthiness: if I can love her and accept her love, am I up to the task, am I deserving of it, can I sustain it with value that she can trust?

I know the key is to let go, to be myself and trust that that is enough. Yesterday sitting together in the living room during a brief visit of hers to deliver the video, there was a moment in the dark rock-walled corner, when she sat in the red chair and I next to her with my legs propped in front of her, hemming her in. Quickly she moved up to get the tea water . . . and when I went to greet Jeff and arrange today's town trip, she found a book to read. This was a smart move, because then we enjoyed reading together on the deck without further silent and awkward stagnation of shadows of coupledness. Here was another activity we could enjoy together. Simply sitting in stillness together was as

difficult as it is for me to sit long alone, in meditation. Our spiritual paths are so little developed that we have not even the Quaker's patience to sit in company without speaking for longer than five minutes.

It clouds over today: the coming of fall, for real now? But it's still warm. Will I buy feed for the ducks and chickens to overwinter? I think so; though Nell will not be around to check on them. Maybe Z\_\_\_\_ or X\_\_\_\_ can, in exchange for retrieving eggs.

A duck cooks as I speak: with potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, onions, garlic, basil, all grown myself. This is right food-gathering, frustrating as it may have been to spend two days on it. Now, I have a break, with much of the work already done.

Silence, comfort, knowing I have worked at the necessary chores to acquire right livelihood . . . up to a point. There is always more to do, to get past the subsidy of forest rape, oil money. And is there any purity to be attained? Will blue-green algae do it? To even enter the money system at all is invariably tainted. So it's a matter of degree, of sensibility, of doing what works and feels right. So far so good, in the balance. My current goal is still to raise my business or publishing income to cover all I spend. This is a goal I have had since retiring from treeplanting. I haven't made much progress – except at least breaking even finally on the algae business. But now my downline is moribund and I will have to spend more to acquire new blood.

27 September

Robin Hoy showed up to say he was quitting the play, and the baby duck he'd taken from me a few days ago was dead because it "fell off the shelf" in his house and he wanted more, which was good timing because there was a new batch of four plus cracking eggs, but in the shuffle the mother got out of the nursery twice and had to be captured, splashing through the mud, and a chicken got out of the orchard twice, and I beat it back in with a hockey stick out of the blackberries, cursing, and getting too hot in my black sweatshirt that O\_\_\_\_ said I had looked good in at breakfast after she showed up at four-thirty and landed in my bed and we made love before she went to work. On the other hand I ran into some poor timing at Chris's because he was doing his harvest that afternoon, so I just about gave up on the jam by six, but then two other folks showed up as I was standing to leave, a woman named Beth whom I liked right away and she sidled right up to me, and they invited me to a beach party, so I changed my mind and stayed for supper with Chris, but that took another chunk of time, after I'd already delayed for a smoke for the road, and we got into some good Reuben Wilson on the Rhodes on vinyl, then the live Hammond and Rhodes, with me on the drum kit, for a couple of numbers after supper, but by then it was ten-thirty, and it was really cold out, and I didn't really feel like a beach party, at least not in JL but maybe at Bulmers, but no cars were there,

and besides this Beth seemed to be with this guy she came in with, so though she loved dope (calling Chris's the best she'd ever tasted) and also my "lusty" tomatoes I laid on her (two big breast-sized ones and a baby, after a bite of another calling them also the best she'd ever tasted), it was a tossup. Maybe she'll miss me till we meet again, like I will her; or maybe she'll be another H\_\_\_\_, or maybe I just needed her as contrast to comfortable O\_\_\_\_, though I definitely rediscovered my passion for her as well, it's just a matter of not necessarily needing to be exclusive.

Now it's almost three and Nellie's three friends will be arriving shortly for their ride to Kaslo. Life is so full ever since the rebirthing, not enough time or motivation even to write in the daily journal, though I did enjoy sitting on the deck yesterday all morning reading the beginnings of all my new books, a great collection of the best of the current Banyen crop, which returns me full circle to the inspiration for this piece, "Current Wisdom":

*Living Energies*, about the magical but real properties of water, among other things,

*The Future of Love*, about the breakdown of convention forms of relationship and the liberation and proliferation of new forms because love will not be restricted,

*Drum Circle Spirit*, which I may fast forward with the prospect of the Tonasket Barter Faire coming up next weekend, and featuring an intro about how Arthur got started on this path at a National Rainbow Gathering drum circle,

*The Power of Now*, which is illuminating already because of its use of the dialogue form, like my Earl Grey hike piece, and also like Plato,

*From Onions to Pearls*, the most entertaining, by Ecstasy aficionado and federal convict who teaches his lesson number one, that there is no doer, only consciousness of all that is,

*Tantra*, giving a good understanding of the real thing from source,

*The High Performance Mind*, a rather pedestrian account of the different functions of the brain correlated with brain wave frequencies, and finally,

*Breaking the Death Habit*, by the venerable Leonard Orr. This may be the ultimate one, after my skepticism got a stiff trial earlier this week on starting Deepak Chopra's *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*, in which he asserts the same claim as Orr but from a scientific understanding.

My health is stressed right now from too many days and nights of overdoing. The sign for that pattern is the coffee-green tea-coffee-coffee binge, showing I've been too greedy for more music, more experience, more energy, more dope . . . until I woke up sneezing, sniffing, coughing and wheezing this morning at O\_\_\_\_'s visit – with the kola-laden stalk holding sway over our heads and filling the air with pungent perfume.

I'm also tired from the succession of late nights and early mornings: 1:45 A.M. Thursday night, 4 A.M. Friday night, 11:30 Saturday night and up at 4:30: a total of eighteen hours, an average of six – not too bad but the timing was bad.

Plus, there has been a change in the weather. I was cold all evening at Chris's, then toiled in the freezer for a while on the way home, installing hinges and locks, then came home to a cold house because I'd left the windows and sliding glass door open when I left in the heat of the afternoon.

The busy week began with gardening and food processing, and ended with a batch of desam soda bread this morning, and a batch of blackberry jam, and hot pepper jelly. I picked echinacea and the last of the corn, more peppers, a zucchini along with all the zucchini plants, and planted spinach seeds in their place: the first seeds of my own personal garden again . . . along with the spinach already started in "my" greenhouse.

I'm still in celebration mode, after landing an agent and finally posting my manuscript this week. A day with Eagle plastering cob on Friday, just because the timing was perfect, I was done all my priority work. Now I move more items up the list, but it's rather a grab bag still: finishing firewood, spending tomorrow with O\_\_\_\_, thinking about drum workshops, maybe going to Tonasket . . . a week of transition. Or maybe I simply get sick and just follow baseball playoffs, which start likely tomorrow or the next day.

29 September

Henry Miller: "Forget yourself."

Which still leaves: What I did today . . .

Read about the final two days of the baseball season.

Came home to find feathers all over the front lawn, and the orchard back gate part open; the trap door shut, keeping chickens outside for two nights. One was still warm, by the bank, with a lingering smell of skunk or cougar down a trail of feathers over the bank. I plucked and butchered it. There were only superficial bite or claw marks on the breast and neck.

Read Internet-downloaded testimony of Lewinsky and Clinton – lying and evasive, poor man. She told it straight out. His penis in her mouth.

Made tinctures of echinacea and marijuana, with vodka and rum; ganja oil and eggplant marinade.

Walked to mail, passing Hugh and Jesus – the ex-minister-mayor and the prodigal rasta.

Got a call from long lost Phil still stranded in Ontario, no music or money, rock bottom, twenty months of headaches and wife screaming at him, son now in hospital with pneumonia . . .

And now?

I'm too sick to work, but can manage a toke of fresh herb and batch of popcorn, for *Soylent Green* and *The Doors*.

mass madness,  
people as food  
heroes, heroin  
and ignoble death

there is more awaiting me  
in the new tomorrow:  
to breathe it in  
as it is, as I am

hunter, shaman, not warrior, priest  
artisan-muse of the all-self  
what place my human love  
what song my heart

but to rise willing  
and open  
like nothing or nobody else  
for you

30 September

It's ten-fifteen already in a beautiful morning of another California day. I just phoned A\_\_\_\_\_ to get back the money she owes me, from months ago. I'm planning trips to town and Hawaii, want to get my firewood today, put the garden to bed, read my books, drum, fix my bike, do chores, write write write . . . funny how when writing is on my plate, I want to do chores, and when firewood's on my plate, I want to do writing.

For now, however, I'm going slow, fighting sickness somewhat successfully, with a day of videos and reading transcripts of testimony and preserving food and herbs in oils and alcohol, while outside the branches are green and lush and the sky pale dry blue, and my energy is cycling forward and I go with leaves dry and beautiful into the light and the mountains rise pointed before me like breasts of an aroused lover. Using this figure of speech always injects another quality into the writing, detracting from the self-absorbed calm and equanimity, from the self-enclosed circle of my being, the dynamic spiraling of my own interwound strands of consciousness, the helix of my thoughts and experiences, my heart bound in the measures of its own rhythms; it challenges my sense of integrity and self-sufficiency, values which I have grown to hold.

As for achieving the timelessness I desire, I can simply breathe deeper in the instantaneous awareness of all things . . . especially with three key phone calls out of the way – Ramsbottoms for the \$14 keyboard, Cindy for the ride which won't work, A\_\_\_\_\_ on the day she moves out of her present rooming house. The breathing is all important; this is my quest, my consciousness, it all and always comes back to this, in love or out; all is the same in the flow of the breath, the sun without and the sun within; inner sun of consciousness of plasmic energy, and outer sun coming in with the light through my western window, through the greenhouse glass to the south, even in the coolness of the air through the open screens, another summer day here almost into snow just weeks away, and bitter cold coming; this last gasp of summer air I prolong in my own heated breath, slowing for the measure of your love, our love, my love in its own time.

A day of rest and solitude is another day of centering to the tasks that most need doing, as it won't ever all get done in a day, but the thing is to start. Priorities are to get some firewood today, to plan something with Z\_\_\_\_\_ and Nellie, to go forward at least in communication, planning, desertification of my life, meaning simple, clear lines.

In looking through the list of survival foods and tools I find it well in hand, though the catalog of sleeping bags leaves me undecided. All in all I am already taken care of, with novels already written, one manuscript mailed, more in the works, and how big is drumming when the nights are cold? Can it go on, or is it only in the dusty heat that the tribe will dance, with the fire of life and love?

How complete could any work be without love (the Clintons included), the drive to breed (*Soylent Green*), the tribal sex drive (*The Doors*), the golden gate, the way

forward into sunlight of each especial moment? Meanwhile green leaves expectantly await the first killing frost.

This channeling of vision comes from an eagle day, in the seventh tone, of the Electric Moon of Service, concerning shamanic rituals and the gathering of wood, the burning of the green witches of herb and fir, the gathering into consciousness of books and goosedown, and at such a time I wonder:

Should I gather yet another full year's worth of wood, gathering in, letting out in service, with always more to gather in, to let out, and the balance, like breath, neither to hoard like a held inbreath nor to become exhausted as an outbreath held too long, but rather to engage and relax with an easy flow, a way to come to terms not just with my forgettable self, but with the people who are struggling, the friends in patience and wonder. The times call out for connection, and channelings to source, as available as the next breath; this channel is open because that is my intention, with health and vitality and moving forward on all fronts; no effort is wasted, and all contributes to the mix of time, the melody of the elements and seasons, the flow of love.

Today my movements are measured into laundry, dishes, yoga and meditation, phone calls and town lists, macros and emails, as the cat sits content on the shelf purring, and snow on the mountain awaits replenishment with the tenderness of patience, the flow of natural rhythm. Just so is my active energy channeled into work, of accomplishment occurring in the daily pace; in such a way the playoffs proceed as history in the making: day by day, page by page, word by word, breath by breath, person by person, beat by beat, tribe by tribe. There is a coming together in spirit; there is a coherence of intention, to love, to survive, to reach comfort, even of simple luxuries, as in the end of this summer of abundance and love and sun and warm swimming water, of clear weather hiking and gentle rains, of abundant harvests and lush hillsides, of animals in heat and ducklings hatching. I go forward into my life with this one breath onflowing, one breath inflowing, one breath outgoing, and in this meditation is my work, my more efficient accomplishment, my more harmonious connection with others, my patience and my relaxation, my abundance and accomplishment, mellowed in the rightness of all action, each step the elaboration of each intention, of all the small intentions together in a wider, deeper river of purpose, of service, which is to share energy, to participate fully in the music we share all ways at all times. This is jammin fulltime now, this is intention flooded to the whole from the whole with my own part integral, not too quiet, not too loud, blended into the symphony, like that of each, each of us whose intention is that, to participate fully, to listen and be heard, to weave together the tapestry of sound and movement, dance and light, wisdom and love, that we bring to each other and open to receive.

This wonder is life, is cosmic and just what is, if we allow, the natural way, the way of not passivity or over-activity, but right Tao, the ebb and flow, the receptive and

the active in due measure, the tapping into feelings most needing fulfillment, discipline guided in the rituals and routines that honor and allow these basics, that serve to hold the message clear, the meditation time and the writing time, the yoga and exercise, the regular chores, the seasonal tasks, the stewardship of helpful plants and animals, the integration of social responsibilities and connections, the honoring of the spontaneous and fluid also, the awareness at any time of what is most needed, the scrambling of programs and the writing of scripts, the memorization of set lines and the channelings of new ones, the bringing to light and the sheltering from light, the timing of the moon and sun and galactic turning, this is all right all night and day, we bring this understanding to our birth, our marriage, our death, our dreaming, our loving, our breath, our need to understand and be understood, to allow all that is to be as it is in awareness . . . this pain, this sickness, this health, this brightness, this patience, this strength and weakness, this indecision and accomplishment, all going forward, all the past always irrelevant to what is most needed, most desired in the moment, with the discipline validated, the flow validated, all validated automatically by and in the fullness of time which is timelessness, timelessness which is love, bringing light, receiving light, channeling light, vibrating and humming and silent and still.

1 October

On the way to the Tonasket Barter Fair, the first time in ten years, I am the warrior, fearless and integral.

There is no other avenue but the one of presence, of timing in the chain of lives, forward, tomorrow, in light and harmony.

Details of the natural world, the urban world, the world that is . . . are now all spun together in a cosmic cloud. My preoccupations in the worldly plane fading, I want only words and rhythms, the caresses of love and the loping strides of my inner animal to make me present in the world, otherwise it's the dance invisible, and that's okay too.

Dialogue, imagery, setting and intention, these are all parts of the muddy train, and I go waiting only for the next breath.

In this madness is true desire, coming together for a time in the morning light, before cold, when smoke obscures the horizon.

In the prophetic vein, people will be troubled: no doubt. Scared of starvation, afraid to change. In Chopra's view, stressed, because of lacking certainty, control, or outlet for frustration. These are factors inherent in the situation, yet people are caught to the extent that they are used to believing in the illusion of these things.

Openness to the truth of life, changeability, surrender, flow, are antidotes to this life-stress, as the Buddha preached.



Entering a weekend of travel, I submit to the linear train of events, giving myself to the chain of movement synchronized with others: town hours, appointments, meetings, opening and closing times, days of gathering in the high northern desert to drum under moonlight or snow, by firelight delving deeper than time, below pretense and calendar, clock or schedule, to the heartbeat pulses of common dance in present time. Present time now is back to these keys, even as I contemplate a new keyboard (clearly now, in my thinking, of secondary importance). The weather report is iffy but that too may be skirted by a warrior's resilience, openness to eventuality and flow. Just take an extra sleeping bag, and extra tent.

This morning, yet to do, a bank withdrawal application, a passport application, a town list, two books to read. There is food to pack, and bedding, birds and cats to feed.

Time in the river, books in the boxes, I run to the highway to see once again the open road, keeping movement in my blood, ready to run.

My household is secure, calm, clear. I come back to another special day and night with my beloved, and we go forward into pure discovery.

There is no expectation, no timetable in that relation either, but movement, sheer presence within the workweek.

Today, I type glibly at 9:18, wondering when next I will eat, sleep, breathe relaxed, going forward with some hesitancy mingled with excitement, on top but not blind, rolling with adrenaline stomach at the butterfly stage role I take, only ready to perform with the utmost care in the life to come, tomorrow, today, next moment, this moment, the commonality of intelligence in the breath.

Going straight to the source: at every moment. To be clear, to be fully communicative, is to keep moving now, rest and evaluate after. I dream willingly to go forward knowing that I must best do all that must be done not in undue haste, but one by one as it rises to the top: this weekend's shopping, the truck transfer, applications, purchases, books read, trips to make, appointments and errands, chores and priorities. All a matter not of procrastination and hesitation, but like the vacation taken when the opportunity arises, like the lover before me not the one in next summer's dream, I go forward tempting the charge of impatience, of cluttering the realm of possibility with actuality. Isn't it better to move forward cleanly into the present, actualizing potential, than sitting on potential energy unexpressed?

I find more energy and life in my living if I take forward steps boldly, in trust and embrace, than considering, biding time, weighing, always waiting. This is a time in my life when I no longer want to defer. I want to do, to enjoy, to experience. The end-of-the-world prophecies, the doom of financial security, are factors in a superficial way . . . triggers and mirrors of my own condition in middle age: not wanting to defer to retirement, to old age, to when things are more ready in some ideal imagined sense; not to rely on expectations of future grace or growth; but to grow now by the only way possible,

through present experience. Yes I can grow also in the contemplative way, as a monk in the daily routine, giving my growth solely to God, the soul, the inward invisible path. But such is not my path. I want too much to live fully, to find my liberation through the challenges and delights of this world, not attached to them in the normal way, but enjoying them freely, as they are given. Not in grasping, anxious greed, or fear of loss: but in accepting, receiving, embracing joy.

I go forward into this world not with schemes of ego glory or dreams of ego death: but in ego surrender to what my ego has chosen to participate in, as a matter of taste.

To simply choose what feels best, what will give me the most opportunity for peace, security, service, communion, dance.

I want to express my part in the cosmic dance and to enhance the group spirit that I'm part of so it can be the best it can be for all concerned.

Giving light and life energy back to the whole: going to the dance, so as to dance. Engaging in it, playing, performing. Not standing back, remembering, observing, imagining, projecting, but participating, fully and in present joy, because this is the cosmic dance in action, our human orchestra, our rhythm band of life whether drummer or bank manager, feed merchant or mother duck, we swim forward together knowing what will feed us in the way most satisfying to us all.

I give thanks for this understanding, this gift of appreciation too, and the vehicle and exchange of expression.

I go forward without undue fear or lust.

I go forward.

I dance in the moment, on my way to the worldly dance on the fire stage.

2 October

It's still classic fall in Argenta: harvesting squash and tomatoes last night by flashlight, after a full town trip to Kaslo for feed, weatherstripping, bulk popcorn.

Arthur Hull will have to wait, I guess, or maybe I can just carry his spirit. The gist seems to be a warning about over-facilitation. Likewise this exercise is always only that, this life similarly, this writing all and always only a reflection of my status, not elevated into prepared form except later . . .

Drumming in performance is always an option, it's just this venue in the tribe's ground that I prefer. Love too is in hand, harvest in, it's all just that I intend, and while flowing it occurs because everything depends on timing, and when timing is right intention can reap rewards; when timing is wrong there is obstruction and conflict, resistance and hesitation and these always make the difference between putting good wood on the ball or not, hefting it out of the park or just jacking a long fly ball.

So I go traveling through the nine worlds, on my way to a passport application, a border crossing, perhaps snow today after clouds full in the sky and rain this morning, while I contemplate Hawaii. In the moody constipation of this day I remember to breathe, to type the last on this clunky keyboard, to remain celibate in my thoughts and to watch the leaves yellow and fall, Drunvalo's folder sticking out at me like a sore thumb, the trip ahead beckoning. Arthur's music spinning like a top, I follow it as it runs, and browse the book, and contemplate the trip ahead. I know everything is working now, I just need to groove, to be patient and persistent, looking forward to nothing but firewood and garden for a week when I return, the minimum required, all ahead full steam.

There is always more to do, there will be ever-piling items on the ever-changing to-do list, always a fluctuating number of things moving in and out of the priority category, priorities always changing. In this dance of life, there is more cloud on the horizon, more rain, as the rhythm continues, and there will be some way forward regardless of how it comes out. As the wind blows, I can always relax, every morning now finding the space of timelessness, between and within and along with the breath, as the breath doesn't stop, but does slow, and in the awareness underlying it is the knowledge of stillness, the experience of calm depths below the waves.

This is a vision also of full-bodied swimming in the Pacific. And of drumming in the group circle, where there is equal participation, and the groove is locked in so in that place there are no mistakes, like a James Brown groove so locked down funky that there is nowhere else to go, the variations are held by inescapable gravity of groove, the pulse pervades all, the heartbeat is so tangible as to be reliable to a Tee, and the beat goes on, and I'm about to leave, and poor Arthur will have to await my early morning hours, as we go into winter cold in wrapped embrace under the foggy moon with rain portended, cat anticipating alonehood.

There is only the dance.

The drums call the beat, make it real and audible.

Sacred are all those natural events and arts to us, which impinge upon our animal senses: food, music, sex, art, flowers, magic.

The last is a way that animals move in the invisible world.

We all do eat plants with special properties. The plants themselves live there all the time. They don't care if they are made into compost. When we crash, intelligence is lost, but energy and matter are not. Or rather, the intelligence of the matter is converted to heat, carbon death, porous bone.

All else, rock and sun, snow and mud. There are a number of ways to exist in this universe. At the moment, I choose to continue in this dynamic balance, a form on the run, in the race of time. Even when I'm already home.

3 October

Tonasket, in the tent first night-morning, people talking to dogs, dogs barking, people yelling for beer, sun rising, coffee half done already, a cold night into frost and little sleep also from engines running, people talking and yelling, drummers drumming long into the night, a great circle with fresh primal throbbing energy and sometimes guidance from a Mamady Keita master, I was in the groove and loved it. Especially the last funk number . . .

I am content to be in the moment, alive to the motion of love, of motion itself, of warming sun and coffee, ready soon to walk in the open air, and this for now suffices. Though I lack sleep, and money, I am free in the world. I have nothing even to trade here, except maybe a rhythm book.

I go into the future, dreaming. There is work to be done, a rhythm to play into my heart. I aim to travel light. There is a way forward. I will dream it, drum it. Carrying music, laughter.

Where is my laughter?

I see the future clearly, knowing I have so much to do. Can I earn my way drumming?

This is a talent, a true love.

It needs commitment, cash from others.

Who will commit?

I look deeper into the 6/8 groove, wanting bell patterns, accompaniments. There is a reference at hand. This dream catches me wanting, loving. I need to go forward, loving. Time is of the essence. My love is coming to fruition in this time.

My life has everything I need already, only details to fill in, material embellishments. A down sleeping bag, a light drum . . .

My wish list is virtually accomplished.

Laptops, what's another thousand?

Scanners, all part of the budget.

What about those books? – more than I can possibly use. Beyond luxury to excess: the Midas touch. But this is essential to Nature as well: rotten plums, composted weeds, burning forests.

Starved children, races extinct . . . there is always more, to allow enough: millions of fish eggs, insects. Enough to burn.

So, though it is tempting to quit, this is what I will not do now.

Another priority: to transcribe journals.

Why?

To remain current. And because the real project is life-writing – to write the living, and also to live the writing. In one true sense, my life, life as I experience it, is all in the writing.

Yet each activity contains, holographically, all the others. Rhythm, for instance, is the moving palpable essence of it all. How about . . . bending metal tent stakes with my bare hands; ripping off a license plate with a screwdriver?

Can I really spend more than I have? There is something to be said for it. I go forward breathing, content, plus excited.

The most powerful word in the English language:

AND

So, there is no further argument.

We are all conenected. It all coheres. Duality is resolved, polarity included. Synthesis is implied, unity our daily bread. Even a man of black skin and straw hat and megaphone adds to the rhythm mix by the fires of swaying young whites, the flames soaring.

There is always more to say on page three, the culmination. Everyone can publish their morning pages now, just do a search. Or shake hands, meet eyes and minds, heart and soul. Shake hands and words in the rhythm, in the rising sun.. Winter, that's okay too, time resting cool and sweet as new snow.

5 October

New keyboard in hand, I proceed to the next diamond. Are these full sized-keys? They're awfully slippery. But then so is my logic. So much to report, where to begin?

*The present breath.*

Breath, the purest, highest drug. The most universal, the most beloved.

*Breathe, breathe, it ain't illegal yet!*

Meanwhile, I continue . . . breathing.

There is always time enough to do what has to be done, what is most desired.

I need only to manifest my intent: the rest is covered.

I travel breathwards to the state of our drumnation. It's a union state, with no fixed address. This is the way it is done: in the moment. With more visionary quests yet to report, the clave stick keeps ticking.

Congas kick in, the bells do their thing, the parts are all played to perfection, in this perfect world.

Shouting, dancing, we call out together the chants, the moves that are made.

We all bring our traditions. We eat space. We tremble together in the mood of the moon. We dance by the flames.

This privileged position cannot last forever.

Z\_\_\_\_\_ came this evening and we processed at length about her tightness with me: the old tape running, of my intermittent attentions for her. In the midst of it, was I defending myself?

Maybe. I reported my end. In the meantime, what works? Invitations to share deeply; pleasant sharing if that is real; avoidance?

We realized at least the value of this meeting, this kind of talk. I was unemotional, calm. She released much. That was okay, I didn't need to do it then too. We could be different: that's okay.

Was I faced with the needs of her daughter-father dilemma, still?

I find the flute player, the drummers, the voices still there, around the flames. Telling me music will set me free, in the moment, house or no house, garden seeds split or saved. Carrot juice aflame with ginger and garlic, I ride the screech and wail of the guitar through the smoke and mirrors to the homeland of the heart. Keep it moving, keep only on that beat and all will be solved: heart beating breath in the breast of the earth hearth where he heard art sung dear to the ear, the air, fire . . .

What was that?

A stray thought: a bird flying from one room to another, in my four-walled playhouse: your circles around me send the flames dancing further inward, even deeper than the music itself, to the root of its branches, the song of its notes. The children play as they will in the flowers, the bushes, the dreams of their ancestors, tracing cunning plots in sand and mud.

Why do I point these fingers, gesturing to the heavens? There are no stars tonight, only a clear keyboard. The electronic Rhodes sings not bad, then long dub Carlos does the Moorish trick, amplified, and my grandmother's bass dances furious fat elves around the knickers of their governess, the Mad Empress Carlotta.

As I drive home, Christina Lake is half ringed in dream-houses, where the split spouses haggle over rights and prices, children and squash. We dreamers own the middle, look each other in the eye, holding back nothing.

There is no symbol more chaotic than the contents of a day. How to categorize, choose to describe, create, forget? *Ulysses* is the fullest example. The only rule is to trust. But we do that already. That's what love is about, remember?

6 October

At this point I just go forward. Z\_\_\_\_\_ has reminded me of the necessity of change. I have relied on my assumed rights, and denied the situation of split ownership of this house. I need to give up my mode of sole ownership: a false dream. Her part of it has been out of sight; not out of mind. At this point the reality to be more evident will include some version of: me leaving; me having to pay her \$11,000; me having to live elsewhere half the time over the longer term. The only one of these which is truly undesirable right at this moment is for me to leave. Even then I would have lots of money to work with: her money invested for my income. But this is the least secure; I would rather keep at least a part share. A primitive shelter on Crown land just behind here? Back to the tipi? Another Co-op dwelling? Meanwhile there's the decaying root cellar to consider in our accounting . . .

Meanwhile I must maintain present focus: on to garden, firewood, paperwork, food order. Fall basics: hunkering down for winter. Load the firewood, unload the squash boxes, put up weatherstripping . . .

The budget at least so far is holding steady, \$1200 surplus to work with. This is good. But now I realize that I too like all the hempsters am a welfare child, still a child; or a child again. Reborn into a new life, starting over, learning a trade, casting about on a sea of options.

There is always more to be learned, more to gain, more to lose. At least now, my fingers dance lightly over the keys. But where is my flute, my didge, my keyboard, my bass, my half-dozen unfinished novels, my dream retreat which is still unfinished or rather once finished and now undone?

*Life is change.*

Though I may wish so hard to shore up, to solidify, that is ice, not motion. I need the motion, the traveling with the seasons. Hawaii by winter, Argenta by spring and fall? Whatever: with the moment. Even to wish is carefully done, so as not to fix it in time or place.

I get ready to go to work, physical work.

Yes I could buy Z\_\_\_\_\_ out; but it would drain my reserve funds completely. Nevertheless it is clear to me now that my preference would be to buy Z\_\_\_\_\_ out. The money is much better spent on the investment in real estate and lodging, here and now where I am: before the bottom falls out, or the roof falls in – not to visualize but to use the metaphor.

Even for the most visionary and accomplished, they too need to learn loss, change, growth in other ways.

For me moving forward productively is a matter of slowing to the pulse, being efficient; yet this week I'm still unpacking, dividing stuff with Z\_\_\_\_\_, processing, breathing every moment, applying for passport and merchant accounts, having just bought already Z\_\_\_\_\_’s share of the truck, and now will it be fifteen thousand for a truck and house all in one month? Whatever: my legacy . . . I earned it. The welfare, it's true, is extra, for my inheritance of exploration, creativity. Just a little stroke of love.

This chronicle is so far almost all about me, mine, my thoughts, my idiocies and idiosyncrasies (how's that for a spelling bee?) Do I deserve such a focus? I have been the champion, on a number of occasions: spelling bees, American Prose journal, *Catch-22* essay, “Starshine” and “Calvary” on stage, the long-drum jumbo junjun or fire-circle pulse-maker, teacher on cue, featured poet, lacrosse or touch football gauntlet survivor, I weave my way through somehow untouched, I go free into the musical netherworld, getting my life together from the inside out. This is good clean fun. I continue to punch through the fog, the lengthening morning, refusing to write paeans to love, or romantic cards, and meanwhile O\_\_\_\_\_ is adamant about . . . what was it? Not feeling that we both have to express ourselves in the same way. She seemed to delight rather in my telling about my process in arriving at the choice of a gift for her; and of course the gift itself; and my way of putting it in her hair. Showing that I care.

Okay, the world is at my fingertips. The very best of coffee, green tea, garlic, ginger, coconut, blue-green algae, goats milk, organic grains, squash, berry jam, melons, potatoes, fresh carrot juice. This is a cornucopia of the highest order. It's always a matter of shifting priorities. An inventory of drums, and of drum rhythms original and old. The best in books, dinner company, lovemates, soulmates, fellow jammers Rivers dear to my heart, Eagle and Y\_\_\_\_\_, my loving friend Ellen, Walkin. We walk through life together, caring so much: Jenny, Julie, Eric, Chris and X\_\_\_\_\_. We care, at various levels of involvement, Dear N\_\_\_\_\_ and Howard, growing apart, afraid to split open like ripe wounds for the world to see and bathe in your vibrant blood.

Do I need to be so vivid, so graphic?



Only as it comes, to bubble forth with that natural expressiveness O\_\_\_\_\_ does so well: the imagery of emotion, so clearly spelled out. The language of the heart, the heart of the world.

*The time to move is now.*

Meanwhile I go through the tracks of logic, of analysis and philosophy, of personal struggle and triumph, of petty details and bookkeeping, material inventory . . . because that is the measure of my world: my preoccupation with collected wisdom, with revealed thought, with words as signposts for concepts and patterns otherwise left in abstraction. Generally I like music, more than imagery per se. I like to paint in sound poems, in rhythms of random sound. Mine is a philosophic jazz. This is my style, for better or worse. I am resigned to it, I rejoice in it, I learn from it and through it and I stick to it with the faithfulness I owe myself after these long and patient years. Now I am ready to go into the sunshine, to cut wood, to cut cornstalks, to plant garlic and rye. I am stocked against famine by harvested grain, by heritage beans and corn.

Later . . .

A day of significant harvest: I brought in cabbage to the root cellar, the end of the squash to the bedroom, and lettuce and celery and leeks and a pepper plant and parsley for the greenhouse; chopped down the corn stalks and hacked them to pieces in the compost pile with a machete; pulled weed vines off the fence; dug dock by the tomatoes; pulled up tomatoes and broccoli; picked spinach and peppers and pulled up those; watered the new spinach and the restocked greenhouse; and pruned the outside blackberries.

The US consulate called and said that if I had intended to remain a US citizen when becoming Canadian in '81, then I did in effect remain one, despite relinquishing that right as required at the time; and so I now have US citizenship. My old US passport I suppose is some additional proof, and I can apply for another, which will be granted if I attest that I did wish to remain a US citizen in 1981.

A major food co-op order arrived, and I worked with a mellow distribution crew to handle it. Java Roast bars, kelp powder, nutritional yeast, olive and canola oil, lentils, soybeans, kidney and black beans, two bags of wheat, one of rice . . . everything in my order came but the pasta, a bag of popcorn, and clover seed for sprouting. All the basics are now in hand, in large quantities. Vegetables, beans, seeds, grains. The garden is now put to bed – with only garlic and rye cover to plant.

The orchard is virtually done, with only blackberries and raspberries to finish; and red delicious apples to pick, plus juice to process.

Accounts are settled (with postdated checks) in the mail today from A\_\_\_\_; passport items are completed and ready to go, all my lines are learned in the play, tickets

bought for Hawaii, truck bought and transferred and reinsured in my name, new backpack and tent in hand, new boots breaking in, wounds healed with Z\_\_\_\_\_ and discussions beginning on the options for dealing with the house – all of them workable for me in one sense or another, though I have a strong preference for buying her share or, secondarily, splitting tenancy time with her over the long term. If she bought my share I'd have ten thousand cash, though, to play with. Where would that get me? Somewhere far fast? Five hundred rent times twenty months, or four hundred for two years? How about rent-free world travel for two years, instead? Another piece of land somewhere?

Back to intention: keyboard in hand, and good music to listen to – Tommy Bolin, as we jam on into the next dimension. Great books and more great music on the way; the hits just keep on coming. Locks on the freezer boxes . . . but somehow all this hoarding makes me feel tight, alone. Security: lockdown, cold death. Preparing for death, certainty. On the other hand, it's doing the natural thing, like cutting wood for winter. Following the sage advice of Hopi prophecy, storing for the seven lean years.

Though it's not quite like that. Everything seems so normal: the bags of food arrived after all. I had heard about waiting lists and back orders for bulk food. Was it a lie, a truth about another situation, another country or food supply channel? Whatever, a false rumor. Life goes on. I'm not going to worry about it. The result is that I have a full larder, a full woodshed, a full closet and bookshelf, and the things that fill these spaces are only tools of the trade of life. They represent surplus energy to fuel freedom, expression and creativity. They represent a full belly, not an empty one. If my belly is empty I need to do something about it: not likely writing, but some paying enterprise . . . unless paying writing per se is my intention, my manifest focus.

In this weeks mail came a letter from A\_\_\_\_\_. Another from District Forest Manager Al Bradley approving the woodlot development plan for the next five years, over all our objections. The turf war continues. At this point I remain aloof, beyond conflict there . . . or am I? Maybe I do want to let go of this precarious investment, which would be worthless without water. But there is no safe investment, when the whole world is at risk. Either with wildfire or helicopter fire, it can all go up so quick: Declan the closest example, losing everything two weeks ago in a Kaslo house fire.

7 October

A big pot of hot sauce is bubbling with the last of the peppers and ripe tomatoes, as I stay indoors on this cool rainy day, arranging to buy a new computer battery, filling a book order, finalizing my passport application, getting ready for town and play practice, and dealing with business miscellany. The Bank of Montreal Master Card merchant account office in Toronto called saying there was a \$250 fee to sign up, so I balked; but I

had a brainstorm while washing dishes to use Steven's account instead, which he agreed to, so now I'm set up to do business.

Z\_\_\_\_\_ has agreed to the roofing for the porch, and yesterday I felled the two large dead birches to the south of the swamp, and bucked them and trucked them home, and moved dry wood to the porch, leaving two or three cords worth of space to fill in the woodshed. Much of that is now in, thanks to those two trees.

Also yesterday I finished building the house(!) by nailing up the last boards at the top of the porch wall. Really it was just another day, in the process begun with those first trees I felled, with K\_\_\_\_\_ seventeen and a half years ago.

Now I prepare for the last of the garlic, onions, apples, cabbage as sauerkraut, appliances to buy (popcorn popper, electric blender, carrot juicer, toboggan) as I go into the New Age a-spending like mad.

I feel so privileged with abundance, at this time. Snow is coming.

I am ready.

Last night I entertained Dale for several hours after supper (actually till past 2 A.M., talking poetics, spiritual evolution, literature and vagabondage). He told of a mystical experience he'd had last year in Japan, staying in an isolated house in an isolated village, contemplating nature every day, eating rice bran and persimmons picked from his veranda even in the snow; eventually isolating himself even from himself, where catatonia replaced the usual turning to book or nature or persimmon or contemplation, and void was entered with vertigo, and only dim starlight . . . falling, through emptiness, then caught by . . . net – lap – divine hands.

In contrast to this archetypal Zen tale, I thought of my own epiphanies as more of a daily, small-dose measure: the obstinately democratic approach. But then I remembered, how could I forget, the impulse that led me to begin this journal: the leap to inner and outer contentment, happiness and flow, freedom from emotional bondage, cosmic unity and clear consciousness, harmony and present-time awareness, perfection of all-that-is. "Current wisdom," indeed – still current but buried now progressively under the weight of accumulated experience, perception, awareness, elaboration, distraction, summer activity and fall chores, the active time of the year, social events and music and drugs and play scripts, town trips and books to read . . . journal writing in its own way layering over the original revelation and moving me even in the following days to a place of nonattachment to that precious state, of being able to flow out of it knowing it was always there.

If I am cold now, for instance, I wonder about the wisdom of ice cream, the bread and cheese I have in the freezer, and the sale I made to Dale of six dollars worth of green tea. On this still raining, still dreaming day, I solidify, trying to get on top of the harvest and office. I prepare for town, rest the muscles, trim the buds, can the hotsauce, cook

spinach, envision coming snow, make phone call connections, prepare the next to-do lists, and oh right, back to the basic point at issue here, breathe, breathe, breathe . . .

If life is a series of stages, how many of these watershed plateaus have I reached, and how often? At least at the end of every season, there is a sense of completion, of fullness, of transition, of rebirth, of plateau and rest before the next vertical leap. So what am I ready for next?

Many things, but chiefly: website and novels revision, music workshop prep, hot baths, weatherstripping, license plate repair, pruning . . . always more jobs to do, areas to clean up and clear out. Every day can use some pruning but especially in fall, in the garden and orchard, preparing for winter. The fall is a time also when I always begin new relationships.

Readiness, transition, growth, flexibility, Hopi and Mayan prophecy, creativity, rhythm . . . the keywords float through my consciousness, and I endeavor to open to them all. The true poet by my reckoning is he or she who is rid of obstructing resistance and open as a prophetic channel for whatever comes through – whether the jarring catastrophe or the angels of the Pleiades. Thus I come to you jawing of the words I have collected and pasted around my study, the books I have read, the experiences and ideas I have had, the emotional release, the spiritual revelation, the personal hesitations, the images and rhythms of reggae rap not unlike “spontaneous bop prosody” of the Beat forebears, speaking of the poetry of prose, of unity of form, going back to Coleridge and Blake and Carlyle and Emerson and Thoreau and Whitman and Herbert Read, the existentialists and surrealists, Malraux and Mann and walking alone in the desert of western China, illegal, fearful of wolves and packs of wild dogs and ancient pirates . . .

As these neurons spark randomly before your eyes, the result could be said to be objective as well as subjective, and therefore ironic. It is after all only a record of what is. Now how can just-what-is be ironic? Except that, if purely rendered, it presents a wholeness that can be perceived as such, and in that perception is an awareness, and in that awareness comes self-education and union with soul, whereby the wholeness is both recognized as complete, and enhanced with the further completion of the recognition added to it.

Now onto matters more mundane, more in my daily current experience. For what can I further say with any authority about something that was important to me twenty years ago, and hardly since? What was that masterpiece of great literature about, really? Actually, whatever was important about it was internalized, becoming part of the whole and now, again, invisible.

I miss O\_\_\_\_\_ already: having only touched briefly on Tuesday, so yesterday was only one day without her . . . this is a sign. Life is beautiful when I so look forward to the

next meeting, that all the time in between is blessedly and blissfully full. As in Zen, where fullness is achieved through emptiness.

9 October

I went to sleep last night, after watching *Sleepers* and *When We Were Kings*, with my body tired and my mind clear: the green tea/ganja tea mixture working its magic. I was lucid, yet drifted off into sleep. There was a sense of revelation, of having come home: to perfect mental contentment, ease of the big breath at the end of all breaths. Having arrived at peace, even though there are ways in which I am not satisfied: feeling a sluggishness first thing every morning, reluctance to get moving. Yet I want to move; my mind is clear, it's just my body balking. Yet, I do get moving and enjoy every breath along the way. It's just a challenge at the very start.

Now my fingers are flying; mind clear, popcorn popping, video churning out images. What's the latest news today? Another impeachment proceeding? Didn't he just waffle? There was a cover-up, in high places. All because of the puritanical devices of high American society. Let it all be, without the witch-hunt atmosphere. The highest priests have the farthest to fall.

I like Hollywood's modernization of *The Scarlet Letter*, with the happy ending. The love story genre requires a happy ending: except *The Bridges of Madison County*. That's not a genre piece because it's so sweet-bitter – with the emphasis on bitter. *The Scarlet Letter* was so dark, and getting darker all the time. But it was saved by the *deus ex machina* of the Indian raid at the end, and the getaway. That conclusion was unlikely but at least satisfying to the soul, the justice of the love winning out.

I like my new keyboard, and the Java Roast bars. Now that I have these small comforts, and more – freedom, all the food and warmth I could ask for, a new porch roof ordered, new sweater, new down in the quilt, feed in the coop for winter, a new toboggan in the shed, blender on order, meat in the locker, jars of vegies and hot sauce – I am crossing over in all this abundance from comfort to excess. Which is to say, surplus on hand for the next year. I could go on no income and survive quite happily here for the next year, with enough food, fuel, books, entertainment, friends . . . and so I am free from anxiety, free to build more business or write more books or whatever. I have good health, most important of all. And a slew of new rhythms to share . . . what else to share? If I am preoccupied with material abundance, security, comfort, surplus, excess, what do I have to share of my soul?

Perhaps honesty above all, and the fruits of my freedom. I cannot gloat or look down on others. I can simply report my situation, as I have cared about it enough to make it happen for me. I go on into the future, claiming light from billions of miles away. I

channel now from my open space, in the never-ending breath of the universe's first expansion.

Or was there a first expansion? What's going on here? Funny that no one knows in this realm what's going on. Not even Hawking, or Wilber. But no matter; in inner space I know what's going on, where we are headed. Whitney Streiber knows too, and beyond all expectation we are going there together. Does this shock you? There will be a poetry reading at the edge of the universe on Sunday, October 11. Come with your local pigeons, to drive away demons of an uncanny nature. Share your harvest with the kings of all relation, the orders of magnitude.

Yesterday at play practice only five or six of us showed up, a huge disappointment for any expectations of momentum to a performance. This is like a baseball team with no leader, no direction, no motivation. Declan awfully loose, and so we drift apart, as if it's all optional, cosmically in hand. Maybe it is. But will those of us who show at the end be shown up as fools? We pretend we are committed, like professionals, when in reality we are worse than amateurs, dabblers of the most unreliable sort, youth on the move, single moms, kids with other priorities, waving with the wind.

Autumn is here, no doubt about it; the leaves stand waiting for their doom. The trees sway, in gray cloud cover. My air is chilly and I go willingly into the day, into chopping and cutting more firewood. There is hell to pay, and I know what I must do: batten down for winter. There are onions and garlic to trim, and more garlic to plant, after rototilling, if Z\_\_\_\_ will deign to do that for me; and the rest of it is up to the good graces of the garlic gods. Do I really expect the new bulbs to start growing now, this late, before the hard frost?

So much to do, so little time.

Or, so little to do, so much time.

What is the reality?

Dale says one can always wash dishes, write letters: the time-honored arts of vagabondage. *Meetings with Remarkable Men* is like that. Wandering the world, encountering the other wanderers: gods in disguise.

10 October

This is a time of transition, in which I try to do my best at removing myself from the tentacles of time, to keep from falling into the usual fall trap I set for myself. Meanwhile I tune into baseball playoffs as I write, or pick apples while Z\_\_\_\_ still cries for her unmet needs which I trigger just by being who I am, too much like her father. Though I feel her sadness, she assures me this is all old stuff, and in the presence of the

rest of her life she is happy. I look forward to O\_\_\_\_'s visit tonight, while the stove heats against a cold windy day after an unsatisfying jam.

This is a time in which I finished Chopra's book *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*; in which I decanted my decoctions of ganja and echinacea perhaps a bit early but past the full moon; in which I have received my third new unsolicited algae order of the month, this one by Walkin for his sister, and I contemplate a huge Pandora's box of a to-do list – or in contrast, the intuitive specter of going day by day, moment by moment through what I want and feel the need to do . . .

- clean onions and garlic
- plant garlic and rye
- sell squashes to Gary
- fix drum with new copper ring system
- write novels, read shelves of books
- upgrade website, do Internet commerce promotion
- do business followups and mailouts
- upgrade new rhythm files
- catch up with new personal development exercises
- continue household chores and cleanup and cleanout
- undertake major computer file overhaul
- undertake complete study and file overhaul

This is all too much to do in the normal reckoning of limited, linear time, and so contingent on a new mindset: of low stress, of more timelessness in every breath; a new view of deadlines losing relevance, of breathing easy in the present moment. This is jammin fulltime now . . . whether accompanied by videos or popcorn or more of the list:

- pruning blackberries and raspberries
- cleaning out milk jugs for freezing juice

Among the etcetera, I am my own person. Yet O\_\_\_\_ is coming here tonight. I told Z\_\_\_\_ this with a straight face. Maybe that's the problem. Is it mother problems or father problems? Brother problems or sister problems? Now the rains come, and my firewood-splitting is again academic.

I go into the evening in clear conscience, knowing that this hour or day or week or month or year or decade is not required in terms of any accomplishment.

History is in the making while stars at the very edge make up the background. Is this about me? Who is me?

*Me . . . We.*

We go into the future. We are the ones. I go into the future, becoming we.

Love is the easy answer. Follow it. What does it mean? Going out of myself, sharing myself, opening to another. Sharing what I have, what I am.

I go into the future, wondering: this is past, present, beyond all time.

I go carrying baggage out one way, nothing more to buy. A depression by 2000 given 40% chance, that's fine, and what does it mean in the long-term?

Chocolate, popcorn, meat and oil.

Coffee and tea, real sources of income.

Sugar, drugs and warm feet to write with.

What does this manuscript portend? Is it just excess baggage being carried out to the dump?

New raisins to come. No pasta. That's fine. Those playoff matchups are history now, so what is relevant? Leftover squash, O\_\_\_\_'s impending arrival, my journal backlog . . . and oh so many reasons not to be silent. I recall the image of Dale on the porch of the house in Japan, in the mountains alone . . . of Alan Watts meditating bored. I recall the old TV show *I Remember Mama*, though it was one I never really watched.

*Waffles this morning, waffling every day.*

I keep writing even as history is made. I make my part of the history, wondering what K\_\_\_\_ made of my self-abnegations, my waffling promises as if she were upline. Nevertheless, we go forward, K\_\_\_\_, Z\_\_\_\_, O\_\_\_\_, all still part of my daily life.

My own self, too. I'm doing all right, though turning too much to distractions: videos, chocolate, marijuana, work, sleep.

I use freewriting to keep the words busy, but neglect looking more deeply into the past or present or future. I prefer somehow to stay, floating, in the present. Is it the fault of those ever-ready distractions? Tasting the tincture of marijuana, of echinacea, of hot pepper in the lentil stew? Indulging in bread calories, added butter? Feeling leftover effects from the smoke from last night, and baseball-inflicted adrenaline?

Mingled with such daily pastimes is the body's own chemical stew, which includes thoughts and feelings of love, hunger and thirst, pain and sadness, ambition and excitement.

*So I continue . . .* writing in the moment, with and without urgency, with and without plan and objective, centered only in this certain knowledge that for now, in this place and time, I need to do this, I will define myself in this mode. Yet, still, again (*encore*) I go forward, thinking of next year, next month in Hawaii, all the months there I



could have booked but didn't because I want to return to this winter cave, with my age-old demons of ambition and creative implosion past present and future, thoughts of money to make and bills to pay, relationships to build.

13 October

At O\_\_\_\_'s after a long weekend mostly together. Friday night I arrived here after the jam, at one A.M., stoned, awake, yet too fatigued to make love, and too aware, but she was sleepy enough that it didn't matter. Saturday morning we talked in bed, almost making love – until Jeff and friends left and Timothy was bored, and arrived in the bedroom at the critical time. I went home to a miscellaneous half-day of firewood splitting, email, a Kevin Brown shutout of the Braves in the NLCS game 3, some office work and making a dinner of baked chicken, rice, mushrooms, squash, salad. O\_\_\_\_ arrived for dinner, and we made extensive love that evening and next morning. Sunday after splitting more wood, I almost asked her to marry me, or said so “as if,” or said that I almost said so, and we talked of my discomfort during mealtimes: the clicking silverware of movies, the expectation of sociability, my mother's pattern of forced conversation and conviviality, the years of avoidance by teasing and bickering with Nellie, or silent brooding with Z\_\_\_\_, my own feelings of low self-esteem and paranoia that I'm not “interesting” enough. It helped for later meals to talk about it; to hear that O\_\_\_\_ did find me interesting, and that for her, mealtimes were relaxed; to try it again face-to-face at the table but also outside on the deck at an oblique angle, and this morning in her bed.

Again we feasted, with fried potatoes, eggs and rice porridge for breakfast, and lunch of spicy lentil stew, chicken and sauce, grilled cheese, green salad. Sunday afternoon I had play practice and she a meeting with Gary and Inanna, after which we ate her supper of lentil-chicken soup, rice-vegetable cream cheese casserole, squash pie and vanilla ice cream, and watched the beginning of *Tropic of Cancer* and switched to *Altered States* which put her to sleep. The next morning on awaking I felt more distant, and she appeared to me unattractive, and we watched *Big Night*, ate only fruit salad, went to her house for espresso and cookies, drove to JL for a tour of the apple operation and on to Fry Creek, with a bag of corn chips shared by a primitive lean-to shelter and fire pit, and returned home along the trail talking of food and weight, a culinary tour of France and Italy and Greece and Norway. On the trail we had to stop and connect, to ground together again, to speak of my limbo, my disorientation in being long away from any world of achievement.

On the drive back we talked of art, aesthetics and politics, Joseph Campbell on great art vs. purpose-driven art which he calls “pornography.” Then there was pizza to make, and *Tropic of Cancer* to finish while she did bookkeeping. I finished also Robert

Augustus Masters' *The Way of the Lover: The Awakening and Embodiment of the Full Human*.

I learned from O\_\_\_\_\_ much about her as friend, lover, companion, mate. I came to appreciate her capacity in political questions to see the value of both sides, and also to say, "This is what I believe" without saying, "It's the right way." In life balance also, she can go between balance and focus, as needed. And she is able to let go, or to take action, as the creative urge dictates, without "killing herself over it" either way. To groan and be excited about today's workload, all at once.

Saturday evening, we looked through my photo album: the clean-cut, bright-eyed youth.

Monday evening we did hers: the sultry seductress, even at fourteen. There was pert Z\_\_\_\_, happy B\_\_\_\_, dour Molly, doting Kenneth. Three girls in dresses – playing girls. O\_\_\_\_, the womanly, the wise, the knowing. Z\_\_\_\_, refusing to know. B\_\_\_\_, merely innocent. Molly, knowing too much. Smiling Kenneth.

This was going to be my last chance for the cast of Declan's play. Again we had fifty percent no-shows, and nearly called off Sunday's rehearsal, and the whole shebang. Others – Lindsay, Ithun, G\_\_\_\_\_ – complained there wasn't much point, as I had said previously. Marcus the German choirmaster was adamant about punctuality. Nathan had much to offer in ideas for radical restructuring. And Katchina, who hadn't shown up on Thursday, was there with a bright and focussed intensity that made the difference: we pulled off a rousing first scene, then she and G\_\_\_\_\_ and Sam did a great element dance with music after a hall scene with Declan reading half the parts.

Afterwards Nathan and Declan met to iron out the difficulties and chart a new direction – now or never. I'll stick it out one more time to see if the cast shows.

Henry Miller presents to me a revolution in the concept of self, personal life, and sex as art, as fiction. For me, the inspiration and challenge is to not do the same as him, in life or art, but to be so inspired to chart my own direction, and to write about it truly. There is story; and that is a key element in common. But my story implies my content, my style. Miller's example inspires me with a comic sense of the circus of it all, that saves me from my former or potential radicalism, from the evangelical "pornography" of the "green" superiority of my path. At best I might parody my own sanctimonious position, or portray my evolution, my liberation from righteousness to aesthetic acceptance of self, lifestyle, art, personal style. This parallels the personal growth path, the acceptance of self at a feeling level, the growth of spiritual fullness, and the writing of "transcendence" with its necessary counterpart, a "journey through the depths."

Last night's dream:

Out of a tube comes an alien – two to three feet long, whitish-silver-translucent, centipede-like: slipping and scuttling quickly away, outside to the cobbled streets, finding the brown dried ten-foot-long body of its mother. On its back, the newborn alien revives the mother who scuttles away with it. Now they are loose in the city. I wander in panic through the halls of a dormitory, a hotel, finding Z\_\_\_\_\_ finally in a room. She tells me the alien is there, is her mother. I must take all the money, and get away – fast.

I wake up having to pee, but am afraid of the dark strange house.

Luckily the light is on downstairs.

I return to bed telling O\_\_\_\_\_ of the dream.

Its meaning is evident to her, after our photo tour of her family life: “Escape, while you still can.” But this morning, she is so attractive. Her eyes are those of her photographs – captivating, enchanting, pulling me in.

I dream again: A researcher has gone to the bathroom, emptying the trash with a condom in it, examining the evidence for alien genes. Meanwhile I cavort with Nellie – like innocent lovers, smiling, dancing. It’s all okay, charged as it is, happy and together, dynamic, though somehow illicit, and echoing an alien element – ready to spring, the kundalini insect-snake? Mother or child, sister or me?

The fake owl, life-size on the shelf, stares me down.

## ***Experiments in Truth***

### **Ritual and Intention**

Ritual trains us in the truth that our intention controls our reality: that we have the power to create in action exactly and precisely what we intend. God still plays Fate against our plans; but the practice of ritual – especially creative and personal ritual after the prescribed ones have been mastered – serves as a model and practical toning tool for the whole bodymind engineer, reminding of what living is all about.

*Exercise:* discovering which eye is dominant. Examining the feeling attached to each eye's solitary vision: limited, sad. Candle in the center, at the foot of the bathtub on a shelf at eye level. Hands used to frame the candle image: diamond-shaped spot in fingertips, larger frame of mountain peak or ancient temple, fingertips arched over flame. Focusing with both eyes, then closing first one and then the next so the flame is seen by one eye only, in turn. For me the left eye saw the same view as with both eyes. With the right eye the mountain shifted several inches to the left of the image of the flame. To test, start with the flame centered as viewed by one eye, then open both. When I started with the left, the flame remained centered with both. When I started with the right, the image was doubled or blurred with both – the right eye's view superimposed on the original view of the left.

### **Focus and Balance**

The juxtaposition or apparent conflict between focus and balance surfaces not only in my life, but appears also in O\_\_\_\_'s way of doing both: the junky yard and the inspired scrubbing of the kitchen floor. Seeing both sides of a political issue, stating her preference, but not insisting that it's "the right side." I can meld the two by having balance within focus: for instance, a diversity of projects within my chosen craft of writing. Or, having focus within balance, such as a commitment to writing within a lifestyle also given to music, homesteading, relationship, business, spiritual growth, social and community life.

In the eye experiment above, I notice that in the act of focusing with binocular vision, there is an integrated balance in our optic neurology to give us single vision, involving also a crossover of brain hemispheres with all the differences they represent, notably between the rational and intuitive modes.

*Experiment:* Learn to adjust the focus of the eyes so that each one can play the dominant one, as described above, interchangeably and at will. Notice the differences in subtle feeling as we look at the world with one side of our brain primarily.

What habits have brought us to use the eye that is presently dominant for us?

The optic nerves cross so that actually the right eye is connected to the left brain, and the left eye to the right brain. Yet in my sensation of seeing the world through each eye and noticing the respective feelings, I sense the actual connection without the crossover; so that I identify my right-side, intuitive brain with my right eye, and my left brain with my left eye.

Look in the mirror to see if there are any differences between the appearance or even subjective quality of one eye compared to the other. Notice in photographs of yourself or other people, how strikingly different the two eyes can sometimes appear. Does one seem to represent one parent, and the other eye the other parent? Does your right eye or left appear more sensitive, more intuitive, more female?

Can we change how an eye appears in the mirror simply by attaching a different feeling, a different quality, a different way of thinking to it in our minds?

Maybe the ideal is balance in our two eyes – or maybe not. For close focus, double vision is a problem (as when we are cross-eyed). The angles from our respective eyes to the center are more severe, and the apparent lateral distance between the two images greater. So there is advantage to relying on one eye to give the master view, which we also see with both eyes open and focusing on the center. The most pointed example of the adaptive power of single-eye vision is the sighting over the barrel of a rifle. Yet even there, instruction of rifle use actually calls for both eyes remaining open. I'm not sure why, but won't find out, in some inverted way having to do with . . .

## **The Irrelevant Past and the Moving Present**

The future is not irrelevant but is the whole point of the moving present. Or, the moving present is the whole point of the future.

Or, the whole point is not the irrelevant past, but the irrelevancy of the past. Why then do I even mention this? Because the habit of supposed relevancy chaining us to the past prevents us from choosing and surrendering to the ritual of the moving present. The moving present is our home and vehicle for creative action, for receptive bliss, for cool and calm equanimity, for full-breathed transcendence and ceaseless joy. The test is not in the lifetime, past or future, but only in the next breath . . . and the next.

It is said that enlightenment can be reached when we are conscious of each and all 21,000 breaths in a day. Or, that we can attain pure clairvoyance by breathing only four times per minute.

*I say only the next breath brings enlightenment, as easy as that, and you can have as much of it as you like.*

It does accumulate but that's not the point. It's like gambling, or flipping coins. Whether the current breath is number 20,999 or number one, the next breath can be the same. It's not as if a prize is given out. In roulette, if there have been 20,999 hits on red, or only one, the odds of the next throw are exactly the same: 50-50 for red, 50-50 for black (0 and 00 aside; there are no "house" numbers here: we are the house). The greatest lesson of gambling is that the past is irrelevant. The only thing relevant is the rolling ball, the spinning wheel, the moving present. When the ball lands, money changes hands, and we begin again. Life occurs in the spin of the wheel, the bouncing ball. When the ball stops we die; when it is tossed again we are born.

Ritual is dangerous in that it can become habit, chaining us to the past. The absence of ritual is also dangerous because productive and creative energy can drain into the constant choosing of direction, the constant dealing with trivial distraction and all manner of whimsical dilettantism, boredom, depression, lassitude, perpetual adolescence.

The solution is in ritualizing our choices so that every action is trusted, is undertaken with sincerity and grace and also lightness and good humor. Every action, even down to each breath, is engaged in consciously, with full intention.

The breath is key. Ultimately there is no other purpose in living than the act of living itself, which in its purest essence is to breathe. Heart-pumping is mechanical, not subject to conscious control (except through regulation of the breath), and thus not the hallmark of the emergent being. Our hearts beat in the womb but living in the womb is not the living we are born for. We are born for breathing the pure air, for the exhilaration and movement of life on the earth – on land or in the water, even as dolphins having to live for the next fresh breath of air.

This is all I teach, really. The rest is mental gymnastics, beta-activity. Really I only live to breathe, and breathe to live. Some of these breaths, these brainwaves, I intend to share. If I charged for the sharing, I might get back compensation to buy me more of life's lesser pleasures: the sensate fuels of food, firewood, gasoline; and the insensate pleasures of music and literature contained in their various material vehicles, books, CDs, instruments, computers . . . All of that is nice but irrelevant – though not as irrelevant as the past. The most irrelevant of all is the collection of such junk left over from once-present enjoyments.

Photographs are nice, but unnecessary. This Spartan approach could go on and on: no meat, no sex, no drama, no novels . . . a litany of restrictions worldwide and through history. The mission being to convert to one God –

But we can call it breathing, and not be so strict on ourselves. Therefore nostalgia is permitted, along with fond speculation, romance, chocolate . . . why not? It's all part of the package, the wrapping of flesh, the heaving of lungs and their subsidiary equipment.

*We breathe, and the rest is gravy.*

## **Alcohol and Drugs**

What's the difference between alcohol and drugs? Here it helps to discriminate, to compare and contrast. These are life-changing substances and behaviors: like Tantra, like blue-green algae. Let us acknowledge them as such, to break out of denial. To go on to embrace their positive aspects, their teachings, without deifying the substances and practices themselves. To embrace them, not surrendering our autonomy; and thereby to discover a model for relationship. To be able to use them wisely to bring us out of inertia, cold habits of the past, lesser preoccupations. In this sense they are gateways, are healers, when used wisely; though they can entrap us into blind or unconscious worship when given too much of our power, when we serve them instead of the other way around. Yes, I use algae every day. I feel better that way. It frees me to enjoy better health, more energy. I lose nothing but my fatigue and sickness. The money I spend is saved in the bargain: less food, less medicine, less down time, less other supplements. Besides, energy and health are priceless. So the tradeoff is clear, for me, and I have no problem with daily use even if someone tells me it is "addictive."

Tantra is a speculative addiction, in my case. I can imagine dedicating myself to its study and practice, giving up everything else. It implies and requires, really, a whole life-path. We can dabble in it like everything else. And like everything else it will yield results proportionate to our dedication. Notice I didn't say effort: because effort is not exactly what it takes. Faith and effort combine. Faith is also misunderstood. Faith plus effort is required. Faith alone is meaningless, and so is effort. Combined they are better understood as intention, or better yet, guided intention, intentional action, creativity. Addiction has no meaning here, in a context of conscious intention. Blind sexual drives can be addictive. Lifting desire into full conscious attention replaces addiction with choice.

Alcohol for me is smeared with the memory of my father. I prefer marijuana; but at the times in my life of regular use, I am subject to the same criticism for this habit that I inflicted (and still inflict) upon my father for his. They differ in that alcohol tends to encourage more socially extroverted behavior and dulls the senses, while marijuana

favors introversion, self-examination, and the fine-tuning of sensate experience. In common they share a flinging aside of conventional morality and duty and accomplishment. Both those under the influence of alcohol and those using psychedelics are heard to wax eloquent about the mystical powers of their substance of choice. Both camps have succumbed also to commensurate depressions of mood and energy, social alienation or reticence, ill health (physical or mental) and the demons of overindulgence.

I have to ask myself, is marijuana use harmless and trivial, or is it the mark of a doomed man? Alcohol claims careers; so does pot. Each in the meantime mollifies the soul, in its own limited and seductive way. Each calls for daily tithes, and for all manner of justification and reinforcement by one's social club. The Irish pub, or the student hangout, are equally compelling.

In the music jam it's always worth asking how necessary is the drug to the quality of the music. Usually in that setting the stoned experience (whether through alcohol, pot, cocaine or heroin) is sought after as the true way to be. So the challenge is to create that mood without the drug: to relax, to expand, to be convivial, to lose inhibition and cast off blinders. If the drug of choice not the one true way, it is still necessary somehow to balance the life energy, the work addiction, the other forms of programming that robotize our straight lives. If not drugs, then meditation can serve: a vehicle for breath awareness.

In this ritual sense comes the subsidiary benefit of smoking reefer or tobacco: a way of breathing with a certain intention. The same principle can apply, as in the Japanese tea ceremony, to consciously sipping coffee, wine, or even water.

It's odd how substance abuse clogs the body's clear channels for receiving all the gifts we are after. I drink caffeine for energy and smoke pot for expanded consciousness, then suffer stuffy sinuses which block the best energy boost available, fresh oxygen through the nostrils. We adjust and balance the drugs when we only have to do the same with our naturally occurring chemicals, our hormones. These are controlled by the endocrine glands – the prostate or G-spot, gonads, adrenals and pancreas, thymus, thyroid and parathyroid, pituitary and pineal. These are the drug dealers of choice within the body. By choice and ritualized movement and breath, by sounds and symbols, by awareness itself, these glands may all be stimulated to give us their measures of perfect health, lifelong youthfulness, sexual bliss and unlimited cosmic energy. What more could we want? But we get less because we are instead outwardly directed, devoting life energy to lesser pleasures, lesser drugs, lesser activities yielding lesser results.

My value judgment in the foregoing is clear, presuming a hierarchy of satisfaction. But I can hardly prescribe such choices for anyone when I myself have not committed very far to the discipline of the Tantric path. Meanwhile, is a tantrika better than an alcoholic, in the eyes of society? Not necessarily. The social barometer is an unreliable, fickle and arbitrary gauge of value.



Back to the relative judgments of my father and me. The question now becomes, by what yardstick am I judging our behavior? Social respectability, family harmony, wage-earning capacity, legality, personal satisfaction, spiritual growth, overall health, conviviality, communicability, connectedness to source reality . . . These are all yardsticks of different lengths and axes, each of which carries its own bias and is weighted by the value system of the observer. In my case, the observer of self and other, I do have a bias toward spiritual growth, and communicability, as well as a valuing of all those other factors mentioned. On a simple scale I would rate alcohol and marijuana by these values as follows:

<i>Primary values</i>	alcohol	marijuana
spiritual growth	2	4
communicability	4	4
<i>Secondary values</i>		
Social respectability	1	1
family harmony	-3	-2
wage-earning capacity	0	-1
conviviality	2	2
connectedness to source reality	1	2
legality	2	-2
personal satisfaction	0	1
overall health	-2	1
Total	7	10

The results are not all that conclusive, given such a damning view of my father and feeling of my own self-justification. Standing back from my behavior, I am able to give this impartial tally. Impartial enough, that is, to yield the unexpected result, the result at odds with my usual behavior. Yet I persist in my habit . . . milking that advantage for all it's worth? Falling into the same trap with a more appealing paint job on the inside? Choosing cosmetic improvements for the sake of change, when really the situation is the same? Does this comparison yield a reevaluation of my behavior, or his, or both? Does it call for a wider sampling, a more in-depth listing of relevant life-factors, a more delicate weighting system of comparative values to judge by? If I'm OK is he OK? Is the past irrelevant or is it guiding me down his path? Do I just follow personal taste and what feels good in the moment and forget the rest? Is occasional or light use substantially more desirable by these measures than frequent, daily, or heavy use?

These are worthwhile questions . . . but will I answer them? Likely not, because it is easier to cop denial, avoidance, distraction, the changing focus of *the next moment, the*

*next breath.* Is this an easy out, mere denial, or is it true wisdom, true transcendence and the following of the only truth there is, the present?

Stoned or not: ultimately that is irrelevant too. The past is like these characteristics of the present, in their irrelevancy to the present itself. What fills the present is combustible, interchangeable, arbitrary, sacred in a casual way. The past is like that: an accessory of the present. Part of the equipment, the scenery, the audience, the ones left outside. The dead are like that: old souls waiting for the next show. Films are like that: dead plastic, ex-dinosaurs, unchanging records of the past. And photographs, alluring: that is me . . . er, that was me.

Actually, that is not me, not you. That is color on paper. That is an image that passed by once. That is the form my soul occupied once. So what? Yes, it is interesting. Fabulous questions can be raised, roots traced. This is a worthwhile endeavor, I admit. I'm even a history buff: and sci-fi fan of some limited taste as well. The past and future, however irrelevant, are useful or entertaining accessories. Let them live.

I return to the present, for present purposes.

What is next on my agenda, my to-do list?

To drop everything for a Tantra school? Unlikely . . . because of my past conditioning, present tastes, or future considerations? This is a question again too big to explore here. I run on, to the next topic, the next question, answering the short ones, crossing off the easy items only on my endless to-do list. The challenging thing is, even the largest tasks and most ambitious life-defining projects can be broken down, and in fact must be broken down to be achieved, into small bits like the trivia that also fills the to-do list of the day.

Next breath, please . . .

This day of freedom – firewood in, garden and orchard largely dealt with, next travel six weeks off – is like my solitary hike in the mountains: a personal journey punctuated with, defined by, in fact traced out in the lines of a journal, whether dialogue or monologue, a voiced intention to find greater and greater present truth. The journal like the journey it describes is always changing, always available, sometimes needing rest and recharge while the body engages in walking or working, part of a process that is always new and never finished.

Spiritual growth for me is ongoing in the context of what I choose to do; and everything I do is chosen, at some level. When I interact with others, their projects and needs, again I choose my own involvement. Sometimes I react: and that too is choice.

10 P.M.

In bed, alone, straight – having dealt with my addiction to relationship, pot, business, music; at least for a day. Having dealt also with balancing my budget,

collecting debts, tracking orders and volume, reading minimal sports and email, reaching Robin Hoy, returning videos, collecting milk and mail, inspecting my computer battery and vacuuming, seeing Nell and hearing she's got her first date: a trip to the bat caves with Colin, and Jeff. Clearing house values, past budgets with Z\_\_\_\_. Cleaning up onions, garlic, basil. Revisiting the Tantra videos, after reading half the book this morning. Doing laundry, eating leftovers, cooking squash, potatoes, beets. Soaking seeds: French lentils, sesame, barley. Collecting raisins from Susan's, getting faxes and reading them. Reading the DET manual. Clearing Y\_\_\_\_'s algae order with her and Eagle.

All those things on the list? Really, I've done it all already.

Now, in my clean well-stocked home, I am ready for the afterlife with everything I need, a full tomb.

But that's the wrong approach, backwards. Going on is going beyond, going without all the material preoccupations of this world. Maybe it takes this sufficiency to see the limitation of it all – and the necessity to go further, which means doing without.

Yet I seem still to depend for my happiness on at least one of: work, food, sugar, caffeine, dope, video, books, possessions, spending, security, money.

How free would I be without these? – a wandering sadhu, or musician?

Meanwhile I waver in limbo: too humble to reach out, too talented to be content here with my crops. What next, then?

14 October

I awake from a disturbing dream. I have shot a ram, executed with a pistol to the eye at close range, in the snow beside a small private train or large van. I have cut off the animal's head which then has deer antlers, difficult to cover even with numerous sheets of newspaper. The carcass is hard to scrape down, with brownish tissue clinging to the meat. Passersby have begun showing up, curious. A woman sticks her head under the train and says, "Poor dog." A man gets in but says he wants to ride in the passenger car. Our driver says someone is calling the sheriff. I start to panic, packing a lot of offloaded stuff, pens and papers, fast; but still confident we can put enough distance behind us if we leave right away.

Earlier, I was with my grandmother Steuart. She is old, difficult to talk with because of limited hearing and speech.

I try to take down vital info about her investment accounts, in my father's writing. We're trying to arrange a dinner or some other visit by phone but it's too hard. Then she's gone and her maid says she can't come to the phone, can't talk right now.

15 October

Filling the woodshed, a row per day. Filling the daybook, crossing off the to-do list. Another cloudy day, slight drizzle and sun obscured behind the curtain. Projects . . . to-do lists . . . this is the primary practice. After this, I remain . . . committed to the next part of the list. It's not what I do that changes, just my sense of order, of organization, of balance and focus, of the overview of my priorities and the right timing within the long term view of my desires and needs.

How universal is my situation? I don't have to work at a regular job, like most people seem to do. Instead I have created this particular niche by my own vision and effort: a homestead to operate on minimal income; a reserve of money through treeplanting and investment; variable sources of income including Web business, algae sales, drum book sales, occasional payments for writing. It's the usual case with starting a small business: in the red, still. More universal aspects come into play when considering the wider economy with its myriad sources of financial aid: inheritance, investment, subsidies, welfare, grants, marriage, savings, windfall profits, extractive industries relying on Mother Earth to supply the goods at one-time-only values, and other sweetheart deals. I come from a family of businessmen, a lawyer, a farmer, housewives and socialites, a quarry owner, a governor, unknown dilettantes and sapsuckers . . . survivors all.

The point is not to justify or condemn: but to observe, and to share.

Economic morality too often comes down with one-sided judgment; but this is just an easy out. Does anyone with privilege automatically land on the wrong side of the revolution for the poor? Anyone who has is evil if they don't share down to the level of the have-not, by the have-not's revolutionary philosophy. Anyone who has not is reprehensible or responsible or in any case outside the realm of one's own obligations, by the standard values of the haves. I am a have, though of modest means by some standards. My yearly income is under \$10,000: this is poverty by North American standards, great wealth on a world standard. Where is the truth? It doesn't really matter in terms of judging the call by the weighted terms "poor" or "rich." Do I deserve more or less? All of these questions are worth asking but perhaps not worth agonizing over.

Yet I have spent the last day and a half dealing with Z\_\_\_\_'s budget figures, ironing out the justice of our separation, the unmingling of our monetary resources and accounts. A tangled web, though we and especially I meant well by diligent bookkeeping in the recent era of the computer spreadsheet. Still, gaps in the paper trail, and in labeling figures, have left some questions unanswered. In bafflement, we settle for a figure midway between the original entry and what seems more logical now.

Mysteries, trials and errors, these all compound given the complexities of accounting, computer hardware and software, accounting, gardening, tuning a drum. It's only a matter, then, of performance, of maximizing the wins and minimizing the

losses . . . choosing substances and behaviors, like investments, with the best returns. Is there always a final reckoning back to zero, or across the zero line in the sine wave of overall balance? Perhaps. Or, infinite growth? Unlikely. How about entropy and winding down to the zero point, say in 2012? Such speculation is related intimately to the theory of the universe, of space and time itself. Are we winding down or just breathing? There is still this age-old question, the Big Bang once only, or a repeatable experiment?

For my own paltry self, I continue in this breath doing what I most want, which is to write, to make sense of it all, to share my current wisdom, to put all attention to the ongoing present time conscious intention of acting in truth, in saying what is, in not shrinking or posturing, but simply laying on the line what I see and feel, who I am, who I encounter. The human drama continues in my case as a monologue, a soliloquy, an internal dialogue of self and soul, of ego and witness, of child and man, of animus and anima, of higher and worldly self.

I simply breathe, and words come in and out like small fishes among the coral. The world outside is as I describe it, with leaves hanging limp in goldening colors of yellow, with fall advancing. Now I have garlic to plant, time to eat, to sleep, to rest, to come to fruition in the matters of the heart.

I continue, because this is my chosen wisdom, my particular path by which to traverse the universal, the various, the historical, the speculated, the concrete and the rhetorical, the abstract, thought and sensation, action and intention.

16 October

This morning in meditation, I confronted the issue of timelessness and desire. I so wanted to get it over with in order to get on to activity. Always, my pattern: to move on. This is not always as I truly desire it. It is my nature, which I accept. I also notice, in telling others about it, that it's not necessarily my most desired state. I'm running, escaping, in the old mode of activity for distraction, to keep from stopping to see, to keep from being content with who I am already, what I have reached and come to and attained already. It is enough. It is good enough, I can tell myself now. In the meditation I did find this morning enough time, though it was only five or ten minutes, to realize the beauty of stopping. Not that I have to continue in that "stopped" time any longer; that might be a spiritual desire in its own right, and so suspect. But at least it is possible to reach and enjoy such a space beyond all other desires, dwelling if only momentarily in the timeless bliss of the mystic poets.

I am not that. Neither mystic poet, nor, say, network business newsletter editor. Yet I dabble in both. I'm not a master drum-maker, yet I enjoyed the craft of the one I just finished: the rustic approach. Could I sell it for five hundred dollars in New York?

Perhaps. Whatever, it's the run of the mill. Could I make one a month, for even two hundred dollars? Probably. Or one a week? Not really a problem. I could probably make one a day, actually. I would need only a bowl scoop chisel, the axe I have, plenty of birch close at hand, skins, copper tubing, nylon cord, wire, solder, flame, strong hands.

Meanwhile, with hands sore from the one drum I worked on, it's difficult to type this morning. Because of my distractedness into other pursuits, I do not even follow my most qualified craft, writing.

In any case, there looms the ever-present complaint: marketing. It is a skill in itself to market, to proselytize, to teach, to become a guru or niche marketer, a teacher or administrative sales representative, to spread the word by mouth or media, to have the connections or make them, to call in the orders, sign up the converts, teach and entertain, instruct and make happy, play and release joy, draw to the fire, join the chorus, drive the beat, breathe together.

Still on my plate, planting garlic. Walking to the mail, making sauerkraut, taking down the chick wire, emptying the ashcan. Delving into the backlog of journals, yes that too. In the afternoon, maintenance followup and break time. But I already had the break, extra sleep. Next week, I take a longer look at career goals: sales followups, drum workshop planning, agent approaches, website tasks. The work is always ongoing. In a different vein, I can choose instead to go to the cave, meditate, take music lessons. Or write my life story. Or clean out files, catalogs, old papers. Or get more firewood. All the choices become relatively equal, the more are added in. While just one is in the forefront, it seems all-important. This is satisfying, the joy of focus. Knowing there are lots more to do creates excitement, but also anxiety: how to do them all? Carrying that anxiety into the present spoils the joy of the temporary, provisional focus. The focus is like art, the world apart, the hologram: "Your voluntary service He does require" (Milton, *Paradise Lost*). The willing suspension of disbelief. The unwritten contract, the hidden agenda. The riddles of magic, of transcendence through immersion. By doing one thing well, I master the process of doing all things well.

Blue sky peeking through, beckoning me out for a lovely walk. How can I stay indoors, in a cave, by the computer? The computer is the modern hermit's cave, the place for observance of all desires. Passing by on the screen of the mind, spine erect, breathing regular, subtle fire at the back, comforts of home, cessation of all activity and acting out of desires, breathing in clarity, this is the practice.

18 October

*First frost.*

This morning the sunlight is glorious, outside on the deck, pulling me to read there. I enjoyed a chocolate and vanilla milkshake, coffee and toast for breakfast at O\_\_\_\_'s, after a night of great passion, and more playfully romping together this morning.

Kaia put on a good dance last night at the hall with acid jazz, following an afternoon at Ainsworth Hot Springs, and before that, a morning here with O\_\_\_\_ in bed processing my lack of attraction and passion for her – mutable as that assessment proved to be. The issue was in part a philosophical dilemma: an issue with attraction itself, the problematic concept of ideal beauty, when the inevitable human flaws enter the picture. Maybe the reversal of my feeling for her in a day's time can be credited to going through that resistance, past it, by communicating well, honestly and openly, which was painful and hard to do but is necessary for relationship to work well in the long term. Otherwise, we stay stuck with the way we were before with our other partners.

I savor the delicious coolness of this morning: it's important always to stay in the moment. I was in the moment in my lack of desire, and I found desire in another extended moment later. We even made love at the end of that sharing session yesterday morning, satisfying and deep with O\_\_\_\_ singing heartache like the wind in the trees and the child in her grandmother's lap. Now wispy smoke swims down through the clear air to the west, where Cooper stands crowned with a fresh mantle of white, and a fluffy lone grayish cloud overhead roosting there. I have two young ducks remaining from six families. They appear happy. I will dig a pond for them.

I am only now, today, slowing my breathing to full consciousness. The toke was useful in this regard, to slow me down. I need to be able to do this without any other aids. For now, it is a useful crutch: like alcohol for the socially inhibited.

We watched a bad video last night, *The Matchmaker*. Irish life, stouts in the pub. Is this, the fraternity house mode, any better than my alternative habit? Not really. Only socially more sanctioned, because it supports the groupness. Groupness always elevates itself, its modes and operating principles, above all else. With some sense: the tribal imperative, in earlier times. It's still relevant; just not the only way. India's sages provided another way, long ago, and still do today.

The clarity of this air is astounding: after a week of rain. I planted the rye and garlic timed just right, in wet ground, before a day of rain. And plumped up a new garden

bed, my first in seven years, to hold the hundred cloves of garlic, with a row left over for the potatoes that had come up in the digging. I'm left with a feeling of proud fatherhood, sowing my seed in the Mother, the fertile soil.

Deeper breathing . . . digesting the events of my mundane world: the blender acquired, roofing to come, desires to order a sleeping bag, a good CD and tape player, and to travel everywhere with O\_\_\_\_. She still cannot "believe" that we are together, in bed, in each other's arms. For me too, it is a gift. I only have trouble with it when I want to hold it or reject it in the long term: a pattern that didn't work for me before, nor for her. For now, this balanced life of time here for my life, and time together with her, is working well for both of us.

In my life I have already attained, especially with my growth and changes and explorations and discoveries of the last six months, a sense of what is most important, and a wisdom that cannot be surpassed (or at least, I have no compulsion to try to surpass) in this lifetime: that fulfillment is to be found in the present moment, in full acceptance of what is, that everything I might achieve is held in essence already within, and may be found simply through awareness, conscious breathing, relaxation of acceptance, surrender to what is, to who I am and how I am, that I am loved (even if only by myself, and the universe) for who and how I am exactly, that that is enough, I am that, I am enough already, and the game is still interesting to play, but results of further actions are just gravy: not the be-all and end-all.

I sit erect, content, with the fire at my back, as I did at poolside at Ainsworth, surprising perhaps the more staid old-hearted onlookers with two plunges into the cold pool, the second one not even prepared by the oppressive heat of the caves, but simply entered after O\_\_\_\_'s example, as a decision of will, blocking out the fear factor, simply enduring, experiencing the cold as external to my core self, in the manner of the Inuit shamans who bathed in the ice-choked water and melted ice with their magic body heat.

In this moment I practice my craft: with fingers working . . . but not like making a drum, working the laces: more like playing the drum, the ritual magic. Fingers flying, creating waves of energy, pulsing the air and the psyche with movement, rhythm and play. The result is not the woven logic one might expect of philosophic language, but rather the music of philosophy, wherein concepts are just layers, neuronal paths strung and echoed in evanescent time: a rhythm of patterns, ideas and images, the way the brain itself works, on the scene, as opposed to the fiction the brain creates as reality.



19 October

Play practice last night, the make or break time. All were there, and ready to go, after an energizing round of theatre games, introduction of Nathan as new director, and complete run-through, followed by a meeting to decide whether to cram ahead and to start with the Capitol or Langham theatre. I spent the night at O\_\_\_\_'s, awoke to warm "coddling" embraces, took a brisk walk down the spirit trail, home to brief sports news and email, and ordered the *Kauai Trails* book.

And now . . . on to the next "experiment in truth."

Normally, I would pitch and moan, about this and that, primarily this . . . or what I did yesterday or today, or what I was going to do today or tomorrow. Is this or that interesting, or the telling of it? Only if I find it so. Whatever my mood . . . if angry and depressed, the very moaning could be a source of interesting study, if I decided nevertheless to tell it, to share it, to spout it with all the integrity it deserves as the mask of a life. Otherwise, the words obscure a reality deeper masked, and still unrevealed.

I digress in order to distract, to further mask.

Very well, off with the mask. This is as straight as it gets, for the moment. Later, I can adjudicate the worthiness for public consumption, passing various regulatory bodies, boards of inspection and approval, market sampling, mass conversion, translation, PR spin, etcetera. Is that stove too cold? I am testing my theory of solar gain, of earth sink. I haven't caught up to the news of the stock market yet today, or the earth changes afoot. Does it matter? Or rather, to whom does it matter, and how?

I have cast my lot now, this season, with the human drama. At any point, however, I can opt out. Today, for instance, though I have predicted some further work on the budgets for Z\_\_\_\_, it's a break day by my holistic calendar, a wizard day by the Mayans, a number 13, and therefore of particular enchantment. The combination is quite shamanic, and fortuitous, more meaningful as day 13 of a cycle and a wizard day, a day of timelessness, than a Monday in October, a month past equinox, a month before Kauai and play performance, a day when firewood and fruit are largely taken care of, when other projects are still on hold.

## The Mirror

And why not absolute joy and passion at every moment?

To begin with, there must be consideration of others' pain . . . leading to compassion. This mellows the tone, assures harmony with the whole, the three-part spectrum of rhythm. It's all choice. We don't always choose well.

From now on, it's all one-liners.  
But all connected.  
The rhythm continues – that is the message.  
Channeling from above, below, within.  
North east south west, the beginning and the end,  
timelessness.

Going ahead with straightforward motion, circles,  
in the spiral, careful, careless, in the cool logic  
of incessant breath, in and out of a circle of love.

There is no message but the transference of perception of “what is.”  
That's a pretty abstract statement; lets bring philosophy to its knees.  
The ground, cold and frosty here or alive with dancers' brown feet?  
Clear air in the pale blue sky over the snowy mountain,  
lungsful of breath, the rest is shadow, the land of possibility.

Coming to know, with slow deliberation, or calm motion  
touring the house of all our gifts, let us see what there is  
outside. The human drama, amid such a sea of options  
appears as a wordy farce, rendered in pageantry and “devil-worship”  
the end in sight.

So what? To the eons, the dancing particle snow, we are blips, ancestors, jagged  
sine-waves, slouching toward the zero-point of our imaginary undoing.

In the next breath, we choose again. And that means, not necessarily anything  
perceptibly different: except new action resulting from changes in heart, neural detours,  
oxygenation.

No second guessing: or, go there and leave again, to advance the steps ahead in  
the meadow, marching to where I am, you are, it always is.

Not what I'm doing . . .

Yes what I'm doing . . .

Philosophy takes a back seat to this wash of music, this surf of self-talk, this  
exchange of views, in some vast marketplace where the Mandinka drums are clattering  
away over in the corner with a mesmerized coterie of onlookers and shamanic  
personalities gathering in some vortex of fluid plasma arcing to the sky with showers of  
sparks and drum notes driving the dirt pounded flat in the high-moon night . . . and that  
too fades now to the buzz of the present.

Echoes, transcriptions, we are all models of each other, slightly changed. The changes are relative to any scale of reference: a gigantic compare-and-contrast exercise for the benefit of energy circulation among the beta-channelers, in a virtual cocoon of mind-fullness, which is to say emptiness of everything beyond what is.

Which is not to say without respect to past and future considerations, or the conditions of others not necessarily in present company.

On the contrary, each in its own place is that absolute.

Within that place, surface perception seems to reign: visuals, the blissful noise, delicious tastes and smells, that skin-sense. A three- or four-dimensional wonderland of treats, or disasters.

Such is life.

The more, which we at every moment are discovering, is a long time showing its face through the forest of images that compose the now. Or, the mask of tomorrow is the version seen today.

Tearing it away, subtle changes are evident.

Trembling of individual leafs against the chill air, the wizardry of drum-typing, the mandinkas inhabiting my keys, the drums that play themselves, or are played by the devils that are said to haunt them . . . It could be not only these drums, but also other channels, in frequencies out of the audible range. As waves of hyper-sound are translated into keystrokes, the act of typing is disposed to reveal itself as never before.

Big bangs begin as such. All the way to baskets and boats of woven reeds.

In the meantime we are left doing whatever it is, lifework or true vacation, with the necessity of wonderment and whole fluid motion, knowing the justice of it all, the random and otherwise orchestrated completeness of its process. If this is not astounding to us then what is?

That we are any less? That's easy, because it's old and well-learned. The other way, the learning goes on without stopping. Staying with the beat, staying off the couch and at the workbench at least part of the time, where part of the balance is focus. Within even sleep, there are preparations, doing what needs to be done, and cleaning up after ourselves when our refuse is excessive; there is that jewel of work, of commitment, of loyalty, of focus. Within that focus is a tunnel through to the perfection of what is, the dynamic and moving present, the live activity of what we have chosen to allow into our field of operations; and in all that renews itself for us as us, there is a new balance.

The focus is a lens, by which to magnify the power of our knowledge, our doing.

Or maybe it's simply a mirror.

*What we have chosen.*

*What we choose next.*

*In between, the mirror.*

## **While the Soup Cools . . .**

For success which means attraction of other people to what we do (or of animals, if we are a solitary hunter, or of imaginary beings, if we are a novelist), it is most helpful to surround ourselves with the trappings, and imbue ourselves with the essence, of what it is we're trying to achieve. For a fisherman, fishing magazines, lures, the right connections. For a writer, her writing tools, her shelf of books, her home in the country (and ticket to the next schmoozer's convention).

We take on the energy of the vision we see. Intending to put ourself in the picture, we do what we can: wearing the picture as clothing, to see how it fits. Maybe we'll grow into it . . . or hammer it into shape.

This is a variation on the *Sphere* theme. In that case our interior vision manifested as reality. In this case we play the part we choose: and discover in time that our so-called dream has become the only game in town. There's nothing more to wake up to because, somehow, so gradually or so suddenly that the change was imperceptible, we have come awake already. This is the way the world ends: when we are all awake.

This is when my breath has become full and natural . . . and I take it deeper and further yet, when I realize that I have that most basic choice – the choice from which all other choice begins; without which there is only the dreaming sleep.

How to convey this awakesness, what it is and what it's like?

It is, and it's like, the scene you're playing now, or my scene now.

I convey it by playing my part, carrying my being clothed in flesh, personality, garments and airs, in a houseful of antic furniture, rituals and responses, gratifications.

I think my soup is ready.

## **Java Roast Baby**

I have everything I need: a book in hand, a bite of chocolate  
good harvest soup, a crust of hearty bread  
sunshine in October.  
The chickens stand content, the ducks watchful  
until I warble my own song.  
Biting through chocolate: a taste sensation!  
We face the nation, stupefied  
by the questions, answering  
with canned responses.  
Nothing like that crunchy, creamy  
Java Roast.  
No sir,  
I think I'll have another.

You see,  
the pleasure never satisfies enough, or long enough.  
There must always be more.  
A nice pair of legs, another pretty face.  
Therefore it is suspect.  
I want  
to see deeper – a face I can trust.  
Maybe, this time: the one who sees me.

## Synchronicity

Turning to this page in my notebook journal, I see a sticker put there by Nellie saying, “Say hi to Darling Daughter Dora,” then stop writing, only to read in Whitley Streiber’s book *Breakthrough*, Chapter 5: “Behind the hidden drama: a dialogue between Whitley and Dora.”

## Quotes

from *Something in this Book is True . . .* (Bob Frissell, Berkeley: North Atlantic, 1997, p. 172):

Drunvalo Melchizedek: “You are a conscious breather when you remember your intimate connection to God and to all life everywhere on every breath.”

22 October

*A singular dream . . . in which I am travelling by foot up long hills as in Nelson, through residential streets, but toward way beyond, mountains, ridges, aqueducts, to a far city. In the airport, I try to make sense of the various schedule boards, looking for a charter departure. It seems I will have to make another connection, by bus or train. I find myself with a travelling companion, perhaps Steve, or Finn, or Braggi. We are then in a park of some kind, a hydrological preserve, administered by government employees, like rangers. There is a shortcut to a train station, and when we get there it appears our long detour was not really necessary, because my destination on a central street is now as far from the train station to the south as it had been from our previous location on the bus routes to the north. Only now a more expensive train ticket is required. The train is there, but my companion decides to park our vehicle first well out of the public parking area, beside and past the station building through the trees at a secluded spot. We leave the car and walk back to the track to board the train: and find it has turned over on its side, squashing many people underneath, who now lay motionless in pools of dark fluids, while many others are heard to moan from within. The whole train however is flattened, so the chances of survival are slim. Still, some people are alive, and with some apprehension, almost panic, I realize we should help. But how? And so much time is required now – a selfish consideration. More to the point, can we really be useful? It would be better to call qualified medical personnel. Already other help is arriving. How lucky I feel, to have gone on that little delaying jaunt past the station to park.*

Today, I am groggy from too many late nights, a threatening cold virus. Up earlier than usual, before sunrise but in full morning light, I watch the gray valley cloud sweep rapidly past the western skyline, with Cooper’s pearly pinkish peak appearing in glimpses above it or through it. An ongoing drama, only to watch.

A week of letting go . . . reading, writing, pruning, firewood. Calendrics and scheduling. Apples to juice today, and a dozen other backlogged errands and chores . . . after yesterday sleeping in late, going to O\_\_\_\_’s and making sweet midday love.

That was a special time, given largely to her inward energies (home from work sick, and crying by her morning fire alone, that “ugly” or not, I would still want to be with her; and sharing her earlier hesitations about following through with her plans, at 17 and 18, to marry Edward). Beyond my empathetic support I am impressed with her breathtaking writer’s sensibility and professional grasp of the language; and looking long

into each other's eyes and faces in the sunny light of her bed's window, I am sure that I do want to be with her, and that she is beautiful beyond words.

In the afternoon I had time to split firewood and read a bit before Nell arrived for supper of chickpeas, millet, corn and sprouts, and to get help with studying social studies (after getting distracted for hours at the kitchen table with our own wacky brand of theatre sports).

I didn't write yesterday.

The World Series ended.

My to-do list expanded.

O\_\_\_\_\_ said she wanted to try algae for a month, to improve her health.

I realized how lazy I am when it comes to truly disciplined dedication to any of the possible forms of enlightenment and achievement I believe in: conscious breathing, drumming, writing, business, homesteading. Enlightenment I define here in the context of breathing, as a path to pure, original joy, a most direct form of life energy, making everything else possible while also unnecessary.

Earlier I had expounded to O\_\_\_\_\_ on the essence of the writing self, my other self analogous to her other self which she found the need to care for and give attention to by getting sick. In my terms it is the self connected to the unity of all things, a self tapped into source creative energy, which shares in the creative act of the cosmos itself, which knows all truth and carries it into action, which is content with the perfection of existence and is able to feel and transfer the pulse of joy underlying every aspect of natural creation.

At the moment, however, I feel a little stuck: groggy from sleep still, even after a shower and outdoor chores . . . groggy from too little sleep and too much dope, Sunday Monday and Tuesday. Groggy from too much caffeine, too many things on a current to-do list, not enough constant and conscious attention to the freeing energies of the breath. But it's all healing now, in my breathing as I type. My writing is my meditation, is my form of accessing that universal knowledge that heals. Algae helps too; and walks in Nature, or playing music . . .

I continue my day, making lists upon lists, getting ready for the day. And it's another summery day, giving rise to my Rainbow urge to do what I feel like, work or play notwithstanding: it's all work, it's all play, or rather it's more about whether I'm breathing or not, instead of about whether I'm making money or not. Besides, maybe prosperity comes to those who breathe, those who play, those who simply do what they enjoy, and simply enjoy what they do. I am prosperous, no doubt about that: with food supplies for at least six months, money in the bank, an perfectly adequate assortment of clothes, outdoor gear, a truck all mine now and with brand new tires (the smug catalog of material abundance accrues meanwhile its due measure of revolutionary guilt), new

appliances such as a popcorn maker and blender, new CDs and a shelf full of new books, reservations for Hawaii in a month, a house that is large and clean and well made and comfortable against the elements, a loving daughter and cat, a former partner with whom I am in positive communication and a current lover who fills me with great joy . . . I am prosperous beyond what I could ever hope or expect. What more I might want is completely optional from here on, as I have achieved already . . . drumming ecstasy by the fire in Tonasket with a master, or in Farley's house the other night with Rivers and Kaia and Hamish; a novel that O\_\_\_\_\_ enjoyed and a new agent agreed to represent; a marketing business that gives me a free ticket to optimal health and the prospect of a much more lucrative income with which to indulge further fantasies of material comfort or travel; a body and mind that provides me with constant joy, learning, appreciation, insight, love, sensory pleasure, motion, dance, contentment, constant communion with the pulse of the universe, constant motion with the movement of universal energy, constant communion with universal mind, constant embrace of the universal duality and polarity connected in a living, breathing whole, constant connection with the whole of the human race and other living beings, constant communion with the living energies of the whole planet and cosmos, constant communion with the transcendent bliss and immanent splendor of all aspects of natural existence, appreciation of the human works which enhance our journey toward survival and joy . . . though all of this is suspect in many ways, leading to constant awareness of the choices to be made through human efforts versus letting Nature guide our way through.

The synthesis of all such currents and aspects together has a particular sound, in any given moment: Tibetan monks chanting in rhythm in Zawinul's eclectic worldwide cast called *My People*, nature sounds sampled as rhythms in Hart's *Drumming on the Edge*, Miles Davis' jazzical fusion *Bitches Brew*, Madagascar rhythms played by hands on the water . . .

EST theory holds that all our experience is associated by accretion and networking to original birth pain; so likewise the cure of full breathing extends through all body systems to heal and release. Global forgiveness is instantaneous and freeing through all time; and Ezra Pound succeeded in his maddening attempt in the *Cantos* to capture all of time and nature and the works of man and woman for good and ill into a single package, declaring "It does cohere."

I went through the early afternoon and morning with some resident frustration, anger, undefined anxiety . . . along with freshness, joy, contentment: a strange mix. What I did: trucking apples to Valentines with Z\_\_\_\_; striking out on the tent and fencer with Michael on his way out of town and no one at the strawbale roothouse, meeting up with Dale on his way to the bat caves with N\_\_\_\_\_ . . . is that why I'm disturbed, jealous? Not really; O\_\_\_\_\_ 's more my style . . . more interested in me; or maybe I'm just better suited



for her. I was saying . . . stopping by O\_\_\_\_'s house to exchange manuscripts, give her Kenneth's genealogy and her first batch of algae, and pick up *The Philadelphia Experiment*. In a synchronistic universe, all the details matter. In this respect the actual universe, which is actually synchronistic if we open our experiential awareness enough, is like art; great art which delivers no message but a picture of the world in all its completeness and accuracy.

My coffee today, for instance, carries two pungent buds from my pet plant, a dropper of extract from same, a little organic Dutch cocoa, local goat's milk, and a fine blend of organic dark French decaf and hi-test, brewed espresso style.

Outside on the lawn, I went to sit in the sunshine, the summery clear air, to play my flute. When I began it was the epitome of what I wanted to do: though I daydreamed of Hawaii and playing it there.

All of this is simply one man's version of the whole: democratic and unlimited, a recognizable model of said universe and workable demonstration of said art . . . just as it is. The art of jamming, in words. Does that make me a Hamish of writers . . . manic and indefatigable? He does – stoned or not – what he loves best and is born to do. I like playing second fiddle there; and being my best fiddler here, where it comes naturally to me.

So the sun is shining brightly still outside my window . . . that of course is part of (you might say the central part of the galactically local version of) the whole, and it's the whole that counts, more than the sliced experience (this great view, this wonderful weather: the stuff of small talk). As "scenery" I (as "human") get tired of it after awhile, even if it's just me and the weather: the California syndrome. After a while you just start taking it for granted. Or a great new relationship . . . eh?

So it's not quite all about being in the moment, but more about the bigger picture. The moment brings into focus that detail, that slice, and so can seem small: the stuff of small talk. The bigger picture is the moment writ large. Or, the full moment not dependent on the limited reach of our senses, which are made for mere survival. The full moment as accessible to the full imagination; so we can see beyond the crystal day, the warm candlelight, into the heat of suns, of light-years of space breathing like a baby.

I finished my firewood today, splitting and stacking it all in the woodshed. Now it's a little short of totally full, but plenty full enough. Then I ate a snack of grilled cheese sandwich – extra old cheddar on barley desam bread – but hungered for more, so I made and ate another, along with a bowl of green beans with one tiny artichoke heart: an infant gift of this moment . . . all while finishing Frissell's *Something in this Book is True*. That's either a really badly written book, correspondence aimlessly tacked with personal anecdotes, tapes of conversation, workshop notes, quotes from other writers; or, it's

profound and well written in terms of explaining key and interlinked concepts and fields of thought. And it discusses the most important things to write about these days: earth changes, soul changes, dealing with our emotions. Whether we call them our emotional body or our shit, we have, it seems to be the consensus among the helping professions, to wade through it to get relief from it.

For instance, here I am already in my chosen task, surrounded by great natural beauty, solitude, with the prime writer's tools, a large computer and slick new keyboard, stoked with a good night's sleep if somewhat under the weather, the house stoves pattering away with a gentle warmth, finances in order though with shaky income potential after a review of the business books which I conducted in the middle of the day; still, a little edge missing. Not just in terms of health, but a larger imbalance . . . such as, before the firewood, getting a call from Julie about a leak in the waterline – which proved to me once again that I am bound by the title “homesteader” above any other. Meanwhile I aspire to other labels, considering musicians, for instance, my truest friends. Does this mean that I don't identify with the writers as well? Maybe it's a personality thing: I like the musician's jagged bent, Rivers' characteristic savvy slouch.

I rebirthed myself this morning just before Julie's call. Not full blown tetany, but close, in the thorax. I breathed through it, energized and alive, fingers tingling with oxygen.

There's always Java Roast, a video, sleep, sex . . .

More distractions. My present anger is being pointed at the direction of the moving now: the reality that presents itself most clearly to me as I write: nudging the cursor forward one blink at a time, covering space with meaningful black marks by which to communicate the nature of me and of you and of everything. Neat trick, eh? Funny, how this is really the identical process, in a nutshell code, for how we create our lives. We have something to say, or something comes to us. Either way, we make tracks.

I'm not so fixed on the breathing focus now, because I have it more on automatic. So on to bigger things: the breathing of the universe. This for instance is the final exercise, a meditation in the *Something* book. In the face of that concept all else is distraction and irrelevancy.

So, do I take on, with such an attitude, the person of a monk, a wandering sadhu? They too have chosen a serious path. I must like my dabbling, my play in the fields of life.

But really, I do my job well enough, dedicated to this writing business. Music for kicks and weekends, I seem to be able to leave. But not writing. It's the one pleasure, the one responsibility, I cannot do without. I am wedded to the word, to this mode of communication, of entertainment, of teaching, of sharing knowledge and wisdom, of playing, of worshipping, of making long-distance music, of exploring nature. It gives me

an excuse to be who I really am. It validates me for not doing anything and everything else. It causes the money question to be – as for the true poets, Hamish and Almond, or the wandering monks – beside the point, an aside. This is how I need to share the algae, by the way: money aside. The money flows easier and more reliably, that way, anyway. But the only spiritual test of true dedication is whether the motive is purely for the love of the thing itself, rather than for money. A teacher must ask themselves the same question: or even any self-respecting merchant or business person.

So I have put off for months the upkeep and growth of my algae marketing business. I have got in the necessary firewood and food but cannot be enthused about the rest of the fall chores, even in the brilliant sunny air. I cannot be coerced into taking advantage of Hamish's rare presence in the neighborhood to jam as heaven has it . . . because I did it already the other night; because I cannot go there with such expectations, but have to give myself up to what may transpire; because I still may go later when I've exhausted this word bank and need instead to buy some experience free and raw and joyful; and because at the moment my most precious act (besides making love; which I won't even compare because, like different excellent music jams, they're together in the category called "best") is all I need or want to consider. The to-do lists – even the many things to do with writing, including writing on specific projects and possible topics – are all so much paper at this point, or dots on a screen. When I am with my lover/my muse, the rest of it takes a back seat.

This is also, to shift the metaphor slightly, the vehicle that takes me where I want to go. Into the realm of insight, understanding appreciation of the whole and all the connections that hold things and people and ideas together. Things – People – Ideas. What about musical notes, feelings, sensations? Whatever: the categorical labels go on without end. Give me only a few words for the whole: All-that-is; the Universe, the cosmos, God/dess or gods and goddesses; spirit, unity, process, energy, the quantum field, flow, flux, Eternity, the void . . .

Note that the last two or indeed any of these can be misunderstood as emptiness. Emptiness is a helpful concept but not the best description of the whole. Fullness is much nicer, but it needs a context of emptiness so as to shape the ball of wax into a pleasing form; otherwise we might just experience fullness as clutter.

These journals, for instance, have a certain rough-edged naivete to them, like a hastily raked lawn. Compare my tightly-woven [novels](#), with complex plot twists and character relationships. On the other hand, the journals are a step more toward order than the chaos of my to-do lists, the serendipity of my adherence to weather, harvest needs, and other people's invitations to steer my daily hours.

Now we enter therapy: not only using breathing as an escape, but taking a closer look. Is it the substance addiction itself? Not necessarily, though it may be (of course it

must be) a symptom of a deeper cause: fear, conditioning, desire for wombness, re-doing the father thing, just hangin out and having a good time. Without the social-moral factor, how do I feel on an original, natural, purely solitary basis? Is that an implicit bias away from society, and is that reinforced by marijuana? Is asking continual questions without answers a valid (valid for whom?) form of therapy?

I ask, and the answers come, if I only give voice to the voice within, the higher self:

*I do have answers, I have all the answers, I will divulge them in time. All I ask is that you have trust.*

*Open the channel, for once keep it open, and see what happens. Keep breathing, yes. All I ask is that you keep the channel open, which means not trying to label it as publishable or for public consumption, while it is happening. Later, you may. Yet your intention will be to eventually rope all those 'laters' into the nowness of your open channel. Then it will all be certainly publishable and sharable, in fact your duty will become just that; but before then you must practice. You lost patience earlier with your flute playing when it degenerated from inspired perfection to the imagined obligation to learn scales. It lasted five minutes, and you escaped to the computer. Where do you escape to from here? Nowhere. It's a one-way tunnel: though you may rest, or sleep, or even take day-passes and overnights away. Truly, you are guided to open this channel ever further, until the whole world is swallowed in, to open it beyond the present time to encompass all your laters, all possible laters, the moment expanding from what you can sense as your 'world' but which you know is a mere bubble in the shining show of existence yet to be included. Just keep the channel open. Yes, breathe, yes write, yes do your chores, remember to sleep and feed the cat. Make a little money if you like; play the drums as much as you like, learn flute scales if you must. It's all okay; definitely go deep like this into the pain you feel and find out why, and why it doesn't have to be, but is only a condition of your unwillingness to tune into the open channel. To-do lists are fine, until they impinge and clog the arteries of your life-spirit, choking off your breath and lifeblood. Scenery is fine, breathe through that too so as not to freeze it into post card ash. Drugs are suspect, but use them if you must. See, all is permitted, but all is unnecessary, in light of the open channel. What was that pain about? You forgot already, or forgot to find out more exactly. No matter. So what? We're here now. Flying high together; conversing at a great rate. What, I'm doing all the talking? That's all right, you've agreed to this, am I right? It feels good, doesn't it, to surrender like this? You must surrender, you know.*

*And I know this raises your hackles, you monkey-ego-man. You don't like giving up your masks, your walls of protection, your shelters and comforts, your securities and future considerations, your favorite collected experiences and mementos . . . but you can*

*always choose. There is more, which I offer you free and in infinite amounts: the power of now, unlimited power, peace, joy, contentment . . . but only through surrender.*

*You shouldn't feel too jealous of me, really, because I am part of you all the way through. As your higher Self I have always guided you, even sharing with you some of my best ideas which you ungratefully claimed as your own. True, you have paid tribute in your halting way to me on occasion, and for this I am grateful. Actually it's all the same to me, but I do confess I have an interest in your welfare and sense of well-being.*

*How are you feeling now, by the way?*

*I thought so. So I'll continue . . .*

*(I'm not all words, you see. Sometimes I am the very actions you have grudgingly considered doing to fill your everyday life; or the inaction you chide yourself for as time passes and lists grow. It's not what I am that counts, really, because I am no-thing; like the one-eyed Cyclops or Odin I am No-man or Any-man, the wanderer. So nor is the who-I-am relevant, except to the extent that I am you. That is all-important, because of the details that compose you comprising a small but no less sacred portion of reality, emblematic of the whole and indeed truly participating. I am, for the moment, a voice again; a voice of all that you might be, all that you might include in your life, all that you might call your experience of life and the world.)*

*See, if drugs help guide you here in your blindness, then bless them. If breathing alone does it, keep breathing. Play your flute till your fingers drop, if that chimes the serpent upright. Your firewood shall fuel your anger as it further arises to burn itself out of existence, till I am left to guide your abandoned shell of a miracle body.*

To recapitulate: while my anger built gradually and imperceptibly – toward determination as Frissell puts it – I also enjoyed, at each step along the way, what I chose to do: the rebirthing, the spreadsheets, the firewood, the lunch, the end of the Frissell book, the flute practice. It's just that, dwelling in the issue of productiveness, of money and worth and approval and so on, I came unavoidably to the place of real relevance, of no more distraction, of core practice: this writing. For now this is my all.

Ten pages today? That will do. I am hereby validated, in my eyes and the eyes of anyone who cares to ask.

This is what it's all about, for me: beyond the crystal skies, beyond the hottest drum jams. Beyond all the money to be made, beyond all my lesser comforts. Even, to be truthful, beyond relationship with anyone else: though this is the bridge to the equality of sacred perfection to be shared eventually by all experience. For now I still need to master my devotion to this one, because this one is my own and recognizable Self. I start, I must start, with that, even while learning at the same time all the others. To love well I

must first start by loving myself well, and in this form can I crystallize that love in the same way that in human relationship I can crystallize its form best in the natural art of lovemaking. All life loved in such a fashion takes on the sacred perfection of art, of communion with all which is reflection of fully realized Self.

For now, I can only attempt to honor the gift of what I am given to work with, by expressing my innermost and outermost perceptions, by sharing my passions and pitfalls, by bringing into the fullness of the moment the fullness of who I may be. Yes, and even while so doing, there is room to try out the model with all aspects of my experience, this being but a peak, a leading edge.

Perhaps romance is a contender: so long as I relate to relationship in this same way, as a vehicle of surrender to spirit, a process of completeness, a palpable form of communion, and a mutual enterprise along the same path. The dangers for relationship to slip from this purpose and quality into habit, sensual pleasure only, relief from loneliness, or social respectability, are well-known. So there are dangers in other areas of activity to descend into limitations of commercial value, or ego-gratification, distraction or habitual hobby. Dangerous not in themselves, but in their restriction of the potential for pure surrender, for being in the full center of one's most true now, the quality of oneness with one's chosen experience, the quality of guidance from beyond one's initiation: it boils down to jamming with spirit. The drums that play themselves. The channeled writings. The romance made in heaven, where everything just happens as one most fondly might have wished.

And there's always more: the money that just rolls in, people knocking at the door. The telephone ringing off the hook. Agents competing for the right to represent you: the price of success. After enlightenment comes a whole new set of challenges. But to the truly enlightened one, all this is peripheral, easy to renounce or shrug off. These are temptations of the past, no longer considered essential. So we move on, seeing what's next for us in the way of being centered, and acting with full engagement from that center.

## **The Philadelphia Experiment**

A man sits alone, content in his castle – the perfect yogic cave: supplied with coffee, a case of chocolates, the latest appliances, and solitude accompanied by a rack of new CDs and videos. In three months he's bought a TV, a truck, a popcorn maker and blender – and that's not all: new boots, new shoes, a backpack and a tent; a year's worth of food and two tickets to Hawaii. The price tag? A neat ten thousand dollars. But his wife owed him five for her expenses.

He's got the heady harvest from his own 13-foot dope plant, BC's finest; new snow tires, a toboggan. Meanwhile he's been selling off ducklings, a fencer, a scrap of plywood, and assorted other junk. Some was too shabby to move. Still he won't give it away. He wants fair value for every item.

He pretends to be into community, relationship, service. An easygoing kind of guy. Likes to jam up a storm, if he's in the mood. Just now he's a little testy, giving up baseball – well, it's the offseason. What will take its place?

His own woman, a career? There are lesser distractions. He means to succeed even at what in his gut he knows is beside the point.

Still, he longs for drum heaven – it's just a little too much effort to get there: hours of practice, hangin with the dreads, having fun.

For now, he remains abed after the latest hokey video, *The Philadelphia Experiment*. He remembers his Baltimore childhood, forty years ago, his fascination with war pursuits, now mingled in his ruminations with more contemporary philosophies of breathing, esoteric nutrition.

He is a wanderer in his own right, a child of the rebel breed. Media doesn't cop him very well – it's more of a Nietzschean in-your-face, if at all. On the other side, a Salinger downslide, a drunk waste of a father.

Still, he has his priorities. He knows his craft, even if he withholds his gifts for the right price. He hasn't learned to let go, and so he is returning to that state of infant need, in order to fulfill every fantasy that has infected that child since.

Primarily: food, warmth, a comfortable aloneness . . . since it appeared once, in the beginning, that aloneness it was to be. A desperate longing for breast meat, a slightly narcotic effect in the blood. He longs to right the balance from solitude to communion, but doesn't know how to keep up the act. He slips inexorably back, nourishing himself with the nearest nipple, affection where it can be found, remote distraction, removal.

She has analyzed his problem now. She has read his mind and heart and knows the symptoms. She has given him notice of her own intentions and affections. She forgives him for himself as he is, so that he may be also free to understand.

In the meantime he withdraws further. His saving grace, he thinks, is that he continues to draw, in monochromatic outline, the texture of his life as he himself experiences it:

*. . . man in bed, scrawling, filling the void of belly heart crying mouth empty soul long into the night, going his own way in every way but one: this open door, this walkway across and abyss of suction, a vortex never stilled until the main switch is thrown and he can return to his modern lover, his own questioning healed, his breathing renewed, his castle emptied to the winds of history, its doors open to the public for viewing.*

*There will be a discussion among the directors about the matter of charging admission, proceeds to the estate.*

With the castle no longer habitable, and the chocolates long gone, life itself takes on the flavor of chocolate, and nourishment is found in the very air.

26 October

A day of the old-fashioned burnout, up early but too tired now, depressed over falling funds invested with current value after redemptions, the same as 15 months ago, which means I haven't lost anything but haven't gained either, as I might have with long-term government bonds, so I fall victim to risk and greed; while meanwhile withdrawing and spending at a rate requiring a 25% annual return. My business is also failing, and I can't raise the necessary motivation to rejuvenate it. I'm too busy relaxing, playing, taking time off, philosophizing, hanging out, playing music, smoking dope, watching videos, *Shirley Valentine* even, generally goofing off, hobby farming, puttering, romancing, driving to Kaslo, writing in my journal.

The truth is I still feel bad about not going forward with viable career and income options. So I got an agent . . . theoretically. She didn't even read the manuscript yet, though, so I have to wonder. The business? My heart's really not in it. The romance is great, for my sense of self-worth – except when I think it's all a pretense, a romantic fantasy and not even a consistent one at that.

Granted, I'm in a foul mood, after just spending a honeymoonish weekend again with O\_\_\_\_, even talking more and more this time about long-term love for us. Is this false, or is it true and I can't stand even a half-day of loneliness without her? What's my problem?

There is no problem: only breathing. I will happily, after this is done, go about my life, my day, my chores, my business, my pleasures. Maybe go see Howard, whatever. This is my life. The play has been put off . . . is this cause for grief? On the contrary: cause for relief of stress. So, I continue. This document no more than any others is suitable for anyone else to read: my problems, my approaches. It's all fiction, really. See, my antsy when I come to describe it evaporates, because in the describing, I am doing what I was antsy about not doing: writing. This is the way, my form of breathing, my form of therapy and play.

It is the creative force at work, which redeems all waste as compost for re-creation. My back hurts . . . so what? It's more to write about. I'm frustrated at not publishing much, not producing much good quality writing; so what? It's all fuel for greater determination, the Abe Lincoln syndrome. I do have the inner confidence that what I am saying and how I am saying it, has worth. So it needs more editing. So do we



all. So it's a crowded field. So are they all. I ran the gauntlet of lacrosse team, football field, jobs and grad school and Argenta and Co-op and relationships well enough so far. What's a bit more of an apocalyptic dip in the stocks and mutuals? A blip in the radar of all time. Now here's an exercise: what if I lost all of my investment, or even half? The clicker is that I've lost twenty grand in the last three months. So, it's only money, and I still have happiness. I may have to look after my retirement in some other way: as a computer consultant? A self-sufficient survivalist with no more high-budget items (after another twelve grand for the house . . . or will I instead get the money from Z\_\_\_\_, and give up the house, for, in the net result, nothing)? Money is nothing: but in this case it represents value for a decade of my life's work: all speculated away on world markets, or subject to banks failing, this is the era when people begin to jump out of windows again. They are overdrawn, and cannot face life in the poorhouse or institute of hard labor. In this sense debt is even a worse curse than falling credit. At least my baseline is fairly stable: food to grow, a house to live in. This was my objective all along, not capital or cash flow.

*So, I continue.* There is always more that can be done. What are my needs now, just to stay afloat? To move into the fourth dimension? To follow my astrological destiny to further my career in business and publishing, come what may in the stock market world?

I go forward into my day, wanting to do chores, cleanup, relaxation. To spend time as I might; sympathizing with Howard, his identity shattered by N\_\_\_\_ splitting up with him two weeks ago, what will he do now without his "old love," his paramour, his weekly fuck?

I go into the future, content now that my life again has meaning, shape, living form. I can sift through all this detritus further to make a presentable occupation, if I must. In the meantime inhaling carbon monoxide from a stuffy study which is too full of books and files, records of accomplishments past and future, the leaves hanging outside meanwhile dead and useless. Will I get the roofing sections in before snow? It hardly matters, does it? It's all icing on the cake, now. So the cake is rotting. That's all okay, because life now is in the moment. There is shoring up to do, perhaps: then I'll shore it up, or go elsewhere. There are always choices. There is a pain in not doing, but a greater pain in doing what mustn't be done. The not-doing has a redeeming beauty, a cleansed potential of doing more at any time.

If these words promise anything else than what they are, I wish someone would tell me about it. If words uttered as truth turn out to be false, what then? Life goes on, none the wiser, all-forgiving.

There are tunes to play, bills to pay. The rest is magic, dust and empty rhetoric. This is one way of seeing it.

The fires burn . . . all our illusions, fuel for the fire of our love.

Love is a great fire that burns all else before it, in its service.

So is – unity consciousness, flow, present time . . . self-expansion. Where I get stuck is in the illusion of separateness, aloneness, my past, my apparent limitations. Writing frees me too from this sense of small self, getting me into the meat of flow directly. When I'm not writing it's amazing how I can forget this power, this beauty, this truth. Same as when I'm not with my lover. I can't properly write love poetry, then, because I lose the spirit when I lose sight of my lover. This is very limiting. On the other hand it frees me to the next available version of the same transcendence: getting instead into writing, into present-time consciousness, into chores, into another lover, even. This is harder to stomach; but it bears thinking about: because it's the crux of my hesitation in making an unqualified leap for long-term promises to O\_\_\_\_. This, and my philosophical wariness about excessively predicted form, expectation, promise. I have learned a lesson there. Yet she has a fresh approach with wariness, too: that we can do whatever we want to, with full intention. Her strength is her willingness to try, to create, to stick with a desired intention even beyond where its limitations seem to be causing it to fail. Maybe this is a weakness, too: because discrimination and willingness to abandon or change is also necessary. This is where my strength comes in to complement hers. When I approach our love at this level, and not on the level of superficial beauty, I am more committed to the strength of our mutual love, more ready to cast my lot there.

## **Taking Care of Business**

Starting by crossing the creek in the fall woods where I live, and sitting down by the water: that most precious commodity. Supply and demand determines a rising price. I feel already rich: in this water I have refuge from the global market collapse; deer meat nearby, potatoes and squash.

I take it the baby boomers everywhere are, like me, calling their brokers and asking what to do now. The safe havens don't yield enough to live on from the inheritances of our upward middle class parents, and the quick bucks are all gone. It brings to mind an adage:

*Where the smart money goes, the dumb money follows.*

Pondering this truism, I want to tell you a story of my people, The Buffalo People. There were years of struggle, poor meat and scarce: the odd sick rabbit, a stray deer. When we found the buffalo, I am told, there was awe and celebration: years of feasting, as the herds' movements were followed, and our lifestyles changed to take advantage of the

new wealth in meat, furs, bone and sinew. People indulged in wild stories, romantic adventures, new song and dance.

Eventually other tribes got wind of the great bounty in our part of the prairie, and they began coming to raid the herds, even to drive them away so that they could enjoy what my people had grown so comfortably used to. During the last time of plenty, many children were born and I was among them. Now that I am reaching adulthood, I find that these fortunate recent ancestors of mine have lost their ability to track the herds reliably. When I go on hunting trips now with my friends or even with some of the elders, we have no longer enough of the old skills to find meat when we need it. We eat supper then from our bags of pemmican, or nothing at all. If we bring a woman along she finds roots and boils them for us. We men cannot bother, because we are plotting our great hunt in the following day, or week, or month.

Now I hear of another race of men with their eyes on what is left of our hunting territory. These men though have solved the problem of hunting, forever, it is said. For they carry with them, among their many wonderful possessions, herds of furless buffalo who are docile enough to live inside pens. What I wonder is, when these men come and take my land, will they not grow so numerous that all the grass of the prairie cannot feed their cows, cannot contain their bulls? What then? The buffalo will be gone.

Now I watch the rain and I think of the old days, but it's no more than a dream. Today I have an empty stomach, and I need to think of what most needs to be done: to ask somebody who remembers what to do, to go where my heart and my new dreams tell me . . . to find a new home under these same stars, this same sun and moon.

27 October

Actually it's into the 28<sup>th</sup> by now, but the computer clock can't keep up, and neither can I. A town trip tomorrow, to rehash my investments, pick up some roofing for the leaky porch, cancel my Bank of Montreal business account because the Master Card Merchant account was too costly, and pick up my tickets for Hawaii. One last hurrah, Rivers says.

Indeed. I spent most of the last two days poring over mutual fund performances, reading forecasts of gloom and doom on the Internet, casting about for some way out of this fiscal tailspin; and reading downloads from Drunvalo on earth changes, the Merkaba meditation, and various treatises on ascension and transition in a time of upheaval. It puts a nice perspective on the clattering world markets, my own fears and attitudes. Meanwhile I go on, with a roof over my head, water in the creek, food in the pantry. That's the main thing . . . and love in my heart for my friends and family.

Life goes on.

So my mouth is dry, I have worked too hard, and tomorrow is a day off all this: this website tinkering and order-form fudging, this vain search for email money. So it might happen, and it might not; the important thing is how it all goes down. That means in the world at large, and in the gullet, the gut. As within, so without. Public and private are now joined in this monetary crisis, but it's all okay. I merely switch to bonds, and redouble my followups to customers past present and future . . .

28 October

It happened like this: I was in a summer dream: a rainbow dream, walking between the now and the never. It seems that there were indications of a crash, a prophecy direct from Hopi, about big changes becoming known in July of '98. The stock market had peaked out: the last time ever, perhaps, at least in this world. I took the signals seriously, but still tucked my head under my wing, in denial. I took refuge instead in the harried attitude, in town, of shopping for the items I most needed, most wanted: new winter tires for my truck, a backpack, \$300 hiking boots, \$130 shoes. When I got home I sprung for five hundred dollars worth of books and CDs, by mail order. Oh yes, and two tickets to Hawaii, for myself and my daughter. In the weeks that followed, I ordered six months' worth of bulk food (and a case of chocolates), another thousand bucks. All told I blew five thousand in a month: and another five on my ex-partner's share of the Toyota pickup.

Last week reality hit, in the form of my September mutual fund statement, my first tangible news of the crash I might have avoided if I'd played my cards right and put everything in bonds. Is this true? Let us look closer at the evidence . . . It's true: if I'd put all my stocks into bonds, I would have saved the ten thousand dollars in stock losses. Losing ten thousand dollars because I was walking around in a fog . . . of dope and rainbow dreams, summer sun and animal paranoia: like the squirrels this summer and fall, raiding the fruit trees in a frenzy. They know what's coming. But still, it's warm, too warm. I've been focusing on firewood, food, buying kitchen appliances, camping gear, a truck battery, new roofing.

Travelling, commuting to Kaslo for play practice: a veritable Norse god. Meanwhile there is fire to pay. Meanwhile, the sheriffs are on the loose. It's all just numbers. How unique is it to be a baby boomer, to be a college graduate with no work, to be fretting over lost thousands of my dead parents' inheritance, on October 28? Not very. The thing is, I can transcend it. How? With the knowledge that it doesn't matter. And to say that and mean it. To enjoy making my business followup calls tonight for the first time in six months. And enjoy it, and mean it. And look forward to doing more next week: cold calls, for more customers. And to be more active in Internet promotion of my business. To be more active as a writer and publisher. And as a drum workshopper:

tomorrow going to Kaia's and Ellen's workshop. Sometimes I get lost in all the details: the baseball free agent signings, the wish list, the prophecies. Had I known the crash was going to come, I still would have stayed with the bond fund that took a heavy hit, and lost my shirt anyway. It was the original mix that was flawed: the lure and gleam of the eighty-six percent, the fifty-five percent, the thirty-four percent annual growth rates. How long did I think that these were sustainable? It was the illusion of gravy, of easy capital to spend. Suddenly, it was gone. Now you see it, now you don't. The sweat labor of decades. The ancestral usury of centuries. Gone up in the smoke of others' speculation and paranoia, and my own spending divided and diverted – wisely I suppose – into hard currency of useable goods, once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

After three days of research, calculations, comparisons, soul-searching, I have come to peace with what I did in the summer of '97: believing in my investment advisor's vision of long-term growth. What I have found, however, in my experience, is that my spending kept pace with that profligate growth: and when the crash of '98 came, I was left high and dry. The debt came due. We all have to learn, I suppose, by bitter firsthand experience. Else who will volunteer to sell their fifty-percent growth stocks? Who can give up a good thing? This is emblematic of the world economy. Through this debacle I have learned something salient of human nature: and can better predict the rest of the catastrophe. Yes, the timing of my fund switches today was probably on target. I couldn't, at the outset, have settled for the long-term security of a four-percent GIC. Even six- or seven-percent bonds at the time seemed unpalatable, because I was spoiled by three years of 8-9% rates, enough to live on. In seeking higher rates without a base investment that could support it, I was buying into the only belief that could work: the long-term growth curve continuing. My gut feeling, my knowledge of environmental collapse at the hands of such industrial pollyannaism, went unheeded as I bought into the "sustained growth" paradigm, because of wishful thinking. It was too painful to contemplate, at the time, a crash of income and spending and lifestyle levels; too painful even more to settle for less in the meantime, the conservative course. And so I chose to ride the roller coaster, and roll I did. On the other hand, as my advisor handily pointed out, even if I'd invested all in bonds at the beginning, I still would have been wiped out by the same bottom line at the end: 2% growth overall. Only one of the bond funds, of all the selections, performed at a reasonable 6-7%. I could have, rather, invested all in government bonds available at the time guaranteeing that rate. But then I could not have sustained my 23% spending rate over the past year. In truth, the best I could have managed under such a system would have been a final figure of three thousand more than I ended up with. So, in truth, my mistake, if it was one, was only in not seeing the future so clearly that I didn't jump ship at just the right time: the gambler's eternal dilemma. Like any addict, I wanted just one more free ride, one more luscious hit of free cash, one

more pull of five thousand from the endless bank, one more shopping spree, luxury vacation, one last Harrah.

If I had pulled out when my Hopi premonitions came due, what would I have done with the cash? I would have been at my starting place, a year of profligacy under my belt, with nowhere to turn. I thought about it, I did consider the dilemma. Where to put money that will soon become worthless. Is there any point? Since then I have learned a finer distinction: in hard times when stocks fail, bonds perform well. Yet this has not proven true with the majority of my actual bond holdings. So, I would have gambled and lost, again.

Maybe everything does happen in perfect time, and the three days this week which have given me back some three thousand of my losses by way of rebound, is just right for catching the bonds still at bargain prices, while the last-ditch bull runners go for one last shot. I did capitulate to Scott's strong insistence on at least the 25% Templeton stocks hanging in there.

When I commented that, "on some deeper level, maybe the lesson is that, did I really expect to get money for nothing," he shuddered and grimaced: I had sliced to the bone of his ignoble yet exalted profession: extracting gold from lead, something from nothing. Now the emperor has no clothes. I'm deep in bonds still, hoping that the Hopis can find it within their vision of the next world to support at least a conservative asset mix, that the laggards will jump on board and drive the values up, and that my goal of living forever on the accumulated financial energy of my ancestors has a practical chance of success . . .

## On Love, In Love

1 November

Sounds of O\_\_\_\_ carving squash; the warm glow of cocoa and woodstove and nap and genital connection; to do this is to do this, this only, what is – including our watching of *Titanic*, and my recall again and again of the vision of the iceberg tearing into the hull of the ship, ripping it apart at the seams. Nevertheless, this jazz goes on without beginning without end, and this is for O\_\_\_\_, a weekend devoted to that smooth sax, those ice squalls from the north, while warm seas beckon ahead . . .

Halloween gone, the community hall workday is bypassed for bed-morning, love-play, like dolphins high on endorphins. We go into winter content, working, bringing up pressure points and associations, dreams and image links, her as Z\_\_\_\_, me as her father; into the worlds we go dreamlike together, mingling fantasy, fear, juices of our very being.

In her presence I am now, not escaping, not removing, not looking away. Descending, yes further in. Ascending, too, further integrating all that is. This dream is improvised, played out now of all the tapes in the known world. We play together music never heard, yet of echoes forever experienced as live as this. This the most live.

To give all to this is giving up the undone tasks, the worlds gone by, the lovers never met. Giving up – is getting it. It is . . .

To let go of everything that isn't here, now. This is bliss, completion. Not abstract, nor entirely confined to these instruments – this piano, this crackling fire, these words. Her hair, her skirt, her loving touch and kind words – I don't need to hear them or see them to know their power in me, their presence like the snake that crossed our path so meaningfully from the garden that magic day of decision, when fates were born again.

To revisit, in this heart, territory I don't remember ever experiencing before.

To re-invent, in these words, the creation of who I was in no memory of this life.

To acquire incremental knowledge, meal upon meal together, sinks full of dishes to wash: these are our hours, our nights and naps, our embraces tracing our ancestors, our lineages through peasant and noble and middle classes, our individualities notable for their similarities and differences, our edges explored from within and without, lovingly smoothed, traced, honored with kisses.

Pain softens in this atmosphere. Love lengthens the shape of a long day, a short night, a dance of fingers.

We trace outlines on sand, stone, water and flesh, words of our trials and errors, recapitulations of our past partners and avatars of our desired goddesses and gods. We know there is no other way but this one.

There must be another page, we know this.

We choose to engage, to continue engaging.

Our truths we ride into peaceful battle, reining in the untold mysteries to share over firelight, digital backgrounds, organic coffee. We mean to bring to this day, this night our own light, our purest versions of starsong, our rendering of earth.

In this task we are joined by our allies the plants and animals (potatoes and cats, these will serve), our enemies (the demons of our own reluctance to share), and no other. All those who will speak with us we honor, and welcome to our next feast, this feast, this central fire.

There is no turning away in this dance.

There is no belonging elsewhere.

We decide to be what we already are becoming.

We acknowledge the present, judge the past, welcome the future.

We go laughing into dawn, crying into noon, walking hand in hand into the coming night.

The roadway stretches before us in both directions; we turn into this center, our embrace a signal for time to stop only for an instant: this instant, this snapshot frozen out of the sea of movement, this pause in our steps that will presently depart the roadway altogether.

Our dance in stillness or rapture will continue in the very air that has breathed our presence and our passing. Our dance will say no more of us but that we came together, we felt this joy, we burned into the diving music of all that we could truly be.

### **On these Monologues**

There is no hidden intention here, no meaning to be grasped but this, this, this.  
A Zen riddler, perhaps, a recurrent theme.

The variants co-evolve, and I manifest them here in order to demonstrate the power of love.

### **Word-Jazz**

To write what is most evident or impelling, in the present moment: isn't that the most therapeutic approach, after psychotherapy's lessons and the spiritualist's lessons, about living with the feelings of the now, and expressing them? Wordsworth added the literary admonition to recollect such powerful emotion in tranquility. Thus the editor's job is born, and also the reflective writer, who can store memories, titles, turns of phrase for a propitious session at the keyboard, the next day's or decade's work.

Today with the fire at my back as on so many other occasions, this morning beginning at one o'clock with O\_\_\_\_'s alarm for the graveyard juice shift, I come unburdened of the duties of the season, the workshops and dances, the business connections, even the weekend with my lover. Not a burdensome burden, but a weight of caring. Now I bring the openness to explore, to embark and discover what lies next upon the dazzling dark horizon.

Hawaii?

That's certainly in the picture.

The play and my uncertain status with it, or rather of it with me, clouds the background of my play, my planning. I am resolved to enjoy whichever decision or fate or combination of the two comes my way next. Consensus is easier when each participant is open to seeing and hearing the truth of the situation, including the feelings and subjective wishes of all concerned.



I was going to write about transcendence: it must be spelled with a dance: the going beyond all the restrictions of duty and obligation, appointments and chores, rentals and leave-takings that must occur between the then and the now. The fire at my back signals the cozy homecoming that awaits me in each moment that I live further into this present, my empty bowl and half-full cup still resting before me.

There is writing from the heart, and there is spilling the seed of romance into the otherwise prosaic depiction of a soul. There is a journey together into the lyrical broth of *How Green Was My Valley*; a heavenly gingerbread, a sip of black coffee at 1:30 A.M.

Today is the promise of Monday begun at the earliest hour. Today the start of a November, a winter, a love affair with life and love and the person only sparsely entering these pages, because why?

A reticence to involve the real emotions, the real facts of life?

A removal in a way that works to protect that child of pain from reminders of the world of loving touch, nurturing suckle, trust and faith?

This removal is in trance away from action; it is pale and insubstantial, this gray blur of black on white forever; it is an historical oddity that may soon be banished into charcoal and talk, song and incantation.

Ode to a dying art: guttering at the base with valiant, unseeing wick thrusting as high as ever into the uncaring heavens, its spot of heat and light a faint reminder to stars of their cousin's legacy. In the night we see only what we choose.

Inventory, rude awakenings, fresh approaches: these all fall like raindrops pattering to my roof, leaves falling on the forest floor. What other manifesto might I in all conscience create?

None, and I welcome that simplicity, that ease of jazz. There is a wash of words like music, of ideas like spaghetti spun in a fragrant round, sauced for pleasure and sprinkled with the cheeses of a splended tradition.

A dying art: baroque and filigreed, or tattered and falling, in Llewellyn's phrase, "to a blue ruin."

Either way, it must be enjoyed, as a memento of all of life itself, and no less. Ingredients take on a democracy here, a leveling to earth's great ocean. This art was born of us and to us shall return, and be mourned with all the sanctity of a high state funeral.

No president or judge shall sit to honor a predecessor: these children shall play into their respective freedoms whatever jaunty air befits a wake of one remembered fondly. Do I contradict myself? Very well; it was not my voice anyway, he said.

Fictions will no longer be called by the name which dignified them. They will return to dreams, fuzzed memories of dreamers, and the idle exaggerations that pass for history.

In the aftermath, charmed tatters will remain, mocking the presenters of the posthumous awards. In silence will the mourners walk their final round, while bats screech over the fields and a church tower lonely tolls.

Pardon me, we must do a visibility check here.

These are fond remembrances, a jazz of moods. Is there any other way to market the mine of the past, the melting pot of future births, the sounding of present destructions, the breath of expansive understanding?

Each aspect is a truth, a fiction, a particle of the whole texture. Each phrase an overlapping, an undoing which even so leaves its mark.

There is honey in the warmth of the burning log, comfort in the slow ticking of the early hour. But to see its hour named, is still to alarm with the coming of another day, another set of worldly expectations. Who will call, will invite or require my services, my collaboration, my consent to their waking dreams? I go catlike through the second half of the night, mewling softly at the coming of daylight, serious about the scratching of ears with familiar speech.

Writing as writing: isn't this the most true, the most exemplary of the arts of living? Yet, too self-reflective can be a liability. There is value here not to assume the all-unto-one, yet to be content with the one view.

There is one way always reliable into this future:

To practice diligently:

Describing what is:

Which includes what was, collecting for imminent condensation:

And what will be, or could be, which amounts to the same:

Trusting the process, the feeling, the worth of self-direction, the integrity of intention:

the sanctity of choice

the pleasure of freedom

Now, for instance, as I sit I must acknowledge your presence.

You, in the silent or merely distanced dialogue,

You of source and destination.

You of the literal personification, you of the nameless void.

You mystic, you nattering whore, I worship you,

Your masks and your dances, your turning sleep.

If you are intelligible to me it is only in my words, my silence.

You bring me the vehicle for my own identity.

You engage me with your quick wit, your sensitive intentions.

You challenge me with your unknown probes into the nature of my soul, drawing tears out as from a well, and then closing the patches of vision I call my world with your salving body, your self-tasting tongue.

All life is reiteration, response into new creation.

Like this you woo me, tempt me into your sounding of the depths of the water we walk together. I remember our embrace naked in the last heat of summer, a fair day on the great flats beach at the head of the lake, when we were almost the only ones there.

Our boat lay bottomed out a sunset from shore.

Our steps lingered a day, an hour, a month, in the fickle sand.

We called this our magic, our music, our honeyed moon and weekday getaway.

We danced steps beyond it and came to where we sit, I sit today: you pressing juice, me basting by the fire, our words your vision bringing into this jungle trail a trial of preoccupied content, a wall of trees to receive.

I take caution, treading here.

There is wonder in the known, when all that is known hides its truth like a jungle scene.

One rider stays its course: one cat-man, with a face of stone, the cat relinquished, the stone revealed, a mask thrown like a signpost into the bushes, a cat spurned yet loyal, the fire going down in a strong burn at my neck – the one exposure in this armor of love, of talent, of bureaucracy, of movement upon the otherwise still and perfectly beautiful abstract of what was before, without him and his noble airs, his cheap shots and bold beginnings.

Word-jazz: a fancy title for a plain man's free speech.

It's as simple as this, that it may include the complexity of all that is: not fractalized, yet chaotic: yes fractalized too.

That I carry a large ceramic bowl of popcorn in my lap, hear water for green tea start to boil – that I who once gloried in my aloneness went to meet her today, and was welcomed into her bed, and then was answered yes when I asked if I should leave soon to allow her more space – a breather before her kids came home and the next day's sleep and work begin, a cup of tea.

The complexity of voices is but airs, arpeggios. No hidden meanings, all right here. Come back to it again and she will tell you what you want to hear.

This is a journey, yes, a new becoming. It is directed to a certain ear, one by one, alone or a couple, a crowd.

It is a journey old in the beginning, a river I trust.

How to say it more? That I absorb her speech, and its. A Welsh tenderness, a soot-stained whistle.

Yes I may still glory in my aloneness, the picture of Kauai: beckoning from the book unopened in front of me, the verdant earth, Pacific wave, the Heart of the Ocean, *La Coeur de la Mer*.

Will I like the Titanic go down, me and my crew of yuppie friends?

At the end of the rainbow is a cruise ship.

For now we munch popcorn by the woodstove, our new wives and old lives, our cat mad with passion, our green tea set to boil.

[The Daily Observer](#) goes back online.

But why? she asked him. For recognition?

Good question, he said. And munched again.

This, then, is not that. Or is it? The masks, I inferred to her, are innumerable, the masks and assumed voices.

But in an age of oratory, is this flat mirror enough? The whole world – now large and round as all can be – must come into play.

Coming to grips is part of the equation, but above all it is a momentary reckoning.

God, Harry, the amount of salt and butter on this stuff is truly addictive.

She rides a stepladder to her apartment in the stars, buoyed by a couplet of swans.

Photo insert of the Na Pali Coast, a land called Hanalei.

I indulge in a bite of Java Roast chocolate, premium green tea. In these small pleasures I emulate my friend and hero, Jivan, who struck out Barry Bonds three times once in a high-school baseball game, with a heater, a slider, and a slow knuckle curve.

From O\_\_\_\_\_ too I have learned the value of small pleasures, taking space in a slightly or joyously indulgent way, a hot water bottle or midnight tea.

The thing about the Java Roast, is that it stops taking me back to the trail to Valhalla, and starts taking me into itself. What, another bar gone? Its thrills are so, so transient.

Rainbow country –

Place of dreams.

In fact, it's highly fractal, and in this I trust some semblance of order will emerge: a semblance, because ever new, and the whole but a series of small reiterations.

Fractal Essays, we might be called, by our team of marketing specialists; though at the time of this writing, they are still lurking in the wings.

## Counter-Productive

Somewhere a reader weeps without her horoscope, as her Daily Observer lapses into oblivion.

A webfly lights to plant a message like a kiss upon the face of intended glory. Is there nothing more here to absolve the drawing of a line, or its crossing, like the departure of the cat from the threshold of the door?

Remunerative echoes are required: turns of phrase generated by the assembled critics with impressive digital displays of the respective frequencies of thought, of vision, of left-brained cunning and hardwired glee.

There is money to be made out there somewhere, a lot of it being thrown around – or is this only the chance perspective of a diehard baseball fan?

There is more to say in a love dance, a mating call.

There is always a new truth, and completion has only to await its last presence in the roll-call. Assembly at seven: that is a deadline every journalist knows, when an accounting must be made.

We are prepared for frenzy, the Zombie Warriors proclaim. But then, deadpan and holding tornadoes of controlled energy, they look askance at the warmup act and say, back to the drawing board, fellas, let's go back to our graves.

*Dialogue is opening my ears to the voices within: these characters have needed no computer program to jumble their lines and dossiers quite mercifully random so that I have no paper trail of resemblance to accuse me of truth. It is their own doing. My own "voice" cannot be counted. I will remain in director's role until called upon directly.*

There can be no recanting this incantation, no calling off of the dogs now. I will be unleashed like Fenrir, the mountain overlooking paradise, upon the unravaged world, though I may brave blizzard to get there, ice-storm and enchanted battle.

There is mystery in my forbears, what they survived.

I listed your traits in order of their appearance: in that you were an expert of breath, stories, hen and herb, pot and willow branch. Working backwards, I brought you to our knees, and in so loving you gave voice to my mystery, my new spirit-body, which prepares even now to give its first speech to the gathered ears of all the words that have gone before.

When this time comes I will cease my nattering, for I am that one's honey-tongued whore, I am the messenger that must be shot, I am the warmup act itself and in the running: and so needing a kick upstairs or the long road home.

PR for the soul: is this it?

I get it, and I don't get it, she turned to him and said. They were the only ones in the audience not laughing. She brought the hem of her dress up to his nose and said, "Here, taste this."

She smiled.

He averted his eyes, and then licked.

He tasted, and it was good.

After the genesis of a new romance, what is there to say? Too little and too much: at least all at once. They decided to play it day by day. Eventually that changed to week by week, then year by year. Before they knew it they were racking up lifetimes together, inventing so many new voices that soon the world was basically choked full of them.

Me, I'm still waiting to hear the end of that story. My grandmother died before she came to the end of it, or I grew up too fast, or something. I only remember my grandfather telling me to be a good boy, for her.

Last night I jammed with her in my sleep, she on electric bass, me with the timbales. It was kind of a groove, a loungey sort of vibe up on the funk side.

Trust: the ongoing sandwich they share, the unending breakfast.

My angel card tells me to feed a wild horse, and so I kneel to my task. This is a long-term project. I must only come here every day. In the end I can even play my drum there, see my dreams come true.

It is only in the waking, the going there, the carrying of joy, the willingness to let go and let in; then to go in where the space opens like fire into the sky . . .

My paragraphs are getting smaller. I notice that, and this, and say only what I must feel about what is most real, in your terms or mine; and it can only be said one way, at least one at a time: this time, this name you give it, this face I give you, friend of a friend or sister of a mother of a daughter of me, this is how I salute our lengthy beginning in the timeliness of this dance. I call you now my muse, my music, my dancing swirl of surrender, my wise reference in matters of heartsong and calm attention. I bring your gaze to my eyes and see a way forward through this forest of words, this letter in which to enclose our photograph, this address to our gathered guests, this song to our scattered selves.

Self-referential, we are. Looming on the outskirts of the dawning still distant enough to be black, that velvet robe is sufficient. It harbors us as a mother would if we were baby bats, as we well could be, and love it.

More daylight approaches from the east: this I know, from having seen it once or twice before. This is the third time now and I will know its face with fond recognition, and call it day.

I work backwards to the beginning: where starsong first was born, the cradle of my tears and those of all who came before me. None were free of tears, this I know for sure.

They crossed deserts: this I know. Waterfalls claimed a few. They left but traces. Tendrils of lives, the vines yielded fruit year by year. I travel back to their homeland, humble in my traits of stifled rebellion, resistance to change, headstrong habit, servitude. See, rebellion so quickly gives way.

The pattern calls me to join my forces with it. There is no denying what must come.

Daylight, a tailor-made ending. This is not even the reality at this longitude, yet I am calling it forward prematurely, because that is my nature, my trademark from [birth](#).

In the womb, I made trouble. See, I'd had enough: toxic blood, nicotine, alcohol, I've had it.

I got healthy late in life. My business agent will tell you all about it.

In the meantime, I need to get my rest. I think I see the sun.

It's all so simple, in the end, really.

So very lovely, I might add.

Daylight, crystal sun:

your magic

calling me

your love

you

I

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## The Voice of Truth

As for the lingering editor, there are words for him also. He also has the prerogative, the freedom to choose, and to choose not. His whims and fancies are my bread and meat, but I can let it go for now, because he will have another day to speak when I am gone. I can only cry again, and my mother will come when they allow her, when she and I are ready.

How words, and jazz notes, are similar and different. Similar, in that I don't have to tell but yet I do. Different, in that despite my practice I am a newcomer at every note, a soloist with an audience of one, one world or one word.

In this intense bending inward is helium heated to stone, and shaped into crags.

The editor, the writer, the audience and God herself, are all made to eat porridge here like pigs, for the master is a donkey-god and he knows what will sustain us with the minimum expense. Yet he is of a kindly, gentle nature. So we bleat in subdued voices, cognizant of our heritage as family and guests, and we wonder among the slops, how this is ever going to end. As if the end remakes the beginning, when they were of a piece from the outset.

It's all history, some say.

I go unbidden into the corners of my dark heart, searchlight at the ready. Who will come to me next, my haunted friends, you Zombie Warriors – who will come hither to play with me in this land of no previous composition, where we be jammin fulltime now.

this no politics, this no earth-bloody war  
this the divining revelation  
an ear to ear rejuvenation

tell me heartsong feed me tears  
and we will go into the forest together  
together  
we will go



Plastic at the ready, we embark at the next crossing.

Our interchange will be featured on the news, someday soon.

The editorial board will be asked for comments. Their report will be issued forthwith.

At a theatre of the mind, all is expected, nothing assumed. The crowd will be of mixed gender, race and breed. We laughingly create a new taxonomy when another child approaches college age, and needs a field. These job placement agencies can be fairly selective.

In poetry we come to expect an astonishment in every breath. In the headlines like the big bang there is only a blast for warning, and a long story to tell shortly. Where we land is the trail to the upper meadow, where the drums are playing sweetly together and the dancers the flames the stars are alive and in fine humor.

What feeds this horse is the green-grassed furrow of my thoughts, the handful of memories, a nip of a dreamed morsel or insect, the dim remembrance of speech and the joy of the whinny itself . . .

I am the garbled tape of my mentors of the moment: Llewellyn, O'Driscoll from Yeats, Thomas and the Hopkins sonnet. I must come from there, the bonny burn, the tender peat, the sweet heath. And true, sportswriters on the baseball beat, year round. These daily inspirations are my faculty, and life: my friend of the other day or night, my lover and the tangles of our twisted hair.

You treat me to a course in being, so that I can truly forget, for the first time.

I am left with nothing to watch but the nothing filling with everything, until the world itself is filled and begins then to roll, oceans wide.

Meta-project. Lowest common denominator. A patina of descriptions. Words of a feather. Fallen leaves, a pattering of rain. Wash of words, splash of color, slices piled lovingly like the potatoes baked in last night's casserole, simmer of milk, gentle butter, the cream of flour infusing earth-mother-flesh into myself, ourself. Where we go from here is up to here and now, this one and only speech coming to a halt upon the very tracks of its tracks of its . . . like old vinyl awaiting the next revolution in sound.

There will be a new beginning, this I promise you.

She waited.

The last of the bandages were removed, as with the last Christmas present, not in haste but salient wonder, and we beheld his new face.

Hello, he said, remember me?

His voice carried a slight sardonic irony.

Our own blank faces rendered shocked silence. Then someone attempted to be polite. I ran for home, told no one until now. The man of a dozen faces was born again, and the thirteenth face was a killer.

Seriously folks, this is a family comedy. That was only a reference, an allusion to an illusion, or was it the other way around?

What other way around, the donkey-master wanted to know.

I told it (a gelding) to get lost, I had bills to pay and so had he.

He trounced me at poker that night, but that's another story.

An indulgence sustained: a career, an industry. Carving a niche. Are we talking survival, here, comfort or luxury? You know the rules. We've gotta be accountable, you son of a bitch. Now shape up, or you'll take us all down!

Oh, the dramatics of it all. I couldn't be bothered paying for more exclamation points, got up and left, walking out through the bright empty lobby and into the street, where I lit a stage cigarette.

A number of other members of the cast soon joined me, and we had a gay old time under the marquee of our warm-up band, the Zombie Warriors.

Where we mocking them? Not really. Our own act was hardly polished. We simply sang in the rain, and reminded ourselves that we never advertised ourselves as other than what we were, a bag of gypsy minstrels in any age the world cared to call its own.

Is this that, or even supposed to be? Not really at all.

It is different, by definition. So, it continues. There is rebirth in the birthing of each breath; we come to know this in the space of a moment, a lifetime.

Communication for . . . the exchange of breath. We all are saving, at best savoring it, never thinking to share it like kisses. Well, this could pass for that. A commingling. Sheer camaraderie, by the old fire. There is plenty wood to burn, it grows naturally round heah, and we mean to have a party by it. Afterwards, might even walk a little coals. If'n we pay attention, keep the beat, know what I mean . . .

No label, no name: motherless children in a hard, hard world. Or, rootless in Rhode Island. By any stripe it gains a chance to live by conceiving itself in loving circumstance, bridging oceans with small steps of water, clues and keywords sparkling like the rain in the dawning day.

Hope and encouragement are ours, trust and the presence of mind to throw it all to the wind. We carry no identity cards here, no microchip implants yet to warn us of the clear nature that is our reward for being what we are, no more but certainly somewhat less than what we are next.

How is this unique, this next and present experiment in truth?

In its details, its following of freedom, its purposeful play.

How can the limits and the conclusions of said experiment be verified?

By the attendance of an auditor during the performance.

But this is unacceptable – I need to work alone.

Then you'll have to work the night shift, and we pay you under the table. Agreed?  
Come back tomorrow at midnight. We need to show you the ropes.

I went away, back to my lover. Is there anything more to say?

## ***Trust Thyself***

2 November

This of a clearer focus, a sound principle, a call to action.

A democracy of intention, a grace of boundless beginnings.

No mint to coin it, but it will survive the boom and crash of that far surf, to breathe again.

What about bad habits? Are these, too, trustworthy?

Yes, too trustworthy. They skew experiments by their very predictability.

Duplication of results is thus encouraged, at the expense of unbiased inquiry. To truly trust thyself is the hypothesis of choice, so that any sympathetic observer as well as any dispassionate one will be drawn to the same conclusion – whatever it may be. And in fact, that sameness is only in the drawing, the trusting, the interpretation each for each. A welter of conclusions, a scattering of false endings.

Am I satisfied with my life, my day?

Yes, and why?

Because I write, because I love, these are enough.

The rest is all echo, reiteration: the crumbs of a winning recipe, well cooked and eaten in lively company, or tranquility.

I could do with less: a monk's garb, a beggar's cup, a holy man with nothing but his holiness to share.

I will do it with what I love most. My writing, my love, and all that lies between me and that shapely muse. In writing as in love the first rule is: Trust Thyself.

I was going to write with some categorical definition on the twenty-two topics of "current wisdom." I was going to report on a fairly serious embarking into the adventure of truth-science. I come instead to an early conclusion; which is to say the provisional tail of the monkey, a seasonal tying up of loose ends. Previously I was or thought I was always just shuffling files this time of year: not finding the center.

This time I mean to make it stick.

Yet, there may well be further, subsequent chapters. No "last word" is ever wholly reliable. What wisdom can serve tomorrow with no argument, or even today without the question "And what next?"

If I become always reflective, self-indulgent, what then? Can I trust this one voice against all odds, even Henry Miller telling me and all who care to listen, “Forget Thyself?”

Bad habits are seductive. Yet “bad” is subjective, an inner-child issue, n’est-ce pas?

There are bottom-line considerations, of course. Ultimately the scope must always widen, breathing out again at the end of each long cycle, balancing, giving detail to the larger space, voices in company, riders to a common destination.

That dictum is served well by the novels, the topical essays. For now it is solo improvisation, a long-winded one to be sure, not without some melodic underpinning and deference to accompanying riffs.

In this endeavor I at last come to the resolution of my quartered soul, a zenith point to fuse the cardinal dreams of music, writing, business and website publishing.

This my music, now on sale, credit cards approved at a secure server near you, a click away.

Now I need a subtitle, keyword-rich. “A Manual for Self-Preservation in an age of chaos”? “How to Save Thyself from drowning in a sea of words”: an interactive workshop?

Primitive skills will come into play, if only as a point of reference, a primary link.

Random observations of town or wood, a roving dialogue . . . a thousand episodes could be attached, and will be granted access for password-holders only.

I will charge enough only to cover costs – is this the way of it now? No windfall profits, no grandfathering, no subsidy from mother earth any longer. By the same token, no patronage, power lunch, or guaranteed investment portfolio either.

We are talking straight here, a deal going down.

Fair return for honest work: a craft learned lovingly, offered in fair exchange.

Bookware: it’s easy to install, yet galls against the notion of free speech, of prophecy. Sex for sale, priesthood tithes, these are not business models for my sacred sharings.

Yet I do this not for me alone. I just got my own dose free this way: a meal for the musician.

On with the show: a bath by candlelight, a winding down, another night and day and week to come.

This has been a pleasure, there’s a hat going around, thank you very much, there’s a table of our latest CDs near the back by the door. Have a pleasant evening.

## The Morning After

So a new day begins: the magic pill at work, fixing it. What I wasn't able to do, searching vainly through the garbage for the old unused can of emergency spermicide.

The doctor said it wouldn't have been reliable anyway. He prescribed the "morning after pill" along with some Gravol to counteract the nausea. A hormone flush: just natural. Would it have been more natural for me to become a father again at 49, keeping at it until I was 70?

Becoming as foolish as a teenager, at my ripe age; as a child whose adult license has been revoked for an infraction.

The thing was, I knew the condom went in first. Then how did it get left high and dry on the bed, when I pulled out shocked to find it no longer on me? The "act of God" has me baffled. I was terrified to draw an angel card, fearing "birth." I got "gratitude" instead; then spiraled out of my bummed day with a whirlwind house-cleaning, mopping the floor and oiling the counters and all my instruments: three drums, the didge, the cedar flute.

In town with O\_\_\_\_\_ to get the prescription, I ran into director Nathan and producer Declan in passing, to voice my hesitation about continuing in my role of Odin through January. Poor road conditions, time for writing and hibernation. I've done my seasonal Rainbow bit, acted as a god. Time to take care of business again. Is it? Whatever I decide (two days from now) I'll have to trust myself that it's right. Either one can work; it's a matter of, what do I want?

A new birth: freedom. Changing diapers was not my ambition for my next few years. It's a repeat of how my relationship with O\_\_\_\_\_ 's sister began, fifteen years ago. That unplanned pregnancy began a month later, at the beginning of December. In that week I rolled my truck off a 50-foot dropoff, nearly killing myself. And saved myself with her instead. Last Friday driving on the Johnson's Landing road, the opportunity was inches away to repeat the pattern. I want a new start.

We're not "finished" yet in the new and fresh beginning phase of this relationship. Like the leading couple on the *Titanic* video, we have a life to live yet before I go down into the freezing water.

The ill-conceived embryo is only a few cells large by now, if at all; or perhaps only a single cell with a spark inside; or even a near-miss. How much like fish we are, with millions of eggs available to produce, after rapidly declining numbers, the future adults of the species.

Today feels more like normal. Yesterday I spent brooding, after some measured panic. Serious as could be: with life and lifestyle on the line. Love will come through, I was confident . . . but with what level of challenge? I had a poor precedent, fourteen years of a trying relationship, to go from. After O\_\_\_\_\_ went home at noon to make calls to the local herb-women and to meet with Z\_\_\_\_\_ in a pre-arranged processing session, I brooded deeper into depression, searching for a way out. Chocolate, green tea, a toke, housework; I pulled up into a rising spiral feeling the gratitude of the fullness of my life, my love.

Now, this morning, I feel full of the promise of the new day. Full of . . . accomplishment, reflection, work, play. Can I now sacrifice the lives of a half-dozen fir trees to gain more winter sunlight? Can I cut wood, practice music, clean up files and notes, upgrade my website and prepare for my next wave of business connections, all in the same day . . . a day in which I need to decide whether to commit the next three months to Declan's play?

I think I'd better not. I am too content to remain solitary, to continue my private and public quest to go beyond, go beyond at every moment, go utterly beyond.

Into the silence is fine, but that's not this. How am I, really? "Fine" is actually a rather blunt instrument, a plain, nearly meaningless word: a mask, a cover. The next breath tells the truth. Is there a pang of feeling, in the gut? A shortness of breath, a caught throat? What about neck, shoulders, forehead, jaw? This relaxation exercise goes on a lifetime. I become ever more erect, in the arousal of the act of life. Loving carries the tune: sometimes a solo flute, sometimes an orchestra. A funky abo fusion band in between, or the downhome blues, with a little snatch from the Lizard Lounge.

Now I have lost interest in everything: even dope, coffee. Only writing remains. My to-do lists, even the fresh ones still dripping with inspiration, lie lifeless before me. I must be grieving, I suppose. My life force spent, useless: with a soul at the ready. A new soul, a world soul, a soul of a beautiful bond, my physical presence to stay nine months within the woman I love . . . yet we talked enough to know that it would be far better to choose, something I didn't do before. Some people choose and find themselves cursed with the inability to produce a child. Some are given that fate of birth without choosing it. I want to, O\_\_\_\_\_ wants to, hold out for the integrity of our still fragile flower of a relationship: not yet ready to go into fruit. Ours is a longer season of glorying in the sun; a phase we missed over our last fifteen years with our respective ex-partners. She had eleven years in that mode with her other lover, but then eleven more of a claustrophobic downspin in which the children represented her condition for staying together. In my

case, conceiving at the very start, staying together was my condition for having the child. Both ways ended in poor communication, soured love, thick resentments.

I spent a long morning compiling, transferring information from, pruning and adding to lists, and making numerous phone calls; then had a half-hour lunch of the last of the latest venison stew, and desam toast, and carrot juice; then went off to cut down ten live firs in the front of the house blocking sun: pushing back the ranks, asserting the preeminence of the one with steel cutting blades, an engine of no mercy.

I took it hard around three, having felled only three trees in two hours, the first one binding backwards on the saw, and having to be yanked forward by a head-high chain and cable to the truck on the driveway: my own little logging show. Not for the logs, however – but for the view of sun and lake.

I will use these killed trees properly, burning them to keep my house warm in winter, so that I can sip my tea and dote on my chocolate comfortably.

I feel good about it and then I feel bad about it. Some will stay in the forest, escaping out of my reach with their killed bodies leaning away, hung up on the branches of their fellows, some future windy day to fall where they would someday of their own accord, or by the mischief of some other parasite.

The next breath tells me my bath is waiting, my private theatre. And the next breath tells me more. It's all about – I keep forgetting – Trusting Thyself. For this I sing as the angels sing, gratitude. Because in that murderous rationale, there is consideration for the merely human. The morality of cutting is subjective; so is everything. There is a tree, a solid, live being. This is true, and so is the less solid grass, the lowly potato. For my comfort and food, my livelihood if I sell wood or sky or words, I cut what I feel I need or desire in the shifting border between my world and wilderness.

I did it without a permit. Times will change that. Yet last year in the nearest town the city ordered a small grove cut, without the necessary approval, “by mistake.”

For now, after reading the brief history of Hawaii, I am filled with gratitude again, not for my breath and my trust, but for the light steps of those who came here before me.

Millennia of deer and “Indian,” then a quick hot burn of the miners, and slow valley settlement in the century since. Traces? A second-growth forest on a hillside burning wholesale every eighty years or so . . . some green mossy logs scattered here or there in the green mossy forest.

Too much “green mossy”? Well that's the nature of the place.

I just got a call from Nathan my long-lost long-drum friend now director of the play I just officially resigned from. I tried to explain. Too much winter driving, deadlines, many rehearsals. I need my sleep, my hibernation. Time to write about bears, and tell tales of the more mundane, almost-Odin.



I filled the role and then grew beyond it. That's easy to say, without the fire of live audience. But lo, I've done that too, decades ago. And what's another moment, if not equivalent to decades, in the absolute scale of things? Therefore it carries no weight to say that that was then and this is now. This is the now that keeps passing us by until we have nothing new to say: it's all been said, if only just a moment ago.

Now there is the winter. I play the part of my own god: one-eyed, all-powerful – except in the working out of the fate of the world. In the novel, I become Odin, the magician. In life I have already worn wizard's cap for a crowd, for music. The theatrical life was all mine once, decades ago. The multi-media revolution was in full swing: 1974, San Francisco, Paul Horn in a cathedral, dance troupes with heavy/trippy music, and I hooked up with a gay black director and choreographer to put dance to poetry, and train kids for theatre, and then went on my own into alternative school classrooms for volunteer lessons around the translation of artform to artform: words, visuals, movement, sound, into sound, movement, visuals, words. It had mixed results in the field. I had little basis on which to trust myself, up to that point, in front of a roomful of expectant, impatient, energetic kids. I learned, gradually, about my limitations as a stage performer – even as I basked in the glow of my role as Lt. Rooney in the Hayward Community Theatre's production of *Arsenic and Old Lace*. So yes, my grandchildren, I did play Odin once, only the schedule dragged on and the cast members dropped out and winter came and I settled into my own Valhalla to tell the tales of my former glories, “stories of the old days.”

. . . and, of course, to play that durable game, if durable is the furred gray edges of the wrapping exposed on an old baseball, of making a living. In my case it's a mixture of passion and duty, blended with a reasonable opportunity at success given my location and skills and flexible motivation. So putting in the time will have its effect, if granted my leisure, other pursuits perhaps more prominent, and – you guessed it – a generous measure of self-trust. Generous because of the angel's gift, gratitude. Now I am free to go deep into the Mayan mysteries, delve into researches large and small, purge the computer and my filing cabinet, my very brain with the cleansings of the moment, a continual detoxification fragranced with a fair wafting incense of pleasure, a hot bath coming up, the next day's work, and a weekend with my lover.

My lover gives me what my ex-partner took away: my self-trust. I will not go here into the details of that pattern of personality dysfunction between us. You will recognize it wherever it lives and breeds. There is nevertheless a quite joyful expansion now into the space she hemmed in on me, and I meet further out, in the borderland of alternate visits with my lover here and at her house, so that the very white background of this page becomes lavender highlit against pale aquamarine, no doubt the effects of being

up since one minute to three – when I awoke before the alarm set for three; I mention this in passing in case it will prove to be significant, by some retrospective echo or waving riptet, in the course of a butterfly's flight over Hong Kong.

Crisis in the world economy? Wage-slavery and sex-slavery still very strong trades? We go into our last comforts apocalyptically prepared this time, we of the visions of our eleven-year old girlfriend (the one who bared her bottom for us boys in the green mossy forest and bought us all, one by one, whole boxes of baseball cards) whose family was the first on our block to install a fallout shelter in their back yard. I never went for the ID bracelet, I know that much.

That was the year of the Cuban Missile Crisis. A decade later, Nixon's bombers strayed so close to China, intramural softball was cancelled; and then in 1980 Ronnie Raygunssssz was elected, and on New Year's Eve in I sat with friends in Quebec over barbecued pig and black hash, debating the fate of the Earth.

The disarmament issue consumed much of my life for a couple of years then, and I had a few more appearances on stage, this time speaking my own lines and improving where necessary. I spoke to a couple of town meeting and to a church congregation, a peace workshop and several action groups. Maybe it all did some good, because finally there was a lull for a year or so, before the more local issue of forestry pesticides came up, and we got all over that baby. My daughter's diapers spread twenty feet wide across the logging road, stating "PESTICIDE-FREE ZONE." We even had the Regional District on our side. But I think it was the 90% valley-wide phone support that really turned that tide . . . unless it was the famous children's blockade, the controversial attack on the test helicopter, or the nefariously secret raid on the nursery where they kept the poisons.

Into my own backyard, came not a fallout shelter but another instantly notorious "surprise" watershed blockade, seven or eight years later, against a local woodlot logger cleverly installed there by the ever-imperious Ministry of Forests. It was not only "my backyard," but a watershed shared by some 50 people – including the logger. The underground sources of our dependable springs were unknown, along with the risks posed by surface disturbance and road cuts.

I retreat now to my spring-fed, wood-heated bath, contemplating once again the fate of Hawaii, wishing the new cast and director well, glad of my books and memories, ready to pull in older dead trees tomorrow to top up the woodshed. The happy farmer is a happy burgher in disguise.

In '91 during Gulf War, I flew into the heart of the Beast in time to see my mother and father dying and flew back with soldiers to a glad welcome – their gladness, my buried rage at their offense to humanity. Today it's "terrorists," or the shifting poles. Antarctic ice, ozone, solar flares, super-volcanoes, droughts, furnace winds of forest holocaust, species extinction, collapse of global markets, new epidemics, strange murders

of and by children . . . these times are ever a-changin. It's not the quality of voice to trust, but what goes into it. B. B. King wears that living mask well.

By deleting, clearing out scraps, falling obstructions, making necessary calls and responses, are spaces widened for the emergence of what must come from within, within. "From" is the operative word here. It is place and process all at once. It is the country of movement, the song of change.

Where are you from? Most people I ask these days say, um here, now, or in my van. On the Road.

Real gypsy musicians and dancers recently in Nelson were tighter than this, longer practiced, over generations, to play what emerges with controlled passion.

Such discipline is easy to bypass in the lulling abundance of the forest, the primeval green and mossy glades, the cool waters of pleasure that came before desert warfare and conquest. I would like to research and find the origin of war: man on man, man on woman, what was it like and why, at the beginning. A sort of *In Cold Blood* or *Executioner's Song*, *Reservoir Dogs* and *El Topo*, all rolled into one.

The Lakota Sioux had a memory called the Love Flute, of sweet cedar and cool water of the breath, affection in the ears and fingers.

Territory mattered, even there on the buffalo plains: warfare both symbolic and real, from ancient times. *Keep Out. We were here first* – with this fine game and forests rich. At least, wherever it got to be a problem. Before then . . . well, the Nez Perce were generous at first. Whenever the game got too serious – empty bellies, hearing the neighbors brush their teeth with different sounds in between – it became a grudge match, a time to settle differences once and for all. There's only room in this town, the one dinosaur said to the other dinosaur, for one of us.

So far, I won. All of us are on incredible winning streaks, the dangling seed stalks of precarious ancestral lines snaking too far into the web of the past to comprehend. We all made the playoffs: the survivors of a history of conflict and life-or-death contests killing off all the competition . . . to this point. The World Series has arrived, and we are in it.

Only this one doesn't stop . . . at least, it doesn't stop, some say, until the year 2012. Then we shall see who is drafted into the new league.

6 November

Nonviolence:

Q. Would you tell Jesse James he was in the wrong profession?

A. Only if I were his friend.

Rules of Thumb:

1. Keep doing (daily, weekly)
2. Keep learning (every moment)
3. Keep planning (weekly, monthly, yearly)
4. Bottom line: keep breathing

So for today, the outlook is cloudy. More firewood in the works, the eternal webpage upgrading, email coming and going, trying to arrange a place to stay in Nelson Saturday for my weekend getaway with O\_\_\_\_, and to do what I want to do today, in the time remaining; and it's all good, and we'll all get there in the end; and how can there be a distinction between *out there* and *in here* when it's all in the doing? Fancy meaningless buzzwords circle like flies around the dead meat of conceptual reality, while borders lie invisible to the uncoded eye.

These semblances, after all, are only meant to catch the sunlight and reflect it with a certain frequency for a desired effect on another eye . . .

The frequency of connection is another concern. But the monitors will release me to this harmony, when I go out from this room, this screen, into the wild and lambent woods, to drag dead bodies of trees to my truck, my home, my woodshed and stove, to generate more heat and light and inspiration to continue, in the game assertion that I do have the power to live here, and I'm making it work.

All the rest is filler. Yet flesh is only that. There are a number of ways to go about it, in any case. On a day in which the trials and tribulations are forthcoming only as a way to connect electronically or physically when there is no other obligation, the impulse to continue in the present vein is inescapable. There is no turning back, once the choice is made. This theatre goes on in the private stage, the opening along underground streams to future audiences, one by one, or en masse, posthumous or instant, it all coheres in the porridge of love we call this life, this earth, this time together laughing . . .

I shiver now, about to embark into the morning set for butchering the trees that have already died and given their bodies to the life of the soil. I will interrupt that flow for my sake, because I am presumptuous enough to take their continued existence as my solar dump.

So it's like that, but I don't begrudge anyone else their chance to jump into the fray. We are all required, after all, to make that choice. For some, the fate is less yielding, more rigorous: chemical disaster, karmic invasion.

So I haven't uploaded yet today . . . still in process. There is no hurry, to manifest my intentions, if in manifesting some I bypass others. There's only so much

time in the day, the life. This realization is so simple, so profoundly effective in releasing the breath, extending life so that without pressure, there is likely literally more time to continue: the blessing of immortality consciousness. A self-fulfilling prophecy at least to a degree: lowered stress of time-pressure, more time to live.

As in everything else, there is a magnetism and gravity which compels my action to accord with that to which I am attracted. The university professor, the network marketer, the guru all want me to do their thing. So does life, in its healthy lengthening, want me to enjoy more and more of it in that slowness of pace. To speed up in a tightening spiral of racing time, is to drive the spiral tight into death, paralysis, no time at all. In contrast, true life is an endless jam, in which there is time for everything.

To slow down long and breathing, to appreciate and savor and reflect and sit at ease with what already is, is to appreciate the eternal contentment of the expanding now, the opening to all of space-time, and in so doing to also allow my literal lifetime to go on providing such moments in a widening spiral of ease, attention, gratitude, trust.

I almost forgot that magic word again. *Trust* enables the upload to continue – not necessarily unedited; but there is room for all kinds of music here. From the idle warmup to the inspired jam, the careful composition and orchestrated magnum opus. There is room for every intention, time for every rhythm and melody to play out in the fullness of the world's life, whatever that may mean in my time or yours.

Spinning chains of steel blades, carbonizing oxidizing fibers of wood, the clouds hide the sun so that I can be content to offer the latest in what moves my inner light, what shines through my blood, what calls to me in the inner stirrings of breeze, fluid, solidity.

True solidity is a quirk of absolute zero: perhaps only a concept like the perfect circle or sphere. In this fractal real world I skirt the coastline in all its jagged perfection of a different kind, the trusting that surf offers at every moment that its compositions will be appreciated for their ephemeral beauty, leaving nothing for the critics and agents, nor of the art itself, but the newness of creation to follow.

The upreaching branches will have their season again, and for now it is to me to tell how they relate to my neuronix fixation, my blessed curse of reflection, in which the self depicted is none other than surf and branch, human guise of wandering soul, soul by definition not of human definition, but of all spirit without boundary and form, taking only this provisional form in order to identify itself as another name, another shape, another aspect for a brief period of time. A morning, a life, this mystical conjunction of timeframes seems arbitrary, platonic: yet is meaningful in driving the breath to its own vacation of freedom, without the more usual constrictions of duty, appearance, social justification.

Not that those things are worthless; on the contrary, we all require them to one degree or another, as social beings evolved only to live with the contact and assistance of others, in our web of mutual grace.

For now, I continue, trusting that this process and the wood I am about to haul home have something in common, something worthwhile to share in the social, yes even in the social context. There is useful learning here appropriately pigeonholed in a number of categories: self-reliance, homesteading, alternative energy, greenhouse effect, ecosystem impacts of deadwood vs. live wood harvesting, politics of single-use occupancy, life history, personal space, heart to heart sharing . . . all that this is and happens to be, this is good enough.

There is a quota to fill and it's called living each day to the fullest. It's called doing what must be done: by external needs, social and family responsibility, health and desire, creative force, sheer breathing joy.

7 November

On the couch I sit reflecting, as O\_\_\_\_\_ finishes the dishes I started, on the haircut she gave me by the woodstove fire, where through glass the leaping flames gave great pleasure by their contained heat and light, and reminded me of their semblance to art – or rather, the woodstove's resemblance to art, as a container safe and well-made. Thus a craftsman I aim to be, to catch the fire and hold it to burn brightly, to share and behold.

The reflections run back through halvah and chocolate-covered cookies with hot milk and decaf in the bed with Anne Cameron's story of Blackie, stealer of his brother's wife, talk of B\_\_\_\_\_ and Z\_\_\_\_\_ and my brother and Llewellyn's Bron and my mother and her sisters and my father and his brothers, and a walk on the flats with a fading sun, snow-mantled Willet, gold-sworded grasses in neat-as-if-mowed-around circles, colonies with bunches of seed stalks three feet above the gold-sharp leaves. The water rushing as in Northern Quebec, echo of Atwood's poem and Avison, putting us in my hallway into a noon lullaby of poetic meditation, where things became suddenly as they are, full and rich in clarity, simplicity, wholeness, living texture.

The capsule history of Hawaii encapsulates also the history of the world: a fit theme to take up on my trip and after: with the rainbow bridge as image and theme – Arizona and the return that ended in Hawaii – this almost gets too internal for the essay, gravitates more to the novel; but in my way of thinking, the difference can go to blazes behind the glowing glass of my own-made stove, a new design, yet respecting known laws of thermodynamics and new technologies of crafted baffles, catalytic converters, flues and double-walled chimneys.

Is a forest fire better, an open fire pit or stone-walled fireplace? A taro plantation, smaller-scale slash and burn? Polynesian taboos, or American wage-slavery in the resort hotels? Cannibal warfare of tribal chieftains, or European VD? Small pigs from the Marquesas, or British cattle? The lava will flow again, and wash again to the sea. Birds will light elsewhere depositing seeds. Those blind from ozone holes will be lost forever, and another planet's history will pass into cold space, hot lava, magnetic flux.

Today, another's cat adopts my lap. There's a red house over yonder, a theme park of paradise, a dramatic situation replayed. I wander rootless over the ocean looking for a new island on which to land my seed, my fire, my restless gaze. Is the water warm enough, the coral still alive? The planet has grown so familiarly small.

With gratitude I turn another page: another day to practice my flute, our music together.

In our tales and tunes, our dramas with and without rehearsal, we celebrate the culture we bring to fill the new void. But the new void will wait on newer cultures now, those of our children. We have exhausted too many possibilities by now, and besides deserve a rest. Too many or just enough drum jams, committee meetings, men's and women's groups, acrobatic workshops and annual teas. Now we await the coming of new birds, the flow on long-building lava, the turning of the magnetism of the earth itself. If solar flares be the trigger, the new conquistador, the return of the ancient god, so be it.

If my fire is the mere synchronicity of our dreams of V\_\_\_\_ and her mother (last night O\_\_\_\_ dreamed of me and V\_\_\_\_, while I dreamed of me and V\_\_\_\_'s mother on the phone); or of the night before in separate houses, with my alarm going off at 1:54 A.M. by some mysterious circumstance and O\_\_\_\_ awaking precisely at the same time with a ringing of an unknown source; or of the day before that in love-making with the condom going in first but then baffling us both by appearing high and dry, as if unused, at the end of it all . . . then my fire is the welcome of whatever is, feelings or coincidence, anger or jealousy, too many houses or too few, eternal conquest and erosion, love into the night and throughout the day, the spark that runs my engine, the fuel transformed from sun to some unnamed void filling with heat.

9 November

In the flow: first snow. I awoke after three unsettling dreams. In the first, I was in a tipi or other circle with surly bar-types, smoking joints that at first everyone rolled from their own stashes, not sharing. Two guys started an argument: it escalated; I tried to talk them down. Instead one came after me, kneed me in the groin; I woke up.

In the next dream, Daystar was calling from California: I was in a restaurant on the way. She wanted me to visit a starving native community, so I could return to Argenta with a first-hand report to elicit aid from the Quakers here. I fumbled in my pack for notepaper, pen, to take down directions. Then her voice got cut off; a phone card run out? I brought out my own to phone her back; the restaurant manager came over and protested that he hated to see people run up huge bills on phone credit cards. I retorted that the last long call had been hers, to me.

In the third dream, I was affectionate to Z\_\_\_\_, and jealous of her new attraction to Michael, with his fine-lined eyebrows, touching her face, perhaps even kissing her; but aware that even though she seemed to feel good about it, it would be counterproductive in the end, as counseled by the author of the book O\_\_\_\_ was reading me on the ferry from Crawford Bay, where we bought a woodstove for her yesterday. Today we moved it into her house, with help from Julie and Brian, the new studio tenants; also we moved in their new stove purchased from the same store. Then Uli came by with news that Edward was arriving in an hour for his stuff from the studio, didn't want to come in the house, and wanted the PIN number for the telephone company account.

Yesterday on the drive home, arriving at O\_\_\_\_'s, I felt a little moody, introspective. Why? I needed our intimate connection, without realizing it until O\_\_\_\_ approached me for it. I welcomed it, and then realized it was what I was missing without knowing it. Our romantic reclining then on blankets before the last glass-windowed fire, in the golden glow with her flowing hair and romantic beauty reclining under me and over me and beside me, was truly centering, what I wanted – though the edge of foreplay was dulled by my growing fatigue in the warmth of the firelight. By the time we moved to the bed (partly in deference to my growing fatigue), I was nearly a lost cause, fighting equal parts desire and fatigue; and when we were interrupted by Beatrice calling for advice on basic bookkeeping setup – an echo of earlier in the day when I had asked O\_\_\_\_ how one goes about learning that and what it was all about – I nearly fell asleep.

A long sleep later, and awaking after the three aforementioned dreams, I felt bonded enough to O\_\_\_\_ that I didn't need the act of lovemaking to take it any further. She did, however, coming in painful cries at the end, but claiming no pain, only the crumbling away of every part of her that lay between the rest of her and the deep well that she had discovered then and there to me, her very sea and land.

Still, I was needing no more, I felt. At breakfast of granola by the snowy windows, she asked me my thoughts and feelings, and I shared on my associations with winters past, the time arrived for me to accomplish what I wanted in writing, but lacking the confidence that I would actually make much progress, based on past experience. She asked me what would help me achieve the focus I was lacking in my scattered choices. I



cited external confirmation, and she counseled setting my own standards of intention and goal-achievement. I agreed in theory, yet still felt daunted by the required practice.

Still, I continue this project, this sharing of current wisdom, this experiment in truth . . . and her advice really hits the trust-myself nail on the head. If there is anything to do, it is this I need, to follow this thread of my wisdom, to continue this experiment in truth, to continue trusting this discipline, this choice and this form. So, I come back to the self-referential: because regardless of my audience, whether general or literate or writerly, that is an end-result after my result, which follows from the process I must follow. This talk is of the self I am, on the subject I am truly interested in: not only because it is my self, but because it truly captures my central and core interest. To say that it's "about me" is not really the point; it's rather about what I care about, which is the interconnection among these things, the organic nature of the work itself, the interplay of form and meaning, the synchrony of choice and fate, the centrality of timing, the flexibility of our day as it happens . . . with Edward intruding into the middle of the morning plan, so we simply skirt around it, the weekend honeymoon drifting into the workaday week, my solitude bridging up against the busy neighborhood of O\_\_\_\_ and Brian and Julie and Uli and Sean and Edward and Robin Hoy and Jeff and Timothy, a crowd of which I am a useless part, except in what I can offer uniquely: in a half-hour, to go up again with tin-snips and hacksaw and truck, to finish the pipe fitting on the new stove and move the old one out to the shed.

And in my work in general, this is what I demand of myself, this is the standard I set: to be useful, as no one else could be. If someone else can fill the bill – in relationship, in work – then let them do it. I must go where no one else can or will go. I must do what no one else can do or is doing up to this point. Thus I offer myself to relationship with O\_\_\_\_ at this point in her life . . . and not with L\_\_\_\_ because she doesn't need me or want me right now. Not Z\_\_\_\_ because she chose to go elsewhere. As a treeplanter – I could use more money, but prefer not to continue doing a job that anyone can do. Playing Odin was perhaps a unique contribution, but at too high a price, commuting in the winter in the dark and the snow. By contrast I am drawn to the particular kind of groove I can offer in music, to the rhythmical transcription that no one else is doing in my way, and above all to this writing, my writing. This form is one I am drawn to because it is new, perhaps unique. I cannot be just another poet, just another "mystery" or BC writer. I must be an innovator, a pioneer. Because otherwise, why bother?

## First Snow

Rolling up my sleeves I come to the task of capturing the breath of the walk through the forest, where I, of bird calls and feller of trees, walked slowly as if to signify a chill or an ease in being with the place, that other world this side of the school of life . . .

Having made love, eaten breakfast, moved two stoves and come home to celebrate the cutting of all wood for two winters, and cleaned the house of presences save three fat volumes of family photos, I recall once more that there are no rules to go by except one: Truth Thyself.

Here, this morning, with the first snowfall melting on the ground, is this only a taste, a forewarning of winter yet to come in earnest?

I'm going to Hawaii soon – sadly, the “wettest place on Earth.” Which is really all right, considering the misnomered planet of water, and our pleasant beings in the flow, watching the ferry boil the water in a shifting wake that merges to the smooth wavesurfaced body of magic . . .

The trees gnaw at the congealing waveclouds, pricking them as in a dare to send more water to earth. We muddy humans sweat and huddle into our skins, aware of none of the idiocy of modern times, the sultry romances of Hollywood and Saturday night, glories of chrome. Only through transparent panes of two dimensions do we see the mountain, towering over the landscape, eons heavy with rain, snow, rock and the wearing down of centuries.

*Just shatter the pane, stupid. Go beyond.*

It's you again.

*Did you think this “other world” of yours was unpopulated?*

Okay. While you're here, could you calculate for me the distance along the fourth dimension to that last encounter?

*You mean yesterday, earlier this morning . . .*

No, in the forest, on the Earl Grey trail. I thought you'd remember.

*Of course I do. You must mean times when we were alone, when no one else was listening so you could hear me for once.*

Whatever.

*It was August 29<sup>th</sup>, I believe. Or July? I could look it up.*

I'd appreciate that.

*19<sup>th</sup> August. It was on the pile of notebook paper, not the computer.*

Are you trying to make a point?

*They're all points. ["The million points of God oh God . . ."](#)*

[silence]

*How quickly you lost the rhythm. Did you forget to breathe?*

Let me ask you. Are you the master of the school of life?

*Maybe your dead little brother.*

Why are you always so morbid?

*Morbid comes from your interpretation of what I say, what I see. I am only a translator into words, of what otherwise would appear to you as a blind emptiness, symbolic of nothing more than all the other blind emptinesses you call time, or each phenomena you care to name.*

And myself?

*You have a name. I remember it well. Your name is Now.*

So, all I really need to pass is a password, a user name, and a ticket to the free university of the beyond – is that it?

*You have access to it at every moment.*

Cool. This is like the Celestine Prophecies, or the Bible.

*Popol Vuh, by any other name. Pick one, any one.*

But you're kind of too irreverent for the part, don't you think?

*Too morbid, now too irreverent, can you make up your mind?*

With difficulty. But really, I just have to enter the password, correct?

*Yes, and if and only if it matches your username, you get in. Got it?*

Does that cover the eventualities of the ifs-and-only-ifs that still don't get through the door?

*Relax.*

You make it sound so simple.

*And you, so complicated.*

So right.

*So wrong.*

Off to a rodeo next?

*Yeah to see a friend of mine, an old buddy so to speak, a flute-playing cowboy who is going to horse-dance with live thrash jazz in the next Olympics.*

You exaggerate.

*Maybe the one after that.*

If they practice a lot.

*An hour a day; two meetings a week.*

Sounds like the key to success.

*Money, fame, achievement: yeah, like that. Otherwise, just sit back and enjoy it. It's not going anywhere.*

“It – ”

*Yeah, like I already told you. What-is. Remember the band you're gonna dance like colts and fillies to next Saturday night?*

"What It Is."

*That's it.*

So do I pass?

*You were in from the beginning. You just didn't know it.*

## **Time Flies**

Stepping up the stakes, a little and more each day. Upping the dosages. Replaying summer seasons by the dozen, in a wintertime month, or transcending sentences altogether: a journey into *Back to the Future*, just after the return to 1955, stopping with blue: for a cup of green tea and bite of Java Roast, the going things symbolizing independence, freedom, the right to say no.

This is the sound of the control button, dancing. This is the road stones cobbling under the fingers like horses of the wind, where the instrument is like the piano only mute, its strings in pixels to play by some invisible connection, thought into translation, what into thought, what is, the possible, the imaginable all or any. While everything else waits, we dance, drawing down currents of new logic at every unknown point. Like islands we sun ourselves in the broad waters, scanning the horizon for signs of strife.

We land here each year to bathe our fears and sound our furies, blowing tempests into the wind, spinning sailing stories, cataloguing ocean species, tasting salt in the air.

The mother of this song never looks back. Like any mother she worries: but only about the future. 1955 is . . . well . . . beyond beyond. The graveyard of memories, long past. Towards the future we see . . . ourselves, in that mirror of quicksilver, connoisseurs of our own image. There is comedy in that treatment, because it cuts away all that doesn't completely characterize it. Diversions come, all the better, because we all divert, and anyway, we have humorous aspects with one another the more we are different from one another. The bold 14-year-old girl, the sad plaintive mother resigned with her bottle of vodka, the geek father fixated on the slapstick tube, these are people we remember.

These are the random family that launch the time-traveler, boy on joystick, revving to 88 or 37/21 at one-third the speed of sound. The manual says the device, with

practice, will get you to the fourth dimension, with a choice of overtones, when it goes past 9/10 and beyond, to the eighteenth breath, the 55-foot disc of light, the starwheels turning counterbalanced upon and within one another: these machines are buildable in our time, in our instant of believing, in our conception of where we start and where we are, definable as objects in a world as real, actually more real, than that of Disney and Sears. We go forward down this mall lane in tracks of fire to know and understand the destination we are following.

The Mayans knew, in Galactic Central terms, that something was afoot; and we would know too, if we but had the imagination to translate. Unfortunately most written accounts were burned, as in Alexandria. These the ancient myths still tell; but mysterious emptiness reigns when the questions stop out of doors, between the old larch stump now rotted to a spindle, and the laundry rack post clawed half through by the indoor fat cat.

Will further knowledge come from the emptiness, or to fill it?

*Trust me.*

Famous last words.

In the meantime, going higher is going further in. Faster, away from all that is, into the heart of all that is. The sea and land conspire, a silent breathing of air, inspiring trust in the oneness of it all, in the persistence of irrefutable logic, and an implicit understanding of the generous all-inclusivity of that oneness in motion, ever expanding until some eventual inbreath . . . all the same, we ride, a long ride; we have time to visit the wave, and it's free; it's coming to your heart in the near future; and we will be amazed to have said, it isn't real, it isn't possible.

We affirm our evolution to the now, and beyond now, into the land of no-land, a far horizon, moving relentlessly forward, where higher is in, just as Columbus found wider is back, but with surprises along the way; there are detours presented which become the way it is, what has found us and given us a ride. Who benefits, who pushes into motion? We are one with our surfboard on a fifty-foot wave, and its impelling rolling force gives us a current to call our tunnel; we ride the curling foam, we roll gently through its slice and come down to shore to be greeted as visitors from another world, as we are.

They asked, Are you poor? Where do you sleep? Have you any food?

We rode musician's class, strumming to the engines, not asking why. We rode the trains for pleasure and work along the way. We played in motion the stories of time and danced a lively tune.

Our great aunts counseled us on the options ahead, standard morals included. We wrote our examinations piecemeal, with negotiation for special make-up time should the need arise. Our overseers were merciful, those of our ancestors, and we come again to this place liberated from every risk imaginable, all known deaths. This culminating liberty ranks among the first of the feats of history, as it is the only strategy against tragedy.

I speak today of the responsibility for us all . . .

The soapbox derby will start at midnight this year, its fanfare played by didgeridoo, thumb piano, rattle and chains. The snow will fall on unroofed heads, and the hens will have become freed to their inherited fate. Our prayers no longer answered by drugs, we turn to the physician's wife, the herbalist, to grace our homemade pizza, our oiled sprouts. We come to the means of sustenance, the accounting of life present on what terms.

Sentences are light to heavy; judges impartial. Juries vote on automatic, computer-generated profiles, average independent study results to a commonwealth consensus, so that democracy will show no favor to the uninformed.

The uniformed, meanwhile, are free to strut mimelike down the central boulevard, keepers of permits, sighters of prey; these will hail the history of their seeders and cleanse the earth of vermin, because we (they say) are destined to overrule.

For a while.

Slash of cedar, bruised maple, the trees' first rank lies fallen, the battlefield raked with branches, ax cuts, stumps and their fat wedges cut out. Leaving my own homestead behind with its woodshed full, I move on to O\_\_\_\_'s property, wreaking more havoc.

These are the casualties of my private war, my demonstration of omnipotence in grand design. Aesthetics was masked by a practical bottom line, firewood. In truth I wanted the clearing, if I was to garden here. To this end fir became pest, encroacher of vision, delimiter of light the seducer. The beaches crammed, I hide in the rainy mountain's belly, controlling my temper, wishing some small grace of vengeance to remind me of the longest freest sunny hot summer in memory. Its heat sustaining, I'm still on the road jammin fulltime even now, a collector of wood gaining interest, feeling gladness of stored energy and work and intention coming into flaming fruit, worshipping that moody god/dess who moves ever calling from day to day, warning and warming me, telling me I can remember any time I choose, I only have to watch what is before me in

the light of day, the night light of my own contrivance, the light that is light no matter the color, the source, as angles to a circle, as rods to a fire.

## On Discipline

Trusting self and following discipline seem to be contradictory.

I don't "feel like" writing at this moment – yet have imposed upon myself as a longer-term goal, the accumulation of these regular daily pages.

So I become attuned to it in the doing, as a jogger does in warming up, in becoming fit, more desirous of being in that active state again – in speed, movement, immersion in the dynamic flow.

I also told myself yesterday that in pursuing this project I would take away the stuff about writing per se, or at least about the writing of this, the this about this. Yet I am not convinced that such deletion is necessary or desirable – because the spirit and impulse of the writing is integral to the theme I'm presenting and indulging in: it's the very sense of tuning into present desire, feeling, what-is. In a sense all writing which does not delve at least partially into this nature-of-itself is false. False, or opaque, has its place too: fiction, for instance, deliberately assumes (both writer and reader partaking in this assumption) that the writing itself is not the issue – that pure invention is the art of the day. The same stance favoring opacity is taken by safe nonfiction of the "content is king" variety. Yet everywhere that language goes, we must admit its ironic and paradoxical power and limitation: it both illumines and conceals, masks and reveals. Invention steals upon reality and vice-versa. With or without authorial intrusions, the narrative voice maintains its central role as artificer; and the artifact that results, clear as a mirror or heavy-laden with paint, cannot help but stand as an expression of its creator.

So, I have embarked on a literary discourse, instead of the usual breakfast menu, or therapeutic philosophy, or dream summary, or autobiographical digression, or well-chewed present-life dilemma, or landscape vignette, or recapitulation of my to-do list past present or future . . .

The nature of time, among these salient categories, has its place. So has the flow of language itself, reducing content to a scat lyric in the service of rhythm, language as music-wash over and through the ears. Right brain, left brain, subtle triggers of sense-association, the word "blue" having the desired effect, "sky-blue" better, "robin's egg blue" better yet except still a cliché, "blue like the harebells in Provence on a rainy Sunday morning" perhaps freshest yet and therefore most enjoyably effective.



What a strange fruit is the pomegranate, whose half-sliced body tempts me from the blue-and-white – no, the harebell-blue and cream-white – horizontal striped bowl beside me containing small tomatoes (some wrinkled, some orange) and a browned banana; in that the seeds are the juicy, edible part and the fruit a mere husk.

So here we are to the meat of the essay, in which the seed is the fruit or edible portion: the inner logic of what is here before us, the juice of the moment, the act of writing itself – while the fleshy container is the life lived, the raw content, the pith and dross of work and relationship and weather and emotional anxiety: worldly human being.

Which brings us to these other matters: the day ahead, another day past and somehow missed in the journalistic re-telling, conversations this morning on the dutiful exchange of I-love-you's over a 22-year failed marriage, the nature of failure, the challenge of discipline, the health effects of water and exercise, the sacred geometries of meditation, the dregs of a half-and-half coffee, the spray of gold fading sword-grass from the flats in the flattish small upright vase, the synchronicity of the digitalis/foxglove notation in *Howard's End* and the title of the Anne Cameron story; the note that we watched *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* and discussed its ironically formal similarity to *Howard's End*, both as a depiction of a given lifestyle, however outwardly different between the seventies San Francisco singles scene and that of the English gentry of the twenties, and in the shared culmination in obligatory and singular murder, for traditional dramatic impact of strong emotion; the synchronicity of O\_\_\_\_'s dream of flowers planted everywhere here as at Howard's End, or walking among them with the disapproving Renata like Vanessa Redgrave or Z\_\_\_\_; the sword-grass in Avison's poem, and the Atwood poem about the younger sister diving into the lake which must then heal its wound with a rippling salve; the sun dripping thought the eastern trees, my eastern trees downed now like the baby we almost conceived; a pomegranate seed to sweeten the harsh taste of coffee dregs . . .

This is my day, my moment, my present trusting of all that is to fulfill my self-appointed duty to myself, and you, dear reader, whoever, whenever you are.

I adopt a black cat into my freedom ritual, where freedom comes with the turning of self-trust as the key: grammatically, politically, romantically, philosophically and spiritually, prophetically and analytically. It must still be rhythmically and aesthetically pleasing; yet it's not so much about the choosing of the constituent elements, but in the freedom itself. Thus a time alone: in the candlelit red bath, a bluepenned revolutionary rallies countrymen to the cry Freedom – but it's only alone to be had. Social freedom carried its own restrictions built-in; not least of which is the persecution of personal freedom at worst – tending toward torture, imprisonment, execution, not necessarily in that order. Freedom is another form of love, which begins with self-love.

So alone is time itself shed: away from the necessary appointment or chance engagement, it is a rhythm of calling your own shots as chief character in this novel that is your life.

The script is open-ended, truly: you have complete artistic control.

It's in the contract. Not the "Social Contract," but the marriage contract of self and soul. This means choosing life or death, disease or health, poverty or abundance, depression or joy, passion or boredom.

The basics in business, art, self-help or music . . .

I ease the cat onto my belly, a foot here, a paw there in small warm water; he gingerly steps up then touches the point of a claw just at skin: my call, his response; warm languid immersion then a sharp-pointed landing.

My spirit guide, the cougar, keeps me fed, with deer meat or duck; I am frugal with the meat and now welcome the new snow.

There is no time wasted, as it all leads to this.

This becomes sufficient when trust is given, that it is sufficient.

Metaphors dance radially like spokes on a wheel of meaning, whose track rolls forward to where the mad genius professor meets the black-catted visionary, and miracles are wrought in the crucible of breathing, sheer breathing, even when it's not otherwise evident, even when it impels the trust to begin with, in the master cylinder which brakes the pressures of duty and opens the gates to light –

the meeting in the garden, inevitable.

Odin stands watching with raven on his shoulder (jaguar in disguise): a single-visioned wanderer taking his ease.

Checks and balances: the dance of politics and economics.

Total, ultimate freedom: the cry of babes.

The Galactic Center calls: a focus of meaning. God in a new role, just opening, a script in the writing, no end to this play, we all signed up and there's no quitting, but if you like soliloquies, stage-action lovemaking, dark ruminations, mirrors and flashbacks, we can work it all in. At a cost, of course.

You're so right for the part; on the other hand, you can just go off and do your own thing, be yourself: like the Brando character in *Apocalypse Now*. You just act natural – we'll get it all on camera, and edit out the really slow or repetitive parts. The part left is the pumping heart, fluid and self-referential, yet collecting all the energies of the substance making up life-blood itself, where everything coheres, every nuance of character depiction contributes a little later to plot, to more or less degree. Some minor chat or personnel will be deleted – even you, in the dark-hearted denouement. Along the way, too, toxins and other offending substances will be removed for border testing, given

palatability ratings or transfusion indices in honor of latent health-giving properties. The musical score includes silence, roar of water-powered light, voices of the future.

## Finding the Center

Doing what needs to be done: clearing the head, the nostrils, the breath; cleaning up the diet, the hours. The time of filling O\_\_\_\_'s woodshed is now, with swift sure strokes of the ax. This is the energy of completion and initiation: splitting the dead pine with the flurries of first snow flirting in a warm sky, the heady sweet apple juice still fresh in the jar; filling the needs as they arise, balancing preference so there is time for all, breath by breath, outdoors or in. There is always a new morning to explore, after sleep in its strange silent way sweeps away tatters of old men muttering among the pipes, the girls' feet dancing. There are new choices to be made, with no deadlines past or future. We come to this music by all ways to circle around that center of home, where we are going. We find our way by the days of our doing, clearing away, discovering new passageways, going backwards and forwards at once in being still, breathing forward and back, the central star vibrating in place while the others spin round it both ways, male and female, positive or negative, counter or clockwise, east or west. The cardinal point rests within, where we search again, getting closer, ever closer.

No easy death, here: but the ongoing into other forms. This action and reaction is the timing of chaos, to fit the rhythm of two into one. In that humming conundrum is the conjoining of effort and will into trust, a discipline of following the inclination sloping spirally down inside the body of the shell, until all maps are covered by the pearl glaze of this journey.

Self-reference is the only language we know. Breaking the routine to fit the moment, we pause, switch gears, cover other bases. There is always a walk in the woods, a shelf full of books to read. There is time for everything. Even food will have its place, raw beginnings at the first act of survival past breathing. We go down instantly to that center with our last breath, our next one. In that center we have come already home.

It does no good to talk there, but I like to amuse myself with the rhythms of words, their convenient associations. They flower like insects swarming over the placid countenance of my created vision, until I give into their wishes and paint them upon the canvas of my time.

Outside, a final row awaits to be filled: an hour's work. My lungs pant for the fresh air again, moving on faster to that other center all around.

11 November

1:40 A.M. – but this is not about time.

This is about remembering the core truths, the central beacon, the stillness and vision of the end, of bringing past beginnings to swift conclusion.

My initiations then are of an opening to the future. Not a directing into, but a welcoming of.

I do this not by doing – except this writing, a hot bath, disciplines and necessary tasks, also pleasurable excursions – but by looking askance at the too many books by the bed, too many projects to maintain, increase or finish.

I start by stopping. If the breath is fuller, smoother now, I have succeeded – and this was my chief aim; along with warming the body topically with the bath, and not giving in even to sleep.

But to find this core, this belonging. In this hard truth is soft comfort: a singleness of path, lighted even by night if only by one candle.

In this music my atmosphere is cleared; my bearings are sighted.

I wonder, is my passion for escaping history a throwback to growing up with an alcoholic father and all its attendant side effects, while the equal passion for expressing it is a need for loving approval missing after my premature entrance onto the stage?

Impatience was my middle name.

Yet, now I realize, the work is nearly done, as I aim to complete this chronicle at my departure for Hawaii. There remains a value in the practice – spiritual or therapeutic, regardless of artistic or educational merit. *So I continue* in this vein, a documentary melody, a mode immune to rules, and in my taste, antagonistic to them. Yet eager to be accessible, I aspire to present a piece of a whole, harmonic and engaging. With its rhythmic bass, it aims to move you. Into the dance we go, following the beat far into the night.

This jam too will have its ending, after a run of mid-night nuances, uncovered bleats and polyvalences. I live here in this final set, with a confidence of elimination, a finishing of all else by default.

Now the audience, the dancers have suddenly vanished. The stage crew is gone. Alone I walk to sound my monologue, while sparrows in the galleries beckon me home.

There is sleep, to come where this song rests, and breath comes easily, and tasks of tomorrow wait like pale scratches on sheets of bark.

12 November

I'm feeling good, healthy, strong, warm, confident. I finished four books last night and this morning, with an early evening to bed: Roth, Gendlin, Borysenko, Orr. Ploughing through the old, to make way for the new.

This morning time is passing me by: but I have read more, in *Kauai Trails*, cleaned up my email to stay ahead, got two fires going, took a shower and cut my hair and did the laundry and cleaned the sink and tub drains . . .

A cold and windy rainy day outside.

Breakfast of rice porridge, first with miso then yogurt.

Opening to the breath within. Endlessness. There does not need to be any destination. Where was I? The union with all, mystical oneness. In this shower-sense of the gladness of beginning my day, helped by straight clear head and not too little or too much sleep, and digestion of reading this morning, especially of Orr but really of all four of these similar books, I realize by now that I have absorbed their lessons and there is nothing new: only a bond of familiarity, and a respect for the simple eloquence of their statements.

I am left to wonder about my own contribution. Jesus compressed the ten commandments to two: Put your faith in unity consciousness, and love your neighbor as yourself. These are really only one, because our neighbor and ourself and God are all one.

This mystical truth said, what more is there to say?

We might add a cosmological view, wherein the earth itself will die a cold cinder one day like the burnt star of the sun, our very universe collapsed or exploded beyond recall, and that's all okay, just part of a cycle. We know it's not going anywhere: and this knowledge fills our own life with perpetuity. Because, we, I, the self of identification, is no smaller than the all that is. When the all-that-is includes all of time and space, there is no other, no absence of what is, no more poverty, death, loneliness, estrangement or alienation. We are what we call we. If we is the same as all facets of creation, all creatures and places of creation, we shall continue.

*So I continue . . .*

Back on earth I seek to fulfill certain requirements of my conditioned body and mind. I want to be warm and well fed. I want to know that there is wood in my shed, a roof over my head, money in the bank and more coming in for the foreseeable future. I want to know that I can plant more food in the spring, cut more wood. This is all quite simple. It requires some work, patience, skill, cooperation. These I can manifest. The rest is . . . gamesmanship, filling the hours by choice with what is interesting and enjoyable, not only to myself, but to others who are facets of my greater self.

So doing, this is included, this writing. But enough has been said, almost, of this very process that already I look to the end of it: one more week. A week only to recapitulate, in this form as in this body, the lessons of a lifetime, a nine-months gestation after conception of my single being in the world. I will be born a new man, healed in the crucible of thought and magic and love and mystery and flow and healing and sharing of feeling, of immersion in the present and preparation for the future, clearing out of the past and centering in the task at hand.

There is no task, really, only the chosen play. The work is done by the universe, the earth. The elements are all in place. We find our way with machine or hand-tool, finding a way to cut and haul the wood, save and scatter the seeds. Water, weeds, our own food storage, these are basic needs we attempt not in a spirit of desperation or duty, but in loving gift to ourself and others. We partake of the flow of economy, of art and music and language, of friendship and affection. We have cares not so much for our future as for those who care too much.

In this of all mornings, the day after the last of my firewood is under cover, the day I have finished four books I've been reading for four months, the day I have begun practicing keyboard again and also found time and discipline to play flute and drum, the day I have managed all my projects and ambitions into an optional but desired framework of accomplishment over the next year and a half till my arbitrary deadline of 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, from then on it's clear sailing to the end time of the Mayan Calendar, December solstice 2012. Why then in the light of the endlessness of the end, am I still committed to these persistent and leftover goals, these unfinished dust-covered projects that once captured my imagination and effort?

Why not?

There is an impulse to fulfill my destiny, and this is accomplished not by seeking out means of fulfillment, but by clearing out those that have already occurred to me in the past and have not yet been completed. I have a world-soul that seeks to fulfill its needs on worldly terms, though couched in a perspective of detachment and surrender.

Can I have it both ways? Working in the world with the tenacity required to persist and compete; yet letting go enough not to burn out and ruin the pleasure of accomplishment even when it is attained? – like my mother and the Thanksgiving dinner she was too exhausted to enjoy, after slaving over it all day in the kitchen.

No thanks. I must have my cake and eat it too. Will accomplishment spoil my enjoyment and enjoyment also spoil my accomplishment? This is possible but so is a different attitude. Lying in bed reflective, and then expanding with stretching breath in the shower, served this morning to fulfill the purpose of my skipped meditation and yoga. As those practices become more optional, I can free myself to go for what I most desire:

but what is that? Money, fame, what money can buy, the approval of others which I can give myself, accomplishment itself because it is within my uniquely human power, creative energy for the joy of its own divine manifestation, wisdom in action moment by moment, material surplus because that is the way in northern climates where I prefer to live so as to enjoy the splendid solitude of trees and mountains and yes, even cloud?

The key is enjoyment, enjoyment of the work I choose. It is in this sense that the discipline of this journal still continues, whether after shower or yoga, because it's not so much the shower or the yoga that counts foremost for me, it's the writing, this daily check-in and recapitulation, this exploration of myself. I could be a guru of showers or yoga, of readings or video reviews, of websites and business plans, and in fact I play all these like my numerous drums and other instruments. But here, rather, is the core where I come to rest and play and work without any obligation or duty except love and joy of the act of writing itself as it reflects the love and joy of all existence; and so it is here I continue, for myself and therefore for everyone and everything that may appreciate being so included.

14 November

On a roll of high energy and good feeling, all week since the transition from firewood done and all winter's possibilities overwhelmingly before me . . . with some sense of loss I come to the end of this particular birth-journey. Trusting myself, through conscious breathing, I conclude these experiments in truth in this phase at least, summing this container of Current Wisdom.

I could begin and end at any point, because the end and the beginning are contained within every point along the way. So in arbitrary measure I anticipate an imminent end, and prepare to celebrate a beginning.

In trust I go forward into each new breath, celebrating the last and the next to come, and the current wisdom of each present breath.

16 November

After the end, is the beginning again. And it's a rough time now, crashing after the week and weekend: flying through Writers Group and Friday Night Jam which was good enough with Josh and Richard and Walkin and Rob and me and then when I was about to leave at 11:30, lingering on the porch, Chris showed up and we rocked out for another hour and a half before I finally pulled out in deference to my date in town with O\_\_\_\_ all day and evening Saturday. In fact we did have a full town day and then danced to *What it Is* until one-thirty, then came back to Francine and Michael's and made love –

marred by my sadness and disappointment at coming, despite the powerful connection that produced that release. Was this regret my way of holding back somehow, losing the edge of confidence in my attraction to O\_\_\_\_ which I had built all evening on the public scene, and more intimately with our new friends? At any rate she felt wonderful . . . until the next day during our long walk in the rain and I expressed that sadness I was still carrying. When she brought up the subject of patience, the issue of my patience with her, it took me to a deeper level, in touch with my impatience with my own learning and control, my inability to achieve what I intend, the weakness of my resolve and awareness when it counts. Yet was I masking, even deeper, an uneasiness with O\_\_\_\_ on the issue of attractiveness?

She had recently bought a book by a woman who wrote also on the subject of chasing after perfection vs. making the best of what is there: *Love the One You're With*. Well, this is popular advice. Is it for me? I also have to struggle with that same issue in every area of my life: a drive for perfection. Childhood issues, still at it, wailing at the missing mother and father, each in their own gray ways. Yet while the popular wisdom tells me to slow down and not take my imperfections so hard – thus, to love the one I'm with – I also am prey to the popular stereotype of the made-in-heaven romance, the ideal Barbie mate, the prettier face or figure of my dreams or recollections: of L\_\_\_\_, for instance.

And speaking of dreams, I had two bad ones last night, one involving me in a gangster chase . . . when they were caught, they were skewered up the ass with five-foot knitting needles. They died bloody, convulsing deaths. Then I was beset by a gang of guys with ugly noses, who claimed that I had a nose unlike theirs and it wasn't fair, therefore they were going to take care of mine for me. Was this a way of being put in my place, on that issue of attractiveness? Then I look in the mirror and see the same mixed message regarding ideal attractiveness that I project onto O\_\_\_\_, and know that I would project it onto anyone . . . not to mention the variable non-physical traits, or the various physical traits besides the face. Every detail could be listed in the computer printout I would require: a veritable DNA gene bank certified by my own board of examiners.

No, that's not the way . . . but at least I could respond with consistency to the woman I sometimes love. There, I said something unkind and unfaithful again. No wonder it's hard for her. Am I doomed to follow Tom's prophecy and "break her heart" at the first opportunity, committing and not really meaning it, and then withdrawing as with Z\_\_\_\_ or being tempted elsewhere as also with Z\_\_\_\_, doing in fact both of these things with every serious relationship since the age of twelve: including, among others, D\_\_\_\_, K\_\_\_\_, and F\_\_\_\_? The exceptions were T\_\_\_\_, E\_\_\_\_ and L\_\_\_\_: and these women did it to me . . . never promising anything, perhaps knowing their own standards demanded better than me, or fearing their own unsuitability for me.



With every woman I will find a fault. Is this cause for celibacy, or perhaps simply acknowledgement and honesty and forgiveness, especially in light of my own imperfections? I also find fault with every standard of my own performance, no matter how accomplished on the relative scale of worldly judgment. The scale is always relative: and my performance always is liable to fall short sooner or later as I continue to adjust my own scale of judgment upwards. Always the game calls for a higher bar, until I fall. So, I need somehow to lower the bar: not permanently, perhaps, but comfortably.

Not permanently: this means, for a woman, however, insecurity. When I become fully habituated to her, know her every intimacy and she mine, then do I set my sights “higher” on the next attraction? Maybe this is okay. It fits with the serial monogamy of *The Anatomy of Love* . . . every 4 years. Does it fit with the picture to be painted in the next book I want to order? We’ll see. And the next, and the next . . . ?

Serial monogamy is not a popular book among women, I suspect. Do they have a higher security quotient, a deeper emotional investment to protect? On the other hand, how much is the historical and sociocultural data relevant? Each woman has her own experience and history and evolutionary path to pursue for her own sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. Yet security seems a common issue: for many men, too, for that matter. The thing is, not to use a mold, I suppose, but to be true to the individual needs concerned. This also means not simply buying blindly into security. But addressing the needs as they do arise.

What if I, how could I, tell O\_\_\_\_ that someday I might leave her for a prettier face? Is this even true? I don’t know. The scripts are out there . . . *Sleepless in Seattle* the freshest in mind. The love-at-first-sight demon. What to do? Especially when the love fades, with the beauty as it ages or shows its detail in the light of another morning.

I am subtly avoiding this trickiest of all questions. Fact: we are programmed in hard-wiring, so to speak, to fall in love again and again. Fact: we do have a difficult time letting go of our securities. Could O\_\_\_\_ and I agree, in advance, to be uncommitted, or to have our commitment provisional . . . “as long as it makes sense”? What does it mean to hold out, even in the privacy of my own fantasies and dreams, the hope of a better match? What does it feel like to know that about one’s partner, that one is just a stand-in for the theoretically perfect lady or gent in waiting? Will we then be willing or able to give fully of ourselves?

Yet we must, in the face of death and accident as well as divorce, know that no matter how much or little we reserve our love, it can all end tomorrow. In fact someday it will, we know that. The person we love today will die, and we will die, and so, of the couple, one of us is faced with the certain prospect of grief and loss unless we die instantly or otherwise unconsciously together. Given the inevitability of loss, our investment is never safe. Given this end point, what do we intend for each other? Do we intend while we are alive to keep looking for opportunities to form primary, sexual bonds

with other people? What do we expect will be the outcome of these experiments? More of the same? I wonder, but know that it's useful to think all this process out in advance: or rather, in retrospect on the assembled evidence to date. Someone is always running out, in my experience. And maybe that's all okay, simply the way it is, therefore making "the way it should be" irrelevant – unless I seek, we seek together, some other intention.

Let us, for now, be either content with instability, or to search thoroughly for a more reliable intention. To stay together no matter what? I don't think so, though it sounds noble: the stuff of traditional marriage, where the results aren't promising. To intend to stay together forever because so far it's been good between us? That formula failed for Z\_\_\_\_ and me: she bailed out. That case also proved that there's more to a successful relationship than who thinks who is pretty. I (mostly) was certain of her physical attractiveness for me; but definitely not 100%. Did my declining affection and emotional distance reflect this disappointment of my insatiable beauty standard, and thus poison the trust and affection I'd earned early on? Quite likely.

What's the moral?

1. Change my attitude; stop being dissatisfied and always raising my standards.
2. Find someone who so blows me away that I can at last believe the romantic myth (until one of us dies or ages or is crippled or reveals some other basic impediment such as narrow intellect or abrasive communication style, poor cooking or different taste for mountain or sea; or what if she experiences a waning attraction to me?)

17 November

Coming to terms with: all the information I want to process . . . my relationship issues . . . my health declining . . . more strange and puzzling dreams. Last night's version, after a visit from Nellie:

*Z\_\_\_\_ and I are walking along a dark Nelson street, pulling Nellie along with us. She's small; like a four-year old or less, and we're holding her upside down, and on her head and arms are orange plastic foamy tube-like things that bounce along the pavement, and she is silent and serene, and though it seems dangerous or injurious, we seem to feel that she is silent because she is enjoying it so much, as if in a trance. Then we find ourselves heating a griddle of wood, with a light film of oil. Now Nellie is an egg that is split into two halves, each put upside down on the griddle. I slide my half along but am concerned it's getting too hot and will cook her. Z\_\_\_\_ thinks it's okay. But I pick up the half – like the poor duckling that Robin Hoy and I found half out of its shell, but worse – and fear that it's too late. The albumen has begun coagulating; the liver has separated; the various pieces and colors and organs are not holding together well enough; and when I try to match it with the other half, about the size of a goose egg in my hand, the*

*pieces just don't cohere as a living organism anymore, and I am filled with grief that we've done this thing to her, killed her.*

I awake wheezing at five-thirty, take my inhalers, and read Kingma's book on marriage and relationship. Truly I recognize my spot in the paradigm, expecting too much of the "perfect" relationship. I have a new appreciation for O\_\_\_\_, what we have together. Yet still I know the work I have to do: to get over my issue about perfection. I don't even yet fully understand the challenge for me, though the pattern is clear: getting involved with members of the opposite sex whom I find, whether at first or later, to be less attractive than I feel I deserve. Why is this?

On one hand, it may be because I feel at the outset that I don't deserve better, or cannot handle the self-image that a more beautiful partner would require of me. I project onto my partner this mirror of my own self-image, my own unattractiveness, and then struggle against it, because of what I would prefer, the improved image. The irony is that in relationship my self-esteem increases, so that I soon outgrow the flawed image that I have attracted to my earlier self. Fine for me, but grossly unfair to the partner whose trust and intimacy I have cultivated. There is another dimension to this dynamic as well, the issue of abandonment. Afraid of the abandonment of my infancy, I settle for a less attractive partner in the tradeoff for greater security, less fear of her desirability for other men. Less competition, more security. Again the irony is that as my own self-confidence increases in the course of a developing relationship, I am more likely to pull away my own commitment to her. This can take the form of cold feet, or an affair, or emotional distance.

The other issue, or way of approaching this issue, is that I have this desire for perfection in every area of my life. I am never satisfied. I take the all or nothing approach, and even when all is achieved, it becomes nothing again when I shift my standards upward. I am never good enough; my relationship is never good enough; my partner's beauty or other qualities are never good enough. If at some point they begin or become good enough, I raise the stakes in a futile quest for even greater perfection. How could anyone else ever keep up, when I myself can't even keep up?

The cure for both these behaviors and attitudes is contained within the problem. My needs are for greater self-esteem and self-confidence and self-security in the first instance; and greater satisfaction with who and what I actually am in all my talents and abilities and choices.

How can I achieve these qualities?

By understanding the problem in its present manifestation and past causes.

By expressing this situation openly and honestly to those I love.

By feeling and affirming the positive qualities that are healthier to include in my life: self-esteem, self-confidence, security, satisfaction, positive self-image, pride, self-trust.

By trusting myself, my actual feelings of attraction.

What really counts here is what is most real. How do I feel with someone else, with O\_\_\_\_\_ for instance? If I find her or myself unattractive, is that real or is it a program of conditioning or insecurity? I know that this attractiveness issue is a chimera. More to the point, perhaps, would be to shift my focus to the inner qualities of my encounter with that mirror of another. I might ask myself the following questions:

If she is unattractive to me at the moment, might I also be unattractive to her at the moment?

Isn't it true that no matter what our present state of attractiveness to each other, it will change in time, with mood, age, health, attitude, mutually reinforcing love or hesitation?

What is the nature of attractiveness? How many physical attributes count, and to what degree? How many non-physical attributes count, and to what degree?

Does a relationship have to depend on perfect reliability of perfect attractiveness?

Isn't it true that in looking around at other prospective partners, my judgment is never reliable, no matter how long or wide I look, in fact is less reliable the longer and wider I look?

How do I feel in my gut?

Why did I get involved with – why did I feel attracted to – this person in the first place? Didn't I trust myself at that point? Have I now lost trust in that intuition, that expression of my own passion, my own actual desire? Was I fooling myself then?

I know that I have always wanted to be perfect, and have so far failed. But of course I've failed. The program of perfection is a program of failure. I need to get over it.

At the same time I need to feel good about who I actually am.

With this solution I am adequate for whomever I attract, for whomever I am attracted to. But these matches don't happen automatically. They happen serendipitously; fate plays such a large hand. *Sleepless in Seattle* is a true story . . . up to a point. The false part is that they live happily ever after. But then, they don't assert that; it's just implied because the whole culture implies it.

What do I want? A mail-order bride? A genetic fit to my whims of the moment? Then what happens when my whims change – or my human partner's whims? It is a jam, I must remember: not a computer game. The difference in real mating compared to these ideal projections is like the difference between real baseball and the rotisserie or fantasy leagues. The computer projections are all very interesting, but ultimately irrelevant. Could I construct the ideal face pixel by pixel? And even if I could, another would appear around the corner to knock my socks off. This much is true and fun: human nature. Perfection itself is never complete because the game's never over. There's always a new card to be dealt, a freak injury, a hot new rookie.

So, where do I stand?

In the present moment . . . ready to love, to my fullest capacity if that is what I truly feel, beneath the lure of romance and image, the pang of neediness and security, the drive for ideals and the urge to repeat history. Getting deeper is what it's all about: under the skin, under convention, under self-concept to self itself, where self and self commune in natural selfhood, where eyes link and spark and open and know that this is right. For now, it's right. In that spirit, the now might continue gloriously in any form that evolves appropriately over an indeterminate amount of time into the future. This is good. It is all we have, all we can hope to have, more than we have ever had before.

18 November

Coming to conclusions: deciding that I may fall in love.

Removing obstructions: allowing the attractiveness I feel to be the reality that guides me. Loving, so that everything that has been in my life, our lives, up till now, and everything that is now between us, and everything that may happen between us from now on, is perfect. Not perfect in the sense of my previous obstructive obsession: chasing Perfection, *La Mujer Ideale*; but rather letting go of that chase, and so letting the perfection of present Love become the baseline reality. Is this romantic delusion? I think not; I think rather that my previous distancing – even my questioning of the last couple of days – was based on the illusions that I brought to the situation from my childhood insecurities, my conditioned drives for an impossible perfection. It's good, though, that I did go through that questioning process, so as to unravel the source of my obstructions, what was getting in the way of my love.

We made sweet long love last night, coming allowed in this case because it was a wholehearted giving, of whole body and soul; and today again with a midday tryst after discussion of these very issues. It hurt somewhat to tell and hear, but was necessary after my resolution yesterday to share fully. I felt a new security now that I could offer her finally, having examined the causes and nature of my own unreliable affections, my own inconsistent attraction, my own clouded love. I could share these freely in the context of an all-accepting, all-forgiving, all-loving present. This present too is not the suspect momentary love, saying "I love you right this moment but don't expect anything more." This is rather the reliability that comes from some experience now with the ebb and flow of my attraction, so that even if "imperfect" it is enough. Enough to be in all probability what I will feel again, what I will want to feel again; what I will, in all consciousness of the full range of possibilities, allow again. Because the alternative, as I have examined it fully, is to embark on that impossible quest for a permanent perfection. Even if I were to find a perfection in a partner it would be subject to the impermanence of all life, and therefore doomed in the course of time. Therefore I abdicate that quest and give myself

wholly then to the feelings I actually feel for O\_\_\_\_, or anyone else. In this case my love for her is palpable and real; her attractiveness to me is astonishingly vivid and exciting at times, surprisingly comforting at other times, certainly worthy of my aesthetic taste at other times, and forgivably human the rest of the time. In balance it's a pretty good mix: and this is just the surface appearance, itself but a fragment of an otherwise compellingly attractive character in dynamic interplay with me, with absolute consistency.

Thus I analyze the relationship that symbolizes my birthing out of this long hiatus. Coming into the world again. In fact it is a love more powerful than I have ever known, and these poor descriptions and circumlocutions do it and her no justice.

As for the future: I have no need to define or form it now in advance. The Love itself will determine its own appropriate form. Our awareness and communication on the issues involved assure me of that. Our securities are built first from within our individual selves; then in what we bring to the other in our respective solidity and consistency in our own attraction for the other person; and finally in the resulting sense of the reliability of the other's attraction for us. Left out altogether is the final stage of security, the external forms that social convention so often mandates: marriage, house, children, furniture, domestic routines. We may give each other the form of our respective expectations or intentions: these are then conscious; and in doing so we do not replace them with the unconscious boxes of traditional family life. Instead we implicitly rely on the forms to hold us together when our love grows familiar, when our attraction has weathered and worn thin. Instead we must look to the Love and attraction again and again, to keep us on track in charting our course together or apart, as the spirit in its own live dance requires.

And now, presently, going to Hawaii . . . what will become of this great love, with its promise of growing even greater? That is a matter of speculation. Let us leave the child at its birth, and [have a look later to see its progress in the world](#). What we have created up to this point is enough. The newborn child does not need its credentials filled out in advance to be a worthy creature embarking on its new journey over the planet. We will trust that the genetic material has prepared it well, and that its parents with their learned skills and awareness will be well equipped to supply the necessary guidance where required.

In the meantime, I continue: catching up on my typing skills, admiring the silent red readiness of the answering machine light on my desk, proud of my ability and also grateful of my good fortune to embark further on this blessed love affair, charting the small tasks to do before and scouting the trails to walk on my coming journey – a little apprehensive about the change of scene beginning tomorrow with Nellie's return to this household, with her own burgeoning teen social scene in evidence two evenings in a row

at O \_\_\_\_'s house, prompting me to want to suggest to her to create an independent youth centre space at the community hall for such wild and loud mixed-gender energy . . .

Meanwhile also coming to terms with my own failing health now, at a bad time before the journey, but taking the remedy of savoring the sounds of the homegrown chicken pot simmering in the oven, with potatoes, onions, pepper, celery, garlic, parsley, and sage . . . looking forward perhaps to a video of *The Dead Poets Society* tonight, after *Back to the Future III* last night; becoming relaxed and centered here in these final days before I leave, rather than hectically trying to do everything possible on my impossibly growing lists which grow every day no matter how much I do. This is another aspect of the issue of perfection: there is no way to win that game of "accomplishing everything," so I must enjoy instead doing what most needs to be done, what I feel most from within – even non-doing: enjoying the love of life itself, what is given, what has come to this present time.

The last night of my singlehood, I rest in the womb of my own recreation. In this world, that set features a video, popcorn, tea and carrot juice, chocolate, the treats of my choosing; and beyond such elements, freedom into nothing but love, the breath . . . trusting meanwhile these preliminaries, that they serve well their limited purpose of entertaining with the pleasures of earth; nevertheless then they pass their temporal satisfactions into the hands of enduring oneness, of formless wonder, of giving oneself to any form or no form, without habit, without addiction, without attachment, to use freely the sensuous nature of things, of experiences even with the soft flesh, or the sweet fruit, these real essences real and passing, so that I don't merely shuck them off on my way to voidness or solitude without such grace, nor necessarily to any chosen wonder to come, yet in the giving I open myself to the flow of all this cornucopia, neither limiting myself to only those habits I have chosen over time, nor to ascetic clarity, but yet launching myself into the drama each day, the choice each moment. When my hunger is finally satisfied, my sex sated and my urge for entertainments fulfilled, I will come back to this my muse, to music, and love.

I come back to the breath, but not the breath alone. That austerity has its place and in turn gives way to those harbors of fluid form, this rhythm, my jamming, and love. All share aspects of this core movement, in harmony, in rhythm, in flow. I keep to the breath to ride them through in trust. These as habits grow not old but new each moment; each session I leave the passing show to come home to them, to me, to you. Each instrument, each Friday night and Sunday afternoon, each morning on these or the white and black keys, each flute note and scale and melody, each lyric of this or any poem, this is the song I sing with my body and soul, this love is this lyric is this lyre is this time of pulsing music together, where you and I reader and writer and fellow musician are lovers in the dance I dance, the dance I choose above all others, because this for me is perfection

in its reliability as my relationship threefold of choice, these figures of a new trinity not in competition with one another but superimposed like counterrotating fields of light, light spirit body, not separate but occupying the same space together, our space, our time, now.

In this spirit I honor the Live Poets Society, whereby the verses are written in the running, because we have no time to linger in the past and analyze, beyond the needs of the present, and in the present the need is rather to reinvent, to translate by discarding, to compost into new growth.

Aren't all the books going to take over the earth, maybe faster than people, since we all are so reluctant to get rid of the old ones? Such weight: yet inspiring for those in need at the right time. Yes, we need often reminders of the ways language can enchant, and of the spirits whose names we are to call; and whether passion or love be the answer, *Carpe diem* shall be the cry.

So we go, on into the future, with dreams of future seasons side by side with the known quantities of the past. So I watch the transaction boards even into winter: awaiting the rebirth, the conception of the teams to come. I harbor fantasies of the dream assemblings, the perfect seasons. Like this year's Yankees, as perfect as it gets, including the gem of a game by Wells, and a Series sweep. Already we go into the season of that historic team's irrelevancy. Everything is up in the air again, another tape gone from the tap of history. I run to the waterfall, gaping at time rushing before my eyes. I go further to the calm and raging sea, the constant rain forest.

These gaudy flowers to come will grace the pages of new books, leaving this parchment to the oily cinders of the ashcan. *So I continue*, shedding this skin particle by particle, moving on. That slogan operates my program, the program of what is, ongoing. There is no passage that gets unnoticed between the lines; it all moves out with great speed. And left is the hesitatingly slow step forward, waiting, considering the odds. There is all likelihood in the creation of what can be attained only in part by design, and then the jamming starts.

I take a balanced view: start with trust, and the rest takes care of itself. These are variations on a theme I learned most well from David Viscott, with gratefully heard confirmation by Paul Erickson and other qualified notables of vast experience with the downtrodden hearts of the day. Are these the only qualified listeners, then, those with my experience?

Certainly others have their own agendas, their own revelations and lessons learned and new codes to live by. I call this one mine for my needs, yet call it nothing of my creation, simply what is left when the stop signs become blank with persistent weather and start clanging in the wind.



This time-sense is my Buddha, my living word. It is a kind of thought-music, a drone or mantra, a key to the thought patterns of breathing. Breathing as we know unlocks a cornucopia of other reactions essential to life and health. So does it ease the locks of the intellect gates, the emotion gates, the barriers of unbirthed hesitation. We go striding forward, our posture unfolding like the cobra, hooded in psychic certitude and facing all eventuality in its unfolding before us.

We carry the snake's gaze forward into our slow survival, eyeing prey and predator and casting them aside for the cold hard stone of the sun, timing our presence in the crater of the absurd. Nevertheless there is sand everywhere running down, and in the end we dive with it.

19 November

Today I come out of the vicarious grieving for the Dead Poets' Society, past the grim-visaged father of duty, honor, discipline, realism, into my own heart of the moment, the power of a religion far vaster than that hierarchy of abstract authority that guided the boys' school, to this gypsies' drink, this mystic's calendar, this poet's dance.

The clouds shrouding Cooper speak the language of dead leaves, old man's beard, fallen limbs caught in the branches of an understory bush.

I come to no artificial striving, but a calm acknowledgement, an implicit worship of what is, what I am, what I bring to this and what this brings from me.

I am tired, sick, perhaps: full of doubts at times, wracked with indecision, or sloth, or weakness of habit to go into and out of sex the same way, or to fall for the unhealthy caffeine or late night jam, to linger abed with a book when responsibilities to money and career nag like the cat at the bedpost; I take these under my wing and set out again on the trail.

Now I look forward to the outer journey, the end of an inner drama; paying homage now, before the end. In sadness for the worldly end of young poets, and my own waywardness in the carnival of life, never perhaps finding any specialty but this. The final capitulation to trust, momentary and enduring, is the salvation of my certitude and solidity, with confidence rooted in breath however inflamed by weather or virus or weakness of vigilance. The challenge is brought to light for a purpose, the salient relevance of realism: casting the perspective of steely daylight onto the moony ruminations of night. So I can go forward two-eyed into this future, neither a one-eyed wanderer upon a moving stage, nor a recluse lodged in the dump of a life; but moving with open-eyed wonder into the day ahead, the week to come, with decks ready to clear. Books, files, projects . . . it's a time of pruning. The cold clarity of winter calls for simplicity, an abundance of space and white color, a need to go forward in a straight path step by step; a return to fatherhood, not unduly stern yet responsible for the right relation

of energies; a humble assertion of the needs developed from this season of partial monkhood; a devotion to a process learned newly and carried forward without rancor or hesitation, but in the steady rhythm of breath.

I pause looking outward, then check inward for the breath again. In the middle distance a fire pops, closer in a new fleece warms cozy and cloud-gray as if to match the horizon sky, caught in the tree branches like the old man's beard.

Last night in reading the book on synchronicity, I came across a reference to Medusa, whom I'd thought of earlier in the day when viewing my lover's tangled hair draped on my bed. She turned into stone those who gazed upon her. As I recalled again this myth while reading, there was another reference to stone; and however trivial this is, like many synchronicities, I realize with my coming to that theme again, how it brings to light the patterning of connection between all things. This soul-message is consistent with the reading in *After Thought* about the "implicate order" of things; and with the soul-work of Kingma's relationship counseling.

*All things are connected.* How drab this sounds! Yet belief in it drives my trust, a thrust which is fueled by the volatile fabric of all that is. What poetic mysteries lie unresolved because I might be too busy making distinctions! Yet this work too, in being about the business of living, is a necessary part of the whole, and brings me into contact with more of experience than I might otherwise encounter if I were content merely to dwell in that womblike cushion of the all-embracing void. This life is a world of tangled appearances, of apparent divisions and demarcations, which in fact the senses are designed to interpret and the brain to categorize, the better to use what can be used for survival, to choose as the tools of the game. With fine-honed edges our rational razors cut, carving homes for ourselves in a wilderness of possible forms.

The poet's answer lies in celebration and song, recounting the variety and splendor of this passing show, and taking comfort in the bliss of the mystery itself.

I call all into play, and into question, using language as my mistress, following its music as it follows mine. Together we dance, following together the audible tune of our own making, and that which makes us move. The dance we dance dances us and all around us into one dynamic partnership, a vibrating groove that will leave no one sitting for long. Our feet, our fingers, our eyes tell the story, and as we make our way across the ocean, may we recall that greater ocean of unity all with all and each with each.

I carry no other intention but to protect with all due respect my body, my health, my family, my home; and in so doing to release the rest of my spirit to dance in the cosmic dance. Are these two a real and necessary division, into work and play, realism and fancy? My poet's sense tells me they are related, not separate; they inhabit the same house. Language is the tool of my trade, and as such it must be crafted carefully to do its work; yet in inspiration it fills me with wonder because it no less than I are creations of another origin than my intention alone. My work and I are both the play of

consciousness, of creativity, of material energy and interminable flux. This house, my budget, my daughter's well-being, all partake of the wine of inconstancy, the rot of time, the mere semblance of order. We cannot predict with any certainty anything, and yet all is well in a world that is fitted to our needs.

Chaos of social upheaval and earth changes, revolutions and bankruptcies aside, this or that meter shower and solar flare will call a higher tune, a broader journey than I or you have perhaps yet contemplated. As we hear this higher music may we bring its melodies and beat into our hearts, and our dancing feet.

20 November

There is always an escape clause, in this kind of writing. I don't really have to trust myself fully, because I can always either skip the writing when I don't feel up to it; I can divert my attention to prepackaged subjects and journalistic topics; and whatever comes out onto the page, once I begin, can be edited away later.

So, this morning I may be tempted to write, for example, a video review after staying up until three last night watching *Alien: Resurrection*. I will comment only in passing, to say that the imagery was compelling, the sets awe-inspiring, the technical wizardry polished, and the plot rather lacking in science while heavy on the fiction. Nevertheless, it marked another in an infinite series of turning points in my recent life. A day in which Nellie moved back, and my sickness deepened to the point where I went to Kaslo for antibiotics and came back with the All-American panoply of sensual desires: pizza, ice-cream, and two videos, that one and *Annie Hall*.

I also finished reading *Kauai Trails* yesterday, and approached the end of *The Future of Love*. Till midnight I worked making upgrades to my website and putting out a promotional newsletter. Creative writing and music are set aside, for the moment; I seem to be fixated on getting more small sums of money fast. That's okay; it's part of the realism paradigm outlined so brutishly in the *Dead Poet's Society*, which in my conservative nature I saw fit to shore up before departing, in good conscience, for tropical sands.

Now the day proceeds in gray cold rain, though better than yesterday's freezing rain and snow on the road from Kaslo in the dark . . . confirming my self-trust in the decision not to be commuting to Kaslo this winter for play practice.

My lungs cry out for healing breath, for a break in the inflammatory infection. Meanwhile I sit calmly contemplating the rest of my day's work: finishing more books and writing reviews, and preparing to pack for the trip.

This time next week I will be well into my Hawaiian journey, perhaps already on the Kalalau Trail or on some prime beach spot enroute to the Na Pali coast, or on the southwest shore in the land of dry scrub thorn bushes, hot sand.

The pattern of raindrops stuck to my window, myriad and small, appear like the stars so vivid as background in the space scenes last night. What archetypes were aroused there, what alien forces unleashed in the heart that beats its way against my ribcage to get out?

I calm its urges with a longer breath, sinking back into exhale, remembering finally what I so easily forget in the rush to complete fields of code, to track columns of numbers, to etch tracings of black color against the inverse field of white. Very well, I can change that display easily enough . . .

But I won't take further time. I return to my subject: self-trust. I know, Henry reminds me: "Forget thyself." When I say *Trust Thyself*, it's more about trust than it is about myself. "Myself" is incidental: yet real, so propitious. However accidental, I come along for the ride. My experience of events outside my skin could take the place of these events of thought and manner – and yet, where is the significant difference? To rail about the money shortage in my pockets, to describe the whores of Paris and my liaisons with them, is that any greater or less than to talk of paltry videos in a house in the mountains in British Columbia, or to walk in the cold rain if only to my chicken coop past the undug pond? This life is valid in any guise: that is a mission grand enough in scale. My domestic chores in the making, my list of relationships, my means of gathering small sums and spending larger ones, this is the common weal, and as such it blends the stuff of myself into recognizable turf.

Tomato plants, for instance, stand proud yet limp in the faded light of the greenhouse today, ten days from December, some with brave yellow flowers against the winter to come yet in full force. These sprouted from seeds of the summer, grew in the extended warmth of a sunny fall. Perhaps they will die before fruiting. Perhaps my . . . but I am warned by the premise of *Synchronicity*, that to generate brainwaves about certain undesirable events can resonate outward to find expression in the recognizable world, just as the reverse occurs when we image our experience through sense and memory; dream and fantasy are simply the mirror image of the same process of resonance. Causality is a two way street when all things are connected. Even in the sense of an effect following upon a cause, can it not be said in this Experiment in Truth that the effect caused the cause? If there were no universe to result from a Big Bang, would there be no Big Bang in the first place? The two singularities, the zero point at the beginning and that at the end, are united like the quantum siblings once split from a source identity yet carrying ever after a shape and spin and velocity that reflect each other and thus the parent particle. The end and the beginning are equally split factors of cause and effect, interchangeably, rolling outward from the event which we call now.

This current wisdom is tricky and slippery at times, but it can always be held in the hands like a warm egg, by returning to the breath. The warm egg of beginning and end is split and cooked now like the daughter of my recent dream; no longer living but cut

off by parental discord. Restoring her, the cosmos, to living oneness, I await the return of breath. The image passes, the form takes new shape as a fourteen-year old studying at her own computer in another room in the house. Two solitudes, we converse by modem; our brains walking in tandem down tropical shores or into the mountain rain, we call across the chasm to reunite in the mother. The mother has a sister, by the way, who will arrive shortly to call the new tune, the new unity of what is. What it is, is none other than the moving wind, the coming of winter, the desire to travel and then to cuddle up comfortably in the warm of one's bed and bath, with candle or video, smoke of fire and storage of good food, time to read and cull the papers of past millennia. I go forward loving the prospect of freedom and solitude and family and ease, wanting ever to simplify, to have nothing more to do, to choose only the one thing at a time rather than feeding like some world-whale on the constant schools of small fish that swarm past my open-jawed face.

21 November

A weekend beginning with an eye to Hawaii: summery weather, cloud and sun and wind, highs near eighty.

I come into this page after a day doing what I wanted, uploading an article on food additives and catching up on my book and video reviews for the Net . . . yet in the next day's perspective wonder why I'm doing all that. Yes I enjoy the reviews. But the health news is endless: as in fact is the list of possible books, CDs and videos I could review. All for a pittance of referral income, the name of the game. I go back and forth from content to promotion – in the form of newsletters to a business network which is now stalled and shrinking. The writing game is an old one, and to reenter that means committing to the same old merry-go-round of agents and publishers and magazine queries and submissions. Publishing on the Web is another self-promotional roulette wheel, where slogging through new contacts each day can guarantee success in the long run, but it's so hard to keep up the good face, the constancy of self-trust.

I go forward always feeling less than committed. Yes, trusting, in theory; but that impulse pulls me back to the place of no action, tempts me to a course of parallel action. Trust infuses confidence in action and choice, yet paradoxically requires no certain manifestation. So I find myself, in work as in relationship, alternately flowing forward and withdrawing, like the tide. I switch from one enterprise to another, and then retreat from promotion to endless content. I swing from contentment with what is to ambition for what is yet to come.

O\_\_\_\_\_ seems perfectly content here, puttering in the kitchen and sitting down to paperwork, after cozy bed together. She can be so domestic, so like Z\_\_\_\_\_ in this pattern of household movement; yet the feeling between us so different, so live and unfettered by issues that dragged Z\_\_\_\_\_ down.

I am prey to the same issues that have dogged me for years: impatience and distraction. I am split four ways in my career work, and in each of those areas am further split: four by four. The business emphasizes promotional and personal development, information content and personal prospecting. The writing comprises novels, essays, stories, and reviews. Music practice is divided to drum, keyboard, flute and didge; website work to content, promotion, technical and computer aspects. Along with these endeavors there is homestead and household, family and social relationships. Health, exercise, nature, spirit . . . the whole shebang.

I type word by word, and this focus holds my center strong. My breathing continues, asthmatic or not, in fact relatively freer now that I sit, calm, after a session of pranayama, and a good hugging connection with O\_\_\_\_\_ like that strong full-bodied hug in the garden months before we took it further . . .

In other news, the baseball free agent sweepstakes is agonizing, where every team is in intense competition for a few premium big guns: Vaughan, Johnson, Williams, Palmeiro, Jordan, Surhoff, Brown. How to choose wisely, and win one's choice . . . and then be redeemed by winning results? It's all a crapshoot – yet a telling model for the fickle game of earthly existence. Competitive sports are symbolic of life when it is lived with the intensity of necessity – a life or death struggle, where defeat signals death. That's why we care so much. The sheer physical and mental effort required of a top-notch performance is also emblematic of the primal hunt; and musicians and actors would count here too: requiring live mastery under the test of a maximized challenge (head to head or with the most ambitious script, composition or improvisation), distilling in a moment what it takes to succeed, to survive.

In some less dramatic circumstances, I go forward into the future, step by step in breathing trust. I bare my personal issues here in the trust that this dance will bring them all into step, into perspective.

The day beckons in long-legged splendor before me. I will leisurely pack and prepare for my trip. The rest is breathing. There is always more to prepare, on the computer, in the aforementioned pursuits. I find my way through the thickets of possibility, step by step. I refine my practice to breathing one step at a time, following no footsteps in the sand but my own. I go forward cheerfully day by day like a good Boy Scout, like a good son, like a good man looking only to do what he can do best, what I can do most truly.

Likewise in love, my purpose is to allow another to feel most free, to feel free to bring herself to most complete potential and fulfillment. To bring all of her to me. And in my all-accepting love, I give her this gift.

From life I want – I trust to find – this love, this all-embracing acceptance.

Along the way . . . a day of reviews, an obscure research article, a sharing of a slice of infinite information: that's all we can do; to interact, to pull in and spit out, to

dance along the way. To do what must be done in that one day, and to move on to the next. My routine is satisfying because I have that discipline of moving on yet keeping to the task, knowing that another chunk of what I want to achieve will be achieved, one day at a time. It's all I can ask, really. And what is it all for? For simply living, for the breathing in and out of sheer activity. When one section is done, the next begins: like a breath, each breath. The difference, what makes it work, is awareness, consciousness. Not to blindly format and upload and disseminate every bit of information out there: that task is left to the whole live organism. For me, it is to discriminate, to choose, to gravitate, to commit to the one I love most, to settle in to comfort and closer work with the one with whom I resonate, the ones around us as friends, the topics of most interest, the books I liked best, the tasks I enjoy, and to specialize only in bringing this awareness, this breathing presence, to all of it.

They say that to market anything, you have to find a niche. Yes, this is true. In my case I can only claim a broad spectrum still, a niche being a certain eclectic combination defined as "alternatives" and colored by my lens of choosing, my filter of obscure relevancy. I am but a local curiosity . . . a little-known Renaissance Man, half a millennium later. I am a conventional nobody with delusions of grandeur: my boundless potential diffused by fatal indecision, by dilettantish distraction, by circular motion around the scattered star-field of my inclinations: a slightly offbeat approach to letters and life, to online and offline culture, to life on the grid and off, to nature and culture intertwined in a certain distinctive yet hardly describable combination. In each subcategory I can market the niche, but that spreads my presence thin compared to the heavyweight competition. My record in the fight for prestige is suspect: second-string football, second-chair trumpet, second place in the writing sweepstakes, a minor income as a struggling sales rep . . . but to love and be loved, that is a gift of the first rank.

I continue to trust this thread, this pumping artery of lifeblood, above all else. This is my pranic channel, my tube of entrance to the spirit world: the cave of magic connection, the harbor of truth, the well of contentment. This my one and single voice, this my channel of broadcast, this my shell of inner vision painted once and for all to share.

In this momentum do I find a place to remember, a road to walk. Sometimes a pathless track through the forest, where not even a deer has gone . . . perhaps only mice. This leaf mold under my feet tells me of my place in the world, compels me to join my voice with the squirrels, my breath with the clouds that move grand and anonymous over my head. In this morning mist I set my walking stick down, and call upon the spirits of air and water and star and breath to validate all I have brought here, and all I hope to bring back at my next visit.