

राम

Autobillography

Revised Standard Version

*Translated from the original Jargon
Being only slightly related to
the original of 1979,
which is now considered Anathema
Compared with the most ancient Authorities
Completely re-written 2011
Including Apocrypha, Insignifica,
Hysteria, Physica, Dystopia,
Comedia, Sanatana Dharma,
and Musica Nova*

Dr. Bill Robinson

हार्द क्रिश्चन

हार्द राबल

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ISBN-13: 978-1466259911

ISBN-10: 1466259914

This book is self-published with CreateSpace. Audio book version is available on my website and on CDs. First Edition, September 2011

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Photo credits

Title page and Chapter 1 (Moses); title page of first edition, King James Bible, 1611

Chapter 1

Brigham Young portrait: Harvard Art Museum/Fogg Museum, Historical Photographs and Special Visual Collections Department, Fine Arts Library, 119.197
ponderscripture.org for picture of street signs

Chapter 4

PA engravings; <http://www.pa59ers.com/library/Kemper/Andover.html>
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Chapter 5

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Chapter 6

Old Denton County Courthouse, Aaron Jacobs, 2005
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Chapter 7

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Chapter 8

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Ch. 9

Rowan County Courthouse by <http://www.talb.com/municipal.htm>

Ch. 10

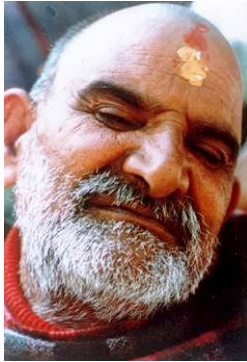
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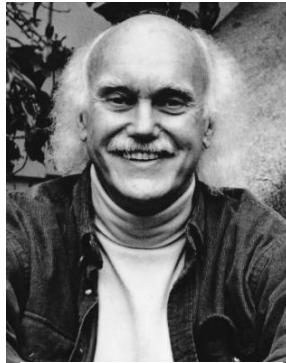
John Tenniel, illustration for *Alice Through the Looking Glass*
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<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9D00EFD8163DE633A2575BC2A96F9C946296D6CF> idiots pie chart, New York Times 1913
<http://kimmysf.hubpages.com/hub/Chakras-for-Beginners> Chakra diagram

Dedication Quiz

Can you name these inspirational figures?



(a)



(b)



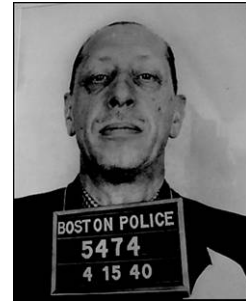
(c)



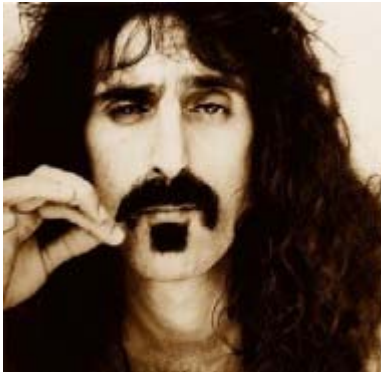
(d)



(e)



(f)



(g)



(h)



(i)

Answers:

- (a) Neem Karoli Baba, great saint from India
- (b) Ram Dass, who inspired many in the West to become higher beings
- (c) Timothy Leary
- (d) The Lord God according to Monty Python
- (e) Jesus according to South Park
- (f) Igor Stravinsky's mug shot, taken by the Boston Police, 1940
- (g) St. Frank Zappa
- (h) Santa Claus
- (i) Ming the Merciless

Autobillography

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*One day I was out for a walk, and met a friend who said “Out for your daily constitutional?”
I replied, “No, just a little*

Preamble

An odd prospect, don't you know, to consider writing the biography of someone unknown and highly eccentric, a failure in all his works and most of his relationships, who makes a hash even of his miserable attempts at self-pity, impoverished and in poor health his entire adult life, betimes within spitting distance of raving lunacy and moral turpitude, a seeker of truth enmeshed in illusion, attempting a form where the author must discard any hope of objectivity, with no particular target audience and little prospect of publication in an era of dwindling readership for books. *{Does he always talk with his hands? And what's with Mr. Positive Attitude?—Ed.}*

No stranger to such situations, I sat myself down at the auspicious time of 11:11 AM on January 1, 2011 to salvage at least some literary object from a peculiar series of experiences not generally combined in one lifetime, including expeditions into lofty psychedelic heavens and gritty physical hells, adventures on the low seas and high deserts, skirting the ramparts of radical cults and training for the priesthood of Science, attempting to contribute to the dead-but-alive world of classical music while unable to perform, and doing it all with a one-piece back, bad ears, no money, and a tin hip. Whooda thunk. *{Displays a hackneyed but somehow appealing, almost Twainian talent for vernacular. Very charming. Either that or he turned off spell-check. Teach him about run-on sentences and abuse of comma privileges.—Ed.}*

My experience in writing is mostly in technical pseudoscientific screeds, random and anonymous chat-room monologues, macrobiotic rants long since hunted down and destroyed, and exotic poetry frequently used as lyrics for vocal music yet unsung. One such poem was in place of a final exam in an astrophysics course, where I described Steinhardt and Turok's cyclical universe cosmology in heroic couplets in the style of Alexander Pope. Another poem was for the epic song “What I Hear After Submitting a Score”, where I attempted to rhyme *physical*, *mystical*, and *testicle* for the first time in literary history. None of this experience prepared me for the task ahead. *{Where does he get his material? Remind to urine test before publishing.—Ed.}*

And so I humbly invite the dear Reader into this odd compendium of unsubstantiated rumor, hearsay, wool-gathering, navel-gazing, libel, bile, slander, perfidy and Absolute Truth hidden in plain sight and ten-point type. The important stuff, about Love, God, Devotion, Spirituality and Sacred Breath, I save for the non-verbal method of music. That leaves all the useless chatter for this *Autobillography*. Enjoy!

{Pedestrian but adequate for pot-boiler stuff; keep him on board and feed him some formulaic material that wouldn't rely on a writer's talent to make it worth publishing. Put something bodice-busting on the cover, and avoid religious controversy. He'll work cheap and do what he's told after living in the woods so long. Make sure and remove my comments before printing.—Ed.}

1. Genesis

(1500 BCE—1955 CE)

Finis Origine Pendet

In the Beginning

There's a lot of blaspheming to get done, so might as well get started. Please not to take offense.

Those Terrific Abrahamic religions

Way back something like 1500 BCE, an Egyptian¹ got in hot water for murder. This might have been the Crown Prince of Egypt, Ramose, who disappeared from Egyptian records when Queen Hatshepsut died. Fleeing into the desert alone is a rough deal unless you have quite an entourage; he got together with a band of folks possibly going by the name Habiru, who are recorded as invading Canaan in 1480 BCE. Naturally he spoke their language at best with a heavy accent, hence his translator Aaron did his speaking for him. Once out on the desert he knew the best way to dominate as a leader is to speak with the authority of a single God, and have some of this magical writing as proof. That way, opposition becomes heresy, which is easy to justify punishing with death. So he went off and made some tablets, amazing the illiterate flock. First thing, he had his closest aides kill 3000 of his adopted people for idolatry, which they didn't know was against the law that hadn't been made yet. This arbitrary killing was very effective in setting up absolute power. He continued liquidating his own after that, which established him as a great hero. His tribe proceeded to follow his orders to invade, rape, steal, and commit genocide repeatedly, which is always popular when it works (see German newsreels from 1940). The Good Book tells all about it. Sure enough, his legacy only grew with time, just as with Genghis Khan or Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great, who were even more effective mass murderers with endless supplies of women (or men) in their beds. With YHWH™ the Thunder God on his side, Moses is an object of religious veneration by pious, decent, devoted spiritual seekers all over the world. *Terrific*.



Now I have a lot of reverence and respect for Jesus, not because of some book or because of some church, but because of personal transcendental experiences. But Christianity as we have it today was *not* founded by Jesus. It was founded by Paul, who never knew Jesus. He thought he knew Jesus through transcendental experience, *and got it all wrong*. (So I'd better be careful!) The people who did know Jesus personally considered Paul a liar and a most dangerous man. Some even wanted to kill him; something about circumcision and kosher food. The Good Book tells all about it. After that start, Paul's orthodox church bumped off the competition, and its creed was mutilated repeatedly by the Roman Empire and a whole slew of priests and kings whose main interest was their jobs and power. Thus the irony of decent, intelligent, compassionate Anglicans doing good works, including protesting capital punishment, in a denomination founded by Henry VIII—who executed 70,000 people in his reign. *Terrific*.

So along in 620 CE, Muhammad, stuck out in the sand in the middle of nowhere, saw what the game is with the magic writing and the messages from God from many examples like Moses. By his own account he was a horny guy, and knew that power and violence could get him all the action he could possibly handle—and the ultimate power and violence came from The Guy Upstairs. Illiterate himself, he dictated a series of very convenient messages from the Archangel Gabriel. Oddly enough for someone in a position to Know All and See All in Eternity, Gabriel

neglected to inform Muhammad of anything he wouldn't already know in 7th century Arabia. Thus, all the mythology of the Bible was taken as fact, along with the other current beliefs of geography and cosmology.

Muhammad's Allah was even more psychotic than YHWH—more vengeful, more prone to smiting anybody in the way, and eager to inflict eternal torture on infidels and apostates. Allah demanded absolute submission, since that was the whole point of the exercise, hence the name “Islam”. Thus, behaving in a Godly manner fit right into a martial life. (Goebbels commented that he approved of Islam as a martial religion from which it was simple to recruit fascists; this was crucial to progress in the Balkans.) The revelations Muhammad made up were perfect for getting him all the women he desired, including a child. He had absolute power of life and death, and exercised the option of killing those who criticized his new religion with no regrets, which was the style at the time. His successors, when not fighting each other, continued conversion by the sword until most of the known world was under the control of Islam. And they *still* threaten to kill people who make entirely accurate statements about historical fact. You can be killed for saying “You can be killed for saying ‘You can be killed for saying “Islam is violent”””. *Terrific*.

A yogi might add

In the case of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, spiritual people managed to create a framework for devotion, insight, and profound development. All three religions produced great saints, and billions turn to them for solace, moral guidance, and inspiration. Most live peaceful and tolerant lives. The essential hustle of the origins of the faiths remains enshrined in the scriptures. Other religions have much the same situation.

Modern Times

LDS: Right Letters, Wrong Order

Cut to 1827 in upstate New York. Joseph Smith knew all about the power of magic writing from God and what it had done for Moses and Muhammad, among others². Islam was a particularly tempting model for a new American religion that would give him unlimited power and women on demand.³ The most likely story seems to be that Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, and Smith extensively altered a romantic novel by Solomon Spaulding that became the *Book of Mormon*.⁴ There was also material added from James Adair's *A history of the American Indians* from 1775, and (no relation) Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews or the tribes of Israel in America*.⁵ Subsequently Smith published *Book of Abraham*, an imaginary “translation” of a typical first century Egyptian funerary text he claimed was written by Abraham himself. These books were perfect tools for founding the new cult of Latter Day Saints. Smith and his cohorts knew very well that people are far more willing to accept and become passionately devoted to the wildest, most absurd, and obviously fabricated tales, than they would to more mundane stories that just might be true.

And in that spirit, to inspire passionate devotion: Joseph Smith, written in Hebrew, adds up to 666. Yod = 10, Holem Waw = 6, Samech = 60, Pheh = 80, Samech = 60, Mem = 40, Yod = 10, Thau = 400. Isn't math fun?

Once the sanctity of religious faith cloaked these books and the leadership, total obedience followed. Smith soon had many wives, and other leaders followed suit. Blood atonement—execution for crossing the church—was fundamental in the first several decades, as declared by Brigham Young himself.⁶ Although Mormons have destroyed, altered, or locked away

many documents from the 19th century, enough survives in the public record to have a good idea of what went on.

My ancestors came into this story right at the beginning. They fought in the Mormon wars in Missouri and Illinois, walked across the plains with handcarts to Utah, fought the Mexicans in California in 1849 in the Mormon Brigade, and were some of the first Anglo settlers in Nevada. Surviving documents show slavish devotion and absolute obedience, with a few interesting exceptions.



Brigham Young

One such exception speaks to what life was like in an isolated theocracy that followed LDS ideals. One day in Salt Lake City, Brigham “Breed ‘em” Young decided that one of my ancestors, the 13 year old daughter of a local family, should be his next wife. The parents were horrified, and decided on drastic action. That night they wrapped rags around the wheels of their wagon and snuck silently out of town. Thankfully they pulled it off without fatal consequences and survived to continue life as good church members. (One of my ancestors is Lorenzo Dow Young, Brigham’s brother.)

Another tale related by my father, although without telling me exactly who was involved, was a touch more grim. A German immigrant convert to the faith and his wife came out west and set up a homestead not far from where some of my ancestors lived. A wagonload of local women visited the farm to welcome them, and saw that he had hitched his wife to the plow. That way the milch cow would not get tired and would give more milk. Horrified, the women told their menfolk, who then paid a visit of their own. They killed and buried the man, and brought the woman back with them to find a better life. End of story.

My father’s mother’s brother was Homer Achilles (pronounced AT-chill-eez) Brown (1853-1886). Chill was guide and cook for Major Powell’s expedition mapping the Grand Canyon.⁷ Exposure to the elements and lack of treatment lead to both he and his brother dying young from tuberculosis.

One of my ancestors had an argument with a man, who bonked him on the head with a shovel. He wasn’t quite the same after that. Some years afterwards, he saw the assailant on the street in another town, and asked him who he was. When my ancestor was satisfied that it was the man he wanted, he pulled a pistol and shot the bum dead. The jury of his LDS peers ruled Not Guilty by reason of Served Him Right. Sometimes sharing the same cult comes in handy!

Although polygamy was supposed to have ended in the main church after 1890, this was not the case. My grandfather, Joseph Eldridge Robinson (1867-1941) was the president of the California mission starting in 1901 for more than twenty years, and had five wives, three of whom were acknowledged. All were wed after 1890. He was in San Francisco for the 1906 earthquake, which destroyed the mission headquarters.⁸ Afterwards he moved to Los Angeles. My father, Heber Brown Robinson, was born in Bountiful, Utah, in 1915. His birth certificate read “Heber Brown”, but later his name was legally changed. His family moved to Arizona when he



Joseph E. Robinson

was 12.

Life was difficult on the farm in those days, with dirt floors and frequently no shoes. Dad missed a lot of school since shoes were required. He was traumatized by ill-treatment from his siblings and absence of his father. At about age 12, he decided to kill himself in the kitchen, using a knife to make as big a mess as possible. As he was about to stab himself, he suddenly had an overwhelming vision where he was transported to the Mormon version of heaven. All his relatives and the prophets and so forth were there. When he came out of it, he put the knife away and continued on with his life, and remained convinced in the validity of the faith for about eight more years.

And a yogi might interject

There is no lack of testimonials about direct spiritual experiences fitting the dictates of the LDS creed. True, some seem rather repetitive, like the loaf of bread that goes missing in the kitchen at the same time a distant kin in need miraculously finds it, yum yum. Still, such reports are extremely common. Other people in other faiths likewise report vivid transcendental experiences that tend, for the most part, to comply with what their religion describes. Something like 40% of Americans say they've experienced the presence of a loved one after they died in a convincing and meaningful way. People whose belief system denies the possibility of having any spiritual experience, tend not to have them except in the most extreme circumstances, like near-death out of body journeys or psychedelic trips, which overwhelm their programming. What the heck is going on?

My father's interpretation, many years afterwards when he was an adamant atheist and materialist, was that his central nervous system saw a threat to its existence, and did what it had to do to keep him alive. It had to manufacture an experience in keeping with his concepts to be meaningful and effective, but this was not evidence for anything actually transcendental.

But the mystery is more fundamental than this. The nature of our awareness at any time, even our normal waking state, is unknown.

Who am I? Why am I here? How did I get here? Where am I going? Best to have something to say about these matters in an autobiography. This book would be worthless if it didn't, and inaccurate if it didn't apply to everyone. As I am not omniscient, my ramblings will be yet another guess, compared to the guesses of the past; but at least it is based on a large number of direct experiences.

Everything we know is wrong

I have strolled down the aisles of library stacks in the philosophy section, and found no answers—just books citing other books citing other books going back to Plato, who didn't know either. They could do no better than guess, and compare their guesses with other guesses. You pays your money and you takes your choice. Clearly, if thousands of years of the best minds of the Western World could get no further than this, then pushing an intellectual approach as far as it can possibly go is ineffective and misleading.

What about the answers that come from contemplation? Savants and saints all through history have been contemplating their respective navels and written the results of their divine inspiration, or passed them down in oral traditions. Some of the subject matter is beyond our ability to observe, but much concerns our material world and can be directly measured and tested. Without exception, the cosmologies describing the material universe in all the world's traditional

cultures are at wide variance from what we now know through science. Just about everything that could be gotten wrong, was gotten wrong, and by a very wide margin.

Mormonism is an extreme case. One would expect the cosmology and history of a deliberate fraud to be far from accurate. (Try talking Hebrew to a Navajo and see how well it works—my ancestors gave it a shot. And it will be hard to find a chariot wheel in pre-Columbian Central American ruins.) But no religion, not the Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, animists, *nobody* came up with a heliocentric solar system, a spherical Earth, gravity, or evolution. Only observation and reasoning—Logos—came up with such truths, starting with the ancient Greeks and continuing on to today. Mythos not only didn't give correct answers, it continues to fight against them. If transcendental insight was valid, they should have known of things they couldn't yet observe, like galaxies, chemical elements, atoms and particles, and so forth. Not only that; if such insight were accurate, then seers all over the world would see the same thing, and religions would all be equivalent. Clearly, they are not. The universe does not play by a thousand different rule books at once. If it did, electrons would be very confused.

Since the Renaissance, the fundamental problem with religion in its relationship to science has been, "If we got the things we *can* observe wrong, how do we know we are right about the things we *can't* observe?" This problem has produced what we see today. Fundamentalists insist on literal truth for their mythology, while the moral authority and spiritual guidance of religions erodes among those who accept modern science as accurate about our physical world. Science, in turn, does not address transcendental affairs that are critical for our lives. The consequences are grave.

Religions clearly have no monopoly on ethics. There is nothing about atheism or materialism that specifically denigrates compassion, selflessness, and a willingness to love and serve others, *or so I've heard*. And every conceivable crime has found a happy home in all major religions. But the logical implication of materialism is that people are just bags of chemicals, with some sort of biocomputer whizzing away inside. Our awareness, taken as emerging from sufficient complexity, is an illusion. Love reduces to an evolutionarily advantageous, hormone-induced behavior produced by selfish DNA. Killing a person is just turning off the computer and recycling the bag. If such a philosophy were accurate, and actually practiced, then we would be making food, soap, and leather goods out of very old people, criminals, and anyone who dies and leaves a fresh corpse, as we do so remorselessly with animals. I have never met a materialist, however devoted to the cause, who treated his mother like she was nothing more than a bag of chemicals. (However, I never met Stalin.) It's hard to take materialism seriously when its most ardent advocates can only live true to their convictions if they are criminally insane.

Note that the savage cruelty practiced on our industrial farms raising poultry, swine, and cattle in horrendous conditions is only possible with the materialistic view that animals are unselfconscious machines. On the bright side, industrial farming is entirely dependent on oil and gas, and ruins the environment on which it depends. Thus, it will end soon.

But I digress...now to my mother's side

My mother's mother's father was a circuit riding Baptist preacher in the plains of north Texas in the late 19th century. When his ex-confederate mother came to visit, he had to hide the US flag under



Fanny Belle Bowles

the bed. My grandmother, Fanny Bell Bowles (1894-1990) did not accept his teaching that Negroes had no souls, which was the style at the time, and by age 14 accepted the idea of reincarnation. Naturally this caused consternation in the household.

And why didn't the Baptists believe in the possibility of reincarnation, or at least the Greek idea about transmigration of souls? Especially since it was widely accepted in the first 500 years of the Christian church, by leaders such as St. Augustine, Clement of Alexandria, St. Gregory of Nyssa, Justin Martyr, and St. Jerome? And most significantly, by Origen?^{9,10} Well—as mentioned above, church doctrine was defined primarily by kings and priests to maximize their power. Against the adamant protests of Pope Vigilius, who was imprisoned for his troubles, Justinian, one of the most psychopathic of Roman emperors, ordered the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 CE. This was attended mostly by bishops from the east (with a lonely six from the west) to condemn Origen and the heresy of Nestorianism. The reasoning was that if souls had pre-existed with God, Christ wasn't unique; and if everyone thought they were a Child of God, they might not pay taxes or submit to the authority of the Church or the state. And if everyone



eventually went back to God after many lifetimes, then the Church would not be the unique and necessary path to salvation. Damn Universalists! After much dissention and struggle, eventually the orthodox church fell into line, and reincarnation became heresy forever after. (Truth be told, the situation was much more complex than this,¹¹ but there are many books about it already, and I can only stray a bit here and there. Corners must be cut.)

Meanwhile, my maternal grandfather, David Vanderkooi, was born into a Dutch family in Ohio in 1882.. He lied about his age to get into the Spanish-American War at age 15 in 1898, and fought in Cuba. He stayed in the Army, serving under Pershing fighting first Pancho Villa, and then in WWI. Shot in the arm by friendly fire, he returned to Johns Hopkins Hospital for treatment, where he met Fanny, who was a nurse there. One can only imagine what

David Vanderkooi nursing was like during the influenza pandemic.

This was an odd match to say the least. Her fellow nurses said, "you're marrying HIM?" Fanny was very much a pacifist, involved with the Quakers, and (at least by the '30s) a vegetarian. David was fresh from the trenches, an experience that drove many stable men insane. Fanny told me that she felt that it was her karma, that she had a duty of some sort to fulfill by marrying this man despite the difficulties.

And difficulties there were. One example: David would deliberately drive his pregnant wife at high speed on primitive mountain roads, which terrified her. There were more severe problems, best not specified here. My mother Frances was born in Pasadena, California in 1925, followed by her sister Helen (who died in her early 20's) and brother David. The elder David died of cancer in 1931. Fanny got a Masters degree in 1940 at USC, and went on to found the Occupational Therapy Department at Texas Women's University in Denton, Texas.



Frances Vanderkooi, 1944

Fanny was a fitness nut, using vitamins as soon as they were produced. She became convinced as to the importance of posture, and strapped my mother and her sister into harnesses which they slept in every night. With her parenting style by turns excessively controlling and absent with her work and studies, life was not happy.

Music was very important in the Vanderkooi family. Mom played piano, and was timpanist in the orchestra of the progressive high school she attended. Although hindered with some degree of dyslexia, she developed very good pianistic skills, as well as having a fine voice. Helen was a violist, and David played cello. Later he went to Eastman School of Music, and was cellist in the Blair Quartet at Vanderbilt in Nashville where he taught for many years.

And back to Dad

Meanwhile, my father was 17 years old and in California when FDR ran against Hoover in 1932. He told me about widespread plans afoot, that if Hoover won, there would be armed revolt against the government. The idea would be not a communist revolution, but a restoration of constitutional government. But of course, once something like that starts, who knows where it goes. People were that fed up with misrule by organized money; if the alternative was organized mob, then so be it. After FDR's election, the FBI came around and let people know that this had better not happen, and everyone pretty much agreed that there wasn't any taste for revolution anymore—they'd just voted it in instead. Now the Army's machine guns were pointed at the industrial goons instead of at the strikers. Wall Street never caught on how lucky they were; they lived to pillage another day. Today.

But bad times persisted. Dad was going to school, working, and sending money home to help support his mother—despite having quite a few brothers with very good jobs who didn't bother. As the youngest son, he had been designated as the one to provide for his mother. He quit a job in disgust that paid 60 cents an hour, only to be forced to accept one that paid *15 cents*. The experiences of these years scarred him, and his generation, for life. For instance, in 1973, I suggested that he, Mom, and I ride in the car to go about three blocks to save time over walking. He objected, since it would cost 5 cents in gasoline...and this was during my graduation from Phillips Academy, Andover.

One of his brothers was Radburn Robinson, baritone in *The King's Men*. This male vocal quartet was quite successful in the '30s through the '50s, singing in many movies, *Fibber McGee and Mollie* on the radio for fifteen years, providing theme music for radio and television shows, and recordings. Rad was the voice of the Coroner in *The Wizard of Oz*. After the breakup of the quartet, Rad became one of the Mormon Mafia that oversaw the business holdings of Howard Hughes in Las Vegas, and was in charge of the entertainment at five casinos.

And yet, when my grandfather Joseph was dying of cancer in 1941, none of the prosperous brothers and half-brothers (all twenty) would pitch in to buy him a hospital bed. That was left to my father, the poorest of them all, to provide.

These and many other experiences, some violent, embittered Dad permanently. He abandoned Mormonism in his early twenties. He studied at Berkeley, and then at Starr King School for the Ministry to train to become a Unitarian minister. Music was also very important to him. He was active in the LA opera scene as a bass. His friend Dick Knost founded the American Opera Guild, which championed the cause of opera in English. Dad had a running bet with George London as to which of them would be the first to sing *Boris Godunov* in Moscow. George won.

Dad showed me a newspaper clipping from this time that puzzled me. There was a picture of him with an eyepatch, and a concert review. He was the soloist with an orchestra for the

premiere of “Ghost Drums of Oglala”, I don’t know the composer. He invited his brothers to the concert, but they said “Don’t want to hear Heber bawl”, and one punched him in the face. The patch hid the resulting black eye. Gotta love that music business.

During his time at Berkeley, Dad was writing a paper about LDS early history. One evening at a bar, he mentioned in conversation what he was doing, and that he was using records in the Berkeley library. A few days later he went back to the library and found the documents missing. The librarian was very upset at the theft, but was familiar with the problem. Dad kept his mouth shut about such things after that.

Some time in the ‘30s, my father met Paramahansa Yogananda, during a group session teaching meditation. Dad spoke with him and got some personal guidance, but didn’t think much of it. When he told me this in the ‘70s, I was much impressed. I and my sister had read *Autobiography of a Yogi*, and we both felt deeply inspired by Yogananda’s life, devotion, spiritual practice, and message. It was only much later, when the internet made information easily obtained, that I started to wonder. Yogananda, like many other spiritual leaders, didn’t have much knowledge about matters outside his expertise. Mystical omniscience didn’t help. Quotes: “A master brain like that of Mussolini does more good than millions of social organizations of group intelligence...The average man cannot think clearly . . . He needs the master mind of a Dictator in order to think right and do right.”¹² “Hitler is to be admired for leaving the League of Nations because peace can never be attained by the victor and vanquished attitude, but on a basis of equality and brotherhood...America, France, and Great Britain should reduce their armaments first, and thereby destroy the desire of Japan, Russia, and Germany to become equally armed.”¹³ These statements were made in 1933, soon after Hitler gained power, but after repressions of opponents had begun. And Mussolini had led Italy for eleven years. No retraction was ever issued. Gurus cannot be wrong. What’s a spiritual seeker to do?

When we entered WWII, Dad was in southern California, and registered as a Conscientious Objector. This was not the safest thing to do at the time, but he was six foot three and at least 250 pounds, which helped avoid attack. With his skills from factory work, he got a job as a machinist in war plants.

In the early ‘40s, a popular magazine (not sure which one) published an article saying that a bomb based on atomic fission, using uranium, could destroy a city. Dad read this and found it interesting. I think he mentioned that the FBI tracked down issues of the magazine, including his, and confiscated them. One day, government agents of some sort came to the plant and took all the drill bits and tools that contained uranium, which was very useful as it is extremely hard. So, he figured we were building an atomic bomb. (The agents were using a Geiger counter to find the uranium. One of the machinists led them on wild goose chases using his radium-dialed watch in the bottom of a barrel of scrap. Pissed them off.)

Life in those plants was not easy. One day an Army Air Force officer came in and told the machinists to follow him to take a look at something. In a hanger, shortly before this, a worker had been asked to sit in the cockpit of a fighter plane while some tests were done. He was told not to touch anything and do exactly as he was told. The sun was in his eyes, and he saw what looked like a shade over his head, and pulled it down. That wasn’t a shade; it was a shield, and it automatically activated an explosive charge under the seat, ejecting him all over the ceiling. The officer said, see what happens when you don’t do what you’re told. (I don’t know what year this happened, it could have been after WWII.)

When production of the B-29 started, he was a key member of the team pouring molten magnesium into molds for engine blocks, one of the many innovations in this aircraft. The Army

threatened to draft him, but a Navy officer intervened and said they'd sign him into the Navy and put him right back in the plant, and the Army backed off.

Using his considerable strength, he used a ladle to transfer the molten metal into the molds. One day someone handed him a damp ladle, and on contact with the molten magnesium, there was an immediate fire. Terrible damage resulted and Dad was in the hospital for weeks. Production halted until they could bring him back on a stretcher to oversee the work. (Magnesium *engine blocks*, you might wonder? Yes, several planes were lost when the blocks caught fire and burned through the wing spar. Not all innovation is so great. The bomber that dropped so many tons of incendiary bombs was itself incendiary.)

Family life, Oh Joy oh Rapture

By this time, my parents had met, and they wed in July 1945. Both had come from chaotic family situations, had serious personal problems, and did not know how to have a happy marriage and domestic tranquility. They never did find out.

One thing they shared was a deep commitment to pacifism and civil rights. One day not long after Pearl Harbor, my father met Joe Kikuchi, a young Japanese man whose family faced internment. Dad found this to be a clear violation of his rights and of no use in defense of the country. I am not sure about all the details, but Dad said that the Kikuchis had a large orchard that they had to leave behind when they were taken to the



Picnic in Joe Kikuchi's orchard

internment camps. When they came back, Dad regularly got gift boxes of fruit from their farm. I have found in the documents left by my parents a photograph of them enjoying a picnic in the orchard in Sabastopol, California, in the spring of 1946, with the large Kikuchi family.

About this time, the LDS church was annoyed with his apostasy, which he had never formalized. Two guys showed up at the door, wearing fedoras and suits, knocked, and Mom answered. They were there with a summons to ecclesiastical court. When my Dad came to the door, they were not quite so bold, given his size and evident strength, but they proceeded to read out the summons. He just shut the door in their faces. Undaunted, they continued to read until they had finished, then left. That was the last contact my father had with LDS. In fact, to my knowledge after leaving California he never met anyone on his side of the family, which is also true for all of his children. This is common when someone leaves the Mormon church.

Shortly after, in 1946, the new couple left for a Unitarian church in New Olmstead, Ohio. My sister Catherine Claire was born in late 1946, and my brother John David in mid-1948. Cathy was a very sweet-natured baby. John suffered from dyslexia. Dad sat him on his knee for many hours to teach him to speak, which he finally could at age 4. He's overcome this disability quite well.

My father was not exactly the kind of person you would guess would go into the ministry. He was very intellectual, morose, and did not radiate the kind of compassion and encouragement

people need to feel from their pastor. More to the point, he had a growing family, and found out rather late in the game that Unitarian ministers were not supposed to live entirely off their salary—they usually came from rich families and had some other means of support.



Heber Robinson, 1946

My family left North Olmstead and moved to Beverly, Massachusetts, a small city on the coast about 20 miles north of Boston, in 1948. There my father preached until 1953. There was some kind of trouble whose details were never shared with me. I heard as I am writing this from a family friend that he was dismissed for being undesirable as the leader of a congregation. He left the ministry to go back to school in Texas, once again embittered.

Fanny was teaching at Texas Women's University in Denton. The plan was for the family to live with her while Dad studied. After a couple of weeks of trying this out, Cathy and John were in rebellion over the austere food, Mom was remembering why she was so eager to marry and get out of her mother's house, and Dad was not exactly overjoyed not wearing the pants in the family. Primal primate patterns took millions of years to evolve, and can't just be turned off when inconvenient. So he went out to find a job, and the Robinsons moved into their own small house next to TWU.

After selling Fuller Brushes, Kirby vacuums, and insurance door-to-door, he eventually got work as a machinist, which he did for the rest of his working life. He hated his work, but did his best to provide for his family with the skills and opportunities available. About this time he started feeling the effects of arthritis, which stooped his shoulders, stiffened his back, and gave him considerable pain. The doctors gave various inaccurate diagnoses, and no therapy. His job required him to be on his feet all day, leaning over a machine, which must have been hell. He didn't find out what it really was until I came down with the same disease, only much worse, finally diagnosed correctly in 1981.

Mom continued her piano playing, as well as art in pastels, crayon, watercolor and oil. Although she got a bachelor's degree in Advertising Art at North Texas State College, she couldn't bear the thought of using it professionally. Although starting from scratch, she became a very good cook, with a lot of tutelage from Dad; her cakes and bread were quite in demand.

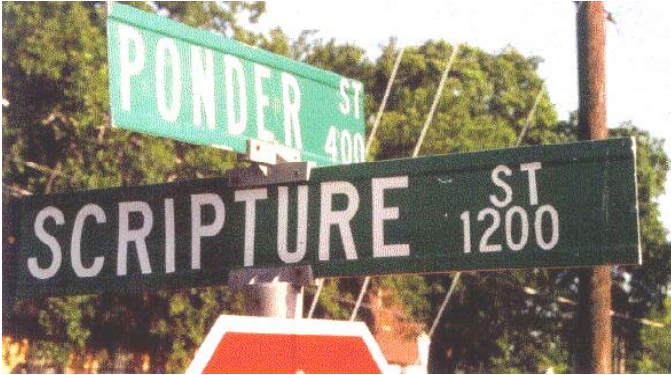
My earliest memories date from late in 1954, seeing what looked like a dark red curtain with many folds. Enough light gets into the womb for a fetus to see. I was pretty well developed by that point, and basically just hung out until the beginning of the next chapter.

2. Inferno

(1955–1961)

Being in the flow from the get-go

I was born in Flow Hospital, on the corner of Ponder and Scripture streets. (Can this be a sign?) Flow was also at the head of Fry Street, next to the NTSU campus. I would migrate back to the headwaters of this natal stream in years to come. I was named William Richard, so that I would have a good Texan name—Billy Dick.



Stop, and Ponder Scripture



Note Finder

Alas, in the March of Progress, Flow was torn down along with its ancient post oak trees and replaced with soulless condominiums in the early 2000's.

Being born feels just about as you'd expect—one hell of a squeeze. All I remember is the event itself, then breast feeding. If people could remember that more frequently, bottle feeding would be illegal except for emergencies. All the pleasure circuits were turned ON; Nature wants babies to enjoy their milk.

Half the year, Texas is an inferno with chiggers. North central Texas sits on the borderline between both east and west climates, and north and south climates, so it can get just about any weather, mostly intolerable, and sometimes violent. Early settlers, especially womenfolk homebound in the constant roar of prairie wind, not infrequently went insane. It hardly rained at all when I was born, as 1955 was a La Nina year, and the drought lasted about four years. The Army Corps of Engineers built a dam in Denton County to make what became Lake Lewisville, completing it in 1955. At that time, people were driving on lake beds. They thought it would take many years to fill the lake. A few months later, water was over the spillway and Dad saw a refrigerator tumbling downstream in the street in Denton. Just decided to start raining again, which produced a plague of mosquitoes, which produced a plague of frogs.



When I was two we left what was very nearly a shotgun shack for another rented home at 505 Welsh Avenue, across the street from NTSU. This put us squarely in the thick of studentia. I remember the squeal of tires as young hormone-crazed drivers with gassed-back hair made question-mark skids in the street, which was the style of the time.

Music training started early for me. I remember the cacophony of early rock and roll, which I detested without any prompting. Doo wop? Doo wop what? (This did not prevent me from doing Elvis impressions with a ukelele.) My taste was strictly classical from the start. Mom made a “note finder”, which is a piece of cardboard with treble and bass clefs, a string looped vertically

over the front and back, and a black button for a note head. I started reading music and words at age three. It's easier for a child to learn from a teacher outside the family, so even though Mom was a skilled pianist, she took me to lessons from a graduate student at NTSU. The teacher was a violist, and I loved to hold it like a cello and pretend to play. By age four, I provided the music for a dance class for young children.



My first performance was at age five during a show put on by my first grade class. I was dressed as a clown fireman with a big fireman's hat on. In those days I had a very short buzz haircut, given by my mother. Before the concert, she gave me a haircut that included a large raised star on the top. We colored this white and the rest of my hair blue, and hid it under my hat. I played some simple Bach piece on a harpsichord, and at the end of the music I took a deep bow and as a grand flourish, doffed my fireman's hat. Much applause ensued.

Many of our family friends were from the colleges. Bill Leue, who taught philosophy at TWU, and his wife Mary and five kids were close

friends. We also knew George Morey, who conducted the NTSU orchestra and taught flute, and several other faculty members.

One of these was Dr. Paul, a Pakistani, who suffered from being mistaken for a Mexican. In those days, this was worse than being black in the eyes of the typical white yahoo. Dr. Paul and his family came to our house to cook and enjoy a feast, with home-style cooking. Banishing the women from the kitchen, Paul showed my Dad how it's done. Lining up can after can of spices, he emptied all of them over the chicken and vegetables, much to the amazement of my father. Now Dad could chomp down hot chilies like they were carrots, but this was another order of heat altogether, not to mention expense. But the end result was, while fiery and almost explosive, magnificent. Lesson: if someone from South Asia tells you a dish is spicy, believe them.



We also knew Tom and Isabel Miller. Tom was an architect, who designed a modern meeting house for the newly-formed Unitarian Fellowship, built during our stay in Texas. Mary Leue describes the group; "It was very much a humanistic experience. We gathered, taught our kids through Unitarian Sunday School materials, wrote our own sermons or talks, listened to live music, had dinners together, went on camping trips, talked and argued a lot over issues like politics, theology or budget—and enjoyed the entire experience! But God was seldom a topic of conversation; and Jesus, never!" During my whole life with my family, church was not a place for religion, except as a kind of historical subject for study; there was no worship, and nothing in that community that pointed to anything of a transcendental nature. Our church was basically a habit,

something that people wanted to keep going even after abandoning the traditional belief systems. That Old-Time Religion was *not* Good Enough for Us. Eventually, of course, I went a very different way, in the manner of all rebellious youth.

Leaving Denton for Good Part I

The Eisenhower administration was not a happy time to be a liberal in Texas. Actually, come to think of it, there probably have been NO times when it's been easy, except in little enclaves now and again. Denton and Austin and a few other little pockets have been liberal refuges, centered around the universities, growing significantly after the influx of Damn Yankees and air conditioning. But in the '50s the land was very much in the hands of Good Old Boys. My Dad saw little chance of advancement at work, and so by 1957 we were putting aside money to move back to New England, land of Emerson, Cotton Mather, the Red Sox, and four seasons. When you're used to the fall in the northeast, watching leaves turn brown in Texas just doesn't quite cut it. And dodging tornadoes gets old. One hopped over our house and knocked down a large sign next door.

In the spring of 1958, Mom wanted to make some pizza, but due to the drain of saving for the move, couldn't afford pizza mix. So, she had to learn to make her own. In combination with what she and Dad had learned from Sicilians in Massachusetts, plus a few southwestern additions (jalapeños!) and some experimentation, voila—an excellent recipe. This was before the days of pizza joints. Mom was already making bread that was quite a hit, and students started dropping by for the food. We renovated the kitchen, put in three ovens, bought a big freezer, installed a sign on the front lawn, and went into business. All three kids pitched in, and things went quite well. In our three years of operation, we sold 18,000 pizzas for a dollar apiece. This made our move possible.

I started in nursery school at 3, kindergarten at 4, and first grade at 5, a year early. I didn't quite catch the point of all this. My favorite activity in first grade was the swing set, which, by some convolution of values, was also the punishment. Naturally, I figured out how to misbehave in order to be able to go out and swing. The teachers didn't realize that I could do that for hours and not mind at all.

By the election of 1960, our moving plans were well advanced. Our family's backing of Kennedy over Nixon was not a very popular stance outside the college circle of friends, so we felt even more isolated. The next summer I told a neighbor, who had several teeth, that we were moving to Massachusetts. He said "You need to say it the way they do; Mass-a-TOO-sits." Which I didn't.

And so we packed up the Studebaker station wagon, filled a moving van with our stuff, and hit the road in the summer of 1961, destination Yankee-land. I remember being overwhelmed by so much greenery on the way north, and for the first time I saw hills and valleys. Amazing.

3. Puritans

(1961-1969)

Kinfolk said, Move to Beverly

Massachusetts, that is. We found a large three-story home in not great shape overlooking the ocean. The threat of urban renewal, where the government would buy out declining neighborhoods, raze them, and build new, depressed the price enough for us to buy it; I think it was something like \$30,000. Since then, owners have fixed up these old homes, and they are worth ten or twenty times as much. We could see the ocean from every floor, even the basement. On the coldest days, the sea water would steam. I thought it was great. In high wind I could feel the house sway, which I thought was very cool, but which really meant maintenance was overdue. I could go up to the widow's walk and watch the sailboats. The house was so big it included a one-bedroom apartment that we rented out to touring actors. (One night a tenant fell asleep while smoking and started a fire; it was put out after much excitement and firemen and axes and smashed doors. Why use the doorknob when you have an axe?) A downstairs second living room we used as my mother's art gallery, where we sold her artwork and those of our local artist friends. We rented out the garage to a guy who raced Saab cars on ice.

My mother called the art studio "Gallery 31", since our address was 31 Lothrop Street. I didn't know until much later that much of the reason she did it was to impress a local artist. He had recently tended faithfully to his wife as she died of cancer, and was newly single. Mom was hoping that he would choose her and she could go off with him. But it was not to be, as he found someone else. Very quickly the gallery shut down. It turned out that a lot of what didn't make sense in our family history was due to soap opera, but I didn't know until decades later.

The elementary school was an easy walk away, and was quite an education. Kids would ask me to say words like "forest", which from me was "ferrest". It took a couple of years to wipe the Texan out of my mouth. But it wasn't replaced with a Nowath Shoa accent, instead something like Ohio. Later it took on a prep school flavor, and wandered on from there; but I never again spoke with the full accent of my location.

New England was still a place where people tended to live in the same place their whole lives, and where the social structure reflected that. WWII marked the end of overwhelmingly static demographics, but among the older people, you could tell what town they were from by their accents. Just recently I met a man of about 70 here in North Carolina, and I knew at once that he was from Salem. One story my Dad told frequently was of a woman then in her eighties, who was born in Lynn, and moved about 15 miles to Manchester when less than a year old. She was still known as "that Lynn woman". You can imagine the difficulties fitting in after coming from another country, like Texas.

One new experience about Beverly, and the North Shore in general, was the ethnic flavors. Several of our neighbours were Polish; I played frequently with the son of a Greek family a couple of streets away; several blocks of nearby towns were Portuguese; and a very large proportion of the locals had Sicilian roots. Now this would not have been the case if I were in Beverly Farms, or Marblehead, or most upscale neighborhoods, which were strictly WASP.

Most people where I lived were Catholic, which was entirely novel to me. One day on the beach, the neighbor kids looked up at the sun, which was behind clouds and producing long rays in all directions, and they said, "it's the Virgin Mary." ?. OK, why not? More fun than dust, humidity, and optics. They were really anxious about catechism, which made me glad to go to a church with no homework. My parents revered Pope John XXIII and we watched Sunday mass televised with Cardinal Cushing from time to time. He was great—his nasal voice was

unmistakable, like W. C. Fields in a dress and funny hat. I couldn't make much sense of the creed, but then, I didn't do the homework. I heard about people in Massachusetts being arrested for selling condoms, whatever *they* were. After Pope Paul VI came along I lost interest. It was amusing to watch the very non-Catholic Irving R. Levine on TV whisper reverently as he reported from the Vatican. Sounded like he was reporting from a golf tournament and didn't want the Pope to miss his putt. As the years progressed, I tended to identify more with the people they burned at the stake; but I was always impressed by the simple devotion and piety of the believers, which was entirely missing at my church.

Away from the ocean and across the street was a fairly large depression, on which the city put a baseball field. In the winter we hosed it down and it froze, giving us a skating rink for about four months. I don't think we're in Texas anymore! A girl I knew about my age lived in a house on the road leading down to the depression. Her father designed and built a ferrocement submersible that fit on a trailer. My mother thought it was shameful that a man would pursue a useless dream instead of using all of his time and effort supporting his wife and daughter. I thought it was *incredibly cool*. At this age I was always designing odd airplanes and submarines and such, and thought it would be a terrible waste of a life to not try and build something extraordinary if you had the chance. Of course my submarines were what you would expect from age 6 to 9, made with brick hulls and steam engines, since I knew about bricks and had a toy steam engine. And my airplanes ran on cod liver oil so that I could refuel at sea.

But actually I wasn't that far off. There were British steam-powered submarines during WWI, although they proved to be a very bad idea¹⁴, and steam is an important part of the propulsion for many torpedos. Some very advanced designs are now being developed for ceramic-carbon fiber hulls allowing dives to the deepest parts of the ocean, so that was not too bad either. And cod liver oil could be used as biodiesel fuel. Who knows?

It was great to be a kid living a few yards from the beach. In Texas, in playing with my little toy trucks, I made an entire web of dirt roads in our front lawn, which I rather admired for its engineering skill and efficient layout. My mother thought otherwise. But on the beach, there were no turf limitations to my freeway fantasies. I was determined to be the first swimmer in the water in the spring, and the last out in the fall, by means of slow immersion and progressive numbing. The wildlife was abundant and fascinating. We could go to the end of the stone jetty, throw out a line, and probably get a fish. Nothing beats flounder straight from the water. But that was the early '60s. Since then, almost all the fish have been exterminated, and fishing from the jetty, or anywhere else in the harbor, would be a waste of time. Nothing makes me sadder when revisiting the old place than to see the ocean now mostly dead and poisoned. Even back then, I would pick up staph infections from the water. Someone interviewed one of the many professional fishermen in the area, asking "What if there was only one fish left in the ocean, what would you do?" He said, "Go kill it."

The past weighs heavily in New England, compared to brand-new Texas. The beach I played on was the launching spot for the *Hannah*, first ship of the Revolutionary Navy. When the first English settlers arrived, lobsters were so plentiful that colonists simply raked them off the beach and fed them to their hogs; no one bothered to eat them. Cod were so thick that simply lowering baskets over the side was enough to catch some. They were good fertilizer for the corn. Even into the 1940s, seafood was low-class, and people in the area much preferred red meat. Schoolchildren from poor homes were given lobsters to bring to school for lunch, and would throw them in the bushes out of embarrassment. Now the cod are gone, and lobsters a delicacy.

The mussels are poisoned, we can't eat them, and so they remain abundant. Sick bastards, aren't we?

The winters were wild, as I'd never seen more than a dusting of snow before. I would pile on my warmest clothes and huddle alone in a snowdrift in the back yard, playing "Peary at the North Pole". Oh, for the thermostat of youth.

Much to my future regret, I stopped taking piano in 1962 at age seven. It was just nerve-racking and not so much fun. My mother was very controlling and I was getting rather neurotic, with chronic bed-wetting and social troubles. Taking piano lessons from her was just not sustainable. I never did have whatever personality traits are required of top-notch classical performers.

Thankfully, composition is a different beast altogether. I thought it was normal to simply play any music you liked between your ears, not knowing that this was quite abnormal indeed. I was a huge fan of Stravinsky, and at a very early age would conduct *Firebird* to a recording. I also went down to the basement of our big house with a dowel, pretended it was a bow, and played air-violin to my own imagined violin concerto. (I would have to wait until 2008 for the real thing.)

I took a very large sheet of paper, wrote a number starting 100000000..., and filled the page with zeros. I took it to my sister and proudly showed her that I had written the largest number in the world. She said you could just add another zero and it would be ten times bigger, and anyway there was this thing called *infinity* that was bigger than any number you could possibly write. I found this annoying and pouted the rest of the afternoon. It remains annoying, and probably will be so for all eternity.

Second grade continued my usual career. Note that the teachers I had in nursery and kindergarten had both left teaching the year after I had them; the first grade school in Texas went out of business. My second grade teacher found a husband and left teaching the next year. Third grade was another story altogether. My teacher was mentally ill, and everyone knew it, but did nothing. I completely blanked the memory of the whole horrendous year. After my time with her, she was committed. I had done my part. Fourth grade, afterwards my teacher moved to Germany. So far so good!

After many colds and sore throats, I had my tonsils and adenoids removed when I was seven. I had them preserved in a jar, which was the custom at the time. I stored them along with various baby teeth, three adult teeth removed to ease crowding, and a stash of fingernail clippings. Alas, all are now gone, gone the way of all flesh. My legacy will have to be less physical.

One day in November 1963 I was coming home with friends from a day in fourth grade making my teacher dream of other lands where people followed authority, when a man on the street told us Kennedy had been shot. I raced home and watched TV in horror for the next several days. I was acutely aware of current events from early on, and remembered Eisenhower and Kennedy's election well. (I also recalled the previous October when we laughed at JFK saying "Havaner Cuber".) Grandma was in Dallas at the time of the assassination. Children my age in Denton schools cheered when told the news. I remember reporters and talking heads saying again and again, "Johnson wasn't involved" and words to that effect. Why did they keep saying that? Mao Zedong had very good spies in the US, and came to the conclusion early on that Kennedy had been killed by "the oil kings";¹⁵ Kennedy had proposed a slight increase in oil taxes, so the oil barons would grow rich a little slower. Their man was now president. We watched our revered Cardinal Cushing conduct the funeral.

Our family had spent parts of summers at Ferry Beach, in Saco, Maine, which is a Unitarian church camp, back during the first residence in New England. We started going again

starting in 1961, and I greatly enjoyed it. I was a regular there every summer through 1972, and with occasional visits later in the '70s. More on Ferry Beach later.

In February 1964, for three days, a unique event happened; I listened attentively to popular music. The Beatles came to the US. I got a transistor radio and heard every broadcast of their music I could pick up. It was quite exhilarating. After the three or so days, enough was enough. Why only three chords? Why no modulation? Why do they sing about *love* all the time? *Eeeeeewwww*. My fourth grade teacher brought an album to class recorded by Peter Paul and Mary, with *Puff the Magic Dragon* and other similar songs. I protested to the point of tears, much to the consternation of the poor teacher. More reasons for her to flee to Germany!

Our friends from Denton, the Leues, moved to Albany as Bill Leue took a post at the new state university being built there. I was good friends with his daughter Ellen, one year older than I. In about 1961 I wrote her a letter, which went something like this:

Dear Elen,

I got your letter in the middle of a nap. I was reading NATL. GEOGrAPhic. I was reading about how we are going topu ta man on the moon.

We got a cello. it's not as big as some, but it sounds like one, feels like one, smells LIKEONE! (PhFW!!) It tunes beter than ower one in TEX., but ther's one thing. Ther's to many INSTEMENTS!

I have a gutar, augordiaN, 2 drums, 2 claonets, sometriangles, and a zilephone!

My sister has 1 gutar

My mother and I have the cello!

My bruther's going to git a bango!

And, for mother, ME, and CATheY, a piano!

It's that old, white, big Stinway. It's old, about 10 years! It's white. My mother painted it white 8 years ago.

It's big. It fills up one side of the room!

So much for instrurments. By the way, remember when I sad that I was going to make my JurNal of CODES??? WELL, I MADE IT!!!! I CALL it the BookofCodes, but it's the same thing!

As you can see, I was interested in having a code book so that we could communicate in a way even more incomprehensible than my attempts at standard English. Oh, and the big piano was a baby grand. I doubt it was a Steinway.

Escape to the Sea in Books

The allure of the ocean ran strong, and I voraciously scoured the shelves of the town library for anything nautical. This started many years of such scholarship, which was cheaper and easier than actually getting on the water. One does what is possible; sailing takes money, strength, and social skills, while I was poor, weak, and had serious socialization problems. I especially admired books on singlehanded long-distance sailing, and for many years hoped to do the same. Joshua Slocum, Vito Dumas, Howard Blackburn, and many others were my heroes, especially the ones who (like these three) worked past lack of resources or physical disability and pulled off great voyages.

It's a little hard to remember what sailing singlehanded offshore was like even in the mid-sixties. In today's world, teenagers circumnavigate non-stop, and if they stub their toes, well, they're on the internet. Celestial navigation skills are not necessary with GPS; in fog there's radar,

in shoals there are depth meters, for water there's reverse osmosis, for steering there's autopilots and wind vanes, for power there's solar cells or small windmills, for emergencies there's satellite beacons. Only depth meters were available when I was ten. Now, over a hundred yachts are circumnavigating at any given time. By contrast, Slocum, in the 1890's, got an ancient oyster boat, fixed it up, found it could steer itself, and sailed it around the world in the first solo circumnavigation. His book is a literary masterpiece¹⁶. Vito Dumas¹⁷ started off in Argentina in 1942, and circumnavigated in the Roaring Forties, completing in 1943. He stuffed newspapers in his foul-weather gear to ward off the Antarctic cold, and was unconscious with an infection while approaching Cape Horn. Blackburn¹⁸ had frozen off his fingers and thumbs while rowing his dory to shore after losing contact with his ship in the fog off Newfoundland in the winter, with his dead partner stiff in the bilge. He modified a small boat and sailed alone across the Atlantic in 1899, fingers be damned. None of these guys had self-steering, as was still the case for almost everyone in 1965. When sailors left harbor, few were able to keep any regular radio contact, so usually the isolation was total except for meeting passing ships, which is rare in the traditional sailing routes. If something bad happened, there weren't any satellites overhead listening for their beacons; they just didn't show up at the next port. These guys had *balls*.

But not only that; the sensory deprivation and various austerities of diet, fatigue, and sleeplessness caused most solo sailors to *hallucinate*. Sometimes there was pathological breakdown, like with Donald Crowhurst's suicide in 1969 while sailing a trimaran around the world. But more common were curious, amusing, bizarre stories from people not particularly oriented towards abnormal states of consciousness. This was my first whiff of something beyond my normal awareness. Slocum had one of the best stories. He was incapacitated by food poisoning, and in serious trouble, when—

I went below, and threw myself upon the cabin floor in great pain. How long I laid there I could not tell, for I became delirious. When I came to, as I thought, from my swoon, I realized that the sloop was plunging into a heavy sea, and looking out through the companionway, to my amazement I saw a tall man at the helm.... "I am the pilot of the Pinta come to aid you. Lie quiet, Señor Captain," he said "and I will guide your ship tonight." ¹⁹

And, indeed, his boat stayed on course. The Pinta's helmsman appeared again from time to time.

In a sense, and quite without intending to, these sailors were doing something similar to Bodhidharma's staring at a cave wall for nine years before introducing Buddhism to China. Some sailors actually intended their voyages to be for self-discovery, such as my hero Bernard Moitessier²⁰. The dear Reader is encouraged to look him up.

Oh why did we move...

Our next-door neighbors were fixing up their houses, which would serve them very well. Mom decided that she wanted to leave, didn't want to fuss with fixing our house, and it reminded her of her studio drama. It would have been a big job lasting years, but we would have had a stable residence, apartment income, an easily paid-off mortgage, and then we'd have a very valuable piece of real estate. The potential profit would have been much more than Dad made at work. But Dad didn't want to bicker, and the local public schools were not very good (losing teachers after having me!). So in 1964 we moved to North Beverly, to a small home with none of the attributes of our big one on the coast.

We were shocked that Goldwater won nomination, and delighted that LBJ, the peace candidate, was re-elected; but dark days were ahead. Boston Brahmin Louis Lyons on the public TV station WGBH mumbled about “Vietnam”.

The three houses next door and across the street were homes to boys my age, and there was a girl also my age just up the street, so friends were easy to find. We went to a nearby elementary school where I started the fifth grade with Mizz Puffer. (My last lingering Texanism was turning Miss or Mrs. to Mizz, which turned out to be prescient.) Mizz Puffer was relaxed, fun to be around, and introduced the very white-bread kids to a variety of Yiddish slang. My streak went unbroken as she married and went back to school at the end of the year.

The next year was altogether different. I had the formidable Miss Smitty, a battleaxe in her sixties who had seen tougher characters than me before and put them in line. She had the peculiar idea that Tenochtitlan was pronounced “Tenetitelian”, and insisted that we learn that again and again. School was unbearably dull, and I managed to get sick and miss as much as possible that year. On the first day I didn’t show up, she fainted, fell down, and hurt her knees, so that substitute teachers had to be brought in. But in a couple of weeks, she was back. I got sick again, missed some school, and this time she broke her neck. But again, she was tough, and returned in a neck brace. Sure enough, she was back again the next year—the first survivor of my school career. Maybe if I had fewer absences, early retirement might have appealed to her more.

This was the civil rights era. I was too young to know about segregation while in Texas, but my parents saw that as another good reason to leave the state. What I saw in Beverly was impressive and shocking. I would hear the neighbor boys talk about the only black student in our elementary school as “that raisin” and other negative terms. This struck me as incredibly stupid, but I kept my mouth shut, knowing I couldn’t change things by complaining. This was against everything I’d been brought up to believe, but I had no personal contact with anyone who wasn’t white—my egalitarian ideals remained untested by reality. The local Unitarian ministers, including the one from Beverly, personally participated in marches and demonstrations in the deep south, which was hardly a safe undertaking. Maybe they should have marched at home as well, it might have been just as dangerous.



Let the Fiddling Commence

The public school system included string teachers and school orchestras, and in November 1964 I started violin lessons with a warm Italian man named Mr. DeGeorge. Starting so late was a real disadvantage, but I was not thinking in terms of a music career; I wanted to be an oceanographer like Jacques Cousteau. But I could concentrate on music for a half hour a day and made rapid progress. Mom attended my lessons during the first three years and kept notes, which was most useful.

The next summer I had eight lessons with an old man named P. Gordon Green, who was dying of stomach cancer. He was both patient and strict, and an excellent teacher for me. We got a call one day canceling our lesson, and four days later he went to the hospital. Two months later he died. His widow sold us his violin for a very reasonable sum, and I was extremely pleased with its

sound. Mr. Green was the first of several people I saw die from tobacco after horrible suffering, and it made quite an impression. Dad smoked a pipe, but about this time decided to quit, which pleased me greatly.

Just up the street was Doris McVann, who was a superb violinist. She had a son and daughter about my age who were good friends. Doris played violin sonatas by Brahms and César-Auguste-Jean-Guillaume-Hubert Franck with my mother as accompanist, which I would do myself in years to come. It was quite remarkable to hear a good violin up close and in person; the contrast to even the best recording was enormous. It was magical. I continued my violin lessons at a local branch of the New England Conservatory, and after a couple of years, joined the Cape Ann Symphony up in Gloucester.

I knew another skinny bookish boy my age a few blocks away, and we hatched a plan to communicate by means of a small vehicle that could carry messages. It would hang from a wire, and be powered by a model airplane motor and propeller. We couldn't figure out how to get permission to string it up along with the telephone and power lines, so I went back to frying bugs with a magnifying glass in the back yard, which was the custom at the time. The Japanese beetles infesting the rose bushes made a most satisfying *pop*.

About this time I started studying multihulls, especially trimarans. At Ferry Beach, some of the regulars got together and built an 18 foot plywood catamaran. This was my first exposure to sailboats, and I was very impressed indeed. The boat seemed huge and powerful to me, and astoundingly fast, with a bright red, fully battened mainsail. My ambition became to live on a boat, however that might be possible.

There was another sailboat at Ferry Beach, an Old Town Whitecap sloop, 13½ feet long, of lapstrake construction and 550 pounds stripped down and dry. It was about twenty-five years old, smelled of varnish and pine, had just the feel you want from a classic wooden boat, *and someone else did the maintenance*. A porcupine had done a bit of gnawing at some of the strakes over the winter, but nothing fatal. Probably made it more hydrodynamic anyway. The sails were the original cotton set, and had the comfortable feel of well-used pajamas, not like the plastic Dacron sails that are almost universal these days. The bluff bows and lapstrake planks made a comforting chuff-chuff sound and easily rose over the sometimes formidable chop in Saco Bay. This was one of the most enjoyable boats I've ever had the pleasure to sail. It wasn't fast or flashy or practical or easy to launch, but it had a certain poetry of motion and harmony of function that I just couldn't get enough of. I didn't have to hang my ass over the side to keep the boat upright, and on any point of sail the tiller rested easily in my hands. That water's cold in Maine, and sometimes rough; you never know when the fog might roll in, which has happened to me. But in that boat I felt secure, and with patience, knew I'd get back home. In 1965, Robert Manry put a cabin on a Whitecap and sailed it across the Atlantic in 77 days. The resulting book, *Tinkerbelle*,²¹ was quite an inspiration to me.

Things were in turmoil at home. Cathy graduated from high school and left home with hopes of becoming an actress in the Boston theater scene, which filled my parents with dread. Psychedelics and cannabis were available in the arts scene in 1965, and she started to change as a result, although we didn't know at the time. When we didn't hear from her for a few months, Mom filled the information vacuum with the worst paranoid fantasies, convinced she saw her picture in a scandalous news report of hippies in New York when it was clearly not possible, thinking she must be a prostitute, and so forth. It was very disturbing to witness. What would happen when I left home? My brother John left for the University of Massachusetts in Amherst in the fall of 1966, so from then on I was the only kid at home.

Also that fall, I started seventh grade at Memorial Junior High. My grandmother was spending a lot of time traveling the world and the US after her retirement, and she brought a wonderful leather and canvas backpack from Switzerland for me. I disposed of my bookbag and used the backpack every day for school. My classmates ridiculed me endlessly, while they messed with their highly inefficient bags. Slowly, backpacks caught on (coincidentally, through no influence from me, residing at the bottom of the social order), and before very long everybody used them. As a result I made a circular cushion and started carrying books *on my head*.

I continued to hate school and was getting more and more neurotic and unhappy. I took some tests, did well, and earned one of only three scholarships at Shore Country Day School, a pre-prep school for the local Old Money Yankees. Although I had done pretty well academically, I had to repeat the seventh grade to get up to their level. This was actually just fine, since I was a year too young for my grade level. A neighbor my age, Jack Maney, also got in and we were classmates, beginning in the fall of 1967.

After months of my multihull fanaticism, Dad relented that summer and we bought a Triumph trimaran, the smallest, cheapest trimaran ever produced. This was only nine feet long, five feet wide, of high-impact plastic with a lateen sail. The helm was so horrendous that we broke a series of tillers and rudders just keeping the thing in a straight line. If I was sailing alone, it was fast and safe and not a bad boat, but with two on board it was extremely overloaded and thus very slow and hard to steer. This boat was the idea of Arthur Piver, who designed a series of full-sized trimarans suited to amateur construction from plywood. I studied these plans and hoped to build one someday. (He disappeared the next year on one of his boats while sailing alone off California.) It was terrific to finally have a boat, and we attended sailing lessons at a local lake. The teacher weighed about 400 pounds, which was several times the weight of the tiny boats we used, leading to curious lists and negative freeboard. The nomenclature of even small boats is rather complex, which he simplified by calling it “norman culture”. I kept an eye out for dragon boats.

There we met two other students, who became important players in my life. I’ll call them “Anton” and “Rose”. Anton was my age, 12, and his sister Rose was 10. They lived in Beverly Farms, the part of town dominated by coastal mansions, although they lived in a modest home and had a middle-class income. Over time we became close friends.

I went with my siblings regularly to Sunday School at the local Unitarian-Universalist church. My mother, with her cake-making skills, helped prepare a cake for the 300th anniversary of the congregation in 1967. Naturally, we put 300 candles on the cake, without due consideration of the consequences. When most had been ignited, it caused a miniature fire storm and mass melting. Not sure if a fire extinguisher was involved, but it was a fiasco for sure.

This year I attended a group lesson in Boston lead by Shinichi Suzuki. I was by far the oldest and tallest violinist there. It was quite remarkable. He was a very warm and engaging man, and we all felt very comfortable around him. He produced a wonderful tone from his violin. I knew that I had met a master musician and teacher.

Must-see TV: Turn on, Tune in

1967 was the Summer of Love, and the psychedelic revolution was a hot topic. In November, WGBH broadcast four times in one week a debate at MIT between Timothy Leary and Jerome Lettvin.²² The original faculty member who was to debate Leary couldn’t make it and had to cancel at the last minute. After a mad scramble to find a substitute, they found Lettvin in his laboratory experimenting with vivisectioned frog brains. He came straight from the lab in his shirtsleeves and joined Tim on stage for an extemporaneous debate.

Tim started by lighting a candle, sitting cross-legged and barefoot, and spoke while a slideshow and movie projected behind him depicting an LSD experience. I couldn't understand what he was talking about in any detail, but it was compelling and very new to me. He didn't seem brain-damaged or mentally ill at all. In response, Lettvin tore into him with anger, sarcasm and vitriol, asserting (without evidence) that LSD and other similar psychedelics caused a functional equivalent of temporal lobe epilepsy, and disturbed the rational process possibly for months after a trip. Party of the first part, party of the second part, the only box I have to put this in is labeled "psychosis", I rest my case. The newspapers crowed at his logical triumph, hoping to see the back of this dangerous Pied Piper Leary character.

It was all very odd. My parents, church, and schools were all urging me to achieve, work hard, and become just like Dr. Lettvin, and that was just fine with me. He was very smart, knew a ton of stuff, wonderful stuff, beautiful stuff, stuff I wanted to know too. Stuff that people admired him for knowing, that gave him a prosperous life, grateful students, and a place on the stage where he could shout "Bullshit" on television for the first time in history. And that to a man greatly feared and hated by millions. By using my rational mind, trained with conditioned responses and memorization, someday after many years I too could sit in a lab and try to probe the nature of consciousness by sticking electrodes into living frog brains. All the rewards were for going in this direction, and all the punishments were for going astray. This message was all day every day, all the more because I had aptitude for scholarship and willingness to work hard at intellectual development. And everyone in authority told me that Timothy Leary was a criminal, or as Lettvin said, a tool of Satan.

But what was this way of life doing to me? I was angry and frustrated. No one *ever* talked to me about love and spirituality and kindness and compassion and serenity. I felt put down at school for being poor and weak and socially clumsy, which just made me even more neurotic. And at the end of years more to come of this training, what would I be like? Would I be angry and frustrated like Dr. Lettvin? Would I have to sit in some damn laboratory making animals suffer, still dreaming of being in Nature and enveloped by beauty? Or would I become an engineer, laboring to make even more toys to extend the very temporary Industrial Revolution, or weapons to end it? That's what people wanted of me. Music was another realm of beauty and inspiration I longed for, but my experience of making it was rarely satisfying, and frequently just made me more lonely, nervous, and afraid. It just wasn't in a spiritual context at all; it was all about competition, and playing the way you were told.

Tim seemed to offer another way of being, another approach that actually pointed in a direction far more attractive than Lettvin's. To him and, as I learned later, his colleague Richard Alpert, *the stuff was just stuff*. They had learned and taught stuff too. Alpert called it "Stuff 101". But if you say so, you lose your job, which requires believing in and promoting the value of stuff accumulation. To people in a prison, who think that the prison is all there is, the worst heresy, the worst treason, is first to realize you're in prison, and then try and get out. I felt trapped, and Tim was one of the only people I'd heard talking about doing something about it. I couldn't very well go to the people who RAN the prison; they just wanted me to adapt and be a good inmate. But Tim's answer was completely impossible for me, and incomprehensible. I never did embrace "Turn on, tune in, drop out". I was only 12. Where would I go?

Psychological crisis

All this was working subliminally in my head; I wasn't on top of what was going on for some time yet. But what was clear was that the mental turmoil that I had felt in previous years

was getting worse at Shore, along with social problems, and something had to be done. Seventh grade is too old to be throwing temper tantrums. My schoolmates took advantage of my weakness to see how upset they could make me. I did not have school as an excuse anymore since I went to the best one there was. The teasing that I'd endured for years in public school continued apace, so I couldn't run away from it. Somehow I had to stop generating it.

One focus of my discontent was sports. I was eager to participate and have fun on the field, especially with baseball, as I had always been too weak to keep up with my peers. I went out for catcher for much the same reason Peter Ustinov volunteered for the Tank Corps in World War II; he wanted to go to war sitting down. I ended up being the team photographer. Dad never could figure out why I would want to do something physical, or why I was upset that it was not possible.

Early in 1968, my parents started taking me to a psychologist in Salem. He was a WWII veteran of the submarine service in the Pacific, and had a wonderful large sailboat. Naturally all I wanted to talk about was his boat. When he mentioned my family life, I would break down in tears and go back to boats. He also saw my parents, and eventually told Dad, "You need to get Bill away from his mother." So our hopes of my going to boarding school made even more sense now.

After a few months things eased up considerably—the psychologist had actually done us some good, without any medication, and I was coping like a good inmate in the madhouse of life. He never did take me sailing though. The bigger the boat, the worse the manners.

1968 was a hard year for the whole country. When Martin Luther King was killed, the staid and scholarly Louis Lyons yelled "Burn down Memphis!" while reading the news on WGBH. A lot of places did burn as I watched on TV.



Solar Still

As a diversion from all the bad news, we had a plan in French class. Our teacher had been in the Resistance fighting the Gestapo in Paris, and she spoke with a thick accent. We did whatever we could to make her say "teeth", which she pronounced "teets". This, to the eighth grade mind, was far more humorous than Molière.

In the spring, for my science project, I made a large solar still, using my own parabolic trough design. It had a vertical axis and could tilt to track the sun. I only learned years later that it would have been much more practical with a horizontal axis. Who'da thunk? Made the papers, was a lot of fun, actually boiled water, and being a still, had the aura of potentially clandestine use. Scared the teachers, too, which was a bonus.

John dropped out of college at this time; after many vocational adventures he got a plumber's license and a good stable job in maintenance at UMass.

They laughed at me, and called me mad, MAD...but I'LL SHOW THEM! I'LL SHOW THEM ALL!! BWAHAHAHAAA!

Although no longer so freaked out, I was still an Untouchable in the land of the Boston Brahmins. One spring day in the eighth grade (1969) we were going to have a play performed at Shore by a Boston theater troupe, but one of their actors was sick. So instead, the actors put on workshops with the students, with improvisation and various exercises. One such exercise was a

confidence circle. About a dozen students formed a tight circle, and one stood in the middle. After closing his eyes, the central student would fall in a random direction, and the surrounding students would push him back upright. Simple, no?

So I was chosen to be the first to stand in the middle. I closed my eyes, leaned back and to the right, and fell to the ground. The students parted like the Red Sea on my approach in horror of touching this lower class person and his 25 cent sport coat. The actors were shocked, but I wasn't surprised at all. They replaced me with one of their own caste, and all went well.

The thrift shop blazers weren't the only item of apparel that the sartorial police might have noticed. When I started at Shore, all my socks were white. Cheap, easy, never a problem with matching, simple. But very '50s, so I got teased for it. Not worth the crap, says I, and I replaced them with all grey socks. But then people just thought they were the same socks only worn out. Be that way, will ya? I got white socks and black socks, and wore one on each foot, yin and yang. I continued to wear various mismatched socks for about a dozen years.

That spring I got into Phillips Academy, Andover, which would be my home for the next four years, except for summers. As I heard the news, a patch of red traveled up and down my neck, so I must have been reacting viscerally. While I got a substantial scholarship, we still needed to pay tuition that was difficult to afford. My mother took up a part-time job selling art supplies in a local artist's shop to cover the expense. While I have made severe sacrifices over the years for the sake of composition, or exotic physics projects, or eccentric approaches to spiritual practice, and all this in the mode of service, I have never made sacrifices *for another specific person* the way my parents did for me.

We moved from our little home in North Beverly to the Fowler house in Danvers, the next town over. The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) owned the house and rented about two-thirds of it to caretakers. Four large rooms in the front of the house were kept in original condition and we would show it to visitors over the summers. Our rent was very low, but the heating bill was huge. The house was on the Danvers River, which was tidal and only a few miles away from Beverly harbor, so once again I lived on the water, in a house with a widow's walk on the roof. It was built in 1810 by a ship captain for \$800, had fourteen rooms, ten fireplaces and five chimneys. The original name for Danversport was New Salem Village, and the people involved in the Salem Witch Trials had lived in my neighborhood.



Fowler House

It was not clear to me why we would give up home ownership and move yet again, losing equity, but then I was not privy to all the details of yet more soap opera. Only after my father died did my mother tell me that she found him in bed with a neighbor girl of about twelve. I see it would have been difficult for us to stay in North Beverly after that. I was very close to my father most of the time until he died, with normal patches of difficulties; if I had known he was a pedophile, I would not have been able to associate with him unless he got serious treatment and acknowledged the problem, which he never did. He enjoyed the company of little girls, that was no secret, but I didn't realize anything beyond that. Other family members, better informed, had much more distant relationships with him.

Pedophilia is an orientation, not a condition, so treatment cannot change the underlying problem. I don't know if previous firings and moves were rooted in this behavior, but it seems likely. Better than prison, although that would have protected the girls involved.

I met a physicist for the first time that summer at Ferry Beach, complete with goatee and sandals and impressive wild grey hair. His name was Marvin White. He gave me a copy of a paper he'd written about jet streams on the sun, which had all kinds of funny squiggles and Greek letters, very impressive.²³ He also had an operatic baritone voice. Music and physics? Whaddya know. One day an amusement park four miles away, Old Orchard Beach, burned down. We put his 4 inch reflector telescope on the beach and watched as the smoke went straight up for a mile or two. It was a clear windless day or we'd have sailed over for a closer look.

I watched the first moon landing at Ferry Beach. Dad made parts for quite a few spacecraft, including the Lunar Excursion Module, so I had a personal interest in the Apollo missions.

My hair had been a buzz cut, no more than half an inch long, my whole life. Now came the time to go with the flow, and for the months leading up to Andover, I let it grow. What changes in my head would this foretell?

4. Epistle to the Phillipians

(1969-1973)



Samuel Phillips Hall

Hobnobbing with the swells

Samuel Phillips ran a gunpowder mill during the American Revolution, and took time off during that unpleasantness to found a school for boys from all quarters in 1778. The school charter is quite impressive and includes many admirable ideals, some of which were actually realized. The first class included ages from 6 to 22. In 1807, Calvinists fled Harvard after that august institution appointed a Unitarian (horrors) to a professorship of divinity. They founded the Andover Theological Seminary and shared the campus with Phillips Academy. Thus Andover found itself at the polar opposite of the New England Transcendentalists, such as Emerson, Thoreau, and Alcott, who were leading America to a fresh and original spiritual life.²⁴ The cold, dead hand of John Calvin still has a lingering ghostly presence on campus, and in our Long Dark Night of the Protestant Work Ethic.²⁵

In 1908 the seminary left to its own regressive campus down the road, and the modern era of preppie heaven commenced. It was the age of a small group of extremely wealthy barons of industry and finance controlling everything, riding the wave of the industrial revolution. A weak government and a tiny middle class, with most of the population struggling in poverty, was perfect for them to sustain the new aristocracy. The very rich used private education as the prime method for ensuring the continuation of wealth, power, connections and privilege for the well-born.

Enter Thomas Cochran, alumnus of Andover and Yale (the traditional combination, like Exeter and Harvard). He became a partner in J. P. Morgan & Co. in 1917. As one of the richest and most powerful men in the country, he could indulge in whatever he liked, and he chose Andover for his indulgence. During the '20s and '30s, old buildings were moved into a new grand landscape, and his campaign of building transformed the school into a remarkable edifice. By the middle of the Depression, Andover was fit for the snottiest of young white Protestant Capitalist spawn, complete with secret societies, hazing, and some remarkable and memorable pranks. Yes, scholarship was expected, but those from particularly rich and powerful families could not fail, and their offspring would be guaranteed admission, assuming the dynastic fortunes and alumni contributions continued.

One such dynasty was the Bush clan. Prescott Bush could spend a few shekels earned from doing business with Fritz Thyssen, among others, to shuffle young George H. W. off to Andover. There he could learn all about sucking up and kicking down. Roosevelt decided Prescott was too rich to prosecute for treason, but you can be sure they sent Young George in the direction of *Japan*, not *Germany*, just as they did with Lindbergh. (FDR was a Groton boy, and bless his sacred memory, a traitor to his class.) Grandson George W.T.F. was class of '65, and his brother what's-his-name was at Andover when I arrived. Skip? Chip? Jeb? I can't keep them straight. Just my luck; it isn't *what* you know, it's *who* you know, and I can't remember names.

While Andover existed to fill this dynastic role for the rich, sometimes the dynasties went in liberal and egalitarian directions. William Sloane Coffin Jr. was a classmate of G. H. W. Bush's at both Andover and Yale, and was a member of Skull and Bones. After working with the CIA, he was disillusioned with the powers that be, and became an important progressive leader. He was arrested for draft resistance in 1968 with another Andover and Yale alumnus, Dr. Benjamin Spock, who with his baby book helped make the social revolution of the '60s possible. Strange things happen when you show affection to babies.

Just down the street was Abbot Academy, a girl's school, that merged with Andover the year after I graduated. In fact, the four years I was at Andover saw the greatest changes in the school's history for any single class. When I arrived, coats and ties were the dress code. Chapel was mandatory twice a week; each term, a student could miss no more than three breakfasts or classes. By the time I was a senior, most of us looked like hippies. (Thank you JESUS!)

A few statistics; in the early '50s, one percent of the student body was black. All the faculty were white, none Jewish, with three staff members who were Catholic. It caused a sensation when one of them was given faculty status. One of the Catholic staff members will always have a warm place in my memory—the unforgettable Bob Leete.

Dear old Bob was nearing the end of his career when I arrived. He was in charge of food services in Commons, the large dining hall erected in 1930. He supervised some ten million meals in his long career. Bob was a chain smoker who distained the use of ash trays. I wondered if he put a wire in his cigarettes, as the ash would invariably reach two inches or more, leaving us to wonder at its structural integrity as he leaned over the beans. Breakfast was a required meal, and it closed at 8 AM. Bob would stand at the door greeting late-comers with a cheerful and sardonic "It's 8 AM, goodBYE! It's 8 AM, goodBYE!" Bob certainly had our health and fitness in mind, having started off as a football coach, and set an example by living across the street from Commons—and driving to work every day. One faculty member, impressed by the morning pancakes, folded one up, put it in Bob's shirt pocket, and said, "If you ever have a blowout..." He was a model for progressive and enlightened hiring practices, signing on mentally and developmentally challenged people from the local area to work in the kitchen. This came with some understandable complications. One day I looked closely at my spaghetti, and found the wire from someone's retainer. I fished it out and wore it proudly in my lapel for weeks.

First Year Follies

I arrived wide-eyed to this enormous expanse of towering elm trees and Episcopalian architecture, with its private bird sanctuary, half-million-book library with a glass roof, art and archeology museums, hundred-stop organ in a church that could seat a thousand, music building complete with gargoyles—it was all too much. The people here must be happy and content, I thought, and here I can live in peace and tranquility for the next four years. The teachers know that they have the best possible jobs, and the students are here only because of dedication to

excellence in scholarship and because of proven aptitude and accomplishment. With our every creature need provided for, we could concentrate on our studies and prove worthy of admission to the best universities in Creation. Should we become lonely, there was Abbot Academy a short walk away, as well as dances arranged with some of the most exclusive girl's schools in New England. Impressed by our erudition and sartorial taste, these girls of fine breeding and sophistication would find us fascinating and worthy of admiration and properly restrained affection. Our spiritual needs would be satisfied by the ministrations of our own clergy who would inspire us with their faultless example and inspiring sermons. In addition to our own theatrical and musical performances, we would have periodic movie screenings of tasteful and interesting cinematic productions. Prominent personages of all stripes would come from time to time to address the assembled student body, engaging us with their wit and wisdom, and preparing us for our prosperous and achievement-filled careers.



Memorial Bell Tower

Well—some of it was true all of the time, and all of it was true some of the time, *but you can't fool all the people all of the time*. And what was the first sign of something amiss? When I filled out my schedule of classes, I noted that each class lasted 45 minutes, but the time between classes was *seven minutes*. What evil genius violated the symmetry of Nature in this manner? I had to remember to arrive at 4:23 to an afternoon class.

Oh, and then there was hazing. The first two weeks, new students were subject to “prepping” by seniors, until we were officially de-prepped in a bizarre ceremony. It took weeks to get the Vaseline out of my hair. This was the last year for prepping, and good riddance. But it wasn't anywhere near as bad as what we did to each other. There were two rich jocks in my dorm who were meaner than most, taking advantage of the fact that both the rich and the jocks play by different rules, which amplify when combined. The school wanted to win games, and when they found an applicant who could pay full tuition and score goals, he was in. Who cares about low intelligence or defective character? So these guys could mess with any of the weaker students all they liked, and the folks in charge just thought it was funny.

One of these jerks was the scion of an oil fortune, who had the habit of defecating in the manicured bushes. (This was not the “mad shitter” who was a senior that year. Mysterious baggies of doop were discovered in student's dresser drawers and desks, leading to a mad shitter hunt of some magnitude. When suspicion centered on the guilty party, he deflected attention by depositing his gift in his own drawer.)

The other worst offender, and yes I mean YOU, *Norm Stitzer*, along with his oil fortune buddy, had an odd psychosexual deviation that led them to enjoy ripping off the underpants of weaker classmates. To the cheering and laughing onlookers, these violent “wedgies” were enormous fun, and were only humiliating and painful to those who couldn't defend themselves. And who cares about them? In my case it became so extreme that I was hung on a high coat hook by the back of my belt. The hall proctor, a senior who lived with us and who was supposed to enforce simple decency, took me down, but did nothing else. I wasn't rich.

Turning the other cheek was great for the bullies, not so great for me, so by Thanksgiving I was ready to defend myself. While at home I took a small knife that I could fit in my pocket. When I got back to school, I told friends of Stitzer to let him know I had a knife and I wasn't afraid

to use it. I'd already had years of harassment and this was going to end, even if I had to cut him. The next time I passed him in the hall, I put my hand in my pocket, and he stayed far away from me. Thankfully the violence ended right there. Norm flunked out soon after, which in his case took some doing, but you do need to show up to *some* classes even if you're a rich jock.

In October I decided to join the Philomathean Society, the debating club, which met in the same room since 1825. It took \$2 to join, so I scraped and borrowed and thought I had enough. When I got to Bulfinch Hall, I found I only had \$1.99, and no one would lend me the extra cent. Thankfully the club officers let it slide. When we did our arguments, I noticed that no matter how strenuously I tried to be serious and straightforward, people simply could not take me seriously. My voice and expressions were just inherently goofy. I didn't want to be a damn lawyer anyway, so I quit the club, leaving the others to become master debaters.

One night that fall coming home from a Philo meeting, I saw a full moon behind two layers of clouds, each going in different directions. It was so stunningly beautiful that I found myself saying, "There must be a God." Quite surprising for the young materialist. But this made me five minutes past the 8 PM deadline for being back in the dorm. I was greeted at the sign-in book by "Goober", our housemaster, who was one of the three school ministers attending to our spiritual needs. He was enraged, and staggering, eye-popping drunk. He grabbed me by the ear and hauled me to the sign-in book, with the slobbering and threatening harangue only an alcoholicleric can deliver. Could I count on the faculty for protection from attack by other students, and the clergy for transcendental and moral guidance?

Oh Lighten Up

Most of the time, though, I managed to enjoy Andover, and the prospect of leaving and going to public school was enough to make me put up with just about anything. Anton was not so fortunate. From time to time when I was home on vacation while public school was still in session, I would join him to visit Beverly High School. It was always a shock and a reminder of how lucky I was, Stitzer and all.

I read a cartoon a few years ago about how when puberty starts, everyone gets a number stamped on their forehead between one and ten. They don't know what it is, but everyone else can see it. People with similar numbers cluster together, and everyone wants to be with those with higher numbers. Lower numbered people are shunned. Andover and similar schools were lousy with high-number cases, and of course *my* number was Unitarian. The school organized dances with girl's schools, and that first fall they had a dance with, of all places, Shore Country Day School. This was possible because while boys went up to eighth grade at Shore, the girls went up to ninth. This was actually a fun night for me since I could introduce my classmates from both schools.

Later dances that year, however, were grim affairs. I never could tolerate the loud mindless music. Shouting directly into another person's ear might sometimes result in comprehension. While the custom was for a girl to agree to dance with any boy for one dance, even if she didn't much care for him, for some reason I was unable to find any partners. My Andover buddies simply didn't believe me, so I said "Just watch." I went to a line of a dozen girls and asked each in turn, as nicely as I could, if she would like to dance. Not a slow dance, this was the standard fast dance where people stood somewhere within a couple of yards of their partner and wiggled this way and that as the spirit moved. Each girl in turn said "No", generally with the impression that they were somehow insulted by the proposition. I went back to my friends, whose mouths were hanging open in disbelief. I didn't go to another dance for seventeen years.

My violin teacher was Bill Schneider. He was a veteran of the air war in Europe, with 27 bombing runs over Germany. You could tell he had witnessed real hell. I became good friends with him and his wife Sedgie during my Andover years. Very few students in his long career intended to become professional musicians, and I also had no such intention until 1972; but after that my plans changed to music. Thus our relationship was rather intense. Unfortunately, Bill had some serious personal problems with mental health and alcohol, and it would have been better for my development as a performer to have taken lessons elsewhere. I found it impossible to cause him that kind of pain, and stuck with him for the four years.

One effect of required chapel attendance on Sundays and Wednesdays was a tremendous performance opportunity for classical musicians. We took full advantage of having the better part of a thousand audience members, whether they enjoyed it or not. Our organist, Dr. Lorene Banta, was in a perpetual feud with conductor Schneider, and hid herself behind large oak screens while performing. The organ had been a masterpiece in its day when constructed in the Thomas Cochran era, but that was forty years in the past. Many if not most of the hundred stops were wheezing, gasping, or entirely silent. We never were quite sure what might be nesting in the pipes and didn't care to disturb errant wildlife. With such a massive instrument, renovation was a huge and costly project that was delayed until after my graduation.

The school's rapid change included the church, and in my second year, chapel became voluntary. At once, our audience dwindled to a loyal dozen souls.

My grades fluctuated wildly depending on whether I was interested or not, even in math and science where I was accustomed to doing very well. The teachers were the best I'd ever experienced, or would experience, with only a very few exceptions.

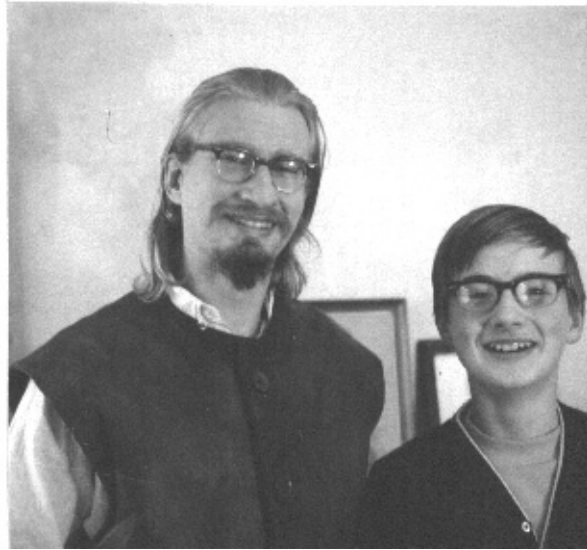
The Revolution that gave us Ronald Reagan

Our headmaster was John Kemper, an Army historian who took the helm at age 35 in 1947. He was an excellent writer and eloquent speaker, facing some bewildering times for a West Point graduate and lieutenant colonel. In the spring of 1970, campuses around the country went on strike to protest the Vietnam war and the killing of students by the National Guard at Kent State. Of course the idea of students on strike at a proto-Ivy League school is more than faintly ridiculous; we weren't exactly striking during meal times. But we didn't go to class, take *that*, Nixon and Westmoreland! If anything gave aid and comfort to the Indochinese enemy, it was our cutting French. Except for the Young Americans for Freedom, which was a kind of rich kid's KKK, we were all heartily sick of the war. I had participated in vigils and marches, and was anticipating doing whatever was required to not be drafted. (When my brother went in for his physical, he went to the bathroom and fell asleep. A few hours later they gave him a 4-F and he could go home.)

So there we were on the steps of Samuel Phillips Hall, presumptive heirs to Anglo-Saxon global domination, with the columns before us and the grand vista behind, on strike against The Man, which was Us in thirty years. I recall a speech by Freddy McClendon, the black senior class president with a major Afro, aimed at getting us all pissed off, preaching to the choir. He was followed by John Kemper, who gave a talk actually requiring us to reflect on a complex situation. It was well-reasoned and thoughtful, not what one would necessarily expect from a man who was born and raised in the military and who had no civilian experience except as headmaster. The anger and frustration were diffused. We called it a party and left.

Kemper was dealing with other more serious issues. After a lifetime of smoking, he had lung cancer. In 1971 I had a vivid dream of him going through a door into the next world. Shortly

afterwards I learned that he had died a couple of hours before the dream. I played with the school orchestra at his funeral, and had a strong feeling of his presence.



John and me

This strike did not imply most students had sympathy with the counterculture. I had a picture of my brother and me on my wall that year, and people would frequently comment about “that damn hippie” in reaction to his long hair and beard. A cultural shift would have to wait until I was a senior.

Now that we weren’t protesting anymore, we could have our own miniature war games in the dining hall. Commons was no ordinary cafeteria. Marble staircases, well-worn by generations of students, led to the upper two of four large dining areas. The décor included murals of the evolution of mankind as known in 1930, walls of mirrors, oak paneling, chandeliers, and extraordinarily high ceilings on the second floor. The mirrored walls were superb targets for tea bags. We would rip out the middles of slices of bread and toss them up to the chandeliers in hopes of making a ringer. Successful tosses would remain in evidence for months. And even the highest ceilings were targets for the more athletic. In years past, diners had cloth napkins, but now we had paper. Reason was, kids put butter in the middle of the cloth napkins and pulled the ends tight, sending the butter onto the ceiling. There it would remain until the next period when it would come down onto the next set of diners. I knew one large black fellow from Chicago named Elrod who was incredibly muscular. While collecting butter from tables, he would casually reach a hand into the butter bucket and with only a wrist flick send the fistful of fat to the ceiling, all the while appearing to continue in his appointed duties. Some grease spots above us were rumored to have been deposited some ten or more years ago.

One day after a particularly ghastly repast, we started chanting “Leete, Leete, Leete, Leete...” Bob Leete came out expecting to take a bow for exemplary work, and we pelted him with dinner rolls. Another day we noticed some panic among the wombats, as we termed the kitchen staff. The silverware had disappeared, and they needed to feed nine hundred people. Some of our braver lads had hidden the utensils on the roof.

And there were legendary food fights. The air would seem to fog with flying victuals. I recall with fondness the tallest member of our first-year class, some six feet four inches, getting half a grapefruit smack in the nose. Such was life before coeducation. Girls are a civilizing force, although life in the trees wasn’t all that bad.

That winter I had spent a lot of time with a fellow student designing a ram-jet helicopter. After getting into the gory details, it was obvious that this was far beyond our capabilities, and I



Commons, 1947

switched over in the spring to building a flying model zeppelin. I started with a trial balsa frame only a couple of feet long, working out design difficulties, and finally decided on a 12 ½ foot long balsa structure with transparent plastic skin and gas bags, with radio control. There were some books in the library about dirigibles and I studied all information that was possible to obtain about them.

In years past, the tradition was to perform a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta each year, but that had changed to Broadway musicals. I was needed in the pit, although it was a big commitment of time and effort when I already had very little time. (I was either in class, rehearsals, eating, in sports, or studying from 7 AM to 10 PM every day.) I had to learn seventy pages of hard-to-read rented manuscript, or Mr. Schneider threatened to not teach me any more. I have no idea why I kept playing violin, except that I loved what music could be someday, and wanted to be able to play well as an adult. There were other ways to get yelled at that were more fun, and I was to find many of them over the years. When I was a senior I finally had a little self-confidence and said I would skip the musical.

To give you an idea of the regimentation of that first year; in April, I stayed up until 10:05 PM in order to make my bed. However I was discovered by “Loose Jock”, the housemaster from the other side of the dorm, and he put me on 7:30 study hours as punishment for not being in bed by 10. This meant I had to be in my room studying at 7:30 instead of 8. But the musical rehearsals were required appointments and were from 6:45 to 7:45, and I had to get from there back to the dorm. It’s a little hard to imagine that this was all voluntary.

This first year I encountered computers. We had a time-sharing arrangement with Dartmouth’s 20 million dollar machine, with a room in the basement of the math building with several teletypes. These ran at a blazing 10 characters per second, which was the style at the time, and were equipped with paper tape readers and punchers. This tape could not be corrected, so a single character error would mean forced disposal of the entire tape and starting over. I learned BASIC and managed a few rudimentary tasks, but lost interest after a few months. The math department also purchased a Wang calculator the size of a small table for \$10,000, that could do trig functions and square roots. *Yawn*. When they made one I could put in my pocket, my life would be entirely transformed.

After finals and return home for the summer of 1970, I convinced Anton that zeppelins were quite amazing and that we should build flying models. He made his own design, and arranged with his neighbor Edward Weeks to use his barn for constructing both his and mine. Ed Weeks was retired from a long career as editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*. I also did major repairs to our small trimaran, which had fared badly during the winter.

Anton’s family spent some time each summer at Ogunquit, Maine, just south of Saco where I camped at Ferry Beach. He had a 10 foot O’Day Sprite sailing dingy moored at West Beach just off Beverly Farms. I figured we could take both his boat and my trimaran, or team up on one boat, for the hundred mile sail. The prevailing winds are in that direction, so we figured it would take maybe two days, three at most. Unexpectedly one evening I got a call from Pigeon Cove, a little inlet at the tip of Cape Ann. That’s maybe 15 miles towards Maine. Anton had taken off by himself without telling me, and after a day’s hard slog had given up and pulled into the cove. He wanted me to help him sail back to Beverly Farms, as the wind was strong and in the wrong direction for continuing to Maine.

OK, says I, and packed up for next day’s adventure. We nearly surfed most of the way back, straight downwind, fantastic sail. The next day, Anton looked out at the mooring, and saw the top of the mast sticking out of the water. Turns out the mast had been abrading the hull and

had very nearly worn a hole in the bottom of the boat before he'd taken off for Maine. There was just enough fiberglass left for us to complete the previous day's sail. Overnight the mast went through the bottom, filling the boat with water. Normally this wouldn't have sunk the boat, but Anton had let the plugs in the watertight compartments get old, and they fell out. Close call that one! This inspired me to be vigilant on my maintenance, and a touch wary of Anton's eye to safety.



Trimaran at Ferry Beach (with Jimmy Taylor)



O'Day Sprite

Life on the home front was more tense than ever. Dad had to quit his machinist job when his paychecks bounced for more than a month. He found work at Hood Yacht Systems making rigging for top-notch racing sailboats, which I thought was wonderful. (He wasn't so happy about it.) My mother was prone to spells of anger, when she would say things like "You can be replaced". Not easy to forget. Naturally I spent as much time away from the family as possible.

Second year, 1970-71

After a favorable draw in a lottery, I was able to move from my relatively austere dorm to the relative ease of Stearns Hall on Rabbit Pond. There I had Jack Zucker as housemaster. He was a poet, English teacher, and a very cool guy. I had gotten used to Goober checking to see if my bed was completely free of wrinkles, and if not, he would dump the mattress and bedding on the floor. Nothing like that with Mr. Zucker. He was too out of shape to bother with that nonsense, and besides he wasn't an alcoholic Protestant minister. Naturally I was pleased that Andover now allowed Jews on the faculty. I got to know his family quite well.



Stearns Hall, Rabbit Pond

Instead of just first-year students, now I lived with the other three classes, which I much preferred. Things were far more relaxed now and I started to enjoy school a lot more. One dorm resident in my class but freshly arrived was Peter Baldwin Fernberger. Through divorce and

remarriage, he had two homes, both well-appointed, one in Weston near Boston and the other in Marblehead. (While in junior high school in Weston he had the misfortune of knowing fellow student Grover Norquist, later of right-wing political infamy. Peter says he was a jerk then too.) When in Marblehead, Pete sailed his 420 racing dingy well enough to win an impressive trophy, and also sailed in his family's International One Design racing keel boat. He played a pretty mean trumpet, and was easy to get along with. In time we became good friends and remain so to this day.

Not that I was an easy person to be friends with. After years of conflict with rich classmates, I had grown wary of people who could do what I could only read about, and who had every possible advantage from being born in a prosperous family. I had to be convinced that someone would not treat me as an inferior if they were of a higher class, and sometimes that led to paranoia and not being able to form friendships that could have worked just fine. With Pete this was never a problem; he was always a very genuine person.

While we're at it, I was also priggish, stubborn, dogmatic, obsessive, self-righteous, severely judgmental, quick to anger, impulsive, homophobic, lustful, inconsiderate, resentful, jealous, rebellious with or without cause, ungrateful, and self-centered. *Practically presidential material*. No wonder I wanted to conduct. Jack Zucker had me visit the school psychologist to rearrange my synapses, but talking about this and that was hardly going to do the kind of total renovation of my central nervous system that would be required. That would begin shortly.

A classmate recently reminded me that I had entered my English class with Francis E. Belizia through the window, when I was worried about being late. (It was on the first floor, so no athletics were involved.) He also remembered that I'd been expelled from that class for telling a terrible pun, something that had happened in other classes and schools. The teacher reported it to my housemaster somewhat differently; "He has been on several occasions a disruptive force in the group by attacking others or me verbally without apparent stimulus. One such outburst resulted in his ejection from the class." Must have been quite a pun.

This inspired the following poem, which I reproduce for your edification.

Diderot, Cicero, Balzac, Belizia:
Gonna go to public school, 'cuz it's easia.

My parents read in the review written by Jack Zucker that "He is often more severe on the issue of student behavior and discipline than the most conservative faculty member, and this is strange indeed. It would be much more natural for him to identify, even slightly, with his own group." Well, that was about to change. Some kids on my hall had a gallon jug of apple cider that they left near the radiator for about two months. The bottom third remained, and I asked what the heck that was. They invited me to chug it down and find out, which I did, sediment and all. It certainly bent my head out of shape, and for the next three days my intestines as well, but somehow I thought this alcohol stuff was worth another try someday.

I put the zeppelin in the basement of our dorm and tried to make some progress with it. However, someone busted it up, and the whole project was trashed, after many months of work. Anton's zeppelin building continued until the following summer when one of his friends sat on it. So all was lost. I would have to start building more sturdy objects.

A more successful project was building my first kayak, teamed up with Peter. Outward Bound had its headquarters on the Andover campus, and they had a mold for making fiberglass white water kayaks. Several students were popping them out, and it looked very tempting indeed.

The resulting boat was a lot of fun, but it was designed for quick turns in rocky rivers, and was a challenge to use on the ocean. Nonetheless, I paddled it from my home in Danversport to Marblehead and back. There is a kind of intimacy one gets with the water in a kayak or similar very small boats that cannot be experienced in a larger boat. Kayaks are amphibious creatures, like seals, and can explore the meeting of the land with the water, which is the most interesting part of the ocean.

Peace, Love, Dope—well, at least Dope

In the summer, when I wasn't at Ferry Beach, I hung out with Anton and Rose. On July 4th we had a tradition of seeing fireworks set off at West Beach near his home. During the day there was quite a party scene all along the beachfront. Anton had with him a rather substantial baggie of marijuana and a pipe, and said I should try some of this remarkable herb. It took quite a bit of toking to cut through my hardened awareness, and I thought it was having no effect, but after an hour or two and the better part of the bag...whoosh! This here chemotherapy hit the spot. I needed something to break me out of my particularly unpleasant illusion, even if it was into yet another illusion for just a short time. This was a relatively harmless method. I smoked, sometimes a lot, sometimes only once in a couple of weeks, for the next six years. By that time I understood the disadvantages and stopped for good.

I could feel the effects for a couple of days. Several days after this first experience, I noticed that if I fully relaxed on my bed I could get a sensation of floating right out of my body. This had happened many years ago in early childhood, and I didn't remember it until now. As a result, I started to meditate and chant. We had a paperback edition of the *Bhagavad Gita* translated by Juan Mascero, and I started to study it closely. Mom was taking hatha yoga classes, and I started attending and enjoying them. None of this was of any interest to me before smoking weed. My life had taken a dramatic turn, and there was no going back. It was time to start growing up.

At one of Mom's hatha yoga classes, Isabel Hickey came to demonstrate a method of assisting people to remember past lives by a guided meditation. This was of great interest to me, and I wondered what would happen if I did the same with some of my friends. This would stick in the back of my mind until the following spring.

Cathy was visiting home when Isabel was giving this class. She was living in Boston and acting with the Atma company. Unfortunately they had a Lebanese producer, and the cultural prejudices within the existing theater community were ultimately impossible to overcome. She appeared as Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, which I saw while on a field trip from Andover. She left some food behind, which I discovered one day while looking for some Worcestershire Sauce to drink. (My tastes were exotic back then.) There was some odd brown paste resembling dog droppings. I put some on my finger and tried it out; it tasted like extremely salty dirt. "What's this weird stuff?" I asked Dad. "Orientals put it in soup for stock" he replied; it was very strong miso. There was also some umeboshi, salted plums, that tasted like battery acid. We never used either of them, but the memory stuck.

Also, I spotted a jar of brown rice on the shelf. I was intrigued, smelling it and running my hands through it. "What's this stuff?" I asked Mom. "It's brown rice, but it takes too long to cook," she replied, so we never ate any. But I sprouted some in a pot, watching it grow with fascination.

Turns out, Cathy was interested in macrobiotics. She tried eating brown rice and veggies, miso soup and seaweed, in the recommended manner. Several days into a ten-day brown rice fast, she took a breath of marijuana smoke, and saw nothing but blue. Looking down, she saw she was

standing in water, and had green leaves and a stalk for a body. She had transformed into a rice plant in the middle of a field. After coming back to her body, she said to her friend, "Let's go get a hamburger!"

Third year, 1971-1972

The occasional joint or bong hit added a new dimension to my Andover experience. I was quite aware of the risks involved. One fellow in my class from a family that owned the better part of a small state was kicked out when marijuana paraphernalia was found in his room. The faculty member who busted him was heir to a huge fortune himself, and worked for a dollar a year. The power of *his* money was such that he could openly sleep with students, and the school turned a blind eye. The crime of using marijuana was far worse than pedophilia in the eyes of the school, even when the money was equivalent for both.

Inattention and selective blindness to problems of this sort eventually bit Andover in the proverbial ass. David Cobb was an English teacher while I was there, and had a thirty year career, including a stint as chairman of the English department. In 1995 he was arrested in New Hampshire for trying to have sex with a 12 year old boy, as well as child pornography he made himself. He served 11 years in prison, since he was not protected by a large inheritance, and was caught off campus.

Stearns Hall, along with the other dorms in the vicinity, was built during the duck-and-cover era of Civil Defense. Our basement was designed to double as a bomb shelter. There was a special room down there behind a substantial locked door we wondered about. One day it was unlocked, and I kept it that way by means of epoxy in the keyhole. Thus we could explore it at will until the lock was replaced. This was a store room for food and water to supply shelter residents until they could resurface to a world free of rabble who couldn't afford protection. Unless, of course, townies came to campus to get some protection themselves and ruined the game. We saw that this store room would be an excellent bunker for unsanctioned activities, and so a friend and I went in there and promptly lit up a doobie to celebrate. Little did we suspect that for some unfathomable reason, the ventilation system for the dorm took its air from that room. Thus the entire building was suffused with the odor of Michoacán's finest. But that also meant that tracing the source was impossible. Live and learn!

My first year's science courses were mostly physics of a very introductory sort; second year was biology. Third year was chemistry. Much of my glassware went into elaborate water pipes. Peter and I were in the same class, and one afternoon we went to the supply room, absconding with all the parts for molecular model-making. The result was the world's largest molecule, easily five feet long.

Some new student musicians arrived for the fall semester, including Brian Zeger. He was a phenomenal pianist, and it was quite a pleasure to play with him. Later he went to Harvard and back to Juilliard (where he had studied prior to Andover) to be on their faculty. He's had a very impressive career.

Also new that year was a cellist named Thornton. He was enthusiastic about football, which was a problem. He kept breaking his fingers. When he had his left hand in a cast, it interfered with his cello playing for several weeks. Bothered by this, he decided to go ahead and play cello and forget the broken bones until he didn't need to play cello as often. That fall he would set aside his cello, and to impress us, would push his pinky sideways between the joints. They mended in time.

Another newcomer was Peter Sellars, from Pittsburgh. He rapidly gained a reputation as a theatrical genius. I took a class with art teacher (and fine musician) Bob Lloyd, which included a performance including a number of odd routines. Peter was in the class, and was certainly the star. He made and operated puppets that did things no one had seen puppets do before. Later he studied at Harvard, where he did a puppet version of Wagner's *Ring* cycle. He has had much success in theater and opera direction. His work is a little avant-garde for my taste, such as *Antony and Cleopatra* staged in a swimming pool, or *Don Giovanni* on the streets of Baltimore with the Don as a heroin addict...In 1983 he won a MacArthur grant of a quarter million dollars, and in 2005 the Lillian Gish Prize of three hundred thousand. I last saw him in about 1985 when he was director of the American National Theater in the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. I gave him a score and a cassette tape, one of my very few recordings at the time. He showed little interest; he was too busy complaining about having to work under such luxurious and pampered conditions, what with the big budget and thick rugs and chandeliers and tacky statuary and all like that there. Now I had been living for eight years in the odd garage, attic, tent, hunting cabin, \$40 a month duplex, doing wherever I could manage to get by, disabled with arthritis, with no prospects of being able to make music after so many years labor because I didn't have any money. Somehow I kept my pleasant face on and didn't slap this spoiled brat upside the head, since he was one of my few contacts. He had his hands full working with John Adams on various opera projects and was in no mood to consider someone else, especially a total unknown. Show biz sucks.

But Bob Lloyd and his wife Susan were good folks to know. Bob showed me how to use the craft center lathe, where I made a small replica of a Revolutionary War mortar out of bronze. (I had earlier made a copper cannon at my Dad's machine shop.) The cannon were part of a project for my religion class, to demonstrate the militarism of the Church before the Enlightenment; kind of a stretch, I just wanted to make the models. Later, I modified the mortar to be an exotic pipe. Swords to plowshares! Bob and Susan were experienced singers, and I showed Bob my first attempts at composition, which was some kind of horrid motet. He was very kind and pointed out its many flaws in a most gracious manner.

That fall I decided to make my own moonshine. I liberated cartons of sugar from the kitchens, along with handfuls of bananas and oranges. Our school had expanded long ago into a former apple orchard, so I gathered lots of windfall apples. Then I took five-gallon plastic milk containers from the kitchens and filled them with cut fruit, sugar, yeast, and water. Before long they became fetid with the appropriate fermentation. I made a lid to fit a metal wastebasket and used that as my boiler. Copper tubing remained from my eighth grade solar still to use as a condenser. All I had to do was put the boiler over cans of Sterno, fill with ripe mash, and wait for my booze.

After about a month of work, I had finally managed one martini's worth of copper-flavored firewater. Just then, Mr. Zucker caught wind of my distillery—probably literally, as you might imagine the odor. A true gentleman, he summoned me over and said, very loudly for all to hear, "I have heard a rumor that someone in our dorm is making alcoholic beverages. I'm going to search the rooms in 45 minutes..." and went on to describe the dire consequences of being caught. With no time to lose, I dumped all my precious tropical mash down the toilets and broke up the still into non-incriminating parts. Thankfully I passed inspection.

However as a backup, I had started brewing mead in bottles down in the basement. Now mead likes to ferment and age in relatively cool conditions, while the basement was quite warm due to the furnace. This made the product of very low grade indeed. Also I couldn't get the

sediment out of the bottles with my clandestine setup. I covered over the deficits by making it sparkling. However, this entailed risk. Several bottles would fit into a suitcase, and a slight error in the sugar content would explode a bottle, which would in turn explode the others. When I returned from Christmas vacation I had lost most of my bottles this way.

Enough remained for the occasional tipple. I had an ethanolinguiistic hypothesis that French was invented by a race habituated to wine drinking. To test this idea I imbibed some mead before French class, which greatly enhanced my command of the language and pronunciation. But when I tried the same experiment stoned, the opposite effect occurred. I didn't have a chance to try a cannabinolinguiistic experiment with Hindi or Pashtun, languages from cultures with traditions of little alcohol and plenty of hashish. One might expect the opposite result.

Anton had a certain predilection for the grotesque, and in that vein he introduced me to Aleister Crowley and his *Autohagiography*.²⁶ This was a huge, profane, extraordinarily funny and intelligent work of a truly demented, drug-addled, and deliberately demonic soul, and it had NO influence on my later writing of this book. None. Zero. Please do not even think this is possible. I am not profane.

Crowley was quite in vogue and had a horrendous influence on the hippie culture and New Age movement. I noted one of his adolescent exploits where he had made a batch of nitrogen triiodide, which blew up in his face and took some time to heal. This contact explosive, when made with pure ingredients, is sensitive enough to explode when a fly lands on it, or when an ant walks across it. Even a change in humidity can set it off. It is the only explosive that detonates when exposed to alpha particles and nuclear fission products, and those are mighty small things. Thankfully, when submerged in ammonia it's stable, so I could bring it safely to my French classroom. I had a problem there with prank escalation. Our teacher, the youthful and enthusiastic Henry Kilmer, would start the class by vigorously attacking the board with the eraser to clear the decks for our class. With chalk in the eraser, much hilarity would ensue. However, after a few times he learned to check, and I had to go to the next level. My improved model of eraser burst into flames. But beyond conflagration is only explosions, which is where the nitrogen triiodide came in. Let's just say that no instructor or students were injured in the performance of this prank.

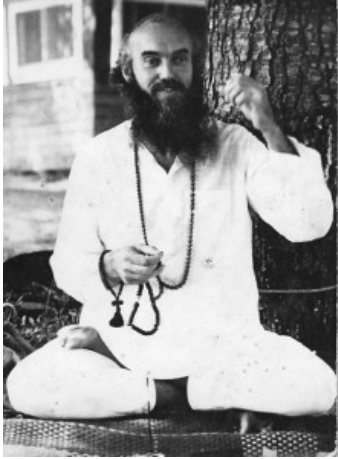
About this time my grandmother was having some adventures of her own. She signed up for the Peace Corps, with the intent to serve in Fiji. However the language training put her off, and she switched to VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). With her long-standing interest in American Indians, she went to Arizona to serve on the Navaho reservation. A week or two later, late at night, she was barricaded in her room, with drunken Navaho men trying to break in to rape her.

This was not what she had in mind, so she transferred to West Virginia. She used her occupational therapy skills in a hospital serving some of the backwoods population. There she met a boy of about 16 who could not speak and could barely walk, although physically and mentally there was no illness evident. He came from a family of about twenty children back in one of the small isolated valleys. His mother was blind and would be randomly impregnated by the local men, give birth, and let the children fend for themselves. These feral children were now institutionalized with little hope of rehabilitation. Evidently some kids had it a lot worse than me.

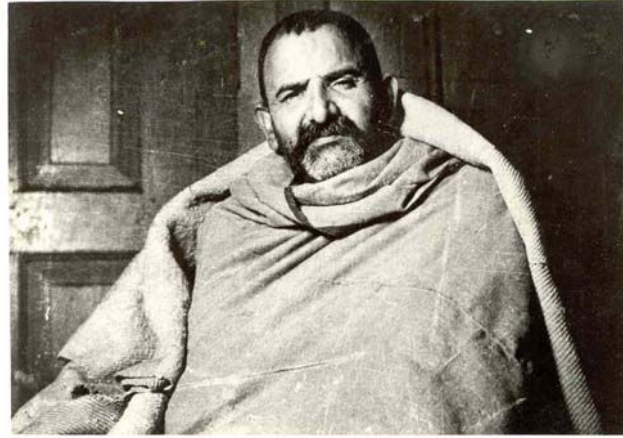
Psychedelphia PA

Things were getting strange indeed. With cannabis, I was expanding my range of experiences into places I had no idea were possible. During Easter vacation in 1972, Anton and I

went to a meeting of some young people interested in parapsychology for a weekend in a strange little house on the coast near Gloucester. There I got the first indication of my own past life experiences. The main effect of this was an immediate vocational shift away from science and towards music, and my first attempts at composition.



Ram Dass in 1969



Neem Karoli Baba

My sister Cathy left a copy of *Be Here Now* by Ram Dass at home, and I read it that Easter. This book introduced me to Richard Alpert and his psychedelic transformation starting at Harvard and continuing in India. I was intrigued and a bit baffled by this book and its oddly compelling stories. It continues to inspire me today. But I could only guess as to what Ram Dass was talking about. He told of going to India in 1967 to try and find out what the spiritual people there would have to say about LSD. Eventually he met his guru, Neem Karoli Baba (although his name was not released until after his death in 1973). The fundamental basis for my whole spiritual and musical life was set in motion during that Easter vacation.

*And then one day he took a pill that put things in perspective,
When In was Out and Up was Down and Angels used invective.*

Many of my classmates were eating strange pieces of paper and having amazing results. I didn't see any particularly bad reactions, and was intrigued. When a friend said he had capsules of mescaline, which I knew of by means of Aldous Huxley, another friend and I availed ourselves of samples. In retrospect I doubt it was mescaline, more likely LSD with some sort of additive; anyway—down the hatch! Now at the time I was a cheerleader, which I used as a kind of alternative theater of the absurd, as I had no interest in sports. I dropped this mysterious package down my adventurous gullet before I was due to cheerlead a lacrosse match. Although I thought I'd done my homework, clearly I had *no clue whatsoever* of what to expect. As I trekked across campus to the appointed game, I noticed that the mud under my feet was some of the most peculiar terrain I had ever witnessed. Colors were doing unimaginable things that were not mentioned in our physics class. By the time I got to the lacrosse match, walking was only possible by automatic reflexes. When I looked at the playing field, it went vertical and formed a background to the players who were suspended in front of it racing about in some kind of abstract coordinate system not discussed in our math class. I found this quite amusing.

Now, I had a crowd of spectators to attend to. Bravely taking up the megaphone, I called out, “Give me an A”, which was a good start. After all there was a big glowing cobalt blue “A” on my sweater, I couldn’t miss that one. By my own recollection, the letters quickly became random; but witnesses say that I asked people to spell some very rude words.

After the match it was clear that this was a large dose. I decided to retreat to my room for some serious contemplation. Being around people was not comfortable. The sensory effects, while incredible and magnificent, were not the important part of the experience. There was a clarity of awareness I had never felt before. I lit a candle and meditated. Or, more accurately, lighting candle happened. The whole self-identity thing was blown away. The bottom of the candle was the most perfect mandala I’d ever seen. The world was an interlocking pattern of energy and light. Why had I never noticed? What was keeping me from being like this all the time?

The next day I looked at the bottom of the candle. It was just the end of a candle, no mandala anymore. But I couldn’t forget the colors, and they still looked far more intense than before. Something changed in my mind that day that never went away, and for that I am most grateful. I started looking at flowers bursting out that spring as if I had never seen them before. Once you’ve seen Technicolor, the old black and white just won’t do. Dreams were much more intense, and even weeks after the trip I had amazing rushes of light up my spine in the early morning hours.

This was my first encounter with the paradox of psychedelics. They can show you the possibilities, in a not-quite-genuine manner, but you can’t eat a pill and become a saint. When you fall back down, everything that kept you from that state in the first place is still there. All the attachment, lust, anger, selfishness, ignorance, illusions, they all take the daily grind to strip away. But now I had a way of knowing that the way I thought things were couldn’t be right.

Early one morning as I slept I saw a huge flash of light, and a dark arm sweeping across it.



I woke and sat up straight in bed, sweating. That morning I learned that Tom M., a student I’d known at Shore Country Day who had come with me to Andover, died in a car crash a couple of hours before my dream. He had gotten into very bad drugs like speed, and had dropped out of Andover shortly before. He was in a car with other teens going over 100 miles an hour, and ran into a stone wall, flipping the car and killing everyone inside. This was the second time I had a strong experience when someone I knew died. Later, I got used to this kind of thing. It’s especially amusing when the person didn’t believe we survive death. Now I feel positively put out if friends don’t visit after they pass over.

Summertime 1972

It was time to start visiting prospective universities. My first two choices were Harvard and Yale, so at the beginning of the summer vacation I visited Cathy in Boston for a couple of days to check out Harvard. During this visit, we were walking in a park by the Charles River, and paused to rest and watch the sunset, as others around us were doing. Cathy spotted an airplane and its contrail, and said, “See that? I’m going to make it disappear.” I looked at the plane, and wondered what she was talking about. Then she started saying “Disappear! Disappear!” a few

times, and sure enough, the contrail stopped abruptly, and no airplane was in sight. The other people there were amazed, and all I could think of to say was “What about the people?” to which she replied, “What people?”

This spun my head around and I had no idea what to make of this, so I filed it under “Bizarre” and left it alone. Nowadays I figure that the plane flew into a patch of exceptionally dry air, which caused the contrail to stop forming. At that altitude, airplanes with no contrail are quite hard to see, and the low angle of the sun could have helped. But that still leaves the *timing* of the contrail ending which exactly coordinated with my sister. There are mysteries around us.

Harvard was impressive, a bit intimidating, and very familiar as it was so much like Andover. But the music department was small and oriented to musicology. I was focused on professional training, and this was not what I was looking for. Yale, on the other hand, had a fine music school, and that was my first choice.

That spring, Anton also had his first LSD trip, and was amazed as much as I was. From then on he always had a drawer full of quite a selection of medicines. We did peyote at night on the beach, and I was very impressed. I felt connected to the Earth in a way I’d never been before. This was rough on the guts, and tasted about as bad as a plant can taste, but easier on the nervous system than LSD. The next day was the familiar sparkly feeling—tired, of course, but with a residual of heightened awareness.

By this time I’d gotten to know Peter Fernberger pretty well, and we arranged to be roommates during our senior year. We raced with a fleet of keel boats in an impressive squall, sailed his canoe rigged with a square sail made from a sheet, and generally messed about in his various boats.

Our family also got into the boat scene more seriously this summer, although at the lower class level. We sold our worn-out trimaran to friends in Maine. Dad found an old beat-up 25 foot swing keel plywood cabin sloop owned by another worker at Hood Yacht Systems, and we fixed it up that spring. We called it *Kan Taki*, and the dingy was *Kan Taxi*. The mast was stored for some years lying on two sawhorses, which gave it a permanent curve to starboard. The rig was taken from a boat of at least 30 feet, so there was quite a bit too much canvas up there, giving the boat some real speed, even with its baggy old sails. I was at Ferry Beach almost all summer on the ground crew, and we moored the boat off the beach. I was thrilled to have a real boat at last. However, a boat this size needs crew, and the drawbacks of having a big old wooden boat were immediately apparent. After a fun summer, we sold it, and it ended up in a garage waiting for our next encounter in Chapter Six. Phil Bolger had it about right; the best boats are ones you can put under your arm, or are big enough to live on. In between is trouble. I had more fun on the little Old Town Whitecap.

There was an old upright piano in the dining room at Ferry Beach, and I struggled to write my first music on it. Between generating that cacophony and the long list of character flaws already mentioned, I had quite a few social difficulties. I am now trying to get back in touch with crew members to heal old karma.

We had a camping trailer and my parents would come up when they could. Dad especially enjoyed the company of young girls, who would gather around him in what became known as “Heber’s harem”. I didn’t know of any darker side to this at the time, but others did. By contrast, I was remarkably unattractive despite every inclination to have a harem as well.

My biology teacher from Andover, George Sanborn, had retired to his coastal home in Kennebunkport, not far from Ferry Beach, and I visited him and his wife there. He was a truly

great teacher and a real inspiration, very vigorous and active. Seeing my countercultural interests, he gave me some excellent pipes.

I read accounts of Alexander Graham Bell's experiments with tetrahedral kites, including one from 1907 that could carry a man. I built one of balsa wood and paper six feet on a side, and flew it on four thousand feet of string. As I brought it in, for some reason it decided to take a sudden nosedive into the ocean, which dissuaded me from trying a man-sized edition.

As I was surrounded by sand, I figured, why not dress like an Arab? So I experimented with several versions of the towel-head look, whatever you call it (keffiyeh, ghutra, mashadah, hattah, shemagh, chafiye, or whatnot). It got me the nickname "Burnoose Bill". In later years I moved on to pith helmets, then to French Indochina Bush hats. I bought eight bush hats from Banana Republic before they degenerated and went Eurocasual, which was the style at the time. At one point almost all my clothes were khaki, and I had as many as 30 pockets to keep track of.

The head of our crew was Bruce Munson, then in his mid-twenties. He had a picture of his guru, Swami Rudrananda, in his room. Bruce didn't eat meat, which was a novelty to me. However it started to make a lot of sense after my psychedelic experiences where everything was alive. My favorite food for many years was extremely rare barbecue, but my tastes were changing with greater sensitivity to subtle energies. Bruce had a certain presence I'd not seen before, and I had a deep respect for him. When I was upset or angry, which was a frequent occurrence, he could take me outside, show me the stars, and put everything into a calm perspective. I wanted more of whatever he was doing. So, I stopped eating meat, meditated more, focused on my breath, and gradually started using mantras. He was an example to me of how to be a genuine spiritual practitioner, and helped me start my own spiritual path. I've continued those basic methods for the rest of my life.

Not long after, Bruce went to work for Sweetheart Plastics, married the boss's daughter, and moved into one of the biggest mansions in Beverly Farms. He does not respond to my attempts to communicate.

Near the end of summer, Anton and I, along with a close friend, took a little sports car to a rocky part of the Cape Ann coast. There was a cleft in the rocks leading down to the water, which at low tide was twenty feet deep and four feet wide. It was very steep to enter and the bottom was water-rounded rocks. Near dusk we dropped serious doses of acid in preparation, and climbed down into the cleft near the peak of low tide. I looked up at the thin slot of light overhead, and suddenly that slot went 360 degrees around me, dividing the universe in two. I put one hand on each wall, but then the walls dissolved...One side reconstituted itself into a bas-relief carving from a Hindu temple, with a gigantic Ganesh surrounded by hundreds of attendants, all in motion and quite alive. Then the attendants looked up to the light above, turning first their faces, then their eyes, then each iris in each eye, then each pupil in each iris of each eye, every one of the thousand details in perfect focus. *Blew my mind.*

It meant I had homework to do, because although I'd seen elephant-headed statues, I had never heard of Ganesh. Evidently there was something to this Hinduism stuff.

Fourth year Senioritis, 1972-73; or, Non Sibi that Joint

Fall arrived and back to school with Captain Fernberger as my roommate. I was now concertmaster of our little orchestra, and Peter was president of the band. I wrote a cadenza to the first movement of Mozart's *Fourth Violin Concerto* and performed it in the Chapel, with Pete on the trumpet. This was the first performance of my music.

At some point, can't remember just when, I took the Advanced Placement tests in preparation for my college applications. When I started the Chemistry test, I realized that for some reason I was feeling the effects of LSD; the stress of the test had given me one of my only flashbacks. I looked out the window and it looked like a Van Gogh painting. "This will be interesting" I thought, and got to work. I could visualize the periodic table and pick out whatever was needed. I got a perfect score.

On October 28, several friends were in the two rooms I shared with Peter, and we were engaged in the fine art of joint rolling. We had a special model that was twice as long as the normal number and included a cardboard filter. I had one of these five inch wonders dangling from my lip as I answered a knock on the door.

Wrong move! It was the housemaster from the other side of the dorm. I flipped the joint from my mouth to waiting hands who stashed the evidence, but we had already been toking and the odor was unmistakable. We were all terrified. In the end, the school was as lenient as they could possibly be. All the other students in our room were ignored. Peter and I were charged with allowing our room to be used for the smoking of marijuana, and given Censure, which was not a very serious penalty. We were the first students who were not kicked out for a pot offence.

This year I remembered Isabel Hickey's past life class, and I started trying the same kind of guided meditation with friends so that they could remember their previous incarnations. It worked about half the time. Naturally I was interested in any opportunity to test the validity of the memories, which was usually impossible. We could typically get a date and a first name along with the various memories, but usually there was no hope of finding an historical record. One day I did a session with a fellow student, and he remembered being a small-time radical Jewish socialist newspaper editor in New York City around 1900. He was run out of town and emigrated to Canada where he continued his paper. With a full name, dates, and locations, it looked like we could trace this character. It was clearly far too obscure for him to have known about ahead of time and form a false memory.

So off to the Oliver Wendell Holmes Library, where we blew the dust off various tomes in the stacks in search of records. And in fact, after some digging, we were able to verify all the basic facts of this fellow's recollection.

Not every recollection was reliable, and a few were clearly confused and false. It was very important to keep an eye out for bad results. The good ones, though, were very interesting and of value for people in understanding their situation and the larger context of their lives.

On December 27, there was a reunion up at Ferry Beach for the summer crew. We took a rowboat through the surf for a spin out in the ocean. On the trip in to the beach, we judged the waves wrong and swamped the boat. I was fully immersed in 28 degree water, and had to walk a few hundred yards through snow to the house we were gathered in. I wondered if my testicles remained fully descended.

With my grades, SAT scores, National Merit Scholarship and so forth I was getting mail from West Point, the Marines, Brigham Young University, and other similar institutions who



WRR & PBF

clearly had *no clue* as to what a hippie I had become. I applied to only three schools; Harvard, Yale, and Eastman School of Music.

Peter was interested in Transcendental Meditation, and the two of us visited a TM center in Boston. I was not impressed; they charged a lot of money and I thought it smelled like a hustle. I preferred to try and find my own way to meditate. There were lots of other spiritual hustles at the time. I was reading books by T. Lobsang Rampa, really Cyril Hoskins, who claimed a Tibetan monk died and took over his body. It was a profitable fraud. My sister believed in him, so I kept quiet about it. I also read books by Carlos Castaneda, another hustler who ended up founding a cult complete with member suicides after his death. I tired of both in short order. The *Bhagavad Gita*, *Be Here Now*, chanting OM, music, grass and psychedelics were my haphazard paths of choice.

Some classmates from our dorm and the next one over got together to make a hang glider. It had aluminum spars and a plastic skin, a Rogallo wing design that would seem antiquated these days. Rather too heavy, it had a glide ratio of about 3:1, and our available hills were not steep or large enough to get far off the ground. I tried one flight, but my feet were skimming the grass, and I was lucky not to break my back on landing. That was enough for me. Later on I corresponded with a man who did break his back hang gliding and was paraplegic as a result.

I think it was this winter that much of the same gang that made the hang glider decided to build an ice boat. One bitterly cold day we launched it on a local lake. On my turn to sail I had with me “Gestapo Joe”, who taught German, in the front seat. He was in charge of steering, and I had the sheet controlling the sail. We started off at a good clip, and I saw an opportunity to make some real speed. So I slowly pulled in the boom, and we accelerated to at least 40 miles an hour. This terrified Joe, and he pulled hard over on the controls making us spin around. He was convinced I was trying to kill him. Can you say, *Schadenfreude*?

On occasion I would drink alcohol, but two encounters with distilled spirits resulted in humiliating and out-of-control drunkenness. Moderation is not a common refrain in this story. On reflection, and after a two-day hangover from cheap wine, I decided this was a vice best enjoyed by others, and became fearfully and obnoxiously abstemious. Only recently have I started enjoying small glasses of red wine with some meals, just enough to not be a Puritan.

In the spring, I signed up for fencing, which was led by fellow student John Major. He was also a fine guitarist and would later teach at Andover. While practicing lunges, I noticed discomfort in my hips, and had to transfer to another sport. This was the first sign of arthritis that would last the rest of my life.

Now the notices came in from the colleges we had applied to. Yale put me on the waiting list, and I got in to Harvard and Eastman. I had a friend from Shore and Andover who had gone to Eastman for a year, hated it, and transferred over to Harvard. He warned me not to make the same mistake. But Mr. Schneider didn't think much of my friend's musicianship, and thought Harvard was for dilettantes. By now I was focused on music, and made the fateful decision to go to Eastman. I said Goodbye to the Golden Road to Success, and Hello to Getting my Ass Kicked into Poverty and Obscurity. But I had no clue at the time.

After a year of composition there was enough music for a concert. Brian Zeger, Thornton and I performed the first movement of Mendelssohn's first piano trio, which we had rehearsed with Robert Levin in Boston, and I performed a Hindemith violin sonata, I think with Brian. My pieces were a string quartet and *Children's Suite*, a trio for two violins and piano. Small bits of the string quartet found their way later into a quartet for recorders, which was eventually totally

recomposed with the ancestral material expunged. Thus, nothing remains of it. The *Children's Suite* got reworked in the following year for flute, violin, and piano, performed once in Texas, and then thrown out. I was not yet able to capture the internal image of the music I wanted, and would not have that ability for decades to come. What I was trying to do required maturity, and that was sorely lacking for most of my life. I did have the arrogance to keep going, and faith that once I could master the skill, the results would be worth the effort.

Anton came through this spring with a bag full of mescaline. This is the hardest psychedelic to find with any degree of purity, and I only possessed the real thing twice. I had about nine doses, so there was plenty to share. It came in time for the blossom season and made for an exquisite final semester. With acid, there's always the fear that you'll end up with your toes in your nose²⁷ and out of control, but mescaline is very mellow and smooth. However, chemists know that they can make much more money by adding amphetamine groups to the mescaline molecule, resulting in Ecstasy and similar drugs of far less spiritual interest.

Anton also had some windowpane, which is LSD contained in a gelatin base. This was VERY potent. I had a poster of Krishna on my wall, and after dropping the windowpane, He melted into my forehead. I looked out the window, and the lawn turned into hundreds of Krishna's eyes looking at me with deepest love. There's something to this Hinduism stuff!

Sometime that spring a most peculiar thing happened. My dorm was some distance from the main road, and screened from our small avenue by trees and bushes. I never saw anyone come to the dorm that wasn't connected to the school. My room was upstairs and far from the front door. And yet, one day I heard a knock on my door. I opened it to find a Hare Krishna devotee, with the saffron robe and beads and no hair and the whole trip. As far as I know he hadn't gone to anyone else's room, never heard that mentioned. But there he was. I bought a big *Bhagavad Gita As It Is*²⁸ from him, as well as some incense and whatnot. This was my first meeting with a devotee of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), and a more unlikely venue was hard to imagine. We will run across these characters repeatedly through this volume.

High altitude summer of 1973

After graduation I went to Denver Colorado, where Cathy and her boyfriend David Ode had moved the previous fall. David was a director who had worked with her in Boston. To get there cheaply, I hitched a ride from the second violinist from my quartet and his mother to Denver Colorado, and saw that other mother-son combinations also included whining and needless bickering. This was my first experience of the Rockies and, for that matter, anywhere outside Texas and New England. Cathy and David lived in a small house rented with several other actors in the Third Eye theater company. They were performing O'Neill's *A Touch of the Poet* while I was there, which was quite impressive.

I brought my violin and composing notebook to keep up my music, and borrowed a piano for composition. Walking the few blocks to the piano was an endurance test at this altitude, which was a new experience for me. The thin air also made the effects of any mind-altering elixir all the more potent.

Not long after my arrival, I purchased ten four-way hits of blotter acid for the princely sum of ten dollars. Now I don't approve of four-way hits, since there's always some neophyte who will think, "Oh, that means I need to take four of them" and gets in trouble by taking sixteen doses. But that was the style at the time. I did a hit with breakfast for three days, and noticed a substantial resistance building. So the next four trips were every other day. After that I moderated to a couple of hits once a week. I ended up doing a total of 20 hits in 40 days.

Life was not without drama in this house full of actors. Early one morning I heard a sharp pop from next door. Shortly afterwards cop cars arrived. Some random stranger had walked onto the lawn of our neighbors, put a pistol to his head and killed himself. This was not the only gun death in our vicinity that summer. Welcome to the Wild West.

In mid-summer we went to a festival in Aspen, and camped in a lovely valley ringed by very high mountains holding a glacier-fed lake in a bowl at the end of the access road. I was determined to do some mountain climbing. The day after we arrived I packed my backpack and headed up the slope while everyone else went to town for the festival. About halfway up I stopped for lunch and ate a peanut butter sandwich and a four-way hit. Now this was an act of faith, because if I had gotten into any kind of trouble, there was no one around to help. By the time I got above the timber line, things were pretty well lit up. All the spruce trees were tapered helical cones with that peculiar trademark acid script that you can almost, but not quite, decipher. If only you could read the words! Looking down into the valley was like looking down from an airplane. The moss was several inches thick and very soft. It had been a bright sunny day, but thunderstorms came in from across the valley. Western weather was new to me and I was stunned by its power and definition. Here you could see the whole storm as it passed over the valley. What especially impressed me was the lightning. I noticed the reason I was above the tree line; all the trees that used to be here were now dead trunks, as they had been—killed by lightning. And there was no place to hide. I put on my poncho, crouched down as low as I could, and touched the ground only with the balls of my feet close together. Soon the storm was overhead, with ping-pong ball sized hailstones bouncing off the moss, and lightning strikes right next to me. All while I was peaking on a very solid dose of acid.

After the storm passed, I continued along the ridge until scrambling without ropes would no longer suffice. I headed back, and returned to camp early in the evening. The next day I was unbelievably sore and would remain unable to join in the trips to town for the several days we were there, missing the entire event. I learned the hard way that enthusiasm and enthiogens do not substitute for being in shape.

The sunsets were spectacular in Denver, all the better with colors from air pollution. I can see why Cathy was so taken with Colorado. Even when the mountains were not morphing into dinosaurs, the environment was tremendously inspirational.

I caught a ride with a fellow with a tiny fast sports car, and we drove to New York City in 36 hours. I caught a bus to Boston and prepared for my entry into the World of Professional Music.

Anton, meanwhile, was getting ready for his first year at Bowdoin College in Maine. During the summer he somehow obtained a list of phone credit card numbers, which he said were just fine to use. When I tried them out, I discovered they were stolen, and came close to being arrested. He never apologized or thought anything was amiss. This was my first indication that something was going terribly wrong with his morality.

5. *Musica Neurotica*

(1973-1977)

Eastman, Heart of Darkness

My parents drove me to Rochester to start my career in music school. I moved into a formidable stone dormitory that was a fifteen minute walk from campus. Soon enough I would have to make that walk in the dark during blizzards. My roommate was a tubist from Georgia who had never seen snow. He didn't have long to wait. After the first storm, he ran outside in bare feet and threw snowballs for a couple of hours with no gloves.

I had tripped a lot the previous summer and figured I'd not do any psychedelics during the school year, and smoke only rarely. There was plenty to do and I wanted to focus on my work. During the auditions it was clear that my violin skills were not competitive with the performance majors. After all, they had been practicing three or four hours a day for most of their lives, while I had been getting a very general education. My violin teacher was Norma Ausin Leonard, and I couldn't have asked for better.

I started composition lessons with Joseph Schwantner. I respected his work, but his music was very different from what I wanted to write. As a result we didn't get much into details of composition. Most of what we talked about was calligraphy, of which he knew a great deal. In those long-ago days, the technology of making scores had not advanced for about fifty years. Engraving cost about seventy dollars a page, so we were limited to manuscripts and Ozalid reproduction, which used light shining through the page to be copied. That meant using very expensive translucent paper and black ink, making any alterations very difficult. Parts were extracted by hand using the same process. Joe made his own five-point pen for drawing staff lines, almost identical to those used by 18th century composers. Like all my peers, I found this approach to copywork tedious and a terrible waste of time. After fussing with the Ozalid method, I thought "Fold this five ways and put it where the moon don't shine" and resorted to simple Xerography. After all, I was here in Xerox's home town, where the moon didn't shine but the Genesee River did with residue from both Xerox and Kodak factories. (A fellow succeeded in developing film in Genesee River water.) From then on I used photocopy machines and legal size paper for my scores and parts.

Joe and I also talked a lot about student rebellions from his days in college not long before, and he lent me a book about political radicals. That was about all I got out of composition lessons. Bela Bartok was offered a post as a composition teacher when Eastman was founded, but he refused, saying composition could not be taught. That's been my experience as well. I studied scores and listened to piles of records in the remarkable Sibley Music Library as many hours as I could spare. *That*, along with performance, was my education in composition.

I had never lived in an urban environment before. Eastman was in a part of town that had been not so bad in the 1920's, but now it was the wino district. Next to the school was a bowling alley whose upper floor served as the local Mafia headquarters. One day I was wandering about on the roof of the music building en route to entering my upper-floor English class through the



window. (Old habits are hard to break.) I looked out over the city and was disheartened at how ugly and dirty the landscape appeared. Mercifully it was soon covered with snow and concealed in darkness.

Orchestra rehearsals were a dismal grind. Our conductor got the usual derision and contempt musicians customarily have for twits with sticks, and in this case it was most certainly deserved. Someone once asked him why we never played Bach, and he responded, "Because his music is too easy." So we played Liszt. One day the winds were messing up, and he stopped and said, "Play...better." Golly that was helpful. During a performance of Beethoven's *Third Piano Concerto*, during one of the standard cadenzas he brought the orchestra in early three times, then just waited sheepishly until the pianist indicated he was through with his solo. The next year he went to Yale.

We wore white tie and tails for concerts. Actually I wore tails most of the time, having brought mine from Andover. But I was too cheap to buy the white tie. Instead, I cut a bow-tie shape out of a stack of napkins and used a safety pin to attach it to my collar. Unfortunately, flop sweat combined with the violin against my neck to result in droopage of the paper, which I ignored. I was back in the second violins anyway and didn't figure anyone was watching.

The tails added dramatic effect while skating in the main lobby. The lobby floor was polished marble, and I had sneakers with especially slick soles. This allowed me to use the same technique as speed skaters, bending over and swinging my arms, to skate the length of the lobby at considerable velocity.

Eastman has a phenomenal chamber music auditorium, Kilbourn Hall. I was listening to a piano recital there featuring a piece by Mozart. During a break, a graduate student in the row ahead of me said to his friend something about how bland the performance was, and I chimed in, "Yes, when you play Mozart, *you must draw blood.*" They turned around and gave me a look that said, You're not one of Us, are you...

And of course they were right. As the sun fled to more southerly realms and the sky went grey and black, and the slush and ice season took hold, I felt more and more out of place. Naturally, one solution was to make others miserable as well. About a third of the student body had perfect pitch. I was a strong whistler at the time, and found two conspirators who were as well. During supper in our crowded dining hall, one of us picked a central note, while another whistled a quarter tone above and the third a quarter tone below. We held it that way until shouts of despair came our way. I was hoping for projectile vomiting, but we were not loud enough.

Social rank was determined mostly by performance ability, which was not to my advantage. Perhaps the most amazing student musician at that time was trumpeter Al Vizzutti. His senior recital consisted of a wide range of virtuoso literature from baroque to jazz, performed from memory, all of which he had first seen three weeks before. It was flawless. One day at supper he was eating at the next table over, and I gave him a friendly greeting, as we had not yet met. He responded, "Are you walking around with a hole in your head as usual?" The others at his table smirked. This was not a good symptom.

The students in the room across the hall from me had a recording of Artur Schnabel playing Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* sonata, and another of the Budapest String Quartet playing the *Grosse Fuge*. We played them on alternating nights for many weeks. This was not well calculated to preserve our sanity.

Visiting home for the holidays required ten-hour bus rides. On a trip from Rochester to Boston, one passenger spoke loudly of having started off in San Francisco after enduring electroshock treatments. (No, he wasn't a hippie.) He'd been on the bus for three days and was

clearly the worse for wear. In the seats in front of him were a retired couple from Finland who spoke no English. Our demented passenger was convinced they were speaking to each other in “Catholic”, and that they were part of the global Catholic conspiracy. After things got progressively beyond strange, the bus driver decided enough was enough. At the next toll booth he alerted the state police, pulled over the bus, and told our passenger he had to go. Which he did, when convinced at length that the police were Protestant.

That was one of only two contacts with organized religion during my stay at Eastman. The other was a project I did for my art history class, where I wrote a paper about Matthias Grünewald’s *Isenheim Altarpiece*. This has musical significance due to Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler*. Some of my fellow students thought that this project meant I was a religious fanatic, which I found astonishing. My whole reason for being a musician was rooted in devotion and spirituality, although in a rather primitive stage at the time. I had to keep all that to myself in this extremely materialistic and competitive environment. Eastman was no ivory tower. If this is what classical music was like, then I was training for a life that was not what I wanted at all. Music was my form of prayer and communion; the concert hall was my church. Of what use is competitive prayer? And even with all the pressure and intensity, only about a third of my classmates ended up with careers in music. The odds for composers were far lower.

One composition student I met did pretty well. Eric Ewazen was a year older than me and was a phenomenal pianist. He was already gaining some recognition for his extremely complex and virtuosic pieces that he somehow managed to play. I was unable to appreciate his music at that time, but certainly admired his technique. Eric went on to have a long career teaching composition at Juilliard and has done very well as a composer. The running gag was that if he had a daughter, he’d name her Kiwiay.

All About New Music

I never did like music in the contemporary styles, and further exposure to cacophony did little to endear it to me. Students ran around with Babbitt squares, which were primitive matrices used with serial compositions to determine all the things that used to be decided for musical reasons, like pitch, rhythm, and dynamics. No actual ideas were necessary and anyone could crank out a twelve tone masterpiece just like the Big Boys. Of course only you, perhaps your teacher, and your family would hear it or care about it, and you never could tell about them either. After all the result was indistinguishable from random sounds, which inspired the rise of aleatoric music, the easiest of all to write. In this method, the composer leaves the fussy difficult details to chance or the performer to make up on his own. And if getting actual musicians was too much of a pain because you couldn’t find anyone to play naked underwater, the latest and greatest fad was conceptual music. This wasn’t even intended to be performed or even be *possible* to perform.

Thankfully Joe Schwantner was very reasonable, but from others I saw what the avant-garde norm was in music schools at this time. There was a minor industry feeding off the largess of institutions supporting insufferable gibberish that no one besides new music specialists could bear to hear. Harold Rosenberg nailed it when he said the avant-garde was “a profession one of whose aspects is the pretense of overthrowing it.”²⁹ Everything had to challenge the limits of the audience and break down barriers, even when doing so was an old, tired, disreputable orthodoxy. But disliking this junk branded someone in the field as an untrained barbarian and ignorant of all the wonderful theoretical advances. The winners of this game picked who else could play, and they didn’t want competitors who would be popular with audiences. After a few generations, the result was a profession so remote from filling the aesthetic needs of the audience or musicians

that most of the general public didn't even know it existed. The battles were all the more bitter because the prizes were so small.

Three big names from New Music came to give talks at Eastman while I was there; Pierre Boulez, Milton Babbitt, and George Crumb. As the dear Reader can only be expected to tolerate a finite dose of vented spleen, I will only describe Babbitt's visit.

A large crowd filled our biggest lecture hall to see the Great Man expound on his latest ideas. He wrote on a blackboard the stunning idea that we could assign a number from one to twelve for each of the twelve pitches, and then perform mathematical operations on these numbers to write "music". Now the audience could follow up to the word *mathematical*, but after that their eyes glazed over and they felt they were in the presence of Genius. But in the years the others had spent four hours a day practicing, I had been studying math and science, and it wasn't magic to me. What Babbitt was doing was geared to be impressive to his audience, but had little artistic merit. His idea was that new music scores should be like papers published in scientific journals, appreciated only by other professors, and best if incomprehensible to the non-initiated. But I knew what he was talking about, and it was crap. The only kind of *rigor* in music is *rigor mortis*. I was to see the same game again in years to come.

Had my own music been exceptional, I could have had something constructive to offer, but in fact my efforts were very immature and nothing to write home about. I performed a sonata for violin and piano at a student composition concert. It is now safely expunged from my catalogue. I did much better hanging out in a practice room with Bevan Manson, one of my classmates, who was an excellent pianist and improviser. Just jamming with him was a much more satisfying result than what I'd written, but we only did it once or twice and never performed. Bevan has had a good career since then with both jazz and classical music.

The jazz performances at Eastman were extraordinary, and if I had felt comfortable with the idiom, I would have tried to convert over from classical. But I just never felt like that was where my heart was. Apart from some Coltrane, jazz was rarely associated with spirituality, and I had no interest in the gritty urban basis for much of the jazz culture. Most certainly I had no connection with the kinds of hard drugs that were traditional among many jazz musicians. The main subject matter in jazz songs was love and sex, in which I was clumsy, inexperienced, and unattractive. And truth be told, most ordinary jazz sounded to me like strangling geese.

At least the jazzers had a good reason to study theory, since they had to follow chord changes instead of written-out parts. My fellow "legit" composers seemed misled by all the cerebral fussing about and disconnected from the creative flow, so I held most theory in low regard. Typically, after years of hard theoretical studies, the result was music even more boring and mechanical than before the years of study. I struggled with theory classes and got a solid C the first semester. This was a matter of some concern, since I needed to have a 3.0 average to keep my scholarship. My first semester grade point average was 2.6 out of 4. With grade inflation rampant in most courses, that put me 118th out of a class of 122. For the first time I really had to sweat about grades. I was at a disadvantage compared to other students who were used to public high schools, where making sure the teacher liked you was the main skill required to pass, especially in non-quantitative classes. I was too proud and too stubborn to be obsequious on demand.

I went to one of only two rock concerts in my life during this year, with Frank Zappa and the *Mothers of Invention*. I brought ear plugs. I've always admired Zappa's writings and approach to life and music, but I have little ability to appreciate his music. Still, he's certainly a hero for me.

One day on the elevator I met a fellow who I thought was a janitor, pudgy, balding, and with an old stogie in his mouth. Turns out this was Oscar Zimmerman, one of the greatest bass players and teachers in the world. He would get together with cronies to screen a copy of *Birth of a Nation*, and play secretly recorded disks of Toscanini rehearsals, complete with insane screeching and temper tantrums. Oscar had been a bassist in the NBC Symphony. He could solfège at tempo everything he played, and he could play very, very fast.

By the beginning of the second semester I was getting more and more depressed. February had a total of eleven hours of clear skies, and I saw the moon once through the clouds. One blind classmate habitually banged his head against the wall, and a few years later committed suicide. There was no provision for lunch, so I took heavily sugared donuts from breakfast and microwaved them to keep me going during the day. After a few months of this my hands were shaking. I wasn't eating red meat, but the rest of my diet was way out of balance. I was not a happy camper.

Throughout my college career, I didn't trip during the school year, since I was extremely busy. However in this grim winter and early spring, I was drawn to marijuana and smoked regularly. This left me tired, spaced, and even more prone to depression.

One night the fire alarm went off and we all had to go outside in the snow. Someone had run down the hallways, burning the posters people had hung on their doors. The place was full of smoke. Nobody knew who did it. The next night the same thing happened; this time he'd gone all the way to the basement, chased by a resident assistant while lighting door posters, and ignited a couch. Things were getting serious. Finally we found out it was a trombonist, and he was expelled.

After months of cold weather and stress, my left hip started hurting again, and it was difficult to walk to school from the dorm. I went to the school doctor, and he said I had arthritis. I was advised to buy aspirin in bulk, and when that didn't work anymore they'd put me on cortisone. I was so offended by the cavalier attitude and silly grin he and the nurses had, and the lack of any real help or specific diagnosis, that I didn't get a proper diagnosis from a doctor for nine years. When the weather warmed up my hip felt better and I forgot about the trouble.

In April it was time for our juries. I had improved a good deal over the year on violin, and chose to play my violin sonata for the jury. My friends warned me not to, saying that the jury only wanted to hear music they knew, but I insisted that I wrote the piece to be heard, had worked on it for many months, and they would like it. My turn to play was at noon, when the jury started eating lunch. They broke out the food and were talking loudly to one another the entire time. My playing did not lessen the high volume of their conversations or the gusto of their dining. Welcome to the world of classical music.

The first semester, I had an enjoyable English class. The second semester I had a new English teacher, whose teeth appeared to be smoothed by continual gnashing. The University of Rochester would sometimes send Eastman the lesser lights on the faculty for the side courses we had to take, and this was certainly one of those very dim bulbs. Our mutual loathing was not to my advantage, and the C he gave me brought my grade average to 2.8. This stopped my scholarship, and so just as the sun came back and the clouds parted for glorious spring weather, my Eastman adventure came to an abrupt end.



What next?

My parents also were forced to relocate when the antiquities society that owned the Fowler House decided to use the place for storage. They moved to an apartment in Peabody, the next town over from Danvers. Living in a much smaller space was decidedly negative for their relationship.

Returning to stay with my parents for the summer, I had to find a cheap school that would let me in quickly, since most had application deadlines that had already passed. While thinking about this, I visited Anton up in Bowdoin. He was finishing up his first year living in a frat house. Another student in his house painted a large pentagram on his room's floor and had the whole décor set up for satanic rituals, which apparently was the style at the time. Anton thought it was amusing and interesting, while I was repulsed.

Dad mentioned North Texas State University back in the dimly-recalled Denton, which had a good music school. I applied, sent a tape of my playing unaccompanied Bach, and was quickly accepted with a little scholarship requiring short hours of labor. Entirely out of the blue, I was returning to my home town, and an entirely new kind of life.

I'd overheard someone at Eastman say that no one since Beethoven had done something like the *Grosse Fuge*. Naturally I responded "Oh yeah, says who?" and started my own *Variations on the Grosse Fuge* for string quartet and double bass while visiting Anton, who had moved into a yurt at Bowdoin. This would be my main compositional activity for two years.

North Texas State University (now UNT), Fall 1974

Landing at Dallas-Fort Worth airport, the air hit me like a wet mattress. I settled in to Kendall Hall and explored my new territory. This was late August and the heat was Indian in magnitude. The trees were curiously stunted and shrivelled. I walked over to my former home at 505 Welsh. The house was moved to the countryside some time previously, and the vacant lot was soon to be parking for the school. The color of the grass was a vibrant green and it all looked alive, while my memories were comparatively drab. This was unmistakable residue from LSD, and I was glad to have it.

NTSU ranked in the bottom quarter of universities, despite the excellent music school. This was definitely a cow college experience, but I'd learned to appreciate simple things and was grateful to have the opportunity to be a student. Besides, the sun was shining, the winter was mild, I could leave during the torrid summers, the people were friendly, and I could be as weird as I wanted and no one bothered me about it. This was actually a comfortable and relaxed environment, and in time I didn't mind leaving Eastman.

We signed up for classes in the Coliseum, the large arena built for basketball. As I stood waiting in a long line, wide-eyed students went through the crowds saying "Don't sign up for Dick Arme! Don't sign up for Dick Arme!" Who is this guy Arme, I thought, that students would



hate him this much with universal fervor? I was to learn a few years later. Thankfully I didn't need to take Economics, which was his subject.

My scholarship job was in the musicology office, where I handled shoeboxes full of Hollerith cards with records of all the dissertations for musicology students in the country. There were thousands of these papers to keep track of, with titles like "On the Cowherd Songs of the Basques in the Pyrenees". An astonishing amount of time and effort went into producing these long texts that no one would read or care about in the slightest. That was my introduction to life in graduate school.

In all the confusion of landing at a new school, I missed the auditions for the orchestra. The conductor, Anshel Brusilow, put me in the back of the second violins and said if I was good it would be obvious and I'd move up. In two years I was in the first desk of the seconds, which put me directly in front of Anshel and in the perfect spot for listening and observing the orchestra in action. It also was a great location to mess with Anshel's head. In those days, I had one farsighted and one nearsighted eye. Looking back and forth from music to conductor grew wearisome, and one day during a break in rehearsal I went outside and broke out one of my lenses with a rock. On resuming the rehearsal, when I knew Anshel was watching, I nonchalantly put my finger through the now-empty frame to scratch my eye. Definitely disrupted the proceedings.

After difficulties with the conductor at Eastman, Anshel was a real inspiration. This was how it should be done. Leading an orchestra in a music school is more challenging than a professional orchestra, where people already know most of the music and could play pretty well without a conductor at all. He could communicate with extraordinary skill and artistic integrity, and knew what was going on everywhere. I was deeply impressed and learned a great deal about every aspect of music for large ensembles by playing under his direction.

Anshel started his career as a violinist, four years as assistant concertmaster in Cleveland and seven as concertmaster under Ormandy in Philadelphia. He conducted the Dallas Symphony for three years before starting at NTSU in 1973. With this experience, he knew all about professional music making at the highest levels and what skills we needed to have to join orchestras after graduation.

Although I was too thick to appreciate it at the time, however much I admired his musicianship and benefited from the association, Anshel had a very different set of ideals that didn't have much in common with mine. He was comfortable with his formidable ego, while I saw my own as a barrier to spiritual development and good musicianship. He preferred to be surrounded by sycophantic graduate students, while I was too proud for that kind of thing. And worst of all, he admired the conventional and predictable and avoided eccentricity, while the dear Reader will have observed that my lifestyle was extremely bizarre. As part of that conservatism, he was absolutely not going to feature new music unless he had to, as with the case of compositions by faculty members. I was determined to win him over with the music I had not yet written, and thus had every reason to believe was very good.



While the classical program was solid, the school was famous for its jazz, with an unofficial motto of “Faster, Higher, Louder.” There was a wide range of abilities given the large number of students, but the best were certainly professional quality, and supplied big bands and other groups all over the country. After three years I broke down and sat in on a rehearsal with *Schwantz Lefantz*, a Denton band whose violinist was away that night. I actually *improvised* with a shirtless saxophonist and a drummer and everything. These guys stayed up too late for me, so it was a one-time experiment.

Texas was swarming with Christians, which was a novel experience. I didn’t know any churchgoers at Eastman, but half the students here went most Sundays. There was a church whose sign said “The Church by Jesus Christ” where “borned again Christians...believe on the Word of the Lord”. On an orchestral bus trip to San Antonio, while talking to the violinist seated next to me I mentioned dinosaurs for some reason. “Well, if you believe in them,” he responded. *That’s interesting*, I thought; *most third graders are experts on dinosaurs, and this college student doesn’t know about them because of his church*. Hmmm....My good friends in the dorm were really fine, kind and caring people, but our belief systems were worlds apart. What was most dear and meaningful to them made little sense to me, and I’m sure vice versa. It was very interesting. They put up with my heathen Hindu ways very well.

After several months, I noticed a dark shadow on my bed where I slept. It was a bit mysterious. Then I figured it out. Our sheets at Andover and Eastman were washed for us, and I had completely forgotten that laundering them was necessary. Also various dust balls and scraps of music manuscript paper completely filled the space under the bed. My walls were covered with hundreds of identical pictures I had clipped from the student daily newspaper, of a particularly homely doctor recently hired by the school. In fact I had taped his picture all over the campus one night, for no particular reason. I was settling in nicely.

Actually, for a composer this wasn’t that bad. After Eric Satie died, his friends broke into his apartment and found four upright pianos smashed and stacked on top of one another. There was evidence he hadn’t changed his sheets in thirty years.

One dorm resident was a guitar major fresh from the Navy. We would play the occasional duet. He’d been drummed out of the service for smoking dope while cruising on a nuclear submarine loaded with Uncle Sam’s finest missiles. I couldn’t quite figure out how he thought he’d get away with that one.

Truitt Rogers lived down the hall from me in Kendall Hall, and when he married his sweetheart Melinda they wanted me to play at their wedding. Melinda made me a fine cummerbund, but her mother objected to my white tie, which was made of cardboard covered with cloth from underwear. So I was unable to perform.

That first semester I met Paul, who was looking for a violin teacher. He was a double bass major, but had a hard time focusing on his task at hand, what with being a hippie and all. He would show up to lessons without his bow, or without his music, or without his bass, or not show up at all, until his teacher, *Dr. Rainbow*, said “What you need is a good swift kick in the ass.” I became his violin teacher for \$2.50 an hour. If he was to be kicked, it wasn’t going to be from me—I needed the money. We got along great. I turned him on to the *Bhagavad Gita*, and he bought a case of the Juan Mascaro translation to share with friends.

The dorms had an irritating way of closing during the holidays, so every Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter I had to find a place to live. This meant finding food and figuring out how to cook as well. I had a copy of Frances Moore Lappé’s *Diet for a Small Planet* that helped a great deal, and had a real interest in eating something besides the usual supermarket fare.

Exploring for something good to eat, I found the recently-formed Infinity Natural Food Co-op in a little storefront downtown. This was run by Terence, three years my senior, a very striking figure with a long Hammurabi-style flaming red beard and cheerful eyes. (Before becoming macrobiotic, Terence got a letter every day from a friend in the Bay area in California with a hit of acid under the stamp. But now he was completely away from psychedelics.) Members helped out with chores in return for a price discount. Over the next couple of years I became a regular and read a lot of the macrobiotic literature offered in the store. Little did I know how much those little books would hurt me.

Christmas of 1974 I spent in East Texas. A fellow student named Patrick lived in Livingston, about an hour's drive north of Houston, and I spent a few holidays down there with him and his Irish Cajun family. Pat was a cheerful sort who performed the blues; you can see him just to the right of Jesus in the photograph from Easter 1975. He told me Beethoven would have liked rock and roll, and I said "Sure he would, *he was deaf*." One time in Livingston the local radio station was changing formats and had a call-in show to help decide whether to become a rock and roll, gospel, easy listening, or country and western station. Naturally I couldn't resist and called in with my best prep-school brogue, saying "You shouldn't be any of those; you should be a classical station, and you should specifically program Bach's *B Minor Mass* and *Brandenburg Concerti*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and Mozart's *Requiem*." The DJ responded "I don't think we have any of those; which of our categories would you prefer?" I said "Well, it's *sacred to me!*" so they put me down for gospel.

On the way back I visited Grandma in Rusk. Then 80 years old, she worked as an occupational therapist in the state hospital for the criminally insane, which was a maximum security unit. (I'd see a lot more of that in years to come!) I brought my violin to play for the inmates. Grandma didn't want me to play my own music for fear that it would make their condition worse, so I played Bach. Someday maybe I'll use that for publicity; Come Listen to Music that makes the Criminally Insane *Even Crazier!*

By this time I'd written several new pieces and in the spring it was time to put on a recital. One piece was a newly re-written version of the *Children's Suite*, this time for flute, violin, and piano, including the *March of the First International Order of Scaly Creatures*, a title I shamelessly stole from Jocko MacNelly, an Andover musician. Naturally, the theme went stepwise. I had to explain the dedication to Krishna, which was none too easy. I'd rewritten the sonata for violin and piano and played it on this concert. In conclusion was the much more ambitious *Concert for Six*, for violin, cello, oboe, bassoon, piano, and timpani. This time I had another violinist perform, as I was quite attracted to her, and she played better than me. If I couldn't have a date, at least there were rehearsals! Except that by the concert she



Notes Picker

Peabody, Mass., sophomore Bill Robinson "practices" in preparation for his upcoming recital. The Sunday night program at 7:15 p.m. in the Music Recital Hall will feature a violin sonata, a children's suite and a piece written for a sextet, all Robinson's original compositions.

thought I was a jerk. Oh well...This did allow me one of the only times I've had a chance to conduct. I learned the hard way to beware of wobbly bassoons. The timpani worked great, and someday I might include it again in a chamber work.

This was not Eastman. Instead of tutorials with a composer who in a few years would win a Pulitzer Prize, I was in a composition class. (At least the teacher said I had "good note choice", whatever that means. He couldn't say the music itself was good since it was not in a politically correct style.) Musicians here would show up half an hour late and expect congratulations because they came at all. Students wrecked many practice rooms that required substantial and expensive repair. And not every music teacher was superb. My first violin teacher was an impressive performer but a huge egomaniac. Three years later when I gave him a copy of a collection of my solo violin sonatas, he said "When I retire I will have time for trivial music, and I only play music that is engraved." I lasted two years with him before switching to Dr. Lerch, a very fine teacher.



Easter 1975 on Fry Street. (I'm the 5th hippie from the left.)

Summertime and the Living is Easy

At the end of the spring semester, Paul and I loaded up his new little car and drove very leisurely to his home in Potomac, Maryland. We took the Blue Ridge Parkway along the crest of the Appalachians, where I played the Bach *Chaconne* to the trees. We had decided to not smoke weed during our journey, but when we consulted the *I Ching*, the commentary said "Two small bowls will do." So we complied.

Paul's family was quite well to do, and his family home was impressive, with a pool, a maid, the works. Females picked up on his prosperity, and he was clearly the object of some competition by very desirable women, who found me invisible. Welcome to the world of finding a mate; no money, no honey.

We spent three weeks in Maryland, visiting the Eastern Shore and bumming around in general. He had some hash oil, which I had not yet done. I gave it two puffs, and found that it was ABSURDLY STRONG. We got in his car, and I held on to the seat with what little of my sanity remained. It felt like the car had been replaced by my head, minus the jaw, and the road met the roof of my mouth with no suspension to ease the ride. Our destination was a friend's pool that was mostly empty of water, but had been completely inundated by tiny frogs. Our job was to fill

buckets with the little squirming jumping critters and dump them in the surrounding woods. I never smoked hash oil again.

Paul and his brother were very impressed by Guru Maharaji, Prem Rawat, who was then 18 years old. I had visited a grocery store in Denver during my summer with my sister that was run by his Divine Light Mission. The workers seemed spaced and robotic, and worked long hours for very small wages, putting a strain on competing supermarkets. I was not impressed by the whole scene, especially as Maharaji claimed to be God, Krishna, whatever. The luxury of his lifestyle and platitudinous speechifying was hardly my cup of tea. The previous year, the Perfect Master had married an American against his mother's wishes. She decided that his brother, not Prem, was God, and put the brother in charge of the business back in India. Prem took all the religion out of his movement in 1980 and continues his speeches worldwide.

But it seemed to do Paul some good, and so I didn't object. After all I was doing some exotic things myself by way of spiritual path.

Eventually we headed to New York City for a night. We got lost at midnight driving in Harlem, terrified that his new car would break down and we would be at the mercy of all these dangerous black people. Sounds silly, I know; all the streets are straight and clearly numbered. We got the hell out of there as soon as we could via a power U-turn skid on the main drag. Next stop Boston. Then a return to Manhattan, where I'd forgotten my violin. Then a bus back to Boston, and on to Peabody. By the time I got there I'd been on the road six weeks.

I returned to a home in transition. Since I was out of the nest, my parents were divorcing. My mother now had no support, and got menial jobs where she could, usually as a housekeeper. Sometimes she lived with friends for short periods. Grandma helped out and took her on trips overseas, once to Central America and another time to Egypt and Greece. Life was transient and difficult for her until she remarried in 1981.

I stayed with Dad during these summers. He droned on and on with complaints about Mom, which I joined in at first since I had problems myself with her. But it kept going, hour after hour, for three summers. It was like reading a long book whose author keeps complaining about poverty, musicians not playing his music, and women refusing to sleep with him. That would be *just unbearable*. So finally I told him to please stifle the resentment, which he then put elsewhere.

My brother John was living with his long-time partner Jackie Brodeur in western Massachusetts. Eventually they married. John was the only member of my family to have both stable employment and a good marriage.

Cathy was enthused about the *Course in Miracles*, which is supposed to be channelled from Jesus to guide people into the New Age. I bought a set of the three books, and went through them carefully. The course has become quite influential, and a lot of people have studied it, but there were many statements in the books that I knew couldn't be right. For example, there was no way I could accept that there were only two emotions, love and fear. That's not true even on a biochemical level. There was a kind of smugness to the Course crowd, in that if a person didn't like it or criticized the material, they were just not ready for it yet, and thus spiritually immature. I sent the books to Cathy so she could find them a good home. She said they would be there when I was ready for them. But I wanted to be the *smugger*, not the *smuggee*. My time would come.

I visited Mom and played my first sonata for solo violin for her. She said she was amazed that I could play it, but I couldn't force people to like my music. Oh well...

Fall 1975: Bruce Hall, Home of Grace and Kulcher

I settled in for the first of five three day bus rides between Boston and Denton, armed with my little *Bhagavad Gita* and a film canister full of marijuana, which was the custom at the time. I took a banana, dipped it in the “oregano”, and munched it down en route as required. *Hare Krishna, Hare Rama, Hare Ganja*. I was cutting way back, tripping once a year and smoking maybe once every couple of weeks. But Mary Jane was good to have on the bus.

For the fall semester, I moved to Bruce Hall, the dorm where most musicians and many artists lived. This was a great boon for a person with my distinct social difficulties. I had every opportunity to establish some kind of relationship with one of the many intelligent, creative, and attractive women living there. We shall see how well I fared.

By this time I had been without a haircut for almost four years, and my hair trimmed itself by attrition. This was couture of inattention, not maintenance, and it would have been dreadlocks had my hair not been extremely fine and occasionally laundered. When too clean, strands would drift up and get between my bow and the string, causing mayhem. But if long hair was good enough for Yogananda, it was good enough for me.



One of the first things I did was to help paint a large mural on a wall in the basement. My part, predictably enough, was a blue Krishna with flowing black hair stretching many feet left and right.

A transfer sophomore named Jonathan moved in a couple doors down from me. He was a very fine pianist but was concentrating on conducting. Story was that he was a protégé of Anshel’s but I don’t know if that was true. He sure knew the political side of things I had so sorely neglected; his motto was “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know”, and he allocated his time and efforts accordingly. He did have good conducting skills and I became interested in getting into Anshel’s graduate level conducting class, even though that would strain my other studies considerably. We were going to play Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* during the next semester. To get into the class I would have to be able to pass a test where I’d conduct any part of the piece while Anshel and various grad students sang the parts. We spent many evenings together carefully rehearsing how Anshel planned to beat each measure, and I played every note written for all 120 musicians on the piano, line by line. I grew to loath transposition and vowed that all of my scores would be in C.

To get in the mood to conduct Texas-style, I decided I needed a baton holster. A Vietnam vet who at one time smuggled bales of Thai cannabis in the tails of B-52s lived a few doors down the hallway. He was quite skilled in leatherwork. I got some leather and cut and stitched it into shape. He had all the tools and made elaborate stampings, and we put on a touch of leather stain for that authentic Western look. The result was superb, and I tied it on my right leg ready for a quick draw for the next two years, rain or shine. You never know when there’s some conducting to get done, pilgrim, *and I ain’t here to win no beauty contest*.

I met a very interesting bassoonist who was living in Bruce Hall, and we hit it off to a certain extent. She was very intelligent and creative, and I was hoping that we could have some kind of relationship. Our paths crossed from time to time into the mid-eighties. But when I told her I loved her, she thought I was an idiot, and that was that. I’ve tried to communicate with her recently but she avoids contact.

The very few times I’ve tried similar extensions of affection to women, things have gone very badly indeed, so I am extremely wary of doing the same again. It would be less than gallant to go into details, but sometimes I do anyway because on occasion I am less than gallant. One side

effect of being alone is that when I was about to make a bad decision, there wasn't anyone close to me to tell me that it was a big mistake. Nor did I ever have responsibilities keeping me from taking large and dangerous risks.

One fellow denizen of Bruce Hall, and my rival in exoticism, was Mark Gash. He was born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a severe bone disease that left him wheelchair bound and about three and a half feet tall. Mark was at the center of the very exotic art scene in Denton; his life was a work of rolling performance art. I asked him to create covers for a couple of my compositions. One was perfectly well-mannered, gently humorous and quite acceptable. The other was so absurd, obscene and extremely repugnant that I couldn't resist using it for the *Variations on the Grosse Fuge*, guaranteeing major rejections. Over vacations he also had to find other lodgings, complicated by his need for assistance in all the daily necessities. I volunteered to take care of him over Christmas vacation, which also gave me a place to stay as I continued my score study. Mark graduated in 1982 and moved to Los Angeles, where he again became an avant-garde icon of sorts, appearing in the movies *D.O.A.* and *To Live and Die in L.A.* He died in 2000.



I auditioned for Anshel's conducting class, and for my sins my desire was granted. The strain of taking this class along with my normal studies was enormous, but I did manage to carry the full load this spring semester of 1976. The orchestra performed the *Rite of Spring* and Brahms' *First Symphony*, also studied by the class. Student conductors got a chance to work with the orchestra for half the rehearsal on Friday afternoons. How much time each student got depended on Anshel's mood and favor, and I got far less time than any other student, about two minutes a month. As I was thick-headed, stubborn, and idealistic, I didn't see what this meant. Our final exam was to conduct the end of the *Rite* from memory. All I had to do was channel my four-year-old self practicing with a dowel and a recording, and all went well.

Back North for the Summer of Spiritual Strangeness

In the summer of 1976, Anton introduced me to the *Illuminatus Trilogy* by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson. This was a set of three psychedelic science fiction novels heavy on the conspiratorial tongue-in-cheek fantasies. The books were a lot of fun and well written, but the clearly imaginary order given to discordant events had a disturbing tendency to seem to verify themselves at every turn. It became difficult to separate which was made up and which was real, part of the role good fiction plays anyway but verging on the dangerous in this case. A good conspiracy theory doesn't need to be based on real intent of some cabal pulling strings; it can rely on real patterns that lie all around us. But working backwards from a pattern when you have a prime pattern generator in mind ahead of time is the quickest way to verify a completely wrong idea. Working in science gets a researcher used to the problem. Anton, however, was an anthropology major, which means his whole game was the study of culture-based illusions taken as reality—such as cargo cults, fertility rites, or anthropology departments. I was open to explore

possibilities. So we dove into these books for the next couple of years. Other readers in Dallas were inspired by the trilogy to start the *Church of the Subgenius*, which all sentient beings should revere on bended knee.

Robert Anton Wilson also wrote a play, *Wilhelm Reich in Hell*. Anton was impressed by the work of Reich, a crackpot psychiatrist originally a student of Freud who ended up living in Maine. Reich was clearly insane himself, which in the psychiatry game is pretty hard to differentiate from normal. A full treatment of his paranoid delusions is beyond the scope of this book, but is entertaining reading and recommended as a cautionary tale. Let's just say, when he thought airplanes flying overhead were from the Air Force coming to give him encouragement, he was a *little* bit off. Reich put together a complex and incoherent theory based on "orgone", which had something in common with prana in some imaginary way. I had plenty of experience with pranayama, which is control of prana by means of breath, so this part of it was of interest to me. His orgone boxes were supposed to collect this life energy which then could be used therapeutically, as well as odd applications like weather control, shooting down UFOs, and spontaneous generation of microbes. To describe the theory he made up his own mathematical language which consisted of a bunch of funny symbols that looked a lot like advanced math to someone who didn't know any advanced math. Anton practiced his Reichian massage on me, to try and cut through my "body armor" by pressing on the tops of my shoulders as hard as he could with his elbows. Hurt like hell, and whatever armor I had remained healthy and strong. It was there for a reason, and did its job well. Without it, I would start thinking the airplanes were encouraging me.

Although I couldn't buy Reich's approach, I did place great value on trying to make devices that could interact with prana. My many experiences convinced me that this would be the key to bringing transcendental existence into science. I thought it likely that those who had positive experiences with his orgone collectors were getting results without a good understanding of what was happening. It was obvious to me that physical experiment and careful, systematic measurements would be the best route to any kind of accurate overall theory including prana, consciousness, other planes, and similar matters. Given my level of ignorance, there was no particular reason to think that such important matters as what I was experiencing of the non-physical universe could not be approached in much the same way as finding out about electrons. My budding interest in transcendental physics had begun.

Next to Dad's apartment complex was a hill cleared of trees facing west, where I saw many spectacular sunsets. Early one morning my usual dreams were interrupted by an extremely vivid experience where I was sitting on this hill as I usually did. But instead of a sunset, a very large Earth was slowly sinking to the horizon. The Earth looked drab and dark and much the worse for wear. Once its lower limb touched the horizon its motion accelerated and it quickly sank from sight, to be immediately replaced by a rising brilliantly glowing new Earth. But the view of North America wasn't quite the same as what we are used to; Florida wasn't there anymore, and Louisiana seemed also absent. Whatever it was, it was magnificent and completely unexpected. I woke up feeling that I had seen something of deep value, but exactly what it meant was not entirely clear.

Cathy out in Denver was taking a four year break from acting to study metaphysics with a small cult called the Astro Institute, led by the amazingly named Rama Adonis. All the members wore white shawls with the belt tied in a knot on the left side; a knot on the right side would disturb the "force field". John and Jackie visited her around this time with disturbing results. She

was on a kind of verbal retreat as a nun in her group, and couldn't talk to them much at all. That was the last time John saw Cathy, now known as Akanda.

The cult was based on the six volume *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East* by Baird T. Spaulding. Once again, an incredibly outlandish hoax by a remarkably clumsy conman continues to be taken seriously as a factual account by many spiritual seekers, and the books are sold as non-fiction. He claimed to have been born in several countries at several times, usually England in 1853, but in fact was born in mundane North Cohocton, New York, in 1872. In the early twenties he told his friend David Bruton that he was considering writing a book about a fictional trip to Tibet, and in 1924 he published the first volume of *Life and Teachings*. He described going through India, Tibet, China and Persia from 1894 to 1897 with ten unnamed scientists and meeting Jesus, Buddha, and so forth in the flesh, with all the various miracles one would expect. This was an easy hoax to pull off, since Tibet was sealed off from outside contact through the whole 19th century, only seeing Westerners after the British invasion of 1903, and precious few then. The general public knew nothing about the real Tibet, so there were, and continue to be, many imaginary books sold as non-fiction to a gullible audience. Spaulding never did actually go to Tibet. He led a tour group to India in 1935 but that fell apart when it was clear he had no clue about the country and lied about having lived there. Equally impossible, he claimed to have invented a "Camera of Past Events" with Charles Steinmetz, the father of electrical engineering and a very famous person at the time, who conveniently died in 1923 and could not refute the claim. No camera or photographs were ever produced. Although Spaulding said he was a millionaire, he died penniless in 1953. Six months later, his publisher was shot and killed in his Los Angeles office by a jealous husband.

David Bruton, a long-time friend of Spaulding's, wrote a book³⁰ describing the hoax soon after Spaulding and his publisher died. This had little to no effect on the many believers. Akanda gave copies of the volumes to Grandma, Mom, Dad, and me. I sent mine back as they were just too absurd for my taste. Dad remembered the first volume from the late '20s when it was still fairly new, and also thought little of the material. A casual internet search will reveal a large flock of believers and little in the way of reality about the books.

Akanda took her spiritual life very seriously and was no fool. She was more advanced than I was in these matters. While I thought these books and this cult were bizarre, I was about to go in a much more irrational direction.

I visited Ferry Beach each summer, and this time Dad and I were on the staff of a two-week camp for teenagers. As was my custom, I gave a little concert, this time playing Bartok's *First Rhapsody*. They had to settle for just the violin part as the piano accompaniment is quite difficult. Also for the third time I produced an "underground" newspaper, *The Daily Mole*, which is far too embarrassing to quote at length. It was proof positive of the verdict of my Andover English teachers, that my writing was hopeless as all I wanted to do was tell bad jokes. However, as all I want to do is tell bad jokes, I will include one small feature. There was some squabbling between the teenagers and the adults about various trivial matters, giving us something to do at a Unitarian church camp without any particularly churchlike activities. So I ran two questionnaires, one for the kids and one for the adults. This is the *Mole Adult Questionnaire*:

1. Are you disappointed in the pointlessness of your existence?
No Comment No Exit
2. Do you have confidence in America's future, or do you have a teen-age offspring?
No Maybe

3. Have you seen what nursing homes are like lately?
 __You little whippersnapper __Where's my...what?
4. Should raw intellect be served, even in the kitchen?
 __Excellent __Middle-income __Poor
5. Do you think modern youth is degenerate?
 __Jitterbug __Zoot Suit

After supper one evening I took my annual dose of acid. I went down to the beach, took a seat on the dunes, and watched as the horizon, ocean and beach split in two, so now there was an upper ocean and a lower ocean. Soon it split again into three. All were equally real. After some time I decided to go for a walk, and had to decide which beach to choose. Being a moderate and reasonable sort, I chose the middle world. I wonder what would have happened had I chosen the upper or lower one?

Fortified and stabilized by mantras and pranayama, I stayed on the beach until the early morning hours. The tide went out and fog rolled in, obliterating the boundaries between air, water, and land. Ripples of the ocean continued into ripples of continent. Phosphorescent plankton washed ashore and embedded in the sand, so sheets of light shimmered wherever I put my feet. The wind blew through my empty body; *nobody was home*.

Senior Year, Fall 1976

Back to Bruce Hall, and a full load plus Brusilow's conducting class. This semester we played Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* suite, over and over and over and over until it made me want to retch. I couldn't bear to look at the score and had a very hard time in class. I had a critical flaw as a conductor, much as with my violin performance, in that I was miserably incompetent with music I didn't like. Thankfully we also did Brahms' *Second Piano Concerto*.

In the first week, I was wheeling Mark Gash past the Bruce lobby when we spotted coming through the front door a 17 year old wide-eyed freshman art major with long blonde hair, just graduated from Plano High School, in her first college experience. *Fresh meat!* thought we, and closed in for the kill. Mark was wearing a tutu at the time, with glitter and a magic wand, and in his naturally Munchkin voice, shouted "It's Dorothy! Follow the Yellow Brick Road! Follow the Yellow Brick Road!" while I got on all fours, barking, and circled the poor lass. She immediately saw that *she wasn't in Kansas anymore*. Thus, for the time being, her pseudonym will be Dorothy.

As NTSU was a jocular institution, the homecoming game and election of the Homecoming Queen was a major event every fall. The Queen would have a consort, who would ride with her in a convertible in a parade ending at the game. Runners-up would be part of the Queen's Court. So, in October, I gathered a harem of consorts, and as I didn't care to run for Queen, I ran for *Homecoming Phenomenon*. Each harem member had a note pinned to her dress saying "Official Harem Member: If Lost, Return to Bill Robinson." My propaganda covered as much of the campus as I could manage, with pamphlets full of things like "I'm going to California to write some High C Arias" and "Officially



**Homecoming Phenomenon
with Baton Holster**

Embruced by Anshel Dusseldorf". When the student paper asked me why I was running, I replied "Because I am being chaste."

In the election, out of a field of fifteen I did pretty well, coming in second. (As a result, I didn't have to kiss President C. C. "Jitter" Nolan.) There was only room for one consort in my convertible in the parade, and the rules required monogamy. I picked Dorothy, decked out in furs, which complimented my dark purple tails with gold trim. Just before the parade, we had a freak snowstorm that left at least six inches on the ground. We got to the stadium and threw some snowballs, but the game had to be postponed, alas.

It's All Downhill from Here

While we had a lot of fun, my personal life was in turmoil. The workload was unbearable with Anshel's conducting class, so I dropped all my other courses except for orchestra, violin lessons and composition. This meant that I would not be able to get my bachelor's degree in the spring, when my financial support ended. I saw what the composition graduate students were going through, and how unhappy they were. Many wrote music they couldn't bear to listen to because it was the only chance to win composition contests and have a chance at employment. I was burned out on school after so many intense years of study and seven and a half years in dorms. My studies of macrobiotics made me dissatisfied with the cafeteria food, and I rarely smoked weed anymore, quitting permanently in early January 1977. I started trimming my hair, which got progressively shorter and shorter. I had a falling out with my friend Jonathan, after he told me how he met Michael Tilson Thomas backstage, who had no time to see anybody right then. Jonathan said, "Can't you make time for a fellow Yid?" after which they met for an hour. I saw that my political situation in music was impossible, without powerful friends, money, or ethnic pull, and it all looked quite hopeless. For once, I was right.

While Dorothy was quite attractive, intelligent, and extremely creative, our lifestyles were radically different, so a relationship was not going to work. Late in the semester I became close to E., a chemistry major who was in my Homecoming Phenomenon harem. For two months I referred to her as my "girlfriend". But it turns out I was not exactly correct; she was sleeping with other *women*. Ouch. In January she told me to get lost. I saw her again in 1981 at NTSU, with a group of extremist Christians handing out fliers titled "Sword of the Lord and the Blood of the Lamb". I tried to be friendly but she just wanted me to read the literature and Git Saved. A little later I ran into her and her partner at the laundromat, and tried to speak to her, but she put a newspaper up to her face and pretended I wasn't there.

That was as close as I've ever come to a stable relationship, and the only time I've called a woman my girlfriend.

I finished the *Variations on the Grosse Fuge* and started preparing my senior recital. Despite our differences I asked Jonathan to conduct the string quintet. The previous fall I wrote my second solo violin sonata, and dedicated it to Dorothy, who turned 18 that November. I wrote a solo cello piece with my uncle in mind, and made a viola arrangement for this recital. Also, as a bit of a challenge to see if it could be done, I wrote a trio for horn, cello, and piano in one day, and oddly enough called it *One Day Trio*.

In addition to these works, I included *Art of the Recorder*. Dad was a recorder enthusiast and played every size from soprano to bass with a local group meeting at the Unitarian church. In the summer of 1975 I wrote a recorder quartet for him and his group. Dad learned every part, but the group would not agree to play it. In hopes of performance, I made many versions, including *Art of the Violin*, *Art of the Saxophone*, *Art of the Double Reed*, and *Art of the Flute*. None of

these were performed. Thirty years later I kept the middle of the three movements intact, and wrote completely new first and third movements. Someday it will be performed in its new incarnation, although it has suffered many refusals so far. I'll keep trying, as it is one of my favorite little pieces.

I'd had enough of the dorm, and looked about for other lodgings at the end of the fall semester. My friend Pat and his girlfriend Trisha rented a big house on the corner of Oak and Fry Street a block from the school, and there was a derelict garage behind the house. Someone had tried converting the garage to an apartment but not done very well. The two back rooms had gone back to Nature some time ago. The front two rooms had a cracked cement floor, two bare bulbs for light, no water, no bathroom, no kitchen, no storage, no phone, only a mattress for furniture, and no heat. Pat offered it to me for twenty dollars a month plus electricity. I shovelled out the front two rooms and moved in, with two small electric space heaters for warmth in the coldest time of the year. They did not suffice to keep my buckets of water from freezing.

There were rumors afoot about previous tenants, of strange visitors and bizarre decorations. I noticed a hexagram from the *I Ching* on the door. Turns out my macrobiotic mentor Terence had been the previous inhabitant. About the strangest thing he did here was to read under an umbrella. The roof did little to protect from the rain. In fact, I could not find a contiguous area free from leaks where I could put my mattress. Thus I had to sleep under trash bags to repel the ice water melting off the roof. This was not a foolproof option. Water would accumulate in low parts, and when I turned over, it would slosh out over my feet, up my pant legs (as I had to wear all my clothes to bed), and would land in a very tender region in the wee hours of the morning.

For furniture I borrowed a chair, table, and music stand from the school. But the floor was freezing cold and I needed something to cover it. I found a shopping cart and started off down the street in a hopeful mood. A couple of blocks away, much to my surprise, I found a house that had just burned down, and the result was, lo and behold, carpeting rolled up by the curb. Bingo! So I had my rug for free. From the wreckage I scavenged boards and bricks for shelving. I bought a kerosene camping stove which was miserably difficult and dangerous to use, and got my food from Infinity Natural Foods.

Even after years of reading macrobiotic literature at the store, I had little idea of what to eat and how to cook. For the first four months away from the cafeteria, I boiled rice, soy flakes, burdock, sea salt and miso all together in an aluminum pot, and ate it with soy sauce and a mixture of miso and tahini. No greens, no surface vegetables, no fruit or nuts, no oil, and certainly no dairy. In addition to cooking with sea salt, I ate a pound of strong dark miso and a pint of old-fashioned tamari soy sauce every six days, both being eighteen percent salt. I noticed that my urine turned brown; my kidneys were bleeding. After a little while I craved sweets and bought jars of honey and ate it straight. For some reason, Terence and my other macrobiotic friends never told me I was making mistakes.

My health suffered under this regime, and I barely had enough energy to get through the day. This did not keep me from lecturing my friends about the wonders of macrobiotics, but as I was clearly not well people were not impressed. I was no longer taking conducting, but did have classes, plus orchestra, and my senior recital loomed. Practicing in my garage was frequently impossible from the cold. I knew things were not going well, so to reset the stage and get some perspective, I dropped acid in March for what I thought would be the last time. It was a very positive experience which helped me see what was wrong with my situation. I immediately got out of the garage and moved down Fry Street only one house away from my birthplace at Flow

Hospital. This was also a rough place to live, in a room sharing a kitchen and bathroom in a large house full of other students, but far superior to the garage. I lived in the back on the ground floor. While the house didn't look too bad from the front, it was a disaster in the back. I gave directions to a friend to visit me there, and he never showed up. When I asked him about it, he said when he got there he assumed the back of the house had burned down and no one could possibly be living there.

I also started eating much more reasonably, with less salt, lots of vegetables, sprouts, tofu, and the like. This was still far from a healthy way of life, but at least I could avoid kidney failure and scurvy. However my weight continued to fall.

My recital hit the stage on April first. The *Variations on the Grosse Fuge* proved a bit beyond our grasp technically and we had to stop and try again, never quite getting it right. In the view of the composition faculty my skills were lacking and I failed the recital. Once again I dropped all but the most essential classes since a degree was no longer practical.

I submitted the *Variations* to Anshel to play with the strings of the orchestra, but he turned it down. In addition I entered it into a composition contest, and received the most memorable of my many rejections. Rather than a typed original, it was a carbon copy. To avoid the expense of an entire page of paper, the judge had sliced a strip about an inch and a half wide, large enough to contain these words: "*Variations on the Grosse Fuge*, eh? Pretty gross. Wasn't the original complicated enough?" So much for two years of work.

In the thirty-four years since then, I've entered dozens of contests, and have yet to do any better.

Wounded but still maintaining steerageway, I wrote my first orchestral work. Figuring I needed performers who would have reason to want to play a piece, I combined all such political motivations into one package and came up with the *Concerto for Neglected Soloists*. This was for piccolo, oboe, bassoon, French horn, bass trombone, viola, double bass and orchestra, and was twelve minutes long. Brusilow ignored it, and no trace remains today.

The strain of all this and the uncertainty of what came after graduation took its toll. My hair had gotten shorter and shorter under my own scissors, with questionable results. My friend Irene Mitchell, a violin major, most compassionately paid for me to visit a local hair salon to repair the damage. I told the stylist to give me a straightforward, low-maintenance haircut. For my sins, he got all creative on me, and gave me a fluffy gay hairdo that required frequent ministrations by a blow-drier to keep the bangs out of my eyes. My scissors had to go to work again so that I could see. With mounting frustration, soon after my recital failure I crossed the street to where Bill and Ed Sterling lived and had them shave my head. (I'll introduce the Sterling brothers in the next chapter.) Some people can get away with this, but my skull has a bit of a point to it, and I looked like a freak. The cops checked me out to see if I was an escapee; the Marines paid attention in case I was AWOL; and the Christians assumed I was a Hare Krishna and thus going straight to Hell. As my shaving skills were none too good and I couldn't afford an electric razor, there were nicks and various wounds here and there, leading some to think I had recently undergone brain surgery. Oddly enough, Michio Kushi related other cases in macrobiotcs where ill-informed



fanatics ate far too much salt and couldn't stand hair. They would throw out their shag rugs, shave their heads, and go on to shave their wife's furs and the family cats. Nice to think I wasn't alone.

Showing up to orchestra rehearsal with no hair was one of those singular experiences. Someone back in the wind section said "He'll do anything for attention", which hit home. *He's got a point*, thought I, and decided not to be that kind of person. Over time my life became much less public, and eventually reclusive.

I wasn't the only one having difficulties. The pianist who had played my music more than anyone else, and whom I would work with again in the early '80s, had a phobia about dogs. We'll call him "Fido". I met him one day as he was getting things out of his locker in the music building, and asked him why he was carrying a metal table leg. "That's my doggie beater," he replied with a grin. Now there was a very lovable skinny German Shepard puppy who was a campus favorite, greeting students as they passed by and enjoying the affection and attention we all gave to him. One day the dog went up to my pianist friend for a little ear scratch, and he beat the dog nearly to death with the table leg. There was a pitiful photograph in the student newspaper of the dog bandaged up and with a sorrowful look in his eye. I heard students saying they wanted to kill this guy. He stayed out of sight for quite some time.

Later, Fido invited me to join him to watch a free movie. This was an interesting feature about a hang glider pilot who was photographed landing on top of one of those immense pillars of rock out in Utah, that must have been 500 feet high with about a living room worth of flat area on the summit. But after that spectacular footage they cut to Billy Graham; the adventure part was just to get a crowd interested in showing up. Fido was trying to convert me to evangelical Christianity. I think the logical first step would be to try not to kill friendly dogs with a metal table leg.

Sometimes it is hard to remember that music is supposed to be a healing art.

To give myself independence from school, I bought a Fender Rhodes 73 key electric piano for composition, now that I could keep it out of the rain. My first music on this new instrument was my glorious stab at opera. I got temporary non-exclusive rights to use Eugene Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* for the libretto. I'd seen this play at Andover. My poor composition teacher, Newel K. Brown, who had put up with me for two years and had seen quite enough, told me there was absolutely no chance of performance of any kind. Shortly thereafter I saw his point and quit, never to try opera again. I remembered sitting at supper with opera singers at Eastman as they sang quotes to each other, and shuddered.

What little remained of my hopes for a career in music diminished considerably when one of my fellow students, whose music I thought clearly inferior, was offered a successful career, publication, and performances by a New York agent in return for \$200 a month. This was backed up by an impressive list of famous contemporary composers the agent already promoted. Some years later I noticed this student had remarkable success, many recordings and performances, and tenure. I guess he ponied up the cash. This wasn't an option for me.

Peru or Bust: Leaving Denton for Good Part II

I had the misfortune of reading exotic spiritual material down at the Infinity food store, including *Secret of the Andes* by Brother Philip. I didn't know that this was a pseudonym for George Hunt Williamson, a UFO contactee from the 1950's and certified nut-case. He claimed that there was a temple in Peru that would be a center for bringing in the New Age, with the Brotherhood of the Seven Rays, whatever that was. The book was full of vanished continents like

Mu and Lemuria, and a billion year history with funny-named sages and hidden libraries about to be revealed. I decided to sell my stuff, store what couldn't be sold, and light out for the Peruvian hinterlands for hands-on prophet training. For some reason I figured the best route was via Dad's place in Massachusetts, to find some work and get the funds together for the expedition. I left my violin in Anshel's office and stored my piano and a trunk of papers with friends. Sadly my baton holster and most of my belongings went to the winds.

So I asked Dad to spot me one last sum for a car, which as long as I was in the States would make me marginally employable. He sent me \$400, and I asked my trombonist friend Richard to help me find a car. He took me to a local junkyard where he found a sedan that would still run, paid \$300, kept \$100, and I was set. Except of course the car kept stalling in difficult places like intersections. I learned how to goose the gas pedal just so to keep it cruising, more or less. At least it was easy to spot with the white oil smoke coming out the back.

Unable to afford the gas and oil for the trip, I got a rider to come along. When he saw what I was going to drive 1800 miles, his jaw dropped, but he figured, well what the heck. We set off with my single backpack of possessions as I relied on a constant chant of OMMMM to keep things running. It worked for seventy miles, which got us into desolate plains. Suddenly the engine threw a rod and all power stopped. I spun the wheel to get off the highway, and just at that instant we came to the driveway of a service station. The car stopped precisely in the station's parking lot of its own volition.

The manager of the station bought the car for \$40, and I called up Terence to come rescue me. My rider stuck out his thumb and hitched the rest of the way, which he figured was the likely outcome from the start. My life was in such turmoil that my signature had changed between the time I bought the car and when I signed over the deed, so that the station manager didn't believe I was the actual owner.

6. Macrobiotica

(1977-1981)

What is this yin-yang anyway?

To make sense of this chapter I'll have to give a little background about macrobiotics. This is not a diet; it's a philosophy that is applied to diet, among other things, based on founder George Ohsawa's personal interpretation of yin-yang analysis, and developed by his pupils. (The traditional Chinese version of yin and yang is very different.) Yin and yang are tendencies that are antagonistic and complimentary, and in the extremes change into their opposite. According to Ohsawa, expansion is more yin, contraction yang; space is yin, time is yang; cold is yin, hot is yang; water is yin, salt is yang; darkness is yin, brightness is yang; and finally, females are more yin and men more yang. Needless to say, yang is considered superior to yin for health, vitality, strength, wisdom, and power. Men can have many women as a sign of their virility, but women should be faithful to one man. Women are not well treated in this cult, although they do get to do a lot of kitchen work. "Put them on a pedestal and hand them a broom."

It gets very complicated and self-contradictory when applied to real situations. Thankfully there's always somehow an explanation for the analysis not working, because yin can change to yang, and besides, complaint is symptomatic of a disease and thus a crime against the Order of the Universe. All disease is a sign of inferiority and is the fault of the person afflicted. So dissent is considered very negatively, even when it is based on reality and would correct serious error. In Japan, the nail that sticks up is hammered down. Macrobiotica also picks up the severe racism that is endemic in Japanese culture. According to the literature, genes are made from food, so genes *respond* to food quality. The best food is whole grains, and the best grain is rice. Thus those cultures with many generations of rice eating are genetically superior to those with other dietary histories, and the most inferior are from tropical climates ill suited to cereal grains. That every step of the argument is easily proven false makes no difference, since the cult is based on the intuition of the founders, not on any evidence.

Things get stranger the deeper one goes into macrobiotics. For instance there's the *doctrine of signatures*, an ancient European superstition that herbs or food that resemble parts of the body can treat ailments for that part of the body. Thus, to be smart, eat cauliflower; corn kernels kind of look like hearts, so corn is good for heart trouble; and for a long nose, eat bananas. However this goes both ways. Bananas that we get in the supermarket do not produce seeds, thus eating them is supposed to make you sterile. (Quite frankly, if I were writing this fantasy, bananas would make men better endowed. That and a couple kiwi fruits. And give the ladies melons.)

While macrobiotic councillors give medical advice on all disorders, even those they know nothing about, the most important medical claim has been that macrobiotics cures cancer. Michio Kushi said that the diet cures all cancers, case closed.³¹ Later, his wife and daughter died of cancer, and in 2004 he had surgery to remove colon cancer that came within a day of killing him as well. The cancer cure was a major factor in my getting involved, as a very large proportion of my family and ancestors have had cancer.

Macrobiotica does not accept the germ theory of infectious disease, and Louis Pasteur is described in the literature as a great criminal. I had conversations with a macrobiotic friend who insisted that AIDS was not caused by HIV or any virus, which I found ridiculous and dangerous. I wondered if any of the big teachers would consent to getting an injection of HIV or bubonic plague bacteria.

Dairy food is strictly avoided. In 1971, Herman Aihara, a student of Ohsawa based in California, introduced Kokoh, a non-dairy baby formula. After several infants had to be

hospitalized³² it became clear that the formula could induce kwashiorkor, a form of protein malnutrition leading to permanent brain damage, which in turn leads to believing in the doctrine of signatures.

Ohsawa described several stages of diet, starting with a rather wide food choice, becoming more and more restricted until the final, ideal stage of 100% brown rice. This terminal stage is, in fact, fatal. To justify this extremity, macrobiotics includes *biological transmutation*, where an organism is supposed to be able to change one element into another. That way you don't need to eat what you need to survive. Ohsawa himself smoked heavily and enjoyed cheesecake, doughnuts, Coca-Cola, coffee, Guinness Stout, and Scotch whiskey.³³ At the time I was involved, most macrobiotic leaders smoked since Ohsawa said it "yangized the lungs", implying it dried them, made them less flexible, and shrank their capacity. Evidently the goal was emphysema.

Ohsawa had a macrobiotic center in New York City, but it was forced to close in 1965 after the death of a woman from malnutrition. Michio Kushi then opened his various operations in Boston.

I said, "Peru or Bust": Leaving Denton for Good Part III

I stayed with Terence for a month. As I had almost no money, he let me sleep in his garage for free. There was no door or screen, and we lived on a drainage canal, so the mosquitoes were ferocious. But it was out of the weather, mostly.

In the first week of June 1977 I joined with three friends to explore Big Bend. This is a huge national park at the elbow of Texas where the Rio Grande makes, well, a big bend. One friend was Zeke, a short wide-shouldered weightlifter who'd blown out his knees in the gym, rendering his fitness frequently useless. The other two were the Sterling brothers, Bill and Ed. Bill was finishing up a BS in physics, which I found most impressive. When I needed an amp for my electric piano to power headphones and run on a battery, he designed the circuit, etched a board in acid, wired up the components, and there it was. Whenever I tried putting together a circuit from a schematic, it looked like a rat's nest, and did little except emit toxic smoke and the occasional spark. (Thirty years later, I specialized in putting together experiments that were *intended* to create smoke and sparks, thus playing to my strengths.) Ed was a jack of all trades sort shortly to serve in the Coast Guard for four years, and was just the guy to have along in far-flung adventures. His Quixotic streak served him well later in his career as a lawyer in Austin.

We rented an old pickup truck, put a large plastic garbage can in the back full of water, crammed ourselves in the front seat despite Zeke's shoulders and drove 650 miles to the park. We put on another 650 miles inside the park during the next week. I was very impressed. We drank well over a gallon of water a day and hardly urinated. Down by the river it reached 115 degrees, and swimming in the river was shockingly cold, except for the superb hot springs. I was amazed by the sheer cliffs and stunning vistas, and the climate for which beer was the only acceptable antidote.

On one of our forays to the river in an out-of-the-way location, we noticed Mexicans on the other bank, and a man on a horse rode toward us. About halfway across he stopped, and started shooting his rifle into the air. We got the message and split. On the road heading out, we passed a pickup truck that also was light blue, and looked very much like ours, heading to the river. A little further along we passed a cop car going the same way. Glad we missed that little drama.

After driving the truck back to Denton, I still had to get to Peru. Terence and I took a twenty-four hour train ride to Chicago, to attend an international meditation conference in one of

the big hotels. Many spiritual leaders were there, including Michio Kushi, the most famous of the macrobiotic leaders. The event was hosted by Swami Rama and his Himalayan Institute, and included Satchidananda and Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan. Terence had friends in Evansville who put us up for the three days of the event. When Michio saw me with no hair and Terence with his now more modest red beard and bright blue turban, he thought, "How can I help these very strange people?"

His first step was humiliation. He gave a talk at a local YMCA, and Terence and I tagged along. The crowd was colorful, including hecklers from the local raw food community. They shouted things like "Cooking kills the life force in food" and "Marijuana is a healthful herb". One fellow had his hair partially shaved samurai-style, but the macho effect was muted by his billowing dress and makeup. Michio called me up to the stage and asked me a series of questions. I answered that I was born in Texas (boos), was six feet two inches tall (boos), and was a musician (boos). All this is on the yin side, and therefore inferior. Next he called up a woman who answered that she was short (cheers), born in Chicago of Polish stock (cheers), and worked in manual labor (cheers). All this is on the yang side, and thus superior. I was shocked but compliant. This is a standard tactic for cult leaders when they have a new recruit.

Later at this conference I asked Michio about a hearing problem I had that made my voice sound very loud and made speaking difficult. He said it was from mucus congestion, and I should eat a little fruit and fish three or four times a week. Actually it was from emaciation, as I was down to about 120 pounds and still losing weight. My eustachian tubes were hanging open from simple lack of tissue resulting from malnutrition. I had to wait thirty years before having a correct diagnosis.

I was very tired from all the activity and needed a place to lie down. Chicago is not very sympathetic to people who need a nap. I found an out-of-the-way place in the hotel and stretched out for a little rest. A few minutes later three burly men showed up and ordered me to my feet. If I wanted to lie down in this town, I'd have to pay. I've never been back to Chicago.

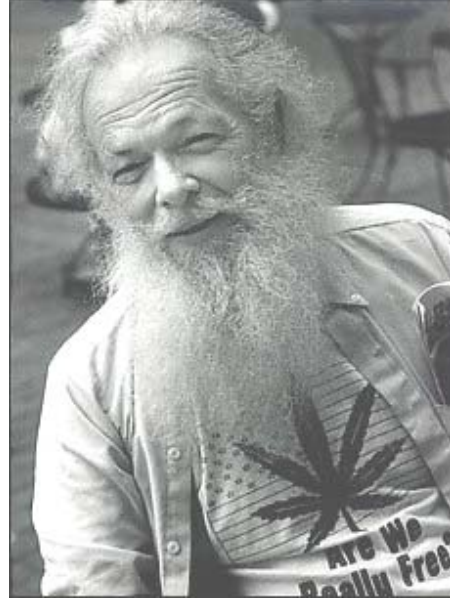
After three days of my enlightened presence, Terence's friends were very eager to see me go. Terence went back to Denton, and I got a ride from a spaced out Swami Rama devotee to Dad's home, now in Danvers. He was appalled to see my shaven head and single backpack, and his anger grew during my visit as I described my new philosophy. Meals were very tense. He would say things like, "What kind of slop do you want to eat now?"

Anton had just graduated with his anthropology degree, which was almost as useless for employment as a composition degree would have been for me. His thesis was an incomprehensible string of jargon-laden sentences about cargo cults. He lined up a job painting a house for the cheapest homeowner in Beverly Farms, a stockbroker who hitchhiked to work twenty miles away in Boston. Anton paid himself \$7.50 an hour, his sister Rose \$5, and I got \$2.50. His rationale was that my work would be inferior, although we hadn't done any painting yet, and in the event my work was just as good as theirs. I decided I had no other opportunities, especially with a bald head, and wanted to spend the summer with my friends. At the same time I felt ripped off. This was not the last time Anton would take advantage of me.

About this time, Anton picked up a grey-bearded hitchhiker. After some conversation, it was clear the new friend would appreciate some acid, so Anton gave him some. Turns out this was Harold Humes, who went by the nickname "Doc". This was not from a doctorate, although most people thought so, especially from his claims to have been a professor. The nickname was from

Doc Huer, a character in Buck Rogers comics he read in high school. Doc went to MIT for a short time, left school, and later completed a bachelor's degree at Harvard. He was an accomplished writer in the '50s and early '60s, completing two novels and co-founding the *Paris Review* in 1953 with George Plimpton and Peter Matthiessen. The CIA funded the new literary journal as a cover occupation for Matthiessen, but this wasn't known until 1966.

Doc didn't need this to fuel his paranoia. In the '50s he had over a thousand pairs of shoes and was considered a charming and brilliant eccentric. In fact, he had a much deeper mental illness, but fit right into the artistic community where such things do not stand out from the norm. Doc was campaign manager for Norman Mailer's run for mayor of New York City in 1960, and was present at the party where Mailer stabbed his wife Adele, ending his chances at the polls. After planning to live in a hollowed out ox carcass, Doc designed and built a paper house for low-income housing, which he set up on George Plimpton's family estate on Long Island. His brain was insured for one million dollars.³⁴



Harold Humes

In 1964, Doc wrote "Bernoulli's Epitaph", a cosmology based on a spherical vortex. I read and studied this paper, especially as macrobotics talks a lot about spirals, but could get nothing useful out of it.

Doc lived in London in 1966, part of the hedonistic and self-destructive party scene then in full bloom. Timothy Leary was a good friend from Doc's participation in the Harvard psychedelic experiments, and he gave Doc a very large supply of LSD. Tim thought that almost anyone could benefit from acid anywhere at any time. This was a disastrous error. Schizophrenia and some other severe mental illnesses are almost always worsened dramatically by tripping, sometimes permanently. This was the case with Doc. He required several months of institutionalization in London after a psychotic break and would be in and out of hospitals and jails from then on.

I visited the Unidentified Flying Idea in Cambridge, one of Doc's main hangouts, which was a free massage co-op giving what they thought was shiatzu and the like. A large poster of Mao Zedong graced the wall. Doc considered Mao to be a good candidate for the second coming of Christ, and listed all the reasons which thankfully I cannot remember. Anton thought it plausible. As Anton and I stood outside the center, a car swerved out of the traffic and came towards us. We scrambled to one side as it plowed into a car parked by the curb, with various car parts flying in all directions. The driver got out of his car, very groggy. Doc said, and all but I agreed, that this was due to beamed microwaves; government agents wanted to destroy the clinic by blacking out drivers who would drive through the front wall. Later he looked to the sky, saw an airplane with a flashing light, waved, and said "Hi there, thanks for the support!" Clearly he was lacking his body armor.

Doc had small enthusiastic groups of student followers at Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, and Bennington, and would bum a place to sleep and hang out at these campuses. Anton and I visited an apartment where several Harvard students gathered with Doc, with the inevitable cloud

of dope smoke. He held court quite convincingly, although I only bought a fraction of what he said. I'm embarrassed that I believed any of it at all. He was convinced that lenticular clouds were a recent phenomenon that UFOs used as both heat sinks and shields to avoid detection. From time to time he would claim that agents were going into and out of the next room to change surveillance tapes, and you could almost see them if you smoked hard enough. People stayed away from the windows to avoid the microwaves used to control our thoughts and sap our will to resist the F.I.D.O. subterranean government computer network. He described how Jimmy Carter would send a limousine at any moment to pick him up so that he could come to the White House and give his sage council to men of power. And what Anton liked the best, Doc said that he was Socrates in a past life, and Anton had been Plato. They locked up Socrates for corruption of youth too, didn't they? My not smoking put me out of range for most of these delusions, and I was held in some suspicion as a result. Was I one of *us*, or one of *them*? Only in this crowd could I pass for a Normal.

Anton, Rose and I finished the painting job, and life was not easy with Dad. After a brief stay in sweltering Denton, Terence travelled to Nova Scotia to join Ken Morehead, a fellow macrobiotic Dentonian. Ken was a fine percussionist and was struggling to have a career in music. On their way south they stopped by to say howdy, and with about five minutes notice I joined their road trip to my home town. I forgot about my quest to go to Peru. We drove through Manhattan, shouting out our windows "Labor Day Earthquake!" But our timing was mistaken.

Denton Again, Fall 1977

I became roommates with Terence, sharing half of his duplex and paying \$40 a month rent. Our landlord's name, and I'm not making this up, was *Phil T. Luker*. He was in his early 70s and had fled the Weimar Republic during the hyperinflation of the 1920s. We had no air conditioning, relying instead on evaporative coolers, even though our climate was too damp for them to be very effective. With constant 100% humidity, all our papers curled and mold was everywhere. Terence refused to use insecticide, and the roaches took over. We tried boric acid powder and keeping our food sealed and dishes clean, but it didn't matter. My futon was on the floor, and I would wake up with roaches on my lips and eyelashes searching for water. Finally we resorted to weekly attacks with a vacuum cleaner, filling the bag each time.

Some of my stray possessions, such as my instruments and papers, that had been scattered hither and yon came back together. I set up my electric piano with headphones so I could compose without bothering others and got back to practicing violin. In November I started my first work for soloists, chorus and orchestra, a setting of the first chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* in Sanskrit. I'd kept up my bhakti yoga, pranayama, chanting and meditation, even though this was considered dreadfully yin in macrobiotic circles.

Dorothy moved into my apartment on Fry Street next to Flow Hospital when I left town, and soon after the house burned down. She lost all her paintings and possessions and had to start over from scratch.

The first order of business was to find work. A shiny bald head was a hindrance, so my hair grew back. I relied on my trusty ten-speed bike for transportation so employment had to be local. I joined the crew painting the inside of the old Denton County Courthouse. This is a massive stone structure built in 1896, and it will probably last as long as the pyramids. Our plucky team consisted of a 62 year old boss about to either retire or fall over dead, whichever came first, and about six young people scrambling to find work. Something about painting leads a man to alcohol, and our boss was clearly a lifelong drunk of the affable variety. He was quite wobbly on

his feet and not terribly motivated to overachieve, which suited us fine. The sooner we finished, the sooner we were out of a job. We bought each day's paint in one-gallon cans, and poured them with due deliberation into the smallest roller trays we could find. Working around the lawyers and judges and other riff-raff was handy in slowing us down. Starting in the basement, we had to paint the walls of the rooms housing the large volumes of county records. The boss said, "Don't bother moving the books, just paint around them." One can imagine what the reaction would have been when the volumes were moved a few months later to the new courthouse. So we went ahead and moved the shelves and contents before painting.



Old Denton County Courthouse

I met Rufus, the chief of maintenance, who was also 62 years old. He was the first black man allowed to have a telephone in Denton County, back in 1940, because a prominent white man swore to his reliability. He showed me the old segregated bathrooms in the basement, no longer used. The white bathrooms were just as you would expect, with doors, sinks, and individual private stalls. The black bathroom was simply a wide part of the hall with a toilet. No doors, no privacy of any kind. The drinking cup for blacks to use was smeared with tar to keep it separate from that for whites. I found it hard to believe, but there was the toilet. Rufus understood our pace of work, and said that before we painted his room we would "have to wait for the right phase of the moon."

I continued my interest in the Illuminati conspiracy, which now is quite embarrassing but seemed plausible at the time. After compiling a great deal of information and speculation, I gave a talk early in the fall at Bruce Hall on the subject. Two men in the back dressed in trench coats drew my attention, and at the end of the talk I made clear that I wouldn't repeat the act. They seemed relieved and left. One less nut to monitor.

Part of this talk was about international fugitive Robert Vesco, whom I figured was portrayed in the *Illuminatus Trilogy* under the name Hagbard Celine. No one else thought so but it seemed obvious to Anton and me. Hagbard/Vesco was supposed to have a penchant for white luxury cars, especially Bugattis, to compliment his stolen nuclear submarine. A little while later, I was loitering outside the Infinity food store when a white Cadillac pulled up with a driver and a passenger. The passenger leaned over and shook his finger at me, smiling, and they drove off. *He looked exactly like Robert Vesco.* I have absolutely no explanation for this whatsoever. After this experience I dropped the whole Illuminati thing and went on to other delusions.

My hair was still short and I required a lot of coverage to protect my poor pointy head from the tropical sun. I'd inherited an old silk scarf my brother used in magic shows in the early '60s. The scarf was probably fifty years old, and was a 48 star US flag. I wore it on my head with a headband. Naturally I thought nothing of this, since plenty of Republicans did much the same, including Nancy Reagan. But as I walked to the store one day past the movie theater, an attendant ran out, clenched his fist, and shouted "How dare you wear the flag! I'm going to shoot you!" I blew it off as more Texan bluster. After I was in the store a few minutes, a policeman came in and asked if someone wearing a flag had come in. I produced the antique scarf and explained that it only had the 48 stars, and there was no ordinance against wearing a flag. Plus, wasn't threatening

to murder someone a touch more significant by way of criminal activity? The cop didn't care about threats to kill me, one less hippie don't you know, and let me off with a warning.

In December we finally finished painting the courthouse, and the city had us do one more job—the county jail. There were only two “bullpen” style cells, already overcrowded, and as we painted one of them, all the inmates had to crowd into the other, standing room only. They were not happy campers. Our old friendly derelict boss was replaced by the officer in charge of the jail, and he treated us as if we were criminals. I lasted one morning and quit. But my living expenses were so minute that four months of minimum wages gave me enough money to go three months without work, which I valued much more than financial security. So back to the music!

Winter and Spring 1978

A macrobiotic woman named Barbara came to live with us in return for cooking, and screened off a few square feet of our living room for her bed and few possessions. She cooked in a very orthodox manner, salty and too long, and it was a struggle to get her to loosen up. I started feeling pain in my hips and lower back again, only this time it was worse and didn't go away. Salt made me quite ill with stiffness and muscle spasms. Some of my muscles never relaxed and remained fully contracted for years at a time, finally becoming calcified. I used ground ginger in hot water soaked into cloths and applied externally which helped a little, but I was at a loss as to what was going on. I was getting more and more exhausted with normal activity, and resting didn't help much.

Barbara cooked bread just like we did, which was much like the bread we sold in the store. Others might be tempted to use the loaves as construction material, possibly as firebrick, or maybe ballast. Our ideal was to produce a texture and density that defied the efforts of knives to cut, teeth to chew, and intestines to digest, since we were tough guys eating tough food, real yanksters. When our guts responded with pain, we knew we were on the right track, since this we called “discharge”. In fact when our food made us sick in any way, it was *discharge of toxins*, although we didn't know what the toxins might be and could never detect any actually leaving our bodies.

Sterling Proctor, macrobiotic French Horn player and founding member of the brass quintet *Les Beaux Eaux* at NTSU, recruited me to play the violin part in Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*. I was working on that, the Bach solo sonatas and partitas, and my two solo violin sonatas when Barbara came to my room and said “What is that music you were playing?” Happened to be one of my pieces. “That's the WORST thing I've EVER HEARD!” was her review. Oh well...

To avoid the flack I took my violin to the International Order of Odd Fellows cemetery not far away to play for all the dead folks, which is most of the classical audience anyway in our Brave New World of pop music. There I encountered chiggers for the first time. For all you northerners out there who have not had the pleasure, come on down south some moist spring and lay down on the grass in a shady patch for awhile. An unseen army of microscopic vampires will latch on to your most tender areas and send you back north of the Mason-Dixon line right quick.

Terence and I held classes in macrobotics using space at NTSU. I put an ad up at the Infinity food store about helping people remember their past lives. A 19 year old fellow named Randy responded. From our past life sessions, or attempts at them, and attending our classes, he got involved in macrobotics. (He's all better now!) Turns out from multiple investigations that a number of local friends in the Denton macro community had lived at about the same time and knew each other in Japan, during the 1400's. We all ended up in Denton at about the same time, and after a bit, most left to other adventures. All the decisions we thought we were making and

various life dramas that put us in the same town at the same time were actually coordinated at some other level we knew nothing about. In my case, I had to turn down Harvard and get booted from Eastman in order to end up back in Denton. I wondered how many other decisions in my life were of the same type—not really made the way I thought they were at all, but instead guided by much larger patterns of karma and unfinished business.

In March I completed the pencil draft of the *Bhagavad Gita Chapter One* for chorus and orchestra, and showed the score to Anshel. He was impressed, and asked me to write a ten minute piece for orchestra, which he would commission. He talked my price down to \$100, which would almost cover the paper, ink, and first couple copies of the score. This was my big break, although he didn't want me to mention it to anyone. I got to work arranging one of my solo violin sonatas into my *Symphony #1: In Memoriam George Ohsawa*, and gave it to Anshel in October. However he didn't pay me the money, which I desperately needed. When I sent him a note reminding him, he replied with a check and an angry retort. That was my last income in music for thirty years. Despite his promises, Anshel never read through or performed the music.

A few of the local macrobiotic folks were even more strict than I was, and paid the price. Two of them were down in the 80 pound range, and you could see all their bones. In time both started eating more sensibly and regained weight and health. One, named Gwen, started going out with Terence, and eventually they were engaged. I did a past life session with her, and she remembered being in a German concentration camp—which is about what she looked like when I met her. After she recovered she was quite a lovely woman.

After a dozen years of boat dreams, I now lived 350 miles from the ocean, and felt quite desiccated. I bought the cheapest boat on the market, an inflatable vinyl kayak, and got a ride with Ken Morehead who was driving to Wichita Falls. He let me off on a wild stretch of the Red River. I inflated the boat and threw it off a small cliff, followed by my gear, then scrambled down to get in, careful to avoid the nearby water moccasin. That night I pitched my tent on a sandbank. Sometime after dark I was awakened by what I thought was a woman being raped, very near to my tent. I couldn't make any sense of it. When I left my tent the next morning, I saw pug marks from a mountain lion nearby.

The Wonderful World of Work

By spring I had to look about for employment again, and after quite a bit of looking found a job as a busboy in a local Pizza Inn. My fellow workers found my whole existence enigmatic, especially my bizarre food choice. A sizable chunk of the minimum wage pay check was automatically deducted in the assumption that the workers would eat some of the pizza. I didn't, but had to pay anyway. When one of the bosses found out that I didn't eat there, he got offended and huffed, "Don't you like our food?" to which I had to reply, "Well, I don't eat tomatoes, white bromated flour, spices, preservatives, vinegar, cheese, sugar, soft drinks, canned food, anchovies, meat, commercial salt, or green peppers." This left them confused as to what I *did* eat, especially when I said "Whole grains and vegetables, primarily." Almost no one knew what whole grains were. One young lady (whom I overheard criticizing another for "not speaking no good English") asked, "But where do you go to eat? Burger King? No, you can't go there. Jack in the Box? Where do you go?" They couldn't grasp the idea of cooking for yourself. What they *could* grasp was the tips, of which I got no share. Exhausted after two weeks of this, one night I dropped a tray of beer mugs, and they fired me.

The old music building where I had my first lessons at age three had seen better days. A piano's legs punched through the floor, and that was the final straw. They demolished the older

portions of the building and built new all around what remained. I went down and applied to be a he-man construction worker. I must be a tough guy, I ate macrobiotic bread. What could possibly go wrong?

As I had no particular skills, they set me and a co-worker on a large pile of rocks and said "Move it over there." This was not my finest hour. The boss figured that the best motivational tool for getting a skinny weakling to haul ass was to scream in his ear. I lasted two days.

Broke, I applied to Manpower, which hires out day labor. I called in early each morning to see if there was a job available. I had one assignment scrubbing out the inside of a filthy oven. After I had worked about five hours, the woman who had hired me came in and said that she would rather have a woman do this work, so I had to leave. She knew that if she fired the worker before six hours she wouldn't need to pay anything to Manpower, so she did this a lot. Then I got sick with a cold and couldn't work for two days. After that Manpower didn't want me to call any more.

I got a job at a local furniture store, but after a few days they saw that I had little ability to move furniture in and out of trucks. Next, I signed on to a two week trial period at a nursing home. I found myself force-feeding meat to old people who were struggling against it. They would bend the spoon in their mouths to keep the food out. Although they wanted to die, we forced them to keep living. People would come to the home usually with most of their wits about them, but in a few weeks they usually fell apart. One woman didn't want us to get her out of bed in the morning; she would scream "No no no no no no" until we tied her in a wheelchair. Then all day she would repeat "I want to go back to bed. I want to go back to bed." (Ever since, this has occasionally been my mantra as well.) Then after we did finally put her in her bed, she would say "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you" for a couple of hours until falling asleep.

Some patients were violent, and others were comatose. I had a very hard time lifting the dead weight of a 250 pound man up in his bed, much less into a tub. The more artistic patients created abstract expressionist works on the walls with their own excrement. Being that close to such intense suffering took its toll on the staff, most of whom said they would commit suicide when they turned 65.

All my co-workers were women, although a man was in charge of the home. During a break I overheard some of them talk about me. They held me in extremely low regard since I was physically weak, and said some very cruel things. At the end of the trial period, I was called in to see the boss, who said "The two weeks are through, and so are you. Maybe you can find a nursing home with lower standards." His former job was as a minister. I was already familiar with the lack of divinity in our divines.

While working at the nursing home under the delusion that I had a regular job, I got the idea of making a small cruising sailboat to live on. The plan was to launch in the Gulf, then cruise along the coast, playing my violin for donations. To see what that would be like, I tried busking in Denton. I had learned four of the Bach solo Sonatas and Partitas, and had two solo sonatas of my own. Over the course of a week I performed in, and was run out of, all the prime spots, after an elapsed three hours of music. I averaged about \$18 an hour, but it was extraordinarily hard work. Still, the dream persisted, and I gathered plans for a 16 foot sailboat.



I was lucky to have Randy as a friend. His grandfather had recently died of dementia in a nursing home, and left some apartments to his mother up in Stratford, Texas. This little town is right at the top of the Texas panhandle, next to the border with Oklahoma. If you ever need evidence that the Universe is geometrically Euclidean, a visit to Stratford will convince you of spacetime flatness.

The apartments needed maintenance, and so Randy and I went up there for two weeks every month. Usually the tenants had been illegal aliens who were hard on the housing, and frequently left quickly from fear of arrest and deportation. We would find beans still on the stove. The work was hard, but we didn't have a boss yelling at us and could do as we pleased half of each month.

We did have police, though. They didn't much like the idea of strangers from out of town. One day Randy and I were shopping at the hardware store when two cops came in and slapped handcuffs on me, read me my rights, but didn't mention any reason for the arrest. They hauled me down to the station and interrogated me for awhile, finally saying there was a man going by the name of Jim Robinson using a fake credit card. His description was five foot three inches tall, black hair. I guess they thought I might be using trick shoes and a wig, and was too stupid to keep my first name straight.

The local agriculture was a nightmare. People tried keeping gardens in town, but it was a futile gesture. Planes sprayed herbicides and pesticides on the surrounding fields and bathed the town in poison, killing anything people planted except grass. There was a massive feedlot upwind of town where thousands of cattle spent their last few months living on several feet of manure, crowded together fattening up for slaughter. The carbon dioxide released producing meat in this manner far exceeds that from all transportation combined. Most of the employment in town was to support the feedlot, and our neighbours were cowboys working there. They would spend most of the day injecting the cattle with antibiotics, hormones, and other drugs, to keep them alive under such unnatural conditions and make them gain weight faster. (Someday when we have an epidemic, those antibiotics will be useless, but nothing can be done due to the political power of agribusiness.) At night, a choking brown fog surrounded the street lamps, made of acrid manure dust. The whole scene depended on diesel pumps lifting water from the Ogallala Aquifer at a rate of over 100 million gallons per square mile per year. This water dates from the last Ice Age and before, and could be completely gone from this area in twenty-five years.

The locals couldn't get enough of this hell. After a full day in 100 degree heat, these guys came home and practiced their roping skills on bales of hay on which they'd attached plastic cow heads. Then they'd get in their big cars and ride up and down the one road in town making as much noise as possible, burning up that cheap gas for kicks.



Barbara left for Vancouver in early summer, and we were back to cooking for ourselves. My weight was now down to 112 pounds, and I was quite worried about it, as my strength was very low. I tried all kinds of dietary adjustments but with little effect. Finally in desperation, I included small amounts of fish, yogurt, and cheese. After several months I got up to 130 pounds, but my more orthodox friends disapproved. Any difficulties or illnesses could now be blamed on the wider diet, and my lack of self-denial.

After many days over 100 degrees, Randy and I were more than eager to get the hell out of Dodge. He had an old BMW sedan he'd fixed up, and we took off from Stratford in late July. We stopped in Denver to visit my sister, who was living with other members of her Astro Institute. I think Rama Adonis

had recently died, and the group dissolved soon after our visit. Then on to Wyoming. Yellowstone was booked up and we hadn't made advance reservations, so we were stuck driving through without stopping. As we arrived late in the day, we drove through the park through the moonless night, missing almost everything. This was quite hazardous. Steam from geysers drifted across the road, lit up by our headlights, so that from time to time visibility went down to about an inch. It was as if cardboard suddenly covered the windows.

I had admired and studied the works of Edgar Cayce for many years, and so was curious to check out Livingstone, Montana, just to the north of Yellowstone. Cayce said that Livingstone would be an important city after the earth changes he predicted. We camped for a week on the Yellowstone River just south of town and got acquainted with the locals. There was a Cayce study group that we attended, which was a center of activity for the local New Age scene. Many were anticipating a reversal of the poles, although there *was* that pesky matter of conservation of angular momentum. Randy and I were so burnt on Texas that we were thinking of buying land in Montana. We took a tour of properties with a local real estate agent. He pointed to a tipi on a hillside where a woman had given birth during the previous winter.

There wasn't much level ground, which was a relief from the plains. Randy and I decided to climb a mountain, and picked a relatively modest one of maybe 9000 feet. We got an early start and got to the top about lunchtime. But the path down was rather more exciting than we'd bargained for. We came down a scree slope made of small bits of shale. After we'd gone down it a hundred feet or so, we realized the surface was extremely unstable. Standing was impossible, so I got on my back and figured I'd ease my way down. When I moved my hands or feet, rocks under me would dislodge, which would dislodge rocks just above them, which would dislodge rocks above them, and so forth, until I was hit by rocks coming down from above me. There was some serious nail-biting until we got free from the scree.

The growing season limited agriculture to hay and cabbages, more or less. They'd had a killing frost in early July. The people were a whole lot tougher than I could ever hope to be. The females were especially different. I was used to Southern Belles, who were not in evidence here. Just wading in the river up to my knees in the first week of August was unbearably cold. We decided to try for a milder climate where the native women wear halter tops.

Some friendly fishermen gave us several trout they'd caught near our campsite. We had the fish heads in our cooler when we came back through Denver for another night or two with my sister. I decided to make some improvised fish head soup, the sight of which nauseated the Astro Institute folks. Turns out eating it nauseated Randy and me as well, and it took a day to recover.

Back to Denton, where Anton came through town. He was involved in a gold mine in Nevada, and when possible wanted me to come out and join in. I was game, but wary of worshipping gold, which after all is just a kind of rock. But Anton was enthralled, and the chase for gold and power became the major theme of his life. He mentioned casually one day that a mutual friend thought that cocaine was the perfect drug. I thought that was absurd and dangerous, since cocaine was just about the worst. I should have picked up that he was using it himself. Thankfully, his schemes didn't work out and I remained in Texas.

With the apartment job over, Randy and I started refinishing floors. This was, quite literally, a daily grind. Randy had an early '60s Chevy pickup truck that we loaded up with rented equipment. I got used to driving this beast, which lacked such luxuries as speedometer or ignition key. To start the truck, I used a paint can opener in the keyhole. No car thief would think of *that*.

More macroneurotica

Terence made plans to marry Gwen in January 1979. They would move into a house across town that she had bought, as her family was prosperous. I noticed some strange changes in his character. When I'd first met him four years ago he was cheerful and had an easy laugh, with a glint in his eye, left over perhaps from those daily acid trips. Over time, with macrobotics, he was getting tight, rigid, and more secretive. One day he said quite unexpectedly that it was silly to make any promises, since it was impossible to know that you could honestly live up to them. I didn't know what to make of that, especially since he was about to take wedding vows.

In October I noticed an old 18 foot mahogany Chris Craft motorboat on a trailer in the street. It was in terrible shape, with six inches of soil accumulated inside. I asked if it was for sale, and the owners were happy to let it go very cheaply to avoid having to dispose of the carcass. Thus I encountered yet another of those dreaded *opportunities for growth*. This was a planing hull, totally unsuited to what I had in mind, but I figured with a full keel, some ballast, a Chinese junk rig, and a cabin, I could have myself a sailboat; *Miso Sloop*. It was all planned, with a balanced rudder complete with trim tab for easy self-steering. I'd studied junk rigs for some time, including during my visit with Paul where I went to the Library of Congress and found a Chinese librarian who had waited a long time for someone like me to show up. He was delighted to hand me the three books about junks, which were worthy of his pride. With a Chinese lug rig I could use cheap materials and have a sail I could control and reef from inside the cabin.



Seasickness drill on Miso Sloop

Besides the total hopelessness of the hull design, I had neglected to do my homework with regard to rotten wood. I thought I could just chisel out the soft parts, fill in with thickened epoxy, and be good to go. I didn't realize that fungus tendrils stretch a foot beyond the obviously rotten parts, and that the boat was fit only for a Viking funeral pyre. It was just too entrancing a project.

I gathered local bamboo and made the battens for my 200 square foot sail, made of scrounged cloth. At the first real blow it would have ripped into ribbons, but mercifully it never got the chance. I built up a mast glued from pine boards and used a drawknife to make it round and tapered. For the keel I took similar small boards and glued them together, and much the same for the elaborate rudder. Unfortunately, I had neglected my homework on the glue as well, and used carpenter's wood glue—which was not waterproof for prolonged submergence. So everything would have fallen apart.

It was February 1979 when I finally realized that this was yet another folly, and I sold *Miso Sloop* to people who wanted the trailer, flat tires and all. I figured there would be other lost causes to apply myself to.

There was a significant result from this misadventure. To busk with my violin up and down the coast, I needed music to play. So, in January 1979 I started a cycle of 64 movements in 21 sonatas for solo violin. Each movement corresponded to a change in the *I Ching*. It took about

five days for each piece, and two to copy in ink, so that by June I'd finished 18 sonatas, about three hours of music.



Michio & Aveline Kushi

In the fall of 1978, Terence told me that there was a very interesting veterinarian in Dallas, Norman Ralston, who had cured his terminal cancer with macrobiotcs, and used similar dietary treatments with acupuncture on the small animals in his clinic. He was setting up a seminar for Michio and Aveline Kushi in late January. Terence, Gwen, and I got involved and got to cook for the Kushis during their visit. This was quite an honor for us, and we had the opportunity to spend some time with both of them. They were so charming and charismatic that they could have said anything and we'd have believed it, and that's just about what happened.

Michio gave a lecture about the five elements and how they relate to our internal organs, in a cycle. In his thick Japanese accent, he went organ by organ, and then asked the audience, "What comes after the *spreen*?" I whispered to the person next to me, "*Summer*."

One thing he mentioned got me thinking. He was a soldier in Japan near the end of the war, stationed in the home islands, and said that he admired the martial spirit and feeling of unity the Japanese had then. It seemed to me that this martial spirit caused one of the cruellest disasters in the history of East Asia, but I kept my sentiments to myself.

The interest stirred up by the Kushi's visit led us to plot the formation of the North-South Macrobiotic Center, to be located in Dallas. Norman bought some land with a house and a barn on the eastern edge of Dallas, and gave me \$50 to start up a newsletter. This was a series of dogmatic diatribes that I hope will never be excavated from the landfills where it so deservedly rots.

Shortly after, Terence and Gwen got married at her parent's home in Fort Worth. At the wedding I played my third solo violin sonata, which was dedicated to them. They moved into Gwen's house and I got another roommate, Earl, also macrobiotic. He was friendly and easy to live with, and worked with disabled children. A week or two afterwards he mentioned that one week a month one of his autistic kids would live with us. This was interesting news, but I figured what the heck. Turns out this ten-year-old was quite a handful. Sometimes he would throw uncontrollable screaming fits and be quite violent. From the pallor of his skin, you would think he had been entirely drained of blood. His speech was echolalia, repeating bits of what he heard over and over, kind of like Phillip Glass. The doctor thought autism was a food allergy, so we would have to prepare just one food at a time when he was with us. One week it was broccoli, another week it was elk meat from wild game shot in Yellowstone, and so forth. None of it worked.

Dorothy, after several traumatic misadventures, was continuing in school and living with theater majors. This was an exotic bunch. One day when I visited, a roommate was wearing underpants with a purple cape. (Purple? Really now, there's such a thing as taste.) I needed a cover for my *Gita* piece and gave Dorothy a copy of *Back to Godhead*, the magazine of the Hare Krishna movement. There was an illustration of Krishna showing his divine form to Arjuna which was just right for my cover.

Two weeks later, Dorothy quit school, and joined the Dallas ISKCON temple. I was apprehensive to say the least. Founder A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada had died the previous year, and all sorts of nasty power plays were afoot in the political structure which would last a decade.³⁵ Membership fell by more than ninety percent. Later we learned that the boarding school for devotees in Dallas was the scene of severe child abuse which nearly ended the movement after a lawsuit. People thought that by being devoted to Krishna and chanting, new converts would be pure and trustworthy. Didn't work out that way. But Dorothy, now with a devotee name, was blissed out and busy working on artwork for the Dallas temple. She did a splendid job, but others took the credit, as she was a mere woman. While there was a lot of elaborate singing and dancing, the focus was on the Mahamantra, *Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna hare hare; Hare Rama, hare Rama, Rama Rama hare hare*. Along with the other devotees, she chanted sixteen rounds of the mahamantra a day, with each round having 108 repetitions. This was one of my favorite mantras, but that many repetitions would have driven me nuts.

The temple had separate sleeping quarters for women that were decidedly inferior to the men's. Her vermin problem made my battle with roaches look petty by comparison. One night, exhausted after her daily labors and chanting, she was trying to sleep when the ceiling collapsed on her. It had been weakened by rats, and now she was covered in the scurrying beasts and their feces. She and the other women were not shy about bringing this to the attention of the temple leaders.

We hadn't had a meeting of the members of the Infinity Natural Food Co-op for some time, so we gathered together with humble self wielding the gavel as President. There was some concern about our legal status. Terence had started off as an equal member of the co-op, with the special task of storekeeper. He had done so much of the daily oversight of the store that we all just let him run things. We didn't understand that he didn't like the government and especially didn't care to pay taxes. As is usual in such cases, he was happy to reap the communal benefits, he just didn't want to pitch in. We had not yet registered as a non-profit organization, which would exempt us from income taxes. We hadn't registered as *any* kind of business, which meant that we all shared liability for the store's income taxes as cooperative owners. Terence always paid the state sales tax since that was something regularly checked, but he had never paid any other kind of tax, personal or corporate. In fact he didn't have a Social Security card, or a driver's license. And on closer inspection, he didn't do any accounting and kept no books, apart from a file of odd receipts. Money simply accumulated in the bank, up to about \$14,000 at the time, which was supposed to be owned by store members. About \$3000 was designated for projects to benefit the natural food community, although nothing had ever been done. Many members, including me, voiced alarm and insisted that we immediately register as a non-profit before serious problems came up that would close the store and get us all in trouble. Terence agreed, and we believed him.

Trusting Terence was a big deal for me. We had done a long series of guided meditations. They started off as research into past lives, but one day a powerful being calling itself the Source barged in and we began channeling. I had no experience with this kind of thing, but had done a good deal of reading of Edgar Cayce and others. A few channelers seemed legitimate, most did not, and the information was rarely of any use. Generally it was the "Space Brothers say to Love One Another" kind of thing, not exactly big headline news. I was tired of the impracticality and unreliability of this kind of research, and wanted what similar researchers have needed for a very long time; a mechanical instrument that would interact with other planes. Then the whole area of transcendental physics could actually be a science instead of this strange and usually bogus

conglomeration of some fact and mostly imagination. I knew beyond doubt that other planes existed, from extensive personal experience. I realized that knowing about all the planes and their interactions was fundamental to a better understanding of most of the big philosophical and physical questions. The first reading with the Source gave the basic design for an interactive device that I later called the Oracle, and later readings with Terence and others helped fill in missing details. All I got were general design parameters, and I had to figure out how to build and run the device.

Terence had a booklet written by Ray Stanford, who operated the Association for the Understanding of Man (AUM) in Austin. He had done what appeared to be good quality channeling in response to a request from a physicist for cosmological insights. The ideas from this article, combined with what the Source described as the wave-matrix theory, dominated my research for the next eleven years. I neglected to do any research on Ray Stanford himself.

During March, while practicing my violin, I noticed that my neck would become very painful and stiff, and the muscles wouldn't relax. Then my hip problem came back, alternating hips. Slowly pain and stiffness spread all over my body, until any movement was with great difficulty. Soon I had to buy a cane to get around, and life was a nightmare. Sleep was torture, as lying down and getting up were major projects, and turning over required great effort. No dietary adjustments seemed to work. Plus, I was almost out of money. Fortunately it let up a little for a week, during which Randy and I refinshed a floor; but soon I was crippled up again.

While I was wondering how to suport myself, I pondered the possibilities of a chain letter, and what angle I could use to make it profitable. Finally, I came up with a "Strange Name Chain Letter", which implored the addressee to go to a library, find a fat telephone directory, and copy down the addresses of the strangest names he could find. Then he was to run off copies of the letter and send to as many as he liked. This was to help "make balance" for the prejudice suffered by people with unpronounceable names. Some of the eighty letters I sent went to Aarlon Aardvark, Dora Asgefrsdottir, Arnett Clapsaddle, Emilio Zywczuk, Insty Pop, Joseph Nwachukwu, Oh Achzlgler, and Igor Zygote. Fortunately for my depleted karma bank, no one responded.

Leaving Denton for Good Part IV

Norman Ralston was generous enough to invite me down to the new North-South Macrobiotic Center's east Dallas location to help set it up, which I eagerly accepted. There was a two-bedroom apartment above the barn which was more comfortable than my Denton home. I was able to paint, scrape, and clean some of the property, but my condition was worsening, and soon I could not trust myself on a ladder. Some days, riding in a car was not possible as my neck could not withstand any motion. Norman demonstrated his healing skill in massage by working on me many times, but I was in such bad shape from this mysterious ailment that the slightest touch would be agonizing. My spine was two inches off to one side in the small of my back. I thought I had kidney problems due to pain there, but that was mistaken. Getting out of bed could take as long as twenty minutes. I never considered conventional medical diagnosis or treatment, but macrobotics wasn't working and I had no idea what the disease was. This drove me to the point of considering suicide.

Anshel Brusilow had promised me since I had started writing my *Symphony #1* for him the previous May that the NTSU orchestra would play through the work. However, he put it off again and again, until there was only one more week of orchestra rehearsals. He reassured me that the orchestra would read through it, and on Saturday he wanted me to phone his office on Monday morning to work out details. When I called, his assistant told me there were no more

rehearsals, and that Anshel wouldn't be in until the afternoon. Finally I realized I was being toyed with and deceived. I sent him a letter saying that I would like very much to work with him in the future, but that he would have to get in touch with me, as I would no longer bother him as I had in the past. I stuck to my guns for a couple of years. People looked to Anshel to see what his reaction to my music would be. Since he rejected my work, everyone else did too. Any musical opportunities for me in Denton were finished, and I had no other leads.

In early June, Herman and Corneilia Aihara came to visit our center from California, accompanied by Carl Ferre, an old friend from Denton. Herman was far more relaxed than the Boston leaders, to the point of hardly being able to give a talk. He got up and said, "Any questions?" Corneila, on the other hand, was quite the battleaxe, or should I say *nagitana*. Her cooking was so salty that my jaw swelled and I couldn't fully close my mouth. When I used ground sesame seeds without salt as a condiment, she cackled and ridiculed me at length for being different. I was not amused. During their visit I performed one of my solo violin sonatas, which was quickly forgotten. Next time I'll play *before* we eat.

In late June we had Stephen Uprichard come down from Boston, quite the opposite from Herman. Stephen retired from a job in the Pentagon devising targeting strategies for nuclear warheads. Now he ran a study house where people coming to learn about macrobiotics could rent a room and share meals, which had about the same kind of vibe as his old job. From my extremely meager personal funds I ran off flyers for his visit and paid for the stamps, plus put in hours phoning anyone who might be interested. Stephen sat me down and scolded me for not doing a better job with slicker and more expensive advertising. Deep inside I wanted to tell him he was a sorry sack of miso, but for some reason I just took the abuse. My spine was weak. People were so uninspired by our visitors that no one came to cooking classes or any other events afterwards. The best we could manage was occasional potlucks.

My health improved somewhat over the summer so that I was ambulatory and could ride in cars. The hot weather helped as well. After some external treatments with sesame oil and ginger juice, I was fit enough to take a little jog around our block. In our neighborhood, each house had a yard, each yard had a tall chain-link fence, and every fence held a vicious dog at bay, which would lunge and howl at anyone walking or jogging down the street. Welcome to friendly Dallas.

This was the last time I would ever run.

The heat inspired my customary flight north for the summer on July 4, when I boarded the dreaded bus for the three-day trip to my Dad's home. He asked me to lend him my electric piano, and he would pay to have it shipped up from Dallas. However there was a criminal element in the cargo department, and they stole my piano, stopping my efforts at composition for a year.

After seeing Dad, I visited Anton, who was renting and caretaking 740 acres in eastern Maine, just across the border from Mount Washington. This was near the little town of Brownfield, where Philo T. Farnsworth had lived. Farnsworth became a hero of mine some time later. He was the inventor of electronic television, as well as Inertial Electrostatic Confinement for table-top scale nuclear fusion. On this farm was a dilapidated and vandalized hunting cabin fit only for summer use, and a ten-acre lake. I was delighted by the natural beauty and wildness. Anton was getting its use so cheaply that he offered to let me stay there whenever I liked. But that was only possible during the warm season, which was quite short in those parts. There was a small mountain on the property, and some superb firewood. The cabin was two miles from the paved road and nearest neighbor. We had no electricity, phone, or any other utilities, and it was seven miles to the mailbox. There was a well uphill and a pipe four feet underground to the cabin

that gave running water, quite the luxury. I used my quiet time here in the heavy theoretical work of my pseudoscientific cosmology, banging the life out of my calculator.

Passing through Boston I attended the first North American Macrobiotic Congress, since like most cults we were preparing for the day we had global power. I showed the early results of my wave-matrix work to Michio and asked his advice. He mumbled something about logarithmic spirals.

There was a little talent show at the end of the congress. I decided to write something that could be performed on short notice by just about anyone who could read a little music. The result was *Little Miss Non-fat* for four speakers, modelled after the marvelous *Geographical Fugue* by Ernst Toch. I found one woman who could read rhythms, and we tried out the top two parts outside on the lawn. After going through it she said, "It's too good, we can't perform this, we might ruin it." I responded, "I can always make it worse so that we can play it. What do you recommend?" That was the end of that.

I returned to Dallas in mid-September, and noticed that the bus people had taken my inflatable kayak, which I'd brought along with me. As a result I was down to clothes, a few books, my own music, and my violin. Plus I had lost fifteen pounds during the trip.

Norman gave me a part-time job at his veterinary clinic. Here I could see real results. There is no placebo effect with animals; they don't get better because they believe in the power of a treatment. Pets came in sick from eating what their masters gave them, and very frequently with the same diseases as their owners. In fact we used the health of the humans to help diagnose the pets. We changed the animal's diet and saw them get better in ten days. It was quite powerful and impressive. I cooked for the dogs and cats in our kennel. We did a lot of acupuncture, using traditional needles, electroacupuncture, and moxabustion. This was particularly dramatic in cases of paralysis. One day a dog came in dragging its hind legs. We had the owners wait out front while we consulted our acupuncture charts, which are dizzyingly complex. After insertion of the needles we applied the voltage, and sure enough, the back legs came up. But for some unknown reason, *the front legs went down!* So we had to stall the owners awhile to figure out what went wrong. We got all four legs in operation by the end of the afternoon. After seeing that kind of thing day after day, I was sold on the power of what we were doing, but I saw real deficiencies in the traditional theory behind the effects. We would be unlikely to improve that situation without a device that could interact with *ki* (or as I preferred to call it, *prana*) that flowed through the body. That's why I wanted to build the Oracle.

Norman hired two veterinarians to help with his practice. One was Hugh Wheir, whom I respected a lot. He went on to run a non-profit animal protection organization in New Mexico for twenty years, and did acupuncture for racehorses. Norman and Hugh were not the "put on a show, collect the dough, let 'em go" kind of medicine men I'd seen so many times. I did gruntwork during some surgeries and was duly impressed.

Norman and Hugh, in typical Texas A&M graduate style, said "it's time to get you bred". But no prospects appeared.

I called up the ISKCON temple in Dallas and asked for Dorothy. The prabhu who answered the phone said "She is taking sleep." I said "She's what?" He said "She's *sleeping*," with that disgusted *what a karmi* tone of voice. I set up a time we could come visit, and shortly afterwards Norman and I drove down there. She was all decked out in a fine sari and long red pigtails, clearly enjoying herself. We weren't allowed to talk to her alone, and there were several male devotees hovering around. She was a new convert and they wanted to make sure she stayed

converted. Plus she was very attractive and I'm sure these brahmacharis (celebrate devotees) were feeling the heat.

As we talked, the devotees became more and more upset. Dorothy insists I said "Food is God", but I doubt it, since I never thought so. We encouraged her to think for herself, and in short order her minders got very angry and started shouting at us. It was time to leave. Dorothy had never seen her fellow devotees lose their tempers before. This was not the last time.

That fall I wrote a truly terrible book, *It's All Done With Mirrors*. The first part was a compilation of past life readings with various people, and the second part was the first attempt at the *Autobillography*. The whole mess was almost unreadable with its constant ranting about the Order of the Universe and macrobiotic bushwa. I convinced Terence, with some difficulty, that this qualified as a community project for the food store, and got \$500 from the store funds to print 300 copies. I mailed and gave away a dozen or so, with the rest mouldering in a trunk. Eventually I disposed of them. Some time later, I hunted down people who retained copies and implored them to throw their copy away. The book infuriated many friends and family members and some musicians as well. The damage from distributing even a few copies lasted many years.

Randy joined me in the apartment above the barn, enjoying the free rent in return for pitching in. By December it was clear that the North South center lacked community interest and was not going to work. Norman was in the mood to start charging rent. I was keen on going to a macrobiotic study house in Boston anyway, and Randy decided that only free rent would keep him in the desolation of far east Dallas, next door to the auto-crushing yard and a couple blocks away from scenic Balch Springs. So late in the year I got once again on the Greyhound and landed in Jamaica Plain to live in the study house of Rob and Kit Allanson.

Intensive cult training, winter 1979-80

From my work at the vet clinic and by spending almost nothing, I had saved up about \$500. At the study house, I paid about \$200 a month for a small room and board. After some time, I had to move up to the attic which I shared with two others, and had a space about eight feet by six feet for my own. Many evenings I would go to the East West center and attend macrobiotic functions. To sustain this I needed to work as much as possible. My first hope was employment on the staff of the *East West Journal*, the main macrobiotic publication. I arrived with samples of my *North-South Journal* from Texas and my new book. The staff were chain-smoking coffee guzzling weak skinny white urban guys guilty about being Caucasian and fantasizing about some ideal rural lifestyle. They wanted no part of me, especially as I was eager to join them.

Another possible job was at Erehwon, the food company founded by the Kushis. I went down to the warehouse and saw the personnel manager. As soon as I said I was macrobiotic, she rolled her eyes and thought "Oh no, another one..." She really didn't want someone interested in saving the world and living in harmony with Nature and spreading peace and health through food. Those folks were tired all the time and spaced out. She needed somebody who ate meat and could work all day and get things done. In this land of the Yankees, she needed someone with actual yang ki. Having macros work there already put them on the verge of bankruptcy.

After all my education, my only employable skill was touch typing, which I taught myself at age twelve. So I went to a firm that specialized in temporary office work downtown. Companies typically used the temporary employees to try them out for possible long-term employment, so every assignment started off as a prospective permanent job. They gave me some classes in ten-key for data entry and other soul-killing secretarial skills, and set me loose on the financial

district. I managed to find a spot in the accounting department of Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. (Standard joke: guy gets in a taxi, says "Take me to the hospital." Driver says "Peter Bent?" Guy says "None of your damn business.") To not go insane from the tedium and to keep my body moving, I would do exercises during coffee breaks where no one could see me. This was just too strange for my boss and after two weeks he fired me.

While drifting in and out of employment, I set up shop in the basement to start construction of the Oracle. The design was formidable, but this was a low-budget approach in the extreme. The biggest part of the device was an eleven foot antenna that had to fit inside an octahedral orgone box with seventy-two layers of alternating conductor and insulator. That meant each of the eight equilateral triangular faces of the box had to be eight feet on a side. I set up a ping-pong table and made triangles out of cardboard, and started layering with newsprint and aluminum foil. After a month of work on this and other components, such as 7000-turn mercury-core electromagnets, I realized the scale required for this device was enormous and far beyond what I could do at the moment.

So I moved on to something even less practical. Macrobiotic theory included the work of Louis Kervran in biological transmutation, which asserted that organisms can change one element into another. It was impossible to justify the extreme forms of the diet without allowing our bodies to create critical elements missing in the food. I decided to put this to the test, not quite appreciating that experiments were frowned upon in macrobiotic circles. The idea was to expose carbon dust made from carbonized grains to a series of arcs, then test to see if the carbon had changed to any other elements. If the teachings of the Dear Leader were correct, we'd soon see.

I made a series of slanted transparent tubes, at first plastic and then Pyrex, that vibrated from an eccentric motor drive. This allowed passage of carbon dust from the top through the tubes, which had rows of spark gaps about half an inch wide. I had stacks of automobile spark coils running off of 110 AC giving me several tens of thousands of volts. The grain had to be roasted thoroughly, which took a lot of oven time. I had to get up in the pre-dawn hours when the stove was not being used. One day I put trays of rice in the oven, cranked it up, and went back to bed. Unfortunately I fell asleep, and woke up to the smell of smoke. I went down to the kitchen, opened up the stove and it belched forth flames. I put out the fire and was mopping things up when two burly firemen showed up due to a neighbor's call. It took a couple of weeks of wages to pay for the damage. In the end, there was no sign of transmutation, but I did get a fondness for high voltages that stuck with me through the years. Failure of the experiment made no difference to the party line on transmutation.

Making this gear for bottom dollar meant several trips to a bulk wire warehouse in a rough part of town, requiring a walk through Roxbury. One day on this trip there was only one other person in sight, a ten year old black boy dressed like a pimp, with a wide brim hat, bell bottom pants and lots of jewellery. He came up to me and said something entirely incomprehensible. I said "Pardon?" reflexively, just as I would at Andover, before reflecting that this would be somewhat out of place. "Pardon?" he said mockingly back at me, then more clearly this time, "Do you have a big dick?" I was rather taken aback, and responded that I supposed it was large enough for the duties it had to perform, and walked hurriedly on to the wire store.

I could only play violin from time to time due to neck pain. In January I rehearsed a Handel sonata for violin and piano with Lily Kushi, Michio's daughter, who was a fine pianist. (Sadly, in 1995 she died of cervical cancer at age 41, after which Micho blamed her for eating poorly and getting medical treatments.) In mid-January I tried busking in the Boston subway

during lunch for an hour and made \$4. I gave a little concert for people from nearby study houses, but the noise level in the background was impossible to penetrate. People just didn't give a damn about my music, and I was tired of forcing the issue.

I tried qualifying to be a taxi driver, which many residents of study houses had done. Their stories of violence and robberies by black men, including one friend whose throat was cut, did not dissuade me. I was a tough guy used to eating macrobiotic bread. Besides, as an enlightened liberal I could relate equally well to people of all backgrounds, who were all the same fundamentally, or so the story went. The only problem was my chronic and life-long inability to navigate. I studied the convoluted Boston street maps for a week before the Hackney Carriage License test. Most of my competitors had lived on these streets their whole lives. Not surprisingly, and as a blessing from the Universe, I failed.

My next employment was at Blue Cross Blue Shield, punching an adding machine into submission. Our study house was four miles from the financial district downtown, and the subway cars took about 50 minutes to get there, if nothing went wrong. The commute was slower than it had been a hundred years ago. A winter evening in the dark the motor caught fire, which was not surprising since the car was manufactured during the Depression. That was a lot longer ride. My boss was drunk all day, and I sometimes envied him. Self-medication of the obliterating sort was an effective adaptive mechanism that was unavailable to me. I had to do each sum of perhaps a hundred numbers with every keystroke perfect, or I had to do it all over again. There was no mechanism for correcting errors, which certainly sounded like an error needing correcting. After a couple of weeks I said "screw this noise" and simply put in pencil corrections on the paper tape. The boss saw this and flipped out. End of that job.

Terence and Gwen arrived in early February for a week's visit and brought the last of my meager possessions up from Texas. Everyone in the study house, Terence and Gwen included, came down with a bad cold. Macrobiotic theory said this couldn't happen. I had just started a new office job and had worked one day when I had to leave halfway through the next, which was a Friday. The following Monday I worked five hours before having to leave due to sickness, and was immediately fired and replaced.

Rob Allanson, who ran the study house with his wife Kit, had been a husky and hearty hockey player, but through the wonders of macrobotics was now an emaciated smoker. Eating at the study house was a unique experience. The table was very low to the ground, Japanese style. We were expected to sit on our heels, which my arthritis made excruciating. I used a little seiza bench that raised me up a couple of inches and allowed me to sit almost like everyone else. I was severely criticized for this sign of weakness and non-conformity. Everyone else used only chopsticks, but I liked having a wooden spoon as well. This was always a cause of ridicule. The cooking relied on beans for our protein, but I couldn't digest them as they were cooked. I was frequently incapacitated with severe gas pain, sometimes having to miss work. It turns out that the almost total lack of saturated fat was damaging my intestines. And yet I remained a true believer.

With my continuing health issues and a superabundance of macrobiotic advisors, I got a very long list of advice. Herman Aihara back in Dallas told me I should eat no animal food; Michio said I should eat fish three or four times a week. I was told to eat more salt, less salt, live in the north, live in the south, quit music, do more music, eat aduki beans, avoid aduki beans, "you're too yin", "you're too yang", "you're too yin *and* yang", "you eat too strictly", "you eat too widely", drink more water, drink less water, eat salads, cook all your food, and so forth. And yet I remained a true believer.

I was deeply impressed by Masanobu Fukuoka's seminal book *One-Straw Revolution*³⁶, about natural farming techniques. I had just missed his first trip outside Japan when he came through Boston the previous summer. He was highly trained in agricultural science and applied his ideas to his family farm with remarkable results. Afterwards he went all around the world spreading his knowledge and helping to reclaim barren and abused land. This was the kind of spiritual, practical, humble, non-dogmatic action I was looking for.

One couple took his message to heart, along with other influences from the back-to-the-land movement, and went off to the wilds of British Columbia to homestead in the woods. They cleared some land, built a cabin, and toughed it out. As it was dead of winter they came to Boston to give a talk to other macros. I was much impressed by their tenacity and ingenuity, and also by the reaction of the crowd, all of whom had clearly never been to a farm. This is where coming from Texas was an advantage. (After all, Denton was the home of the American Donkey and Mule Society.³⁷) Everybody wanted to hear about the bears, how the bears walked through the property, were they afraid of the bears, did the bears pound at their doors, did they hear the bears howl at night. I think they had all grown up watching Yogi Bear on Saturday mornings.

Being a wise-ass, I asked: "What about COWS?" The speaker grimaced. There were many snickers and comments from the crowd, how stupid that was, cows out in the woods, they don't have cows in British Columbia, who does he think he is. But in fact, they had a neighbor who had cows that got loose from time to time and played hell with their garden, and the speaker had to explain a little about reality to the city slickers. Naturally I became even more unpopular, but some things are worth it.

My next hell-job was in the heart of Roxbury typing up reports from visiting nurses. Michio talked about the legendary inventor of the yin-yang philosophy, Fu Hsi, and how his name is used in a Japanese version of pranayama. The outbreath is "Foouooo", and the inbreath is a hissing "Hssssssssi" through clenched teeth. I adopted this into a very powerful pranayama technique I had done for some time, using sharp quick breaths (*bhastrika*) ending with Fu Hsi and then held for some time sequentially on all seven chakras. As the subway ride to work was a long useless waste of time, I did this *bhastrika* while wearing a ski mask to remain inconspicuous. Of course I wasn't, but the other riders took most things in stride.

One day I wish they hadn't been so jaded. At one stop, four young teenagers got on the car, one black and the others Hispanic. Two of the Hispanics held the third against one of the poles and the black youth pummelled him in the guts. When they were through they got off at the next stop. The other riders said and did nothing.

I was fired after a couple of weeks as usual, and on March 10 started a new and ostensibly permanent job with AT&T, on the thirteenth floor of their eighteen-floor building in the financial district. Dad was delighted. He was hoping I would spend the rest of my career in that building, grinding my soul into small easily-digested pieces, just as had happened with him in the machine shop. His own release came only three days later at his 65th birthday. He immediately sold all of his tools and never looked back.

I worked with a dozen overweight depressed women and had a woman as my boss, but as usual all the higher officers were men. We all could have been replaced by one person with an Apple II computer, but we had a union and worked for a monopoly. Nowadays technology and the social structure are more efficient in concentrating wealth and those jobs are long gone, along with Ma Bell. The work was not hard, just the usual menial tedium, with the perk of free phone calls. They gave me a sheet of paper with a list of trunk lines that needed periodic checking. I would send out tapes to each station in turn, and the whole cycle would take a couple of months.

Fine. What they didn't mention was that I was to start halfway down the page; I started at the top. This meant that everything I did during my six weeks was worthless.

One day in the bowels of the subway I noticed that the first car was empty, even during rush hour. We all clambered aboard taking advantage of this oddity. Almost immediately after the doors closed and we started down the track, all the people from the front rushed to the back and on into the next car with horrified expressions. I was halfway down the car and wondered what the problem was. Suddenly it was apparent. A homeless man slumped unconscious in a seat in the front, next to the most unfortunate driver. Evidently he took dump in his pants some time before and gave it a chance to ripen. The stench was overwhelming. I joined the exodus. Now I knew how to have a subway car to myself.

Being a single man out in the world, I would often find a woman attractive and try to strike up a friendship. On a few occasions this went all the way to sharing a lunch. But I was arthritic, dogmatic and poor, and invariably women could easily find men healthier, easier to get along with, and richer. One woman who was very dear to me, intelligent, cultured, and creative, but far out of my class, had just moved to Boston. I met her when she was at Abbott and I was at Andover, and visited her in Denver during my high-altitude summer and again when she visited Dad and me in Peabody in 1975. She had an impressive apartment on Beacon Hill, and she introduced me to the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum, a place that suited her sense of whimsy. After reading my first *Autobillography*, she was grateful that I didn't include her, and so I won't mention her here either.

I was desperate to find another way to live. After being trapped in the city since December I was starved for Nature. There was a macrobiotic farm in western Massachusetts, but they wanted someone who could man a big chain saw all day. So I made plans to move to the wilds of Maine at the property Anton rented, where I could try natural agriculture and harvesting wild plants, while working on the wave-matrix theory.

I had done some foraging in Texas, but needed to learn about plants in New England. To prepare, I took a course with Ken Burns, who ran another macrobiotic study house. He was an expert on wild food. After some classroom time, we stashed digging tools under our coats and headed for the subways. It's a good thing the officials didn't see our grubhoes and pitchforks with sawn-off handles or we would have been arrested as terrorists. Ken's jaunty black beret helped set the mood of underground resistance. It was astonishing how many edible plants we could find in the parks and overgrown lots. But Ken said it took about a year to adapt to eating a substantial fraction of wild food in the diet. In fact he reported what he called "wild food psychosis" when residents of his study house ate too much wild food too soon.

Ken and his wife had big bags under their eyes. In the early days, Ohsawa advocated the use of raw grey sea salt, which includes magnesium salts and other impurities. The result was permanent kidney damage among many of his followers, hence the eye bags. Ken died of cancer, and afterwards I heard that this was because he'd been a heroin addict or an alcoholic. I thought Ken was a very intelligent and articulate fellow and saw no sign of any impairment. There was no compassion in macrobotics; he had to be at fault, or the doctrine would be invalidated.

Peter Fernberger joined me on Patriot's Day in the crowd near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Pete was delivering yachts for a living, which for me was the dream job to end all dream jobs. Anton wanted to start "Cargo Cult Inc." to haul frozen fish from Martha's Vinyard to New Bedford, and cordwood back to the island, in a large sailing boat. Pete thought Anton was nuts and wanted nothing to do with him, but then Pete always had more sense than me. We watched Bill Rodgers win his third marathon in a row. Then along came a woman flailing her

arms in extreme exhaustion, but sweat-free and with flabby thighs, unlike the other leading runners. She won the woman's race, perked up right quick, and stood on the podium. Turns out Rosie Ruiz had cut out of the race early, rode the subway, got back in half a mile from the finish, and faked being tired. A heroine for our times.



Rosie Ruiz and Bill Rodgers

Appalachian Spring, 1980

At the end of April I bought a cheap wall tent, packed up and moved to Brownfield. Anton helped with transportation and most of the odd necessities to get the place liveable; he stayed at the farm from time to time. Over the winter, a hermit had squatted in the hunting cabin, and our first duty was to clean up the mess. He left a sheet-metal wood stove which would tide us over until we got a better one. There was a large hole burned in the floor in front of the stove, many broken windows, and his pile of girlie magazines, unfortunately used and of low quality. I pitched my tent nearby and put cardboard on the floor to withstand daily use. My Osmiroid fountain pen used for copying music and writing was lost in the move from Texas. My replacement pen still couldn't spell and used too many words.

Previous tenants had attempted conventional gardening in the thin soil, which made the soil even worse. I brought seeds from Boston, for both cultivated and wild plants. I thought I could dig narrow trenches in the sod, plant seeds, and put mulch on the grass between the trenches, thus avoiding the dreaded plow. I quickly gave this up and hired a man to till the garden. Fukuoka's methods required a lot of knowledge of agriculture plus his specific training, of which I knew only what I read. I got quite a bit of food from foraging, but most of what I ate came from bags of grain and beans. Much of the wild greens had high levels of oxalic acid, which were not good for my condition. I devised ways of using my pressure cooker to eat wild carrots and burdock otherwise far too hardened by age to eat. Also I ground wild seeds to put in bread that I also pressure cooked. Times were fat during blueberry season. That was when the bear turds turned blue, so we knew we had competition.

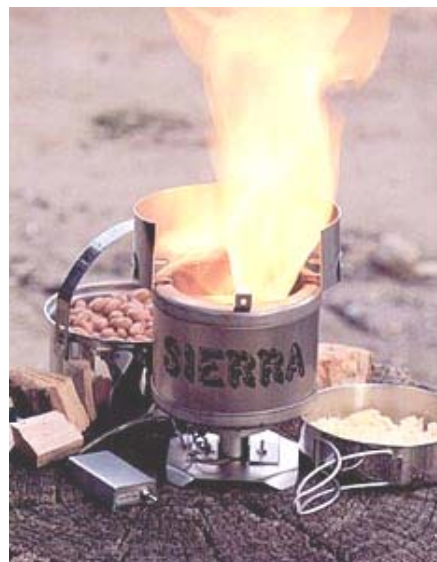
Two weeks into May, black fly season started in earnest. These little bastards kept the woods free from settlement. The bites are much more painful than for mosquitoes, and for dramatic effect, they bleed. I couldn't expose any flesh for two months. Bug dope just let them know where you were. I clipped two sticks of incense on the bill of my hat to generate a portable smoke screen. At dusk these appeared to be two glowing red alien eyes that drove any visiting dogs insane.

There were trout in our little pond, and thousands of very loud frogs. One day a great blue heron showed up and after three weeks, the pond was silent. This was the last year for any fish in the pond due to acid rain.

We decided to make major improvements on the cabin so that staying the winter would be an option. We glassed in the former porch, put new asphalt shingles on the roof, added insulation and a new vertical stovepipe. In December we brought in a cast-iron airtight wood stove, and put the sheet metal stove in the basement. After the first snow I packed some into the stove, later joined by pond ice, and it remained frozen for four months, helping me store vegetables away from the bears. We also put in much labor cutting and splitting wood, which was at the limit of my physical capacity on the best of days. After months of effort, we managed to

gather about half of what we needed, and bought the rest from a neighbor who was a professional. Wood heat is no joke.

I was convinced that the quality of the fire used in cooking made a big difference in the effects of the food, and from my experience it does make a difference, although of unknown origin. We had a little gas range using a bottle of propane, but I preferred wood. I had a little Sierra Zip Ztove, which is a little camping stove that uses a battery-powered fan to use a little wood or charcoal like a tiny blast furnace. I put it inside a five gallon metal can hitched to a stovepipe, so that I could use it inside. This is one approach to a huge environmental disaster, since something like a billion people burn wood or charcoal to cook their meals. Charcoal for cooking was enough to destroy all the trees in Haiti, and with no trees, all kinds of disasters are inevitable. With the Zip Ztove, I could cook a meal with a couple of pine cones and a few twigs. I started a long series of variations and improvements that continued with some lengthy interruptions for twenty years. At one point, I was using special high-temperature firebox liners, souped-up fan and power supply, and wood pellets and coal for fuel, getting a scorching flame about two feet tall. But that was just for fun.



Zip Ztove

In mid-June, exactly one year since my piano had been stolen, I went to an estate auction in Kezar Falls about 15 miles south of Brownfield. I bought an old upright piano for \$73, plus \$5 to move it to the cabin. The other auction goers didn't know what to make of my whooping and hollering in celebration that now I could start composing again. Mom sent up a tuning hammer and I set to work getting the thing up to pitch. After removing the various mouse corpses and nests, I found it impossible to keep from breaking the rusted strings, so finally I relented and hired a local tuner. Then I composed a piano sonata. Next I worked on my solo violin sonatas, finishing the twenty-first by early November. This completed the cycle of 64 movements, one for each change of the *I Ching*. After that I started two years of work on a two piano piece, the *Goldbug Variations*.

Occasionally Anton's friends would come by. Connie Cappel ran Vermont Crossroads Press and visited from time to time. We talked about my writing an actually publishable book, maybe about guerrilla agriculture, if I could get something to grow. Connie and Rose were devotees of Charan Singh, a Sikh guru in the lineage of Kirpal Singh. Rose, by the way, had majored in acid and ice cream at Goddard College in Vermont, and like the rest of us had no idea what to do for a living. But she did have more sense than most of us, and clearly thought I was a fool with the macrobiotic twaddle. That was a fair assessment, especially when I boiled the watermelon down to a delicious syrup.

One day Connie, Anton, Rose, and another woman came by and we went out to a local place for dinner. At first the other woman, whom I'd never met, was quite friendly. I didn't realize that this was a blind date they'd set up for my benefit. At dinner I started talking a little about my theory and drew a couple of diagrams and equations on a napkin to make things clear. This horrified the woman beyond words. When Rose asked her if she'd like to come back for another

visit, she shouted “ABSOLUTELY NOT!” Later, Anton scolded me for bringing up my work, and I learned not to talk shop.

One day Anton drove Doc up from Cambridge. He was sure we were under surveillance with government agents in the woods, which we found amusing. That night he had nightmares and got up in the wee hours to sit at the kitchen table and smoke cigarettes. As I was trying to sleep just a few feet away, it made me gag, and I asked him to please go outside to smoke. This infuriated him, and after a temper tantrum he grabbed his stuff and headed out the door. Anton was very angry with me for upsetting Doc, and found him on the road, sputtering in rage. They drove back to Cambridge. That was the last time I saw Doc, since now he was sure I was one of Them. I guess someone else would have to monitor the transceiver in his teeth, put there by the CIA dentist that most schizophrenics seem to have.

Unbeknownst to me, Anton was selling cocaine, and Doc was right, we were in fact under surveillance. But not by UFOs hiding in lenticular clouds.

Anton and Rose had a cousin who was about our age. She had been through some severe trauma in her late teens, and had been constantly stoned for years. She became mentally ill, and now was a gaunt compulsive cleaner. Visiting our little cabin with its rustic outhouse must have been a great challenge for her. We had a very limited supply of toilet paper which we used one or two squares at a time. Her first trip to the outhouse lasted about three hours, and she had used most of a roll covering the seat and any other surfaces she would touch. Talking to her was a challenge if you didn't want to talk about staying clean, and quite frankly I did not. It was a lesson in the power of psychosis. I'm sure plenty of people thought the same way about me and macrobotics.

The garden had very poor soil, and despite my efforts, the plants were stunted. I waited anxiously for the few tiny cobs of Indian corn to ripen. But I had no fence, and there was plenty of wildlife. The local raccoons knew just when the corn would be harvested, and a couple of days before the corn was ready, they knocked down every plant and took one bite from each cob. What the coons didn't get, the deer finished off. Nature won this round.

Ice age

In the early fall, a cheerful burly fellow named Bear joined me at the farm. He had been through three Maine winters living in the woods in a birchbark wigwam. He made everything he owned, including all his clothing, which was mostly from deer he'd killed, skinned, and tanned with their own brains. He set up his wigwam down by the lake, a few hundred yards from the cabin. The wigwam was a circular dome about nine feet in diameter and about seven feet at the peak, which had a small hole to let the smoke out. In the center was a firepit, and he built a pipe of old cans that let fresh air directly into the pit from the outside. Next to the pit was his bed made of dry spruce boughs. Note that birchbark is one of Nature's most effective tinders, so flammable that it can burn under snow. I wondered that he hadn't gone up in flames long ago. The constant smoke impregnated itself into everything he owned, which helped kill bacteria and covered the stench from irregular bathing. When the snow came in force, his wigwam was nothing more than a small bump in the drifts with smoke drifting up.

Bear was physically up to the rigors of life in the woods in ways that I could never be with my arthritis, and also had many skills from long practice. He made wire snares for rabbits which were remarkably effective. One day on the mountain I came across a small cave where a porcupine hid. I let Bear know, and next day he went up and dispatched the animal with a spear. After skinning he put it on a spit and roasted what he termed “the scrumptious critter”. The quills

went into decorative patterns on his clothing, and the cold lake water served as a refrigerator. I decided not to tell him of other wildlife unless he got very hungry indeed. From his example and my experience, reality dictated that just gathering was not going to work in a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, especially in a cold climate.

We relied on the lake for bathing as long as it was possible, following the Cartesian principle "I stink, therefore I swim." This led to the inevitable contest of who would be the last to jump in. First snow was at the end of October, and about then little fringes of ice formed on the edges each morning. Jumping into that water was a freakish experience, almost like little volcanoes going off all over my skin. Despite my emaciation and arthritis, and his substantial heft, I won this little contest, which probably made me all the more stiff.

There were many abandoned wild apple trees from long ago when there were orchards here and there. Bear brought large burlap bags filled with hundreds of pounds of downed apples. We sliced them and strung apple rings with thread along the rafters to dry. This was a major part of our diet for the winter.

As the weather turned cold, the wall of windows that replaced our porch was a big disadvantage. I used blankets to hold about a foot thick layer of crumpled newspapers all along that wall, making the place much gloomier but far warmer. Still, heat was a major challenge. I wanted the running water from the well to continue as long as possible, so when I went to Dad's place over Thanksgiving, I left a little drip going in the two large stainless sinks. These were from big kitchens originally so were each about two feet deep and about the same size square. When I got back, the sinks were two very large ice cubes, and the floor was a skating rink. In a little while the frost was six feet deep, so the pipe, which was four feet down, froze as well. From then on water came from melted snow and lake ice. This meant that bathing and laundry were extremely difficult. I took a sponge bath every couple of weeks whether I needed it or not, and did little laundry for at least three months. I would track snow in, and a day later sweep it out. Frequently it was impossible to get the temperature above freezing below my knees, unless close to the stove. I wore my Maine hunting boots with half-inch felt, plus thick wool socks, for almost six months.

We had some neighbors who set me up with a job house-sitting for a couple who were going to Hawaii for their honeymoon from December 7 through January 10. They lived in the center of the Ossipee Mountains in New Hampshire in a winterized mobile home, way off in the woods, and had a dog who needed company. This would pay \$300, which was about what I had spent since leaving work last April. Before that started, I headed down to visit with Dad for Thanksgiving, especially as he was about to have an operation for a hiatal hernia.

Shortly after my arrival, I had a severe attack of arthritis that left me in agony. I could only walk backwards, leaning on a mop handle. Dad was freaked out. I couldn't reach my feet, so Dad had to help dress me and get me into bed. We rented crutches, and I spent hours in steaming bathwater.

John and Jackie came from western Massachusetts, and we joined with Mom in a restaurant. This was the largest gathering of our family since the early '70s, although Akanda was in Colorado. I had wanted us to get together and try and have some decent relations. My parents clearly despised each other, and John didn't want to hear Dad's lectures. I appeared to them to be quite foolish, being a self-styled expert in alternative medicine while getting sicker and sicker, and now hobbling on crutches. This was our last gathering.

I tried once again eating more widely, and after several days of turkey had recovered enough to walk leaning heavily on a cane. We went to see a doctor who was an old family friend, now converted from Unitarian to Sufism. He used homeopathy and other alternative methods,

although still running his conventional practice. He said I had rheumatoid arthritis (still a misdiagnosis) and gave me some diluted toxin of poison ivy. It didn't help.

I borrowed Anton's old Volvo station wagon, which he let me use for the cost of the insurance. This made the house-sitting job possible. When I got to the property, I had to use my hands to lift my legs up out of the car and onto the snow. The couple had never met me in person, and when the man saw me do this, he told his wife loudly enough for me to hear that I was too sick to stay there and they should get someone else. I pleaded with them to let me have the job, and they relented. Then off they flew to Hawaii.

The mobile home was heavily insulated and had a large wood stove. They built a sauna between the house and a creek that flowed fast enough to never freeze. The couple were members of Arica, yet another cult, and had much literature for me to gawk at during my stay. They had coloring books for the various spirits they were supposed to visualize in meditation and commune with, which looked a lot like Tarot card illustrations only much sillier. Lots of swords and flames and skimpy dresses on well-endowed cartoon bodies. The husband was a dentist, and you'd think with all that nitrous oxide around he could have done better. I preferred reading Churchill's history of World War II, which prompted me to have dreams of my body at war. To turn over I sent a telegram to the general of the knees...

That Christmas, and for three weeks following, we had a record cold spell. It never got above -10° in the day, and got down to -30° regularly at night, all over inland New England. I did quite a few saunas as hot as I could stand, dashing outside to test the limits of endurance. The creek froze over for the first time ever, which was a challenge since that was my drinking water. I had to wear goggles outdoors as exposing my eyes to the air made vision very difficult. To see what the Eastern Front was like I tried firing a 22 rifle, and it was almost impossible to hit anything. Not far from the house, a construction crew was building a barn, even in these conditions. I could hardly believe it, and invited them over for a sauna.

The couple returned from Hawaii, and immediately threw wood in the stove. I had to strip down to my long johns, and collapsed prostrate on the floor. Then I checked the thermometer. It was 100 degrees and they didn't even notice. Yes, I wanted to go to India, but not right this second.

I returned to Brownfield in mid-January, and kept the car two miles from the cabin with my nearest neighbors. Bear and I snowshoed through the woods, visiting some people on the other side of the mountain who lived in a cave, very snug and comfortable. He then left for Ellsworth, on the coast. I started copying parts for the *Bhagavad Gita* cantata, which was a mammoth task taking months back in the days of pen and ink. My health continued to deteriorate despite every effort, including periodic fasts, and even some aspirin and vitamin pills. I started having spatial disorientation due to prolonged darkness and lighting from kerosene lanterns.

During the cold snap, the ice on the lake got to a foot and a half thick. Locals came by to ice fish, and didn't catch anything. They left their spare minnows for me, which I boiled and ate, treating them as fresh-water sardines. Yum!

The winter was getting to me, and I was worried about money once again. Since Thanksgiving I could only play violin from time to time, sometimes not for a month. I had not solved any of the practical problems of my life, and saw no end to the suffering. Suicide sounded like a viable option.

Hunting the Wild Algae

I saw the name “Maine Coast Sea Vegetables” on a package of seaweed, and dropped them a postcard asking for employment and a place to stay. Shep and Linnette Erhart were macrobiotic also, and most graciously accepted. I tobogganed down the mountain at the end of March, dug my car out of five feet of snow, and did laundry for the first time since January 7th. Anton and a neighbor I’ll call Ernie helped get my stuff from the cabin, as I could not walk back uphill. Ernie’s wife had just left with their infant daughter, leaving behind a four year old son, who I’m sure was distressed as he was still breastfeeding. I could sympathize, as I was never properly weaned myself. With no girlfriend, I could not properly complete the withdrawal.

Anton was having a drama of his own, as he was out on bail after arrest by a couple of drunken DEA agents, and at first was facing seventy-five years. The whole scene in Waitsfield Vermont, where he lived when not in Brownfield, was in turmoil as a result. Thankfully, the cop’s incompetence led them to charge him with selling 15,000 hits of acid, which he hadn’t done. They’d given immunity to the person who *did* sell the acid, who then confessed. So they were left with a measly conspiracy charge, after \$400,000 and a year’s work on the case.

I drove to Franklin Maine, not far from Bar Harbor and Mount Desert Island, at the head of Frenchman’s Bay. This is some of the most scenic coastline in America, and a spectacular place to sail. My first duty was to not smell like I had been in the woods for a year, which took two days of bathing to remedy.

The seaweed season had just started, so even with some snow flurries in the air, I put on lots of wool, clambered into waders, and strode out to hook some kelp. Somehow I managed to scramble around on rocks covered with seaweed at low tide in nearly freezing water. This was a wonderful way to make a living and I enjoyed being out in Nature, finding food in such a harmless way that was good for people to eat. But this could only go on for so long before the arthritis got the upper hand.

The Erharts were satsangis, devotees of Ajaib Singh, who taught Surat Shabd Yoga and was a disciple of Kirpal Singh. They had pictures of their spiritual master all over the house and had been to the temple in India. They tended to associate primarily with other satsangis of their guru, which made their acceptance of me into their home rather remarkable. As there were very few American followers, maybe a few dozen, this made their life socially isolated. But they had The One True Guru, and only other satsangis of their group were going to be enlightened. They had little other logical choice than isolation. I admired their taking spiritual evolution so seriously, but I couldn’t join a group that saw itself as the only effective path.

I regaled the Erharts with sailing tales, true and enhanced, and they agreed they had the perfect setup for having a sailboat. I found out that *Kan-Taki* had been partially taken apart and stored in a garage for the last eight years and was for sale cheap, not terribly far away. They bought it, and then risked the transmission of their new Volkswagen Rabbit towing it home. I spent several weeks putting it back together. They renamed it *Alaria* after a seaweed we harvested.

After talking with Grandma and old friends in Denton, I applied to go back to school at NTSU. Since this was for vocational training, I figured on studying physics, math, and computers, which Vocational Rehabilitation would help pay for. There were challenges getting in-state tuition



and other details to deal with over the spring and summer, but Grandma would send some money to get me down there and started up in school.

Rita Field is a chiropractor in Cambridge who had a second home near the Erhart's, and was a regular visitor. She took one look at me and knew exactly what the problem was. She gave me the critical advice to apply for Supplemental Security Income from Social Security, which I didn't know about and should have done years before. This would include Medicaid and enough money to pay for basic needs, plus Food Stamps. I got on the phone right away. In those days, it took several months to qualify, but the process was basically fair. Soon after this, Reagan changed the rules so that everyone was automatically denied, and had to go through a long process of appeal while hiring a lawyer. Thousands of disabled people were left without benefits and many committed suicide. Eventually the Supreme Court found this to be illegal, and the application process went back to what it had been. But this cost the government money, since viable applicants were no longer giving up or dying before payments started. So, a few years later, once again all applicants were automatically denied and required appeals. This time, no lawyers thought they could make any money fighting the case, and the situation remains to this day, despite the existing court ruling. The power of money is just too formidable. It can take up to three years to get approved for SSI, even with an obvious case, and the benefit is now too low to live on.

We launched *Alaria* in mid-June in Sorrento at the head of Frenchman's Bay, and a week later moved our mooring over to the other side of Scodic peninsula to Bunker's Harbor. We could now use the sailboat as a mother ship for an inflatable dingy and seaweed harvesting. I wanted to live on the boat, but there was no way to pull that off. After a few weeks of boating, I was exhausted, and realized that my body just couldn't take the strain.

After a particularly hard day on the water I had a sore throat for a week, then a high fever. When the fever broke, I had an extraordinary vision of Ajaib Singh. First he stepped on my foot, which felt like a massive electric shock, and surprised the hell out of me. Then I saw what they refer to as the "lightform" for a bit. After that subsided, I asked him a question about the path of the Masters, which has many features I don't accept. He said three things that are basic to my not becoming an initiate. "I am the only Perfect Master on the Earth. I am the only one unstained by Kal. None shall come to the Father but through me." Up to now he had been full of light and it was a blissful experience; but as soon as he said these things, the lights went out, and he appeared to be completely mundane. He also advised me to change my brand of shampoo.

When I related this to Shep and Linnette, they were delighted, as they had not had visions of their guru. While I thought the story as I told it would be a cautionary tale and a reason to step



On board Alaria

back from total devotion, they saw it as proof that their guru was in fact the only true Master. Oh well...

One day coming into our little harbor, I'd forgotten to raise the retractable keel made of heavy steel plate. We hit a rock and came off sideways. Next time out, the boat was more tender than usual. Turns out we'd torn the steel plate off and left it on the rock. Shep and friends retrieved the keel and we pulled the boat for repairs.

I started composing the *Goldbug Variations* again, this time on their old upright they stored in the barn. Anton came by. He'd beaten the 75 years but was convicted of conspiracy, and was waiting the next six weeks on bail for sentencing.

One day some friends came by with a woman in her early twenties who was staying with them for a little while. Her host introduced us by saying, "Dear, I'd like you to meet Bill Robinson." I extended my hand, and she recoiled in horror. Turns out she didn't touch men. She had been introduced to me as "dear" because *she didn't have a name*, those being part of the patriarchal hegemony. She was on her way to live at a lesbian separatist community, where all the buildings were built by womyn, thus avoiding the contamination of male architectural vibrations.



Detail from Dorothy's mural

Meanwhile, quite unknown to me at the time, Dorothy was assigned a devotee husband down at the ISKCON temple in Dallas. This fellow was from Wisconsin and had no experience with women at all, and had been a brahmachari for some years. They could not have been less suited for each other. He bought the cult party line, and thought that sex was acceptable only when the man demanded it for making children. Soon after marriage, they were assigned to live in Fiji, where there is a substantial Indian population. While there, Dorothy found herself doing missionary work in the

interior jungle, trying to convince people one generation removed from cannibalism to eat no meat of any kind, and to worship a strange blue-skinned god from India. One older woman came up and squeezed her thigh, and said something in the native language. The others grinned but were shy about translating. The woman was sizing her up as possible dinner.

Dorothy gave birth to her daughter there, and painted a large mural for the temple. Under great stress, she returned to the US and left ISKCON. Her husband decided to leave also in order to preserve the marriage, and they settled in Wisconsin with his family.

I was examined by doctors as part of my application for SSI, and finally got a solid diagnosis of ankylosing spondylitis. Now I could go look up information about what I had. None of my friends in macrobiotica had ever heard of this kind of arthritis.

Anton asked me to sign an affidavit to present in court swearing that he had no involvement in drugs. I thought this was true, but of course it was not. Although I brought this matter up from time to time over the next few decades, he has never apologized for this breach of faith.

In August I boarded the Dreaded Bus for three days and returned to school at NTSU.

7. Numbers

(1981-1984)

Denton Recidivist

I found that Pat and Trisha's old house whose garage I'd camped in was now divided into single rooms for rent, with a shared kitchen and bath. So I moved back to the ancestral Fry Street. I decided to get into the mood to study by wearing a vest, and sometimes even a three-piece suit. It matched my predilection for pockets and pocketwatches; I had yet to own a wristwatch. The idea of a machine on my organic grain-fed arm was unbearable. My apartment was across Oak Street from the Corkscrew beer and wine store, and diagonally across from the Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity. It was a real animal house



situation, and I frequently called the cops early in the morning to get them to shut up so I could sleep. They would heckle me as I walked past in my new uniform. "Hey man, get with it, *it's 1981.*" To which I thought, "Yes, temporarily." A few years later they solved the problem by burning down the place.

SSI payments started in mid-November, giving me the princely sum of \$260 a month, plus Food Stamps and Medicaid. So at long last I was financially secure.

I started off with a dual major in computer science and math, with physics on the side. It was soon obvious that computers were extremely boring, and by the spring semester I'd changed to a physics and math double major with extreme pain on the side. Specifically my left side. The hip deteriorated during the fall, so that I went from one cane to two, and finally to crutches. The x-rays showed bone that looked like swiss cheese, and tendons that looked like bone. By late December there were times I couldn't reach my feet, and so could no longer dress myself. Medicaid paid for home health care for 15 hours a week starting in January, which later expanded to 20 hours.

I had a great teacher in physics, Miles Anderson, and really took to the subject. That fall I got a 99 average and he let me skip the final. For the first month in both physics and math there was a very interesting woman, Suzanne, who dropped both classes. She was affectionate and I had high hopes that we could be a couple. But she lost interest after about a week, and in December moved to Austin to study microbiology.

To give you an idea of this time, here is an account from my friend Rick Denton, a temporarily Mormon fellow student I met in this class:

Back in the bad old days of undergrad college—bad because I was too poor to score with chicks, too funny looking for same, and not smart enough to give up—I fancied myself a smart young Turk with a future in engineering, physics or math. Classical Physics, which seems like child's play today, was particularly perplexing in that I couldn't seem to remember anything that was helpful on an exam. I decided to hang with people who were doing well which led me to all the Mormon physics students. This didn't work out because I wasn't smart enough to master the

realm of the Newtonian universe while simultaneously professing native Americans are Jews who built temples based on stolen blueprints from the pyramids at Giza and that reality stems from a man who read sacred plates while sticking his head in a hat. Go figure.

I decided a new approach was needed. Now, back in freshman physics, our instructor had an interesting technique for violating the secrecy that guarded which student got which grade. When an exam came back, he would put the grades up on the board then proceed to hand out the exams in descending grade order. From this secret (wink, wink) method, I made two profound observations: the highest grade in the class was always a minimum of 10 points higher than the next best grades (the latter usually belonging to some Persian guys who sat on the back row), and that first returned exam always went to the same guy who sat center front. He walked with a cane (sans sword), had a long pointy red beard, and had a habit of hiking his eyebrows into two McDonalds arches whenever someone said something banal, bourgeois, or just plain stupid. For example:

“Wow, that last test was a killer!”

Bill, eyebrows up: “Was it? That’s good information.”

“I guess you got the high grade?”

Bill, single arch: “Well, if you think that sort of thing is important.”

“Would you like to study together?”

Bill, twin arches, expression of disbelief: “What a novel idea. That could be interesting.”

That was Bill.

Now, Bill was a little different then than today, as age, maturity, and a pathological need to build radios to talk to the dead will do to a person over time. His maddening ability to remember pages from the Tipler Physics book and quote passages from memory, for instance.

“Y’know Bill, I keep confusing the formulas between momentum and acceleration.”

Bill: “I see. Yes, I think I can help. If you’ll just recall...” looking up at the ceiling “... Tipler page 242, left column, 3rd *complete* paragraph: ‘acceleration is the time derivative of velocity’ ...” ya-de-ya-de-ya.

Ten years after college I visited him to help me solve a problem in thermodynamics and he pulled the same crap. If this is what guys in physics are like, I needed to find a profession with dumber people I could hope to compete with!

The Narrative Resumes

The local macro crowd of maybe a dozen people had regular potluck dinners at Terence and Gwen’s home. I didn’t realized it, but my attitude had become cynical, especially under the duress of my condition. I was starting to make unpopular challenging remarks about the Faith, which strained my friendships.

In November, John Cage came to NTSU to give a concert featuring his HPSCHD, a multimedia piece featuring slide shows and live harpsichords and multiple tapes playing at once and where are my damn earplugs. Since he was macrobiotic, we had him over to our potluck. He made point of mentioning that he was introduced to macrobiotics by John Lennon, although I don’t know how John’s heroin addiction fits into the macro scheme of things. I gave him a copy of my *I*

Ching cycle of 21 solo violin sonatas and also the *Bhagavad Gita* score. He mentioned his own *I Ching* violin pieces that were determined by chance, which I determined never to have the chance to hear. At school I saw an excited young student come up to Cage and tell him he'd found a mistake in one of his scores. Cage looked blankly at the page. Clearly the student didn't quite get the point. You can only make a mistake if by changing the score you make it worse. Cage wouldn't know that he wrote the piece if his name wasn't on the program, which was the style at the time. (I was going to write "wouldn't know that he wrote the piece if he pulled it directly out of his ass", but that would be rude. True, but rude.)

Violin playing was not possible, I was given an old upright piano and crammed it into my small room. From time to time I heard the *twang* of breaking strings, which were very difficult to replace since they dated from the 1930's. John Cage would have appreciated its random self-preparation and autonomous stochastic sound disorganization. I continued work on the *Goldbug Variations*.

I bought a 50-cc Yamaha motorcycle, which looked quite curious with crutches stashed in the back. One day I took the straightest route between two points, without paying attention to what neighborhoods I went through. When I got to the black part of town, kids threw stones at me. When I told my friends they said I was foolish not to know this kind of thing would happen. I never went there again.

Mom married Burns Westman in April. He taught strings in the Oklahoma City public schools, so now she was not very far away. She and Burns drove to Denton for Thanksgiving and we went on to Grandma's trailer in Tyler, in east Texas. I gave my 21 sonatas to Burns, who played both violin and viola, but he never touched them. Over Christmas I visited with uncle David at Grandma's, and played him a cassette of the *Variations on the Grosse Fuge* in hopes that the Blair Quartet he played in would take it on. No luck.

My Mormon orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Steiner, was an amateur violinist, and owned a Strad. Naturally I gave him music as well, but his long work hours precluded practicing. By March, it was clear that I needed my left hip replaced. I had to wait until after school ended in May, which meant an extra two months of severe pain. We tried a series of medications, and I ended up with non-steroidal anti-inflammatories. When one went bad on me, which I knew by spitting up blood, I went to another, eventually settling on Naprosyn. Side effects included sores on my arms, and the rumor started that I was a heroin addict. I asked Dr. Steiner how long the hip would last, and he said about ten years, and I wouldn't be walking at all in twenty.

A major macrobiotic teacher named Lino Stanchich came through Dallas on his way west, and I joined several Denton macros to see him. I was on crutches and planning on surgery. Leno said I shouldn't have the operation, but instead should use sea salt produced by Naboru Muramoto. He said that this salt cured all kinds of diseases, including glaucoma. I didn't tell him that the small amount of salt I used had been from Muramoto for quite some time, and I was only getting worse. He had no clue. This was the last time I bothered to listen to any macrobiotic quackery.

In early 1982, various members of the large Fleet family showed up in and around Denton. (I'll need to use pseudonyms for the bunch of them. Details will be unreliable as I might improvise. Close enough, though.) The Fleets were Irish Catholics from the mid-Atlantic coast. One grandfather served with my maternal grandfather in the Army under Black Jack Pershing fighting Pancho Villa in the southwest desert. The other grandfather was at Walter Reed Hospital when my maternal grandparents met. The father died in his forties. Young Bacchus Fleet, three years my junior, grew up in an orphanage. He and his brothers Harpo and Groucho, and two of

his four sisters, were settling in north Texas. Brother Chico lived on the streets in DC. It took a year to slowly get to know Bacchus, his family, and colorful friends, such as Big Doug Breaker of Chairs, and Ulysses Guzzler of Wine. He made harpsichords, guitars and lutes used by leading musicians, and prize-winning wings for stunt planes up in Ponder, about ten miles from Denton. Not bad for a guy who was deep into the bottle.

Classes went well, although I took a course in linear algebra that was an endurance contest. One of my classmates said that while listening to a lecture, he looked at his sharpened pencil and wondered if he should continue writing notes or plunge it directly into his heart. I can be forgiven my B.

The East West Foundation in Boston collected macrobiotic case histories. In late March, I sent a write-up of my experiences that was highly critical of macrobiotics and specific teachers. The result was much as expected. They were only interested in collecting and printing positive stories. I sent the paper to Rob Allanson, Michio Kushi, and some friends and family members. Non-macrobiotic friends were delighted I was coming to my senses.

I finished the two piano version of the *Goldbug Variations*, by far my longest work yet at twenty-three minutes. Now I started the orchestral version. I bought an old cheap upright that looked terrible but sounded not so bad, and junked the old free job. No more involuntary prepared piano sounds.

Late April, just before the end of the semester, was the annual Fry Street Fair. This started in 1979, but now my house was in the thick of it. It was centered around music performances, put on by the Delta Lodge, a nearby fraternity as a fundraiser for charity. At its peak in 2002, the attendance was 20,000. After that they tried moving it elsewhere, and the last one was in 2007. One band that appeared at these fairs later won a Grammy for a recording made while tripping on acid I provided. That's as close to a Grammy as I'm likely to get unless they start giving them posthumously.

Under the Knife

Classes ended in early May, and a couple weeks later I arrived at Westgate Hospital. Mom came to town to help out for the first several days. After five years of macrobiotics, I was anemic and so weak that while lying on a bed, I couldn't raise my legs. I'd put so little weight on my left leg that all the calluses on the bottom of my feet were gone. They couldn't use gas with my stiff neck, so they used spinal anesthesia. My memory only goes to being on the slab and being turned on my side, but they say I told jokes through the operation. Wish I had a tape of that.



When I came to, things seemed under control. Shortly, though, it was evident that the hospital's policy for post-operative pain relief was slanted on the side of not giving enough Demerol, in the spirit of the national Drug War hysteria. Other patients in my ward were moaning and screaming, and I joined them in time. But the nurses were stalwart. Every shot that gave me a pain in the ass was a pain in the ass for them to give. My roommate moaned so loudly I couldn't sleep the first two nights, and when I did there were Demerol-induced nightmares. After three days they stopped the Demerol shots and started giving me useless pills. The new left hip became infected, and my thigh swelled to about twice its normal size. Dr. Steiner took a hundred-cc syringe with an ominous looking spike for a needle, put it into my wound until

he reached the bone, and pulled on the piston to see if he could extract some pus. He didn't get much except an example of how loudly I could yell. After much IV antibiotics, the infection eased.

At first I was on an all-liquid diet. I'd requested vegetarian fare, but the first meal they brought me was beef broth. I reminded them of my request, and they said "Oh don't worry, it's all just synthetic chemicals, there's no actual beef in it."

After a week of lying on my back, it was time to sit up and start exercising. However, despite the nine units of blood they'd put in me, I lost vision and most other senses when I tried to sit on the edge of the bed. It was terrifying. It took about a week to be able to get out of bed and start physical therapy. This was during the time when HIV was in the blood supply, and there was no test to detect it. I dodged the bullet.

I came home after twenty-seven days of hell in the hospital. Slowly over the summer I healed and got stronger, especially as I was eating more rationally, with some poultry and fish. I was able to take a multivariable calculus course in the second summer session. My teacher was an avid Mormon, and one day I met him in a local bookstore. I decided to have a little fun with him, and picked up a book by Chuang Tsu, a genius of Taoist absurdity. "Pretty good stuff, you should take a look at it," I offered. He looked at me like I was liable to be damned on the spot. Well, they can always baptize me after I'm dead.

Rent assistance came through, and I moved two doors down to a real one-bedroom apartment. By fall I was back in traces with the third semester of physics and more math courses. Things were on the mend. I was making friends, getting great grades, enjoying my work, and putting together a recital for November. By October I could walk without a cane. My anti-inflammatory drugs seemed to work pretty well, and I felt better than I had for years. I wrote up my wave-matrix theory and puzzled my teachers with its convoluted transcendental guesswork. And in late July I started *Symphony No. 2*.



In September, rehearsals started for my concert coming up in November. I got a couple of graduate students to take on the *Goldbug Variations*, a good student violinist to play *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin #19*, and Fido to play *Piano Sonata No. 1*. To leaven this heavy stew I wrote another spoken chorus piece to go along with *Little Miss Non-fat*, this one called *Math Class: or, Does the Zero Have Buddha-Nature™?* Both were compulsory encores, to be belted out by four good friends under my direction, called "Christian Science and the Monitors". Maybe things weren't so bad after all.

Just when things were looking up

Anton ended up doing 60 days starting in mid-October at Lewisburg in Pennsylvania, the same country-club prison where Wilhelm Reich was incarcerated and died, with mostly white-collar criminals. He had a private room in a quiet all-Caucasian section. His contacts and training prepared him for a career in finance.

One of his fellow inmates was George Marquardt, from Oklahoma. He was a high-school dropout who taught himself physics and chemistry after being captivated by an anti-drug film in which a mouse on LSD chased a cat. In 1965 at age 20, he impersonated an official of the Atomic Energy Commission specializing in isotope development, and was hired by a Milwaukee college as

a lecturer in physics. His dream was to be a wizard of chemical synthesis, and so made AZT for AIDS sufferers who couldn't afford the drug. He also made the key component for nerve gas for survivalists in the Northwest. In 1978 he was busted for mixing his LSD with methamphetamine³⁸, which is how Anton got to know him in the pokey. By now he was convinced he was "the Lord of Nanana-Booboo", a sort of human-machine interface region, and was too far out for even Anton to associate with.

In 1991 I spoke with some heroin addicts from Washington DC, who described their excitement when they heard that some China White had arrived in New York that was killing addicts. They all jumped in a car and raced north to try and find some. This was fentanyl, an extraordinarily toxic chemical very difficult to make that was passed off as synthetic heroin. A dose the size of three sugar grains could be fatal. Dealers were carelessly cutting the China White leading to as many as 300 deaths in 1991 and 1992 on the East Coast. Finally in February 1993, DEA agents closed in on the source. Sure enough, it was George Marquardt, who had a very sophisticated lab in Goddard, Kansas. His release date is November, 2014.

Across town at TWU, a woman walking across campus after dark was raped by a black man about 20 years old. He was arrested, and told the detective that he was going to raise hell until they put him in prison for good, and there was nothing they could do to stop him. Even so, they let him out on \$30,000 bail.

I was enjoying my new ability to walk one night just after sundown in October. I'd dressed in white pants, white shirt, white shoes and white jacket, quite the fashion plate. A couple blocks from my home I looked around me and saw ten feet behind a black man, and no one else in sight. There was a very strong thought, "This man is your nemesis", but I dismissed it as paranoia and continued on my way.

A few seconds later I saw a brilliant white flash and a terrible pain in the back of my head. I fell to the ground on my back and saw that I had been hit with a short tree limb in this man's hands. I said "What do you want?" and he said "Gimme your fuckin' money." Out of laziness I kept rather too much of my SSI check in my wallet, and gave him \$100. He swung the stick at my right shin and broke it, then ran off.

People in nearby houses heard my screams and called the cops. The ambulance took me to Flow Hospital, where Dr. Steiner put a cast on my leg. The first person I called was Anshel Brusilow, whose first words were, "Why did you call *me*?" Good point. I got to know a very friendly and capable detective who told me about the rapist out on bail, and I picked his picture out of a collection. They rounded him up and got him off the streets. Meanwhile, I was now in a wheelchair, since my left hip was not fully healed and my right shin was now broken. I couldn't handle the strain of pushing it around since I had arthritis in my shoulders and little strength. Thankfully that only lasted a week, and I was able then to walk with crutches. I never could have made it without my home health aide.

I had to drop out of school. My teachers encouraged me to just take a break and get back into classes in time to keep going in that semester, but this was just one blow too many. Due to the way courses were sequenced, missing this semester would mean adding a year to get a degree. With so many reverses and difficulties I just wanted to do whatever I felt like and enjoy life as much as I could. If things were going to be this hard, I wouldn't be able to hold a physics job anyway on graduation, at least any that I'd seen offered. I just wanted to rest. For several months I had occasional seizures due to the head trauma. My grades were so good that at the end of the spring semester, I got a prize for being the best sophomore physics student, even though I'd only done two of the nine months.

When walking down the street on my crutches, from time to time cars full of angry black men would drive by and give me the finger, threatening me because I had gone to the police. I made sure to stay in places where many other people could protect me from attack. It helped that my health aide was a large black woman who wasn't going to put up with any nonsense.

I asked the detective what the policy was on weapons. There was no way I could use physical strength to defend myself, which is what invited the assault in the first place. He said there was a law against carrying concealed firearms, but in my case, if I had a pistol and had shot the guy, they would have fined me \$140, taken the gun, and that's it. This was Texas, after all. With all my pacifism and peaceful way of life and yoga and devotion and we're all One and all the New Age stuff, if I had a gun I would have shot my attacker. (Maybe losing his testicles would change his life for the better.) So I went to a gun store and checked it out. It seemed like the guy behind the counter really wanted to be assaulted so that he could kill someone. I couldn't pack heat, so I just learned to live with the fear.

A few months later, the detective wanted me to testify at the sentencing of the mugger after he was convicted for the rape at TWU. They didn't bother prosecuting him for my mugging. I went down and did an interview, but it turns out that Texas law forbids testimony by anyone who knew the convicted person directly. The only allowed testimony was by people who knew him purely *by reputation*. Since I'd been mugged, I knew him from his being on the other end of a stick, and thus had no input as to his fate. This was bizarre beyond belief, but that's the law for you. A succession of cops who had heard about the convict got on the stand and were asked by the prosecutor, "What is his reputation?" They all said just one word, "Bad." Somehow the defence got permission to call his mother, their only witness. The lawyer asked her one question, if he'd had any previous felony convictions, and she said "No." He got thirty years to life, but the detective said with his attitude he'd not last long in Huntsville.



Terry Brown and me

My friend Terry Brown was a big help. He was a technical whiz who set up my custom speakers and stereo system from his giant pile of spare gizmos packed away in his apartment, sharing space with his thirty cats. When we drove around town, he would take extraordinarily convoluted routes to try and avoid any intersection with police, although he'd never broken a law in his life—except for his penchant for stopping at green lights. He figured out how to rewire cassette players so that he could play tapes at a fraction of their original speed. The effect was stunning when applied to recordings of his cats yowling. After his untimely death in 1994, his landlord took four months to clear out his belongings, and then found another dumpster load in the attic.

Terry used to play some of the 80 cassettes recorded by the immortal Dr. Peter Beter (yes, that's pronounced "Beater"). These were entertaining paranoid rants including long lists of coordinates for Soviet missiles placed in major American harbors. Peter thought David Rockefeller, Henry Kissinger, and Jimmy Carter were actually dead and were impersonated by organic "robotoids". Jack T. Chick, the most published comic book author in the world, used Peter Beter as a reference for his

evangelical screeds. It was good to know that someone was continuing the tradition of anti-Illuminati paranoia, setting the stage for Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh.

The Show Must Go On; Break a Leg

Cast or no, I had a concert to give on November 18th, my first in five and a half years. We played to twenty people, with no musicians in the audience. Three math and physics faculty members came, which I appreciated. This meant that I worked about six weeks for every person who filled a chair. Now I had a recording I could reproduce on cassettes and show people my work.

Fido had a job playing piano in an upscale restaurant, and thought it might be interesting to insert the mellow, easygoing, practically tonal middle movement of my *Piano Sonata* into his playlist. After he finished the owner came up to him and said “If you *ever* play anything like that again, *you’re fired!*” My first review.

In January 1983 I finished the copywork on my *Symphony No. 2*, and sent a copy to Anshel Brusilow. He left NTSU in the spring of 1982, and now was teaching and conducting at SMU in Dallas. I don’t have his response recorded, but I did have the impression that he would play it in the following year, as he had promised before. He did not. His replacement at North Texas was Geoffrey Simon, a conductor from a rich Australian family. I sat down with him two or three times, and when I submitted my *Symphony No. 1*, he said “I don’t like the cover. I would never play anything you gave me even if you wrote another *Eroica*.” Problem was, I wasn’t Australian. The former crew of sycophants surrounding Brusilow was now replaced by a new crew of Australian sycophants. As it was unlikely that they would hire a conductor from Denton with a bent for Hinduism, I had little chance for an orchestral performance anytime soon. Simon was widely disrespected among the musicians and lasted two years.

Peter Fernberger was studying film and working in a camera shop in New York City when he met Bronwyn Woodhead, from Perth, Australia, in his film class. She already had a cat named Pete, and a snake also named Pete. So he married her. They went on to have four children, none of whom is named Pete for some reason, and still live in New York.

Early 1983 was a difficult time. My anti-inflammatory drugs were not working so well anymore, and my right hip was hurting ominously. I had no prospects for music and was out of formal physics studies, and lost my grounding and friendships in macrobiotics. I was lying in my bed in considerable despair one day with the door locked, when suddenly I couldn’t move. Someone came in the front door, although I couldn’t make out a distinct image of who it was. He? She? It? came over to me, and I thought he was going to beat me. Instead, he put his hands on my abdomen and shot high-energy prana into me, flooding my body. It was a very high experience and all the fear left. Then he walked away, pausing for a moment to take my phone off the hook before leaving out the front door. A few minutes afterwards, when I’d landed but was still sparkling from the energy, I noticed a beeping sound. It was the phone, making the noise from being off the hook. I got up and put the receiver back on the cradle, then checked the front door, which was still locked. There you have it. Whoever it was had left physical evidence that this was not just a dream or mental delusion. But true to the rules of the game, it was not evidence I could record or show skeptics.

Peculiar friendships, spring and summer 1983

I got more familiar with the local counter-cultural scene and made many new friends. One was the remarkable Albert Most. Al had been in the Army during what he described as “an

attack of the stupid". When his remarkable intellect returned he became a Resident Assistant at a dorm at NTSU. His taste was to the exotic, and that summer he wrote a scholarly booklet, *Bufo alvarius: The Psychedelic Toad of the Sonoran Desert*,³⁹ published by Venom Press. This concerned the Colorado River Toad, also known as the Sonoran Desert toad after its habitat. It's a huge toad, the largest found in the United States, reaching seven inches long and almost as wide. *Bufo alvarius* is the only animal that synthesizes a DMT compound, which has to be smoked. (Rumors of the efficacy of licking toads are much exaggerated, and other toad venoms are toxic.) The toad's chemical of interest, 5-MEO-DMT, is powerful but relatively safe, producing a trip only a few minutes in duration. A dose of LSD reaching similar levels of continuum plasticity would mean a trip of ten or fifteen hours, one of its great disadvantages.



After this publication, the school authorities took a dim view of Al's accurate and practical scholarship, and he moved into private digs. Eventually he joined Rainbow Valley, a property north of town settled by various hippie type people in search of a more back-to-the-land-but-not-too-damn-far-away lifestyle. This was a sister settlement to the already-established White Hawk, a community of ferrocement earth-sheltered homes built by their owners starting in the 1970's. I started gravitating to both communities, but my physical condition and low income made living off the grid and building a house impractical. Turns out the buildings at White Hawk were built without properly waterproofing the cement, leading to chronic leakage problems once the buildings were buried. But the idea was very attractive, given the harshness of north Texan weather and the occasional tornado. There was a free-form, improvised quality to the curved walls, and a feeling of community and security with no dependence on the utility companies.

Some of the architecture got a touch exotic out at Rainbow Valley. The most expensive home was a very large underground ferrocement structure, but the owner insisted on having big picture windows. As a result he had one whole glassed wall with the view of a retaining wall about eight feet away. To make sure the view was well worth it, the retaining wall was constructed of expensive redwood timbers.

Several members of both White Hawk and Rainbow Valley used their construction experience and skills for employment. One Rainbow dweller remodelled homes. His own house was ferrocement, not yet buried, and appeared to the casual observer as a rocky bump in the ground, covered with tarps held down with large tires. I saw his van festooned with his advertisement parked in front of the bump, and asked Albert, "Can he make MY house look like HIS? How does he do it? Fire?"

Two local music groups caught my attention. One was BL Lacerta, named after an active galactic nucleus. Their keyboardist and percussionist was David Anderson, son of my physics teacher Miles. I tried to interest them in my music, but they played paintings and other exotic objects. A notable performance was at a home for mentally disabled adults, where they had a big howl-along. It came off better than most stuff from the professors of composition. The other was Brave Combo, which pioneered Nuclear Polka. Again I was interested in submitting something for them, but there was a drastic mismatch what with all the dots on paper I produce and they don't read any of. Too bad.

An exotic couple I started spending time with was Gerald Blow and his girlfriend Carolyn. I'd met Gerald back in the early days of the Infinity food co-op. He had been an advertising art major, the same field as my mother at North Texas, graduating in 1973. He met Carolyn at a Brave

Combo concert in 1980. Gerald made a transition to technical art, and worked for the Institute of Applied Science in the General Academic Building, a faceless brick monstrosity built during the less-is-more architectural delusion. There he dabbled in drawing spuria, inconsequentia and insignifica of geological obscurity for unread papers to be filed back when people used paper for such things.

His landlord kicked him out in 1982 in order to house a derelict son, and Gerald decided “Who needs rent?” The GAB was a big place with a fair number of amenities, and a person could find ways to hang out and keep clean and rested. He took the passenger seat out of his 1968 Datsun 510 four-door sedan, which gave room to stretch out, and parked in imaginative places over the next ten years, such as by the lake, or in an abandoned garage. He also house-sat when friends were out of town. With his stuff in storage and only a PO box as a permanent address, he was set. And Carolyn didn’t run away. He had it made.

Another fellow I got to know about this time was Rodan, a big cheerful fellow from Baton Rouge. He was studying music with a minor in dissipation, and NTSU was the place to do it. I gave him my tape and scores, and he appreciated my music, something quite rare in those days. For the next twenty years, Rodan and Gerald were my audience of two.

Over the winter, things got tense with Terence. For some reason he couldn’t carry on a simple conversation without telling a lie. His whole moral sense was severely out of shape. He decided, without asking his wife, that they should have a celibate marriage, but he would be free to see any woman he pleased. At one potluck held at his home, he left early with a woman, and Gwen had to explain it away as giving her a ride home, much to her mortification. I was anxious to settle the legal issues of Infinity Natural Food Store, since I was one of the many co-op members legally liable for unpaid taxes. Terence still hadn’t registered the store as a non-profit organization, still had no books, and still paid no taxes. I asked him to call a meeting of co-op members, and he said he would, but didn’t. I insisted, asking for the list of members so that I could contact them, and he responded by destroying the list. No one else had access to the bank deposits or records, so members didn’t know how much money was at stake. Finally our relationship broke down completely, as I have never been able to deal with people who lie to my face repeatedly. That’s entirely my fault; had I been a more mature friend I would have found a way to help him recover. Instead, as I had warned would happen, the IRS came to visit the store and closed it down. Terence by then was divorced and lost the house, which belonged to Gwen. He took the store money and assets, and in time became a recluse. The last time I saw him, he was chugging beers in a bar.

I have tried contacting our mutual friends over the years, and no one has seen him for some time, although he does live in Denton. I believe he’s holed up with his mother. It’s a very sad story. We were close friends, and I relied on his guidance for many things. The guided meditations we did were the core to my research in transcendental physics. It saddens me to this day.

In the spring, a brilliant stoner friend of mine who knew more about classical music than I did, but didn’t make any music himself, graduated and went off to China to teach English. Late in the year I got a mysterious unsigned post card from China that read as follows:

Dear Bill, or should I say Mr. Robinson,

After my accident, the doctors recommended contacting people who might help me regain my memory. Your name was on a list in my pocket when they pulled me from under the train. The other name was Klaus Barbie, but he’s apparently not answering his mail. This is

extremely important to me, as you can imagine, especially since they tell me when I'm sufficiently recovered they'll take me out of the hospital and put me back in the prison. That was some shock. Have you ever seen a Chinese prison? Have you ever seen a Chinese hospital?! If you see Mr. Barbie, have him explain things to them. Try as I might, I can't remember where I got a 1945 German passport, the 20,000 marks, or Dr. Mengele's gold I.D. bracelet.

Your friend, I think,
OHO

March 1983 saw the completion of the *Great American Piano Trio*, for violin, cello, and piano. I sent it along to Uncle David, who tried to get a group together to play it, unsuccessfully. On March 15, I wrote *Klampetzlied*, a setting of "The Ballad of Jed Clampett", the theme song for *The Beverly Hillbillies*, in plainchant for male voice and piano. However I never figured out how to get around the copyright problem.



1222 West Oak Street

In April, Anton sent a letter of a type often repeated over the next two decades. It mentioned a business venture he proposed to a banker friend he met in jail for establishing a floating international free state in conjunction with Bernie Cornfeld and Robert Vesco. The banker was now out and moving forward on the project. Vesco tried to purchase Barbuda in the Bahamas in 1978 for just this purpose. Should they succeed I'd have a place for my lab and so forth. It was always like that. I think this one fell through when Anton sent the banker some money to buy a watch and never heard from him again.

Anton was trying to ride the Reagan Revolution as it put wealthy criminals in power. The world of finance consists of very rich people and their employees, many buzzed on cocaine, spending all day conniving ways to use their power to get more power and money at the expense of people who actually produce things. That's what any mobster does as well. As a result of this revolution over the last thirty years the place of finance and manufacturing in the US has reversed. Now finance is twenty percent of the economy and manufacturing is nine percent. Despite his psychedelic start, something had turned Anton's life into the story of right-wing America in miniature. He was the product of public schools and son of a truck driver, who had only contempt for the "rabble" who might object to rule by the super-rich, which he would be one of any time now. Much of the time he lived upstairs in his parents house.

I'd given my violin to Mom and Burns to try and sell, but then had an idea. Since I couldn't use my neck to hold the violin, maybe it could mount on a camera tripod with a side extension. I made the necessary adaptive gear and started playing again. I got pretty well along in getting my chops back, but after a few months my right shoulder hurt like hell and I had to quit. I gave the violin back and it sold for \$2000.

In June I submitted a tape to the two Dallas stations playing classical music. WRR is one of the very rare commercial classical stations, appropriately enough with my initials. The other was KERA, the public radio station, before they joined the shameful nationwide exodus from classical to all-talk format. The old music got old and the new music was intolerable. Nancy Lamb was the DJ, and she was used to hearing from me. They had a contest where they asked listeners

to identify a piece and a composer, and the first caller won. It really wasn't fair, but I entered anyway because I liked the prizes, usually tickets to concerts and plays. I would dial all but the last number before they played the music, so that I had a jump on the competition. Success got to be a regular thing, so much so that during one of their pledge breaks, they said "Now Bill Robinson, we know you're out there, you've been winning lots of our stuff, now it's time for you to pledge." Nancy played the *Goldbug Variations*, my first broadcast.

There's an excellent science-fiction novel named *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, the only novel published during author Walter Miller's lifetime. I heard a radio adaptation produced by WHA Radio and NPR in 1981 and was very impressed. Miller flew 53 bombing missions over Italy, including the destruction of the Benedictine Abbey at Monte Cassino. Traumatized, he converted to Catholicism. *Canticle* is a post-apocalyptic novel that, while not exactly in line with my own expectations, certainly was in harmony with anticipating the end of our current civilization. Miller turned reclusive and suffered from depression. His agent of forty years never met him. The last third of *Canticle* is a testament against suicide. Miller shot himself in 1996.

I decided it would be a terrific subject for my third symphony. Dealing with two publishers, an agent, and a suicidal author no one had seen for decades was an ordeal, and I didn't get permission to write the piece until October. That was good news, as I finished the symphony in July.

With the weather turning horrific as usual, it was time for my northerly vacation. I visited Peter and Bronwyn in New York, and was impressed by how difficult it was to get around the city in my condition. There was much motivation to live in a flat warm place. Next I saw John and Jackie in the Berkshires. John told me he'd done some plumbing for a family whose parents and children all had names beginning with "R", whose father and in-laws made a performing group of seven pianists called "Sevenars". They had winter digs in New York and summer concerts not far from John's place. When I got back to Texas I wrote and sent scores, and they were very friendly, wanting to play my music. I visited them next time I came north in 1985, but they changed their minds.

I went up to Vermont to see Anton, now enjoying freedom with his new girlfriend, a cheerleader from Fort Worth. He seemed more edgy and tense than before. Rose was living on the beach in Hawaii, not wanting to come home, which was certainly something I could understand. I saw Dad, who was living in a better situation after a couple of years in a slum. Then back to Texas and work on my next big piece, *The Great American Piano Concerto*.

Finally in August, I took LSD again, and had a magnificent and therapeutic experience. It was very difficult for me to get energy down to the lower half of my body. While tripping I could consciously funnel energy down, which reanimated my legs. The effect lingered quite some time. Afterwards I learned that there had been clinical studies of anti-inflammatory and analgesic effects of LSD that were quite remarkable, although not welcome by the AMA and of no interest to my doctor.

I decided that it was silly to have so much college credit and years of work with no degree, so I pleaded with my Vocational Rehabilitation worker to sponsor my going back to school for a couple of semesters to get a bachelor's degree in music. Somehow he agreed, reluctantly, and I applied to start in January.



Copywork, fall 1983

The Chapel Chorus of NTSU performed *Little Miss Non-fat* and *Math Class* in November to the enthusiastic and unanimously appreciative audience shown applauding wildly in the photograph.



Back of my head and Chorus

Back to Muzik Skool, 1984

I got back on good terms with Dr. Brown and started tutorials again. My limitations weren't technical but spiritual, and he couldn't help me with that. Only severe austerity could fix what was ailing my music, and that would come of its own accord.

Figuring I should start off with a bang, I had my senior recital on February 9th. I posted a long diatribe ascribed to "Phil LePage, DMT" on various locations around the music school. I will quote the first two sentences, which should suffice:

Early 1984 is truly a dark period in Robinson's continuing mental deterioration. Inflamed by self-lust, addled by drug dependency, crazed by neglect of his works, he has flung his shattered psyche and its attendant, albeit malfunctioning, body into the maelstrom of violence, horror, aggression, and low grades that is the NTSU Music School.



Mom and me before the recital

Rodan was taking a course whose conservative Mormon teacher read this propaganda to the class. He had a hard time reading "self-lust". Dad got a copy and said that Phil LePage didn't seem to like me very much. When I passed the Dean of the Music School in the hall, he gave me a dark scowl. Seeing as how the collected composition faculty would be judging this from the audience, and they'd failed me not that long ago, I gave an interview to a reporter from the school daily newspaper. The headline was "Composer wants music reform: Student calls modern classical music 'sterile'". Ever the diplomat.

On the program was a two-piano version of the *Symphony No. 2*, a two-piano six hands and singers version of *Symphony No. 3: A Canticle for Leibowitz*, and *The Great American Piano Trio*. I conducted all three pieces just to make sure everybody started and stopped at the same time. It went pretty well, and this time I passed. Perhaps they wanted to see the back of me. After many years of my trying to be on good terms, the head of the department, Martin Mailman, came backstage after the concert and shook my hand with a warm smile.

I had the bad habit of writing large orchestral works, largely in the delusion that Anshel would play them. But the only practical way I had to get a performance was by multiple piano transcriptions, which turned out far too percussive and muddy. This was not a good solution. So, like so many other composers, I investigated electronic synthesis. Various keyboards were now on the market aimed at the rock 'n roll crowd that came fairly near viability for live performance. When I checked some out at a local store, I asked about expressive quality, and the salesman said, "No problem, here's the Expression switch." Glad that question was cleared up.

I was not that impressed by sequencing, especially since the computers of that time were crude and cumbersome. However, David Anderson worked in a private studio across town by TWU that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to set up. It had a Synclavier, which was then a state-of-the-art synthesizer that he demonstrated to me. I was duly impressed, but had no opportunity to use the equipment. I got training on the school's ancient Moog synthesizer with the phone jacks and manual patches and so forth, which actually was a good way to learn how synthesizers work. Audio editing was by cutting magnetic tape with a razor blade and taping pieces together, which today sounds barbaric. I was bored to tears.

Figuring I could do better by reading on my own, I prowled the library for a good textbook on electronic music. The only thing I could find was written by a graduate of the NTSU music school and devotee of Larry Austin, the most well-known of the composers on our faculty. Flipping through the book I found nothing of any interest until this line caught my eye and branded itself indelibly onto my frontal cortex: "Composition is the art of convincing waves to become particles, and vice versa." That was several orders of magnitude more spaced out than the common academic definition, "Music is organized sound". How about "Architecture is organized brick"? I closed the book with extreme prejudice and never looked back.

William Latham, longtime professor of composition at NTSU and a good musician, was retiring, and all the faculty members pitched in to help find a replacement. Dr. Brown asked me and a few other students to help him sort out his share of the 120 applications. This was a formidable pile of manila envelopes, all from DMAs, all with fancy recommendations from famous people, and only one of them was a woman. There was far too much material to find out who was a good composer and who sucked, especially since at that level of composition the people who concentrated on artistic content in their scores had already mostly been weeded out in favor of those who made noise and eye-music. I suggested, "What about the woman? That would be a change." They ended up hiring Cindy McTee, and I'm glad they did. She went on to be head of the department for five years, and recently retired to move to Detroit and marry conductor Leonard Slatkin.

Meanwhile Anton was hanging out with a yacht designer in San Diego, broke, but planning on building a 60 foot ultralight sailboat to compete in the 1986-87 Round the World race, with honeycomb decks and depleted uranium ballast and the works. To finance this he was going to sell his old 28 foot Friendship sloop. Also he was plotting with a venture capitalist on something called infinite reserve banking that would get around those pesky regulations that kept us from having another depression since the 1930s, so that he could make millions while not doing anything for anyone. Other people beat him to it.

On April 1, I finished the *Great American Piano Concerto*, which had versions for piano and orchestra, and also for piano with four synthesizers. I was intrigued by the idea of live performance on synths in order to get around the mechanical sound of computerized sequencing. There was a group playing pop and jazz music at NTSU called the *Zebras* headed by Dan Haerle, whom I greatly respected, that was five synths and a drum set. I started writing music for five synths in hopes they would play it, including arrangements of some of my unperformed orchestral music. The result was my longest work to date, the *Art of the Synthesizer*, in three books. It was finally complete in July 1985. The dedication read;

In loving memory of 2(methylamino)-2(o-chlorophenyl) cyclohexanone.

Edward Teller came to school in his big Cadillac complete with bodyguards to award a scholarship funded by a rich John Bircher type. He had the ear of President Reagan and convinced the poor dolt that Star Wars was a nifty idea. Never mind that it required twenty million lines of code to work perfectly the first time without testing, or that countermeasures were simple, cheap, and effective, or that computers would decide whether or not we went to war within seconds. Strategic Defense gave Teller and Reagan and defense industries power, and so it was abundantly funded.

The physics department hosted a talk by Teller, and several of my friends planned a protest. I was the only one of the bunch who had been a physics major, and the department was concerned that there would be a scene. I assured them that it would be OK. After the talk when he took questions, I raised my hand and when it became obvious that it was a critical question, he started talking at the same time to drown me out. My friends unfurled a protest banner. The physics faculty all knew that Star Wars was a scam, but they were polite and said nothing. They knew who paid the bills. From then on I could brag to my physicist friends that I had pissed off Edward Teller, the incarnation of the Dark Side of science.

The Ketamine Universe and Rainbow Tribe of Living Light

I read books by John Lilly, a psychedelic pioneer, and was intrigued by what he called Vitamin K. I did my homework on ketamine, and was intrigued by what I discovered. It was a hypnotic dissociative psychedelic of a very different type than the indole alkaloids that I was accustomed to. A friend knew a person with access to medical supplies, and soon I had a small bottle to try out. This was a pharmaceutical drug that required intramuscular injection, something I had not done. That was a big guardian at the gate. But everything was sterile and much the same as in the doctor's office, so in fact this was not a major issue except psychologically. I was very impressed. It seemed like a drug-induced out of body experience, and lasted no more than an hour and a half at high doses. I almost always did it prone in a dark room. Things were pretty wobbly for a few hours afterwards. My body weight of about 130 pounds was economical, as dosage went by milligrams per pound. There was a reasonable degree of safety in that the autonomic reflexes stayed intact, so even if I blacked out I'd continue to swallow and breath normally. The ideal dosage was well below what was used for general anesthesia, with the psychedelic goal being to stay conscious. There's no way to come close to describing what ketamine experiences are like, but suffice it to say that it was phenomenal, especially when combined with chanting and pranayama. In late spring my small supply ran out and I started looking for more.

Tripping on ketamine was not a casual undertaking for the amateur. Serious and constant use could result in unpleasant side-effects and significant health problems. The degree of physical incapacitation during the trip could be dangerous and had to be part of the plan. Psychonaut D. M. Turner made the mistake of using K in a bathtub and drowned. Marcia Moore, author of *Journeys Into the Bright World*,⁴⁰ died of hypothermia after injecting ketamine in a tree during the winter in Massachusetts. Her book's introduction stresses that ketamine has no harmful side-effects. Indeed, it usually is benign in reasonable doses and suitable surroundings, which can be very seductive. She started using it every day. Lilly warned her that there were dangers involved. This was much like climbing in the Himalayas, in that intangible rewards and physical risks could not be separated.

At the same time, there is significant research into a variety of beneficial effects. Ketamine is effective in treating depression, especially in patients with bipolar disorder.⁴¹ It also is used for chronic regional pain syndrome, postoperative pain, and migraines.

I didn't have any LSD and so did not yet have the chance to see what a combination with K was like, but that was about to change. I had learned about Rainbow Gatherings from my White Hawk friends and planned on traveling with them to northern California for the 1984 gathering. The Rainbow Tribe of Living Light is a non-group of non-members with nobody as a leader or spokesman, with a communal philosophy of sharing that shuns money whenever possible. Gatherings started in 1971 and continued not only regionally throughout the year, but also nationally during the first week of July in a different national forest every year. The peak of the event is noon on July Fourth, when there is silence followed by a group chant of OM. Most of the hippies live in the west, so the California gathering promised to be well attended, with about 20,000 anticipated. The Forest Service was not amused.

The van owner was Bill Stephens, also known as Grey Eagle. He was a WWII veteran from west Texas who had lived on a destroyer for two years, including kamikaze attacks off Okinawa. Afterwards he went to work for the railroads, and took to alcohol. In the early '70s he used psychedelics, marijuana, and AA to completely stop drinking. He was an avid photographer and was a common sight at every Rainbow Gathering making a photographic record of thousands of images. He was building a handsome ferrocement dwelling at White Hawk which a few years later was completed. We became very good friends.

We arrived in northern California within sight of the Nevada border, in mountainous terrain. Our camp was at the base of a steep climb that I had to negotiate on crutches. It was a maximal strain for me, but worth it, and people helped when they could. Rainbow was unlike anything I had experienced. In this environment, love was a priority. People actually were trying to live by the idea that we should love everyone and everything else without condition. I was starved for this kind of experience. With my spiritual practice, with and without psychedelics, I could experience oceans of love and bliss, but then I would land back in the world where everything was conditional. Here it didn't matter that I had no money, no career, and serious physical problems. I had a bellybutton, and that was my ticket to admission. With no one excluded, there was certain to be a mixture of light and dark, and plenty of dramas.

First order of business was to find some acid. I wandered around and asked whomever looked likely, and about the third person directed me to a fellow who sold me a sheet (100 hits). Further inquiry led me to Woodstock, a curious fellow in his mid-thirties from Marin County. He was quite a remarkable character, and well known in Sausalito as an activist in environmental and anti-nuclear causes. In Sausalito he must have been quite a sight, dressed in feathers and wearing war paint in sympathy with the Indians of antiquity, calling himself Shaman of Rainbow Bay. We hit it off right away, and set up a mail-order business on the spot, where I could buy LSD from him at about 50 cents a hit in any quantity, which I'd sell for a dollar. As I had little money I'd have to work up to any major purchases.

My tolerance was pretty high during the gathering since I was tripping about every other day, so that even on 400 micrograms I was only Transformed for about two hours. But during those hours I finally saw what people were talking about when they mentioned nature spirits. Very heavy duty stuff, not in the rational vocabulary, I have no explanations. It was an incredible blessing, and incredibly illegal.

There were all kinds of camps set up, including one by the Hare Krishnas that was a favorite of mine. Amidst all this hair, they were shaved, and with all the hippie sacraments

around, they were squeaky clean from all intoxicants. They were messed up on the Lord. I couldn't get entirely involved as long as they said they had the One True Path, but was glad it was there.

After leaving Rainbow we took a week to re-enter the world and see the sights, including Yosemite and the north side of the Grand Canyon. This was my first tour of the western mountains outside of Colorado, and it was another kind of awakening to see this vast land. I would be back.

Shortly after my return to Denton, I got several grams of ketamine in the mail. So now I finally could explore what the combination of K and LSD was like. This was unknown territory and I couldn't find anything in the literature. In preparation, I asked Bacchus to check on me every hour until he was sure I was OK. Then I put pads all over the floor to make sure that I'd land gently, put on a favorite cassette with others stacked nearby, ate five hits and injected 75 milligrams of K. Now it was a little odd to do everything at once since the ketamine kicks in within seven minutes and the acid peak is in an hour or more. But actually it wasn't a bad idea, as the K was comfortable and relaxing, and I'm always a little nervous on the way up with acid. When the acid kicked in, it was like being sandwiched between two searchlights, one on top of me and the other below. An unimaginable brilliance of light. Turns out that each drug amplifies the other profoundly.

Bacchus came by and knocked on the door an hour into the trip. He heard something like "...Ommmm YIP YIP Ommmmm YIP" and knew everything was OK. He came back after another hour, and I came to the door, hair in all directions, crazed look in my eye, and unable to speak. After another hour, he returned, and again I came to the door, paused, and said, "I...have merged...with the CHRIST." Bacchus found that very humorous and left me to my own devices.

After the first cassette side finished, I decided to get up and turn it over. Easier said than done. The air had a jello-like consistency as it was completely filled with some sort of energy pattern and lots of molecules, and I had to struggle through it to get to the stereo. Unfortunately I chose to play Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, a long oratorio that includes musical depictions of the Ten Plagues of Egypt. Under normal circumstances they do not come to life. Future trips avoided programmatic music.

Sixteen hours later I settled back onto the planet and called the experiment a great success. I got into a cycle of tripping about every two weeks, which allowed me plenty of time to assimilate each experience and avoid physical or mental imbalances. Mostly. If doing ketamine alone, dosages got up to 240 milligrams.

My violin sold for \$2000, giving me some options. I was eager to try and build the Oracle, but knew that it would require many thousands of dollars and years of labor. I decided to try and grow psychedelic mushrooms, which were a higher quality enthiogen than LSD, in order to finance the research. I spent months studying mycology and converted a closet into a climate-controlled, sterilizable growing chamber. Over the door I put a large quilt so that no one would know a closet was there at all. Mushrooms need to be in a narrow temperature range, and they generate heat. So, I installed an air conditioner into a closet next to the growing chamber, and was very thankful my landlord never visited. The chamber also had to have light at the proper times, and careful humidity control. I made a glove box for culture transfers and other sterile procedures, and had a huge pressure cooker. It took months to get everything set up.

Fall of Civilization, 1984 Style

Meanwhile the country was enduring a political spasm of stupidity and greed, one of many to come. Our one-term Democratic representative, Tom Vandergriff, was being challenged in the 1984 congressional election by Dick Arme, the same economics professor so many wide-eyed students had warned me about in breathless terms years before. The Republicans held a campaign rally at NTSU's big basketball arena, and several of us countercultural types got together to protest. The big draw was an appearance by the Vice President of These United States, George Bush.

There were reasons for protests against Bush. He was spearheading efforts for minimum mandatory sentencing for drug offenses, such as those committed by his son George W. during cocaine-dealing years at Yale, or future vice president Dan Quayle who tripped at his fraternity's parties at DePauw.⁴² Under these guidelines, one hit of LSD was punished by five years at a minimum, with a \$50,000 fine. The weight of the substrate was taken as weight of the drug, so that anyone could be charged with possession of hundreds or thousands of hits. In effect, a person caught with any acid at all could be sentenced to as many years in prison as the judicial system wanted, with all of their possessions and money confiscated without due process before trial. Bush was taking the lead from his political mentor, heavy drinker Richard Nixon, who knew that it was effective politics to criminalize an unpopular group without much money that is unlikely to vote for you.

We stood outside the arena with some placards and made a general stink about things. A blonde sweet young thang walked by me and called out, "Communist!" The Secret Service saw that we were heavily outnumbered and no threat, and so left us alone. However a gang of young Republican hoodlums came up to us and started shouting that Mondale was a faggot, that Democrats had no balls, and so forth, wanting to pick a fight. This was politics of the second chakra.

We moved inside and I took a seat in the balcony. Albert Most managed to smuggle in a sign rolled up in his coat, about twelve feet long and three feet high. He and a co-conspirator walked out on the floor in front of the stage where Dick and George were doing their show. Dick made a few vacuous remarks about liberty and guns and the virtues of avarice, and then George came to the podium. He was trying valiantly to be another Huey Long, getting us all fired up for a new fascist state, but his weedy voice and forced mannerisms seemed more like Barney Fife. And then he came to a climax, saying "I want you all to go out and vote for—DICK ARMEREY!" There was a collective gasp, and Dick grimaced bravely. Cut to country and western fiddle music.

Meanwhile, Albert and his friend unfurled their sign and walked around the floor. The sign read, "Don't Vote: It Only Encourages Them." Guards came over and hustled them off.

Only Democrats followed Albert's advice. Dick and George won their elections by wide margins.

I wrote a companion piece to my first two works for spoken chorus, this one titled *No Degree, or Why I Bother With College*, with a tempo marking of *Allegro diploma*. However it was very dark and depressing, and eventually I threw it out. It was about Republicans.

My first semester went smoothly and I had a 4.0 average. The fall semester was more rocky, and I was feeling burnt out on school. I took a course in 20th century music with Cindy McTee, and one day Larry Austin came by to demonstrate a chamber piece he'd written based on the fractal nature of clouds. Fractals were in style at the time, since they promised to allow automation of composition. He superimposed a grid over a photograph of a cloud, and the edge of the cloud determined the melody. He played a tape of an interview on Canadian radio about the

piece, full of big words like *iterate* and *stochastic*. This made him sound oh so smart, which was his motivation for the whole exercise. But I'd studied math, and knew how mundane the meaning was. If he wanted to actually communicate, he'd say *repeat* instead of *iterate*, and *random* instead of *stochastic*. But then no one would be impressed because the ideas would sound stupid if they were comprehended. He had different parts using different click tracks, one of which accelerated while the other decelerated. I noted that using click tracks meant having to play like a metronome, while one of the basic ideas of art music was phrasing, which requires subtle alterations of tempo. My comments were not appreciated.

Another day, our homework was to write a conceptual piece. These are compositions which consist of an artist's statement, or in new-music-speak, "composition that can only exist in explanation, the explanation becoming the transparency through which the composition is experienced."⁴³ Right. Actual performance was frequently impossible or pointless. One example was, "Fill a concert hall with cement." My offering, opus 43, was as follows:

Refuse to perform a conceptual piece, because the concept of conceptual music is so dumb-ass: and refuse to elaborate on why the objection to doing it is so strong, to avoid wasting even more time and effort on something so obvious only the excessively educated don't understand it.

This also was not appreciated. I got a B.

I did a read-through of my piano concerto with a faculty member on the solo part, and two graduate students playing an orchestral reduction four-hands on another piano. The soloist liked it and said he'd play it with the school orchestra. Then I went to the new conductor, Serge Zehnacker, with the score and the recommendation in high hopes. Serge was French, and sure enough, the Australian sycophants that had hovered around Geoffrey Simon were replaced by new crew of French sycophants. A few weeks later he handed the score back to me and brushed me off. *C'est la guerre*.

I was very appreciative that the faculty member wanted to play my concerto, so I gave him all my scores that included piano. Later I learned he threw all my music away.

Finally I graduated in December and got my BM. Martin Mailman, the head of the composition department, called me up and offered me a place in graduate school. The only use for my degree was to go to grad school, and I had no prospects for employment otherwise. All rational considerations would point to saying YES. But I had seen the process where Cindy McTee got her job. I knew that if I spent six or more years getting a doctorate, I then could be one of those 120 manila envelopes on a desk somewhere. Given my complete disgust with new music, and my inability as a card-carrying pompous ass to apply tact when politically necessary, my chances for success in musical academia were nil. So, I said no.

This was the first time in my life any musician had phoned me up to talk about my music, and it would be the last such call until 2006.

8. Revelations

(1985-1991)

Men who leave their mark on the world are very often those who, being gifted and full of nervous power, are at the same time haunted and driven by a dominant idea, and are therefore within a measurable distance of insanity.

–Francis Galton44

A Dangerous Winter

Beginning the previous fall, I had a new health aide, whom I will call “Joe”. He was very relaxed most of the time, and we got along very well. His three-legged dog, Ghandi, was much like his master in that the dog would eat anything that looked like a pill. Joe frequently did not show up on time, I suppose due to his vast consumption of weed, but I was a forgiving sort. He lived with his masochistic girlfriend a few miles out of town in a rented house. It was quite roomy, until they’d lived there awhile and the kitchen completely filled with garbage bags of trash. Joe was an electric bass player, and practiced by putting on a cassette of the music, then taking a nap in front of the speakers. No matter what combination of substances was coursing through his brain, he remained an excellent driver. This was important, since I relied on my health aide for my automotive needs. Joe and another friend were part of what I wanted to be a team in growing the mushrooms. I needed help with the labor and expense, and we would split the crop three ways. However I was the only one who learned the skills, did almost all the work, took most of the risk, and invested all the money. This was not the business plan I had anticipated, but that’s what happened.

Joe’s big garage had a tornado cellar that looked perfect for mushrooms. I assumed that my closet would be most practical for now, but preparing for the future, we built shelves in the cellar and put in lights. This turned out to be a very good move.

My eyes started hurting, and when the pain became severe I went to an ophthalmologist. I had iritis, which is a kind of arthritic inflammation of the iris and other tissues that leaves damage after each episode. Iritis is common among people who have ankylosing spondylitis, and Dad suffered from it in earlier years. I could control it with cortisone drops and dark glasses, and after a few weeks I was mostly recovered. I continued to have periodic attacks from then on, especially during times of stress.



In January 1985, Anton came through Denton with a friend from Waitsfield Vermont named Montgomery. This character had been in the employ of the State Department in Lebanon, among other adventures, but had become an advisor to Yasser Arafat when this was not exactly popular. Thus he was fired, and concentrated on the hash crop in the Bekaa Valley. Not all his stories were credible, but the ones where people were shooting at him rang true. I came to regret their poor aim. Montgomery was an alcoholic who could not hold his liquor, which did not help him blend into the scene in Lebanon. It wasn’t a big hit with me in Denton either. He had been involved with Anton in failed gold mine speculations some time previously. He asked if I had any weed, and although I hadn’t smoked for years I had a spare joint stored in my freezer in case such was needed for hospitality. A few tokes and he was out like a light, which I preferred. As Anton was such a close friend, I showed him and, sadly, Montgomery as well, my setup for growing mushrooms. By this time I was ready to set up my first crop.

After an overnight visit, they went on to parts west. In February, I got a call from Montgomery saying he was coming through my area on his way back to Vermont, and could he stop by with a business proposition? I said OK, so shortly thereafter he showed up at the bus station. Turns out the proposition was for multi-ton hash smuggling from Lebanon to the Balearic Islands off of Spain, which did not interest me in the slightest.

Now Doc Humes was not the only friend of Anton's with serious problems. Pretty much all of his friends were trouble, which made me wonder about my OWN self. Was I the *only* non-psychotic person he knew? Anyway I was all about being hospitable and this was a friend of my best friend, so.... After a couple of days I told him to please not throw up in my wastebaskets, that's what the toilet is for thank you very much. I lived not far from a pizza joint, and he phoned in orders and didn't pick them up so that he could find the pizzas in the dumpster afterwards. He was gone most of the time and out of my hair, and got a job at a local stable training horses, so things went relatively smoothly for a month. One day he rode up on a huge motorcycle he said a fellow had given him, and stored it on the porch. I realized much later this had to be stolen, but I was a trusting sort, and he was taking care of his own transportation needs.

Mushroom growing starts with a *psilocybe cubensis* spore print, which is entirely legal and available through the mail. I germinated the spores on sterile agar in petri dishes, separated pure strains, and inoculated two-quart Mason jars full of cooked sorghum. The mycelium is the underground part of the fungus, and it grew through the grain until the jars turned white, unless they were contaminated. In that case it was much like cooking a nice lunch and letting it decay on a warm moist shelf for a month. I have tried to block out memories of cleaning rotten grain from jars, surely one of the jobs described by Dante for exceptional sinners. But the mushroom itself was a magical creature for which I had tremendous affection. It had a clean fresh smell, and was phenomenally beautiful to watch grow. I'd fallen in love with a particularly amazing fungus. The psilocybin was just a bonus.

Once the grain jars were fully colonized, I extracted the results and spread it through small bales of pasteurized hay held in special plastic bags. When the straw was completely filled with mycelium, I opened the tops of the bags, and added a thin layer of sterilized casing to simulate soil. Then it was time to start cycling the lights and wait for the mushrooms to sprout.

I had finished this final preparation in March when there was a big party out a few miles into the countryside at a friend's home. Montgomery and I got a ride to the party. I sat in the front with two women who were sisters, and Montgomery sat in back with two of their children, including a nine year old girl. After the party had gone on awhile, the sisters asked to see me in a separate room, and said that my friend had tried to molest the girl. I was horrified and said anything they wanted to do in response was fine with me, and I would kick him out of my house right away. I didn't realize that he had stolen my modest stash of fourteen hits of microdot LSD from my freezer, and probably had eaten who knows how many of them, plus drunk a lot of whiskey, plus anything else he could get.

Meanwhile Montgomery was annoyed that a local biker was playing music too loudly for his taste from a car parked in the front yard. He went out and said to turn it down or he'd kill the biker, since he was a tough guy from Vermont. The biker looked calmly at my friends to see what an acceptable response should be, which is to say, how much he should hurt the little punk, whom he outweighed by at least a hundred pounds. Fatal or non-fatal? Gun, knife, or stomp? My friends indicated that Montgomery wasn't worth the trouble, and the biker blew it off.

When we got home in the early morning hours, I was furious and told Montgomery as calmly as I could that he had to leave, I didn't care where he went but this was it. He then went

psycho and backed me up against a wall, threatening to kill me that night. After quite a bit of jawing I talked him down enough so that he didn't attack me, but he did sleep as before in my living room. The next day he moved his stuff to the front porch of the house next door, also owned by my landlord and without a tenant at the time. He threatened to tell the cops about my mushroom closet and acid dealing if I reported his various crimes. From now on our conversations were shouted through my locked door. He never did quite understand where he was, or how my friends would treat him should I come to harm. I recall once the police telling the host of our party, "Don't shoot anybody for a *week*."

This was clearly an emergency. Joe came over and by stuffing his car full for three loads, my apartment became nominally legal. The straw bales were now set up in the tornado cellar. I gathered my courage and called up the detective who had done such a good job when I was mugged. He came over and I told him as much as I could about Montgomery without incriminating myself. I added that Montgomery was liable to tell him stories about me, that I led a private and peaceful life and was obviously not a criminal. The detective said not to worry, they were interested in actual offenders and they wouldn't pay any attention to what he said about me. They were disinclined to let a thief and child molester disturb the domestic tranquillity that I had done nothing to harm.

And true enough, they rounded him up that day and put him on a bus back to Vermont, easiest way to deal with him. This was the only practical solution as my friends were not in the mood to press charges. Montgomery would not be missed.

I contacted Anton and expressed my severe displeasure to him, and insisted that he pay for what Montgomery had stolen from me. He sent a check for \$300 some time later. After returning to Vermont, Montgomery borrowed a car from Anton, and refused to give it back.

I become Auto-mobilized for the harvest

With my beloved mushrooms now ten miles away, I needed wheels. My acid trade had slowly increased over the months, so I could afford the cheapest possible car. I asked around and a friend had a 1962 Volkswagen Beetle for sale, only \$300. A previous conflagration had destroyed the firewall in front of the engine, as well as all the interior fabric and most of the exterior paint. The color was now from rust. Having no firewall made the car exceptionally loud, and I drove with earphones to block the noise. There was no heater, which usually isn't a problem in Texas, except when the blue northers blow down from Canada. The gas gauge didn't work either, so I used a wooden dowel as a dipstick. There was a shade tree mechanic living only a few blocks away who specialized in VWs, and I drove the car across town to his place for inspection and diagnosis. It was hard to start and ran very rough, but managed to get there. Turns out two of the four cylinders were wired in the wrong order. Once everything was working properly, I installed the top of a baseball trophy on the hood. I travelled in Style.

Shortly thereafter, the mushrooms sprouted, and we harvested about three pounds after drying. My pound just covered the cost of my investment, while my partners had pure profit. Growing mushrooms on straw was slow and took a lot of physical labor that I was doing almost entirely alone. I was pondering other, more advanced, technologically challenging methods. The mycelium is just as psychoactive as the fruiting body, but when grown on solid substrates it cannot be separated very well. However, some growers had used liquid



cultures with good results, typically in very small batches. I hit the library and did months of study on aerobic fermentation, and decided to give it a try.

Fermenters are sterilized tanks that are vigorously stirred and have a steady stream of filtered air flowing through a nutrient liquid. The control of temperature, acidity, foam, and above all contamination results in fermenters being extremely expensive and sophisticated machines. This is a good thing, because in addition to making vaccines and antibiotics, the ability to culture mass quantities of bacteria or fungi is a fundamental requirement for biological warfare. If I could make a reliable fermenter of decent size, I could have a harvest every week, freeze-dry the mycelium, and have a reliable organic product of high quality. In addition, the same fermenter could grow a number of molds that produce lysergic acid compounds.



Bubble Jars

So I started experimenting with two-quart bubble jars, making my own sub-micron air filters, and powering the lot with a stack of aquarium pumps. To control the temperature and keep things hidden, I bought two small refrigerators, and persuaded my infrequent visitors to pay no attention to them as they hummed and vibrated. After considerable experimentation I was able to culture the mushroom in the shape of half-inch balls of mycelium in liquid broth made mostly of barley malt. However, to do this without bacterial contamination required an acidic pH of about 4, which destroyed the psilocybin.

Assuming I'd figure out a fix to this, I went shopping for my Monster Tank. Joe and I went down to the local junk yard, where the attendant in charge was a woman I knew from the second violin section of the school orchestra. I said, "I need a stainless steel tank, kinda like that one over there, about yea high and yea wide, like that tank over there, and say let's go take a look at that tank over there." Turns out this was a laboratory scale spray dehydrator, sold for the price of stainless scrap. It cost \$80. This beauty could hold 80 gallons of nutrient and might produce a pound of dried mycelium a week, or if used for lysergic acid amides, enough to supply all the labs in the world with raw material for LSD. Not that this was a practical goal, but it was food for thought.

In other news, Susan Fleet lived in a little house across from Flow Hospital with her rambunctious three year old son. She was great with child as a result of a party where she met a barefoot lad from east Texas where the pine cones grow big. He came through town to say howdy once so I got to meet him. No shoes, but at least most of his teeth. Why didn't I get invited to parties like that?

When the time to deliver came in early April, she was a bit out of pocket, on a rural highway near the Oklahoma border. She gave birth in her car under the stars of the prairie sky, thankfully with assistance from Bacchus and a midwife. While certain that the middle name would be Jacob, she hadn't decided on a first name, and continued to be indecisive for three more weeks. Several of us volunteered names for Baby XJ Fleet. I insisted that the only appropriate choice for a baby hatched in a hatchback was *Otto*. I was outvoted.

I spent the first week of July at the Rainbow Gathering in Missouri along with most of the local hippies, soaking up the love and gentle anarchy and testing the limits of K and LSD



combined with living in a tent and using slit latrines. Rose was there, with several friends who did not like me because I didn't give them lots of free acid without them asking. They could have had all they could possibly use for only a dollar a hit. I was becoming acquainted with Drainbows. Several from the Rainbow Gathering later came to Rainbow Valley. For about a week it was "Hey brother, got a beer?" When the answer became "The store is five miles that way", they left town.

On my return I set to work on hundreds of technical details for the fermenter. I had the cover story of brewing beer, which was faintly believable, and everything was looking fine—until Joe, out of the blue, freaked out. He couldn't stand my coming to the garage every day and working long hours when he wanted to snooze. He told me I couldn't come to his place anymore, and I got another health aide. Everything ended just like that. Just as well, as I was financing the mushrooms by selling acid in order to finance my Oracle, which I hadn't been able to start constructing because I'd been growing mushrooms!

It was good to be rid of Joe. A couple months later, at about midnight, I got a knock on the door. I got out of bed and it was his girlfriend, needing a place to stay for the night. She turned around and waved, headlights blinked and a car drove off. She'd gotten a ride with the *police* from a bar to my house. Joe had hit her and doused her with beer, and she didn't want to go home that evening. I told her it wasn't a great idea to bring official attention to me, what with the hundreds of hits of acid I had on hand, but she assured me she told the cops I was a very nice guy. Well I'm sure they thought so anyway, but still... Later she found another man who dominated her the way she liked and married him.

In late August I went up to visit Dad, and we went to Ferry Beach for a week. Mom and Burns were in charge of the music that summer. I used Burns' violin and with quite a bit of padding to keep it under my neck, performed a little, but it was painful. Also I worked up the middle movement of my *Piano Sonata* and performed it as well, which was the only time I've played piano in public since age five.



If memory serves, I dropped by Anton's parent's house where he was living upstairs. He borrowed \$50 to make a down payment on an elderly Jaguar, which he promptly forgot about repaying. I thought this a bit odd, since he was involved in international banking schemes that kept him on the phone at all hours and unable to leave his room for days at a time.

From Music to Oracle

When the fall semester started, I got together with Dan Haerle and the *Zebras* for a read-through of the first Book of the now-completed *Art of the Synthesizer*. Although it went pretty well, I knew that two of the five keyboardists didn't have the classical training required, so they simply could not perform the piece. Dan sequenced four of the *Golbug Variations* on his computer and synthesizer, and performed the recording on his faculty recital in October. But the results were predictably mechanical and quickly forgotten. I continued to give Dan scores for five synths, including arrangements of my orchestral works, and put in about two and a half years of work into this format. But nothing was ever performed. His players simply couldn't handle it.

In October I decided to suspend music and work full-time on the Oracle. I couldn't possibly do this large project entirely in my home, so I looked for extra space. When I'd first lived in Denton in the 1950's, our family knew a fellow named Richard Ernhart who was very active in

the Unitarian church, mostly to wolf down the food at pot-lucks. When I was a small lad he'd gotten in trouble for severely beating his girlfriend, and since then had been on disability pay for mental illness. He was now in his early 60's and living with his aged mother on Fry Street very near Flow Hospital, next door to where I had formerly lived. From time to time he would stumble into the local coffee shop wearing an ancient sweater holding a poster of Raquel Welsh that he had slobbered over, and leer at the college girls. Just the kind of guy I was looking for to help house my secret project in transcendental physics. Who would suspect? He had a garage and a spare room in the back of the house. I went and talked to him about renting both for my project, and he and his mother agreed to a most reasonable sum.

First job was to clear out a space in the spare room. I noticed that the several semi-feral cats roaming the property used a litter box, which had not been emptied in a very long time. This was intolerable, so I put the box outdoors. Mistake. The cats were used to defecating in that spot, box or no, and continued to do so. Cat piss had already soaked into the floorboards, but now there was a fresh supply. I had to put the box back.

There were two major components in the Oracle that were the major technical challenges. One was the orgone box. This time I made the eight triangular faces, eight feet on a side, of plywood. I did the layering in my bedroom, with 72 layers of aluminum foil each separated by two layers of newsprint. Once all eight sides were done, I took them down to the garage and assembled them. One corner of one side had a triangular hatch so I could get inside. Eventually I would have to put the antenna in a dome.



Crystal and mirrors

Next came the optical resonator. I had a specialist in gem faceting cut a one inch diameter flawless quartz crystal with 144 symmetrical facets. Each one of these facets had a corresponding mirror facing it that mounted on a rod to adjust the distance. The crystal was in the center of an acrylic sphere 16 inches across, which in turn rested on a vibration-free mounting. My first method of mounting the crystal used tungsten filaments from light bulbs, and was exceptionally sensitive to any motion. I bounced a laser beam off one of the facets that went to a dual-axis diode, allowing me to measure rotation down to a millionth of a radian on my oscilloscope. I had the whole thing floating on four half-filled truck inner tubes, but this was inadequate. Any motion would move the floor and set the crystal to vibrate. I bought a small metal building and put it up next to the house, which got me away from the cat piss. Then I could mount the sphere, via the inner tubes, directly on the ground. Now I was down to a little seismic background and tremors from traffic. My sensitive electronics were picking up stray signals from the hospital next door. I'd need a more remote location.

The main house was in very bad repair as neither Richard nor his mother had any capacity for maintenance, or even noticed when things went wrong. One day a very strong wind knocked a large tree limb down onto the roof, causing major damage and a bad leak. They just left it there to rot.

As a social service, one of the local fraternities would come by from time to time and take the mother out for groceries and such. One day I came to work on the Oracle while Richard and his mother were at home. As I pattered along, all of a sudden they started yelling at each other. Richard would scream for awhile, then his mother would take her turn. It was very embarrassing to overhear this severe domestic turmoil. I dropped something, and the noise must have

reminded them I was there. The quarrel stopped cold. Then I realized the fraternity had come to pick up the mother *before the quarrel started*. Richard was all alone in the house.

In another case of delusional pseudo-conversations, our brand new representative Dick Armev held a series of town hall meetings with his constituents. One was at the NTSU campus. I went accompanied by Rick Denton, my friend from physics class, who was Republican but also rational and nauseated by Armev. At this meeting, Armev showed us a short movie starring Lorne Greene singing the praises of the Strategic Defense Initiative. I suppose Greene's role in *Battlestar Galactica* gave him the credentials to evaluate the feasibility of Star Wars. Armev wanted to reduce funding for everything else, and cut taxes for the rich, but then spend a trillion borrowed dollars on a weapons system that had no chance of working. The Republicans in the audience all wanted to talk about money, and how they could keep more for themselves; everyone else wanted to talk about ethics, good judgement, war and peace, education, and the environment. After all Reagan was supporting the terrorist Contra forces in Nicaragua, and James Watt was Secretary of the Interior and had no interest in Nature. Armev's response to my question was, "If you don't like what I'm doing, vote against me next election." That was his style of communicating with his constituents. It worked for twenty years, until he could cash in and become a rich lobbyist due to the Republican K Street project he promoted.

Trip to Denver

In early November I was ready for a break, and decided it would be a big adventure to drive my bug to visit Akanda. Once on the road, I thought it would be entertaining to try the journey on half a hit of my blotter, having never driven on acid before. Then a cold front blew in that created fog and ice from just outside Denton all the way to southern Colorado. With no heat in the car, I crawled into my sleeping bag and managed to operate the pedals through the bag. In the panhandle things were getting frigid, so I stopped in a store for a local newspaper, which I used to insulate the roof and plug the larger leaks, apologizing to the storekeeper for not reading it.

I took Highway 287, a sizable road that goes from Fort Worth to Denver. But as the day progressed I noticed that the road got somewhat smaller, from a divided highway to a three-lane. Then it shrank to a two-lane, then to a single lane, then to a rutted dirt track heading into a farmer's field. The changes seemed gradual and mysterious. I knew that 287 never got down to dirt, after all I'd taken it to Montana with Randy. Evidently half a hit was plenty while trying to navigate, even when there weren't any turns. I asked locals for directions and got back on the main drag.

It was 7 PM and after dark when I got into Denver, with bumper-to-bumper traffic moving about as fast as my car would go. I was on the interstate and wondering when my turnoff would come when suddenly the engine died. I shifted to neutral and spun the wheel to cross two lanes of traffic to get off the road. Thankfully no one was in the way, and much like when my engine threw a rod in 1977, there was an exit ramp at exactly the right spot. I pulled off the highway and onto the shoulder with the last remaining momentum. Physics, along with Cosmic Coincidence Control, was on my side. I was very glad to have had the sharpened reflexes and acute awareness that LSD can provide in a pinch.

I called my sister from a nearby hotel, and got a tow to a shop that fixed the problem without too much fuss. We had a good visit, but I noticed that she had some medical problems and had gained a great deal of weight. This, along with panic attacks, ended her stage career. She worked at a frame shop, and seemed to have given up on making some larger contribution.

1986; I Cultivate Vascular Definition

One part of the Oracle was an assembly similar to electromagnets that had to be surrounded by a sphere at least two inches thick of graphite with a particular conductivity. I bought two large blocks of graphite for a thousand dollars, and set to work hollowing out hemispheres about fourteen inches across. At first I took it to a school workshop, but in short order the whole place was darkened by graphite dust, and I was *persona non grata*. Looking like a coal miner, I took the blocks back to Richard's garage, and started drilling, chiselling, and wire brushing. Every day I would bathe and leave the tub solid black.

Albert Most did interesting research on reversible monamine oxidase inhibitors in conjunction with indole alkaloid psychedelics, which was a mouthful that caught my interest. The Amazonian Indians used DMT-containing plants, but used alone that's a very brief experience. They discovered that by mixing that with an MAO inhibitor, the trip was far longer and more meaningful, and the herbs could be eaten instead of snorted or smoked. This was the mix used in ayahuasca ceremonies. I was especially interested in the ego-dissolving effects reported from the use of harmaline, whose first name was "telepathine". This was legally obtainable as a powder made from wild rue, a Eurasian herb now growing as a common weed throughout the western states. There is a long list of medicinal uses, from treating depression, to killing algae, bacteria, intestinal parasites, and molds. It is useful against malarial protozoa, and is being researched as a cancer treatment.

I had an account with a biological supply company from my mushroom work, and bought some harmala powder. As this was an experiment, Rodan was with me to help out in case of mishap, unlike my usual solo trips. I did a third of a gram of harmala powder, then about an hour later did three hits of blotter. I knew right away this would be intense. Sitting on my bed, I realized I had to either let go and melt, or I would burn to a crisp. So I resolved to go ahead and melt. The top of my body from my waist up gently exploded. I looked down and saw only my hips on down. The rest of me flowed down across the floor, up the walls, and over the ceiling, until the entire environment, including Rodan, was me. There was perfect safety since I was everything. It was a direct spiritual experience. When I went outside, the ego-free state remained. I was the trees, the street, the stars, the works. I could feel a total clarity in my awareness, which had some basis in physiology. Usually LSD is only active in a very small part of the brain, but now it was firing everywhere and on all cylinders. I could feel mild effects for about a month, which kept me from repeating this combination, although there was no impairment. Even I had to come down and go about the business of living in the world.

Working on the Oracle was just as physical as growing mushrooms, and I was feeling exhausted. I got together with my good friend Dan Canales, who was well-trained in physical matters and owned a local gym. I joined and started working out, but it didn't seem to help. I was losing weight instead of gaining. So, I went to my doctor with my complaints. Ankylosing spondylitis is a wasting disease, and in the normal progression of things people get more and more emaciated, weak, and fatigued. To combat this in several diseases, they developed anabolic steroids. They weren't devised with sports in mind. So, he says bend over, and gave me a shot of deca durabolin. My life changed immediately. I had an appetite, I went from 120 pounds to 145 pounds in three months, my strength quadrupled, and I had energy. The effect waned in two months and he gave me another shot. When I worked out, instead of just getting sore and tired, I actually got stronger. When I got a bad cut it would be completely healed in two days. It was amazing. I felt healthy for the first time in nine years.

This was a very clumsy way to do steroids, and after some research I got my own supply and did cycles with very small amounts, much less than weightlifters use. I continued with these cycles for about a year. With so little body fat, when I flexed my muscles they felt like wood. People thought I was a marathon runner. There was no avoiding the negative side-effects, including sudden hair loss and emotional instability, so even though there were so many positive factors, I had to stop. It was hard to imagine the Buddha on steroids. My spiritual development had to come first. With regular weight training, I managed to keep up most of the strength and weight for several years. By the fall I could give up having a health aide, which allowed me to leave Texas.

One of my local hippie friends was a fellow named Peace. He had long black hair and a bushy beard and that I've-had-too-much-booze look in his eye. At his birthday party he blew out the candles on his cake, and in the process ignited his beard. Good thing I was there to put it out, as he did not notice. One evening after dark I was walking towards town and he drove by, and stopped to give me a ride for a few blocks. Foolishly I accepted. I commented on how his car was not keeping in the lane very well, and he said it wasn't the car, it was the whiskey. This concerned me as I had several hits of acid in my pocket. Sure enough, a cop pulled up behind us and flashed his lights. Turns out one of our back lights wasn't working. Peace talked to the officer, who evidently didn't feel like more paperwork that night and told us to fix the light and have a good evening. *Whew....*

Later Peace drew up a proposal for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing happiness for all citizens as a right. I pointed out to him the legal detail that anything that the government can allow, it can also deny and control, so it's better to leave some things out of the law. He didn't follow the argument, and moved with his girlfriend to camp full time in Lafayette Park across from the White House. From there he visited many congressmen with his proposal. This fellow was what our lawmakers associated with the effects of psychedelics, not understanding that his wastage was the result of a potent mixture of alcohol and insanity. Acid was just frosting on the crazy cake.

My correspondence with Woodstock continued to make the Oracle work possible. He was an excellent person to know, very reliable and conscientious. And his blotter was *superb*. For those of you unfamiliar with the trade, LSD is incredibly powerful, with the standard dose being only 50 micrograms. In the lab, sometimes dressed in scuba gear, they dissolve the solid crystal in alcohol, then dip pages of ornately printed blotter paper into the solution and hang them to dry. This is very effective in distributing standard dosages in a stable and easily transported form. Each page is a thousand hits, and I would usually buy a page or two at a time. Then I would divide the page into ten sheets and send them out in the mail. Since it was just odorless paper, it was impossible for the Post Office to detect.

That spring Woodstock told me that he and a couple of friends were driving their old hearse across the country, and would drive through southern Oklahoma. Could I meet them there? I said sure, so I drove off in my Wonder Bug. He said to meet them at an International House of Pancakes at a certain shopping center. When I got near, I saw their hearse, but also a cop car, and they were being questioned. So, I parked in the next lot over to survey the scene. After a little bit I screwed up my courage, since after all I had nothing illegal with me, and walked over all friendly-like and said "Hey Woodstock, what's up?" He said "Boy am I glad to see you!" The restaurant owner had called the cops when these strange hippies were loitering in the lot, and Woodstock told them he was waiting for me. So I told the cop, "Well, I was a little worried when I saw your car..." and he laughed and took off.

Now you got to figure, this is rural southern Oklahoma, and here is a hearse with the inside all tie-died and reeking from days of hash smoke, and three road-weary hippies quite the other side of clean. I was amazed that the cop was so relaxed after I showed up. Woodstock gave me a page of his finest, we had a meal at what was now the Intergalactic House of Fruitcakes, and went on our respective trips.

That was the last time I saw him. In June, his sister Carla told me Woodstock had been in Acapulco wearing heavy turquoise and silver jewellery, and after visiting several bars in a rough part of town was stabbed to death in the early morning hours. He was in Mexico to translate a book about Mexican Indians from Spanish into English. The Mexican police had no interest in solving the crime, preferring to fish for bribes. The murderers approached Woodstock's brother and offered the jewellery for a few dollars. He was 37 years old. Business continued with Carla.

Summer Road Trip

Rainbow 1986 was in Pennsylvania. I had been spending a lot of time with my friends David and Sarah, and we decided to make a grand tour of parts north and east. David was from deep east Texas and had a profound drawl that made him sound, well, *slow*; but in fact he was extremely intelligent and got superb grades in graduate school studying history. He had terrible chronic back pain, and was taking formidable daily doses of Vicodin and Valium since that's all the doctors could do for him. Both David and Sarah were devoted Deadheads and big fans of my blotter. David didn't quite grasp the spiritual implications, but Sarah was tuning in. They were planning on a move to Las Cruces, New Mexico, where David would study at NMSU.

We got in their SUV and headed to the hills. They were big fans of caves, so we stopped at as many as we could find, including Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. They dosed for the tour, but I was afraid of claustrophobia. Very impressive.

Also on the route was a Grateful Dead concert at Riverbend Music Center in Cincinnati. This was the second of the two rock concerts I have ever attended. I played designated driver, being the conservative sort, so I only did mescaline, while David and Sarah did several hits of blotter. A sweaty Deadhead came up begging for water, and as I lent her my bota bag, I wished I had a blowtorch to flame sterilize the mouthpiece afterwards. My months with mushrooms battling contamination, as well as getting sick at Rainbow Gatherings, had left me cautious. Speakers were everywhere, and even with hefty plugs wedged in my ears, the volume was intense. Whenever I had to take the plugs out for a few seconds, the sound hit my ears like a fist. The crowd was the most interesting part of the concert. It was a real community that would be the envy of any musical group. I wished that I could make music for people like this, but I couldn't find a way to make music for anyone at all, and just had to let it go.

There were few cops in sight. After dark I did notice two sullen and hostile policemen walking angrily around the periphery of the happy and well-behaved crowd who were clearly not following all the statutory regulations regarding consciousness. I wore my poncho of invisibility, which oddly enough seemed to work.

On to the mountains of Pennsylvania and the Rainbow Gathering. It had rained for three weeks, and was still raining as we drove up to Rainbow parking. There's usually at least a three mile hike from the trailhead to the nearest part of a gathering site, in order to keep out the alcohol. A little austerity works wonders, but it can be rough with both arthritis and mud. After so many feet on the trails, the muck was a foot or more deep. We pitched our tents in not necessarily the wisest places. By morning, David and Sarah had six inches of standing water in their tent.

They told me they were leaving, and if I wanted a ride to pack my stuff NOW. I'd seen enough and went with them.

After visiting Dad and Anton in Peabody and Beverly, I flew back to Dallas from Boston, my only psychedelic flight, and went back to work on the Oracle. I had enough money to get a better car, if still not a good one. I bought Dan Canales' old Pinto station wagon for \$900. Mechanics who serviced it were puzzled by various tubes to nowhere that seemed to proliferate around the engine, but it was a step up from the 1962 bug. I sold the VW to a Rainbow Valley friend on easy terms with delayed payments that never happened. Made the mistake of signing over the title.

A lot of my Denton friends were going downhill, and I was tired of the scene and ready to move. On coming back to my apartment from New England, I saw that my front window was covered in plywood. Under the delusion that I had stolen his girlfriend, an alcoholic friend threw a cinderblock through the window, and busted the tail lights on my car. Adding insult to injury, he snapped the plastic bat off the baseball trophy on the hood. And in other news, a drunken hippie came to my apartment in the early morning hours, pounded on the door and yelled that he wanted to buy a hit of acid. This was sure to wake up the other people living in the same house. Besides, he knew there was a hundred hit minimum. An artist friend who was on speed and coke thought that the little white specks of dirt in his apartment were alive and crawling under his skin, and he did his best to convince me. Then there was a local schizophrenic deep in his cups who thought he had worked for the CIA. One of his many assignments was to destroy a Russian missile base in the Aleutians by riding a female orca that he controlled with a giant dildo. But CIA agents would periodically wipe his memory clean by pulling over in their van and putting electrodes onto his tongue wired to their car battery, or so he claimed. He was pestering me to teach him how to manufacture acid, even though I insisted that he forget about it and please go get therapy.

This was all highly uncomfortable and dangerous. Not everybody was doing psychedelics for spiritual uplift and enlightenment and avoiding other drugs as I did. I couldn't inspire a change in attitude, since I had my own long list of problems and character flaws. Besides, to do my Oracle experiment properly I needed a different location, and so I started looking for a new home far away.

My favorite magical elixir was the combination of mushrooms and K, although I only did that a few times. Once was during this summer, when I camped with two friends on the shore of a lake in southern Oklahoma. After nightfall the motorboats went home and all was peaceful. I pitched my tent and ate six grams of dried mushrooms. As I was acclimated to such things, it was not so easy to tell if I was off or not unless I looked at the sky and saw that it flattened out and was doing the usual display of northern lights no one else could see. About an hour into the shrooms I retired to my little dome and did the ketamine. Ten minutes later there was a bulge in the continuum over my head. Out of this bulge emerged a probe with various small tentacles at the tip, which reached down and attached to the middle of my forehead. I was sucked out the top of my head while some other being took over my body, and I got a tour of the galaxy. At the time I thought that was it, and somebody else would have to deal with my arthritis from then on. But eventually I came back and shooed away whomever it was and reintegrated into my monkey suit. Another day in the life! There were many like that.

I went out to Las Cruces with David and Sarah, and liked what I saw. The desert was quite a remarkable place. We drove to Carlsbad Caverns and dosed with blotter just before going in. The woman working for the Park Service as a ranger saw us and knew exactly what was up, since she was a Deadhead herself. Carlsbad is an amazing place to trip, because the cave is *already*

psychedelic. The roof looks the same as the floor, it comes pre-melted, and everything has a fractal quality of scale invariance. We also went to the Guadalupe Mountains in west Texas, and White Sands during a clear night with full moon.

Seemed like time to plot a move. I bought an old 18 foot camping trailer and brought it over to the Ernhalts. With some friends helping, I stripped out the inside and adapted it to use with my project. I drilled six inch holes in the floor so the optical resonator could mount directly on the ground. I also bought a small flat bed trailer for the orgone box.

Leaving Denton for Good Part V

In September I rented a U-Haul truck, loaded up my camping trailer, stacked the orgone box sides on my flatbed, and with the assistance of David, Sarah, and two other friends, headed west to Las Cruces. This was quite the dramatic change of scene. Now I was in serious desert, where it rained eight inches that year. In Denton I'd seen it rain that much in an afternoon. I bought an old run-down singlewide trailer and stashed my orgone box in David and Sarah's back yard.

Las Cruces is fifty miles north of El Paso, which is just across the Rio Grande from Juarez. Naturally our first order of business was to get some ketamine, as I'd run out. David and I walked over the bridge to Mexico and hailed a taxi. Usually such a driver will advise his passengers as to the merits and locations of various donkey shows, even if they don't show any interest in that kind of entertainment, but we had a special request. Could he help us find a veterinarian? Veterinary ketamine was the same purity and in a more convenient concentration than that bottled for humans. He took us to a small shop, and we went in and rang the bell for service. A drowsy middle-aged fellow in a tee shirt came out to the counter, and with the help of our driver we asked him if he could get us some K. We arranged for him to buy it in El Paso, where he got his medicines, and we would get it from him there. That way everything was nominally legal and there was no smuggling. We gave him a couple hundred dollars, crossed our fingers, and went back to El Paso to wait at our designated spot. Sure enough, a couple hours later, our new friend came over to us with a paper bag with two cartons, each with ten one-gram bottles. David and I were set.



Las Cruces and Organ Mountains

A few months later, David and I ran low and returned to the same shop. The owner had returned from a vacation to parts south and had a nice shirt on this time. He was delighted to see us and we repeated the transaction. That kind of money for him was a big deal.

Out of curiosity, I went of a Sunday morning to the local Unitarian-Universalist church. The minister was shared with other congregations, and from his late-model white Cadillac he clearly didn't need the income. One parishioner was astronomer Clyde Tombaugh, then 80 years old and the discoverer of Pluto, the largest Kuiper Belt object. The Tombaugh belt was considerably north of his equator. He was a formidably careful and objective observer, and used his skills during three observations of UFOs near Las Cruces and White Sands. The Big Bang and other newfangled ideas were unacceptable, as the old-time steady-state cosmology was good enough for him. I also met Jerry and Pat Cole, both quite convinced in their atheism which made

for many interesting conversations. Jerry was recently retired from nuclear weapons work. They were friendly and generous, and I got to know them and their family quite well.

When I visited New Mexico State University, I saw that the conductor of the Las Cruces Symphony based there was Marianna Gabbi, who had been in my conducting class with Anshel Brusilow. I knew that she was a good conductor, so it was with high hopes that I submitted a couple of scores for her consideration. Some orchestra members would get together at one of their apartments after rehearsals, so I asked Marianna if I could tag along and get acquainted. There were teachers and students there. All of the teachers had trained at major conservatories. The conversation veered into job prospects for graduates, a subject about which I had considerable bitterness. I pointed out the low rate of employment with Eastman graduates. The last classmate I'd met was an excellent horn player in a Boston subway on the way to his job in a stockbroker's office. How was he to find work when there were four hundred hornists graduating each year for three jobs? The students didn't believe me, and the teachers were infuriated. Their jobs depended on students believing that music degrees from NMSU were tickets to music careers. A few days later I asked Marianna if I could come again to another orchestral social event and she almost slapped me. However true my words were, they ensured I would have no more contact with local musicians.

I had channeling sessions with Rodan in 1986, but these were not as clear as those with Terence four years previously. I was worried about needing a mid-course correction. There was no fundamental instrument analogous to a voltmeter or ammeter to measure the energy I was working with, and so I had no way to tell if my various components and connections were functional. The whole Oracle itself was the simplest mechanical detector for prana, which was an enormous impediment. I looked around for people to work with in guided meditations, and tried several local friends, but nothing worked out. One woman I tried this with had several cats, all of whom were crazy in love with her, and I took one of her kittens home. It was wonderful to have Fred Feline in my humble abode. Gerald Blow and Carolyn came by from Denton and took a picture of Fred licking the inside of my nostrils.



I grew tired of my run-down and cramped trailer park. After a couple of months I moved a few blocks away to a more run-down but roomier trailer slum where I could put my camping trailer and orgone box next to my single-wide house trailer. I left Fred in the house trailer as it was towed to the new location. When we got there I saw the door had sprung open, and the kitten was gone, never to be seen again. Distraught, I went to the animal shelter and got a small tortoiseshell female cat who had lived on the streets for some time. Mauser Wowser would be my dear friend and the closest thing I've ever had to my own family for the next four years. She taught me a great deal about love and playfulness and trust and how to chew a rabbit in two with one bite. But I wasn't letting her near my stash of cat anaesthetic.

With my new digs next to the irrigation canal my progress on the Oracle stalled. I could make bits and pieces, but this rough neighborhood was not the location to put it together and turn it on. Besides, I had a break-in where thieves stole electronics from the camping trailer, requiring



installation of thick metal bars over the windows. That was taken care of by one of the neighbors I'd befriended, whose obese wife was a witch. And I mean seriously obese and seriously a witch. Their whole trailer was tricked out with druid and wicca and whatnot geegaws. She tried some of my vitamin K, and predictably had a rather dark experience. The husband complained about not having many friends, and I didn't have the heart to clue him in to how easy

it was to be scared off by the wife dressed in black with black lipstick and black nail polish and satanic jewellery and tattoos.

While contemplating my next step, I decided to write a little more music. So, in early 1987 I looked around for an upright piano. Back in Bruce Hall days, in about 1976, one of my friends was the largest guy in the dorm, who had a huge van and a massive dog. Turns out his family business was a piano shop in Las Cruces, and they were all behemoths. Handy in that trade. So now I had a piano in my trailer, and started work on a completely new version of the *Variations on the Grosse Fuge*, this time for five synthesizers. It took almost three months, finishing on March 22.

During those months, I was tripping every other day. At the end I did ketamine once a day for a week, and realized this was not a good idea. From then on I cut way back, until I did it only a few times a year. However, I did have another untested frontier. At that time, nitrous oxide was still legal, and I saw an ad for a firm in Houston that sold 60 pound tanks. That's a tank over five feet tall holding 550 cubic feet of gas. Although I had never done nitrous before, I sent off a check, and sure enough, one day I got a call from my private postal center saying "Mr. Robinson, your gas has arrived." Yippee! So down I went to pick it up. Then I screwed on a quick-release fitting and got a stainless ball valve, and a couple of very robust four-foot diameter weather balloons. Now I could snap on the valve, throw the lever, and fill a weather balloon in short order. That's enough gas for an entire Mae West movie. I learned that if done for more than about an hour, there's a hangover, so I took it easy. There are plenty of ways to hurt yourself with nitrous if it's done without regard to asphyxiation (yes, oxygen is required for life as we know it) or gas laws (suck directly on a tank and you can freeze your lungs). But I knew enough about biology and physics to stay safe.

Nitrous was fun, but not as deep and rewarding as other methods. I had come close to learning everything I could from psychedelics, which was a lot. This left me with all the things I needed to deal with that no magic elixir could cure. There was no escaping the fundamental reality that whatever goes up, must come down. Even with completely drug-free traditional yogic methods that lead to extremely high states, the same principle applies. The real progress in spiritual life is done down here in the dirt, in the day-to-day mundane awareness we signed up for in the first place. Sometimes you need to visit technicolor Oz quite a few times before realizing there's no place like OM, even if it's in black and white. I had been more of a yo-yo than a yo-gi, and so I cut way back on all tripping.

Life back on Earth

Anton told me he'd set up something called New York Guarantee and Trust based in Amsterdam with his financial friends, and through some sort of machination it had a substantial paper worth that could turn into actual cash any day. It was being worked over by some European

banks and teams of lawyers. If the payday came, I would be able to set up the Oracle in style, with a real machine shop and employees. So, I started looking around for a good site. I visited Silver City, a delightful small town with a beautiful climate in the mountains west of Las Cruces, and hobnobbed with the Chamber of Commerce, touring possible places to rent. Anton continued to anticipate many millions of dollars from this deal for the next ten years, always any day now. After awhile I just said "Sure, Anton," and no longer embarrassed myself by considering it possible.

I continued my weight training at a local gym, owned by a bald fellow who clearly had bulked up way too much with steroids. There was a bank of tall thin metal lockers against one wall in back with a bench in front of it, and I opened one up to change my clothes. On getting up from the bench I pulled on the open door, and the entire bank of lockers tipped over towards me. I immediately got into my locker as it fell over onto the bench. Had I not done that, or had the door closed, the lockers surely would have killed me. As it was, I just got a scratch on my knee and a bad scare. After that, they bolted the lockers to the wall.

In April 1987 I flew to the San Francisco airport to visit Carla, who lived in Marin County as had Woodstock. My only glimpse of the city and the bay was from the car as we drove over the Golden Gate Bridge, which my father saw being built. I stayed a week getting to know some of the characters in that peculiar neck of the woods. One fellow was the long-time editor of a local magazine. He had taken a hit of acid every day for the last seven years, and seemed perfectly fine to me. Another man had several amber necklaces, some with enormous beads, which I complimented. Turns out he worshiped amber, thought amber was the guide to higher reality, and simply would not talk about anything else. Amber was his entire life and center of his constant devotion. He even was amberdextrous. Welcome to California.

Carla rented a beautiful home surrounded by lush vegetation, tall trees, and blooming flowers. It was a relief after my stay in the desert. She had hummingbird feeders out in the yard. The large sliding glass doors were open one sunny afternoon, and I heard a thumping by the kitchen sink, which was in front of a large picture window. This was a female hummingbird who had flown in and was trying to get out. I managed to gather her in my hands and gently carried her outside. When I opened my hands, *zip!* off she went at seventy miles an hour. About ten minutes later I heard the same sound from the same place. The bird was back and trying to get out again. This time she was very tired, and when I picked her up she collapsed in my palms. I took her this time directly to the feeder. I had to lift up her beak and place it into the feeding hole so she could drink some sugar water. When I did this, a male hummingbird flew to another hole on the feeder, inches from my hands. He knew he could trust me. After a few minutes she'd finished drinking, I opened my hands, and *zip!* off she went at seventy miles an hour into the top of the tallest trees.

Marin County was certainly gorgeous, and it was not at all unusual to be a hippie there. Ram Dass lived just down the street in San Anselmo. But lots of people were chasing after a spot in paradise, tired of the places they had already ruined. Ram Dass often quoted the third Zen patriarch who said, "The Great Way is easy for those who have no preferences." Deciding where to live is a big preference. Besides, the California prisons were among the most psychotic and dangerous in the nation. Risking arrest there was even more terrifying than what I had become accustomed to. My parents left California in the late 1940's because it was getting too crowded and expensive, and it made sense to me. I enjoyed my week getting to know Carla and seeing the sights, but had no inclination to move to the Pacific coast.

The more I knew David, the more I appreciated the toll his addiction to Valium and Vicodin was taking on his life. He was frequently severely depressed to the point of threatening suicide, although frequently that seemed like a way to win arguments and get attention. He and Sarah grew both pot plants in their closet and tired of Las Cruces, so they left to find another home somewhere in north Texas. When they left, my own perspective changed, and I saw that southern New Mexico really wasn't the right place for me. I needed somewhere with a rich culture where I had a chance to contribute. Las Cruces jobs were mostly either military or agricultural, which didn't make for much classical music, eastern religions, or exotic physics. Now if I had just tried NORTHERN New Mexico, where they have all of that...but the cold and the expense scared me off.

One day at the local food store in Las Cruces I met Gordon Solberg, who is a beekeeper and ex-planetary astronomer who used to be an expert in weather on Jupiter. After becoming hippified in the peak years of the Nixon Administration, he set up shop near Radium Springs on the Rio Grande. I visited his microfarm, and we paddled for an afternoon down the river in his canoe. He had the most eco-friendly way of live I'd seen. His home was solar heated and very cozy. This was the kind of grounded living that made a lot of sense to me, but that I couldn't quite manage. If I had the strength, beekeeping would be a choice occupation, but there's a lot of lifting involved, beyond my capacity even with the anti-inflammatory bee stings. Gordon and wife Laura run Sun Mountain Honey, and today Gordon fills his internet blogs⁴⁵ with terrific radical leftist and apocalyptic rants just as I would if I weren't busy ranting right here. When you live like they do, there's no avoiding being in tune with Nature, and seeing how it suffers from our abuse.

Big Summer Voyage

I saw that a little boat could connect me not only with the outdoors and physical activity, but with very interesting people and unexpected environments as well. With increased strength, mobility, and endurance, I was ready for some physical adventure. The Oracle project was stalled and business was thriving, so with my extremely frugal living, I had a decent pile of cash saved up. Years ago during my escape to the sea in books I read Hannes Lindemann's dramatic account of crossing the Atlantic⁴⁶ in a Klepper folding kayak. This was a boat I could sail or paddle for an afternoon or a week, on rivers or lakes or the ocean, and it fit in a couple of canvas bags. I got in touch with Eric Stiller up at the Manhattan Klepper USA office and they shipped me a boat with a sailing rig. It was a masterpiece of engineering. I went to work making outriggers with floats made of a truck inner tube I'd sliced and sealed, and aluminum tubing for the crossarms. When all was ready, I stashed 3000 hits in a waterproof bag and took off for the long drive to New England on June 20. While travelling I'd check my phone messages and send off letters as needed to fill orders.

But I didn't go *directly* to New England. I'd last seen Dorothy in early 1983 when she took a break from the Wisconsin winter and family to party hearty in Denton. Nothing like a few years in the temple scene to make you shake yer booty, now is there. She and her husband Arjuna, five year old daughter, and two year old son moved to Charlotte North Carolina. The Rainbow Gathering was going to be in western North Carolina, so I thought it would be quite the treat to introduce them to the Tribe, and let them introduce me to a new part of the country. The results changed all of our lives.

We drove out to the Joyce Kilmer National Forest and trekked into the gathering. Dorothy hadn't tripped since before she joined the ISKCON temple and was out of practice. After we had our camp all set up, she decided to make a day of it by wearing multiple layers of colorful

saris and such, plus her expensive camera, and a bag of this and that. I told her to pack as lightly as possible, since I'd end up lugging her gear, but this was not in her nature. So she ate the blotter and we set out. Sure enough, she started to peel off the layers, handing me her belongings and garb as we went along. Soon I had my arms full of her stuff and she was naked, smeared with mud by other Rainbow hippies. I stashed her belongings out of sight and assumed she'd be just fine. She found a new extended family here, and went to as many gatherings as she could from then on. Among the hippie brethren she now went by Rainbeau Weaver.

After the gathering we returned to Charlotte and recovered from the usual Rainbow dysentery which was particularly virulent this year. While there, I did a channeling session with Rainbeau that went extremely well, and helped me plot my next move to North Carolina. This included a prayer from her spiritual guide that I started saying twice a day. I then continued on my way northeast, following the scenic route through the mountains so as to break down in the hills of rural western Maryland. The mechanics in Versailles (which the locals call Ver-SAYLES) wondered how my car got so far. But then it was fixed and after a visit with Paul, who was building a large circular home of his own design in the woods, and a stop by the Klepper office in Manhattan, I went on to Dad and Anton in Massachusetts.

I'd been talking with Anton about how he could help fund my research, and he said he'd found a way. There was this guy named Wardell who had the inside scoop on a great stock investment, and he and his sister were both putting everything they could afford into it. So I said OK, and put \$2000 of my acid revenue into the pot, plus Anton's brokerage fee. As I was about to leave his upstairs-with-the-rents abode, he mentioned "And I get half your profits." I said "No damn way", and he backed off.

Two or three days later he told me the stock was frozen, could not be sold, and we'd lost the money. Now with the wonders of the internet, I see that James Wardell had been convicted of stock fraud in 1977, with a prior in 1972, and was about to be indicted again just before he died.

The loss was a valuable lesson. It got me thinking about the ethics of the stock market and capitalism in general. Why did Anton and his financial industry cohorts like dictators? Anton even advocated a return to monarchy, although I pointed out it took over a century of struggle and millions of lives to get rid of it. Free markets allocate power according to money, which is incompatible with any true democracy. My spiritual path was showing me in vivid terms the unity of our awareness and the illusion of separation, so why would I sell someone a stock if I thought it would go down? Every transaction seemed to be a result of thinking the other person was *someone else*. No wonder so many brokers were living on cocaine, the ultimate ego drug. This was my first, and last, stock purchase.

After a trial paddle with Anton in Beverly harbor, we drove to Manchester, just south of Gloucester and Cape Ann. There we assembled and packed my boat with camping gear, food and water, outriggers, sail, and a 1.5 horsepower outboard motor. (And don't forget the 3000 hits way up in the bow.) The whole thing loaded was at least 250 pounds. Destination: Ferry Beach and Saco Maine, about a hundred miles away. After I launched, Anton drove my car back to his house to await my return. To avoid rounding the outside of Cape Ann, I took the canal through Gloucester. There, rich jerks in huge motorboats tested my kayak with their towering wakes that reflected off the banks. It was reassuring to see that I could bounce back after complete submergence. I camped for the first night on the northern end of the canal. The next day was a wild thirty mile trip to Portsmouth New Hampshire, where I found a suitable gravel spit for my tent. The next day was blowing about twenty knots in my face inside the harbor. I made an attempt to fight it, but after getting out of the sheltered water I thought better and went back to

my gravel spit to wait it out. My gaff sloop rig and modest leeboards were not extremely efficient going upwind against a breaking chop. Next day, conditions were still rough but the wind was favorable, and off I went. I ventured about four miles off the coast, until I could see the land only from the tops of the eight-foot waves. Passing keel boats appeared hardly to notice how rough things were, just lowering their headsails, but for me it was pretty damn dramatic under my reefed main. Lunch was crackers and a can of sardines, made possible by steering with my feet. In case of bailing or bowel movement I had a handy bedpan, quite a luxury for a kayak trip. By about 6 PM I saw my destination, Kennebunkport harbor, through my monocular. Cruising safely to one side of the Bush family compound, I docked about an hour later after another thirty mile eleven hour day.

When I got on land my first goal was to find a camping store, since my stove broke on the first night. However all the shops appeared to have only stuffed animals and mass-produced big-eye clown paintings on velvet. No wonder the Bushes felt so much at home here. I asked a cop if there was anyplace near I could get a stove, and where there might be a place to camp. He looked at me all suited up in my kayak foul weather gear and face crusted with salt, and said "You're the first real person I've talked to all day." He said there wasn't anything but tourist crap in town. I was out of luck with the stove, but he'd drive me the short distance to a campground. So that's where I pitched my tent for the night.

The next day was moderate and calm in the afternoon, so I motored into Saco Bay and landed at Ferry Beach in the afternoon. Mom and Burns were in charge of the music programs, and Akanda was visiting. She was rather put off by my doing something so physical, and thought it was some kind of sports stunt. She didn't understand the magic and the spiritual aspect until I took her out for an afternoon paddle back in Beverly harbor. There she saw the harmony of the elements at play, the play of light on the water, the rhythm of the waves, and how entrancing it can be. Messing about in boats can be a legitimate spiritual path. She got the drift, although at the price of very sore arms and shoulders the next few days.

I was completely exhausted. Even after over a year of weight training with steroid therapy, and being stronger than I'd ever been, I still had severe arthritis and this was beyond what my body could handle. I got on the phone and bought Bacchus a plane ticket so he could fill the front seat. Even with no camping gear, sailing a two-seat kayak alone is a big job, and with way too much gear it's formidable for a strong healthy man. It didn't matter that Bacchus wasn't experienced on the water. He was healthy, centered, and a good travelling companion.

When he arrived we headed for Maine and did a series of day trips, which was much more practical than an extended cruise. The Maine coast is heavily populated, and it's a real challenge to find places to land and camp. One day we launched in Camden, and saw coming into the harbor a 50 foot schooner of delightful proportions, a spoon-bowed John Alden design. This was *Daphne*, launched in 1929 and owned by Howard Nash, then in his seventies. He'd been cruising in *Daphne* since the forties, based in Lobster Cove on Cape Ann. He and his young crew welcomed us aboard. Howard's father was 100 years old. The old man went missing for three days driving back to Massachusetts. Turns out he hooked up with a retired teacher he met on the way. Sailing keeps you young. But maintenance makes you age, and with a wooden boat of this size, the work is constant and daunting. Howard called the condition "rotational rot"; he'd go around the boat replacing sections of decking each year and by the time he got back to where he started, it needed replacing again.⁴⁷

Towards the end of the day after the wind died we saw a curious contraption entering the harbor using a minute outboard motor. My jaw dropped and I told Bacchus, "That's a *proa!*" I'd

never seen one, because there were only two on the east coast. This was *Kauri*, designed and built by Russell Brown, son of Jim Brown, a well-known designer of trimarans. Proas were invented by Polynesians, and have one long thin hull and a smaller hull always kept to windward. This means that when tacking, the boat has to exchange bow for stern, quite an intricate maneuver. We came aboard and got the grand tour. There was a picture of *Kauri* offshore doing twenty knots hanging on the wall. In 2000, Russ with crewman Steve Callahan sailed his next proa *Jzerro* from San Francisco to the Marquesas islands, and then alone to Australia and New Zealand.



Kauri

A little south of Camden is Georgetown Island. Bacchus had a friend whose mother I'll call Theodora ran one of the finest bed-and-breakfasts on the Maine coast, on a spectacular site overlooking an inlet to a bay. We were living in *style* now. But I had to be on my best behaviour. Theodora was an enthusiastic evangelical Christian, and believed that the King James Bible was the inerrant word of God. None of that Hebrew or Greek stuff would cut it. She was convinced that when Madonna gave a concert in Baghdad, as she was scheduled to do soon, it would signal the beginning of the End of the World and the Second Coming of Christ. Evidently, rock and roll is uncommonly influential. Our conversation strayed to the drug war, and she said that anyone caught dealing acid should be castrated and then slowly tortured to death. I crossed my legs and ate cautiously.

Bacchus and I launched the Klepper to paddle out into the bay, which is exposed to the open ocean to the south. We headed out with the tide from the shelter of the harbor. Bacchus had not been in open water yet, and the wind was lively and from the south. When we got into a little chop he asked how high the waves were, and I said "about a foot." Next time he asked it was with a touch more concern and I said "two feet." When the waves hid the horizon I said "three feet." Finally when we were in open water, we got into six to eight footers, and Bacchus was duly impressed. It was not a good idea to capsize as the water temperature was around 45 degrees.

The Move to North Carolina

After another week of kayak adventures we headed south, stopping by Charlotte to help plot my relocation in the fall. In Las Cruces I packed up my things, sold my house trailer and the Pinto, bought a one-ton bare-bones used GM van fresh from the Los Alamos labs, and got ready to roll. Bacchus and a friend with a car came from Denton to help with the driving. After several crises, including a broken axle on my camping trailer plus a blown tire while fishtailing on a bridge that easily could have turned into a fatal crash, we got the camping trailer to Denton. The orgone box and flatbed was stranded for awhile at a gas station in west Texas when the towing car overheated, but later we went to fetch it. I stored the box at Rainbow Valley under a tarp until I could come back for it next year, and continued on to Charlotte in early November.

I arrived into the middle of an unexpected drama. Rainbeau was divorcing Arjuna after many fights and several beatings. It was not surprising that Arjuna had a martial attitude towards marriage, since he thought he was the incarnation of the Arjuna of the *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavad Gita*. In Hindu literature, Krishna was Arjuna's charioteer on the great battlefield of Kurukshetra. Without the personal guidance of Krishna as his chauffeur, Arjuna was fired after

getting into the habit of locking himself in a room at work and falling asleep. In despair, he took fifty hits of my acid in a suicide attempt. He clearly hadn't done his homework, since LSD is not toxic. It took six months to get his head back in order but he recovered, mostly. Meanwhile I crashed for a month on Rainbeau's couch while looking for a place to live in Charlotte. She was soon involved in another relationship, and her new partner visited for a few weeks.

The chaos was way over my head. The stress caused a severe bout of iritis, the worst I ever had, which required injections of cortisone around my eyes. I looked like I'd been in a bad bar fight. I needed to find a place I could afford to rent where I could park my camping trailer and work on my project. I met a fellow I'll call Dick, who had an evangelical mother and an alcoholic father. He had inherited the worst characteristics from both, although I didn't realize this at first. He was a Southern writer, who with the other local Southern writers thought that being drunk was a traditional literary necessity. Never mind that the writing done by these characters was an occasional article in *Creative Loafing*, the city's alternative weekly newspaper. We agreed to rent an old run-down house on several acres of bamboo and tall wild trees, overrun with poison ivy, an island of Nature in the middle of the city. At \$250 a month it was a steal, although I had to repair 13 missing windows broken out by a local addict, who did not come with the house. I supplied my own wood stove for heat.

On our first night in the new house we held a party, mostly Dick's friends plus the few that I had met in my initial month. The result was raucous with quite a bit of booze, and I was duly disgusted. Rainbeau and I split for most of it. When I returned at 2 AM, as I approached the front door a partygoer lurched out and vomited on the front steps. This was not a positive omen. Then Big Bob, at three hundred fifty pounds the largest of my new friends, announced that he had ignored our warnings and took a dump in the upstairs toilet, which did not flush. Sorry about that.

Dick apologized and said things would be better, but after a week his mooching was intolerable. I told him he had to go, and he refused, even though I had paid his half of the deposit. Providentially, the only other house in our wooded lot went vacant and he moved next door. I was still within mooching distance so it was all the same to him. Foolishly I let him use my nitrous tank, and sure enough he was filling my balloon every day at all hours. After awhile I tired of this and removed the fitting and hid the balloon, much to his annoyance. Soon the tank was empty, mostly due to him, and I couldn't recharge it since nitrous oxide was now controlled. Oh well...

I put my upright piano in the large living room and continued work on the *Munster Variations*. This was a large work for concert band consisting of variations on themes from trash TV of the 1960's. However I never did figure out the copyright situation and eventually had to throw it all out. Most of my daily efforts went into the Oracle. I bought a small lathe and set up a room as a little machine shop and set to work making parts for the more difficult components. But little could be done until I found another place to live out in the countryside. This was a big challenge since rural properties usually are for sale, not rent, and my budget was tight.

Continuing to tinker with my Klepper, I was not satisfied with my outriggers. The sections of inner tube created a lot of drag. I decided to try a radical solution, and put ballast on some serious leeboards. I bought a large wok, and melted twenty five pounds of lead in each of two weights that took the spherical curve of the wok. That way the lead was streamlined from all directions. I made two oak leeboards three feet long to hold the fifty pounds of ballast, and fixed a line to their trailing edges so I could pull them up. Then I took the contraption with my kayak and sail rig to Lake Norman just north of town. To avoid sinking if I took on water, I filled the bow and stern with bags of styrofoam. Launching was a nightmare, since the leeboards weighed about as

much as the empty boat. But once on the water deep enough to put the leeboards on, the thing sailed like a dream. It was especially good upwind, even with a gaff main that was not all that well cut. It felt like a very big boat. But there was no way to make it safe without sacrificing all the storage room with floatation, so this was the only time I took it out.

In June 1988 I drove north for the fifteenth reunion of my Andover class, where as always I was the outlier in every statistical category, especially success. My classmates had gone on to be doctors, brokers, artists, lawyers, bankers, and such, with wives and kids and houses. Evidently they were taking things a lot more seriously than I was. One alumna from Abbott was the rich, blonde, and beautiful Marcia McCabe, a soap opera actress who married actor-turned-producer Christopher Goutman. He had played many roles, including a cross-dressing psycho in *Texas*. Marcia played Sunny on *Search for Tomorrow* for eight years, including a graphic rape scene that took an entire episode with minimal commercial interruption. Later she played Alicia on *One Life to Live*. After Alicia died, Gabrielle switched Alicia's dead newborn with that of Brenda's, hoping to save Alicia's husband Michael the agony of losing both his wife and his son (and wanting Michael for herself). Later on *Another World* she played Bunny Eberhardt, who was a loan shark and hit-woman hired to off Jake. He appeared to die in a car crash, but was really suffering from amnesia, and thought HIS name was Bunny Eberhardt.⁴⁸ You can't make this stuff up.

I had a friendly chat with Christopher and I asked him "Ever think of the millions of hours people have spent watching soap operas instead of doing something productive?" He said "Goodbye, Bill", turned on his heel and walked away. I guess I'm not cut out for Hollywood. Besides, my teeth aren't straight.

Not long after, in rural North Carolina, I was eating in a local seafood restaurant with a friend. We started a conversation with a fellow at another table dressed in overalls with no shirt. He said he'd recently left prison. One day someone on his cell block changed the channel away from his favorite soap opera. He stabbed the guy seventeen times. Since no one testified, he got away with the murder. Do you like the flounder?

While in Massachusetts, Anton introduced me to another one of his friends, a college lad named Peter. His audiophile father had a used car lot, which I came to regret.

On returning to Charlotte, Rainbeau's life had settled down just enough for us to do another channeling session, which was very valuable. This was to get guidance for both of us, not just for me and the Oracle project. We did these sessions in the same way as I did past life readings. First she would lie down comfortably, and then I'd talk her through a systematic relaxation process. After that she would expand a bit out of her body in various directions, come back, then expand further, come back in, then expand out many feet in all directions. Then she would float up to just beyond the atmosphere. At this point I could converse with her spiritual guide. It's a lot more involved than that but this is the general idea. In this session, it was clear that I needed to be more regular in my spiritual practice, become more pure and devoted and loving, and not take things so lightly. Also, there was karma involved in the acid trade, and my situation was becoming more dangerous. I was advised to buy no more after August. There was specific instructions about the Oracle and what to look for in the rural property. I shouldn't trip anymore, except for mushrooms, since LSD and other psychedelics would make me too centered in mental activity.

In working on the Oracle, and should that work then on the theoretical side of transcendental physics, I was asking to make a leapfrog in the progress of our knowledge. There was debate on higher planes about whether this was a good idea or not. Since I didn't know the

physics behind the device, if they didn't want it to work, a small misdirection would be all that was needed to make the Oracle completely non-functional.

The national Rainbow Gathering was in east Texas, way too hot and buggy for me during the first week of July. So I settled on the North Carolina regional gathering where I met many local hippies. One was Wave, the mother of a six-year-old whose father visited from time to time. In August, she went through a tough spot and needed emergency housing. I had a spare bedroom upstairs and offered it to her for a little while, with the understanding that her child would NOT come over. My place was an extreme example of kid-unsafe living quarters.

Wave moved in, and trouble commenced in short order. I am a very orderly person with regard to my refrigerator. Now when I opened the door, rotting food fell out on the floor. And sure enough, along came the boy. When I greeted him, he ran over to me and punched me as hard as he could right in the testicles. When I yelled he broke into hysterical laughter. Something was wrong with this picture.

I figured it was time for my final acid trip, not having dosed in a year. In my elevated reality, I saw the need for corrective action, and so I put all of Wave's belongings out on the lawn, ancient tofu and fetid fruit included. It was hard on her, but sometimes being Mr. Nice Guy is a lot like being punched in the nuts. Sometimes it's *exactly* like being punched in the nuts.

By pooling all my resources for my final purchase, and including what I had on hand already, I had 30 kilodoses on hand. Now came the challenge of what to do with them. My customers were living hand-to-mouth, and none were in a position to buy a thousand or more at a time. So I had to front the large majority of the acid to get it out the door by the end of the month. This led to all kinds of complications, and after all the dust settled I barely broke even. Sometimes I was lied to, other times there were genuine difficulties where someone else needed the money more than I did. It was a relief to be free from the trade. It was a lot of fun while it lasted, but the danger was extreme. When I was active, I had a reasonable social life, and quite a few friends. When I wasn't selling acid anymore, my phone was silent. With all the work I was putting into trying to serve in music and fringe science, the only thing that people really wanted from me, or later hated me for, was psychedelics. Everything else was of no interest. This was not what I had in mind.

After much searching, I found a property for rent in the little town of Cleveland, an hour's drive north of Charlotte, home to about 600 people and 800 cows. This was across the street from the farm owned by Jim Graham, long-time Secretary of Agriculture, who wore a button reading "Thank your for smoking". Every once in a while I'd see his limousine drive by. There was a lot of money to be made peddling deadly addictive drugs.

My new place was 19 acres, with three or four cleared. There was a mobile home that had been made permanent with a roof and enclosed porch, a large garage, chicken coop, workshop, and fruit trees, all for about \$250 a month. It looked perfect for the Oracle. I moved in late October.

As my funds trickled in from my last trades, Anton recommended that I help his friend Peter start up his own used car business using spare space on his father's lot. This way I could have a completely legal income and be able to continue work on the Oracle, which was entering a particularly expensive stage. Once again I trusted Anton, and once again, it was an incredibly stupid move. Anton and Peter paid themselves from my money for labor in fixing up the cars, and the rest went to Peter's dad for rent. Over the next year, I lost most of my money. Legal business was not at all as trustworthy as what I had become used to in the acid trade.



Kayaking in 1988 included Cape Ann and Cape Cod in Massachusetts, four lakes, a river, and Cape Hatteras in North Carolina, and finally a kayaking symposium in Norfolk. There I was inspired to send off to John Lockwood out in Washington State for his kit to build one of his mahogany single kayaks. In Charlotte, I met Jim McGuire, a photographer and member of the local arts scene who tracked me down as he had heard of my kayaking exploits. He

knew of a great place to explore, so the day after Christmas we drove down to Cumberland Island. This is the largest and southernmost coastal island in Georgia, right on the Florida border. On the inland side is a major nuclear submarine base, but most of the rest of the land is wild. We paddled and camped for three days. Afterwards, Jim was inspired to buy his own used Klepper.

1989 and Life in the Styx

I met interesting folks through kayaking. One was Way Wired Willy, a thoroughly legal pharmacist who knew Jim and also had a Klepper. We went to another kayaking symposium in Savannah in early April. There I showed off my Paddle Pal, which was my own development of a rig designed by Kybor Tylor allowing disabled people to kayak. I used a mast and a boom with shock cords coming down that clipped onto rotating bearings in the middle of the paddle. This took all the weight of the paddle and arms, but minimally interfered with paddling. I continued to refine the design for the next two years.

Another fellow I met was Lou Kandl, a doctor in the nearby town of Albemarle who was also building a Lockwood kayak. It was interesting to hear tales of the medical profession from the other side. Like most, he got started out in the field to be of service healing people, but medical school and the materialist norms of the profession forced him to be basically a mechanic for bodies and a lawyer against insurance companies. He wanted to retire, but felt an obligation especially to his older patients.

And yet another paddling friend, David Bolduc, was a podiatrist, but facing similar problems as Lou, got tired of feet and insurance in his face, and quit. He and his wife Mindy cruise in their tiny sharpies designed and built by Matt Layden, taking their 15 foot *Little Cruiser* seven times across the Gulf Stream to the Bahamas.⁴⁹ Matt lived on *Little Cruiser* on Cape Cod for three years before selling it to Dave and Mindy, sailing it from the Bay of Fundy to the Exumas. If you ever feel claustrophobic, consider spending three New England winters in a box three feet wide, four feet tall, and fifteen feet long. Dave and I sailed my Klepper in the southern part of the Outer Banks in October, which was fine on the water. But there was seventy miles of salt marsh directly upwind, so when we hit the beach, it was a full sprint to get the tent up and hustle inside. Then after killing mosquitoes that had followed us in, we could have a little peace. The screen door was colored brown from the swarms of mosquitoes.

We launched from the Cedar Island home of Mark Balogh and Sam Carveth, who ran Balogh Sail Designs.⁵⁰ They made state-of-the-art sailing rigs for canoes and kayaks, and naturally I bought two sails and their inflatable outriggers. Jim McGuire did the same. Mark

sailed with Russell Brown on his first proa in 1977 in the Caribbean, describing one passage as “going *up* Niagara Falls.”

One day I did an experiment in navigating an unnavigable stream. In January I parked my van eighteen miles from home on the South Yadkin river, and a friend drove me back home. The next day, which was right about freezing, I donned my wet suit and took my whitewater inflatable kayak down to Third Creek, which ran on one end of my property. In I went, not exactly sure that I would emerge at the other end. And in fact, there were many downed trees I had to choose to go either over or under, plus a large dam. A golden retriever spotted me and decided to come along for several miles just for the hell of it. I did eventually get to my van by nightfall. This may not have been the first trip down the river, but it was likely the last, since Hurricane Hugo came over the area in September and tore down thousands of trees.

While doing all this, I realized that I was fussing with gear more than communing with Nature. There was always some refinement, one more piece of engineering that would make the experience more spiritually rewarding. But here was another variety of the same philosophical problem I had with music, psychedelics, science and meditation. I was stuck with accumulating a list of experiences, hoping that this would lead me to that place beyond the beyond that I'd tasted so many times. But no matter how long the list got, it was still an accumulation of desired experiences, which would never end. I could point five degrees higher to windward after a week's work on new leeboards, or write a fugue in eighteen voices, or spend years building the Oracle, but this was still just *stuff*. How do you get to that place where there's nowhere to go? What do you study to get beyond thought? I had problems with periodic depression that lasted two years. Stopping steroids may have contributed to the moodiness.

In early 1989 I designed and started building a geodesic dome to house my orgone box, which was still in Texas. Art imitates life, and in this case I neglected the entire idea of a foundation until after the dome was built. I put up a mast and had a cable with a winch, which allowed me to build the dome from the top down. As soon as I finished the very top, I pulled it up the mast and started work on the next lower section. Finally



I had the frame for a five-eighths dome, eighteen feet tall and twenty four feet in diameter, dangling from the mast on uneven ground. I piled up some cinder blocks on the low side to drop the dome down on, but this was very shaky. Next I coated the dome with blue poly tarps, then nailed triangles of green canvas over that. With the new windage, the dome blew off the cinder blocks during a storm. I figured out how to lash everything in place and staked down the dome as if it were a tent.

Finally the dome was secure and waterproof, and I could go fetch the orgone box from Texas. I drove through Nashville, where Mom and Burns had relocated, and Grandma was in a nursing home. She had been in remarkably good health until recently, but now at age 95 was strapped into bed and badly demented. This was the last time we met. She had been very kind and generous to me and it was sad to see her suffering. She died in January 1990. She showed up in a meditation shortly afterwards, in a dark cloak. I said “You are beautiful as in the days of your youth,” and everything lit up.



In Denton I got Groucho Fleet to help me drive the flatbed trailer back to Charlotte. When I got to the box, the tarp had long ago rotted in the sun and blown off, exposing the box to the elements and ruining everything. I hauled the box back to Cleveland anyway. Groucho was showing signs of a short temper. In time his life proceeded to unravel. Efforts to save his sorry hide indirectly cost me four thousand dollars, to no lasting positive effect.



Orgone Box at Rainbow Valley

Before rebuilding the box, I mounted pivots on opposing vertices so that I could suspend the box from the peak of the dome. To make these custom pivots, I found a WWII Navy vet who lived in town who had a machine shop in his garage. He did a great job welding them together. As he was a devout Baptist, he invited me to his church that was very close to my home. I was sampling the religion of the people who made the laws and ran the prisons. In the service I attended, the minister spent his whole sermon castigating Voltaire for his atheism and for exposing the sins of the Catholic Church. The story was that as Voltaire died, he recanted his errors and screamed as he felt the flames of hell licking at his feet. This is what God does to people who write satire and poke fun at the bishops who build grand estates for their mistresses. There was a retired judge in the congregation who at first sight clearly thought I was going the way of Voltaire.

I took the mast out of the dome and put in the ruined box on its trailer. After screwing on the pivots and attaching a cable to the two opposing vertices, I winched it up so that the box was suspended from the peak of the dome. I had to get under the dangling box to take care of some details, then left for a minute to check my mailbox. When I walked back to the dome, the top had caved in under the stress, and the box crashed down on the trailer. Had this happened a few seconds earlier I would have been crushed. Even if I had only been pinned, it would have been fatal in that remote location with so few visitors.

I straightened out the crumpled peak and reinforced the whole dome with an icosahedral array of extra struts, so now it could take a great deal of weight. I had to rebuild the box from scratch for the third time, with a better design. It took months of work, but finally I had all the eight panels completed and with help of some friends, we screwed the thing together. It weighed 1200 pounds, and could float above the ground and point in any direction directed by one hand.

I interact with the locals

Country life requires physical labor, and I was unable to cut my large lawn. One of my neighbors was a very muscular black man named Johnny, and he was happy to have the job. He mowed about half of the lawn, then split, saying he'd be back shortly. Shortly was three weeks. I looked around for another solution. He had an elderly riding lawnmower and sold it to me for \$150. I was barely able to ride it, as any rough terrain was very painful on my joints, but this was not an issue for long as on the first mowing one of the axles broke. Johnny took the mower back for repair, and that's the last I saw of either the mower or my money. Johnny's wife was a former crack addict from Philadelphia, trying to straighten out her life here in the countryside. I was aware of the low success rate for such things and was not surprised when I visited their home one evening and found only their two small children. They said their parents were out partying, and they were hungry and asked me to feed them. I went home and fixed sandwiches and returned. They were very unhappy with me, since they assumed I would take them out to a restaurant. I did

not go back again. Johnny was a handy person to know, since one of his friends was talking one day about breaking into my house. Johnny talked him out of it. He saw that I didn't have a girlfriend, and said he knew a black woman who would give me a blow job for ten dollars, which he described in graphic detail. I declined. From time to time Johnny would come by and ask for money, but eventually he stopped since he never got any.

I learned to be friendly but wary with the local black population. One night a very well-dressed black woman with a beehive hairdo came to my door. She said she had run out of gas and was looking for a station. I gave her some gas from a can I kept in my van, and told her where the nearest station was. The next night she came back, asking for gas. I opened the door just a crack, told her I couldn't help her, and locked the door. Later when I told some friends about this, they said this was a standard trick. The woman would keep the person busy at the front door while someone broke into the house in the back. Thankfully nothing happened this time.

My next door neighbors ran a large dairy farm. I'll call them Steve and Tess. Steve showed me around the barn and the various facilities. He raised veal calves in cages too small for them to turn around so they could not exercise, and fed them iron-deficient food for fashionably pale meat. Since the calves were accustomed to sucking on teats, he indicated that they were also adept at satisfying male sexual needs. Now I see why they called it "animal husbandry."

Tess was a rotund woman with a phobia about snakes. A picture of a snake, or mentioning snakes in a conversation, was enough to send her into a panic attack, so I was careful not to mention the S word. They had no reticence about the N word, however, and used it without any embarrassment when talking about their black employees. As a card-carrying liberal I found this bizarre but kept my mouth shut.

Tess did like her booze, something very common in the dairy business, and from time to time would go on a bender. One day she went missing, and eventually led the cops on a long car chase through the countryside. She was in and out of quite a few ditches that afternoon. I learned about it when I heard squealing tires and sirens going past my house. I came outside and found muddy tire tracks in the road weaving from side to side. I followed them over the bridge crossing Third Creek, and saw that she had driven into the freshly plowed field across the road and stuck in the deep soil. The sudden stop had turned her sideways, and with her considerable girth she was jammed between the steering wheel and the back of the seat. The cops and her husband were trying to talk to her, but all they got was a stream of garbled invective. They bundled her up and sent her to a rehab center off in the mountains. Steve divorced her, but would visit every once in awhile, since as he put it, "pussy is pussy". Better than an anemic calf, I suppose.

Despite the example of the local farmers, I took great stock in the value of gardening to get in touch with Nature, and as a profound spiritual path. I read about the work at Perelandra up in Virginia, and Findhorn in Scotland, with reservations. The previous occupant of my property had ruined the soil in the space he cleared for a garden, and most of the topsoil had eroded away. What was left was weakened by chemical fertilizers and pesticides. I did my best to plant a modest garden, but as before, the physical labor was far beyond my capacity. Eventually the garden yielded a few okra and a healthy stand of six-foot weeds. From then on I planted it in clover and let the woodchucks feast. They were fat and sassy and terrorized my poor cat.

An old friend from Bruce Hall days at NTSU, Fred Robinson (no relation), joined the Air Force and was the composer/arranger and sometime bari sax player for the band at Warner Robins Air Force Base in Georgia. The band came to Brevard, out in the mountains, for a music festival, and I went to see them and hung out with Fred for a couple of days. As a result I started

plotting music to write for his musicians, which would preoccupy my musical efforts for the next year and a half.

A Fateful Decision and Serious Weather

By August 1989, the investment in Peter's car lot had lost \$15,000 out of \$18,000. With the Oracle expenses mounting, and with no acid revenue in a year, my reserves were running low. My options were few. While I was productive with my own projects, I was working at my own pace with plenty of naps and breaks, far more than would be tolerated on any normal job. My kayaking was possible with adaptive gear and help from friends. I knew I couldn't handle any full-time employment, since I was in worse shape than the last time I'd tried. Even if I could find something part-time, I would lose my SSI, rent assistance, food stamps, and most critical of all, Medicaid. With my pre-existing condition, I couldn't get health insurance, and wouldn't be able to afford it even if I *could* get it. My medical expenses were considerable and lack of health care was not a realistic option. If I tried to live only on my SSI check, I would have to stop the Oracle project, sell my boats, and do very little travel. I might even have to give up living in the country and move into a slum. The option of going back to school would require stopping the Oracle, and would take a year to arrange.

After much pondering, I decided that the Oracle project was too important to give up, and made the fateful decision to go back into the acid trade. Despite the difficulties and dramas, the marvellous experiences I and others had with LSD were profoundly inspirational. The laws were clearly born of ignorance, fear, and greed, and it was important for someone to stand up to this stark injustice, even if there could be dire consequences. My associates were overjoyed and things picked up where they had left off in short order.

In early September I visited a couple we'll call Bud and Petunia I'd met at Sam's Knob. They lived at Carolina Beach, on the southern end of the North Carolina coast. Bud was a stocky and quite strong fellow, the kind I liked to have in the front seat of my Klepper. Petunia had cerebral palsy and was confined to a wheelchair. That was another kind I liked in the front seat, and we dropped her in for a delightful paddle around the harbor. There had been a hurricane offshore a day or two previously, and serious waves pounded the barrier island. I saw fishing boats slamming against them as they headed out the narrow cut between two islands, and plotted my next adventure. Consulting the tide charts, I saw that if we arrived at this cut at 9:30 PM, we would go out with the last of the ebb tide, and could turn around and come back in with the beginning of the flood. Tide currents are maximal when the water is low since the channel is small. Paddling at night is especially wonderful, and this night there was no moon. The only light would be the eerie green glow from the tritium in my compass.

So off we went, me and Bud, who had no experience in a kayak. In my haste I neglected to bring life jackets, which added a certain edge of danger to the enterprise. When we got to the cut, I noticed that we were heading out to sea very fast, much faster than one would expect at the end of the outgoing tide. Soon I realized that this cut's current was delayed from the overall tide by as much as an hour, and that we were stuck in something like a four knot out-flowing current. Meanwhile the hurricane swells were breaking against the shoals all the way to the horizon, much steeper and closer together than normal because they were against the current and in shallow water. We were swept uncontrollably into eight foot breaking waves that hit us about every five seconds. The froth at the tops of the wave had little buoyancy, so we were totally submerged up to our heads with every breaker. Bud was thrilled at the adventure, since he didn't quite get how serious the situation was. We were continuing to head out to sea, and would continue to do so

unless we could turn around and go along the shore to get out of the rip. But we could not afford to be caught taking the waves on our beam, since that would certainly capsize us, especially since Bud didn't know how to brace with his paddle.

Bud could just barely hear me if I shouted at the top of my lungs. I told him we'd have to take a wave on our port bow quarter, then turn as fast as possible to take the next wave on our stern quarter. This was complicated because our rudder was out of the water a good bit of the time waving uselessly in the air, when not flailing in the foam. We took a wave at about 30 degrees away from straight-on, then in three seconds we managed to turn to take the next wave at about 45 degrees off our stern. Then we straightened out. Now we were hit by waves we didn't see coming that hit me in the back of my head.

We had to figure out where we were. There was no moon and I could see only a couple of lights on radio masts which told me nothing. The cut was invisible. I figured there was a longshore current due to the waves hitting at an angle, and deliberately aimed to miss the cut by a wide margin. That way I knew which side I would be on and would turn in the correct direction. Eventually we got in safely. I never forgot life jackets again.



Hugo Approacheth

of my small fruit trees toppled over, but no big deal, I pushed them back up and staked them down. The dome did fine in the 90 mile per hour winds. The power and phone were out, so I couldn't phone Greg, but I assumed he was still up for the trip. Right after the winds died I started down the road.

Turning the corner to head through town on the way to the main road south, I saw that this was going to be an entirely different kind of day. The biggest tree in town had fallen on the biggest house in town, cutting it in two. The roads were cluttered with fallen limbs, and it was quite difficult to get by. When I got to Interstate 77, only one lane was open in either direction due to downed trees. Somehow I got into Charlotte a couple of hours later, still determined to hit the coast. When I got to Greg's neighborhood, the residents were in the streets with chain saws clearing away large oak trees. Greg was not at home, but after some searching I found him doing his bit as an amateur street lumberjack. The damage was astounding, with some trees not just uprooted, but also turned upside down, with the roots now in the branches of other trees. Word from the radio said that the National Guard was stationed along the coast with loaded M-16s to shoot looters, so our trip to the coast was out. However I did have my boat and all my gear, and there was plenty of water around. With everything torn up and Charlotte alone having lost

Another paddling buddy was Greg Shanding, who worked in one of the big faceless banks in Charlotte. To keep sane he fished from his canoe. His basso profundo voice is the lowest I've ever heard. He really should sing Russian Orthodox chants, although he's Catholic. I saw in the weather forecast that Hurricane Hugo was going to hit Charleston with 140 mile per hour winds at 4 AM on Friday, September 22, then go west and peter out. We made plans to hit the coast in my Klepper right afterwards to play in the big swells over the weekend, this time with life preservers. I packed up the boat and camping gear into my van the night before and battened down the hatches. Hugo didn't obey the forecast, and instead went due north after Charleston, going right over Charlotte and my little town of Cleveland only six hours later. A couple

100,000 trees, there wasn't much else to do. So the next day we paddled down the Yadkin while it was eighteen feet over flood, trying not to get tangled in the treetops. *That* would have been foolhardy.

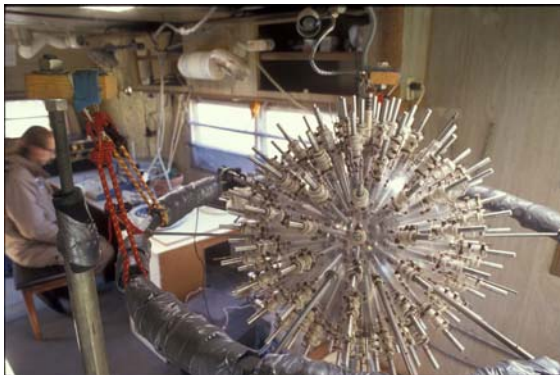


Ralph

Each December for the last nine years, the Creative Council for Psychotic Awareness put on the Tacky Party for the alternative artistic oddballs who kept Charlotte weird. To make things manageable, only a thousand tickets were sold. The venue this year was a vacant warehouse, suitably decked out in day-glow monstrosities. The mascot for the party was Ralph the Barfing Dog, who was immortalized in neon. Big Bob, of upstairs toilet fame, was the main character pulling it off, and also one of my best local customers. A fair proportion of the attendants were enjoying my blotter thanks to his intercession. I went wearing my neoprene wetsuit in costume as the Human Prophylactic, which

resulted in multiple pinches by buxom babes. At this party, Way Wired Willy met Alice, his dream date, starting a relationship culminating in marriage a year later, just in time for the 1990 Tacky Party. There they had a wedding cake made of Twinkies, certainly a food for the ages, or should I say a food that *never* ages, as would be appropriate for a lasting confluence of lives. Alas, the 1990 party was the last of its kind as the logistics became overwhelming. Ralph had lost his last lunch, and Charlotte got a little more normal.

Right after Christmas, Jim, his friend Brent, and a fellow named Paul joined me on another trip to Cumberland Island. This time we took both my Klepper and Jim's, rigged with my paddle pal gear. When we got there it had just snowed for the first time in 75 years. We launched at about 1:30 PM off of snow and ice. After dark, sea ice formed on our decks. We continued paddling for twelve hours until we found just the right place to stop. (Last year, Jim and I had not been so selective, and landed in mud full of sharp oyster shells that reached up to our waists.) Next morning, my thumbs were completely inoperative, and if it weren't for my adaptive gear I would have been unable to paddle any further. I couldn't use a zipper until the next day, and my thumbs hurt for six weeks. We did the sixty mile circumnavigation of the island in five days, with four dolphin encounters and some very brazen wildlife.



First trial of the Oracle, in the control trailer Assembling the box in the dome

1990—Eenie, Weenie, Chilli Beanie, the Spirits are About to Speak

The Oracle was nearing completion, and I devoted all my time and energy through the winter to finishing it up. I'd done some channeling with Gary Weinreb, one of the first people I met in Charlotte, which gave some final course corrections. But the situation was insecure and unsettling. Finally the day arrived on April 1, when I could assemble the entire elaborate apparatus—a couple of tons of gear—and throw the switch. Gary came up to witness the grand event.

Nothing happened.

I spent the next week trying every combination I could think of, but finally had to admit defeat. Rainbeau was able to do a reading a couple of weeks later that threw a lot of light on the situation. I can't go into details, but it was clear that the project was premature. As a result, I was not given guidelines that were entirely correct, nor did I know enough of the underlying physics to tell the difference and design around the mistakes. Our current position of ignorance and separation from full awareness of other planes is not distinct from our separation from extraterrestrial civilizations. It's quite deliberate and necessary, and part of the whole drama of how and why people come here to have human lives. When the time is right, these constraints will fall away. I give a more detailed analysis in my write-up of the Oracle project, where it is more appropriate.

The best method I knew at the time for selfless service was my work on the Oracle, to make a demonstrable interface to other planes and intelligences, and to be one of many working to bring science and religion together. This will happen in time. I didn't do it to have yet another attachment, so time came to let it go.

Things could be worse. David and Sarah moved to Witchita Falls after leaving Las Cruces. David got more and more psychotic, probably from his pain medications, and wanted to fly to Switzerland and die of a heroin overdose in Needle Park. Sarah divorced him. David had poor eyesight and was frequently in car crashes, and a few years later finally had one that was fatal.

The Rainbow gathering was in Minnesota this year. I'd never been there and knew the canoeing was grand, so I gave it a thumbs-up. After inquiries among the local hippies as to possible riders, one was referred to me, and late in June a young woman was dropped off at my place. All her camping gear and food was stored in paper bags. I informed her that we were going into the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes, which would imply a certain tendency to humidity that would destroy her bags. I showed her my nylon stuff sacks, waterproof backpack cover and dry bags for kayaking. But she insisted that she didn't want to do things the way other people did. I detected possible trouble ahead. This was not a mistaken impression. She told me she was seven months pregnant by a man now held in a Florida insane asylum. *OK*, I thought, I'm willing to go with the flow. She most certainly did not know about my stash of a couple thousand hits, and I aimed to keep it that way.

I put her tofu, soy milk, and yogurt in my ice chest and stowed her other things as best I could. It was great to have company and the start of the trip was quite cheerful. I did all the driving in my one-ton van, bought the gas, and had her do the navigation. After we got out of North Carolina and away from my usual routes, I noticed that we were repeatedly missing turn-offs. It seems she didn't want to follow rules and preferred to use her intuition to know which exit to take. Maps and directions were used by everyone else, and she wanted to be unique, free from the paternalistic paradigm. My good humor faded.

After the second night we were nearing our goal, when I detected a certain unpleasant odor. Her food containers had ruptured in my ice chest and spoiled all of the contents. Even with

my Buddha-like yogic equanimity, it was a trial to keep from yelling at her. Finally we arrived in the northeast corner of Minnesota near the Canadian border, and with considerable relief I unloaded our gear. Her bags had ruptured, spreading almonds and various other foodstuffs into various nooks and crannies of my van. I continued to find unwelcome evidence of her unique packing style for a few months afterwards. Had our association continued much longer, a local insane asylum would look pretty good after all. My sympathies to the father-to-be in Florida.

It was a splendid gathering. I had been tense and upset about the latest failures, as well as with chronic isolation from women. With the loving kindness of my friends and a solid dose of mushrooms, I relaxed, stepped back, and got things in perspective. Especially after the traumatic drive north.

Rodan was at the gathering with the usual contingent of Denton-area hippies, and we continued on after the gathering to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area straddling the border. Highly recommended, although canoes really are better suited to the local conditions than kayaks. After a couple of nights camping we traveled along the northern coast of the Great Lakes. In Ontario we toured the Kanawa International Canoe and Kayak Museum, run by Michael Ketemer, who had fled a career teaching clarinet at the conservatory in Toronto. They had some 500 boats, including original Inuit and Aleut-Russian kayaks of driftwood, bone, and sealskin.



Michael saw the hair halfway down my back and said the inspections at Customs entering the US could be intrusive. I mailed all but a handful of my LSD first-class to myself across the border. In the event there was no difficulty. The customs officer was crew-cut and curt, asking me about all the piles of bags in the back and the kayak on my roof rack. Finally he said he'd taught kayaking, liked my gear, go on ahead and have a nice trip. I said we certainly would.

Rodan and I showed up tired and bedraggled at my Dad's apartment. I took Rodan on several paddles, and then we visited Anton upstairs at his parents. He was convinced he was the world's most powerful credit broker, and evidently some others thought so too for some reason. He had been abroad, hosted by the rich and powerful of several nations. Rodan thought he was racist, delusional, and greedy, which allowed him to fit right in with the people who run the world. Anton showed us a copy of a prospectus for "New York Guarantee and Trust" that showed a complete list of fabricated financial information. He'd learned how to do this from Ivan Boesky, whom he admired. This was the last time I would see Anton in person.

After paddling with Rodan in Martha's Vineyard, I was exhausted, and we headed back to North Carolina. I took two months to recover. In August Anshel Brusilow told me he'd be coming to North Carolina and would stop by for a visit. He'd give me a call when nearby, and told me the three days he'd be around. During those days I hung by the phone waiting for the call, canceling all other activities. He forgot all about it, and never said he was sorry. That's what my life in music was like.

The local pharmacist knew me pretty well from the several medications I took, and one day in the fall she introduced me to Susan Davies in a little shop she ran on the main street in Cleveland. Susan was a very warm and friendly presence who was a real light in the community.

She in turn introduced me to her husband Ray, who ran his own small construction company and was building their home in the woods next to his parents house. Through them I found the interesting people living in this neck of the woods, including Rev. Diane and Fred Corlett. Diane was the rector at the local Episcopal church. In the sermons I heard, she never mentioned Voltaire or the fires of hell once, which I found refreshing. Finally I found neighbors who were educated, cultured, and friendly. I started having real social interactions not requiring long drives.

In November, Anton phoned from the Philippines, where he'd been for a month. His friend Ronnie Marcos, evidently the adopted son of Ferdinand, was coming to the States. Anton told him to come by my home to help get the Oracle working. Urban legend had it that Ferdi had adopted Ronnie to keep the KGB from kidnapping him to use his psychic powers. Anton said he saw Ronnie demonstrate mind-reading and telekinesis. One example was that he could make calls on a toy phone by using his hand as a satellite dish to make the connection, as he did once to get a visa to the US. Anton said he vibrates at a high frequency that annoys the ears, and that he would come by my place after seeing George Bush. I said no thanks, having already experienced his friends. Later, Ronnie predicted a world war between the US and the Soviet Union starting at 2 AM, March 16, 1991. After that date, he fell into obscurity. Meanwhile, Anton kept up the chase after 400,000 tons of Japanese gold buried during WWII...

Also in November, Gerald Blow and Carolyn came to North Carolina. Gerald had starred in the title role in *R. Crumb Comix* directed by Johnny Simons in a presentation by Fort Worth's Hip Pocket Theater. Simons had noted Gerald's remarkable resemblance to the eccentric



R. Crumb & G. Blow

underground cartoonist, resulting in thespian excess of appropriate proportions. Now the director was doing another production of the play with students at Duke, and wanted Gerald to come give his critique. As an extra bonus, Leonardo da Crumb Himself was going to be in town for rehearsals. Gerald and Carolyn picked me up and off we went to Durham. Crumb was every bit as odd as I'd hoped for, constantly sketching with his technical pens. We had a fine dinner together and traded a few acid stories. Crumb and his wife Alice were moving to France, which he described as "womb-like" and far more comfortable for his delicate sensibilities.

For Christmas, while Anton was dining with the prime minister of Malaysia, Jim McGuire and his new wife Lou introduced me to rural South Carolina culture. We visited her parent's home in the little town of Salley. Seems the local gentry, including the local judge and prominent lawyers, thought Hitler was a liberal, and that slavery was a pretty good economic model. At Christmas dinner, talk went to guns, and I realized that *every male at the table was packing heat*. Afterwards they invited me to stay the next day and try my hand at firing a machine gun, but instead we packed up for three days of kayaking in the rain at the mouth of the Edisto River.

1991, *Enjoying my Freedom*

Bad news from Warner Robins Air Force Base and their struggle against Jazzless Communism in defense of our Haluci-Nation. Fred said the new Commander, a certain *Major Sapp* (no kidding) who conducted the concert band was not so receptive to music like mine. Fred got him to agree to a read-through of the *Munster Variations*, but couldn't persuade him to actually look at the score before the rehearsal. This was one of my more intricate pieces, and the attempt to play it on sight was catastrophic. Commander Sapp said the piece "wouldn't play with the Blue Hairs", and that was that. There were two jazz band pieces that Fred could have conducted, the big *Popular Music of Planet X* and the short *For Those Who Fell: A War Memorial for Jazz Band*. But the musicians couldn't manage *Planet X*. By contrast, *For Those Who Fell* was simple, slow, and quite tonal, and thus my best shot at performance. But when the Gulf War looked likely, the Pentagon came out with a directive saying they didn't want any music that would remind audiences that Americans die in war. That would be bad for business, which was exactly what I was hoping for. I had also sent him a saxophone quartet arranged from *Art of the Recorder*, which his friends couldn't quite handle. In addition there was a woodwind quintet and a brass quintet, but when I phoned those musicians directly they didn't know who I was, even though Fred had given them my music, which lingered at the bottom of their slush piles. After a year and a half of labor, once more all was lost.

With no Oracle and no musicians, I was on my own. My big plan was to sell just enough LSD to buy electronic synthesis gear, and thus be able to make my own recordings. After that I would quit the trade for good. It seemed my great good luck that Big Bob found a buyer who wanted 10,000 doses a month, and so in the spring we started supplying him. I figured by fall I would be set. I was still digging out of the hole from Anton's investment advice, and from spending \$20,000 on the Oracle, which left me with very low reserves. True, I had the occasional nightmare about arrest and living in a jail cell, but I dismissed these as *negative waves*.



It came to me that I could use the same adaptive gear that allowed me to paddle kayaks to play the violin. So, I rigged a mast and a boom that fit to a folding chair, and used a shock cord clipping to a sling on my bow arm. Mom reported that Burns was deteriorating, presumably from Alzheimer's, so that I could borrow one of his violins. I mounted it onto a camera tripod much as I had done ten years previously. It took several months to get my chops back, and before I was ready I gave a truly dreadful performance at Diane's Episcopal church that Easter. But by summer I was playing almost as well as I ever had, and performed Bach's *Chaconne* and one of my sonatas in Charlotte. I took the opportunity to make my own electric violin, the first of several. To have something to play, I re-edited my old set of 21 sonatas, trimming the fat and recomposing some weaker sections, until I had a set of 16. However by June, my right shoulder

hurt quite a bit, giving me some sleepless nights.

Meanwhile on the domestic front, my landlady wanted to sell the property. Since I couldn't buy it, she found a fellow seriously red of neck to buy it. He pulled a house trailer into the field next to my home, and by summer I was paying rent to him. Attempts to tell him what I was doing in music or science were entirely futile.

Rainbow was in Vermont, so I lined up my New England friends for my summer adventure. Before leaving, I placed the third order for Big Bob's customer, so that it would be delivered after my return. I packed my mahogany single, Klepper double, sailing gear, and my violin with a battery and portable amplifier. Jim McGuire and I drove up together with kayaking in mind.

At the gathering, I found a flutist with classical training, and we performed the first movement of the Bach *Concerto for Two Violins* for a small group of hippies and a lot of trees and nature spirits. This was a piece Bill Schneider taught me at Andover. I found myself growing away from the Rainbow scene, and wondered where I would find a spiritual community to take its place. What I had to offer was of little value to the community, and I was not learning much from them.

Afterwards, Jim and I drove to show off my boats for a day at a small craft exhibition on Lake Champlain. At that point I was doing my varnishing with a toothpick, and my single was nice and shiny. After some banging around Camden harbor, Jim and I camped for a couple of days, eating mussels off the rocks and lobsters off the boats. I chomped down a couple of grams of mushrooms for my last trip. Phenomenal.

We went down to Danvers to see Dad, which was my final visit with him. At his age and with shaky health, I always assumed that any visit might be the last. Anton was hobnobbing with the nabobs in Hong Kong.

Jim and I went for a paddle across Beverly harbor, around Salem and over to Marblehead and back. On our return we noticed a crowd on the pier at the end of Salem Neck with a television crew, and some small Coast Guard boats. Later we watched the local news and saw ourselves paddling on the TV as background to a murder story. Thomas Maimoni had gone sailing with a woman and come back alone, saying she'd fallen overboard. A lobsterman pulled up her body with a weight belt around her waist and an anchor around one foot, at a spot marked with an "x" on Maimoni's chart. The lobsters had eaten the corpse down to the bones in six days. Maimoni got life in prison.⁵¹

After dropping Jim off at the airport, I drove to see Bill and Sedgie Schneider at their home in New Hampshire. Bill had been fired from Andover due to mental illness, and had stopped playing violin altogether. Now he carved wooden ducks. Although I was dismayed and frustrated with my musical failure, he was overjoyed that one of his students took music so



Pygmy single in Hockomock Channel

seriously and that his teaching had continuing importance. Then on to see John and Jackie and her parents, and from there home. As I drove onto my street, I noticed a sheriff's car coming in the other direction. That's odd, I thought; I've hardly ever seen any law enforcement in this area.

I was working on a cabin for the Klepper, including a Plexiglas dome, so that I could sleep and camp on board, and even attempt offshore passages. It was near completion. I am most fortunate that I didn't get a chance to use it in the wild, as it was a most elegant technology for drowning.

Big Bob assured me in dulcet tones that everything was fine on his end. The latest package of 10,000 doses was due Monday July 29, but did not arrive. I called Fed Ex, and the operator transferred me to another line, where I was assured that it was en route, although delayed. I called again Wednesday July 31, and they said it would arrive by 4 PM. At about 2:30 a very friendly Fed Ex courier knocked on my door, and with a big grin gave me my envelope. There was another fellow back in his truck inspecting the scene. I unpacked the contents, divided the ten pages into hundreds as usual, stuck them in my freezer, and went back to doing the copywork for my solo violin sonatas.

At 3:30 I heard a loud banging on the door and the words "Police, we have a warrant, open up." I looked behind me through a window and saw a car driving on the lawn to my back door. I set down my pen, and did not write another note for eleven years.



With Ray Davies in the Klepper Schooner

9. Judges (1991-1996)

Peace officers inform me that I've been naughty

A crew of burly men entered with all the paraphernalia seen on TV, in case I was armed and dangerous. Clearly they had done their homework and were prepared for barbed sarcasm. One of them told me to put my hands on the wall; he emptied my pockets and slapped on handcuffs. Another went directly to my freezer and liberated my blotter and a small bag of mushrooms left over from my growing days. I was in a bit of emotional shock, so I really didn't respond much at first. This was not sufficiently entertaining to one cop, who started regaling me with stories of how the English used to torture and execute felons like me, in rather graphic and gory detail, trying to get me all scared and thus get his rocks off. But I just sat there.

I gave them a tour of my place, including my dome and Oracle project trailer, trying valiantly to explain how this was an attempt to interact with other planes. A photographer from the *Salisbury Post* took photographs of the odd contraption. I also explained my music composition, but they had long ago decided I must be insane, so attempts to communicate were difficult. I took a paperback copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* as my sole possession, and had a last glance at my beloved cat on the way to the caged back seat. When we arrived at the Salisbury jail, Sergeant Don Gale of the State Bureau of Investigation brought me to see Sheriff Bob Martin, then in his mid-seventies. Later his photograph would grace the *Salisbury Post*, showing him holding a page of my blotter with plastic gloves, under the headline "Largest haul ever of LSD is seized". Largest for our county at least. Typical of the *Post* to use the passive voice for such an aggressive action. The police got 10,483 doses, which they had ordered, and an ounce of mushrooms. As usual they grossly exaggerated the worth, saying the blotter (which cost me \$5000) was worth \$52,000, and the ounce of mushrooms was worth \$6,500, about forty times too much. They also claimed that I had bought 80,000 hits in the last six months, which was 50,000 past reality.

I next went to a small office where an old clerk in a severe crew cut decided my bail should be \$500,000. As I entered the jail, I turned and saw a magnificent sunset, almost as if it were made to order. I tried to soak in the beauty for as long as possible. I would not see another sunset for two years.

My first stop was to Don Gale's office. He was having a great time, and with some delight told me the details of the charges against me. Psychedelics, and LSD in particular, are weighed including whatever substrate holds them, which typically will be far more massive than the drug itself. Thus one hit in a glass of water would count as millions of hits. This allows the state to charge offenders with whatever they like. For 1000 doses and above, the penalty is a minimum mandatory 35 years, plus \$200,000 fine. There was also an indictment of twelve years for the little bag of mushrooms that they would leave hanging until after Carla was sentenced. The only way I would ever get out of prison would be to cooperate, and hope they reduced the charges. There were two judges taking six-month turns at the Rowan County Courthouse. One was extremely severe and would never let me out, while the other might be more reasonable. Thus, I had to try and time my trial for the lesser of two evils. The law is like that.

Then he took me to the accountant's office to learn about the stamp tax. A young woman there was enjoying her job racking up the bills against all the bad people out there. There was a charge of \$40 per hit, which doubled if not paid within a few days, and then accumulated interest. The debt would evaporate mysteriously in ten years, but by the time it did I was over a million

dollars in debt. All my possessions would be taken immediately without any due process and auctioned off, and all my money would be seized. This was quite popular with the public since they got stuff cheap, and of course the cops could take what they liked home as well. Our legal system is a commercial, cash-and-carry operation, optimized for profit. Not having any money meant I had to be content with the court-appointed lawyer, Marshall Bickett. He was a mild-mannered man of low intellect well suited to the job of making my prosecution easy, which is why he got lots of work. Now, in 2011, he is District Court Judge, and is running for Superior Court. Most inmates with appointed lawyers see them only at booking and at trial, with little or no contact otherwise, even if waiting months or years. As I had friends to intervene, I fared a little better, but I had to prepare to wait weeks or months for responses to my letters. He felt free to tell me lies if they were convenient.

Finally I changed from street clothes to the rags that inmates wore which were washed once a week, and was led to my cell block. Up to now I had kept a fairly even emotional state. For many years I'd considered myself a pretty good yogi, and after the arrest I had my mantra going, watching the drama go past in a witness awareness the way you're supposed to do. But when I heard the door clang shut behind me, I realized I wasn't as good at the yoga thing as I thought, even after so many years. My practice had been unfocused and haphazard. Far from being free from attachment, I was attached to every tiny detail of my life, all of which was now violently wrenched away. After all the daring things I'd done over the years, the Universe conspired to deal up a situation where I had no bravery at all. It finally registered that today could be the first day of the rest of my life,⁵² and the prospect was terrifying.

But they would have done much worse given the chance. Sue Myrick, mayor of Charlotte and later a representative in Congress, said they should build concentration camps for drug dealers. In fact, the jail I now sat in was a few hundred yards from the site of a Civil War POW camp where thousands of Yankee prisoners starved to death.

My first impression was that this felt just like public school, which I last experienced in the seventh grade. These were the students who majored in detention, and now they were professionals.

I could just barely get onto the top bunk, which was the only vacancy. My health would decline rapidly and soon this would be impossible. While lying on the bed and trying to relax, I was hit with what felt like a massive electric shock that threw me into the air about six inches. After a sleepless night, I was exhausted and stared through the bars for hours. Frequently I would sob uncontrollably, which did not help my social standing.

One black inmate fresh from the street wanted me to read him his indictment. I said that he was charged with premeditated murder with malice aforethought. Then I had to explain to him what premeditated, malice, and aforethought meant. He showed no sign of any emotion whatsoever. I could just as easily been reading him a menu at a restaurant. His bail was \$50,000, one-tenth of mine. The case was not important enough to be in the newspapers. In his part of town, people were expected to kill each other—it was no big deal. The average time served in prison for homicide was eight years.

Don Gale and Lieutenant Wood fetched me and we drove back to my home. Diane Corlett joined us. She was incredibly helpful and patient, taking time out of her many pastoral duties to help me in my time of greatest need. There were many small obnoxious details, and my family was far too removed to help. Diane condemned my actions, but helped out anyway. Gale and Wood took my money from the bank, some \$10,635, most of which was from the two transactions with Big Bob's mysterious customer. I signed over all my possessions, and various officers started

loading things up. They asked me how to sell my music. I told them I'd been trying to sell it for nineteen years with no luck. So, they dumped the folders of camera-ready scores onto the floor, and took the filing cabinets to auction. Someone tore apart the Oracle, stealing the crystal and whatever parts had value, such as the gold wire on the antenna in the orgone box. I told them that my landlord owned the piano, in hopes of saving it. My violins went off to Mom and Burns since much of that they owned. The cops took my diaries and several books as evidence, including the well-researched and accurate *Acid Dreams: The Complete Social History of LSD*,⁵³ which covered the role of the CIA in some detail. Never saw that book again.

Soon after, the landlord from the trailer next door surveyed what was left. He saw the pile of music folders on the floor, and having no clue what written music was, figured it was trash. He put it in garbage bags and hauled it to the dump. Friends saw him doing this but did nothing to stop him, not wanting to get involved. Thus nineteen years of work was now landfill.

Later, this landlord couldn't make payments, and drove off with the now-empty camping trailer once used for the Oracle. My original landlady rented out the house, offering to give my friends my upright piano in exchange for someone dismantling the dome. Gary offered to do this, but he has difficulties getting things done, and put it off for several months. Before he could get around to it, the next tenant sold my piano and kept the cash.

Don told me "You made your bed and now you must sleep in it." That way, all the cruel things they enjoyed doing to me was *my fault*. I did not recall passing or supporting any of the absurd laws that I violated, nor had I helped construct any penal institutions, much less the bunks and mattresses. In fact Gerald Blow took a photograph of me voting against Jesse Helms. I did what I could to *unmake* the bed. Now I was the raw material of the law industry.

Diane Corlett saw to it I had \$20 and a \$5 book of stamps, so that I could write my friends and family with the bad news. When back in my cell block, I needed a shower, and put the money in my shirt pocket. When I got out of the shower, the money and stamps were gone. I was now cut off from writing to friends and family. Inmates smirked at my stupidity. Clearly I needed to figure out how things worked in this domain of the damned. It's much like the outer world, only more so, and with immediate consequences.

Deciphering the Inmate Code

Item: The strong are admired for dominating the weak. The only admissible means of defense are violence or the threat of violence. Relying on officers for protection is strictly forbidden and severely punished. Being a witness or reporting a crime, even when it is done to you, means you are a *snitch*, which is a word only used by people in a thoroughly criminalized culture.

Item: Race matters, and you can't enjoy the middle-class luxury of forgetting about it. Everyone will disapprove if a white person acts black, or a black person acts white. White inmates watch NASCAR, blacks watch basketball. Everyone watches crime shows, and no one watches *The Simpsons*.

Item: There are some behavior patterns among the black inmates that are part of the normal culture of prison. If one shakes his fist at you, this is friendly, he means no harm. He will likely ask in every other sentence if you know what he's saying, but you don't need to reassure him that you do indeed comprehend his meaning. The word "motherfucker" doesn't actually signify anything, and will be used in every sentence, sometimes multiple times, in every conceivable grammatical role. It exists only to ensure the crudity of expression and prevent gainful

employment. Normal behavior includes walking about with one hand in the pants holding his penis, or having the pants riding a foot low. Anthropologists remain baffled.

Item: Suffering is entertainment. When two inmates fight, they are immediately surrounded by a circle of cheering and laughing cell mates having a wonderful time. When an inmate takes medicine from others, mixes them together, and swallows them, resulting in seizures, this is a source of great hilarity. Compassion is a sign of weakness.

Item: Respect for the disreputable is mandatory. The more disreputable the person, the more mandatory the respect. The entire world is constantly telling inmates that they are worthless and hated. Respect is the closest acceptable substitute for love, and costs nothing to give. Don't expect any back.

Item: Crimes do much to determine social rank. This was greatly to my benefit. Child molesters are at the bottom, of course, along with those who prey upon helpless people like the elderly. Drug chemists are at the very top, along with cop killers. Since I spoke in complete sentences, they assumed I was a chemist. Denial was completely ineffective, so I stopped correcting them.

Item: The large majority of inmates are, or have been, addicted to something. Ninety percent smoke the most deadly drug, tobacco, and about a third will die from smoking. When tobacco is forbidden behind bars, inmates will pay up to \$200 for a pack of cigarettes. The fact that drugs are available in prison proves that controlling them with laws is hopeless. Very few inmates have any interest in psychedelics like psilocybin or LSD. For those that do, they are just one of the list of drugs they abuse. Involvement with any kind of drug in prison is extremely dangerous.

Item: Sex is only about lust and power, and has little or no relationship to love at all. The Code concerning sex was too depressing and confusing for me to figure out. My efforts went into avoiding being someone's punk. This was one environment when being undesirable was a distinct advantage.

Item: Everyone lies, but only prisoners pay a price for lying. As a result, employees of the justice system systematically deceive inmates. Seeing this gives inmates no particular motivation to see the justice system as a moral institution, or any reason to become more truthful themselves.

I go to the Looney Bin and back

Crowding was intense. At one point I was sleeping near the shower on the floor under a bunk bed, trying to avoid splashes of water and the occasional rat. Bickett got me a single cell due to my health. The food was abominable and almost inedible. There had been a retired couple who cooked good food for the inmates, but one day they were murdered in a home invasion, or so I heard, and their replacement had no clue. My iritis flared up from the stress, and I needed cortisone eyedrops every two hours. This irritated the staff since they had to fetch the medicine and watch me take the drops, and frequently I went quite some time without. Jail is not meant for either disabled inmates or for long-term residence, and I was very likely going to have many months before trial. If Diane and I could convince officials that I might be needing a test for mental competency, I could get a break at Dorothea Dix Hospital in Raleigh for a few weeks.

Four days after my arrest, the *Salisbury Post* ran an article saying I was trying to send my music to outer space, with pictures of the Oracle and lurid misinformation. This convinced many that I was, as they call it, a *bug*. I had my ticket to Dix three days later.

Competence to stand trial basically means can you say your name and what year it is, and damn few inmates fail the test. Those that do are locked in the hospital until treatment succeeds

in making them competent, after which they go to trial. I just wanted to get out of jail and eat some decent food with no urine on the floor. So off I went. The food was great, and the nursing staff actually cared about our health. Of course they thought I was a horrible felon who should never get out, but I was used to that by now. Inmates here could have cigarettes, unlike in jail, so I gagged on the smoke most of each day. There was the occasional psychotic break from one or another of my comrades, but there were several orderlies around that were selected for brawn.

There was an opportunity to catch up on correspondence. Mom sent me a letter saying I was a fun little boy until drugs got hold of me, and society was right to lock me up in a very unpleasant place. My recollection was that I was a neurotic and unhappy little boy until I started having a spiritual life. Another person very close to me said “Don’t do the crime if you can’t do the time”, neglecting to recall his years growing fourteen-foot marijuana plants. Many others ran away for reasons of their own. Eventually my list of friends shrank to those who were loyal and genuine.

Susan and Ray Davies took in my cat soon after my arrest and kept her in their home. They had quite a few animals outside, including some cats, a couple dogs, and a goat. Mauser was not used to nice furniture, and while affectionate, messed up the place. So Susan had to put her outside with the other animals. She freaked out, ran off into the woods and died. About a year later she visited on whatever plane it is that such things happen, and said that she now lived with Leonard Bernstein, who had several dogs as well. I don’t make the news, I just reports it. (Hey Lenny, be good to my cat.)

I stretched my stay to three and a half weeks, which was as much as possible, after which the doctor wrote a single sentence saying I was in fact perfectly sane, free from mental defect or deficiency, and fit to punish. Your tax dollars at work. Back to jail I went.

My single cell was between two black juveniles who were good friends, both 15 years old. One was facing a forty year charge for statutory rape. His mother had set him up on a date with a thirteen year old girl. Her mother got wind of it afterwards and pressed charges. I don’t know what the other was in for, but he amused himself by threatening to kill me, and yelling over to the women’s section about sex acts. They both talked endlessly about “judy-fly”, which I eventually found out was a nickname for joints laced with crack. Single cells also functioned as the drunk tank, so most evenings we were joined by men out of their minds on alcohol. I learned to keep my few books and documents under my mattress and off the floor, since drunks would frequently urinate into the hallway, or use a cup to empty their toilet and flood nearby cells.

It’s against the law to mix adults and juveniles, but the jail was both condemned and extremely overcrowded, and didn’t bother with all the rules. We had to go to a cell block normally holding sixteen inmates for some time during the day to get our showers and mandatory time out of our single cells. This meant combining the age groups, which was very dangerous for the adults. One homeless man had been in jail for three weeks for being hungry and stealing a hot dog. A white 15 year old beat him badly and broke his nose. Treating him would cost money, not to mention bring attention and possibly a law suit. The folks running the place decided to drop the hot dog charge and let him go, bloody shirt, broken nose and all.

I was hoping to keep my SSI income, but the rules say that if a beneficiary spends *one night* in any institution that provides room and board, such as a nursing home, mental hospital, or jail, then the SSI benefits are terminated. Restoring benefits can take years, during which the disabled person has only Food Stamps and, if lucky, Medicaid. I could not reapply until release.

Diane helped me get some letters out to my friends and was in contact with Mom. This was extremely helpful. I got a copy of the infamous *Salisbury Post* article, and wrote short notes

to a list of friends. Then I sent the lot to Jim McGuire so that he could copy the article and send out the letters. This would be invaluable, and I couldn't manage it from my cell. However, Jim thought for some reason that he would *deliberately* make my situation more difficult. So he did nothing with the letters, and didn't tell me he didn't send them. For the next six months when I sent letters to friends they were shocked that I was in prison, until finally Jim told me what he'd done.

But I did have a great advantage over most inmates in that quite a few friends were helping as best they could. Ray Davies and others from Cleveland went to my home and salvaged what they could of the Oracle and other odds and ends. Way Wired Willy and Alice helped compile a list of items to be auctioned, and Mom and other friends helped get some cash together to try and buy back the basic necessities. Diane visited several times and was the main reason I ever saw my lawyer at all, although he would rather have ignored me and just picked up the check. I was not the easiest person to help. Despite meditation and all the spiritual practice I could manage, my nerves were shot. I was not in control of my emotions, and when writing to friends they would misinterpret what I was saying as ingratitude to them. I kept copies of all my outgoing letters, and it's clear my mental state was in turmoil and despair until after my trial. It was just too much for me to handle.

Diane gave me a copy of the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*, which was a stretch for me but a welcome addition to my small but growing library. I was used to prayers chanted by naked saddhus covered in buffalo dung ash with waist-long dreadlocks on the banks of the Ganges, while these were prayers recited by lawyers and stockbrokers on the banks of the



Susan Davies

Thames. She also sent books by St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila. Spiritual practice filled as many hours of the day as possible. Every night before bed I would read a chapter of the *Gita*. I needed chanting beads, and Diane tried sending me rosaries several times over the next year, but none got through. It's hard to imagine that a rosary sent from a priest well known to the authorities would be considered dangerous contraband, but that's the mentality of the prison world.

Susan came to visit once at the jail. All visits were through glass. Her friendship and affection were lifesavers for me. It was so wonderful to see her, but wrenching, and I broke down during the whole time we spoke together. I told her of a vision I'd had the night before, which I don't usually do since it sounds so terribly odd. Unfortunately one of the two juvenile crack heads was within listening distance, and tormented me later with what he had heard.

Some inmates saw that I was interested in meditation and Hinduism, and said they'd been in the Charlotte jail when Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was there in 1985. He was fleeing prosecution for a multitude of crimes, flying from his commune in Oregon to the Bahamas in a rented Learjet, when he was arrested at a North Carolina airstrip while refuelling. While in the Mecklenburg County Jail for a few days, he taught meditation to inmates and was very popular. He asked the

jailers for ice cream, but they laughed at him. They said if he had ice cream then everyone would have to have ice cream. Fair enough, he responded, and bought a local creamery to supply the whole jail. To this day they serve ice cream three times a week, or so the inmates said.

For the entire time before trial, I tried to get an estimate of how severe my punishment would be. It was not in the interest of the state for me to know, so my lawyer and all the officials I talked to said they didn't know the rules for parole or how much I would be charged with. Nor did they indicate how much an effect my cooperation would have. The usual way was for an inmate to earn a day off his sentence for every day of good behavior, and he'd be eligible for parole after one-eighth of the remaining time served. This would be a great deal if I got a sentence of fourteen years, as I would be paroled probably after a couple of years total time. As a result I was very optimistic about getting out before very long. Not a single person in or out of the system gave me the true facts. *Everyone* who knew, lied to me.

Don Gale interviewed me several times to get information about those I had done business with. While I had to cooperate in order not to die in prison, I was ill disposed to inform on those good friends who had done not only nothing wrong, but in my view had performed a valuable service to thousands of people, who frequently expressed their gratitude. There were associates along the way who were not honest and who took advantage of me, and I felt that they had forfeited any expectation that I would sacrifice years or decades of my life on their behalf. Thankfully, later when I checked with my friends, there were no arrests or hassles as a result of what I said, even to those who had stolen from me.

Carla's address was on the envelopes, so they had all they needed on her already. The California narcs raided her houseboat, but she wasn't there. Although they searched the boat and found acid, the court threw out the charges because she wasn't home, and so the warrant wasn't properly executed, or some such detail. Now she could only be brought up on federal charges. The feds told Don Gale that they had no interest in me, since they considered LSD to be a "kiddy drug". But with Carla they did pay attention, and over the next two years brought a case against her. Eventually she got a seven year sentence, which would mean six years served. I wrote her after she was in prison but never heard back.

One day in the cell block I met a young fellow who had been found in a groggy state on his porch covered in blood. Someone had carved X marks all over his chest with a knife. A doctor sewed them up with what must have been a few hundred stitches, but our patient was bored with all that thread and started picking them off. We told him he would be scarred for life if he did that, but he didn't care. It was fun to pick the threads.

There was a heavily muscled, quiet white guy who never wore a shirt. He didn't need to, as his entire chest, back, and arms were covered with tattoos. On closer inspection, beyond the usual swastikas and knives, I saw that the picture covering his back depicted a *lynching*. The black inmates gave him a wide berth, which for me meant his company was the safest place in the jail. Any port in a storm.

Mr. Big goes to Central Prison

Rowan County was getting frustrated with my medical care, minimal as it was. Don Gale wanted to have me available to testify at Carla's trial, but who knew when that might be. Also I had to wait for the right judge. Jail is not designed



for long-term stays. It is deliberately stressful, to intimidate those held before trial and give them motivation to transition quickly to prison. This is a successful and economical strategy, since cruelty is cheap. At the end of September they shipped me off to Raleigh once again, this time to be a maximum security guest at Central Prison.

At Central I was what they call a safekeeper. This was for inmates who were awaiting trial and needed either medical attention or protection from assault, or if they were very dangerous. Many safekeepers had been on death row, and were here to prepare for a new trial or hearing. The cellblocks were interchangeable with those used by death row inmates, and the restrictions were in some ways more severe. We could not visit the canteen, chapel, or the library, but we did have limited ability to borrow books and buy snacks. Otherwise the only real difference was that death row wore red jumpsuits, and we wore yellow. General population wore grey. Any contact was potentially dangerous, since the assumption was that safekeepers were snitches. Once a week, at seven in the morning, we had an hour of recreation in a small cement yard with forty-foot walls and a gun tower. But we had no warm clothes, so for much of the year it was far too cold for me to go outside at all. We had one ten-minute collect phone call a year, at Christmas.

The cell block was overcrowded, so they put up bunk beds in the dayroom. Newcomers started there, then went to single cells as they became available. There were no lockers, and thus no way to secure possessions against theft. I was very eager to get a single cell, but to get a better place in line would cost me \$10. At the moment I had no money. No one wanted my books and papers, but here at Central once I could afford it I could have a small radio with earplugs, which would have to be defended. It was very difficult to sleep on a bunk bed from the combination of noise in the room and motion from the guy on the upper bunk. The TV was cranked up all day until 11 PM. Thankfully, I was allowed earplugs, which were forbidden in jail. For the rest of my time in prison, getting fresh earplugs was a major preoccupation and priority.

My first earplugs came from a mild-mannered biker named Danny. He was charged with killing three drunks with his bare hands in an altercation outside a bar. That's what happens when you know karate. Danny brewed some hooch from fermenting fruit he got at chow. I think he got drunk from the placebo effect.

Officers were usually absent from the cell block. They came in during the several counts each day, banging the few window bars with a stick to see if they'd been partially sawn. Except for that, we were watched from behind bulletproof glass by an officer in a console with switches controlling the doors and lights. He could listen through hidden microphones to most things discussed in the dayroom. I saw the lieutenant in his office call down to the officer in the console when he needed to know what was up. Snitches were hardly necessary.



Day room in the cell block

All the doors were electrically controlled. The single cell doors could be opened all at once or individually, but only from the console. Between our cellblock and the hallway was a double door, with just enough room between for us all to pack in. One of those two doors was always closed. The dining hall was quite some distance away, through a long tunnel. Between my cell and the dining hall were twelve doors, all controlled from behind glass. Meals were particularly dangerous

since all the safekeeping cell blocks were mixed together, and we could pass by inmates from general population in the hall. I had an option to go completely vegetarian, but this would mean two peanut butter meals a day. Instead I did as the Muslim inmates, and ate red meat for the rest of my years in prison. I didn't have to eat pork.

This was a very different environment than either the Salisbury jail or Dorothea Dix. In jail, most were in for minor charges, and many would never go to prison at all. As a result there was no interest among other inmates in anything spiritual. Here it was very different. Almost all the inmates were facing serious time, and many would never leave prison. The level of despair was palpable. This was the bottom of the bottom, and it was enough to reach some very hardened souls. We had a prayer circle that met every evening in our cell block, led by a young black inmate down from New York. He was a very friendly and up-beat guy, very easy to like and intelligent, and deeply devoted to Jesus. I couldn't imagine why he was here. He had a good office job and things seemed to be going well for him. I think he was charged with murder, but can't be sure. Puzzled the heck out of me. Something like half of the cell block was in the prayer circle. You don't get that kind of intensity in your normal corner church.

On the other end of the spectrum, soon after my arrival at Central some inmates came to me asking to lead them in a Black Mass, since they saw I was interested in meditation and such. Preachers told them that yoga, Hinduism and LSD were demonic, so how about it? Another time two cellmates needed me as a third party for a séance where they'd sell their souls to the Devil in exchange for freedom. I don't think they'd done the math on that one.

Veterans were well represented. One served in WWII. Another had been in Korea. He was overly fond of bombs, and had many arrests for owning and using high explosives. He was caught blowing up fish in a local lake. The authorities lost patience and brought him to Central. I asked him why he didn't just use a rod and reel, and he looked at me like I was crazy. "Because I like dynamite," he said with a leering grin. His hands had been shaking for the forty years since the Korean war. I think he done bumped his head.

Another soldier was from the first Gulf War, which had ended just months before. When he came back from action, he raped and killed a five year old girl and left her body on a hill. He was not particularly worried, as he was convinced that no jury would convict him since he was a veteran. We spent a bundle teaching these guys to kill without remorse, and did nothing to deprogram them on return. The training is a substantial investment, and we might need them to kill again someday. What do we expect?

One of the first people I'd phoned after arrest was Anshel Brusilow. His son was a lawyer, and Anshel thought he might be able to help. He talked with Dad and sent some encouraging letters when I really needed them. The best I could hope for with many people who meant a lot to me was that they would say I did something really terrible, and now that I realized how bad it was I could reform my behavior and everything would be better someday. I learned to say that I was overcome with remorse and that I had made a horrible mistake by being involved with psychedelics, or many people would abandon me and the punishment would never stop. Once out of prison I could speak my mind, but this was just not possible behind bars, where I was at the mercy of people who were *good, righteous and*



moral, and thus capable of unlimited cruelty. So I was forced to tell people I'd seen the error of my ways. Grovelling is cheap.

One of my friends on the block was an extremely tall and slender black man named, oddly enough, Slim. I wrote his letters for him, and so got to know the details of his life. He managed to be upbeat and could put a bright edge on a bleak day. Every male member of his family was in prison. His letters to his girlfriend were wrenching, as he didn't know the names of his own twin infants. He was going to give testimony in a trial so that he would someday be released, and as a result one day he was badly beaten. But he told the doctor who bandaged his ribs that he'd fallen down the stairs. Otherwise he'd have to be locked down in protective custody. One day an inmate named Camacho charged at him in the dayroom and threatened to cut his throat with a razor, but this was averted at the last minute. Camacho was a Mexican who pretended to be Japanese, and wore a samurai headband to look the part. Soon after, Camacho went to trial where he was defending himself for two capital murder charges. He'd killed an ex-girlfriend and her new boyfriend with a hammer. He got the death penalty, much to the amusement of the guards who give a candid assessment of his legal skills. They didn't like him much after he threw water mixed with Ben Gay in a guard's face. His cell was now empty, and after a week in the dayroom I moved in. I was more concerned about getting his room than his living on death row. Life is like that.

Dad sent \$1000, which he could ill afford, and others pitched in as best they could in preparation for the auction. As a result I could get my radio, which was fixed to my ears most of the day for the duration. Dad also got me membership in a book club, and I started a considerable library. I needed my own supply. One of the cells in our block was full of books and magazines accumulated over a few years, as well as board games. But a few months later, an illiterate inmate decided that if he couldn't read, no one else should be able to, and he threw the books away and tore up the games. We salvaged some, but most were lost. Several black inmates thought that saving the garbage bags full of books was cooperating with "the Man", whoever that might be. Since most of the people who wanted to read were white, this caused considerable racial tension for a couple of days. I know it makes no sense, but there it is.

I was very depressed and went to see the psychiatrist. She was a Hindu woman, dressed in a sari with a bindu on her forehead, and I thought maybe I could communicate with her. No such luck. After I tried to explain my situation, she cut me off and said that her job was to find which medication I should use and at what dosage. She didn't have time to talk about *problems*. If I wasn't happy here in the bowels of Hell, then there must be some chemical imbalance in my brain that could be fixed with a combination of pills that would flatten my emotions, remove access to transcendental states, and make me not bother her any more. "Trust the pills," she said soothingly, "they're good for you." I figured there must be a chemical balance in her brain that could be undone with a combination of my *own* pills, if I could just get them back from the evidence locker. Then maybe she could talk to me as one soul to another. I tried flirting with low doses of her tranquilizers and anti-depressants, but they were of little use. Later she gave me an anti-psychotic that put me on a horrifying bummer for two days. No more of her meds for me. They were by far the most dangerous drugs I'd ever done. I know they are useful for people with mental illnesses, who are having visions and hearing voices and need to shut that stuff down. Drugs that reinforced the mechanistic view of reality were big money earners and pillars of the medical establishment. Psychedelics did not function this way and could never be part of the pharmacopeia.

In mid-October they executed a guy from the cell block across the hall. When that happens the whole prison locks down and everything is very tense for a couple of days, with the

occasional burning mattress and threats of riots. Thankfully this was the only execution while I was at Central. Diane was involved in a group protesting the death penalty. I had mixed feelings, since I was dealing with inmates who had killed or raped other prisoners. They were already in for life, and some time in segregation was not a big deal for them. If there were no death penalty then there really wasn't any punishment they would consider as deterrent, which increased the threat level for people like me, as well as anyone who worked in the prison.

The furniture in the day room was all welded stainless steel, very hard for me to sit on and quite loud when used as percussion. Rap expressed the heart and diseased soul of the gangster mentality. Inmates who never learned to read or add or subtract could recite from memory complex lyrics for half an hour at a time. The metal tables used as drums added to the din. Although most of the words were incomprehensible, what I could make out glorified hatred, murder, rape, greed, and addiction. This is most profitable for the music industry that pushes the poison all over the planet. It is not surprising that artists for Death Row Records shoot each other. This doesn't tend to happen with the Juilliard String Quartet, although from time to time they probably ponder such things in the dark recesses of their classical hearts. If there ever were to be hope for rehabilitation in prison, the first thing they would have to change is the sound track.

One of the most dangerous inmates I met in prison was a huge black man named Rayford Burkes. Rayford determined what was on the TV, and any disagreement led quickly to a beating. I managed to get along with him pretty well, but it was a real challenge. He'd previously killed about five people and gotten away with it since prosecutors couldn't get anyone to testify. Now he was going to be tried for a 1990 murder where there was a witness who would take the stand. He went to trial in late 1991, and despite the witness, got off. He could intimidate any black person on the jury. Once on the street he stabbed a man and shot his girlfriend, both non-fatally. Two months after the trial at a crack house in Statesville, after having given threats, he shot and killed the man who testified against him. When he was tried for this murder, the prosecutors managed to get an all-white jury. His family sat in the back of the courtroom, glaring at the jury. Although they couldn't sleep at night, jurors refused to cave in to the pressure. Three crackheads testified and Burkes was finally convicted and sent to death row. A group called DeathWatch is now trying to get him released, claiming this was all a terrible miscarriage of justice. If they succeed, order more body bags. Thankfully, they have no chance.

In October, Anton flew to Boston for a few days, then back to Jakarta. He and Doc Humes advised that I stand up to the law, plead an insanity defense, and claim the statute was unconstitutional. This would guarantee life behind bars, but I would be making a noble stand. I said no thanks.

When arrested, I had long hair and a month-old beard. Finally here in Central Prison I cut the hair and shaved. The beard would come and go, but my hair stayed short from then on. The longest hair I saw in prison was worn by a very private and polite white inmate a couple doors down from me. His hair went down almost to his waist. He only came out of his cell when he had to, which tended to be my routine as well. After a few months I finally got to talk to him enough to learn some of his story. He'd originally been in maximum security in Iowa, where he resisted everything and ended up in the basement of a formidable prison in solitary. Guards fed him food through a hatch in the door dressed in protective gear, and mostly he'd throw it right back at them. After some time his sentence expired and they had to let him go. He moved to the mountains of North Carolina. A couple of friends asked for his advice on a burglary, and he told them how it should be done. The two friends invaded a trailer, killed the couple inside, and set the place on fire. My long-haired friend went to trial while I was at Central, and I last saw him in grey

clothes in general population, smiling and waving. He got 108 years, which for Hindus is an auspicious number. Not for him.

In November I got two books from Human Kindness Foundation. This was originated by Ram Dass in the 1970's to help prisoners have access to yogic materials behind bars, but was quickly handed over to Bo and Sita Lozoff. Now they were headquartered in Durham, soon to move to a nearby rural property. Bo's book *We're All Doing Time* is well-known in prisons all over the country and is quite helpful. Most importantly, it helped focus my spiritual practice, and reminded me of Neem Karoli Baba, the guru that Ram Dass found in India. He started showing up in my meditations, and in time became my main guide. Bo was on a verbal fast, not talking or writing to anyone for three years, but I corresponded with Sita.

The cops told me they would notify me in advance of my auction, but that was another lie to keep me off balance. My friends heard of it through the papers, and managed to attend at short notice, on Friday, December 13. Gary Weinreb, Diane, Susan and Ray, Way Wired Willy and Alice, and Jim McGuire attended. Thankfully my Klepper and most of my kayak sailing gear was in bags, so no one knew what it was. Both the Klepper and my single were saved, along with some basic goods that would be waiting for me on release. I learned about it after the fact.

The unrelenting harshness of the environment forced me to realize the lack of loving relationships in my life. I went many years without ever using a term of endearment to another person. Now the yearning for anything feminine, anything warm, soothing, comforting, nurturing, accepting, and affectionate ate at my mind. Some of that translated into uncontrollable lust, which was a disaster and probably the most difficult and painful aspect of the whole prison experience. Before arrest I thought I had that under control, but this was simply a matter of distraction and avoidance, not spiritual progress.

Meanwhile I had to deal with a psychotic black inmate who enjoyed sexually assaulting weaker whites. I saw him do this to another who managed to fend him off. Now he had me as his target. When he shoved me around and grabbed at me, all the other blacks in the cellblock, including people I considered friends, jeered at me and cheered him on. I had no allies to protect me. A friend of the aggressive inmate tried to sell me protection, with lurid stories about breaking my jaw, but I refused. Then they forcibly stole my radio. Someone told the guards and they were both locked down. Black inmates got in the habit of slipping lit cigarettes into my back pockets, but at least I wasn't beaten or raped.

At the same time I got a letter from Jim saying the usual New Age crap about how everything was just as it should be, that I created all these experiences, and how it was all a "set up". He said he was tired of my "victim trip" and so forth. A lot of my friends said this kind of thing. I got a feel for what combat veterans go through when coming back to a country that has not experienced war on its soil for over a hundred years. My friends, however well-meaning, simply had no idea what I was going through. Eventually I gave up trying to talk about what it was like, and *saved it for my eventual book*. It won't work there either, but what the heck.

Before Christmas, inmates can receive food from the outside, and this was a real treat. Still, Christmas and Thanksgiving were the most difficult times to be a prisoner, as they have always been for me anyway. I borrowed families on the outside, but couldn't do that here. I did my best to love the ones I was with.

1992 Starts with Cosmic Income

Mom was notified in December about a man who had stayed with her family in the late 1930s as a teenager, and had lived in and out of mental institutions since. He had been entirely

out of contact and forgotten by Mom and her family. He died in 1990 and completely out of the blue left John, Akanda, and me \$2000 each. We'd never heard of the guy, but the timing was superb. After various legal hurdles, this meant I would be able to pay back many of the people who had contributed to my auction. This left a few hundred to live on for the duration.

Anton wrote from his 4000 square foot apartment with thirty foot ceilings in Singapore that his Chinese friends paid four million dollars for an ancient map pinpointing the fabled City of Gold in the Gobi Desert. They got permission from the Chinese government to excavate and share findings. He still owed me \$350. Anton had joined the Royal Sovereign Military and Hospitaler Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta Ecumenical. They claimed territorial sovereignty over the uninhabited Spratly Islands off the coast of Vietnam, thus making them a government. (The Chinese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Malaysian, and Philippine governments would beg to differ on this point.) The Knights were interested in setting up shop in Annabon, an island off the coast of west Africa. This would involve a deal with Equatorial Guinea's vicious and violent dictator Obiang, who according to Anton had depopulated the island by imprisoning 130,000 of the former residents on the mainland. The Knights didn't care about details involving the impoverished and oppressed rabble, and made Obiang a knight himself. If this succeeded then I'd have a location and funding for the Oracle, and a commission to write the national anthem. I suppose "Oh Tannenbaum" could be changed to "Oh Annabon" without too much labor.

His sister Rose was now visiting India with the Radha Soami folks having satsang with Gurinder Singh. That's the kind of thing I would be doing if I could. Chasing gurus sounded more attractive than chasing imaginary gold.

My physical health steadily declined after arrest, and in February I had to ask for a cane since my artificial left hip hurt. I have had to use a cane ever since. The prison doctor, who was an orthopedic surgeon, took x-rays of my various innards. He opined that I really should be executed for trafficking LSD, and by the way he could give me a new hip. I'd never had a doctor who thought I should be killed. It was not exactly comforting to think of him cutting me open someday.

But then, he'd heard the same strange propaganda as everyone else, and I'm sure he'd not read the scholarly literature. On the TV news, the reporters said there was an increase in LSD use around the state. For their expert on the subject, they interviewed the head of the State Bureau of Investigation. He held up some of my acid, and said that this deadly drug was being marketed to young children. (Cue the weird color effects.) Their only evidence for this was that the acid was very cheap. They didn't quite get the non-materialistic part of psychedelics, or anything else about them either.

Susan and Ray Davies were working on the upstairs of their house, which was nearing completion. Susan thought she had some kind of respiratory bug, and had to take extra rest to be able to help with the work. Susan and Diane came to visit in late February, which was the last visit I had in Central Prison. Visits were very stressful to the guests and none too easy on me either, but complete isolation was worse. The officials were on their best behavior with Diane, since she was a priest, while they were free to bully me in her absence. This gave her a rather different take on their attitude than I had. The reality was probably somewhere in between. After some months of incarceration, it was obvious to the officials that I was hardly a big threat to society or a hardened criminal.

Susan continued to feel tired and shortly afterwards went to a doctor. He diagnosed leukemia, which shocked everyone. She underwent chemotherapy and after some very harrowing

times, went into remission, although remaining weak. She was the person most dear to me, and the thought of her suffering was almost intolerable.

Two new white inmates came to my cell block. Michael Dial was about my age. He was physically strong, and his case had been in all the papers. As a result, other inmates shied away. I didn't read the papers and didn't much care what they wrote, having been covered by the *Salisbury Post* myself. Originally from Norfolk, Mike was facing a murder charge after his girlfriend's body washed up at Nag's Head in the Outer Banks without head or hands. We were both relieved to find someone intelligent to talk to, and we became close friends. At breakfast we lined up small cartons of corn flakes and called ourselves "the cereal killers". He'd help cheer me up when I was depressed, and I helped sooth his anger issues, which were formidable.

The other inmate was Cale Buckner. A young buck in his early 20s from Gastonia, he was built like a fireplug and clearly had some wild living behind him. He also was facing a murder charge. We got along very well. For a little while, especially when both of them were in my cell block, I felt considerably more secure, and had much fewer difficulties with blacks.

But things were not exactly safe. Mike was sleeping out on the floor, waiting for a cell, when someone broke through the door separating our block from the next one, that housed general population prisoners working in the kitchen. They invaded at night and beat the inmates who were sleeping outside cells. This was because they assumed safekeepers needed protection from other inmates, therefore there must be a reason they would be attacked, therefore they should be attacked when possible. That's logic for you.

More Depressing Prison Stories for your Reading Pleasure

When it warmed up enough to go to the exercise yard one hour a week, I got acquainted with Tom Bonney, who was about 60 years old. I didn't know about the details of his life until much later. He was pleasant and mild-mannered in the way you would expect someone heavily medicated to be, which is to say, unbelievably spaced out. He had the appearance of someone not just harmless, but probably incapable of tying his own shoes, if he were allowed shoelaces. Before the unpleasantness that landed him here, he ran an auto recycling yard in Virginia. He'd been convicted of shooting his nineteen-year-old daughter twenty-seven times for living with a man he didn't approve of, and dumping her body in the Great Dismal Swamp Canal. There was a book and a movie out about his crime, both called *Deadly Whispers*.⁵⁴ I have tried, quite unsuccessfully, to imagine Tony Danza playing Tom. After some years on death row, he was in safekeeping pending a new sentencing hearing. Eventually he was given life and went to general population.

In 1994, Tom's mother died, and he couldn't go to the funeral. This made something snap even further in his head. He and a convicted rapist slid down a trash chute to the compactor. Tom broke his left arm and wrist and dislocated his shoulder, but that was getting off lightly. When the officials figured out where they'd gone, the assumption was that they were dead. The search was for two corpses down at the dump. Tom was rounded up a few days later under an I-64 overpass in Norfolk. Some days after that they caught his partner in the mountains with a list of people he wanted to kill.

One day there was a fight on the long walk to lunch, and the lieutenant in charge of all of us safekeepers broke it up. He was a short, powerfully built black man who most of the time was personable and professional. But not today. As he patted all of us down, he grabbed my penis and stroked it. I tore away from him as he laughed. He had absolute power over us and enjoyed the hell out of it.

Pat Cole wrote from New Mexico. I had known the Coles well when I lived in Las Cruces. She was recovering from months of illness, and although an atheist, promised to write religiously. Her son Eric went schizophrenic and his consequent dread of Satan worshippers caused him to attend the Jehovah's Witness church. I resolved to visit them when possible.

My paddling friend Dr. Lou Kandl bought me a subscription to *WoodenBoat Magazine*. I read there that Eric Stiller and Tony Brown were circumnavigating Antarctica in a double Klepper kayak. This was a typo, they meant Australia. Eric and I had debated gear choices at length in preparation for his trip, since I thought the BSD sails and outriggers were much superior to what he was going to use. They set out from Sydney and went up the east coast to Darwin. After a two-day offshore crossing on the northern coast, they started to get worried at the prospect of a thousand miles of twenty foot tides and twenty foot crocodiles. Tony split, and Eric got a bicycle and rode south through the center of Australia just for the hell of it.

Oddly enough I met a sailor in safekeeping. For some years he'd shared ownership of a 45 or 50 foot keelboat, and cruised to South America and back. He had great stories about his sailing adventures. Later he went to trial, and I last saw him in the hall wearing grey, very heavily medicated. He and his wife both got 350 years for a string of rapes at scissor-point through several southern states.

On April 29, riots broke out in South Central LA. The blacks on our block wished they could be there to enjoy the looting, burning, rape and murder. If there were exceptions, I did not see them. It was astonishing to watch them cheer for days at the scenes of violence, especially the repeated video of Reginald Denny's beating with a concrete block to the head as he lay on the street. What hopes I had left for a healed and sane society free from racial divisions died that week. I corresponded with a couple of classical musicians living in Encinitas who felt much the same.

One day at chow, we were joined at the cereal killer's table by David Sokolowski. He was just there to stare vacantly into space, as he wasn't eating anything at the time. This is a dangerous policy, as hunger strikes count as "damaging state property". They strap striking prisoners down and feed them by IV until they change their mind. David might have lost his appetite for good reason. His friend Rubel Hill and his girlfriend Pamela Ellwood went missing in February. When the cops came by to check things out, they saw a bonfire in the back yard with a body in the flames. David kept parts in the fridge and evidently had eaten some of them. Somehow even this wasn't enough for the death penalty, and he ended up with life.

Not all the stories were grim. They brought in an inmate I'd known in the Salisbury jail, and I asked how he ended up here—carefully, it's not good form to ask people what their crime was. He was quite jovial about it. He and his wife, along with some other friends, were in the jail on the same charge. His buddies figured out an escape plan, and they busted out together. He was trailing his friends as they ran out of the jail, holding a ring of keys, when one of the guards spotted what was happening and started shooting at the fleeing inmates. My friend decided that running across the parking lot dodging bullets was not a great idea, and he ducked into the only place available—the women's cell block. He unlocked the doors, locked them back, threw the keys into the hall, and hid in his wife's cell. They kept him hidden under a bunk for three weeks until he was finally discovered.

While visiting the doctor, I passed Bob Kelly in the hall. The news had been dominated since 1989 by the Little Rascals Day Care case. By means of fabricated evidence and months of coercive treatment of children by therapists hired by the prosecution, Bob, his wife Betsy, and three others were accused of sexually abusing over 90 children. The testimony of the kids

included trips to other planets and feeding them to sharks, but no matter. Reality was not important. Bob was convicted on 99 out of 100 counts of child molestation and got 12 consecutive life terms. While usually child molesters get treated very badly, in this case the inmates knew they were innocent. Due to nationwide publicity from PBS documentaries, the state was forced to drop all the charges in 1997.

In the third week of July, without warning I was moved to Hoke Correctional Institution, out in the eastern flatlands. I think the administrators in Central Prison were trying to cut me a break, since the ten safekeepers at Hoke were in less danger, and in somewhat more relaxed and quieter conditions. We could go to the exercise yard an hour a day, had a little more room, and felt significantly less fear. Gary and Jim came to visit, and took the only picture of me from between arrest and the summer of 1993.

At first I was pleased with my new location, but when I went to check in with the doctor's assistant on duty, things went downhill fast. I was dependent on Naprosyn and needed cortisone eyedrops in case of a spell of iritis. After seeing my thick file, the nurse in charge scowled at me and said flat out "we don't like sick people."

The doctor's assistant cancelled my prescriptions and gave me Advil, which was like using spitballs against a tank. I didn't know this until after our appointment, and could only make another appointment for his next weekly visit. In two or three days I was in a great deal of pain and hardly able to walk, and started having another iritis attack.

Turns out, all of Hoke County had only one doctor, since it's hard to convince any to come live out in Tobacco Road country. We got the bottom of the barrel, a doctor who couldn't get employed anywhere else due to past convictions. When I complained to the administrators, they had heard all this before. One inmate was diabetic, and his first two days here they withheld his insulin, giving in on the third day after they had heard enough of his yelling. It took nine days for me to finally see the doctor. Far from restoring my medications, he threatened to send me back to the Salisbury jail and take my cane away. I was already holding onto the walls to get around. He also denied me sufficient bedding, and thought I should be confined in such a way as to maximize my suffering. He accused me of "trying to be comfortable." The non-medical staff was very understanding and cooperative, but there wasn't much they could do. A few days later they sent me back to Central Prison.

This set up a severe situation. I was put in a different cell block this time, and no longer had Mike and Cale around except during meals, when all the safekeepers ate together. I was back to sleeping on a bunk in the dayroom. Black inmates started severely hassling me for money, which was difficult since the prison took weeks to transfer my account of \$53 from Hoke. I could not protect my belongings. Once again, my radio was stolen. Here gambling was constant, unlike my old block where it was not tolerated. I remembered the good effects of our prayer circle and tried to start one up in the new block, but that was a huge mistake. I asked a black inmate named DC to join us, and he snarled a negative response. He was in for a double murder, and had a long history of targeting white inmates who were either old or disabled for serious abuse. I saw a white man of about seventy who was terrified of him and seriously traumatized. Now he set his sights on



Visit with Gary and Jim

me. He was part of a loosely-formed gang headed by a Bloods gangster named King, who had been brought in by helicopter and SWAT teams a month or two previously. King was charged with five gang murders in the Durham area, and wanted to be the top dog in safekeeping as well.

I did my best to notify the authorities, and I asked to be locked down in protective custody. Instead, they moved me to my old cell block, which certainly helped. However there were a couple of inmates on the block who were running with this gang and were keen to hurt me. Meal time was the big danger. I walked to and from chow at the back of the line where an officer headed up the crowd, and had Mike, Cale, and another white inmate box me in while I walked along the wall.

With the danger so pressing, the officers in charge decided to send meals to my cell block so I wouldn't have to go through the hallway. I was so afraid at this point that it was difficult to eat, as my hands shook severely and I could barely get food in my mouth. My radio had been stolen by DC, but I managed to buy it back from a third party. When the authorities heard of this, they threatened to charge me with an offense for buying stolen goods. In early September I wrote to the sergeant pleading for protective custody, as my friends could no longer protect me. They also had been threatened with death. This was not an idle threat. Two days before my letter, a man was rushed down the hall to the medical center with a slashed throat. DC demanded \$15 as extortion.

All this time I had assured everyone that I had no intent of causing any harm or doing anything resulting in punishment, that I meant everyone the best. The gangsters found this completely confusing. After a few days of eating in my cell block, the officers made me eat with the others again. The first meal, I got there safely, but for some reason the powers that be decided to escort me back to the block to eat there. When two officers escorted me out of the dining hall, nearly the whole crowd of 150 people suddenly erupted in jeers, taunts, and threats. I was frozen in fear as a bizarre carnival atmosphere surrounded me.

The next meal I needed to complete in the dining hall. Without my white friends to help, I walked with a large black guy who volunteered to help out. Suddenly I was confronted by six or seven gang members, including King and DC. My friend said "Step!" with a look of shock in his eyes, as he hadn't expected something to actually happen. We got away to the back of the crowd before I could be stabbed. That was the last time I saw my new friend.

Finally things calmed down. After all this senseless danger, they got the point that I was more trouble than anything they could get out of me. The administration at Central Prison was tired of having me around and wanted me to go to trial. Rick and Martha Denton came up from Atlanta to visit. They were very supportive and genuine friends throughout the ordeal.

Judge driven mad by LSD despite never taking it

I went to trial on September 21, almost fourteen months after arrest. Only Rick and Martha could attend, as I had no warning as to the date. They testified on my behalf while the judge made a great show of yawning. The prosecutors charged me with 500 hits, which carried a 14 year minimum mandatory sentence and \$50,000 fine. Although I had cooperated, which allowed the judge to reduce the sentence, he did not, and I got the full load, along with the \$860,000 stamp tax. Don Gale and Lt. Wood gave me street clothes to wear, including pants



Rowan County Courthouse

much too big for me, and no belt. That way I had to use one hand to hold up my pants, which they found very amusing. Oddly enough, I saw old Nazi newsreels of show trials where the Germans did the same thing to their defendants to make them look ridiculous. We've come a long way.



Piedmont Correctional Institution

The entire fourteen months before trial, I was lead to believe that I would be released quite soon even with 14 years, due to time served and parole after one-eighth of the sentence. Thus, I was not too upset with the verdict. After a week in the Salisbury jail, I went to the Piedmont Correctional Institution in Salisbury, a high-rise close-custody prison where inmates were processed before shipping to their camps. There I took an intelligence test, and the psychologist harrumphed and said I was *not* the smartest inmate that had *ever* been incarcerated in North Carolina. Better luck next time. Finally, they had to level with me about my punishment. My lawyer, Don Gale, and everyone else in the system lied to me constantly all the way to this point, to keep me pliable. In fact, the one-eighth parole was not possible with trafficking charges of any kind. I was only eligible for parole in the last ninety days of my sentence. My pre-trial time counted day for day. From now on, with good time I could get a day off for every day served, and by working could get a week off per month. That would bring the total down to about five years. Figuring out work was going to be a problem, as I was disabled and physical labor was not possible.

Meanwhile, the hours each day of spiritual practice did have results. I was having extraordinary experiences, despite not necessarily having my act together in the physical plane. It was very beneficial to have a single cell at Central, so that I could feel secure in letting go of my body. Here at the high rise, I had a roommate, who was a decent fellow and not in the cell most of the time. I was meditating prone on the lower bunk one day and floated out of my body, and was loitering just below the upper bunk like a long fuzzy light bulb, when he came back to the cell to fetch something. I had never been in a situation where I was in a high state and someone else was around, and I wondered if he would see anything odd. The only thing I could think of doing was to turn and face the wall, still a couple of feet above my physical body. He didn't see anything and turned and left. That was reassuring. Now my concern would be being mistaken for dead. Some years later a friend caught me not at home, so to speak, and I wasn't breathing. Quite a mystery.

Despite these excursions, my nerves were still shot. I tried reading the Psalms and the prayers Diane sent, but couldn't get through them. My simple Hindu mantras were more effective in this tense situation. Rick introduced me to a local woman who showed some interest in my case and thought I'd been badly treated. She came to visit and we talked through the glass. I really appreciated the kindness and wrote her a letter of thanks. After not hearing back, I asked Rick what happened. Turns out she was dependent on some government programs to help out raising her kid. The sheriff told her I was a hardened criminal with many criminal friends, and if she continued being in contact with me, he'd see to it that her assistance was terminated.

Arbeit Macht Frei

After a couple of weeks, they sent me to Stanly Correctional Institution, a small camp in Albemarle, not very far from Cleveland. This was a medium custody unit with about 100 inmates.

I couldn't go to minimum until the pending mushroom charge was dropped. I needed a camp with a library, since this was the only work I could do, and where there was a disciplinary section with single cells so I could have a place to sleep and meditate. Somehow I managed to be classified as sufficiently disabled to need a single cell, but fit enough to work. Central Prison was 65 to 70% black, but from now on the population would be about 80 to 90% black. There was a small schoolroom where I sat in on classes and helped the teachers give basic skills to inmates, while I waited until the library job was available. One day the teachers were helping some inmates with addition, and I gave a little extemporaneous talk on Cantor's diagonal argument for the existence of uncountable sets as proof of transfinite numbers. They didn't quite get it.

Oddly enough, just as I moved from Raleigh back to my home territory, the Corletts moved from Cleveland to Raleigh, where Diane had a new Episcopal church. As a result I didn't see her again until I left prison.

There was an upright piano in a little practice room that inmates could use. It was terribly out of tune, and I offered to pay to have it brought to pitch. For some reason this was not possible, for one of those "if we let you have the piano tuned we'd have to let everyone have the piano tuned" sort of reasons. But in fact I couldn't bear the idea of trying to make music anymore after the destruction of all that I had worked for and the total rejection of what I had sent off to musicians. After a little while I simply accepted leaving music entirely behind as a bad dream with a few happy moments.

Anton wrote from the Philippines that he was about to leave for Japan to show the Emperor pictures of an ivory Buddha that had been looted by the Japanese in WWII. The legend was that Japan would be destroyed by the year 2000 if it was not returned to Japan. Anton was expecting his group to be paid \$10 million for their labors. Never heard of this again.

There was a book in the library about Vivekananda, who was one of the founders of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement at the end of the 19th century. I got in touch with them and got more literature. Susan sent a book by Thich Nhat Hanh that was most helpful, and of course there was the literature from Bo and Sita Lozoff. I got up most mornings at 2 or 3 AM, draped long underwear over my head to block the lights, and did pranayama and mantras before lying down again. The officers were puzzled at all of this, but got used to it after awhile. They joked that they'd bust me for disembodied escape. My extremely slow pace of walking resulted from both arthritis and not having anywhere to go in a tiny camp, which earned me the nickname "Lightning".

Now that I had a place to study and read, I started corresponding with Phil Bolger, a prominent boat designer, libertarian and terrific guy. He was sympathetic to my situation and over the next several months talked me through a series of thirteen drafts of my peculiar design, called the *Anchorite*. This was a twenty-foot boat designed to be able to cross large oceans, with several different rigs possible, from a single gaff sail to a full-rigged brigantine. The idea was to sail to India and go up the Ganges, but I didn't seriously think I could pull it off in reality, given my physical limitations. The boat could be constructed of plywood, aluminum, or steel. I had a calculator but no drafting equipment, so I designed the boat numerically. Bob Hicks published an article on the design in *Messing About in Boats*⁵⁵ in 1995.

The authorities kept insisting I had a drug problem, even sending letters to friends saying I had been convicted of trafficking cocaine. In early December they shipped me out to Craggy Prison in Asheville to freeze for a month taking the first three steps of a twelve-step program. The instructors didn't want me there since I wasn't addicted to anything, unlike all the others. This gave me a chance to hear once again a long list of horror stories from alcohol and narcotics, but I

didn't have any of my own except for what the state had done to me. My drug stories were about profound experiences that were inspirational and which changed my life towards a spiritual path. Theirs were about disasters, dependency, and a peculiar nostalgia for puking their guts out, which didn't sound like a lot of fun. One of the instructors was a woman who recovered from alcoholism, and told how after a bender she would wake up with a stranger in her bed. I complained bitterly that this had never happened to me. OK, it was for a laugh, but it was disturbingly true.

1993; *Adventures in Sanskrit*

By now I'd done what I could with boat design. Over the years I'd tried my hand at reciting the *Bhagavad Gita* in Sanskrit without knowing much about the language. Now that I had some time on my hands, I bought an Indian high school Sanskrit textbook dating from the Victorian era. This was extremely confusing, so I ordered a modern textbook⁵⁶ written by two professors at Berkeley, which was very good. Also I bought the huge *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*⁵⁷ by Sir Monier Monier-Williams, M.A., K.C.I.E., Hon. D.C.L. Oxon, Hon. L.L.D. Calcutta, Hon. Ph.D. Göttingen. The hyphenated author of the hyphenated book was an Oxford don who took fifty years to complete his masterpiece, finishing just before his death in 1899. His chair had been endowed for the specific purpose of translating the Bible into Sanskrit "to enable his countrymen to proceed in the conversion of the natives of India to the Christian Religion." It didn't work. Although laughable in hindsight, Westerners actually considered South Asia to be Godless, much like Billy and Franklin Graham do now. Perhaps the Victorians weren't paying attention after the long boat ride. Indians who knew Sanskrit had ten thousand books to read that came from their culture instead of just the one Bible which did not. I spent much of the next two years doing my best to learn what I could of this remarkable language.

The barber at Albemarle had been a Quaalude dealer. One night at his supplier's home, he took exception to the way a transaction had gone, and beheaded the supplier with a knife. He got life as a result, and had been in prison for a couple of decades. I just barely knew him, but one day he took me aside and said we needed to talk away from the others. He said that someone told him I'd been spreading bad stories about him and was causing trouble. I said this was clearly false, we were only slightly acquainted and had no arguments whatever. Someone was just stirring things up. He said "fine", and that was that. Nothing to lose your head about. I had no qualms about future haircuts, but he didn't give me shaves.

I got in touch with the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) Prison Ministry people, and they assigned me a devotee named Jamuna, then living at the Hillsborough temple. We had both been at several Rainbow gatherings, but hadn't met. She was quite obsessive. One of her friends called her "a keyholing religious projectile." We traded letters for a few weeks, but I tired of her orthodoxy and fanaticism. Preaching is not listening. The mahamantra, which I'd used for many years, was very valuable, and I got some benefit out of the contact. After I got out of prison I looked her up. She'd quit the temple and ISKCON. We went out for dinner, where she slugged down a beer. Afterwards she told me to go away, which by my standards is a normal date.

On May 9, Mom, John, and Jackie came to visit. Halfway through, Mom said she had a sore throat, and went back to the car. John told me that was a story, and that I was lucky she lasted that long. This was my only visit with family during my years in prison. Meanwhile back in Nashville, Burns was in a nursing home going senile, and my cousin, the daughter of Mom's brother David, was training to join the police. In time she became a narc.



Jackie, Mom, me and John

Here Now. I wrote them often and hoped to visit after release, and maybe stay there.

A new black inmate showed up one day and caused a bit of a stir. His name was Willie Monteith Jr., better known as Willie M. At age nine he was removed from his mother's abusive care, and spent most of his childhood in detention or asylums. Lawyers who saw a chance to fix a major social problem (and make a buck at the same time) used his case in a class-action lawsuit for impoverished mentally disabled and violent youth. The result was the Willie M. program, which cost \$744 million during its run from 1980 to 1998, helping some 6000 youngsters. Willie became a child celebrity, even having dinner with Governor Hunt.

As an adult he was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder, and was addicted to cocaine and alcohol. At 23 he sold crack to a narc and ended up in my world. Willie was clearly retarded, but the teachers at our camp said that people had obviously worked with him on basic skills. He could go so far and no further. In later years he was in and out of jail. As of this writing, he is living on the streets in Charlotte, broke⁵⁸. Social Security did with him as they did with me, cutting him off when he was arrested, then automatically turning him down when he reapplied, hoping he wouldn't be sharp enough to get a lawyer. It's a rough world.

And a corrupt one, too. One inmate I knew at Stanly had hired a hit man who was arrested and charged with nine murders. The prosecutors named their fee, and \$150,000 later, he was released. A little later I heard of an offer to buy paroles. The cost was \$10,000 to the lawyer, and \$10,000 to the parole board. This was shut down shortly after I heard of it. Such stories are highly unlikely to make the papers, since after all there are hit men and rich people on the streets who like things just the way they are.

I had a regular correspondence with Dad since arrest, but in June he wrote a long, angry, bitter letter that I found insulting and intolerable. After my reply, we did not communicate for a year.

Medium security required a strip search before and after my visits. This was also true when I went to a doctor's office away from the camp. One day I was strip-searched four times. Rules is rules. Visits to doctors were the only chance I had to be away from the camp. As I was in handcuffs and leg-irons and in the grey uniform, accompanied by guards, any civilians I encountered recoiled in fear and disgust. I tried to project love and kindness as best I could, and kept my mantras going.

I'd written Ram Dass some time before, and in mid-May I got a response from him, which was most welcome. We traded letters from time to time, which helped bolster my faith and keep my perspective. His assistant Marlene gave me the address for the Lama Foundation, a wonderful spiritual community twenty miles north of Taos, New Mexico. This is where Ram Dass wrote *Be*

We had a preacher visit weekly, and he would play Jimmy Swaggart videos and other born-again propaganda. A friend sent a couple of recordings from Kripalu Center in Massachusetts, and I could use the preacher's cassette player to hear Amrit Desai chanting in an incredibly tone-deaf and raucous manner. One hearing was enough. Desai was making something like \$400,000 a year running his ashram. Residents of Kripalu had to take vows of celibacy and obedience to Desai. The next year he resigned after admitting having sex with three followers. It's hard to find a spiritual group where something like this has not happened eventually. The alpha male desexualizes the beta males so he can have the women for himself. Been working that way for at least a million years.

I had plenty of problems dealing with sensual desires myself. Early one morning I had a vivid vision of Ramakrishna burning out parts of my brain to free me from lust. It worked for a few hours.

Moving up in the world

The library job opened up in July, which meant eleven days of good time per month instead of six, and an income of \$4.90 a week. I spent weeks straightening out the mess, organizing the material by subject, and pleading with the system for books and magazines. Inmates usually used the library as a place to get away from the guards and a handy place to stash contraband, so my efforts were not appreciated.

I met only two other inmates arrested for LSD my whole time in prison. One was in the Salisbury high-rise while I was being processed; he'd already done seven years and had more to go. The other was here in Stanly. He was busted as a first offense at age 19 with 4000 hits, did not cooperate, and got 70 years. He was only in medium custody through some sort of paperwork error that he did not complain about.

Anton wrote that when he was in Sulawesi he was taken to the mountain hideaway of a 226 year old prophet, where inside a large seven-step pyramid he was shown a sacred book in Aramaic. The prophet was the incarnation of Adam and Jesus and Angel Gabriel and all the saints and founders of all the religions, and goes to Mecca every Friday. He controlled a secret holy



Picture I sent to Susan

treasure of gold from heaven which was Solomon's treasure, the secret treasure of the Knights of Malta, and the Czar's treasure, among others. This would replace our present economic system after the Tribulation and restoration of the old royal blood lines. Conveniently, he brought back many of the Buddhist texts that had been lost on Earth from the Western Paradise Planets. And so forth and so on. I'm sure the dear Reader gets letters like this all the time. But of course Anton was a little strapped for cash at the moment. I think he said the prophet was the Living Buddha Lu Sheng-Yen, who lives in Redmond, Washington, not far from Master Gates of Microsoft. I may be wrong as letters were garbled.

For months I had been pleading for the return of my diaries and photographs from the federal court, where they were held as evidence in Carla's trial. She was sentenced to seven years in

June, and finally I got word that my diaries would be returned, minus a few pages. That was a big relief, and made a large part of this book possible.

I was allowed one ten minute collect call every two weeks. In mid-August, I phoned Susan and Ray in Cleveland. They told me that Susan was diagnosed a few days before with a relapse of her leukemia, and was about to get chemotherapy and transfusions in Charlotte. She was quite frightened as they told her without treatment she would live only three or four weeks. After she got to the hospital and started the therapy, she was not able to read or write letters and was in a great deal of pain. They tried an experimental treatment in Baltimore where they removed bone marrow, treated it, killed what remained in her body, and then replaced the marrow. This was her only chance.

In early September, Mom wrote to tell me she had been diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia with an average life expectancy of twelve years.

Overhearing conversations was an odd pastime. Some would discuss the comparative virtues of brass knuckles, another bunch debated the proper ammunition to use in drive-by shootings. A black pimp described how he would take all the money from one of his prostitutes, then rape her to show her who was boss. She would always come back the next day to work for him again. I couldn't quite figure that out.

Inmates were limited to possessions that could fit in a single plastic garbage bag. This had always been a difficulty for me as I started ordering books while in Central Prison, and kept copies of my many letters and papers. When I had too many to store, I sent them home with visitors for storage. The superintendent at Stanly was very suspicious of my ordering so many books, even though I was the librarian, and delayed my money orders. The system is not set up for intellectual development. You're expected to spend the time learning about brass knuckles and ammunition.

In my absence, links to the outer world were fraying. Jim and Gary came to visit in October, and Jim brought with him a letter I'd written two weeks ago. It was unopened, and had been lying on the floor of his car the whole time. It was not unusual for me to wait six months for a response to a letter, and many never responded at all. It was like watching your own slow funeral. This is supposed to be a good spiritual exercise, but it didn't seem like a lot of fun at the time. Jim had a lot of things to do and handling my money and storing my belongings was becoming too much of a burden. I had no way of doing anything for people in return, so everything I needed was on someone's shoulders costing them time and effort. Most inmates lost all contact with friends after a couple of years and were completely isolated, so my situation was much better than theirs.

I shuffle off to my last camp

Just before Thanksgiving I transferred to Mecklenburg Correctional Center in Huntersville, about twenty miles north of Charlotte. This was a close minimum custody road camp of about 120 inmates. I needed close minimum so that it would have single cells, and this camp had a library to work in. I started off in the little school waiting for the job to become available. At last I had access to pay phones for ten-minute collect calls most days. I could pull in National Public Radio from Charlotte and two classical radio stations. One of these broadcast from Davidson College, about four miles away. I could probably pick it up from the bedsprings. An inmate wondered what I was listening to one day, and I pulled out my earplugs and handed them over. I was listening to one of Bach's Brandenburg concertos, some of the most exquisite music on the planet. He put the earplugs in, and half a second later yanked them out as if they had inflicted a severe electric shock across his brain.

Anton spent the summer in Singapore, then got a call saying His Royal Highness Prince Kgodomo I of Lesotho wanted to meet him in New York to help sell 500 tons of gold. All Anton's expenses were paid to stay at a five-star hotel, while he and one of his "Knights of Malta" associates met with the CIA demanding \$820 million from Yamashita's gold be returned. Prince Kgodomo withdrew from the deal after a month, but Anton's "godfather" kept the party going for months. Anton danced in the discos to 4 AM every night.

In 1998, Kgodomo Crown Prince Of Botswana of the Court of Phelefu, whose real name was Mali Saint Amali, conspired with others to defraud financial institutions in the City of London, and was sentenced to four years in prison.⁵⁹

Three retired people from Davidson, Ann, June, and Walter, came to the camp every Friday to visit and distribute books and magazines, some of which I collected for the library. This was an enormous help and a great humanizing factor for us all.

1994

Lama Foundation sent a copy of *Miracle of Love*,⁶⁰ a superb compilation of stories about Neem Karoli Baba. I had been paying a lot of attention to him before, but this book helped put him in focus in a most remarkable way.

Every couple of weeks, a fair number of inmates were more or less randomly picked for urine tests. I wasn't using any drugs, of course, and even if I had, I wouldn't be using what they'd test for. Dirty urine was mostly from pot, and resulted in a couple of weeks locked in a single cell, plus loss of good time. Hardly worth it, one would think, and pretty much everyone who smoked ended up doing a turn in a cell. But that didn't seem to be much of a deterrence. It reminded me of my NTSU buddy who was popped for smoking joints on a nuclear submarine. Inmates just didn't care all that much if they got caught—what would the cops do, arrest them? And they *really* wanted to get stoned. I saw their point. I didn't trip because acid was too weak and temporary. I was using other methods for transforming my consciousness, which would not be of interest to any but a very few of my fellows.

I paid no attention to dope smoke, knowing that it just meant more mellow inmates. Crack was a different story. The stuff smells incredibly toxic, an odor you would expect of a fire at a chemical plant specializing in plastics or nerve gas. Crack heads were highly unpopular if they continued to use in prison. Some inmates had parents who were "rock stars" and were fully aware of the consequences. At Central Prison, I saw people coming in still buzzed who had committed murders while stoned on crack. They were grinning and completely without any feelings of having done anything wrong or any concerns about consequences to follow. At least with alcohol there usually was remorse when people woke up in prison charged for murders they didn't remember committing. One white crack head smoked out of a broken pen one evening, and when the other inmates (black and white) figured out what was going on, they jumped him, stole his jewelry, and gave him a good scare. I was glad to see him go off to the single cells for awhile.

Early in the year, Susan responded well to the bone marrow transplant, and it appeared that she could make a recovery. However her health turned for the worse, and in February she came home from the hospital to die. She passed on March 3, at age 47. It was a bleak and lonely time for the little town of Cleveland, and for everyone who knew and loved her. Thankfully she came to visit during meditations. Ram Dass sent a consoling note with one of his favorite quotes from the Tibetan Dzogchen tradition: "Prolong not the past. Invite not the future. Disturb not your innate wakefulness. Fear not appearances. There is nothing more than that."

Of course this book is all about prolonging the past, speculating about the future, listing disturbing events, and things I've been afraid of. There is nothing more than that here.

In May I finally got the library job. This allowed me some semi-private space and storage, which was very valuable. With severe overcrowding, I started being bumped out of my single cell and onto a bunk in a cage with fifty other men. Whenever that happened things were very stressful and meditation far more difficult. By the end of 1994 I was permanently crowded out of the single cells and just had to adapt.

June and Ann showed me some beads that they had grown called Job's Tears, which is a kind of grass seed that dries to a lovely blue-grey color with intricate patterns. I had been in need of chanting beads, called a *mala*, for years and saw this as a chance to make my own. They planted some for me, and when they were ready brought a cupful to the camp. I split them with another inmate and started the conspiracy to put them together. There was a school for teaching heating and air conditioning at the camp, and a friend snuck a piece of wood into the shop and made a



In the Gulag

small disk for the beginning part of the mala. Then I asked an inmate who worked in the sewing room for some sturdy thread and a contraband needle, which I concealed by taping to the ink supply tube inside a ball point pen. Finally I strung 108 beads together and had my official Hindu mala at long last.

In 1989, inmates won a law suit requiring 50 square feet of living space per inmate in prisons, that had to be met by the summer of 1994. Now that it was spring of 1994, the living space per inmate was only 35 square feet. To meet the court order would require releasing 4000 inmates. Nothing happened. Next time you don't have much to do, trace out an area six feet by six feet. That's what we had.

One fellow in his early twenties was clearly not quite right. He enjoyed pulling the wings off bumblebees, but I knew enough to mind my own business, even though I had befriended many an insect during my incarceration. One day he asked me "Could you teach me German, and by the way, where is Germany?" Turns out he had been born on an Army base in Germany, and came to the US as an infant. His parents never bothered with the citizenship details, and when time came for him to make up his mind, he knew nothing about it. So legally he was now a German citizen. He was brought to court on five traffic violations, each of which was a misdemeanor. Usually this would result in a fine and a scolding, but as I say, he wasn't quite right, and he told the judge "Fuck you." She did not take kindly to this, and sentenced him to the maximum two years for each charge, to serve consecutively. As a result he was looking at ten years for two words. In addition she ordered him deported. So, he now had to learn a lot more geography and languages than he got in school, where evidently he learned nothing of either. No lawyer stood to make a buck by helping him out, so he was out of luck. The only German I know is either faked or out of music scores, so I wasn't much good either.

One day I noticed small white flecks of dirt on my clothes, and mentioned to a black inmate out of earshot of the others that "it is remarkable how much *white trash* there is around

here.” Word spread quickly, and soon another black inmate came up to me and with a big grin mentioned my remark, which I acknowledged, while keeping it in the context of laundry. Should have said it long ago, as it won me major points. I had few hassles for some time after that.

Which was a good thing, because in June the O. J. Simpson murder psychodrama started. All of the blacks were rooting for him and all of the whites were disgusted. This kept going until October of 1995 when O. J. was acquitted. There was instant pandemonium when the news hit the prison, with the black inmates exultant that their hero got away with cutting the throat of “that white bitch”. This was a kind of revenge opera that was horrifying to watch—not so much the sordid details of Simpson’s actions, but the reactions right here of the people surrounding me. At this point all I wanted was to get out of prison without injury and get the hell away from lower class black culture.

In September I got news concerning a Rainbow family friend. Jaydene Blount lived for some time at Rainbow Valley north of Denton, then moved to a poor black neighborhood in Dallas. She was one of the few whites heavily involved with Rastafarians, and to reflect that changed her name to “Jahdene”. She had a daughter with a black man who left immediately and had no role in his daughter’s life. Jahdene was beaten and fatally stabbed in the throat in front of her four-year-old daughter during the theft of her freshly cashed and very modest paycheck.

Part of my duties as librarian was a daily trek into the single cells, going down the corridor with a cart full of books they had either asked for or might like. Most books were westerns or romances, while the books in greatest demand were about crime, especially black gangs or the Mafia. I tried to include more uplifting and informative material in case I could spark interest. Sometimes the clientele were pretty rough and would tear up the books and throw them into the hallway, or clog up the toilets with them. Only once in awhile would things get too threatening and then I would ask an officer for backup to make my rounds. I wanted to be on good terms since people would come out of the cells and into the general population from time to time. I tried to use this job as a way to do something kind and useful for people in a desperate situation, but my altruism was hardly constant.

Neem Karoli Baba became more and more important to me. One morning in meditation he came by and I wondered what it would be like to see the world like he did. He took off his face and put it over mine, and I got a look for about a second before blacking out. Pretty amazing character. Another time he said he was in charge of what happened on these jaunts to other planes.

I joined an international pen-pal group based in India, mostly to find women to write to, but others as well. One correspondent was Swami Mangalabhilashi, who styled himself as “Babaji, Universal Monk, Head, Mission International, Temporal Seat of Humanism”. He said he was the living Neem Karoli Baba for me, would be my Savior by showing me the Righteous Path, would wash off my sins of this life and other lives too, would find me a wife, and so on. He had the big long white beard and everything, and gave me a special mantra. I’m not sure he understood that this westerner was broke. I sent him friendly letters from time to time, then I wrote him a letter in Sanskrit with no future tenses. It wasn’t for any spiritual reasons, I just hadn’t learned them yet, since the grammar is really intense. Never heard back from him after that.



Swami Mangalabhilashi

1995

In the cold months we were cooped up inside, and with little ventilation I gagged on the cigarette smoke. The extra confinement made inmates edgy. I needed to ask a large inmate about something, and as he was facing away from me I tapped him on the shoulder to get his attention. Mistake. He whipped around, got in my face as I backed rapidly away, and shouted “Don’t EVER touch me!” “Ok, ok, no problem,” I said, and smoothed things over. He was totally freaked out. But that was mild compared to the other time I tapped an inmate on the shoulder. The officers knew I had an insomnia problem, but now that I was out in the main cell block, sleeping in a room with fifty guys, they decided to mess with me. There was an insane black inmate that had usually been in the single cells. Sometimes he would roll naked down the corridor. He was way, way out of it. They brought him out to sleep with us and put him in the bunk over mine. He spent the whole night shifting around, switching head to foot, moaning, bouncing and in general making any attempt at sleep impossible. After several hours of this, in the early morning as he thrashed I ventured to tap him on the shoulder so I could speak with him. Little did I know that he was asleep. He awoke, and started hooting and hollering, waking the entire room, as I ran to the far side. Everybody thought it was hilarious, although I was quite afraid. The officer in charge came in and took him back to the single cell. They’d had their fun.



I had a subscription to *Scientific American*, and in the February issue there was an article by Seth Putterman from UCLA about sonoluminescence.⁶¹ When degassed water is exposed to ultrasound, under the right conditions there can be cavitation bubbles that emit light. With some tweaking, a single bubble will stay in the center of a chamber and flash light in bursts only picoseconds long at the frequency of the sound, typically 20,000 times a second. Theory broke down and no one knew how the light was produced or how hot the bubble got. The physics was very intriguing, especially since if the bubbles collapsed small enough and got hot enough with deuterium and tritium gas, fusion might be possible. As a result I dropped Sanskrit and started freshening up my

physics. There was a huge multi-volume encyclopedia of physics and chemistry dating from 1962 in the library, untouched for decades, and I mined its contents for anything of value. Over the next fourteen months I designed a series of fusion reactors, including material I used fifteen years later in my doctoral dissertation. Ultimately I crunched some numbers that made it abundantly clear that no power-producing reactor could ever work with this method, even in the best possible case. But by then I’d studied a great deal of physics and gotten my old interest back. Unlike almost everything I did, this actually had vocational potential.

It was very difficult for me to wait months at a time for people to write me back. Even after years in prison, I never managed to adapt to the reality that my friends and acquaintances had full lives and sometimes hardly wrote letters to anyone. Sitting in a cage for prolonged periods waiting for a reply was so painful that I would end up writing to people I loved and needed to have on my side with considerable bitterness and annoyance. This made people even more reluctant to communicate with me.

Every Christmas, local church groups would bring in poinsettias, and I would keep one alive for most of the next year in the library window. This spring there was a large hatch of the local species of small brown praying mantises, not to be confused with the large green Chinese jobs. I grew four of them on my plant from very small hatchlings. It was a challenge to find minute bugs for them to eat when they were very young. Once they were mature, they could take down formidable prey. I tied thread onto yellow jackets and other wasps, allowing them to fly on a leash, and the mantises could knock them down and gobble them up. Their eyesight and intelligence must have been superb. In one experiment, I used thread to dangle insects past them, and generally they would ignore such treats. But if I dangled a spider by a thread, they would attack at once. They could tell which arthropod should be at the end of a line. The inmates were enthralled by the graphic violence of my little monsters, and would line up with potential meals they had found on the yard. This got the attention of the camp warden when he saw inmates actually enjoying something, which is not part of the punishment ethos. He ordered me to get rid of the mantises, although I argued that this was a chance to teach a little biology on the fly, so to speak.



Ram Dass very generously sent a package with a large collection of cassette tapes. Previously such packages were returned to the senders, but this time they let me keep them in the chaplain's office. Cassette players were contraband since inmates made tattoo machines with them, but I managed to hide one. I kept copies of several of his books in the library and encouraged inmates to read them, as well as the volumes from Bo and Sita Lozoff who kept me well stocked with their literature.

In 1994, Dad collapsed a couple of times in his apartment, and started treatments for diabetes. He had chronic problems with congestive heart failure and was looking for a rest home that would have more services than the retirement apartment complex he'd been in for many years. On September 28 he felt intestinal discomfort and went to the hospital. They took an x-ray and found bowel perforations. They said they could make him comfortable, but that was all they could do. He died an hour later. Brother John took care of the details. Dad was 80 years old. He hadn't gotten around to modifying his will for the last thirty years, so everything went to Mom.

A month later I wrote to Akanda mentioning some matters that I wanted to discuss and clear up so that we could have a better relationship and understand one another. She thought this was an attack of some sort, and wrote back a curt note cutting off communication. We were out of touch for many years.

First half of 1996

From time to time I went to the evangelical Baptist Sunday service given by a visiting preacher. It was primitive stuff, but at least it was appropriate for many of the inmates. They were looking for a gang to join that would get them away from the gangs they were with, and Christianity offered just that kind of a ride.

It was not possible to know when I'd get out exactly, but I knew that it would be sometime probably between June and October. I looked around for somewhere to live and some way to get by while waiting for SSI checks to start again. My hip was in bad shape but I couldn't get an operation until I had benefits and a secure place to live set up. Getting a regular job was not realistic. Mom couldn't take me in for more than a week; Akanda wasn't speaking to me and was impoverished herself; and John and Jackie up in Massachusetts turned me away, even though they had room. I wanted to go back to school to study physics and nuclear engineering, possibly at NCSU, conveniently sited just a couple of blocks from Central Prison, but setting that up would take a lot of time.

Other prisoners also were ready to get out. One of my friends had been down for twenty years, and finally qualified for a minimum custody camp where he could work on the road crew. He had six months left before release when he figured he'd had enough, and ran off. They were searching for him in a swamp and noticed the tip of his shoe sticking above the water. Back to the pokey for him for a few more years.

I'd been corresponding with Lama Foundation in New Mexico for years and was dismayed in early May when I saw news accounts of the Hondo Fire. This covered 7500 acres and wiped out twenty of the twenty-three Lama buildings, burning all of the large pine trees on their side of the mountain. It would take Lama years of hard labor to rebuild, and since I couldn't swing a hammer, I would have to look elsewhere.

With considerable trepidation I wrote to the Maharishi University of Management in Iowa to see if that was a reasonable option. I never was a fan of Transcendental Meditation, since it seemed to be oriented to maximizing profit. A close look at their claims did little to dispel my misgivings. They sent a video including footage of their well-publicized "yogic flying", which was really hopping in a lotus position. To make it look like flying they used slow motion and frozen frames. It became clear that they wouldn't teach me the skills I wanted, nor could I pay them the high fees required, nor would I be free to practice my own spiritual path. They considered TM to be The Only Way, and everything else was prohibited. I would have had a more flexible and liberal education at West Point. So I told them "no thanks".

Bo and Sita Lozoff were just starting to set up a residential center for ex-convicts and people who worked with prisoners called Kindness House in Mebane, a rural setting about 45 miles west of Raleigh. They were not ready for new members yet but I would keep in touch and visit after release. This sounded best of all, since they were oriented around Neem Karoli Baba, and my prison experience could be valuable in helping others.

I arranged with my paddling buddy Greg Shanding to sleep in a storage room at his home in Charlotte for a couple of months while finding more permanent digs. Finally, without warning, I was released on July 19. As I signed the final papers, I let the officers know that they had wasted their time and money, and that they were in no position to give me lessons in morality.

10. Exodus (1996-2001)

The Situation is Desperate but not Serious

Greg drove me away from the prison camp on a Friday. My fellow inmates all thought I was rich, and I would have hired a limousine if I could have spared the bucks just for the show, but it was a gag too far. The next day Greg flew off to Alaska for nine days of salmon fishing. Jim, with his peculiar sense of humor, came by and took me to see the movie *Independence Day*, a science fiction eyeball-overload thriller with massive computer-generated special effects, to get my system going one day removed from five years of sensory deprivation. I came out of the theater shaking and sweating. Next, he said he'd set me up with a date, what with my having been away from women for so long, and dropped me off to see Morning Star for an hour. She was a Rainbow sister who was about 40, but looked much older than her parents with whom she lived temporarily. This was due to her obsession with tobacco. Her skin looked like it had been cured for months in a smokehouse. She couldn't light up in the house, and so spent most of her time outside. Between hacking coughs on the porch she squinted her bleary eyes at me and said through yellowed teeth that she didn't believe the doctor's diagnosis of emphysema, or that it was caused by cigarettes. As I didn't partake myself, there wasn't much for us to talk about, and I was relieved to make my escape when Jim came to pick me up. I was not her Marlboro Man.

To get around, I borrowed Jim's mountain bike, which was painful and barely possible to use, and relied on the Charlotte bus system. Usually I was the only white rider, and from time to time I would meet former inmates. While they were all friendly, it was nerve-racking. Getting anywhere by bus took at least an hour each way.

I went to visit my parole officer, and he took one look at me and my papers and said "phone me up once a month." He had actual criminals to attend to. That was the last time I saw him, and parole ended in October.

Now that I was on my own, I had no medical care and no income. Some friends very kindly pitched in enough for me to get by, but things were very difficult. I trained for three weeks on Photoshop in Jim's studio, and then he gave me a job for a few hours two or three days a week. This was enough to leave me exhausted. Putting in more than ten or fifteen hours a week was not possible, so I wasn't going to be able to support myself. I needed to be certified as disabled all over again to get Medicaid and SSI, as well as food stamps. The world was very confusing and frequently hostile.

At a local library, I had my first experience of this internet thing I had heard so much about. I went to a terminal, someone told me how to sign on, and the first thing that came on the screen was a neo-Nazi page, with pictures of Hitler and giant swastikas. *That's odd*, I thought. Later I found it also had email and porn.



Jim and Me

My lawyer's secretary had been saying that she had no idea where my diaries and photographs were, although they had been entrusted to my lawyer by the federal court. Luck was with me, and Marshall Bickett got a new secretary, who found them after some considerable rummaging. I took the bus to Salisbury for a reunion with Don Gale and Bickett in the courthouse. It was quite odd to be surrounded by people who had done so much to harm and deceive me, and who mostly still treated me like dirt. Retrieval of these documents made this book possible. On parting at the bus station, Don said he hoped I wouldn't be involved with LSD again, as he wouldn't want to bust me once more. After doing so much harm to me that lasted so many years, he was actually being friendly and respectful, where other people couldn't witness.

In late August a vanload of plainclothes police came to the door to search the house for drugs. They said a neighbor had reported me walking down the street smoking a joint, which I hadn't done for twenty years. They found nothing, since there was nothing to find, but on the way out the last one said "You can tell us if you've been smoking dope, it's OK, *you can trust us.*" I showed him the door.

Also in late August I visited Rainbeau Weaver in Chapel Hill. She drove me over to the newly-constructed main building at Kindness House, where we had a meeting with Bo and Sita Lozoff and a dinner with the residents. I was keen on the idea of joining the ashram, since it was all about love and chanting and devotion to my guru and selfless service. But some things struck me as a touch strange. Bo said they didn't want people who had "problems with authority", and smoking one cigarette would result in immediate expulsion. I wasn't sure where he was going to find ex-cons with that kind of admission policy. In fact there were none there yet. They had a pledge for all members to sign that had a list of austerities, including celibacy and obedience. Bo and Sita didn't have to sign since they were taken as special and spiritually evolved. Ex-prisoners couldn't leave the compound without permission, and were escorted when away. Bo would threaten those on parole with revocation and re-imprisonment if they broke rules or talked back, even though he did not have this power. Ashram residents would bunk four to a room and were allowed half a backpack of possessions. Compensation for working all day every day was room and board plus \$50 a month, with no medical care.

The handful living there struck me as timid and passive and from traumatic pasts. One was a refugee from the Hare Krishnas, and others had similar histories. Dinner was tense as we all tried to be on our best behavior and be all spiritual and such. I noticed that all other religions and methods were mocked, which was not a good sign. When I showed Bo a translation of the *Hanuman Chalisa* by an Indian devotee, who used somewhat flowery Indian English, he ridiculed the book. Something just wasn't smelling right.

Still, I wanted to join since I thought the work with inmates was valuable, and the chance to be in an ashram centered around Neem Karoli Baba was extremely rare. The only other such ashram in the country was in Taos. They didn't think my residence was a very good idea unless I tried staying for a very short visit to try it out, which was prudent. I proposed bringing my own housing in the form of a tipi, then later an RV. They turned these ideas down. They wanted residents to have no social life, no outside interests, no personal freedom, and no activities other than service to the ashram. Humor was unwelcome. They said that if I joined it could destroy their group and drive them insane, much to my surprise. I found this offensive and absurd, and asked them to take me off their mailing list.

A couple of years later Rainbeau Weaver introduced me to Peace, one of the few ex-inmates who moved to Kindness House. He was about 60, with long hair and bushy white beard, very much the hippie. He'd been arrested for something not terribly serious in Pennsylvania,

probably weed, but when paroled he split for California. They brought him back and put him in prison for parole violation. When he was paroled again, he went back to California, was arrested again, and so on over and over. By the time he'd been paroled to Kindness House, he'd been in prison for *twenty-five years*, mostly for going to California while on parole for going to California while on parole for going to California, ad infinitum. Eventually Pennsylvania tired of footing the bill for this nonsense, but instead of simply paroling him to California and ending the problem, they paroled him to North Carolina. Sending him to California would be giving him what he wanted, instead of teaching this hippie a lesson about authority. Peace chafed under the severe restrictions at Kindness House. Friends got together and arranged for him to have a little apartment in Chapel Hill and a modest job at a store. I visited his apartment where he told me about how great California was. I pleaded with him to just sit tight in this situation for a few more months, then he'd be done with parole and could go to California without being a fugitive. He seemed to agree that this made sense.

A week later the apartment was empty, as Peace had escaped to California once again.

I finally figured out that Bo was the boss-man of a cult, and in 2000 I wrote him a couple of letters about this. He responded with foul language, which he often employed when losing his temper, and that was the end of our contact. Just as with so many other spiritual groups, the celibacy requirement emasculated the other men, leaving the women horny and available to the alpha male. Sita considered anything Bo did to be inspired and ordained by God, including affairs with women residents in the ashram, even a random sacred blow-job from a first-time visitor in Bo's office. By 2005 his sexual misconduct forced the end of Kindness House, but Human Kindness Foundation continued. In 2008 *Independent Weekly* printed an article titled "The two faces of Bo Lozoff",⁶² detailing the situation. Bo and Sita and the core members thought of this as a conspiracy by bitter convicts. After the article Bo had a harder time locally, and so he moved to Hawaii. There he sings rock and roll in bars and bills himself as a yoga teacher and inspirational author on iHanuman.com. Many people give him lavish praise.

I move into subterranean digs

In early October I moved across town to live in the basement of my friend I'll call Janice, who let me stay there for free while I got back on my feet. It had a bathroom and a fridge, which made it practical. The house was built on a steep hill, so I had my own entrance to the yard and could avoid disturbing her privacy. Janice did not want me to come upstairs to use her washer and drier, so to do laundry I had to carry my clothes in a large duffle bag to the nearest bus stop, then across a shopping center to the laundromat. With my bum hip, this was excruciating. Later, Janice had knee replacement surgery, experienced the pain, and profusely apologized for making me do this.

Janice said that before my arrest, Big Bob made a couple of purchases from his terrific customer, then found himself in a room surrounded by policemen. They told him he would never get out of prison unless he cooperated and helped set up his supplier for arrest and prosecution. He never spent a night in jail. Big Bob was careful not to let anyone know about this, or I would have heard through many mutual friends. This didn't keep him from dealing pot later on. Oh well.

In October, Jim and I loaded up our kayak gear and went to Balogh Sail Design's annual Born to Raise Sail gathering at Cedar Island on the Outer Banks. We met Jim Brown, great trimaran designer, and had some wonderful sailing. But I couldn't handle the boats anymore, and needed money desperately. I met a couple there who lived on the road in their camping trailer and were interested in my Klepper and sailing rig. Later they came to Charlotte and I sold it all to

them. Later I found a buyer for my wooden single. This was the end of my boating life, and an inspiration to think about living on the road myself.

Looking around for local spiritual groups, I visited the local Hindu Center. But as the only cowboy in a room full of Indians, I couldn't connect. Next I tuned into the Charlotte Zen scene. I sat with them weekly for most of a year. But it was not satisfying. I wanted a quiet concentrated mind in pure awareness, but there wasn't any devotion or sense of growing closer to God in this path. Staring at the wall just didn't do it for me. It clearly was designed to get Japanese past problems that are endemic in that culture, but I am not Japanese, something I learned in some detail while macrobiotic.

1997: Life in the Slow Lane

In January I bought an old station wagon for \$750 and relished scratching my very itchy feet. Now a visit to the library wouldn't require three hours of travel time on the bus. I'd had several visions relating to moving to somewhere between Nashville and West Virginia, and so I was eager to be mobile as soon as I could.

In contrast to my life before prison, my spiritual practice was now a regular daily routine, with pranayama, chanting, and meditation before dawn most days. As a result I had a long series of very high experiences that were sometimes clear and sometimes completely bewildering, frequently with Neem Karoli Baba involved "riding on the thought forms" as Ram Dass put it.

Rainbeau Weaver's two children, ages 11 and 15, were living with her, and I could drive from time to time to Chapel Hill to visit. Although we had gone through ups and downs, and she did not visit while I was in prison, we were very close. She had gone through many dramas during my prison years. For instance, one of her boyfriends blew out his brains with a shotgun, and she found the body, a trauma which took some time to heal. There were serious lifestyle differences between us that kept us from being mates, much to my regret. Her extremely difficult childhood left her with severe problems that I found perplexing. Soon she had a new boyfriend whom she'd been seeing from time to time since December.

After two months of waiting to get into a free clinic to get current medical records for SSI and Medicaid appeals, I saw a doctor and had x-rays of my left hip. Then I saw an orthopedic surgeon who was emphatic that I needed surgery, probably including an implant of cadaver bone. Even by prison standards this was gruesome. I couldn't possibly do this living in a basement and with no benefits, so surgery would just have to wait.

In the spring, Ram Dass had a severe stroke, which was devastating for all the many people who love him and owe him so much for his guidance and example over the years. After a prolonged recovery he was able to continue writing and speaking at events, although with long thoughtful pauses as he searched for words.



Home and car

Finally in August my SSI was granted, with a check including back pay from when I first applied fresh out of prison. A thousand dollars went to my lawyer in return for his sending a few letters. I renovated a twelve foot square space in Jim's garage and moved in to prepare for my operation.

Time for a technical paragraph. (Don't worry, it is brief. In case of nosebleed, you may skip it without becoming disoriented.) My

research had gone from sonoluminescence to cold fusion. I was intrigued by the various reports of lingering anomalies in several labs, and hoped to propose an experiment to make a practical reactor with a high and unambiguous power density. As a result I studied detonation shock waves through aerosols, and the reactions of fine powders of titanium, nickel, and lithium in hydrogen or deuterium gases. Although it got quite intricate, none of the proposals were realistic. I was in correspondence with a company called Zpower Corporation based in Phoenix for several years for backing and setting up a lab, but nothing came of it. You can't fool Mother Nature.

In early September Anton wrote from England, back from a summer in the Far East. He'd met James Lansdale, brother of long-time Manila CIA station chief Edward Lansdale, who said he was 99 years old but looked 45 due to eating living food and periodic month-long fasts. James claimed to be the titular head of Alpha Omega, the secret government behind the governments going back to 34,000 BC, and which was now setting up the New World Order. James invited Anton to his Pentagon office in October to introduce him to the major players in Washington. Also, in Indonesia he met with the Raja Muda of Perlis, and then with the spiritual guardians of a vast treasure entrusted to them by King Solomon that would be released to the world in 1998. The treasure was overseen by a 400 year old saint and kept under a spiritual cloak so that no one could find it. In Singapore, Count Albert Chiang of the Kingdom of Colonia St. John told of his travels to Tibet and the sacred hidden city. Count considered himself an incarnation of a Chinese emperor whose many lifetimes of spiritual practice allowed him to see and handle the sacred treasure. I couldn't quite see how the goal of lifetimes of spiritual practice was to be able to play with rocks and little bits of shiny metal. The periodic missives from Anton were certainly entertaining.

Finally I had my total hip revision in mid-September. It went much better than the first time and I was out in thirteen days, walking on new plastic, steel, and a chunk of someone's second-hand pelvis. I got off crutches in a month, but kept on the prison-issue cane, which I called my "muggerwhacker". It was a solid oak job which lasted several years until I left it at a gas station.

1998

I started plotting my next adventure. Jim was going to marry his girlfriend Laura in September, and I was getting underfoot and rather in the way. I needed to find a new place to hang my pith helmets by August. I applied for subsidized housing, but the only available apartments had no white residents. There was ample reason to fear living there. Staying in North Carolina was uncomfortable to me due to my recent judicial unpleasantness, and I wanted to be as mobile as possible while finding my new home turf. Ideally I wanted to find a suitable spiritual community, but that would take some serious travel. So, I started considering selling my car and buying an old motorhome, with a recumbent bicycle as short-range transportation. Rainbeau introduced me to a NASCAR mechanic living down the street from her who had a 1973 Winnebago Indian, 22 feet long, that was for sale. In late March we took a close look at it and I drove it around the block. The water tank and the manifold gasket needed work, which he agreed to fix, but everything else seemed fine. I gave a hefty down payment as it would be early June before I could pick it up.

I wanted to get everything rigged and down the road to the next Rainbow gathering in Arizona, as always during the first week of July. I wrote a note to the Armageddon Time Ark Base⁶³ in Weslaco, Texas, who were at the 1990 gathering handing out information about their 5-D technology and monadic gravity. It was like the Church of the Sub-Genius, except they were

serious. I couldn't resist, and wanted to join the Cosmic Corps of Engineers of the Positive Section of the Outer Dimensional Forces, who offered for the first time in 6000 years *exclusive information* on a videocassette for a nominal fee. But they were down by Brownsville, hundreds of miles off my usual routes, and I never managed to get down there. Couldn't tell if they'd done too much acid or not enough.

In May I sent off a check for a used recumbent bike. It was a big challenge to ride with my fused back, since balancing was more difficult than with a standard bike, and I was quite frightened of falling over in traffic. But it was fast and easy to pedal, and very light, as well as suitably eccentric. It was no longer possible for me to even try riding conventional bikes, or as we recumbent riders call them, "wedgies".



In early June I went to Chapel Hill and paid the balance for the Winnebago. The total price was \$4500. The first night I tried sleeping in the rig, I was chased out by horrendous gas fumes. Turns out the gas lines from the two tanks were corroded and full of holes. After that was fixed, I still had gas stench from a leaking carburetor, which left a pool of gasoline resting on top of the engine right under my bed. It only caught on fire once, thankfully while I was working on it and not while driving. I noticed that nothing on board worked like it had when I first toured the vehicle. The mechanic had taken the time between my deposit and final delivery to switch out various items and replace them with broken ones, such as the cracked toilet. The water tank was hopelessly full of holes from corrosion. The generator, which had worked before, would only run for ten minutes at a time, then after a few weeks wouldn't start at all. The propane heater also would not

function well. The manifold seal was not repaired as promised, leading to exhaust fumes into the cabin and terrible noise. The roof leaked around the many vents and openings. The seals around the windows had corroded and let in water through the walls, rotting most of the plywood inner lining. I used the microwave oven to store canned food. Mice and rats had free and easy entry through many holes in the floor. The only things that worked were the lights, the propane and electric refrigerator, and the stove. This was a huge rip-off, but with a lot of work I could make it into a comfy, if rudimentary, back-country capable RV. I did not plan on paying for camping sites except on special occasions.

Jim had some solar panels he'd bought second-hand that he had no use for, and I stashed them to install later. I made my own water system with five gallon plastic jugs and gravity feed, with a solar shower bag in the shower stall. The sewage tank leaked, and since it was polyurethane it resisted all attempts to seal over an entire year, until I just gave up. The toilet was cracked, and eventually I threw it away and put a cap over the hole, plus fresh plywood to replace the rot. I got a hassock-style camping toilet and for the next three years manhandled my own sewage. This gave me great respect for indoor plumbing! With this setup I could live on two gallons of water a day. I rigged a block and tackle on the back of the RV and used it to hoist my recumbent bike vertically. I

had an old desktop computer that I bolted to a desk, along with its printer and monitor, but clearly this was not going to work for long.

There was a ton of maintenance to do, which would be my main labor for the next year, but it was possible after two weeks of hard work to drive to Texas. And so, after a flurry of paperwork and preparations for mail forwarding and such, I said goodbye to North Carolina forever and drove off to Nashville to visit my uncle, aunt, and Mom. I managed to be civil with my narc cousin, but it was a trial. She had bookshelves filled with volumes on how to prosecute the War on Drugs and lock up People like Me. Burns was too ill to visit in the nursing home, unconscious and waiting to die. Our social ignorance of the nature of physical death required the nursing staff to force his body to stay alive and prolong his suffering as long as possible, for a price.



Rainbow or Bust

Next stop was Ponder Texas, ten miles west of Denton, to park on Ulysses' lawn. Bacchus has considerable mechanical skills, and there was 14,000 pounds of truck needing serious maintenance before heading to the wide open spaces. His help was invaluable and made the whole enterprise possible. Now I could share the joy of crawling under the rig with raw sewage dripping on our faces in 105 degree heat. He rebuilt the carburettor, ground and sealed my exhaust system ending my manifold miseries, and repaired my steering column after the RV refused to turn to the right. I spent much time on the roof, rebuilding the evaporative cooler and installing large plastic bins for extra storage. These old Winnebagos had three-quarter inch plywood on the roof, and with all that stuff stored up there as well, curves at any speed were a test of skill and nerve. I could feel the rectangular cross-section distort out of right angles and back again. I got used to watching tree branches very carefully as I hit a good many of them.

I looked around for anyone who might want a ride to the Arizona Rainbow gathering, and found Fern, a 20 year old hippie with two yippy canines in tow. Ulysses had divorced his wife some time previously. So he found Fern's company welcome. At 42 I felt like an old man. Since three quarters of those going to Rainbow gatherings are under 25, this feeling was only just beginning.

Heavy maintenance delayed our start but Fern and I finally hit the road for parts west. We drove across the New Mexico high desert and into Arizona at Springerville, and then on to Show Low. (Most of the forests in that region are burning as I write this in the summer of 2011.) Even in an old beat-up rig, motorhomes are the way to travel in style. I did all the driving, but Fern could fetch me cold water from the fridge. I endured the two little dogs, and thankfully they did not get between the brake pedal and the floor. The aerodynamics were roughly the same as a grand piano, with cross winds adding considerable excitement. The picture window up front gave an amazing view. In the mountains I frequently drove leaning far forward with my face near the glass to take it all in. Gas was relatively inexpensive, probably for the last time in history, so getting six and a half miles per gallon was not terribly critical. I minimized my mileage anyway.

With RV at Mom's

The front tank held 32 gallons and the back tank 18, so a stop at a gas station was a considerable investment, even at \$1.50 a gallon.

We arrived at the gathering on the morning of July 4, and I managed to get to the main circle fifteen minutes before the breaking of silence at noon with a group chanting of OM. This was always the high point of gatherings for me, being one of twenty thousand people together in this one sacred moment.



High Noon, July 4

together for maximal transcendental effect. But then there was this *other* fellow dressed in a long cape with large crystal mounted on his staff who claimed to be in charge of all the crystals and their energy at the gathering, so these two characters had to stay clear of one another. Now that I wasn't involved with psychedelics, there was little I had to offer that the others valued, and little that they offered that I wanted. My declining health made the gathering an endurance contest, even with my relatively palatial motorhome. And the nail in my hippie-time coffin was staying at the gathering until July 10. Like most people I had always left not long after the fourth of July. Now, despite the daily rains and resultant mud, I took part in the Vision Circles where the next gathering site was chosen. All decisions had to be by consensus, and whoever held the Talking Stick was allowed to speak as long as he or she saw fit. Naturally, schizophrenic street people would grab the stick and we would have to endure endless delusional rants, since there was no organizational method to SHUT crazy people UP and make a damn decision that someone might not agree with. This went on for days, and by the end we still didn't know where to meet next year. By contrast, the United States Congress seemed a model of decorum, sanity, and efficiency.

Back on the road, I headed ninety miles due east to a ranch owned by the Cole family seven miles east of Fence Lake, New Mexico. I had known the Coles in Las Cruces in 1987, and they very kindly sent me the gate key in the mail. It didn't work, but I was an ex-con with a hacksaw, so there was little delay. Fence Lake is a tiny settlement of about a dozen people, a little schoolhouse, a post office, and a general store serving local ranchers. There is neither a fence nor a lake. In fact there's no surface water for a good many miles in any direction. Some time later I met a couple who rode horses from the Mexican border to Canada. They passed through the Fence Lake area, and were in serious trouble trying to find something for their horses to drink. The nearest population was the Zuni Indian reservation some thirty-five miles to the north, and the nearest real town was 65 miles away. The FM and AM radio stations were in Navajo. I tuned in just to catch the flavor of the language. I had a shortwave radio for living in the outback, but that meant no classical music for long stretches.

One day in the woods I came across Morning Star, the woman I met the day after getting out of prison. She was in a wheelchair with an oxygen tank, with a helpful friend pushing her where she needed to go over the challenging terrain. She insisted that cigarettes did not cause her emphysema.

Slowly it dawned on me that I had outgrown the Rainbow tribe. There was one fellow who showed me his little devices that consisted of quartz crystals wrapped in thick copper wire with bits of leather and feathers and such all stuck

My first experience with rural roads in Arizona and New Mexico was an education. My suspension was quite stiff with 75 psi in the tires, so the corrugation on the roads resulted in intense vibration. All the containers in my refrigerator turned upside down. The poor desktop computer was shaken to bits. I would open the case and wiggle the cards back into place, but that only worked the first few times. By early the next year I found an old laptop which worked well.

This was juniper and piñon pine forest, and I foraged for pine nuts until realizing I was allergic to them. My first order of business was to mount Jim's solar panels and rewire the 12 volt system with extra storage batteries. The experience was quite valuable in learning how pointless photovoltaic systems are, which some years later figured into my physics research. I never got out of the system as much energy as was required to put it together from raw materials.

After a week I stepped out of my door one morning and barely missed stepping on a green rattlesnake. After quickly dancing out of the way, I stopped to observe and beam some positive waves. After he calmed down and stopped rattling he started following me around like a long thin friendly dog with no legs. The next day, Jerry, Pat, and Eric Cole came up from Las Cruces, and I introduced Jerry to my new pet.

I rode around the area with the Coles to find out what was up. In the school's library there was an article⁶⁴ from Look Magazine dating from 1956 posted on the wall featuring Fence Lake, describing the town as a dusty god-forsaken wasteland on the other side of nowhere. Back then the population was 197, but over the years those who could get out, did.

Our nearest neighbors to the east were a couple of miles away, and I noticed that there were as many people there as in the town itself. The Coles told me it was a fundamentalist Christian group that had moved there in 1996. This was the Aggressive Christianity Missions Training Corps, kind of a Salvation Army on speed. Jim Green started off in a good Christian home in rural Kentucky, but moved to Satanic California in the 1960s. He and his new wife Lila were wired on amphetamines, screaming "KILL KILL KILL" and throwing hunting knives to the beat of hard rock music. In the early 1970's, Lila and Jim joined the Bear Tribe, a radical back-to-nature commune of Rainbow Warriors in Montana, where they lived in a tipi. Jim was known as "Buffalo Sun" and ran around in a loin cloth howling at the moon. Finally Jesus reached down His hands of mercy and delivered them from the Grateful Dead, promoting them both to the rank of General. Lila claimed to be God's number one prophet, and they moved to Sacramento—Spanish for "sacrament"—to set up their cult. In 1989, Maura Schmierer won a lawsuit for \$1.2 million saying they'd forced her to divorce her husband, taken her children, and confined her along with another member in a five by twelve foot shed with no window or toilet for ten weeks. After fleeing to Mozambique and back, the Greens and their entourage moved to other properties, which they lost, eventually ending up as far away from Satan as they could find on the map; Fence Lake. In 2005, General Jim attacked his wife, son Peter, and another man, who in turn beat him with walking sticks. Jim spent four days in jail before they apologized to one another and went back to the work of being the Army for the Prince of Peace.⁶⁵

New-age and Sew-age

On July 24 I drove north to Taos, then twenty miles further to Lama Foundation. The road from the highway to Lama is a long dirt track with many switchbacks, not exactly designed with elderly Winnebagos in mind. I managed to keep all four wheels on the road. They were recovering well from the fire of 1996, but construction was very much the focus of activity. The people were warm, the spiritual practice was inviting and stimulating, the food was extraordinary, and with my SSI check and Medicaid I was better off than most residents. I was keen on staying

until winter drove me away. The library had a good selection of spiritual books and tapes, but was in a mess of disorganization and neglect. I was hoping I could do my daily work requirement in the library just as I had in prison, as well as some other intellectual tasks like tutoring Sanskrit. But this was a low priority for Lama and they didn't think it was enough work. The 8800 foot altitude exhausted me, as well as the steep mountainside, so I really couldn't manage physical tasks. After two weeks I had to call it quits and went down the mountain. This was my opportunity to visit the beautiful Neem Karoli Baba Ashram in Taos, which is a center of attention for fellow devotees near and far. But this was not a residential ashram, and Taos is expensive.

On my way back to Fence Lake I dropped by Los Alamos to say "hi" to the atomic bomb museum and atone for the crimes of physics. I pointed out proudly to the receptionist that I had *personally* pissed off Edward Teller, which was my only notable accomplishment so far in physics. She found this amusing and approved of the effort. I also opined that nuclear weapons were the worst horror the world had ever known, which left her confused. She rarely heard such sentiments in this company town.

I had to figure out heat for the winter, and also where to park. Fence Lake would be too cold and isolated, and a dangerous place to have medical problems living alone. I decided to rip out the passenger seat in the front of the RV and put in a wood stove, in true back-to-the-land fashion. I found a good lightweight stove made for horse camping in Minnesota and ordered one. The Coles very generously offered to let me park next to their house in Las Cruces, where I would be able to spend time fixing it up. In late September I left Fence Lake to visit Phoenix and southeast Arizona before crossing over to Las Cruces for the winter. The road to Phoenix passed through the spectacular Salt River canyon, which kept my nose glued to the windshield. Good thing I was going downhill; my overloaded RV went up steep hills at 25 miles per hour, much to the aggravation of those lined up behind me. Here, I went downhill in lowest gear next to flatbed trucks hauling loads of copper ingots billowing smoke from their brakes.

In Phoenix I had a rendezvous with one of the partners in Zpower, who like Anton was always on the verge of big bucks. The horizon constantly receded, in the usual manner of such things, and I never saw any money. They were mostly interested in zero-point energy as the basis for a reactor, which I thought was impossible. Next, I'd found a woman online interested in esoteric spiritual things who seemed friendly. I parked my Winnebago near her apartment and went in for afternoon tea. She was quite pleasant, then started complaining about her family. They all thought she was nuts, even though she tried to explain to them that she wasn't the same person they knew from before. *That* person was unhappy here and left her body so that a *different* person from Arcturus could take over and bless the world with her presence. Thankfully she absorbed the old Earth memories so now she had two different pasts to choose from. Then she looked at me accusingly and said "You think I'm crazy too, don't you?" I gave my best noncommittal what-is-reality and anything-is-possible reply, which is always prudent in such situations. Soon after I retreated to my home on wheels for the night. The next morning she came out, knocked on my door, and told me to leave immediately. I had been in her dreams and did something she didn't like, although what exactly she wouldn't say. I tried to explain that I had no control over such things, but she would have none of it.

Next I visited Sigmund and Martha and their daughter Anna (not their real names), whom I had met kayaking in Camden Maine just before arrest. Sigmund ran a kayak rental company, using Balogh sails and gear, but grew tired of the old biddy next door complaining about his "ugly canoes" and other bits and pieces of Yankee twaddle. They relocated to as different an environment as possible, the remote stretch of desert on the Mexican border between Bisbee

and Sierra Vista. By driving down to Baja they could use their boats on the Sea of Cortez. They lived in an Airstream and a fifth-wheel trailer while plotting construction of a home. I was impressed by the isolation and beauty of their surroundings, and the drama of having a low two-stranded barbed wire fence a few hundred feet away forming the border with Mexico. Gunshots were not uncommon and helicopters and border control vehicles came by from time to time. This area was the most active crossing point for illegal aliens and smuggling at the time. More on this later.

We paid a visit to Nogales and had a relaxed meal in a restaurant. Being inexperienced in such matters, I trusted their water. The next day I set off towards New Mexico. An hour or so later I started feeling ill, and soon I was in real trouble. I was crossing uninhabited desert, periodically vomiting and passing diarrhea and nearly passing out, resting, then getting back in the driver's seat to make a few more miles before repeating the process. Drinking water was impossible, and I was losing fluids rapidly. I had to get to the main highway in New Mexico to get to a phone and call an ambulance before dehydrating and falling unconscious. If that happened, survival was questionable. I went eighty miles in this manner before finally reaching a truck stop where I stumbled in and asked them to call a hospital. After I was wheeled into the emergency room, before any treatment they asked me about my insurance and demanded that I sign papers ensuring I would pay them. I had Medicaid in North Carolina which was no good here. At this point I was fading in and out and just needed the damn IV saline to stay conscious, so I signed the papers. I told them I'd be applying for Medicaid in New Mexico shortly, that I was indigent and would not pay the bill. They gave me the saline and two Tylenol. I stayed the night and most of the next day before recovering enough to keep driving down the road. The bill they insisted I pay was \$2000. Eventually Medicaid covered it retroactively.

Back in Las Cruces

I parked my rig next to the Cole's handsome and comfortable home, nestled in ten acres of pecan trees nearing harvest time. Jerry was working on a novel, and Pat made extraordinary quilts. This was an opportunity to tear the cabin apart and put it back together in a more appropriate manner. I even ripped off part of the exterior on one side and replaced it with wood. It was a mess, living with sawdust in the oatmeal and oatmeal in the sawdust, but afterwards it was a mean green



camping machine. Everything was manual and it took a lot of work to live in it, but now I would be able to dry camp for three weeks without any problem in any weather.

The wood stove was a step too far, and in retrospect hardly rational, but it was unique and did free me from the tyranny of running to the propane store every week in the cold season. I put a triple wall insulated chimney going straight up from the stove, through a corner of the bed that folded down over the front of the cabin. That meant I could sleep very warm right over the stove with a little fire. I made a chimney to fit on the roof that I could detach for traveling. When I'd not quite put out the fire completely and went down the road, it looked like my Winnebago ran on steam. I sold the generator for a song and used its compartment for firewood. There was an

elaborate ritual to get the fire going quickly in the morning, using vegetable oil, alcohol, and various other kindling, so that I could have warmth in just a few minutes. Another challenge was putting the fire out fast, since in this climate it could be freezing overnight at hot by 10 AM. In the end I found out all the many reasons why RVs use propane instead of wood for heat.

Eric was in pretty bad shape, and I learned a lot about schizophrenia by spending time with him. On good days he thought he was Jesus, and on bad days it was the other direction. Once he stared at me and said in solemn tones, "*I am the Son of Perdition.*" To which I replied, "What is perdition?" And with the same solemn tone, he said "*I don't know.*" Some of his visionary experiences sounded a lot like what I'd had with and without psychedelics, but there was always a strange twist that made them pathological. For instance, the UFO that lit up the back yard and spoke to him about how he was loved and directed him to get a job at Taco Bell. ?. Advice for employment like that was certainly a signal from Satan.

It was terribly sad to see him suffer. There was always a shuffle of medications, but that was a frustrating dance. There was no social support sufficient to help. If the Coles hadn't had some prosperity in their favor and a deep and loving commitment, Eric would be on the street, and then in prison, like so many thousands of others. Mental health facilities for the kind of residential care he needed were all temporary and entirely inadequate since they shut down the asylums. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was a deplorably successful book.

One disturbing thing I noticed was how full the mailbox was every day with deceptive marketing targeted at Eric. There are quite a few companies, such as Publisher's Clearing House, who keep lists of the mentally ill and vulnerable elderly. They mail sweepstakes offers and special deals and all kinds of criminal mischief to swindle sick people. There is no particular reason for lawmakers to do anything about it, since laws against fraudulent mail get in the way of campaigning. You can't ask a hustler to outlaw hustling. It was not uncommon for Eric to tell me about some wonderful product he just bought for hundreds of dollars. I would raise the alarm and most of the time we could reverse the sale. He was completely defenseless, and in this world that attracts predators. But at thirty years old, he wanted to live on his own. Like with my arthritis, there just wasn't any fixing this situation.

We were in an area noted for pecan orchards, producing something like six million pounds of nuts a year. I never saw a squirrel, so the farmers must have been good shots. And soon I thought I heard rifle shots right over my head. It was pecans falling on the metal skin of my roof, by the hundreds. I was glad it wasn't coconuts. This was my kind of agriculture.

1999

As I prepared to leave the Coles in January, Burns Westman died in the Nashville nursing home. Autopsy showed he had Pick's Disease, which includes atrophy of the frontal lobes. This was an explanation of Burn's behavior for several years, since the disease degrades the capacity to tell right from wrong early in its progression. Personality changes happened before memory loss and dementia. It was a ghastly way to go.

Half an hour out of town I noticed my steering wasn't as responsive as it should be, and found that one of my dual rear wheels was flat. This used up my spare, which was dicey since they'd stopped making that size tire. The second morning, most of my dashboard gauges went out. This was disconcerting as I had to monitor my engine temperature closely due to a bad coolant leak, as well as extremely high oil pressure that was blowing out my seals. Thankfully I teamed up with Bacchus who once again kept the vehicle operational.

We cruised through Big Bend, where I met the memorable scholar and historian Enrique Madrid and his wife Ruby. Enrique took Bacchus and me across the river to a curandero who gave his best efforts to heal my arthritis, which unfortunately didn't work. Then I loitered and bummed my way through Texas for half the year with various and sundry colorful adventures looking for cheap parking and enlightenment. I visited Bharsana Dham outside Austin, a stunning Vaishnava temple complex. While I am devoted to Krishna, they said theirs



Big Bend

was The One True Path, so I split. I endured a video session with neurotic followers of the incredibly rich guru Maharaji (Prem Rawat)⁶⁶ and got a headache. Finally I ended up in Denton and Ponder once again in June. After final repairs by Bacchus, I tooled on over to Taos and Lama, trying to find a way to stay, but could only last a couple of weeks. Local ordinances prevented my long-term parking at the temple, and normal housing was unaffordable. Then onwards through southern Colorado, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, a week on top of Grand Mesa, and then to Moab.

Now if more of Utah were like Moab I'd be tempted to relocate. There was a small countercultural community centered around the little natural food store. I could tell it was countercultural from the cartoons posted on the bulletin board showing jack-booted Mormon missionaries with swastikas on their arms. Clearly they were working out some issues. I could park various places in town without hassles, which I appreciated. Then on to nearby Arches National Park where I was suitably amazed. On my way out one hot day, I noticed a Green Tortoise bus broken down on the side of the road. I had heard of this bus line for years but had never run across them, so curiosity got the better of me and I turned around for a look-see. Turns out this was a tour of college-age women, mostly from Europe, out to see the USA and the natural wonders. Some internal gizzard of the old diesel engine had blown up and the nearest replacement was back in the San Francisco office. They'd have to figure out lodgings for the night while repairs were made. I had the bright idea of taking them to one of the park's campsites in my RV. There were forty of them, so I figured two trips of twenty each over fifteen miles of steep road in 100 degree weather in a rig that was already overloaded. What could possibly go wrong?

So off we went with the first set of twenty. About ten miles into the trip I headed up a fifteen percent grade, and the rig started to lurch. I stopped and let things cool down, then kept on going. On the second run, going up this stretch, riders in the back yelled that smoke was billowing up, and the lurching started again, bringing me to an involuntary halt. Everybody got out, and I managed to nurse the rig up to the top of the hill. Reloaded, I gently eased into the campsite, wondering what damage had been done to my old transmission.

So here I was, with one bus driver-tour guide and forty attractive women out in the middle of a spectacular natural wonder, having played hero and sacrificed for their convenience and comfort. Would it be worth it? Well, once again, I proved that I couldn't get laid in a whorehouse with a fistful of twenties, and spent the night by my lonesome.

After breakfast the next day I headed out, and the old beast seemed to drive pretty well. I'd been aiming at driving to California to visit Rose and her husband out near Lake Tahoe, but thought I'd linger in the mountains and forests of southwest Utah for a spell. The area was entrancing and seductive. A week later I was leaving a campsite at altitude and could only get the RV to run in reverse. This was not good, as I was twenty miles from town. After much coaxing I got it to run in the lowest possible gear. Thankfully, all twenty miles was downhill, and I coasted much of the way to Monticello's transmission shop. There I learned that the repair would cost two hundred dollars more than what I had in the bank. They accepted my promise to pay the balance next month after I got my SSI check, so with just enough cash for gas for the next three weeks of August I limped south. I got in touch with Sigmund and Martha, and they agreed to let me hang at their property for free until my SSI checks piled up enough for me to get back on my feet. I slowly drifted south seeing the sights of eastern Arizona until once again I arrived on the Mexican border.



Martha's daughter was off to college, and she and Sigmund were gone much of the time. It was convenient for them to have me on the property all the time to water the garden and keep away bad guys, and be company for their big German Shepard. Sigmund brought a pistol with him while walking the dog, since there was little chance of keeping him from chasing any passing pack of javelinas. In that case the only option was to shoot the pigs before they tore the dog to pieces, especially if that got them in the mood for a human drumstick for dessert.

There was a small stream flowing north from Mexico on one edge of the property, which gave a haven for wildlife and large cottonwood trees. In late August, one night a *Bufo Alverius*, or Colorado River Toad, came right up to my doorstep. This was the psychedelic toad of the American Southwest that Albert Most had written about so eloquently as mentioned in Chapter 5, unmistakable with its seven-inch width. I put it in a pet carrier and then made a little pen for it. I harvested and dried some of its toxin, but never ended up sampling it. I fed it three-inch black grasshoppers with gold trim and a wobbly gait that we called Mexican Generals. It snapped them up faster than my eye could

There are usually two monsoons in Arizona, and I arrived at my new campsite just at the end of the summer rainy season. The climate she was changing, and ever since then it has been extremely dry. It didn't rain for the next hundred days, after which there was a tiny fraction of an inch, then nothing again. When I arrived everything was green and lush, and when I left, all was brown and shriveled, as it has remained most of the time since then.



Bufo alvarius and me

follow. Poof! The poor toad was quite unhappy and dug under the fence of its pen in short order to return to its stream. It was one more misunderstood creature unjustly imprisoned for psychedelics.

Most people in this sparsely populated country were there to get away, and my hosts were no exception. It was quite remarkable that they accepted my company. Sigmund was a Vietnam veteran who'd been wounded in a tank, and Martha was the daughter of a psychiatrist. Not surprisingly they had some issues to work out here in the middle of nowhere, sometimes at high volume and accentuated with whiskey. I used the solitude to contemplate my navel, do a bunch of chanting, gaze at the desert moon, and freshen up my calculus. My hosts didn't quite understand what I was up to; they weren't interested in spiritual practice like mine, and the math just looked like random squiggles. After four months I'd worn out my welcome and in early December I cranked up the engine and headed down the road for parts further west.

No Stopping Me Now

A few yards down the driveway I realized I had to stand on the brake to have even the tiniest effect on deceleration. The emergency brake was never connected, so that wasn't an option. Thankfully the twenty-five miles to Sierra Vista was flat, but driving 14,000 pounds of RV with very nearly no brakes was going to be a challenge. I glided to a halt about ten miles down the road where there were a few houses and asked where there was a brake shop. A fellow said he'd ride to town with me, but after about a block he was terrified and ran away. Finally I coaxed the Winnebago to the shop. The brake fluid reservoir was mounted behind the left front wheel, as that was the only place to keep it above the rest of the system. This meant checking the level and adding fluid required taking the wheel off. When they did so they found I had no fluid at all. After they fixed the problem, I stood on my head with a saber saw, arthritis be damned, and cut a hatch in the steel floor below the driver's seat so that I could access the brake fluid tank.

From there to the Huachuca Mountains and a couple of nights in the charming little town of Patagonia, meeting Darci Frankel. She was about to move her yoga studio and Aryurvedic healing center to Hawaii. I really liked what she was doing and would love to have participated, but once again, I was too poor for the New Age and the Upper-Middle Way. Then on to a couple of nights on the streets of Tucson. This was a considerable drop in altitude, my first time below 4000 feet in a year and a half.

Continuing my search for spiritual community and a place to live, I visited the nearby Desert Ashram founded by Swami Amar Jyoti. This was quite an impressive site on a nearby hilltop. I toured their well-stocked spiritual library and then joined the small number of devotees for an evening service. For such a lavish setup there seemed to be rather few people in attendance. The Swami was off in India, so the worshipers sat on the floor covered in blankets saddhu-style with blissful expressions as a taped lecture played through loudspeakers. I couldn't make out a word of the thickly-accented mumbles, so I left after half an hour. Only now through the magic of the internet I learned that Jyoti had run off to India in 1990 as a result of exactly the same game I had seen so many times before. He segregated the devotees by sex and insisted on sexual abstinence, including married couples, and then started his advances on the women. This was simple and effective since he was treated as their Lord, and they as his servants, children, and disciples. The women believed the obvious and time-tested lies in order to have sex with the alpha male. He refused to use birth control as that would be sinful, and so he ordered one woman to have two abortions, while not telling her husband of the affair. As usual this happened with many of his followers until finally women talked to each other, compared stories, and word leaked out.

As one newspaper noted, "Some of the women who admitted having had sex with the guru told her they found it to be uplifting; others confided that it had been crude and rough, nothing remotely spiritual. But who were they to question God's ways?"⁶⁷ The ashrams in Michigan, New Zealand, and California folded, but the ones in Boulder, Tucson, and Pune, India remained.⁶⁸ The Swami's legal troubles ended with his "mahasamahdi", or kicking the cosmic bucket, in 2001. All I knew at the time was that this once again was an expensive scene where nothing I had to offer was of any value.

After a visit to a Bureau of Land Management office I got tags to camp out on their land. Off I went into the back country, where I met two German couples. Evidently quite a few retired Germans living in Canada come south for the winter. One fellow was from Munich, and was about ten when the war ended. He remembered playing in the ruins and while glad the Nazis lost, felt contempt for the airmen flying in comfort above them while the bombs fell. I didn't remind him that the Eighth Air Force alone lost 88,000 men killed with a higher casualty rate than any other service on our side. But he did have a point; targeting civilians was a war crime, just as much in Munich and Berlin as it was in Rotterdam, Guernica, Leningrad, Warsaw, London and Coventry. Another fellow and his wife were slightly older. His father had been in the Wehrmacht on the eastern front and had survived only because he'd turned back just as the Sixth Army marched to Stalingrad. He went on and on about the mistakes they'd made, how the artillery tubes were worn out and useless, and how if they'd jiggered things differently they could have won. Slowly I came to realize that *he was sorry the Nazis lost*. I reminded him of the reign of terror, and he said it was no such thing, that life was good under Hitler. He swore up and down they knew nothing, nothing of the death camps and the Holocaust. I figured it wasn't worth arguing about. Thanks to the German war machine I'd already had an uncle killed and a grandfather wounded and rendered mentally unstable. That was good enough. Like this guy said, "It's damn hard to kill a German." Time will do the job.

I meandered on down the road headed for Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. On the way there, the road heading west intersects a road going south into the park. Originally the intersection was in the shape of a "Y". (The road going south was the reason the park existed. During Prohibition, the Arizona state legislature donated the land for Organ Pipe to the federal government, knowing that the north-south road would be improved. This would help smuggling alcohol from Mexico.) There was a gas station and a few dwellings at this intersection, and locals would say "I'll meet you at the Y". Eventually this led to a tiny town there called, oddly enough, Why. I noticed several motorhomes parked on the side of the road with people hobnobbing, and out of curiosity I parked and joined them. They were part of the Escapees RV Club, and I joined them for the rest of the month. They knew all the tricks to bushwhacking, as some had been on the road for fifteen years.

After a wonderful week in Organ Pipe I took rides in their four-wheel-drive vehicles into the remote outback, including a jaunt fifty miles into the lava-strewn wasteland on the trail to Yuma. This is where thousands of migrants have died coming north from Mexico, and it's little wonder. Even in late December the heat and desiccation was formidable. There was rumbling in the distance from the Barry Goldwater Bombing Range, which encouraged us to keep our navigation straight. That's the Sound of Freedom, or so I've been told.

For the end of the year festivities I went to see one of my Texan friends from my first Rainbow gathering in 1984, a fellow named Bamboo. He lived in Phoenix with several friends in a rather nice house, with a hot tub in back fired with cedar logs. They were all members of a cult that was preparing for the end of the world. Nothing new about that, I was looking over my

shoulder too, still am, especially after having heard the Sound of Freedom. The main ways they prepared seemed to be having lots of random sex with one another, and target practice with a serious array of handguns. I went with him to one of their big private parties to celebrate the New Millennium, along with at least a couple of hundred people. The women got less and less inhibited as the night went on, which I appreciated. One naked woman would sit on your lap—no touching allowed—for a contribution. I was my usual stiff-necked self about not paying for sex, and so as usual got none.

2000

Next morning I started up my wood stove as usual to cut the chill, and the neighbors called the cops. Turns out the species of wood I got while out in the desert smelled like an open sewer when burnt. Whooda thunk? The house was full of many of last night's partiers, busy cleaning guns from the last target practice. Now there's a religion for our times.

Phoenix was too weird for me to handle, so off to the desert spaces again, heading back to West Texas. After passing through Las Cruces I went along the Rio Grande, then cut across to Del Rio. I found a campsite on Amistad Reservoir that used to be on the shore, but the lake was forty feet low and I was half a mile from the water. I could also bum places to park in town and enjoyed the little library and local wineries. At the library I met a guy with long hair who had worked at the Pentagon in a low level capacity, and as a person deemed expendable was sent to Chernobyl to help assess the damage. Now he was riddled with cancer and had a few months to live. I hung in Del Rio for a month, then wandered aimlessly north, landing in Denton by mid-February.

An old friend had a house near TWU and I parked much of the time in the street near his home. There were some other places I shifted to when there was too much attention. I applied to UNT (the new name, changed from NTSU) to be a physics major there once again. Apart from the fine music school, it's a cow college firmly stuck in the bottom quarter of rankings, but beggars can't be choosers.

The recumbent bike was not working out for me since it was so hard for me to handle, so I found a second-hand recumbent trike to replace it. This was a Thebis, one of the most eccentric velocipedes in history. Made near Vancouver, this was a *rear-steering* trike with two wheels in back, which made steering away from cars or a curb very challenging. Most of the construction was of magnesium, highly over-engineered and almost entirely of custom machined parts. It was a hoot to ride and a real relief to not worry about turning over, but it was extremely dangerous to ride, especially in traffic. The light construction and severe complexity meant that it wasn't long before it broke down. I would be repairing it all the time I owned it until I couldn't repair it anymore, and sold it to a fellow with access to a machine shop.



Meanwhile, the hippie woman I'm calling Fern met a guest of Bacchus and Ulysses named Harmon. He was visiting from Amsterdam, where he supplied some of the cafes with hashish. He handled about a ton a year, which is a fair amount considering one gram is roughly twenty doses. Harmon was a thin fellow in his late forties with an encyclopedic knowledge of mind-altering botany. He and Fern became a bit of an item, which was unfortunate when his wife

back in Holland got word. There proceeded the drama of breakup and divorce and figuring out what to do with the five children, while Fern moved on to men more her own age.

In the midst of all this Harmon wanted to see Big Bend, and what better chance than in my palatial rig and with Bacchus as guide. We drove the 650 miles down on his nickel and had yet another splendid romp in the desert. Harmon figured he'd return the favor, and offered to buy me a ticket to Amsterdam and put me up for a couple of months. At last, a chance to sample the land of my ancestors.

I had lunch with Anshel Brusilow, who discouraged me from going back to composition. He said it would be impossible for me to succeed as long as I continued to say unflattering things about my fellow composers that were venerated by those in the know. And he was quite correct. While Harmon was still in Denton, we showed up to an international conference held at UNT for electroacoustic music. Something like a hundred people participated. Although publicized and open to the public for free, Harmon and I were the only ones in the audience who weren't composers, performers, or technicians directly involved in the event. There was absolutely no interest in enduring these concerts except from those making the music themselves. A whiff of what came off the stage left no doubt as to why. It was the usual exercise in chaos and nonsense with the patina of scholarship. The only work of interest was the first minute of a fellow playing an amplified cactus by plucking the thorns, but once the novelty and humor wore off, it was just more noise. Later I discovered that John Cage had done the same trick some years ago, so even the novelty was old. In this zoo I was not going to be part of the menagerie.

Rainbeau Weaver was set to marry again on June 11 to a fellow I'll call Roger in Chapel Hill. He had problems, like ADHD and a history of addiction, but this was better than her previous prospects; he appeared clean for now, and it looked like he could actually get a job. On June 7, I found out that a fussy woman behind a desk in the bowels of the UNT administration building decided purely out of thin air that I would sell acid as a graduate student, so she denied my application for admission. This was actually a wonderful decision on her part, although it cost me a year, because UNT was hardly the right school. I hopped in my rig the next day and drove to North Carolina just in time for the wedding. Rainbeau was an hour late to the event. They spent all available money on the festivities, including over a hundred dollars for flavored ice, but didn't have a wedding license for four months because they put off paying the minister her \$40 fee. Oh for the hippie life! I crossed my fingers that their marriage would be stable, prosperous and happy. (Sadly, it was not.) Later I drove back to Charlotte and ended up parking in a friend's back yard, not exactly legally, and built a large fence to hide my presence and shoo away the winos.

In early July I took a bus to New York City and stayed a couple of nights with Peter Fernberger and his family in their home ten miles up the Hudson. An Andover alumnus I'll call Caligula from the class of '72 got some interested people together down at the Larchmont Yacht Club to pitch in and rent seven 12 Meter yachts from Newport. These were all former defenders of the America's Cup. The ones from the 1970's were most likely rigged by my Dad from his years at Hood Yacht Systems. Pete, his wife Bronwyn and I showed up to crew on Caligula's chosen boat, *Weatherly*, which defended in 1962. In the cabin there was a signed photograph of JFK watching the race.

Caligula met us and was every inch the type of fellow you would imagine spending his days in the cesspool of high finance. He was accustomed to being in an asshole contest all day every day, and he was accustomed to *winning*. On inquiring as to what I'd been up to, when I mentioned that I'd been disabled and out of the regular work force, he assumed I had wasted my life and made it clear that I was an inferior being. Mercifully from then on I was ignored.

This was my first time out on a real sailboat in many years, and I found that the arthritis made even an easy ride on a boat with modest motion in light airs quite painful. I ended up on the very end of the stern well away from any action just soaking it in. A peregrine falcon flew to the top of the mast and tried to perch there for about fifteen minutes, and I was the only person on board who noticed. I have not been sailing since.

My European Vacation

On July 6 I went to JFK airport and signed in with Royal Jordanian Airlines, which was the cheapest way to get to Amsterdam, and I soon discovered why. I was listening to National Public Radio on my little pocket radio left over from prison, and just before checking my bags I heard that there was a hijacking of an RJA jet at the Amman airport in progress. When at the counter I told the attendants what was going on, which was news to them. They went back and checked and found that I was correct. They took me aside and asked me not to tell any passengers, which was a little odd since Amman was the next stop after Amsterdam. But I played along. There were about three last-minute cancellations, but other than that, only the crew and I knew what was going on in Jordan during the flight. The hijacker threw a grenade, injuring 15 passengers, but then was shot and killed. Everything was mopped up by the time my airliner got there.⁶⁹

Thankfully I was not going that far, and landed safely at Schiphol, having crossed southern Greenland and Iceland informed at all times by a video display of the direction to Mecca.

Bacchus was there with Harmon for the first week of my visit, and had been there for some weeks. One of our first tours was down to the old cathedral, which despite the years and the wars and the Protestants, was a wonder to see. There was a corner where the handful of people still observing Catholic rituals came to kneel and light candles while tourists took pictures of the curiosity. When we had our fill of Gothic splendor, we crossed the street into the red light district. Why they put it in the shadow of the cathedral is difficult to fathom, but Amsterdam is a curious place. We sauntered down streets watched by pimps making sure we took no pictures, and peered through picture windows at bored and unhappy prostitutes on display. It was remarkably unerotic, garish, and depressing.

Bacchus and I visited the remarkable Netherlands Maritime Museum, housed in the old Naval Depot building built in 1656. This is where the ships used to stock up on cannon and shells to subdue the savages of the spice islands 8,000 miles away and show them who's boss. Nearby sat the *Amsterdam*, a full-size replica of a Dutch East Indiaman. After going all through the hull I was grateful they did not duplicate the smell of the bilges after hundreds of men lived on board for a couple of years in the tropics. Unfortunately this ship was fake, in that it could not sail. There is a genuine sailing replica named *Batavia*, which was in Sydney at the time.

Just across the canal from the museum and down a few hundred yards, Harmon's friends had an apartment that served as headquarters for his team of smugglers. Harmon and crew started smoking hash first thing in the morning and kept going as needed until bedtime, every



day. I had a serious problem keeping away from the smoke. Even a small whiff caused an adverse reaction much like what made me stop smoking dope in 1976. One day I noticed a 100 cc syringe completely full of hash oil, which was at least a couple of thousand doses for normal people. Back home, Harmon stored what he needed for immediate delivery, which I noted one day was *seventy kilos*. This was the first time I'd seen hash in quantities too heavy to lift.



Radhadesh

Unfortunately Bacchus had to return to Texas, and so I explored the town either on my own or with Harmon. I frequented the local Hare Krishna temple, which Harmon ridiculed, and although the lectures there were boring I did meet some interesting people and enjoyed the devotional food. I rode in their Ratha Yatra parade through downtown Amsterdam, throwing sanctified bananas at the curious crowds. They organized a long weekend retreat at Radhadesh, a Belgian castle that ISKCON bought and renovated into an ashram and temple complex. I signed up and one Friday joined several devotees and some neophytes in a van heading for Belgium. I noted in passing some cemeteries for Allied soldiers from World War II, but did not have a chance to stop and search for my uncle's grave. I joined the resident monks in rising at 4 AM to chant. It was quite a remarkable experience. However it was a little odd how literally many devotees were taking things. On the way back to Amsterdam I was talking with a Russian devotee driving the van who had been all over the world preaching his faith. It dawned on me that to him the Vedic mythology was all completely true. So, I asked him, "Do you think the world is flat?" to which he answered indignantly, "Of course it is!" I couldn't seem to get any other devotees to commit to one geometry or another. They were more than a little embarrassed, since they really couldn't come out and say the world was spherical, since that contradicted their scriptures. But they couldn't be outspoken about the world being flat either since that was a point decided by the ancient Greeks. All they would say was that I was certainly bold to bring up the subject.

This was not an isolated bizarre event. Rainbeau's initiating guru, Tamal Krishna Goswami, wrote in the 1970's of how puzzled he was by the astronaut's pictures from space. Srila Prabhupada claimed that no man had landed on the moon, which he considered to be a spiritual planet further away than the Sun. But there were these pictures of a round Earth taken from far away to deal with. Tamal Krishna thought that the circular form was sufficiently flat, after all it *was a flat picture*, but the lotus petals that should be arrayed around the edge were missing. He also could not understand how he could fly to India from Texas by going either east or west.

One wonders, why would I hang out with these folks? I had a long list of personal experiences, including seeing Krishna face-to-face, that did not fit any rational, secular model of the way reality worked. I saw among devotees something common to many religious practitioners, that they took growing close to God as the most important part of their life. It took some guts to shave their heads and wear funny Indian clothes and bang a drum out in public. In war-torn regions where rational people ran away for a long list of very good reasons, devotees arrived with food to give away to starving refugees. This included Muslim areas in the former Yugoslavia and in Africa. They have faced prison and murder but keep doing it anyway. I have

found chanting and sankirtan with devotees to be an uplifting and invigorating spiritual practice. So I usually cut them a lot of slack about the mythology and the Vedic fantasies. At some point every religion brings up the talking snakes, and while sometimes that is just too absurd to take, most of the time I'm learning to adapt. Anyway, most people have fantastic notions, like "money is real", and I don't throw *them* out of my life.

I met a 23 year old woman on this Belgian trip who was not a Krishna devotee but just did it on a lark, and arranged to meet her at her home later. She lived with a roommate at an elderly relative's large rural estate. I got a glimpse of how the upper class live in Holland, and it's pretty nice. Her roommate was struggling with her English, and when inviting me to stay for lunch she said "We should eat each other", which I found amusing. But no such luck. When I showed some interest in my new friend she told me to get lost.

Harmon introduced me to Ruigoord, which is a squatter camp of artists, free-thinkers, and chronic stoners on a sand bank next to the harbor. The camp's name, like most Dutch words, is best pronounced by clearing the throat with a mouth full of french fries, or *frites de prononciation*. We came to the annual festival held every August. Most of the residents were strongly influenced by Mongolian culture. If you had to find the polar opposite to Amsterdam, central Asia would be a good place to start. That's where the locals called Red Army troops "hippies". Many of the Ruigoord folks took the three week train ride to beautiful downtown Ulan Bator. Between sandstorms, they learned how to make authentic *gers*, what we usually call yurts. On their return they built some truly impressive gers which made quite handsome and comfortable dwellings.

Along with the traditional technology, they acquired hero-worship of Genghis Khan. The consensus was that we really didn't need cities, and it was a good idea to level them to make more pastureland. They didn't mention the pyramids of skulls or other massacre-related topics. One woman waxed nostalgic as she told of how artisans went from Poland and other eastern European countries to Mongolia in order to enrich the culture there. I started to mention that they had been captured and enslaved and forced to march across Asia, but was told to hush up by those who didn't want to cause a scene. They also adopted traditional Mongolian cuisine, which consists of throwing everything into a single pot and boiling until the germs are dead.⁷⁰

Outside, people were dancing to the constant techno music. For those who haven't had the pleasure, techno is a product of a series of evolutionary steps that eliminated unnecessary aspects of the lively arts. It used to be that dancers required musicians, a knowledge of several different dance forms, a partner or group to dance with, and the ability to cope with different tempos and dynamic levels. Techno is designed specifically for use with Ecstasy and other amphetamine-related drugs, and as such cannot abide such details. There are no performers, no rhythm, no melody, no harmony, only one tempo and one volume (extremely loud), no dance forms, and everyone dances alone. The only musical or terpsichorean attributes remaining are damage to the ears and potentially fatal dehydration. If I had partaken of some of the nitrous oxide dispensed from large tanks to one side of the dance area I might have enjoyed it, but I remained self-righteously abstemious.

There were some Mongolian musicians who performed at the festival, and they were most impressive. One man was a master at the *morin khuur*, or horsehead violin. This is the original bowed string instrument, and has two horsehair strings, one from a mare and the other from a stallion. It is played with a bow of horsehair and with a horse head carved at the top of the peg box where a western string instrument would have a scroll. Their word for "bridge" etymologically

means “horse”. He could make the thing whinny exactly like a stallion. I gather this is from an equestrian culture.

I enjoyed the friendly natives, and was amazed at the many ties to the United States. There was one couple with a small skiff with an outboard motor, and after a little chat they invited me aboard and I got a tour of the canals. My clothes looked military, and so when I met old people they were very friendly, thinking I was with the American army. When I was walking by a bar, someone called out “June 6, 1944!” and they insisted I come in and have a drink, which for me was water. One marine bookstore was housed in a curious little brick building with a plaque on the outside saying this is where Henry Hudson departed on his trip to discover New Amsterdam. The young people running my favorite internet café spoke English so well I thought one of them was a native of California, but he’d never been to America. And in one of the many head shops, where a refrigerator was stocked with many species of psychedelic mushrooms, the proprietor gave me a free packet of dried mushrooms to sample when she heard I’d been a grower back in Texas. Sadly, I ended up giving them away...

I went to all the major sights and big art museums, and got a lifetime dose of Rembrandt and van Gogh. There was a lot of walking involved, and to get enough range I frequently used my forearm crutches. This when added to my small backpack meant I took up a lot of space on the crowded trams. One day there was a large contingent of evangelicals from the United States visiting the Seven Circles of Hell to try and convert the demonic and happy Dutch away from their shameless lives of sin. The locals were gun-shy of enthusiastic foreigners coming in with solutions to their problems, with lingering memories of the Spanish and the Germans. Usually I could avoid the Billy Graham types, but now on the tram I was squeezed against them, such that I could have raised my feet and been levitated by the pressure of their wholesome Christian bodies. So naturally, with their faces pressed next to mine, I fell into yet another depressing conversation, the kind that starts off well enough—“Where are you from?”—and ends up badly. “The only way is through the blood of Jaysus Christ your personal Savior, and you’re going to hell you idol-worshipping Hindu bastard, but we love you anyway.” Or words to that effect. That’s why the churches here were for tourists.

When I lived in Boston, it was hard to find a place where you could see the water, which was treated as an open sewer. The city had turned its back on the ocean and faced the land. Amsterdam embraced, and was embraced by, the sea, and for me that was wonderful. Every five years tall ships come to the city, and 2000 was one of those years. The wind was in a favorable direction, so they could keep their sails up while passing through town and furl them at the last moment before docking. It was an astonishing and inspirational experience. One ship was from the Jubilee Sailing Trust, based in England, that has two ships rigged for use by disabled sailors. They had a helm that could be steered by a blind pilot, and winches for hoisting paraplegics up the mast. I hope someday to take a trip on one of their boats.

Harmon’s family problems became more acute as divorce loomed. He was in emotional pain, and found that I was handy to pick on for relief. This was exacerbated by my having to avoid the hash smoke, which he found offensive. He especially enjoyed insulting Neem Karoli Baba, which I found extremely hard to bear. It is difficult to be the only straight person in a group where everyone is in some kind of altered state. Harmon was not just fond of cannabis. He usually had a lump of opium with him which every once in awhile he’d add to his pipe. His brother was just out of rehab for the fifth time for heroin addiction. I found him friendly and we got along much better than I did with Harmon, but I knew the odds were not so good for him. About half of Harmon’s friends that he’d known for many years were either dead or in prison. This was not a good

advertisement for the lifestyle. Harmon said that after he died, he wanted to reincarnate as soon as possible so that he could get stoned again. This I found to be the height of absurdity, but kept my judgment to myself. None of this was in line with how I had used psychedelics.

I noticed local Muslims in the neighborhood, mostly from Turkey, and found this to be a matter of great concern. Some Dutch had emigrated to get away from the cultural clash. This was very new to the culture; Harmon hadn't seen a foreigner until he was about twenty. Unlike here in the States, the immigrants had no particular desire to assimilate and become Dutch. Rather they thought the local culture to be morally degenerate. There were honor killings resulting from young women breaking ranks and living like the Dutch. It was a tense scene.

Harmon bought a new Mercedes van, and at the end of August we hit the road to take a tour of western Europe. First we visited friends of his on the northeast coast of Germany, then drove through the sky over an immense bridge to Copenhagen. There we were guests in a large flat in a huge stone building in the center of town, living with a government official and his young pregnant wife. He had a doctorate in Sanskrit, and I looked over his impressive library of sacred texts. Next to the books was a large paper bag full of decaying dried psychedelic mushrooms. He had used one of his large rooms for growing mushrooms, but got bored with it



Denmark Beach

after some time. The bag would have been worth several thousand dollars back home, but here it was extraneous. We don't have many politicians like that on this side of the pond.

Next we drove to Berlin. We had use of an apartment near the center of town where we lived for a week. The wall had been down for twelve years, and it was very interesting to ask people what it was like to live under Soviet domination. They all said it was just like living in prison. We visited Checkpoint Charlie, and various points all over town. There was a policeman standing guard 24 hours a day in front of the synagogue, near a large sign in English on a construction site for a memorial for six million murdered Jews. The war was never far away. Most bullet holes were repaired but you could see the patches, and in the eastern part there were still some ratty looking buildings damaged in the Battle of Berlin. I saw old men now well into their seventies and eighties limping down the street who had been wounded in the war.



Expedition Robinson

The media was certainly less constrained than here in America with regard to sexuality. Right when we arrived, there was a massive advertising campaign all over Berlin, with billboards proclaiming "Expedition Robinson" with a couple portraying Adam

and Eve, with full frontal nudity. Only now do I know that it was a Swedish reality TV show. There were things to watch we would never see here. I saw a program without commercials that was a discussion between Ram Dass and Terence McKenna in a restaurant in Czechoslovakia, that most certainly would never have airplay in America.

Things were getting unbearably tense with Harmon. He was constantly abusive and insulting, and I couldn't simply write it off as tension from his domestic nightmare. He thought I was faking sensitivity to hash smoke, and so put a small lump of hash in my food. For some reason I didn't feel any effects, and he thought this was proof I was just messing with his head. This was a step too far, and I immediately said I was going home. A 32 year old friend of Harmon's was driving to Amsterdam with a shipment for the cafes, so I hitched a ride with him. He had lived in West Berlin, and enjoyed the subsidy that the government gave to induce people to live there. With a job working a few days a month driving a taxi, he was able to have an RV, get married and start a family. Then the wall came down and the troops left, and with them the gravy train. After Yankees spent \$10 trillion dollars so this fellow wouldn't be speaking Russian, he was on his own. As a result he loathed all things American with a passion. As a good Berliner he also hated Bavarians, and went on for some time detailing how horrible they were, and how Americans thought all Germans were like those southwestern pigs with the leather pants. On passing the former border between East and West Germany, he pointed out the cleared fields where automatic machine guns triggered by trip wires could pop up and start shooting anyone trying to escape. At the end of the ride I was extremely glad that I was not born in Germany. The Good old You Ess of A never looked so good, and in short order my sorry behind landed back at JFK.

Back in the States and into 2001

On my return I settled into Gary's backyard and plotted a new future. Life in the RV was temporary and I needed to get serious. Parking in the back yard was a dead end and would only last as long as the neighbors didn't call the cops, which in fact they did in the summer.

I did a channeling session with Rainbeau that was very helpful in reorienting my situation. In early January 2001 I corresponded with Stephen Reynolds, an astrophysicist on the physics faculty at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. He was also a musician, and in graduate school in Berkeley had to decide between a career as a violinist or as a physicist. He was very reasonable and accommodating, plus he had a sense of humor. I felt like I'd found the right situation at last. In late January I visited the brick-festooned NCSU campus with Rainbeau and we had a long talk with Steve. After I waved my hands and used the right jargon, he figured I could jump into classes and we'd see pretty soon if it was just talk. I filled out my application, and got admitted in early March. Vocational Rehabilitation would pick up most of the tuition, and SSI and student loans would take up the rest. I bought a used mobility scooter to get around campus, sold my recumbent trike, and hit the road in August to renew my life as a student once again. Best guess was I would probably start being a productive citizen in about a decade, and then I could figure out how to retire.

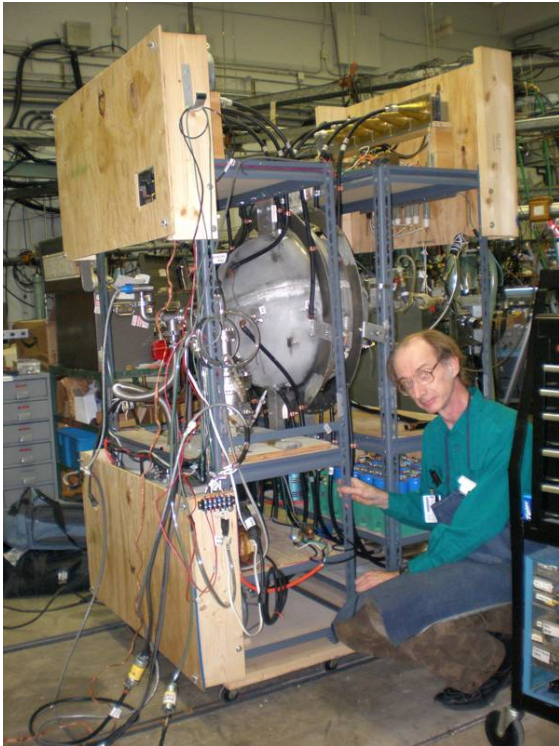


11. Book of (Part-time) Job

(2001-2011)

I attempt to pass for a Normal

Well, this book is pretty damn long, and there are disadvantages to writing history too close to the present. Lots of people I'd be writing about I run into every day, which cuts right down on the opportunities for humor and scandal-mongering. People I mention would complain, and people I *don't* mention would too. Besides, my short-term memory isn't the best, which is a marvellous excuse I'll need to remember to use more often. So what say I just wrap things up polite-like and leave something for future scholars to fuss with, should anything I work on actually succeed someday.



My reactor at Duke

Delusions of Grandeur

With the onset of regular housing I was able to start back into music in 2002 by constructing two electric violins, one four-string and the other six-string, using adaptive gear to be able to play them. I resumed composition, which was revolutionized by using Finale for copywork and synthesis starting in 2003. That year I had the first performance since 1984 by the strings of the Raleigh Civic Chamber Orchestra. Arthritis cut short my violin playing once more. In the fall of 2005 I had a stack of scores with which I stuffed mailboxes at all the local schools, which lead to my meeting Eric Pritchard and his wife Laura Lawton. Eric teaches

I was an undergraduate at North Carolina State University for three years, giving little talks like “Thermonuclear Weapons: Advice for the Home Enthusiast” and “Solitons: Threat or Menace?” After graduating in 2004, I continued on in grad school still at NCSU. David Aspnes taught me electromagnetism, and was kind enough to sign on as my faculty advisor in a bizarre and exploratory experiment to confine plasmas and try to make some ball lightning, which would either save or destroy the world. Good science either way. I wrote a big long dissertation⁷¹ with all the details and got my PhD amid much hoopla in May 2010, with Bacchus in attendance. Michael Paesler, head of the Physics department, then most kindly hired me as a part-time lecturer to develop and teach courses online. Thus, for the first time, I have actual gainful employment that I can physically maintain.



Eric Pritchard

violin at Duke and started performing my music in 2006. Through him I met many fine local musicians and continue to have concerts from time to time, usually at Duke. I have been most fortunate to work with some of the finest chamber musicians in the state, for which I give profuse thanks at every opportunity. My website⁷² is the best concert hall, and has all my recordings, videos, and scores. Most visitors to the website come to look at pictures of the recumbent tricycles I've owned over the years, or arrive by mistake searching for Bo Jangles. My music remains unknown outside the immediate local circle, and orchestral performances remain elusive.

In 2001 my friends complained that I wasn't hearing them very well. Vocational Rehabilitation tested my ears and found I was about 40 decibels down, which made me eligible for hearing aids. My hearing has continued to deteriorate, which has put my musical future in some doubt. Also my short-term memory isn't the best.

I've found good spiritual community (and great food) with the Dances of Universal Peace, although arthritis means I cannot dance with them. I chant with local Hare Krishna devotees, and lurk in a philosophical adult Sunday School class down at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church.

I had a chance to reconnect with my mother before she died in early 2005. That summer I visited my sister Akanda in Colorado after not seeing her since 1987. We were very different people, but I recognized that she was devoted to spiritual development in her own way and was a kind and loving soul. She had no health insurance, and after six months of heart trouble died unexpectedly in 2009 at age 62. I put on a memorial concert at Duke in February 2010. Now my family is just my brother and sister-in-law up in Massachusetts, and uncle and aunt in Nashville.

I left a ton of material out, and my apologies for the many dear friends that I did not mention or say enough about. This book is a grossly distorted view of my life, but that is because *no man is a hero to his own valet*.⁷³ Or at least that's an interesting excuse.

It's not my general practice to invite the future, but as I learn about the physical world and tune into subtle energies, it's impossible to ignore the prospect of the end of our foolish and extremely temporary civilization. I'm very optimistic that it will be replaced by a more spiritually oriented world inhabited by far fewer people, in harmony with Nature. I'll write details elsewhere.

This book has been about the external drama of my life, with only a few mentions of internal events and spiritual practices. That's because the internal scene cannot be depicted in words, and I have no idea if what worked for me would work for anyone else. What I see with religions giving out general directions for everybody is usually wretched and ineffective, however well meant. Nor am I advanced enough to give advice. I am the sixteen-year-old kid in the third grade who has been held back many times, and should have graduated lifetimes ago but for many defects depicted in this weighty tome. But if through all these hard experiences I've come out with less judgement and more compassion, less sarcasm and more kindness, fewer lectures and more patience, less attachment and more love for all beings, less egotesticle and with more identification with pure loving awareness, then it's been worth it. As long as judgement, sarcasm, lectures, ego and attachment are so much fun, though, I may have to wait yet again for the fourth grade.

Now that all these words are out of my head, there's ample room for what's really important:

...Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram...

Appendix: Compositions (to September, 2011)

in roughly chronological order; more information, recordings and scores at
billrobinsonmusic.com (Not including withdrawn or lost works)

Eleven Sonatas for Solo Violin or Viola (1977–2003)

Two works for spoken chorus:

Little Miss Nonfat (1979)

Math Class: or, Does the Zero have Buddha-Nature™?(1982)

For Those Who Fell: A War Memorial For Jazz Band (1990)

I Dream of Buddha With The Light Golden Aura for Baritone and Piano (2003)
Lyrics by Padmasambhava, melody by Stephen Foster, arranged by BR

Variations on the Grosse Fuge for String Quartet and Orchestra
(1987, 2003, '05, '07) (also for Piano Quintet)

Chamber Concerto for Piano, String Orchestra and Timpani (2003)
(also for Piano and Chamber Orchestra, or Piano and String Quartet)

Nocturne and Minuet for String Orchestra, String Quintet or String Quartet
(2003)

What I Hear After Submitting A Score: A Dreadful Rant for Baritone Solo, Tenor-Bari-Bass Chorus, Two Pianos and Wastebaskets (2003)

The Elements of Wind and Wood for Woodwind Quintet (1990, 2004)

Art of the Recorder for SATB Recorders (1975, 2004)

High Metallicity for Brass Quintet (1990, 2004)
(also for Clarinet and Brass)

The Popular Music of Planet X for Jazz Band (1990, 2004)

I'm a Physicist and That's Just Fine for Baritone and Piano (2004)

Gayatri Sonata for Violoncello and Piano (2005)

Art of the Synthesizer in four books (1984-5, 2005)

Der Jammerwock: ein Carroll für Bariton und Kammerorchester (2005-6)
(also für nonet und Bariton)

Govinda Sonata for Flute and Piano, also for Violin and Piano (2006)

Aditya Hridayam for Oboe, Violin, and Piano (2006),
composed for Joseph and Mary Kay Robinson

Quartet for a New Beginning for Violin, Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano
(2006)
(also for Piano Quartet, or for Alto Saxophone in place of Clarinet)

Ananda Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (2007), composed for Eric Pritchard

Ananda Sonata for Violin and Piano (2007), composed for Eric Pritchard

Ananda Songs for Soprano, Violin and Piano (2007)
composed for Eric Pritchard

Grand Serenade for Clarinet, Cello and Piano (2008)
composed for Fred and Bonnie Jacobowitz

Ananda Dances for String Quartet (2008) or Violin and Piano (2009)
composed for Eric Pritchard

*A Major Piano Sonata** (2008) (*not actually in A Major)

Ananda Duet for Violin and Violoncello (2009), composed for Eric Pritchard

Mantra Cantata for SATB Chorus and Orchestra (2009)
(also for SATB Chorus and Piano Quintet)

Clarinet Sextet (2010) for Clarinet in A, Two Violins, Viola, and Two Violoncellos

Strange Songs (2010) for Baritone, SATBariB Chorus, and Orchestra
(also for SATBariB Chorus and Two Pianos)

Three Kinds of Music (2010) for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano

Birthday Trio (2010) for Violin, Viola, and Violoncello

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Scenes from Autobiography by Dr. Bill Robinson

