

The background of the page is a stylized landscape. The top half is a blue sky with a large, bright sun in the upper left quadrant, surrounded by concentric circles. The bottom half is a brown, mountainous landscape with a winding road that starts from the bottom left and curves towards the center. The title 'The Road Within' is written in a light blue, cursive font in the upper right corner.

The Road Within

Douglas Scott McCarron
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The Road Within

This is a story of a decent into darkness, and an Awakening.

*By Douglas Scott McCarron
dougasmccarron@gmail.com
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*What is to be done, O Moslems? for I do not recognize myself.
I am neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Zoroastrian, nor Moslem.
I am not of Nature's mint, nor of the circling heavens.
I am not of earth, nor of water, nor of air, nor of fire;
I am not of the empyrean, nor of the dust, nor of existence,
nor of entity
I am not of India, nor of China, nor of Bulgaria, nor of Saqsin;
I am not of the kingdom of Iraqain, nor of the country of Khorasan.
I am not of this world, nor of the next, nor of Paradise, nor of Hell;
I am not of Adam, nor of Eve, nor of Eden and Rizwan.*

*My place is the Placeless, my trace is the Traceless;
'Tis neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of the Beloved.
I have put duality away, I have seen that the two worlds are one;
One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call.
He is the first, He is the last, He is the outward, He is the inward;
I know none other except "O He" and "O He who is."
I am intoxicated with Love's cup,
the two worlds have passed out of my ken;
I have no business save carouse and revelry.
If once in my life I spend a moment without thee,
From that time and from that hour I repent of my life.
If once in this world I win a moment with thee,
I will trample on both worlds, I will dance in triumph forever.
O Shamzi of Tabriz, I am so drunken in this world
That except of drunkenness and revelry I have no tale to tell*

Do not suppose that my mission on earth is to spread peace.

My mission is to spread, not peace, but division.

I have come to set a man at odds with his father, a daughter with her mother, a daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law: in short, to make a man's enemies those of his own household.

Whoever loves father or mother, son or daughter, more than me is not worthy of me. He who will not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me. He who seeks only himself brings himself to ruin, whereas he who brings himself to nought for me discovers who he is.

Jesus

Matthew 11, 34-39.

The New American Bible

This book is dedicated to The Lord Who set me free.

This book is in two parts. The first part is my “personal history.” I included it for two reasons. The first was to show how I got caught up in the darkness and then how I worked my way out. The second part is about the understandings I learned and explains some of the exercises I used to awaken the deeper spiritual part of my being. If you are not interested in my life story I offer these exercises to you to assist you in awakening the deeper part.

Ultimately, your only true friend is God

Blessed is he who comes in the name of The Lord

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Beginnings

The car slipped through the night like a hand through the fur of a black cat. He guided the vehicle on the road from West Lafayette to Indianapolis, a path he had practiced many times just for this night. Yet even at 100 miles per hour he was late.

From the back seat came a moan, and a hand grabbed his hair and yanked his head back, a scream breaking through the hum of the engine. Then quiet. He stepped on the brake, the car stopping a half mile later, somewhere on Indiana highway 52. He got out, opened the back door and reached in to help his wife.

As I lay there wallowing in my afterbirth, crying my arrival to the world, my father reached down and stuck his finger in my mouth to check for obstructions. My gums clasped hard. But for the fact I was toothless, my first act in life was to bite the hand that would feed me.

He made sure Mom was all right, then started the car again and drove to Fort Benjamin Harrison, located outside Indianapolis. At the base he crashed through the gate without stopping for the Military Police. He would deal with them later. Within seconds the MP's were in their jeeps chasing him across the compound. He slid the car to a stop in front of the "hospital", jumped out, and ran inside.

"Quick, quick, my wife just had a baby" he barked at the orderly.

"Yes Sir, I'll find the nurse" the man replied and ran off looking through the five story building.

Dad ran back out and looked in at mother. She had covered herself with a couple of towels and was laughing and smoking a cigarette. They chuckled at what a wild ride it had been.

The Military Police encircled the car and drew their weapons. A few stuck their heads through the back windows and pointed pistols at Mom, who blow smoke rings in their faces and laughed. When they saw me on my mother's chest, drooling contentedly, they wished us good luck and drove away. Dad could have been arrested on my birthday.

The orderly returned with a nurse. The placenta hadn't fallen out yet but they wanted to get us inside the hospital. They removed the bolts that held the back seat in place, lifted it and us out, and climbed the steps while Mom cracked jokes and smoked cigarettes. The doctors would note that I was normal, except I had a high level of nicotine in my blood.

There were no rooms available so we were placed out in a hall. Everyone came see the baby born in the car, so Mom got little sleep. Meanwhile, Dad argued with the doctor concerning my birth certificate. The doctor resisted listing the medical unit because that wasn't true, while Dad couldn't specify the exact spot on the highway where I was totally out. Dad persuaded the doctor to use the hospital. After all, nobody would write a book about it.

While all this was happening my four year old Sister was being watched by some friends. A few hours after I was born a total eclipse of the sun announced my arrival. The friends gave her and each of their children a piece of smoked glass to look at the eclipse directly. Dad feels this is why my Sister grew up with bad eye sight.

When she was picked up later that day the car hadn't been cleaned from the birthing. Dad told her she had a new baby brother. She replied "he sure is messy."

Such a Charming Young Boy

My father was a professional soldier, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point. His only war was the Korean Conflict. Because of a later kidney operation he would never face combat again, to protect the other kidney. He cried when he wasn't allowed to fight in Vietnam. I have seen photographs of him as a new soldier, handsome, nice smile, fresh looking. I have also seen later pictures with worn skin and a hard piercing look in his eyes. That was the one I knew better.

Being a soldier is weird. You are full of patriotism, camaraderie, devotion, yet your side is the one that orders you out to get killed. So who is really your enemy?

Dad really angered me when I discovered language. I wanted to be seen as a deep and insightful person, at the age of five. I would develop imponderable questions I thought difficult to answer, yet when I proposed these he would answer them immediately. Man, I really hated him for this. How could I be a person known for my deep knowledge if my questions were answered so easily? I was sure He was against me and didn't care about my feelings. Kid logic.

I felt myself very well informed. I often watched television and learned many new and interesting things. I used this information to develop opinions that matched those of the presenters on the television, and with this secret knowledge I imagined how I would teach the uninformed masses, ignoring the fact that the masses had watched the same national broadcasts I did. Ignorance of this was good, for it supported my understanding of the world.

Mom. I ran to her when I was often afraid of Dad, but my main childhood emotional memory was her discounting me. Everything was only a phase I needed to work through. When I cried or wanted to be held that was decreed a phase. She wasn't a bad Mom. She washed clothes, cooked food, ignored most of my lies, but she didn't like holding me. I grew up assuming it was wrong to want affection or to be held. She also told me several times that if she hadn't had a miscarriage prior to my birth I would never have been born, so I was lucky Mom and Dad wanted two kids so I could be here.

My Sister and I hated each other. We fought about everything, even over whether we were fighting. We often complained that the other was dominating the television, so Dad assigned rotating weeks for which of us to be in charge of it, though somehow what he wanted to watch seemed to prevail most of the time. We were selfish dictatorial children.

I felt unwanted early. This showed up in anti social activities. When my father was transferred to Germany we flew with him, stopping in Frankfurt to wait for our next plane. I asked where I could go to the bathroom. Mother pointed at the woman's room. This puzzled me but off I went to it. As I sat on the toilet I decided to lay out a pattern of toilet paper on the floor, then defecated on it. It would have been fun to see the face of the person who found it but that wouldn't happen. Pleased, I went out to the family.

Mom said she had to use the bathroom and headed where my little gift waited. As soon as the door closed I turned to Dad.

"Say, don't we have to catch a plane, right now?"

"No no" he said, "our flight doesn't leave for another half hour."

"Maybe we could grab one going some where else until ours is ready."

Dad laughed. "Gee, are you trying to leave mother behind?"

I hated when he knew what I was thinking. I went to the window.

"Wonder what's taking Mom so long?" Dad said.

I stared at my reflection in the window. The door to the bathroom opened in the reflection. There was only one option. Lying.

She grabbed me by the nape of my neck and lifted me to her eyes. "Did you do that?!"

"Do what mommy?"

"Don't give me that" she said. I tried to look dumb founded, knowing perfectly well what I'd given her.

"Oh, that stuff on the floor? I wondered where that came from."

"Don't lie to me. I'll hit you if you lie to me."

Well, I didn't want to get hit, so I admitted it was me, where upon she spanked me. Gee, what's the point of telling the truth if you get the same result?

A few months later I was sent to Kindergarten, not that anyone asked if I wanted to. Mom drove me to the building, introduced me to the teacher, told me to be good, and left. After about ten minutes I realized she wasn't merely out of the room, she was gone! I sprang to my feet and glared out the window. Oh my God, how could she do this to me?

I heard laughter and turned around. There were four girls giggling at me. I didn't like that so I ran to a seat and started reading a book, though I didn't know the alphabet.

"Hey, sit with us, we'd like to get to know you" one of them asked. "Yeah right, you just want to laugh at me" I thought. I stared at her stoned face. "Come on" she said. I gave her a look of disdain. She looked hurt and pouted. Good, now I knew how to handle girls who liked me.

At the end of the day Mom returned and drove me home. I was still angry but at least she came back. This daily pattern repeated, Mom dropping me off, me ignoring people, her taking me home. I decided it was all right, especially as I didn't have any choice in the matter.

In the First Grade I discovered something interesting. It was a girl, a pretty blond girl. I stared at her. Where did she come from? Had she been in class all along? I asked a kid, but he didn't know. At recess she walked past me towards the bathroom. I was transfixed, until someone bounced a chalk board eraser off my head. I ran to hide in the boy's bathroom where a brat sprayed me with water from the sink. "Bet that got your attention" he laughed as he ran away. I was mad, but gee, he was right, what a great way to get someone's attention. I found a paper cup, filled it with water, and marched out into the class room. She was sitting in her desk. I walked over and tossed the water on her head. She turned and punched me in the stomach. I fell back into the teacher. I looked around and noticed all the kids were sitting down. I turned and looked up.

"What are you doing?" the teacher demanded.

"I'm playing, like the other kids."

"They aren't playing, they are in their desks young man."

"Well they were."

"Don't sass me boy. You are staying after school to be punished."

The day ended and the children filed out of the room. It wasn't fair. How come I always got caught and no one else did?

I stood in the room alone, except for that ominous presence at the teacher's desk. I felt a breeze from the

hallway and looked up. There she was, all blond and radiant, looking at me for a second, then gone.

"So little boy, umm, Doug? Are you ready?" the teacher said.

"Oh, sure, OK. For what?" "I thought.

"For your actions today I want you to color twenty pictures in your work book. I want them neat, and no mistakes. Understand?"

Her tone reminded me of my Sister and mother dominating me at home. I didn't like it there, and I really didn't like it from someone who wasn't family.

"Fill in the lion on page five, using the proper color."

I picked up my green crayon and scribbled all over the page.

"What are you doing stupid?" she demanded as she stalked over to my desk.

I didn't like being called stupid either.

"I'm filling in the lion like you told me to."

"Jeez, what a idiot, a lion is yellow. Now pick up yellow, and put it between the lines."

I picked up my yellow crayon, and laid it on the paper within the outline of the lion.

"What, what the hell are you doing?!" she blurted, then put her hand over her mouth.

"Hum, I wonder what that means" I thought.

"OK, you're dense. I want you to fill inside the outlines of each animal with the proper color."

So I placed one crayon inside each drawing.

She was getting really irritated. "What are you, mentally deficient? Just color the animals properly. I don't have all night."

Ah, there was a time limit. I could win this game. So I colored the frog pink, the elephant orange. She started shaking her head.

"What is with you?"

"I like the colors, don't you, maam?"

She glared at me. "That's it, we're leaving, but I'm going to keep my eye on you Mr. McCarron. Now put your shoes on."

I pouted. "I don't know how."

"Don't give me that, you put them on every morning."

"Mommy does it."

Her head started wiggling around randomly, then stopped. "OK, come here." She put them on, put on my coat, and carried me outside by the collar. "I'll see you in the morning." she said as she got in her car after dropping me. She rolled down the window. "Get outta here, now!" she barked. I turned and ran around the corner of the building. After a few seconds I looked back. She was sitting in the driver's seat, gripping the steering wheel tightly. She sat there for about five minutes, then started the engine, squealed the tires, and drove away.

I skipped home. That was fun. I was really learning how to interact with the female of the species.

I didn't know what to do about the blond haired one. The teacher had me in her sight, so I couldn't start a conversation. As days passed, Blondie didn't seem interested in me. I guess that look she gave from the hallway didn't mean anything after all. At a young age I was developing an obsession for affection from females who wouldn't talk to me.

Mom enrolled me in nursery. It was at school, but at night. Mothers brought their kids and left them there for others to care for. My Sister always stayed to watch. Nursery was fun. We played, the adults read to us, we fought about sharing. The second week I was sitting on a chair when the door opened, and in she came, blond mane cascading down her neck and back. I panicked and ran and hid in the bathroom. I looked out and saw my Sister eyeing around suspiciously. She knew something was up.

As weeks passed the girl kept ignoring me. When I approached her my Sister watched -- maybe she could pick up some embarrassing gossip she could tell Mom. One night the girl arrived, hung up her coat, and went into a toy closet. I checked real quick. Sister was not in sight. I darted towards the closet, jumped inside, and closed the door behind me. The girl turned and started to scream. I placed my hand over her mouth. She bit me. Crying silently, I begged her to stop. I just wanted to talk to her. She retracted her teeth.

"What do you want?" she demanded.

"I, um, ehh"

"What?"

"Well, I kind of like you, ever since I sprayed water on you."

She chuckled quietly. "I know."

"Then why did you bite me?" I thought.

I said I was mesmerized, but did not know what to do. (Well, actually at the time I didn't know the word mesmerized, but you know what I mean))

The closet was dark, but I could see her, barely. She leaned into me, put her hands around my head, running her fingers in my hair. Then she kissed me.

"Say, they didn't teach us about this in kindergarten" I thought.

She kissed me again, so I kissed back, not having a clue what to do but she seemed to enjoy it.

I heard my Sister calling for me. Several times the foghorn passed the closet door. "Douglas, Doooouuuglaas."

"She can't see this, so I have to sneak out, ok?" I asked.

"Sure" the blond girl grinned.

I dashed to a chair, grabbed a book, and started coloring animals.

"There you are" my Sister snapped, "where have you been?"

"Reading"

No you haven't, I've been here three times and you weren't here."

"Yes I was."

"No you weren't."

"Yes I was."

"No you weren't."

"Yes"

"No"

"Yep"

"Nope"

"Uhh huh"

"You were not"

and so on for a few minutes. Finally she stopped and stared at me. She'd be waiting. As I knew what would happen if I confessed the truth she would just have to wait.

After a few weeks of young love my girl and I threw caution to the wind and kissed in the playroom.

Immediately the room broke into laughter. Children threw toys at us while adults pointed and snickered.

Blondie broke away and ran down the hall, girls chasing her and making snide comments. I looked at my Sister. She just smiled and nodded.

As soon as Mom came my Sister told her what had happened, that I'd embarrassed the girl and made a fool of myself. Mom started to laugh. I couldn't believe it she thought it was funny. I protested, saying we kissed

because we liked each other.

Mom chuckled. "Sure son, sure."

"No, it is true, we do."

"It's puppy love Doug, just a phase."

Oh her and her phases. "No it's not" I said forcefully. "We like each other, and I can't believe you trust Sister over me."

Mom became real stern. "Don't you talk to me like that young man."

"But it is true..."

She slapped me hard on the butt. "Not another word, or I'll spank you good."

I stood silent.

"Now say your sorry to your Sister for saying she lied."

I apologized. Sister had a big grin.

"Now don't you ever talk to me like that again, you hear."

I nodded.

The girl never spoke to me again. She ignored me in class, though the teacher made reference to us as the young lovers.

Years would pass before I spoke openly and truthfully to Mom again.

Once while walking home from school I passed a sandbox with two kids playing in it. Dinner was coming but this looked fun so I joined them. We had a blast. Eventually the other kids left for home, but not me. I seldom had fun and didn't want to quit. After about fifteen minutes I heard this loud booming commanding voice, obviously my fathers. I fell off the edge of the sandbox on my back, tilted my head up, and looked towards the sound. There he was upside down, sitting in his car, yelling.

"If you don't get home immediately, you're not getting any supper" he barked. He slammed shut the car door and sped away.

Great, I was in trouble for having fun. I frowned and brushed myself off. I hated it when parents acted that way. Then suddenly it hit me. He had said "if" I didn't get home, I would get no supper. Hum, he'd offered a choice! Choice, maturing people got that. This was so cool. I wasn't hungry, the sandbox was fun so I chose to keep digging.

Unfortunately, I hadn't quite understood the situation. Apparently Dad had held dinner up for me. He insisted we eat together so we could appear to be a nice normal happy family. He grew tired of waiting and drove down to tell me to get to supper. When he returned home he saw me playing in the sandbox. He couldn't believe his eyes. His son was disobeying him. After a few minutes he joined Mom and Sister to eat. Then he sat, and waited.

I climbed the stairs to the apartment, opened the door, ready for a new maturity. I looked at Dad. "Well, I'm ready to go to sleep now" I said, assuming that followed not eating. He grabbed me, spanked me, and shoved me face first into a corner. I was completely shocked and tried to move away, so he spanked me again. I stared at the wall, afraid to move or not move.

"You think this is funny don't you?" he asked.

Nope. Nothing funny in my opinion.

"Don't you ever disobey me again. When I tell you to get home, you do it."

I was crushed. Not only did I have no choice but I couldn't even imagine I had one.

"You need to do what you're told, and quit being so disobedient."

Apparently he thought I was always disobedient and bad, which hurt.

"Do you understand?"

I nodded. Yes, I understand. No say, no opinion, and if I develop one I'll be spanked. If I speak truthfully I will be hit. If I like a girl I will be mocked, and then hit. If Sister makes fun of me, she is right. This hurt too much, so I did the one thing I could think of to protect me. I started to kill myself inside, and cease to be for anyone.

No gain, no pain.

Separation of the way

At school things were getting rather rough. My favorite subject was history. I just loved learning about all the nations and people, art, music, all of it. However, I did badly on the tests because I was not very good at answering questions. I felt that everyone treated me like dirt so why would I want to learn to communicate with them? I particularly hated spelling bee's. This language and spelling agenda was not a specialty of mine. However the teacher insisted I stand up and spell, even though she, all the kids, and I knew I would blow it. The kids would snicker as I rose, then erupt in laughter as I mangled whatever was offered to me. Once I was offered the word "soda." I was so excited that I had a chance to spell something right that I messed up and spelled "sado." That one took the class at least a minute to stop laughing over.

As I withdrew inwards I began mumbling to myself out loud. This resulted in my being separated from the class, my own desk up front in the corner with the rest of the class behind me, I in full sight of them. Kids would sneak up behind me and pull my hair and ears, everyone including the teacher laughing. Cut off, cut off, farther and farther, no reason to share or be part of them.

I would come home, supposed refuge from the world. There my mother and Sister mocked me and laughed at me constantly. Mom constantly reminded me that she had planned on having only two kids, and except for the miscarriage she had before me, I would never have been born. Dad would come home to find me red faced and crying while they cackled. Dad would yell at them to stop, which they did until he was out of the house again. By the time I was fourteen I quit smiling. On top of my personal life, my country was at war and at eighteen I'd probably die defending someone else's dream of how things should be, probably the same type of people that were laughing at me. Global destruction was possible. Yet despite it all, I still hoped. I occasionally met people and made friends, but in military life they always left.

I prayed for a girl friend. I wasn't sure why except I thought "she'd" make things all right. I think I wanted one because I was told I should and everyone seemed to expect it. There was one girl I wanted to meet. She lived three houses away and across a field. After being enamored with her for a few months I resolved to talk to her one evening. I strode up to her house, raised my hand to knock on the door, then put it back down. I did this several times, then turned and walked away. She didn't even know me. What would I say? What about her family staring at this kid she didn't know who came visiting in the night?

I walked away, around the edge of her house, and stumbled in the dark across the field towards dad's house. I turned and looked at her building. The light to her room was on. Hum, maybe she was home. If I stood in her yard she might look out and see me, open her window and say hello. Yeah, that was a great idea. I could meet her without admitting my interest and risking rejection. I walked over and looked inside the room. No one was there. I stood around for several minutes waiting for her. Well maybe she is laying on her bed. I moved in closer until I was against the glass. Nope she wasn't in there. Damn, what could be worse?

I heard a twig snap and turned to see the silhouette of her father sneaking towards me. Suddenly I realized that I was looking in his daughter's window in the dark of night. This was not good idea. I ran into nearby woods, my youth and fear keeping me well ahead of him. I looked back. He was gone. Good. I started walking home, then stopped. I realized he was in his house calling the police and giving them my name and address, which meant the police would call Dad, and oh great.

I left the woods and walked on the street in front of my house. I heard an engine and turned. It was a military police car with its lights on me. I bolted away from my house into a large clump of woods and ran to the middle of it. I looked around. There were eight police cars circling the woods. Damn cops, why are they always so curious if you run from them? I ran to the far side of the thicket. As I broke out of the tree line a military police man barked "stop." I saw a very large Colt 45 pistol pointed at me, so I stopped. He walked over and stuck it right on my forehead. His partner rammed my arms behind my back and hand cuffed me, dragged me to the car and tossed me against it. They frisked me, shoved me in the back seat, and took me to the station.

There they asked my name. Humm, they not know. If I didn't say no, they'd just wait for a parent to call and make the connection. I told them. They called Dad, who arrived about twenty minutes later. We both went into a room with a police inspector who proceeded to question me ...

"Were you the guy looking in this girls window"? "Why were you running in the woods"? "Why did you run

from the police"? All of which I tried to evade. If I admitted I was there, I'd have to explain my attraction to her, and I didn't want to face the embarrassment of admitting that. Then Dad said "Come on son, they know you're lying, admit it." Gee, thanks Dad. So I did, and it was over.

They released me into my father's care. He took me to a hamburger place. He tried to talk to me, but I just stared blankly at the floor. He finally said that if I ever wanted to speak of this, he would be there. "Yeah, I'm sure you'll keep this one handy" I thought. He then closed with "whatever happens I won't tell your mother."

We went home and were met by Hysterical Mom. The last she'd knew her husband had been called by the police, and now he was arriving home with me. Yeah, he was going to have a hard time keeping this from her. I went to my room, took off my clothes, and went to bed. I was unable to sleep so I went to the window and looked across the field at her house, at her window. I crawled back into bed, cried until drunk, then slept.

I gave up hope on her, but not hope. I became fascinated with another girl. Occasionally I would talk to her, but nothing to draw attention, just making friends. One day in gym class I was against the wall that separated the boys from the girls. It was a temporary wall, one that slid in sections along a track so the entire room could be opened if desired. I heard this new girl on the other side of the wall and called her name through a crack between sections. She answered back. We talked through the crack for a few minutes until all of a sudden I was grabbed by the shoulder and turned violently. The boy's coach started yelling at me that I was disturbing both the girl's class and his so if I wanted to talk to the girls I should go over there. I said there was no reason. He grabbed me and dragged me over to their side. All the girls were sitting on the floor, their teacher up on a bleacher. The coach forced me up the bleacher and made me sit there next to their teacher.

"OK Mister, you want to talk, start talking" he said. The woman looked at me with a bemused face, daring me to talk. "Well, talk pal" the coach said. I was silent. He said I could sit there until I spoke and left me there, in front of all these giggling girls and this teacher. All my feelings of being fat, stupid, unwanted, and ridiculous came forth. This was worse than Mom and Sister at home. I looked out at the girls, some pointing, others whispering to each other, most just grinning or laughing at me. I turned and looked at the teacher. "I sorry I just wanted to be friendly" I said, starting to quiver. "I didn't mean to do anything wrong, just trying to talk." She was about to say something when I shifted my weight, which caused my zipper to rip open, wide open. She got the biggest grin turned her head and buried her face in her hand, laughing. All forty of the girls exploded in tremendous roaring laughter. I was mortified. I sat there for five minutes, sinking, sinking, as they laughed, until the teacher could stop long enough to tell me to go. I got up and held the rip together, which created more laughter. Then I got to the guy's side, where they insisted on holding me down and showing each other the rip that had happened to me, laughing the entire time.

No sanctuary at home, no sanctuary anywhere.

Separation of the Soul

One night I watched a guy playing guitar on television, backing a couple singing the virtues of the telephone system. I thought the guitar was cool. Dad played classical, jazz, and flamenco guitar albums while I drifted away to sleep, but this was the first time I'd actually seen someone do it. I was deeply moved. I went into Dad's study and picked up his guitar while he watched. It looked easy enough. The guy moved fingers on his left hand and strummed with his right hand. So that's what I did. Ehww, that stinks. I kept moving my left hand around until suddenly a nice sound came out. I was surprised but really happy. Dad said I'd just played a D chord. I asked what that was. He responded by saying "Well, Doug, the method of Western Music is based on triads, designed" I immediately tuned him out. Jezz, ask a simple question and get a correct answer. I kept moving my fingers around, every once in a while making a nice sound out of the ugly. This was disappointing. I complained to Dad and he explained that it took practice.

I resolved to teach myself guitar. Dad bought a chord book complete with pictures of a guitar pick and how to hold it. I studied pick holding first, then tried some of the beginning chords. They hurt my hand, but after three week's chords suddenly sounded right. This was a pleasant shock. They no longer clattered and clanked they sounded. I showed Dad all four chords I could play. He smiled and said that was good. Excited I went back to my room ready to learn more. This was a great emotional release, and I'd done it myself.

After a few months I knew twenty chords and was adding notes between them like the guy on TV, but it didn't always sound good. Dad gave me a book that showed where the notes were and how the chords and notes fit together. I worked on this for a few months until I wrote my first piece, which I immediately played for Mom and Dad. I was proud and happy. I'd actually accomplished something! Mom turned to Dad and asked if they should get me an instructor for lessons. I wilted slightly. I didn't want lessons I wanted to do this myself. Dad looked at me and said to wait.

One evening I walked into my father's Study as he listened to a beautiful record. It was so soft and emotional. I asked what it was. "It's the Concierto de Aranjuez" he said his eyes closed and relaxed. I lay on the floor and listened. The second movement started, slowly, gently, and I began to feel sad. It built up speed and feeling, until it broke into one of the most intense releases I'd ever heard. I cried on the floor. Then it drifted away. I stood up and walked outside. This was what I wanted to do, and that was the piece I would learn someday.

Dad decided I needed to learn personal responsibility. His choice raking the back yard, actually woods, during the summer. No playing with the friends, just raking. The area was about two acres of trees, two feet deep in leaves. Dad said the base commander wanted this cleared out, even though it looked like every other back woods on the block. I pointed the similarity out. Dad said that the leaves were clogging the drainage ditch under them. I was to remove all the leaves and take them to the back of the woods. "Won't they be replaced by new ones later?" I asked? That didn't matter. "Won't the ones I put in the back blow forward again?" Just rake the leaves Doug. The under mesh of vines made the work go slowly. Days turned into weeks, weeks into months. Relations got worse. Mom gave me crap for rest breaks, friends stole my rake and trash cans, Sister reminded me I was a loser. Dad lost patience and confronted me about the slow progress one evening. I was offended so I snapped back, saying I was doing the best I could, that it was unfair to stick me out there alone and ruin my summer for such a stupid goal. He slapped me hard on the left side of my head, hitting my ear. I stumbled, both from surprise, shock, and my ear hurting. He grabbed me by the collar, and told me to stop acting. I began to cry. He said that he was sick of me crying all the time and I wasn't going to get away with it this time. He then shoved me out towards the leaves and told me supper was canceled.

Another day Dad gave me cash, payment in advance for the work. He said he saw it as a way for me to earn money and learn that one is obligated to finish what one is paid to do. I certainly didn't want the money, but how do you tell Dad no? I just didn't see the point of it all. He also told me that if we cleaned it out I could play basketball there, though I never played the game. I was really confused.

Eventually Dad joined me in the evenings and weekends. After several sessions we had piled most the leaves

and vines in the back, except for the drainage ditch. Then we started on the front. By now it was fall and getting chilly. Dad recruited Mom and Sister to help finish the job. This made me feel better because we were doing this as a family instead of me alone, even though they bitched at me constantly about it.

Winter was coming and that ditch still wasn't cleared. All this effort and the original objective lay untouched. One day a company of soldiers arrived in the woods, rakes in hand. I was sarcastically amused, but sadly pissed. Dad stood in front of me and watched as thirty soldiers cleared the ditch in about half an hour. As they finished Dad turned, gave me some kind of meaningful look and walked past me. I grinned tightly and watched the troops leave.

A few weeks later leaves started falling, filling the yard and ditch.

My Sister went to college with an art Scholarship. She was apparently good enough to earn one. As we didn't like each other and both were horribly self absorbed I never really noticed. I thought she did better than me, but I guess she was very good. She had a variety of experiences there, eventually left and went on her way. However, the day our father dropped her of she told him she would never come back and made it clear she didn't like him. I was afraid of him also but had never said that to him. Dad was shaken when he came back.

I began to detach from my direct experience of life. I became aware of, or developed I am not sure which, a part in me that wasn't swayed by events. It was cool, aloof, and just identified situations and watched. I appreciated this, though it was also a place to hide -- that was what I wanted, to hide. I called it The Watcher. It counter balanced emotionally painful situations. I purposefully restricted my reaction to events to just the face value I perceived instead of the myriad of implications I'd assumed before. Trauma produces the need to not feel. It also impacted my internal conversation. Humans listen to an ever flowing discussion inside their head that I am sure you have heard. It defines how life occurs. You can hear it yacking away, telling you how the world is, what so and so meant about something, endless opinions of many things. The Watcher wasn't swept into this conversation as deeply. It held these conversations as just words, illusions of the person speaking. Why I thought this I'm unsure, but the idea of people living within a conversational being it was there, by sixth grade. During 1968, when I was 14 years old, there was a political gathering called the Democratic Convention in Chicago. It was televised and as I watched I had an overwhelming, complete experience of the Watcher. A large demonstration protesting our involvement in the Vietnam War was being televised. It was a spectacle as demonstrators goaded the police to attack them, knowing they would. Late in the evening the police waded into the protesters and started beating and arresting people. We watched it live on television. My mother and Sister were screaming, calling the police pigs and fascists. My Dad laughed, saying this was what the demonstrators had come for. He winked at me knowingly, possibly thinking I agreed with him. My impression was he was looking at an internal thought, reacting to it, and projecting it out on me.

I looked at the events on television and in my living room, and suddenly Watched. It just sprang forth and took over like a firm teacher trying to show me something. I saw the protesters, police, generals, leaders of all sides, each one within a personal internal drama, each a reflection of their personal situation. From within each was asserting their image was the truth, the others wrong. I saw my father, winking at his internal assumptions reflected to me. Mom and Sister were yelling at internal feelings of a system they deemed failed, when in fact this is how the system truly is. I was talking to this new awareness. A massive mob of personal movies in conflict.

As I Watched there was a jolt, an internal feeling, the cessation of continuity. I was suddenly wondering whose system was this? Who was in charge here? Why were police beating their children, was it to teach "them" a lesson, or because it was their job? Why were soldiers, who twenty years hence would drink beer together, trying to kill one another? What image was glued to each individual perception to cause them to act this way? And who was gluing it? Suddenly the image of generation after generation doing this and history was revealed as but a replay of a long running repetitive drama. Good vs. Evil, freedom loving America stopping the

enslaving Communists, the People's Liberation Army freeing the peasants from the merciless Capitalists, it was all the same. My interest in history recalled over and over, multiple sides fighting for their truth or greed to root out opposition, all driven by internal images and movies. What was going on before me, on the television and in dad's living room was yet another rendering of this struggle that had been happening, forever across national boundaries, religious and irreligious internal beliefs, through out the ages. Though leaders were often blamed for these conflicts, they were also at the mercy of hummm, there is a feeling inside, something, that compels us, dictates to us what we hold as personal free thought. It is a shared compulsion, an internally shared agreement. We are an awareness that is born into a Universal Conversation. It greets us at birth and immediately glues on to our internal perception. We experience it as always there. We each think that we are listening to our own thoughts, assuming we have individuality, yet our thoughts are generally the same, despite their expression through various languages. We assume we control our thoughts yet in truth are led by them. Actually, we are led by a feeling that occurs to us as thought. Yet we never run this description. We bounce from feeling to feeling, thought to thought, impressed by our feeling of having insight. Through out the day these thoughts and feelings cycle back to ones we have had before, around and around, yet we are generally unaware of the cycle. Our attention is led by the nose constantly by this energy, this Universal Conversation, always fooled into believing we are thinking personal thoughts, yet this is not true, because the conversation is seldom ours, we belong to it. This energy that glues onto our attention, it runs this place. As this was revealed to me I was again left with -- Who is in charge here? What was this energy? After that evening I began to listen intently whenever the Watcher spoke. It could be said that while in The Watcher I was living in my head and wasn't present, yet it always had something to show me. The Watcher also seemed to be an energy that was trying to wake me up from something. It seemed that while I was within The Watcher that was when I felt most within my body. It made sense though. My normal state was to be within the conversation, so if I checked out of the normal I was no longer within the conversational being.

Suicide makes a House Call

My life went on like this for years. Though The Watcher could teach me, it was generally overwhelmed and could not maintain against the feelings of being useless and unloved. The two energies seemed to be at war within me, and the painful ones were winning. Feelings of being unwanted and self disgust spiraled upon themselves and colored all other events in my life. There was one girl at High School who told me I was handsome. I was so sure that I was ugly and unwanted that the only possibility in my mind was she was making fun of me so I ran away and cried. Another time I was fretting about being a virgin at seventeen. All the other kids claimed to be wild sex hounds. I felt like a failure that no one would ever want. I talked with Dad about this. He said that any imbecile could get laid, and he knew I was capable of doing much more in life. He was paying me a compliment referring to my intelligence and what I could contribute to society. I heard that I couldn't even do what any imbecile could do.

Years had passed since the leafs had fallen. High school would be completed soon. Life had not changed. I was a hurt self doubting guy that no one wanted, using the Watcher to keep me stable. The Watcher continued to show me things about my world view, but the world seemed pointless and repetitive. Guy chases girl. Guy gets girl or doesn't, Guy chases girl. Get married, have kids, work, do stuff, buy things, get acknowledged, vilified, or ignored, then die. Everyone claimed individuality yet did the same things just the presentation looked different. The old folks had seen it. When they were young their dreams seemed meaningful. Now their dreams were fulfilled or crushed, but now what? They had grown to see them as dreams. Now what? Die? A world of internal thoughts presenting false hopes and dreams that ends. What was the point of continuing to live? A group of Germans known as Bader-Meinhoff was killing German and U.S. Officials for no real stated purpose. At least none was stated on the news. Another group wrapped up in their internal judgments of others, killing life as symbols of their theories. My father was the commander of the only military tank repair plant in Western Europe which made him, and therefore me, a target. Great, I am living a pointless life that ends in death, walking the streets in fear that I might be sacrificed to the delusions of someone I never met.

I really saw little point in continuing. One afternoon I was visiting a guy in his apartment, sort of a friend. I was in his bedroom while he was making out with his girl friend in the living room. He had a new Stiletto, which is a knife. The blade came straight out the front, then slid straight back in. I sat on his bed triggering the knife over and over, nice, sharp, new, good shine, all the time eyeing my left wrist. It would be quick. Several deep slashes, and no one could stop it in time. My life would drain away and it would be over. Trigger, reset, trigger, reset. It was time. I raised my wrist, held the knife a few inches above my wrist, and pressed the trigger. To my consternation the blade flew out the window. I was shocked -- Jeez, what a loser I am, I can't even slit my wrist properly. Now I had to walk past the make out twins and get the blade. I calmly walked through the living room, furious, sad, embarrassed, depressed because I couldn't make out or kill myself, and went down stairs. I found the blade, went back upstairs and lay it next to the handle. I went back into the living room and explained to my friend I had broken it, and would to pay for it. He waved me off and kept kissing. Fine, you don't care about me then I won't pay for it.

I went home, very down. Unfortunately, Mom was there. She asked me what was going on. Usually I buried everything but today I told her. I was depressed, felt unloved, unwanted, not cared for, and just didn't see why I should be in life. She was stunned and silent. I went to my room.

One afternoon I was riding the bus home after classes. I would graduate from high school in a few weeks. Then what would I do? Try to go to college and get a degree so I could find a good job and do stuff. There is was, the choice of life. Get a job, make money, collect a wife, kids, car, dog, house, other symbols of “something”, stuff, until I died, apparently because everyone else did. I would seek to fill a heart of pain with the temporary and stuff, as many did.

The kids on the bus were hollering and throwing things at one another. They had done this since first grade. The bus driver screamed at them as had always been, always the same. It was like watching the Eternally Repetitive Movie Machine. I got off the bus a few stops early to walk home peacefully. I waved at a sergeant who took a drink from his beer, as he always did, he nodded and drank some more. It all seemed so pre-designed, the same thing over and over. There was so much to look forward to.

I walked through the baseball field across the street from my house, stopping at the curb to wait for a car to pass by. I smelt the exhaust and breathed deep. I'd always loved the smell of burnt gasoline. I crossed the street, went to the front door, unlocked it, stepped inside and yelled hello to my mother.

"Jeez, what's that?!" I coughed. All I could smell was gas, overwhelming gas. I spun to see if it was drifting from that car, but it was long gone. No, the gas was far too strong for that. My head started spinning as I started choking hard.

"I bet it's the fuel truck" I thought. I'd seen mettle covers in the back yard that covered shafts to the heating storage tanks underground. I had always wanted to see them being filled, but jeez, the smell.

I went to the side hallway. It had two doors, one that led to the back yard, the other to the garage. I reached for the back yard door handle when I suddenly heard an engine running. Wait a second. It isn't outside it is in the garage. I was suddenly terrified. What if Bader-Meinhoff had gotten on base, in the house, and was trying to blow it up using our car? This had to be stopped. Instead of running away I spun around and threw the garage door open, and stepped across.

I looked around quick to see if anyone was in the garage. It was empty. Mom's car was running so I ran around to its front door. The window was down. I reached in and turned the key off. I saw the family cat laying stiff on the rider's side floor, and a shape to my right. I turned my head.

"Mother?"

She was just a few inches from my eyes, a bit of dry spittle on her left her chin....

"Mo..."

...her dull lifeless eyes rolled slightly up and to the left, staring.

"M..."

A jolt ran through me, then I heard a load snapping sound, like a large dry tree branch cracking. Suddenly I was both looking at her, and above looking down at me. At first I thought I was Watching again, but this was different, this wasn't dispassionate. There was a pain, an ache, a fire, that I felt from somewhere new. I "heard" a voice, not words, not thoughts, not the internal conversation, but a much deeper talking, not really words, but a communication I heard as words, a silence that spoke in complete thoughts and truthfully.

"Is that all there is Doug, to be someone's son, to be someone's husband, to be someone's father, to work, and then die? Is there nothing more?"

Slam, I was back inside looking at mother. I started to faint. At first I thought it was because of what I had heard, but then I remembered the gas. I opened the garage door, then fell to the driveway, almost passing out. As I breathed oxygen my head cleared.

I sat up, my head swiveling back and forth. I stood and went back through the front door into the house, opened all the windows I could find, and went back outside. After the house aired out for about ten minutes I went in and phoned Dad at work.

"Hello, Colonel McCarron."

"Dad..."

He was a bit surprised because I had never called him before. "Yes Doug, what do you want?"

"Dad, mom's dead."

There was silence for about a minute, then he said "Go get the police."

"Ok Dad, bye." I put down the phone and ran towards the Military Police building, everything gray and grainy. As I passed the drinking sergeant he told me to slow down. Three little kids ran up to me. "Hi fatty" they yelled, giggling to themselves.

I ended up at the medic post, telling them to hurry and come help my dead mother. I have hazy memories; riding in the ambulance, sitting on the sidewalk talking to an MP I knew, the MP touching his hand on my head for a few seconds, then walking away. Dad getting out of his car, running to put his arms around me, crying.

Going to school the next day, trying to be brave, but crying on the football field.

The family gathered for the funeral. My Sister had gained weight and everyone spoke about that. I was already

fat but had grown my hair out. Many a comment about how stupid I looked. Occasional comments about I must feel bad about losing my Mom, but then back to the hair. After a few days the funeral came. The US Military buried her in Arlington National Cemetery. There was a minister who sounded bored and doing this for the thousand time, a horse driver with a crooked tie, a yawning honor guard. Another dead body in a grave.

Misunderstandings

The Army showed its mercy by quickly re-posting Dad to another base plus allocating additional funds so he could get an apartment for me so I could finish school without moving. It was a penthouse on top of a tall apartment building near the Rhine River, with a great view of Mainz and Wiesbaden. This cool place was all mine except when Dad visited on weekends. I loved having time to myself, thinking and exploring what I wanted, instead of hiding from my parents. The New Years fireworks were amazing as Mainz and Wiesbaden competed over who could shoot the most in the air, all exploding a few hundred feet above me.

I still had to graduate so after I recovered some I went back to class. One cool day in April I was talking with a guy I'd known for about a year. I mentioned that I didn't even know his name and stuck out my hand to shake his.

"Hi, I'm Doug."

He was a bit startled and said "I thought you weren't interested in me." His name was T--.

"How can I be sure?" I asked jokingly. We both presented our military ID cards. "See, I'm who I am," "Oh, yeah, well so am I," "Oh yeah, well..." and we started laughing. He handed back my card. I started to return his but jokingly pulled back and put both cards in my coat pocket. Then I handed his back to him. "Well, now we each know who that mystery guy is" he said. I nodded.

Suddenly a woman appeared about ten feet from us. She said "I know what you are doing, and I'm calling CID." She turned and walked quickly away, shaking her finger at us. We were dumbfounded. This was not good. CID stood for Criminal Investigation Department, popularly known as The Drug Police. T-- and I looked at each other, than at her, then us, then her, several times.

"Well, I think we better leave" T-- said.

"If we leave, we will look guilty. Let's wait and explain the truth."

T-- snickered. "Yeah, well, we better go."

"No" I said, "Dad taught me to be honest, then there is nothing to fear."

"Uh, OK. No man, I mean it, we better leave."

I shook my head no. He waved good bye and walked towards the school. I sat down on the curb and waited for the police. In a few minutes they'd arrive, I'd explain what happened, and everything would be fine.

At next class change, an hour later, T-- came back. "Hey, you missed class, come on, this is goofy."

"No" I said, "its the principal of the thing. I didn't do anything wrong." We stood around about ten minutes.

"Maybe I should shoot someone so they'll get here quicker" I thought.

"I'm going back to school" T-- said. He took one step. "Uh oh." I turned my head. There were three police cars pulling to a stop in the parking lot. For a lousy ID card? "Well, uh, I have to go" said T-- as he scampered away. I waved at him and walked towards the police.

I started to explain to the first two I met, but they told me to shut up and empty my pockets. I hesitated, then started pulling things out and tossing them on the hood of their car. Erasers, paper, a comb, a piece of metal I reflected sunlight with (made a nice scratch in the paint job), pencils, and a gum eraser. A cop grabbed it in mid air.

"What is this?"

"That is a gum eraser sir" I said. He put it in his pocket.

The school bell rang, telling the pavlovian trained kids to change classes. About a hundred of them came over to the cop cars. They realized I was being searched by the drug police and started making threatening comments at the cops. In the middle of them was T--, a slight grin, just looking at me. More police cars arrived and additional students ran over and started screaming. I looked at T--.

"What is happening?" I mouthed at him. He shrugged his shoulders. A riot was about to start over two guys introducing themselves.

"Get in the car" ordered an officer. I asked T-- if he wanted to join me. The cop said he couldn't, but I said he was part of the incident, so the police insisted he come. T-- glared at me. By this time students were shaking the cars, the crowd kept growing, and girls I'd never seen screamed they loved me. I was a rock star.

All six cars tore out of the parking lot and drove to the base shopping complex (the PX). They pulled into the loading dock area that was fenced in with wire and barb wire on top, passing a guard and two large, barking, German Shepherds. The cars stopped and everyone got out. The officers took our coats, hats, gloves, shoes, and started searching them. We shivered in the cold April wind, our bare feet standing on concrete. One of the cops asked T-- if he needed drugs because of withdrawing.

"No you ass hole, I'm cold" was his response. "Very helpful" I thought.

The dogs started barking again. Six more American police cars and three German ones entered the area. Several Americans climbed ladders to the roofs and aimed scoped rifles out into the woods beyond the fence. Cars blocked the entry way. Dogs patrolled the fence with their partners.

"Say T--, isn't this a bit of an over reaction?" I asked.

"Stop talking" commanded a cop.

Two German officers came over and started asking me questions.

"What is you name?"

"Douglas McCarron."

"Where do you live?"

"In a penthouse on top of an apartment building."

They looked at each other, then back at me.

"What is the address?"

I was stumped. "Well, I don't know the address, but you know the highway bridge over the Rhine? When you cross over heading....." I explained how to drive there.

They stared at me. "Do you go to school here?"

"Yes, it is my final semester"

"What is your home phone number?"

"Uhhh, I don't know, I've never called it." Good answer Doug.

"So how can we call your parents?"

"Well my Mom just died, but my Dad can be reached at the Kaiserslautern U.S. Army Base."

"Oh, you live here in Mainz alone?"

"Yes." Yep, big smart ass kid with no answers living in a foreign country with no adult supervision, that would

be me.

"And who is your father?"

"Lieutenant Colonel Dean J McCarron."

They looked at each other. "Ummm" one of them said.

We received back our shoes, coats, hats and gloves and we put them on. "Nothing in them" said an officer.

An American spoke. "A woman says you sold drugs to T-- here, is that true?"

"No sir" I said, "we were just introducing ourselves to each other. We showed one another our ID cards. I was playing and pretended to keep his, then a woman appeared and went to call you. No drugs, I've never even had a beer, much less drugs."

They kept watching T--.

"We should have nailed you last time" one of them said. He was silent. "Your luck will run out soon, boy." I went silent. They had obviously dealt with T-- before, and now I was involved, for trafficking in ID pranks. They murmured among themselves then one of the Americans said "OK, let's break this up." Down from the roofs came the guys with rifles. Into the cars went the dogs followed by the officers. The gate swung open, and they were gone, except the original two cops.

"All right, get in the car." We did, and they drove us back to the edge of the school grounds. T-- got out of the car and ran to the nearest door inside. I turned to the officers. "I'm really sorry about this, I don't know what happened."

"Sure you are" one responded before they drove away.

I arrived a hero. Guys shook my hand, girls kissed me, teachers glared at me. Gee, I was a legend for a couple of seconds. What a dream.

About a month later at home I answered a phone call from CID. Dad was there. I said "just a second" then turned to Dad. "Uh, Dad, there's something I need to tell you." I told him that CID was on the phone and the entire story. He asked if I had been dealing drugs. I was offended that he asked, but told him no. He took the phone. I didn't hear anything else about it, but I felt he didn't trust me.

This incident, added to my mother's suicide, increased the painful absurdity of my life, but as I Watched, I could see a set of conditioning that ran everyone involved. Cops, students, the lady, dogs, T-- and I, all at the mercy of our personal illusions.

The last week of school some students who decided they were gang members felt it was a good idea to go off campus, get drunk, and cause some people some problems. They found a mid forties German who was laying some bricks and took his twelve pack of beer, which in Germany was held in a wooden case. He attacked them so they smashed the case over his head, and kicked him for a bit. They then came back to school while drinking the beer and arrived a bit tipsy and full of themselves. They went into the school and starting hitting various people apparently trying to show they were in control and didn't care what others thought. I felt the best thing to do was to wait outside and let other people get beat. After several minutes a couple of car loads of German police showed up. The students had made a slight miscalculation. They had left the School yard and went out into German country. Out there German laws applied. Generally, Germans are very polite, very European, and they don't fight with the police. If you try to fight they are not restrained like the US police are. The German police went into the school and dragged the drunk kids out. A few of the kids started thrashing around to show they were bad. Typically US military police put up with this some and arrest you. The German police pulled out their batons and started beating the kids, who looked very surprised. They started punching back. This made the police really get nasty as they started kicking the drunks to the ground and throwing them against the walls of the school.

About this time the school bell rang at the junior high across the street, and out came the twelve to fourteen year old kids going to their next class. They saw the police beating up some kids and were immediately enflamed. This was the era of Vietnam and anti war demonstrations, and the sight of the police doing this seemed to really ignite the crowd. Hundreds of screaming children came running across the street at the police. All the miscommunication you can imagine played out as two different cultures, languages, ages collided on the school yard. The German police seeing they were out numbered about 80 to 1 started hitting kids with their batons and kicking them around. The kids began screaming at the police and throwing food and such things. In the middle of all this one of the kids grabbed for a police officer's weapon. The child was beaten down and suddenly there

was a circle of German police totally surrounded with their weapons pulled and aimed at the kids. I dove to the ground behind a car. I thought "maybe as an older student I should go try to calm the young ones down." I got up and looked over the hood of the car, and at all those pissed off kids, and those armed weapons. "No, maybe not" and I ducked down again.

Fortunately, just at this time several car loads of US Military Police arrived. They sized up the situation and with astonishing calm walked into the middle of this riot and calmed the kids down. After a few minutes the teens backed up and the US police talked with the German police over who had jurisdiction of the drunk boys. Essentially drunk or not, they had cracked the skull of a German man, and the German police were taking them. In the middle of all this the two main cops from the ID prank walked by. I asked them what had been going on that day they took me, all I did was show T-- my ID Card.

"Well, we have arrested T-- several times, and we have been watching you."

"Why, what did I do?"

He looked at me for a few seconds. "We suspect you are a major drug supplier at the school."

I was stunned. "Officer, I haven't even seen any drugs, much less used or sold them!"

"Sure you haven't" said the cop. He looked at the tense crowd. "Well, got to go" and he waded into the melee.

Gee, I was guilty of other's presumption.

Eventually the German police put their weapons back in their holsters and a path was cleared through the crowd. The gang was thrown in to a van and taken away. The mob continued to scream, but as the anger simmered away I recalled the Chicago riot I had watched on television. Here it was again, the Big Illusion. A gang of kids talks each other into being stupid, the police react as trained, the students react to their feelings about authority, I was a drug dealer, that woman saw drugs that weren't there, on and on. Everyone triggered by what they thought they saw, an energy that made them feel they had truth, projecting internal feelings outside. Was there no end to this? It seemed like we were all stamped out of a mold, a human mold, and fed presumptions to project outwards, which then dragged us around by the nose while telling us these were our thoughts and insights. These thoughts and feelings weren't really ours. It is more like there is a being here that glues these images and feelings on us as we get born into them, and we never think of them as anything but ours. We aren't in charge this being is. I remembered that Voice again, how it had cut through all the layers, all this stuff that is like a covering, a big dream. It was the Voice that was real.

After graduation I went for a walk by the Rhine River, taking lunch in a paper bag. I stopped on a bridge and looked down at the river. Life was so chaotic. Death, riots, war, people trying to look happy when they weren't, those that were actually happy would be swept away at death. Was there any reason to be here? I looked down at the brown industrial waste channel, once so blue German poets wrote poems of it beauty. Trillions of water molecules passing by, going to the sea, to evaporate, become rain and flow again to the sea. Ah, the great cycle of life. Some claimed to see beauty in it, but to me it was just another thought process to hide in. Billions of humans passing by, flowing through their lives to...? I had no completion for that thought.

I tossed my lunch in to the river, watching it sink to join the other trash at the bottom.

"Yeah" I murmured.

Dad moved me to Heidelberg a few weeks later. He remarried to a German woman. At first she and I got along, but we started fighting. About what I have never been clear. She accused me of threatening her relationship with my Dad. I figured that relationship was between them. I was getting ready to leave the family to go to college and had no interest in coming between them. Somehow it got pretty ugly with almost nightly accusations. I had no clue what to say to make her to be happy or leave it alone. I even said I didn't care about it, which irritated her even more. I just wanted her to leave me alone until I left, but she insisted we discuss it. No matter how I tried to be true I was called a liar. This increased my fear of engaging in conversation with women I felt they already were disgusted by me, but with this I concluded they would just find more fault with me and lash me. I saw little reason to open up.

Dad got me my first a job on the base he commanded. I worked at a warehouse with an elderly German. We built wooden shelves to store missile parts for the military. I had never used a hammer but they told me to drive nails, so drive I did. I worked two stories up and missed half the time, banging hard against the wood, driving everyone to irritation.

The German had been through a hard life. He had fought in both World Wars and was reaching the end of his time. After the second war he lost everything and scraped to stay alive. He raised his kids, who grew up and ignored him. He loved his wife, but she was getting old and sickly. It was hard to make ends meet. So he worked in the warehouse and mowed lawns on weekends. No breaks, working to survive until he didn't. I told my father about this guy. Dad was very quiet.

That Voice kept bugging my memory. I often found my self started by internal jolts, a feeling, I would suddenly look around, listening for something, which didn't come. I wanted to hear it again, but it was silent. Oddly the jolts increased my desire to know now why I lived or I might as well die. I told Dad I wanted to hitchhike around Germany and think about my life. He was worried but went along with the idea. We bought a backpack, some clothes, and some ugly sneakers. Olive green with lavender trim, orange shoe strings. Red with yellow poke-a-dots trimmed in blue.

On my last day of warehouse work the German kept thanking me. Near the end of the day he told me he had just been promoted several grades to a manager position, with a big increase in salary and a pension, on orders of the base commander. It took me a minute to realize he was talking about ... Dad. Gee..., I didn't know Dad had that kind of mercy in him.

A Wandering Seeker

I went on the road, ugly shoes on my feet. First, I went to the base I'd lived on before mom's suicide. My old friends were not very interested that I was back. I wandered around on the military facility, long hair, ripped up clothes, like I used to live there. I slept out on various fields around the base. This drew the attention of the local authorities. After about a week the base commander told me to leave. I hung around a few days as I had no way to get off the base. The Master Sergeant, who answered directly to the Commander, came by telling me to leave. I kept staying around. For an Army unit I must have been quite the puzzle.

I met up with the candy man, the guy who refilled all the candy machine on base. I would ride around with him and help fill the machines. I got the bright idea of leaving with him. I told the Master Sergeant my plan and that I would be gone the next day. He wasn't too happy about this but at least it was a plan to get me off base. He also told me that my father was looking for me and to call home. Apparently Dad was having the military radio station broadcast my name and to phone home. This was not what I wanted, so I avoided the phones. Thinking back on it, my poor father sick with fear for me, but I was not done wandering yet. Not everyone is lost when they appear to be.

The next morning candy man came. We drove around dispensing fructose sugar and lard covered with chocolate to antagonize all the soldier's colons. After the final machine we got my pack and left the base. At the gate was the Master Sergeant and the Military Police man who had touched my head the day my mother died. As we passed the Sergeant kind of nodded. The MP gave a subtle but visible wave of his hand to say hood bye. I nodded back slightly, not wanting to get him in trouble.

I went to visit my high school, sleeping out by the football field. Again no old friends cared that I was there. I felt sad but refused to show it. I could see how shallow my friendships were, and that you can't go home again. While wandering around the city bare foot, getting tar stuck the bottom of my feet, I met another kid in a similar situation. He was about twenty three and lived in the woods under a bridge. He had a mold invested sofa to sleep on and a roof that was a mixture of a parachute, garbage bags and tree branches. It kept the rain out at least. He loved to tell me deep insights he had and how he was free. I didn't get that he had either, and I wasn't planning on living in the wood on a moldy sofa. However, he was interesting to talk to.

I met T--, the guy who was almost arrested with me over the ID cards. He had since been charged with possession of something and wasn't too happy. That night he was going to dinner at his girl friend's house and asked me to join them. I accepted.

The food was good but the parents kept looking at me, this bedraggled wandering soul they had never seen that was at their table. The father, a spiritual minister, asked if I'd talked to my Dad recently. I said no. He suggested I call. I asked why? He said that if his son were out on the road, as a father he would be terrified and would like to know I was all right. I didn't think this was a good idea because Dad would tell me to come home, and I wasn't ready to. The minister insisted. I told him I was waiting for an answer, the right time.

"The time is never a right, Doug. You can only get it about right, but never perfect. Consider a clock, this tool we use to track the idea of time. If it is working and running, it is almost certainly never on the correct time. The only way to get the right time is for it to stop and wait for the day to come around to it. Then, and only for the briefest of partial second, would it be exactly right, but that would be of no use in day to day life. We can't wait for that exact precision we have to live our life's with good enough time. Think about it."

That night, as I waited for sleep, I thought about his comments. He was right, but not as he intended. My whole life had been about being "good enough" for others that I thought never accepted me. Yet I had heard That Voice and I wanted it again. When it spoke everything stopped. I just felt it was the Source, not part of the conversation of the mind, this made up personality we live in. I wanted the source, or to die trying. The only way to get the precise answer was to stop good enough, to stop the machine and wait for it to come to me. That made sense, somehow. It had stopped next to Mom. Yet how does one stop the machine, whatever that is, and wait for your freedom?

After a few more weeks I headed home. Though I hadn't found the meaning of life, I at least saw a point to having life. Now I had a plan. I arrived at my folk's house and resumed my repressed life of denial.

An acceptance notice to an international college in Germany arrived while I was out looking around. Dad had worried that I might not get in to college, but I had assumed it as a foretold event. He drove me to the campus in a little town called Bönningheim. We found where my room was, carried my belongings to it, and talked a little bit. He said to call when I wanted, and was gone. I was so sad at him that I didn't call.

College was strange. I registered as a History student, but most of the people were majoring in getting drunk, taking drugs, and having sex together in various combinations. On my floor were several hash heads, two guys into heroin, an extremely disciplined Air Force kid, and me.

The campus was on property owned by a formerly royal family. The women were housed in the palace. The men lived in a converted house for servants and horses. Talk about gender bias. The class rooms were on the first floor of each building. My room mate was the son of an Air force officer and one of the hash heads. We talked about young male things, music, how the world should be, how each one's theory was so insightful that the common man could never understand them, females.

He met a woman from Canada and they began dating. I had my first sexual experience with them. One night I awoke to a loud creaking sound and muffled groaning. In my stupor I thought the five hundred year old building I lived in was shifting. I surfaced rapidly and heard someone moaning, like they were choking. Someone was being attacked in my room! I jumped out of bed and grabbed my baseball bat, turning to the sound, which was in his bed, with him between her legs. She stared up at me, terror in her eyes as I held my bat over my head. She dug her nails into his back. "Oh yeah, that's it" he groaned. I looked at her eyes a few more seconds, then my bat went down. Embarrassed I crawled back under my covers, wishing they would stop. However, they went at it many a night.

I didn't care too much about classes, nor did others. Often kids on LSD were out in the town pestering the local German drunks. One guy went berserk because his girl friend slept with him and he felt guilty. He ripped the sink out of the wall causing a flood, plus destroyed the furniture in his room. He offered the college twenty dollars in compensation. There was also the woman whose father was a former Nazi death camp guard, and her Switz boy friend who made porno flicks with her. One night a German female art student from another college ended up on our floor dancing naked in a room full of horny guys. I was in my room unaware of this trying to sleep through the music when suddenly my door crashed open and in ran this naked woman. She said "Uppah" and ran back out. She finished the night by going home with one of the guys and shaved off his pubic hairs in the bathtub. (I suspect she failed to share that story with her future children.) I didn't take part in any of this, though people kept inviting me to join in. It wasn't what I was looking for.

My first drug experience came when one of the heroin users invited me to "enter the mysteries of hash, and all that it could reveal." It seemed like a silly come on, but I went along. We smoked, and waited. After a few minutes I felt waves rolling through my body as I breathed. He kept telling me not to be afraid, which concerned me because I wasn't and wondered if I should be. I played the guitar. Every time my arm moved a wave would roll through me and I'd laugh. It was a great deal of fun. When we were done I went out to the hallway intending to turn towards my room, but instead walked straight into the wall. Even getting hurt was amusing.

I tried this stuff several more times and had fun, though the time I fell asleep at dinner with my face in a bowl of spaghetti was a big surprise. Yet as fun as it was, it didn't have the mind expansion my friends claimed it would. To me it seemed I was so limited that what little I saw occurred as insightful. Kind of like being stuck in an unlit clothes closet and being impressed with how far I could see.

I became fairly good friends with one of my professors. She taught German, at which I was really bad, but she couched me. She was my favorite person on the campus. We were both uptight and repressed so we got along fine. She and her husband would invite me over for dinner, where they and other professors would talk, drink, and look at nude girl magazines, making comments about the women in the photographs. Once she came to

visit my room and made a pass at me with full knowledge and agreement of her husband. I didn't think this was a good idea. She left upset and depressed. Her husband always glared at me after that. But I escaped with my virginity intact.

The professors either were scripted or they seemed to teach what they thought we should think. We weren't asked what we wanted. The more I listened it seemed that was what everyone was doing. People didn't really talk to one another. While one spoke the other listened to their judgments of the speaker's words and planned answers instead of listening. This isn't communication or the transference of ideas and feelings. It's two self involved separated conversations missing each other. I wondered if there really was any conversation except with ourselves in our heads? Boy and girl friends, children and parents, professors and students, each talking to their internal conversation. Again, something was amiss here.

In my second semester I took a philosophy class studying the origins of language. Everyone wanted to be in the class because the teacher was interesting. The first session the teacher walked in, put down his pack, laid a writing pad on his desk, and said that anyone who wanted a passing grade should write their name down on the pad and leave, they would get a C. About ten people walked up, wrote their names, and left. The rest of us looked at each other. Then he went into a discussion about a soldier captured during World War One who passed time in prison pondering how language was developed, first concentrating on Europe, then around the globe. Within two hours the professor had detailed the guy's life, his linguistic theory, and what it all meant. That was the study of the origin of language.

"OK, we have 45 minutes left, the subject is complete. There will be no test. Is there anything else you would like to explore the next twelve weeks?" Several people laughed, most stared at him. After about five minutes the disciplined Air Force kid asked if he was serious.

"I have a limited time on this earth, and each minute counts. I am absolutely serious."

There was a long pause.

"Any questions?"

No one answered.

"Class is dismissed, see you next session." He picked up his bag and left.

Everyone shuffled around, not quite able to leave. I wasn't sure why but I had the distinct impression the clock was about to stop.

I talked with the professor after every class, and found that he was a member of a Hindu religious group. This surprised me. Most professors sneered at religion and spirituality. Al, I'll call him Al, understood my confusion, considering the religious upbringing most had. He said his group wasn't being brain washed they were just sick of the old way and were interested in truth. I was intrigued, skeptical, but excited to find someone else interested in such questions. Still I wasn't sure. Smart people are just as gullible, possibly more, than common people.

The semester went on. More people left and got their C. Al kept asking why were we in college, why were we in life? He never demanded an answer he just wanted us to think about it. I don't remember much of what he said, but he was a major lesson. We each have a short time here. When you consider how fast one month passes, and in seventy years that adds up to 840 months, we have only a brief time, though we act like we have all the time in the world. Make it count.

Dad came to visit. He wasn't excited about my grades and wanted to know if he was wasting his money sending me to college. I told him it was the responsibility of every parent to do this for their kid. I figured after all the trauma of my childhood I deserved a place to work things out away from him. He left upset and sad. I could be quite manipulative. That seemed to be the way the family operated. However, in college one thing I learned was that was how most families operated and I was not alone. I was grateful to know that.

Acid Trails

The semester ended and I got a B in Al's class, like everyone else that stuck around. I attended Summer School which started a few weeks later. One afternoon E--, a guy I knew, was getting ready to drive to the next village and visit Al to buy some LSD. I stumbled in my mind. Did I hear him say he was going to buy drugs from a professor? He said "Well, that's where we all get our drugs."

Man, what a strange thing to learn. I was generally disappointed with the professors, but Al had restored some faith for me. Now I find out he's a drug dealer. I tried not judge, out loud.

E-- said the kids thought it was pretty neat, hanging out getting high with the professor. It got behind their false roles so they could learn from one another. E-- got in his car and drove away. He returned after a while with a small container full of little pills and came to my room. I asked what they were, and he said they were Acid. He swallowed two. Wait a minute, there are drugs in my room and I didn't get asked about it? I said nothing. It seemed impolite to impose. Besides, as he got goofier, I became interested.

The next time E-- went to Al's I asked if I could go along. "Sure" he replied. This struck me as odd. Shouldn't he be a little leery bringing a new person on a drug run to a professor's house, who if caught, could lose his career and go to jail? Nope, didn't bug him. This drug world was very trusting, nothing like the paranoid TV and movie representations I'd seen.

We drove to Al's apartment. Actually, it was the entire floor of a small rooming house with all the rooms rented by his spiritual group. There was a central kitchen, several bedrooms, and a living room. The living room seemed to be the main area. There was a bunch of pillows on the floor and in the corners. A table along the central wall filled with photographs. A cheap record player. The curtains were really neat, thick and full of ripples. Oh, wait, those were Marijuana plants. I went over to the table. The photo's were all religious. There was Jesus, Mohammed and a bunch of I guess Hindu guys. This must be a shrine, but why this strange mixture of people?

I walked into the kitchen where E-- and a few of the students were finishing a purchase with one of the residents. Al was not around so I couldn't voice my concerns to him. I asked the dealer guy why they had that particular combination of photo's on the altar.

"Those are all risen Masters, incarnations, Avatars, of the One."

"I thought the Christians said that Jesus was the Son of God, the Savior. They don't say he is an Avatar, what ever that is."

"Yes, sadly they are wrong. This myth has arisen over the centuries. Even his own followers couldn't get beyond their own cultural blindness to see the truth."

Not that I was Christian, but this seemed an insulting assumption if I'd ever heard one. The people that knew Jesus were too blind to truly know who he was, but a bunch of people two thousand years later who never met him knew better?

I looked at the kitchen table. There were a lot of little orange tablets. I asked what they were.

"Oh, they are Orange Sunshine, the best Acid in the world. Jerry Garcia made it himself." Yeah right, Jerry Garcia of the rock band The Grateful Dead is in his living room brewing vats of LSD to ship around the world, unconcerned that his big record deal could be ruined after being busted and sent to jail for ten billion years. I could see truth in advertising didn't apply in the drug world anymore than in the straight.

"Would you like some?"

I looked at E--, who smiled broadly.

"Ah, I don't know." Actually, I was curious. I'd heard Acid could get you out of your normal view of life. Some even had deep mystical experiences. This appealed to me. Of course I'd also heard of others who went insane, nor did I have any interest in being a drug addict. Yet this could be the doorway to a new view of the world, or I could get arrested and explain to Dad why I was spending his tuition money on LSD. However, there were no police in the village I lived in, so why not. What if I came back a babbling idiot? I looked at the two of them as this debate rambled in my head.

"I have no money" I said.

"Oh, I'll give it to you for free, a gift of the soul."

Damn, that didn't weasel my way out. E-- insisted it would be fun. I looked at it. What could a little tablet do to me? I put it in my mouth, swallowed, and waited. And waited... and waited. After years of hearing stories of intense hallucinations, mind expansion, dementia, intense overwhelming emotion, I waited...and waited.

Another student asked E-- to give him a ride to the train station twenty five miles away. E-- said sure and asked

me to go along. I was hesitant. What if the drug kicked in and we hallucinated our way into a tree? Except, well, we were waiting. Gee, what a let down. We piled into the car and went on a trip.

After some time we arrived at the train station. It felt like a friendly structure, big, imposing, and, well, more genial than usual. I got out of the car and looked around. The square in front of the station had an exceptionally happy feel to it today. It seemed to vibrate. I heard E-- yelling at me. "Doug, Doug" he said while waving. That was nice. I waved back. "No, come over here." Oh, I understand. I floated over to him

"Let's get lunch" E-- said, his voice suddenly clearer than before. As we went to pay the cashier I didn't comprehend the circular metal things that were suddenly in my hand. They had faces of people and numbers on them. The cashier said something in German that I didn't understand. I held out my hand, she took some chunks of metal, we smiled at each other, and I went to eat.

The sandwich was chewy with food getting stuck in my teeth. I reached for my soft drink, looking down at the glass from the top. Amazing, it was a two dimensional spot on the table, yet my hand fit around it. I picked up the spot and drank. "Jeez" I blurted, spraying drink everywhere. Normally this stuff was sweet but now it tasted like old road tar would smell.

We went to the station to meet the train. I stood against a pillar so I wouldn't wander around or fall over. After a few hours the train came creeping around the bend. I turned to E-- and said the train was here, looked back at it, and yelled in horror. The train exploded rapidly pass me. I fell to the ground. A rotund German gentleman looked down at me, and shuck his head. Oh, right, don't attract attention. I ran to a bench and sat on it, or more precisely held on to it. E-- was laughing into his hands at another bench. I looked away for self protection.

Our friend and the German guy got on the train. We returned to E's car and went on the most beautiful ride I'd ever been on. The sunlight, the trees, vineyards, rivers, cars, people, buildings, birds, animals all enhanced in many ways. There was a great sense of being one with it all. In particular the buzzing of the insects seem to meld with the general energy of the universe and I could ride the buzzing to that energy, as if I knew what that meant. This was the second most overwhelming experience I had ever had. After a life of self loathing, anger and aloneness, I felt happy and a part of it.

We drove to the vineyards outside of town and set up camp, looking into the valley below. All the life that was there, pulsating, vibrating, every variety, in the now, countless generations past, and hopefully countless generations to come, it was all there. As darkness approached I watched the shadows of night move through the trees. E-- got his guitar from his car and I listened to him play. Nearby we heard others, though we couldn't tell if they were humans. On another hill was a monastery. I walked over to it and climbed over the wall. As I landed on the other side I noted that dusk was at its most intense, and there was a thin fog developing. I wandered for a while, then turned startled as something snapped.

Before me stood a monk, his cowl pulled far over his head, nose barely visible, eyes there yet out of sight. I wanted to run, afraid I'd get in trouble, yet felt no reason to move. He just stood there, looking. I talked to him, about my mother's death, That Voice. He tilted his head. Now I could see an eye, quizzically looking at me. The shadows deepened, the fog mixing between us. I realized he was German and probably couldn't understand a word I said. Yet he listened, or I thought he did. There it was again, talking to people not understanding, talking to my "self". I was unsure what to do. I thought of the argument's people have, wishing the other would listen, thinking of what to say while the other spoke, too busy to hear or disinterested, planning a response. All the endless miscommunication, so important. We hold it as who we are. We want to share but few want to hear.

The source of so much family feuding, of wars, so simple to solve yet so many blind to what they do.

I looked him in the eye. "Do we ever talk, heart to heart?" I started to cry painfully and put my head in my hands. He smiled and lowered his head. Here I was tripping on acid and losing control, talking to a guy who I knew couldn't understand, about communication. He turned and stepped into the fog. "Will I ever open, and have my sharing heard?" I asked. He turned. I could see a slight smile on his mouth. I fell down and wailed. He stepped into the fog and vanished.

"Doug?"

I looked up. "What!?"

"You're snoring" E-- said, his guitar laying on the ground beside him.

My head fell back and hit the tree I was laying against. I looked around. We were surrounded by trees, no hills, no monastery in sight.

This was astonishing. Experiencing time slowing and accelerating at the same time, four dimensional objects becoming two dimensional, visiting monasteries that weren't there. The term hallucination really fit. It was like nothing I'd ever seen before. There was no fear, it was somehow familiar, and deep inside I felt calm. Somehow I'd slipped free from the bonds of something. E-- said he had similar feelings, so strange, yet known. I wasn't sure what to do, but when E-- went for a new supply, I went along.

Though Al wasn't around there were several people present. The guy who gave me the LSD greeted us, asking how my trip was. I told him about the experiences. When I spoke about the monk his eyes widened, the room became silent. I looked around. What had I said? After some seconds they started talking among themselves.

"What happened?" I asked the guy

"We saw something about you."

"What?"

"Here, take these."

I looked at his hand. There were those little pills. I hesitated, took one, and put it on my tongue. There was an immediate reaction in me, a strange shock ripped through me, and my head felt slightly numb. Well, at least this was going to be a lot quicker than the first time.

The guy led me into a small sparse room, wood floors, a short bar refrigerator in the corner. He asked me to stay there for a while. I watched the village through the window as the sun set.

The guy opened the door and walked in. "How are you doing?" he asked.

"Getting there."

He walked over to me. "Have you ever thought about God?" I said yeah, and told him of the time I found Mom in the garage. Suddenly I knew why this drug was familiar. It felt like that instant I was floating in the air next to her, when that voice had spoken. The guy continued, "did you know you can communicate with God?" He looked deep into my eyes. I nodded I did know that. "Did you know that you are God?" He looked at me for an instant, than his eyes darted around, looking like he might have gone too far. I just looked at him. I knew what he meant, but then again I was tripping on Acid. I looked out the window.

The guy left. A few minutes later Al walked in. Here was the guy I had a million questions for, but I couldn't have cared less. He was just a person talking about his opinions. The other guy opened the door. Al said it was time to meditate and left. After a few minutes it was very dark. I sat in the room, watching the grain of the wooden floor slither around like snakes as the walls started to breathe. Then Al's dog was let in. It insisted on trying to hump my leg. I spent the beginning of this trip kicking away a sexually aroused dog that kept coming after me while also understanding women a lot better. Eventually Al came and got the dog. Through all this I wasn't afraid. I was surprised how unusually clear my view was, as there was no light. I figured my eyes or brain were altering a signal and enjoyed how weird it was.

Al came in to talk with me, to elucidate his view of the universe, to answer all my questions. I had waited for this for a few weeks, but I just stared at him and somehow watched his nose hairs move around in the dark. He eventually left and I sat in the empty room for some amount of time.

Eventually I left the house and walked past the edge of town, following the road back to my village so I wouldn't get lost. In the distance a car left my village heading my direction. Its headlights snaked back and forth as it approached. I went into a bend of the road that was shielded by an embankment, and watched the car lights swinging wildly back and forth in the sky night. Then the car turned into my corner and stabbed my eyes with intense light shafts. The driver hit his horn and I was overwhelmed with fear. I fell into the drainage ditch by the road. Oh, great, now I'm wet. Something slithered up my leg. I screamed and somehow jumped to the top of the embankment, even though I had started sitting on my butt in the water. I ran across a freshly harvested corn field. I became aware of a very painful fact. I was barefoot and those corn stocks hurt. I slowed to a walk and my feet sank into the mud with an ugly squishing sound. Finally I reached the other side and entered my village's square. I looked at the bottom of my feet. Amazing. Not a cut or a welt, but boy they were dirty.

The town fountain was across the square. I walked towards it to wash my feet. Suddenly the ground started swaying beneath me. Oh my goodness, what was this an earthquake in Germany? I looked down. I was standing on the scale that weighed trucks when they left the local factory. Oh good, at least I had an explanation. Across the square a cat hissed at me, then ran away. I wanted to chase it and proclaim they couldn't get me, except I

didn't know who "they" were. So bizarre. I washed my feet in the fountain, then walked until I passed out the other side of the village. I looked down. My feet were dirty.

I reached an unlit part of the road and looked up at the stars. Such vastness. I suddenly knew just how big it was. Not a conversation saying "it's really really big, I understand." No, I felt it was limitless. Words bring understanding into conversation, but I was seeing the real universe. Something stirred in my stomach and jumped into the sky. My vision went with it, and I linked with the immensity of it all. I was it, or it was me.

I awoke in a field, covered in mud. I walked to my room and took a shower. All the while I was thinking. What had I bumped into? I'd read of people claiming oneness with the universe, but "I" had just jumped into it, not intellectually but viscerally. My experience was that I had an awareness that was separate from my daily awareness, and it could leave and go other places. Not like dreaming, or having a mental fantasy but viscerally, bodily. I didn't know what to make of it. I shared with some people I knew, who were happy for me and said I had found what I needed and could stop. Others told me I was an idiot. After all, I was on drugs. They insisted I to get back to reality for it had all been an hallucination. Each side gave supporting arguments, but they both told me to stop. I shook my head. There was something more to come.

I wondered what a hallucination was. I went to a dictionary and a Thesaurus. The basic definition came down to "something that is accepted as true that is actually empirically false or untrue." Empirical means physically true, that the senses can naturally detect it. I had to admit that two dimensional drinking glasses and a floor writhing like snakes was hallucinatory. Then I thought of my lessons in history classes. Nation States have no empirical basis. You can't touch them. They have no physical border. If you go to "the border" the same Earth is on the other side. A border is simply a shared intellectual assumption used to mentally separate "our" turf from "theirs." We think of this turf as owned by humans, even though we are all just passing through. "Within" the border there is no universal agreement on what the country is. People don't even agree on what it is to be a member of a particular linguistic group (an invented communication system) within the nation (an invented non entity). Each countries' currency only has the value our feelings give it. Laws are intellectual agreements among those in charge, backed by armed uniformed gangs of control freaks. Whoever's ego is in charge often defines everyone else's agreements or resistance. The entire system we live by is all made up, it is "something that is accepted as true that is actually empirically false or untrue." They only exist in our agreements. Hallucinations. A mirage. All our racial pride and hated, gender presumptions, superiority and inferiority, language, money, wealth, is all a mental hallucination. You only see it as you do because you think it is there, just like vanishing monks. Except people slaughter one another over their hallucinations that they accept as true.

Somehow we have a need to feel separated and defined by differences, when in fact we are all pretty much the same. We live in the hallucination of separation. Many are willing to surrender their life, their only real gift, for imaginary separations that only exist in their feelings. They often do this as if their act was a pivotal event in human life. Terrorist, drug dealers, day to day people, surrender life for cheap things. Usually it is about a feeling of control, or being right, establishing one's view as the true understanding. Most surrender their life to these illusions before they even know they are really alive, then die and lose it all. Our ephemeral power, perceived as all important, lost in the end. A soldier fights for a country. A religious zealot strikes out for his religion (actually their internal feelings). The country is an imagined thing. The religion is an internal discussion. Only the bodies that God created which were getting blown up are real. All an internal hallucination, an internal conversation. There it was again. That energy that bound its being to ours at birth, presenting an internal movie. We all live in our own theater of the one, treating others as characters of our movie. One big controlling hallucination that held all of our attention. Ah ha, that was what had happened. My attention had slipped free for a few precious seconds and flown away some where.

The path I was investigating might not be the norm, but it seemed worth the pursuit. I had felt overwhelming happiness, a sense of complete terror, and complete connectedness with the vast oneness of the universe, the united song. I had read of Saints and teachers that spoke of such things. They might not have used LSD, but it was the path open to me. The other socially accepted hallucinations didn't offer as much.

The summer ended. It was almost time to move to the Heidelberg campus of the college, but I had no transportation. I filled my foot locker with a few clothes, a few books, grabbed my guitar, and with E-- I carried my luggage up to the vineyards. From there I watched the cleaning crew pack my stuff in their cars or throw it in the trash truck. That's one way to let go.

For a few weeks we lived in the vineyards, taking LSD, eating fruit from the trees, buying food with the money E-- made selling opium. It was a romantic pre-industrial way of life. E-- was in my opinion a bit careless. He once drove to a military base hidden away in the woods and asked the Military Police if such and such a soldier was around. The MP asked why and E-- told him he had come to sell the soldier some opium. The MP told us to get lost and called the Master Sergeant. Some soldier was about to have a very nasty evening.

Another time we went to a large military facility to buy some groceries through the use of my ID card. The guard asked us to get out and proceeded to strip the car. Tires, door panels. E-- was very upset. I was pensive and asked if we had anything to be afraid of. I was not too concerned with him getting arrested as with explaining to my father what I was doing riding around with an opium dealer. It was clear though that nothing was going to be found, so I started suggesting to the MP he was making a mistake and my father, the West Point Graduate Lieutenant Colonel of 1949, might be rather irritated at him for doing this to me. After a while he stooped, I think more because there were no more parts to take off than my threat. I then insisted that he put it back together, which he did. Long hairs don't mix with the military very well. I told E-- I didn't think it was a good idea for me to ride with him anymore.

It took me a few days but I found a German to drive me and my stuff to Heidelberg. I gave him my collection of music cassettes as payment. Once moved I packed my stuff in another friend's room. For three weeks I wandered around taking drugs, thinking about the cosmos, and reading spiritual books.

My friend A-- was irritated. School would start soon and he was sick of me snoring on his floor all night. I woke every morning with shoes around my head. He had thrown them at me to silence me. A-- asked his friend C-- to talk to me. C-- was an old acid head, no longer thrilled by the experience. He invited me over for tea, then told me God had called him on the phone, and God wanted me to quit being an idiot and find a place to live. I was so embarrassed I looked immediately.

I asked various landlords, but they didn't like the look of me and my lack of funds. I went to the locator service the U.S. Military had in town, and told them I was an army brat in need of a room. They promised they'd get right on it. I had grown up in the army and believed they always did as promised. I went back a few times, but nothing ever happened. So, though I did not want to, I called my father. I didn't want to, but I hadn't eaten for a few days and there seemed to be no other choice.

Dad and step Mom came to Heidelberg. He was shaking his head disapprovingly from the instant he saw me. We drove to the military housing office. Dad was dressed in his Lieutenant Colonel's uniform, me barefoot, T-shirt and ripped pants. At the flash of rank the soldiers found a room for me in about five minutes. My Dad turned to me and said that was the privilege of rank, and without power one didn't get anything. So much for my illusion of the military supporting one another, but now I had a room.

I began to read the Bible. What was this thing called God? I'd concluded earlier that as I made up all my thoughts and choose how I viewed the world, then I was God, or I believed in my opinions as God. However, when I lay in fields high on LSD, staring at endless space sparsely populated with countless stars, whose collective heat was dwarfed by the ambient warmth of the emptiness, I began to doubt. It is a human oddity, born into a world already provided, thinking it centers around us personally. Some people become somewhat cynical or depressed when they learn they are only one of the billions of a single species among trillions of

species on a small planet that circles one of countless stars in vast never ending space. However, because we can create explanations for all this, we think we are God like. Such a human trait, constrained by our thoughts, yet thinking ourselves special because we think while assuming other species don't think, mistaking explanation for reality. Whatever is the source of our thoughts may be the creator of all that we perceive and believe, but is that God? Or something else?

What I called God was simply part of my conversation with myself. Truth be told I believed in my beliefs of God, but not God. The Bible presented God as something other than one's own beliefs, and that it was One. I had thought this biblical God stuff was a bunch of simpletons trying to explain what they didn't comprehend, but I saw now that this was me discounting what I didn't understand. The editors insisted there was something called God. Could I meet this God directly?

I also wondered what was this Devil I had heard so much about while growing up? I'd been told that it came from D' Evil, or The Evil. This made sense because it would be the source of everything that was bad, except bad is usually defined by what you support. Their side kills millions in war and we call it evil, our side slaughters millions and that's just the price of good. Good is what we like. Evil is what's not that.

I looked in the dictionary and discovered something rather interesting. The structure of the word doesn't break down as D-evil, but as De-vil. I started following the meaning of the two parts of the word, and was intrigued to find that De.. is related to Des.., Dia.. and Di.. as prefixes, and they all mean a breaking apart or shattering. Destroy, divide, delete. So the first part was to break apart, or separate a unified whole of some sort. What the -vil meant, I couldn't find.

I listened to a radio program where smart folks explained interesting quotations and word uses. They described the statement "caught between the Devil and the deep blue sea." I'd heard this before, but being caught between evil and drowning didn't seem like a very good quotation. According to the announcer the statement came from the British navy in the 1800's. When it was a particular sailor's turn to be physically punished he would be lowered by a rope over the front of the ship with a knife and a bucket of hot tar. He then had to maneuver along the middle seam running between the port and starboard sides of the boat, chipping out old tar and sealing the various cracks so water wouldn't flood the ship. Below was the sea, and the seam between the two sides was called, the Devil. The word had nothing to do with evil. It had to do with a line that divides and separates, or joins, two sides. I'd never heard that before, yet it seemed common enough knowledge back then that everyone knew what it meant. Hummm, the Devil is the line that divides, but God is One. Hummm. Had our language forgotten something?

I looked up diabolic, something the Devil was said to be. It was also a straight Greek translation of a word for the Devil, Diabolus, or something similar. The definition of the word talked about being evil and deceitful, but the word parts revealed more. The dia.. came from shattering or breaking apart. The other part of the word, -bolic I found under the word hyperbolic, as in a hyperbolic curve. Hyper meant exaggerated, -bolic meant to throw, or to throw apart. Hyperbolic meant an exaggerated throw, and a hyperbolic curve is an exaggeratedly thrown curve. It seemed that diabolic meant to shatter or break apart (dia..) and bolic meant to throw apart. So the Devil, in being diabolic, is shattering something, I assume a whole, or a one, and throwing the parts away from each other. In Devil the De.. pointed to this, though I still couldn't find the ..vil. However, the word had to do with separating a unity, but the unity of what? Also interestingly, the original meaning of all this was "The Adversary."

I looked up the word sin. The dictionary said this was a crime, or a breaking of law, doing something wrong or making God mad at you. I went to the library and got me a biblical dictionary. There sin meant to miss the mark, or to fail to measure up to ones highest standards, or to not live up to the agreement between God and humans. It also meant the substituting of our concerns and interests for the will of God. It doesn't mean you are bad, or evil, it meant you missed the mark, like an arrow missing the bull's eye on a target. Sin isn't bad, you just missed, you are separated from God because you want to proclaim yourself as god. The Devil isn't evil, but the breaking of a unity, seemingly with the purpose of making you self absorbed and missing the joining with One. Humm. The Adversary.

I read about those deadly sins I had heard of, pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. What did these have to do with the Devil? These intense emotions increase our feeling of separation and dominate our internal conversations, the ones you hold as the world and truth. These deadly sins are based on a diabolic

world, one shattered and thrown apart, one so intensely divided that we seek only the desires and self will. What about our inner thoughts? I'd been told The Devil appears to be God, but isn't. That is how we hold our inner thoughts to be the truth, no matter how often we see they are false. So is the conversation in our head the Devil, or more precisely was it the tool of the Divider? Deep feelings make it appear there are great differences between us, when there aren't. The internal conversation supports the feelings under this and to us appears to be truth (God), but the conversation, and the feeling, isn't God. This thing in our hearts, our minds, that so occupies us with judgments worth harming others, this thing that appears to be God, is the Devil. It binds us to this state of being shattered and thrown apart. Again. Here was the energy that glued itself to our awareness I had seen at the Chicago Demonstration.

So if the Devil is all my concepts, feelings, beliefs, all that I think and hold true, the very filters I use to know the world, then what is God?

I then recalled being taught in high school of Columbus sailing to the New World, and the fear they might fall off the edge of the world. This was always presented in high school as an example of how the Church prevented exploration and showed how ignorant people were back then. However, in college, I learned that in the universities of the 1400's it was widely accepted that the earth was curved and they conjectured that it probably wrapped around. That was why the Spanish Monarchy and Church blessed the Columbus voyage. They wouldn't waste all that wealth to prove the curvature if they assumed the earth flat. I saw now that the commonly accepted Columbus myth of high school was not the truth, but a myth of ours.

During the discussion of this in college the idea was emphasized that we fell off the edge of the world, not the earth. This interested me. I'd seen before that we had lost the meaning of words from the past, so I wondered what the past was trying to tell us about the "world" and being human.

I looked in the various dictionaries I had available at college. The word "world" means "the remembrance of a man." It isn't this planet we walk on. It concerns how a man remembers, or reassembles, his parts, his self view, or how others hold the man within their imaginations, their imaginary understandings of people. The image of the man, not the man. Like a toy, you take the parts (members) and put them together as they should be (remember). The World is a mans self reflection. (I also found out that the word man means both sexes.) I found a picture of the flat world from the Middle Ages. It was like a table top, with a supporting central shaft under it. On the table were countless pieces of various detailed items; buildings, ships, water, people, animals. Under the table was a frog and a tortoise, both holding the world up by the shaft. The notes said that the tortoise was a symbol for slothfulness (no drive, don't do anything, failure to achieve goals, why investigate) while the frog was self importance, a princely frog wearing a crown when in fact, he was just a frog. So slothfulness and self importance hold up the world, our self remembrance. Off the edge was a fog, with monsters. The fog made sense, because if you fell off the edge of your view of who you are and what reality is, there would be a fog. But what were those monsters? If we fell off the edge of the world into the mist and the monsters, our separateness would die. Off the edge, no separation, One. Could it be that out in the mist, off the edge of our self perception, in The Cloud of Unknowing, was where one could find God? Not in our opinions or laws we make out of fear of lawlessness (non definedness), but out there, off the edge? Mystics talk of selfless love and selfish love. I had thought that selfish meant greedy, but I saw that it meant a reflecting of the self, one's self view and members, the world. If you think you are great for feeding the poor, this increases your self-ish-ness. Selfless didn't mean lack of greed, it meant without a self, no reflection, no world. So if you fall off the edge of the world, off of division, you fall into One. And God is One. So maybe those monsters representing God, where we surrender our separate self and we sink into oneness and eternity, not of this world?

All those people dividing (devil separating) the world (how we put our members together in our personal public mind) to prove they alone were the chosen, were actually the ones in sin (separated from God). The way to find out was to go off the edge. But how? And, what did that mean?

I loved walking the streets of Hiedelberg. In particular I enjoyed the feel of soft asphalt on my bare feet. At the time there was a great phonograph called Benefit that I still hear in my head when I think of those days. Jethro Tull, that was the band, very good, but they became self important and things went down hill. I remember there was a dam in the Nekar River and Germans would walk out on it to fish. They would stand on the dam with the river passing through their legs just before the water went over the dam top. It appeared there were hundreds of Germans walking on water. Germans have a high opinion of themselves but this was ridiculous. It seemed to me to be a bad place to fish because of the suds. There were a lot of chemicals in the water from industrial plants and as the water passed over the dam and dropped down the water was churned up and suds would come out bottom side. Large suds. Two or three times the height of a person and about twenty yards long. It was especially odd to look at in the moonlight of night.

I began to think about how my father had tolerated my being on the road. Not many dad's would have done that, letting their teen age son go on the road in a foreign country and trusting the son to return. He had always been a lot hipper than I. He had a record collection of Negro Blues records purchased during segregation. Most know that blacks couldn't go where the whites were, but it was also illegal for whites to go to black businesses. Dad was risking arrest going to the black record stores, but he always wore his military uniform with his officer rank. Police would confront him, but he was silently daring them to arrest a military officer, which never happened. Dad was so hip that one day I came home and he had this really obnoxious noise on the record player. He was in uniform but had his collar open, a beer in his hand, and was gyrating around wildly. I was so embarrassed. I looked at the record cover. It was some black guy with large frizzy hair called Jimi Hendrix singing about a purple haze. Too strange, Dad was so weird.

As I thought about it, he wasn't just the hard ass military guy I always cast him in. I began to understand that he was also a father, a father who didn't have a clue what he was doing and just trying to keep his child alive. He wanted the best for that child, to let him learn what he needed, to find whatever it was his son needed to find. I had told him about The Voice, and he let me go look for it, despite all his fears, knowing that while I was on the road he would not be able to protect me. I was suddenly very impressed with him. I thought of the nights he must have spent in worry while I was out sleeping under the night sky. He had the military broadcast daily for me to call him but he never heard from me. When I returned he didn't beat me or yell at me, or even bring any of this up. I struggled to understand what would cause him to allow this until one night I figured it out. He loved me.

My heart broke. All the years, all the misunderstandings, all the times I felt slighted I now saw that he was doing his best and trying to protect me while not understanding what I was up to. He had no comprehension of a voice but he knew it was important to me. He also knew I had to work out my mother's suicide, and was willing to risk and trust me enough to let me leave him and look around. I was astonished, ecstatic. He loved me! I literally ran out the door barefoot in a T-shirt and ripped up jeans, got on the train and went to his house. I wanted to tell him that I understood now, it all made sense. When the train arrived I ran to his house and he was in the yard. He looked at me with a look of complete revulsion, his barely clothed son who needed a bath arriving unannounced. My Stepmother came out with a similar look on her face. I began to tell him I understood finally that he loved me, that I knew. He waved his hand dismissively and said of course he loved me, that was what fathers were supposed to do. He told me to get a shower because I stunk. I tried to insist but they both had this look of disgust on their faces. He took me by the arm and dragged me in the house to the shower room and left. I stayed there for a couple of days listening to how disappointed they were with me and how dare I come unannounced to their house like a stinking street rat and expect them to change their lives just because I was there. I needed to learn more respect. Then I went back to school feeling unloved and not accepted as always.

One of the peculiarities of LSD is that when you are under its influence, you can remember almost everything that has ever happened to you, especially other LSD trips. However, when you are back to being straight you can't remember the trip. You have a physical memory that something happened, usually quite funny, but you

are clouded over and can't quite get the memory. Oddly it is your normal state that can't access this information, yet on LSD you can hold an incredible amount of your life and information in front of your awareness. Something is very awake and aware on LSD. That same thing seems to be asleep normally. Unfortunately, the LSD state it is not terribly ordered nor very good at operating in the normal world. The two sets of hallucinations, normal and drug, are different. The straight hallucination makes you think in terms of you and the self. On LSD I was totally other. I wondered if it was possible to combine the two. It would be valuable to have the discipline of being straight while at the same time accessing to the knowledge of LSD. I found out that one could, though it took assistance.

One of my "insights" at the time was the belief I could influence what people saw. I was reading books on mesmerization and realized that the Shaman's could do this. For instance I read a report about a photographer in India who witnessed a snake charmer. With his eyes he saw the charmer open a box, a snake came out, the charmer started playing flute, the snake started "snaking" to the music as more and more of it came out of the box until it was several feet tall. Then the snake came completely out of the box and floated up into the sky, the entire time "dancing" to the music, until it disappeared. Before this started the photographer had set up his camera and set it to take photographs every five seconds. When he processed the film later what he had was several hundred images of a snake sleeping in a box and the charmer playing his instrument. The photographer stated that this proved the charmer was a total fraud as proved by the photo's. He never actually addressed how it was that he and a couple dozen other people saw the exact same thing because it was obviously disproved by the photo's. Yet somehow the charmer had caused them to see what they saw, or something created a common experience of a snake floating into the sky and disappearing.

I had noticed through my life that people look only at their belief of what is happening, at the movie within, and often don't see what is going on in "reality." Of course what I was calling "Reality" would only be my movie, but there was also what the camera would see independent of our perceptions. Well, seeing as the charmer had apparently projected a commonly accepted image into the perceptions of the crowd, I concluded that if I concentrated on doing this, then I could also manipulate what others would perceive.

I spent several weeks meditating on this, on feeling my energies within, on picking specific ones that seemed to respond to my desire and will, and worked on projecting them. I then tried to influence others with this, and to my surprise and enjoyment I found that about 80% of the time the person would change their beliefs to what I wanted, without any verbal suggestion on my part. I kept at this several more weeks until one night I was cooking using a hot plate. As the food was starting to warm up I got the idea of trying to cause the hot plate to cool down without of course turning the knob that made the heat go down. I looked at it, concentrated, and suddenly the food quit bubbling. It stayed that way for about a minute. So then I decided to let it heat again, and suddenly it started bubbling again. I did this several times and each time it worked. It was amazing, I seemed to be able to actually do it. I also ruined dinner.

With my new found sorcerer powers I decided I could use them for practical purposes. Specifically I was having money problems and I needed a way to stretch out my funds. My plan was to get free food. There was a specific food mart I went to every couple of weeks. Unlike most German food stores this was a large American Style food cornucopia with twenty cash registers and crowded all the time. My plan was go in my loose fitting overalls with many pockets, to buy some food but to fill up the pockets with other things, and walk out with a lot of food to eat. I was sure that I could cloud the mind of anyone looking at me so they would not see. Beside on television shows there were always people sneaking things like this without being caught. So I went to the store. Slowly I walked through this upscale German store in my farmer's overalls, long ragged hair, tennis shoes and a T-shirt, trying to not draw attention to myself. When I was sure no one was looking I would sneak something into a pocket or into to inside of my overalls. Occasionally I became suspicious that someone was looking at me, but then I would back off and project into their minds.

After wandering around in this store for a couple of hours, trying to not be noticed, my pants bulging out in several places, I went to the cash register to check out. The woman at the register gave me a look but I quickly

mesmerized her. I placed one thing on the counter and then something fell out of my pant leg. I looked down then up, and there, standing before me was the security chief of the store. I quickly concentrated and projected my will at him. He suddenly demonstrated how much I had mastered the power of sorcery. He reached out, grabbed my arm, and dragged me across the floor and up some stairs to his office followed by a couple of police officers. In his office he showed me a video tape of my little shopping spree, then demanded I place all the food on his desk. After about a minute there was a fairly good pile of food on it. He and the police were talking in German but I could hear the discussing taking me to jail. I suddenly was scared. This was serious, not some drug head's self deluded experiment. I start stammering out in broken German with a horrible American accent that I was starving and poor and I needed some food and I was sorry and I was desperate. The Security Chief said "You're poor? I'm poor, we are all poor!" He waved his arms around a few times and then told me to get out of the store and never come back. I stood up ran out of the office, down the stairs and out to the streets. When I reviewed the situation it was not a total failure. I had in the end managed to manipulate them to perceive what I wanted in order to get what I wanted. Unfortunately it involved on falling back on my old stand by of crying and being desperate. One needs to be in a situation where the outcome is not an interesting mental experiment but one of real danger, and in my middle class upbringing going to jail was dangerous. Not because of the criminals that would be there, but because Dad would hear about it. So one's emotions and will have to be really engaged, plus being dressed the part helps. If I hadn't dressed like a beggar I probably wouldn't have been believed, and in fact I was low on money and food, so the truth was the real sorcery. Still, how did that charmer do that to all those people, and why did the hot plate go cool and hot apparently on my wish, and no there was no problem with the electricity. And how do those girl's do that to me?

Some friends and I were under the influence one night. Their trip was quite giggly and mirthful. Mine, as usual, was intensely focused. I read the Bible, listened to music, and had some rather interesting visual hallucinations. Translucent light blue bubble men play music with odd instruments. Not in the room with me, but wherever it is one goes when one trips.

I was staring at the wall paper, which was alternating between a print of a Dutch Boy and his dog, and a raging storm on the North Atlantic. Very interesting. One of the women of the tripping party came to me and said we were going to the sculptured gardens at the Heidelberg Castle. That could be fun. I reached down for my shoes. They evaporated. I sat straight up and looked at the wall paper. It and the room evaporated. I gasped and turned towards her. Her eyes were all that was left, and they melted away into sound. A sound, a deep humming pulsating sound. Suddenly, like a wave, the energy swept from that sound through several octaves until they because the spectrum of light and colors passing by. It all occurred as one wave length that changed to appear as anything.

Total silence. Total emptiness. Nothing to perceive. No me to perceive, and yet somehow an awareness. I wanted to scream, horror and terror, but I had no voice. I wasn't there. This lasted for an interminable amount of time, never ending, never beginning, always this state. After I floated there for several eons, there was a sudden slash, a rip, and a piercing white, slightly blue light, shone in from somewhere. It was "far away", yet slowly coming towards me, growing and getting brighter. I struggled to yell, but I had no voice, and I was strangely indifferent. I "sat" and watched it grow and approach, slowly, gently till it was so large it filled my entire perception. It came up to me as if an opaque flat surface, it "pressed against my nose", and then my face penetrated it like a face penetrating the surface of a calm water, and it enveloped me.

"Well Doug, do you want to go or not." The woman was sitting in front of me. My shoes were in my hands, the clock had moved a few seconds, the Dutch Boy played with his dog. I look piercingly into her eyes. "Sure, OK, lets go to the castle" I murmured. We went to the Castle. The carved bushes were really fun, especially the ones that looked like animals. As I wandered I thought "where have I been" at which point everything that had ever happened to me in my life flashed by in my mind in about two seconds. I fell down and thought "too much information."

We spent the night in the Castle Gardens. In the morning we came down into town, and ended up in the parking

lot of the main German Police Station. There, before me, in rectangular morning formation, was a few hundred police officers, with a superior officer reading them something. The two people I had been in the garden with tried to sneak by this group, trying to not draw attention, which of course drew all of their attention. I on the other hand, seeing this, collapsed on the ground, started pointing at them and laughing hysterically while crawling, dragging myself on the ground. I wasn't sure what was funny, but it was. Somehow, probably because of the shocked strangeness of the situation froze them in place, I got to the end of the rectangle and ran like a demented soul.

LSD trips typically last about ten hours, after which you "Crash" from it and sleep. This one kept going, for a week. I was worried I had lost it, yet I felt "found." My straight mind finally came back and placed order around me, yet the doors continued to stay blown open. And it never quite sealed shut. It seemed as if my "normal" and the "other" met, and entwined, both awake yet neither in charge. I never did come down from that trip. I just learned to adapt eternity into my mind set.

One of my classes was on modern psychiatry. The Dean of Male Student's taught this class. He was well trained to teach the subject. He had a wall full of degrees to show he had studied it, and being a modern professor he was also fairly good at convincing coeds to have sex with him (one of my female friends walked in on him and one of the coeds). Actually, a lot of the professors of both genders were fairly good at finding young bed mates. Maybe this was one of the perks to make up for the reduced salaries. He and almost everyone in the class had the attitude that everyone should do what they wanted and anyone who tried to repress anyone had a problem, so the Dean's wife who wasn't pleased with his activities needed to relax and examine her repressive ways. I say almost everyone because I had a different attitude. There was also another guy in his late fifties who was divorced and he made it clear that he felt they were all wasting their time and acting like self absorbed teen agers (well, they were all in their twenties except the professor who was thirty two). There was an ongoing struggle between him and the class who responded with dismissive laughter and acting like his age and experience had nothing to tell them. This went on most of the semester until one class he started crying in front of everyone. The professor told him that if he would just be less rigid he could open up and feel his joy. A couple of the coed's put their arms around him and told him they loved him and the way he was finally being open. He shuck his head and looked at the class with disbelieving eyes. "Don't you understand? You talk of this as your life and you are going to live it to the fullest, but so what? This is all going to die. You won't remember any of this when you are dead. Everything you learn, it is going to pass away. It isn't enough."

My father could no longer afford the private college. He was sending me to the state of Michigan in the U.S.A. where he had family ties and more importantly, citizenship. One pays less attending a university in ones home state. I had no state to claim as home, so I got his by devolution.

We went to the airport in Frankfort to catch the flight. As we waited I looked around. There was something, familiar about this place. That view out the window, the flooring, that door on the wall. That bathroom door on the wall. Yeah, that bathroom, the one I'd defecated in so long ago. "Couldn't be" I thought. Boarding time came and I flew to Michigan where I stayed with an aunt and uncle while I picked a college to attend. After visiting a few I choose Michigan State University in East Lansing. There was no real reason for this. I placed my hands over the pamphlets, and M.S.U. felt right.

There I lived in a co-op which was good for me. I learned a bit about being around others. I found a job washing dishes at a cafeteria, and began to learn how to operate on my own. This was good because I received a letter from Dad. He did not support the life I was choosing, and he would no longer monetarily or emotionally support me. That was one of the few letters that passed between us. I really was on my own.

After several months I met a guy who I engaged in a long discussion of spirituality. He had a strong interest in this and gave a lot of information of his own. As the months passed he and I formed a bond of friendship and learning. One revelation was that he played guitar in a jazz style, compared to my more classical vein. We played together and I learned from his technique. We arranged some music and one night played at a party. Lots of fun. I had become fairly good at the guitar, but standing in front of people in public was a big step for me in feeling comfortable.

I moved to another co-op house, Tralfamadore co-op, named after an imaginary planet from a book. There I shared a room with a guy who felt he was far more brilliant then the rest of us, and was happy to explain why. He would talk for hours on the infinitesimal sliver of knowledge the Catholic Church imprisoned their minds with and how he had so much to teach them. He liked to drink beer and have sex with his girlfriend. I ate his food just to irritate him.

Desecration of Belief

I lost my virginity to a woman in Ann Arbor. Since being a teenager I had wondered and feared about this. I developed a negative assumption that no one would have me. I was in Ann Arbor for a weekend job loading tires into an 18 wheeler to help a friends tire business and make some money. A lady invited me for a massage. One thing led to another and we were doing the wild thing. Well, she was, she was quite practiced at it. I was just following her lead. Two things surprised me. Apparently I didn't have the necessary indoctrination to get all hot and bothered because she was naked. All my live I had seen everyone else seemed to get all excited about sex and creating various sorts of responses and meanings about it. I just saw a naked woman. The other was when I had my orgasm, it was a slight spurt out there somewhere in my nervous system. That was it. THAT WAS IT??!! Twenty years of neuroses and self deprecating because I had never had sex, and that was it? Gee, what a let down.

A few years had passed but I suddenly had the desire to take LSD again. Some of the other Co-op members were in the mood, so we ingested some. It was intense. A lightning storm caused a tremendous shimmering effect in the visual realm of the experience. We sat in the dark watching the room jump rapidly between light and dark, catching a tremendous shaking of everything. I would close my eyes and have hallucinations of cartoon style bombers flying over Germany in World War II, dropping flowers that would spring to life as they hit the ground, while the fighters and defense gunners fired balloons full of multi colored paint, spraying the sky in a wondrous display. Too bad the real war wasn't like this.

Once the storm ended we went to another house to join another acid party. The combined energy of thirty people tripping was not to be missed. My head felt overwhelmed trying to hold everything as each person carried out their own private dementia.

The party left the room after some time, leaving me and a guy from my house. We turned on the TV and found a broadcast of Beethoven's 9th Symphony played the Berlin Philharmonic. This is an awesome piece naturally, but on LSD it is indescribable. We were transfixed.

As we listened to the music we both heard a door open, glanced and saw a guy come in the room. After a few minutes we heard murmuring. We ignored him for a while but together we looked to see what was up.

Apparently he had been rebuffed for sex and had his pants down, penis in hand, complaining at it that it was its fault for being too small. My music partner and I looked at each other, then turned back to the music.

The guy left the room and went outside, pants down, and tried to swim in the water of the street gutter. There was big commotion complete with police sirens. My partner and I figured we'd stay on the sofa and watch the music, and talk to nobody.

When we returned home we crashed, a term that now made sense as I came down off the acid trip. About an hour later we started hearing the strangest noises, but soon realized it was the house Buddhists chanting their mantras. They sounded like a turbine humming. That ended sleeping so we went to breakfast.

All through the LSD experiments I had been reading a lot of books about various spirituality's. I was on the trail of something other than normal and these books seemed to have the keys to understanding. How much was myth or empirically true I didn't know. The Bible, Taoist, Bhuddist, Koran, Carlos Casteneda, other Shaman books. To many people these represent the very systems that repressed and trapped the souls of the common man, but when one is actually spiritually driven the words within them reveal a path that leads to the source. They all spoke of life as temporary and that there was an "other" part of us that had eternity. From them I developed some practices that were designed to open the way to this "other." Surprisingly they actually worked.

I took LSD a few more times, but it was not the same, no big awakening There was some inane laughter and distortion that was amusing but the promise of a great awakening seemed to have slipped away, or I had

received what I could from it and there wasn't much more. I felt a sorrow in this. I had learned a place to be calm and had experienced a state of happiness, but this was not consistent. It came and went. My belief in the drug was shaken because it didn't really take me deeper. I saw a lot of interesting hallucinations, and I had learned that most of what people learned in life was an hallucination, but it didn't really move me off my central feeling of negativity. It held the promise of something like spiritual bliss and enlightenment, but never delivered it. In that it was limited. So I stopped, though I had a lot of fun memories. I also had developed a spiritual arrogance particular to LSD. One has a sense of superiority over those that have not tried it. After all, I had seen the One. I had seen that the darkness and light of this world were both reflections of the same source. I had jumped into the universe and had that memory stored within. Yet for all that my heart was still full of pain. I used my great knowing as a place to hide in, but I still hurt. I had striven to attain the selflessness off the edge of the world but ended up completely self impressed. I became an ego making believe it was selfless. All my hopes to hear the Voice again seemed vanquished. Yet I reveled in my superiority.

I felt trapped. The memory of that Voice kept bugging me but I couldn't get to it. I spoke with my fellow co-oper's about it, but most made fun of me. Several created the First Church of Doug. They would grovel at my feet and work on creating a nonprofit organization to receive donations with which to fund their drug habits. It took me awhile to realize that most people don't have an experience of the Voice. So I closed up. Instead of sharing that experience of God I held it as a personal secret I would share if others were interested, but I assumed they wouldn't be. Gradually my experience had translated from a gift to an arrogantly withheld secret.

I did finally find a girl friend. I was so happy. After all the years of self loathing her interest I took as validation for my being. We had a few problems though. She also had a parent who committed suicide. Both felt a sense of emptiness and unworthiness, but I figured we could help each other. She claimed to be a submissive girl, but I found out this was really a control trip that I fell for. She liked me to spank her and slap her face during sex, which I couldn't do. I was trained to never hit women, so she was always annoyed at me. She also had an interest in other guys, or so it seemed to me. I tried to be hip, mature and open, but this upset the hell out of me. She once went on a vacation with a guy which I took to mean she wanted to be with him. I felt that she had left me so I went and found another girl friend. This actually surprised me. Fat old unwanted me, and click, I had a new girl friend?! So I became involved with 2ndher.

Unfortunately, it turned out the first one didn't want to break up, though she would accept the situation. I felt bad for her and became involved again. The second lady wasn't very pleased by this, nor was the first. Here I was, my first relationship, and I had two that were mad at me and hated each other. I was doing exactly the thing that that I feared about the first woman. This was my first relationship so I tried a few things. I thought they should meet (that went badly). I thought that I could trade off (the first one was more OK with this than the 2nd one). It got extremely tense and painful. The second named this period "The Summer of Tears." She eventually left, which hurt, but at least things would calm down.

I started to settle in with the first but she started getting interested in a prior boyfriend. More pain and agony. I told her that she had to choose between us, and she chose him. No, that was not the correct door choose again. She chose him. So she was sleeping with him for a bit. Then they started to troubles so after being with him she would come to my room and cuddle up and tell me all the troubles she was having with him, which struck me as strange and a bit heartless. However, I was a nice guy so I listened to her. This went on for a while until we terminated. I was so messed up after that I hated Her, the single unified undifferentiated female, in all Her billions of representations in the world. This entire relationship thing, which I had heard was supposed to be a fun thing where you share with others, but which I was trying essentially because I wanted to stop feeling like a loser, it seemed a painful endeavor.

The girl friend thing didn't work. The sex thing didn't work. The drug thing didn't work. Not doing any of these didn't work. All the things I had fantasized would release me from my sadness I found were empty dreams. My life entered into a depression. Not a crying sobbing one, not an incapable of action one. Just a go to work, leave me alone, making money to save for my old age kind of depression. I became a rock heart, arrogantly loving my knowledge of God, but not loving you. I had a few more relationships but they only

increased the sorrow. My basic attitude was “I suck.”

BITTERNESS

I moved to Austin, Texas for an accounting job at a housing co-op. I was many years older than the students so there was little useful contact there. I worked for them several years, piled up cash for future retirement, went to movies alone, and avoided getting too close to people. I essentially assumed I would offend people or have painful misunderstandings. From interacting with others through out life it really did seem that all there was to life was to be someone's son, someone's father, to work until you die. The Voice seemed to imply there was something else, but I couldn't see it, and I couldn't even do what the others did. Still, in all this emptiness, was the memory. That Voice. At least I had that. No matter how much others didn't want me and how irrelevant I felt I knew that. I had something others didn't. At least I could snicker at their lost.

I piled up a good stash of money. Dad started a business so I loaned it to him, with the promise of a good rate of return, far better than I got at the bank. His business cratered, the cash disappeared. He didn't intend it so I couldn't hold it against him but saving for a pointless retirement, only to lose it was rough. He would eventually pay it back years later, but at the time it was something else to swallow stoically.

It was clear my life would go on painfully stuck. I guess this isn't unusual. Many of us are hurt, shut down, and opiate the pain. I knew this was true about me, and even if I wanted to change I didn't think it possible. An acquaintance invited me to hear about a seminar on being human. I listened to the presentation and though I didn't like the pressure to sign up, I was interested.

I made an agreement not to reveal details of what happened but I found it powerful enough to do it twice. A lot of their statements on being human really stuck with me. Like many groups they had me look at my internal conversation and how it defined and constrained my life. I had been conscious of this since my teenage years and meeting the Watcher. It was nothing new, though I had forgotten that we are controlled by the conversation. Yet I was surprised by the impact of looking again because despite knowing that I had forgotten it totally and been swallowed up into the conversation again. They imparted a technology with which I could alter the conversation and thus the way I perceived the world. In that I gained some power, at least in my internal being. I wasn't free of the mud inside, but I could manage the mud more powerfully.

Their continuing seminars opened me a bit. I learned a lot about my issues and pain, and was relieved of some of it, but I wasn't particularly happy. Despite the understanding and internal power, there was still a darkness, a cry in me. Yet I kept at it and finally began to achieve some results, a change in my emotions. Unfortunately, when I started to open I became too talkative for one of the leaders who told me to shut up, so I did.

Near the end of a seminar the leader was asked about happiness. He pointed out that they promised we would be more powerful and effective in the world, and this work wasn't about being happy. They kept their promise, but what was the point of it? Being a strong self understanding ego that was born to die but has the tools to get its way? No happiness? I value what I learned, but something was missing in this plan. After five years, stronger, wiser, a bit sad, I left.

I felt the need to begin reconciling with my father. With the techniques I had learned I was internally stable enough to look within at my assumptions about him. I'd believed Dad had no respect for me, that he didn't love me, and I held this as the source of my self loathing and hatred. I now wanted to reconcile with him. It was a selfish desire but I had heard of many people whose parents died while feeling separated from them and they felt an emptiness the rest of their life. I feared he would die, leaving my life dark forever. I didn't want to hold the anger inside and stew until death. I finally had the courage and the means to talk with him about our relationship.

He had suffered a couple of heart attacks and been to see a therapist so he was more mortal and open. We were finally able to hear one another. To my amazement I heard of his pride in me, and that he always loved me. I heard of his sorrow that as a military officer he was a hard ass and wasn't emotionally available for me, but it was his life and that was how he had lived it. He hadn't had any choice in the matter. His father had saved a man from a wealthy family in World War One, a man from the same state of Michigan. That man later became

a Senator. My grandfather called the Senator and as pay back my father was given the opportunity to try out for West Point and got in. My Grandfather was a poor postman in the Depression and this was the one way he could place his son in college, the first McCarron to ever do so. So my Dad chose the life that was given to him, not a free choice but out of resignation and recognition that it was the door available so he opened it. My father was a very blunt person. A riveting moment came when he looked me in the eye and said "Doug, you have to understand, I kill people in the name of the United States government, that is what I do and I like it, and even though I am retired, if called, I would do it again." This was hard to swallow. I'd dreamed that if we ever resolved he would be a nice television type Dad. I wasn't ready for My Dad The Killer, but there he was. Well, at least I had my real Dad and could deal with him. Perhaps without those television dad's I wouldn't have been so lost in trying to have him be what he wasn't.

He talked about the time when I was searched for dealing drugs in high school, the famous ID incident. It turned out, unbeknownst to me, that the commander of the base the high school was located on had tried to deport me to the United States. This meant I would be picked up, put on an airplane to the U.S., escorted off into what ever airport I arrived in, and left to fend for myself. My father fought to stop this, based solely on his trust of my statement that I didn't do it. A few days before my deportation my father told the commander that they were of equal rank, both had long carrier's at stake, and that he strongly requested that the commander reconsider his position. The commander refused, that I was a known drug dealer and everyone would be better off with me gone. My father said that he had no proof of that, the police had found nothing on me, there were no clients that were ever connected to me. The base commander said the CID wouldn't have tracked me for months for no reason so I had to go. My father said that I was not a dealer. The base commander asked what Dad based his position on and Dad said he had asked me and I said no I had not done it. The base commander said "of course your son would say that you expect him to come clean on this?" The base commander was going to deport me because that was best. So my father told him that he would appeal to the Supreme Commander of all U.S. Military forces in Europe to have this stopped. This extremely busy General would not be amused listening as two Colonels squabbled about a kid, but I was my father's son and if that was what it was going to take to protect me then that is what would happen. I was his son and he was placing his career on the line based on my telling him I had not done it. Since the base commander had no proof of my being a drug dealer, and as the police officers who searched me had found no drugs, the Supreme Commander would wonder why I was being deported. Either my Dad was protecting a drug dealer or the base commander was groundlessly deporting a dependent child away from his father. Somebody's career was going to end at that meeting, and it wasn't going to be dad's. The base commander backed off and I wasn't deported.

At the time of the event I had been tremendously insulted that Dad even asked if I was dealing, using it as proof he didn't trust or respect me. Now, twenty years later, I found the complete opposite was the truth. On my word, on my word alone, he had believed me. This was very painful for me. To lose the certainty that he didn't care and to find that he loved me and had stood for me was very harsh. My whole life was about being unloved and mistrusted, how could I have room for this? However, truth is truth.

I was hired by an organization that cared for babies and young children with HIV and AIDS. The parents were saddening. Some were awash with guilt for their children's condition, others were angry and had us hold the kids while they found something to dull the pain. One woman was a prostitute, another went to church twice a day all her life but her one sexual affair had infected her and her resulting child.

I had a conversation with the president of the organization, who was passing through the stages of AIDS. I said that though I couldn't directly identify with his experience, I had the pain of finding my mother dead. It is a blow knowing that you are going to die.

He turned, looked me in the eye, and said "So, you've heard the clock stop."

Wow, he knew. Straight out of the ministers mouth years ago. Death sweeps everything away. All the opinions, the philosophies, the reconciliation's, my standing stoic in the face of adversity, my gripping to defenses so I could live my life of not feeling until I died, it would all be gone.

A few months later the president went across, unaware of who we were, in anger, in denial. Several weeks after that the director and I had a tremendous fight and I was fired. So much for serving society.

I met a woman, a blessing. There was a great age difference, and we didn't totally trust each other, but we both seemed willing or were desperate enough to have each other as friends. After years of no close connections I enjoyed as we gradually opened to each other. It was nice to have someone come visit and enjoy me, share her frustration and anger, her man problems, her limited joy. She became a drug for me, happy when she came, missing her when she was gone. It had been years since I had obsessed over a woman and I was picking up where I left off. All my repressed need for affection and attachment came out, though I did a good job of being the supportive friend when she had boyfriends. I made some sexual suggestions but she was clear she didn't want that from me. She loved me as a friend but sexually I was a stinky old fat man. I wasn't really sure if I wanted sex other than it occurred to me occasionally, I just knew I needed her in my life. After all these years it was just what I needed.

She had emotional problems as we all do. However, unlike many, she was very focused on dealing with them. She heard about a nine day spiritual experience in California that she wanted to attend. Another friend of hers recommended it to her and she was prepared to give it a try. I wished her luck when she went. When she returned she was changed. I wasn't sure how, but she was altered. For instance she had been a sort of Buddhist Atheist but now she believed in God and spoke of her direct connection she had found. She kept asking me to do the nine day experience but I was suspicious. I wasn't entirely sure why, though I think it was my spiritual arrogance. After all I already knew all spiritual experiences. I had seen the light on LSD. I had studied theology in college, and heard The Voice. She got frustrated, furious at my attitude, but seriously, I knew this stuff. I was a very spiritually advanced guy.

After several months I went to a gathering with her and her boyfriend. It concerned this experience, called The Intensive. There was a woman from the spiritual group leading a gathering of several people. She spoke openly about God which I found refreshing, but I was suspicious, waiting for the closing sale pitch. It never came. At the end of the evening the woman asked if I was open to feedback and I said sure. She said the truth was I wanted to have sex with my friend. I said that wasn't true, though if my friend was a yes I would be, but as she was a no, I was a no to support her. She said this wasn't really true and if I looked deeper and could be honest, I would see the truth was I wanted my friend. It would be a lot easier to simply live in truth.

The comment "if I could be honest" I took to mean she thought I was lying, so I screamed "Fuck you, you god damn arrogant fucking bitch" and we proceeded to have a rather "pointed" conversation. Yet for some reason we exchanged phone numbers before I stalked out livid. How could my friend possibly like folks who call you a liar? I went to sleep with a fierce fight in my head.

In the morning when I awoke, I could see she had spoken truth. I did want my friend in the sack, but I denied it so I wouldn't scare her away. I was willing to lie and deny anything to preserve the desperate opening of friendship I had. I called and told her she was right. I couldn't apologize, but she was right. She thanked me, and acknowledged the honesty. Oddly, my internal homing beacon focused on her. From the day of my mother's death I had been following something internal, a homing beacon searching for something, and it locked in on this woman. I wasn't sure, but something was there.

I started working for a CPA, an improvement over the AIDS job. I used my bookkeeping skills and the boss was generally satisfied with my work. I also landed a twice a week guitar playing gig at a nice restaurant and got paid half way decently for it. Life was suddenly good. I had work I liked though it wasn't emotionally fulfilling. I got to play the guitar and learn to be in front of others. I had a great friend for the first in my life. I mean I had many friends but this was a Friend. I felt happy and had someone to share it with. How my life had changed. I 'd been so depressed but now I wanted to live forever in this life, enjoying my happiness. I resented God for putting a nasty design flaw into this world, called death. I knew we all died, but I was finally happy and didn't want it to end. Though there was still something missing in my heart, life was a good deal. Too bad about that dying thing.

Yet I was still not sure about my friends. I had a birthday and invited everyone to a party at my place. It was the

middle of June, sunny, hot, there was a pool, it would be great. My good friend was an excellent cook and she prepared a feast for the thirty five people that said they were coming. Two showed up, they said for the food, and left. We sat there for five hours waiting but no one else came. When I called people to ask where they had been, they had all forgotten. I felt dejected, but I learned I have a great way of not knowing what friends are.

Late one night as I watched television a nasty pain started in my left side. I figured it was intestinal gas. I made tea which usually helped, but the pain persisted. I sat in the pool hoping the cool water would mellow out some muscles, but it kept building. By three in the morning I was afraid. I grabbed my checkbook and walked twelve blocks in the rain to the hospital. As I hobbled down the hallway doubled over from the ache an orderly guided me to the emergency room. I was asked for a cash advancement, then they stuck me in a gurney, gave me some shots and an IV. Just like that I felt much better. Something in that IV sure was cool.

The attending doctor, in his thirties, came in and said that I had a kidney stone trying to work its way out and the medicine would allow me to pass it without too much discomfort. I should rest and it would be over in a few hours. Five hours passed and he became concerned. He phoned the Urologist on call and they arranged to put a dye in my blood stream so x-rays could follow what was happening. That done I was taken back to my bed and given my soothing medication. I could see why people get addicted to this stuff.

A half hour later the attending doctor walked in holding an x-ray, a disbelieving look on his face. He looked me in the eye and said "I've never seen anything like this," then walked out. Oh thanks Doc. My mind invented cancer, a growth, an alien creature trying to get out. I lay there pretending to be calm, wanting to bust the place up because I was about to die.

An older Radiologist walked in with the x-ray, looked at it, nodded, and said "you have a congenital urital pelvic junction constriction ..." and a lot of other big words. He saw a few hundred of these a year. This was a big relief. Interesting, stick a name on it and everything is better. The pain had stopped so they injected some more goofy syrup, gave me the phone number of the urologist, and sent me home. I asked if I could take a bottle of whatever was in the IV home with me. They declined.

A week later I went to see the Urologist. Apparently the stone had hit a constriction in my Ureter. I didn't even know I had a Ureter but it passes urine from the kidney to the bladder. It had tried to force the stone through but the constriction had stopped it. The pain was not only a stone grinding over tissue, but the system reversing as the stone was sent back into the kidney. The good news was the stone had moved to a remote part of the kidney and I might never have to deal with it again. The bad news, I'd probably had the constriction since developing in my mother's womb, and my left kidney was swollen thirty percent. Eventually the urine might go bad, the kidney might fail, or the stone could get stuck at the constriction. The Urologist felt he should operate and alter the Ureter to preserve the kidney. He offered two options, one going through a small hole in my side that would leave a tiny scar, but he couldn't guaranty the results. The other was to cut my side wide open and change the needed parts. I'd have a nasty scar but success was more probable. I got rather hostile. I didn't want to hear this. My life was going well, and now some damn stranger was suggesting I let him cut me open. This sucked. Plus, I had no insurance and no money to pay for it. He suggested a source of funding to cover the cost, so the operation was a real possibility.

I went home to think of anything to avoid being cut open. Things to drink, alternative medicine, prayer. Many acquaintances, alternative medical professionals, offered energy work, non surgical remedies, all sorts of things, but they said I shouldn't let the butcher cut me for it would ruin my physical energy. Besides, I could die during the process. I had heard the clock stop for my mother, but this time I realized the party could really end and I was the guest of honor.

I wrote the Urologist of my concerns. He responded that there was always the possibility that I might never have any trouble with it again, but in his opinion the best option was to operate. Basically we'd be doing extensive preventive medicine. I talked it over with my best friend, and she felt I should go for the big cut to make sure the doctor could do his job. After all, I'd be asleep at the time. Easy for her to say I thought, but it was true.

A neighbor helped settle my fears. He showed me his scar from a similar operation twenty years earlier. He said there would be pain, but it was bearable. He felt there was nothing to worry about and I should do it. This

calmed me. I'd received a lot of advice from many, but the two people who had experience with the situation, the doctor and my neighbor, said I should do it. So their votes won, two against a hundred.

After several months the funding source came through. The operation was set for a few days before my birthday. I would celebrate it in a recovery room this year. My friend took me to the hospital. I changed into a fashionable butt exposing hospital gown, then walked to a room where they put goofy juice into me through an IV. I was feeling good and talking to my friend when the doctor walked in. He'd just been operating on another client and was covered in blood. No, not really but I thought it would make a great line in a movie. "Well, you showed up, I guess you want to do it." he said. "Not really Doc" I thought. He spoke a few minutes about what would happen. I pointed to my left side and reminded him it was that side he was working on. He smiled and thanked me for the assistance. Then a nurse injected something into the IV, and I chilled. My friend's eyes opened wide and she stared at me. She said I looked bleached out, my skin completely drained. A couple of guys grabbed my gurney and started wheeling me down the hall. Oh crap, here we go. We entered the operating room, the guys lifted me onto a table, bright lights in my eyes, nurse sticks a syringe into my IV, and....

Suddenly I'm shocked awake, a nurse is calling my name and telling me I am in the recovery room, asking if I'm OK. I swirled around in my internal soup and said "sure I'm OK." She and a few other nurses rolled my gurney up to my room, tore my gown off leaving me naked, ripped off a large heart monitor taped on my back, and put on a new gown. So much for modesty. A few minutes later my friend came in with her boyfriend, flowers, cards, smiles and jokes. I was still a bit out of control but glad that my support person was there. They visited for a while, then I went to sleep, for a long time.

The next morning the Urologist came in. I had noticed there was a very deep something stuck in my numb penis. He said it was a catheter to keep things stable the first night. He reached down, grabbed it, and yanked it out. Jesus that hurt. He said that I was going to get some medicine to help me urinate, which I had to do in the next six hours or he would have to put the catheter back in. "No you aren't" I thought to myself. I was given a plastic bottle. I stuck my mighty two inches in it and tried to pee. Nothing. There I was, trying to pee in bed like Mom trained me not to do. Every fifteen minutes or so a doctor or nurse asked how I was doing, standing there while my penis was stuck in the plastic bottle. Again, so much for modesty. One of the nurses said she hoped it happened soon because it really hurt putting the catheter back in. Thanks for sharing lady. Finally it happened, though a few hours late.

The next day we tried walking a few times but they always rolled me towards my scar and the pain of it stopped me. Finally I asked if I could roll to the right, away from my scar. The nurses looked at each other, one raised his eyebrow slightly, and they said yes. I rolled out of bed and went for my walk down to the end of the hall and back. Exhausted I went back to bed, though I didn't sleep.

On my birthday my friend and the woman from the spiritual group brought cards and fruit. As we talked I asked my friend why she thought I should do the Intensive, and she said to get closer to God. I asked the woman the same, and she said to get closer to God. I let that in for further processing. It was starting to interest me. A few minutes later a doctor and a nurse came in to remove the pain medicator in my back, plus various other tubes sticking out of me. They sat me up, ripped several yards of tape off my hairy unmedicated back, pulled the tubes out of my body, and left. Happy birthday Doug. After talking a bit more my friends left and I spent the rest of my birthday in bed or walking.

The next few days I went for walks, ate food, gained strength. I was told I could go home. My friend arranged for me to be at her boyfriend's house so she could assist me. I thought this would be great and went. As a few days passed something was happening. I was happy to be there, but she wasn't. The air was less open. It felt like she was caring for me out of obligation, not because she wanted to. I felt bad about this. I had the feeling something was going to happen, like she wanted to take some time off from me after this. I could see that, I was a drain on her energy at times.

After a couple days I felt very cut off and talked with her about it hoping to make things OK, but that didn't settle anything. The next morning she said I could go home whenever I was ready, which I took to mean she was ready for me to go. Her boyfriend drove me home and I spent the night in deep pain, both from the scar and a fear in my heart. I knew. My friend, the first person to ever spend time with me, the one that filled the emptiness in my heart, on whom my happiness depended, was leaving me.

The next morning she called and told me that it was over. I could say whatever I had to but I was to never speak to her again. I sat stunned. This was far beyond anything I expected. Surprised by the severity I mumbled a few

things, said if that was how she wanted it I would respect her wishes, and hung up. And then cried for hours, from the deepest most abandoned place in my heart. My friend, gone.

I plummeted into a deep broken sadness, all the years of depressing painful emptiness poured out of my heart. I lay on my floor for days, a general system failure. The only person who came to mind was the woman from California, and to my amazement she was there for me. This person, who on my first interaction I called a fucking bitch and then basically ignored, was there for me. People give lip service to support and forgiving others, but she did it. Nightly she received my tears over the phone. If this is what her group produced in a human, I wanted more.

I had money, was out of work, and recovering from an operation. Nothing was on the agenda so I let the emotions rip me open. This was the time to go into it. I went for long walks, crying in the rain. I remembered doing the same from the age of nine until just after my mom's death. Hmm, I'd been repeating this pattern for decades. This insight changed the perspective. I'd spent years resisting the rock slide of a collapsing life, but seeing this pattern in my life changed something. It became mysteriously healed somehow by exposing it. I choose to push the rock slide faster. I began to see that my friend had been questioning our relationship for several months. I saw that I had a deep neediness and was compelling my friend to fill the hole. I was so tied to her filling my life that I basically forced my being into her hands and was strangling her. If we ever talked again, I had to stop that. I prayed and pushed the rocks down hill even faster.

I was a complete mess. I went to a couple of people I knew that ran a record store for independent record artists. I would sit in their store and sulk, blathering away about my abandonment, my only friend had left me and I was hopeless. This went on for a couple days until the woman asked me a question.

"Doug" said she.

"Yes" I replied.

"Aren't we your friends?"

This shook me. "Ehhh, yes, yes you are" I said. "O yeah" I thought, and suddenly it wasn't so bad.

After a few weeks I stabilized. I didn't know what, but something had changed. Drastically. It went by too fast to recall, though at each second I saw things about me and then let go. I called the woman from the spiritual group and thanked her for the support, but I could go on now. As a matter of fact I had to go on alone for my own well being and strengthening. She said she would be available if I needed her in the future.

I worked through what I could, opening to the pain in my heart, and the basic fact that I didn't want to reach the end of my life sad and empty. I seemed to have a choice, the way my life had been, a veneer of contentment covering endless sadness, or this Intensive thing. Their brochure said "Love and Ecstasy beyond your comprehension." I was ready for that. Feeling love and openness was something I'd craved my entire life, though since my mother's death I'd looked for something even deeper. Humans die, their love isn't enough. I believed in God and studied religion, which gave me strength, solace, and calm. But it didn't give me peace. I was ready for ... something. So I signed up to attend their Intensive in a few months.

A few weeks later my ex-friend and I reconnected at a weekly meditation dance. At about thirty paces we caught each other's eyes, and slowly started dancing together. Letting the best friend I'd ever had just leave without reconciliation wasn't going to happen. We danced rhythmically, moving toward each other a few feet a minute, until we were together, and we started to cry, and began to open our hearts to each other. At the end of dancing I thanked her and we parted. I didn't want to cling. I walked along the sidewalk and she pulled up next me in her car, asking if I wanted to get lunch. Oh man, did I. So we began to talk again. There were difficult conversations. She cleared up that she didn't mean to cut me off forever, but I needed to change, there had to be a place for her. I wasn't sure what I had done wrong, but certainty had blinded me before. It was time to walk in the cloud of unknowing for a while.

After a couple of months, it was time for this Intensive thing. I'd heard it wasn't going to be the funniest thing I ever did, but it would be the most valuable. I figured "yeah right", I'd just spent the summer spewing out my soul. It was however the true place to be.

A NEW WAY TO LIVE

I flew to California, checked my luggage in at the hotel, met my roommate, and went down stairs to chat with people. We were all a bit nervous, not really sure what we were in for, but here we were. About a half hour later we were gathered together and car pooled over to the workshop site. We checked in, got familiar with the reception area, read and signed a few legal documents. Then we were told to go have a meal and return at an appointed time. The meal done we came back, and waited in the reception area. I was a mixture of jovial, confident, and anxious. After some time a woman came out and asked us to pass through the set of doors before us. We funneled in, broke into some smaller groups, sat in our chairs, and another woman said "Ok, begin." What followed was the deepest, most penetrating nine days I had experienced. I evaded and faced some very emotional parts in my life, deep hurts that controlled me but which began to heal. Deeper, I had an incredible connection with something. All of my life I had felt jolts, a pause, like something was trying to get into me. I could almost see it, but not quite. On the third day I was squatting against the wall, in deep quiet. I felt I was clouds. You know, when you look at the sky and wisps of clouds and the blue sky mix together. I was that, actually part of it. This was cool, I'd never done this before. So I floated, serene and feeling loved for the first time, it seemed for weeks on end. Then something moved in the clouds. I was startled. It rushed up to me. I felt a hand on my face, lightly caressing my left cheek. I started to cry. I opened my eyes. There was nobody there, yet the caressing continued, all over my face. I closed my eyes. I asked "What is this?"

"You know Who I Am."

I began to weep, my chest started convulsing, my heart crying the pain of a lost life. It was That Voice.

"And I have loved you forever."

All my prayer, my study and philosophy, my arrogant knowing opinions and theories, the Voice by my mother's side, none of it prepared me for this. Into my heart of anger and self loathing, the home of "I suck", poured the love of the Eternal One. I collapsed to the floor sobbing. He took me into his "arms" and we melted together into the clouds, "swirling," deeply, deeply in love. A love so sweet it was agony. I convulsed violently for over an hour, the staff giving what support they could, but it was all in His hands. Once I calmed I went to the hotel and slept for a day.

When I returned home I was in ecstasy for a week, but the experience began to fade, covered by a kind of fog, like something was purposefully trying to make me forget. My spiritual ego, the one that knew all about religion and God, became very self impressed. As I had been through such an experience I must be an important soul and that he really liked me. The local community members commented on how deep I was, which my ego loved, though they also said I was judgmental and arrogant, which I didn't love. At the dance meditation I felt the dancers were spiritual flyweights. I figured that was the place to be until I stopped such arrogance.

Amazingly I forgot the hands upon my face. I told the story to impress others, but forgot the connection. It was like God had come to love me, and now something else was trying to smother me with forgetfulness. I struggled to remember. I went to meditation no matter what. Earlier in my life I had heard that voice while standing next to my dead mother. I looked and found enough to make my life bearable, but it had become buried in my opinions, employed to make myself better than others. This clouding was happening again. I remembered priests telling us there was a war on for our soul between God and the darkness. I now knew this was true. I couldn't afford the mistake again. Whatever was clouding me, I had to resist.

The spiritual group said that if you break one illusion, you weaken the rest of them. By illusion they meant sort of like an hallucination as I learned earlier. An image of how one holds oneself or another to be. We absolutely swear is true because the image is always in our mind, but it is still only an image. Still the image has an energy, a binding energy that glues itself onto our awareness. I realized this was the same thing I thought of as the De Vil earlier in my life. The difference now was as I opened my wounds and started healing them the exercise became less intellectual and more "biological" in nature. Instead of thinking about the meaning of life I now had to play the game of living. It is like playing baseball. You can think about running all three bases and then arriving home, but you will have only thought about arriving home. I saw that was what I had done in my life. I had developed good conceptualizations and thought of myself as one who had arrived home, but I had never really gone out and run the bases. I had always been stuck in the batter's box, taking swings but getting nowhere. I wrote the leader of the organization and told her that though she didn't know me that I was

struggling, and if I ever met her I requested she help me slice through whatever I needed to so I could get home. The obvious thing to handle was my obsession/ attachment to my friend. Others in the community said my feelings weren't even about her. I sneered at this. Of course they were, I looked at her and had feelings about her. They insisted both the pain and desire were about God. The spiritual woman said the only being that could fulfill me was God and He was who my feelings were really about. This didn't make sense to me. All I knew was if I continued the old way I would drown my friend again and drive her away.

After many months of meditation I began to see I was living my life and my worth through "her." I say "her" in quotes because it was not my friend but females in general that I was trying to get my worth through. This wasn't news to me as it had been around all my life. However, I had lived my life in total resignation of being unwanted and despised. With my friend being present that resignation had given way to seeing I could be loved, so I grabbed on to her to be sure my access to love was always here, though it wasn't really present. I gave her all the freedom she could attain with a guy gripping on to her and compelling her to be with me. I don't mean that I physically grabbed and held her, but emotionally. I also saw this was the reason for her holding back. If a guy was holding you by the throat and telling you he loved you wouldn't you have some doubts and fears? I was going to have to give her more room.

There was however a deeper understanding that started to surface. I saw that I was trying to fulfill my internal longing through another human who was also hurt and trying to see her way through her issues and problems. I wondered what the chances were of two self obsessed people having enough love and energy to spare for another and then also being able to give it to the other. If her obsession was anywhere as desperate as mine it was clear there was no way this would work. While I could still be a friend I was going to have to do a lot of work on myself, and it couldn't be with an attitude of attaining her love in the end. That had a destination that was already known. I had to change for me and my strength. If she and I had a match when that happened then maybe we could see.

This effort to free myself of my obsession became such a focus for me that I had the sense that I had forgotten something. It was a general feeling, like I had the memory of a great event yet it had slipped away. While in prayer or meditation I made a point to spend some time away from the general struggle to remember what this missing thing was. After a few weeks it finally occurred to me. I had completely forgotten the Intensive and the direct experience of God telling me I was loved. Oh yeah, gee how did I forget? I had sworn not to be clouded over again, yet I was awash in my obsessions and had forgotten about God. How quick! I needed to be healed but I could see that concentrating on the healing would distract me from God. That I would forget really scared me but the spiritual woman told me I had to get to the core of the obsession so I could see it and let go of it consciously. She said that my experience of God in the Intensive was for that moment of my life, and my attempt to hold on to it was another way for me to stay ensnared in the past, to let my fears rule me. It might even be that I totally lost God in the time that was coming, but that was only the memory of God, not God. I understood. The only way to arrive home after running the bases was to leave home.

I kept struggling with my desires for my friend. Why was I pining for a woman who was clear she had no interest in a romantic relationship? It made no sense but I was intensely drawn towards her. I was almost pouting, like a little kid wondering why was he left out? I was a forty two years old acting like a repressed child who lived in his images of what a man is but who thought he shouldn't act like a kid. I wasn't so much stuck in childhood as stuck in a youth's image imagining it was an older image based on youthful problems. One big self referential internal conversation. Essentially my life was that of inventing ever more refined versions of the same basic feelings.

I began to doubt my belief in God. Mostly I used those key events to impress my self importance. I also met people who had left the group I was with and they filled my head with stories of corruption, manipulation, the "guru" living a life of wealth on the backs of all the people she had conned into using the Intensive. How did I know what had happened with that hand on my face? The entire Intensive was an ever deepening busting opening of my emotions and my adrenal system so I would have been highly suggestible. They had placed me in a spiritually and emotionally defenseless position and who knows what they did to me. So how could I trust this hand on the face event?

I did have my earlier experiences I could trust. I had heard that voice. Then again my entire faith had really been in my opinions of the event. God was love, trying to offer the gate to the hall of freedom, that is what they

said. Me, what did I do? I was angry, sneered at others, withheld information on what I knew. Yeah I was some believer in God. I did nothing for Him or those interested in knowing him, I just sat around telling myself how cool and advanced I was. Even that was slipping away. Even with a direct experience I turned it into being about my importance. Yeah way to go god boy.

As this stripped away I was scared. My life was tied up in this. My entire understanding of everything was connected to this, and it was being denigrated and stripped away from me. How could I bare to lose it all when all I had was God to balance my self importance and self hate? Could I stand to abandon all hope?

Yet what worth was this hope? This hope that glued me to my self importance to shield my endless vault of pain? Was it really God I believed in? Was it just a couple of strange aural experiences I had from which I had invented a story that really had little to do with my life, my life of work, pay bills, hanging around seeing new things through the lenses of the old, waiting for the Reapers Scythe? Trust it, trust it, the spiritual woman told me, your path you walked before did you no good. To truly walk with God you have to let Him lead you out of your defenses. Yes, the darkness will attack you every step of the way because it wants you. But how did I know she had a clue what to do? I didn't fear death, but I did fear not arriving on target. Yes, that was it. I now knew the underlying feeling I had in my heart from birth. I was a seeker. All of my life that was the background feeling, that I was in a land that was not my own, seeking something I knew not what. And in my life there had been a couple times something had spoken to me, awakening me from the darkness, calling me. Everything else was story and explanation. I chose to trust the teachings of Saint John of the Cross in "Dark Night of the Soul." He said that one has to be stripped of everything, every stance, every belief, especially your love and faith in God, before you can meet the true One. Everything else is simply you and how you feel God should be. You worship your "self" and stick the name of God on it, a false god presenting its being as the true one to follow. I saw now that when the spiritual guides said I needed to be selfless, they meant it, to let go of my self, my past, my name, all made up. Geeesh, these bases were going to be tough to run, but I already knew the result of not running them so off I went. I let my faith in God go, praying it was as proper step. At least this was truer.

My friend announced she was planning to move to California to another phase of her life. I made believe this was OK. It was her life and I had to let her go. Yet I started reacting strongly and went into a tremendous funk. It was Christmas vacation. God seems to arrange my crises on vacation days so I can breakdown with abandon. I again melted down with heart break. After a few days the oddest thing happened. I'd assumed I would cry, Doug would examine his issue about loneliness, I would calm and end up more settled, accepting her leaving. What actually happened was my emotional pain got so intense that suddenly something else fell out. It was hard to describe. It wasn't a physical thing that fell out, but like another being fell out of me. My awareness barely picked it up, but I was so startled I stopped. There was Doug, his issues, and this "other" in the room, like a sensation. Plus I seemed to be perceiving from both locations of perception, though not at the same time, jumping back and forth. It stayed out for about ten minutes before it was covered over again. It just faded away, like the darkness saw what had happened and came to put my perceptions back to sleep and I would think it was all a dream. Yet I had seen. It felt like it was ... me. Not Doug the guy who got so named as a child and his bunch of issues, but me. It faded fast, but I had seen.

About an hour later I remembered a girl in the forth grade. I'd wanted her as a friend but felt she would never talk to me. She may have grown up wondering why no one would talk to her, but I pined for this girl I felt I could not have. Then there was that blonde girl I kissed in the closet. I remembered a girl from each grade. Hmmmm, This pining for the girl I could not have was a repeating theme in my life. Wow the community was right, this really didn't have anything to do with my friend. It was a reoccurring something. She was just the latest one I tried to make a puppet in the drama. I felt a power enter me. It made a cut in this story, beginning the shredding of a crusty old skin. My attention, my energy, shifted from my friend to the pining that had held me for years. Internally I had been sitting in front of this feeling of pining, staring at it like a mirror glued to my eyes, convinced I could see all but I could only see this little repetitive movie. A movie the darkness ran specifically for me, endlessly presented to hold my attention. I was a lost feeling, hypnotized by the energy of an image, dragging and compelling my friends and acquaintances to play forced characters in the drama. Forty years enslaved to the same story, dragging others into the chains. Man, this had to go. I also understood something very important -- I was not Doug, I was an awareness, a feeling.

Things began to improve with my friend. The pining, though not gone, ruled me less.

After a few more months I attended a retreat held by the spiritual group. I had sweet prayers and some stunning meditations. I learned to go much deeper and how important it was to stand against the darkness. I also met the woman who sources it all. This was the first time I'd ever seen her, though I had heard her teach on cassettes about the path to God. I had also heard endless rumor and innuendo about her from former members. She seemed to be the center of many people's attention and fears. Though I had received much movement within the organization I felt that God was independent of them and her, and I wasn't really sure what her "function" was. She did "lead" the organization, not that it was going anywhere in particular. The organization seemed to exist simply as a tool of self examination and letting go for those interested in sticking around it. Sort of like I was using my pining with my friend as a tool to investigate and let go of things. This woman did produce cassette tapes for us to purchase and listen to. This tape purchasing thing was another source of many stories. The former members said it was a way to suck money out of people and bind misguided souls to her words so she could mind control them, which apparently included me. However, one of my friends within the community told me she was one of the people who had requested the production of the tapes. Being in one of the outlying communities she had returned from the Intensive and was clue less how to proceed with her meditations except to try and re-create the Intensive, which was over and not what was now needed. So the "Center" in California made these tapes and shipped them out, and we covered the cost of production and added on some money to support the Center. Kind of like any company. Make a product and sell it to cover the cost of production plus office expenses and then some. We could buy them as we wanted though we were encouraged to buy them all, which made sense as the Center wouldn't have made valueless tapes. It all made sense unless I actually was brainwashed.

Now I was in the same room with her, trying to get who she was. She was sitting in a chair on a slight rise talking to us. There were several rows of people sitting on the floor, ten more rows of chairs, and me standing at the back, looking at her with a "who the heck are you" look on my face. I stood looking at her, a strange kind of looking, like something other than my eyes reached across the room to her, drawn. She suddenly stopped talking and looked right at me. Her head tilted down. Her right hand rose with only her first finger extended. Her eyes became intense. Suddenly I was flooded with a sharply focused energy. My body shook involuntarily for about fifteen seconds and my internal conversation was knocked silent. Then she dropped her hand, turned her head, and kept talking to the group. The energy ceased.

What was that? I'd seen this faked in movies but I had just experienced it personally and directly. WHAT WAS THAT? My brain rapidly invented explanations that crumbled even faster. I saw she really could brain control me so I latched on that explanation, yet quickly realized that concept paled before the mere fact she could do whatever had just happened. As she kept talking to the group my self importance ran in terror, knowing I couldn't defend against her. An "itching" began in my heart. I just stared at her for a few minutes. Something more than a small woman with dark curly hair was sitting there. Then someone from the group invited me to sit in a chair, and I did.

When I returned home I shared the experience with others, though they didn't seem to see it as any big event considering as I was still dark, moody and self absorbed. My blessed spiritual self importance trip lapped it up though. I had been zotted by the head woman in charge, pretty cool. I managed to keep my self importance in check when actually talking to others but it ran rampant within. It is so hard to surrender self importance, though as the glue that binds everything to us it is vitally important to do so.

Gradually that itching feeling grew in my heart area and the self importance faded slightly, though it still oozed. I also remembered that I had asked her to slice me if I ever saw her, and she had. Wow, she remembered the request and seemed to have fulfilled it. As the weeks passed I began to see that it was the itching sensation in my heart or chest that was the actual gift. It is hard to describe it other than as a slightly irritating feeling that was below the skin that itched. More precisely it felt like someone had taken a stick and tried to puncture my chest with it, leaving that sub-muscle bruised feeling that one would get. I felt like my chest had been stabbed and now itched. Geeeee, that was strange, that was exactly what I had needed, my heart to be pierced and opened. This was too weird. As time appeared to move the itch grew to feel like a burning in my heart. For whatever reason I prayed out of the burning. This went on for weeks as I opened deeper yet continued to revel in the vanity. During this time that being that had "fallen out" of me at Christmas began to surface and take root. There seemed to be two beings within, a pierced heart I prayed from and a massive ego trip. I wondered what else was going to happen?

One meditation the Voice came and said that even if I was the most powerful, deepest soul to ever walk the earth, more intense than all others combined, that was all dust in a limited existence. That was not Him. Well, that was how I understood it, not that there are gender words to name this Power. Anyway the Voice demanded -- Did I want Him? My personality barked back like a self impressed little dog, but the other being in me, the one that predated Doug, struggled to follow. I understood that I could wallow in self importance, a minuscule power in a temporary life on a planet born to die, circling one of the trillions of stars in limitless space. I could live that way --- forever. Or I could choose Him. Whatever was calling me, and whatever held my arrogance and self importance in place, both pulled forcefully on me. There was a war on, and I, not Doug, was being asked to choose a side.

The next time I went to California I was assisting others going through the experience. One morning a woman asked if I'd ever take the way my mother had treated me into meditation. I said I saw no reason to, then became instantly angry and snarled. I really wanted to punch her in the face. That night I tossed and turned in bed. The next morning as we rode to the Center I spoke with her about it and suddenly went into a tremendous fit. Someone handed me a towel and I shrieked with it over my face. Yep, there we were, driving down the Interstate passing hundreds of cars, me yelling into a towel. However, this emotional release moved inside and I calmed down. Then we went to assist. As the day passed I had intense feelings of my mother refusing to hold me in her lap. I was just having a phase. She made fun of me and reminded me that I wasn't planned, and I was

always screwing up. I always looked for proof she loved me but knew I would be denied. Then I connected that here I was now pining for the love of women who didn't want me and wouldn't give it. Wow, that was it, all this misery about being unloved by women, craving them but expecting rejection, it really was about Mom pushing me away. Damn, how predictable and typical. That night the energy swept in and started cleaning. Yet I was dispirited in a way. I wanted to have a special trauma, one that really mattered and would have a special impact. But no, I had something so typical. Oh, well, at least it was healing.

Apparently this Mom thing was a strong covering in my emotions. The lady who ran the Intensive walked among us during a break saying hello to people. She pointed at me, or so I thought, and asked who I was. I replied "Doug". She flicked her hand and said she knew who I was, but the person behind me. There was something in that flick of her wrist that I took as being dismissive and it bothered me.

Once home my issues about my father came up. Given the success around my friend and Mom, I figured why not him? I went deep into my anger. Again a deep tearing apart of my heart with tremendous emotional pain, but gradually after about a month and a half of praying about it I awoke one day and felt resolved with him. I was happy, but without a father to hate what was I to do? Was it really handled? I had to test it. I called him and asked if I could come visit. He said yes and I flew to see him. I was surprised by what happened. I sat at the table with him ... and we enjoyed each other's company. On previous visits I was tense, I waited for conflict or disapproving comments to set off my anger. On this visit he did in fact state opinions and comment, but I didn't care. The nightmare I'd lived in about my father started evaporating at the dinner table. I sat with him in a kind of amused state. Imagine, hanging out with Dad. When I returned home I shared this a few times, but then let it go. To continue as the healed hurt guy was to still be the hurt guy. Besides, I dwelt too much on demonstrating my transition instead of transforming.

I also decided that as expressing things seemed to trigger healing in me, and as we were encouraged to go into our feelings and let them out, I chose to write a letter to the lady of the Intensive. I told her I thought it was insensitive of her to treat me that way and that it really hurt and I was mad at her. It was actually a kind of heated letter. But I said it to get it off my chest, and I knew there were people who screened the letters to her so she probably wouldn't see it anyway.

I settled back into my life. I played guitar at restaurants and became a lot better. I had two part time job's bookkeeping for small restaurants, so that and the guitar and the low cost of living in Austin made things work really well. I meditated and went out dancing and generally improved. Things were going well.

The Past Moves On

It was time for my friend to move. I was all right, though inside I was the boy losing his friend. In my heart, I knew it wasn't her but the little boy who was leaving. We spent a lot of time together the last few weeks and I waved good-bye as she drove away. For a few days I was a bit glum, though nothing like the Christmas melt down. God had granted me time to heal and let go. There was no clinging but I missed her.

At the next meditation I was waiting to begin when suddenly, deep inside me, a voice said "she's gone." I cried uncontrollably and sputtered my loss. Again a deep searing pain in my chest, like a stake piercing me. When it stopped half way through the meditation it felt like the pilot light of not being loved was blown out. In the next few days I saw I was a healed guy that "had not been loved."

A few days later I received a letter from an old college girl friend, one of the two woman I had the triad love affair with many years ago. She had forgotten the names of the other guys in her life, but she remembered me twenty years later. She described that when she woke in my arms it felt like being held by a warm sunrise. As I read the letter the truth seeped into me. I wasn't an unloved guy who was healed. I had never been that. I thought about it. In the forty years of feeling that I sucked and no one liked me, I had always been loved. As a matter of fact I had never been unloved. My family, my friends, even most strangers I met. The truth was I had wandered into a nightmare of self hatred and pain while very young, and the force in the universe that keeps us bound to our world view had held me there ever since. My entire life was getting overturned. I had awoken to find that almost nothing I held to be true was so. It was hard to know what to do. For a few days my body trembled and I had the symptoms of the flu, except my temperature was normal and I wasn't sick. I was filled by a sweet energy that lasted several weeks. The emotions began to change.

Yet I noticed something else. I seemed to keep healing and awakening around the same thing. I kept finding out why I felt I sucked and the energy would release it from me, yet I kept pursuing the question. It was all about my Dad and I felt released, it was all about my Mom and I felt released. It was never exactly the same yet I kept being released about the same general things. The basic movie was always the same, though the end had a slightly different costume each time. It seemed that first I lived in the movie "I suck - The Story of Me" but then the next movie "I suck - The Explanation" was released to watch in my internal theater. The sequel was "The Energy of I Suck - how understanding is not enough" to be followed with "I understand why I thought I suck - A release of the energy." This just kept going on and on and it seemed I wasn't really getting released at all, just chasing the same thing over and over. It also seemed a mixture of funny and hopeless. Perhaps the very attempt to understand was becoming part of the problem. I had changed a lot as far as emotional stability, yet here I was still in the same movie, just filmed from a different angle.

God changed tactics on me. There was a total misfire of my understanding of what was happening. All of a sudden nothing worked. I felt thwarted in everything, and all my efforts in any endeavor failed. I hated it. It was like God was smashing everything just to point out I wasn't in charge of my transformation. This dug at the roots of my spiritual arrogance. I still wanted to have other be impressed at my depth and change, much more so than I wanted the change. I still wanted to be the one that declared what it all meant, but that was being torn apart. Still I wouldn't let go. I didn't want to be humble, I didn't want salvation. I wanted to be right. That was truth. I wanted to be the one with the superior explanation, and I wasn't going to just feel it. I was going to have the truth that explained it all, whether God liked it or not. Here we were back at the baseball example, yet again. I wanted to tell the umpire the perfect description of sliding home. I was interested in the umpire declaring I was safe. Maybe it was I feared I wouldn't be called safe. Maybe it was I was fat and didn't want to face people laughing at me running the bases. Maybe it was the fact that most people didn't dedicate so much of their lives to spirituality and couldn't comprehend why I did. Perhaps I was just starting to understand how serious this game really was. Whatever the reason I wanted to control the game but the game can't be controlled. There was an energy that was beginning to flood me. My skin felt had goose bumps constantly, I felt a cycle of warmth

and chills, my finger nails felt like they were vibrating, yet my system was normal, except it was so strong it was almost repulsive. He pulled hard, until I felt I was literally going to die, in a constant state of nausea. I felt He hated me and was trying to destroy all that I held on to, trying to destroy me. Still I wouldn't let go. My plans and presumptions were getting crushed. I hated God and felt He was actively driving me away, a whip on my back. I couldn't get it to stop. I tried to stop praying and meditating, but that didn't help. One night I awoke with the sensation of being an energy field, and a force was circling me a million cycles per second, lashing me with a sword, cutting things off. I lay weeping in bed begging for it to end.

Then next meditation I spent trying to get some stability and cursing God. About half way through I started seeing images, very real, of me as a German tank commander on the Russian front in World War II. I felt an explosion in my tank which tore me to shreds and I died with a shrieking "NO!!!" Then I was back by the tank and could see my men. I could feel my arrogant superiority towards them, enjoying my control of life and death over them, sending them to fight and die on my command, taking personal pleasure in the victories they fought for me. Sending civilians to be killed in mass. Dragging old screaming Russian women across the snow and throwing them alive into burning huts or barns, standing on a pile of dead, nodding approval. It was a condescending arrogance that had been with me most of my life, underlying the self loathing and pain. I had assumed the arrogance was there to mask the pain and anger, but suddenly Something riveted in me. I got it... this wasn't a shield for my life, this painful arrogance had been going on for a very long, long time.

Then The Voice spoke.

"So, are you bored with this yet?"

"Go away you mother fucking cock sucker, you abandoned me" I replied inside.

I lay in deep resentment over the lack of control I had, that my arrogant knowing was being vanquished. I knew His question was a very deep one, to my soul eternal. I began to understand, that the nausea I had been feeling, the sickly energy and repulsion that I was blaming on God was actually my normal state of my soul, being revealed to me through the haze of my life. My life, my anger and hatred, my self loathing and vilification of others, was simply a reflection of exactly who lived within.

"I ask again, are you bored with this yet?"

"What the heck kind of question is that?!?!" I yelled within. "You are supposed to offer me salvation, send in a shower of angels to welcome me home, horns sounding in victory for my awakening." What was this crap, am I bored with this. No I am not bored I am mad. I am upset that I have happiness and you are going to take it away with death. I am mad that no matter how much I fantasize my great meaning I still don't count more than a grain of sand on an endless beach. I am pissed off I never had the chance to lead armies into battle to die gloriously and have the others hold me in great esteem, raising me to god hood. To find an endless stream of lovers to do the same erotic things over and over so I could declare myself liberated. It seemed my life was to see these all as folly so I could feel spiritually superior, my ceaselessly boring superiority. An eternity of chasing these things or refusing them, over and over and over, such an image did my soul present to me.

A few minutes later It came back.

"No, I mean really" it spoke in a tone that meant it was time to choose.

What was I being so upset out for? Because I wanted to be a god, but couldn't be? Because I felt whatever this voice was, it was now just playing with me, asking if I was bored? No I wasn't bored, I was endlessly frustrated, I could see no point to all my endeavors nor that of the others around me, I was tired of the same things over and over, I was bored.

"OK, for you, I'll let it go." I thought.

Suddenly I saw a dense reddish cloud and in it a pair of legs, my legs, with leg irons tight on the ankles. On my physical legs I felt this excruciating pain at my ankles. Suddenly the clamps sprung open, the pressure on my physical legs stopped. The internal legs were raised up and moved away from the clamps.

"You are free to go now."

I decided I needed to change and got a new job, this time as a construction grunt. I thought this would be a good job because I was fat and construction was a real work out. What did I do? I was assigned to stand by the tool boxes and hand things to the more experienced guys, or I painted stain on wood. Neither of these were particularly challenging and I probably would have expended more calories entering data in the computer. Yet it was a change, especially the difference between an air conditioned office and the heat of a Texas summer. That season the temperature reached one hundred degrees Fahrenheit or more every day for over forty five days, and then there would be a quick shower at the end of the day just to add steam. Plus there was a massive forest fire going in central Mexico and the smoke was reaching all the way to central Texas, adding to the Dante like feeling of the work.

During this time I started to think about moving to California to serve this spiritual community that had helped me so much in my healing. Several of the members in California told me to stay put, a few others said to come out. I kept thinking about it though as I slathered stain on wood day after day. I eventually figured that fact that I kept thinking about it was a pretty good indication that it was the right thing to do. Then one night my friend who lived out in California told me there was an open apartment in her complex, and asked would I like to come? Well, that seemed to be the clincher. My friend wanted me out there, I had the cash, the desire, and there was a place to live. So I started things in motion.

There was a farewell dinner for me. This surprised me and scared me. After my experiences with parties and no one coming I was sure it would be sparse. To my shock and joy there was over fifty people, one woman had driven seventy five miles and tolerated being in the room with an ex boyfriend to come see me off. It was a wonderful way to head to my new life. In the past I had always left without bringing attention to myself and felt that it didn't matter that I was gone. This was a great thing for my emotions and feelings of acceptance.

I moved to California to be with and volunteer for the spiritual group. My plan was to live a life of serving God through that mission, and to deepen my spiritual path. Things didn't quite go that way. First off the group was in a big upheaval to separate those who really believed in the leader (the woman who zotted me that one time) from those that were just working on their stuff. I wasn't very sure I was agreeable to this. My experience in the Intensive was with god, and that Voice that had been with me, that had removed the leg irons on me. This woman was just the lady who spoke on the tapes, though that zot in the past was pretty impressive.

Additionally I was asked to talk with the lawyer. I wasn't sure why but I went to see him and was confronted with the letter I had written the lady of the Intensive, the letter expressing direct anger at her. There was a great concern among the leaders about having me around her, and they felt I still had to handle something deep. All I knew was I had been thwarted in fulfilling my dream of living a life of spiritual service which annoyed me. I did however comprehend that my anger in the letter was more about the pain about my Mom, and there was more calming from knowing that. However, I could meditate with the group.

It was interesting having the lawyer keep me out though as I learned things from people who had left the group. One woman said that she was the sex buddy of the leader, who apparently brought in and become the power of god. She didn't get any impression that there was anything powerful about him. He had a strong interest in spirituality and religious concepts, but there was no "power" about him. She talked about going to water slides with him and HOW he loved sliding in the water that way. At other times they would go dancing and he said he had to leave because the energy was taking him too hard. However, as far as she could tell he was just a guy.

On the other hand she was highly absorbed in seeing herself as being highly spiritually advanced and seemed rather unable to pick up things about others, so her inability may have been more of a comment about her. I also found that the lady who ran the Intensive had been in a previous group. Also in her past she had tried to be sort straight laced but had kind of a kinky streak and seemed to like to be slapped in bed. This was a big scandal to me and I thumped my chest about it for a few months. Yet as I thought about it I realized that meant that at one time the lady was just like millions of other women. My two girlfriends in college wanted me to spank the and slap them, not that I ever could. There is just a streak in some women that they find that wild and liberating so they can really cut lose in bed. What was really inspiring was to see her in her openness and loving

and to know from where she had been she had become this lovely being. The point was that we could become that. She wasn't there to be worshipped, but as a symbol that we could be that.

I spoke with several of the leaders of the group and they freely acknowledged what I had found. I said that I was questioning if I should be in the group. They said that being in the group was irrelevant. The group was simply a tool to work on seeing our internal illusions so we could let go of them and be freer, to let the deeper spiritual being get the garbage off of it so it could awaken. The exact statement was "Don't mistake being in the group or doing the exercises for your personal path. The goal is God, not us." I could understand that. So my certainty in the group was shaken, but my certainty in my changing was strengthened.

Well, seeing as my plans were all a mess but there was no reason to go back to Texas I settled in, looking for accounting work and playing the guitar. San Diego is a horrible place to be a musician and opportunities are far less than in Austin, or probably anywhere from what I could tell.

Over the month's things changed. I realized that while I was receiving a great deal of healing and movement through meditation, I was avoiding something. There was an agony left open. The group really emphasized lots of internal movement, emotional upheaval and getting to what was under the emotions so as to let go of them. I saw however that I was using the group to live a dream of fast spiritual movement to mollify an intense sadness that filled every cell and breath of my life. This combined with not being allowed to take part made the options clear. So I chose to step away from active participation in the very group I came to serve, because that act of service was an avoidance strategy.

My friend recommended I see a therapist for my emotions and psychology. I considered this and felt I didn't need to, but as my friend persisted I tossed the idea around. It was clear that despite all my knowing, I was still stuck despite all the things that had improved in my life, the releases. Also my father had been seeing a therapist and he had become more open so maybe it might help. Besides the sick apparently don't know they are. So after a few weeks of thinking this over I made an appointment to see the woman that was a therapist. When we met my opening statement to her was "I have tried understanding, crying and meditation, reviewing, all sorts of things. I have made great strides in understanding what my parents did, how I misunderstood it all, and can explain the entire thing. Yet I am still stuck, cold and unable to open. I have no tears, I don't care about finding blame, I just want to know where the door is." She told later that in with that statement she knew I was someone she could work with.

The first thing she did after I made my statement was to take out a large drawing sheet and, through a series of interconnecting hub and spoke sketches, she described my life, my past, my feelings, my day to day life. I was rather stunned considering I had just met her and only said one sentence to her. I asked her how she did. She told me that I had Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. She said that I lived alone, had few friends, was reclusive, suspicious, paranoid and expecting attack so I always struck first. I said I never hit anyone and always tried to be supportive. She said I often said things to put people on guard, that I always had a comment of how others lives didn't work, though I called it "being honest." I would often perceive a coming attack and would pre-empt that with my own attack, often sending the recipient off in a confused state (they would be rebuffed before even saying hello and they didn't know why). I said that most people were like that. She said that no that was not true, most people don't spend their entire life being defensive and protective, just some people do. The majority are more open. I stared at her in disbelief. There were people who were happy and unprotected?

She said the way I acted and lived was the defense mechanism of the syndrome. Possibly from my mother's suicide (how did she know that?) or from my trying to protect myself growing up in a militaristic environment. I was happy though that I wasn't alone. There were millions of people with this syndrome the world over. All the child abuse, the rapes, the civil war and drug trade, The world was full of people like me. A large smile formed on my face. It wasn't me in particular she knew, it was that I fit in with a large chunk of the population. I found great relief in this. Part of the syndrome is to believe you are the only one suffering and this screwed up. After all everyone else is walking around with a smile saying they are OK, but I saw that a lot of them were simply trying to cover their insanity. Most of the world was messed up she said. There were hundreds of millions of screwed up people, and I was one of them. For the first time in my life I felt that I belonged!!! One big messed up family of humans.

She was an interesting therapist because she was quite open that she had the same syndrome and felt no need to

hide it or worry that it might make her less professional. As a matter of fact it made her more believable to me because it wasn't just something she studied, she knew it personally. Over the weeks we dug deeper. I had a major shift in my desire to find a companion. I had always figured a girl friend would fill my life of sadness and self loathing. If she didn't I could blame her though I would know it was me. I realized I wasn't attracted to women, I was attracted to finding a plug in my being. I absorbed the situation. I didn't need a girl friend, I needed to become stable and stop sucking the life out of others around me in order to fuel my story. Finding someone who would fulfill my life would leave me dependent on how others treated me, or more precisely how I interpreted the outside person. This was a step up from realizing I couldn't be a suck on my friend. It wasn't her, it was my entire way of being. The situation was in me. The change had to happen here, not there. I reflected on the past. When I was a child I was emotionally traumatized, though as I looked at it with the therapist it wasn't entirely clear who did the work on me. I gave my parents as bad as I got. The therapist was also aware that there was a darkness and we concluded that energy was the one working on me. Whatever the source my response was to strive to be objective and detached, and Watch. At the time I felt it couldn't be that bad so I felt I must have been misinterpreting, that I was the one at fault. This resulted in a hesitancy to trust myself mixed with absolute certainty of my opinion. However, as we explored it became clear that my experience had been that bad. From what she heard she affirmed I had been raked over the coals emotionally. Yet at the same time from my parents point of view I was the one who could really disrupt their lives. Think of my poor father the professional Military Officer, with all the requirements to appear he was in charge, and his son is running around whining and doing socially scandalous acts, causing dad's peers to wonder about him. Being a child and teen that felt I was the only one screwed up I needed to make up for feeling so lowly, to hide the worthlessness. Typical of the Syndrome I did this by going to the other extreme with obnoxious superiority. Hence my interest in classical guitar, history and Biblical studies, things that most can't do but I did all extremely well. I didn't study theology to learn about God or to help minister to others, no no, I wasn't that nice. I went for subject areas few studied so I could arrogantly talk down my nose at them for being ignorant.

With the therapist help I saw that my defenses were totally and completely justified, that they were rational and made sense at the time After all I was getting hurt and had to protect myself. That made sense when I was fourteen, but now I was forty five and I was no longer being traumatized, except by the syndrome. As the Syndrome was all I knew it was hard for me to see anything else. So I had a tremendous investment in my explanations. I feared that without that protective barrier the pain would sweep over me. I had mistaken the protection for actually letting the pain be healed. Instead I kept it nailed in place with the understandings. My protection was also a prison. Then I had Watched but it was time To Be. Again I had to run those bases.

I began to see I identified with an image called "me." I was everything I thought myself to be, and I interacted with that image, not life. I was a conversational life. This was different from the technology I had learned earlier about the internal listening and how we live in our own individual movie. In that case the idea was to change the conversation and change who you were. However, you would still be an awareness staring at an internal conversation that was talking to itself about how powerful it was, an image talking to itself. The difference was I was perceiving an internal energy independent of the conversation, an actual alive energy. I saw the internal conversation as a foreign energy and the attempt to have a powerful conversation was to succumb to it. This may sound circular or like gibberish but it seemed the internal conversation was not talking to me but to itself yet there was a me inside independent of it. I could direct it at moments but generally it talked on its own accord and often just swept me into it. How many times had I been aware of this internal thing that was distracting my real being, yet within a week I was swept back into the conversation and had forgotten what I had seen? No matter the knowledge or awareness I still ended up in its flow. Somehow the stupidity would slip into me and I would totally forget again, asleep to what I knew. Instead when I interacted with others I never talked to them, I tried to manage what they thought of me. No, not quite. I was actually within my internal conversation managing my perceptions of what they thought, giving reactions to my beliefs of what I thought others thought of me, and thinking that if I managed and by controlled that then I managed them. Geeesh I was completely lost in my head. The Voice informed me that I walked the earth a weeping narcissist, interpreting everything in terms of me, filled with sorrow and feeling unloved, and it was time to let go of all this. I was always surprised that when the therapist talked with me about a subject there was an internal movement

and change, yet when I thought of it myself the emotions and connections stayed the same. I guess there is something to be said for speaking out loud to an ear that can hear. The therapist and I investigated my mother's suicide. After a childhood of feeling irrelevant and being unwanted, one day I found my dead mother. This was the stake in my heart that froze me in place. The therapist described how I emotionally carried Mom around on my back looking for solace and someone to bring her back, but she wasn't coming back. I could do this until death, or change. I didn't think it was right to change, that seemed to denigrate her. The therapist told me if Mom was here she would tell me that she loved me and wanted the best for me. I wasn't sure because I had always felt Mom didn't want me. I figured out I was carrying Mom around to feel the emptiness of not being wanted. I was using this to enroll other women to tell me they did want me, but they never did -- or I never let them because then I would have to let Mom go. I was addicted to my emptiness and being unloved because I got such a charge of self righteous judgment towards others for abandoning me. I loved doing that to the point that I preferred being empty. That was what I had to let go of even more than Mom. Doing that seemed like a waste of a way to spend my remaining years so I mustered the energy to change. I borrowed a shovel, dug a hole in the sand at the beach, and went through the motions of peeling Mom off my back and burying her so she and I could rest in peace. I filled in the hole, turned and walked away from her, and my, grave site. Several weeks later I finally developed the internal strength to go after the central pain. I aimed straight at it, imagining a ship turning into the eye of the hurricane and sailing into the storm. I literally shivered physically as this happened expecting the most vicious emotional storm of my life. To my surprise I experienced penetrating a thin membrane and then standing in a musty old room lined with shelves of books titled "Things People Did to Me." Here I was at the core of the pain, and it was a room full of musty old memories, gigantically magnified to completely fill the image I lived in. It was the image of fear that had bound me all those years. Again, it was the image. I laughed at it and it evaporated. I saw something deeper about Mom. I had forgotten something about her suicide. A week before her time I had tried to kill myself with a stiletto knife. I had failed and felt very depressed because I couldn't even kill myself properly. I felt alone and powerless. My mother asked why I was so down. For the first time in my life I told the truth instead of trying to make it all better. I told her that I felt unloved, unwanted and pointless. She looked very pained and walked away. I felt guilty. Theoretically mom's provide love and support. I had just told her she failed. She looked hurt for a few days, then killed herself. I was told at the time that it was all about her but emotionally I believed otherwise. I thought I was at fault by telling her she was a failure. Not that I caused her to do it, or if I'd done something she might not have carried it out. I felt that with those words I had personally killed her. I had carried her for years, not just to revive her, but to get forgiveness. When I buried her something started to move inside me. The reason I never opened up, that I avoided speaking truthfully, was that the one time I spoke truth, I killed my mother. With that I had welded my heart shut. At this realization I didn't cry. There was no drama. I just nodded, then the cleansing energy descended on me and grabbed the welding on my heart and released it. It felt like the outer vacuum door of a space vehicle blew out and all the pressure blew out with it. By finally reaching this core of the pain it blew open and I was healed. of that. The Reign of Terror ended, my heart opened and I felt calm and peaceful. I told the therapist I thought it was time I go on by myself and she agreed.

One night about two months later I was in meditation with the spiritual group. I was fiercely focused for some reason. My mind and feelings were full of anger and vilification. I hated this group. I hated the leader. I was right and they were wrong, pissing and moaning and stalking around. I was totally enraptured by the images of my life. This reached an intense peak, then my body stiffened and I struck a rigid pose. One of those slight jolts I felt through life struck, then a second and third, a few more, then a sense of total concentration and absolute silence, despite the loud music in the room. I held this pose for almost a minute, then another slight jolt. Suddenly, I relaxed. I gave up all hope of anything. Not an empty hopelessness. I just understood what the Bhuddists meant, that it was desire that created the illusion, the striving to perfection and my empowerment was what enslaved me from seeing who I was, and without desire I would see the face of who I am. I understood the

Christians, that there was nothing I could do, that all my images and acts of faith had betrayed me and did not matter. It was all in the hands of the Almighty, and that with all my striving there was nothing I could do, it was only by the act of He Who Is that freedom comes. I surrendered. And then, with all the power and force I could have possibly absorbed I was struck by an energy, precisely at the spot of my neck where I had jumped from at my mother's side. There before me, was something. My senses told me there was a series of concentric rings, lime green, magenta, light blue, on a black background. In the center was a "pulsating" something, black, it was so brilliant it was black, with white electrical currents jumping all throughout it. All things came from it, and it swallowed all things back. Beyond it was something I couldn't even construct a vision of. This energy hammered me, ceaselessly and viciously, until the other deeper part within me began to pull loose. As this was happening information was coming in. Not sentences, but they were turned into words, a stream of knowledge coursing in.

"All of your existence you have wanted to be superior to others. This is impossible. You are all each finally polished gems of life come from me, each an equal piece of beauty and dust in my wind."

"You have tried to be arrogant about your faith in me, as if your spiritual nature made you better than others. Know that I live in everything, and all have me. Being arrogant about knowing me is like being arrogant about breathing."

"When others tell you their mission is the My mission, know that I am The Mission."

Among the last things said was "I told you earlier that you were free to go, yet you insist on staying in this prison as if you have time to look in every cell for your own amusement. Leave now." At which point I was "grabbed by the neck" and flung out of ... eternal prison.

My eyes opened in the room, the music playing. My neck hurt painfully. I lay there writhing around, holding my neck. It took three weeks to heal during which I was bedridden. My Chiropractor said it felt like I had whiplash. Still something was different. My internal conversation, even after this intense experience, still thought of self vilification and insults like a trained dog that didn't know another way to act. But my energy within was different. The life I led, with all it's painful trauma, all the barbs it held me with, that life evaporated like it was someone else's life. There was a calm aloofness combined with a soft opening compassion. From that time the change was real and permanent. The "other" was awake. More important than a hurt being healed, something eternal had found its way. I now really understood. Unless you are truly reborn, you can not enter the kingdom.

I lived my life, went to movies, attended dinners and had great meditation as the energy kept taking a stronger hold. It was quite good. I opened to learning more, became more aware of ways to play the guitar, enjoyed the sunrise and sunset, and the polluted ocean. The main change wasn't that I quit thinking or feeling the past pain, but that I had separated from it. I now understood that I had been hurt and formed a protective system, but that the system was not me. There was another being within that had always been there alive, the real me. Now it was surfacing slowly. I could never think about it or identify it because that was all internal conversation. However, there was a physical charge like electricity that pulsed in me, and at times I would look around and see things without the conversation, and it was astonishing. So my mind yacked on about all the slights and pain of my life, but my heart didn't care much anymore.

Eventually my life long friend decided that we should terminate our connection. As she said we were square, money was even, no one had really hurt each other, and all we had in common was that we had a past together. As I listened I had to agree. I did have fantasies of watching her find a guy and get married, but generally we just got together because we had. She seemed to think there had to be an objective to a friendship and we didn't have that anymore. She also said that as a step to cure her trauma (she had the same syndrome) she had to ask me to leave because I had been one of her abusers. This stunned me for a day but I figured if we were breaking up I didn't really need the details. Yet the idea that she was asking me to leave while holding me as an abuser did upset me. Then the life long irony of it hit me. When I was a boy I would listen to the girls tell me they liked me because I didn't grope them like all the other boys did. As I was fat and unlovable I became "Guy

Girls Can Trust” so I would get whatever love spill over came my way. Now here I was forty years later, after years of denying I wanted her, suppressing my sexuality to the point of being emasculated around her, enduring her anger towards men, and finally getting to the point I really didn’t care, all so I could be a friend she could trust and open to, here I was being told to leave because she held me to be exactly the one thing I had feared, striven my entire life to not be. My eyes bugged out and I had the clear impression of the darkness standing around with a fishing reel, hook all bated with the thing it knew always got me, tossing the hook in my mouth. Normally I would have swallowed and blown up into righteous justified royal indignation. Instead I spit the hook out and laughed at the entire life drama. All that pain, struggle, drugs, anger, understanding, even spiritual awakening, it was all part of the imaginary life, the hallucination, the illusion. I laughed so hard my guts hurt. Then I said within “OK, I really am bored with this.” At that instant it felt like a large hand reached down and lifted off the drama, the entire movie of my life, like a large curtain raised up and suddenly I was awake. The other was finally here.

So there is my life. It’s a good story. A child is traumatized, descends into Hell, heals, and recovers, becoming happy.

There is however an other's story.

The Other

My life was one of great emotional pain until the surfacing. It could have been quite different. When I was young I'd ask my Dad imponderable questions, and he'd answer me. This infuriated me because I wanted to be someone who stood intellectually above others. However, if I had noticed that he actually answered me, I could have thought "Gee many dads ignore their children's questions, but he has enough respect for me to pay attention and answer me." I could have grown up confident of my abilities and my father's admiration. In high school I had a girl tell me she thought I was handsome. I took this as mockery. I could have responded with "isn't that sweet, and I love you and your looks to", then learned to sanely interact with women in my life. When my Dad told me any jerk could have sex but he knew I was capable of more, I could have derived confidence in his expectations and my abilities. Instead I heard that I was less than any jerk. I could have had a completely different life, a different personality, happy with itself and few pains. However, it almost seemed destined to go the way it did. Besides, a positive made up personality is still a made up personality, even if it feels good.

An easy explanation would be to blame my parents. On the other hand it is often the child who runs the home and dictates the daily crisis. Until recently children were seen as essentially uncivilized beasts that had to be bent into a proper human, "proper" being defined by whoever controlled the child. More recently some have decided parents are at fault for their children and now kids are raised with a lot less confrontation. I want to point out that we are both parent and child in our life and trauma goes both ways. We have all been tormented. This isn't a parents vs. children situation, for we are each both of these. I suggest that there is something else here, an energy, a presence that is affecting this situation. This energy supersedes our understandings. It has been antagonizing each of us for every generation, enforcing this situation on each of us. It sweeps us into an image and comforts us there, popcorn in our own personal theater.

I am sure you have noticed that I have mentioned an "other part" that came out of me, which oddly seemed to be more me than my normal life. When I was seeing the therapist I realized I was living in my head, in a self image. I was imagining my "self" interacting with how I imagined others imaged me. I actually had no connection with them, and almost no connection with my body, except as a means to chase images. The entire population of humanity does this. Each one involved with their "self" as if it is the truth, developing in our imagination's images of how others should appear to us, and often inflicting tremendous suffering in the process. We don't like a skin color or religion or gender or whatever because in our personal movie that whatever is pronounced bad and must be removed, when in fact it is the illusion that has to be removed. We appear to be walking the earth sharing it with millions of other people, yet each lives in a dream, these thoughts and feelings within us. Only when I was in "the other" was I real and here. My I understanding of the human condition is that in truth, we are "the other", a living force within a living body, but we act like if we can't think of it or see it in an image, it doesn't exist. Yet you are not the one you think you are.

Consider the situation. Your name was made up, given by others. You live in an internal conversation often indoctrinated into you by those around you. Unless you visit other cultures it never even dawns on you there are other ways to think, and often after visiting other cultures they are held as novelty but an aberration from the true way to live, the aberration you grew up with. The other culture is an interesting way to look at things, but yours is the one you will hold on to. You live in this image you were indoctrinated with and how you imagine others should be.

The currency you use is imaginary. Trading animals involves getting real things like food, The currency accomplishes the same thing, but it is a replacement for trading in real things. In that it is actually a superior item to trade because it has the value the two engaged in trading assign to it. You can purchase real things like food, or imaginary things such as "Self Worth." Many items we purchase we do so to symbolize our self image and distinguish us from others in culture. The problem is that culture only exists within each ones self image. There is no culture except as an internal conversation. We purchase symbols of our self reflection with symbolic currency. We quite literally live an illusory life. We believe this image defines of all things and it will be with us always, constantly growing and becoming more aware. Many live as an illusion that imagines itself

eternal, expanding, and growing.

Don't get me wrong. I am not anti intellectual. I spent years in college and loved it. Human thought has produced some astonishing things. The banking system that allows the purchase of items with a currency whose value comes simply from our trust in image and thoughts. The entire system of education, engineers laying out civic systems that ease the lives of many while ruining others, medicine, technology, all of this is amazing. My point however is that as great as all this is, this is an image of life. Yes the delivery of food to starving children really does help them live. What I am pointing at though is the process of getting caught up in life as a thought. There are even some who for instance love math so much that they think it alone can express what life is. Others point to music because it is mathematics with emotion. From my perspective though they are looking for a perfection illusion and are quite cut off from life. They want the perfect explanation, not the real thing. This so attracts many of us to the point that we literally don't know who we really are.

All of this is an imaged self, an internal conversation of self. This is an illusory self. You are not this self that is made up in thought. You are the other part. I am avoiding purposefully making any conversation of the other part because that will simply feed a conversation about it. This won't give you the real you. What one needs is for the illusory self to be designed that it can do the miracles that make this planet more pleasant yet does not bury the life force within you that is you.

In the past there was a time when people held the world as a mythology, complete with angels, super beings, all sorts of unseen entities and places to go after death. Each culture had its variation on this theme. More recently the attention of many was glued to the mythology of Rational Materialism. The cosmos was seen to run "almost like clockwork", and post Newtonian mechanics strove to get rid of the "almost". Matter itself was rational. This led to the belief that humans as matter ran like clocks. This was taken to the point that human emotion was really just part of the clockwork, though a very self deceived form of it. Human emotion was to be done away with, and the Ideal (idea -- in the head self image) was to be an unemotional objective observer so you could see the clock work. The net result was the enslavement of countless intellectuals to be an inhuman ideal, trapped within, imagining how other perceived them, and imagining themselves free. All the --isms of the nineteenth and twentieth century are reflections of this, Capitalism (an economy that runs itself rationally), Communism (an economy that needs to be run rationally), Democracy (originally the right of the landed class who had time to think and be rational, but later transformed to allow all to vote because as matter was rational, all voters were rational) Totalitarianism (The need for a central rational thought that ran the clock workers in a rational way). Even Romanticism was an intellectual revolt against the machine with an exalted opinion of feeling. All of these appealed to Rational Materialism as their root. Even many religions have bent themselves to this. The World Wars were generally fights between who's Rational Materialism was going to dominate. Well that and power too.

More recently scientific exploration has torn down Rational Materialism. When you read about the ideas of the Theory of General Relativity your brain gets quite bent. Light is a particle and a wavelength. You are both a physical body emitting energy and wavelengths, yet are also the wavelength that flies through all eternity and levels of the universe, though your awareness is set as the object (an indoctrination left over from Rational Mechanics). A lot of people love the Idea of General Relativity and apply it to culture, in the sense that culture is relative and I can do what I want and don't you tell me what to do because it is all relative. This is of course nothing like the science or Relativity. The science is very structured and hard within its illusions, but people extrapolate it to unstructured things such as a culture or a personal illusion. But then again, culture is within ones illusion.

In the end, these are all imaged theories, from the Seraphim to the Angels to Materialism to General Relativity. They don't produce who you are.

Pain. It is in everyone's life. Some have tremendous agony, but that doesn't minimize anyone else's. People employ a variety of responses or protection concerning this, ranging from denial and beer to inflicting pain on others just because one has pain or pre-empt an attack. None of these rid one of pain though. I have learned there is a difference between protecting your "self" against an attack and the feeling left within as a result of being attacked. There is both a memory and an energy left behind. Generally attacks are meant. It is often the design of the attacker to leave their image stabbed in your feelings and thus memory. That way they and their desires are remembered and known by many. For instance in Greek mythology one strives to be in the minds of many so the thought of you is recalled, called back, from the pit of Tantrous, the pit of nothingness, no-thingness. You strive to be "re-membered." (have your members reassembled) so your life wasn't a big no-thing (tantrous) to be forgotten. If you are not known in the thoughts of others, you are no-thing. So attackers strive to be "remembered" in the world. The question is what is "the world?"

Over the years I learned an old story of “the world” being flat with monsters being off the edge. We now days laugh at this because we say the world is round. This however is not true. It is the earth that is generally round. The **World** is something different from the earth. The word “world” means “the remembrance of a man.” It is how a person’s “members” are reassembled and presented to one’s “self.” It is your internal image of yourself conceived of as presented to the “public.” Others will use their image of who they think you are to reflect themselves. Humans built a religion out of this. In the orient it is referred to as “face” while in the Middle East they call it “honor” though these terms are used the “world over.” The World exists individually within each person, a movie that is individual to each one’s illusion. It is one’s personal self image thought of within as how others hold you to be, though it is really how you judge yourself. This self image is the part of you that is recalled in history and in the public mind. This self lives on in a form in the thoughts of others. If your image does not exist, even as a ghost figure, then “you” fade into nothingness. You are simply born, have sex, eat, work, and then die, no one the wiser or even interested in you. Only the great and the historical are remembered. So many people strive to do something great to be remembered or resent that they don’t get a chance to “make their mark,” Yet the truth is these people are forgotten. Their names and feats may be recalled but only for the use and self image of the ones interested in recalling them. This is true of you. The truth is you won’t live in the thoughts of others. Others will simply think of their memory of you as relates to them. It is about them, not you. You will die. Period. The attempt to be remembered in the world is really a person having a fantasy within their own internal conversation, chasing a false image of needed self importance.

To cap this off, the final tragedy is that history forgets you. Walk through the graveyards of a town. See the mausoleums. Walk down Main Street and see the large buildings with the names of people on them. These were built for the great, the important, the notables. How many of them do you remember, reassemble? Even with their name carved in rock. History forgets you.

In Greek mythology the female, Gaia, is eternal, the actual nature of this place. She is and will always be remembered, for she is the very life we walk in. Men are temporal, mere visitors. The only chance that a man has of being remembered is in the public mind, history, or through their male heirs. This is why in old text a male introduces themselves as “I am so and so, son of whatchamacallit, son of whosamajigger, son of this that and the other ...” and so on, Re-Calling from No-thingness the names and images of previous male generations. It is the son’s job to recall the males back from the pit of nothingness so that the person is no dead. This is why keeping a family (male) line is so important. There is a great hatred and fear of the female that is in most cultures. Part of the hatred for women is that you have to go to her for a male child, but she will drain you of your illusions and images of greatness with her demands and desires, until you lose them. The “better way” to be remembered in history or by the public mind is through war, though art works for many. Men like fighting, they love stories of conquest, and if you are a great general or a member of his army, men will re-call you throughout the ages. There is one little irony in Greco Roman based cultures. Even with history written down, with all the struggles to record it, and now with international libraries that can be tapped from around the world, history will forget. In Greek mythology history and the public mind are feminine, and females always forget. This is the great tragedy as a male. You are temporal and your attempts to overcome this with great effort will be remembered by the feminine, the eternal part, but she always forgets. This is her ultimate control over you. As a female, you will be told all your life that you don’t matter as much and often are abused because you are held as thwarting the male’s delusion of greatness. Neither of these is true in reality, but the myth is the myth.

To the Greeks, there is no way out of here.

And in reality there is no way out for the personality and name that we live in through life. All of the imagined thoughts of who “you are” will evaporate when you die. All of your ideas of where you go will die. Even if you think you just rot in a hole, that will evaporate. However, there is this “other part” the real you, the energy that lives within the body. It has a different agenda. Only it stands a chance breaking through to freedom. Not an imagined freedom, but in reality. It will awaken at death, but at that point things are happening so fast that it has little time to find the door. It is best to let it awaken long before you die, so it has time to get ready, and your personality has time to soften enough to let it prepare.

The spiritual group I was involved with stressed lots of internal movement, to push, to break free, to follow the

master and be led to freedom. The goal was to let go of the false illusory self and reach the true self. Once when my good friend was moving I had such a wrenching experience that something “other” fell out of me, something almost a phantom yet very alive, and seemed to be me. When she finally kicked me to the curb I again had the experience of a curtain rising and this being was present. When I found my mother dead a part of me jumped out and was above several feet. All through my life I kept getting jolts, of something trying to get out, or free. So I pushed and I pushed, trying to rid myself of the false self, to reach the true self. Yet it would appear and then be clouded over again. This seems to be part of the path of awakening. There really is something trying to make us forget.

When I was seeing the therapist she asked me “where are you going?” She knew that in the spiritual group there was this strong emphasis on “going home.” This startled me. Being traumatized I always wanted to escape the hurt and the idea of “going home” appealed to me. But where was this, except as yet another thought or hope in my being? I began to see that my very push to go home, to be free, to be present here, however you want to describe it, was based on trying to escape. To be freed I was going to have to quit trying to escape. I understood that it was my image seeing itself as fleeing into an imagined rapture where God had come for me that was causing the pain and keeping me stuck. In fact the image was simply swirling and scrambling itself with deception. The feeling of movement was provided to reinforce the sense of forward motion and being empowered, but I wasn’t going anywhere, much less home.

The therapist was somewhat Shamanistic. She said that in order for me to truly have the option to leave, I must get here first. I lived in my imagination fleeing the events of my life. I had to cease that and be here, completely here. Only then would the deeper part of me surface. Only then could it really choose. Thoughts couldn’t describe what she meant but I knew, I had seen the other several times. If I was going to become me, I now understood that it would be a thing sensed, not an imaged thing, not in the mind's eye, not something I conversed about in internal conversation as everyone does.

I read again some books I had held for years. The Castenada books, the Bible, the Koran. They all spoke of our life here, but also a being, I’ll use the word soul, an other part not of your normal daily experience. I now knew I had imagined this to be my true being or soul, and my imagined being I imagined as a false self. Both were of the imagination. I felt thought I had to get to the edge of the world (my self remembrance) and into the mist, for it was off the edge of the world (the remembrance) where one found your true being. I had twisted these stories. I was trying to take the imaged me off the edge into eternity, the mist, but can not happen. My self image was at war with itself, imagining itself as fleeing into an imagined mist that symbolized release from itself. I now understood, on a physical level, that this was impossible. The imagined stays in the imagined, but the other has life, and a different agenda.

There is no way for the being of illusion, the imagined self, to be saved or brought to enlightenment. All you can do is use it properly while the “other part” works its way free. After years of trying to kill the false ego I realized the imagined being needs to stay put. It has a job. Its job is to provide a way of understanding and protection while we live within this energy field that surrounds us and looks like life. It shields the other real part that is here. The problem is the personality take such firm control that it covers over the real part. The trick is to bring them into a proper balance that allows the real part to surface. One can’t escape. One has to stand here and see what is really happening and then choose from that insight. In order for “the other” to surface the imagined part has to be stable and balanced, not at war with itself. I understood I was finally arriving right here, but as this other, undefined part, and not necessarily on this level.

You see, there is great understanding that you receive and use in this life, yet that isn’t who you are. You run dually. It is important one seeks perfect understanding, but there comes a time when the war for perfection ceases. The clock will then stop That is when you surface.

Surfacing

The spiritual group spoke a lot about death of the false ego, as did most of the spiritual books I read. St. John of the Cross called it The Dark Night of the Soul. Just the title gets the idea across. There is the Book of the Dead, the fire of Allah, dying into the heart of Jesus and joining him on the Cross. To the average person this sounds like a large waste of time and a bunch of useless anguish. To one whose heart is called to seek it has a very different meaning. It is the path Home, where one surrenders this made up lie of this life and awakens into the energy of life itself, into who one truly is.

Why was I like this? Heck if I knew. I had been driven almost insane because of this central drive since my mother's death. Yet I had felt it's call long before. Perhaps a life of drinking beer and making out with girls would have been better, but that wasn't what happened. It is a hard suffering burden to live a life like this. One wonders why one is driven to do things no one else can make sense out of, and endless self examination, to repetitively awaken about the same darn issue over and over, yet each time with deeper awareness and strength. Beer and lips seems a superior choice quite often. Yet if one is a seeker, one has almost no choice, except to live in denial or to walk the path as well as you can. A warrior accepts one's fate, and carries it out as best they can. What for? There is a feeling that one's freedom is at stake. Is this from years of reincarnation, or are some set up by God to be tormented to look for freedom when apparently there is no need. After all Christ paid the atonement, all we have to do is accept him, there is no need to look. So is one's attempt at freedom a deep spiritual goal or a denial of what is given to us freely? Heck, I don't know. All that internal conversation stuff was just a bunch of words. All I knew was I was driven to find my freedom, without really knowing what that meant.

Yet something has happened. I am completely not like I used to be. When my friend finally ended the relationship I was, well, not indifferent but not particularly dedicated to keeping it going. I recognized that she was right, the only thing we had in common was the past. I did cry for a few hours at home, I wasn't in denial or avoiding my feelings either. The next day I headed off into whatever the world had in store with me with no regrets. I had listened to her, accepted it, and went on. My center was within me now, not "out there." Compared to how my life was in earlier years this was a dramatic change.

I also have to say it wasn't just that I had grown older and matured. I know a lot of people who do that but are still bitchy mean people who bring up the past and dig it in others just for spite. I could have easily been one of them. My therapist tells me that I was wise to have let go at the age that I did. Part of her practice is to work with the old and dying, and she said those people are very bitter and vindictive. They are eighty and dying, and they get mad about something that happened when they were five. They had gotten older and matured, but they were still stuck. They had not moved or grown in all of their lives, they just rearranged things so it appeared different.

The woman who introduced me to the spiritual group, the one I called a bunch of names, once told me the difference between transformation and translation. To transform means to completely change from one form into another. To translate was to take a statement and restate the exact same thing in a different language. It sounds completely different, but it is the same. That is what these angry dying people were, translations of the same internal movie that had held them their entire life. Now they were at the end and felt they had been betrayed and lied to by something all their years, something that made everything seem OK, but which deserted them as they lay dying. And they were right. There was something that had lied to them all their years. There is a darkness that covers their eternal souls over with a lie, a lie that causes them to focus on the images and stories of this world that will pass away. And when they die the darkness will desert them to die in suffering and not knowing what to do or where to go.

Why was I driven? I heard the clock stop by my mother's side. I heard death calling when I knew the President of the AIDS organization, and I saw him descend into anger and pain as he died over the course of a week. Until then he was fine, able to deny what was happening, what is happening to us all. We are doing a bunch of things we think important until one day we look around and realize we are about to die. Then the thing that kept us self absorbed abandons us to our death and provides no more comfort.

Why was I driven? Because though I have no guarantee that my pursuit of free will do me any good, I knew that

I would change, transform, and one day that deeper part would awaken. Will that do me any good when it is my time to stare at death? I don't know, but now darkness can not suddenly leave me and reveal the pain and trap me that way, for it has already been driven away and I see the pain every day. I see something else. As I stare at all the death and pain in this world I am also filled with an energy in this life that is astonishing, that is powerful, that is loving. It is the power of the deeper eternal part connected to The Source. I would say God and Christ because that is what I hold to be true, but for those of you who don't have that connection I say The Source.

I was driven because everything here dies, and except transforming from the imaginary being we live within over to the being that is living energy within one's body, the fire of life itself, there is nothing else worth doing.

I sought and strove and dug for years. It seemed I ran in cycles, every few years having a sense of waking up but always within the same context (feeling I was not loved and seeking that in women). Each time I had a change in my understanding and energy, but a few years later I would wake up again within that same story, until finally it was bored with me and I of it. Perhaps that is how it is. The strike in my neck didn't end this. nor did the Voice removing the leg irons and telling me I was free to go. All of these were important steps, but not enough. It was my becoming bored with the situation that ended it. That was the night I was awakened. As the Voice once asked me if I was bored yet, that seems to be what it really takes to awaken. That is when the dream ends and you wake up.

An Understanding and some exercises

So, nice story aye, but what good is it to you? It is nice that I had this experience but what is that to you? Well, if you are interested in having the awakening happen for you, I offer this chapter to you because it includes some basic understandings that I have learned, plus some specific practices that you can use to reduce the hold of the being of imagination so that the deeper eternal part of you can also awaken.

You need to be careful when listening to or reading words because they at best only point at something, they are not the thing. It is also important to try to derive the meaning that is being imparted, yet to also listen within and let your inner being guide you. For instance lets look at the word Dogma. Most people think that Catholic Dogma means something unyielding and dictated, a mindless expression of someone's desire to control other's spirituality. What the word actually mean is "what appears to be true." The Church has a historical experience by which they hold that some peasant carpenter who was executed by the Roman government as a criminal and enemy of the State, with the blessing of his own people, this guy paid the atonement for all of our souls so that we could have eternal freedom and return to the live eternally in the heart of God. To a lot of people this sounds at best a bit insane. Yet these people, many of whom are quite educated and well meaning, have thought this through within their own experience, have prayed and questioned, and through personal understanding and reflection have reached the conclusion that it is true. In their experience it is "what appears to be true." They present it as true because they thing it is true, as you present what you think is true as factually true. Yet it is only what appears to be true. As Catholic Doctrine states you can not in the end say that it is Truth, but rather it is a matter of Faith, something that to your heart you experience as true and real. I happen to be one of these people that think Christ did atone for each of us individually and thus agree with them. Still you have to be careful when reading. The word DOGMA has all sorts of meanings and causes various reverberations within people when they hear the word. Still all it means is "what appears to be true." So while reading this just remember it is what appears true to me.

I also happen to be involved with a spiritual group that that has a different set of truth. In the eyes of many the group is a manipulative dangerous mind controlling cult. I am asked if I am afraid that I will be brain washed, but I am not. From what I can tell everything and everybody is engaging in self serving manipulative lying mind control. It is the nature of this place. The only Truth is God, and everyone else is simply chasing their internal drama in circles and trying to compel others to join in as they dictate. I come from a background of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and I know what it is like to live within a self delusion and attempt to suck others into my movie. The difference is I know I am doing it. I just happen to know that you are also doing it also. We really are all insane this way. It is the nature of this place for we all live within that conversation that is within all of our heads, that thing that is gluing our attention to our internal image of life, our own private movie. The darkness. This group I am associated with probably does have elements of emotional manipulation and blackmail. So does joining the military, or raising children or going to work. I hang out with them because the meditation is intense and opening and assists me in staying focused and awake. They know there is an illusion, a darkness trying to keep the eternal part asleep and they struggle against it. I find that refreshing and real. Then again so does going to church or talking with some of the Protestant ministers I know. I am there for those things in the group that help. The ones who try to manipulate me I tell to take a hike. The ones who offer useful guidance I listen to. As one of their leaders once said to me, I am not here to be part of the group, I am here to attain my liberation, and now to hopefully assist others attain theirs.

So to conclude this book I want to share an understanding that has come into me. I hope it is of service to you, and I hope I am not too repetitive. I can't state this truth, for Truth is too astonishing. It is however a comprehension that came while in the hands of Power. I just ask that you allow it in and consider it.

A word of caution before we begin. Day to day life has its patterns and needs, and you must to use those patterns and needs efficiently to support your time in this plane. Don't ignore living in the illusion. Pay your rent. Eat food. Wash your body. Just be conscious it is what it is, a mirage, but a very real mirage. It covers a

deeper truth, but it is also a truth. If you starve, you are starving, that is not illusion. Sitting within your mind explaining to yourself that starvation is an illusion is idiocy and to fall completely under the spell of the darkness. Keep that in mind.

OK, what follows is about eternity.

As I have said, we are born here and given a made up name. We develop a made up identity. We develop internal conversations about this identity and become attached to them. This is an imaginary, illusory self you hear in thoughts. Quite clearly they are not you. There is nothing wrong or bad about this being of conversation. In fact it is good and has a purpose. It is your container, your shield assistant in this place. However, that is what it is, it is not you.

I request that you please pay attention and be alert.

We live in a massive energy field. This world we see before our eyes and live in is one of the many ways this energy field looks. If you were to leave this world (self remembrance) and stay in this energy field, the energy would occur as something else, a world apparently different from this one, yet the same energy field. This energy field has a unified attention. It gives all things, light and dark, good and bad, damnation and salvation, reincarnation and liberation, understanding and knowledge, the feeling of growth of awareness, of power and strength, and the ability to pursue these as we desire even at the expense of others. On and on. It is a show that never ends.

We are each an individual attention, perhaps described as a feeling but something else. We are an eternal attention living within this energy field, constantly shifting through various parts and levels of it. While we are here we are provided a shield, a container, a being of imagination. It is a shield that blinds us for our own protection, for if we were to see what is really here it would scare us, unless we are prepared for it.

The purpose of the shield, which is part of the energy field, is to provide a protective way of appraising what we are in. It is like a friend that lets us look out through it, to use its images to see. However, while protecting you it also pulls on your awareness, your energy, moving them towards being defensive, until it has all of your attention engaged. This is true if you go the way I did, or choose to be strong so others can't win from your tragedy, or you are emphasizing the positive so you will feel happy about life. With all of your energy thus engaged to defend how you imagine this place to be you forget you are an eternal attention.

The thoughts that you hear, everyone has them. We all think about sex, food, making judgements of others. Those you agree with are smart, those you don't agree with are stupid. Some would even say they should die. Others are nicer and allow that even though they disagree with you some of what you say may be valid, though they still think they are right. We are all members of the "I'm Right, You are Wrong" faith. This is all part of the shield. People, despite having different languages and symbols that give them access to different ways of describing the world, are pretty much the same.

I have brought this up several times but whose thoughts are these in your head? As we all have essentially the same thoughts, and as these same thoughts have been going on for who knows how many generations, I suggest it is more true to say that the thoughts live in this place, as an energy of this place, and that we are born into them, that we are swimming in them, not them in us. They are not our thoughts.

Doesn't it seem a little odd that you have thoughts? Where do they fit in a body composed of muscles, bones, liquids, viruses, bacteria and electrical currents? There aren't any "word channels" for them to run in. We obviously have thoughts, but where do they lie? I suggest that thoughts are not in our brain or "mind" but at the point of where our attention is, so as to hold our interest. We are all sitting within, looking at our own private movie, and that is where thoughts lie, not in the physical nature of humans.

The thoughts that we have, they were here before we were born. They are like a butler, a greeter at a powerful beings large house. You are born into a party that was already going on and will never end. The greeter immediately grabs your attention and your ear. It begins interacting with your attention the instant you step into this place, making you feel like this party is for you in particular instead of the owner of this place. It explains

how to react, gives you images and feelings to interact with, informs you of the rules of the house, escorts you around your entire life, sort of keeping you in line. As we each have heard these thoughts all of our lives, and as we interact with these thoughts to create various internal images that are more real to us than the living creatures around us, we hold them as our personal thoughts. However, I am saying they are not. They are an expression of this place, this indescribable energy field within which we are located and feel a part of. The energy that is this place, that runs this place, is the giver of all things here. This being some would say is God, for it is all things that we know, and all that we don't know. I suggest otherwise. I suggest that this energy is the darkness that keeps us from truly seeing what we are, and where we are from. This being, the giver of your life, the bequeather of all things on this level, that gives you the thoughts you assume are yours, with which you build your self description to be cradled in and to view the world through, this being is not your friend. It is the darkness that clouds your awareness so you do not see your eternity. There is a God, but not this thing.

Judge not, lest you also be judged. This energy will reflect your judgments and you will be further tied to it.

You may have heard the information that one of God's angels (angel generally means physical manifestation of God) decided it wanted to be God. This being is the one often called the devil or the divider. It could not be God because only God is God. However, God, being an accommodating Supreme Being, allowed the Devil to have a place it could appear to rule, and anyone who wanted to join the division could go to that house and play. This energy we live in, not just this plane of it but all the planes of this energy, is the house of the darkness.

We each have a problem. This place is where beings that want to be godlike come. We want all attention on ourselves. It houses beings who reject the centrality of God and the unity of the One, preferring separation to satisfy our own interests. We are beings that have tried to separate themselves from God because we want to be the one of power, to judge, dictate and give orders as we choose to. This is where beings in revolt against the union with One come. We are those beings. This is that place. We want to be judge, jury and executioner. We are born totally self absorbed with the assumption the world rotates around each of us individually, and suffer greatly as we discover that this is not true. Most of us eventually adapt to the idea we aren't the center of all things though often with a begrudging annoyance in our heart. Some do manage to force their neighbor's attention solely to themselves, often with threats and violence, but these people are so lost in their imagination that they stand no chance of freedom.

This place was provided to us for our use so we can worship our separation and division, and the one who holds it divided. This place is also here to teach. It is designed so that one's desire to be godlike is thwarted. Because each being strives to be the center of attention, none of us gets to be. The other beings want your eyes on them, so they won't give you the center. The only one that gives you total attention is the voice of the darkness, yacking away in your head to convince you of your separateness.

The being that runs this place goes by many names in different religions and non-religions. The one I used earlier, Devil, is a good one. It is the energy that provides a separation of a unity. It is a being that tries to be godlike but in the end works for God. This separation gives us what appears to be individuality within our internal conversation, but that individuality and that internal conversation are both images provided by the one who separates. The truth is you can not be separated, even though you are totally convinced you are and desire to be.

Your true being is individual, but not separated in the way we think of it. It is an individual part of a union where there is no separateness, like a shaft of sunlight in the light of the sun.

So, that is what you are living in. You are living in a made up existence striving to stand apart and be seen, to be separated. You are receiving all the results of trying to be separated. Some build statues or buildings to be remembered. Others write great books to impact the public mind. Others judge that too self absorbed and choose simply to love their kids. It's all still judgment within the imagination.

There are those who dream that they are constantly reincarnating here in this place to advance their souls. They say they are striving, evolving towards something each defines separately. I suggest this is an exercise in self importance, the very act that keeps them bound. They act as if they go to other levels of existence and have to return here to advance, as if there is something spiritually special about this place. This place is just like the other myriad of places in this energy, this Adversary, this divider, this Devil. You don't reincarnate or advance, you just swim from level to level of the energy, thinking the current level is the place to be, though often at death you are waiting for another place. This is an act of self importance and separation. Though this place gives the impression of separation from God, you can not be separate from God. You are simply engaging in a fantasy of separation and thinking you are in control, self important.

I have met people who think that if they live a good life, if they follow the rules laid out by their religion, they will go to a conversation they call heaven. They hold themselves to be totally unique, that there has never been another being like them before and there will never be another one. More imagined self importance. Your body, your face, your thoughts, are not unique. Your trip to heaven or hell is an internal conversation you are having within your god likeness. They even write books of the final days when they will be saved and the rest have to choose right or die. More self importance. Do you really think this made up name and randomly gathered collection of opinions, defenses, and reactions you call you is going anywhere at death? You didn't have these before you got here, and you won't have them when you leave. The greeter will take them all back because that conversation is a function of this level. None of this goes with you. It is a function of this place, set up as a container for you while you are here. Some presume to know what God is doing and God has to follow their beliefs? Jeeeeeesh how self important is that?

You are an eternal awareness. You are an eternal being. You are buried within a multi refracting mirrored dream, one that fascinates you and holds your attention. You do not need to evolve, for you are eternity. You do not reincarnate, you already know. You do not need the law, though it gives good guidance for the day to day. If you choose the eternal, you have the Law within your heart. When you step into eternity, there will be no rapture and going into heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven is before you, and you awaken from the dream into the

house of the Lord, which is what is here when the separation is removed. You step into the house of the Lord forever.

You need to know that you chose to be here in this energy field that binds you. The Devil did not conspire to entrap you, God did not banish you, you wanted to be separate so you could fancy yourself a god, full of the fruit of the knowledge of the gods. The problem is you aren't any of this. You are not a separate god that has its power through imaging. You are an eternal awareness, but a tiny insignificant grain of awareness on God's endless beach, a speck of awareness in God's endless, endless cloud of creation. Each grain is an amazing, beautiful creation, a perfect reflection of God, and yet a tiny little flame in a universe inhabited by suns.

God so loves us that God created this place of apparent separation so as to satisfy our desire to tear away from God, to stand in our self absorbed importance. We like this so much that we have been floating around in these levels with great enjoyment for a long time. Some want to leave, but on the condition that they get to leave as massive souls that will assist God in retrieving others. Some want to march out in triumph. Some want to fill themselves with the energy of god so it carries them out. This is all self importance. There is only one way out of here, and that is as the tiny shining awareness that you truly are, with no interest in being better or superior to anything.

You came here with a will of separateness. You came here to be the master of your fate, but your fate is to die, nothing else. You can not be a fully realized master, or a living or dead saint. These titles are more self importance. You may grow in awareness, you might gain strength and shine brightly, but this is buying more into the gifts of The Divider, the devil. You already glow with all of this, but you are buried under all this distraction. Only when you want union with the One, and are willing to be a tiny little shaft of light that is part of that great sun, will you leave. Surrender.

I have read a lot of books on the subject of the spirit. Theology, Mythology, various spiritual writings from different cultures. I studied the subject extensively both in college and on personal time. I could refer you to several hundred books that would give you thoughts to ponder. However, all you will end up with is thoughts, opinions and self reflection, not the direct experience. It is the direct experience, and that alone, that will bring about the change. It was That Voice and its power that changed me, not my studies. You are not the thoughts. You are not a personality. You are something that actually has life and will surface from these mere images and words when you die. There is a strong pull from all the people and things we know to bind you to them, and while you should be loving and open, that is not why you are here. You are not an extension of your group's self imagination. The Lord didn't pay The Atonement so you could have a great time with your family and friends.

Do not suppose that my mission on earth is to spread peace.

My mission is to spread, not peace, but division.

I have come to set a man at odds with his father, a daughter with her mother, a daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law: in short, to make a man's enemies those of his own household.

Whoever loves father or mother, son or daughter, more than me is not worthy of me. He who will not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me. He who seeks only himself brings himself to ruin, whereas he who brings himself to nought for me discovers who he is.

Jesus

Matthew 11, 34-39.

The New American Bible

“he who brings himself to nought for me discovers who he is.”

“he who brings himself to nought for me discovers who he is.”

“he who brings himself to nought for me discovers who he is.”

When you bring your made up personality to nothing out of desire to know God, then and only then will you discover who you truly are.

THE EXERCISES

If you are called to pursue God I would like to share a couple of exercises with you. They are designed to puncture the conversational personality that holds your awareness during this life. I pray you get how serious an endeavor this is, and if you are not pulled to pursue God I strongly recommend you do not do this. In order to live in the other part of you, the eternal part of you, this is necessary. There are no tricks. There are no formulas to follow. You just have to continually refocus on the One. These exercises are designed to help that, but it is your desire and focus that sends out the distress call. You are in an energy, in the hands of a being that wants to hold you bound forever, but there Is One who is much mightier, and if your desire is to no longer be a separated god like lie, God will come for you. The Devil works for God, and someday even the Divider is going home.

Again to remind you of some lessons I learned. For thirty five years I strove to over throw, to destroy my false self in an attempt to get to my true being. I held the false self as corrupt or in the way or bad, and it had to be removed. This results in the false self being at war with itself. This is a waste of time. The being of thought can not be brought to enlightenment. It is thoughts provided by the darkness. That is the trap so many take. They want to perfect the being of thought and have truth enter that so they can imagine their soul as whole. They are not whole, they are only imagining themselves to be that way. You simply want the energy that is your internal conversation to come into balance so it efficiently supports you. For me it took therapy, for others it will require something else.

The internal conversation is the thing that provides a cushion for you. Don't be at war with it. While there is a need to puncture it for the other to surface, you will still need it to live here. If you manage to have the shock of the other in your awareness, it will leave a personal bodily experience that will turn your attention from the imagined personality to something much deeper. This is exactly when you need the personality so you can still operate in the world. If you can calm the being of conversation do so but don't make that your life's work, otherwise the darkness will keep feeding your attempts to calm. Just keep your focus on your goal. This focus can also bring about the calm so the shield supports the surfacing of the eternal part of you, the other. When the other does appear don't go off on a big superiority trip. It is just who you are, though it is a wonderful gift in its own right. Always remember that the other is completely different from all the things the internal conversation talks about, so don't fool yourself and think you see it. Simply let the conversation realize it is not god, and then calmly, gently, with great personal care and love, yet with total drive, allow the other to surface, here in this life, not an imagined thing.

FOUR TOOLS

I suggest the following four things as tools for transformation. Transformation is not a repackaging of the way you have always been, but is a total change. Repackaging is translation which is what many do. If you say a sentence in one language, then repeat it again in another language, they sound totally different, yet the meaning is the same. This is what most people do, they translate. They do the same thing over and over but do not change. For instance I kept waking up to my not loving me and looking for women to prove I was worthy over and over and over. Each time it was deeper, each time I was more powerful, and each time I went right back to it. It wasn't until I was totally bored with it that I let go of it. Then the story of my life evaporated and something else was present. To transform means you will not be the same. Unless you are born again, you haven't transformed. Yet you don't really transform, though you are changed. You just simply woke up.

The four things are 1) believe it is possible 2) strive to reduce your “self” importance 3) do the walk that will be described 4) do the remembrance meditation described below, it is designed to remove the energy of past images and remembrances.

1) It is possible.

If you don't believe this then nothing happens. If you make believe it is possible so you can check out what might happen, nothing happens. If you believe it is possible, it is. I know, it happened to me.

2) Self Importance

This is not a negative thing. It makes us take care of ourselves, makes sure we are fed and makes sure that we do not get trampled to death. However, from the point of a spiritual awakening it is a problem. Self importance is what glues our attention to the being of internal conversation so we do not perceive eternity within.

At the root of self importance are the times we felt thwarted in something we did not get. The first devastating blow usually comes at the hands of our parents, who in our young eyes were put here for us and all our needs. There comes a point when we discover they have lives outside of us, and that leaves a mark. Also there are some who unfortunately were actually attacked emotionally and physically within their family. Either way we pity ourselves. Self pity is the source of self importance. Self pity builds stories of how we would have done things better, dreams of what should have been, developing a sense of being superior to "them", and then becomes self importance. Kids build great self pity scenarios and resent it when told to stop doing so. Adults do the same but are far more convoluted about it. As children we fail to see is that our parents are tormented with their own self pity. However, the energy that runs this place assures that we are fed the necessary internal images to reinforce self pity and importance.

Self importance is the lubricant of the internal conversation, the major component that we grind repetitively. It keeps your attention focused on the conversation instead of accessing the deeper part of you. To reduce the hold of the being of conversation, you have to reduce and then let go of self pity, and with it will go self importance. This is the first step to reduce your self importance. In other words, you quit being the center of your world.

This is taught in the world at large, but in a hurtful way. We hear that we shouldn't dwell on ourselves, our pain, keep a stiff upper lip. We hear to give selflessly, submit to those in charge, but this becomes a reflection of the conversational self, it is selfish (-ish means to reflect something). In order to appear selfless most take the hurt and self pity, squash it, then feel guilty or threatened when the anger, self pity, and pain show through. The end result is self repressed, hurt people looking for their value in other hurt people. We are all nailing down each other's coffins this way. We feel somewhat less for feeling bad. The eternal part can not surface in this game. This is why I caution you to not do this unless you are very clear you are called for a spiritual path. If not this can cause great emotional pain for no good result. But if you are called, this will pull you through.

To truly be selfless means you have no reflection. Faking it will not work. To let go of the importance and self pity you have to reach a place that neither matter anymore. Not that you do not matter, but that pity and importance do not matter.

To release the pain it is best to let it out, in a controlled fashion. The scars are in your emotions and body, they need to be let out. A quick way to release emotional pain is to express it, but don't do it at others. These are your issues. Pouring anger on others only harms them and primes them for revenge, which ensnares you both. Release it into something inanimate. Get something soft you can kick, beat, and punch, like a big thick pillow. Then allow your self to relive the situations of pain. When you find you are sinking into a painful recollection let it build until it is primed, then grab the pillow and beat it with every cell in your body, though taking care not to hurt yourself. Do this for as long as feels right during a session, then stop. As time passes your body will let go of the physical need to express this. This is not the removal of self pity and importance, but it will reduce it so you can better listen inside unfiltered by the static.

Eventually with the anger out of you the self pity will fall away, and then the self importance.

Women in general have a better time of dealing with self importance. Unfortunately, they are often treated as less than men. This is most painful for the ego, but it is a benefit on the spiritual path. Men are quite stupid. They actually think they are god like, that their opinion has to be listened to. They are combative and will fight to prove their self deception is true. They feel like failures if unsuccessful in what they imagine themselves to be, and when they finally realize, not as a neat idea but really understand, that they are only a tiny sliver of one species of millions of species on a tiny rock in limitless space and are not really of any consequences, they feel threatened and often experience a collapse and feel worthless. Yet the truth is that this is all they have ever

been. Women have an advantage here, because they always knew they weren't in charge. There are of course exceptions to this, and this is in no way an excuse for a man to degrade a woman. In fact, if a man feels that way, he would be well advised to pay close attention to women and learn some humility. Otherwise he stands no chance what so ever of attaining freedom. Only those that bring themselves to nothing for His sake will discover who they truly are.

Self Importance. The earth is full of statues to past rulers. These stone blobs were set to permanently keep that particular ruler's existence before us. They have inscriptions such as "I am so and so, king of some country that doesn't exist anymore, ruler of all there is. All bow before me, gods grovel at my feet, the earth carries me on her shoulders, all eyes are fixed on my magnificence." These are expressions of the self importance of various people. These statues lie shattered and crumbling, unknown to any except archaeologist and the local people who use them to break off small stones. Birds live among the statues and crap on them. That is what self importance gets you.

To spend a life of self importance will not free you.

3) The Walk

While releasing pain has its value, it doesn't give you a door to the other. It is true that the other fell out of me during emotional upheavals, but it was always covered over and then forgotten. This walk that I am about to describe is designed to puncture a hole in the conversational being and give you an experience of the other. By doing it daily your body stores the energy of the other until a clearing in you forms for the other to stand in at all times.

The goal is subtle. Don't expect fireworks or shattering flashes of insight. That is self importance. The being of conversation loves to discuss things to death. The internal conversation is confused by anything outside of its bounds. However, words only form a system to express what we know, the words are not the knowledge itself. The walk will build the knowledge.

Go for a walk. Do this daily with an internal feeling of intent. Do it at dusk or at early sunrise. Walk erect but not rigid, eyes ahead and not to the ground, face relaxed without squinting. Be alert. If possible walk towards a scene that is flat and has an expansive unobstructed view of the far away horizon, but any scene will do.

With your eyes you should gaze, without focusing on any particular thing, letting in as much of the 180 degrees of your sight as you can. Do not zoom into details that you see, let the feeling of your eyes be experienced in your body. Do something with your hands that draws attention to them. Not something that draws others to you, nor dominates this walk, something simple, tapping the tips of fingers together, dig a fingernail softly into your palm, wear tight rings.

When your feet hit the ground let them be soft and feel the bottom of them spread out, feel them as warm soft mud.

Feel the wind on your face, hear the birds singing, the cars coming, the dogs barking, let all this information in at once. Do not jump from one to the other, let them all in at once.

If you live in a neighborhood where it is not advisable to walk outside, sit on a soft surface, or a rocking chair. Gaze at an empty wall, and rock slightly while tapping your fingers together, and drop within your being. Listen to the sounds of the house, neighborhood, etc. If something happens in the neighborhood take care to be safe. You can always come back to the exercise.

If you have odd sensations, floating, a sense of flying, an extreme calm or internal silence, let these happen. If you sense of a kind of flash or tear somewhere not physical, or a subtle shift of some sort, a physical shudder or jolt, or nothing at all, let this happen. If you hear your thoughts diminish or become totally quiet let that be. If you hear something speak to you, listen.

Don't force this to happen, this will lead you back to self importance and conflict. This is a slow and gradual process, and can take a long time, often years. Do this walk and the following remembrance exercise daily and the process speeds up considerably.

I cannot stress this enough. **This is the key to the highway**

While you carry out the walking meditation you will begin to contact a part of you that is not the internal conversation. Combined with the following exercise your energy will be freed up and be passed to the other part of you. These two joined cause the internal stirring that shakes you awake from the being of conversation, and hopefully from the being that runs this place. Hopefully you awaken totally into what you are.

Though all revelations are personal, all paths are individual, if you are striving for freedom from the darkness there is something everyone will bump into. At a given time, as you begin to awaken and feel energy coursing “somewhere”, you will eventually experience a being that is almost indescribable. It is a being of immense intense light, a being that produces a feeling of complete love and acceptance, a being that seems our total soul companion, reflecting everything there is in us. Its presence gives a sense of arrival, of seeing the source of all that we are and being our lover.

This being is not God, nor the goal.

When we are born, not only do we get a personality and a name, but a piece of eternity is poured into a sort of container. Not a body, but a container on the feeling level. Humans operate as feelings, using a body as a method to express with. This container is a form. It is like a mold humans are formed out of, like a car mold stamps out cars, this container stamps out human shapes to house the pieces of eternity taking human birth. The container is a central feeling. It is all that we recognize as human, all our loves and hates, judgments and understandings. It is the perfect reflection of all that humans desire, because it is the form that those desires came from. You will feel total acceptance for it, and it for you, because it is you, as a human. It is absolutely beautiful and meeting it gives a human a total sense of arrival and being home.

It is not home for the eternity within. It is the shell that contains the eternity while here in this energy haze, protecting and supporting it, but also keeping the eternity here in this haze. If you want freedom for the eternal other within you, keep in your awareness that when you meet this being of light it is not your final target. The eternal home of the eternal soul is something totally different from being in the human shape. You may sit in amazement before this form, but do not stop there.

Which bring us to the topic of Letting Go. As you do the remembrance exercise below, you let go of events in your life so the energy of those events are released and return to your being. Letting go is a state of releasing connection to the hold of the events. For the eternity within there will also come a time, if you want eternal freedom, that you will have to let go of the events and energy of the human mold.

There is no crime in being here, but freedom does not exist in this place, only shifting from one image to the next. Don't beat your being up, that strengthens the mold. Just move on past it after a while.

4) The Remembrance

The being of internal conversation is a marvelous and very mysterious thing. It is not at all clear where it exists, yet it created literature, history, a monetary system that lifts many out of subsistence living, and ponders how to interact in the world. It also stores the pity and importance, all the wounds still stuck in us, draining energy towards them. Though you recall these events as thoughts in your mind, this is not where they are stored. Your thoughts are ways of organizing the events, but not their impact. My sense is they are stored deeper as a way to hold your attention. The darkness pokes at these scars in order to keep your attention on burying the pain so that remains.

If you want freedom the most important thing you can do is to gradually but unwaveringly “re- collect” these past events and bring them to the fore of your attention, understand their impact, and let them go. Do not just think about them. Relive and witness them, understand how you became bound, and when ready let them go. Send them back to the one the images really belong to. The image you drew as a defense system does not serve freedom. These words, feelings, awareness, are all energy designed to adhere to you and ensnare the other in them. This all belongs to the darkness. Make it operate efficiently in the world to support you, but don't let its energy absorb you. When ready give them back to the darkness.

This is actually very simple and straight forward. You desired to be here. God made this place for you to use, and the darkness supports it for you. The darkness wants you to stay and there will be a vicious fight if you try to leave, but you can. However, you can't take anything of this place with you, and you won't want to. When you choose this remembrance you send a signal to something far more powerful than the darkness. The darkness merely runs this backwater area of creation. This is the self absorbed part of something much bigger. It goes by many names but I have used God and The One. It is The Source. It is beyond the darkness and all that is of this place. When your eternity wants freedom, The Source comes to set you free. Only The Source can set you free. You do not have the power to fight the darkness. Your spiritual leaders do not have the power. If you feel yourself puffing up in reaction to this, see your self importance that holds you to your image. You can only choose to leave and allow your being to be guided. This is not a matter of a positive feeling, image, or thoughts, all part of the internal conversation. This is a deep willful feeling for freedom, knowing you do not have what it takes to get there, and calling The Source to pull you Home. Do not waste time calling it to fulfill your dreams, your wishes, your desire for money, big boobs or penis, power, and a good car. This is calling the power of Freedom to assist your eternity in staying stuck in temporal dreams. If you call for freedom, and you mean it, there will come a day, after many days of micro releases, when The Source will stand before you, and set you eternally free.

This is the process of the remembrance. Do the remembrance with the intent of being released of how you are. It isn't for producing agonizing remembrance of all the hurt you are holding, though pain and pleasures might come. The goal is to relive the events and then really let them go. Also, you can do this daily to handle the events of the day. There is no sense storing new thorns while trying to remove old ones.

All right here is the exercise

Get comfortable. Emotionally place yourself in the feeling of the event at the time it happened. If you are calm in this then be calm, if you need to emote then emote. Feel the energy that grabbed and pinned your attention down at the time. See how your attention became transfixed. While doing this breathe very deeply into it, rotating your head back and forth like you are fanning the experience. When you reach the end of an event, state in your feelings that you are letting go of this and giving it back to the one it truly belongs to. As you pull thorns out you cease being a scar and heal. One day the balance will tip, and you begin to awaken.

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I know there is another part of us, totally different from the internal conversation, and it operates separately from the conversation. As one disconnects the emotional and energetic hooks, the energy holding them is freed and moves towards the other part of us. It occurs as an energy, not a feeling, but a physical energy. With this energy we hold our world together, with this energy we hold others to our world, and with this energy we can let go of this place and aim home. This world has an absolute realness to it, but it is only one of endless realms, as many as you want the darkness to create for you. Yet all these realms are all still this place. Only aiming for freedom creates something new.

Freedom requires giving up wanting to be god like. Not in conversation, but deeper. If you honestly chose freedom there will be a force, subtle but persistent, that will pull on you and extricate you. If you do not want to leave, here you will stay.

This is not an escape. The goal of pulling the spears out is to free the energy stuck by them, and end the need to live in your images, grandeur, self importance. You have to quit trying to be somewhere else, and arrive here, totally here, as the little speck of eternity that you are stabbed with spears that you need to pullout.

Yet ultimately, you have to let go of all of this -- you can't not free yourself, only God can set your soul free, but not if you insist on holding on with a firm grip. You came here to be god like, to be in control and be master of your fate, and that is what binds you to the separation. Even in your attempts to be free you can be caught if you don't let go at the right time, though that time will be clear when it arrives. You can not attain your freedom. Only God can give that to you. He paid the atonement for this long ago, He opened the door, and He is the one that will pull you to His heart.

To have freedom you can't be the sun, you will have to accept being the thin shaft of light that you really are.

